

Dear Alex -

My name is Susan Brannigan. I own a condo at 653 W. Bittersweet Place, #3 (top floor). I have lived on Bittersweet for almost 30 years, including almost 20 years at 653. I moved to Bittersweet and have chosen to stay here because it is a generally quiet residential street, with a close-to-the-ground comfortable feel; it's close to the Lake and public transportation; and my place gets lots of sunlight. I attended the Zoom meeting on March 24, 2021, with the developer's representatives, Alderman Cappleman and about 47 Bittersweet residents. I am writing to provide you, as our BPN Zoning Representative, with my comments and questions about the proposed development at the American Islamic College/Immaculata High School (AIC) for your and the 46th Ward Zoning and Development Committee's consideration.

My neighbors, Ken Daley and Devorah Silberstein, owners of 653 #1 for more than 15 years, join me in this email.

1. I know that most construction projects are disruptive to someone, in residential areas in particular, and not all new construction design plans are welcome. But the proposal for the re-design of the existing AIC buildings into rental units and the construction of a 27-story glass tower for seniors will be singularly disruptive and unwelcome. All of the residents who spoke at the March 24 meeting, and, based on my discussions with others, most of those who did not speak oppose the proposal vigorously and for many reasons.

Erecting a 27-story high-rise, in the middle of the current parking lot, surrounded by rental units in the existing 3-4 story landmarked masonry buildings is a wholly incongruous, unsuitable use of the space. If built, it will be the only glass tower on this stretch of N. Marine Drive - N. Lake Shore Drive, an area of some distinguished, older masonry and mid-century residential low-, mid- and high-rise buildings. The tower's design & location certainly is not in keeping with other residential structures in Buena Park, nor with our street. As you may know, the buildings on Bittersweet are primarily 3-4 story residential masonry structures: a mix of condos and rentals; a landmarked single-family residence; and an outlier masonry high-rise at 732 W. Bittersweet.

The AIC proposal includes converting the existing landmarked buildings into 265 studio and 1-bedroom rental units. It also includes erecting a 27-story high-rise mixed use-continuing care community for seniors that would consist of 230 units - 138 independent living units; 60 assisted living units; and 32 memory care units.

2. The plans include 2 solid structures, designated 'seniors amenities', as part of or adjacent to the parking garage - a 5-story and a 6-story solid block, with terraces for the seniors' use on the top stories. The blocks are separated from the existing 3-story buildings at 645-649 W. Bittersweet by 12 feet, including a 6 ft. walkway. Next to the walkway will be a 'garden', currently a day school playground, which abuts the property line and a 6 ft. high fence at 653 and 649. The blocks, walkway and 'garden' (which will be in total shade) raise significant safety, noise and privacy issues for us residents of 645-53. All three buildings have open porches; the top floor porch of each building does not have a roof over it. The blocks will tower over 645-49, totally blocking their sunlight and diminishing the light for us at 653. Moreover, our privacy will be lost with terraces on the 5th and 6th floors looming over us. And unlike tots and grade schoolers on the playground, adults easily can look over our backyard fence into our yards and residences from the garden. It cannot be an answer to our safety and privacy concerns that we put up an even higher fence, to close us in even more.
3. The plans designate a 6 foot wide pedestrian walkway from Irving Park Rd. through to Bittersweet. Part of the walkway follows the current walkway from the parking lot on Irving Park in the front of the AIC building up to the playground. It is designed to follow the edge of the playground-garden to the rear of the 645-649 buildings, then follow the east façade of 645 out to Bittersweet. If the garden is not securely enclosed, and the drawings do not indicate that it will be, pedestrians could walk from the designated walkway, through the garden, right up to the fence at the rear of 653 and 649.

Currently, pedestrians can walk from Irving Park through to the parking lot and out to Bittersweet, far enough away from any of the 3 buildings that safety rarely has ever been a concern. Noise from a rowdy bunch walking through the parking lot is not unheard of, but rare enough and passing that it is not a concern. However, the walkway, designed for use by the property's 500 new residents (and guests, employees, vendors) and the neighborhood's residents, guarantees many more people, much more noise, more serious safety and privacy concerns will be present all hours of the day.

