Strengthening the Puerto Rican and Latino Presence in Chicago

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“Division Street,” the Paseo Boricua, “must be the most beautifully decorated street in America. And since you have the prettiest street in America, it’s possible that you may just be at the forefront of this [displacement] struggle for the whole United States, and then maybe for the whole world. As you lift up your voices, you teach all of us what we are supposed to do to make progress.”

- Dr. Mindy Thompson Fullilove
INTRODUCTION

“We must attack this root of hatred that allows us to abandon people, which allows us to push them out of their neighborhoods, which allows us to not care how children grow up. Gentrification is a slow process, it’s not like a hurricane. Hurricane Maria came in, devastated the island of Puerto Rico in just a few days. Gentrification takes years...so we have to work against the historical headwinds to make progress.”

-Dr. Mindy Thompson Fullilove, Keynote Speaker
Housing Summit 2018

On June 15, 2018, a Housing Summit was convened under the leadership of the Puerto Rican Agenda, Bickerdike Redevelopment Corporation, Hispanic Housing Development Corporation, Latin United Community Housing Association (LUCHA) and the Puerto Rican Cultural Center (The “Organizers”). Its purpose was to facilitate bold discussions, kickoff a research agenda, create new strategies to celebrate, preserve, and strengthen the cultural vibrancies of Chicago’s Near Northwest neighborhoods and maintain their existing housing affordability.

The Keynote Speaker of the Housing Summit was Dr. Mindy Thompson Fullilove, Professor of Urban Policy and Health at The New School’s Parsons School of Design, New York City, and author of the book *Root Shock*. Dr. Thompson Fullilove emphasized how gentrification is devastating to everyone in communities- both for the low-income, and also for those who replace low-income households and who have themselves lost their communities. To solve this crisis, Dr. Thompson Fullilove noted that, “there are no magic bullets, but there are magic strategies.” Accordingly, the Puerto Rican Agenda resolved the following primary strategies to fight gentrification and displacement on Chicago’s Near Northwest Side:

1. **Increase affordable housing in the Northwest Side** to address the gap of about 41,248 shortage of units for low-income residents living in these neighborhoods, many of whom are Latino.
2. **Real Estate Tax exemption for affordable housing** is cited as one of the most effective tools in ensuring that housing stays affordable and remains available for intended residents.
3. **Establish a “Puerto Rico Town” at the state level** to create a Special Purpose District to preserve cultural identity and designate Puerto Rico Town by the state of Illinois instead of only at the city level.
4. **Improve distribution of CHA resources to Latino residents and Puerto Rican evacuees** through targeted deployment of development funding, vouchers, and other CHA resources to communities on the Northwest side.
This Housing Summit report was created by ChicagoLAB, a course involving students from the University of Utah, as well as from the drafting contributions of the Organizers and participants of the Housing Summit. Other objectives of this report are to:

- Understand the extent of gentrification on Chicago's Near Northwest Side using historical perspectives, data on changing demographics, and housing market trends.
- Learn from policy experts, affordable housing developers, decision-makers, and community members about the barriers and opportunities to further affordable housing goals in Chicago’s Near Northwest Side.
- Increase awareness of the urgent need for affordable housing, fair housing enforcement, and racial equity of homeownership in our communities.
- Engage organizations and residents in meaningful dialogue about stabilizing the Puerto Rican evacuee community, as well as the Latino community at large.
- Connect housing outcomes in Chicago’s historic Puerto Rican and Latino communities with those of health/wellness and environmental justice.
- Cooperatively plan for the future of Chicago’s Near Northwest Side in an equitable manner, particularly through youth engagement and empowerment.

With these goals in mind, the Organizers along with affordable housing advocates, decision makers, and the community at large aim to share visions and plans to retain and to strengthen Puerto Rican and Latino households, and to increase affordable housing options for residents along Chicago’s Near Northwest Side.

One such goal is preserving the cultural vibrancy of these neighborhoods by formally creating a Puerto Rico Town district to symbolize the long-established heritage of the area and pursue grassroots economic development.
ChicagoLAB - University of Utah

Participating in ChicagoLAB, a course provided through the University of Utah College of Architecture and Planning under the direction of researcher Dr. Ivis Garcia Zambrana, students have worked to create new strategies to celebrate, preserve, and strengthen the cultural vibrancies of Near NorthWest neighborhoods in Chicago, IL and maintain their existing housing affordability.

