

Press Release

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Subject: Possible Demolition of Cob on Wood and Evictions of Unhoused Wood Street Encampment residents by CalTrans.

Hello!

CalTrans evictions of the Wood Street encampment are slated to hit Cob on Wood as well as the 100 + residents of "Phase 2" Monday morning 9/26 starting at 8am.

Sunday beginning at 2pm there will be a rally and concert for residents and the community to make signs and speak out about the impacts of the displacements happening across Oakland.

Cob on Wood is a historical landmark social experiment that has touched the lives of many from the residents it's served to people around the globe who learned about the unique intersection of housed and unhoused working for housing rights and human dignity side by side under the 880 Freeway.

Below you can find a press release containing additional details about what is expected to take place this Sunday and Monday.

Best,

Xochitl

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For immediate release

Friday, September 23, 2022

12PM PST

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Cob on Wood faces demolition Monday as Wood St. Evictions Continue

(West Oakland, California)— Caltrans evictions of [over 200 residents at the Wood Street houseless encampment](#) that began on September 8th will continue this Monday at 8am and next on the chopping block is [Cob on Wood](#).

The evictions had been delayed for 46 days thanks to a [temporary restraining order against CalTrans](#) issued by Judge William H. Orrick. Wood Street residents have since filed a civil rights lawsuit with over 30 residents bringing charges against CalTrans for loss and destruction of property which go against the orders of Judge Orrick.

Wood Street is the [largest homeless encampment in Oakland](#) and one of the largest in the country. [Cob on Wood](#) is an ecovillage made up of community support structures which has served this community since December of 2020. It has been a groundbreaking model of what can be built through the collaboration of the housed and unhoused communities working together.

It provides residents with an outdoor kitchen, shower, community garden, and gathering space. It has been a place for food distribution, pop up clinics, houses a free store where residents can access clothing and needed supplies, and hosts regular open-mics and community townhall events.

The displacement taking place by Caltrans and the City of Oakland is illegal according to *Martin v. Boise* decision that cites that cities cannot enforce anti-camping ordinances if they do not have enough homeless shelter beds available for their homeless population. Currently the city does not have enough beds and many of the displaced have nowhere to go except the streets of Oakland.

In a recent press release, Caltrans recognized that there currently is not enough housing available for the over 300 individuals who are being kicked out of their current residence at the Wood St. Encampment. The department simply cites “future housing,” which is yet to be made available for residents at the Wood St. Encampment.

The residents at the Wood St. encampment, as well as organizers who work with Cob on Wood, have been organizing against Caltrans to stop this infringement of civil rights from taking place. Residents and organizers alike are hoping that the City of Oakland will declare homelessness a State of Emergency and open vacant city land to house those being evicted.

“Ever more money is flowing to solve the homeless problem in California, and yet hardly a cent goes directly to meet the basic human needs of people living in encampments. We are instead all threatened by the Governor's plans for ‘encampment resolution’, which consists primarily of a Statewide clampdown on encampments, using the Caltrans heavy machinery, and the California Highway Patrol's monopoly on force, to bully, bulldoze, intimidate, and otherwise violently displace every last person living in the hundreds of homeless encampments in the State of California,” said a Wood St. resident who wishes to stay anonymous .

Cob on Wood (@cobonwood on instagram) is a cob based community space that serves the Wood St residents and works with them to meet their basic needs. The residents overwhelmingly oppose being moved from Wood St, so organizers are calling out for support in defending the Wood St. Encampment and Cob on Wood.

“The notices went up on September 19th 2022, as dozens of Caltrans employees and subcontractors fanned out through the community laying a virtual wallpapering of eviction notices on every home and vehicle. Even the Cob on Wood village, the object of worldwide [press attention](#), is threatened with destruction by the giant forklifts and excavators of the multi-billion dollar State transportation agency,” **said a Wood St. resident who organizes with Cob on Wood.**

This Sunday residents and supporters will gather at Cob on Wood for a rally and Speak Out beginning at 2pm to prepare for the planned demolition of the ecovillage on Monday 9/26 at 8am, and to continue to plan and organize for real solutions for the homelessness crises. The Wood Street community has been building for over a decade and the displacement happening here will affect all of Oakland.

For the past year and a half, while under constant threat of eviction by Caltrans and the City of Oakland and with few viable housing options available, Wood Street resident community organizers and advocates have been meeting with Oakland City Councilmember Carroll Fife (D3), in whose district the encampment is located, to negotiate a new site on city land where they can safely relocate if they are displaced from the current site. At the Oakland City Council Rules and Legislation Committee meeting on Thursday morning, September 22nd, where Councilmember Fife proposed to introduce legislation to permit Wood Street residents who are being displaced to relocate to an eight-acre section of the unused city-owned Northgate Parcel just west of the encampment, 20 community members including several Wood Street residents gave impassioned public comment in support of the proposal. When Assistant City of Oakland Administrator LaTonda Simmons pushed back on the proposal and asked to postpone the item, Fife took a firm stand in support of unhoused residents of her district, urging the committee to schedule the proposed legislation at the next City Council meeting on Tuesday, October 4th beginning at 10 AM, and committee members voted in support of scheduling the item on that date. Wood Street residents and advocates plan to attend the meeting and testify during public comment in support of Fife's proposal.

Wood St. residents have organized the Homeless Helping Homeless bike ride from Oakland to Sacramento taking place October 1-4, where they will have a peaceful protest at the capitol to advocate for more humane solutions to the current crisis and the inclusion of the unhoused in constructing those solutions. The bike ride is also a fundraiser which will support the construction of new tiny homes, a nonprofit license, and community businesses to employ the unhoused. To donate to this cause, please visit <https://www.gofundme.com/f/wood-street-commons-general-fund>

NBC Video :

<https://youtu.be/8bLssS8ONag>

CNBC VIDEO:

<https://www.facebook.com/100000517895340/posts/4749269318433618/?d=n>

Guardian UK Article :

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/may/11/oakland-homeless-cob-on-wood-village>

Op-Ed written by Wood Street Community

<https://itsgoingdown.org/?s=Wood+street>

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