

Housing is a Queer Issue

For **low-income lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (lgbt) people** being displaced by **gentrification and cutbacks in public housing**, housing is an issue.

For **lgbt people of color who face racial discrimination** from landlords, neighbors, lenders, and real estate agents, housing is an issue.

For **transgendered people facing transphobic discrimination** from landlords, neighbors, lenders, and real estate agents, housing is an issue.

For **lgbt people who face homophobic discrimination** from landlords, neighbors, lenders, and real estate agents, housing is an issue.

For **people living with AIDS** living on a fixed income watching rental units disappear and prices rising as Chicago neighborhoods gentrify, housing is an issue.

For **people living with AIDS and other disabilities** who have special needs that neither the market nor public housing address, housing is an issue.

For **lgbt youth tormented by their parents and neighbors**, with nowhere to go, housing is an issue.

For **lgbt youth on the streets**, with nowhere to go, housing is an issue.

For **lgbt victims of domestic abuse** needing a safe space, housing is an issue.

For **lgbt seniors** living on fixed incomes in neighborhoods where they have built community for themselves over many years now facing skyrocketing taxes and rents as Chicago neighborhoods gentrify, housing is an issue.

For **lesbian or bisexual woman trapped in a heterosexual relationship** because they cannot afford to leave and live on their own, housing is an issue.

For **lgbt people who believe that the struggle for sexual freedom requires building coalitions** with others fighting for social justice, housing is an issue.

Queer to the Left

Queer to the Left (Q2L) is a multi-racial group of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer people who fight for racial, economic, gender and sexual justice.

We are committed to forming coalitions with others to stop gentrification, police brutality, the death penalty, and the racism and growing conservatism of the mainstream lesbian and gay movement.

Q2L meets the first Sunday of every month at 5 p.m. at the COURAJ Office, 4554 N. Broadway #236.
queertothelleft-owner@yahoo.com.

It's been more than three years...now is the time

THE PEOPLE'S MARCH FOR THE WILSON YARD

Saturday May 11, 2002 – NOON

Meet at the Goldblatt's Building (Leland and Broadway)

We demand 200-300 units of low-cost housing at the Wilson Yard
We demand that 50% of all new TIF-funded housing be low-cost

Sponsored by The Wilson Yard Coalition:

COURAJ (Community Of Uptown Residents for Affordability and Justice), Queer to the Left, Edgewater-Uptown Greens, The Cambodian Association, Chicago Anti-Bashing Network, Coalition for Fair Community Development, Concerned Citizens of East Garfield, Freedom Road Co-op, The Jesus People, The Latino Task Force Against Homelessness, Metropolitan Tenants Organization, and Prairie Fire

The Housing Crisis: In the last decade the population of metropolitan Chicago grew by more than half a million people, but the number of rental units actually decreased by 52,000. Rents are rising by more than twice the overall rate of inflation. Nearly 40% of all renters now pay more than a third of their income on rent, with nearly 200,000 people paying more than 50% of their income on rent. Many people would be surprised to know that only about one in five people living in poverty receives any type of housing subsidies, and that at the same time, nationwide, homeowners, who are overwhelmingly middle- or upper-class, are subsidized to the tune of \$100 billion a year through Federal income tax deductions for their mortgage payments. Here in Chicago, the number of Section 8 rental units is shrinking because landlords are choosing to take advantage of the overall housing shortage in the city to rent their units on the open market to higher-income people. Over the next five years, about 10,000 Section 8 units in Chicago, some in Uptown, are set to convert to private market rates. In this context, landlords have been given an incentive to discriminate against people of color, poor people and people with large families. Meanwhile, the needs of low-income people with disabilities who have special housing needs go completely unaddressed. And how many more units will be lost to “condo conversions?” Already over the last five years, the North Side of Chicago has lost nearly 8,000 rental units to “condo conversions.”

The Goldblatt's Building: The city had the opportunity to address the housing crisis in Uptown at the Goldblatt's building. They could have built 50+ units of low-cost affordable housing, instead they decided to fuel the engine of gentrification with high-end condos and a Borders Bookstore which will threaten two independent queer bookstores.

The Wilson Yards: Now the city has another opportunity to address the housing crisis with the Wilson Yards, a five-acre plot of vacant land owned by the CTA next to Truman College. In a series of public meetings held at Truman College over the last couple of years, overwhelming majorities of attendees have voiced a demand that the city use this land to build new low-cost housing. In a referendum in 1999, 76% of the voters in Uptown voted YES to the question: “Shall the City of Chicago, State of Illinois and Federal Government do everything in their power to preserve existing low-cost and affordable housing as well as use every means available to develop new low-cost and affordable housing?” The Wilson Yards represents the best opportunity for the neighborhood and the city to follow through on this demand. To facilitate our goal of building new low-cost housing, we demand that the CTA sell this land to the City for one dollar, and that the City give the land to a developer who has experience and is committed to building at least 200 units of low-cost housing there.

A Word To and About LGBT Folks in Uptown: Uptown, like most other lakefront neighborhoods on both the South and North Sides, is home to lots of lgbt folks. We find ourselves in widely varying housing situations, based on our income, household size, race, nationality, gender, age, physical and mental abilities, and our health. The Uptown and Edgewater neighborhoods are home to nearly 1,000 PWAs. One-half of Chicago's PWAs live below the federal government's poverty level. One-third have been homeless at some point. These statistics come from a recent study carried out by the AIDS Foundation of Chicago.

Historically, many of us have tried to build “community” within particular urban neighborhoods. Some lgbt people have lived in Uptown a long time. Others are relatively new, some pushed out of, or excluded from, more established “gay neighborhoods” because of rampant gentrification there. Vibrant “gay residential neighborhoods” cannot survive gentrification—Lakeview is proof of that—even if a few lucky individuals make a big profit in the process.

We all have a stake in maintaining Uptown's economic, racial and ethnic diversity, whether we simply need affordable and accessible apartments, or if we want a vibrant queer culture we all have access to.