



March 23, 2022

To: Buena Park Neighbors

Re: Immaculata Redevelopment

On behalf of the Immaculata Redevelopment team, I want to express our appreciation for Buena Park Neighbors' ("BPN") work on behalf of the neighborhood and also your efforts in reviewing and commenting on the proposed development. I also want to apologize for the delay in responding to your comments, but as you are undoubtedly aware these have been and continue to be challenging times not only because of Covid-19 but also the financial conditions caused by escalating construction costs and increased affordable housing requirements. The project team believes it has successfully navigated the financial conditions faced by the development and is now in the position, working with you, the Alderman and City to move forward with the development.

We recognized from inception BPN's efforts on behalf of the community and for that reason it was the first group of community members that we contacted when the project was initially proposed in January of 2020. It is our intention that the proposed development provide additional residents that share your mission in preserving and enhancing "good living by the lake", that they along with the owners and developers of the property become your partners in furthering that mission and through a high quality development that preserves an important neighborhood landmark and adds a high-quality new building, the community is improved and celebrated.

Regarding our shared goal of ensuring a diverse community, the developer committed from the beginning, as your letter acknowledges, to provide the required affordable housing on-site. At that time the required percentage was 10%. Since that time, the City law changed, and the percentage increased to 20% effective October 1, 2021. As a result, it is this higher requirement that will be applicable to the project. The developer has worked in recent months to accommodate the financial impacts of the increased affordable requirement. I am pleased to report that the 20% affordable requirement can and will be met by providing the required units on-site, further assuring a diverse community.

As mentioned, we share your desire for partnerships and for the development to enhance that goal. From a gathering space perspective, as you will see from our response to your request regarding the auditorium that it will be made available for community gatherings, preferably through coordination with Buena Park Neighbors. We also are exploring the ability to locate car-share spaces in the surface parking lot along Irving Park Road, a service that can be used by not only the residents of the development but also the community at-large.



We share Buena Park Neighbor's desire to preserve and restore the existing landmark Immaculata Building. It is a marvelous building with a long history in the community. At this juncture, it needs significant work to upgrade its systems and infrastructure, restore critical elements and assure its continued use and existence into the future. Current estimates based on the anticipated residential re-use exceed \$50 mm. Construction of the Senior Building assists in the preservation of the Immaculata Building from an economic perspective as it helps absorb costs that otherwise would be born solely by the existing landmark.

We have worked with City, State and federal landmark entities to ensure that the proposed redevelopment of the Immaculata Building and the new Senior Building comply with applicable landmark regulations and that the new Senior Building is compatible and complementary with the landmark. The National Park Service and the Historic Preservation Division of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources both have provided preliminary "Blue Sheet" approval of the redevelopment plan. The City of Chicago Landmark's Division and the City's Department of Planning and Development design team also have reviewed the proposed redevelopment in detail and all comments received, both regarding the Immaculata Building and the design of the new Senior Building, have been acceptably addressed.

We have been mindful of your thoughts and comments throughout this process. We appreciate those comments and endeavored to carefully evaluate and consider each one. Following are our responses to BPN's requests as embodied in your letter dated September 4, 2021.

1) Commitment to make additional accommodations for traffic issues:

From inception, the project team has been cognizant of the traffic conditions in the vicinity of the site. A senior building and smaller apartment units were selected as the proposed re-use of the site because they generally represent among the lowest traffic generators. Seniors tend to have more flexible schedules that reduces the traffic impact during the typical commute to and from work – the peak hours. Residents of smaller apartments tend, especially in a public transportation and amenity rich areas like Buena Park, to have fewer cars and be more reliant on other means of transportation.

The original proposal, as presented to Buena Park Neighbors in February of 2020, consisted of redevelopment of the existing Immaculata Building into 275 units and construction of a new 23-story plus penthouse Senior Building with 220 units. After that meeting and a general favorable reception to the proposal, we began the process of having the development reviewed by the various government landmark entities, as well as refining the development program. The result of landmark review process was that the shape of the Senior Building was changed from a rectangle as originally proposed to an "L" shape. This change resulted in a taller but more slender profile that was preferred, particularly by the



City's reviewers, with any perceived impact from the increased height being more than offset by the reduced profile. The end result was a 27-story with mechanical penthouse Senior Building, containing 230 units and the Immaculata Building's unit count reduced from 275 to 265 units. This revised project scope was the one presented to Buena Park and others in the community during the late spring and summer of last year.

Based on the comments received from Buena Park Neighbors as well as others in the community, the project was reduced in scope by decreasing the Senior Building's height from 27 stories (314 ft.) to 22 stories (250 ft.), an approximate 20% decrease in height. The number of units also was reduced by a total of 45 units. The units in the Immaculata Building were reduced to 250 units instead of the previously proposed 265 units. The number of units in the Senior Building decreased from the 230 units previously proposed to 200 units.

