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South Los Angeles Community Leaders Sign Groundbreaking Community Benefits Agreement for Geoff Palmer's 'Lorenzo Project'

Multimillion Dollar Settlement Agreement Designed to Meet Critical Health Care Needs and Provide Other Benefits to Underserved South Los Angeles Residents

Los Angeles—Community organizations working with United Neighbors in Defense Against Displacement (UNIDAD) announced the signing of a Community Benefits Agreement (CBA) with developer Geoff Palmer for his upcoming 'Lorenzo Project,' to be located on what used to be the North Campus of the Orthopedic Hospital at 23rd St. and Flower.

As part of the Agreement with UNIDAD Coalition Organizations, Palmer has agreed to provide 7,500 square feet in the Project for a community-serving medical clinic that will be rent free for 20 years, providing at least 20,000 patient visits a year for low income and uninsured South LA resident, and to provide operations funding and start-up costs for the clinic. In addition, Palmer has agreed to provide funding for community health promotion, affordable housing creation in South Los Angeles, job training, local small business support, and transit oriented development support for development around the Exposition Line. Palmer has also agreed to implement a local and at-risk jobs hiring program for the Project's construction workers, and a living wage and local hiring program for the Project's permanent workers. "This is an important victory for local families. With this agreement we will again have access to more health services close to our home," said community resident Sandra Matamoros.

This historic agreement is unusual in that it concerns a development to be funded entirely with private funds. It also comes at a time when proposals are being discussed that would grant environmental exemptions for a proposed football stadium at the Convention Center downtown, and on the eve of the city's entitlement process for the USC Master Plan, which includes retail, a hotel, and student housing at the University Village. "It is critical that community residents have a real seat at the decision-making table for development projects to ensure that their voices are being heard and that community residents will benefit from any proposed developments in their neighborhood," said Paulina Gonzalez, Executive Director of SAJE (Strategic Actions for a Just Economy). "We should strive together to build a better city for all its residents. We hope this agreement marks a step in that direction."

Coalition Organizations believe that the benefits provided in the agreement will improve the quality of life for residents in and around South Los Angeles. Based on these community benefits, the Coalition Organizations have withdrawn objections to the Project. "The people of South LA were heard loud and clear with this game-changing CBA. We have an agreement with Palmer that provides South LA residents with health services, jobs, affordable housing, small business development, and TOD planning – all desperately needed in this historically underserved community," said Serena W. Lin, Staff Attorney at Public Counsel, and Malcolm Carson, Managing Attorney for Legal Aid Foundation's South LA office.

Funds from the agreement will be stewarded in partnership with The California Endowment, which has embarked on a new 10-year statewide initiative to improve health outcomes in fourteen key California communities, including South Los Angeles.

"This is exactly the type of collaboration that will result in healthier places to live for California children and families. We applaud the efforts of everyone who worked together towards this agreement," said Charles Fields, regional director for The California Endowment's Building Health Communities plan.

UNIDAD Coalition Organizations include SAJE (Strategic Actions for a Just Economy), Esperanza Community Housing, St. John's Well Child and Family Center, Community Development Technologies Center, PV Jobs, TRUST South LA, St. Francis Center, United University Church, Coalition for Responsible Community Development, and Vermont Village CDC. UNIDAD Coalition organizations were represented by Public Counsel, Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles, Chatten Brown & Carstens, Natural Resources Defense Council and Community Benefits Law Center.