

A Better Proposal for Francis W. Parker School Expansion

East Lincoln Park Neighbors
July 2026

- We are here today to share a superior alternative plan for developing within Parker's existing Planned Development that is a win for the City, for Lincoln Park and for the Parker community. Parker can get the space they are looking for, fix some longstanding neighborhood issues and eliminate many of the harms that will result from the current proposal.
- Ald. Knudsen has materially misrepresented the community's support for Parker's proposal. He said he received 283 communications from the 43rd Ward supporting the proposal. He failed to tell his constituents that over 2,000 people have signed a petition opposing Parker's expansion on Belden Ave. and installation of stadium lights. Over 1400 of those signatories are from the 43rd Ward with almost 800 coming from East Lincoln Park, Parker's immediate neighbors.
- There are many Parker-affiliated families among the petition signers. Importantly, neighbors are not opposed to Parker achieving its goals. This alternative proposal shows how they can meet their goals while staying on their current six acres.

Who we are and why we are credible

- East Lincoln Park Neighbors (ELPN) is a community organization representing the 4,000 residents of the area bounded by Fullerton Ave., Clark St., Sedgwick St., Armitage Ave. and Lincoln Park West in Lincoln Park. The Mid-North Association also represents the area.
- The Francis W. Parker School (Parker) is in East Lincoln Park and changes to their planned development significantly impact this community.
- An ELPN member with 40 years of real estate development experience, including building a high-rise residential building on Lincoln Park West, developed the Better Proposal.
- An experienced architect created the conceptual drawings. A second unaffiliated experienced architect peer reviewed the proposal.

This proposal is a win for Parker, Lincoln Park, and the City of Chicago

- Same additional square footage of programmable space as Parker's proposal
- Avoids the community and City harms embedded in Parker's proposal
- Resolves long-standing traffic and parking issues not addressed in Parker's proposal
- Our goal is to work WITH Parker to help them achieve their goals, while doing so in a way that makes their impact on the neighborhood better, not worse



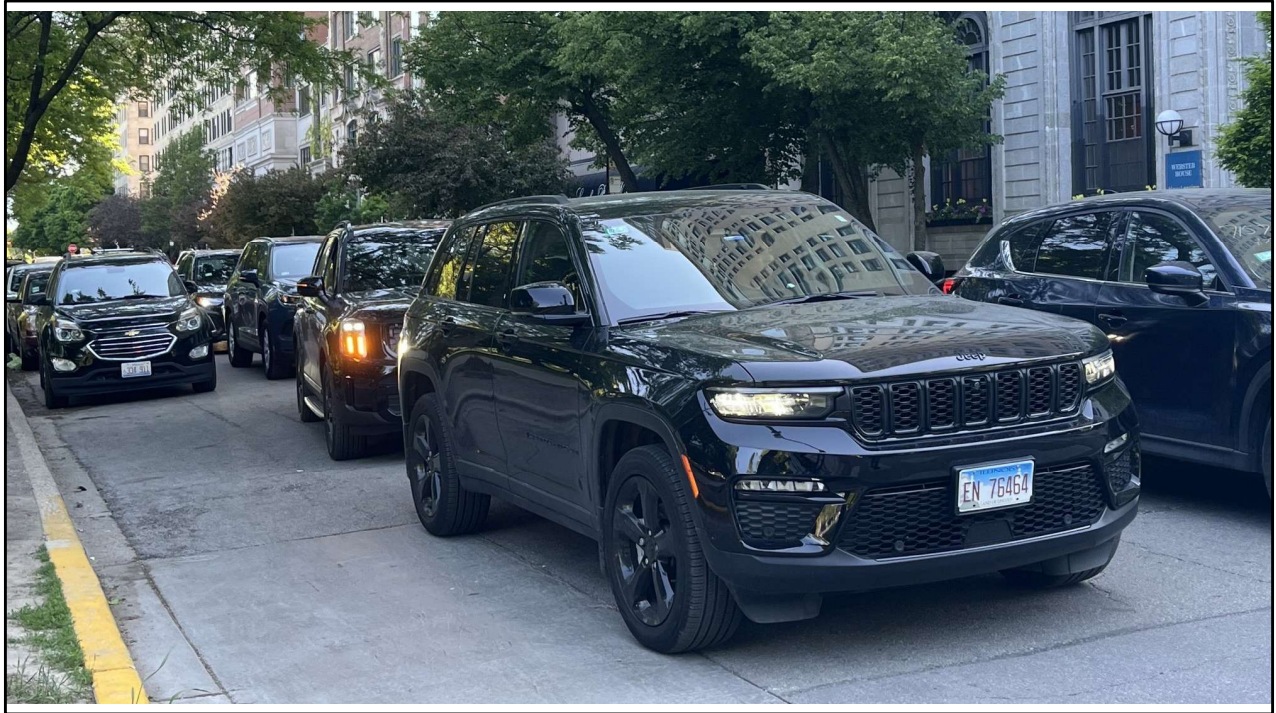
- This aerial view shows Parker's current planned development outlined in yellow.
- The vintage multi-family building that Parker is proposing to demolish is outlined in solid red just north of the planned development. The building that Parker is proposing to turn into housing is outlined in solid red to the west of the campus across Clark Street.
- The second vintage multi-family building that Parker owns, but is not proposing to incorporate into its planned development now is outlined in a red dashed line.
- Parker has not demonstrated a need for expansion, only a desire to do so.
 - a. The existing campus can easily accommodate 125 more students
 - b. 6.4 acre site, 278K sq. feet gross space
 - c. 310 sq. feet gross space per pupil, the second highest space per pupil among Chicago private schools
- Underutilized space on campus that has not been accurately represented
 - a. 2 parking lots with space for 47 cars
 - b. SW lot has space for 31 cars
 - c. SW lot is 13.5K sq. feet

