

LOGAN SQUARE, HUMBOLDT PARK, AVONDALE

Encuentro Square, Huge Affordable Housing Project Along 606's Bloomingdale Trail, Coming In 2022

The first phase will bring nearly 100 affordable apartments to the old Magid Glove factory site. About 100 more affordable apartments and a public park are planned in later phases.

Mina Bloom 7:51 AM CDT on Oct 22, 2021



Credit: Canopy / Architecture + Design

Phase one of the Encuentro Square project at 3745 W. Cortland St. includes two affordable housing buildings and a courtyard for residents.



Credibility:  Original Reporting  Sources Cited

LOGAN SQUARE — Crews will begin building a huge affordable housing project along the western end of The 606's Bloomingdale Trail next year, the first step in a three-phase development aimed at curbing displacement in the gentrifying area.

Developers Latin United Community Housing, known as LUCHA, and Evergreen Real Estate Group have teamed up to transform the old Magid Glove factory site at 3745 W. Cortland St. into a 200-unit affordable housing campus with a public park.

The first phase of the project — just under 100 affordable apartments spread out over two buildings — will kick off in late 2022, the developers said at a community meeting Wednesday. The plan is to build the park and a third affordable apartment building with 100 units in 2023 or 2024 once more funding is secured, the development team said.



Credit: Canopy / Architecture + Design

With the project, called Encuentro Square, the developers hope to attack rampant displacement along The Bloomingdale Trail by providing affordable homes to longtime residents who otherwise couldn't afford to stay in the community. Home prices have skyrocketed along the elevated biking and walking path in recent years, according to a study by The Institute for Housing Studies at DePaul University.

The developers named the project Encuentro Square because the 4.5-acre site sits in the middle of gentrifying Logan Square, Humboldt Park and Hermosa. Encuentro means “the act of coming together” in Spanish.

“We are very keenly aware of the need for affordable housing in this community, and the rising cost of housing in the Logan Square community,” said Charlene Andreas, LUCHA’s director of affordable housing.

At Wednesday’s meeting, the developers unveiled the first architectural drawings of the project designed by local architecture firms JGMA and Canopy.

The drawings show two affordable housing buildings and a private courtyard. But once construction is complete, the site will be home to a total of three affordable apartment buildings and a public park that will take up half of the site under an agreement with The Trust for Public Land, the former property owner.

Under the developers’ plans, the project will have a parking lot, a lawn for gathering and a community garden, among other amenities. Families will receive support services on site, a “key” part of the project, Andreas said.





Credit: Canopy / Architecture + Design

Phase one of the Encuentro Square project at 3745 W. Cortland St. includes two affordable apartment buildings and a courtyard.

The site has languished since the Magid Glove factory vacated its buildings in the late 2000s, Ald. Roberto Maldonado (26th) has said. The Trust for Public Land, the private partner tapped to oversee The Bloomingdale Trail, bought the land in 2014 for a trail “access park.” But those plans didn’t materialize, and in 2019 the organization sold the land to the city.

With displacement pressure mounting in the area, the Trust for Public Land and the city crafted a redevelopment plan for the site, requiring developers to build at least 150 affordable apartments and a public park there. LUCHA and Evergreen Real Estate Group took on the plan last year.

The development is being funded with \$22.5 million in low-income housing tax credits, \$9 million in tax-increment financing, \$1.6 million in donation tax credits, \$415,000 in grants, \$5.1 million in low-interest loans, a private mortgage of \$7.1 million and debt financing, Andreas said.

Andreas said they’ve applied for funding to construct the third building and the park, and expect to hear back later this year.

So far, Encuentro Square has drawn positive feedback from residents, but some at Wednesday’s meeting raised concerns about traffic and scale. One resident

commented: “This is a huge project for this neighborhood, we support affordable housing 100 percent but not at this massive scale. Please consider keeping Phase I only.”

Maldonado, a champion of the project since its inception, didn’t attend the community meeting, but has said the development will be a “huge stabilizer” in the face of gentrification.

“All we see around The 606, in terms of new construction, is construction of market-rate housing,” Maldonado previously said. “Don’t working families have the right to also enjoy living in new affordable units near The 606?”

[Subscribe to Block Club Chicago](#), an independent, 501(c)(3), journalist-run newsroom. Every dime we make funds reporting from Chicago’s neighborhoods.

Already subscribe? Click [here](#) to support Block Club with a [tax-deductible donation](#).



Credit: Canopy / Architecture + Design