

Name	Last Name	Organization	Comment
Joshua	Harris	Barack Obama Foundation	<p>We support the proposed and in-progress plan for the Midway Plaisance East End Improvements. The proposed design appears to strike an effective balance between respecting the history of this specific segment of the Midway Plaisance and applying the more recent practice of universal design to expand the opportunities for public engagement and use of the Midway. The planned design appears to complement and add to the recreational amenities already existing in nearby Jackson Park and the future Obama Presidential Center.</p> <p>The proposed plan also appears to address existing drainage issues at this segment of the Midway that too often render this land unusable for most forms of recreation, and the plan should make this a more welcoming and exciting gateway to the Midway and the adjacent Metra station.</p> <p>The focus on accessibility for this proposed play area mirrors the planned redevelopment of the Women's Garden directly across Stony Island Avenue as part of the Obama Presidential Center, which also is being reconstituted and updated to provide access to persons of all abilities and to create a more environmentally resilient landscape by incorporating improved stormwater management strategies.</p>
Susan	Alitto	Chicago Hyde Park Village	<p>I oppose the improvements proposed here for the East End of the Midway Plaisance because:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. There is insufficient attention to restoring and enhancing the existing wetlands</li> <li>2. Although I applaud the attention to providing space and equipment suitable for people with disabilities, this is not an appropriate site because traffic congestions would make access difficult and potentially hazardous</li> <li>3. Recreation areas for children are also in appropriate at this site because of access and safety challenges.</li> <li>4. The funds would be better spent in underserved neighborhoods that lack recreation areas and which would not have the same access and safety issues.</li> </ol> <p>Instead I would support greater attention to preservation and appropriate landscaping of the wetlands to create a attractive area to visit and explore.</p> <p>If the Park District is committed to installing some equipment, I would suggest devoting a small area to adult exercise equipment..</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Such equipment is lacking in this area</li> <li>* There is a high concentration of older adults living nearby.</li> <li>* Access to such equipment would benefit the health and wellbeing of this population</li> <li>* Adults could handle the traffic and congestion in accessing the area.</li> </ul>
Mary Pat	Sheppard	City Colleges of Chicago	Can the park district at least follow the Friends of the Parks recommendation for the Midway Plaisance East End Improvement? The Obama Foundation refused to listen to information about the negative environmental impact of the presidential center and also the need for open public Green space in Jackson Park. that the FOP highlighted before ground was broken. Can the park district of Chicago listen to and follow the recommendations of FOP? We should all be concerned about environmental impact of all new construction.
Anne	Miles	Disabled Walkers of Jackson Park Alliance	<p>Hi</p> <p>I am happy to see the proposed improvements for the Midway by Stony. As a parent whose children walked from Lab home I know the area well. Children and older people will have places to congregate that they do not have now. Please ignore the losers who are trumpian in their refusal to acknowledge that the community wants the. OPC and improvements at the Midway.</p> <p>Anne Miles</p>
Alisa	Starks	Don Nash Park Advisory Council	On behalf of Don Nash Park Advisory Council, I am writing to share our approval of the proposed design for the Midway Plaisance East End. We were excited to see the improvements planned for the area and did not expect to see such a wide variety of experiences, like the Sensory Path, slides, obstacle courses and shade structure. It is fun, educational, and suitable for the entire family. Great job!!
Nancy	Juda	FOTP board member and park user	<p>To whom it may concern,</p> <p>I am writing to ask you to reconsider the plans you have made for the east end of Midway Plaisance. Replacing the playground lost to the Obama Presidential Center is an opportunity for you to operate in accordance with the UPARR Act of 1978 and to do the right thing for the underserved communities directly impacted. The decisions you make will also have environmental and climate consequences.. The easy way of fulfilling the UPARR Act of 1978 by replacing the playground with one on already existing park land is of questionable legality. Please take this opportunity to use your power and position of leadership to enrich life for these community members rather than only enriching those who have the power to make this go the way they want it to go.</p> <p>Thank you.</p> <p>Nancy</p>
Juanita	Irizarry	Friends of the Parks (Part 1)	<p>August 22, 2022</p> <p>Re: Comments sent to Chicago Park District for Midway Plaisance East End Improvements 45 Day Review &amp; Comment Period</p> <p>Friends of the Parks advocates for equitable investment, transparency, and public access to our park lands and the governance of parks. Since our founding over 45 years ago, we have mobilized, equipped, and inspired Chicagoans to work for an equitable park system and a healthy Chicago. Our work is grounded in the belief that Chicago's park system is one of the City's unique features and most incredible gifts.</p> <p>One of the gems of our park system is the South Parks: the collection of Jackson Park, Midway Plaisance, and Washington Park. From the beginning of conversations about the siting of the Obama Presidential Center (OPC), Friends of the Parks has been clear and vocal about our preference that the OPC be constructed across the street from Washington Park on vacant land rather than usurping existing parkland anywhere in the South Parks system. That would have saved existing amenities and trees while still offering the opportunity to attract investment to enhance adjacent parkland. But since that clearly is not the case, we consistently have taken the position that new parks should be created in the neighborhoods surrounding Jackson Park to make up for the approximately 20 acres that will be taken up by the footprint of the OPC.</p> <p>Unfortunately, rather the creating new parkland, the construction planned for the Midway Plaisance east of the railway embankment is being used to "replace" park acreage that is being taken up by the OPC. We are glad that the process has affirmed our assertion all along that the fact that the OPC is being built on a portion of Jackson Park that received federal funding for improvements in the 1980s means that there must be replacement. Federal law requires that any conversion of recreation or park property that received funding under the Urban Parks and Recreation Recovery (UPARR) Act of 1978 to be replaced by an area of equivalent use and size. But we reiterate our disagreements already communicated during the Section 106/NEPA process about the creation of a playground on the Midway Plaisance; it is not new parkland, and it is not an equivalent use.</p>

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Juanita	Irizarry	Friends of the Parks (Part 2)	<p>As FOTP reviewed the most recent presentations and plans for the Midway Plaisance East End Improvements, we offer the following recommendations and comments reiterating previously communicated stances:</p> <p>1) Instead of creating a playground at the east end of the Midway Plaisance, the Chicago Park District should develop new parkland and amenities in underserved communities around Jackson Park. The purpose of UPARR funding, to create recreational programs in communities lacking them, and to redevelop the community, is not met by the current plan. Hyde Park is an area rich in parkland compared to surrounding communities and possesses more economic and community development resources. The allocation of UPARR replacement funds to add amenities to an existing park, Midway Plaisance, continues a pattern of disinvestment in parkland in low- and moderate-income communities on the south side. By contrast, South Shore and Woodlawn have lower concentration of parkland, recreational opportunities, and other resources, and residents have been asking for years for more investment in parks and green space.</p> <p>During the UPARR replacement site selection, the Chicago Park District rejected pocket parks in Woodlawn for development, even while the City of Chicago Department of Planning and Development did a study that revealed a need for more parks in the neighborhood. Other surrounding neighborhoods that are low- and moderate-income are also asking for more parks and green space. In South Shore, members of Park Advisory Councils and other community leaders have asked for more park investment in a variety of forms ranging from infrastructure improvements to new park programs and the creation of new parks.</p> <p>The Midway Plaisance East End Improvement Project is another clear example of Chicago squandering an opportunity to create new parks or expand parks in neighborhoods around Jackson Park.</p>
Juanita	Irizarry	Friends of the Parks (Part 3)	<p>2) The Chicago Park District did not engage enough with community members in selecting the UPARR replacement site or project.</p> <p>The process did not allow for impactful community decision making. In our 2018 State of the Parks report, Friends of the Parks called for the Chicago Park District to provide park stakeholders more power and influence over decision making. In that report, we noted that the park district's community involvement often focuses on consulting and informing rather than gathering meaningful input. The engagement process used for the Midway Plaisance improvement replicated this pattern.</p> <p>While the Chicago Park District held three public meetings, many of them were not well attended and the meetings focused on a presentation of already planned uses. Community members that attended were asked to give their feedback on the information or designs that were presented before them. Many participants articulated that they felt they were merely rubber stamping a proposal rather than helping to co-create or co-inform a decision.</p> <p>3) Despite some community pushback, the planning process continued with little adaptation.</p> <p>Leadership and members of Jackson Park Watch and the Midway Plaisance Park Advisory Council (MPAC) have been speaking out for a while criticizing the process used to select the site. The critiques are that federal process was not followed appropriately and there has not been enough community involvement in decision making. We affirm their concerns.</p> <p>4) We are concerned about the loss of the wetlands.</p> <p>As collective understanding of climate change threats grows rapidly, there is still time for the Chicago Park District to reconsider the use of wetlands for a playground. While playgrounds serve useful purposes to communities, the preservation of the natural tendency of this site to be soggy offers both environmental and educational benefit by enhancing it as a natural area. The construction of a playground at another site that would both avoid the challenges of building on a wetland and would add a much-needed amenity in an underserved area makes more sense.</p> <p>Friends of the Parks appreciates the opportunity to restate our concerns and our long-held desire for this project to be approached in a way that could be a win for everyone.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p> <p>Juanita Irizarry Executive Director</p>
Kenneth	Newman	HPKCAC/JPAC/MPAC/NPAC/BPAC/HWPAC	<p>Its unfortunate that the Chicago Park District doesn't care to obey city ordinances that require any private organization doing construction on public property ( CPD land), the organization in question MUST have their construction money COMPLETELY raised before starting construction. As the Obama Foundation is NOW running out of money to pay for construction, in another two years the construction will be stopping before any building is finished. NO playground should be built on any field that is a part of the Midway, and which should remain clear of any obstruction, and the field in question is also flood plain, with massive drainage problems after a heavy rainstorm. Will this playground even be available to those who are disabled???? Will the playground be ADA certified????</p>
Kineret	Jaffe	Hyde Park Art Center	<p>I serve on the Board of the Hyde Park Art Center. I am also a member of the Jackson Park Advisory Council and the Midway Plaisance Advisory Council.</p> <p>I wholeheartedly support the idea of creating a playground on the eastern end of the Midway Plaisance. The area in question is a goose-poop filled swamp that currently cannot be used for recreational activities. It will be wonderful to have this area accessible to children and their families. I cannot think of a better use for this end of the Midway. Thank you for working to make this possible.</p>
Clinee	Hedspeth	Hyde Park Historical Society, President	<p>Although the Society has expressed its general concerns in the past about projects in and around Jackson Park, and although the Society does not endorse this current playground plan nor the procedures used for its site selection, design or review, for this comment review period, the Society will confine itself to an issue of historic importance – the restoration of the Cheney-Goode Memorial Bench. The long-neglected restoration of the Cheney-Goode Memorial is the solitary achievement of the current plan and is to be applauded. It should be the central feature of the site.</p>
Robin	Kaufman	Jackson Park Advisory Council	<p>I have been attending many meetings regarding the Obama presidential Center. We were told if there would be replacement Parkland for any land that was taken.</p> <p>Using existing parkland to replace parkland lost violates that promise to provide new, replacement land.</p> <p>Furthermore, there are parts of the city far more in need of new park space and playgrounds than 59th and Stoney Island in Hyde Park. Residents of Woodlawn will be losing access to much of Jackson Park as a result of the elimination of 300 parking spaces in in the Woodlawn portion of Jackson Park. An excellent location creating NEW parkland in Woodlawn would be appropriate.</p> <p>Thank you.</p>

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Brenda	Nelms	Jackson Park Watch (Part 1 )	<p>This comment is submitted by Brenda Nelms and Jack Spicer, co-presidents of Jackson Park Watch. As a consulting party to the Section 106 review of changes in Jackson Park to accommodate the construction of the Obama Presidential Center, Jackson Park Watch did not concur with or sign the Memorandum of Agreement that set the stage for the now proposed changes to the east end of the Midway Plaisance. We comment now both as officers of Jackson Park Watch and as individual members of the community. We have previously stated our opposition to the proposed use of the Midway tip to satisfy the UPARR requirements and we summarize our reasons here:</p> <p>-The process of selecting the Midway as the UPARR replacement site made a mockery of the City's promises for community engagement in the decision and indeed completely ignored the expressed objections of the Midway Plaisance Advisory Council.</p> <p>-The City's interpretation of the UPARR requirements was blinkered, seemingly designed to serve primarily the Obama Foundation by combining a solution to the UPARR impediment with a plan to spruce up the Midway's eastern tip in anticipation of visitors to the OPC from outside the neighborhood. But the City failed miserably to take advantage of a special opportunity to provide new, additional park space to underserved neighborhoods such as West Woodlawn.</p> <p>-The designated "replacement" site is not a vacant lot in need of development, but rather it is already a public good that, like much of Jackson Park and many other South Side parks, has long been neglected when it should have been maintained and nurtured. The decades of inadequate park maintenance across the area are evident in crumbling pathways and bridges, untended plantings, flooded underpasses, and unplayable tennis courts and athletic fields, features that have been used by the Obama Foundation, media outlets, and even elected officials to claim that the parks are underused and in need of "transformation" when all that is needed is regular care of what is there already.</p> <p>-The site is inappropriate for the proposed design of which the central feature is a universally accessible play area. The site is difficult and unsafe to access; surrounded by heavy traffic and noisy train tracks, exposing users to air and sensory pollution; lacking in restroom facilities that could be particularly important for the targeted audience (defined as young children and disabled individuals of all ages).</p>
Brenda	Nelms	Jackson Park Watch (Part 2)	<p>Here we comment on the specific design plan presented by the Park District at a public meeting on June 21 and presented in summary (without any changes to reflect community input at that meeting) for the required 45-day Public Comment period that began on July 8.</p> <p>-The long-neglected restoration of the Cheney-Goode Memorial is the primary achievement of this plan and to be applauded. It should be the central feature of the site.</p> <p>-The universally accessible nature play area that is the central feature of the draft plan seems to be a comprehensive assemblage of activities that could serve a wide range of disabled children and adults as well as able children under about age 10. The assemblage of 25 separate stations has the feeling of boxes being checked to meet every need. But it also has the feel of being tightly jammed into a space too small for its worthy ambitions. The maximum capacity was projected by design team staff as 125, but the area would be unusable if anywhere near that many individuals of different ages and needs (plus caregivers) showed up at the same time. The play area as designed requires more space, on a different site, to realize its potential and to be the showcase model that the Park District hopes it will be.</p> <p>-Beyond its crowded appearance, the expansive play area and the vertical mix of its individual elements clash with Olmsted's open space design. Also jarring is the introduction of a pastel-roofed outlook amid a maze of wooden structures and planting. A different plan would be needed to be compatible, spatially and aesthetically, with the historic site.</p> <p>-We are told that the current plan is defined to be responsive to the requirements demands of the National Park Service for active recreation space, but current community use of the space for such activity is ignored. The wide stretch of the playground (north to south) along with the ornamental plantings at each end will create a barrier that effectively eliminates one of the current recreational activities frequently mentioned by community residents sledding down the railroad embankment to the center of the Midway. This is in spite of design team response to comments at community meetings that we hear you. Removing the playground and rethinking the plantings could preserve this pleasant (and active) pastime and also allow for the open space required by NPS without the need to eliminate the wetland.</p>
Brenda	Nelms	Jackson Park Watch (Part 3)	<p>-The July 8 plan continues to include the CPD's plan to eradicate the half-acre of wetland at the eastern end of the site by regrading and the installation of new drainage. Many members of the community have spoken in opposition to this eradication on environmental grounds as well as because of the cost and futility of the proposed changes. We support the recommendation that the wetland be retained and featured as an important and natural element of the Midway. We believe that there would still be adequate space for an athletics area as mandated by NPS (though we also believe that it would be an unnecessary feature for the site given the better athletic fields just to the west).</p> <p>-Many of the features that community members cited as essential if the proposed play area were to be built are either not yet included or not fully illustrated in the draft plan presented on July 8 for review. Chief among these are a safety fence around the play area, a safe drop-off or accessible parking area, and a restroom.</p> <p>-The outline for a fence is shown on Proposed Design diagram #3, but the fence is not shown in either of the "View" illustrations in which the play area appears entirely open and unprotected. Appearances and details are important. It seems likely that an illustration of the play area surrounded by a fence would further emphasize the intrusiveness of the</p> <p>-The July 8 materials do not include any reference to the repeated community concerns about safe access to the site. There was mention by staff at the June 21 community meeting of discussions with CDOT regarding better crosswalks and a drop-off on the south side of the site and of looking to the parking lot at 60th and Stony (which is owned by the University) for possible accessible parking. We believe that those discussions should be concluded and the results incorporated into the plan presented for public review before any final decision is made about the site or the design. Such features are necessary, not optional, regardless of the final design for the site.</p> <p>-There is no reference in the July 8 materials to community concerns about access to a restroom for users of the site and particularly for users of the universally accessible play area. Community members suggested that restroom facilities could be developed in collaboration with the to-be-renovated Metra station. Cross-agency collaboration is difficult but not impossible and is especially important in an age of budget tightening, and it should be pursued. No decision about the current design should be made until that important need is resolved.</p>
Brenda	Nelms	Jackson Park Watch (Part 4)	<p>Given the misguided use of the Midway tip as a UPARR replacement space, given the misfit of the current draft plan for the chosen site, given the many community concerns about the current design, and given the reported lack of full funding, we suggest elements for an alternative plan that would be more appropriate, more effective and, most likely, less costly:</p> <p>-Transfer the UPARR designation to another space (or spaces) in Woodlawn that would constitute additional parkland and that would be more accommodating, appropriate and accessible for a universally accessible play area.</p> <p>-Restore the Cheney-Goode Memorial and make it the central feature of the site with an accessible connector path to it across the Midway.</p> <p>-Maintain and develop the wetland area as a public resource and educational opportunity.</p> <p>-Develop a design that would be more compatible with long-standing recreational usage of the site (e.g., sledding hill) and would also maintain an open lawn between the wetland area</p> <p>-Establish permanent safe access routes, drop-off areas and accessible parking.</p> <p>-Establish an endowed fund to support regular maintenance of the Midway site to avoid continuation of the pattern of neglected maintenance that has been the rule for at least fifty years.</p>

