

LOGAN SQUARE, HUMBOLDT PARK, AVONDALE

As Gentrification Pushes Longtime Residents Out, 40 Affordable Apartments Planned In Humboldt Park

LUCHA and Full Circle Communities developers are proposing a six-story, 40-unit apartment complex that would be fully affordable for working families.



By Ariel Parrella-Aureli
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The first proposal for 40 affordable units at 3305 W. Division St. could include a ground floor of retail and amenities on the sixth floor Credit: DesignBridge

HUMBOLDT PARK — Two affordable housing developers have teamed up to pitch a 40-unit development that would take over a corner church.

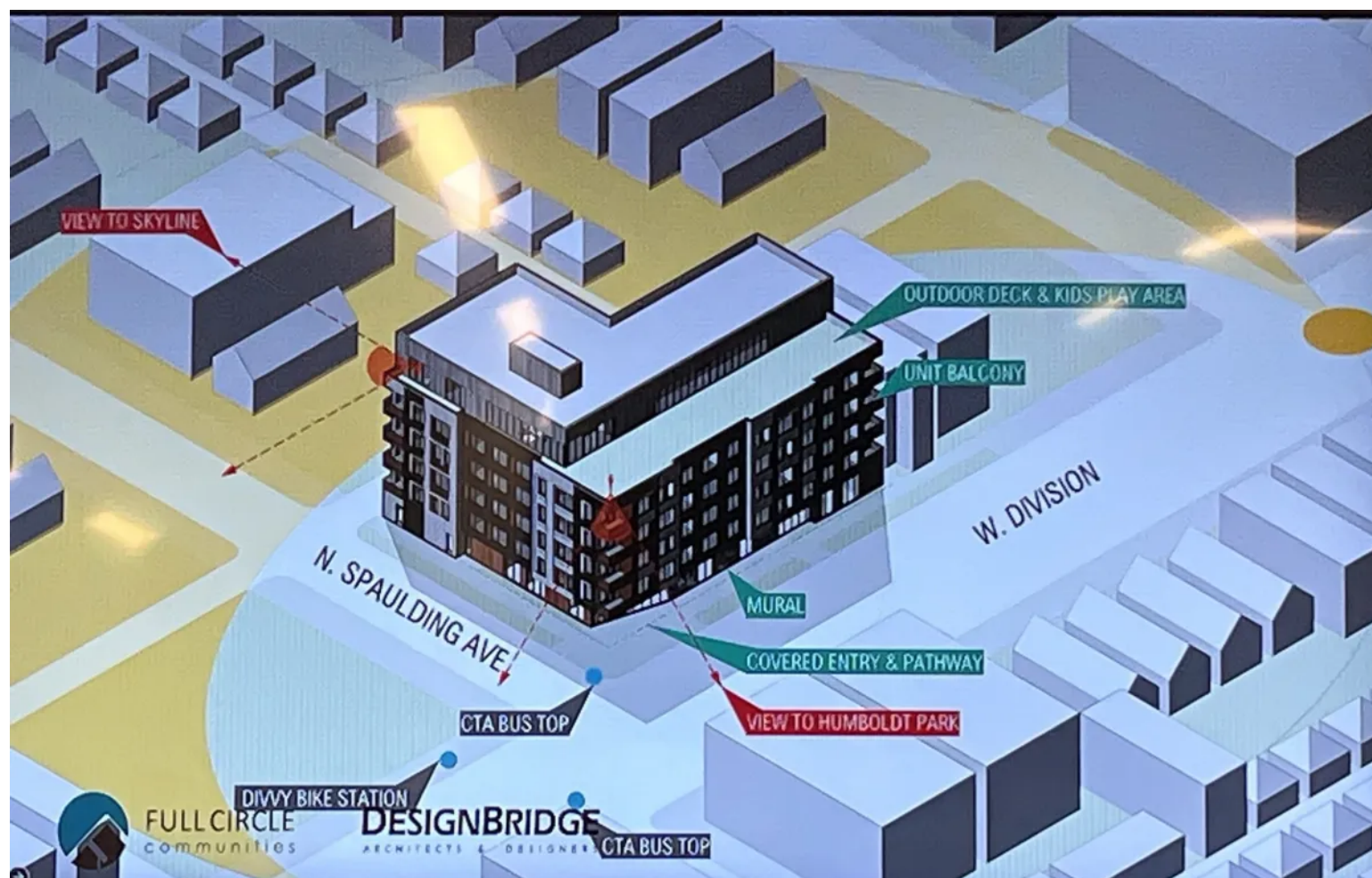
Developers Latin United Community Housing, known as LUCHA, and Full Circle Communities are proposing a six-story, 40-unit apartment complex at 3305 W. Division St., the former administrative offices of

Iglesia De Dios Emanuel.

