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Laura Flores, Chair
Plan Commission
121 N LaSalle St
Chicago, IL 60602

December 9, 2022

RE: Proposed Amendment to PD 1426

Dear Chair Person Flores:

North Branch Works (NBW) is a membership-supported nonprofit organization that for forty years has promoted balanced, job-creating economic development along the North Branch of the Chicago River. We are a City of Chicago “delegate agency” providing support services to local businesses through the Local Industrial Retention Initiative and Neighborhood Business Development Center programs. We also a member of the Chicago Casino Community Advisory Council in addition to chairing the Lincoln Yards Community Advisory Council.

The Bally’s Casino and entertainment district is a new use within PD 1426, and NBW has worked with Deputy Mayor Samir Mayekar and his team, 27th Ward Ald. Walter Burnett, representatives from the Department of Transportation, representatives from the Department of Planning and Development, and representatives from Bally’s Casino to address the project’s impact on adjacent industrial businesses.

The North Branch Industrial Corridor is home to dozens of manufacturing and industrial firms including WaterSaver Faucets, Guardian Systems, Prairie Materials, Bigane Paving, Ogden Avenue Materials, as well as the forthcoming Pilot Plant at Mars Wrigley. These firms hire locally and have provided high-quality, family sustaining employment opportunities for over 50 years. It is important for any new use within the area to coexist with the existing business community.

NBW appreciates the engagement from the team at Bally’s who reached out to us prior to their selection as a finalist for the casino development. They presented at a meeting to North Branch businesses, met with representatives from WaterSaver Faucets, Bigane Paving, and Prairie Materials, and toured their sites. These three industrial firms are closest to the proposed casino site and will be impacted the most. WaterSaver Faucets has expressed concern about how the project will impact traffic to their loading docks on Erie Street. As a firm with 250 employees which supplies 80% of the faucets to labs throughout the country, it is critical for them to receive supplies efficiently. Likewise, Prairie Materials has trucks which need to get to job sites in a timely fashion and increased traffic on Chicago Avenue presents a challenge. NBW is pleased to note that Deputy

Mayor Samir Mayekar and CDOT Commissioner Gia Biagi have committed to convening a working group with impacted businesses to resolve these critical issues.

NBW supports the reduction in maximum buildable area on the site from 8.47 million square feet to 6.65 million square feet under the proposed amendment. This will help to reduce traffic congestion compared to what is allowable under the current PD. However, NBW is concerned by the increase in allowable dwelling units from 4,099 to 4,799. Although the North Branch Framework plan protects these critical services, additional residential in the area increases traffic congestion relative to other uses and has the potential to increase frivolous nuisance complaints against long-standing businesses. NBW will work with the city and Bally's to address this issue.

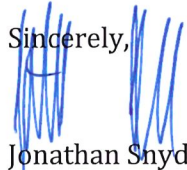
As an organization whose mission is to foster the creation of family-sustaining employment, NBW supports the Bally's Casino project which anticipates the creation of 3,000 permanent jobs and 3,000 construction jobs. We are pleased that the Bally's Casino team is committed to hiring locally,

Given the jobs which will be created and the reduction in buildable square footage, NBW supports the amendment to PD 1426 provided:

1. The working group to address Erie Street is convened by January 15, 2023 and achieves an acceptable solution.
2. The City works with CTA to improve transit service in the area including increasing the frequency of buses on Halsted and Chicago and establishes protected bicycle lanes.

Since 1982 North Branch Works has supported Near North Side manufacturing firms. The proposed Bally's Casino and Hotel would have a significant impact on this important business corridor. We will work with all our partners to ensure the success of the new use, but we also wish to emphasize our continued aim to growing the industrial sector firms in the surrounding area. We look forward to continuing to work with all stakeholders in the best interests of the community and of the City.

Sincerely,



Jonathan Snyder
Executive Director

cc: Deputy Mayor Samir Mayekar
Commissioner Maurice Cox, Department of Planning and Development
Commissioner Gia Biagi, Department of Transportation
Ald. Walter Burnett, 27th Ward
John Bosca, Chair, Chicago Casino Community Advisory Council
Steven Kersten, WaterSaver Faucets
Ken Kalafut, Prairie Materials
Anne Wilson, Bigane Paving