

April/May/June 2021

To Mayor, Councilors, and City Manager,

Amidst a year of uprisings against police violence, the people of Eugene have urged the City to address the housing crisis and allocate resources and funds to affordable housing and institutions that create true public safety. We write to you as a growing alliance of community members and organizations aware of the intersections between racial justice, land justice, housing justice, climate justice, and the need to end corporate welfare. We demand that you:

1. Reject the current development proposal for 1059 Willamette. It is corporate welfare. It does not provide affordable housing.

2. Use the property at 1059 Willamette to support the development of Community Land Trust or Community-Owned Housing with pro-BIPOC, pro-disabled, pro-houseless, pro-poor, pro-queer, and pro-trans covenants.

3. Reallocate 90% of Community Safety Initiative Funds (all but the 10% earmarked for Fire and Emergency Services) to provisions of shelter and housing for people who are in poverty, BIPOC, of targeted social status, survivors of domestic violence, and climate refugees.

4. Solicit input toward an inclusive process to establish anti-racist and anti-discriminatory policies regarding the disposition of city-controlled Real Property and resources.

The development proposal put forth by deChase Miksis/Edlen LLC includes \$10M worth of public subsidy from the City of Eugene, including a transfer of the publicly held property at 1059 Willamette, valued at \$6.8M; a \$1.1M direct payment (through the Downtown Urban Renewal District, generated by taxpayers city-wide); and a ten-year property tax exemption valued at \$2M.

In exchange for this \$10M in public assistance, deChase Miksis/Edlen LLC proposes to build units that are supposedly “affordable,” however they propose studios—that is, housing for individuals, not families—to rent for nearly \$1000/month. We know this is not affordable housing for the people of Eugene who actually need housing.

According to a City webpage, 32% (roughly 50,000 residents) of Eugene households live on a household income of less than \$25K/year, most of whom can afford only \$625/month or less. The City has identified a 13,500 unit deficit of rentals affordable to the 50,000 people in this income category. This is the population we need to use public resources to support housing for, not \$1,000/month studio apartments. The City has actually identified a 4,800 unit surplus of rentals available to those who can afford \$1000/month.

Rather than help create affordable and accessible housing that Eugene so desperately needs, this development project is likely to accelerate gentrification and homelessness. The numbers don't

line up. Eugene needs to subsidize actual and permanent affordable housing for our marginally-housed and working-class community members. Granting public subsidies for general housing that doesn't meet the needs of working class, marginally-housed Eugenians is trickle-down economics, with a negative return. We have decades of proof that this never works for those at the bottom.

Furthermore, Eugene is founded on Indigenous Dispossession, Black Exclusion, and Racialized Labor Exploitation. To stop further perpetuation of these harms, the City must proactively seek means for redress in all its dealings, most certainly where the transfer of public land is at stake. Nothing in the City's November 2020 request for proposals, nor in the deChase Miksis/Edlen LLC proposal, addresses Indigenous Dispossession and Black Exclusion. Rather, the proposal would donate publicly-held Real Property to a for-profit corporation controlled by white cis men. This is unacceptable.

We urge you to use the resources at your disposal to address the needs that will create true public safety in our city; to reallocate 90% of the CSI budget to housing, to reject the development proposal for 1059 Willamette and instead use the property to support the development of Community Land Trust (or otherwise community-owned) housing for our most exploited communities.

Submitted by:

1. Eugene Springfield NAACP
2. Lane East Asian Network (LEAN)
3. Community Alliance of Lane County (CALC)
4. Black Sex Worker Collective
5. BIWOC Rising (Black Indigenous Women of Color Rising)
6. Eugene-Springfield Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ)
7. Lane Independent Living Alliance
8. Solidarity Not Cops
9. Cooperation Eugene
10. 350 Eugene
11. Sunrise Eugene
12. Eugene DSA
13. Neighborhood Anarchist Collective
14. Human Rights, Human Stories
15. TransPonder
16. Stop The Sweeps Eugene
17. Eugene-Springfield Solidarity Network (ESSN)
18. CareWorks of Lane County
19. Community Rights of Lane County
20. Black Thistle Street Aid
21. Extinction Rebellion Justice Eugene
22. Eugene Mennonite Church
23. Maslow's Mission
24. National Lawyers Guild, University of Oregon Chapter (UO NLG)

25. Whiteaker Community Council
26. Cascadian Wildlands and Mutual Aid Network
27. Community Outreach through Radical Empowerment (CORE)
28. Burrito Brigade
29. Friendly Area Neighbors Executive Board

Prominent Members of BIPOC Communities:

Sandra Shotridge
Erika Lincango
Jane Ch'áak
Tyshawn Ford
Juan Carlos Valle
Patricia Toledo Robbins
Silverio Mogart
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