



RANCH Reporter

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“The smallest act of kindness is worth more than the grandest intention.” Oscar Wilde

Thank you to everyone who participated in the Earth Day Parks Clean-up held on Earth Day, April 22nd. Volunteers helped clean-up all four of RANCH’s parks – Adams Playlot, Clybourn Park, Privet Park and the Wisconsin Tot Lot, getting them ready as the weather gets warmer and more inviting for kids to come out and play. Please also join us at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, May 13th at Clybourn Park for the ribbon-cutting ceremony celebrating the renovation of the Clybourn Park basketball court. Alderman Brian Hopkins will be present as well as representatives from RANCH, Olivet Nazarene University, @properties, and the Park District to celebrate the event. There will be music and refreshments and basketball, of course! Finally, please remember that RANCH relies on the help and support of the community to further its mission – one of which is helping to improve the physical conditions of the neighborhood. One of the ways we do this is by maintaining the planters along RANCH’s northern and eastern borders. Please consider donating to the planter fund to help us continue this simple but beautiful way we can show that we care about our community.

- Reatha Kay, President, RANCH Triangle Community Conservation Association

“Sustainable Development” and the North Branch Industrial Corridor

The term “sustainable development” is usually associated with urban planning, and the Department of Planning and Development (“DPD”) has deemed “sustainability” one of its goals for the proposed rezoning plan of the North Branch Industrial Corridor. But what does it mean? I met with Professor Euan Hague¹ to learn more about what sustainable development might look like in the context of the proposed rezoning of the North Branch Industrial Corridor. According to Professor Hague, there is no set definition of sustainable development but, as they teach it in their program, “sustainable” connotes development that is economically and environmentally sustainable, and that comprises a social equity component – meaning that it works for all members of society. Therefore, for laypeople looking at the North Branch Industrial Corridor proposed

¹ Professor Euan Hague, Vincent de Paul Professor and Chair, Department of Geography, and Co-Director of its Masters in Sustainable Urban Development at DePaul University is a contributor to and co-editor of *Neoliberal Chicago*, a book which explores how the neoliberal philosophy “work[s] on the ground in today’s Chicago.” University of Illinois Press. Click [here](#) for more information on *Neoliberal Chicago*.

rezoning plan and trying to determine whether the term “sustainability” applies, one can simply start by asking, “who does it serve?”

Recognition of the role of open recreational space is a primary issue raised by community groups. All greenspace is not equal. To provide an example of this, Professor Hague suggested comparing Millennium Park and Grant Park, both wonderful downtown parks immediately adjacent to each other. With respect to Grant Park, he notes that this is a space that provides for “unscripted” play, where you can pretty much do anything: fly a kite, have a picnic, or play soccer, to name a few. In contrast, Millennium Park is a space that does not invite you to linger: rather it is a space that you move through, essentially directed through the space by the park’s floorplan – up the steps, look at the “Bean,” move to the fountains, walk through the gardens, and then possibly move on to Maggie Daley Park or the Art Institute. The riverwalk proposed by DPD, presented as providing over 60 acres of open space, is a linear space that has limited uses for limited users. Like Millennium Park, it is designed to move you through the space. Conversely, the space that the community wants and needs is open, recreational space – space that provides for unscripted play and has wider uses for all members of the community. Interestingly, Professor Hague noted that the Burnham plan was not just about a plan to maintain the lakefront as a public asset, but also to create a network of parks where people can gather and play. At a 2017 breakfast hosted by the Lincoln Park Chamber of Commerce, in response to a question regarding the Chicago Park District’s position that the Lincoln Park neighborhood is not in need of additional open space, Alderman Brian Hopkins stated that simply looking at a map demonstrates that the Lincoln Park community is in need of more open space. Therefore, if there is real commitment to providing needed open space to the community, the form it takes is important – it should be something that embraces and furthers the vision of the Burnham plan, continuing the idea of Chicago as an *Urbs in Horto*, a city in a garden.

A plan to address traffic and congestion is another important component of sustainable development. Professor Hague states that good urban planning should view the traffic and congestion issues and solutions in a holistic manner, rather than on the site-by-site basis proposed by DPD. Professor Hague agreed with RANCH that any traffic infrastructure planning surrounding the North Branch Industrial Corridor should also consider the impact of the developments at the old Children’s Hospital and Lathrop Homes sites. Traffic associated with these developments will clearly impact the North Branch Industrial Corridor and surrounding communities. With respect to the density of residential development, Professor Hague noted that increased density can be a positive thing, by allowing for more control in travel patterns and the movement of people – provided that this increase in density comes with a proportional increase in open space (to account for the lack of private yard space), as well appropriate transportation and pedestrian infrastructure. Will there be a pedestrian bridge from the high-density space to the Clybourn Metra station, to encourage pedestrian travel and use of public transportation? Will this bridge be covered, to encourage use even during

inclement weather? In the proposed rezoning plan, even these basic questions relating to connecting pedestrians to public transportation are not concrete, have not been satisfactorily addressed, and lack identifiable funding sources.

