



NetworkNews

February 2017: News and Updates from the Chicago Rehab Network

In this issue: | [Updates from CRN's 2017 Winter Membership Meeting](#)| [City Launches New Zoning Map](#) | [The Vacant Lots Program is Live!](#) | [Buyer for United Steel South Works Site Announced](#) | [Donation Tax Credit Officially Renewed!](#) | [HUD Exit Memo](#) | [4th Ward Candidates Forums](#) | [Chicago Schools Remain Shuttered](#) |

Updates from CRN's 2017 Winter Membership Meeting



On Friday, January 27, CRN hosted President and CEO Diane Yentel of the National Low Income Housing Coalition for a robust discussion on the future of affordable housing policy across the country. Aldermen Moore and Burnett provided commentary and updates about their respective wards, and Commissioner Boykin joined us to discuss his recently proposed

Revitalization Act.

Last Friday's meeting opened with a round of introductions and updates from the attendees, who represented a broad cross section of the Chicago affordable housing community- from Alderman to architects, and developers to financiers. The discussion soon broadened as President Yentel of NLIHC gave updates about the rapidly changing political climate in D.C. and the almost certain appointment of Dr. Ben Carson to the position of HUD director (access his written testimony [here](#)). She reaffirmed the audience's mutual interest in championing affordable housing, stating the unfortunate fact that 7.2 million affordable units are currently needed to close the nation's housing gap. Yentel underscored the need to keeping affordable housing as a central focus, for \$19.98 is the current hourly wage required to afford a 2 bedroom apartment in Illinois and approximately 400,000 households within the state are severely cost burdened, paying more than 50% of their income for housing. To learn more and take action on a national level, visit the [NLIHC website](#).



Commissioner Richard Boykin of Cook County's 1st District joined in the latter half of the morning to provide an overview of his Revitalization Act, which proposes bringing teachers, firefighters, EMTs, paramedics, and police officers to live in the neighborhoods in which they

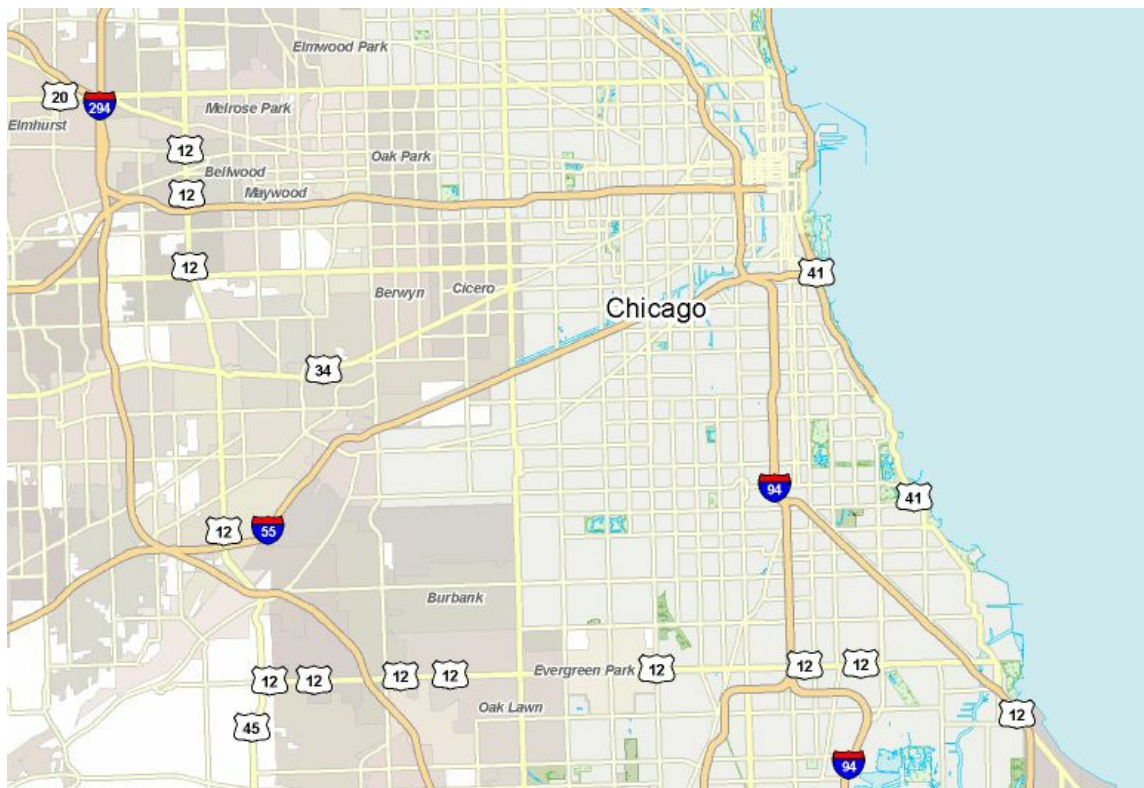
work. By offering these critical personnel housing at next to no cost, under the condition that they occupy these homes for 5 or more years, the Revitalization Act proposes to strengthen communities block-by-block while increasing neighborhood safety and stability. In addition, Boykin stated that the act would require that 30% of all construction be performed by local youth between the ages of 16 and 25, ideally bringing work to at-risk individuals. Commissioner Boykin plans to present this to the Cook County Board on the morning of February 8th.

Although those present were rightly concerned by the uncertainty that the new administration in Washington brings, fruitful dialogue was had throughout the meeting, with commitments to fight for affordable housing being continually expressed. As always, stay tuned for more updates from CRN.



