



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 29, 2024

Contact: Tenaya Senzaki
Marketing & Communications Manager
213-473-1642
tsenzaki@LTSC.org

Jamie Coker-Robertson
JCR Public Relations for GFBNEC
310-804-1408
jcrpublicrelations@gmail.com

Groundbreaking Ceremony for Go For Broke Plaza & First Street North Residences Launches Construction of New Mixed-Use Development in Little Tokyo

LOS ANGELES – Little Tokyo Service Center (LTSC) and Go For Broke National Education Center (GFBNEC) held a groundbreaking ceremony on February 13, 2024 to celebrate the start of construction of Go For Broke Plaza & First Street North Residences, a mixed-use development and one of the City of LA’s largest 100% affordable housing developments, located in the historic Little Tokyo district in downtown Los Angeles. This transformative project is slated for completion by the end of 2026.

As Little Tokyo celebrates its 140th anniversary, now the largest of only four remaining “Japantowns” in the U.S., this project meaningfully reclaims land the neighborhood lost to the City by eminent domain during the Urban Renewal period of the 1950s (and has since sat vacant). Located mere yards away from a major assembly point for WWII incarceration camps, this project both honors the community’s unique history and creates a significant foothold for the sustainability of Little Tokyo’s future.

“It’s appropriate that we break ground this year, the 140th anniversary of Little Tokyo, to help realize the community’s vision for its future and usher in the next 140 years. This project is the result of years of visioning by countless stakeholders imagining how this block can be reclaimed for Little Tokyo and developed for the community’s benefit,” said Erich Nakano, Executive Director of Little Tokyo Service Center.

This 100% affordable, mixed-use, transit-oriented development will create an unprecedented 248 affordable units, with 80 permanent supportive housing units including 63 units for homeless veterans. Intensive case management and on-site services will be available to residents to increase their self-sufficiency, financial capability and long-term stability. Residential units consist of a mix of 76 studios, 43 one bedrooms, 60 two bedrooms, 66 three bedrooms, and 3 manager’s units.

The ground floor along Jackson Street will feature approximately 40,000 square feet of retail space, prioritizing community-serving commercial spaces for Little Tokyo legacy small

businesses including 120+ year old Fugetsu-do Confectionary, Suehiro Cafe, and other longtime establishments. With nearly one third of local businesses closing during the COVID-19 pandemic, and six just in 2023, a key component of this project is preserving legacy small businesses crucial to the neighborhood's cultural identity.

The courtyard creates urban green space and pedestrian linkages connecting major landmarks in the neighborhood. It will also incorporate the existing Go For Broke Monument, which pays tribute to the WWII American veterans of Japanese ancestry who fought in the famed 100th/442nd Regimental Combat Team and the Military Intelligence Service. 'Go for Broke', a Hawaiian phrase meaning "to give it your all," was the regiment's motto. The ground floor will include the permanent home for GFBNEC, a community-based nonprofit organization and LTSC's partner on the project.

"The Go For Broke Plaza is the fulfillment of the bold vision by our founding veterans who wanted to ensure that their Go For Broke spirit and legacy is forever remembered as an important American story. Through their successful efforts to secure a lease from the City of LA to build the Go For Broke Monument, we will now be able expand our current programming and inspire multi-cultural and intergenerational audiences from across the nation," said Mitchell T. Maki, President and CEO of Go For Broke National Education Center.

The groundbreaking ceremony featured speeches from LTSC staff as well as partners, funders and elected officials integral to the project's success. Over 200 guests attended the special occasion. Located at 232 Judge John Aiso St., Los Angeles, CA 90012, the 380,000 square-foot project occupies about 2.5 acres of municipal parking land.

"The innovation and all the different ways that LTSC is showing up to address the community is inspiring and it's why I do this work," said Jenna Hornstock, Deputy Mayor of Housing for the City of L.A.

"When LTSC thought they could go bigger, if they had more land, we spearheaded that drive to expand their lease and triple the number of units the project could produce," said Los Angeles City Councilmember Kevin De León.

"[LTSC] is about neighborhood building and neighborhood rebuilding, particularly with this location. I think, too often in this work we get caught up in the transactions that we do, and we sometimes forget the big picture of the neighborhoods and the city that is being made from those neighborhoods," said Thomas De Simone, President and CEO of Genesis LA.

"We're committed to continuing investing in our California communities to help drive meaningful change. We believe everyone deserves a place to call home, and that is now going to be the reality for 248 more individuals and families in Downtown Los Angeles," said Lisa Gutierrez, Senior Vice President of Affordable Housing for U.S. Bancorp Impact Finance.

###

ABOUT LTSC

For over 40 years, Little Tokyo Service Center (LTSC) has provided a safety net of social welfare and community development services to empower people and communities in need. Starting with its home in Little Tokyo, LTSC preserves and strengthens the unique ethnic communities of the Southern California region where people, culture and collective future matter. www.ltsc.org

ABOUT GFBNEC

Go For Broke National Education Center (GFBNEC) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that educates the public on the valor of Japanese American soldiers of WWII and their contributions to democracy. Our goal is to inspire new generations to embody the veterans' core values of courage, sacrifice, equality, humility and patriotism. Founded in 1989, GFBNEC maintains the Go For Broke Monument and the interactive *Defining Courage* exhibit in downtown Los Angeles, as well as extensive oral histories and archives, education and training programs and other initiatives. For more information, visit www.goforbroke.org.