Ernesto Espinoza has spent his career advocating for social and economic justice for low-income communities, working for the United Farm Workers Union and the Chavez Foundation developing affordable housing. In 2007, he joined East LA Community Corporation, starting as a Senior Project Manager before transitioning to Director of Real Estate Development. Ernesto is a graduate of the University of California at Berkeley, where he earned a BA in Architecture.

ELACC is a non-profit community development corporation based in Boyle Heights, Los Angeles. The mission of the organization is to advocate for economic and social justice in Boyle Heights and Unincorporated East Los Angeles by building affordable housing, grassroots leadership, self-sufficiency, and access to economic development opportunities for low and moderate income families. Since 1995, ELACC has completed 87 single family homes and 473 rental units. 183 units are in construction and 156 units are in predevelopment.
**PROJECT INFORMATION**

**DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**
- ☑ New Construction
- ☐ Rehabilitation/Preservation
- ☐ Adaptive Reuse
- ☐ Scattered Site Infill

**HOUSING TYPOLOGY**
- ☑ Multi-Family (Mid-High Rise)
- ☐ Multi-Family (Townhouse)
- ☐ Single Family
- ☐ Single-Room Occupancy/Supportive Housing
- ☐ Senior Housing
- ☐ Tribal/Native American
- ☐ Workforce Housing

**RESIDENTIAL UNIT INFORMATION**
- Number of Units: 50 (35 additional with Phase II)
- > 6 story affordable (30-50%AMI), mixed-use building
  - 30 1BR, 4 2BR, 16 3BR
- > Parking: 70 car spaces, 70 bike spaces

**NON-RESIDENTIAL FEATURES**
- ☑ Commercial/Retail Space
- ☑ Community Space
- ☐ Offices
- ☐ Service Space
- ☑ Open Space: Community Garden on Second Floor
- ☑ Recreation/Exercise Room
- ☐ Other

**PROJECT SUMMARY**

1st and Soto Apartments is planned as a vibrant, mixed-use affordable housing project along the 1st Street corridor in Los Angeles’ Boyle Heights neighborhood. The site is located just across the street from Metro’s 1st and Soto Gold Line station and is part of ELACC’s strategy of pursuing transit-oriented development. ELACC is using this approach to reduce dependence on cars, thus decreasing traffic and improving air quality. By connecting low-income residents with public transit, residents will have greater access to Los Angeles’ centers of employment, promoting economic opportunity and spurring healthy neighborhood development. The project features a contemporary design and aims to achieve high energy efficiency. Building on ELACC’s comprehensive, service-focused approach to community development, 1st and Soto Apartments seeks to improve residents health outcomes and quality of life by including spaces for food production, social interaction and bicycle parking.

**INSTITUTE OUTCOMES**

ELACC hopes to get constructive feedback on their overall approach towards designing and building infill multi-family affordable housing, learning best practices around transit-oriented development and how to successfully include retail in a residential building. One key challenge is to provide ample outdoor space that is desirable and functional while maintaining the targeted number of units. The team has decided on a contemporary design aesthetic but wants to ensure that the final product is not “just a box.” As far as the bigger picture, this building is part of a larger plan to bring sustainable, vibrant development to the Boyle Heights neighborhood and specifically the 1st Street corridor. ELACC is looking for strategies and solutions to building on the momentum of transit-oriented development around this station area and in East L.A.

Renderings of ELACC’s planned family and senior housing projects, on two opposite corners from the Site, at Soto Station.
Site Context: Soto Station and surrounding blocks showing existing context and ELACC’s planned projects