Since the location is next to the Division bus stop, it's considered a transit-oriented development and would have 14 parking spaces and 40 bike spots.

Ald. Jessie Fuentes (26th) held an initial bilingual community meeting about the proposal Thursday night at one of LUCHA's buildings, 1152 N. Christiana Ave.

Dozens of neighbors packed the community room to learn more about the proposal and see the first renderings for the project, which needs a zoning change and housing subsidies from the Illinois Housing Development Authority and the Chicago Housing Authority before moving forward.



A photo of the birds eye view of the proposed apartment complex at 3305 W Division St. shows transportation access and building amenities. Credit: DesignBridge

The two- and three-bedroom affordable units would be targeted toward families earning between \$20,000-\$70,000 a year. Rent would include all utilities and could range between \$621-\$1,242 for a one-bedroom unit, \$745-\$1,489 for a two-bedroom unit and \$860-\$1,721 for a three-bedroom unit, said Lindsey Haines, senior vice president of real estate development at Full Circle Communities.

Developers aim to add subsidies on a portion of the units to make them even more affordable, Haines said.

Rent could change, as could the renderings by **DesignBridge** architect firm, developers said. What won't change is the overall affordability and commitment from the developers to increase affordable housing in the neighborhood, project leaders said.



“The rapid gentrification has unfortunately caused some displacement in our community, and in order to truly address that we have to make sure that there is a diversity of an affordable housing stock,” Fuentes said. “This project is just one version of the type of affordable housing that we seek to bring to the 26th Ward.”

The \$25 million project could have ground-floor retail storefronts for small businesses, or the project could become fully residential if no retail partner is secured, said Lincoln Stannard, director of community development at LUCHA.

“One of the things that we really value at LUCHA is what is the input of the community and what are the community needs. That is part of why we are here today,” Stannard said.

Developers have already secured control of the building from the previous owners and now want to gather community feedback while the project is still being developed. If the community approves, project leaders plan to apply for state funding next month and get zoning approval early next year, Stannard said.

Even with zoning approval, the project would not break ground until the middle of 2025 and the leasing

process would begin in the latter half of 2026, Stannard said.



The rough timeline for the proposed apartment complex at 3305 W Division St. was shared at a Nov. 9, 2023 community meeting. Credit: Ariel Parrella-Aureli/Block Club Chicago

The majority of residents at the meeting applauded the plan that would bring needed affordable housing to a **rapidly gentrifying neighborhood**, help curb displacement and increase housing stock for families.

“I support this with my whole heart. I wish that when I was a teenager, there would have been more projects like this so that my family didn’t have to bounce back and forth,” said Gary Jimenez, whose family was displaced from the area due to rising rents and property value.

Natasha Brown Castro, director of human services and housing initiatives at the Puerto Rican Cultural Center, touted the project as necessary for working families. She highlighted the **historic racism and disinvestment** Puerto Ricans faced in Humboldt Park in the 1970s and ’80s and the project’s effort to rebuild the displaced community.

“The affordable housing project provides the ability to address historical wrongs committed against the Puerto

Rican community,” Brown Castro said.

A few neighbors took issue with the height of the building, parking, other affordable housing projects nearby and the lack of ownership options. Others who have lived in the community for over 20 years expressed concerns about what the zoning change would mean for nearby land parcels.



3305 W. Division St. as seen in June 2021. Credit: Google Maps

Gentrification and displacement have transformed Humboldt Park and **neighboring Logan Square and Avondale** in recent years. A **series of affordable developments** are under construction in the area to help people stay in the community or return to their neighborhoods.

LUCHA has been at the forefront of some of these developments, including **Encuentro Square**, 3745 W. Cortland St., an 187-apartment affordable campus with a public park near the western end of The 606 that began construction over the summer.

Full Circle Communities is behind **two affordable developments in Jefferson Park** and one coming to Irving Park.

Less than 50 percent of the housing stock in Humboldt Park is considered affordable for people who make 60 percent of the area median income, **according to a 2019 citywide neighborhood analysis**. An analysis of census data ending in 2021 found the neighborhood has more low-income renters than there are units, according to the **2023 State of Rental Housing** report by DePaul’s Institute for Housing Studies.

Developers estimate the neighborhood has a shortage of 10,000 affordable units, said Haines, who lives in the

community.

“We’re really proud of our 40 that we’re proposing here, but it’s truly a drop in the bucket,” she said.

Should the project move forward, Fuentes said she is committed to doing a traffic study of the area to see how extra commuters would affect transportation. The meeting was a constructive first step in having community input on housing options in the ward, Fuentes said. More outreach and future meetings on the proposal are likely, she said.

“Tent encampments across the city of Chicago will grow if we don’t ensure that there is affordability in our community. No one deserves to be one paycheck away from homelessness,” Fuentes said. “This development allows that opportunity.”

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