

# GAZETTE

## CHICAGO

August 2, 2019

Vol. 37, No. 4

### INSIDE



St. Adalbert Church parishioners lament final Mass; vow to fight on as future use undetermined. See page 3.



Bronzeville family, like many others, in danger of losing their home to foreclosure. See page 8.



Ald. Byron Sigcho-Lopez addresses Pilsen housing, affordability issues. See page 21.

### OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

*Gazette Chicago's* Back-to-school guide offers excellent educational choices. See page 23.

Little Italy Festa-Taylor Street offers four days of food, music, and reunions. See page 29.

One Central developer fumbles the ball with his Springfield legislative end-around. See Editorial on page 30.

## South Loop community, elected officials not pleased with initial One Central plans

By Monica M. Walk

It is not "blue skies" for developing air space over the Metra rail yard just north of McCormick Place in the South Loop neighborhood. In late spring, Landmark Development announced its vision to create and build a platform infrastructure to hold a combination of residential and commercial buildings, public green spaces, parking, and a revamped transit hub. Planners have named the development One Central.

Mayor Lori Lightfoot lambasted Wisconsin developer Bob Dunn in early June, accusing him of going to Springfield "under cover of darkness" to slip billions of dollars in funding for the transit hub into the state capital bill, SB 1814. Lightfoot said she did not consider



Courtesy Landmark Development

*The One Central development would include housing, office space, retail space, dining, entertainment, and a transit hub on a platform built over the existing Metra tracks in the South Loop.*

the transportation hub a priority among Chicago's many transportation needs, citing a Red Line South

extension as more important. She emphasized the requirement of a

*Continued on page 10*

## Protestors oppose Trump detention, family separation policies

By Andrew Adams

Protesters from dozens of Chicago area activist groups blocked several streets in the Loop on July 13 to protest the Trump administration's detention and family separation policies as well as its immigration policies generally.

Demonstrators met at the Daley Center Plaza on Washington Street at 11 a.m., where the group Indivisible Chicago held a rally. They then blocked sections

of Clark and Dearborn Streets as they marched and demonstrated outside the Federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) field office.

A committee of representatives from several activist, social, and legal organizations planned the protest, including Indivisible Chicago, Amnesty International, the American Civil Liberties Union of Illinois, Planned Parenthood Illinois Action, Women's March Chicago, and others.

Marj Halperin, an Indivisible Chicago representative, estimated attendance at the march to be between 10,000 and 12,000.

The protest focused on immigration with specific calls for congressional action to regulate ICE and for ending all forms of local support for and cooperation with ICE. Protesters' demands also included uniting families separated at the Mexico-United States border during border crossings.

*Continued on page 2*

## Health benefits of marijuana—myth, fact, or something in between?

By Eva Hofmann

It is official.

Governor JB Pritzker has signed the bill legalizing recreational marijuana for adult use, beginning in January 2020. Marijuana for medical use under a doctor's prescription already is legal in Illinois.

This is the second in a three-part series of articles to help inform *Gazette Chicago* readers about the pros and cons of legal cannabis.

Here, we focus on the drug's health aspects.

### Treating pain and disease

*What are cannabinoids?* The chemicals in marijuana are known as cannabinoids, and the two main cannabinoids of medical interest are cannabidiol (CBD) and tetrahydrocannabinol (THC). Unlike THC, CBD does not make people high. Researchers continue to explore uses of THC, CBD, and

other cannabinoids for medical treatment.

*Cancer.* According to the American Cancer Society, several small studies found smoked marijuana helped treat nausea and vomiting from cancer chemotherapy. Other studies have shown smoked or vaporized marijuana can help treat pain caused by damaged nerves and improve food intake.

More recently, scientists reported

*Continued on page 13*

## South Loop community, elected officials not pleased with initial One Central plans

Continued from page 1

“robust community engagement process” and one that is more “respectful” of local aldermen and state legislators.

Area residents are banding together to express concerns about the development’s impact on their neighborhood, noting questions about building size and shadows, construction density, foot and car traffic, the transit hub’s usefulness, and the propriety of tapping public funds to support a project that would include largely private retail and residential building.