4. Irving Park Road is a wind tunnel, particularly for the strong east-west winds we get this close to the Lake. Park Place Tower, 655 W. Irving Park Rd., itself creates wind eddies, its own weather system. We are concerned about the effect of wind a 27-story tower will have on us and the surrounding buildings. The developer said that they have commissioned a wind study, which has not

been completed. Concern about the effect the winds will have by the presence of the tower cannot be overstated.

In addition, the AIC property is located very close - walking distance - to the Montrose Point Bird Sanctuary, a protected area for migrating birds. Situating a glass tower so close to the sanctuary creates a collision threat to migrating birds.

5. No matter what the drawings of the planned building show, the 27-story tower and 2 block structures will block the sunlight and cast shadows on the 645-653 buildings for most of the day for most of the year. The tower also will cast the 700-708 building in shadow during the morning.

Mr. Acosta arrogantly claimed that the shadows cast by the Park Place Tower are not of his or the developer's concern, as his tower will block sunlight & cast shadows for only the morning hours. Park Place Tower blocks the sun, for at least 645-653, for a couple hours around noon year round; coupled with the AIC tower blocking the sun all morning, our sunlight will be blocked until mid-afternoon for a couple hours until it is blocked again by other buildings to the southwest. The 1st floors of 645-653 will be in dungeon-like darkness all year.

6. The parking on Bittersweet will become unworkable with the addition of so many new residents and vehicles, as well as with the displacement of the vehicles currently using the AIC parking lot.

Bittersweet is one block long. There are about 85 parking spots on the street now (and 10 driveways, 4 fire hydrants, and 2 handicap parking spots). The AIC parking lot, off Bittersweet, has about 85 parking spots (including 2 designated handicap spots), of which at least 50+ are monthly permit parkers; there are 21-22 spots in the front of the AIC building on Irving Park, mostly used by employees and students at the College and parents of children in the day school. Bittersweet is a residential permit parking street, with day passes required for guests.

The plans propose 20 parking spots, and ride share pick-up/drop-off, on the Irving Park side, and 96 spots in a garage. The proposed development is exempt from complying with off-street parking requirements because it is designated as a T.O.D. and a qualifying re-use of the landmarked property. That does not mean, however, that the developers do not have to make some concessions to current residents with cars, whether they park on the street or in the AIC lot. It is not reasonable to presume, as Mr. Acosta does, that half of the 66 people

employed in the high-rise will not drive to work; that most of the renters and seniors in the tower will not own cars; that most guests won't drive to visit renters or seniors; that vendors will find somewhere on Marine Drive to park.

Bittersweet cannot handle the overflow of the current AIC parking lot parkers (who have residential parking permits for Bittersweet) displaced by the construction of the tower - there's just not enough space on the street. Parking space in the lots behind the Disney School and in the garage in the 4100 N. Marine Dr. building is scarce. Overnight parking is banned on Irving Park Rd. during the winter - and guess where those drivers look first for a spot! And we can't overlook the people who look for parking on Bittersweet and surrounding side streets when they go to the Lake and Wrigley Field. Parking by construction workers will create even more problems. While Mr. Acosta said that the new residents - even the seniors with a Bittersweet address - their guests, and construction workers would not get Bittersweet residential parking permits or day guest parking passes, he does not control the City Clerks Office nor the residential parking permit system. In fact, he said that the developers would tell construction workers not to park on Bittersweet, but admitted he 'can't really control them.'

7. Mr. Acosta claimed that 50% of the employees at the seniors building will take public transportation, as will most of the renters, a figure I cannot believe is accurate. (There are CTA bus stops at Marine & Bittersweet and on Irving Park Rd. in front of the AIC, and the CTA train station at Sheridan.) The CTA buses lines could not handle an additional 200-300 or more new riders; they would strain an already strained system. And the Sheridan L stop is not ADA compliant, so it is not reasonable to presume that a number of the residents of the seniors building will use it. (It also is the only L station on the North Side Red Line that is not being renovated and modernized.)
8. Bittersweet is a one block long, one way street; parking on both sides of the street reduces safe, passable traffic to one lane. It has several speed bumps and is a marked school slow zone. Still, it is used often as a quick through-street to Marine Dr. to avoid Irving Park traffic. The Fire Department - both fire trucks of all sizes and ambulances - uses Bittersweet to answer emergency calls at AIC, as that is the property's designated address, as it will be if the tower is built. Fire trucks and ambulances routinely double park when answering calls at other buildings on the street; and CFD emergency vehicles have been blocked from calls by double parked vehicles. Delivery vans, garbage trucks (both City and private waste haulers) double park while servicing each building, some daily, (the lone exception is the 700-708 building, where waste haulers back

into the building's driveway). Passenger vehicles double park. It's a city street. The street, however, currently does not get traffic from wide, heavy construction vehicles.

