



June 23, 2020

Martina Hone, Chief Engagement Officer
City of Chicago

Dear Ms. Hone and Colleagues,

The leadership of River North Residents Association (RNRA) was glad to receive the notice, recently distributed by the Mayor's Office of Community Engagement, inviting individuals to participate on the Chicago Casino Community Advisory Council.

As you know, our organization, which represents nearly 23,000 residents in the River North neighborhood, has been involved in this issue since early in the evaluation process. Shortly after the May 25 City Council vote in favor of the Bally's Tribune casino proposal, RNRA issued a comprehensive list of project improvement recommendations, intended to reduce negative external impacts from the development. A copy is attached herewith.

We are pleased to designate Ms. Robin Schabes as RNRA's official representative on the CCCAC. A long-term River North resident, Robin currently serves with distinction as the Volunteer Chair of RNRA's Development and Land Use Committee, which has evaluated and recommended improvements to dozens of local developments over the last 25 years. Robin is well qualified for this important role, with training and experience as an urban planner and a seasoned economic development practitioner. With professional experience working in the private, public, and nonprofit sectors, Robin brings a wealth of community and economic development knowledge to the table. Her email address is rschabes@rnrachicago.org.

We look forward to a robust and meaningful community engagement process, as described by Bally's representatives and City Officials at each of the casino community meetings.

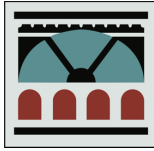
Sincerely submitted on behalf of River North Residents Association,

Brian Israel

Brian Israel
President

cc:

Members of the Special City Council Committee on Casinos
Samir Mayekar, Deputy Mayor for Economic and Neighborhood Development
Maurice Cox, Commissioner, Department of Planning and Development



Bally's Tribune Casino Complex Development Improvements/Accommodations

During the Chicago casino evaluation process, River North Residents Association joined 42nd Ward Alderman Brendan Reilly and 2nd Ward Alderman Brian Hopkins in vigorously opposing Bally's Tribune casino proposal. Since the May 25 Chicago City Council vote in favor of the project, RNRA has turned its attention to identifying and advocating for adjustments to the plan with the goal of reducing harmful impacts to the River North neighborhood, the citizens of Chicago, and the natural environment.

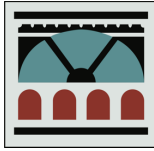
The recommendations below are based on input from many association members and partners and while we believe that they address essential issues involving this project, we remain open to other suggestions as well. During the introduction to each casino community meeting, City officials stated that "community engagement is at the center of this process". Our organization is eager to participate in a robust community engagement process and to work with the many other individuals and organizations who hope to improve the design, construction, and operation of this development for the good of all local stakeholders.

1. Development and Financing

- a. Reduce the overall square footage in the amendment to PD 1426, with no transferring of unused FAR to other sub-areas.
- b. Build out all 500 hotel rooms from the start with no time or performance thresholds.
- c. Engage surrounding community organizations in advance regarding the nature and quantity of development on the rest of the site, north and south of the casino facility.
- d. Eliminate the proposed pedestrian bridge to Ward Park.
- e. Publish complete details of the minority crowdfunding plan, including leverage options, loan repayment terms, investment return formula and statutory limitations.
- f. Publish detailed information regarding who controls the \$2 million direct and \$2 million indirect Host Community Impact Fees, for both the main and temporary facilities, and how these funds will be spent.

2. Environment

- a. Seek LEED Platinum certification and take all reasonable measures to lower energy usage, reduce the carbon footprint, improve sustainability, and lessen the environmental impact of the development.
- b. The North Branch Framework Plan, adopted in 2017, and PD 1426, adopted in 2018, included extensive riverfront development parameters designed to improve public access, create open green spaces, and reduce negative impacts on the Chicago River. Revise the site plan to incorporate these elements and involve Friends of the Chicago River in this process.



- c. Replace the outdoor music venue with a well-appointed and accessible public park, including an onsite Dog Friendly Area and river walk connection. Involve Friends of the Parks in this process.
- d. Ensure that all vehicles operated by Bally's in connection with the site (maintenance, shuttles, security, hospitality, etc.) are 100% green and use renewable fuels.

