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# L.A. Metro and A Community of Friends Celebrate the Start of Construction of Lorena Plaza Affordable Housing Complex in Boyle Heights

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Dave Sotero November 10, 2022

## Half of all Units Set Aside for Low-Income Veterans

The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) and A Community of Friends, a nonprofit specializing in developing supportive housing, today broke ground on construction of a new affordable housing development called Lorena Plaza located at the intersection of 1st and Lorena Streets in Boyle Heights. Low-income veterans will receive preference for half of all units in the development.

The joint development project, scheduled for completion in 2024, is Metro's latest effort to add critically needed affordable housing to the L.A. region and provide new opportunities for Metro customers to live adjacent to transit in their own communities.

Located next to the L Line (Gold) about a quarter mile from the Indiana Station, the development will be home to a four-story apartment building that will include 49 affordable housing units. This includes a mix of studio, one-, two-, and three-bedroom apartments. It will also feature 7,500 square feet of commercial space. Thirty-two of the 49 apartments will go to unhoused individuals and families, another 16 to low-income families and the remaining unit will go to a resident manager.

Of the 48 apartments to be leased, half will go to veterans who are either unhoused or low-income. In addition to housing, the Lorena Plaza project will also provide supportive services to its tenants.

"The housing crisis in Boyle Heights and throughout Los Angeles is so critical that we need all the tools we can lay our hands on to meet the housing demand," said Glendale City Councilmember and Metro Board Chair Ara J. Najarian. "Lorena Plaza brings us ever closer to realizing Metro's mandate of delivering 5,000 affordable housing units as part of our agency's Joint Development portfolio by 2031. This development is a prime example of innovative thinking and strategic partnerships that are making a real difference for working families in Boyle Heights."

Onsite amenities include a large community room with kitchen that opens into a private, landscaped interior courtyard with outdoor seating. There will also be a barbecue area, play area for children, on-site laundry rooms, offices for case management staff and property manager, bicycle parking, computer room, fitness center and elevators.

"The need for affordable and permanent supportive housing has never been more urgent," said Metro Board Member and L.A. County Supervisor Hilda L. Solis, representing the First District. "Many residents in Boyle Heights are struggling to keep a roof over their heads. By leveraging Metro property for housing and other community benefits, projects like Lorena Plaza and the rest of the Metro Joint Development Program help to provide Angelenos with access to stable, affordable housing and opportunity."

As a part of the original Spanish land grant that established the City of Los Angeles in 1781, Boyle Heights was one of the first neighborhoods to develop outside of Downtown Los Angeles. When Lorena Plaza is completed, it will help the Boyle Heights community maintain its rich history of vibrancy and diversity and help its residents avoid displacement.

"We are proud to be collaborating with Metro on this development that will help address the acute affordability challenges families face throughout Los Angeles, especially for people with special needs," said A Community of Friends President and CEO Dora Leong Gallo. "Lorena Plaza is a prime example of how adding affordable housing options can positively impact Los Angeles neighborhoods by supporting the city's most underserved residents."

Metro's joint development sites are a gateway to the Metro transit system and hold unique potential to advance community development goals while attracting new riders to the Metro system. In June 2021, the Metro Board of Directors adopted an updated Joint Development Policy (<https://www.dropbox.com/s/mpuors403e75o0/JD%20Policy%202021%20FINAL.pdf?dl=0>) with a mandate to build as much affordable housing near transit for those who need it most, as soon as possible.

"This project demonstrates what holistic approaches, strong partnerships and perseverance can achieve. We are grateful to the many members of the community who were involved in making this project a reality," said Metro CEO Stephanie Wiggins. "We are excited to partner with A Community of Friends to bring much-needed affordable housing to Boyle Heights."

In 2022, 300 affordable housing units have begun construction on Metro-owned property. This is in addition to the 2,200 existing units already in Metro's portfolio. Last June, Metro celebrated the groundbreaking of Los Lirios, another Boyle Heights affordable housing development. With the addition of Lorena Plaza, 111 affordable housing units are now under construction in Boyle Heights.

Metro's overall joint development efforts are designed to help reduce auto use and increase transit ridership by directly linking Metro's transportation network with housing, employment, retail and commercial opportunities.

For additional project information, please visit [https://www.metro.net/about/joint\\_dev\\_pgm/](https://www.metro.net/about/joint_dev_pgm/) ([https://www.metro.net/about/joint\\_dev\\_pgm/](https://www.metro.net/about/joint_dev_pgm/)).

### **About Metro**

The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) is building the most ambitious transportation infrastructure program in the United States and is working to greatly improve mobility through its Vision 2028 Plan (<https://www.metro.net/about/metro-vision-2028-plan/>). Metro is the lead transportation planning and funding agency for L.A. County and carries about 800,000 boardings daily on a fleet of 2,200 low-emission buses and six rail lines.

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### **About A Community of Friends**

A Community of Friends (ACOF) has been the leading nonprofit permanent supportive housing developer in Southern California since 1988. Its mission is to end homelessness through the provision of quality permanent supportive housing for people with mental illness. ACOF currently has 43 buildings in its portfolio in Los Angeles and Orange counties, which provide homes for nearly 2500 people, including more than 630 children.

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