Double-parked vehicles create traffic back-ups for anyone else trying to drive down the street. It must/should be a grave concern for any resident of the seniors high-rise in need of emergency services if a CFD ambulance cannot move down the street to respond.

Based on my personal experience of my parents living in a similar continuing care arrangement, residents (even in memory care) routinely use private ambulances and/or medi-vans for non-emergency transportation to/ from doctors offices, other medical facilities, and vans for social outings. When asked, one of the developers said private ambulance and medi-van services will be instructed to use the Marine Dr. alley entrance, but he did not dispute that the drivers would more likely than not drive down Bittersweet to Marine Dr. and turn right to the alley entrance or turn directly into the parking lot to the entrance of the seniors high-rise. Note: the alley entrance off Marine Dr. is 8 ft. from the CTA bus stop.

The developers claim, however, that traffic on the street won't increase that much, although a traffic study they commissioned is not complete, and Mr. Acosta said they may have to have it redone based on residents' concerns. Residents of the seniors tower who park in the garage, their visitors, and their ride share drivers will enter the property from Bittersweet. Since the main entrance to the site and the parking garage is off Bittersweet, and the senior tower will have a Bittersweet address, and at least 3 entrances to the AIC buildings-rental units can be accessed from Bittersweet (from the parking lot), it is far more likely that Bittersweet will be the street of choice for entry. In addition, construction vehicles will take the easy route down Bittersweet before attempting to enter the lot from Marine Dr - if the dump trucks, cement trucks, flat bed trucks with construction cranes can even fit through the alley (with a 13-14 ft. clearance) from Marine. And the moving vans for the property's 500 new residents? They'll drive down Bittersweet as well.

Mr. Acosta said that employees and vendors (food service and waste haulers) will be scheduled for 'off-peak' hours. 'Off peak' hours in a residential neighborhood are in the evening/night. 25 employees in the high-rise are projected to work the 2 pm-10pm shift in the high-rise, 18 employees for the 10pm-6am shift. That's a lot of 'off-peak' traffic, both vehicular and foot. Yes, there were complaints from neighborhood residents about traffic tied to the

Lycee Francais, that had been in the AIC building; parents dropping off and picking up their children 2 times a day did create some annoying traffic blocks. But the school did not create traffic problems at night or on weekends except for once or twice/year for special events, and none when school was out of session.

9. I rely on and refer you to the comments on technical and construction issues raised by another owner in my building, Eric Lee, in his email to you on Mar. 26.

We are concerned about the proposed development, especially the erection of a 27-story glass tower shoehorned into an existing parking lot of a landmarked property, that is so out of character for the neighborhood. We are concerned about the deleterious effects of the project on the neighborhood and our quality of life here. The proposed development is inappropriate for the site and we oppose it.

Thank you for your consideration. We hope you will inform the other members of the Zoning and Development Committee of our concerns and opposition and vote to deny the re-zoning requests. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or need any additional information.

Susan Brannigan, 653 #3 W. Bittersweet Pl., Secretary, 653 W. Bittersweet Pl. Condo Assn.

Ken Daley and Devorah Silberstein, 653 #1 W. Bittersweet Pl.

**Home Owners Association
645 West Bittersweet Place
Chicago IL 60613**

Alex Wolking

Zoning Representative

Buena Park Neighbors

29th March 2021

Dear Mr Wolking,

**American Islamic College/Immaculate High School Proposed
Redevelopment**

Following the meeting on 24th March 2021 regarding the proposed redevelopment of the American Islamic College/Immaculate High School at West Bittersweet Place, Marine Drive and Irving Park. I am writing to you, as our Zoning Representative with Buena Park Neighbors, about our comments and concerns about the proposed redevelopment. The Homeowners Association of 645 West Bittersweet Place would like to raise the following concerns.

