

CPC Meeting 400 N Elizabeth Life Science Building (Written Comment)

Al Romero <aromero@zbchi.com>

Tue 10/19/2021 8:26 PM

To: CPC <CPC@cityofchicago.org>

[Warning: External email]

Hello, my name is Al Romero, my wife Maricela and my 10-year-old son Noah have been in the neighborhood for 16 years on N. Ada St.....250 feet from this proposed building.

I would like to submit a written comment to oppose the proposed development at 400 N Elizabeth.

The developer's proposal for 400 N Elizabeth wants to put a building that is almost 14 times larger than the building that sits there today. He proposes going from a 35,000 sq foot 2 story building to an almost 460,000 sq foot 20 story building.

This is going to have a significant negative impact on traffic congestion, pedestrian safety and property taxes to our neighborhood.

The future of 400 Elizabeth should not be a mammoth structure that has downtown zoning amid a residential community. This particular parcel is unique in that fact that it is only accessible from one street and is surround by residents on the North (Hubbard), East (Elizabeth and Racine) and West (Ada). It is vastly different from any other property in Fulton Market.

We welcome anyone who wants to invest in Chicago, but not at the cost of overwhelming our community.

We have asked the alderman to listen to our possible DX proposals that can allow us to live in a neighborly fashion.

Our last community meeting was a webinar format which basically "gagged" the community from speaking out.

I ask the CPC to carefully consider the negative effects this will have on our residents and ask the alderman and developer to have more community meetings to find a more common ground.

Regards,
Al Romero

19 October, 2021

City of Chicago, Chicago Plan Commission

RE: 400 N. Elizabeth St. - Proposed Project

Dear Chicago Plan Commission,

This written statement is respectfully submitted by a concerned citizen and impacted property owner regarding the proposed project for 400 N. Elizabeth Street. The project is a new life sciences building with a proposed height of 270', requesting a zoning change to DX-5, and with additional FAR bonuses increasing the density to DX-8.1. The project would be located within the Fulton Market Innovation District (FMID), and therefore requires compliance with the Fulton Market Innovation District Plan adopted by the Chicago Plan Commission on February 18, 2021.

Located in an overlay district, the project requires a change of the underlying zoning to a D zoning district, and then to a Planned Development requiring approval by the City Council. Public review and input is required for the PD process, and the Alderman representing our ward specifically asked the developer to reach out directly to adjacent properties impacted by the project. The multi-unit condominium building residents (407 N. Elizabeth), directly across the street from the proposal and most immediately impacted, were not contacted or engaged until the developer presented the project on July 6, 2021 in a Zoom community meeting. While the developer claimed that he had contacted and engaged the building residents, and other affected properties, this was not the case. This false assertion was pointed out during the meeting and the Alderman expressed dissatisfaction that the engagement he requested had not occurred. The developer was once again told to engage with the community, and specifically the 407 N. Elizabeth condominium properties. The first direct engagement between the developer and 407 N. Elizabeth occurred via a Zoom presentation on Wednesday, August 25, 2021.

The design presented was exactly the same proposal presented on July 6, 2021, while the developer claimed that the design reflected input from the community and neighboring properties. As expressed at the Grand Hubbard Association community meeting on August 24, 2021, the Condo Board of 407 N. Elizabeth representing a majority of condo owners, other neighboring residents, and concerned citizens voiced sentiments stating that the proposed project was inappropriate, immensely over scaled, poorly designed, and not respectful of the neighborhood or the FMID design guidelines. It was also considered an incompatible use; dramatically exacerbating traffic and congestion, and overwhelming an essentially 2-4 story residential neighborhood. As proposed, it would be the tallest structure in the immediate area and is counter to the FMID design guidelines which state that buildings should step down in height to the west, and also transition in scale to smaller-scale buildings north of Hubbard Street. The majority of owners at 407 N. Elizabeth St. and the Grand Hubbard Neighbors Association oppose the proposal as is, and recommend that the most appropriate use for the site would be residential development.

The design presented on August 25, 2021 had the main (310') tower cantilevering directly to the east, abutting the east property line, and thereby being as close as possible to the low rise residential property at 407 N. Elizabeth. Incongruously, the tower was set back a substantial distance from Ogden Avenue, which has a substantial right-of-way, and new tower projects rising in height directly along the avenue's eastern right-of-way line. Additionally, the proposed design encroaches to the south within the vacated Kinzie Street right of way, and does not align with the established building walls/lines to the east along Kinzie Street. It should be noted that the new Fulton Labs project at Kinzie and Racine/Aberdeen actually sets back to north from Kinzie St., at a distance greater than the adjoining properties along Kinzie.

While the currently proposed design has set the tower back slightly from Elizabeth St., it still maintains a deep setback along Ogden Avenue. The south building line still encroaches within the vacated Kinzie right-of-way, and is inconsistent

with the established building line along Kinzie Street. Combined with the unusually large floor plates, the result is a massive building form which significantly impacts sunlight and daylight access for the 407 N. Elizabeth St. building, and places much of the building in shadow throughout the year. Given the current state of the office leasing market and vacancy rates, this raises questions regarding the viability/feasibility of such a project. Newly completed projects in the area, designed for “life sciences”, are having difficulties attracting this type of tenant, and have sought or leased to more conventional IT start-ups. Additionally, new commercial buildings with larger floor plates are not in demand for this area, as evidenced by the revised development proposal and plans at 360 N. Morgan. That project has been redesigned, responding to the changing market by making the floor plates smaller, thereby producing a narrower building form.

