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Alderman Brendan Reilly
Alderman Brian Hopkins
City Hall
121 N LaSalle
Chicago, IL 60602

September 5, 2023

Dear Alderman Reilly and Alderman Hopkins,

SOAR is firmly opposed to plans recently proposed by developers to demolish and or repurpose the current Fire House at 202 E Chicago Ave in Streeterville. This firehouse is critical to the safety and wellbeing of Streeterville residents, workers and visitors that are served by this location.

The Fire House on Chicago Avenue, Engine Company 98 serves the Streeterville community on a daily basis. There are almost 30,000 residents, 100,000 workers daily, and countless visitors that are protected by this important and iconic Fire House. Streeterville is a global destination and has many health crisis' that occur as a result. It is also home to many who have frequent and critical health issues in need of immediate attention such as strokes and heart attacks. This firehouse is an important life safety necessity for the Streeterville neighborhood. The fire fighters and paramedics who service this community are of major importance to everyone whose life may be threatened by fire, being stuck in an elevator, or an acute health problem.

The other neighboring firehouses are not close enough to serve the needs of this community due to the urban density and traffic conditions that plague this area. Additionally Northwestern Medicine, Lurie Children's Hospital, Prentice Women's Hospital and the Shirley Ryan Ability Lab are all served by this firehouse. By the time a fire truck or paramedic team would arrive on the scene, it may be too late due to increased travel distance and traffic delays. If anything is done to Engine Company 98 Firehouse, it should be to improve the living conditions in the firehouse for the first responders who are assigned to that critical location.

Again, we are strongly opposed to demolition or change of purpose for this critical Fire House. Developers are not thinking about the needs of the community when they propose a change for the purpose of this location.

Sincerely,

Deborah Gershbein
President, on behalf of the SOAR Board of Directors, Residents, Workers and Visitors

cc: Alderman Brian Hopkins
Alderman Brendan Reilly
Fire Commissioner Annette Nance-Holt
Kimberly Bares, President, CEO Magnificent Mile Association
Marc Schulman
SOAR Board of Directors

Streeterville Organization of Active Residents