Source: Institutional Planned Development 697, approved 11/4/98
Source: Francis W. Parker School website, 6/19/2026
Source: City of Chicago Land use and zoning maps

Traffic congestion is a significant problem that Parker's proposal doesn't address



- The photo shows Webster Street at Lincoln Park West at pick-up.
- Traffic congestion at pick-up and drop-off are significant neighborhood and safety problems.
- Parker's traffic is due to lack of bussing and wide distribution of Parker families across 63 zip codes.
- There is already scarce parking in East Lincoln Park and Parker's drop-off and pick-up take 80 parking spaces out of availability during the school day and during summer camps.
- Parker's proposal will worsen the problems. The Better Proposal addresses traffic and parking problems.



The photo shows some of the spill-over traffic effects at Parker's pick-up. This is Lincoln Park West South of Webster Street.



The photo shows some of the spill-over traffic effects at Parker's pick-up. This is Lincoln Park West north of Webster Street at pick-up. Note the car at the far left of the picture. Due to double parking, this south-bound car is forced to use the north bound lane, creating visibility and other safety issues.



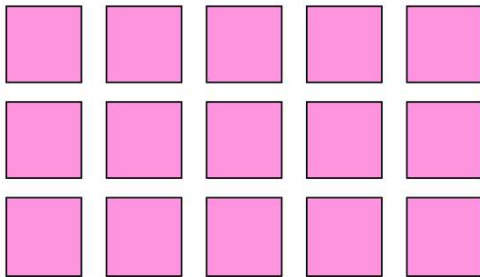
BELDEN APARTMENT BUILDING, CHICAGO
S. N. Crowen, Architect

THE INLAND ARCHITL.
AND NEWS RECORD
JANUARY, 1908

Parker wants to tear down an existing multi-family, vintage residential building at 327-335 Belden Ave. Notably, this building was included in an application to the City to establish a courtyard building landmark district, which Preservation Chicago has supported since 2016. Samuel Nichols Crowen, a noted architect of the time, designed the building. The building was recognized for being a classic example of early twentieth century residential architecture and is the earliest building in the proposed landmark district.