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Bonnie	McDonald	Landmarks Illinois	<p>Dear Midway Plaisance Planning Team,</p> <p>Landmarks Illinois (LI), as a consulting party to the December, 2020 Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) for Projects in Jackson Park, was in receipt of the Chicago Park District's July 8, 2022 letter regarding a 45-day comment period for review of proposed modifications to the east end of the Midway Plaisance. The proposed changes to the Midway Plaisance are associated with road and park changes to Jackson Park and Midway Plaisance, listed in the National Register of Historic Places, to accommodate the Obama Presidential Center (OPC). As outlined in the MOA, design review of recreation replacement was an agreed upon mitigation measure due to the planned loss of recreation area in Jackson Park that was previously restored in the 1980s using Urban Park and Recreation Recovery (UPARR) grant money. Thank you for this opportunity to provide the following comments.</p> <p>1. In 2020, after reviewing the MOA draft, Landmarks Illinois offered in an August 10, 2020 letter to Matt Fuller of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) a preference that for UPARR grant recreation land replacement, the Chicago Park District (CPD) select other city-owned vacant land in the community to create new parks where green and open space is severely lacking. While use of the eastern end of the Midway Plaisance was ultimately selected and included in the MOA as the recreation land replacement area, we do not believe the MOA requires play equipment to be added as part of this requirement. This is a design feature that can change and its inclusion does not meet the Secretary of Interior Standards. Instead, we again urge CPD to maintain this area as open meadow, as was Frederick Law Olmsted's original vision, and identify other areas in the greater Woodlawn community where new or improved playground equipment is desperately in need. In the City's February 2020 Woodlawn Plan Consolidation Report, Southwest Woodlawn was acknowledged as being underserved by green space and playgrounds. Providing new play equipment in another existing park or new park also would meet the UPARR recreation area replacement requirement.</p> <p>2. We are glad to see planned restoration of the 1932 Cheney-Goode Memorial on the Midway Plaisance so that it may continue to honor early women leaders elected to public office in Chicago. We want assurance that the conservator selected to do the restoration meets National Park Service 1999 Professional Qualification Standards. The monument is made of sandstone and the removal of paint will be a delicate process. We also hope a lighting plan of the monument is considered to help prevent future vandalism.</p> <p>3. It is unclear to date if a Section 404 permit is necessary from the Army Corps of Engineers due to wetland conditions. This is important to know, as the need for this permit could once again trigger a Section 106 review.</p> <p>Thank you for taking our comments and suggestions into consideration.</p> <p>Sincerely, Bonnie McDonald, President &amp; CEO</p> <p>Cc: Heather Gleason, CPD; Anthony Rubano, SHPO; Carol Wallace, SHPO; Jaime Leichinger, ACHP</p>
Karin	Nelson	Midway Apartment Building Corporation	<p>The proposed play area on the Midway Plaisance east of the Metra tracks is inconsistent with Olmsted's vision. This proposed use of the site has been opposed by the MPAC and others. The decision was made deliberately ignoring the wishes of local stakeholders. This was a top-down decision that ignored local concerns and opposition. There is currently no play area at the site, it is not part of Olmsted's historical design. This proposed playground plan is not part of Olmsted's historical plan and does not fit the character of the site.</p> <p>A more appropriate renovation would be to landscape the area as a garden, strengthening the connection between Jackson Park, Midway Plaisance, and Washington Park as originally intended by Olmsted. The proposed play area is redundant, as there will be a play area right across the street at the Obama Presidential Center.</p> <p>Fencing around the play area? Also seems out of keeping with Olmsted's vision for the parks. Does this mean that the playground will be closed and locked during part of the day/at night?</p> <p>The central lawn at the Midway site is currently a wetland as defined by the Army Corps of Engineers. It should be embraced and expanded, not destroyed. What is the specific plan for replacing the wetland that will be destroyed in this plan per Illinois Law (20 ILCS 830/) Interagency Wetland Policy Act of 1989?</p> <p>As a resident across the street from this proposed renovation, I'm very concerned about the noise from this playground interfering with the quiet enjoyment of my home. I'm particularly concerned about the play areas #10 and possibly #6, and oppose the idea of a musical garden at this site in the strongest possible terms, as it will be loud and highly annoying to residents who live along the Midway.</p>
Marc	Lipinski	Midway Plaisance Advisory Council (Part 1)	<p>The Chicago Park District has solicited public comment concerning its July 2022 draft plan (the "July 2022 Plan") for what it describes as "East End Improvements for the Midway". It is respectfully submitted that the plan should be rejected because: (1) it promotes disinvestment in underserved communities, in direct contravention of the intent of the UPARR (Urban Park and Recreation Recovery) program and Chicago Park District policy; (2) it fails to expressly address the preservation and management of the wetland at the eastern end of the Midway, which should be the foundational consideration for any planning for this area; and (3) it proposes play structures supposedly for disabled persons, which, as a practical matter, will be useless to them. These problems are compounded by a lack of funding for all but \$265,000 the contemplated \$3,000,000 project budget. Accordingly, a planning process is being presented as being near completion, for play structures that should be expected to be of no use to their target audience, for an area for which the principal planning issue, the wetland, is being ignored.</p> <p>1. The July 2022 Plan Promotes Inequity The City of Chicago has acknowledged, on its website, that it received two UPARR grants for Jackson Park in the early 1980s. The first grant was \$125,300 for "community-based recreation awareness, anti-vandalism training, and park rehabilitation programs" and recognized that "[t]he area lack[ed] recreational programs available in other areas of the city which hinder[ed] the redevelopment of the community." The second grant was \$135,870 for the "replacement of 700 trees and shrubs and restoration of 7,000 yards of landscaped area within Jackson Park" and was "intended to improve the aesthetics of Jackson Park and to enhance picnicking and other passive recreational activities through improved landscaping."</p> <p>The selection of the eastern end of the Midway as a UPARR replacement site flouts both planning objectives. Under no circumstances can the eastern end of the Midway be considered part of an area "lacking in recreational programs available in other areas of the city. And there is no need to divert UPARR funding to the eastern end of the Midway to aid the redevelopment of the community. In a May 16, 2022 article, the Hyde Park Herald quoted Eillesh Tuffy of the City of Chicago's Department of Planning, as stating "[t]here were a number of sites that were reviewed [for UPARR replacement], including some smaller pocket parks within the Woodlawn Community. And some of those locations were found to be inadequate for the sizing and the location." Ms. Tuffy failed to indicate who reviewed those sites, avoiding the issue of the absence of any public input into the selection of a UPARR replacement site. A public process could have included a discussion about the divestment of underserved communities of parks and recreation funding. A public process also could have identified additional sites in underserved communities that could have been considered.</p> <p>Unfortunately, the UPARR replacement story fits all too well within a pattern of disinvestment in Chicago's low- and moderate-income communities, especially those on Chicago's south side. The Hyde Park Herald, in a June 30, 2022 article, quoted Eillesh Tuffy of the City of Chicago's Department of Planning, as stating at the June 21, 2022 Community Meeting #3 Presentation, that "the location of the east end of the Midway is essentially serving the same exact community as the space where the project is occurring," apparently to suggest that a location in Hyde Park is equivalent to a location in Woodlawn. However, the shifting of investment from Woodlawn to Hyde Park reflects an official statement of the City's lack of confidence in Woodlawn, which contravenes the purpose of the UPARR program.</p>



Name	Last Name	Organization	Comment
Marc	Lipinski	Midway Plaisance Advisory Council (Part 2)	<p>2. The Project is Vastly Underfunded</p> <p>According to the Park District's website, the budget for the planned "improvements" to the east end of the Midway is \$3,000,000. However, as recently as the June 21, 2022 community meeting, the Park District has acknowledged that it lacked \$2,700,000 of funding for this project. This funding issue was addressed at the May 2022 public meeting of the Midway Plaisance Park Advisory Council (MPAC). When asked about funding for work at the eastern end of the Midway, Heather Gleason (the Chicago Park District's Director of Planning and Development) told MPAC that \$260,000 in UPARR replacement funding was available for playground structures, but an additional \$2.7 million of funding for contemplated wetland drainage has not been secured from any source. The only money secured for the project is the UPARR funding that is being diverted from Woodlawn.</p> <p>3. The July 2022 Plan Reflects the Park District's Intention to Destroy the Wetland at the Eastern End of the Midway</p> <p>The eastern end of the Midway is designated as a wetland in an Environmental Assessment published on the City of Chicago's website. The July 2022 Plan conspicuously fails to account for this wetland, notwithstanding the fact that planning for preservation and management of the wetland should be the foundation of any planning for the eastern end of the Midway. While it has been suggested by the Park District and its consultant that the wetland would be preserved and that native plantings would be installed, the July 2022 Plan includes no such provision. This follows Heather Gleason's statement that funding for wetland drainage has not been secured. The omission of wetland considerations from the Park District's July 2022 Plan suggests that there is no intention to maintain the wetland.</p> <p>The construction of a playground area on the eastern end of the Midway, at the expense of destroying a wetland, is an unnecessary, inappropriate, unduly expensive, and environmentally destructive choice. First, and most importantly, the Park District should be acting as a steward of natural resources. As a steward, the Park District should be developing a plan for the eastern end of the Midway that embraces nature, rather than destroys it. The Midway's natural wetland should be recognized and enhanced as such. Native wetland plants that absorb and thrive on seasonal excess water could greatly enhance the beauty and biodiversity of the Midway. Midway wetland restoration "achievable at a relatively modest price" would provide habitat for birds and native pollinators and create an opportunity for timely environmental education, while offering a carbon sequestration function that the current mowed lawn aesthetic at public parks does not provide.</p> <p>Second, the destruction of the naturally occurring wetland on the easternmost portion of the Midway means that rainfall and underground water running beneath the surface of the eastern end of the Midway will be diverted elsewhere. It makes no sense to maximize the diversion of rainfall and groundwater into the City's sewers, to be mixed with pollutants and increasing opportunities for flooding.</p> <p>Third, and as is stated above, the apparent cost estimate of \$2.7 million for wetland drainage is unsupported by any plan. The rule of thumb for public projects is that initial cost estimates are far too low.</p> <p>Fourth, the cost estimate for wetland drainage does not include any accounting for flooding of streets or basements, or flooding after-effects such as mold and mildew, arising from stormwater management problems created by wetland drainage.</p> <p>Protecting the wetland allows city water management to work with natural water management, mitigating flooding and its after-effects, eliminating the need for a \$2.7 million drainage plan. The Hyde Park Herald, in a June 30, 2022 article, quoted Heather Gleason of the Park District as stating at the June 21, 2022 Community Meeting #3 Presentation, that the Park District "focus[es] so much on natural areas, but we do have to balance. We don't have the ability to put natural plantings everywhere." However, it is not "balanced" to destroy a natural resource without replacing it, as apparently is contemplated for the eastern end of the Midway. Nor is it "balanced" to maximize wetland destruction, by coupling the contemplated destruction of the wetland at the eastern end of the Midway with the recently accomplished destruction of wetland area in neighboring Jackson Park.</p>
Marc	Lipinski	Midway Plaisance Advisory Council (Part 3)	<p>4. The July 2022 Plan Proposes Play Structures that will be Useless to its Target Audience, Persons with Disabilities and their Caregivers</p> <p>The eastern end of the Midway, where the proposed play structures are to be built, is surrounded on three sides by high vehicular traffic roadways, and on the fourth side by railroad tracks which carry significant freight traffic. Due to the roadway changes that are currently in progress in and around Jackson Park, the already high vehicular traffic on the three sides will significantly increase. This area is inconvenient at best for individuals with disabilities and their caregivers, because caregivers will need to park at a distance from the playground and then bring individuals with disabilities some distance to the playground. The alternative would be to expect caregivers to get third persons to act as drivers, for drop-offs and pick-ups. Also, the proximity to freight train traffic, heavy vehicular traffic, and related sudden loud noises poses a problem for those who have sensory sensitivities, such as those on the autism spectrum. The practical effect of these problems is to make the proposed playground useless to its target audience. Disabled persons and their caregivers have sufficient obstacles to address as part of daily life. To demand the additional effort required to make this inappropriate playground destination work is both unkind and unrealistic.</p> <p>5. The July 2022 Plan Expands the Square Footage for the Proposed Play Structure, at the Expense of Open Area and Wetland Maintenance</p> <p>The July 2022 Plan also expands the play structure area beyond what was disclosed and discussed at previous meetings, at the expense of open area (and wetland maintenance) at the eastern end of the Midway.</p> <p>6. An Alternative Vision for UPARR</p> <p>An alternative vision for UPARR would be to keep the \$260,000 of funding in underserved communities, which could use the investment in parks and playgrounds to enhance redevelopment and to simply make these areas more enjoyable places to live. There is no reason why Hyde Park should be muscling out communities with fewer resources. The general public should have an opportunity to be heard concerning this alternative vision and the City of Chicago and the Chicago Park District have refused to allow it.</p> <p>It has been suggested that nothing can be done about this misguided approach to UPARR replacement, because it has been included in the Section 106 Memorandum of Agreement related to Jackson Park. That simply isn't so. The Memorandum of Agreement, at Stipulation VIII, expressly provides for amendments. At Stipulation IX, the Memorandum of Agreement provides that a signatory (such as the Chicago Park District) can choose to not perform an undertaking, and if so, the agreement is to be amended or terminated.</p>
Marc	Lipinski	Midway Plaisance Advisory Council (Part 4)	<p>7. The July 2022 Draft Plan Reflects that the Park District has Ignored Public Input</p> <p>The problems with the July 2022 Plan, as described above, have been mainstays of the Park District's planning, notwithstanding critiques offered on multiple occasions, including: (a) a meeting of Park District representatives with MPAC on May 11, 2022; (b) MPAC's letter of June 8, 2022 to the Hyde Park Herald, on which the Chicago Park District, among others, was copied; and (c) the June 21, 2022 Community Meeting #3 Presentation. MPAC has consistently raised concerns with the Park District about the issue of equity in connection with shifting of UPARR funds from Woodlawn, an underserved community, to Hyde Park, and the failure to plan for the maintenance of the wetland at the eastern end of the Midway. MPAC also has consistently raised concerns with the Park District concerning funding for its proposal for the eastern end of the Midway, as well as the unsuitability of the eastern end of the Midway for the play structures that it is proposing. The July 2022 Plan fails to acknowledge or address these issues and shows that the Park District is knowingly and intentionally going forward with a plan that is fundamentally flawed.</p> <p>There is no legitimate reason why the Section 106 Memorandum of Agreement cannot be amended, so that the UPARR funding can be allocated, once again, to an underserved community, enhancing park equity and accountability for the stewardship of funds allocated for south side parks.</p> <p>Bronwyn Nichols Lodato, President, Midway Plaisance Park Advisory Council Marc Lipinski, Vice President, Midway Plaisance Park Advisory Council Matthew Isoda, Secretary, Midway Plaisance Park Advisory Council Kristy Rawson, Treasurer, Midway Plaisance Park Advisory Council</p>

Name	Last Name	Organization	Comment
Marc	Lipinski	Midway Plaisance Advisory Council (Part 5)	cc: Rosa Escareno, Superintendent Chicago Park District Patrick Levar, Chief Operating Officer, Chicago Park District Heather Gleason, Director of Planning and Development, Chicago Park District Sarah White, Lakefront Planning Coordinator, Chicago Park District Ald. Leslie Hairston Ald. Jeannette Taylor State Sen. Robert Peters State Rep. Curtis Tarver
Kristy	Rawson	Midway Plaisance Advisory Council treasurer	<p>Good evening,</p> <p>You have already received several sets of comments from me, both individually and in my capacity as an MPAC board member. I want to just reiterate one point, on which I feel uniquely qualified to comment, as I live directly across 59th Street from the proposed playground and approximately as close to the train tracks as the playground will be located. Freight trains go by several times a day. They are extremely loud and they approach very suddenly. The very sudden very loud noise will undoubtedly cause irritation and possibly distress to anyone using the playground, but it will be nothing short of traumatic to those who are on the autism spectrum. People (any age) on the spectrum have extremely heightened auditory sensitivity. Trains could cause kids on the spectrum to scream, cover their ears, cry, run away, etc. My guess is that, if they use the playground at all, they would absolutely need to wear noise cancellation headphones (which would single them out among their peers just as much as their traumatized reaction to the freighters would do).</p> <p>Please understand, also, that the playground equipment will shake when a freight train passes. I'm not speculating here; this is a fact and I state it based on my lived experience. Our brick building shakes with passing freighters.</p> <p>I am absolutely flabbergasted that this site has been chosen for a playground for children with disabilities, it is entirely unsuitable, just owing to the train tracks alone, to say nothing of all the additional factors that people have cited, which I won't go into here. Was anyone with expertise in neurodiversity consulted before choosing this site for this purpose? Surely, if there was an expert on the case, they did not spend enough time at the site to understand it's characteristics. This is insulting -- quite frankly -- insulting to the surrounding community and to the supposed intended users of the site, i.e., people with disabilities. It's a devastatingly irresponsible. use of taxpayer dollars. Please reconsider the UPARR site choice before you find yourselves in a position of regret and embarrassment.</p> <p>MPAC understand the need to improve the east end of the midway and we are enthusiastically ready to be involved in that landscape planning process. but the UPARR funds should go to a Woodlawn residential area... and one further from the train tracks.</p> <p>Respectfully, Kristy Rawson</p>
Anne	Neal Petri	National Association for Olmsted Parks (Part 1)	<p>August 22, 2022</p> <p>Comments of the National Association for Olmsted Parks <a href="https://www.chicagoparkdistrict.com/Midway-East-End-Improvements-45Day-Comment-Form">https://www.chicagoparkdistrict.com/Midway-East-End-Improvements-45Day-Comment-Form</a></p> <p>Re: Proposed Midway Plaisance East End Improvements</p> <p>Summary The National Association for Olmsted Parks objects to the July 2022 Draft Plan for "Midway Plaisance East-End Improvements."</p> <p>The so-called "Improvements" to the Midway Plaisance, which is listed on the National Historic Register, decimate the design of Frederick Law Olmsted, do immense ecological harm by eliminating a wetland, and ignore, at considerable cost, the needs of underserved neighborhoods in Chicago. We align ourselves with the comments of the Midway Plaisance Park Advisory Council, submitted on August 17, 2022, and request that the Memorandum of Agreement outlining these plans (December 2021) be amended to protect the public interest.</p> <p>Discussion I. The So-called Improvements Should be Rejected In 1870, city officials called on Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux the most famous landscape architects of the day – to help develop a great metropolitan park that would rival Central Park in its importance to the city. The answer: South Park. The inland park, later called Washington Park, would include a refectory, courts, garden and galleries with a carriage concourse and deer paddock. The Lake Park, now known as Jackson Park, would have a mile of lakefront; Olmsted and Vaux proposed transforming the swampy land into a system of lagoons and waterways with boat landings and shelters. The two parks were to be connected by a narrow strip of land, now known as the Midway Plaisance, which would serve as both a boulevard and canal. Sited on the edge of Lake Michigan, the Parl realized in different phases over a period of 20 years – transformed a fetid wetland into a magical space that invited wildlife, birds and people into its picturesque, pastoral and restorative setting, with wide open vistas to the Lake.</p> <p>Jackson Park and the Midway Plaisance also focused on ecological concerns raised by the marshy wetlands. Olmsted had a persistent concern about frequent flooding and varying fluctuations in the level of the Lake. According to the Papers, Olmsted "was so concerned about how changing water levels would affect plantings in the redesign of South Park that he had assistants compile a list of annual water levels on Lake Michigan from 1859 through 1892," finding that the water levels varied as much as three feet. <i>FLO Papers, Vol 9, p. 781, footnotes 4 and 5</i></p>
Anne	Neal Petri	National Association for Olmsted Parks (Part 2)	<p>Olmsted's design of the Park, therefore, used thick plantings with native dune grasses, sages and sedges – to protect park edges when flooded during storms. By helping soak up water from the sky and the lake, the park operated like a green sponge helping to address the inevitable challenges of storms and water runoff, now only worsened by climate change. See New York Times, Battle Between a Great City and a Great Lake, p. 1 et alia (July 7, 2021).</p> <p>Now 100 years later, the importance of this historic landscape and natural wetland has not diminished. This is especially true in light of the rapidly disappearing wetlands in the Chicago area, as outlined by recent research. Wetlands are not luxuries. They remove pollutants, help manage groundwater, cycle nutrients and support biodiversity.</p> <p>Notwithstanding, the Chicago Park District is proposing to replace the wetland at the east end of the Midway Plaisance with a "destination" playground which will include a vast amount of heavy play equipment and new paving out of keeping with the original, green and restorative park design.</p> <p>We agree with the concerns raised by the Midway Plaisance Advisory Council (MPAC), an elected body dedicated to supporting the Midway Plaisance. As outlined in the MPAC comments submitted on August 17, 2022: "The construction of a playground area on the eastern end of the Midway, at the expense of destroying a wetland, is an unnecessary, inappropriate, unduly expensive, and environmentally destructive choice. First, and most importantly, the Park District should be acting as a steward of natural resources. As a steward, the Park District should be developing a plan for the eastern end of the Midway that embraces nature, rather than destroys it. Protecting the wetland allows city water management to work with natural water management, mitigating flooding and its after-effects, eliminating the need for a \$2.7 million drainage plan."</p>

Name	Last Name	Organization	Comment
Anne	Neal Petri	National Association for Olmsted Parks (Part 3)	<p>If allowed to function as a wetlands, this area of the Midway could absorb seasonal excess water and provide habitat for birds and native pollinators. This was surely Frederick Law Olmstedâ€™s vision over 100 years ago and should remain the vision today. As the MPAC outlines, Midway wetland restoration achievable at a relatively modest price " would create an opportunity for timely environmental education, while offering a carbon sequestration function that the current mowed lawn aesthetic at public parks does not provide." MPAC comments, page 3.</p> <p>II. Plans for the Playground Ignore Equity Concerns</p> <p>Olmsted explored the themes of urbanization, civic infrastructure, and social justice as a foundation for the enrichment and empowerment of American society. He believed, fundamentally, in the capacity of nature to improve health and bring people together. And, in developing parks in Chicago and other communities, he was dedicated to the notion of equitable access: parks for all people.</p> <p>The Urban Park and Recreation Recovery Act (UPARR) was created in this spirit. By regulation, UPARR funding is to be used for areas "lacking in recreational programs available in other areas of the city." The selection of the eastern end of the Midway Plaisance for a playground fails to address these express social justice concerns. The designation of existing parkland in Jackson Park to "make up" for parkland lost to the Obama Presidential Center will result in no net park gains. Meanwhile, there are a number of sites, scattered throughout the South Side, where new parks and playgrounds could be built.</p> <p>We, therefore, agree with the comments of MPAC, page 4: "An alternative vision for UPARR would be to keep the \$260,000 of funding in underserved communities, which could use the investment in parks and playgrounds." There is no reason why Hyde Park should be muscling out communities with fewer resources. The general public should have an opportunity to be heard concerning this alternative vision and the City of Chicago and the Chicago Park District have refused to allow it.</p> <p>Far from advancing equity and social justice, the proposed "improvements" amount to little more than grand expensive plans with no attention to actual costs, not to mention REAL environmental and community needs. For these reasons, we request that the Federal Highway Administration consult with all signatories to reconsider and amend the terms of the MOA to preserve Olmsted's design, preserve the existing Midway wetland and apply UPARR funds, as expressly intended, for new parks in truly underserved communities.</p>
Joel	Lynch	National Park Service	<p>The Urban Park and Recreation Recovery (UPARR) program is administered by the National Park Service (NPS). As a result of the Projects in Jackson Park, the City of Chicago (City) must provide the NPS the opportunity to confirm the final design of the east end of the Midway Plaisance still meets the UPARR statutory equivalency requirements. The NPS looks forward to consultation with the City outlining how public participation influenced the final design for replacement recreation opportunities of reasonably equivalent usefulness.</p>
Laura	Derks	Nature, Culture, and Human Health Network	<p>On behalf of the Nature, Culture, and Human Health Network, we are writing to express our deep concern about plans to continue to reshape Jackson Park when other nearby communities that are under-resourced in quality nature spaces could very much use and benefit from new investments. The Nature, Culture, and Human Health Network (NCH2) represents hundreds of organizations and individuals in the Chicago region committed to understanding the connection between health and time spent outside, in nature and we advocate on behalf of maintaining and enhancing access to quality nature places throughout the area. The positive link between human health and time in nature has been researched and proven many times over.</p> <p>We have been concerned about the dramatic elimination of tree canopy for the Obama Presidential Center and believe any further canopy elimination would have a detrimental impact not only for the health and well-being of nearby neighborhoods but also for increasing the heat island effect in the summertime as climate change pushes up temperatures in the summer. In addition, we strongly encourage you to distribute resources and invest in neighborhoods adjacent to Hyde Park like Woodlawn, Grand Crossing, and Washington Park that do not have high quality nature spaces or opportunities to engage in the nature spots that might be there. We discourage the repurposing of historic Jackson Park for a children's playground.</p> <p>On another note for the redevelopment of the South Parks, we have asked Mayor Lightfoot as well to preserve the South Shore Nature Sanctuary and the tree canopy that remains in these parks. NCH2 is deeply concerned about plans to reshape the current nature scape on Chicago's South Side surrounding the South Shore Cultural Center and involving the potential elimination of the South Shore Nature Sanctuary. As part of the City's INVEST South/West campaign and other long-term strategic plans, we ask and encourage you to maintain AND expand high quality nature spaces in these neighborhoods.</p> <p>Thank you so much for your consideration of our comments, Laura Derks Director, Nature, Culture, and Human Health Network NCH2.org</p>
Gerald (Jerry)	Adelmann	Openlands	<p>August 22, 2022</p> <p>RE: Comments sent to Chicago Park District for Midway Plaisance East End Improvements 45 Day Review &amp; Comment Period</p> <p>Dear Chicago Park District Board of Commissioners:</p> <p>Upon a review of recent presentations and plans for the Midway Plaisance East End Improvements, Openlands would like to reinforce our previous recommendations. Specifically, while we support the restoration and revitalization of Jackson and Washington parks and the Midway Plaisance, it must come with careful consideration.</p> <p>In this instance, rather than creating new or reclaimed park acreage to replace land used for buildings at the Obama Presidential Library (OPL), the construction planned for the Midway Plaisance East End would use an existing natural area to do so. Effectively missing an opportunity to invest in the creation of new parkland and amenities in the underserved communities around Jackson Park.</p> <p>As the long-lasting implications and effects of climate change grow stronger by the day, we ask that you look for opportunities to replace the land used for building the OPL with the construction of a playground at another site. This would not only avoid the financial implications and engineering challenges of building on an existing wetland but also add a much-needed amenity in an underserved area that could make more sense.</p> <p>Such an investment could prioritize physical activity, outdoor learning, and community engagement in an area with the greatest need for parks, green space, and urban flood management. A new park and playground at another site could also incorporate landscape features "green stormwater infrastructure" that captures a significant amount of rainfall, helping keep the City's water resources clean and resulting in less neighborhood flooding.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p> <p>Gerald Adelmann, President &amp; CEO Openlands</p>