Governor JB Pritzker’s office noted misunderstanding of what the legislature actually approved, saying lawmakers have attached no State funds to the development yet.

“The governor has not committed to developing this project,” gubernatorial press secretary Jordan Abudayyeh told *Gazette Chicago*. “There is no cost to the State in the BIMP [the budget implementation bill], which allows Landmark to explore whether it’s viable for them to get federal backing. If they can, then the State could consider whether or not we would like to do an agreement.

“None of the BIMP provisions go into effect unless and until a separate agreement is reached. Spe-

cifically, the BIMP allows GOMB [the Governor’s Office of Management and Budget] to negotiate a P3 with Landmark and gives Landmark time to apply for RRIF funding in the event a deal can be reached in the future,” Abudayyeh added.

P3s are public-private partnerships, which Abudayyeh said Landmark must form for anything to move forward with One Central development. RRIF is Railroad Rehabilitation and Improvement Financing, a Federal Department of Transportation program authorized to provide direct loans and loan guarantees up to \$35 billion to finance railroad infrastructure development.

### ‘Far off’ from State agreement

“All we did was keep the door open to hearing more from the developer, but they needed the opportunity to go get Federal funds, so the language allowed them to go try and get the Federal funding,” Abudayyeh said. “They don’t get anything from the State until an agreement is made, and we’re far off from that. We just wanted to keep the door open to negotiations. The developer was in a time crunch to get the Federal funding, so the language just allows them the opportunity to do that while the State and local authorities

“Understanding the existing Central Station master plan and development rights is critically important when looking at the One Central project proposed by Landmark Development. It is clear there is a wide gap between what is currently allowed to be developed on the site and what the developer has shown to the community in the renderings released earlier this year.”

— Alderman Pat Dowell, Fourth Ward

learn more about the project, study the need, and contemplate whether or not to move forward.”

“While I am absolutely a proponent of development in the district, I am also a firm believer that these developments need to follow a robust process that includes community input,” said State Representative Kambium Buckner (D-26th). “I’ve made it very clear that I was not happy with the lack of communication in regards to the budget implementation bill and the One Central project. I, along with three of my colleagues, sent a letter to the governor stating our disappointment with the process and declaring our desire to be informed on any other

developments moving forward.”

Alderman Pat Dowell (3rd Ward) is talking with residents in her district at community meetings. Prior to convening a July 15 evening meeting, she noted, “We are continuing to engage South Loop residents in the review of the One Central proposal. There are many outstanding and substantive questions regarding the transit hub, zoning, density, traffic infrastructure, and residential/commercial demand that have to be answered. No decisions up or down have been made at this time.”

That meeting featured zoning administrator Patrick Murphy and assistant commissioner Bob McKenna from the Chicago

Book Your Party Now at

Department of Planning and Development (DPD), who addressed the area's zoning as well as plans and the approval process.

They emphasized to the more than 300 meeting attendees that the project remains in the very beginning, or pre-review, stage and the City of Chicago has not received requested answers to questions, official development plans, financial plans, and neighborhood and citywide impact assessments from the developer for review by government agency professionals. Therefore, the City cannot make substantive comment on the project.

View the full meeting slideshow online at <http://ward03chicago.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/PDF-July-15-Public-Meeting-Pow-erpoint.pdf>. See additional related Department of Planning and Development documents at <http://ward03chicago.com/one-central-zoning-and-pd-499-documents/>.

Murphy, McKenna, and Dowell fielded dozens of questions and objections from concerned residents on a range of topics such as traffic, quality of life, site plan, and view corridors.

"I am very proud of my residents and the professional staff of the City of Chicago's Department of Planning and Development for coming together to have an informative discussion about development in the South Loop



Courtesy SLCC

*An SLCC rendering shows how proposed One Central buildings could tower over the South Loop.*

community," Dowell said after the meeting.

**'Wide gap,' Dowell said**

"Understanding the existing Central Station master plan and development rights is critically important when looking at the One Central project proposed by Landmark Development," she added. "It is clear there is a wide gap between what is currently allowed to be developed on the site and what the developer has shown to the community in the renderings released earlier this year.

"This gap is reinforced by the very clear skepticism expressed by neighborhood residents during the meeting regarding the One Central proposal." Dowell

continued. "What was also clear from the meeting is that there is a long way to go until any development occurs over the Metra train tracks in the South Loop."