Bickerdike Redevelopment Corporation

Celebrating over 50 years, Bickerdike is a nonprofit community development corporation dedicated to preserving the ethnic and cultural character of the Latino neighborhoods they serve, while also improving the economic conditions of the communities. Providing over 1,646 affordable units with several award winning developments, they strive to provide quality affordable housing to negate the impacts of gentrification and displacement.

Hispanic Housing Development Corporation

Established in 1976 to focus on affordable housing development in Latino neighborhoods, HHDC has developed 4,400 apartments and homes for families and seniors with a development value in excess of half a billion dollars, and housing over 11,000 residents in Illinois, Wisconsin, Michigan and Indiana.

Latin United Community Housing Association

Founded in 1982, LUCHA is an affordable housing advocate and service provider. The organization is dedicated to the fulfillment of housing as a human right, the empowerment of Latino communities and communities of color. The organization pursues integrating affordable housing with green construction and seeks to promote the health and wellness of the community.

The Puerto Rican Agenda

A volunteer and community run organization made up of Puerto Rican leaders in Chicago seeking to influence public policy to promote the advancements of Puerto Ricans. Their efforts include affordable housing, health, culture, education and human rights. Currently, the PRA is in the midst of 3Rs (Rescue, Relief, Rebuild) for Puerto Rico; a campaign to assist those affected by Hurricane Maria.

The Puerto Rican Cultural Center

The Puerto Rican Cultural Center is a community-based, grassroots, educational, health and cultural services organization founded on the principles of self-determination, self-actualization and self-sufficiency that is activist-oriented.
GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Long Term Affordability
While there are numerous solutions to the housing crisis, we recognize that the challenges facing Latino low-income families are long-term. If we depart from the basic premise that housing is a right, then affordable housing should be provided for as long as someone needs it. We need to not only develop affordable housing but also maintain affordable housing as low-income neighborhoods become mixed-income.

Diversity
Housing is for everyone. Chicago residents must dedicate themselves explicitly to providing a more equitable city structure that allows for macro and micro diversity. Protecting and empowering people from diverse backgrounds—older adults, veterans, LGBTQIA, single mothers and their children—as integral residents.

Sustainability
In addition to economic stability for all residents, we must continue to strive for a more environmentally sustainable city in order to protect the livelihood of future generations, ensuring that they may recover from natural disasters and will not be forced to migrate because of a lack of basic needs.

Health and Wellness
Environment and housing have been strongly linked to health and wellness outcomes. Housing must encourage good health for all residents through design, and through the implementation of Health Impact Assessments. Neighborhoods must contribute through access to healthy food, physical activity, and places to gather and connect with others. Accordingly, green space must be prioritized for Latino communities.

Building Preservation
Buildings hold stories and cultural identities. Treasuring older buildings allows for a deeper connection to place, sustainable practices, and preservation of natural housing affordability.

Community Engagement, Advocacy, and Education
A successful housing plan requires partnership with local housing organizations, service providers, government, politicians, and residents to ensure that housing needs and opportunities are addressed. Putting residents and low-income individuals at the center ensures that programs created are responsive and effective.
VISION

**Housing is a Human Right**
Housing is a basic human need and should be treated as more than a luxury for the wealthy.

**Housing for All**
Everyone has unique housing needs near their economic livelihood. Housing must reflect the unique needs of everyone in a city.

**Housing Provides Stability in People**
The foundation of physical, mental, social, and economic well-being lies in adequate housing.

**Development without Displacement**
Current development practices often funnel money past existing residents, depleting their economic opportunities. Growing cities have the opportunity to build community wealth among existing residents and foster stronger and healthier communities through the addition of amenities.

GOALS

**Affordable Housing in Gentrifying Neighborhoods**
Identify gentrifying neighborhoods and the risks to affordability in order to provide appropriate affordable housing solutions.

