

Phase II of Wolf Point to be Presented at the Next Chicago Plan Commission Hearing

In early 2013, after nearly two years of extensive work by Alderman Reilly, the Department of Planning and Development (DPD), the Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT), our River North neighbors (RNRA) and the project developers, an amendment to PD 98 for the Wolf Point site was approved by the Chicago Plan Commission. This approval granted development rights for three phases to contain three separate structures in addition to dozens of public improvements and amenities---with more to come!

At that time, the Alderman negotiated with the developers via the planned development process to maximize the amount of publicly accessible open green space, gain traffic improvements and fund infrastructure projects on and around the Wolf Point site that the city would not have been able to fund or afford.

Following over a year of intense negotiations---including 2 project deferrals at the Alderman's request in order to finalize many important details---dozens of public benefit items were added to the project scope. These items were both aesthetic, by way of publicly accessible green space and infrastructure-related, identified by 17 separate traffic improvements including:

- Addition of a left-turn arrow for northbound Orleans Street traffic turning west onto Hubbard Street
- Addition of a left-turn arrow for westbound Kinzie Street traffic turning south onto Wells Street
- Addition of a right-turn arrow for southbound Wells Street traffic turning west onto Merchandise Mart Drive
- Addition of a left-turn arrow for eastbound Wolf Point Plaza Drive traffic turning north onto Orleans Street
- Addition of a left-turn arrow for northbound Orleans Street turning west onto Wolf Point Plaza Drive
- Installation of a new traffic signal, with pedestrian countdown signal heads, at the intersection of Kingsbury and Kinzie Streets
- Installation of new pedestrian countdown signals at the intersection of Wacker Drive and Lake Street
- Installation of new pedestrian countdown signals at the intersection of Wacker Drive and Wells Street
- Installation of new pedestrian countdown signals at the intersection of Hubbard and Wells Streets
- Installation of new pedestrian countdown signals at the intersection of Wacker Drive and Orleans Street
- Installation of new pedestrian countdown signals at the intersection of Orleans Street and Wolf Point Plaza Drive
- Installation of new pedestrian countdown signals at the intersection of Lake Street, Canal Street and Milwaukee Avenue
- Actuation of the signal which controls the traffic coming off of the Merchandise Mart ramp which connects to Kinzie Street, immediately west of the intersection of Kinzie and Wells Streets
- Installation of High-Visibility (International Style) Crosswalks on all legs of the following intersections:
 - Wacker Drive and Orleans Street
 - Orleans Street and Merchandise Mart Drive
 - Wells Street and Merchandise Mart Drive
 - Lake Street, Canal Street and Milwaukee Avenue

Maximizing publicly accessible open space and the construction of new riverwalk was also a high priority for Alderman Reilly. Based upon his efforts and extensive community process which generated useful feedback in negotiations, the approved plans include an increase of overall green space to a full 78% of the site - approximately 2.6 acres of the buildable area. In addition to expanding the acreage of public open space, the Alderman's negotiations resulted in over 100,000 SF of new riverbank park and public riverwalk. To place this in perspective, many of the Chicago Park District's neighborhood parks are not nearly as large as the planted areas will be once the full site is complete by year's end.

Please click on this link to view a copy of the complete [planned development ordinance](https://gisapps.cityofchicago.org/gisimages/zoning_pds/PD98.pdf).
(https://gisapps.cityofchicago.org/gisimages/zoning_pds/PD98.pdf)

Phase 1, known as Wolf Point West, is a 509-unit apartment building that broke ground in early 2014 and opened for occupancy in January of this year. With this first phase came the completion of all 17 traffic improvements, previously mentioned, in addition to much of the accessible green spaces including: construction of over 400' of riverwalk, improvements to the northwest riverwalk gateway, a new riverbank park and a heavily landscaped riverside urban veranda---as pictured below.



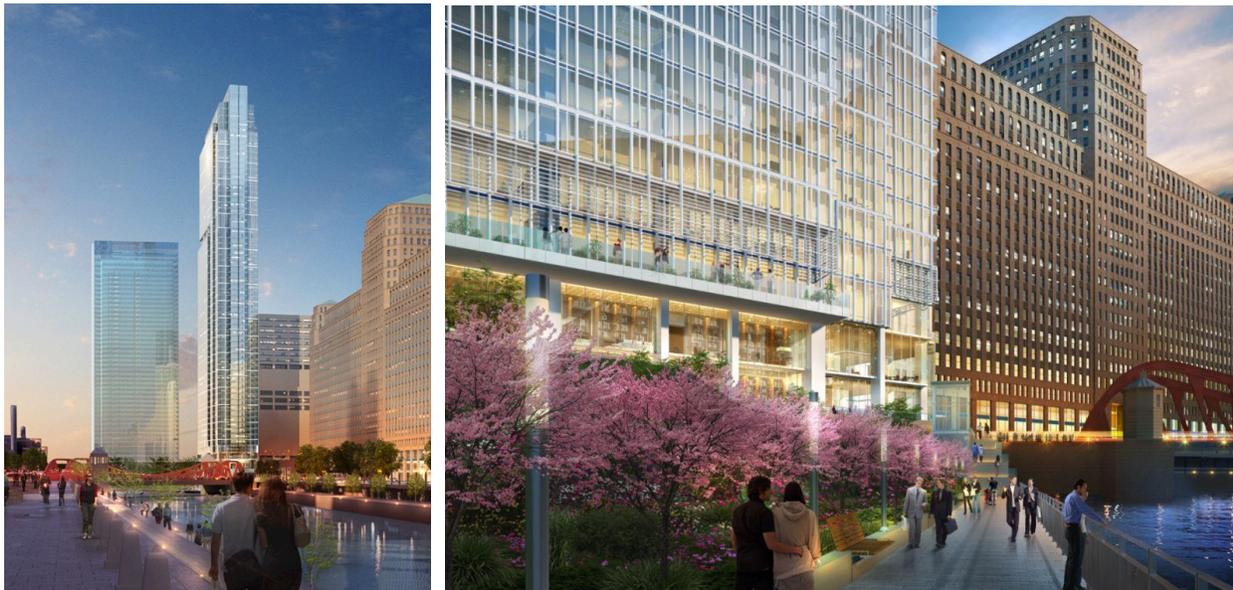
(Photo: Jon Miller © Hedrich Blessing)

