

November 9, 2022

Ms. Laura Flores
Chair, Chicago Plan Commission
Department of Planning Development
121 N. LaSalle St., Room 1101 Chicago, IL 60602

Re: Proposed Amendment to PD 1426 - Bally's Casino Development at Chicago and Halsted

Dear Ms. Flores and Colleagues,

Though the proposed amendment to PD 1426 would indeed lower FAR for the entire 30-acre site, this reduction is limited to Sub Area A. The remaining two-thirds of the site could see dramatic increases in density, as FAR is shifted from the northeast section to the south and west.

Sub Area C, south of the Ohio feeder, would see a 21% increase in maximum FAR from 7.2 to 8.7, and a 74% increase in maximum dwelling units from 1,582 to 2,750. Sub area B, west of Jefferson Street, would see a 30% increase in maximum FAR from 7.2 to 9.4, and a nearly 10-fold increase in dwelling units from 305 to 3,000. Maximum units for the entire site would increase 46% from 4,099 to 6,000.

The table below includes other major development projects in close proximity to the Bally's site.

PD	Street Address	Floor Area Ratio*	Square Footage*	Dwelling Units*	Hotel Keys*	Commercial Space*
1399	640-740 W Chicago/801-843 N Halsted	5	1,546,385	310	TBD	1,237,108
1522	901 N Halsted	8.1	2,712,549	2650	565	TBD
New	500-520 N Des Plaines/509 N Union	11.5	823,457	1,110	141	-
1426	643-741 W Chicago/641-739 N Halsted	6.1	6,653,312	6,000	800	1,470,000
447	808 N Cleveland	-	286,000	200	-	-
-	751 N Hudson/411 W Chicago (Hugo)	-	149,304	227	-	-
Aggregate			12,170,007	10,497	1,506	2,726,052

* As referenced in the Planned Development Bulk and Density tables.

While this substantial increase in density maximizes economic value for landowners and developers, it also amplifies the impact on surrounding residential neighborhoods, increases congestion, and strains already overtaxed infrastructure. We recommend reducing maximum FAR and maximum dwelling units for PD 1426, increasing the area for natural landscaping and open space, and imposing reasonable triggers to control future development.

During the December 5 town hall meeting, presenters referred to the planned inclusion of dedicated lanes in and/or around the site for bikes, charter busses, and public transit. While RNRA supports safe multi-modal transit options, its difficult to see how the streets within and/or around the site can be configured in such a way as to maximize capacity for passenger vehicles, while also including these dedicated lanes.



Additionally, the recently announced sale/leaseback arrangement between the Bally's organization and a private equity firm changes the nature and risk profile of the project by changing the property owner at this late stage in the entitlement process. This transaction, as well as Oak Street Capital and its New York parent, Blue Owl Capital, should be subject to the same rigorous vetting, by the City and the IGB, as the original financing terms and the original property owners.

We appreciate the willingness of the Bally's organization and the City to engage in constructive dialogue and look forward to further conversations, both directly and through the Casino Community Advisory Committee, about project improvements to reduce negative impacts on the surrounding community and the natural environment.

On behalf of the River North Residents Association Board,

Brian Israel

Brian Israel
President

Cc: Alderman Brendan Reilly 42nd Ward
Alderman Brian Hopkins, 2nd Ward
Alderman Walter Burnett, 27th Ward
Deputy Mayor Samir Mayekar
Commander Jon Hein, 18th District

Re: Ballys casino

Hui <yunhui.wang1@gmail.com>

Wed 12/7/2022 8:36 PM

To: CPC <CPC@cityofchicago.org>

[Warning: External email]

Another feedback is that we need more public green space on the Chicago Ave. The casino brought destruction to people on the east side of Chicago River north of Grand avenue, yet, Their current development does not provide any benefits to people impacted most. They need to have more green space on the North side(on Chicago Ave).

Yunhui Wang

On Tue, Dec 6, 2022 at 11:36 PM H. Wang <yunhui.wang1@gmail.com> wrote:

I opposed the current casino site at Tribune printing center

1. It is a residential area. The land should be used to build residences that solve our housing crisis, not a casino that will bankrupt some people.
2. Alternative site at Lakefront, including soldier field which will no longer be of usage, has less impacts to the community and closer for the people living in South side who need more job opportunities.
3. If this casino is really about creating jobs, it should be put in the areas where many more people need jobs.

Let's consider alternatives- most people in the community don't want this casino- why force us to accept this ?

Sent from my iPhone

to Laura Flores about casino

Hui <yunhui.wang1@gmail.com>

Wed 12/7/2022 9:40 PM

To: CPC <CPC@cityofchicago.org>

[Warning: External email]

Dear Laura Flores,

My name is Yunhui Wang, I've lived in 758 N Larrabee Street for more than 2 years. As the granddaughter of someone who suffered from gambling addiction, I strongly oppose Ballys casino in a highly dense residential area.

Most tourists coming to Chicago do not gamble, most gamblers don't come to Chicago for gambling. This means that Ballys casino is likely to hyper target local residents, especially those who live close by. How many Chicagoans will suffer as a result?

The city claimed it is about job creation. If so, why not put it in the area that is close to where people need jobs? Most people in the surrounding areas won't need the jobs that Ballys offered. The city talked about investing in the South and West Side. Is Ballys casino not a positive investment that the city is proud of and willing to invest in? The city hopes gamblers will go to visit Mag Miles. However, we know the problem of Michigan Avenue is more than just lack of tourists.

Soldier Field will soon be empty. It is a huge space, more convenient for those commuting from the South and North side, and further away from the dense residential areas. Chicago can have a casino there that causes the least disruption to the neighborhood!