**Meet Latino Housing Needs**
Latinos are underrepresented in affordable housing and home ownership. Identifying unique needs and providing opportunities for greater access to Latinos is imperative to the success of the community.
COMMUNITY TIMELINE
A Brief History of Affordable Housing Organizations in Chicago

1960
- Division Street Riots, Puerto Rican Rebellion

1966
- Bickerdike breaks ground on first affordable housing project

1967
- Bickerdike Redevelopment Corporation is founded through Northwest Community Organization
- Kerner Commission Report outlines de facto segregation in cities and white racism

1968
- The Fair Housing Act is passed

1969
- Bickerdike starts constructing 90 single family homes and flats to provide community stabilization

1975
- The Hispanic Housing Development Corporation (HHDC) is founded

1977
- Puerto Rican Rebellion occurs in Humboldt Park, leaving two residents dead
- Community Reinvestment Act is passed to stop redlining

1981
- Bickerdike establishes Humboldt Construction Company

1982
- LUCHA United Community Housing Association (LUCHA) is founded

1982
- Financing for Bickerdike's first rental project, West Town Housing Partners Phase I, is approved

1983
- HHDC creates a Property Management Division
- HHDC's first HUD 202 financial development, Lin Moradas, is constructed

1988
- Bickerdike increases staff to 25 and expands services to include development, property management, and community organizing

1989
- LUCHA acquires its first building, Berinson Apartments

1990
- Holiday caroling in front of the Governor's mansion helps to approve an affordable rental development in Humboldt Park

1991
- Paul Roland, the President of HHDC, establishes the Hipolita and Teresa Roland Community Development Scholarship Fund
- The Puerto Rican Agenda is formed

1993
- Puerto Rican Agenda Summit outlines Passo Berlina

1994
- Class action lawsuit filed against HUD and FHA for underserving minority communities with housing assistance

1995
- Dedication of the Puerto Rican Flag at entrance of Passo Berlina
- LUCHA completes its first SRO development, Humboldt Park Residence and services rental

Key Historical Dates
Significant dates important to the three mission-oriented developers: Bickerdike, HHDC, LUCHA
COMMUNITY TIMELINE

A Brief History of Affordable Housing Organizations in Chicago

Bickerdike Redevelopment Corporation (Bickerdike), Hispanic Housing Development Corporation (HHDC), Latin United Community Housing Association (LUCHA)

1956
HHDC creates a Business Development Division to further its work in stabilizing Chicago neighborhoods

1997
Bickerdike begins to pursue property tax reform

2001
HHDC’s first LIHTC financed senior property, James Snead, is constructed

2006
Bickerdike’s developments receive two national awards: Freddie Mac Foundation’s Maxwell Award and the KM Rowe Award

2008
HHDC’s first part family and part elderly housing, Armitage Commons, is constructed

2008
LUCHA builds Marvins Bridges, dedicated to single mothers in Humboldt Park

2009
Bickerdike opens Harold Washington Unity Co-op

2009
LUCHA partners with Freddie Mac to house one of 14 Borrower Helps Centers in the US

2011
HHDC creates a community energy company called Affordable Community Energy (ACE)

2014
Opening of El Rescate: a transitional housing center for LGBTQIA+ Latino youth

2015
Bickerdike wins the CNDA preservation project of the year and Zapata Apartments receives the National Development Council’s Chairperson’s Award for Excellence in Community Impact

2015
LUCHA partners with Freddie Mac to house one of 14 Borrower Helps Centers in the US

2016
Bickerdike’s developments receive two national awards: Freddie Mac Foundation’s Maxwell Award and the KM Rowe Award

2017
Bickerdike rides a transitional housing center for Latino youth

2018
LUCHA establishes the Household Foundations Pilot Project

2018
LUCHA begins building the first multi-family passive house in Illinois

2020
LUCHA has built or rehabbed 950 homes and currently manages 1,200 units of affordable housing divided across four developments spanning the Humboldt Park, West Town and Logan Square communities. LUCHA serves 6,000 low- to moderate-income clients per year (50% Latino, 28% African-American, 7% White, 8% Asian, 1% other) through its programs and services.

TO DATE
Bickerdike Redevelopment Corporation has developed 1,475 homes, been involved in property and asset management of 1,090 affordable apartments, made 1,351 repairs and adaptations for local seniors, registered thousands of voters, and leads hundreds of community leaders in advocating for progressive community change.

