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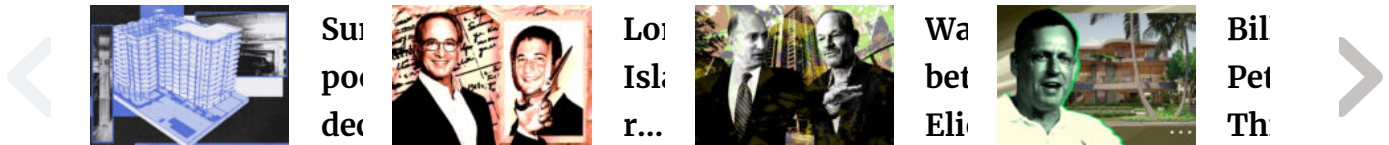


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Expiration looms over anti-gentrification ordinance

Officials propose extension of demolition fees into more neighborhoods



Alds. Carlos Ramirez-Rosa and Jessie Fuentes introduced the extension to the ordinance (Getty)

By TRD Staff

MAR 8, 2024, 9:30 AM

A quartet of Chicago officials is working to extend an ordinance that increases the cost of demolitions as a way to protect several West and Northwest Side neighborhoods from gentrification and displacement.

The ordinance, originally initiated as a pilot program in 2015, targets areas in Humboldt Park, Logan Square and Pilsen, imposing fees of up to \$15,000 on developers who demolish single-family homes and multi-unit buildings.

With its expiration date set for April, area aldermen Jessie Fuentes, Carlos Ramirez-Rosa, Daniel La Spata and Byron Sigcho-Lopez have proposed expanding the ordinance, citing its success in slowing down gentrification and preserving the fabric of these communities, Block Club reported.

Since its inception, the ordinance has collected approximately \$200,000 in

fees, and significantly reduced the number of demolition permits near The 606 trail and in Pilsen, according to data from the city's Department of Housing. Its success has prompted calls for permanent legislation to widen its reach to more neighborhoods grappling with gentrification and the loss of affordable housing.

Between 2013 and 2018, nearly 60 percent of 2- to 6-flat buildings near the popular 606 trail were lost. In addition, areas like Logan Square, Humboldt Park and Avondale experienced a disproportionate depletion of low-cost apartments, according to The DePaul Institute for Housing Studies.

The proposed extension seeks to broaden the ordinance's coverage, including more areas vulnerable to gentrification. Developers would continue to face substantial fees for demolishing single-family homes or multi-unit buildings, with the collected funds directed towards the Chicago Community Land Trust, aimed at facilitating homeownership for low- and moderate-income residents, the outlet reported.

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If passed, this would mark the second extension of the ordinance, and it would last through the end of the year, allowing for further discussions on its future iterations.

“All this stuff is to actually do something that feels more like planning and forward reaching, which takes time, so that’s why we’re doing this short-term expansion for now with the hopes of potentially introducing something more comprehensive later in the year,” LaSpata told the outlet.

Chicago’s City Council could vote on the proposal as soon as March 20, following deliberation among the Committee on Housing and Real Estate.

—*Quinn Donoghue*

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