In response to Buena Park's request, we evaluated any additional reductions in scope that could be achieved while retaining project viability and also accommodating the increased affordable requirement previously mentioned. A further reduction in the number of units in the Senior Building to a total of 192 units is viable, and we propose to reduce the request accordingly. In the Immaculata Building, the unit count can be reduced by five additional units, from the 250 units most recently proposed to 245 units.

We are, however, unable to further reduce the height of the proposed Senior Building. In response to the community comments, we had reduced the height by over 60 feet, over a 20% reduction. This reduction did not leave much of a margin for further design refinements that will naturally occur as final construction plans are prepared. Any further reduction in height would require an increase in floor plate size, decreasing separation from adjacent property, creating a wider profile and being counter to the thoughtful direction provided by City's Landmark and design review staff. It is noteworthy that the Senior Building is not anticipated to be a significant traffic generator, particularly during traffic peak-hours, and that any traffic that it may cause is more related to the number of units than the building's height.

With regard to creative solutions with local traffic agencies, the development team would welcome such an effort. While we do not agree that the proposed development will result in any significant traffic increase, something that has been verified by not only our study but also by CDOT's review, we have embodied in the proposed development additional elements that would tend to further reduce traffic and/or car ownership. The development now contains significant on-site bicycle parking, with approximately 100 spaces adjacent to the Immaculata Building and 80 spaces in the Senior Building. Exterior bicycle racks also have been added along Bittersweet, Marine and Irving Park that can accommodate an additional 54 bicycles. A private shuttle will be part of the Senior Building's operation to facilitate resident travel without the use of multiple private cars. A shared vehicle location



is proposed in the Irving Park lot, again to reduce vehicle ownership, and also as a community amenity.

Public transit is under the CTA's jurisdiction. Typically, CTA increases service based on increased demand, and providing additional residents in the area serves to preserve existing service and provides a basis for enhanced service. We are happy to participate with you in advocating for additional service and to explore any other envisioned creative solutions that can be implement without impacting the financial viability of the development.

2) Commitments regarding neighborhood parking:

We have committed to reserve fifteen parking spaces from the approximately 118 spaces proposed as part of the project for use by Bittersweet or other community residents. Of these spaces, ten will be in the new garage within the Senior Building and five will be in the surface parking lot on Irving Park Road. One of the key topics mentioned throughout the community process has been the actual demand for parking from the development. Parking, particularly garage parking, is expensive to construct at over \$50,000 per space. Adding more spaces also increases the project's size and height. We believe that the proposed parking is an appropriate amount based on the development's anticipated demand, with a bit of margin added.

We are comfortable with reserving fifteen spaces from the planned parking supply for community use. However, we believe that a greater commitment of spaces should not be made until utilization of parking manifests and is evaluated. If at that time, additional spaces are available, we will commit to those spaces being made available first to Bittersweet residents and then to others in the immediate community. To ensure that the fifteen spaces can be made available to Bittersweet residents and the community as well as additional spaces if they prove to be available, we will include in the planned development provisions to that effect.

3) Commitments regarding neighborhood use of auditorium:

The auditorium within the existing Immaculata Building will be made available to the community for its gatherings. As the auditorium is private space within what will be a residential building, the types of gathering will be limited to those that are consistent with the nature of the space. In an effort to simplify reservation of the space, we believe that it would be helpful to have a local organization like BPN be the conduit through which such requests are coordinated with the building management.



4) Commitments regarding two or more bedroom units:

For multiple reasons, including to reduce the incidence of private automobile usage and the attendant traffic, and because of the layout of the existing Immaculata Building as predominantly classrooms, the reuse of that building was envisioned to contain only one-bedroom units and studios. Based on BPN's request, the interior will be reworked to include five two-bedroom units. Further increasing the number of two-bedroom units is inconsistent with a project that from inception focused on a generating lower parking demand and traffic. Two-bedroom units increases the project's population and also can attract families, which can have a higher demand for parking and attendant traffic than singles or empty-nesters.

We have made an effort throughout the community process, and even before we engaged the community, to be sensitive and responsive to community questions and concerns. We believe we have done our best to address issues raised and have reduced the development to the maximum extent possible. We sincerely appreciate our working relationship over the last two-years with BPN and collectively the project team looks forward to continuing to work collaboratively with BPN to make the project as now proposed a reality. We believe the development will fulfill BPN's goal of "good living by the lake" by adding new residents that enhance the diversity of people in the neighborhood, with those residents, along with the development team, being good partners, by preserving a significant area building and by celebrating Buena Park with a new elegant, state-of-the-art Senior Building.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at 312-636-6937 or rolando@acostaezgur.com should you have any questions or wish to further discuss any aspect of the development.

Sincerely,

Rolando R. Acosta

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