TO DATE
Hispanic Housing Development Corporation has completed 55 real estate projects totaling $456,799,000 in development cost including developing 4,369 units of housing, acquiring 4,200 homes since 1970, managing 3,815 units in 270 buildings, preserving 1,700 units of affordable housing, and serving a total of 7,295 tenants.
DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

Source: 2016 American Community Survey

**Highest Population**
- Belmont Cragin 98,197
- Logan Square 71,390
- Austin 65,715
- Irving Park 60,581
- Portage Park 56,210
- Hermosa 48,071
- Avondale 46,206
- Humboldt Park 38,629
- West Town 34,725
- Dunning 32,050
- Albany Park 25,003
- Montclare 18,150

**Highest Percentage**
- Hermosa 81%
- Belmont Cragin 65%
- Avondale 53%
- Logan Square 50%
- Humboldt Park 50%
- Albany Park 48%
- Irving Park 47%
- Portage Park 44%
- Montclare 42%
- Austin 31%
- Dunning 30%
- West Town 24%
The Latino population is growing at a rapid rate and moving away from the north side over to the northwest side, while also dispersing to different parts of Chicago.

**PROJECTIONS**
One million Latinos in Chicago by 2040

Source: Census and American Community Survey, Social Explorer
Latino families in particular tend to be overburden by housing costs. Latinos tend to have larger households: 3.46 people in comparison to 2.41 people for African Americans and 2.11 people for whites.

Majority Young Adult Areas (18 to 34)  Majority Older Adult Areas (65+)

Richer blues show area with higher concentrations of young adult (18-34) and older adult (65+), respectively. In 2010 about 25% of Puerto Ricans in Chicago over the age of 65 lived alone and on average earned a median annual household income of $16,804.
This map shows how the Latino population (in green) has been growing since 1980.

Despite its growth, the Latino population has been moving and dispersing in the northwest direction further from the central business district, its amenities, and historical communities.

This movement, to some extent, is attributed to gentrification.

Source: Census and American Community Survey, Social Explorer
Mapping incomes from 1980-2016, adjusted by inflation, show that where Latinos historically used to live are today high income neighborhoods. There is a clear link between increasing rents, and the displacement of low-income individuals.

**LATINO RENT PAYMENTS IN CHICAGO**

**COST BURDEN FOR LATINOS RENTERS & OWNERS**

Source: Census and American Community Survey, Social Explorer, adjusted for inflation
SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS OF LATINOS

EDUCATION LEVELS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Level</th>
<th>Latino</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>White</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Graduate School</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor's</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some College</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than High School</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Latinos have the lowest education attainment of any racial/ethnic group. Latinos have tended to lag behind whites in their rates of employment, presence in high-paying occupations, and overall levels of earnings which affect home affordability.

MEDIAN INCOME

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Median Income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>$30,755</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>$48,853</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>$65,624</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>$81,973</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chicago median incomes by racial and ethnic group. While median incomes have remained stagnant for all groups, incomes in communities of color lag.

Source: 2016 American Community Survey
AREAS WITH RISING PRICES
and at Risk of Displacement

Lower-Cost Neighborhoods
Lower-cost areas have a somewhat lower risk of displacement in the near-term. Long-term displacement is a more pressing concern in these areas. Changing market conditions, proximity to strong markets, or new investment may attract speculative investment. Acquisition of land for future affordable development and helping renters become homeowners are opportunities in these areas.

Source: 2016 American Community Survey

Medium-Cost Neighborhoods
Rising costs in these areas will increase displacement due to larger concentrations of vulnerable, cost-burdened populations. Values are still generally affordable but are increasing at a higher than average rate. Preserving existing affordable housing and expanding funding for affordable housing construction are potential opportunities in these areas.

High-Cost Neighborhoods
High values areas may currently be experiencing displacement and have large shares of vulnerable populations. Affordable housing must compete with market-rate developers in these locations. Including affordable units in new development and expanding funding for mission-driven developers may preserve affordability here.

Source: The Institute of Housing Studies

RENTAL COST BURDEN

The map above displays the average percentage of a household’s income that tenants spend on rent. There is significant overlap between the areas at risk of displacement in the map on the left and rental cost burden on the right. Areas with the highest cost burden may be the result of lower incomes than particularly higher rents.

Regardless of the cause, the map on the right was a factor in determining the neighborhoods at risk of displacement on the left. These pressures continue to unequally effect poorer neighborhoods and communities of color.