1. Historical Community Buena Park

The historic Buena Park neighborhood will be directly impacted by this development in so many ways and most of them being to the detriment of the community and neighborhood, it being a national landmark and an area of preservation. Most of the residents choose to live in this area because of its historical relevance, and this development will seriously change the cityscape and community atmosphere we enjoy at the moment. The 27 story glass design does not fit in with the landscape and does not compliment the historical features of the landmarked Immaculate High School, and the low rise period buildings of West

Bittersweet Place or the vintage mid century condo blocks along Marine and are Shore Drive.

2. Loss of Light/Sun

645 West Bittersweet Place, will be directly affected by loss of light, all the windows for this three flat are on the east side of the building and currently overlook the school carpark, with no buildings directly in front of them. With this proposal these windows will be blocked by the 27 story building. To the back the windows will be blocked by the 5/6 story building reducing the light significantly. They will be in almost permanent shade due to the shadow of these buildings. In addition 645, 649, 653 and 657 also lose all the sunshine they have now as they will be facing a minimum 5/6 story building no more than about 12 feet away. Other homes on the north side of the street will be in the shadow of the high rise for much of the day.

3. Traffic

Congestion and lack of parking is a big issue already and will only get worse with the project. Bittersweet is a busy street most of the time, being one way and with both sides of the street used for permit parking. It is impossible most days to find parking and many residents pay the school for parking. Traffic gets stopped for garbage trucks, deliveries, ubers, moving trucks, emergency vehicles etc on a hourly basis. If we add in the additional traffic this proposed construction will bring this will place a heavy burden on the street and access for residents. I'm not even sure if Bittersweet is even wide enough for such deliveries but no matter what, the construction phase will be a nightmare for residents.

During construction there would be many large trucks removing debris when the foundation of the high rise is being excavated. The cement trucks will be next and it is possible that they will be stacked on Bittersweet waiting to deliver the cement. I believe this is a "just in time" job. Next will be trucks delivering bricks, steel and glass for the high rise tower and lets not forget the cranes needed during construction.

We have three parking spots at the front of 645 West Bittersweet. This part of the street is regularly blocked either by parked cars or a line of

traffic blocking the entrance and limiting our access. I see this only getting worse with deliveries and contractors trying to find parking.

When construction is complete traffic will be impacted by the activity that 495 new residences will bring. The statement that many of the residents will not have cars and 50% of workers will use public transport is inaccurate. While some seniors may not have cars, there will be an influx of staff, visitors, ambulances, taxis, deliveries, maintenance vehicles, medical and emergency vehicles, ride shares and Ubers all using the main entrance on Bittersweet. 118 parking spaces is not adequate for 495 new residences, staff and other commercial vehicles needing access on a daily basis. It is already difficult to park in this area and Bittersweet being one way will not be able to cope with this added burden of traffic.

4. Impact during Construction

As 645 West Bittersweet Place is directly located next to the proposed development sight we will be directly impacted by major noise, dust and vibration issues for the total period of construction. Our home will be filthy and the continual noise and vibration will drive us crazy. It will also be impossible to use our decks during this period due to the dust and lack of privacy. This is a major environmental issue. Has the Developer or Alderman thought of how we would be compensated for this awful situation? We have asked for a timeline for the project, and have been given no indication as to what this will be and at the meetings the question was just ignored.

5. Loading/Unloading

The developer asserts that this would be done at off peak hours. When is this? 6am? 10pm? Our experience of the area is that there is no "off peak" as it is always busy. I also believe that large deliveries will have to come to the main entrance on Bittersweet, which will cause major access issues, for through traffic.

6. “How will this improve our neighborhood and our lives”.

In the two community meetings this question was asked and was not answered adequately by any party. The developer is of the opinion that our homes could increase in value. This is hard to see, when we will have no light coming into our condos, the 5 story building will be 12 feet away from our deck blocking light and the terraces and garden over looking our deck so there will be no privacy.

There is to be a public footpath adjacent to our lot line which means we will also have a steady pedestrian traffic passing by the length of the building. This will be an invasion of privacy and an safety/security issue.