3. Infrastructure

- a. Produce and publish a new CDOT traffic study that ignores the outdated PD 1426 estimates and projects volume changes from present levels, considering the casino complex plus all planned, approved, and under-construction projects within a ½ mile radius of the site. Proposed traffic controls at all entry points should be detailed and volume estimates should reflect the capacity of the improved adjacent arterials and other planned infrastructure changes.
- b. Explore the feasibility of constructing an eastbound exit ramp and a westbound entrance ramp connecting the casino site directly to the Ohio-Ontario feeder to minimize use of surface streets, if this could be done without adversely impacting existing residents.
- c. Continue Jefferson Street all the way to Grand Avenue to relieve Halsted congestion.
- d. Ensure that the Grand Avenue and Chicago Avenue bridge improvement projects increase traffic capacity without compromising the safety of cyclists and pedestrians. Both projects should be completed before the main facility opens.
- e. Complete the Chicago/Halsted intersection improvements prior to opening.
- f. Include improvements to address the existing Halsted/Erie Metra underpass bottleneck.
- g. Include support structure reinforcements to the Metra trestles on Grand Avenue and Halsted.
- h. Use parking and drop-off access points, bike-share and ride-share accommodations, wayfinding, and customer information materials to encourage multi-modal transportation and balanced use of all entrances to the site.
- i. Publish a detailed description of the public infrastructure improvements that will be funded by Bally's, and those that will be funded by taxpayers through TIF allocations or other city, county, or state incentive.

4. Security

- a. Conduct regular external security patrols for four blocks in every direction from both the permanent and temporary casino sites to reduce deleterious impacts in the surrounding neighborhoods. Maintain ongoing communication with local CPD Officers.
- b. Install and connect license plate readers and exterior surveillance cameras, at the main and temporary facilities, to the CPD/OEMC monitoring platforms.
- c. Work with the CPD to support the implementation of security enhancements for the area around the intersection of Chicago Avenue and Cambridge Avenue, which is only two blocks from the development and has been the site of significant incidents of violent crime in recent years. This



would help to manage any increased risk associated with the presence of customers coming to and from the casino.

- d. To prevent patrons of local taverns from moving to the casino at closing time in order to continue drinking, onsite liquor service at both the temporary and permanent facilities should not exceed the latest hours of existing licensed hospitality establishments in the surrounding area.
- e. Offer shuttle services to customers traveling to and from nearby public transit stations.

5. Temporary Facility

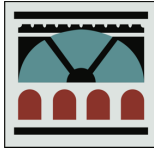
- a. Conduct and publish comprehensive traffic, parking, security, and infrastructure studies of the Medinah Temple site before proceeding with the temporary casino plan.
- b. Install appropriate external signage, wayfinding, lighting, and soundproofing.
- c. Prohibit street parking around the perimeter, limit bus staging and idling, designate specific ride-share, taxi, and delivery zones, and assign airport-style traffic management personnel.
- d. Assign Bally's security personnel for escorting patrons and staff, and patrolling area parking garages. Coordinate efforts with 18th District CPD Officers.
- e. Leave License Plate Reader and surveillance cameras in place and connected after the facility ceases operation.

6. Quality-of-Life

- a. Prohibit private, recreational, and commercial for-hire boat docking, except for water taxis.
- b. Conclude outdoor programming at 9 p.m. on weekdays and 11:00 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday.
- c. Conduct all concerts and performances indoors and limit the schedule to 15 days per month.
- d. Take all reasonable measures to limit external noise and light pollution. Ensure strict conformance to all existing city codes regarding noise and light.

7. Gambling Addiction Prevention and Treatment

- a. Establish a CDPH program to oversee neighborhood-based problem gaming outreach and treatment, funded by 2% of annual revenue received by the city from casino operations.
- b. Establish city-wide guidelines to restrict casino marketing, advertising and promotional activities that target or impact youth, or vulnerable neighborhoods, particularly communities of color.
- c. Work with the Illinois Council on Problem Gambling and an experienced and accredited academic institution to design, fund and conduct research on the social and economic impact of gaming, particularly on low-income neighborhoods and communities of color.
- d. Establish a Community Advisory Council comprised of local residents and professionals who understand the gaming industry to advise the operator and the city and provide oversight of relevant provisions of the host agreement and any community benefit agreements.



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8. Community

- a. Establish and execute an aggressive diversity, inclusion, and social equity hiring and advancement plan during construction and once the facility begins operating. Publish periodic performance reports.
- b. Establish a fund to provide financial support for non-profit organizations in the 27th and 42nd Wards.
- c. Establish a fund to underwrite capital improvements for A. Montgomery Ward Park & Ohio Place Park.
- d. Make suitable interior space in the facility available for non-profit fundraising events, community meetings, CPD beat meetings, family events, etc.
- e. Designate a community liaison who will attend local Beat and CAPS Hospitality meetings, interface regularly with local community organizations, and be accessible 24/7 via phone/email to address issues.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the RNRA Board