



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



**MAYOR LORI E. LIGHTFOOT**

**Dear Woodlawn Residents:**

Over the last several months, my administration has been very intentional about engaging with the residents of Woodlawn to listen carefully and learn about your hopes and fears for your community.

We have heard from countless voices. Renters who want more and better affordable housing options, especially for those at very low incomes. Homeowners who want programs to help repair and maintain their homes.

Residents who want a more comprehensive and coordinated effort to build more pathways to middle-class homeownership and increase their property values. We've also heard from elected officials, community organizers, real estate developers, block club presidents, faith leaders and many, many more.

All of these voices and perspectives are critical to the City's plans for unlocking the unprecedented potential now in front of the residents of Woodlawn, due to the Obama Presidential Center.

We want to be your partners in the journey ahead.

I am writing to personally and directly share with you the City's proposals to take advantage of this historic moment, reflect what we heard and partner with you to transform Woodlawn into an even stronger, safer, and more equitable place to call home.

For far too long, your voices have been ignored. Last summer, when I was just weeks into office, I made it a priority to listen and incorporate what I heard into an action plan.

Since then, our team at the Department of Housing (DOH), led by Commissioner Marisa Novara, has embarked on an expansive community engagement tour, spanning 16 Woodlawn community meetings, which were attended by hundreds of Woodlawn residents. In January 2020 alone, DOH exchanged ideas with more than 320 residents at multiple community meetings, including a January 30th community Open House well attended by local residents and stakeholders who participated in a fulsome discussion about how to implement years of community-driven planning to prevent displacement and move Woodlawn forward.

All of our combined hard work and community collaboration has resulted in the draft Woodlawn Housing Preservation Ordinance that addresses some of the most pressing needs of the community as articulated directly to me and other members of my Administration.

We crafted this ordinance with the purpose that everyone who lives in Woodlawn should be able to stay and share in the transformative promise for economic growth and cultural enrichment offered by



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the Obama Presidential Center project. This draft ordinance – which we provided to the Woodlawn Housing Working Group in advance of hosting a very productive meeting last night – reflects the wide range of Woodlawn’s voices, and charts a roadmap toward a thriving, inclusive future.

There are five main goals for this ordinance.

1. Help protect existing residents from displacement;
2. Create new rental and for-sale housing opportunities that are affordable to households at a range of incomes;
3. Ensure that existing housing stock offers good quality housing for residents;
4. Promote housing options to support equitable and inclusive income diversity in Woodlawn; and
5. Support economic development opportunities.

The programs included in the City’s proposed ordinance – bold new tenant protections, turning City-owned vacant lots into affordable housing, enhanced local hiring requirements – are tailored for residents ranging from very low-income through those entering the middle class, while at the same time supporting and expanding homeownership opportunities.

Please visit [this link](#) to read the entire draft ordinance, and [this link](#) for a high-level summary and Q&A around its primary components. We hope to file this ordinance with the City Council soon so that we can get protections in place to support Woodlawn. We look forward to your further feedback.

I ask each of you – as residents of Woodlawn – to continue engaging with us as we take this journey. Reach out to your Alderwoman, our Department of Housing ([DOH@cityofchicago.org](mailto:DOH@cityofchicago.org)) or our Community Engagement team ([communityengagement@cityofchicago.org](mailto:communityengagement@cityofchicago.org)), and share your feedback so that we can ensure we are on the right track to building Woodlawn’s future.

As I said on the night I was elected Mayor of this great City: there is nothing that we cannot accomplish if we work together. On behalf of my dedicated team and our many, many partners within and throughout the great neighborhood of Woodlawn, I look forward to our groundbreaking work together.

Sincerely,

Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot