

# Catholic Archdiocese of Seattle and St. James Cathedral Embrace Sustainability for First Hill Property Redevelopment

Westbank and Creative Energy partner to develop carbon-neutral community on First Hill

SEATTLE, March 29, 2022 – Today, the [Archdiocese of Seattle](#) and [St. James Cathedral](#) announced plans to sell and redevelop four properties on First Hill with [Westbank](#), a global developer recognized for its long-term commitment to sustainable building. The vision is to create an inspiring carbon-neutral community that enhances the future of the First Hill neighborhood, while also supporting the continued mission of the Catholic Church.

“Creatively thinking about how we can better use our properties to achieve the mission of the Church is exactly what we need to do as good stewards of God’s gifts,” said Archbishop Paul D. Etienne. “Redeveloping our real estate in a very efficient and sustainable way not only reflects our Catholic value of caring for our common home, but also provides us with resources to carry out our greater mission of bringing Christ to others. This significant project is an investment in the First Hill community and in our future, ensuring we can continue the good work of the Catholic Church.”

The Archdiocese of Seattle and St. James Cathedral will sell four properties for development including St. James Cathedral’s Pastoral Outreach Center at 907 Columbia Street and the Archdiocese of Seattle’s buildings at 710 Ninth Avenue (Paul Pigott Building), 907 Terry Avenue (old Chancery Building), and 1104 Spring Street (Connolly House). As part of the agreement with Westbank, the historic Connolly House will be preserved.

## Commitment to the Environment

As announced in 2021, Westbank and its affiliate [Creative Energy](#) have partnered with [Swedish Health Services on First Hill](#) in Seattle. Swedish—an affiliate of [Providence Health](#)—is working with Creative Energy to modernize its campus infrastructure. As part of this project, Swedish will be able to divert excess heat from its First Hill Campus to an energy sharing platform. Through this platform, Swedish will be able to share excess heat, which becomes a source of heating for other buildings connected to the platform, dramatically reducing the overall carbon footprint of the neighborhood. This infrastructure investment is part of the commitment Swedish and Providence have made to be [carbon negative by 2030](#).

As part of the redevelopment of the older Archdiocesan and St. James Pastoral Outreach Center buildings, Westbank plans to create upwards of 1,300 residential homes across the housing continuum, connected to the district energy system.

“It’s a pleasure to be working with our partners at the Archdiocese of Seattle, to realize our shared vision for First Hill,” said Westbank founder Ian Gillespie. “Our initiative will create low-carbon housing, infrastructure and amenities that will serve Seattle for generations to come. We’re looking forward to continuing our work with the Archdiocese of Seattle and the team at Swedish Health Services, to not only contribute to the long-term vitality of this community but help First Hill significantly reduce its carbon footprint and demonstrate leadership globally in responding to climate change.”

“Recognizing all of nature as the handiwork of God, Pope Francis calls us to do all we can to protect the earth from further destruction,” said Archbishop Etienne. “Minimizing our impact on the earth is our responsibility as Catholics. Working with sustainability experts like Westbank and Creative Energy will ensure that the redevelopment uses green building techniques, processes and materials, while alleviating future environmental impacts with the district energy plan.”

### **Archdiocesan offices and St. James Pastoral Outreach Center**

“We are grateful for this opportunity to collaborate with our partners to help shape the future of First Hill,” said Father Michael G. Ryan, pastor of St. James Cathedral since 1988. “This redevelopment will allow us to improve our office and gathering spaces, while greatly enhancing our ability to carry out our mission of worship and service. We are committed to being good stewards of our resources. St. James has been part of the history of First Hill since 1905, and we are excited to be part of shaping the First Hill of the future and ensuring that St. James Cathedral, as well as neighboring O’Dea High School, remain at its heart.”

The archdiocese will identify a new consolidated office location for its 125 employees and St. James Cathedral will relocate the offices and meeting areas currently housed in the Pastoral Outreach Center.

