

Gentrification pushback: City could pay homeowners in hot areas not to sell

The area around the 606 trail is so hot some residents get daily unsolicited offers

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The 606 trail (Credit: David Wilson via Flickr)

The residential market near the western end of the 606 trail is so hot that some residents say they get daily unsolicited offers to sell their homes.

Some have even taken to warning off pushy potential buyers with signs on their door that say: “Not for sale. Don’t knock.”

Now, the city is proposing a new program would devote \$1 million to helping encourage residents in the neighborhood — and other gentrifying areas — not to sell their homes, according to Crain’s.

Under the program, the city would provide loan grants of up to \$25,000 to residents to make improvements to their homes. The grants would be forgivable as long as homeowners stay in their residences for another five years.

Alderman Robert Maldonado (26th) said the goal is to make homes less of a target for opportunistic buyers who would tear them down and build near the popular three-year-old trail.

“The market here is extremely hot since the 606 was built, and I think we need to slow it down so we can allow for economic diversity,” Maldonado told Crain’s. The grants would encourage residents to stay in their homes rather than “take the cash that Realtors and developers are throwing at them,” he said.

In the first year after the trail opened, home values along the western part of the trail shot up by more than 9 percent, researchers at the DePaul Institute of Housing Studies found.

Maldonado, Alderman Joe Moreno (1st) and Mayor Rahm Emanuel introduced the plan for a two-year pilot of the grant program that would use money from the Affordable Housing Opportunity Fund, which developers contribute to in lieu of offering affordable housing in their projects.

The City Council will consider the proposal later this month.

Moreno told Crain’s many longtime residents of areas around the trail are feeling intense pressure to sell, especially given the sometimes daily unsolicited offers.

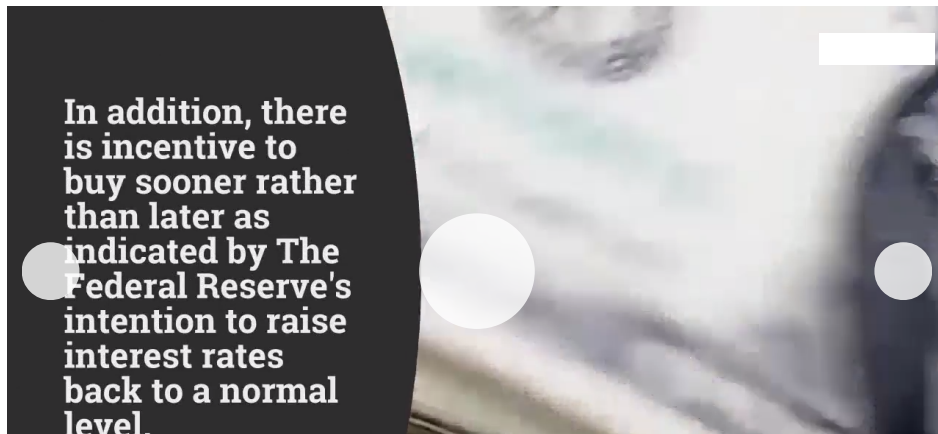
Some “were there 30 years ago when it was (filled with gangs), and now that it’s improved, if they want stay, perhaps it’s appropriate for us to give them a little help,” he said. [\[Crain’s\]](#) — *John O’Brien*

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