



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 2, 2022

Media contact:

Jessica Sherwin, Senior Communications Manager

jsherwin@communityrootshousing.org

Africatown Community Land Trust and Community Roots Housing to break ground on community-led affordable housing development in Central District

SEATTLE, WA – This Saturday, Feb. 5 at noon, Africatown Community Land Trust (ACLT) and Community Roots Housing will hold a groundbreaking celebration for Africatown Plaza, an affordable housing project at the historic corner of 23rd and East Spring Street in the Central District.

The groundbreaking, emceed by TraeAnna Holiday, will feature DJ Zeta Barber, Javoeon Byrd of Awodi Drumming, as well as performances of the Black National Anthem and a spoken word piece. Seattle Mayor Bruce Harrell, Representative Kirstin Harris-Talley, Councilman Girmay Zahilay, and leaders on the project will deliver remarks. Press are invited to attend the event in person; the event will be also be [livestreamed](#) so community members can attend virtually.

Africatown Plaza will create 126 new units for families and individuals making up to 60% of the Area Median Income. In addition to affordable housing, the development will feature a community room, a public plaza, and a curated art collection focused on healing, restoring, and celebrating Black and Pan-African communities in Seattle's Central District. The building's ground floor will house ACLT's new headquarters, an affordable space that will include a commercial kitchen to be used by local culinary entrepreneurs.

Africatown Plaza will continue a legacy of community building on the site of the former Umoja PEACE Center, the grassroots, Black-led community organization where the Africatown Seattle movement began over a decade ago. The 7-story mixed use development is an extension of the partnership between ACLT and Community Roots. Building on the success of their previous collaboration, [Liberty Bank Building](#), the two organizations are embarking on Africatown Plaza in an effort to build another cultural anchor and stem the tide of displacement in the Central District. The Central District has been the center of African American and African diaspora life in Seattle for over 140 years, but today gentrification and rising rents are threatening affordable housing, commercial affordability, economic development, and cultural preservation.

ACLT and Community Roots are working to maximize the participation of African American contractors and subcontractors to create economic opportunities for the community during the construction process. The general contractor is a joint venture of Absher and an African American-owned MAD Construction.

In addition to \$1.26 million raised by ACLT and CRH, the City of Seattle provided \$13.4 million in acquisition and construction financing and \$1.6 million in Equitable Development Initiative funds, with a further \$2 million in construction financing from King County. KeyBank Community Development Lending and Investment is providing \$37.4 million of construction financing and \$14.2 million of permanent financing, and Key Community Development Corporation is providing \$25.7 million of low income housing tax credit equity.

###

About Africatown Community Land Trust

Africatown Community Land Trust was formed to acquire, steward, and develop land assets that are necessary for the Black/African diaspora community to grow and thrive in place in the Central District and greater Seattle region. Learn more at africatownlandtrust.org

About Community Roots Housing

Everyone has the right to a quality, affordable home. At Community Roots Housing, this truth drives our work. By embracing community-led development and engaging in deep-rooted partnerships, we're fostering vibrant, equitable communities where everyone has access to safe, affordable, and welcoming homes. Today, with nearly 50 apartment buildings and over 2,000 residents, we continue our commitment to build community with and for people. Learn more at communityrootshousing.org.