

May 15, 2020

Dear Committee on Finance,

On behalf of the Metropolitan Planning Council (MPC), I strongly support the issuance of Multi-Family Housing Revenue Notes, Series 2020A and Series 2020B, for costs of acquisition of real property located at 2602-2638 N. Emmett Street, construction thereon of the Emmett Street Apartments, and to pay costs of issuance of the Notes and related costs of the Project.

In 2014, MPC partnered with the 35th Ward Office and stakeholders to host a series of public workshops through the Corridor Development Initiative (CDI) about the future of this site just above the Logan Square CTA station. CDI is a participatory planning process that engages communities in proactively planning for real-world development scenarios. Through three public workshops, an online survey and text polling, over 370 participants engaged with us and with one another, sharing a wide range of opinions about the community's needs and which of those could be met by redevelopment of the Logan Square Blue Line station area. Ultimately, the community identified affordable housing as their top priority for the use of limited public subsidy. We believe this current proposal directly aligns with the priorities that emerged from that participatory process.

Building more affordable housing in Logan Square is also critical for advancing racial equity in Chicago. In recent years, MPC has led research and developed policy proposals related to the deeply entrenched racial and economic segregation in our region. As you know, over 20,000 Latinx Chicagoans have moved out of Logan Square since 2000 driven by rising housing costs that have outpaced local incomes. The unjust displacement of Latinx families only serves to perpetuate our existing segregation, making the production of affordable housing in Logan Square all the more critical for advancing equity in Chicago.

Last, MPC encourages growth near public transit to create thriving, balanced and mixed income communities, and to ensure that the benefits of transit-oriented are experienced by people of all income levels. Equitable transit-oriented development (eTOD) advocates that people of all incomes experience the benefits of dense, mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented development near transit hubs. In fact, the blocks neighboring the current parking lot have among the lowest car ownership rates in the 35th Ward, with only 34% of residents owning a vehicle. The proposed affordable housing development is an important opportunity to advance equitable TOD in Chicago, and one that will have minimal impact on nearby parking given the already low rates of car ownership in the area.

MPC wholeheartedly supports the Emmett Street affordable housing proposal as one of the many needed steps the city can take to advance a more equitable future.

Sincerely,

Juan Sebastian Arias, Manager

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