Loss of family housing in Lincoln Park

Parker proposes destroying 15 historic family homes which provide an average of 2,300 SF living space each



And replacing them with 7 studio & one-bedroom apartments which average about 600 SF each



Parker's proposed Clark Street property development does not start to address the losses on Belden

Lost at 327-335 W. Belden

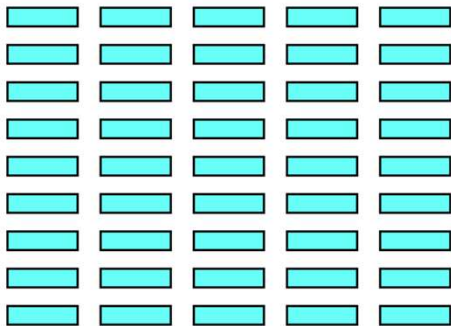
- ~35,000 square feet total
- 15 family-sized housing units
- >\$10M in lost tax revenues
- 4.5M pounds of embodied carbon
- 15 families displaced
- Neighbors' eyes and ears on the streets, footfall in local shops
- Vibrant human presence on Belden

Added at 2236 N. Clark

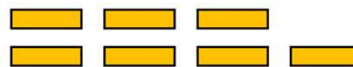
- ~5,000 square feet total
- 7 single-individual housing units
- Limited tax revenues over 30 years
- After 30 years, or sooner with aldermanic consent, Parker may take the property out of the housing/tax base

Net loss of at least 40 residents in the neighborhood

Residents displaced in Belden by the Park



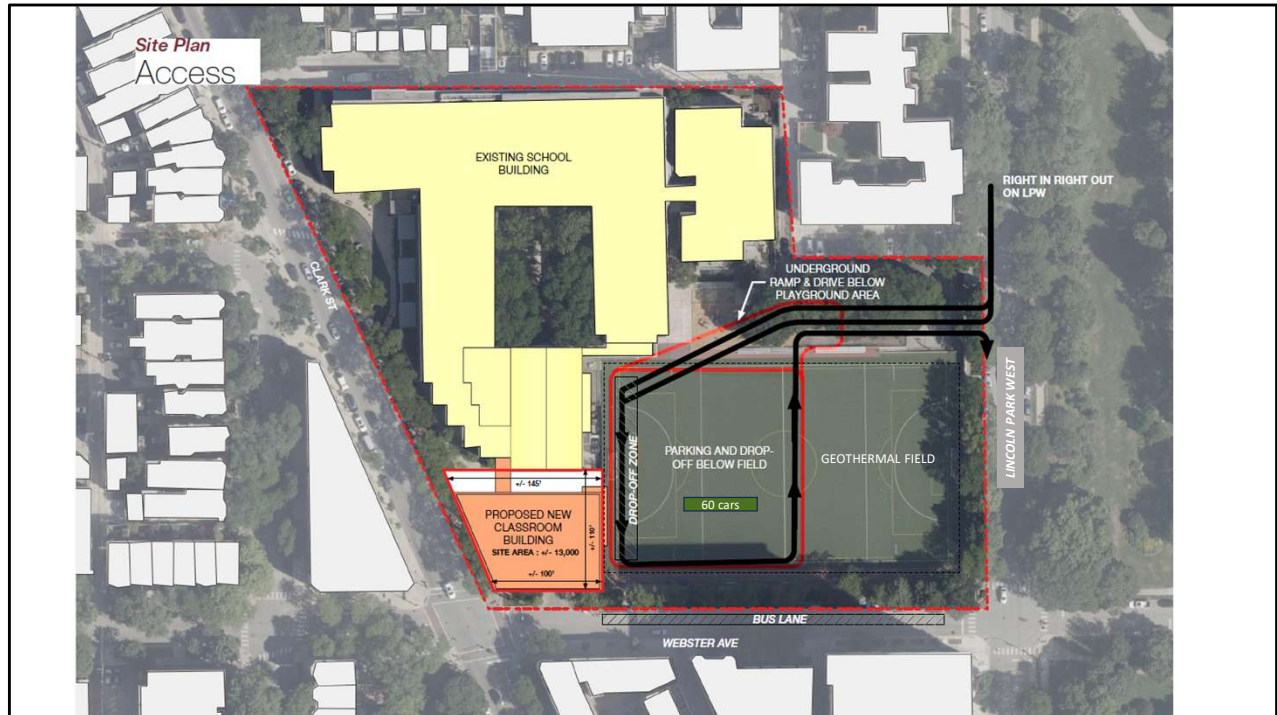
Residents added on Clark Street



Includes families with 11 kids who attend or will attend Lincoln Elementary School.

