

AMAZON WAREHOUSE A PROPERTY-TAX JACKPOT? NOPE.

A single new student-housing complex pays more than Amazon will

After *Eugene Weekly* unmasked Amazon as the conglomerate behind the planned package-distribution center near the Eugene Airport, some people have suggested Amazon's property tax payments on the place may prove a rich windfall for money-starved local governments.

But that's not likely.

How much will the facility pay each year in property taxes to the cash-strapped city of Eugene? Maybe about \$290,000, Bricks \$ Mortar calculates. That won't go far in a city government with a \$930 million annual budget and 1,500 employees.

Eugene School District 4J, now implementing major layoffs, would get less, about \$250,000, Bricks \$ Mortar calculates. That's enough to pay the salary and benefits of a few teachers, in a district with about 2,000 employees and a roughly \$300 million annual budget.

The Amazon facility may be many things. But a property tax goldmine it is not.

The facility's advocates give it a fancy name: an "e-commerce center." But it will really be just a vast steel warehouse filled with expensive conveyor belts, and will be taxed accordingly.

Amazon's total property tax payments, to all local jurisdictions, will be roughly \$720,000 a year, Bricks \$ Mortar estimates. It could be somewhat more or somewhat less, depending on the value of the conveyor system. Amazon won't disclose what it will spend on the facility, spokesperson Farah Jud says.

Let's put this money in perspective:

Lane County records show

the county's single biggest property taxpayer is International Paper's linerboard factory in Springfield, which pays \$4.4 million a year. Other big property taxpayers are McKenzie-Willamette hospital (\$1.8 million a year), Weyerhaeuser Co.'s mills in Eugene and Cottage Grove (\$2.1 million total a year) and Valley River Center in Eugene (\$1 million a year).

The Amazon facility likely would fall far short of making the top 10 list of Lane County property tax payers.

If you're looking for a genuine recent tax godsend, consider the five big student apartment complexes out-of-state developers have built in Eugene in the last eight years. As a group, these five pay over \$3.4 million a year in property taxes, county records show.

The biggest, the Standard at Eugene, the new 703-bedroom student complex on Broadway near the Ferry Street Bridge, pays nearly \$1 million a year in property taxes, county records show. Two more student housing high-rises are under construction. Each will likely pay about \$750,000 a year in property taxes.

No one will know for sure how much Amazon will pay until the

place has been built and officially assessed.

Here's how Bricks \$ Mortar estimated the taxes:

1. How much will Amazon spend on its project? Amazon spent \$2 million to buy the farmland site, and in a filing with the city, Amazon's consultant put the construction cost at \$24 million.

On top of this, the wild card is the value of the conveyor system Amazon will install. News reports show that for some package-sorting centers of this size in other states, Amazon installs \$20 million to \$30 million worth of equipment. Let's use the higher number. That gives us a facility with a total value of \$56 million.

Compare that to the market value of the IP linerboard plant: \$253 million.

2. Once the place is built, the Oregon Department of Revenue will use a valuation formula to determine the assessed value of the facility. The assessed value is the amount that's taxed.

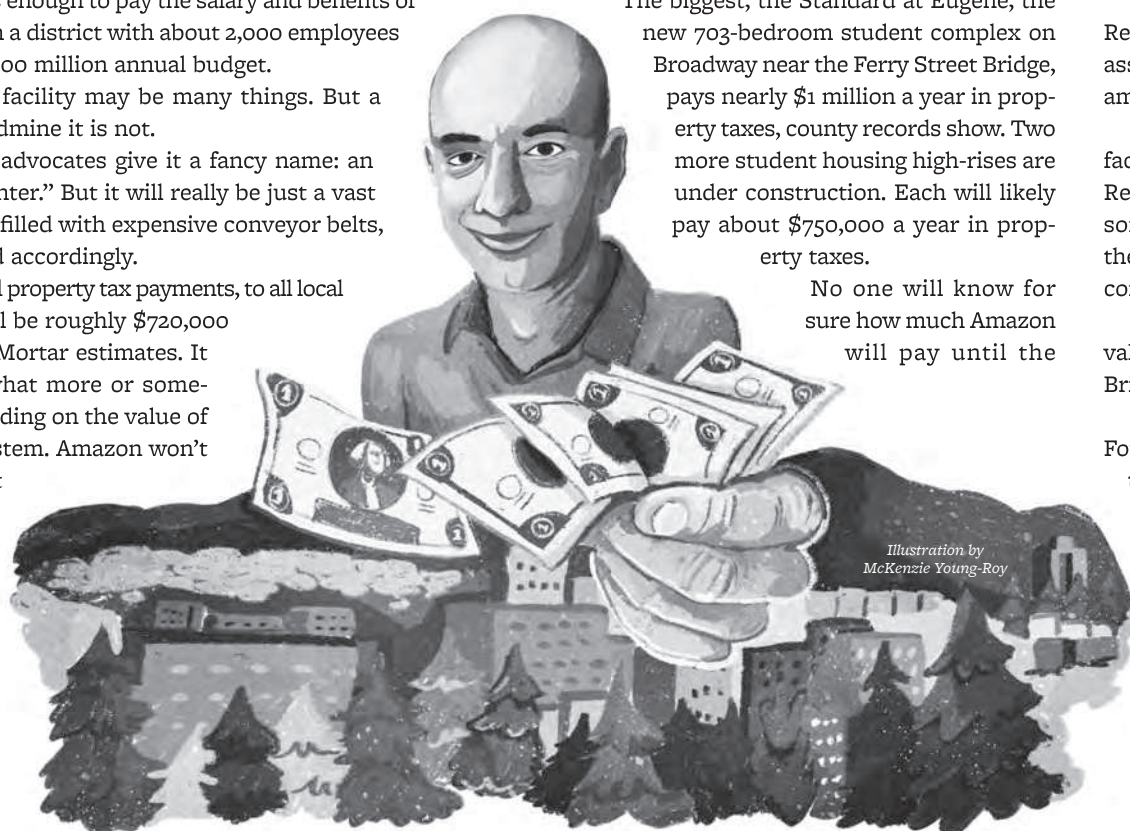
On large industrial properties such as the Amazon facility, assessment work is done by the Department of Revenue in cooperation with the Lane County Assessor's Office. For almost all properties in Lane County, the assessed value is much lower than the cost of new construction, for reasons that are beside the point here.