Name	Last Name	Organization	Comment
Linda	Gonzalez	People's Council of SouthEast Chicago	Stop killing trees!
Elena	Tiedens	Phoenix Sustainability Initiative at the University of Chicago	<p>As a member of the Hyde Park community, I urge you to identify another location for the Urban Park Recreation and Recovery Placement (UPARR) replacement. The current plan will cause the destruction of the Midway's east end ephemeral wetlands, resulting from the construction of a playground on top of the wetlands. As city officials you have continually abandoned your responsibilities to us, your constituencies, in refusing to respond to our concerns about both the social and environmental implications of your plan for the Midway. However, in amending the Section 106 MOA and identifying another location in need of recreational park space, you can prevent the destruction of a key natural habitat and community space while enhancing park equity. I implore that you begin the process of finding a just Urban Parks and Recreation Recovery Act (UPARR) replacement space for Jackson Park associated with the construction of the Obama Presidential Center (OPC).</p> <p>The Midway's ephemeral wetlands are a key natural space and habitat that deserves our undying protection. According to the National Park Service, the current plan would decimate 0.436 acres of the Midway's ephemeral wetlands. This wetland is an invaluable carbon sink, and its destruction would represent a major loss to the entirety of the Southside. Further, not only does UPARR mandate that the Jackson Park replacement space be located in a comparable location i.e. one that is not a pre-established park, but the Navigable Waters Rule of the Clean Water Act also mandates that local and state entities do not destroy adjacent wetlands: wetlands next to a perennial body of water. The east end of the Midway deserves protection and preservation as the wetlands that it is, and the current plan is environmentally irresponsible in its alterations of the wetlands in order to construct a playground. The City's current disregard for environmental well being is only exacerbated by the inevitably negative effects that the nearby construction of the OPC will have on the surrounding ecosystems and human communities. Not only will the construction of the OPC create traffic, noise pollution and vibrations that will render the playground unenjoyable for its visitors, but it will also lead to increased erosion, greenhouse gas emissions, and chemical discharge. In light of the negative environmental impacts of the OPC's construction, we must ensure to preserve the few remaining natural parklands in our neighborhoods. The destruction of the Midway's ephemeral wetlands directly contradicts this goal and contributes to continued environmental degradation.</p> <p>The destruction of the wetlands is also an insult to the citizens of the Southside and deprives us of our rights to multiple types of recreational facilities. There are already many playgrounds in Hyde Park, including one just three blocks from the proposed site on 56th St and Cornell Ave. These parks provide the residents, young and old, of Hyde Park and the surrounding communities with wonderful spaces to play, walk, and engage in healthy lifestyle activities that promote good health. However, there is no need to build another playground just blocks away from many existing playspaces. Instead, we need to preserve the natural and green recreational areas that already exist. Environmental destruction is not just a loss to the natural world but to humans ourselves as natural spaces provide us with space for enjoyment, recreation, and community-building. The decision to destroy the Midway's ephemeral wetlands is not just an environmental injustice but a sociopolitical one, a decision that compounds centuries of systemic racism on Chicago's southside by undermining a review and selection process called for by the National Park Service that is designed to prioritize the voices and needs of community members. Instead of continually depriving Black and Brown Chicagoans of the opportunity to engage with having a say about adding more parkspace rather than repurposing existing parks and environmental assets, I call on you to amend the MOA in order to halt environmental degradation and promote community wellbeing.</p> <p>Following the 45-Day Review and Comment Period, we hope you will listen to us as community members and honor your obligation to protect our parks.</p>
Mary Lu	Seidel	Preservation Chicago (Part 1)	<p>Preservation Chicago submits for your consideration the following comments regarding the plans for the Midway Plaisance East End Improvements.</p> <p>We have been advocating for the historic parks that make up the South Parks system for years: Jackson Park, Washington Park, and the Midway Plaisance. These parks have suffered from a lack of resources invested by the Chicago Park District for decades, and we advocate that future improvements to these parks respect the history, integrity, and community uses and alterations that the community stands behind.</p> <p>There are a number of concerns about plans to replace the park space being taken to build the private Obama Presidential Center in Jackson Park by relocating it to an existing park across the street.</p> <p>1. Does not meet UPARR criteria. The eastern end of the Midway Plaisance in no way meets the UPARR criteria for an underserved area lacking in park spaces. UPARR's intent to is to create new park spaces in underserved areas when park space did not previously exist. It stands amidst the Museum of Science and Industry, the under-construction Obama Presidential Center, Jackson Park, Washington Park, the lakefront, and Hyde Park. Nothing about this site meets the criteria for underserved areas lacking in park spaces.</p> <p>2. No public vetting of alternative sites that were considered. Throughout the OPC Section 106 review process, the City reiterated that it vetted other sites for consideration but they either did not meet UPARR criteria, or they had environmental issues related to the site. The complete list of sites considered was never shared with the community with specific explanations of why those sites were dismissed. Transparency and community input is essential to this work, and this part of the process lacked both. Besides public officeholders, was there extensive input from community residents on possible park locations? Were they able to offer alternative sites? Provide feedback on the sites that were considered and eliminated? This is not how communities are built stronger and more equitably.</p>
Mary Lu	Seidel	Preservation Chicago (Part 2)	<p>3. Wetland filling. There is extensive engineering planned for the OPC to offset negative impacts on drainage and natural water flow. This plan intends to fill in a "soggy" area of the park to add playground equipment. Playground equipment is important and is needed in abundance in areas west of this proposed replacement park. Can we find a site for that playground equipment that does not fill in a wetland? If water gathers there naturally, it is a part of our water infiltration system and should be protected not buried.</p> <p>4. Accessibility. The park equipment planned for this site is promoted for its righteous goal of minimizing barriers for use of the park by people with physical limitations. Where will the handicapped parking be located directly adjacent to this site to enable people who are unable to navigate to this site via sidewalks? It appears a great challenge to develop an accessible playground in a relatively inaccessible location, especially with the projected additional traffic that will be traveling on three sides of this land in the very near future.</p> <p>We encourage the decisionmakers in this process to amend the Memorandum of Agreement that governs this project and move the replacement park to an underserved area on the South Side: ideally West Woodlawn. The mandatory signatories to the MOA can and should implement such an amendment so this process follows the federal laws that govern UPARR park replacement.</p>



Name	Last Name	Organization	Comment
Herbert	Caplan	Protect Our Parks	<p>Re:Objection and Comment regarding Plan For Midway Plaisance</p> <p>To Whom It May Concern:</p> <p>Protect Our Parks, Inc. focuses its efforts on keeping Chicago's parks open, free and accessible to the community. This is written to convey the objections and comments of Protect Our Parks, Inc. in regards to the plan put forward by the City of Chicago and Chicago Park District in regards to changes proposed for the east end of the Midway Plaisance. There are numerous reasons why the suggested plans and "improvements" are in actuality the opposite.</p> <p>As an initial matter, as Protect Our Parks has consistently stated, the process associated with the selection of the east end of the Midway for as "replacement" land for other UPARR properties was flawed. The selection process was a result-oriented process that was designed to utilize that land to further enhance the view and feature Obama Presidential Center (the "OPC"), not for purposes of locating new parkland for the land taken for the OPC. There was little public involvement, and to the extent of any involvement, such public input was ignored.</p> <p>On a related point, the suggestion that the Midway provides new and replacement parkland consistent with UPARR is wrong. The Midway represented existing and utilized parkland, and a key feature of the Olmsted designs for Jackson Park and Washington Park, the integrity of which is now destroyed. Indeed, part of the genius of the Olmsted designs involved thoughtfulness regarding handling storm and water runoff; in other words, considering issues of climate change well before that term was used. Here, the proposed "improvements" on the east of the Midway involve building the playground on a wetland. That cannot act as "improvement" given the environmentally challenges that are being faced (and which the original design and area help to address).</p> <p>If not enough, the lack of parkland and trees in the areas surrounding the OPC is well document. Communities such as Woodlawn and South Shore would benefit greatly from a new park. However, the flawed and pre-determined process allowed the opportunity to locate and create a new park with new plantings to be squandered. That can and must be remedied.</p> <p>During the hearings to date, it has been articulated in words or effect that the City and Park District are powerless in the effort to put the brakes on such an ill-conceived and faulty plan, claiming that this is what the federal governmental authorities have insisted upon and made part of a memorandum of agreement ("MOA") that was agreed upon as part of the federal reviews associated with the OPC. The fact is that this entire plan was advanced by the City and Park District. That it is part of a memorandum of agreement does not mean the plan cannot be revisited. An memorandum of agreement can be modified and amended. That is precisely what should occur. It is not too late to do the right thing, and the best thing, here to amend and modify the existing MOA and locate new parkland in Woodlawn or other nearby areas, leaving the east of the Midway to remain as Olmsted envisioned and remain a historical and ecological benefit to the community and City.</p> <p>Very truly yours,</p> <p>Herbert Caplan, President Protect Our Parks</p>
Karen	Rechtschaffen	Save the Midway	Save the Midway, a 106 consulting party, wholeheartedly endorses the comments of the Midway Plaisance Advisory Council both from its Hyde Park Herald letter to the editor ( <a href="https://www.hpherald.com/opinion/uparr-funding-should-go-to-underserved-communities/article_4e7efa8e-eb2f-11ec-91b5-4b209069ae17.html">https://www.hpherald.com/opinion/uparr-funding-should-go-to-underserved-communities/article_4e7efa8e-eb2f-11ec-91b5-4b209069ae17.html</a> ) and to its comments to you dated 17 August 2022
Michael	McNamee	Save the Midway	<p>Forgive the double posting—we were not sure it went through before--</p> <p>Save the Midway, a 106 consulting party, wholeheartedly endorses the comments of the Midway Plaisance Advisory Council both from its Hyde Park Herald letter to the editor (<a href="https://www.hpherald.com/opinion/uparr-funding-should-go-to-underserved-communities/article_4e7efa8e-eb2f-11ec-91b5-4b209069ae17.html">https://www.hpherald.com/opinion/uparr-funding-should-go-to-underserved-communities/article_4e7efa8e-eb2f-11ec-91b5-4b209069ae17.html</a>) and to its comments to you dated 17 August 2022</p>
Mary	Anton	Section 106 Individual Consultant	<p>Dear Chicago Park District Midway Plaisance East End Improvements Team:</p> <p>I want to put forward my support of the thoughtful and innovative design you have developed for a universally accessible playground on the east end of the Midway Plaisance. While the east end of the Midway has long been a play area for soccer and football, most of the year it is an underutilized and uninviting space for most other activities. So along with the children's park, your plans to improve site drainage, restore the Cheney-Goode Memorial Bench and trails and pathways, and add new landscaping will surely make this site more functional and enjoyable to use.</p> <p>Some critics of the project have suggested that the funding for this project could be better used in other south side neighborhoods more in need of such attention. As someone who has lived essentially around the corner from the site for more than 30 years, I would contend that this site has also seen years of neglect and there are a great many who will benefit from a rejuvenation of this location. There are currently three elementary schools within walking distance of the site: Carnegie, Lab School, and Bret Harte - and not all that far away is the Orthogenic School. Families, from toddlers to seniors, in housing, both north of the Midway in Hyde Park and south of the Midway in Woodlawn will have a close-by location for an afternoon visit, a picnic, playdate, or stroll.</p> <p>At the same time, I expect this is not an "either or project," where creating this park does not mean another park will suffer. Instead, I would hope that in the longer term, the development of this site would not deprive other neighborhoods of new or improved parks, but instead that this site would become the model for new park locations or the renewal of other existing parks.</p> <p>While I have no suggestions to make about the design itself, I do have some comments about logistical issues relating to the ongoing safety, care and operation of the park. Some, such as a drop off site, nearby bathroom facilities, and lighting were discussed in the design meetings. To that list I would add a couple of other items. First, should the area have any type of perimeter fencing that defines and encloses the play area so that children stay safely in the park enclosure? A configuration that comes to mind is the Bixler Playlot on 57th &amp; Kenwood where the play area is surrounded by a low fence with a gate (latched not locked) and a somewhat broader park area with benches and a fountain outside of the gated area. Safety is another issue. Given an area that will have enclosed spaces or semi-hidden areas, will it become inviting to people who want to use the space for sleeping or other after hour uses? Another aspect of safety may be providing some division in the form of a barrier of some sort between the park and access to the slope leading up to the train tracks. Such a barrier might also provide some soundproofing if deemed needed. Beyond those issues, I also hope it will be possible to enlist a strong group of volunteers who will become stewards of the ongoing care of the park and will partner with the Park District to keep it well maintained.</p> <p>Thank you for the opportunity to be involved in the design discussion for this project. I look forward to seeing work get underway and spending time in this wonderful new park in the future.</p> <p>Best,</p> <p>Mary Mary Anton, Section 106 Individual Consultant; Hyde Park Resident (Harper Avenue); Member of Jackson Park Advisory Counsel and Midway Plaisance Advisory Council <del>Please note that my statement given above is as a Section 106 Individual Consultant and not as a representative of either IPAC or MPAC which may hold different views from those expressed here.</del></p>

Name	Last Name	Organization	Comment
Erin	Adams	South Side Neighbors for Hope	<p>I've been delighted by the plans proposed by the park district for improvements on the East End of the Midway Plaisance in order to fulfill the UPARR requirements triggered by the location of the Obama Presidential Center to Jackson Park. The plans have been incredibly thoughtful and will address two major issues of the current site: the cesspool of stagnant water that is a breeding ground for mosquitos and a Canada geese hangout which causes it to stink to high-heaven, something I am keenly aware of as I walk my son to his school along that site every week day during the school year. The combination of geese poop and mosquito breeding make it almost inaccessible to pedestrians during these periods, and also keeps almost everyone from enjoying that part of the open space. In the winter, it can be a slick ice rink unsafe for walking as well. I will note that some, in their general opposition to everything associated with the Obama Presidential Center, have recently taken to calling this a "wetland", which is an interesting strategy to again throw sand into the wheels of progress on the southside. Their (MPAC, JPW and FOTP) attempt at a letter writing campaign outlining a set of falsehoods and fake narratives is unsurprising and exhausting and I hope is ignored by those who have decision-making power. They are obstructionists that are angry about their recent legal loss regarding the OPC and will do anything to delay or derail its progress. The rest of us are exhausted at fighting this ridiculousness and dismayed they still get airtime in this discussion.</p> <p>The other major issue that this improvement addresses is the paucity of natural play areas for our children on the southside. I long for additions such as the one proposed for the Eastern End, where natural materials are used for our kids to climb, crawl and run around on. Yes, we have lots of play lots, but they are fabricated with synthetic materials such as plastic and rubber, distancing our kids from nature and imaginative play. I'm stunned that, again, the obstructionists are trying to derail this amazing resource for our kids. I would think that these predominately retired white folk with an overabundance of time on their hands would rather see investments and resources for their grandchildren rather than stifle change so that they can end their days with a setting that hasn't changed for 50 years. Please don't let them prevail. They do not represent the majority of us that are users of this space and want it accessible for our kids.</p> <p>Thank you for reading this letter and for all your hard work through the years on progress for the south side.</p> <p>Erin Adams</p>
Morton	Silverman	SPRC	I fully support the plan to build a children's playground at this location. It will serve the community well and bring much anticipated joy and pleasure both to the children of the neighborhood and to their caregivers.
Mark	Cassello	The Pullman National Monument Preservation Society	<p>Upon reviewing the proposed "East End Improvements," we have the following comments:</p> <p>We appreciate the desire to include community amenities as part of this redevelopment and understand that there are, as we understand, certain federal requirements to ensure a playground of some type is included in these improvements.</p> <p>The two acre area in question has long-served as an important migratory bird habitat. Though located to adjacent roadways, the low-lying ground often serves as a retention pond, attracting migratory waterfowl and other wildlife. Pedestrian traffic and use of this area has been historically low and limited to the perimeter, which has offered a delicate balance between human leisure at this location and its ecological role in a broader system.</p> <p>Rather than strengthen this historic, natural connection through expansion of native plant species into what is essentially an urban wetland, you degrade the ecosystem by promoting further human encroachment into the core of this habitat. The construction of a "mini forest maze" "accessible swing" and "tree top adventure course" are antithetical to the historical use of this cultural landscape and will disrupt the ecosystem and further displace wildlife from this small, but vital, urban sanctuary.</p> <p>Aside from the obvious ecological considerations (of which they are many given the extensive habitat destruction that has occurred adjacent to this site) the location of a child's play area directly adjacent to the elevated train tracks and busy roadways is an accident waiting to happen.</p> <p>We recommend restoring this location as a wetland prairie in the spirit of Olmsted's intent for this historic designed landscape. This child's forest adventure simulation should be nestled snugly adjacent to Obama Presidential Center (OPC) Structure itself, where pedestrian traffic will be most heavily concentrated, accentuating the family spirit the Obama family itself conveyed so strongly to the nation.</p> <p>We recommend that the peripheral sites to the OPC be preserved as Olmsted-inspired natural landscapes.</p>
Emma	Huerta	University of Chicago	<p>As a member of the Hyde Park community, I urge you to identify another location for the Urban Park Recreation and Recovery Placement (UPARR) replacement. The current plan will cause the destruction of the Midway's east end ephemeral wetlands, resulting from the construction of a playground on top of the wetlands. As city officials you have continually abandoned your responsibilities to us, your constituencies, in refusing to respond to our concerns about both the social and environmental implications of your plan for the Midway. However, in amending the Section 106 MOA and identifying another location in need of recreational park space, you can prevent the destruction of a key natural habitat and community space while enhancing park equity. I implore that you begin the process of finding a just Urban Parks and Recreation Recovery Act (UPARR) replacement space for Jackson Park associated with the construction of the Obama Presidential Center (OPC).</p> <p>The Midway's ephemeral wetlands are a key natural space and habitat that deserves our undying protection. According to the National Park Service, the current plan would decimate 0.436 acres of the Midway's ephemeral wetlands. This wetland is an invaluable carbon sink, and its destruction would represent a major loss to the entirety of the Southside. Further, not only does UPARR mandate that the Jackson Park replacement space be located in a comparable location i.e. one that is not a pre-established park, but the Navigable Waters Rule of the Clean Water Act also mandates that local and state entities do not destroy "adjacent wetlands": wetlands next to a perennial body of water. The east end of the Midway deserves protection and preservation as the wetlands that it is, and the current plan is environmentally irresponsible in its alterations of the wetlands in order to construct a playground. The City's current disregard for environmental well being is only exacerbated by the inevitably negative effects that the nearby construction of the OPC will have on the surrounding ecosystems and human communities. Not only will the construction of the OPC create traffic, noise pollution and vibrations that will render the playground unenjoyable for its visitors, but it will also lead to increased erosion, greenhouse gas emissions, and chemical discharge. In light of the negative environmental impacts of the OPC's construction, we must ensure to preserve the few remaining natural parklands in our neighborhoods. The destruction of the Midway's ephemeral wetlands directly contradicts this goal and contributes to continued environmental degradation.</p> <p>The destruction of the wetlands is also an insult to the citizens of the Southside and deprives us of our rights to multiple types of recreational facilities. There are already many playgrounds in Hyde Park, including one just three blocks from the proposed site on 56th St and Cornell Ave. These parks provide the residents, young and old, of Hyde Park and the surrounding communities with wonderful spaces to play, walk, and engage in healthy lifestyle activities that promote good health. However, there is no need to build another playground just blocks away from many existing playspaces. Instead, we need to preserve the natural and green recreational areas that already exist. Environmental destruction is not just a loss to the natural world but to humans ourselves as natural spaces provide us with space for enjoyment, recreation, and community-building. The decision to destroy the Midway's ephemeral wetlands is not just an environmental injustice but a sociopolitical one, a decision that compounds centuries of systemic racism on Chicago's southside by undermining a review and selection process called for by the National Park Service that is designed to prioritize the voices and needs of community members. Instead of continually depriving Black and Brown Chicagoans of the opportunity to engage with having a say about adding more parkspace rather than repurposing existing parks and environmental assets, I call on you to amend the MOA in order to halt environmental degradation and promote community wellbeing.</p> <p>Following the 45-Day Review and Comment Period, we hope you will listen to us as community members and honor your obligation to protect our parks.</p>

