



NEWS RELEASE

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East Harlem El Barrio Community Land Trust locks in permanent affordability for 36 El Barrio homes in the face of looming COVID-19 eviction crisis

City transfers four properties to East Harlem El Barrio Community Land Trust to preserve them as permanently affordable, community-controlled housing

NEW YORK, NY — The East Harlem El Barrio Community Land Trust (CLT) and developer partners [Banana Kelly Community Improvement Association](#) and [Community Assisted Tenant-Controlled Housing](#) (CATCH) closed today on their first preservation project to convert four city-owned multi-family buildings in East and Central Harlem into permanently affordable, community-controlled housing. The NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development transferred the properties to the East Harlem El Barrio CLT for \$1 each. The City will also provide \$13.4 million in low-cost loans and capital grants to finance building rehabilitations.

"CLTs are a critical part of the solution to our city's affordability crisis," said **Council Member Diana Ayala, who represents District 8 in East Harlem and the South Bronx**. "After supporting the development of the East Harlem El Barrio CLT, I am thrilled to see them take this important step toward preserving community-controlled, deeply affordable housing in East Harlem for generations to come."

East Harlem El Barrio CLT will guarantee permanent affordability and community control via a shared ownership structure. The East Harlem El Barrio CLT will own and steward the

land, ensuring it is used to meet community needs in perpetuity. Banana Kelly and CATCH will rehabilitate the properties, and form a tenant-run Mutual Housing Association that will own and manage the buildings on the CLT's land. Of the 36 apartments, 14 will be affordable to tenants earning 35% Area Median Income (AMI) and 18 will be affordable to tenants earning 100% AMI. The remaining four units will be reserved for people experiencing homelessness. In addition to 36 homes, the project includes three community and commercial spaces, which will prioritize local, community-serving businesses.

Years in the making, the closing represents a significant milestone for New York City's [growing CLT movement](#). East-Harlem El Barrio CLT formed in 2014 as a demonstration project of the [NYC Community Land Initiative](#), with organizing support from [Picture the Homeless](#). The CLT received additional support from the New York State Attorney General and Enterprise Community Partners' [2017 CLT Initiative](#), and completed an intensive two-year capacity building initiative called the CLT Learning Exchange. With over a dozen CLTs established or in formation citywide, East Harlem El Barrio CLT is the first new CLT to acquire city-owned land in recent years. The acquisition also comes on the heels of recent victories for CLTs citywide, including [City Council funding](#) in the city's FY 2020 and FY 2021 budgets, and Mayor de Blasio's [announcement](#) to support the development of 3,000 CLT homes.

"As this project advances, we tend to the roots of a stable, affordable housing ecosystem in Harlem, one which honors the human right to good quality housing," said **Athena Bernkopf, EHEBCLT Project Coordinator**. "Securing these plots of land, and protecting the long-term affordability of the buildings on them, is the labor and dreams of many, coming to fruition. Now, we continue building out the infrastructure for truly community-led stewardship of our homes and the land we live on."

"Enterprise was proud to support the East Harlem El Barrio CLT through our Community Land Trust Initiative and CLT Learning Exchange to help develop nascent CLTs," said **Judi Kende, Vice President and New York Market Leader for Enterprise Community Partners**. "East Harlem El Barrio CLT will provide critically needed affordable housing, and offers a model for how community-owned housing can operate in New York City."

"We congratulate the East Harlem-El Barrio Community Land Trust on taking this major step forward," said **John Krinsky, board member of the NYC Community Land Initiative, an alliance that helped plan and launch the CLT in 2013**. "Over seven years of tireless organizing, East Harlem-El Barrio has broken new ground and inspired more than a dozen CLT efforts around the city. Today's closing represents the beginning of a new future for accountable, community-based housing and land stewardship in East Harlem and the city as a whole."

"This victory is due to the tireless efforts of tenants, homeless folks, organizers, and mission-driven, nonprofit developers," said **Ryan Hickey, Project Director at Cooper Square CLT on Manhattan's Lower East Side**. "Thanks to years of hard work and grassroots organizing, the East Harlem El Barrio CLT is one step closer to bringing permanently affordable units to East Harlem and ensuring displaced tenants find their way back home. We are honored to be in this fight with them!"

East Harlem El Barrio CLT hopes this successful closing will deepen city support for CLTs and propel their expansion citywide, to stem further displacement of Black and brown communities, provide permanent housing for homeless New Yorkers, and promote a just recovery from COVID-19.

About

The East-Harlem El Barrio Community Land Trust works to fight the root causes of displacement and homelessness; develop and preserve permanently affordable housing, commercial, green, and cultural space; and promote self-determination in East and Central Harlem.