The formula the state would use would peg the assessed value of the Amazon development at about \$36 million, Bricks \$ Mortar estimates.

How much property taxes would Amazon pay on that? For all property tax jurisdictions at that Highway 99 location — city of Eugene, Eugene School District, Lane County government, etc. — the total tax rate would be about \$20 per \$1,000 of assessed value. That's \$720,000 a year to be paid by Amazon.

Eugene residents may be praying for a savior who will bail out city government and the Eugene School District. But it won't be Jeff Bezos.

Bricks \$ Mortar is a column anchored by Christian Wihtol, who worked as an editor and writer at The Register-Guard in Eugene 1990-2018, much of the time focused on real estate, economic development and business. Reach him at Christian@EugeneWeekly.com.



ACTIVIST ALERT PROTESTS, ACTIVISM AND MORE AROUND LANE COUNTY

BY CAMILLA MORTENSEN

"Power does not corrupt men; fools, however, if they get into a position of power, corrupt power."

— George Bernard Shaw

Upcoming Protests, Rallies, Marches, Talks and Gatherings

>> **National Day of Action**, Jan. 30, No work, no school, no shopping, stop funding ICE. NationalShutdown.org.
ICE OUT: No business as usual, 2 pm Springfield City Hall, 225 5th Street.

Ongoing events at the Eugene Federal Building, 7th Avenue and Pearl Street.

>> **Veterans for Peace, Chapter 159**, weekly protest, 1 pm to 2 pm Mondays.

>> **Protest ICE: Last Tuesday Mobilization Response**, 10 am to 4 pm last Tuesday of each month. More at Linktr.ee/psleugene. Be available for rapid

response via Tinyurl.com/Immigrant-DefenseSignal.

>> **Singing for Our Lives**, noon to 1 pm Tuesdays, the BeLonging Space and Interfaith Alliance with Migrants.

>> **Silent Protest to Support Our Immigrant Neighbors**, 1 pm to 2 pm Tuesdays. Signs provided, wear white or black. Indivisible Eugene/Springfield.

>> **Love and Rage Protest**, 2 pm to 5 pm, Tuesdays.

>> **Showing Up for Racial Justice**, noon to 1 pm Wednesdays.

>> **50501 Weekly Protest**, noon to 4 pm, Wednesdays. Bring readings, songs, signs or other art.

>> **Weekly Vigils Against the Genocide in Gaza and Against ICE**, 3 pm to 5:30 pm, Wednesdays, Planet Versus Pentagon.

>> **"Signs of Fascism" Protest**, 10 am to noon Thursdays. Signs provided, wear all black. Indivisible.

>> **Raging Grannies**, noon to 2 pm, Fridays.

Ongoing events

>> **Resist! Persist! Repeat! Weekly Protest**, 10 am to 11 am Mondays, corners on 29th and Willamette Street and 11 am to noon Mondays, corner of Coburg and Harlow roads.

>> **Weekly Get-Out-the-Vote Postcarding**, for the 2026 midterm elections. For more info Pandi96743@yahoo.com.

>> **Make protest signs at MECCA**, 11 am to 6 pm Tuesday through Saturday; get help with signmaking 11 am to 1 pm Wednesdays, materials donated

by Eugene Message Makers, make up to four signs for a \$5-10 donation to MECCA.

>> **Stop the Cuts**, noon, Fridays, Eugene Veterans Clinic, 3355 Chad Drive.

>> **Stand in Solidarity with Food Not Bombs Feeding the Community**, 4 pm Fridays, downtown Park Blocks, 8th and Oak, Instagram.com/foodnotbombs_eugene.

>> **Springfield Community of Peace: Seeking Peace in the Middle East**, 3 pm the second Sunday of each month, Ebbert Methodist Church, 532 C St., Springfield. Discussion and action.

Email Editor@EugeneWeekly.com with "Activist Alert" in the subject line to add protests to this listing, and subscribe to the Activist Alert newsletter at EugeneWeekly.com/newsletter to get this information in your inbox on Wednesdays!