Name	Last Name	Organization	Comment
Jennie	Strable	Vista Homes Building Corporation (Part 1)	<p>I am the corporate secretary of Vista Homes Building Corporation and I am submitting the following comments on behalf of the Board of Directors:</p> <p>This letter is submitted by the Board of Directors on behalf of the Vista Homes Building Corporation (VHBC), a 120-unit residential cooperative that is located at 59th and Stony Island Avenue. We are also a recognized consulting party to the Jackson Park Section 106 process. We would like to thank the City of Chicago and the Park District for this invitation to submit comments on the proposed plans for the eastern panel of the Midway Plaisance. We have the following comments regarding this plan:</p> <p>1) We would like to object to any aspect of the plans that will further degrade the historic nature of the park. It is on the National Register of Historic Places because it is an Olmsted Parkâ€eliminating its sense of open space, adding too many concrete elements, etc. threaten the historic standing of the park. We remind the planners that this space is not so large as to accommodate the many planned features without sacrificing the sense of an open, natural spaceâ€a space that currently allows for sledding in the winter and soccer and football games other times of the year.</p> <p>2) We request that any elements that will be added to the park will not create gratuitous noise. We have heard rumors of wind chimes or musical elementsâ€and we hope that whatever park infrastructure that will be created will not in itself create noise. We would also like to request increased patrols of the park for safety reasons and to ensure that the park is closed for use at the stated Chicago Park District times.</p> <p>3) VHBC requests that the City and Park District listen to the local, community park advocacy council, the Midway Plaisance Advisory Council (MPAC) regarding the wetland and overall use of the park. A summary of these concerns may be found here: <a href="https://www.hpherald.com/opinion/uparr-funding-should-go-to-underserved-communities/article_4e7efa8e-eb2f-11ec-91b5-4b209069ae17.html">https://www.hpherald.com/opinion/uparr-funding-should-go-to-underserved-communities/article_4e7efa8e-eb2f-11ec-91b5-4b209069ae17.html</a></p> <p>It appears as if recent court cases have overturned the Trump-era rules that allowed the City a few years ago to ignore the intermittent wetland status of the eastern panel of the Midway when it formed its plans to use this space as UPARR replacement. We wonder whether the City has considered these changes in their current plans for the park.</p>
Jennie	Strable	Vista Homes Building Corporation (Part 2)	<p>4) As part of the earlier 106 process, we submitted a letter to NEPA on 25 October 2020, and we would like to quote from a portion of that letter to reiterate our concerns about not involving the community in plans for the Midway. We had hoped to be involved earlier in the planning of new park elements. Instead, we have been presented with a fully designed park. As we stated in 2020:</p> <p>Unfortunately, the City has a history of not consulting the public when it comes to parks in underserved neighborhoods in general or for the Midway Plaisance in particular: in 1982, the federal government forced the City of Chicago through a consent decree to create local park councils in order to ensure that local communities would be able to control their own parks. Yet, throughout the OPC planning process, the City has not consulted the community when making decisions, notably, the lack of community input in selecting the Midway as UPARR replacement; the creation of designs for that area without local community involvement; the initial decision to use the Midway for a private parking garage, etc. Given the opposition of the local park council, we suggest the selection of a different parcel of land as UPARR replacement indeed, we advocate the creation of new parkland in the Woodlawn neighborhood, an area currently lacking in public parks. At the very least, in your final report, we ask for language that requires the City to seek community agreement on design plans for the park rather than stipulating mere input.</p>
Julia	Allen	Vista Homes Corporation	<p>I think the sound feature should be discarded. There is enough noise.</p>
Eva	McCann	Willye White Park Advisory Council	<p>It is with great concern that I question the decision to build a new playground on the east end of the Midway. There are other areas on the south side in greater need of playgrounds that surround Jackson Park as well as other areas of the south side. The Obama Center is already taking up valuable park space when it too could have been placed elsewhere on the south side near but not in the park that would attract tourists, provide jobs for local residents and would have been able to accommodate the same amenities as the location chosen to currently build. Preservation of parkland and green space should be a priority for the Chicago Park District instead of eliminating existing green space with brick and mortar.</p> <p>I am opposed to the playground as it is my understanding area residents feel a better use of that land is to keep it a natural habitat and instead to put a playground or shall I say playgrounds in areas where such amenities are at a minimum throughout the south side.</p> <p>Park Advisory Councils that work more on a grass roots level and consult with community residents as well as the residents themselves should be listened to by the Park District instead of being presented with cookie cutter plans and asked yea or nay on a decision that has already been made long before it was even presented to them.</p> <p>There needs to be more of a participatory process amongst people in the neighborhood, PACs, and the Park District.</p> <p>What is being done is not inclusive of those who have to live with the consequences of what is being built as in the lack of green space that is the result of decisions made by others who are not working on the communityâ€™s behalf. This green space is being lost and not properly being replaced by creating additional green space near or in other areas in need as is part of the Urban Parks and Recreation Recovery Act.</p> <p>Please reconsider putting this playground elsewhere in greater need and leave the east end of the Midway Plaisance as a designated green space and native wetland.</p>
Eva	McCann	Willye White Park Advisory Council	<p>It is with great concern that I question the decision to build a new playground on the east end of the Midway. There are other areas on the south side in greater need of playgrounds that surround Jackson Park as well as other areas of the south side. The Obama Center is already taking up valuable park space when it too could have been placed elsewhere on the south side near but not in the park that would attract tourists, provide jobs for local residents and would have been able to accommodate the same amenities as the location chosen to currently build. Preservation of parkland and green space should be a priority for the Chicago Park District instead of eliminating existing green space with brick and mortar.</p> <p>I am opposed to the playground as it is my understanding area residents feel a better use of that land is to keep it a natural habitat and instead to put a playground or shall I say playgrounds in areas where such amenities are at a minimum throughout the south side.</p> <p>Park Advisory Councils that work more on a grass roots level and consult with community residents as well as the residents themselves should be listened to by the Park District instead of being presented with cookie cutter plans and asked yea or nay on a decision that has already been made long before it was even presented to them.</p> <p>There needs to be more of a participatory process amongst people in the neighborhood, PACs, and the Park District.</p> <p>What is being done is not inclusive of those who have to live with the consequences of what is being built as in the lack of green space that is the result of decisions made by others who are not working on the communityâ€™s behalf. This green space is being lost and not properly being replaced by creating additional green space near or in other areas in need as is part of the Urban Parks and Recreation Recovery Act.</p> <p>Please reconsider putting this playground elsewhere in greater need and leave the east end of the Midway Plaisance as a designated green space and native wetland.</p> <p>In the end, it is the parks that suffer the most</p>

Name	Last Name	Organization	Comment
Anne	Abramson		Building over park land, especially wet lands, is unacceptable. The location of the OPC within Jackson Park was already a mistake. The mistake is being compounded now by selecting the Midway Plaisance for a "replacement" park in the form of a playground. We need a much better plan and commitment to protecting and augmenting our city's precious green infrastructure, parks and especially trees. Park groups all agree that this plan is going in very much in the wrong direction. Please change course and consider the environmental impact first and foremost of what you are doing.
Silvia Aydinyan	Aydinyan		<p>As a resident of the southside of Chicago, I call on you to reject the City of Chicago's proposal to designate the eastern end of the Midway Plaisance as an Urban Parks and Recreation Recovery Program (UPARR) replacement area following the construction of the Obama Presidential Center (OPC) in Jackson Park. Instead, I urge you to follow the Midway Plaisance Advisory Council's (MPAC) calls to begin a transparent and community-based re-evaluation of a UPARR replacement space.</p> <p>The City of Chicago has ruled that land on the eastern end of the Midway Park will be used as UPARR replacement space after the construction of the Obama Presidential Center in Jackson Park. However, according to the UPARR Act, whenever cities remove park space in economically disadvantaged communities, they must provide substitute park space for the residents of these communities. The city's current plan does not authentically follow this law and is not an environmentally or socially just replacement area for the Jackson Park site. Currently, the plan to use the eastern end of the Midway as a UPARR replacement space involves creating new green space by draining wetlands located in the park. This plan would constitute the decimation of a natural ephemeral wetlands ecosystem and would fail to benefit residents of Jackson Park who deserve access to clean and readily available green spaces. According to the National Parks Service, the current plan would decimate 0.436 acres of natural wetlands. As well, the decision to convert the area to a more traditional park would lead to the clear cutting of over 2,000 trees. These trees are essential in both carbon sequestration and creating a natural environment and space for residents of the southside. Further, rather than converting the eastern end of the Midway Plaisance to a UPARR substitution space, the City of Chicago should work to find a legitimate replacement park for the region of Jackson Park that will soon house the Obama Presidential Center. It is essential that the predominantly Black communities of the southside have equal access to parks and other natural spaces. We call on you to support the Midway Plaisance Advisory Council's (MPAC) call to begin a community-based re-evaluation of a UPARR replacement space following the construction of the Obama Presidential Center.</p> <p>We are particularly concerned that our elected officials Alderwoman Leslie Hairston of the 5th ward, Alderwoman Jeanette Taylor of the 20th ward, and Mayor Lori Lightfoot have not urged for the reconsideration of this plan, and we will remember their actions on this issue during the next election.</p> <p>In promoting environmental justice on the southside of Chicago, it is essential to ensure that UPARR regulations are honored in order to authentically create new green spaces for the residents of the southside. I hope you will consider my calls to begin a transparent and community-based re-evaluation of the UPARR replacement space for the Obama Presidential Center.</p>
Paul	Baker		<p>Hi, friends. I hope this finds you well. I believe this project is misnamed. The suggested changes, in my view, are not improvements. Some of the problems: The Park district is reneging on its obligation to replace the parkland destroyed by the OPC when it chooses to modify existing park land rather than create new. This project should be abandoned in favor of creating new parks in Woodlawn. The plan for the play area takes no account of the roar of the freight trains which regularly dominate the area. Children with sensitivities to noise will not be well served in this location. The plans for drop off don't make any sense, and, if instituted will only beg for more park to be destroyed, so parents can park their cars: "The paved paradise and put up a parking lot." There is not, in my view, adequate care for the wetland that is part of this property. I believe that a better plan would be to make that wetland the centerpiece of a plan to bring some "rewilding" to this end of of the Midway. With proper care, this could become a bird and nature sanctuary that people would love to visit. These are just some of the problems. I believe the whole project is misconceived and should be abandoned. Thank you for your attention to this matter.</p>
Elena	Bashir		<p>Please leave as much of the Midway Plaisance Park in its natural state as possible. The loss of trees in Jackson Park because of the Obama Center and the expanded and widened roads nearby have made this neighborhood far less pleasant and attractive than it used to be. I especially enjoy the small wetland area in Midway Plaisance. The geese settling on the ground and their calls are part of the remaining beauty of this area. Please leave it alone. Among environmentally aware people these days, the emphasis is on *protecting* and *restoring* wetlands, not removing ("abating") them.</p> <p>I know that I am only an ordinary resident, and no one is likely to care anything about what I say, but I feel compelled to say it anyway.</p> <p>Thank you, Elena Bashir</p>
Bertha	Blattner		Don't use part of the Midway Plaisance to build a new park on. That would be ugly, and a poor placement for a park. Instead, build your new park in an area on the South side that is underserved re: public park space. Extend yourselves a bit, & think outside the box. Save the purity of the Midway Plaisance as it is.



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Isabella	Bonito		<p>As a member of the Hyde Park community, I urge you to identify another location for the Urban Park Recreation and Recovery Placement (UPARR) replacement. The current plan will cause the destruction of the Midway's east end ephemeral wetlands, resulting from the construction of a playground on top of the wetlands. As city officials you have continually abandoned your responsibilities to us, your constituencies, in refusing to respond to our concerns about both the social and environmental implications of your plan for the Midway. However, in amending the Section 106 MOA and identifying another location in need of recreational park space, you can prevent the destruction of a key natural habitat and community space while enhancing park equity. I implore that you begin the process of finding a just Urban Parks and Recreation Recovery Act (UPARR) replacement space for Jackson Park associated with the construction of the Obama Presidential Center (OPC).</p> <p>The Midway's ephemeral wetlands are a key natural space and habitat that deserves our undying protection. According to the National Park Service, the current plan would decimate 0.436 acres of the Midway's ephemeral wetlands. This wetland is an invaluable carbon sink, and its destruction would represent a major loss to the entirety of the Southside. Further, not only does UPARR mandate that the Jackson Park replacement space be located in a comparable location i.e. one that is not a pre-established park, but the Navigable Waters Rule of the Clean Water Act also mandates that local and state entities do not destroy "adjacent wetlands": wetlands next to a perennial body of water. The east end of the Midway deserves protection and preservation as the wetlands that it is, and the current plan is environmentally irresponsible in its alterations of the wetlands in order to construct a playground. The City's current disregard for environmental well being is only exacerbated by the inevitably negative effects that the nearby construction of the OPC will have on the surrounding ecosystems and human communities. Not only will the construction of the OPC create traffic, noise pollution and vibrations that will render the playground unenjoyable for its visitors, but it will also lead to increased erosion, greenhouse gas emissions, and chemical discharge. In light of the negative environmental impacts of the OPC's construction, we must ensure to preserve the few remaining natural parklands in our neighborhoods. The destruction of the Midway's ephemeral wetlands directly contradicts this goal and contributes to continued environmental degradation.</p> <p>The destruction of the wetlands is also an insult to the citizens of the Southside and deprives us of our rights to multiple types of recreational facilities. There are already many playgrounds in Hyde Park, including one just three blocks from the proposed site on 56th St and Cornell Ave. These parks provide the residents, young and old, of Hyde Park and the surrounding communities with wonderful spaces to play, walk, and engage in healthy lifestyle activities that promote good health. However, there is no need to build another playground just blocks away from many existing playspaces. Instead, we need to preserve the natural and green recreational areas that already exist. Environmental destruction is not just a loss to the natural world but to humans ourselves as natural spaces provide us with space for enjoyment, recreation, and community-building. The decision to destroy the Midway's ephemeral wetlands is not just an environmental injustice but a sociopolitical one, a decision that compounds centuries of systemic racism on Chicago's southside by undermining a review and selection process called for by the National Park Service that is designed to prioritize the voices and needs of community members. Instead of continually depriving Black and Brown Chicagoans of the opportunity to engage with having a say about adding more parkspace rather than repurposing existing parks and environmental assets, I call on you to amend the MOA in order to halt environmental degradation and promote community wellbeing.</p> <p>Following the 45-Day Review and Comment Period, we hope you will listen to us as community members and honor your obligation to protect our parks.</p>
Andy	Brown		<p>As a member of the Hyde Park community, I urge you to identify another location for the Urban Park Recreation and Recovery Placement (UPARR) replacement. The current plan will cause the destruction of the Midway's east end ephemeral wetlands, resulting from the construction of a playground on top of the wetlands. As city officials you have continually abandoned your responsibilities to us, your constituencies, in refusing to respond to our concerns about both the social and environmental implications of your plan for the Midway. However, in amending the Section 106 MOA and identifying another location in need of recreational park space, you can prevent the destruction of a key natural habitat and community space while enhancing park equity. I implore that you begin the process of finding a just Urban Parks and Recreation Recovery Act (UPARR) replacement space for Jackson Park associated with the construction of the Obama Presidential Center (OPC).</p> <p>The Midway's ephemeral wetlands are a key natural space and habitat that deserves our undying protection. According to the National Park Service, the current plan would decimate 0.436 acres of the Midway's ephemeral wetlands. This wetland is an invaluable carbon sink, and its destruction would represent a major loss to the entirety of the Southside. Further, not only does UPARR mandate that the Jackson Park replacement space be located in a comparable location i.e. one that is not a pre-established park, but the Navigable Waters Rule of the Clean Water Act also mandates that local and state entities do not destroy "adjacent wetlands": wetlands next to a perennial body of water. The east end of the Midway deserves protection and preservation as the wetlands that it is, and the current plan is environmentally irresponsible in its alterations of the wetlands in order to construct a playground. The City's current disregard for environmental well being is only exacerbated by the inevitably negative effects that the nearby construction of the OPC will have on the surrounding ecosystems and human communities. Not only will the construction of the OPC create traffic, noise pollution and vibrations that will render the playground unenjoyable for its visitors, but it will also lead to increased erosion, greenhouse gas emissions, and chemical discharge. In light of the negative environmental impacts of the OPC's construction, we must ensure to preserve the few remaining natural parklands in our neighborhoods. The destruction of the Midway's ephemeral wetlands directly contradicts this goal and contributes to continued environmental degradation.</p> <p>The destruction of the wetlands is also an insult to the citizens of the Southside and deprives us of our rights to multiple types of recreational facilities. There are already many playgrounds in Hyde Park, including one just three blocks from the proposed site on 56th St and Cornell Ave. These parks provide the residents, young and old, of Hyde Park and the surrounding communities with wonderful spaces to play, walk, and engage in healthy lifestyle activities that promote good health. However, there is no need to build another playground just blocks away from many existing playspaces. Instead, we need to preserve the natural and green recreational areas that already exist. Environmental destruction is not just a loss to the natural world but to humans ourselves as natural spaces provide us with space for enjoyment, recreation, and community-building. The decision to destroy the Midway's ephemeral wetlands is not just an environmental injustice but a sociopolitical one, a decision that compounds centuries of systemic racism on Chicago's southside by undermining a review and selection process called for by the National Park Service that is designed to prioritize the voices and needs of community members. Instead of continually depriving Black and Brown Chicagoans of the opportunity to engage with having a say about adding more parkspace rather than repurposing existing parks and environmental assets, I call on you to amend the MOA in order to halt environmental degradation and promote community wellbeing.</p> <p>Following the 45-Day Review and Comment Period, we hope you will listen to us as community members and honor your obligation to protect our parks.</p>
Marion	Brown		<p>I strongly believe that the wetland that already exist should be preserved. Since there are no resources presently for restoration, and since that would be in addition to the cost of eradicating existing wetlands this makes no sense. This is one of the most special places in Chicago, because of the preservation of nature and the lack of artificial recreational facilities. These can be built anywhere, and do not need to be put in such a valuable ecosystems. Frequently use the east end of midway, Pleasence and Jackson park and enjoy being able to walk in nature see a huge amount of diversity, have space to interact with people at a distance, and to be removed from the build type of recreation. Unfortunately, it seems that the Park District, especially believes that people in less affluent communities do not value nature. Perhaps, if the Park District check more responsibility for maintaining these areas, keeping them clean and accessible to surrounding communities it would be more beneficial than starting from scratch with some thing that very few people want</p>
David	Bryant		<p>I am a frequent user via biking and walking of the midway and attended UofC. We have already lost enough parkland to the OPC and related transportation projects. Please do not take even more parkland.</p>