Open space and traffic and congestion have been the primary issues raised by RANCH in its written comments to DPD and at each of the public meetings RANCH representatives have attended. A cursory review of these issues suggests that the proposed rezoning plan does not meet the definition of “sustainable.” Additionally, there exist other issues associated with the significant rezoning of such a large area, including the impact on other public resources, such as the local schools. Similar to the calls for open recreational space and real solutions to traffic and congestion issues, DPD’s proposed rezoning plan simply ignores this concern as well, making it difficult to associate this proposed plan with the term “sustainable development.”

- Reatha Kay, President of RANCH Triangle Community Conservation Association. A special thanks to Professor Hague for his help in writing this article.

Practicing What They Teach: DePaul University’s Education and Counseling Center Not Only Teaches Community Engagement, But Leads by Example

At the southeast corner of Halsted and Belden is DePaul University’s Education and Counseling Center (“ECC”). The ECC is part of the DePaul College of Education, and offers a variety of counseling and tutoring services, but did you know that these services are not limited to DePaul students or members of the DePaul community? The services offered by the ECC are open to everyone. The mission of the ECC is not only to prepare counselors and teachers, but also “to provide quality and affordable educational and counseling services to adults, children, and adolescents.”² The ECC offers private tutoring to elementary school to high school aged children and counseling sessions to both children and adults. The tutoring services are structured according to the student’s needs, and the ECC also provides literacy assessments and remediation. The cost of the tutoring varies, and is dependent on the tutor’s educational level - \$10.00 per hour for an undergraduate tutor, up to \$20.00 per hour for a certified teacher. Counseling services are provided on a sliding scale, and all counselors are under the supervision of the Director, Dr. Martha Mason.³

² Mission of DePaul University’s Education and Counseling Center. You can read the mission statement of DePaul University’s Education and Counseling Center [here](#).

³ Dr. Martha Mason, Ed.D., LCPC, Director, Education and Counseling Center, DePaul College of Education.

The ECC also offers many group courses. For example, one of these courses is on the practice of mindfulness, geared toward elementary and high school aged children. This course is “intended to strengthen attention and emotion regulation, cultivate gratitude and compassion, and increase stress and anxiety management skills”⁴ – skills, which seem particularly important in today’s fast-paced and increasingly technology driven life.

The ECC’s commitment to not only providing these services to the community, but to truly serving the community’s needs have been demonstrated time and again. Upon learning that CPS budget cuts gutted Oscar Mayer Elementary School’s professional development budget (something that not only enhances a teacher’s skill, but is necessary for licensure), the Director of the ECC, Dr. Martha Mason, offered to work with Oscar Mayer’s principal to provide professional development for its teachers. Additionally, Dr. Mason offered to try to structure professional development courses and resources to tailor them to what was most important to Oscar Mayer’s teachers. The ECC has also responded to the needs of parents of children with developmental delays by establishing a dedicated playgroup at its facility, where the children and parents could gather, play and socialize in a nonjudgmental setting. Dr. Mason encourages parents and groups to contact the ECC not only to access existing services, but to discuss needs not currently addressed through existing programs or courses, so that opportunities to meet these needs might be developed.

The ECC of DePaul University has a vast array of students and professionals who wish to share their knowledge and skills and serve the community. The ECC is a wonderful example of a member of our community that not only teaches community involvement, but actively works on engaging with and serving our community.

Click [here](#) to learn more about the Education and Counseling Center at DePaul University and the services and courses available, or contact Dr. Martha Mason at (773) 325-8420 or mmason26@depaul.edu.

- A special thanks to Dr. Mason for her willingness to help the Oscar Mayer Elementary School community.

Upcoming Events

Ribbon Cutting Ceremony at Clybourn Park, Saturday, May 13th at 10:00 a.m. – Come celebrate the renovation of the Clybourn basketball court with RANCH, Alderman Hopkins, and representatives from Olivet Nazarene University, @properties and the Chicago Park District. There will be music, refreshments and basketball!

⁴ See the ECC flyer titled “Learning to Breath: Mindfulness Meditation 6-Week Group.” Click [here](#) to view the flyer.

Peace & Violence in Chicago: What Can I Do? Learn more about what's being done in Chicago to combat the growing problem of violence, and where you can plug in to the effort. **Wednesday, May 3rd at 6:30 pm at St. Teresa of Avila, 1950 N. Kenmore Ave.** Come listen to guest speaker Tom Van Berk, and engage with representatives from various groups around the city working to help address the violence in Chicago. Click [here](#) for more information on this event.

Lincoln Park Uncorked: An Armitage-Halsted Wine Stroll, Thursday, May 11 from 6:00 – 9:00 p.m. The Lincoln Park Chamber of Commerce is excited to welcome spring with **Lincoln Park Uncorked: An Armitage - Halsted Wine Stroll.** Enjoy red and white wine samples from Vin Chicago paired with delicious bites while strolling through one of Chicago's most famous shopping districts in the heart of Lincoln Park. Tickets are \$40 and can be reserved at: <http://www.lincolnparkchamber.com/event/uncorked/>.

Chez Moi is celebrating its first five years all week May 1-7. Click [here](#) for more information on their events.

Please remember to support your local businesses, because they support your community.

Stay in touch with community meetings and happenings by becoming a member of RANCH. Sign up on www.RANCHtriangle.org, and follow RANCH on Facebook at: <https://www.facebook.com/RANCH-Triangle-Community-Conservation-Association-108461592543401/>

