



Vacant, City-Owned Land In North Lawndale Could Soon See Hundreds Of Homes

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June 28, 3:25 p.m. CT

Hundreds of long-vacant lots in Chicago's North Lawndale neighborhood could soon have new affordable, single-family homes built on them.

That's after Mayor Lori Lightfoot and city leaders announced plans to sell 250 of the 940 lots the city owns in North Lawndale for \$1 a piece to a community coalition focused on redevelopment on the West and South sides. The group hopes to construct the homes over the next three to five years.

The coalition has [a broader goal](#) to build 1,000 homes in North Lawndale and another 1,000 homes in Roseland. Both communities are among those with high concentrations of vacant and abandoned property. They are both areas where banks do very little home purchase lending, according to [a WBEZ and City Bureau investigation](#) — keeping vacant lots empty, pushing property into further disrepair and hampering residents who want to invest in their communities.

“It isn't enough to just say, ‘OK, now we will start lending equitably or equally,’ ” said Marisa Novara, the city's housing commissioner. “We will have to be intentional to actively repair the intergenerational harm of private and government wealth extraction from Black Chicagoans.”

According to a city news release, the community groups leading the new “Reimagining Communities” effort have secured more than \$25 million in grants and low-interest loans from private foundations and banks. They have also secured \$10 million from the state to provide up to \$30,000 subsidies to each prospective buyer.

“Start calling your neighbors, your cousins, your coworkers — everybody who wants a great, great community with a great, great commute — to come back to North Lawndale and make this place home,” said Kevin Sutton, head of the Foundation for Homan Square and a member of the coalition. “We will stabilize this community together. We will build it together. We will make it more prosperous together. We will make it safer together.”

The City of Chicago [owns nearly 14,000 parcels of land](#) within its borders, though not all of those are vacant. In addition, many vacant and abandoned properties are privately-owned. At least 100 of the 940 city-owned properties in North Lawndale have been on the city’s books since the 1970s.

The local alderman, Ald. Michael Scott Jr., 24th Ward, will allocate \$5.3 million from a tax-increment financing district in his ward toward the new home construction effort. Lightfoot touted the work as part of her broader [INVEST South/West initiative](#), which aims to put \$750 million toward development efforts on the South and West sides.

Gov. JB Pritzker was also in North Lawndale Monday, touting the first phase in the \$20 million development of a manufacturing, distribution and warehouse facility in the community. The project got \$2 million in help from state grants and loans.

The facility, known as the K-Town Business Centre, eventually will lead to 100 local jobs, Pritzker said.