

To: City of Chicago, Department of Planning and Development
Alderman Michele Smith
Alderman Brian Hopkins
Alderman Waguespack

From: Erma Tranter, Former Executive Director, Friends of the Parks, Consultant of Parks and Open Space, resident of 43rd Ward

Re: Need for Neighborhood Recreational Park as part of Finkl Development site

The redevelopment of the 47-acre Finkl Steel site should include a neighborhood park of approximately 10 acres in the final development plan. The redevelopment of the Finkl property offers a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to create a recreational park to serve the future residents of the new development along the river as well as the residents in the western portion of the 43rd Ward and the underserved communities in Logan Square and the 32nd Ward which are just west of the property.

While the Lincoln Park community area is bordered on the east by the lakefront, the lake is nearly two miles to the east of the Finkl parcel. In addition, the community has only one neighborhood-sized park (defined as 10 acres or larger by the Chicago Park District). Oz Park, 13 acres, is the only neighborhood-sized park with ballfields, open areas and tennis courts in the 43rd Ward. The nearest parks to the west are Haas Park, less than 4 acres and Wrightwood Park, a 4-acre public park.

The Chicago Park District and the City of Chicago Department of Planning and Economic Development have adopted guidelines for parks within a half mile from each resident. However, large sections of the 43rd, 2nd and 32nd Wards, all wards that surround the Finkl parcel do not have a park within a half-mile walking area required by the city's development guidelines. The argument for a 10-acre park as part of the Finkl development is backed by the following:

1998 CitySpace Plan of Chicago Park Development Recommendations

- Recommends 4 acres of parks per 1,000 population
- Recommends that each Chicagoan live within ½ mile from a park of at least 3 acres
- Recommends in 2020 the city will have 5 acres per 1,000 capita
- Recommends in 2020 the city will achieve a balance of regional and local open spaces opportunities for all residents.
- Create trails, greenways and wildlife habitat along the Chicago River

- Redevelop abandoned factories into mixed use developments that include parkland

National Recommendations for Park Space

Nationally, the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) recommends 6 to 10 acres of parks per 1,000 capita, 30% to 90% higher than Chicago's 1998 goal.

Today, Chicago is ranked 14th out of the largest cities in the nation in open space acres per capita. Chicago has 11,500 acres of parks and open spaces in the city. This figure includes the acres owned and operated by the Chicago Park District, the Forest Preserve District of Cook County and the City of Chicago.

1993 Chicago Park District Parkland Needs Analysis

Recommendations

- 'The Chicago Park District will continue to seek opportunities to expand its lakefront and riverfront park systems. These systems are regional attractions that are used by all residents of Chicago. The Park District believes that access to Lake Michigan and the Chicago River is a right that all residents should enjoy".
- "The Park District feels that continued development of an interior system of parks along the river will complement the lakefront system and provide new recreational opportunities for residents of Chicago who do not live near Lake Michigan".