Name	Last Name	Organization	Comment
Juliet	Cairney		<p>As a resident of the southside of Chicago, I call on you to reject the City of Chicago's proposal to designate the eastern end of the Midway Plaisance as an Urban Parks and Recreation Recovery Program (UPARR) replacement area following the construction of the Obama Presidential Center (OPC) in Jackson Park. Instead, I urge you to follow the Midway Plaisance Advisory Council's (MPAC) calls to begin a transparent and community-based re-evaluation of a UPARR replacement space.</p> <p>The City of Chicago has ruled that land on the eastern end of the Midway Park will be used as UPARR replacement space after the construction of the Obama Presidential Center in Jackson Park. However, according to the UPARR Act, whenever cities remove park space in economically disadvantaged communities, they must provide substitute park space for the residents of these communities. The city's current plan does not authentically follow this law and is not an environmentally or socially just replacement area for the Jackson Park site. Currently, the plan to use the eastern end of the Midway as a UPARR replacement space involves creating new green space by draining wetlands located in the park. This plan would constitute the decimation of a natural ephemeral wetlands ecosystem and would fail to benefit residents of Jackson Park who deserve access to clean and readily available green spaces. According to the National Parks Service, the current plan would decimate 0.436 acres of natural wetlands. As well, the decision to convert the area to a more traditional park would lead to the clear cutting of over 2,000 trees. These trees are essential in both carbon sequestration and creating a natural environment and space for residents of the southside. Further, rather than converting the eastern end of the Midway Plaisance to a UPARR substitution space, the City of Chicago should work to find a legitimate replacement park for the region of Jackson Park that will soon house the Obama Presidential Center. It is essential that the predominantly Black communities of the southside have equal access to parks and other natural spaces. We call on you to support the Midway Plaisance Advisory Council's (MPAC) call to begin a community-based re-evaluation of a UPARR replacement space following the construction of the Obama Presidential Center.</p> <p>We are particularly concerned that our elected officials Alderwoman Leslie Hairston of the 5th ward, Alderwoman Jeanette Taylor of the 20th ward, and Mayor Lori Lightfoot have not urged for the reconsideration of this plan, and we will remember their actions on this issue during the next election.</p> <p>In promoting environmental justice on the southside of Chicago, it is essential to ensure that UPARR regulations are honored in order to authentically create new green spaces for the residents of the southside. I hope you will consider my calls to begin a transparent and community-based re-evaluation of the UPARR replacement space for the Obama Presidential Center.</p>
Maria	Carrasquilla		<p>Dear Park District Representatives,</p> <p>I heard about the Midway Plaisance East End Improvements project through the Hyde Park Herald, and I think it's a wonderful project. I agree with community members who have noted that the noise from the trains will be disturbing, especially for kids. Have you considered sound in your planning process? Could there be an immersive green house with glass that muffles the sound? Could you include picnic tables that the community could use? Some with shade during the summer?</p> <p>In regards to the monuments at the Midway Plaisance: I had sent the following note to Representative Tarver, and Alderman Hairston on April 23, 2021, and I never heard back from either of them: I am writing to share my surprise and dismay when I came across a monument honoring Frederick Douglass, located by a tunnel in Jackson Park that connects with the lakefront trail in Jackson Park, on the west side of the tunnel. It's an unimpressive tablet on the ground (I have pictures that I could share with you).</p> <p>I've seen magnificent monuments in Hyde Park since I've been living and working in the neighborhood, to name a couple: Thomas Garrigue Masaryk (at the Midway Plaizance) Carl von Linn�� (at the Midway Plaizance)</p> <p>So I couldn't believe my eyes when I saw the difference between the existing monuments above and the one that honors Frederick Douglass, a true hero of this nation. I believe his monument/dedication should be radically improved. There are many talented artists and designers living among us in the South Side of Chicago who could bring Frederick Douglass' historical significance to the light – I'd be happy to share some ideas. Have you thought about reaching out to Theaster Gates?</p> <p>Thank you for your time and consideration of our community's feedback.</p>
Isabella	Cisneros		<p>As a member of the Hyde Park community, I urge you to identify another location for the Urban Park Recreation and Recovery Placement (UPARR) replacement. The current plan will cause the destruction of the Midway's east end ephemeral wetlands, resulting from the construction of a playground on top of the wetlands. As city officials you have continually abandoned your responsibilities to us, your constituencies, in refusing to respond to our concerns about both the social and environmental implications of your plan for the Midway. However, in amending the Section 106 MOA and identifying another location in need of recreational park space, you can prevent the destruction of a key natural habitat and community space while enhancing park equity. I implore that you begin the process of finding a just Urban Parks and Recreation Recovery Act (UPARR) replacement space for Jackson Park associated with the construction of the Obama Presidential Center (OPC).</p> <p>The Midway's ephemeral wetlands are a key natural space and habitat that deserves our undying protection. According to the National Park Service, the current plan would decimate 0.436 acres of the Midway's ephemeral wetlands. This wetland is an invaluable carbon sink, and its destruction would represent a major loss to the entirety of the Southside. Further, not only does UPARR mandate that the Jackson Park replacement space be located in a comparable location i.e. one that is not a pre-established park, but the Navigable Waters Rule of the Clean Water Act also mandates that local and state entities do not destroy "adjacent wetlands"��: wetlands next to a perennial body of water. The east end of the Midway deserves protection and preservation as the wetlands that it is, and the current plan is environmentally irresponsible in its alterations of the wetlands in order to construct a playground. The City's current disregard for environmental well being is only exacerbated by the inevitably negative effects that the nearby construction of the OPC will have on the surrounding ecosystems and human communities. Not only will the construction of the OPC create traffic, noise pollution and vibrations that will render the playground unenjoyable for its visitors, but it will also lead to increased erosion, greenhouse gas emissions, and chemical discharge. In light of the negative environmental impacts of the OPC's construction, we must ensure to preserve the few remaining natural parklands in our neighborhoods. The destruction of the Midway's ephemeral wetlands directly contradicts this goal and contributes to continued environmental degradation.</p> <p>The destruction of the wetlands is also an insult to the citizens of the Southside and deprives us of our rights to multiple types of recreational facilities. There are already many playgrounds in Hyde Park, including one just three blocks from the proposed site on 56th St and Cornell Ave. These parks provide the residents, young and old, of Hyde Park and the surrounding communities with wonderful spaces to play, walk, and engage in healthy lifestyle activities that promote good health. However, there is no need to build another playground just blocks away from many existing playspaces. Instead, we need to preserve the natural and green recreational areas that already exist. Environmental destruction is not just a loss to the natural world but to humans ourselves as natural spaces provide us with space for enjoyment, recreation, and community-building. The decision to destroy the Midway's ephemeral wetlands is not just an environmental injustice but a sociopolitical one, a decision that compounds centuries of systemic racism on Chicago's southside by undermining a review and selection process called for by the National Park Service that is designed to prioritize the voices and needs of community members. Instead of continually depriving Black and Brown Chicagoans of the opportunity to engage with having a say about adding more parkspace rather than repurposing existing parks and environmental assets, I call on you to amend the MOA in order to halt environmental degradation and promote community wellbeing.</p> <p>Following the 45-Day Review and Comment Period, we hope you will listen to us as community members and honor your obligation to protect our parks.</p>

Name	Last Name	Organization	Comment
DAVID	CLOUD		Hello. re: proposed changes to Midway Plaisance East End. I agree with Friends Of The The Parks and their position that NEW land in a location OTHER than the Midway Plaisance should be developed by the Chicago Park District. The park land lost to the the Obama Presidential Center should be replaced by approximately 20 acres of NEW open park land in the Jackson Park area. The community deserves more land and facilities from the Chicago Park District not less. As stakeholders, the community should be given much greater input to the decision making process. As an ecological resource, the wetlands under threat by this development should be protected NOT destroyed. Please DO NOT disturb the Midway Plaisance East End. Thank you
Sofia	Erlin		<p>As a member of the Hyde Park community, I urge you to identify another location for the Urban Park Recreation and Recovery Placement (UPARR) replacement. The current plan will cause the destruction of the Midway's east end ephemeral wetlands, resulting from the construction of a playground on top of the wetlands. As city officials you have continually abandoned your responsibilities to us, your constituencies, in refusing to respond to our concerns about both the social and environmental implications of your plan for the Midway. However, in amending the Section 106 MOA and identifying another location in need of recreational park space, you can prevent the destruction of a key natural habitat and community space while enhancing park equity. I implore that you begin the process of finding a just Urban Parks and Recreation Recovery Act (UPARR) replacement space for Jackson Park associated with the construction of the Obama Presidential Center (OPC).</p> <p>The Midway's ephemeral wetlands are a key natural space and habitat that deserves our undying protection. According to the National Park Service, the current plan would decimate 0.436 acres of the Midway's ephemeral wetlands. This wetland is an invaluable carbon sink, and its destruction would represent a major loss to the entirety of the Southside. Further, not only does UPARR mandate that the Jackson Park replacement space be located in a comparable location i.e. one that is not a pre-established park, but the Navigable Waters Rule of the Clean Water Act also mandates that local and state entities do not destroy "adjacent wetlands": wetlands next to a perennial body of water. The east end of the Midway deserves protection and preservation as the wetlands that it is, and the current plan is environmentally irresponsible in its alterations of the wetlands in order to construct a playground. The City's current disregard for environmental well being is only exacerbated by the inevitably negative effects that the nearby construction of the OPC will have on the surrounding ecosystems and human communities. Not only will the construction of the OPC create traffic, noise pollution and vibrations that will render the playground unenjoyable for its visitors, but it will also lead to increased erosion, greenhouse gas emissions, and chemical discharge. In light of the negative environmental impacts of the OPC's construction, we must ensure to preserve the few remaining natural parklands in our neighborhoods. The destruction of the Midway's ephemeral wetlands directly contradicts this goal and contributes to continued environmental degradation.</p> <p>The destruction of the wetlands is also an insult to the citizens of the Southside and deprives us of our rights to multiple types of recreational facilities. There are already many playgrounds in Hyde Park, including one just three blocks from the proposed site on 56th St and Cornell Ave. These parks provide the residents, young and old, of Hyde Park and the surrounding communities with wonderful spaces to play, walk, and engage in healthy lifestyle activities that promote good health. However, there is no need to build another playground just blocks away from many existing playspaces. Instead, we need to preserve the natural and green recreational areas that already exist. Environmental destruction is not just a loss to the natural world but to humans ourselves as natural spaces provide us with space for enjoyment, recreation, and community-building. The decision to destroy the Midway's ephemeral wetlands is not just an environmental injustice but a sociopolitical one, a decision that compounds centuries of systemic racism on Chicago's southside by undermining a review and selection process called for by the National Park Service that is designed to prioritize the voices and needs of community members. Instead of continually depriving Black and Brown Chicagoans of the opportunity to engage with having a say about adding more parkspace rather than repurposing existing parks and environmental assets, I call on you to amend the MOA in order to halt environmental degradation and promote community wellbeing.</p> <p>Following the 45-Day Review and Comment Period, we hope you will listen to us as community members and honor your obligation to protect our parks.</p>
Roxana	Espoz		<p>I'm writing to express my complete support for the comments submitted by Friends of the Parks in regards to the proposed improvements to the east end of the Midway Plaisance.</p> <p>1) Instead of creating a playground at the east end of the Midway Plaisance, the Chicago Park District should develop NEW parkland AND amenities in underserved communities around Jackson Park.</p> <p>2) The Chicago Park District did not engage enough with community members in selecting the UPARR replacement site or project.</p> <p>3) Despite community pushback, the planning process continued with very little adaptation.</p> <p>4) I am deeply concerned about the loss of the wetlands.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration.</p>
Norma	Field		<p>I cannot do better than the thorough comments provided by Friends of the Parks, a thoughtful criticism of current plans for construction east of the railway embankment on the Midway Plaisance. The siting of the OPC has been disappointing enough. Please do not exacerbate it by taking away valuable wetland, on the one hand, and failing to provide more park space for underserved communities.</p> <p>Sincerely yours, Norma Field</p>
Michael	Gelder		<p>I believe the creation of pkwy area for children are a high priority but the location of the proposed playground at the east end of the midway is ill advised. The law requires that new parkland be established to replace the land usurped by the Presidential Library and the east end is already parkland. And the land closest to Lake Michigan should be set aside as wetland to accommodate the natural cycle of the lake's ebb and flow.</p> <p>Developing playgrounds in nearby residential areas would in greater harmony with the federal law and benefit to the nearby residents.</p>
Renate	Gokl		<p>It is a travesty that an existing park is being used as replacement parkland. The Midway Plaisance is not the appropriate location for this playground especially since the OPC will have a playground across the street. Rather than replacement park, we now have a net loss. The City of Chicago is failing Woodlawn and South Shore by not placing replacement parkland within neighborhoods where few recreational opportunities exist. Children should not have to cross busy streets in order to get to a park that is meant for them. The design of the playground may have noble aspirations, but the Midway is the wrong location.</p>
Derrick	Golon		<p>Whatever is built needs to prevent further flooding in the area, be fully accessible to disabled people and support local flora and animals.</p>
Barbara	Greenman		<p>I agree with Friends of the Park that a playground should not be created at the east end of the Midway Plaisance , but rather CPD should develop new parkland in underserved communities around Jackson Park. Also, there should be NO loss of wetlands! Wetlands are desperately needed for the migratory birds that fly through Chicago.</p> <p>It seems to me from this and other issues that CPD steamrolls their way through projects with little regard for public sentiment. I also question your transparency. It seems that CPD holds an unbalanced amount of power.</p>
Oliver	Harper		<p>I think that new parkland should be added instead of a portion of the Midway being taken away. I foresee more public parkland being needed in the area with the likely privatization of the golf course.</p>

Name	Last Name	Organization	Comment
Debra	Hass		The plan to allow changes (they do not appear to me to be improvements) to the East End of the Midway Plaisance, already Chicago parkland, violates the spirit of the agreement with The Obama Center to replace the amount of land th City provided to the Center. Rather is appears more like annexing additional land to the Center's property for change at its discretion or, at minimum, with its strong input. I support proposals from park advisory councils to create much-needed parks in areas of the community that suffer from a lack of sufficient green space. The Midway Plaisance East End should remain open space and/or be improved as a riparian wetland, not as developed space. Replacement land should be just that, adding acreage to our park system, not replacing what is on existing parkland. The replacement could go far by addressing inequities in access to parks and green space. Please add parks in areas that face a dearth of the green space and play space that contribute to health and wellbeing, rather than moving ahead with the proposed changes to Midway Plaisance East End.
Terry	Herlihy		Zero acres of the same park can be legally used to "pay back" for the 19.3 acres given to OPC. I think the east end of the Midway Plaisance is a actual wetland and included in the park by Olmsted as a wetland, not as a playground. The May 17th, 2018 Chicago Plan Commission "review" was a scam and needs to be reviewed and the \$176 million traffic plan for the Tiger Woods golf course is illegal and stupid.. It reverses the carefully thought out Cornell Drive route from the drive to the Skyway which is still needed and is used by millions. The 1100 acre Olmsted South Park needs to be kept intact. It was a good idea 150 years ago and an even better one today.
Mary Jo	Hoag		While I'm glad that you recognize that the part of Jackson Park taken up by the Obama Center must be replaced by new parkland, I'm afraid the idea of putting up a playground on the Midway Plaisance east of the tracks fails to do that. What is needed around Jackson park is new parkland in the community that residents can enjoy for years to come, not a playground on the east end of the Midway. That's not a proper replacement for taking 20+ acres out of Jackson Park for the Obama Center. I'd ask that you rethink this doubtful project and fund new parkland in the neighborhoods around the park.
Barbara	Iverson		This plan is top-down and ignores facts of nature such as an existing wetland that would be drained for a playground. The plan represents a view of our neighborhood from outside. Instead of considering how people get around and use existing space, it proposes changes no one wants or changes that won't work in real life, no matter how good they look in a design mock up. Stop planning without community input. Don't fix things that aren't broken. The Jackson Park Advisory and Friends of the Park analyses of the plans are worth engaging with.
Mila	Jameson		It seems completely unrealistic to expect that the park district will have the funds and the personnel to maintain such a complex and labor-intensive project considering that they're already unable to provide even the minimal, basic maintenance in already existing parks/playgrounds in the neighborhood
Maureen	Kelleher		The siting of this improvement for a play area seems like a mistake to me. Children cannot reach the area without crossing Stony Island Avenue, and the western boundary is a Metra track. It is also concerning to me that the area, which is now wetland, will be regraded and runoff will be forced into the city's storm sewer system.
Dmitry	Kondrashov		I live only a few blocks from the site, and I have attended the public meeting with Park District representatives. I feel strongly that the choice of the site and the proposed improvements were not made with the well-being of the residents in mind. The location right next to a multi-lane highway (after Stony Island expansion) and next to very active freight and passenger train lines is not conducive to a quiet and safe play environments. The area is fine as a semi-wooded park space, and the large cost of developing it and draining the natural wetlands would be much better used at developing many vacant lots in Woodlawn a similar distance away, with much greater benefit to the community.
Heather	La Riviere		<p>I am a resident of Hyde Park and I am strongly opposed to the plan for East End Improvements put forth by the Chicago Park District that involves building a playground on that land. It would have been much better for the Obama Center to have been built on the west side of Washington Park, on vacant land that desperately needed investment, instead of building the Obama Center in an existing park with much disruption to residents' access and enjoyment of the park, the loss of nearly 20 acres of parkland and literally thousands of trees.</p> <p>I think the proposed Midway East End "Improvements" plan is a misguided use of this park space (since it IS currently park land) and the UPARR funding is supposed to be used to create NEW parks to replace the parkland that was taken from our community. I am in total agreement with the Midway Plaisance Advisory Council that using the UPARR funding to destroy a natural wetland on the Midway and then to build a playground there, causing storm runoff and removing yet another natural area from the south side, is a terrible idea and counter to the proper use of those UPARR funds.</p> <p>As the members of the Midway Plaisance Park Advisory Council said in a recent letter to the editor of the Hyde Park Herald on Jun 13, 2022, "An alternative vision for UPARR would be to keep the \$260,000 of funding in underserved communities, which could use the investment in parks and playgrounds to enhance redevelopment and to simply make these areas more enjoyable places to live. There is no reason why Hyde Park should be muscling out communities with fewer resources."</p> <p>I also think that the public must have a chance to have their voices heard concerning this alternative idea of how to use these UPARR funds and what to do with the eastern end of the Midway. I am concerned and dismayed that the City of Chicago and the Chicago Park District have not convened more opportunities for public discussion and community input, and that they have disregarded the input that they have received. I am also dismayed at the ways that the natural beauty of the south side has been degraded by the Obama Library project and the proposed golf course. No more natural areas should be removed or destroyed based on some outsider's ideas of what we want to have in our community. Listen to what people in the community are saying. Respect their wishes. Respect the trees, the wetlands and the natural areas we have right now on the south side.</p> <p>Even though it been included in the Memorandum of Agreement related to Jackson Park, this misguided approach to UPARR replacement should be scrapped. New replacement parklands should be created with this funding and the east end of the Midway should be left unscathed. The Memorandum of Agreement, at Stipulation VIII, expressly provides for amendments. At Stipulation IX, the Memorandum of Agreement provides that a signatory (such as the Chicago Park District) can choose to not perform an undertaking, and if so, the agreement is to be amended or terminated. There is no legitimate reason why the Memorandum of Agreement cannot be amended. The UPARR funding should be allocated, once again, to an underserved community, enhancing park equity and accountability for the stewardship of funds allocated for south side parks. An amendment would also help maintain the beauty and natural areas of the south side.</p> <p>Please listen to the objections of south side stakeholders and reconsider these plans. The south side does not deserve another boondoggle – those UPARR funds should be used for their intended purpose, to replace parkland that was taken from our community with new parks that establish green areas for underserved communities.</p> <p>Thank you, Heather La Riviere Hyde Park Resident</p>
Rita	Leary		<p>Please reconsider using the east end of the Midway Plaisance to replace community space usurped by the OPC. The children of the Jackson Park community - not Hyde Park and UC Lab School communities - deserve to have a safe and stimulating place to play. There are also some environmental concerns for the selection of the site for OPC and its implications.</p> <p>As collective understanding of climate change threats grows rapidly, there is still time for the Chicago Park District to reconsider the use of wetlands for a playground. While playgrounds serve useful purposes to communities, the preservation of the natural tendency of this site to be soggy offers both environmental and educational benefit by enhancing it as a natural area. The construction of a playground at another site that would both avoid the challenges of building on a wetland and would add a much-needed amenity in an underserved area makes more sense.</p>
Jerry	Levy		I believe the plan as proposed by the Park District is a real plus for the area on Midway Plaisance and I heartily support it