Joan Lovell was among the neighborhood residents who attended the Third Ward meeting. Lovell is one of the directors of the new non-profit South Loop Concerned Coalition (SLCC), formed in direct response to the One Central development. The organization has grown swiftly and represents nearly 6,000 taxpayers in 18 condominium associations with concerns about the One Central development's cost and pace.

"We formed the South Loop Concerned Coalition to get more information into the process of

this mega-developer," Lovell said. "It seems rushed, without due diligence for the livability, shadowing, and traffic. We have concern for the transit hub—the basis for all the structures to sit. There doesn't seem to be support that this transit hub is necessary or needed. If there is no real need for the hub, why will taxpayers foot the bill for the structure?"

A July 16 SLCC press release outlined its mission and cited several studies the group has had prepared. A study of One Central's massing shows the construction creating a barrier separating the neighborhood from the lakefront and altering South Loop dynamics; a shadow study shows the One Central towers shadowing existing buildings from morning sunlight and Soldier Field during afternoon Chicago Bears games.

Area residents are not the only skeptics. Noted transportation expert and DePaul University professor Joseph Schwieterman, PhD, provided SLCC with a pro bono analysis of the proposed transit hub. He concluded, "The biggest problem is the questionable nature of having our City and State devote resources to creating an entirely new hub for transit connections at a spot that is not easy walking distance to the core Loop business district.

"The One Central hub would  
*Continued on page 12*

# South Loop community, elected officials not pleased with initial One Central plans

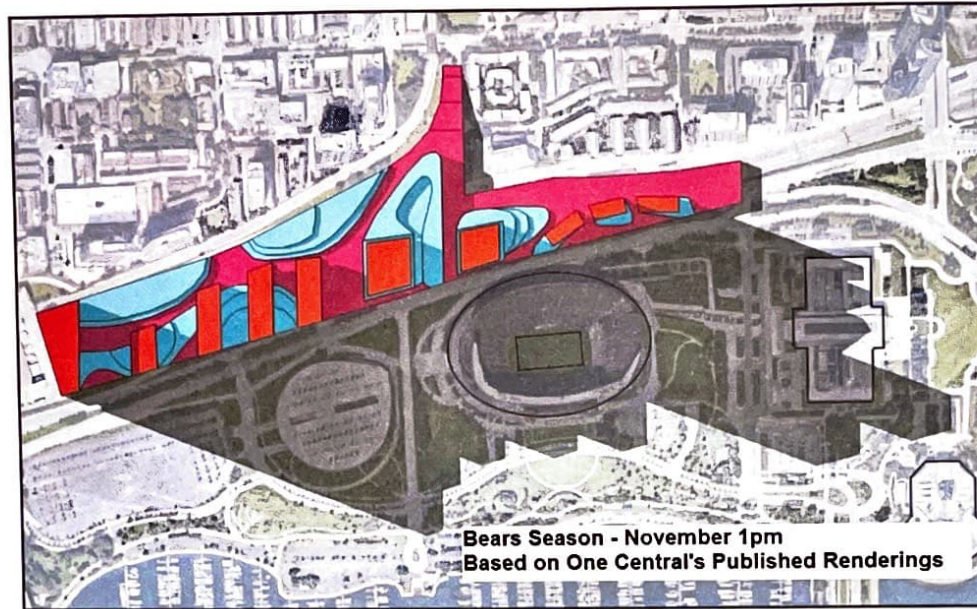
Continued from page 11

be separated from all of the Loop district's jobs, thus limiting walking opportunities," Schwieterman continued. "The opportunities for transfers between lines would likely be of limited value unless significant parts of our existing system were completely reconfigured.

## 'No interest, support'

"It is especially disconcerting that the proponents of the One Central transit hub have not obtained even an informal expression of interest, much less formal support, from a prominent public body," he added. "Having the CTA, Metra, City of Chicago, Cook County, Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP), or the Regional Transportation Authority express support for the concept of the hub would create an avenue for it to be formally evaluated and possibly included on CMAP's list of priority capital projects."

