

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Tenaya Sensaki
Marketing & Communications Manager
213-473-1642
tsenzaki@LTSC.org

Little Tokyo Service Center (LTSC) Celebrates Groundbreaking of Umeya, An Affordable and Permanent Supportive Housing Development in Little Tokyo/Skid Row

LOS ANGELES - Little Tokyo Service Center (LTSC), a community nonprofit and affordable housing developer, held a groundbreaking ceremony on April 18, 2023 to celebrate the start of construction for The Umeya: the developer's newest affordable and permanent supportive housing project.

The development is located at the site of the vacant former Umeya Rice Cake Company, which closed its doors in 2017. LTSC acquired the property in 2019 with plans to redevelop the historic factory and warehouse into a transit-oriented, mixed-use development, featuring 175 deeply affordable apartments. Half of all units will be set aside as permanent supportive housing (PSH) for formerly unhoused individuals, with on-site supportive services for residents.

Umeya additionally includes plans for 13,000 sq. ft. of ground floor space dedicated to community, commercial, and service provider space. This highly sustainable LEED-certified building will also feature a 4,000 sq. ft. landscaped courtyard, a community-led mural by local Skid Row artist, Showzart, and an exhibit honoring Umeya as a three-generation, Japanese-American family-owned business.

"At LTSC, we believe that development should happen within the context of a neighborhood. Beyond housing, we want to make sure that the project is going to have a positive impact on the neighborhood as a whole. This project is symbolic because not only are we contributing to addressing the homelessness crisis here in Los Angeles, but we're doing it in a place that has been so directly impacted by that crisis. Developing 175 affordable units on this historic site in a way that involves meaningful community partnership is really significant," said Grant Sunoo, LTSC's Director of Community Building and Engagement.

The groundbreaking ceremony featured performances from J-Town Taiko Club, LA CAN Housing Organizer Natosha Smith, and Skid Row arts organization Urban Voices, as well as speeches from partners, funders and elected officials integral to the project's success.

"Our office is pleased to have been able to have a real hand in helping push this project forward. Our emergency declaration the first day in office allowed us to move quickly...to work with the housing department and close the gap. It's a sign of the change that's coming and what we're going to continue to do at the mayor's office. As Mayor Bass says, we're rolling up our sleeves and we're doing the work. We're working with this development community, federal, state, and local partners, and all Angelenos, to bring folks inside," said Jenna Hornstock, Deputy Mayor of Housing.

“We all know that affordable, accessible, and supportive housing is key to everything that we do. It affects health outcomes, quality of life, and the ability to build community. This is why Governor Newsom, the California legislature, and the entire administration are working in partnership to accelerate housing production, to provide more resources, and to work in partnership with local leaders to build permanent supportive housing in places that are in need. And this site is exactly doing that,” said Lourdes Castro Ramirez, Secretary of the Business, Consumer Services and Housing Agency for California Governor Gavin Newsom.

“The nature of this 175 unit development, where we are located, the population that this project will be serving with connectivity, with everything that future residents will need, is really the type of housing that the State of California is looking forward to continue supporting,” said Gustavo Velasquez, Director at California Department of Housing & Community Development.

Umeya adds 175 units to LTSC’s portfolio of over 1,000 affordable units across Southern California. Two major affordable housing projects in LTSC’s pipeline include First Street North Apartments in Little Tokyo and Santa Monica Vermont Apartments in East Hollywood.

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ABOUT LTSC

Little Tokyo Service Center is a social service and community development organization that has been creating positive change for the people and places in Southern California for 40 years. Starting with its home in Little Tokyo, LTSC preserves and strengthens the unique ethnic communities of the region where people, culture and collective future matter. www.LTSC.org