



Date August 21st, 2026

To The Honorable Jessie Fuentes
Aldersperson of the 26th Ward
2511 W Division Street
Chicago, IL 60622

From Northwest Neighborhood Alliance
c/o Sam Kovnar (lead volunteer, NWA),
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Subject Housing Strategy in the 26th Ward

Dear Aldersperson Fuentes,

The Northwest Neighborhood Alliance (NWA) is a progressive grassroots organization that advocates for safe streets, housing, and fast, frequent public transit. We represent neighbors within the Humboldt Park, Logan Square, and West Town community areas.

We are deeply disappointed to learn that your office has paused the three developments proposed for Armitage Avenue¹ by electing not to grant the requested upzoning. We were also saddened to read your reasoning for this change of heart, which you outlined in your letter.

We share your concerns about rising rents and displacement of long-time residents. Our advocacy around housing is solely focused on achieving access to housing for all of our neighbors. Rising rents in our neighborhoods mean that the people who make these places special can no longer afford to live there. On that, we can agree.

The housing crisis is not hypothetical. It is real, and it is here. Like your niece, who you talked about in your letter, many of our members know that if housing prices continue to outpace wage growth, we will one day have to make a choice between affording rent and staying in the city that we love. Chicago's approach to housing our neighbors, where we treat housing as a block-by-block problem, is not working. Something must change.

¹ 3208 – 3216 W. Armitage, 3265 W. Armitage, and 3255 W. Armitage

When high-income residents are unable to find housing in wealthy neighborhoods, they look elsewhere. Those without the financial means to compete are forced out. This is what drives displacement, and it is that force which is raising rents in neighborhoods from Humboldt Park to Logan Square to Ukrainian Village. The long-term solution to displacement is to upzone high-income neighborhoods such that those wards can meet the demand for housing before their residents move west and south. This will prevent high-income residents from bidding up the price of housing in the 26th ward. We believe the long-term solution to combating displacement is for you and your coalition to facilitate significant new housing construction in high-income wards, either through proactive upzonings or through zoning reform and building code reform to re-legalize infill development.

In the short-term, we must continue to build housing in the 26th ward to address the urgent crisis of rising rents. If we wait for other wards to act first, our own neighbors will lose housing and be forced out of the neighborhood in the interim. If we want to reduce competition for housing, we have to offset the increasing competition by increasing the 26th Ward's housing stock. This includes not only building 100% non-market developments, but also building mixed market-rate and non-market developments, such as those proposed for Armitage.

Those developments would have created 33 subsidized units, which our community desperately needs. Given that there is no alternative proposal on the table at this time, we are struggling to understand why your office would forgo such a significant volume of affordable housing, especially given that it would not have involved public funding or any of the other complexities that create a bottleneck on the amount of non-market housing that can be built in Chicago each year. They would have also created dozens of market-rate units to absorb the increasing demand for housing in the 26th Ward, which would have eased displacement pressures on naturally-occurring affordable housing.

The proposed developments had strong community support, and you yourself expressed your support at the most recent community meeting at 8/20. We are struggling to understand what changed, and we urge you to reconsider your position. We would be happy to discuss any of the points above in person.

We look forward to your response,

The Northwest Neighborhood Alliance