

Union Crossing Scenario

The neighborhood of Union Crossing is a historically redlined neighborhood. Since the 1950's the neighborhood has been a mostly working class African American community. There's also a Latinx immigrant community that has been there since the 1990's. Recently, a new wave of commercial investment has come into the neighborhood and rental prices have risen steadily. Last month a private developer purchased a historic building in the heart of Union Crossing that at one time was a well-known Black church (the church sold the building in 2007 and moved to a newer building in a close by neighborhood). In the 60's the church was the epicenter of civil rights activities and for decades was a popular gathering space for activists. The building holds significant importance to the community. Your organization, Union Crossing Rise Up, is one of three community organizations that have been working together for over a year to develop a vision for a cross cultural community hub that can serve both the African American and Latinx communities. Almost 250 community members have been involved in the visioning and planning of the community hub and there's momentum building on city council to support the project. Their ideal site is the church property which the community hopes to creatively preserve to honor the legacy of organizing and activism and expand into a mixed use project that would create a new community arts and cultural space, a community gathering hall and kitchen, and 50 units of affordable housing as well as office space for community based organizations and service programs. The developer intends to tear down the building to create 150 units of luxury housing and put a high end non-union grocery store on the ground floor.

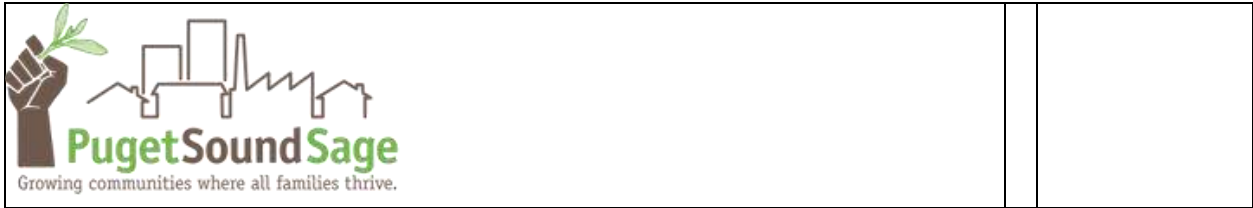
Before the developer can build, they will need to get several permissions from the city:

1. They need to change the city's zoning laws to increase how high they can build to make their project possible.
2. They need to complete a mandatory environmental review process to determine the project's potential environmental impacts and whether it meets federal, state, and local environmental standards.
3. They will need to get all the appropriate permits to build.

In addition, the developer still needs to find a few additional private investors to back the project but they have secured one large investor - the Public Employees Union Pension Fund.

The goal of your organization is to stop the developer and acquire the property so it's back in the hands of the community!

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4. What information will you need to gather to do this effectively? (This is your research)

5. How will you mobilize and engage your base?

6. Who might be helpful allies?

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