(https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/31451100/bKL-WolfPointWest_02.jpg)

Phase 2 of the project, Wolf Point East, will be presented to Chicago Plan Commission at the next meeting on October 20th for public view. As stated at the initial Plan Commission hearing in 2013, the remaining process for the next two phases is an administrative approval through the Department of Planning and Development called "Site Plan Approval". Although there is no required public process per ordinance, Alderman Reilly insisted upon a public presentation where residents can attend to better understand the plan. A preview of the Plan Commission submittal is available for download [here](https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/31451100/20160826_Wolf%20Point%20East%20-%20Exhibit%20Drawings%20Draft.pdf) (https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/31451100/20160826_Wolf%20Point%20East%20-%20Exhibit%20Drawings%20Draft.pdf) for 42nd Ward residents.

Alderman Reilly worked to ensure that this next phase is in conformance with the existing planned development approval and that certain elements were revisited as the site has further evolved with the construction of the first phase. The Alderman asked the developers to reconsider the height, density and site coverage based upon ever-increasing traffic in River North and the fact that the Wolf Point site is landlocked. The final plan package to be presented will show a reduction in height, density and site coverage in addition to an updated traffic plan which contemplates changes on and around the site since 2013.

This upcoming phase will include a 660' tall building with 700 residential apartment units, amenity retail space and accessory parking at 313 W Wolf Point Plaza.



https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/31451100/Wolf%20Point%20East_from%20Wacker_8x11%2072dpi.jpg

<https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/31451100/Wolf%20Point%20East%20-%20Riverwalk.jpg>

As mentioned above, Phase 2 will have less height, less site coverage and less density than what is allowable under PD 98 and previously approved. The allowed uses have not changed and the development will not deviate from the allowable onsite parking limits, which the Alderman insisted should be some of the lowest in all of downtown Chicago based upon proximity to public transportation and the walkable nature of River North. The following design modifications were negotiated based upon residential concerns raised at the time of initial project approval. Those include:

- Reduction of density from 1.5M square feet of FAR to 930,000 square feet of FAR
- Reduction of building height by almost 100' from 750' to +/-660'
- 38% reduction in building footprint and site coverage from 22,301 square feet to +/-13,900 square feet, providing a dramatically more open and spacious park area

- The original site plan assumed the tower would overhang the Riverwalk, while the proposed tower pulls back from River's edge substantially, it also avoids the overhang and provides completely clear views from the Riverwalk to the sky
- The original plan also called for a café/restaurant at the Riverwalk level on East portion of site. While the proposed tower includes the café/restaurant at plaza level of East Tower making it more accessible to the public and serves more as a neighborhood amenity.

Also, at Alderman Reilly's insistence, an updated traffic study was commissioned by the developer, which considers changes in the River North landscape since initial approval of the plans 3 years ago.

Please [click here](#):

<https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/31451100/Wolf%20Point%20Phase%20II%20DRAFT%20Traffic%20Study%202016-09-09.pdf>) to view a copy of this traffic study. Included in this plan is the study of a contra-flow lane that would extend traffic flow Southbound on Orleans Street from Hubbard Street to Wolf Point Plaza Drive. After careful consultation with CDOT and surrounding properties, it has recommended that the Orleans Street Southbound contra-flow lane be implemented as part of Phase 2 of Wolf Point. The addition of this one-block stretch of southbound Orleans will improve connectivity from the expressway and ease current congestion on the surrounding streets. All pavement markings, static signs, electrical signs and signal modifications, as deemed necessary by CDOT, to accommodate the contra-flow lane will be funded by the developers.

Alderman Reilly encourages you to review all of the [project plans](#):

https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/31451100/20160826_Wolf%20Point%20East%20-%20Exhibit%20Drawings%20Draft.pdf)

As well as the [traffic study](#):

<https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/31451100/Wolf%20Point%20Phase%20II%20DRAFT%20Traffic%20Study%202016-09-09.pdf>) and provide his office with feedback on the proposal. Please email us at office@ward42chicago.com.

Of course, all are welcome to attend the Chicago Plan Commission presentation on October 20, 2016 at 10:00am in City Hall Chambers on the 2nd floor.