
AFRICATOWN SEEKING TO BRING BLACK BUSINESSES TO MIDTOWN CENTER

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The Africatown Renaissance is a real thing. From housing to art, community awareness and involvement and education there is a renaissance in motion, which harkens back to Harlem exactly one century ago a growth reflecting the Black Wall streets of Rosewood, Florida and Tulsa, Oklahoma also a century ago and a vigor for education-in-action reminiscent of the great works of Dr. Maxine Mimms campaign to deliver The Evergreen State College-Tacoma to the historical Hilltop Neighborhood.

Along with the renaissance of active community members and organizations providing space and access in Africatown, there is more and there is a plan for even more than already exists. Black businesses are re-emerging in Africatown, some old and some new, but either way these companies are leading the way and setting an example for opportunities just beyond the horizon. These businesses are creating a burgeoning Black business area in Seattle's Central District.

Theres a new development on Martin Luther King Jr. Way and Union that already has four new Black businesses over the past year, says Wyking Garrett, CEO of The Africatown Community Land Trust. Were bringing three to the Liberty Bank Building (Earls Cuts and Styles, Caf Avole and a catering/restaurant) and then theres a coffee shop in the middle, which makes a great business strip. The emerging businesses present not only a powerful and visible social and shopping presence in Africatown,

but an economic one as well. With more businesses come more jobs and opportunity for community investment and growth.

With eight businesses on the horizon by the end of the year, like a boutique, The Postman (a mailing company) and Cheese Platters you'll be able to take an hour and visit businesses in the Black community, with lounges, cafes and shops," says Garrett. Black businesses should be able to capitalize on the growth of the community. Especially, within the Liberty Bank Building and the forthcoming Africatown Plaza across the street. Each building will house hundreds of living units with commercial space within the structures. That means a captive audience of consumers, which Garrett and any other economist will conclude as a prime opportunity to conduct good business.

This is part of the vision for our future the positive side is this, despite whatever else is going on," says Garrett. Africatown is pushing forth the vision, helping develop the vision and making sure that the community interests are at the center of the vision. This unique effort and synergy is a culmination of years of building community cohesion among residents, community members, entrepreneurs, business owners, government officials and most importantly those who are motivated to work together for a sustainable and noticeable community gain. The gains are expected to increase with the construction of Africatown Plaza on the way and additional open business spaces on or near Union Avenue.

If you are a business owner and are interested in commercial retail space in the Central District - Please contact Mr. Curtiss Calhoun of Black Dot at curtissapda@gmail.com