"We recognize the developer has air rights, but we would like a voice in the development," Lovell said. "We are dedicated to the concept of our South Side community and want to be a community where we interact and have diversity and affordability. We are a good, diverse, friendly, lovable neighborhood.



Courtesy SLCC

**SLCC claims that the One Central development would create shadows blocking sunlight at Soldier Field and other structures in the South Loop and close to the lakefront.**

"Folks were appreciative of the information but not satisfied about a process for input going forward," Lovell said after the July 15 meeting. "We don't know when the developer will submit plans, whether we will have the right to say anything about them before the City acts, what the process will be for neighborhood input, whether the City will allow enlargement of existing rights, etc. No information about the State and its decision—and the State bill gives the Governor's Office of Management and

Budget the authority to enter into the agreement with the developer.

"So, apparently, no more input from our [elected state] representatives," Lovell added. "My sense is we are all still dubious about how this will end and want a lot more information to justify the taxpayers paying for the infrastructure the developer needs for his profit."

Catherine Turco from Kivvit public relations supplied a statement from Landmark in response to Mayor Lightfoot's publicly reported concerns and before

Dowell's most recent community meeting, stating, "We agree with Mayor Lightfoot on the need for a robust public process that is inclusive of stakeholders and residents in the nearby neighborhoods and across the city. In fact, we recently participated in the second community meeting hosted by Alderman Dowell to discuss One Central.

## Tax revenue generation

"In this meeting, we announced a public engagement process to include a series of workshops that will solicit community, resident, and stakeholder input in the months ahead on the ways we can best leverage the opportunity we have to strengthen South Side neighborhoods and transit, while generating significant economic activity for the City and State," Turco added. "This development is projected to generate over \$49 billion in new tax revenue to the City of Chicago that can be used to support other vital City services."

Abudayyeh also emphasized ongoing communication. "The governor looks forward to engaging with stakeholders, including elected officials who represent the area, as the State evaluates this project," he said. "Ensuring that underrepresented minorities could

participate in the project if it moves forward will be an important element for this administration.”

Landmark shared details for the initial One Central concept in mid-March, which include development along a 15-year time frame with a focus on creating the largest public transit hub in the Chicago area while revitalizing 34 acres adjacent to several downtown cultural institutions to include urban housing; office space; and destination retail, dining, and entertainment on a platform built over the Metra tracks at a south Lake Shore Drive address.

Lovell and the SLCC remain concerned about Senate Bill 1814, which was over 1,000 pages long and was signed into law by Governor Pritzker on June 5.

The SLCC prepared a summary of the bill, noting highlights. The group’s summary states that the “OMB [State Office of Management and Budget], State, and State agencies cannot take any action that would impair the agreement. There is no answer to questions such as what happens if the cost is more than \$3.8 billion or the project doesn’t get completed and/or is significantly delayed, if it does not meet the projections, etc.”

The wording of the bill puts the project in a positive light. Section 25-5 of the bill calls the project “an opportunity for a prudent State investment,” and that the

project’s implementation “has the ability to reduce unemployment in the State, create new jobs, expand the business and workforce capacity among minority, woman, and disabled and veteran businesses and individuals” and “greatly enhance the overall tax base and strengthen the economy of the State.”

Section 25-10 of the bill notes that “the private entity will develop, finance, construct, own, operate, and manage the Project for a definite term in return for the right to receive the revenues generated from the project and other required payments from the State, including, but not limited to, a portion of the State sales taxes as provided under this Act.”

Section 25-15 of the bill indicates the agreement between the State and One Central could last as long as three-quarters of a century: “The term of the public-private agreement, including all extensions, shall be no more than 75 years.”

For the Department of Planning and Development, call (312) 744-3653. To reach Alderman Dowell’s office, call (773) 373-9273. To contact Landmark Development, call (312) 613-4900. For Mayor Lightfoot’s office, call (312) 744-3300. For Governor Pritzker’s office, log on to [www2.illinois.gov/agencies/GOV](http://www2.illinois.gov/agencies/GOV). For Schwieterman, email [jschweit@depaul.edu](mailto:jschweit@depaul.edu). To reach the SLCC, email [slcc.volunteers@gmail.com](mailto:slcc.volunteers@gmail.com).