



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



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CONTACT:

Mayor's Press Office

312.744.3334

press@cityofchicago.org

**CITY OF CHICAGO AND DEVELOPMENT TEAM BREAK GROUND ON INVEST
SOUTH/WEST DEVELOPMENT IN BACK OF THE YARDS**

United Yards will include new and improved retail spaces, health clinic, brew pub and affordable housing options

CHICAGO — Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot and Ald. Jeanette Taylor joined New City stakeholders today to start construction on United Yards, a \$58M mixed-use project that will revitalize the heart of the Back of the Yards neighborhood. Being developed by Celadon Blackwood Limited Partnership through the Mayor's INVEST South/West initiative, the project includes multiple new and rehabilitated commercial and residential buildings near the 47th and Ashland intersection.

"This groundbreaking marks yet another milestone in our INVEST South/West journey to revitalize our underserved neighborhoods," Mayor Lightfoot said. "The economic activity, job opportunities, health care, and housing options that United Yards is bringing to New City will catalyze future investment in the surrounding community for years to come. I've been proud to work with my team and deliver these kinds of transformative projects across the South and West sides over the last four years."

United Yards' \$17.9M first phase includes the adaptive re-use of a former Goldblatt's showroom at 4700 S. Ashland Ave. as a 15,000-square-foot, federally qualified health center, which will provide primary care services, regardless of a patient's ability to pay. Approximately 7,200 square feet will be used as retail space for La Selva Apparel Company, Back of the Yards Coffee, Back of the Yards Barbershop, and Aracely's Bakery.

The first phase also includes construction of a 6,500-square-foot building at 1641 W. 47th St. that will be anchored by Somos Monos Cerveceria.

Made possible by \$5M in Tax Increment Financing by the Department of Planning and Development (DPD), United Yards' first phase is expected to generate 40 permanent full-time jobs.



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“In addition to serving the area’s health care needs, this investment will provide opportunities for neighborhood residents to shop, convene, and enjoy their neighborhood,” DPD Commissioner Maurice Cox said.

The project’s \$40M second phase includes a 51-unit affordable apartment building with a 7,000-square-foot technology training center for minority entrepreneurs at 1515 W. 47th St., and a pair of affordable three-flats at 4706-08 S. Marshfield Ave. All phase two residential units will be affordable for tenants earning up to 60% of the area median income.

Initial work on both of United Yards’ first two phases is underway and expected to be completed by the end of 2024.

United Yards’ third phase will include the mixed-use rehabilitation of the three-story “Rainbow” commercial building at 4701 S. Ashland Ave.

“On behalf of the residents of the 20th Ward, neighbors in Back of the Yards and New City, I am excited to see United Yards come to fruition as the project begins to fulfill a need for more affordable housing and increases employment opportunities for 20th Ward residents,” Ald. Jeanette Taylor said (20th). “This project also provides future INVEST South/West projects with a viable template for community-driven development that can be replicated across the rest of the city. Although it wasn’t always easy, I appreciate the United Yards and Back of the Yards team and the Department of Planning and Development’s efforts to adapt our Ward’s development process and include residents’ voices in the pre-development stages of this project.”

United Yards was announced by Mayor Lightfoot in August 2021 as the winning response to a DPD Request for Proposals. It is among the largest community-led, mixed-use projects moving forward through the INVEST South/West initiative, which is coordinating more than \$2.2B in public and private investments across the South and West sides.

“The input gained from our partners and neighbors through the community engagement process was essential to coming up with this innovative development,” Celadon Partners principal Aron Weisner said. “The City of Chicago and Ald. Taylor provided essential support to develop the community vision for affordable housing and locally owned small businesses. We are very excited about our partnership with Back of the Yards Works and thrilled that they will be open for business by the end of the year.”



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“Growing up in Back of the Yards and shopping at the old Goldblatts department store on the once thriving 47th and Ashland business corridor, never in my wildest dreams would I have imagined having the opportunity to redevelop the building where Goldblatts once stood and help revitalize our neighborhood’s economic hub,” added Back of the Yards Coffee founder Jesse Iniguez. “What makes this much more special is that we are doing this by supporting other locally owned, minority-owned and woman-owned businesses with meaningful living wage jobs.”

“The United Yards development will ultimately include over 100 units of affordable housing, as well as over 50,000 square feet of retail and community facilities and public art installations,” said Jose Duarte, principal at Blackwood Group.

“DesignBridge Architects created the visionary design in collaboration with AP Monarch, the design firm for the Back of the Yards Works program. We are very proud of our diverse team and will continue to maximize minority participation at every level.”

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About Blackwood Group, LLC

Blackwood Group LLC, founded in 2007, is a Chicago-based, full service general contractor and developer. Blackwood Group, with over 200 projects executed in Chicago since its inception, is highly experienced and active in the multifamily, affordable, non-for-profit, and commercial retail space. Blackwood group is also an MBE certified company.

About Celadon Partners, LLC

Celadon Partners is an experienced developer of affordable housing in the City of Chicago and nationally. Celadon and its owners have completed more than 2,000 units of affordable housing nationally. Owned and operated by Scott Henry and Aron Weisner, Celadon specializes in unique, transformational community redevelopment properties in close partnership with the communities the properties serve.

About Back of the Yards Coffee

Back of the Yards Coffee Co. is a Latinx owned coffee company headquartered in the South Side of Chicago. We strive to honor the immigrant working class tradition of the Chicago Stockyards through our mission that we refer to as our SEED, which stands for social impact, economic development, environmental responsibility, and direct relations. Everything we do, from where we source our coffee, to choosing our packaging, to where we are located and to the people we hire, is guided by these four principles. Our goal is to eliminate coffee deserts, particularly in Latinx communities, and change the way people understand and experience coffee.



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About DesignBridge Architects

DesignBridge is an award winning, diversified collaborative of Architects and Designers based in Chicago. With a nearly 40-year history, DesignBridge has led the design of over 2,000 units of housing within residential and mixed-use projects and brings extensive experience in community development and rehabilitation work throughout Chicago's diverse communities. Deeply connected to the social responsibility of each project opportunity, DesignBridge seeks thoughtful, sustainable solutions inspired by community, context, history, and culture to maximize catalytic impact. DesignBridge is also an MBE certified company.