



Official Position of Support For the Proposed Redevelopment of Immaculata High School

June 10, 2022

Dear Members of the Community and the Interested General Public,

Beginning in January 2020, Buena Park Neighbors Association has engaged thoughtfully and proactively with the current proposal by KGiles, LLC and CA Ventures for redeveloping the former site of Immaculata High School, currently owned by the American Islamic College, located at 640 W. Irving Park Road. Our engagement began with a community meeting, where the developer presented its proposal and made itself available for questions and feedback. In the two and a half years since then, Buena Park Neighbors has been extensively involved in collecting feedback from the community, negotiating with the developer, and facilitating communication and the dissemination of information. During that time, we understood that we would be called upon to present a final position on the proposed redevelopment, and because the site is located in our coverage area, that our position would carry significant weight. We did not and do not take that lightly.

After significant review and consideration for the best interests of Buena Park, our Executive Board has decided to vote in support of the proposed redevelopment.

In assessing the development, BPN had to consider the needs and interests of everyone in Buena Park, and decide what will most effectively promote good living by the lake. We assessed several notable downsides: the potential diminishment of quality of life for those residing closest to the site; the increase in traffic across an already congested neighborhood; and the accompanying increased strain on an already overtaxed parking infrastructure. Against these downsides, we also assessed the positives: the value of revitalizing and preserving a historic building in danger of falling into ruin; the generation of new affordable and family housing in our neighborhood; the introduction of a new wave of consumers for our many local businesses, some of which suffered dearly from the economic toll of the COVID-19 pandemic; and the creation of a senior living and specialized memory-care facility, a major public good and investment in public health that could even offer a way for members of our community to age gracefully in our neighborhood.

Throughout our conversations and feedback gathering, only a small portion of our community expressed strong opinions about the proposed development. The voices we heard came predominantly, and understandably, from those residing immediately adjacent to the building. These voices frequently,



though not uniformly, expressed opposition based on concerns about increased traffic, scarcity of parking, and the impact of the height of the proposed tower. The feedback we received from residents outside the immediate area trended significantly more positive, though traffic and parking concerns persisted as a cause for concern.

Ultimately, our choice is not between this development and the status quo, but rather between this development and the future. The status quo is untenable; either the land will be redeveloped or it will fall to ruin. All of the feasible options for preserving the property will present comparable challenges for traffic and parking in the neighborhood. While there have been several efforts to explore preservation and redevelopment opportunities of the Immaculata building in the past, this is the first proposal that is financially plausible, and there are no known prospects for alternatives. Though other senior housing establishments exist in the northside of Chicago, the proposed building is distinguished by the fact that the units are rentals and include memory-care support, thereby addressing a genuine public health goal. Furthermore, the new residents and caretakers will breathe much-needed economic oxygen into our commercial corridors, improving the general welfare of the entirety of Buena Park. As a final note, to the extent that the redevelopment will create new job opportunities, the developer has expressed its strong intent to hire from the local community.

This project presents real benefits to the neighborhood, approving it ensures a landmark building remains a neighborhood asset, and the few notable deficits presented by the project would likely be inevitable with any future plausible alternatives. Given that, Buena Park Neighbors Association has chosen to support this proposed redevelopment of the Immaculata high school. We encourage the other members of the 46th Ward Zoning and Development Committee to vote in favor.

Sincerely,
Executive Board
Buena Park Neighbors Association