



PRESS CONTACT:

Roberto Garcia Ceballos, Co-Director
Fideicomiso Comunitario Tierra Libre
Roberto@CPCollective.org
(408) 687 – 9012

Los Angeles is One Step Closer to a Thriving Community Land Trust Market

The Los Angeles Community Land Trust (LA CLT) Coalition Celebrates Final Acquisition in First Round of Funding of County Pilot Community Land Trust Partnership Program

LOS ANGELES, CA – June 1, 2022 — The Los Angeles Community Land Trust (LA CLT) Coalition today with the Los Angeles County Development Authority (LACDA), announced the celebration of its eighth acquisition as part of the Pilot Community Land Trust Program. T.R.U.S.T. South LA's acquisition in Los Angeles's Pico Union neighborhood marks the culmination of the first round of funding as part of the [Pilot Community Land Trust \(CLT\) Partnership Program, a motion passed by the LA County Board of Supervisors in November 2020](#). The program allocated \$14 million for the purchase of unsubsidized properties suitable for affordable housing. Preliminary findings suggest the program offers a cost-effective, missing strategy that, if scaled, could stem the tide of displacement in low-income communities of color and mitigate the acute risk of vulnerable households falling into homelessness.

The motion directed the LACDA to administer the program and to work with members of the LA CLT Coalition to acquire multifamily properties for sale on the speculative market, rehabilitate them into more healthy, vibrant homes, and steward them as permanently affordable housing. The LA CLT Coalition has established partnerships with other nonprofits including Community Development Corporations (CDC) to leverage their real estate expertise and ensure sufficient capacity to deliver projects.

The Coalition is appreciative of the investment by the Board of Supervisors in this transformative initiative, and of Supervisors Hilda L. Solis and Sheila Kuehl for spearheading this vision. The residents will now benefit from community ownership models that will keep their buildings affordable in perpetuity.

"This is our eighth CLT project and our role in this pilot has helped dozens of households in need," said Emilio Salas, Executive Director, LACDA. "The leadership and innovation shown by the Board of Supervisors prevented vulnerable households from falling into homelessness. We are proud of the efforts of the LA CLT Coalition and the successes shown by this pilot."

"I felt I was in good hands with the LA CLT Coalition when I was first introduced to them. I felt relieved." said Brenda Jauregui, a resident of a property acquired through the program by the El Sereno Community Land Trust. "Too many investors are trying to buy [properties], make them pretty and then rent them high. They try to get rid of old tenants then fix the apartments and then bring new tenants with a high price. When we found out LA CLT bought the property, I was grateful that they are not buying and kicking us out."

“The previous owner was planning to sell the house and I shared with him that I was interested in buying it. The owner mentioned he could not sell it to me but that he found T.R.U.S.T. South LA who would help us hopefully become owners one day. They explained how community land trusts work and I quickly saw how many people became involved to improve the house and support us. It felt great learning that there is hope for us to own the house one day and we do not need to be millionaires to make it happen,” said Noe Herrera Fernandez, a tenant in a LACLТ-acquired property in South Los Angeles.

“Fideicomiso Comunitario Tierra Libre (FCTL) and Little Tokyo Service Center (LTSC) acquired the first building of the CLТ pilot program. Since we acquired our 700 Simmons Ave building, we have built strong relationships with tenants and learned the drastic inhabitability the tenants had been living due to years of neglect by the former landlords. Our approach is to work with all the families to empower them in decision-making and collectively taking care of the building. In one year, the LA CLТ Coalition, the county, and CDC partners have changed 43 households’ lives by creating permanent affordability in each of their households. This is paving the road towards more cooperative and community-controlled housing in the county,” explained Roberto Garcia-Ceballos, Co-director of Fideicomiso Comunitario Tierra Libre.

Preliminary findings of a report sponsored by the Liberty Hill Foundation suggest the CLТs and their CDC partners ultimately acquired 43 units, stabilizing more than 110 individuals. Until the Pilot CLТ Partnership Program, preservation of small scale, at-risk affordable housing has been a noticeable gap in the ecosystem of funding programs for affordable housing in the County. The families participating in the LA County Pilot CLТ Program are now able to afford their housing into perpetuity, and, at a future date, would have the opportunity to own their homes.

Such housing security is a critical means of homelessness prevention, a way to “plug the gap” in the homelessness system. The program supports critical community-based organizations who are providing housing and services, stabilizing communities, and assuring resiliency in tenant households through various, effective means. The Program effectively preserves affordability for low-income households at a deeper level than typical “naturally occurring” affordable housing (NOAH) preservation projects and has the potential to create permanent, sustainable homeownership opportunities for BIPOC communities.

###

The Los Angeles Community Land Trust Coalition is composed of five Community Land Trusts (CLТs) from across LA County. These include: Beverly Vermont CLТ (BVCLТ), El Sereno CLТ (ESCLТ), Tenemos que Reclamar y Unidos Salvar la Tierra-South LA (T.R.U.S.T. South LA), Fideicomiso Comunitario Tierra Libre (FCTL) and Liberty Community Land Trust. The Coalition is committed to the preservation of low-income communities of color by decommodifying housing, promoting education, community empowerment, the conversion of tenants to owners, and making housing a human right.