Name	Last Name	Organization	Comment
Clare	Lipinski		<p>Assuming the money comes through, which seems like a big ask at this point:</p> <p>First, why propose an accessible park (a wonderful idea, definitely to be encouraged) right between a railroad line and several busy streets, including Stony Island Ave (which, depending on other projects, may end up wider and with far heavier traffic flow - also increasing the traffic on the parkway streets to the north and south)? Surely a significant portion of the people who are supposed to be included by the design will have visual and audio sensitivities, which would easily be triggered by the noise and movement from the trains and traffic? How does that make sense?</p> <p>Second, why should we spend tons of money draining a natural wetland area when instead we could work to transform it into a thriving mini ecosystem - which would work with the natural attributes of the area, avoid unexpected issues from draining that might well increase flooding problems for the nearby residences, offer a fantastic educational/service option for schools and youth groups (especially with signage and coordination with teachers for field trips or volunteering), and be a step *towards* environmental stewardship instead of away?</p> <p>Finally, if the decision to move forward comes through anyway, why not have a (even more) localized wetland area opposite the play area, with suitable planning and plants to help manage the water? It would provide something of a break between one of the very busy roads and the play area (far too easy to see kids getting far too close to very busy streets with the current model), as well as at least some of the educational and stewardship opportunities.</p>
Raymond	Lodato	Part 1	<p>The proposed changes to the eastern portion of the Midway Plaisance as presented in the "Midway Plaisance East End Improvements [sic]" are environmentally damaging and harmful, inappropriate for the space, tone-deaf to input from the community, violate the spirit of the UPARR statute, and exacerbate the ongoing climate crisis and park inequities in Chicago.</p> <p>Environmentally damaging and harmful. The eastern portion of the Midway is an ephemeral wetland that provides important environmental benefits to an underserved area of Chicago. Wetlands are natural water filters and they provide carbon sequestration that is extremely vital for the South Side, not only due to the ongoing asthma crisis, but because of the increased emissions and reduced tree canopy from the Obama Presidential Center construction. The wetland also provides a necessary resting area for migratory birds who face an altered and diminished natural landscape with the destruction of 19.2 acres of adjacent Jackson Park. Rather than destroying the wetland, the Park District and the City should use it as a place to enhance science education for children in local public schools.</p> <p>Inappropriate for the space. The proposed project aims to attract small children and their caregivers to an area that will be subject to traffic from over 700,000 visitors a year to the OPC, according to official estimates. The increase in cars and potential for accidents will discourage those with concerns for the safety of their children in accessing and using the space and makes the proposed location an unlikely benefit to the community. Rather, the intention appears to be to satisfy the UPARR requirements in a manner most convenient to the OPC project, rather than one that will most benefit the community.</p> <p>Tone-deaf to input from the community. The community has expressed its desire that another location be considered as far back as 2018, through a resolution passed by the Midway Plaisance Park Advisory Council. There has been no community support for this project at this site. The Park District and the City of Chicago refuse to state which alternative sites were considered and why they were rejected, and no community meetings were held to vet alternative locations. The process by which this decision was made was closed, top-down, and lacked even the most minimal attempt to involve the community before the decision to site the proposed project on the Midway was presented as a fait accompli.</p> <p>Violates the spirit of UPARR. The intent of the UPARR statute was to provide no net loss of urban parkland when recreational spaces were altered. The Obama Presidential Center represents an extraordinary and unprecedented gutting of an historic urban park, where recreational land is being replaced by concrete structures and closed off environments. The damage it has wrought and the lost recreational opportunities which must be mitigated by UPARR cannot and should not be attempted to be replaced with other parkland, which would cause a net loss of parkspace for the surrounding community.</p>
Raymond	Lodato	Part 2	<p>Perpetuates environmental racism and injustice. The proposed project also violates the tenets of environmental justice by taking parkland located in an underserved community (Woodlawn) and attempting to replace it with parkland already located in a well-resourced community (Hyde Park). Dr. Robert Bullard, the father of environmental justice, states that environmental justice "embraces the principle that all people and communities have a right to equal protection and equal enforcement of environmental laws and regulations." This project does not in any way meet the measure of "equal protection and equal enforcement of environmental laws." The proposed capture of parkland on the Midway to replace what has been lost in Jackson Park would not be proposed or countenanced in Chicago's North Side communities. This project takes from a "park-poor" community and ignores the mandate of the original legislation, which sought to expand the amount of urban parkland.</p> <p>The Park District and the City need to reopen and amend the Memorandum of Agreement that enables this land grab and the accompanying destruction of a valuable natural resource on Chicago's South Side. Some of the City-owned parcels in the community can be repurposed for expanding recreational opportunities, rather than setting a precedent for future generations that Chicago has failed to protect its natural resources for its current and future residents.</p>
Trinita	Logue		<p>DO NOT take part of the Midway Plaisance to build a playground. This disrupts the design of the Midway and also its purpose. The purpose of this land is clear and should be maintained.</p> <p>A new park can be integrated to many other parks in that area, including Jackson Park.</p>
Ellen	Ma		<p>As a member of the Hyde Park community, I urge you to identify another location for the Urban Park Recreation and Recovery Placement (UPARR) replacement. The current plan will cause the destruction of the Midway's east end ephemeral wetlands, resulting from the construction of a playground on top of the wetlands. As city officials you have continually abandoned your responsibilities to us, your constituencies, in refusing to respond to our concerns about both the social and environmental implications of your plan for the Midway. However, in amending the Section 106 MOA and identifying another location in need of recreational park space, you can prevent the destruction of a key natural habitat and community space while enhancing park equity. I implore that you begin the process of finding a just Urban Parks and Recreation Recovery Act (UPARR) replacement space for Jackson Park associated with the construction of the Obama Presidential Center (OPC).</p> <p>The Midway's ephemeral wetlands are a key natural space and habitat that deserves our undying protection. According to the National Park Service, the current plan would decimate 0.436 acres of the Midway's ephemeral wetlands. This wetland is an invaluable carbon sink, and its destruction would represent a major loss to the entirety of the Southside. Further, not only does UPARR mandate that the Jackson Park replacement space be located in a comparable location i.e. one that is not a pre-established park, but the Navigable Waters Rule of the Clean Water Act also mandates that local and state entities do not destroy "adjacent wetlands": wetlands next to a perennial body of water. The east end of the Midway deserves protection and preservation as the wetlands that it is, and the current plan is environmentally irresponsible in its alterations of the wetlands in order to construct a playground. The City's current disregard for environmental well being is only exacerbated by the inevitably negative effects that the nearby construction of the OPC will have on the surrounding ecosystems and human communities. Not only will the construction of the OPC create traffic, noise pollution and vibrations that will render the playground unenjoyable for its visitors, but it will also lead to increased erosion, greenhouse gas emissions, and chemical discharge. In light of the negative environmental impacts of the OPC's construction, we must ensure to preserve the few remaining natural parklands in our neighborhoods. The destruction of the Midway's ephemeral wetlands directly contradicts this goal and contributes to continued environmental degradation.</p> <p>The destruction of the wetlands is also an insult to the citizens of the Southside and deprives us of our rights to multiple types of recreational facilities. There are already many playgrounds in Hyde Park, including one just three blocks from the proposed site on 56th St and Cornell Ave. These parks provide the residents, young and old, of Hyde Park and the surrounding communities with wonderful spaces to play, walk, and engage in healthy lifestyle activities that promote good health. However, there is no need to build another playground just blocks away from many existing playspaces. Instead, we need to preserve the natural and green recreational areas that already exist. Environmental destruction is not just a loss to the natural world but to humans ourselves as natural spaces provide us with space for enjoyment, recreation, and community-building. The decision to destroy the Midway's ephemeral wetlands is not just an environmental injustice but a sociopolitical one, a decision that compounds centuries of systemic racism on Chicago's southside by undermining a review and selection process called for by the National Park Service that is designed to prioritize the voices and needs of community members. Instead of continually depriving Black and Brown Chicagoans of the opportunity to engage with having a say about adding more parkspace rather than repurposing existing parks and environmental assets, I call on you to amend the MOA in order to halt environmental degradation and promote community wellbeing.</p> <p>Following the 45-Day Review and Comment Period, we hope you will listen to us as community members and honor your obligation to protect our parks.</p>

Name	Last Name	Organization	Comment
Brigid	Maniates		<p>I am writing to express my continued disappointment in the Park District. The Park District continues to insist on "improving" an already existing park instead of actually replacing park land. The Park District's claim that it is responding to broad community sentiment is just false (as with their proposals for the golf course merger or for the location of the OPC). The intended beneficiaries of the Park District proposal are the neighboring institutions (Obama Foundation, University of Chicago), not park users or community residents.</p> <p>I look forward to the Park District deciding to do the correct thing and actually replace park land, as UPAAR outlines, rather than trying to improve park land in a neighborhood that is far wealthier than its surrounding neighbors. Or if you all feel this really is such an important improvement- improve the Midway AND replace the acreage that is being removed.</p> <p>Maybe one day the Park District will move past it's racist history and not feel the need to repeat what led to the 1980s consent decree.</p>
Barbara	Mayers		<p>I write in heartfelt agreement with the objections of the Midway Plaisance Park Advisory Council, Jackson Park Watch, and Friends of the Parks to the terrible plan to create a playground at the east end of the Midway, and the wholly inadequate attention paid to them by the Park District. For all of the legal, ecological, family safety, and social justice reasons those organizations have so thoughtfully described, that location is plainly a bad site for a new playground, and does not even meet the "replacement" site requirements of the UPARR Act of 1978.</p> <p>It is way past time for the Chicago Park District to heed the concerns expressed about this plan by the community, and change the plan to instead create or expand a park or parks in an underserved area of nearby Woodlawn or South Shore.</p>
MICHAEL	MCNAMEE		I completely endorse the comments on the Proposed Midway Plaisance East End Improvements made by the Midway Plaisance Advisory Council to you in their submitted comments dated 17 August 2022.
Hayley	Mirabile		<p>As a resident of the southside of Chicago, I call on you to reject the City of Chicago's proposal to designate the eastern end of the Midway Plaisance as an Urban Parks and Recreation Recovery Program (UPARR) replacement area following the construction of the Obama Presidential Center (OPC) in Jackson Park. Instead, I urge you to follow the Midway Plaisance Advisory Council's (MPAC) calls to begin a transparent and community-based re-evaluation of a UPARR replacement space.</p> <p>The City of Chicago has ruled that land on the eastern end of the Midway Park will be used as UPARR replacement space after the construction of the Obama Presidential Center in Jackson Park. However, according to the UPARR Act, whenever cities remove park space in economically disadvantaged communities, they must provide substitute park space for the residents of these communities. The city's current plan does not authentically follow this law and is not an environmentally or socially just replacement area for the Jackson Park site. Currently, the plan to use the eastern end of the Midway as a UPARR replacement space involves creating new green space by draining wetlands located in the park. This plan would constitute the decimation of a natural ephemeral wetlands ecosystem and would fail to benefit residents of Jackson Park who deserve access to clean and readily available green spaces. According to the National Parks Service, the current plan would decimate 0.436 acres of natural wetlands. As well, the decision to convert the area to a more traditional park would lead to the clear cutting of over 2,000 trees. These trees are essential in both carbon sequestration and creating a natural environment and space for residents of the southside. Further, rather than converting the eastern end of the Midway Plaisance to a UPARR substitution space, the City of Chicago should work to find a legitimate replacement park for the region of Jackson Park that will soon house the Obama Presidential Center. It is essential that the predominantly Black communities of the southside have equal access to parks and other natural spaces. We call on you to support the Midway Plaisance Advisory Council's (MPAC) call to begin a community-based re-evaluation of a UPARR replacement space following the construction of the Obama Presidential Center.</p> <p>We are particularly concerned that our elected officials Alderwoman Leslie Hairston of the 5th ward, Alderwoman Jeanette Taylor of the 20th ward, and Mayor Lori Lightfoot have not urged for the reconsideration of this plan, and we will remember their actions on this issue during the next election.</p> <p>In promoting environmental justice on the southside of Chicago, it is essential to ensure that UPARR regulations are honored in order to authentically create new green spaces for the residents of the southside. I hope you will consider my calls to begin a transparent and community-based re-evaluation of the UPARR replacement space for the Obama Presidential Center.</p>
Betty	Mishkin		I don't think park land should ever be taken away from our citizens. If it's already decided and a compromise is needed then I suggest they create parks for the citizens with wild natural areas with wetlands, forests and trees. People need nature for mental and physical health and animals need wild nature made up of native species.
Janice	Misurell-Mitchell		<p>I am writing to object to the proposal to make the East End of the Midway into a recreational area. This proposal was developed because the proposed Obama Presidential Center has destroyed viable park land. But this is a poor excuse for creating a play area that is not feasible: traffic will impact any attempts to cross over to the "playlot"; the area is a swamp, which is also a problem for the proposed Obama Presidential Center; the land should be taken care of, rather than dug up. This area is not accessible to those who actually need it. The City owns a lot of property in Woodlawn and should use that for more recreational space.</p> <p>The City ignores the points made by the Midway Plaisance Advisory Council. The federal process was not followed appropriately, and there has not been enough community involvement and decision-making. Despite community pushback, the Park District continues to move the planning process forward.</p> <p>I encourage the City to rethink this error. The Obama Presidential Center is already under water in both senses of the word. There is no need to add further injury to the land in this part of the city.</p>
Arlen	Moller		I'm sorry, but after learning more about that, I have objections both to the process used to select this site and the site itself. I would like to see reconsideration of the recreational space to Woodlawn, where it is needed more, and greater consideration of preserving wetland areas. Please re-engage with the community and make a site selection that more community members support.
Linda	Nolan		I am against any plans for a play ground on Midway Plaisance area. This area is bordered by very busy streets. Is there to be a parking lot? Also there do not appear to be any plans for washroom facilities. Bad idea! Of course, why would I think that anything sensible would be done. You just look at the destruction already in Jackson Park with the Obama Foundation monstrosity!!
Mary	Oellrich		I am very unhappy that the Midway Plaisance End Improvements will build a playground on wetlands. Wetlands are an important part of the ecological system and need to be preserved, not destroyed! Additionally, building a playground on wetlands will be more expensive than other sites and other sites in underserved communities around Jackson Park are more in need of new parks and playgrounds. Finally, the Park District is only changing the use of this land, not creating new park land as required to replace park land taken for the Obama Presidential Center. This project is therefore in violation of federal requirements!

Name	Last Name	Organization	Comment
J	Osborne		<p>WINTER ACTIVITY</p> <p>The design does not respond enough to seasonal use. In particular, the North Hill feature could support an enhanced sledding facility. Chicago is notoriously flat. The berm of the Metra tracks is one of the few places where the built environment allows a potential winter sports hill. Currently, there is only a short stretch of the North Hill that has the slope and height to support downhill activities such as sledding.</p> <p>This is a local "sledding hill," but not a great one - It needs help. The berm can support modification to extend the slope and the meandering alignment of the North restored connector path could be modified to facilitate a longer and steeper North Hill slope. The connector path can also be brought to the top of the hill to allow inclusive winter recreation. This amenity could easily fit the three design principles of the universal design playspace.</p> <p>Opportunities for winter sports involving hills are very limited. A nearby family wishing to participate in inclusive winter sports is required to travel at least 6 miles to access the Sledding Hill at Museum Campus adjacent to Soldier Field / Waldron Parking Deck. I strongly support the included inclusive play features but need to see an operations and maintenance plan that ensures that these facilities and the nearby sidewalks are cleared of snow during the long inclement months.</p> <p>SUPPORT FOR VENDING</p> <p>Finally, this area is far from commercial activity. I would like to see spaces for vending built into the design to ensure that parents have access to sunscreen, insect repellent, snacks, and drinks. Chicago Park District is very aware of the need for revenue sources. Creating a vending license and using design to support successful appropriate commercial activity will help the District maintain and operate the park.</p> <p>CONNECTIONS</p> <p>Carnegie Elementary School is nearby. This is a resource that will be well used by Carnegie students throughout the school year. It is lovely to have an inclusive play area, but if the connections to the space are not along an accessible and well-maintained path of travel, the space will be an underutilized "inaccessible island." What plans are in place to ensure that access to and from the school will be clear and accessible?</p> <p>The University of Chicago Laboratory School Earl Shapiro Hall is nearby and this space is going to be well used by lab school students throughout the school year. To what extent will their use of this public space impact public programming? Will the Lab School be asked to support the maintenance and repair of the playground? I hope so.</p> <p>Also, I think that accessible pick-up and drop-off space is an important amenity for this location. This will become more important as the Metra Station is improved. "Kiss and ride" sites easily double for accessible PU/DO and are essential for successful stations. This location will become an important and dense node for connections and recreational activity - We need to plan ahead and ensure that these uses are not disregarded moving forward.</p> <p>HOUSE MUSIC</p> <p>This space is adjacent to Jackson Park which is the home of Chicago House Music. The space needs to reflect this important cultural and musical history. How will the current space accommodate the parties and DJ events that happen here on the a weekly basis?</p>
Gary	Ossewaarde		<p>I think the process used to select the Midway panel west of Jackson for the replacement UPAAR site was proper and that there is no reason or need to look further for another site. This site is in Woodlawn, a largely low income and minority community whose children, seniors will benefit from rehab and restoration as a moderate recreation space.</p> <p>There is no wetland, as commonly understood on the site- it lacks the size, potential for the defining species and habitat makeup, and permanence for a formal wetland. The occasional flooding and messiness should be prevented and the water bled off, perhaps to areas with historic planting on the edges.</p> <p>While I believe it is not necessary to the space and designation to build an elaborate nature-based play center, such would serve the children and seniors of the area, enhance the key boulevard and roadway node, and enhance the new park entry at the Obama Center and serve as a better entry way into the University of Chicago and historic Woodlawn and Hyde Park areas, and give hope.</p> <p>An absolute necessity is restoration and calling attention to the Cheney-Goode Memorial and the importance of this area as dedicated to the work of women leaders. This can be done without curbing sledding opportunities.</p>
Ada	Palmer		<p>I would strongly encourage including some space for community garden plots, where people can grow fruits and vegetables. It could be a comparatively small area, taking little away from the large grassy space, and it would greatly encourage frequent visiting as well as supporting local agriculture and low-income families. Trees with edible fruit would likewise be great. The addition of an accessible dropoff space for vehicles would also be a life-changingly valuable addition. More detail about intended water and water access would be welcome.</p>
Ross	Petersen		<p>This is a failure of design, and will have a detrimental effect on what is, already, a public Park. It ignores natural characteristics of the site; such as an ephemeral wetland; it ignores current patterns of use. We are legally entitled to replacement Park land, and to describe existing Park as now 'replacement Park land' is wrong. This is another 'boondoggle', pouring millions into a Park design that will afford little benefit.</p>
Sedonia	Phillips		<p>Find another area</p>
Wendy	Posner		<p>The manner in which the Park District has engineered the UPARR "replacement" site of park land for the OPC to be in compliance is shameful.</p> <p>Sadly, we've come to expect little else but behind the scenes complicity from CPD.</p> <p>As a long time Hyde Park resident I am strongly opposed to the land use of the current plan to restore the East end of the Midway. Placing this high end playground so close to the University of Chicago/Lab School provides resources for the privileged that could far better be placed in an under served community.</p> <p>Not a good look for anyone.</p> <p>That is a social argument - the economic, engineering and logistic consequences stretch belief. With so much available (open, underdeveloped, dry, parking-friendly, playground hungry) acreage in our midst, one must ask, who is the force behind this land grab? Why has the approval process been so dismissive of the strong community disagreement to the project?</p> <p>Sadly, CPD will never allow these questions to be asked, let alone answered.</p> <p>As I said earlier - for shame CPD.</p>

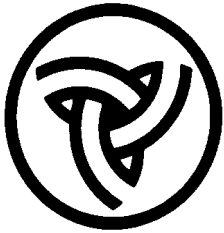
Name	Last Name	Organization	Comment
Deborah	Pratt		I'd like to say that I am completely in support of the proposed playground on the Midway. I attended the informative presentation at the South Shore Cultural Center and was impressed with the plans (there were multiple) and the care that was taken to provide a state-of-the art playground for kids (of all ages) who will come with differing capabilities and such a wonderful variety of options to gather in a beautiful place in productive play and/or leisure and restorative time and space. The Chicago Park District does such an amazing job in creating and maintaining green/play spaces for our communities. Thank you for your time and energy to plan a wonderful and beautiful space in our neighborhood. Thank you for your innovative plans and for your care of neighborhood communities/gathering spaces. I am/we are grateful! Deborah M. Pratt
Lauren	Schiller		I wanted to endorse the accessible dropoff space that I've seen others call for, and also to endorse having some community agriculture plots where people can grow vegetables.
Avi	Schwab		The north end of this area is frequently used as a sledding hill in the winter and this design does not seem to be compatible with this use.
Dana	Silvian		<p>As a member of the Hyde Park community, I urge you to identify another location for the Urban Park Recreation and Recovery Placement (UPARR) replacement. The current plan will cause the destruction of the Midway's east end ephemeral wetlands, resulting from the construction of a playground on top of the wetlands. As city officials you have continually abandoned your responsibilities to us, your constituencies, in refusing to respond to our concerns about both the social and environmental implications of your plan for the Midway. However, in amending the Section 106 MOA and identifying another location in need of recreational park space, you can prevent the destruction of a key natural habitat and community space while enhancing park equity. I implore that you begin the process of finding a just</p> <p>The Midway's ephemeral wetlands are a key natural space and habitat that deserves our undying protection. According to the National Park Service, the current plan would decimate 0.436 acres of the Midway's ephemeral wetlands. This wetland is an invaluable carbon sink, and its destruction would represent a major loss to the entirety of the Southside. Further, not only does UPARR mandate that the Jackson Park replacement space be located in a comparable location i.e. one that is not a pre-established park, but the Navigable Waters Rule of the Clean Water Act also mandates that local and state entities do not destroy "adjacent wetlands"□: wetlands next to a perennial body of water. The east end of the Midway deserves protection and preservation as the wetlands that it is, and the current plan is environmentally irresponsible in its alterations of the wetlands in order to construct a playground. The City's current disregard for environmental well being is only exacerbated by the inevitably negative effects that the nearby construction of the OPC will have on the surrounding ecosystems and human communities. Not only will the construction of the OPC create traffic, noise pollution and vibrations that will render the playground unenjoyable for its visitors, but it will also lead to increased erosion, greenhouse gas emissions, and chemical discharge. In light of the negative environmental impacts of the OPC's construction, we must ensure to preserve the few remaining natural parklands in our neighborhoods. The destruction of the Midway's ephemeral wetlands directly contradicts this goal and contributes to</p> <p>The destruction of the wetlands is also an insult to the citizens of the Southside and deprives us of our rights to multiple types of recreational facilities. There are already many playgrounds in Hyde Park, including one just three blocks from the proposed site on 56th St and Cornell Ave. These parks provide the residents, young and old, of Hyde Park and the surrounding communities with wonderful spaces to play, walk, and engage in healthy lifestyle activities that promote good health. However, there is no need to build another playground just blocks away from many existing playspaces. Instead, we need to preserve the natural and green recreational areas that already exist. Environmental destruction is not just a loss to the natural world but to humans ourselves as natural spaces provide us with space for enjoyment, recreation, and community-building. The decision to destroy the Midway's ephemeral wetlands is not just an environmental injustice but a sociopolitical one, a decision that compounds centuries of systemic racism on Chicago's southside by undermining a review and selection process called for by the National Park Service that is designed to prioritize the voices and needs of community members. Instead of continually depriving Black and Brown Chicagoans of the opportunity to engage with having a say about adding more parkspace rather than repurposing existing parks and environmental assets, I call on you to amend the MOA in order to halt environmental degradation and promote community wellbeing.</p> <p>Following the 45-Day Review and Comment Period, we hope you will listen to us as community members and honor your obligation to protect our parks.</p>
Linda	Slowie		I am completely against the East tip end of the Plaisance being developed as a play ground. First of all the area is surrounded on three sides by very busy streets, one being Stony Island. Children are constantly running after balls and not looking when crosses streets. Have just one child hit by a car who was playing in the purposed playground is too great a risk. A playground should be in the safest area and location, not in the middle of 3 busy streets. The very idea of a playground in this Plaisance site is totally irrational.
Elaine	Smith		<p>Parking in general and parking for handicapped people need to be addressed more fully. Perhaps I missed this in your plan.</p> <p>Just dropping off people in wheelchairs doesn't give them a caregiver to help them use the playground. All children need an adult with them.</p> <p>Will the traffic pattern continue as it is now?</p>
Laura	Staley		It is difficult to understand how close the play space is to the hill in the drawings. However, the hill is a popular location for sledding with neighborhood kids. Preserving a path for sledding (and maybe even improving the hill) should be considered for the final design.
Jennie	Strable		I have attended all of the public meetings on this project and I appreciate the information that has been provided. I live directly north of the site and I am still concerned about noise from the musical feature. It was shared that the musical feature would be acoustic in nature and should not be heard outside of the immediate area, but I'm sure that there will be rowdy people who enter the park at night and use the musical "instruments" to create as much noise as possible. Please reconsider this part of the design. At the last meeting I was very glad to hear that CDOT had been consulted about creating a drop off/pick up space for the park. To drop off someone with mobility issues by double parking on a busy street, that will just get busier after the OPC opens, is very dangerous. I have had to do just this with my elderly father and it was quite dangerous and harrowing. You do not want the lead story on the news to be that a disabled child or adult was injured trying to access your groundbreaking new park, so please make sure that this safe drop off/pick up space is created. I also encourage you to consider adding restrooms, and ensuring that there is a continued plan for maintenance. Thank you.
Deborah	Strauss		<p>I was concerned to learn of the plans to build a playground on the eastern parcel of the Midway.</p> <p>First of all, if the charge is to provide parkland to replace that removed because of the Obama Center, the directive is to create new parkland. Using the Midway parcel does not add parkland and it destroys the wonderful vistas created in this historic Olmstead park. It's just re-purposing an existing park space, denying the fact that the existing vista has value in and of itself.</p> <p>Second,, there is plenty of playground space in the immediate vicinity and there are very few children. There is a playground at 56th and Stony Island and in the Bret Harte school yard. There are playgrounds just to the south in Woodlawn. Buildings to the north and south of the Midway have their own playgrounds and every child (and parent) would need to cross the busy Midway Plaisance roads to get to this new park. there.</p> <p>Third, that parcel floods when there is rain, making it a playground for geese. I have heard about plans to manage the flooding, but it hasn't been managed for all these years, meaning it was often unavailable for soccer and other youth games.</p>