Source: The Institute of Housing Studies
80,345 People in Chicago are estimated to be homeless. Over 10% of the Chicago homeless population is Latino. There is 5,000 homelessness youth, 3,000 are LGBTQIA.

“Lesley Gonzalez and her mother returning to their former block in the Logan Square neighborhood of Chicago. After living there for 17 years, a developer bought their building and evicted them. As rents in the neighborhood have soared beyond their means, the Gonzalezes now live four miles north, far from the community they’re accustomed to.”


2016 Evictions through Cook County Sheriff by Zip Code

Sources:
Homeless stats from La Casa Norte
Evictions: Cook County Sheriff Department
According to U.S. Census data, in 1970, more than 60 percent of all the Puerto Ricans in the City of Chicago lived in West Town. Today, Puerto Ricans are more dispersed, and only about 30 percent live in this neighborhood. However, most Puerto Ricans concentrate in the west side of West Town, near Humboldt Park.

By analyzing data from the 2010 census, we can see that West Town as a whole presented indisputable signs associated with gentrification. Compared to other community areas in Chicago West Town has among the highest median house values, percent of homeowners, young people aged 25 to 34, white people, individuals with bachelor's degrees and working in managerial professions, along with the lowest percentages of minorities, children, elderly, and families living in poverty.

Source: Decennial Census
A reason for the dispersing of Latinos can be directly attributed to impacts of new developments. Take for example The 606 in Logan Square and Humboldt Park. Market pressures moving westward have been driving up values in the community for years.

As reported by the Institute for Housing Studies’ “Measuring the Impact of The 606” report, in 2015 single-family homes within 0.6 from The 606 west were selling for about $100,000 more than they would have without the linear park.

The map above shows where a significant share of residents are vulnerable to displacement because there is a mismatch between current incomes, rents and home values, as well as a large percentage of renters and cost burdened households. The 606 contributes largely to significant raising prices and the vulnerability of low-income households.

Source: The Institute of Housing Study, DePaul University (top) and 2017 Real Estate Center’s Institute for Housing Studies (right).
There are a number of submarkets in the Latino Influence Area, from “at risk of rapid change” in dark blue (like Humboldt Park and west West Town) to “strong markets” shown in green (such as east West Town, Logan Square, small parts of Humboldt Park, Irving Park, and Albany Park).

Neighborhoods in the Latino Influence Area are mostly light blue which is characterized by: Large Households, Moderate Vacancy, High Foreclosure, Low and Moderate Incomes, and largely composed of Renters. Most of these neighborhoods perhaps, with the exception of Portage Park, are dominated by renters.

Source: The Institute of Housing Study, DePaul University
Latinos are more burdened by high-cost loans than non-Latinos due to insufficient credit score or history, inability to afford the down payment or closing costs, and the limited resources available to them.
UNEQUAL ACCESS TO CHA’s HOUSING PROGRAMS

Latinos are underrepresented in Chicago’s Housing Authority (CHA) affordable housing programs, while they are over represented in terms of income eligible households.

Participation of Latinos account for 11% in Public Housing and 8.7% of the Housing Choice Voucher Program, according to the CHA 2016 Q4 report.

However, Latinos make up 25% and 23% respectively, of the income eligible population for CHA’s Public Housing and Housing Choice Voucher Program.

An additional 6,679 Latino households would need access to the Housing Choice Voucher Program to reach equitable participation.

Source: Latino Policy Forum analysis of Chicago Housing Authority’s 2016 Q4 report.
UNEQUAL ACCESS TO CHA’s HOUSING PROGRAMS

2000 To 2011 Latino Income Eligible & Latino Participation in Housing Choice Voucher Program

Map showing HUD/LIHTC developments within Latino Communities.
THE QUALITY OF HOUSING NEEDS TO BE IMPROVED

These maps depict housing quality showing density of renter occupied housing units and owner occupied housing units with negative financial or physical conditions.

A condition includes lacking plumbing and kitchen facilities, having 1.01 or more occupants per room, having selected monthly owner costs as a percentage of household income > 30%, and having gross rent as a percentage of household income greater than 30%.
Bickerdike Redevelopment Corporation has developed 1,646 homes, been involved in property and asset management of 1,094 affordable apartments, and has made 1,321 repairs and adaptations for local seniors.

