

July 24, 2017 Remarks at City Council Re: North Branch

The Ordinance this Council is considering will be a mistake of colossal proportions-it's impact will be felt for decades and the fall-out will only grow with time.

Reshaping 760 acres of some of the most valuable property in the city of Chicago should not be done with vague suggestions. We don't use guidelines, we use a tightly worded legal zoning code-even for one, single city lot. Do we let developers tell us how tall a building should be or how many people can live in a single family home?

But, just this week Commissioner Reifman could not give us a specific density projection for the new population to be created. How is that possible? How could they not know?

Why are density and rezoning fees based on half the cost of buildable land just a few feet away in neighboring communities?
No answer.

Why isn't the market used to determine the Return on Investment that taxpayers deserve? Will the developers who lease and rent their properties out, base those fees on a 5-year average? Of course they won't - they will charge what the market will bear. And so should the City of Chicago to get taxpayers their money's worth.

And how much money will these discounted fees net the city? Again, no projections have been supplied to this Council although I made the specific request of Commissioner Reifman at Monday's Jt Committee meeting.

How much infrastructure will be needed to support this enormous new community? The City said it doesn't know. What about an estimate? No answer. What about the long range costs - city services? No estimates.

And, what **tangible lasting benefit** is guaranteed to the public when this land rush is over along our priceless riverfront? Concrete bike paths, pocket parks for 10-20 toddlers and private green rooftops. Is that adequate for thousands of new residents and 300,000 taxpayers

around the corridor?

Where do families relax? Where do kids play sports? Where will hundreds of thousands of Chicagoans unwind? They will flood to overcrowded baseball and soccer fields and increasingly congested Lakefront and they will wonder why there is so much traffic and why they have to drive their kids to the suburbs to play ball.

Council is on the verge of approving rezoning the most massive swath of land in a century ---

This is an opportunity to build a better Chicago. We should not squander it. I am told that the administration wants to create meaningful Park space – all I can say is that the North Side will be watching.