Name	Last Name	Organization	Comment
Osnat	Strulov-Shlain		<p>As a mom I am very excited for this park and looking forward to using it often. I'm also an early childhood specialist and have consulted in projects around the country here are my two cents: 4 season park: This is a perfect playground for spring/fall... Winter -It's missing a sledding hill/s and there's a start of a slop from the Metra pass and it should be utilized and expanded; Summer- might get too hot. What about adding a water feature or splash pad? Metal slides get extremely hot and not enough shade (hot countries around the world have added specific playground shade features). Why limit play when we know the weather in Chicago is so diverse.</p> <p>Covid had really pushed parents and educators to try and find creative ways to be outdoors as much as possible but planners have to think of an all season playspace and most importantly it has to be maintained. Nichols Park almost always does not have enough tan bark around the playstructures and the play structure gets extremely hot to the point where it's not safe to play on during summer days.</p> <p>In addition it would be wise to add designated picnic spots and trash cans that are secured to the ground. People will come in barbecue people will come and picnic. it's best to think about these things ahead of time and not have a Park full of trash every Monday. Trash cans and recycling bins in Jackson Park are almost always falling down as soon as the wind starts resulting in litter everywhere. It is crucial to have trash cans that are secured to the ground and have enough of them so people can easily get to them at the end of their celebrations. Thank you so much for taking on this wonderful project Hyde Park parents extremely excited about this project!</p>
Jeffrey	Sun		<p>As a member of the Hyde Park community, I urge you to identify another location for the Urban Park Recreation and Recovery Placement (UPARR) replacement. The current plan will cause the destruction of the Midway's east end ephemeral wetlands, resulting from the construction of a playground on top of the wetlands. As city officials you have continually abandoned your responsibilities to us, your constituencies, in refusing to respond to our concerns about both the social and environmental implications of your plan for the Midway. However, in amending the Section 106 MOA and identifying another location in need of recreational park space, you can prevent the destruction of a key natural habitat and community space while enhancing park equity. I implore that you begin the process of finding a just Urban Parks and Recreation Recovery Act (UPARR) replacement space for Jackson Park associated with the construction of the Obama Presidential Center (OPC).</p> <p>The Midway's ephemeral wetlands are a key natural space and habitat that deserves our undying protection. According to the National Park Service, the current plan would decimate 0.436 acres of the Midway's ephemeral wetlands. This wetland is an invaluable carbon sink, and its destruction would represent a major loss to the entirety of the Southside. Further, not only does UPARR mandate that the Jackson Park replacement space be located in a comparable location i.e. one that is not a pre-established park, but the Navigable Waters Rule of the Clean Water Act also mandates that local and state entities do not destroyadjacent wetlands: wetlands next to a perennial body of water. The east end of the Midway deserves protection and preservation as the wetlands that it is, and the current plan is environmentally irresponsible in its alterations of the wetlands in order to construct a playground. The City's current disregard for environmental well being is only exacerbated by the inevitably negative effects that the nearby construction of the OPC will have on the surrounding ecosystems and human communities. Not only will the construction of the OPC create traffic, noise pollution and vibrations that will render the playground unenjoyable for its visitors, but it will also lead to increased erosion, greenhouse gas emissions, and chemical discharge. In light of the negative environmental impacts of the OPC's construction, we must ensure to preserve the few remaining natural parklands in our neighborhoods. The destruction of the Midway's ephemeral wetlands directly contradicts this goal and contributes to continued environmental degradation.</p> <p>The destruction of the wetlands is also an insult to the citizens of the Southside and deprives us of our rights to multiple types of recreational facilities. There are already many playgrounds in Hyde Park, including one just three blocks from the proposed site on 56th St and Cornell Ave. These parks provide the residents, young and old, of Hyde Park and the surrounding communities with wonderful spaces to play, walk, and engage in healthy lifestyle activities that promote good health. However, there is no need to build another playground just blocks away from many existing playspaces. Instead, we need to preserve the natural and green recreational areas that already exist. Environmental destruction is not just a loss to the natural world but to humans ourselves as natural spaces provide us with space for enjoyment, recreation, and community-building. The decision to destroy the Midway's ephemeral wetlands is not just an environmental injustice but a sociopolitical one, a decision that compounds centuries of systemic racism on Chicago's southside by undermining a review and selection process called for by the National Park Service that is designed to prioritize the voices and needs of community members. Instead of continually depriving Black and Brown Chicagoans of the opportunity to engage with having a say about adding more parkspace rather than repurposing existing parks and environmental assets, I call on you to amend the MOA in order to halt environmental degradation and promote community wellbeing.</p> <p>Following the 45-Day Review and Comment Period, we hope you will listen to us as community members and honor your obligation to protect our parks.</p>
Zoe	Torrey		<p>As a resident of the southside of Chicago, I call on you to reject the City of Chicago's proposal to designate the eastern end of the Midway Plaisance as an Urban Parks and Recreation Recovery Program (UPARR) replacement area following the construction of the Obama Presidential Center (OPC) in Jackson Park. Instead, I urge you to follow the Midway Plaisance Advisory Council's (MPAC) calls to begin a transparent and community-based re-evaluation of a UPARR replacement space.</p> <p>The City of Chicago has ruled that land on the eastern end of the Midway Park will be used as UPARR replacement space after the construction of the Obama Presidential Center in Jackson Park. However, according to the UPARR Act, whenever cities remove park space in economically disadvantaged communities, they must provide substitute park space for the residents of these communities. The city's current plan does not authentically follow this law and is not an environmentally or socially just replacement area for the Jackson Park site. Currently, the plan to use the eastern end of the Midway as a UPARR replacement space involves creating new green space by draining wetlands located in the park. This plan would constitute the decimation of a natural ephemeral wetlands ecosystem and would fail to benefit residents of Jackson Park who deserve access to clean and readily available green spaces. According to the National Parks Service, the current plan would decimate 0.436 acres of natural wetlands. As well, the decision to convert the area to a more traditional park would lead to the clear cutting of over 2,000 trees. These trees are essential in both carbon sequestration and creating a natural environment and space for residents of the southside. Further, rather than converting the eastern end of the Midway Plaisance to a UPARR substitution space, the City of Chicago should work to find a legitimate replacement park for the region of Jackson Park that will soon house the Obama Presidential Center. It is essential that the predominantly Black communities of the southside have equal access to parks and other natural spaces. We call on you to support the Midway Plaisance Advisory Council's (MPAC) call to begin a community-based re- evaluation of a UPARR replacement space following the construction of the Obama Presidential Center.</p> <p>We are particularly concerned that our elected officials Alderwoman Leslie Hairston of the 5th ward, Alderwoman Jeanette Taylor of the 20th ward, and Mayor Lori Lightfoot have not urged for the reconsideration of this plan, and we will remember their actions on this issue during the next election.</p> <p>In promoting environmental justice on the southside of Chicago, it is essential to ensure that UPARR regulations are honored in order to authentically create new green spaces for the residents of the southside. I hope you will consider my calls to begin a transparent and community-based re-evaluation of the UPARR replacement space for the Obama Presidential Center.</p>
Lyman	Welch		<p>1) Instead of creating a playground at the east end of the Midway Plaisance, the Chicago Park District should develop new parkland and amenities in underserved communities around Jackson Park.</p> <p>2) The Chicago Park District did not engage enough with community members in selecting the UPARR replacement site or project.</p>

Name	Last Name	Organization	Comment
Hannah	Wilson-Black		<p>As someone who lives on the southside and cares about the green space available to residents here, I feel that the residents of our neighborhoods are being short-changed by this plan. Instead of designating the eastern end of the Midway Plaisance as an Urban Parks and Recreation Recovery Program (UPARR) replacement area following the construction of the Obama Presidential Center (OPC) in Jackson Park, I urge you to follow the Midway Plaisance Advisory Council's (MPAC) calls to begin a transparent and community-based re-evaluation of a UPARR replacement space.</p> <p>The City of Chicago has ruled that land on the eastern end of the Midway Park will be used as UPARR replacement space after the construction of the Obama Presidential Center in Jackson Park. However, according to the UPARR Act, whenever cities remove park space in economically disadvantaged communities, they must provide substitute park space for the residents of these communities. The city's current plan does not authentically follow this law and is not an environmentally or socially just replacement area for the Jackson Park site. Currently, the plan to use the eastern end of the Midway as a UPARR replacement space involves creating new green space by draining wetlands located in the park. This plan would constitute the decimation of a natural ephemeral wetlands ecosystem and would fail to benefit residents of Jackson Park who deserve access to clean and readily available green spaces. According to the National Parks Service, the current plan would decimate 0.436 acres of natural wetlands. As well, the decision to convert the area to a more traditional park would lead to the clear cutting of over 2,000 trees. These trees are essential in both carbon sequestration and creating a natural environment and space for residents of the southside. Further, rather than converting the eastern end of the Midway Plaisance to a UPARR substitution space, the City of Chicago should work to find a "legitimate" replacement park for the region of Jackson Park that will soon house the Obama Presidential Center. It is essential that the predominantly Black communities of the southside have equal access to parks and other natural spaces. We call on you to support the Midway Plaisance Advisory Council's (MPAC) call to begin a community-based re-evaluation of a UPARR replacement space following the construction of the Obama Presidential Center.</p> <p>We are particularly concerned that our elected officials Alderwoman Leslie Hairston of the 5th ward, Alderwoman Jeanette Taylor of the 20th ward, and Mayor Lori Lightfoot have not urged for the reconsideration of this plan, and we will remember their actions on this issue during the next election.</p> <p>In promoting environmental justice on the southside of Chicago, it is essential to ensure that UPARR regulations are honored in order to authentically create new green spaces for the residents of the southside. I hope you will consider my calls to begin a transparent and community-based re-evaluation of the UPARR replacement space for the Obama Presidential Center.</p>
			<p>We do not need these "improvements" and there has been no consultation about whether people want this or not. Part of the Midway Plaisance should not be converted into a playground - as far as I can tell, no one wants this. Residents of the area should be allowed to vote on whether this goes ahead or not.</p>
			<p>I love the idea of restoring the East End of the Midway to the original Olmsted plan. That area has been uncared for for years and it will not make a good impression as it is to the visitors of the Obama Center. Building a playground on the East End does not seem a good idea, though. It is an area surrounded by traffic on 3 sides and a noisy train on the 4th. There are only crosswalks on the East farther side and no parking. As much as I would like to see an Universal Design playground as a model for the city, that is not the space for it. There are several playgrounds nearby, so it is not an urgent need either. Thanks for your consideration.</p>
			<p>I applaud that the city wants to create a Universal Design playground where everyone will have access to enjoyment. If it's going to be used as a model for the new playgrounds in the city, it needs to provide different spaces and several areas. To be enjoyed by all, it will need to be in an accessible location by pedestrians, and have parking and facilities for visitors. The East End of the Midway is not like that. Furthermore, it is noisy by the train and traffic. The projected quiet area in the playground is impossible. Since the green areas need to be kept, the playground also seems to be small to be able to contain meaningful experiences without being cramped. Use all the wonderful ideas and the money in a place where it can be properly developed and appreciated.</p>
Lara			<p>As a member of the Hyde Park community, I urge you to identify another location for the Urban Park Recreation and Recovery Placement (UPARR) replacement. The current plan will cause the destruction of the Midway's east end ephemeral wetlands, resulting from the construction of a playground on top of the wetlands. As city officials you have continually abandoned your responsibilities to us, your constituencies, in refusing to respond to our concerns about both the social and environmental implications of your plan for the Midway. However, in amending the Section 106 MOA and identifying another location in need of recreational park space, you can prevent the destruction of a key natural habitat and community space while enhancing park equity. I implore that you begin the process of finding a just Urban Parks and Recreation Recovery Act (UPARR) replacement space for Jackson Park associated with the construction of the Obama Presidential Center (OPC).</p> <p>The Midway's ephemeral wetlands are a key natural space and habitat that deserves our undying protection. According to the National Park Service, the current plan would decimate 0.436 acres of the Midway's ephemeral wetlands. This wetland is an invaluable carbon sink, and its destruction would represent a major loss to the entirety of the Southside. Further, not only does UPARR mandate that the Jackson Park replacement space be located in a comparable location i.e. one that is not a pre-established park, but the Navigable Waters Rule of the Clean Water Act also mandates that local and state entities do not destroy "adjacent wetlands": wetlands next to a perennial body of water. The east end of the Midway deserves protection and preservation as the wetlands that it is, and the current plan is environmentally irresponsible in its alterations of the wetlands in order to construct a playground. The City's current disregard for environmental well being is only exacerbated by the inevitably negative effects that the nearby construction of the OPC will have on the surrounding ecosystems and human communities. Not only will the construction of the OPC create traffic, noise pollution and vibrations that will render the playground unenjoyable for its visitors, but it will also lead to increased erosion, greenhouse gas emissions, and chemical discharge. In light of the negative environmental impacts of the OPC's construction, we must ensure to preserve the few remaining natural parklands in our neighborhoods. The destruction of the Midway's ephemeral wetlands directly contradicts this goal and contributes to continued environmental degradation.</p> <p>The destruction of the wetlands is also an insult to the citizens of the Southside and deprives us of our rights to multiple types of recreational facilities. There are already many playgrounds in Hyde Park, including one just three blocks from the proposed site on 56th St and Cornell Ave. These parks provide the residents, young and old, of Hyde Park and the surrounding communities with wonderful spaces to play, walk, and engage in healthy lifestyle activities that promote good health. However, there is no need to build another playground just blocks away from many existing playspaces. Instead, we need to preserve the natural and green recreational areas that already exist. Environmental destruction is not just a loss to the natural world but to humans ourselves as natural spaces provide us with space for enjoyment, recreation, and community-building. The decision to destroy the Midway's ephemeral wetlands is not just an environmental injustice but a sociopolitical one, a decision that compounds centuries of systemic racism on Chicago's southside by undermining a review and selection process called for by the National Park Service that is designed to prioritize the voices and needs of community members. Instead of continually depriving Black and Brown Chicagoans of the opportunity to engage with having a say about adding more parkspace rather than repurposing existing parks and environmental assets, I call on you to amend the MOA in order to halt environmental degradation and promote community wellbeing.</p> <p>Following the 45-Day Review and Comment Period, we hope you will listen to us as community members and honor your obligation to protect our parks.</p>

Name	Last Name	Organization	Comment
Lily			<p>As a member of the Hyde Park community, I urge you to identify another location for the Urban Park Recreation and Recovery Placement (UPARR) replacement. The current plan will cause the destruction of the Midway's east end ephemeral wetlands, resulting from the construction of a playground on top of the wetlands. As city officials you have continually abandoned your responsibilities to us, your constituencies, in refusing to respond to our concerns about both the social and environmental implications of your plan for the Midway. However, in amending the Section 106 MOA and identifying another location in need of recreational park space, you can prevent the destruction of a key natural habitat and community space while enhancing park equity. I implore that you begin the process of finding a just Urban Parks and Recreation Recovery Act (UPARR) replacement space for Jackson Park associated with the construction of the Obama Presidential Center (OPC).</p> <p>The Midway's ephemeral wetlands are a key natural space and habitat that deserves our undying protection. According to the National Park Service, the current plan would decimate 0.436 acres of the Midway's ephemeral wetlands. This wetland is an invaluable carbon sink, and its destruction would represent a major loss to the entirety of the Southside. Further, not only does UPARR mandate that the Jackson Park replacement space be located in a comparable location i.e. one that is not a pre-established park, but the Navigable Waters Rule of the Clean Water Act also mandates that local and state entities do not destroy "adjacent wetlands": wetlands next to a perennial body of water. The east end of the Midway deserves protection and preservation as the wetlands that it is, and the current plan is environmentally irresponsible in its alterations of the wetlands in order to construct a playground. The City's current disregard for environmental well being is only exacerbated by the inevitably negative effects that the nearby construction of the OPC will have on the surrounding ecosystems and human communities. Not only will the construction of the OPC create traffic, noise pollution and vibrations that will render the playground unenjoyable for its visitors, but it will also lead to increased erosion, greenhouse gas emissions, and chemical discharge. In light of the negative environmental impacts of the OPC's construction, we must ensure to preserve the few remaining natural parklands in our neighborhoods. The destruction of the Midway's ephemeral wetlands directly contradicts this goal and contributes to continued environmental degradation.</p> <p>The destruction of the wetlands is also an insult to the citizens of the Southside and deprives us of our rights to multiple types of recreational facilities. There are already many playgrounds in Hyde Park, including one just three blocks from the proposed site on 56th St and Cornell Ave. These parks provide the residents, young and old, of Hyde Park and the surrounding communities with wonderful spaces to play, walk, and engage in healthy lifestyle activities that promote good health. However, there is no need to build another playground just blocks away from many existing playspaces. Instead, we need to preserve the natural and green recreational areas that already exist. Environmental destruction is not just a loss to the natural world but to humans ourselves as natural spaces provide us with space for enjoyment, recreation, and community-building. The decision to destroy the Midway's ephemeral wetlands is not just an environmental injustice but a sociopolitical one, a decision that compounds centuries of systemic racism on Chicago's southside by undermining a review and selection process called for by the National Park Service that is designed to prioritize the voices and needs of community members. Instead of continually depriving Black and Brown Chicagoans of the opportunity to engage with having a say about adding more parkspace rather than repurposing existing parks and environmental assets, I call on you to amend the MOA in order to halt environmental degradation and promote community wellbeing.</p> <p>Following the 45-Day Review and Comment Period, we hope you will listen to us as community members and honor your obligation to protect our parks.</p>
			Hello, concerns about the choice of playground location in a wetlands area have been raised by resident & watch dog groups, along with complaints about the outreach process the CPD has followed. If individuals responsible for making the final decision have not followed the correct processes, or if the significant expense of this playground would be better spent to serve an under-resourced area, the City's promises of equity, transparency and climate resilience, will ring hollow. As a tax paying park patron, please, please, let's avoid the future investigations, lawsuits, wasted funds and lost opportunities.
			No playground please!!! Will bring too much noise, activity in an area that's bound to be excessively busy due to the Obama Center.
Arielle			<p>I do not agree with the site choice for the play structure for the replaced parkland from the OPC. Not only is it a dangerous location for children- fenceless design and right next to a busy road that promises to be even busier thanks to the OPC/diversion of traffic, in addition to full of environmental pollutants from car traffic that increase risk of lung disease- but it also does little to invest in south side neighborhoods that could benefit most from safe and creative playspaces. For example, moving the playspace just south and west of where it is located would put it in Woodlawn, in the middle of a neighborhood that could benefit from additional, updated play spaces for children. Additionally, I am concerned about the use of building materials that are not eco-friendly (there is a lot of cement in the design, allegedly 2/2 wheelchair access, though I am sure there are other ways to create flat surfaces) and inordinate expense and energy required to drain moisture from the area. It is a very expensive project because of this choice of land and, rather than spending money to reshape nature, I think it would be a better choice to accentuate natural features that are already there. For example, the area at the end of the midway could simply be replanted with native, moisture-friendly plants and a simple wooden boardwalk placed above it to allow for access (similar to the very beautiful and successful Burnham nature sanctuary west of DuSable on 47th street), while another more suitable location for a playspace could be chosen to invest in. I worry that the Chicago Park District and other organizations who advocate for these sorts of expensive and tone-deaf projects (even more concerning, the replacement of public golf courses and park land and thousands of mature trees with a private golf course) have been swayed by political and economic powers that detract from their function and obligation to serve the public and improve public well being and health.</p>



# Illinois Department of Transportation

## Memorandum

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To:	George Tapas	Attn:	William Raffensperger
From:	Jack Elston	By:	Joseph Galloy
Subject:	Continued Coordination with IL SHPO Regarding MOA Stipulation I.G		
Date:	August 22, 2022		

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**Cook County  
Chicago  
FAU 2929, 1520, 2873, FAP 341 / Stony Island Ave.,  
Cornell Dr., Hayes Dr., S. Lake Shore Dr.  
Jackson Park Road Improvements  
Section # 17-B7203-00-ES  
IDOT Sequence # 20908  
SHPO Log # 021081017**

***Further coordination with the Illinois State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) is required to fulfill Stipulation I.G of the Memorandum of Agreement for the above referenced project.*** Attached is a letter supporting a finding for “No Adverse Effect” from the SHPO indicating that the project meets the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation and that they concur in a finding of no adverse effect pursuant to 36 CFR 800 ***provided*** that the following conditions are met:

- **The historic Cheney-Goode Monument must remain in its original location and orientation.**
- **The restoration of the Cheney-Goode Monument must meet the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation as determined by the SHPO office. The scope of work must be submitted for review and comment as it is developed.**

Overall, the SHPO was accepting of the proposed design and layout of the Midway Plaisance East End Improvements. However, as details were scarce regarding work to the Cheney-Goode Monument, they requested the conditions noted above.

