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Springfield Aldermanic Black Caucus Responds to SSGA East Springfield Redevelopment Recommendations: Calls for Equity-Driven Action and Community-Led Investment

Springfield, IL — The Springfield Aldermanic Black Caucus today issued a formal response to the Springfield Sangamon Growth Alliance's (SSGA) June 3, 2025 recommendations for East Springfield redevelopment. While welcoming the recognition of economic disparities in the community, the Caucus emphasized the urgent need for concrete, community-rooted action rather than further studies.

"Springfield does not need more plans—we need execution tied to equity," said Alderman Shawn Gregory, Chair of the Caucus. "This is about repairing a century of exclusion with a century of investment led by those most impacted."

The Caucus calls for immediate deployment of available resources, including funds unlocked through two newly designated State Cultural Districts and integration of the History Across the Tracks initiative. Supported by Senator Doris Turner, Mayor Misty Buscher, and other key stakeholders, History Across the Tracks is a multi-site cultural and historical preservation project highlighting landmarks such as the Ambidextrous House, Engine House No. 5 (the all-Black firehouse), the Lincoln Colored Home, Zion Baptist Church, the Dr. Edwin Lee E. Building, and the Southtown Walk of Fame honoring Black and minority heroes.

Key to this vision is leveraging Springfield's complex history, including Abraham Lincoln's ties to slavery and emancipation, alongside the newly designated 1908 Springfield Race Riot National Monument. History Across the Tracks aims to boost heritage tourism and drive economic stability east of the 11th Street tracks.

The Caucus also advocates for the creation of a certified local workforce through partnerships with Monty's Custom Furniture Training Center and Solid Grounds Solutions' Minority Trades Network. This workforce would support infrastructure improvements and city-funded projects, alongside a Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) program to remove barriers for Black- and brown-owned contractors.

Additionally, the Caucus proposed The Grand Food Truck Stop, a rotating hub for local food entrepreneurs that will generate business income and sales tax revenue reinvested into youth employment and facility upkeep.

"Our neighborhoods demand real investments—workforce training, community ownership, equitable contracting, and cultural preservation—not another round of paperwork," Alderwoman Lakeisha Purchase, Vice Chair, stated.

The Springfield Aldermanic Black Caucus invites collaboration with city officials, community groups, and investors to integrate these equity-centered proposals into all future redevelopment strategies for East Springfield.

For more information or interview requests, please contact:

Alderman Shawn Gregory

Chair

Alderwoman Purchase

Vice Chair

Alderman Roy Williams Jr

Treasurer

SABCF235@gmail.com