

To Whom This May Concern,

My name is Eduardo Ortiz. I live at 2817 S. Kildare, Apt. 2A. Chicago, IL 60623. I am submitting the following comments for the scheduled Planning Commission meeting on Thursday, April 21, 2022 with regards to Agenda Item #4, the Encuentro Square Project, 1800-1840 N. Hamlin Ave. / 1821-1857 N. Hamlin Ave. / 3735-3759 W. Cortland St. / 1820-1856 N. Ridgeway Ave.

Hello, my name is Eduardo Ortiz and I am a current employee at LUCHA, Latin United Community Housing Association. As a proud employee for the past 15 years, I am writing to express my concern about the proposed affordable housing development called "Encuentro Square" in the 26th ward and the continued need for stronger, better paying jobs for the Logan Square Community.

Every day, I work hard to maintain LUCHA buildings and ensure that residents and their families are safe in their homes. I fulfill work orders, transport heavy materials by myself, and am expected to use my own vehicle and gas to buy and deliver materials from stores to the site. I love my job as I get to help families that face similar situations and challenges like mine - families that work hard to better their future but are still hardly making ends meet. Despite our hard work, LUCHA is paying my coworkers and me far below the prevailing rate for our work - some of them having worked for the organization for 15 years and only making minimum wage.

That is part of why every LUCHA maintenance worker has signed a petition asking LUCHA to respect our decision to come together and have a voice on the job. A union job means we will finally have a wage that reflects our work and benefits that support our families. For me, I will be able to save for my children's studies, catch up on bills that I have fallen behind on, and finally get to live life. We have asked LUCHA to recognize our request for union representation, but they have not done so. This is especially concerning given the millions of dollars in public support LUCHA is getting for the project Encuentro Square. This is why we are asking for the development to be delayed. As a Commission, your decision should take into consideration the quality of jobs and economic impact this development will have on the community beyond the construction phase - should a development receive millions of dollars in public support and only pay their workers minimum wage with no retirement benefits and a poor health insurance plan?

I have a family of six and take care of my elderly parents. My family means the world to me, and beyond my job at LUCHA, it is my job to provide the best life possible for them. To do that - I have to fight for what is right. LUCHA workers deserve to be paid for their hard work, and I am urging the Committee to delay the Encuentro Square development so my co-workers and I can join together and have a voice on the job.

I appreciate your time today and hope you will consider this request - Chicago working families are depending on it.



Commissioner Maurice Cox  
Department of Planning & Development  
City of Chicago, City Hall  
121 N LaSalle St, 7<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Chicago, IL 60602

RE: Letter of Support for Encuentro Square I Project

Dear Commissioner Cox,

LUCHA and EREG Development LLC, a joint venture, along with Children's Place Association, propose Encuentro Square Phase I, an 89-unit, 100% affordable housing development proposal located at the western trailhead of The Bloomingdale Trail at 3737 W. Cortland Street. This project will bring together affordable housing, public open space, and community wellbeing that will meet the needs of a neighborhood as defined by local revitalization plans.

The Friends of the Bloomingdale Trail, who serve as the long term community stewards of the Bloomingdale Trail, fully supports the Encuentro Square Phase I affordable housing development proposal as it will create affordable housing in an area where it is much needed. LUCHA has proven to be a strong advocate and partner for housing in the community and has worked with residents and partners to develop decent, safe, affordable and healthy housing since 1982. The Bloomingdale Trail corridor has particularly benefited from LUCHA's Tierra Linda project.

We support Encuentro Square I and believe it will be a positive step towards meeting the needs of the community around the Bloomingdale Trail. In this regard, we support the designation of a planned development at this site by the Plan Commission for the Encuentro Square project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ben Helphand".

Ben Helphand  
President  
Friends of the Bloomingdale Trail



Commissioner Maurice Cox  
Department of Planning & Development  
City of Chicago, City Hall  
121 N LaSalle St, 7<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Chicago, IL 60602

RE: Letter of Support for Encuentro Square I Project

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Dear Commissioner Cox,

LUCHA and EREG Development LLC, a joint venture, along with Children's Place Association, propose Encuentro Square Phase I, an 89-unit, 100% affordable housing development proposal located at the western trailhead of The Bloomingdale-606 Trail at 3737 W. Cortland Street. This project will bring together affordable housing, public park space, health and housing that will meet the needs of a community as defined by local revitalization plans.

Center for Changing Lives, which is a nonprofit providing financial and employment coaching, fully supports the Encuentro Square Phase I affordable housing development proposal as it will create affordable housing in an area known for rising costs and displacement among long-term residents. LUCHA has proven to be a strong advocate and partner for housing in the community and has worked with residents and partners to develop decent, safe, affordable and healthy housing since 1982.

We support Encuentro Square I and believe it will be a positive step towards meeting the needs of low- to moderate-income households in the City of Chicago. In this regard, we support the designation of a planned development at this site by the Plan Commission for the Encuentro Square project.

Sincerely,

Juliana Gonzalez-Crussi  
Executive Director  
Center for Changing Lives

**Executive Director:**

Juliana Gonzalez-Crussi