

Contact: Leslie Morishita
Senior Housing Developer
InterIm Community Development Association
206-624-1802 x19
lmorishita@interimicda.org
www.interimicda.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 1/24/14

PUBLIC-PRIVATE INVESTMENT IN HOUSING WILL REVITALIZE SEATTLE'S JAPANTOWN InterIm Community Development Association Breaks Ground on Hirabayashi Place



Rendering of Hirabayashi Place. Designed by Mithun, to be built at 424 South Main Street (corner at 4th Avenue South).

A public and private investment in affordable housing for working families and individuals will revitalize a historic neighborhood in Seattle's Japantown. Hirabayashi Place, developed by nonprofit community development corporation, InterIm CDA, breaks ground on Saturday, January 25. When completed, 96 apartments, affordable for moderate income workers, and a childcare center, will transform a currently vacant building and parking lot into an active, vital space.

"This housing project fills in an important gap for low/moderate wage individuals and families who want to live and work downtown. It will create housing with long-term affordability in a key location – within walking distance to transit centers, the vibrant and culturally rich International District and other downtown neighborhoods," said Andrea Akita, Acting Executive Director for InterIm CDA.

The \$30 million project will transform a block in Seattle's historic Japantown, (Nihonmachi) and bring much needed affordable housing to this important transit oriented location adjacent to the downtown core. The project is located in the part of the Chinatown/International District known as Nihonmachi.

To honor the history of the neighborhood, and its revitalization and re-emerging cultural identity, InterIm CDA named the project after the late, Gordon Hirabayashi, who was a student at the University of Washington when he courageously defied the mass removal and incarceration of Japanese Americans during WWII. Mr. Hirabayashi was posthumously awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in May of 2013. This is the highest civilian award presented in the United States.

This site and name for the project has additional significance for the local community. When the U.S. Government required incarceration of Japanese Americans living on the west coast during WWII, Nihonmachi was all but emptied. It has never recovered its pre-WWII vigor. "Naming the project after Gordon Hirabayashi brings us full circle. It's a meaningful statement for the community and we are very excited," said Akita.

Financing for the project is made possible through the Seattle Housing Levy - City of Seattle Office of Housing, the Seattle Human Services Department, Washington State Housing Trust Fund, King County Housing and Community Development Program, Impact Capital Enterprise Community Investment, Inc., Washington State Housing Finance Commission, North Lot Development, LLC, and Chase-Community Development Banking.

InterIm CDA has been planning Hirabayashi Place for over 5 years, bringing public and private partners together, and engaging community members to make the project a reality:

- Public art in, on, and around Hirabayashi Place is planned, that will educate the public about and celebrate Gordon Hirabayashi's story and legacy.
- InterIm CDA has established the Gordon Hirabayashi Legacy of Justice Committee, which brings together interested community members, to steward activities and public art at Hirabayashi Place. Represented in the committee are the Japanese American Citizens League, Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Washington, Wing Luke Museum of the Asian Pacific American Experience, Nisei Veterans Committee, University of Washington American Ethnic Studies, and Gordon Hirabayashi family members, among others. The American Civil Liberties Union, who supported Mr. Hirabayashi's Supreme Court case, is interested in supporting the project as well.
- Over 100 volunteers folded the 3,000 origami cranes that now adorn the decrepit vacant building on the project site. They spell out, "STAND UP FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE," in the spirit of Gordon Hirabayashi's courageous stance for justice during WWII.
- High school students participating in InterIm CDA's youth program, Wilderness Inner City Leadership Development (WILD), painted murals inspired by Gordon Hirabayashi's story.

Hirabayashi Place is designed by Mithun and will be built by Marpac Construction. The childcare center on the ground floor will be operated by El Centro de la Raza.

InterIm Community Development Association (InterIm CDA) celebrates the groundbreaking of Hirabayashi Place on Saturday, January 25th, 11am-1pm at the project site at the northeast corner of South Main Street and 4th Avenue South.



Over 100 volunteers folded the 3,000 origami cranes that now adorn the vacant building where Hirabayashi Place will be built. They spell out, “STAND UP FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE,” in the spirit of Gordon Hirabayashi’s courageous stance for justice during WWII. *(Photo by Joann Ware)*

InterIm CDA provides programs and services in the following areas: affordable housing development and direct housing services that help 2,200 individuals each year with housing stability; the Danny Woo Community Garden and Children’s Garden, which serves about 70 elderly gardeners and 265 students each year and involves hundreds of volunteers; and the Wilderness Inner-City Leadership Development (WILD) program that provides leadership development opportunities for youth and elder advocates, focused on environmental and social justice issues. Over 3,000 residents are served through InterIm CDA’s community building activities.

For more info contact: Elizabeth Gray, Director of Resource Development and Marketing;
egray@interimicda.org; 206.624.1802 x31

###

InterIm Community Development Association: InterIm CDA promotes resiliency in Asian, Pacific Islander, immigrant, and refugee communities through culturally and linguistically responsive community building. We are a nonprofit affordable housing and community development organization based in Seattle’s Chinatown/International District. Through its forerunner founded in 1969, InterIm CDA is one of the oldest community development corporations in the nation. Programs include: affordable housing development, housing stability and homelessness prevention, the Danny Woo International District Community Garden, WILD, leadership development for youth and elders, and advocacy and planning that is responsive to our community’s vision.