



Keelbase Capital Launches in Seattle to Capitalize on \$105 Billion Opportunity in Overleveraged Real Estate

New real estate investment firm to deploy hundreds of millions across private credit and value-add acquisitions as maturing loans trigger market dislocation

SEATTLE — Keelbase Capital, a Seattle-based real estate investment firm, today announced its launch with a strategic focus to capitalize on one of the most consequential real estate trends emerging in major U.S. markets: systemic overleverage driven by the confluence of depressed asset values and the sharp rebound from an unprecedented period of near-zero interest rates.

Founded by industry veterans with nearly 40 years of combined experience, Keelbase Capital plans to deploy \$125 million to \$250 million in private credit over the next three years, while also pursuing \$200 million to \$300 million in joint venture acquisitions. The firm is targeting opportunities in the Seattle metro area, with long-term plans to expand into other markets exhibiting similar economic fundamentals.

“We founded Keelbase Capital to meet the moment,” said Cooper Engst, Keelbase co-founder and principal, who spent the past 20 years in institutional capital markets and commercial real estate development, most recently at Eastdil Secured, where he led their Pacific Northwest multifamily practice.

“Property owners face a significant challenge today, with asset values that remain well below the peak and traditional lenders that can’t provide cash-neutral refinancing. We’re stepping into that void with flexible capital that will give owners a path forward — and deliver strong returns for our investors without taking last-dollar risk,” continued Engst.

Between 2019 and 2022, more than 1,900 multifamily properties in the Seattle MSA — representing approximately \$60 billion in gross value — were acquired, refinanced, or developed during a period of historically low interest rates. Factoring in retail, industrial, and office assets, those figures grow to 3,800 properties with a combined value of approximately \$105 billion¹ — much of which is overleveraged today.

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¹Real Capital Analytics and Keelbase Capital estimates

“Seattle is one of the most dynamic and fundamentally sound real estate markets in the country, but it’s also one of the most exposed to the reset now underway,” said Paul Roeter, co-founder and principal at Keelbase Capital. Roeter has nearly two decades of experience in institutional real estate capital markets, acquisitions, asset management, and construction, most recently co-leading the Pacific Northwest Equity, Debt, and Structured Finance practice at Cushman & Wakefield.

“Values have dropped, owners are feeling pressure from lenders, and growing deal volume is finally providing pricing clarity,” Roeter added. “We see a generational opportunity to deploy capital, and we’re building Keelbase for the long run.”

The Seattle metro area, which leads coastal gateway markets in projected GDP growth and net in-migration through 2029², is at the epicenter of this dislocation. Even with chart-topping income-to-rent ratios, multifamily rents have remained relatively flat due to back-to-back years of record-high deliveries. Looking forward, construction starts are projected to fall by as much as 90%, setting the stage for upward pressure on rents and asset values in the medium term.

Yet Seattle’s story is far from unique.

According to S&P Global, more than \$3.5 trillion in commercial real estate loans will mature nationally over the next three years, reaching a peak in 2027. Across the U.S., sponsors who relied on cheap debt during the 2019-2022 boom are now seeking alternatives, either turning to private lenders to restructure or seeking an exit.

Keelbase Capital’s investment strategy spans two primary verticals:

- **Private Credit:** Providing structured solutions, including preferred equity, mezzanine debt, and stretch senior financing for high-quality, well-located assets.
- **Value-Add Acquisitions:** Targeting properties at a substantial discount to peak pricing and today’s replacement cost, with a focus on operational efficiency, rent growth potential, and strategic repositioning.

“We’re highly selective and move quickly,” added Engst. “We’re not chasing volume. Keelbase is targeting quality assets with strained capital stacks in locations we understand block by block.”

Keelbase Capital sources opportunities through deep, local relationships with brokers, lenders, syndicators, and directly with property owners. Engst and Roeter — who have spent most of their careers on the principal side — are directly involved in every aspect of an investment’s lifecycle, allowing Keelbase to unlock value that others may overlook.

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²Oxford Economics

“The last cycle rewarded scale,” said Roeter. “This one will reward creativity, agility, and conviction. That’s where Keelbase Capital comes in.”

For more information on Keelbase Capital, please visit www.keelbase.com.

About Keelbase Capital

Keelbase Capital LLC is a Seattle-based real estate investment firm focused on private credit and value-add acquisitions. The firm was founded by industry veterans Cooper Engst and Paul Roeter, who together bring nearly 40 years of combined experience spanning capital markets, acquisitions, asset management, construction, and development. Through a focused regional lens and institutional discipline, Keelbase Capital provides creative capital solutions for property owners, and acquires quality assets with upside, generating strong risk-adjusted returns for its investors. Learn more at keelbase.com.

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