Equitable Development Symposium Recaps

QUALITIES OF AN EQUITABLE DEVELOPER

At the 2022 Equitable Development Symposium, **JAMES GARRETT JR,** Managing Partner and Architect at 4RM+ULA in Minneapolis, and **WYKING GARRETT,** President and CEO at Africatown Community Land Trust in Seattle, shared their strategies around designing and developing with equity at the center of the process and community as the primary beneficiary — in the short and long term.

Never assume what a community wants or needs. Engage directly with community members to co-create a framework for development that goes beyond a single project and identifies long-term aspirations and values.

Reflect deeply on how much of the economic opportunity is being realized by community members. How can the asset build community wealth over the long-term? Are there avenues for shared or collective ownership?

Everyone, without exception, deserves to live and work in spaces that are healthy, safe and beautiful. Center the dignity of residents and users at every choice point to create spaces that cultivate wellbeing.

START FROM COMMUNITY VISION

SLOW DOWN

REFLECT ON OWNERSHIP MODELS

DESIGN FOR THE END USER

PRIORITIZE DIGNITY

WYKING GARRETT

Recognize when maximizing profit or uninterrogated urgency are driving a timeline that outpaces authentic collaboration with community members. Move at the speed of trust to ensure decision-making includes those most impacted.

Remember that the true client isn't the funder but the community members who will live in the housing or business owners who will operate in the space. Make decisions with their comfort, joy and sustainability as the bottom line.

JAMES GARRETT JR

AFRICATOWN PLAZA

"We came up with frameworks around selecting tenants — both residential and commercial — with priority to those who had been displaced, whose families had endured decades of the redlining, urban renewal and other government and private sector collaborations that marginalized our communities." Wyking Garrett, Africatown CLT

Africatown Plaza will include 126 new affordable homes designed to restore Black and Pan-African communities that have been displaced from the Central District of Seattle. By engaging the community in a series of conversations and workshops, the Plaza's design goals focus on uniting the community through Afrocentric inspired spaces for events, connection, and storytelling. The building's design weaves together Afrocentric textures, symbols, patterns, and shapes to create flexible spaces that adapt to the community's changing needs. Beyond housing, the 7-story building will include a community room, office, retail spaces, and open plazas for community and resident use.

"We see Africatown CLT as a vehicle or a vessel to hold the beauty, the brilliance and the best of the Black diaspora experience and allow that to be the inspiration for the community to grow and thrive in place," Garrett said.

GREAT RIVER LANDING

"This project was for men that have been homeless or at risk of homelessness due to prior incarceration, and many were in a program learning how to deconstruct buildings. So, in the design, we integrated wood in the main lobby that came out of buildings that the men had literally deconstructed themselves. Even though it cost a little bit more, it showed them that what they're doing is important and that their spaces can be beautiful and meaningful." James Garrett, 4RM + ULA

The Great River Landing project is a prime example of creating value through purposeful design. More than a housing development for 72 adult men, it was created as a place of stability for people committed to positive change after recovering from the traumas of unemployment, homelessness, and incarceration. As Garrett pointed out, intentional steps were taken to integrate healing, including meditation spaces for prayer and de-escalation; windows that open so men have agency and access to fresh air; and vibrant colors throughout the building.

"Sometimes equitable development is advocating for things that are more humane," Garrett emphasized. "Integrating art. Integrating technology. Integrating children and families in places that are usually not considered for that."

Learn more about the Equitable Development Principles & Scorecard and access more resources from the symposium at
theallliancetc.org/equitable-development-scorecard