

Letter to Editor (about soccer field- shorter version)

According to an article about the “*soccer field fight*” printed Thursday May 15 in the Chicago Tribune, Park Board President Gery Chico “*cited a Lincoln Park planning document from 1995 that pegged the area north of LaSalle Drive and west of Lake Shore Drive (the South Athletic fields) for sports use. Chico said some Lincoln Park neighbors signed off on that plan.*”

The Lincoln Park Framework Plan (1995) that was cited by President Chico is not a blueprint but rather a policy plan for decision-making that calls on the Park District to “*provide the community with a substantive opportunity to participate in park decisions*” (page 44). There are no specific projects in that plan that neighbors can “*sign-off on*”.

The framework plan consists of references and discussion of data collection in Lincoln Park on park use, recreational activities, traffic, parking, trees, wildlife, historic resources and more as well as recommendations, policies, ideas, goals and guidelines hammered out in a consensus building process by more than 50 community-wide task force organizations and 250 members. The Plan has been embraced by all administrations at the park district since it was published in 1995 and has proven to be effective in defining policies and guidelines for improvements and development in the park.

You will find little support for the location of the new soccer field in the South Athletic Fields area when you look closely at the Framework Plan. It stipulates *maintaining the current number of fields and courts designated for structural active use, seeking areas for more fields and courts for structured active uses outside of Lincoln Park.* (Page 20) Some groups have already done this. *Where excessive use of and damage*

to the landscape exists, consider relocation of the program, attractions and recreational uses. (Page 49) Reorganize, rehabilitate or relocate athletic fields to better meet demands while at the same time reduce stress on the landscape (page 21). Seek opportunities to decrease built spaces and paved areas determined to be unnecessary and unessential to the ongoing character of the park's primary, recreational, leisure and cultural activities. (Page 13)

The Lincoln Park Advisory Council, the body that monitors the implementation of the Lincoln Park Framework Plan and serves the park district as a conduit of information on park use, plans to have a PDF of this plan available on its website in the near future.

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