An ambitious affordable housing proposal five years in the making, located beside the Logan Square Blue Line, will create 100 units of permanently affordable housing in this rapidly gentrifying neighborhood. Led by affordable housing developer Bickerdike Redevelopment Corporation and designed by Landon Bone Baker Architects, the project is nearing a final vote at Chicago City Council.

The building has staggered heights of two-to-seven stories to respect the low-rise context, and provides wide sidewalks and landscaped plazas. Half of the 100 apartments will be set aside for Chicago Housing Authority voucher holders with the remainder made affordable to renters earning less than 60% of Area Median Income (AMI). The unit mix includes many 2- and 3-bedroom apartments suitable for working families. Transit-oriented design is also given serious consideration, with just 20 parking spaces provided onsite. Other features include a rooftop garden and subsidized retail space reserved for small local businesses.

A City-owned surface lot currently occupies the site, to be sold to Bickerdike for $1. Loss of parking has been cited by opponents of the plan, who argue for a smaller, less dense project to replace more of the parking sacrificed to development. From a quality-of-life perspective, though, Logan Square needs as many new affordable housing units as it can get to combat skyrocketing rents. This argument carried the day at a Chicago Plan Commission hearing in November 2019 where the project was unanimously approved, advancing it to other committees before the full City Council vote. It is an excellent demonstration of what affordable transit-oriented development (TOD) can be.

Further reading:
Logan Square's Affordable Housing Proposal Wins Support From City Panel, Alex Nitkin, Block Club Chicago, October 17, 2019.
Affordable TOD Gets Key Approvals at Plan Commission Hearing, John Greenfield, Streetsblog Chicago, October 17, 2019.
Community Group Challenges Affordable Housing Plan, Jay Koziarz, Curbed Chicago, April 15, 2019.
Emmett Street Project, Bickerdike Redevelopment Corporation.