

## PLAN COMMISSION REMARKS

The vast 750 acre Industrial Corridor sits astride the Logan Square, West Town, the Near North Side, and the Lincoln Park Community Areas....these communities are, quite simply, out of space to play.

We face a period of unprecedented growth with this proposed development. As Crain's reported, "the land rush is on" with the expected new framework plan. As staff has just acknowledged, the city expects billions of dollars of private investment here.

It may be up to 50% residential by acreage. One would think this is a perfect opportunity to correct park deficits for the greater area as well as provide for thousands of new residents that are contemplated by this plan.

The Department of Planning and Development has made a gesture, but not the necessary **commitment** to sound urban planning to address this need.

Unless the framework is revised to include a goal of "at least 15 acres of **contiguous** open space," then the public is entirely dependent on individual developers, and one-off decisionmaking, to address their needs. The framework plan provides no guarantee, as Commissioner Serle has pointed out, that the amount of land will be accumulated or that recreational space will result.

This plan will most likely result in a patchwork of open spaces attached to planned developments, few if any, will be suitable for sports.

The failure of this approach is demonstrated by the plan itself. In the original drafts, DPD staff suggested **potential areas** for "civic space" such as scenic overlooks of a couple of acres each. In the final report, these **identical** spaces are relabeled as "recreational space," and still a couple acres each.

This is not a realistic vision. Chicago must require a development of this size to include true public open space for sports such baseball, soccer, ice skating, and the like. To do otherwise is shirking entrusted government responsibility to plan for its citizens.

I represent Lincoln Park, which is mistakenly viewed as having a rich supply of parkland due to the existence of its 400 acre lakefront park. But LP, (show page) is actually the third busiest park in the United States...right after Central Park and the National Mall, according to the Trust for Public Land. Our lakefront hosts over 20,000,000 visitors a year – hardly solely a neighborhood park.

That is why I am here today representing my Ward along with numerous community organizations and park advocates, some of whom will be testifying

today. Collectively our groups represent the interests of over 350,000 Chicagoans.

We speak for:

-100,000 young professionals playing on leagues and team sports

- thousands of children under the age of 18

-scores of volunteers on local park councils and other nonprofits focused on quality of life and the environment

- and we speak for future generations of Chicagoans

Our neighborhoods have undergone great demographic change. In Lincoln Park there are 65% more children in the area today than in the year 2000. Baseball fields are inadequate. We already turn away hundreds of children wishing to join a league.

The entire Lincoln Park community, a population of 66,000 people has just **one** soccer field – located at the lakefront. Without additional recreational park space, the new resident populations will further strain these over-utilized parks.

Across the river, Logan Square, Wicker Park and Near North Side residents are even more park-starved. According to the 1998 CitySpace plan and the 2016 Chicago Park District Plan - the Near North Side and Logan Square Community Area that includes Bucktown, are in “the top ten underserved communities,” with an open space deficit of over 125 acres.

We call on the City of Chicago to include in the Plan and design guidelines for the North Branch Industrial Corridor firm design goals for **contiguous** recreational space of 15 acres.

A park can be accomplished through a variety of means, both public and private, as has been done in many other cities. DPD can develop guidelines to require a portion of all land be “set aside” to accumulate land for public or public/private recreational park space.

By “banking” and “trading” land, significant parkland could be created. Other ideas include development of public/private entities, similar to the car parking district proposed in the plan, to create year round facilities for team sports and community use.

This is the largest contiguous property on the north side to be rezoned in over three decades and the first in a century along the Chicago River to be opened to residential development.

It will be the last significant property between North Avenue and Fullerton to undergo large-scale transformation.

Our request and your duty is simple – Keep this city livable.

Include a large recreational park as part of the Framework Plan for the North Branch Industrial Corridor. Correct this oversight, which will be felt by communities now and in the future.

Give current Chicagoans a place to play as new entities for jobs develop and new families join our neighborhoods now and in the decades to come.

Without a government commitment in these guidelines, no such space will be realized and the desirability of these communities will be diminished, and we will regret the outcome in the future.