



Department of City Development
City Plan Commission
Redevelopment Authority of the City of Milwaukee
Neighborhood Improvement Development Corporation

Lafayette L. Crump
Commissioner

Sam Leichtling
Deputy Commissioner

Date: November 25, 2025
To: Honorable Common Council Members
CC: CC File No. 251342
Prepared By: Sam Leichtling, Deputy Commissioner
Re: Resolution authorizing the Department of City Development to issue an Exclusive Right to Negotiate for City-owned vacant lot properties in the 15th Aldermanic District.

MEMORANDUM

Overview

Proposed Resolution #251342 would authorize the Department of City Development to issue an Exclusive Right to Negotiate to Emem Group for the purchase of 40 scattered-site vacant lot properties in the Amani neighborhood within the 15th Aldermanic District. This exclusive right to negotiate would allow Emem Group to apply for financing through the Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA) to construct 40 single-family homes on the subject lots that would be operated as affordable rental housing for the 15-year WHEDA compliance period, and then sold as affordable homeownership opportunities. This file **does not** approve specific final home designs, or the specific terms of the potential future sale and development agreement with the development team, all of which remain subject to future review and approval by the Common Council if the developer is successful in being awarded tax credits to advance this development.

Project Process and Timing

The Department of City Development continuously accepts offers for individual or multiple vacant lots for the construction of new 1-2 family homes on a rolling basis. Annually, to align with the WHEDA Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) allocation process, the Department also shares an invitation to local developers to submit interest for any City-owned sites that are proposed to be utilized as part of an application to WHEDA for new housing construction. This year, Emem Group was the **only** development team to propose construction of new homes on scattered site city-owned vacant lots for submission this WHEDA application cycle.

After receiving the initial Emem Group proposal for new construction of scattered-site homes in the Amani neighborhood, DCD Real Estate staff worked with Emem Group to review the initial proposed lots and carry out the required analysis to determine if they would be eligible and feasible for inclusion in this proposed project. Ultimately, DCD and Emem Group identified the 40 lots that are subject of this file for potential future home construction. DCD and the development team were not able to arrive at a final lot list in time for this item to move through a full Common Council cycle and still be approved prior to WHEDA's December 5th application deadline, which is why this file has been submitted for **Immediate Adoption**.

The resolution is sponsored by the local Common Council member, Ald. Russell Stamper II, and has the support of Amani United, the Dominican Center, and the Community Development Alliance (CDA).



These organization are also partnering to advance additional new home construction in the Amani neighborhood via the “Backbone TID” model that has been deployed successfully in the Midtown and Harambee neighborhoods in the past two years. While not subject of this file, it is anticipated that in addition to the homes being proposed by Emem Group, additional homes constructed by Habitat for Humanity will be part of this initiative to bring significant new home construction for affordable homeownership to the Amani neighborhood in the coming year. Dominican Center and Amani United have been engaging with Amani residents for 18 months to receive input and direction to shape this initiative including through hosting home tours, presentations to resident housing committees and tabling at neighborhood events.

Current and Future Council Approvals Associated with this Proposal

Resolution #251342 that is pending Council review would **solely** be for the purposes of granting Emem Group the Exclusive Right to Negotiate for the lots subject to this file to allow the developer the site control needed to apply for WHEDA financing in December of 2025 and begin more formal negotiations with DCD on the details of this proposed development.

The pending file **does not** approve specific home designs, the amount or terms of any City financing proposed for the development, Human Resource requirements, or the specific terms that would be included in a future sale and development agreement with Emem Group related to affordability requirements during the period of time they will be operating the proposed homes as rental homes, and the terms and conditions of their eventual sale to homeowners at affordable price points at the conclusion of the 15-year compliance period.

All of those items would be subject of negotiation between the City and the development team, with input from the local alder and neighborhood partners and residents, and require eventual review and approval by the Common Council. WHEDA awards are anticipated to be announced in May of 2026, providing ample time for ongoing discussions and negotiations of the terms of any eventual development agreement between the City and developer for this project prior to a proposal being presented to the Common Council.

If any members have questions about this pending file, please feel free to contact either myself (x5804) or Real Estate and Development Manager Kari Smith (x5732).