



SE Uplift
3534 SE Main St.
Portland, OR 97214
p: 503 232-0010
www.seuplift.org

February 16, 2016

Commissioner Amanda Fritz
Director Mike Abbaté

Dear Commissioner Fritz and Director Abbaté:

The Southeast Uplift board received your January 7th letter of response to our [date] letter regarding the long promised Southeast Community Center and the remaining Washington-Monroe property still owned by Portland Public Schools.

We discussed your letter and our path forward at our last meeting. In writing my response this morning, I was struck by the contrast between the long dormant Southeast Community Center project and the Oregonian front page article on the \$15.1 million dollar pathway to nowhere.¹ To be exact, the irony of losing a large opportunity at a relatively low price compared to paying out many, many millions for no opportunity at all.

As noted, the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding with Portland Public Schools regarding the remaining 1.31 acres require funding for a Community Center in place or the option for the City of Portland to purchase this property will expire on May 17, 2017.

This seems a harsh condition when one considers the property in question is land already publicly owned - and in fact has been publicly owned for decades. This point should not be taken lightly. The potential passage of this public land into private hands for what will in all practical purposes be an irrevocable action is must be avoided.

As we understand it the Portland Development Commission has penciled in close to a million dollars towards a future Community Center at this site. While this sum is a fraction of what is needed to build a new facility, it would go a long way towards the purchase of this property.

Surely, our public agencies can pool their energies to retain this parcel in a rapidly growing area for the public good.

Meanwhile we at SE Uplift will undertake the challenge of exploring a public private partnership to make our Southeast Portland Community Center a reality. We hope we can achieve what our neighbors up

¹ Portland's \$15.1 million pathway to nowhere, February 14, 2016 Oregonian, Brad Schmidt, page 1.

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Vancouver, WA did when they completed their Firstenburg Community Center in 2006 for \$25 million. Just as Ed & Mary Firstenburg donated \$3 million to seed Vancouver's success, we will now seek to cultivate heroes for our cause in the Rose City.

Yours,

Robert McCullough
President
Southeast Uplift

cc: PPS, PDC with Jan 7th PPR letter attached

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