Please forward the requested details regarding the Cheney-Goode Monument to IDOT’s Cultural Resources Unit when they become available in order to continue the necessary SHPO coordination.



If the project's scope of work changes from what was sent out for comment on July 8, 2022, the SHPO must review those changes. Should this occur, submit amended plans to IDOT's Cultural Resources Unit for their coordination with the SHPO.

Joseph M. Galloy, PhD, RPA  
Cultural Resources Unit Manager  
Chief Archaeologist & NAGPRA Officer  
Bureau of Design & Environment

JG:el



# Illinois Department of Natural Resources

One Natural Resources Way Springfield, Illinois 62702-1271  
www.dnr.illinois.gov

JB Pritzker, Governor  
Colleen Callahan, Director

**Cook County, Chicago**

**New Construction of The Obama Presidential Center 11CK1105, 1106, 1107, 1289, 1290, 1291, 1292,**

**Area Bounded by Stony Island Ave. and Cornell Dr., South of 60th St., Chicago**

**CDOT-B-7-203, IDOT-Tech. Report 184, IDOT Seq #-20908, IDOT-Sec:-17-B7203-00-ES, IDOT/ISAS#-17080, IEPA-WPC-C-0361-17, NPS, SHPO Log #021081017**

**August 22, 2022**

**Emilie Land**

**Illinois Department of Transportation**

**2300 S. Dirksen Parkway**

**Springfield, IL 62764**

**Dear Ms. Land:**

Our review is required by Stipulation II.C of the Memorandum of Agreement executed on 12/17/2020 and by Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, as a part of the City's responsibility under the Urban Park and Recreation Recovery Act (UPARR). The project area bounded by Midway Plaisance Parkway to the north and south, Stony Island Avenue, and the Metra Electric tracks is within the Jackson Park Historic Landscape District and Midway Plaisance, which was listed to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) on 12/15/1972, and the Chicago Park Boulevard System Historic District, which was listed to the NRHP on 12/18/2018.

The proposed play space is located on the west side of the project area, which leaves about half of the site as open meadow, as it was historically. The project reestablishes a curving, north-south path on the west side of the area, reconnecting the historic Cheney-Goode Memorial to the north and south Plaisance sidewalks. The project will eliminate the non-historic wetlands, returning some of its historic character. The project also proposes to add trees and plant material in historically appropriate, perimeter locations, which will help visually screen the new play space from surrounding vantages. However, there is no information on how the Cheney-Goode Memorial will be treated and restored. Therefore, the proposed Midway Plaisance East End Improvements can avoid an adverse effect to the historic resources by implementing the following two conditions:

1. The historic Cheney-Goode Monument must remain in its original location and orientation.
2. The restoration of the Cheney-Goode Monument must meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation as determined by this office. The scope of work must be submitted for review and comment as it is developed.

If the project's scope of work changes from that which has been submitted to and approved by this office, you must email those changes to [SHPO.Review@Illinois.gov](mailto:SHPO.Review@Illinois.gov) and to Anthony Rubano ([Anthony.Rubano@Illinois.gov](mailto:Anthony.Rubano@Illinois.gov)) for review and comment. Failure to submit project changes for review and comment may result in an adverse effect determination pursuant to the Act.

Sincerely,

Carey L. Mayer, AIA

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

CLM



NATIONAL  
ASSOCIATION *for*  
OLMSTED  
PARKS

August 22, 2022

### **Comments of the National Association for Olmsted Parks**

<https://www.chicagoparkdistrict.com/Midway-East-End-Improvements-45Day-Comment-Form>

### **Re: Proposed Midway Plaisance East End Improvements**

#### **Summary**

The National Association for Olmsted Parks objects to the July 2022 Draft Plan for “Midway Plaisance East-End Improvements.”

The so-called “Improvements” to the Midway Plaisance, which is listed on the National Historic Register, decimate the design of Frederick Law Olmsted, do immense ecological harm by eliminating a wetland, and ignore, at considerable cost, the needs of underserved neighborhoods in Chicago. We align ourselves with the comments of the Midway Plaisance Park Advisory Council, submitted on August 17, 2022, and request that the Memorandum of Agreement outlining these plans (December 2020) be amended to protect the public interest.<sup>i</sup>

#### **Discussion**

##### **I. The So-called Improvements Should be Rejected**

In 1870, city officials called on Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux— the most famous landscape architects of the day -- to help develop a great metropolitan park that would rival Central Park in its importance to the city. The answer: South Park.

The inland park, later called Washington Park, would include a refectory, courts, garden and galleries with a carriage concourse and deer paddock. The Lake Park, now known as Jackson Park, would have a mile of lakefront; Olmsted and Vaux proposed transforming the swampy land into a system of lagoons and waterways with boat landings and shelters. The two parks were

to be connected by a narrow strip of land, now known as the Midway Plaisance, which would serve as both a boulevard and canal.

Sited on the edge of Lake Michigan, the Park – realized in different phases over a period of 20 years -- transformed a fetid wetland into a magical space that invited wildlife, birds and people into its picturesque, pastoral and restorative setting, with wide open vistas to the Lake.

Jackson Park and the Midway Plaisance also focused on ecological concerns raised by the marshy wetlands. Olmsted had a persistent concern about frequent flooding and varying fluctuations in the level of the Lake. According to the Papers, Olmsted “was so concerned about how changing water levels ... would affect plantings in the redesign of South Park that he had assistants compile a list of annual water levels on Lake Michigan from 1859 through 1892,” finding that the water levels varied as much as three feet. FLO Papers, Vol 9, p. 781, footnotes 4 and 5.

Olmsted’s design of the Park, therefore, used thick plantings – with native dune grasses, sages and sedges -- to protect park edges when flooded during storms. By helping soak up water from the sky and the lake, the park operated like a green sponge helping to address the inevitable challenges of storms and water runoff, now only worsened by climate change. See *New York Times*, “A Battle Between a Great City and a Great Lake,” p. 1 et alia (July 7, 2021).

Now 100 years later, the importance of this historic landscape and natural wetland has not diminished. This is especially true in light of the rapidly disappearing wetlands in the Chicago area, as outlined by recent [research](#). Wetlands are not luxuries. They remove pollutants, help manage groundwater, cycle nutrients and support biodiversity.

Notwithstanding, the Chicago Park District is proposing to replace the wetland at the east end of the Midway Plaisance with a “destination” playground which will include a vast amount of heavy play equipment and new paving –out of keeping with the original, green and restorative park design.

We agree with the concerns raised by the Midway Plaisance Advisory Council (MPAC), an elected body dedicated to supporting the Midway Plaisance. As outlined in the MPAC comments submitted on August 17, 2022:

*The construction of a playground area on the eastern end of the Midway, at the expense of destroying a wetland, is an unnecessary, inappropriate, unduly expensive, and environmentally destructive choice.*



*First, and most importantly, the Park District should be acting as a steward of natural resources. As a steward, the Park District should be developing a plan for the eastern end of the Midway that embraces nature, rather than destroys it. ... Protecting the wetland allows city water management to work with natural water management, mitigating flooding and its after-effects, eliminating the need for a \$2.7 million drainage plan.*

If allowed to function as a wetlands, this area of the Midway could absorb seasonal excess water and provide habitat for birds and native pollinators. This was surely Frederick Law Olmsted's vision over 100 years ago and should remain the vision today.

As the MPAC outlines, "Midway wetland restoration – achievable at a relatively modest price – would ... create an opportunity for timely environmental education, while offering a carbon sequestration function that the current mowed lawn aesthetic at public parks does not provide." MPAC comments, page 3.

## II. Plans for the Playground Ignore Equity Concerns

Olmsted explored the themes of urbanization, civic infrastructure, and social justice as a foundation for the enrichment and empowerment of American society. He believed, fundamentally, in the capacity of nature to improve health and bring people together. And, in developing parks in Chicago and other communities, he was dedicated to the notion of equitable access – parks for all people.

The Urban Park and Recreation Recovery Act (UPARR) was created in this spirit. By regulation, UPARR funding is to be used for areas "lacking in recreational programs available in other areas of the city." The selection of the eastern end of the Midway Plaisance for a playground fails to address these express social justice concerns. The designation of existing parkland in Jackson Park to "make up" for parkland lost to the Obama Presidential Center will result in no net park gains. Meanwhile, there are a number of sites, scattered throughout the South Side, where new parks and playgrounds could be built.

We, therefore, agree with the comments of MPAC, page 4:

*An alternative vision for UPARR would be to keep the \$260,000 of funding in underserved communities, which could use the investment in parks and playgrounds .... There is no reason why Hyde Park should be muscling out communities with fewer resources. The general public should have an opportunity to be heard concerning this alternative vision – and the City of Chicago and the Chicago Park District have refused to allow it.*

Far from advancing equity and social justice, the proposed “improvements” amount to little more than grand expensive plans with no attention to actual costs, not to mention REAL environmental and community needs. For these reasons, we request that the Federal Highway Administration consult with all signatories to reconsider and amend the terms of the MOA to preserve Olmsted’s design, preserve the existing Midway wetland and apply UPARR funds, as expressly intended, for new parks in truly underserved communities.

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<sup>i</sup> The National Association for Olmsted Parks (NAOP) is the only national organization solely dedicated to protecting and preserving the work and living legacy of Frederick Law Olmsted. NAOP is also the managing partner of the Olmsted Bicentennial, Olmsted 200, [www.olmsted200.org](http://www.olmsted200.org). NAOP refused to sign on to the Section 106 Memorandum of Agreement allowing construction of the Obama Presidential Center in Jackson Park. (*Memorandum of Agreement Among Federal Highway Administration, Illinois State Historic Preservation Officer, and Advisory Council on Historic Preservation Regarding Projects in Jackson Park in Chicago, Cook County, Illinois, Dec. 2020*). Then and now, we believe that parties have failed adequately to consider avoidance and minimization to address the irreparable adverse impacts to the historic Jackson Park and Midway Plaisance.

**Submitted by the National Association for Olmsted Parks**  
**Anne Neal Petri, President and CEO**

## COMMENT OF MIDWAY PLAISANCE ADVISORY COUNCIL ON JULY 2022 DRAFT PLAN FOR EAST END IMPROVEMENTS FOR THE MIDWAY

SUBMITTED AUGUST 17, 2022

The Chicago Park District has solicited public comment concerning its July 2022 draft plan (the “July 2022 Plan”) for what it describes as “East End Improvements for the Midway”. It is respectfully submitted that the plan should be rejected because: (1) it promotes disinvestment in underserved communities, in direct contravention of the intent of the UPARR (Urban Park and Recreation Recovery) program and Chicago Park District policy; (2) it fails to expressly address the preservation and management of the wetland at the eastern end of the Midway, which should be the foundational consideration for any planning for this area; and (3) it proposes play structures supposedly for disabled persons, which, as a practical matter, will be useless to them.

These problems are compounded by a lack of funding for all but \$265,000 the contemplated \$3,000,000 project budget. Accordingly, a planning process is being presented as being near completion, for play structures that should be expected to be of no use to their target audience, for an area for which the principal planning issue – the wetland – is being ignored.

### 1. The July 2022 Plan Promotes Inequity

The City of Chicago has acknowledged, on its website, that it received two UPARR grants for Jackson Park in the early 1980s. The first grant was \$125,300 for “community-based recreation awareness, anti-vandalism training, and park rehabilitation programs” and recognized that “[t]he area lack[ed] recreational programs available in other areas of the city which hinder[ed] the redevelopment of the community.” The second grant was \$135,870 “for the replacement of 700 trees and shrubs and restoration of 7,000 yards of landscaped area within Jackson Park” and was “intended to improve the aesthetics of Jackson Park and to enhance picnicking and other passive recreational activities through improved landscaping.”

The selection of the eastern end of the Midway as a UPARR replacement site flouts both planning objectives. Under no circumstances can the eastern end of the Midway be considered part of an area “lacking in recreational programs available in other areas of the city.” And there is no need to divert UPARR funding to the eastern end of the Midway to aid the “redevelopment of the community.”

In a May 16, 2022 article, the Hyde Park Herald quoted Eiliesh Tuffy of the City of Chicago’s Department of Planning, as stating that “[t]here were a number of sites that were reviewed [for UPARR replacement], including some smaller pocket parks within the Woodlawn Community. And some of those locations were found to be inadequate for the sizing and the location.” Ms. Tuffy failed to indicate who reviewed those sites, avoiding the issue of the absence of any public input into the selection of a UPARR replacement site. A public process could have included a discussion about the divestment of underserved communities of parks and

recreation funding. A public process also could have identified additional sites in underserved communities that could have been considered.

Unfortunately, the UPARR replacement story fits all too well within a pattern of disinvestment in Chicago's low- and moderate-income communities, especially those on Chicago's south side.

The Hyde Park Herald, in a June 30, 2022 article, quoted Eiliesh Tuffy of the City of Chicago's Department of Planning, as stating at the June 21, 2022 Community Meeting #3 Presentation, that "the location of the east end of the Midway is essentially serving the same exact community as the space where the project is occurring," apparently to suggest that a location in Hyde Park is equivalent to a location in Woodlawn. However, the shifting of investment from Woodlawn to Hyde Park reflects an official statement of the City's lack of confidence in Woodlawn, which contravenes the purpose of the UPARR program.

## 2. The Project is Vastly Underfunded

According to the Park District's website, the budget for the planned "improvements" to the east end of the Midway is \$3,000,000. However, as recently as the June 21, 2022 community meeting, the Park District has acknowledged that it lacked \$2,700,000 of funding for this project.

This funding issue was addressed at the May 2022 public meeting of the Midway Plaisance Park Advisory Council (MPAC). When asked about funding for work at the eastern end of the Midway, Heather Gleason (the Chicago Park District's Director of Planning and Development) told MPAC that \$260,000 in UPARR replacement funding was available for playground structures, but an additional \$2.7 million of funding for contemplated wetland drainage has not been secured from any source.

The only money secured for the project is the UPARR funding that is being diverted from Woodlawn.

## 3. The July 2022 Plan Reflects the Park District's Intention to Destroy the Wetland at the Eastern End of the Midway

The eastern end of the Midway is designated as a wetland in an Environmental Assessment published on the City of Chicago's website. The July 2022 Plan conspicuously fails to account for this wetland, notwithstanding the fact that planning for preservation and management of the wetland should be the foundation of any planning for the eastern end of the Midway.

While it has been suggested by the Park District and its consultant that the wetland would be preserved and that native plantings would be installed, the July 2022 Plan includes no such provision. This follows Heather Gleason's statement that funding for wetland drainage has not been secured. The omission of wetland considerations from the Park District's July 2022 Plan suggests that there is no intention to maintain the wetland.



The construction of a playground area on the eastern end of the Midway, at the expense of destroying a wetland, is an unnecessary, inappropriate, unduly expensive, and environmentally destructive choice.

First, and most importantly, the Park District should be acting as a steward of natural resources. As a steward, the Park District should be developing a plan for the eastern end of the Midway that embraces nature, rather than destroys it. The Midway's natural wetland should be recognized and enhanced as such. Native wetland plants that absorb and thrive on seasonal excess water could greatly enhance the beauty and biodiversity of the Midway. Midway wetland restoration – achievable at a relatively modest price – would provide habitat for birds and native pollinators and create an opportunity for timely environmental education, while offering a carbon sequestration function that the current mowed lawn aesthetic at public parks does not provide.

Second, the destruction of the naturally occurring wetland on the easternmost portion of the Midway means that rainfall and underground water running beneath the surface of the eastern end of the Midway will be diverted elsewhere. It makes no sense to maximize the diversion of rainfall and groundwater into the City's sewers, to be mixed with pollutants and increasing opportunities for flooding.

Third, and as is stated above, the apparent cost estimate of \$2.7 million for wetland drainage is unsupported by any plan. The rule of thumb for public projects is that initial cost estimates are far too low.

Fourth, the cost estimate for wetland drainage does not include any accounting for flooding of streets or basements, or flooding after-effects such as mold and mildew, arising from stormwater management problems created by wetland drainage.

Protecting the wetland allows city water management to work with natural water management, mitigating flooding and its after-effects, eliminating the need for a \$2.7 million drainage plan.

The Hyde Park Herald, in a June 30, 2022 article, quoted Heather Gleason of the Park District as stating at the June 21, 2022 Community Meeting #3 Presentation, that the Park District “focus[es] so much on natural areas, but we do have to balance. We don't have the ability to put natural plantings everywhere.” However, it is not “balanced” to destroy a natural resource without replacing it, as apparently is contemplated for the eastern end of the Midway. Nor is it “balanced” to maximize wetland destruction, by coupling the contemplated destruction of the wetland at the eastern end of the Midway with the recently accomplished destruction of wetland area in neighboring Jackson Park.

4. The July 2022 Plan Proposes Play Structures that will be Useless to its Target Audience, Persons with Disabilities and their Caregivers

The eastern end of the Midway, where the proposed play structures are to be built, is surrounded on three sides by high vehicular traffic roadways, and on the fourth side by railroad tracks which carry significant freight traffic.

Due to the roadway changes that are currently in progress in and around Jackson Park, the already high vehicular traffic on the three sides will significantly increase.

This area is inconvenient at best for individuals with disabilities and their caregivers, because caregivers will need to park at a distance from the playground and then bring individuals with disabilities some distance to the playground. The alternative would be to expect caregivers to get third persons to act as drivers, for drop-offs and pick-ups.

Also, the proximity to freight train traffic, heavy vehicular traffic, and related sudden loud noises poses a problem for those who have sensory sensitivities, such as those on the autism spectrum.

The practical effect of these problems is to make the proposed playground useless to its target audience. Disabled persons and their caregivers have sufficient obstacles to address as part of daily life. To demand the additional effort required to make this inappropriate playground destination work is both unkind and unrealistic.

5. The July 2022 Plan Expands the Square Footage for the Proposed Play Structure, at the Expense of Open Area and Wetland Maintenance

The July 2022 Plan also expands the play structure area beyond what was disclosed and discussed at previous meetings, at the expense of open area (and wetland maintenance) at the eastern end of the Midway.

6. An Alternative Vision for UPARR

An alternative vision for UPARR would be to keep the \$260,000 of funding in underserved communities, which could use the investment in parks and playgrounds to enhance redevelopment and to simply make these areas more enjoyable places to live. There is no reason why Hyde Park should be muscling out communities with fewer resources.

The general public should have an opportunity to be heard concerning this alternative vision – and the City of Chicago and the Chicago Park District have refused to allow it.

It has been suggested that nothing can be done about this misguided approach to UPARR replacement, because it has been included in the Section 106 Memorandum of Agreement related to Jackson Park. That simply isn't so.

The Memorandum of Agreement, at Stipulation VIII, expressly provides for amendments. At Stipulation IX, the Memorandum of Agreement provides that a signatory (such as the Chicago Park District) can choose to not perform an undertaking, and if so, the agreement is to be amended or terminated.

7. The July 2022 Draft Plan Reflects that the Park District has Ignored Public Input

The problems with the July 2022 Plan, as described above, have been mainstays of the Park District's planning, notwithstanding critiques offered on multiple occasions, including: (a) a meeting of Park District representatives with MPAC on May 11, 2022; (b) MPAC's letter of June 8, 2022 to the Hyde Park Herald, on which the Chicago Park District, among others, was copied; and (c) the June 21, 2022 Community Meeting #3 Presentation.

MPAC has consistently raised concerns with the Park District about the issue of equity in connection with shifting of UPARR funds from Woodlawn, an underserved community, to Hyde Park, and the failure to plan for the maintenance of the wetland at the eastern end of the Midway. MPAC also has consistently raised concerns with the Park District concerning funding for its proposal for the eastern end of the Midway, as well as the unsuitability of the eastern end of the Midway for the play structures that it is proposing. The July 2022 Plan fails to acknowledge or address these issues and shows that the Park District is knowingly and intentionally going forward with a plan that is fundamentally flawed.

There is no legitimate reason why the Section 106 Memorandum of Agreement cannot be amended, so that the UPARR funding can be allocated, once again, to an underserved community, enhancing park equity and accountability for the stewardship of funds allocated for south side parks.

Bronwyn Nichols Lodato, President, Midway Plaisance Park Advisory Council

Marc Lipinski, Vice President, Midway Plaisance Park Advisory Council

Matthew Isoda, Secretary, Midway Plaisance Park Advisory Council

Kristy Rawson, Treasurer, Midway Plaisance Park Advisory Council

cc: Rosa Escareño  
Superintendent  
Chicago Park District

Patrick Levar  
Chief Operating Officer  
Chicago Park District

Heather Gleason  
Director of Planning and  
Development  
Chicago Park District

Sarah White  
Lakefront Planning Coordinator  
Chicago Park District

Ald. Leslie Hairston

Ald. Jeannette Taylor

State Sen. Robert Peters

State Rep. Curtis Tarver