Hispanic Housing has completed 55 real estate projects totaling $458,789,000 in development cost including developing 4,369 units of housing, acquiring 4,200 homes since 1976, managing 3,815 units in 270 buildings, preserving 1,700 units of affordable housing, and serving a total of 7,295 tenants.

LUCHA has built or rehabbed 690 homes and currently manages 198 units of affordable housing divided across four developments spanning the Humboldt Park, West Town and Logan Square communities.
FOUR KEY POLICIES IDENTIFIED BY THE PUERTO RICAN AGENDA

1. Increase affordable housing in the Northwest Side to address the gap of about 41,248 shortage of units for low-income residents living in these neighborhoods, many of whom are Latino.

2. Real Estate Tax exemption for affordable housing is cited as one of the most effective tools in ensuring that housing stays affordable and remains available for intended residents.

3. Establish a “Puerto Rico Town” at the state level to create a Special Purpose District to preserve cultural identity and designate Puerto Rico Town by the state of Illinois instead of only at the city level.

4. Greater distribution of CHA resources to Latino residents and Puerto Rican evacuees through targeted deployment of development funding, vouchers, and other CHA resources to communities on the Northwest side.
FOUR KEY POLICIES IDENTIFIED BY THE PUERTO RICAN AGENDA

1. INCREASE AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN THE NORTHWEST SIDE

According to the report “2018 State of Rental Housing in Cook County” by the Institute for Housing Studies at DePaul in 2016, the affordable housing gap in areas that included Latinos in the North West Side is estimated to be about 41,249 units. Bickerdike, Hispanic Housing, and LUCHA urge policy makers to support increasing the housing supply in order to better serve the unmet demand of Latinos and other low-income residents living in the North West Side of Chicago.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub Market</th>
<th>Affordable Supply</th>
<th>Affordable Demand</th>
<th>Gap</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Irving Park/Albany Park</td>
<td>9,359</td>
<td>13,635</td>
<td>4,276</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portage Park/Jefferson Park</td>
<td>6,489</td>
<td>10,057</td>
<td>3,568</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austin/Belmont Cragin</td>
<td>15,736</td>
<td>24,770</td>
<td>9,035</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logan Square/Avondale</td>
<td>9,666</td>
<td>15,864</td>
<td>6,198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humboldt Park/Garfield Park</td>
<td>23,551</td>
<td>32,890</td>
<td>9,340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Town/Near West Side</td>
<td>14,524</td>
<td>23,356</td>
<td>8,832</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Data for 2018 IHS State of Rental Housing in Cook County Report, American Community Survey PUMS Data 1-Year, 2014-2016
In gentrifying neighborhoods it becomes increasingly difficult for non-profit developers to be able to afford rising taxes. This is why many affordable housing developers across the country choose to eventually move to neighborhoods that are more affordable than the ones that initially drove their mission. This model goes against the goal of creating mixed-income neighborhoods that are livable and provide access to opportunity.

Nationwide, 100 percent tax exemptions for affordable housing developers is cited as one of the most effective tools in ensuring that housing stays affordable and remains available for its intended residents. It lowers housing development and management costs so the savings can be passed on to renters in the form of lower rents. Moreover, housing providers can invest those funds in the production of new affordable housing developments or in providing improved services for their tenants.

The Puerto Rican Agenda believes that this legislation should be created at the city level to specifically benefit housing providers that cater to households that earn less than 60 percent of the area median income, like those developments from LUCHA, Bickerdike and Hispanic Housing.
3. ESTABLISH A “PUERTO RICO TOWN” AT THE STATE LEVEL

“Paseo Boricua has become the economic, political, and cultural Puerto Rican capital of the Midwest. For years, it’s been the only officially recognized Puerto Rican neighborhood in the country. Millions of dollars are spent at three major annual festivals such as the world-renowned Puerto Rican People’s Parade, the Fiesta Boricua Festival, and the Three Kings’ Day celebration. So, it’s time we recognize our unique identity as a cultural and economic driver called Puerto Rico Town”

- Alderman Roberto Maldonado

- Dr. Mindy Thompson Fullilove, Keynote Speaker, Housing Summit 2018

On October 31, 2018, the City of Chicago declared the space along Division Street where Paseo Boricua is located “Puerto Rico Town.” The ordinance proposed by Alderman Maldonado and approved by City Council zoned the area as a Special Purpose District. This means that the area would receive priority when making investment decisions. The additional investments for existing as well as new businesses would also create employment and serve as an economic engine for the area. Also, other activities that promote art and culture would be favored for funding because these activities help to preserve the community’s unique identity.