Living in a major world city, density and urban development is necessary, inevitable and should be encouraged – but it should be responsible development. The project as currently proposed is not. As an architect and planner, I critically question the proposed architectural and urban design, the massing and bulk, and the impact on the neighborhood. I respectfully request that the Chicago Plan Commission deny this proposed Planned Development, and that they request a new, responsible development be proposed for the site.

Respectfully submitted,

City of Chicago resident

400 N Elizabeth Street (West Town, 27th Ward)

Kevin Drever <kevindrever@hotmail.com>

Wed 10/20/2021 9:56 AM

To: CPC <CPC@cityofchicago.org>

[Warning: External email]

Hello, my name is Kevin J. Drever. I am the President of the condo association for my building. I write today not only on behalf of my household, but also on behalf of the other eight residents of my building and on behalf of many neighbors that live in the vicinity of 400 N. Elizabeth Street. My wife, Matilde, and I live on the 400 block of North Ada Street (within 250 feet of the proposed building). I have lived here since 2005.

We oppose the proposed development at 400 N. Elizabeth Street in its current form. Under the current proposal, an enormous building would be constructed on this parcel; the square footage of the new building would jump nearly 14 times to 460,000 square feet from the 35,000 square feet of the current two-story structure at this location.

Constructing a 270-foot building at 400 N. Elizabeth Street will negatively impact traffic congestion, pedestrian safety and property taxes for many long-time residents of our West Town neighborhood.

The future of 400 N. Elizabeth Street should not be a gargantuan structure with downtown zoning in the middle of a residential neighborhood. This particular location is especially unique in that it is only accessible from one street. The current building is surrounded by residents to the North (Hubbard), East (Elizabeth and Racine) and West (Ada). The presence of train tracks and viaducts on two sides of this parcel further complicate a large-scale development. For these reasons, this parcel of land is not representative of other sites that have been selected for redevelopment within Fulton Market.

I was born and raised in Chicago and have always been proud to say that I am from our city. Similarly, my neighbors and I want to see our city of Chicago continue to improve and prosper. We want what is best for our neighborhood and welcome anyone who wants to invest in Chicago. At the same time, we do not support this project in its current form because of the way this building would overrun and overwhelm our neighborhood.

We have asked the alderman to consider alternate downtown zoning proposals that would allow for redevelopment more in keeping with the contours of the immediate vicinity.

Specifically, instead of **rezoning this property to a DX-5 with permission to expand to the equivalent of DX-8.1, we would suggest an alternate solution.**

Namely, if a life sciences office building is to be built, we would support a DX-3 zoning with a 1.0 FAR (Floor Area Ratio) bonus.

An overall FAR of 4.0 instead of 8.1 would result in a lower density building that would be more in keeping with the adjacent buildings in the neighborhood.

We have tried to advance this alternate solution but have not had any success in our efforts to communicate with local leaders. In fact, at the September 28, 2021 "community meeting" webinar, only presenters were allowed to speak, and meeting attendees were relegated to submitting online questions which effectively "gagged" the community from having a constructive dialogue with the developers and city officials on this proposed development.

We ask the CPC to carefully consider this proposed zoning change given the negative impacts it would have on our West Town community.

In our view, approving this development in its current form will not complement the neighborhood but would rather sacrifice area residents in the name of other goals.

Please ask the alderman and developer to have more community meetings to come up with a proposal that is mutually supportive of both the city of Chicago's goals as well as the needs of area residents.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Kevin J. Drever

400 N Elizabeth St. Hearing on Zoning Change Request (from C3-3 to DX-5)

Marla Frank <mrfrank123@gmail.com>

Wed 10/20/2021 7:22 AM

To: CPC <CPC@cityofchicago.org>

[Warning: External email]

CPC -

I am a long time resident and homeowner on Hubbard Street. I chose this neighborhood because it was a residential haven near downtown - away from the density, and noisy and dangerous traffic.

The planning commission chose to tear up the 2014 Fulton Market Innovation Plan without public notice and real resident input. I plead with you to limit the degradation of my neighborhood further by minimizing the increase in density allowed by Life Science building developers.

The streets are small, and can't handle the density these zoning changes being requested (and granted on May St) are bringing. (The traffic study - lol.) Please limit this zoning change to no more than DX-3 and FAR 1.0 bonus. The essential character of the Fulton Market area and its surrounding "neighborhoods" you once said you would protect in the 2014 plan will be destroyed as will my neighborhood. Keep the skyscrapers south of the railroad tracks.

Regards

Marla Frank

1162 W Hubbard St, Chicago, IL 60642

400 N. Elizabeth St. PD Application (West Town, 27th Ward)

Noah Wangerin <nwangerin@gmail.com>

Tue 10/19/2021 8:23 PM

To: CPC <CPC@cityofchicago.org>

[Warning: External email]

To the Commission,

I oppose this proposed development, specifically, rezoning this property to a DX-5. I am concerned with traffic safety and congestion within our neighborhood with a building of the proposed size. I would prefer a residential building in line with the neighborhood.

If a life sciences office building is to be built, I would support a DX-3 zoning with a 1.0 FAR bonus. A lower density building would be more in keeping with the adjacent buildings in my neighborhood.

Thank you for your consideration,

-Noah Wangerin
413 North Noble Street