Parker's proposal causes many harms

- Permanently removes from the real estate tax base a building that paid \$234,000 in 2022. Present value of lost tax revenue is over \$10M according to a professional analysis by property tax expert UofI Prof. David Merriman.
- Destroys a 120 year old, architecturally significant building that was included in a 2016 proposal to create a landmark courtyard building district.
- Moves 4.5 million pounds of embodied carbon to landfill.
- Evicts 15 families from their homes.
- Adds stadium lighting to its playing field for use 14.5 hours a day, every day, along with associated noise, traffic and parking issues.
- Adds 125 students and 30 staff, worsening traffic and parking issues.



- There is a way for Parker to expand AND resolve neighbors' issues. The alternative proposal can be done for about the same cost, maybe for less.
- The main element of the proposal is to build a new structure on Parker's southwest parking lot.
 - a. The City Zoning and Land Use Map shows the area as 13,565 square feet, 86% of the size of 327-335 Belden Avenue. The lot is big enough that Parker can get same amount of usable space they are planning for the Belden building by going down one level (for mechanicals and storage) and up 5 levels.
 - b. In recent conversations, Parker representatives did not dispute these facts.
- Other key elements:
 - a. Underground parking below their playing field
 - b. Underground drop-off and pick-up lanes move current on-street traffic congestion underground.
 - c. Potential to create a geothermal field to improve sustainability and lower utility costs.
 - d. Parker can retain its current administration building on Clark St.



Parker could construct a 5 story building on its SW parking lot that would provide the same programmable space as the building they are proposing to build on Belden Ave.

Unlike the building on Belden Ave., the Better Proposal building allows air and light on all four sides.

If Parker chose to install a geothermal field, there would not be a need for mechanical housing on the roof.



A sixth story addition could include a world-class aquatic center.

What is a geothermal field and why have one?

- A geothermal field takes advantage of the differential in temperature between the atmosphere and underground to efficiently transfer energy to buildings for heating and cooling.
- It works along the same principles as an air conditioner or refrigerator.
- Geothermal fields are the most efficient way to heat and cool buildings today and are increasingly being used. Recent local examples include the Obama Center.
- Savings can be between 40-60% on energy bills and there are significant installation subsidies available to non-profit entities.

The economics are better for Parker

Economic Benefits of the Alternate Plan for Parker

Additional Costs

60 indoor parking spaces below athletic field	\$4,500,000
Drive lanes and drop-off & pick-up lanes for parking below athletic field	\$4,500,000
New athletic field and playground	\$2,000,000
Construction of new basement	\$3,000,000
Architecture & engineering for parking	\$1,000,000
Additional contingency	\$1,000,000
Additional Costs	\$16,000,000

Savings

Proceeds from the sale of two Belden apartment buildings	\$28,000,000
Omit demolition of one apartment building and associated environmental remediation	\$500,000
Omit costs associated with converting administration building to studio apartments	\$2,000,000
Savings	\$30,500,000

Net Savings for Parker	\$14,500,000
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Add 6th floor with a new Aquatics Center	\$4,000,000
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Net Savings for Parker with New Aquatics Center	\$10,500,000
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- Savings from no demo and landfill of existing structure
- Economic value from retaining Belden building as housing
- Value of keeping Clark building as administration office
- Savings from not paying for lights on field

The alternative proposal is far superior

Benefits for Parker families

- Safer, out-of-the-weather on-site indoor student drop-off and pick-up
- 60 indoor parking spaces (an addition of 30 spaces on-site)
- Significantly increases energy efficiency & reduces annual operating costs
- Could provide a world-class aquatics center for Parker
- Significantly reduces the overall cost of project
- Enhanced sustainability

Benefits for the community and city

- Avoids the loss of \$10 million of city tax revenue
- Avoids the destruction of two historically significant apartment buildings
- Eliminates the destruction of 4.5 million pounds of embodied carbon
- Greatly reduces traffic congestion at peak traffic hours in Lincoln Park
- Increases the availability of on-street parking
- Preserves fifteen family apartments which are very scarce in Lincoln Park
- Avoids forcing 5 families with 11 students from leaving Lincoln Elementary School District