

September 27, 2011

Mr. James Reilly and Ms. Marilyn Gardner
Navy Pier, Inc.
600 E. Grand Avenue
Chicago, IL 60611



Dear Jim and Marilyn,

Thank you for your recent presentation of Navy Pier's Centennial Vision to the Streeterville Organization of Active Residents (SOAR) Real Estate Review Committee. The presentation was informative and inspiring. We are excited that effort is being put into ensuring the long-term viability of Navy Pier, Chicago's most popular attraction, and one of our neighborhood's shining stars.

We applaud you for your foresight, and appreciate the time and patience you have put into The Centennial Vision to ensure it results are a well-planned, attractive, and accessible location for residents and visitors alike. Here is our feedback on some specifics presented in The Centennial Vision.

Chicago Children's Museum – SOAR has always felt that the best location for the Chicago Children's Museum is Navy Pier. The family-oriented nature of the Pier makes the museum a natural fit. We are happy to hear that discussions are underway to expand the Children's Museum and make it a permanent anchor.

Pierscape – Thank you for considering all aspects of Navy Pier, including Gateway Park and East End Park in your Pierscape redesign plan. Specifically, we believe more green and softer materials can be incorporated on South Dock Street and East End Park. South Dock should also be configured so the large cruise ships and boats do not significantly impact the view pedestrians have from the south side of the Pier. Chicago's world famous skyline should be easily viewed by those strolling down the South Dock. Viewing areas that bring the pedestrian closer to the water and with an unobstructed view of the marinas and city should be considered.

People Movement – Great effort should be made to encourage visitors to visit the east end and all points on the Pier. A key component of any new plan should be to make the trip east as easy as possible. The current maze of internal hallways makes it difficult to understand where one is heading. A crowded South Dock discourages individuals from pressing further east. Ideas we encourage you to consider are: trolleys that would run the length of the Pier with many drop off/pickup points along the route, moving walkways similar to those at the airports, more straightforward paths and destination activities should be used to encourage visits to East End Park, which will hopefully become the crown jewel of a re-imagined Navy Pier.

Parking and Traffic – No additional parking should be incorporated into Navy Pier. There is excess capacity of parking in Streeterville, and upcoming developments that are required by the city to include parking, which will further saturate the parking supply. More importantly, people should be encouraged to use alternative methods of reaching Navy Pier besides their personal vehicles. Not only will that help make our streets safer and less congested, but will positively impact the environment. We ask that as part of The Centennial Vision, you develop a plan, working with the CTA, the city, and private companies, to bring the masses of people to Navy Pier by means other than personal vehicles. This could include increasing the already existing free trolley and shuttle service, encouraging use of existing mass transit by making it easier for CTA busses to quickly get to and from the Pier, and improving and increasing the water taxi service. Perhaps a pick up near the Metra Stations and docking/drop off at East End Park would be a good way to ensure all parts of Navy Pier are visited.

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Working to Keep Streeterville a Neighborhood

Gateway and Signage – There are more people than ever that are walking to the Pier down the Illinois and Grand corridors. There should be a focus to improve this gateway into Navy Pier by widening the sidewalks, protecting the bike lanes and adding more streetscape plantings to create a safer, more pleasant and interesting walk to the Pier and lakefront. There is also a great need to incorporate way-finding into the streetscape plan for the area. Signage from Michigan Avenue to the lakefront is greatly needed for the millions of tourists looking for Navy Pier.

Entertainment and Art – Like Millennium Park, Navy Pier is unique in that all people, of all backgrounds, and all income levels, can enjoy the waterfront and the excitement of a premier attraction free of charge. Free art and live entertainment should continue, and an adequate amount of affordable food and shopping venues should be maintained, so that families, who would otherwise feel a visit to Chicago is cost prohibitive, could realize that the opposite is true at the best location in the entire city.

Naval Museum/Memorial – We feel that incorporating a Naval Museum/Exhibit/Memorial into the Pier would be excellent and appropriate way to remember and display the history of the Pier and what it meant to Chicago and those that served.

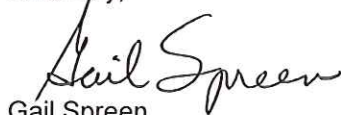
Shakespeare Theater – We wholeheartedly approve and support the idea of expanding the Theater. This proactive approach will ensure that the Shakespeare Theater will continue to provide its world-class entertainment at the current location for many years.

Ferris Wheel – We do question the viability and the need for a new Ferris wheel. We realize that Chicago is the birthplace of the Ferris Wheel, however, we think that the highest and best use of scarce funds should go towards solving existing logistical problems.

We hope that you find our comments beneficial and complimentary to your vision. The residents of Streeterville are very proud of Navy Pier and all that it has done for our community and for the City of Chicago. We recommend that Navy Pier work very closely with its neighbors to arrive at a final plan that incorporates the character of the Streeterville neighborhood while optimizing Navy Pier as a tourist attraction. SOAR is available to help facilitate this process and I hope that you will view the organization as your partner in making Streeterville not only a great place to visit but also a great place to live.

We look forward to watching the progress of this project, and to one day helping you celebrate the completion of your redevelopment.

Sincerely,



Gail Spreen
Immediate Past-President
Chair, Real Estate Review Committee

Cc: Alderman Brendan Reilly
Luann Hamilton, CDOT
Benet Haller, ZLUP
John Chikow, GNMAA
Mable Buckner, Streeterville Chamber of Commerce
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