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Alderman Brian Hopkins
1400 N Ashland Avenue
Chicago, IL 60622

Dear Alderman Hopkins:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input into the Master Plan for Lincoln Yards. The Active Transportation Alliance supports a continuous, multi-use trail along the Chicago River, which has the potential to transform mobility in Chicago by encouraging more people to travel on foot and bike. The trail is embraced by Mayor Emanuel and is a key element of “Our Great Rivers,” the vision and action agenda for the city’s three rivers.

With new trails emerging nearby at Lathrop Homes and the 312 RiverRun, Chicago will soon have trails along 17 of the Chicago River’s 27 miles. We’re excited about closing another gap in the trail system with the addition of a multi-modal trail through Lincoln Yards. However, we’re concerned the Master Plan’s proposed trail design won’t adequately accommodate walking, running, and cycling. We also found some problems related to street design that could hinder the project’s ability to support walking, biking and public transportation.

In addition, we want to echo concerns raised by community organizations and media reports that the project misses a crucial opportunity to advance affordable housing by only meeting minimum requirements and promised increases in open space face unclear timelines for construction.

We ask that the project be delayed to allow time to discuss and address these concerns, which are explained in more detail below. In fact, we would like to invite you and Sterling Bay to meet with the Chicago River Trail coalition to open that dialogue. Please let me know if you are open to that, and we can work on scheduling.

Recommended changes to the Master Plan:

- **Branding should highlight multi-use trail or path, not ‘Riverwalk’:** The term ‘Riverwalk’ has become synonymous with the Riverwalk along the Main Branch of the Chicago River, which evokes a vibrant café and bar oriented public spaces, rather than a multi-use trail. While we are thrilled with the success of the downtown Riverwalk, we are also disappointed it wasn’t designed to comfortably accommodate walking and biking 24/7 as was the original intention. In fact, Alderman Reilly has proposed a biking ban on the Riverwalk. Needless to say, we don’t want a brand that allows/encourages this problem to repeat itself in other places. Including ‘walk’



in the branding would do this by diminishing the multi-modal transportation opportunity. Please use 'path' or 'trail' instead.

- **Separated paths for people walking and biking:** None of the trail cross-sections provided in the master plan show separate trails for walking and biking, which the North Branch Framework Plan indicated as a preferred design. Mixed-use paths in busy areas get congested and safety issues can discourage people from walking and biking. Sterling Bay can look to the Chicago Park District's Lakefront Trail separation project for best practices and lessons learned. We recommend Lincoln Yards include separated paths for people walking and biking.
- **Build "Complete Streets" that accommodate all transportation users.** While it's encouraging to see Complete Streets referenced in the Master Plan, some of the renderings like Dominick Street and Kingsbury Street, fail to show accommodations for all users. This is a missed opportunity. Dominick Street and Kingsbury will be reconstructed and lengthened to serve as major north/south thoroughfares within the development. We believe both streets will see increased average daily traffic volumes, necessitating the need for low stress bike facilities, such as protected bike lanes. We recommend that a bicycle circulation plan be included in the Master Plan that provides low-stress connections throughout the development and across bridges to connect outside of it.
- **Include improvements for bus service in Lincoln Yards.** The Master Plan provides little guidance on bus route and stop design. We recommend dedicated bus lanes, transit signal priority and explore opportunities to implement pre-paid and all door-boarding to steward a modern, reliable bus service. Since many trips will be made between the development and the adjacent CTA L stations, it's crucial that east-west bus service be improved given the volume of new residents and workers that that Lincoln Yards will attract.
- **Extend the 606 and include trail separation.** We are excited about a 606 extension connecting to the continuous Chicago River Trail. The current 606 design has a narrow walking and running path alongside the main path, but when the trail is busy there isn't enough separation and order between people on foot and those on bikes. The extension's design should improve separation. As we've seen on the Lakefront, it's better to include separation from the beginning rather than retrofitting later.

Thank you for the opportunity to share this feedback on Sterling Bay's Master Plan. We welcome any opportunity to discuss these and other ideas at your convenience.



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Sincerely,

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