

November 9, 2022

Ms. Laura Flores
Chair, Chicago Plan Commission
Department of Planning Development
121 N. LaSalle St., Room 1101 Chicago, IL 60602

Re: Proposed Amendment to PD 1426 - Bally's Casino Development at Chicago and Halsted

Dear Ms. Flores and Colleagues,

Though the proposed amendment to PD 1426 would indeed lower FAR for the entire 30-acre site, this reduction is limited to Sub Area A. The remaining two-thirds of the site could see dramatic increases in density, as FAR is shifted from the northeast section to the south and west.

Sub Area C, south of the Ohio feeder, would see a 21% increase in maximum FAR from 7.2 to 8.7, and a 74% increase in maximum dwelling units from 1,582 to 2,750. Sub area B, west of Jefferson Street, would see a 30% increase in maximum FAR from 7.2 to 9.4, and a nearly 10-fold increase in dwelling units from 305 to 3,000. Maximum units for the entire site would increase 46% from 4,099 to 6,000.

The table below includes other major development projects in close proximity to the Bally's site.

PD	Street Address	Floor Area Ratio*	Square Footage*	Dwelling Units*	Hotel Keys*	Commercial Space*
1399	640-740 W Chicago/801-843 N Halsted	5	1,546,385	310	TBD	1,237,108
1522	901 N Halsted	8.1	2,712,549	2650	565	TBD
New	500-520 N Des Plaines/509 N Union	11.5	823,457	1,110	141	-
1426	643-741 W Chicago/641-739 N Halsted	6.1	6,653,312	6,000	800	1,470,000
447	808 N Cleveland	-	286,000	200	-	-
-	751 N Hudson/411 W Chicago (Hugo)	-	149,304	227	-	-
Aggregate			12,170,007	10,497	1,506	2,726,052

* As referenced in the Planned Development Bulk and Density tables.

While this substantial increase in density maximizes economic value for landowners and developers, it also amplifies the impact on surrounding residential neighborhoods, increases congestion, and strains already overtaxed infrastructure. We recommend reducing maximum FAR and maximum dwelling units for PD 1426, increasing the area for natural landscaping and open space, and imposing reasonable triggers to control future development.

During the December 5 town hall meeting, presenters referred to the planned inclusion of dedicated lanes in and/or around the site for bikes, charter busses, and public transit. While RNRA supports safe multi-modal transit options, its difficult to see how the streets within and/or around the site can be configured in such a way as to maximize capacity for passenger vehicles, while also including these dedicated lanes.



Additionally, the recently announced sale/leaseback arrangement between the Bally's organization and a private equity firm changes the nature and risk profile of the project by changing the property owner at this late stage in the entitlement process. This transaction, as well as Oak Street Capital and its New York parent, Blue Owl Capital, should be subject to the same rigorous vetting, by the City and the IGB, as the original financing terms and the original property owners.

We appreciate the willingness of the Bally's organization and the City to engage in constructive dialogue and look forward to further conversations, both directly and through the Casino Community Advisory Committee, about project improvements to reduce negative impacts on the surrounding community and the natural environment.

On behalf of the River North Residents Association Board,

Brian Israel

Brian Israel
President

Cc: Alderman Brendan Reilly 42nd Ward
Alderman Brian Hopkins, 2nd Ward
Alderman Walter Burnett, 27th Ward
Deputy Mayor Samir Mayekar
Commander Jon Hein, 18th District