

August 2022

Applegators Visit the Historic Pullman Neighborhood

Through the firm’s annual “Bus Tour”, Applegate & Thorne-Thomsen has made a concerted effort to visit some of the projects and sites worked on throughout their 24 years of work in affordable housing and community development. With COVID safety precautions cancelling plans, this year’s annual site tour was two years in the making and was worth every second of the wait.

Eric Mittereder, a partner that has been with Applegate since 2012 and that organized the tour, provided some insight as to the significance of visiting the historic Pullman neighborhood this year:



"Pullman is a terrific example of the impact that can be achieved with focused and sustained investment in a single community over more than a decade, buy-in from local government, and a strong guiding organization like Chicago Neighborhood Initiatives (CNI). This community includes a cross-section of reinvestments in affordable housing, access to food and other resources, and businesses creating quality jobs. Applegate has represented CNI and others on many projects in Pullman using a variety of important programs for community investment, such as the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit and the New Markets Tax Credit. This latest period of investment can also be put into the context of Pullman's rich history and special place in the American labor movement. "

-Eric Mittereder



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First Stop: Chicago Neighborhood Initiatives

A group of 37 “Applegators” boarded a bus from their offices at 425 S. Financial Place on a Friday morning at the end of August and headed about fifteen miles south to the historic Pullman neighborhood. The tour started with a stop at the offices of Chicago Neighborhood Initiatives (CNI).



Our friends, collaborators and clients, Jenn Bransfield, COO and General Counsel of CNI, and David Doig, President of CNI, gave an enlightening and thought-framing introduction to the history of the Pullman neighborhood and all the work that CNI has done in Pullman and beyond.

First Stop: Chicago Neighborhood Initiatives



With expansive views from the top floor office at the US Bank building, the group was able to see some familiar projects including: the retail center anchored by Walmart (featuring a green rooftop), the Pullman Community Center, and the Whole Foods distribution center. Not visible from the office, but other familiar projects on the site include the new Culver's outpost and the 111th Street retail center. Many of the projects in view were NMTC financings on which Applegate represented CNI and other impactful clients such as Southside Community Optimal Redevelopment Enterprise (SCORE). Through these developments and their work in the neighborhood, CNI has seen a 47% increase in the number of jobs in the community, attracted \$370 million in investment and created more than 600 construction jobs and 1,500 permanent jobs (<https://www.cnigroup.org/pullman-revitalization/>).

Second Stop: U.S. Bank Pullman Community Center

After re-boarding the bus, the group traveled a few short minutes to the U.S. Bank Pullman Community Center (PCC). Kristin Curtis, the General Manager of PCC, gave a tour of the 135,000 square foot recreation center complete with three turf fields, three hardwood courts, three classrooms, four batting cages, a sports bar and concession stands. Applegate & Thorne-Thomsen Managing Partner, Debbie Kleban, worked on the New Market Tax Credits (NMTCs) that were so important in the financing of the \$20 million center. Debbie spoke about her experience visiting the center:



“I feel so fortunate to have played a small part in development of this incredible center for kids in and around Pullman and Roseland! The excitement of the students who attended the groundbreaking and grand opening was a reminder of how impactful one project can be.” -Debbie Kleban

Third Stop: Lexington Betty Smokehouse

By that time, it was approaching noon and the Applegators were ready for lunch. They boarded the bus and drove back towards the US Bank Building to Lexington Betty Smokehouse for some barbecue.

The restaurant space at 756 E. 111th St., was previously a food hall created as an incubation hub for Black restauranteurs developed by CNI using NMTC financing. Debbie and Eric represented CNI's development team and microfinance group on this \$9 million development, which brought access to dining and lunch options to the area. When the food hall's two other occupants left, CNI asked chef and owner Dominique Leach if she would like to take over the entire space.

After finishing up their delicious meal the Applegators were paid a surprise visit by Alderman Anthony Beale of the 9th Ward. Chicago's 9th Ward encompasses Chatham, Pullman, Riverdale, Roseland, Washington Heights, and West Pullman. Alderman Beale himself is from Pullman and spoke to the group about the importance of partnerships, community, and investment when it comes to creating a thriving neighborhood.



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Fourth Stop: Pullman Artspace Lofts



The group hopped back on the bus and headed to the Pullman Artspace Lofts. The Artspace Lofts are a mixed-use affordable living and working space, specifically for artists and their families. Situated on a beautiful, tree-lined block, the newer loft buildings are book-marked by two 19th century buildings. The Applegators were welcomed by Kimberly Moore, the Director of Asset Management at Artspace, before entering the gallery space on the first floor. The gallery currently featured exhibits by local Pullman artists. Nicole Jackson, a partner at Applegate & Thorne-Thomsen as well as a CNI board member, worked on the \$18 million development using LIHTC and other resources. Nicole provided some insight into the unique development:

Fourth Stop: Pullman Artspace Lofts

“Pullman Artspace is a testament to partnership and perseverance . . . the tenacity of CNI, Pullman Arts and Artspace to bring forth this needed affordable housing for artists in the beautiful, historic Pullman community. By combining a variety of public and private sources, they successfully brought it over the finish line after overcoming a few obstacles along the way, to rave reviews from the neighborhood and the affordable housing community. We were fortunate to assist in helping them navigate the financing for this project to get the deal closed.”





After viewing the gallery, the group was able to tour a vacant residential space before heading outside for a walking tour of the neighborhood. The walk was led by longtime Pullman resident and former president of the Historic Pullman Foundation, Mike Shymanski. Mike lead the group past many Pullman landmarks within a few block radius: the Greenstone Church, the Market Square, Hotel Florence and ended his portion of the tour at a project of which he is the organizer: the Pullman House Project. A Welcome Center is being developed at One Florence Boulevard (605 East 111th Street) and the Applegators got a behind the scenes peek at the renovations currently taking place.



Fifth Stop: Pullman National Monument

The group headed to the last stop on the tour which was just a quick walk across the street to the Pullman National Monument. The National Monument was designated by President Barack Obama in 2015. The Applegators perused the exhibits within the Visitor Center which is housed in the beautiful Administration Clock Tower Building. After learning about the history of the Pullman Company and its significance in American history, labor rights, civil rights and urban planning, the Applegators were given a tour of the entire National Monument site by two of the National Park Service rangers.



"At Applegate we spend long hours working on legal documents and technical structures, in order to assist our clients in the important work they do in their communities. Our day in Pullman with CNI was an opportunity for our employees to connect that work back to the mission of our firm, to experience the impact in one of the communities where we work, and to spend time with many inspirational people working hard to strengthen that community."

- Eric Mittereder

"What the small, but mighty, team at CNI has demonstrated is that commitment and focus on a particular community and its articulated needs can result in truly transformative development." - Debbie Kleban



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Thank You!

Applegate & Thorne-Thomsen would like to thank the following people for their integral part in a successful tour this year:

Jenn Bransfield and Dave Doig at
CNI

Kristin Curtis at PCC

Chef Dominique Leach and the
entire staff at Lexington Betty
Smokehouse

Alderman Anthony Beale for his
heartfelt words

Kimberly Moore and all of the
artists at ArtSpace Lofts

Mike Shymanski

The entire team of rangers at the
Pullman National Monument

Eddie T. from CharterUp