

CHICAGO

MAGAZINE

The Former Lathrop Homes Reopen in September — as Mixed-Income Housing

The first wave of move-ins after renovations begins with 414 units: 151 controlled by the CHA, 101 affordable housing apartments, and 162 renting at market rate.

August 23, 2018 | By AJ Latrace



Residents will return to the former Julia C. Lathrop Homes complex in September, just 11 months after developers and the Chicago Housing Authority held a groundbreaking ceremony signaling the public housing project's transformation into a mixed-income community. Rebranded simply as "Lathrop," the 34-acre site will roll out 414 units in its first phase of move-ins: 151 CHA apartments, 101 affordable residences, and 162 units rented at market rate. Ultimately, Lathrop will reintroduce 1,116 total residences over the next few years: 400 controlled by the CHA, 222 affordable units, and 494 market rate apartments.

The affordable and market rate units are being leased by one of Chicago's most prominent developers, Related Midwest, which leads the Lathrop Community Partners — a coalition that includes affordable housing developers



Bickerdike Redevelopment Corporation and Heartland Housing. They received 3,000 applications for the affordable housing lottery between April 17 and June 1, according to Related Midwest's vice president of marketing Tricia Van Horn

Market rate rents will start at \$870 for a studio apartment. One-bedrooms will go from \$1,175 to \$1,695, while two-bedroom units are priced at \$1,630 to \$2,085. Lathrop's website indicates that current concessions include a \$500 rebate on September leases.

Constructed during the Great Depression, the Lathrop Homes development originally served exclusively as public housing until the CHA began emptying units for renovation in recent years. During a series of subsequent public meetings and a 2016 vote at the Chicago Plan Commission, Lathrop residents and affordable housing activists demanded that the CHA replace the public housing units being exchanged for market rate rentals.

In response to a request for details on the CHA's agreement to deliver more than 500 replacement public housing units off-site, a spokesperson said in an email that the department is continuing to "work with development partners, aldermen, and community stakeholders to identify housing opportunities for the replacement units across the North Side of the city as we collaborate on meeting the goal for this commitment."

According to Related Midwest, all renovated units — affordable, CHA, and market rate — will have identical finishes and features. Those include contemporary appliances, quartz counters, and casement windows designed to reflect the original Prairie School aesthetic of the historic Lathrop buildings. Each unit also includes laundry machines and new mini-split heating and cooling systems.

Outside of the apartments, Lathrop will soon boast an overhauled nature walk, a kayak and boat launch, a new dog park, and a restoration of the Jens Jensen-designed great central lawn space by landscape architect Michael Van Valkenburg. Surface parking spaces are expected to lease for \$75 a month. The developer also plans to transform some of the building basements into maker spaces, says Van Horn, although the programming and features of these spaces is still undetermined. She adds that the Boys & Girls Club of Chicago at Lathrop will return next spring.

The next construction phase involves renovation of the remaining buildings north of Di-versey Avenue.

