

CULLY, from page 7

will be a gathering and event space, “which the community is just begging for,” Ojeda said.

Since Living Cully took control of the building, the coalition has paid for some renovations: tearing out the deep red carpet and removing the red and white tile from the walls. It has also been opened to community groups for meetings and events, including dance and lucha libre classes.

Ojeda said she was surprised by the sheer demand for community space.

The commercial space on the first floor will include a professional kitchen and catering services through Hacienda’s economic development program. There will also be a community hall and a day care center, a huge demand among residents, Ojeda said. Hacienda and Living Cully are trying to find an organization that will help keep the costs deeply subsidized for the residents.

What else could go into the space remains to be seen. During the Oct. 27 open house, residents expressed support for a café, an indoor farmers market, a grocery store, an outdoor playground, a gym and public art.

Demolition will occur in early 2019 and will include a “thoughtful deconstruction,” Ojeda said. “We would like to reuse some of the important materials that are still here. There’s a lot of old growth lumber (in the building).”

Construction will begin in the spring of 2019 and last 18 to 20 months.

The development of Living Cully Plaza is happening during a time that other initiatives of Living Cully are reaching fruition, including finishing Cully Park, which will be the newest park in a neighborhood with the least amount of parkland per capita in Portland.

Living Cully formed in 2010 to reduce poverty and prevent gentrification in Cully, an inner northeast neighborhood that is the most ethnically and racially diverse neighborhood in Oregon.

More than half of Cully’s residents, according to census data, are African-American, Hispanic, Latino, Native

American, African and Asian.

Cully is also known for its poverty. Compared to the regional average of 9.9 percent, a quarter of Cully residents live below the poverty line. Nearly 9 in 10 students living in Cully qualify for free or reduced-price lunch. And the neighborhood’s median income is \$10,000 less than the city’s average median income.

The neighborhood lacks basic infrastructure. More than 10 percent of Cully’s streets are unpaved, almost two-thirds of Cully’s streets do not have sidewalks, and there is only one grocery store, an Albertsons. Laura Young, the chair of the Cully Association of Neighbors, said the neighborhood’s lack of basic infrastructure is the result of decades of “disinvestment” by the city.

All of Living Cully’s work centers on creating the infrastructure to support a tight-knit community without causing gentrification and the displacement of Cully’s residents.

“We don’t need things that bring rich people in the neighborhood,” Sweet said. “We need things that serve the people in the neighborhood and maintain our diversity.”

How to improve a neighborhood without causing displacement is a million-dollar question in Portland these days. In 2013, Living Cully collaborated with students in Portland State University’s Master of Urban and Regional Planning program, who wrote the “Not in Cully” report. The report argues that neighborhood-level investments that involve local organizations such as Living Cully can stabilize a neighborhood and residents’ lives while also preventing displacement. The report emphasizes retaining and building affordable housing.

Sweet said Cully has an unmet need of at least 2,000 units of affordable housing. Hacienda CDC has developed or rehabilitated hundreds of units in the neighborhood, including rehabilitating the 133-unit Clara Vista apartments directly across the street from Living Cully Plaza.

FARMWORKERS, from page 5

At E&S Farms in Woodburn, where we visited the Leary Road Camp, workers earn minimum wage, Ramírez said. They work 10-hour days, and because they are agricultural workers, overtime pay does not apply to them.

In 2012, the owner of E&S Farms, Stanley Dansky, was forced to pay his workers \$11,301 in back wages after a U.S. Department of Labor investigation found he had failed to pay them the minimum wage. It also found that Dansky’s farm was violating child labor laws.

“Our people are getting cancer and all other kinds of diseases. Lymphoma, diabetes, tendonitis, back problems – we’re paying the price so that Americans can eat cheap,” Ramírez said.

He believes the solution will have to come from the consumer, that people need to start demanding food that is humanely farmed, just as some demand food that’s organically farmed.

PCUN has worked with the anti-poverty charity group Oxfam to create a certification label under the Equitable Food Initiative that focuses on farmworker health and safety. It’s currently carried on produce in select Whole Foods and Costco stores, but Ramírez hopes consumers will demand to see it elsewhere.

Farms growing produce that carries this “Responsibly Grown, Farmworker Assured” label are operating in Washington, California, Utah, Arizona, Canada, Mexico and Guatemala, however there is none in Oregon.

But Ramírez is optimistic.

“We just started this. We have about 40 farms that we’ve certified so far – about 16,000 workers,” he said.

In the meantime, he hopes Oregonians will push for better standards for farmworker housing and stronger worker protections, and for their local grocer to carry the Equitable Food Initiative label.

emily@streetroots.org;
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