



# Why Is Saint Louis Using Eminent Domain “On Spec”?

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*By: John Wright*

What would you do if you learned that the government *might* take your home sometime in the next few months? They haven't made up their mind just yet, but they're already putting you through the preliminary steps of eminent domain, excavating next to your home, and [blocking a grocery store from setting up shop in your neighborhood](#) . Gustavo Rendon doesn't have to wonder; this is how his family and neighbors have lived for the past year.

[As reported earlier](#) , St. Louis officials are considering using eminent domain to clear out a neighborhood on the north side. They've begun eminent domain proceedings, but are waiting on the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA), the federal agency they're clearing the land for, to decide whether it even wants to relocate to North St. Louis. Is it worth it putting property owners in limbo like this for a development project that *might not even happen*?

Alderwoman Sharon Tyus doesn't think so. Tyus is not opposed to the use of eminent domain, but when it comes to using eminent domain on homeowner occupied land, she says “you've got to really step lightly.”

In this case, the need for eminent domain is in question because there are three other tracts of land in the region where NGA might choose to relocate instead of Gustavo's neighborhood. Tyus believes one tract, right by Scott Airforce Base, makes the most sense. “It's got everything. I think it's a no-brainer.”

"I'm not trying to lose business for the city." Tyus told me. "I just don't think you need to decimate a neighborhood."

Homeowners like Gustavo and [Joyce Cooks](#) don't think you need to destroy a neighborhood either. "They say they're trying to revitalize the community," Gustavo tells me, commenting on the irony of the situation. "They're killing the community."

## Tags:

- [NGA](#)
- [eminent domain](#)

## About the Author



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*John Wright was a policy analyst focusing on government transparency and labor relations.*

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