7. Emergency Access

It was stated at he meeting that the development has been approved by the Chicago Fire Department. This does raise concerns about emergency access, especially as some of the residences will be for assisted living and memory care. There will be emergency vehicles ambulances, Medi vans etc needing access and with the current limitations on Bittersweet access will be a problem. These vehicles can be backed up and unable to move down the street to gain access.

8. Environmental Issues

As 645 West Bittersweet Place will be directly adjacent to the new tower and 5 story building we have several environmental concerns. The noise, dust, fumes, etc during construction are a concern as are the long terns effects this development will have.

The noise from cooling towers, air conditioning, units and cooking fumes will direct impact our environment. The increase in traffic and the pedestrian traffic around our property will effect our privacy security and safety.

There are also concerns about wind mitigation and ice and snow being blown or falling from the building onto our property.

9. Address

The address and main entrance is to be on West Bittersweet Place. It has been stated that an entrance on Marine Drive would be used as the entrance for some services and the Irving Park would be used for ride shares. Whilst this may be in case in theory in practice if the main entrance and parking access is on West Bittersweet Place it is more than likely that traffic will default to using West Bittersweet Place.

We are very extremely concerned about this proposed redevelopment in our neighborhood which we feel will be detrimental to our homes and this residential community.

In view of the many issues raised above we at 645 West Bittersweet Place, do strongly object to this project going ahead. As our zoning representative we respectfully ask that you do all you can to make our views and concerns known in the strongest possible fashion and vote to deny the request for re zoning.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Yours Sincerely,

Van Tomaras

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Lakeshore Pointe Condo Association
710-718 W. Bittersweet Place
Chicago, IL 60613

Alex Wolking
Zoning and Development Committee Representative

Re: Immaculata School Development

Dear Mr. Wolking,

We are writing to share our residents' opposition to the Immaculata School development at 640 W. Irving Park Road. While we are not opposed to a development on the site, the current proposal raises serious concerns as it currently stands:

- **Parking:** The increased density of residents, staff and service providers, combined with the loss of the existing parking spaces on the current Immaculata parking lot, will create an unmanageable issue for residents on the block. The Buena Park neighborhood is already very congested. Current parking options are further limited by the restrictions the Disney School has recently put on their parking lot. The installation of a metered zone on the lakeshore will make the situation even worse. We appreciate the suggestion that residents of the new development could not apply for zoned parking permits, but that would only move these cars to the already scarce non-zoned parking on surrounding streets - spots that family, visitors, contractors as well as Bittersweet residents need. There needs to be a parking solution that can serve the broader Bittersweet community.
- **Traffic:** Bittersweet is a one-way, one-lane street. During school drop-off and pick-up time, as well as morning and evening rush hour the street is severely impacted by traffic. Additionally, cars are already cutting through Bittersweet at all hours of the day and night to access the Lake Shore Drive ramps while avoiding the Irving/Clarendon intersection. While the neighborhood was quieter during the past year for obvious reasons, activity is starting to go back to its congested, busy, noisy, normal state. We love city living and what it entails, but are extremely concerned about the additional traffic that the proposed entrance on Bittersweet would bring. The increased traffic from residents, visitors, staff, medical services, food and beverage suppliers, technical services, etc. will greatly affect the flow of the Buena Park neighborhood in general; and Bittersweet Place in particular. The impact on the neighborhood at large is bound to be severe no matter where entrances are: two other proposed entrances will affect CTA traffic and already intense congestion on Irving Park between Marine and Broadway. Any traffic survey would need to take account of pre- and post-covid figures as well as residents' concerns.
- **Utilities:** Original discussion centered around the possibility of tapping into utilities such as sewage, water and electricity from Bittersweet. If those plans still stand, we do have some concern about the impact that would have on infrastructure we have already experienced problems with.

We strongly urge you to consider the concerns of the Buena Park community. We all work constantly to make this little corner of the city a peaceful, joyful neighborhood. We would love to welcome new residents provided the development continues in the tradition of "Good Living by The Lake".

Sincerely,

The Residents of 710-718 W. Bittersweet Place

Cc: James Cappleman, 46th Ward Alderman; Buena Park Neighbors