

LOGAN SQUARE, HUMBOLDT PARK, AVONDALE

Anti-Gentrification Ordinance Could Be Expanded To More Of The Northwest Side And Made Permanent

A newly proposed ordinance suggests better protecting two-, three- and four-flats in parts of Hermosa, Logan Square, Avondale, West Town and Humboldt Park.



By Ariel Parrella-Aureli

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Neo Valcarcel and Seamus O'Sullivan, youth leaders with Palenque LSNA, led group chants during a rally and youth-led teach-in on the new proposal on July 16, 2024 at the Hope Center church in Hermosa, 1829 N. Kostner Ave. Credit: Ariel Parrella-Aureli/Block Club Chicago

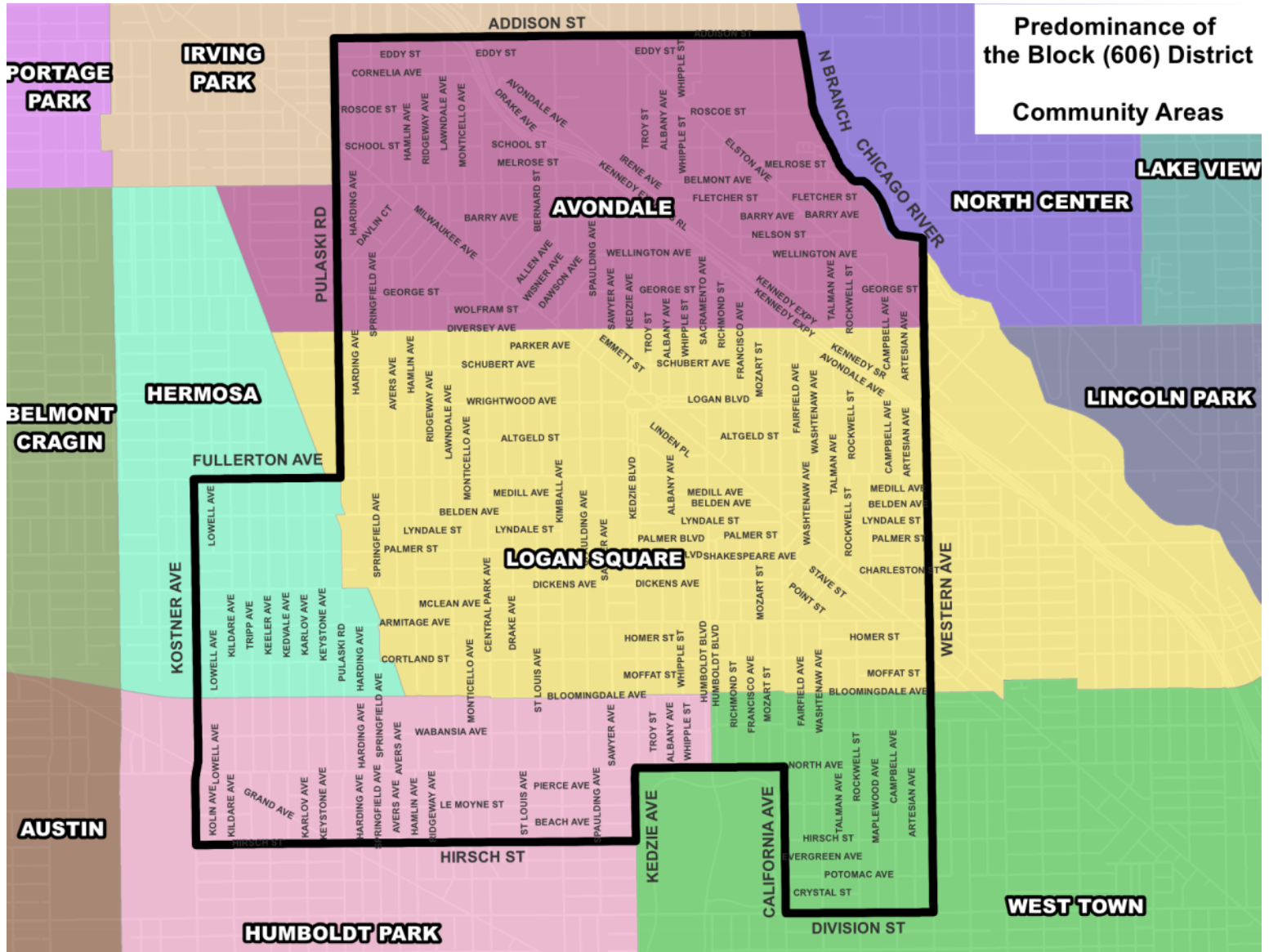
HERMOSA — Northwest Siders are pushing for a new ordinance that would protect housing in the rapidly gentrifying area, hoping to keep more longtime families in their homes.

The Northwest Preservation Ordinance, introduced to the City Council Wednesday, proposes a permanent law to better protect two-, three- and four-flats in parts of Hermosa, Logan Square, Avondale, West Town and Humboldt Park. Those areas have seen the **highest rate of gentrification and displacement** of longtime

families in the past decade in Chicago.

The ordinance was introduced by Alds. Carlos Ramirez-Rosa (35th), Jessie Fuentes (26th), Daniel La Spata (1st), Rossana Rodriguez-Sanchez (33rd), Ruth Cruz (30th) and Felix Cardona (31st).

The proposed ordinance builds off **two programs** introduced in 2021 that protect homes along The 606 and in Pilsen in a bid to slow down gentrification. It would effectively make permanent those programs and expand which areas they cover.