Lastly, the casino construction and operation will impact condos right across the River. Yet the city's community committee includes NO one from buildings who will be DIRECTLY impacted. Ballys never reached out to the condo association. The current proposal offers little green space by Chicago avenue for the residents who are mostly impacted to enjoy.

Yes, Ballys organized a couple of community meetings but so many people are disenfranchised/disappointed about the whole process that they believe those meetings are just for a show!

I grew up in a county under Martial Law. When I used to participate in the democratic movements, the US was considered our North Star, something we aspire to. Yet, this casino selection process has shaken my faith in democracy of this country - Democracy is not just about having a voting process (China and Russia have elections too!), Democracy is about respecting the voices of the people. Our neighborhood should not be forced to accept casinos, just like the Pilsen neighborhood should not be forced to accept polluters. We need to do better to come up with an alternative solution!

Yunhui Wang

Deny Casino

Lynn <lynn.neils@gmail.com>

Mon 12/5/2022 11:48 AM

To: CPC <CPC@cityofchicago.org>

[Warning: External email]

- To the Committee Members: PLEASE understand the impact the casino will have on our lives. The Tribune site is too close a residential neighborhood and it will overpower the skyline there.
- The additional traffic and the lack of adequate police protection are an even bigger concern. Please do not approve the Tribune site for a casino. Where else are casinos built in a family friendly area?

Lynn Neils
300 N. State St
Chicago, IL 60654

Lynn K. Neils. Ph.D.

Casino in River North

Jennifer Smith <j.smith@screamingbabyinc.com>

Tue 12/6/2022 6:19 PM

To: CPC <CPC@cityofchicago.org>

[Warning: External email]

I am vehemently opposed to a casino being built in my neighborhood. Casinos are parasites. They prey on weak people and use algorithms on their machines to make it harder for people to tear themselves away.

I own a one-bedroom loft on Erie Street just blocks from the location selected for the Bally's casino. I did some research prior to the meetings held by Bally's. I could not find one article that had anything good to say about what happens to a community when you put a casino in it. Foreclosures go up, domestic violence goes up, crime goes up, bankruptcies go up and property values plummet. Some people even commit suicide due to insurmountable gambling debts. No matter what they say, there is no way to "promote responsible gambling" unless you find a way to prevent someone from gambling away their mortgage payment... an impossible task.

I purchased my condo in River North in 2005 because I thought it was a great neighborhood within the city. I can't afford for my property value to go down because the mayor decides that's where she wants a casino. It doesn't belong in our neighborhood. You will be ruining this community.

It belongs by McCormick Place or some other location that is not right in the middle of a residential community. What is wrong with the mayor that she thinks it's okay to ignore 85% of the residents of this community who voted against this atrocity! If she expects to be voted back into office, she can forget it. The residents of River North will never forgive her for this.

Jennifer Smith

President



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Maximally oppose the permanent casino

Colin Brown <colin.d.brown@gmail.com>

Tue 12/6/2022 11:26 AM

To: CPC <CPC@cityofchicago.org>

[Warning: External email]

CPC Chairwoman Laura Flores:

I am writing to express my maximal opposition to the permanent casino at the Tribune Publishing Center. I maximally oppose this permanent casino site for the following reasons:

1. In early 2022, my alderman Brendan Reilly held a poll for his constituents about the proposed permanent Bally's casino site in the location of the Tribune Publishing Center. His constituents live in River North, Streeterville, and downtown in general, and so the permanent casino site would be adjacent to Reilly's ward but not in it. The results of the poll: [80% of respondents said that they moderately or strongly oppose](#) the permanent casino site. So the overwhelming majority of respondents do not want the permanent casino site adjacent to their ward.

After Alderman Reilly held his poll, Mayor Lori Lightfoot unilaterally decided and decreed that Bally's, among the three finalists, had won the casino bidding and selection process. So Lightfoot basically shoved the permanent casino down the throats of River North/Streeterville/downtown residents, who overwhelmingly opposed this permanent casino site.

2. According to official Chicago Police Department [crime statistics](#) (Week 47), total citywide crime (year to date) has [increased by 40%](#) compared to last year (2021). And total crime (year to date) in the 18th district, where I live, has [increased by 35%](#) compared to last year. So, since last year, we've seen a 40% increase in total crime citywide and a 35% increase in total crime in the 18th district.

Given these significant increases in crime, you should NOT be putting a permanent casino near downtown (i.e. River North), since the casino will likely attract robbers, carjackers, and other criminals who will target people going to and from the casino. In particular, they will target people who look like they are carrying a lot of cash. So anyone near the permanent casino carrying at least \$200 in cash may very well be targeted. Furthermore, these criminals may target people who are just walking by or frequenting other businesses in the area.

3. In 2020, Lightfoot allowed two rounds of looting/rioting in downtown and Chicago in general that caused at least [\\$125 million in property damage](#). Since 2021, she has allowed certain groups to commit many "smash and grabs" and shoplifting sprees (which effectively constitute the third round of looting) on the Mag Mile and in Gold Coast. Since 2019, she has allowed huge Mexican Independence Day horn-honking caravans, in the downtown area, that last 3-7 consecutive nights. Without consulting the City Council at all, she unilaterally decided and decreed that downtown Chicago would host the July 2023 NASCAR Street Race Weekend. And she unilaterally decided and decreed that Bally's would be the winner of the casino bidding and selection process. Overall, Lightfoot appears determined to turn downtown Chicago into a chaotic, extremely noisy, dysfunctional, crime-ridden city center.

Now, since I oppose the permanent casino site to the maximum possible degree, I will not be spending ONE CENT at the permanent casino or the temporary casino. And I will encourage everyone I know and everyone who lives in my building also to boycott these casinos. Given the aforementioned polling results, it will not take much to persuade others to boycott these casinos.

Regards,
Colin Brown