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## ***Jackson Park Threatened: Traffic & Parking Proposals, Unanswered Questions***

### **The threat:**

With the support of Mayor Rahm Emanuel, the Chicago Department of Transportation, and the Chicago Park District, the Obama Foundation and the Chicago Parks Golf Alliance have proposed major changes to roads in and around Jackson Park to accommodate the Obama Presidential Center and the golf course project. CDOT Commissioner Rebekah Scheinfeld presented the “concepts” listed below in recent community meetings, saying “I am here to listen.”

### **Jackson Park Watch calls for:**

- the traffic study results to be released in full;
- public answers to key questions that have not been addressed (*see below*); and
- further rounds of public input *prior to decisions on any of these proposed changes.*

### **Facts and unanswered questions:**

*1. CDOT Commissioner Rebekah Scheinfeld listed the following proposed changes to the roads in and around Jackson Park:*

- Close Cornell Drive entirely from 59<sup>th</sup> Street to Hayes Drive and the northbound segment between 65<sup>th</sup> Street and 67<sup>th</sup> Street;
- Close Midway Plaisance eastbound between Stony Island Avenue and Cornell Drive;
- Close Marquette Drive between Stony Island Avenue and Richards Drive.

*2. In order to accommodate the new major north-south route [Lake Shore Drive to Hayes Drive to Cornell Drive (63<sup>rd</sup> to 65<sup>th</sup>) to Stony Island], Scheinfeld promised to make the following undefined “improvements”:*

- Improve Lake Shore Drive between 57<sup>th</sup> and Hayes Drive;
- Improve turning at the interchanges at Hayes & LSD; at Hayes & Richards; and at Hayes & Cornell;
- Convert Cornell Drive between Hayes and 65<sup>th</sup>/Stony Island for two-way traffic;
- Reconfigure traffic flow & safety where the Midway Plaisance meets Stony Island;
- Improve Stony Island (parameters not specified but presumably at least between 60<sup>th</sup> and 67<sup>th</sup>);

- Construct connector underpasses under Jeffrey Blvd between 67<sup>th</sup> and Marquette and under South Shore Drive near 67<sup>th</sup> Street to link golf course segments and provide pedestrian access to the lake shore.

### 3. *Key unanswered questions:*

- **Costs** of these major infrastructure projects:
  - Who is going to pay for this work? the Chicago Parks Golf Alliance? the Obama Foundation? Chicago taxpayers?
  - What other sources of funding are anticipated?
- **Timelines:**
  - What are the timelines of each of these proposed changes, and how do they fit together?
  - What hearings, permits, environmental reviews, etc., will be needed, and when will these occur?
- **Specifics of proposed road “improvements”:**
  - for Lake Shore Drive? (And what about the segment between Hayes and Marquette?)
  - for Hayes Drive between LSD and Cornell Drive? (What about the segment between Cornell and Stony?)
  - for key intersections along Hayes Drive and where the Midway meets Jackson Park?
  - for Stony Island?
- **Impact on traffic levels and circulation beyond the bounds of Jackson Park:**
  - What will be the impact on 67<sup>th</sup> Street and residential streets directly south of the Park? on Jeffrey, South Shore Drive, and other routes south of the Park besides Stony? on the Midway Plaisance? on residential streets north of the Park?
  - What improvements will there be to the intersections at 67<sup>th</sup> and South Shore and at the entrance to the South Shore Cultural Center?
- **Parking:**
  - What are the parking plans for visitors to the OPC, for regular users of the golf course, and for the crowds expected for tournament events? How will tournament and school busses be handled?
  - What will be the impact on parking by neighborhood residents and workers at the University?
- **Public transportation**
  - Given the balkanization of Chicago-area public services, shouldn't representatives from both the CTA and Metra (in addition to CDOT) be included in all future discussions to address what improvements will be made to Metra and CTA services to the Jackson Park area?
- **Pedestrian and bicycle routes**
  - How will pedestrians and bikers make their way safely through the reconfigured park?

**READY TO TAKE ACTION? HERE IS WHO TO WRITE OR CALL:**

1. Mayor Rahm Emanuel's Office: Deputy Mayor Andrea Zopp, a mayoral appointee, opened the first of the recent "Community Conversations" sessions saying "we are here to listen." Let her (and the Mayor) know what you think at:

e-mail: [Andrea.Zopp@cityofchicago.org](mailto:Andrea.Zopp@cityofchicago.org)

2. CDOT Commissioner Rebekah Scheinfeld (also appointed by Mayor Emanuel)

e-mail: [Rebekah.Scheinfeld@cityofchicago.org](mailto:Rebekah.Scheinfeld@cityofchicago.org)

3. Alderman Leslie Hairston.

phone: 773-324-5555

e-mail: [Leslie.Hairston@cityofchicago.org](mailto:Leslie.Hairston@cityofchicago.org)

You can also enter your comments and concerns on the Park District's special website <https://southlakefrontplan.com/>. However, do not expect to hear back or to know what has been done with your input, so do not make that your only line of communication.

July 1, 2017  
Jackson Park Watch