The proposed Northwest Preservation Ordinance would affect buildings within the boundaries of most of Logan Square, Avondale and portions of Hermosa, West Town and Humboldt Park. Credit: 35th Ward Office

The proposal would also add opportunities for tenants to become owners and increase the demolition fee for developers looking to tear down older multi-family homes.

“It will protect them from being converted into luxury single-family homes, but we’re going even further,” Ramirez-Rosa said. “If you are a tenant and you live in one of those apartment buildings, when your building

goes to sale, you will have an opportunity to purchase and you will have the right of first refusal.”

Another new component of the ordinance includes legalization of two-flats by right in all RS-3 zoned parcels within the ordinance’s boundaries, which will make it easier to build two-flats in areas zoned for single-family homes within the ordinance’s boundaries, the alderman said.



Ald. Carlos Ramirez-Rosa (35th) smiles as his colleagues praise his work fighting for affordable housing in his ward at a rally and community teach-in about the new housing preservation proposal on July 16, 2024 at the Hope Center church in Hermosa. Credit: Ariel Parrella-Aureli/Block Club Chicago

Youth leaders with Palenque LSNA, the group behind the 2015 **grassroots initiative** that led to the 2021 ordinances, hosted a rally and teach-in on the proposal Tuesday night with neighbors and local officials at the Hope Center church in Hermosa, 1829 N. Kostner Ave.

Originally **passed by the council in 2021**, the demolition surcharge pilot law charged developers \$5,000 per unit and \$15,000 per building for tearing down single-family homes and multi-unit buildings in parts of Humboldt Park, Logan Square and Pilsen. The pilot program was **extended twice** and is set to expire in December, opening up a door to create the permanent legislation, alderpeople said.

Those demolition charges would be significantly higher under the proposed ordinance: \$20,000 per unit and \$60,000 per building. Young organizers, who heavily influenced the terms of the ordinance, said at the teach-in they wanted to increase those fees “with the hopes of making developers think twice before demolishing current homes within our communities.”

The **anti-deconversion ordinance**, a separate but similar ordinance also passed in 2021 for the same areas, aimed to interrupt the loss of cheap housing stock through deconversions of two- to eight-flat apartment buildings and also informed the new proposal.

Advocates have long said such measures are needed to slow down conversions of multi-unit homes into single-family homes, which is making housing less affordable and speeding up gentrification.

Between 2013 and 2018, the area near The 606 lost almost 60 percent of its two- to six-flat buildings, according to The DePaul Institute for Housing Studies.

And between 2015-2021, there were 768 demolitions in the 1st, 25th, 26th and 35th wards, according to **housing department data**. Since the demolition ordinance was passed in 2021, there have been 204 demolitions issued in the area. There was also a reduction in single-family homes built around The 606, alderpeople said.

“We know that Latino and Black families suffer from displacement and gentrification in our communities when multi-unit buildings are gutted and turned into multimillion-dollar homes, when our naturally occurring affordable housing is demolished and our families have to say goodbye to a place they have lived in their entire lives,” Fuentes said. “We are going to compel, inspire and get our family and friends to get on board with this ordinance, because this is how we protect communities.”



Ald. Jessie Fuentes (26th) speaks about the new preservation ordinance at a rally and teach-in on July 16, 2024 at the Hope Center church in Hermosa, 1829 N. Kostner Ave. Credit: Ariel Parrella-Aureli/Block Club Chicago

About \$200,000 in fees have been assessed from the demolition ordinance, Fuentes previously said. The fees have gone into the city's Chicago Community Land Trust, an effort aimed at **creating a pathway for homeownership** for low- and moderate-income Chicagoans. Advocates hope the permanent ordinance can bring in even more money for the effort.

The trust will soon have **18 properties** acquired on the Northwest Side.

Monica Espinoza, a parent leader with Palenque LSNA who has lived in Humboldt Park for over 20 years, said it's become very difficult to keep her house due to rising property values. She hopes the ordinance will make it harder for developers to "destroy our homes" and show people there is power in communities fighting for housing access.

"So many people have had to move away, and we are being stripped away of our culture and history," Espinoza said. "Our families are losing recreational spaces as we are being labeled low-income and racially profiled. As we lose children in our schools, we also lose resources for our schools."

Logan Square and Humboldt Park have seen a growing white population, with dwindling Latino residents and the closing of long-time **businesses** as the neighborhood changes. A WBEZ analysis in December 2018 found **Logan Square's white population has surpassed its Latino population.**

"We embrace progress but progress for all. We deserve to be here as much as the people who can afford those [\$1 million] homes," Espinoza said. "I strongly believe home is where their heart is and my heart is here."



Homes and buildings in Humboldt Park on Nov. 22, 2021. Credit: Colin Boyle/Block Club Chicago

The alderpeople sponsoring the proposal will host a town hall in August and anticipate a committee hearing in September to get more alderpeople on board. Their hope is to pass the legislation this fall before The 606 provision sunsets Dec. 31, Ramirez-Rosa said.

Housing advocates also urge neighbors to sign a **petition** in support of the ordinance and to **tell their elected officials** to support the legislation.

More than 40 community organizations, affordable housing developers, business owners and area elected leaders support the new proposal.

Should the ordinance pass, it would create more affordable housing pathways for other areas experiencing a similar loss in multi-family housing stock in the city and would follow in the passage of the **Woodlawn Housing Preservation Ordinance in 2020**, organizers said.

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