City Launches New Online Zoning Map

Available to view [here](#), the new zoning map provides searchable zoning and related information for all parcels located within the city's borders. It also enables users to search Sidwell maps, 80-acre maps, Planned Developments, Tax Increment Financing Districts, Landmark Districts, historic properties, transit stations, and other features.



Vacant Lot Program Up and Running!



As of February 1st, approximately 4,300 parcels of tax-delinquent vacant land are now available for purchase through the Cook County Land Bank Authority. As stated in CCLBA's press release:

Most of the 4,437 blighted properties are in areas once home to either bustling industries that suffered as a result of the manufacturing decline or dealt a blow during the foreclosure crisis in Chicago and suburban Cook County. These lots now will have an opportunity to transform communities via partnerships with community-based developers as well as local not-for-profits, block clubs, community organizations, homeowners and others to revitalize and reboot distressed neighborhoods, reduce unnecessary vacancies and fill unique community needs, whether it be community gardens, play lots, basketball courts, open space. Many such properties have been vacant for five to ten years, creating blight and dragging down the livelihood of their communities.

The program works by eliminating existing tax burdens to make these properties more financially appealing to the community groups that may wish to acquire and improve them, with property transfer being completed in less than six months. For more information on how to apply to purchase a lot, click [here](#).

Buyer for United Steel South Works Site Announced

On Monday, January 30, US Steel announced the sale of its 430 acre South Works site to the Spanish developer Barcelona Housing Systems and WELink.

The former steelworks is planned to eventually hold approximately 12,000 units of housing, making it one of the largest developments in Chicago history. While there is currently no timeline announced, the project is slated to take place in four phases of 3,000 units each. Read more [here](#).



Image from DNAinfo

Donation Tax Credit Officially Renewed!

Five More Years of the Illinois Affordable Housing Tax Credit Assured

In case you missed our updates near the end of last month, the Illinois Affordable Housing Tax Credit (or Donation Tax Credit as it is commonly known), was officially renewed by Governor Rauner on December 20, 2016! Since its initial passage in 2001, the IAHTC has preserved or created over 17,000 homes, provided key financing for property-tax paying developments representing over \$3.3 billion in invested in 51 of 59 Illinois State Senate Districts, and supported more than 25,000 jobs with over \$1 billion generated in wages and business income.

Learn more about the Donation Tax Credit [here](#) and [here](#).

Outgoing HUD Cabinet Publishes Exit Memo

In early January, outgoing HUD Secretary Julian Castro published an open memo to the American people, strongly reinforcing what many of us in the affordable housing and community development fields have long understood; that housing is the foundation on which stable, safe, and healthy lives are built.

Celebrating HUD's successes under the Obama Administration while pointing out some of the areas in which the department must continue to work, the memo speaks broadly to the current state of the multitude of programs that have been created, preserved, or expanded throughout the past eight years. To read the memo, click [here](#).



Housing as a Platform for Opportunity

A Memo to the American People

Secretary Julian Castro

4th Ward Candidates' Forums

Hyde Park-Kenwood Community Conference forum, 10:30 a.m. Saturday at
Kenwood Academy, 5015 S. Blackstone Ave.

South Loop Neighbors forum, 7 p.m. Wednesday at Grace Episcopal Church, 637 S.
Dearborn Ave.

Gap Community Association and League of Women Voters forum, 6:30 p.m. Feb. 9 at
Hartzell Memorial Methodist Church, 3330 S. Martin Luther King Drive.

Bronzeville Neighborhood Collective, 6 p.m. Feb. 21 at Kenicott Park field house,
4434 S. Lake Park Ave.

Chicago Votes and University of Chicago Democracy Initiative Circle forum, 6 p.m.
Feb. 23 at Chapin Hall, 1313 E. 60th St.

The special election to replace former Ald. Will Burns for the 4th Ward will be February 28.
For more information on the 4th Ward, click [here](#).

Chicago Schools Remain Shuttered

**THE CHICAGO
REPORTER**

Investigating Race & Poverty Since 1972

A series of articles from The Chicago Reporter tracks the 50 schools on Chicago's South and West sides that were closed in 2013, finding that many remain unused. When the under-enrolled schools were initially closed, Mayor Emanuel stated that the buildings would be available for rehabilitation to suit their communities' needs, but The Chicago Reporter finds that approximately two thirds of the buildings remain shuttered. Read more and track the series of articles [here](#).

Thank You to CRN's Recent Supporters

Thanks to recent investments from our generous supporters, CRN is able to continue necessary programming that encourages development without displacement.





P O L K B R O S F O U N D A T I O N
a foundation for chicago families



About the Chicago Rehab Network

For over 35 years, CRN has worked to train, coordinate and empower community-based organizations engaged in developing affordable housing across Chicago and the region. CRN's robust advocacy efforts also have resulted in numerous affordable housing policies and resources, including the Affordable Requirements Ordinance, the Tax Reactivation Program, State of Illinois Housing Trust Fund, various property tax reforms, and the Illinois Affordable Housing Tax Credit. In addition to advocacy and training, CRN provides industry-wide thought leadership through regular policy updates, best practice case studies, and demographic and economic analysis related to housing needs and markets.

www.chicagorehab.org

For 35 years, the Chicago Rehab Network has played a leadership role in bringing affordable housing to Chicago's most disinvested communities. Support our work building strong neighborhoods, strengthening capacity, and creating powerful leaders.