“Currently we have our employees in four separate buildings, which is not only costly to maintain, but also inefficient and an impediment to collaboration among archdiocesan staff,” said Joe Schick, CFO for the Archdiocese of Seattle. “Our plan is to merge all employees into one efficient office building, which reduces operational expenses, while providing a better experience for employees and visitors. This is a great example of our recently announced Catholic Real Estate Initiative in action.”

### **Supporting Housing Affordability**

The planned redevelopment has the potential to generate over \$25 million for the City of Seattle’s Mandatory Housing Affordability fund, which the city will allocate to build housing. This money will be made available to low-income and affordable housing builders, such as [Catholic Housing Services](#) (CHS), one of the largest providers of low-income and affordable housing in the city, which already operates two buildings on First Hill: Cathedral Place Apartments and Ozanam House.

For more information about the First Hill redevelopment, please visit <https://firsthill-seattle.com/>.

### **About the Archdiocese of Seattle**

The Archdiocese of Seattle encompasses all of Western Washington, stretching from Canada to Oregon and from the Cascade Mountains to the Pacific Ocean. There are 72 Catholic Schools, 174 parishes, missions and pastoral centers in the archdiocese, with more than 500 weekly Masses celebrated in eight languages. Archbishop Paul D. Etienne leads the archdiocese with his auxiliary bishops, Bishop Eusebio Elizondo and Bishop-elect Frank Schuster. For more information about the Archdiocese of Seattle, please visit [www.archseattle.org](http://www.archseattle.org).

### **About St. James Cathedral**

St. James Cathedral is the cathedral church for the Catholic Archdiocese of Seattle and its archbishop, the Most Reverend Paul D. Etienne. Dedicated in December 1907, the beautiful Italian Renaissance-style cathedral is not only a gathering place for the entire Archdiocese of Seattle and the wider Seattle community, it is also the parish home for 2,400 households. The cathedral is noted not only for its beautiful liturgies and its extraordinary music program, but also for its extensive outreach to the poor and needy. To find out more, visit [www.stjames-cathedral.org](http://www.stjames-cathedral.org).

### **About Westbank**

Westbank is a leading real estate development practice in North America. Active across Canada, in the United States and in Tokyo, their projects include residential, hotels, retail, workspace, rental, district energy, affordable housing, public art and net zero carbon development. Westbank fundamentally believes that the solutions to our greatest challenges can be found in helping our cities live up to their full potential. They look for every opportunity to help build healthier, more resilient communities, in collaboration with global creative talent. One of the largest net zero carbon developers in the world, they are actively expanding their low-carbon district energy network in cities across North America. Westbank is based in Vancouver, with offices in Toronto, Hong Kong, Seattle, San Jose and Tokyo, and over \$50 billion of projects completed or under development.

[www.westbankcorp.com](http://www.westbankcorp.com)

### **About Creative Energy**

Creative Energy is one of North America's largest district energy providers and the owner and operator of one of the largest district energy systems on the continent. Based in Vancouver, they have been supplying low-cost community energy with 99.9% reliability to the city's downtown core for over 50 years, with a plant connected to a network of over 15 kilometers (9 miles) of pipes, heating over 215 buildings and 45

million square feet of space. Since 2014, Creative Energy has been expanding its network across Canada and the U.S., with a mission to help instigate significant reductions in the greenhouse gas emissions of the cities in which they operate.

<https://creative.energy>

### **About Swedish Health Services**

Founded in 1910, Swedish is one of the largest not-for-profit health care systems in the Greater Seattle area. It is comprised of five hospital campuses (First Hill, Cherry Hill, Ballard, Edmonds and Issaquah); ambulatory care centers in Redmond and Mill Creek; and a network of more than 115 primary care and specialty-care clinics located throughout the Greater Puget Sound area. Swedish is known as a regional referral center, providing specialized treatment in areas such as cardiovascular care, cancer care, neuroscience, orthopedics, high-risk obstetrics, pediatric specialties, organ transplantation and clinical research. In 2020, Swedish provided \$258 million in community benefit programs, including \$30 million in free and discounted care in Western Washington.

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