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Community Roots Housing and Lake Union Partners collaborate on new housing, retail hub in Rainier Valley

SEATTLE, WA – Community Roots Housing and Lake Union Partners closed on the acquisition of a 2.3 acre project site at the corner of Rainier Avenue South and South Genesee Street on Monday, March 18, 2024. Comprising two land parcels located in Seattle’s Rainier Valley neighborhood, the development will create a shared campus of mixed-income housing and over 12,000 square feet of commercial retail space.

In addition to bringing housing and retail, this project supports environmental clean up via a four-year remediation effort in coordination with the Washington State Department of Ecology.

“Housing should be planned in parallel with other neighborhood amenities,” said Christopher Persons, CEO of Community Roots Housing. “This project will create a new neighborhood hub, establishing hundreds of new homes serving a range of incomes alongside space for local businesses. It will extend the energy of Columbia City’s core retail center northward where it can connect with the larger Rainier Valley area.”

Community Roots Housing will develop the northern parcel, located at 4208 Rainier Ave. S, creating between 140 and 180 new, affordable apartments in addition to more than 3,000 square feet of retail space. On the southern parcel, Lake Union Partners will develop 263 units of housing, nearly one-third of which will be affordable, above 9,500 square feet of ground-floor retail space. The two projects will share a courtyard and work cooperatively to enhance the streetscape and cultivate a pedestrian-oriented retail experience, revitalizing a prominent yet underutilized corner of Rainier Valley. Once complete, the campus will serve as a portal to the Mount Baker and Seward Park neighborhoods that are heavily accessed from Genesee Street.

“We’re excited to kick this process off, and we intend to break ground in about a year,” said Norah Potter, development manager at Lake Union Partners. “Our partnership with Community Roots Housing has allowed us to continue our efforts to bring mixed-income communities to great neighborhoods in Seattle. As with all our projects, we’ll be focusing on local, interesting retail that complements the residential units above.”

According to the City of Seattle 2035 Growth and Equity Plan, Columbia City is rated as high access to opportunity and high risk of displacement. By joining forces to build 400+ units of mixed-income housing across both land parcels, Community Roots Housing and Lake Union Partners hope to foster a place where families and neighbors can thrive in a vibrant neighborhood. Both projects are transit-oriented developments located on a major bus line and will place future residents within a 10-minute walk from the Columbia City light rail station.

Community Roots Housing’s acquisition was made possible by support from Seattle’s Office of Housing.

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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.

About Lake Union Partners

Seattle-based Lake Union Partners is an urban real estate company specializing in residential mixed-use and commercial projects in Seattle. As a team of creative and experienced developers, the company is focused on building projects with design integrity and sensitivity to local neighborhoods. Learn more at www.lakeunionpartners.com.