The Puerto Rican Agenda would like state legislators to create a Special Purpose District to designate Puerto Rico Town by the state of Illinois instead of only at the city level. The resolution that they are proposing would be similar to a Resolution Historic District Designation with financial incentives for projects developed in the area. The Agenda is currently leading what could be a national model; they are working with Hispanic Federation to expand this idea as a model for other U.S. cities where Puerto Ricans are concentrated.
4. IMPROVE DISTRIBUTION OF CHA RESOURCES TO LATINO RESIDENTS & PUERTO RICAN EVACUEES

Dineyshka, a young mother of three, recently moved into LUCHA’s Passive House. She evacuated Puerto Rico after Hurricane Maria and has been struggling to make a new life here, having doubled-up with family members in Joliet, then moving to Chicago with big hopes only to wind up on the streets with her children. Thanks to LUCHA’s collaboration with FEMA, HUD, CHA, and Humble Design, she can celebrate the holidays in a safe, warm home. Photo: LUCHA.

Two of CHA’s largest programs—Public Housing and Housing Choice Voucher program, formerly known as the Section 8 housing program—fall short in connecting Latino families with affordable housing options. Latinos make up 25% and 23% of the income eligible population for CHA’s Public Housing and Housing Voucher programs. However, Latinos only account for 11% and 8.7%, respectively, of the participants in these programs. CHA should address this gap by partnering with local community organizations to connect eligible Latinos with the resources and information to enroll in these CHA programs.

In addition to the redistribution of voucher resources for existing affordable housing, the CHA has the opportunity to address the need for new affordable housing developments in Latino communities. CHA should focus on deploying capital dollars for development of new affordable housing in Latino communities on the Northwest side.

The Agenda also advocates for increased CHA resources for Puerto Rican evacuees displaced by Hurricane Maria. Some evacuees were able to access funding through TSA assistance and FEMA, but it resulted in temporary scattered housing across the Chicagoland area, rather than keeping evacuees near family and the resources of the Latino communities on the Northwest side. We can get closer to the goal of keeping evacuees housing in these neighborhoods of choice with assistance from CHA to (i) allow voucher holders from Puerto Rico to port vouchers and (ii) allow the conversion of vouchers to public housing. Having improved access to data will also assist the Agenda’s efforts to address the evacuee crisis. CHA can assist by supplying data on (1) the number of Puerto Rican families and individual evacuees assisted by CHA to date, and (2) the number of vouchers issued to evacuees to date.

The Puerto Rican Agenda has been working with the City of Chicago to find housing opportunities to assist evacuees. From fall 2017 to summer of 2018, the Agenda advocated for rental support for evacuees to ease relocating to Chicago. The City of Chicago invested $270,000 to provide housing assistance to 30 families after their FEMA voucher program expired. These funds prevented families from becoming homeless. From the Agenda’s “3R’s for Puerto Rico: Rescue, Relief, Rebuild,” fundraising campaign, the Agenda dedicated $25,000 for evacuee housing purposes, which provided rental subsidies for qualifying families up to $3,000 to cover rental deposit, first month’s rent, and case management.
ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Targeted Focus

Inclusionary Housing of affordable housing units in new market rate developments for individuals (studios and one bedrooms) and families (two or more bedrooms) proportionate to current neighborhood composition.

Communal Forms of Ownership from Coops to Community Land Trust (CLT) in Latino majority neighborhoods to promote the preservation of permanent affordable housing.

Build Affordable Housing for Diverse Groups such as older adults, youth, families, veterans, LGBTQIA* individuals, formerly homeless individuals, people with disabilities, HIV patients, students, artists, teachers, employees, and multi-generational households. The Penny Cuff Apartments exemplifies this goal.

Transitional Housing with a special focus on Latinos like El Rescate from the Puerto Rican Cultural Center and La Casa Norte developments.

Transit Oriented Development Communities Encouraged by Transit, Pedestrian and Cycling Investments like the new Emmett Street project in Logan Square. Each new investment should include an impact plan and an affordable housing plan.

