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# Study: City Sees Decline in Affordable Housing

Blair Paddock (</stories-by-author/Blair Paddock>) | October 6, 2021 8:33 pm

Renters are finding fewer affordable homes and apartments as the city sees a decline in units.

A new study from DePaul University (<https://www.housingstudies.org/releases/state-rental-2021/>) shows the city experienced a 5.2% decline when comparing the average of affordable units from 2012 - 2014 to those from 2017 - 2019.

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This decline has hit the North and Northwest Side neighborhoods especially hard. The

Logan Square and Avondale neighborhoods lost 14.4% of their inventory of affordable housing units. Portage Park and Jefferson Park saw a 12.3% decline. Lincoln Square, North Center, West Town and the Near West Side all saw an 11.3% decline.

And, the share of renters with lower incomes who face housing insecurity has grown.

“Fewer and fewer affordable renter units are out there,” said Geoff Smith, executive director at the Institute for Housing Studies at DePaul University. “That means low-income renters are struggling to find affordable rental housing which means that they either have to move elsewhere to neighborhoods where there is more affordable housing, or they stay in place and just pay more of their income towards housing costs.”

Jose Muñoz, executive director of La Casa Norte (<https://www.lacasanorte.org/>), said gentrification is one of the biggest factors in people losing out on housing.

“Developers are purchasing properties, rehabbing them and then making them less affordable for individuals,” Muñoz said. “At the same time, we haven’t seen increases in wages, jobs, growth, enough to the point where individuals are able to raise their incomes to be able to continue to afford their housing.”

One factor the study looked at was the “affordability gap.” Smith described it as the mismatch between the number of low-income renters that need affordable rental housing and the supply of affordable rental units that would be accessible to those renters at 30% of their monthly income.

The city can help close that gap and assist low-income renters by continuing rental assistance programs that help renters on an emergency basis with rent, Muñoz said.

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