



News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Statement from Eugene Mayor Lucy Vinis, Springfield Mayor Christine Lundberg and Lane County Commissioner Heather Buch

People are angry. We should all be angry. The violence and injustice that has ravaged communities of color in our country for so long is intolerable and we must do everything we can to stop it. We have a racist history in Eugene, Springfield, Lane County, Oregon, and the United States, and we need to own that.

We have a choice: we can listen and respond to justifiable anger with compassion and constructive change; or we can allow ourselves to be torn apart. We honor the right and importance of peaceful protest. The voices that have been silenced by outright and systemic racism must be heard.

But what started as a peaceful protest last night turned into a violent, dangerous situation. The people who engaged in these acts of violence do not represent our community or the people who were there to advocate for meaningful and needed change. The event started as a peaceful Black Lives Matter protest in response to the death of George Floyd.

We do not condone or accept the destructive acts that took place last night in downtown Eugene. This is not a path to justice. This is a path to more suffering. Nationwide Black, Indigenous and Communities of Color are experiencing higher infection, death rates, job loss and economic instability. Dismantling systemic racism is a critical solution to supporting community recovery. Our local businesses already face an incredible struggle to recover from the pandemic. These acts just make it harder.

We are proud of the thoughtful and measured response from the Eugene Police Department with the assistance of the Springfield Police Department and the Lane County Sheriff's Office. Their priority was safety and while we are truly saddened by the needless destruction of businesses and property, we remain very thankful there were no serious injuries throughout last night's events.

"We strive to be a City of Kindness," said Mayor Vinis. "That calls on us to listen and to respond to one another with open hearts and minds. Destruction is not the pathway to realizing our goal to be a welcoming community for everyone. We must work together."

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