Work Force or Employer Assisted Housing for moderate to low-income health care providers in the proposed Community Wellness District Plan of the Norwegian American Hospital, like the Teacher’s Village project in East Humboldt Park.

Work-Live Spaces provide appropriately-sized commercial spaces below affordable housing for tenants to work in their own neighborhood like the Paseo Boricua Arts Building.
Expand

**Longtime Occupant Homeowner Exemption, which provides Property Tax Abatement** to vulnerable homeowners who have held their property for over 10 years.

**Participation of the Chicago Low-Income Housing Trust Fund (CLIHTF) in Latino Communities** to maintain small landlords with 2 and 3 flats in their buildings as well as their low-income tenants.

**Resources for Energy Efficient Adaptations** furthering funding assistance toward affordable housing and long-time or at-risk homeowners.

**The 606 Bloomingdale Trail Home Improvement Program** would provide forgivable home improvement grants to owner-occupants of one- to four-unit properties along 1.5 miles of the trail.

**City Lots for Working Families Program** provides vacant City-owned lots to developers of affordable single-family homes and two flats for $1 each.

**Preservation of Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing (NOAH)** through an Anti-Demolition Ordinance which taxes new demolitions, thus limiting condominium conversion permits.

**Preservation of Existing Affordable Rental (PEAR)** program refines private sector debt on residential properties with six or more units, ensuring at least 20% of the units will be affordable to tenants earning up to 80% of area median income over a 30-year term.
Support

**Affordable Requirement Ordinance (ARO) and 3 Year Pilot Program** along the Milwaukee Avenue corridor in Logan Square and Wicker Park requires: (1) all the affordable units must be built within the Pilot area and, (2) affordability to be increased from 10 percent to 15 percent of units, with an additional increase up to 20% for units built off-site. Individuals up to 80 percent AMI will be eligible for the units.

**Priority use of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) dollars for affordable housing.**

**Legalization of Coach Houses**, garden apartments, and other accessory dwelling units (ADUs) to increase affordable housing options.

**Fast Track Approval for Developments Providing Affordable Housing** on multi-family units providing over 50% affordability.

**Vacancy Tax** for buildings unoccupied for more than 180 days to encourage rental and to discourage speculation.

**Property Tax Assessment Reform** to supervise property valuation and assessment activities and provide for financing of reassessments. Property taxes on sliding scale fee or based on income, and tax could be deferred until sale.

Photo: LUCHA murals
Conclusion

This report has shown that the Latino, in particular the Puerto Rican population, has experienced continuous displacement moving north and west from the Chicago’s Central Business District. Because of the continuous development of new businesses and high rises along transportation and green lines, which end up rising rents and property taxes, the Latino community struggles to stay in neighborhoods such as Logan Square, West Town, and Humboldt Park.

Affordable housing developers like Bickerdike, LUCHA, and Hispanic Housing are ensuring that housing remains affordable for individuals and families who earn less than 60 percent of the Area Median Income. Along with the Puerto Rican Agenda these three housing developers have identified four key strategies to fight gentrification and displacement on Chicago’s Near Northwest Side: (1) Increase affordable housing in the North West Side, (2) Tax exemption for affordable housing developers, (3) Establish a “Puerto Rico Town” at the state level and, (4) Stronger, streamlined Puerto Rican evacuee relief efforts.

Besides these four recommendations, the report has identified additional strategies to target, expand, and support affordable housing in the Northwest Side. This report is intended to communicate with residents and policymakers the current status of Latinos and housing in the and, most importantly, what can be done. The Puerto Rican Agenda will be dedicating the rest of 2019 to advocate for these policies at meetings, press conferences, and everywhere they can. The Agenda encourages residents and decision makers to discuss the potential strategies provided in the report to also advocate and inform housing developers and public elected officials.

While this report doesn’t offer a silver bullet to fix to the lack of affordable housing in the city, it establishes the steps toward progress in ensuring housing as a human right for Latino families. By conversing about the necessity of affordable housing, it can unite the community to take a stand on sustaining and creating a stock of affordable housing in Latino neighborhoods, especially as median housing costs keep rising. In addition, collaboration efforts should be developed to work among housing developers, political officials, and active residents. This collective agenda can serve to inform Latinos on the issues of affordable housing in Chicago that are faced by current tenants and cultivate potential solutions to implement in the community.