

GAZETTE

HAPPY NEW YEAR

January 6, 2017

FREE

Vol. 34, No. 9

— INSIDE —



Construction underway on two South Loop residential developments. See page 3.



Resurrection Project wants to develop largest Pilsen tract. See page 8.



Clifford the Big Red Dog visits Women's Park. Read Around the Neighborhood. See page 24.

Other highlights:

Use TIF money to help Fulton St. homeless, say business owners. See page 10.

Medical District Apartments expansion talks continue. See page 12.

Supporters fear Maxwell Market still in jeopardy. See Letters on page 22.

City's revitalization vision for river network includes restoring Bridgeport's Bubbly Creek

By Monica M. Walk

A recent City of Chicago vision plan for Chicago's three rivers includes clean-up and restoration that finally will eliminate Bubbly Creek's stockyard stench, opening the waterway for recreation and better neighborhood quality of life.

Bubbly Creek—at the south fork of the Chicago River's south branch—creates a boundary between Chicago's Bridgeport and McKinley Park neighborhoods.

"It's 2016 vs. Upton Sinclair's book," said Metropolitan Planning Council (MPC) program director Josh Ellis, referring to *The Jungle*, Sinclair's 1906 expose of the meat-packing industry. Bubbly Creek earned its name from the gases bubbling up from decomposing entrails and blood dumped in the river by meat processors at the nearby Union Stockyards.

"Bubbly Creek is a very interesting little body of water," Ellis said. "Its biggest issue is ecology.

Water in the creek doesn't flow; the river current is not fast moving. The still water means odors and litter don't move. The sediment on the bottom has the past contamination."

Mayor Rahm Emanuel announced officials will address water quality in a multi-phase vision plan, Our Great Rivers. The plan covers improvements for all three rivers—Calumet, Chicago, and Des Plaines—that flow through

Continued on page 18

Connector project to link Chinatown and South Loop

By Dolly Duplantier

Phase one of the Wells Wentworth Connector improvement project is fully underway. The enhancements, which eventually will create a new roadway between Chinatown and the Loop, will offer another north/south option for the growing Chinatown and South Loop areas.

"The project, which has been in the planning stages for several

Continued on page 6



Workers will add sidewalks and a bicycle lane to 19th Street as part of the Wells Wentworth Connector improvement project.

Activists express concerns about oil freight trains

By Johnny Figel

As the United States has become increasingly urbanized, the country's rail system has remained unchanged.

For many Chicago residents, this antiquated infrastructure has left them directly in harm's way, according to the Southeast Environmental Task Force (SETF).

For Tom Shepherd, SETF director, this danger makes it imperative to raise awareness about crude oil-carrying trains that traverse the city 40 times a week.

"It's something that has alarmed

a lot of people," Shepherd said. People "see the [use of] oil trains are increasing going across the country." Meanwhile, "our infrastructure continues to crumble."

SETF has gathered a group of stakeholders and community members to educate the community about potential disasters from transporting crude oil on outdated rail lines in densely populated areas. The group discussed the potential for explosions from fire or derailment and the areas a crude oil blast would affect; it also toured rail yards.

SETF has hosted four meet-ups

and rail yard tours, with one to come in North Chicago. Shepherd said the meetings have raised awareness but allowed that communication challenges remain.

"It's pretty difficult," he said when asked about the amount of media coverage the crude oil topic generates. "We don't get a whole lot of attention, judging from our press releases and press conferences."

Potential accidents

Shepherd fears lack of interest may change only when the next accident occurs.

Continued on page 16

Revitalization vision for river network includes restoring Bubbly Creek

Continued from page 1

Chicago and includes a series of goals with recommended actions to occur by 2020, 2030, and 2040.

"From opening new boat houses to reinventing the Riverwalk, we've made significant investments in the Chicago River to make it the city's next recreational frontier, and we will continue our efforts to ensure that residents across the city have access to recreational opportunities on all three of the city's rivers," said Emanuel when announcing the vision plan. "Our Great Rivers identifies concrete ways to continue to invest in our riverfront in ways that strengthen and connect neighborhoods and improve the quality of life of all Chicagoans."

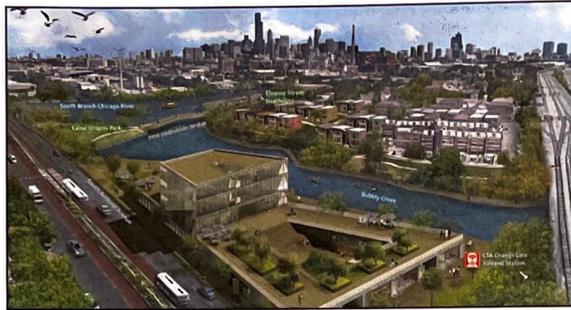
Resident input for vision

Our Great Rivers' large scale resulted from dozens of organizations coming together to create and support the plan. Core partners are the non-profit MPC led by Ellis in coordination with Friends of the Chicago River, the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, and the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago. Other groups are involved in financial and program support.

"We undertook more than 120 stakeholder meetings and talked to 6,000 people to learn what they want," said Ellis of the vision planning process. "We were able to boil it down to three concepts for the essence of what people wanted."

The three overarching concepts are Inviting, Productive, Living. Each includes goals, with timing based on feasibility and priority. Five key desired changes stakeholders consistently cited: better access; more recreational opportunities; improved aesthetics, water quality, and habitat; more business and tourism along the rivers; and more job opportunities.

"We learned that if you know your corner of the river, folks don't know what's up- and downstream," Ellis said. "There are a 150-plus miles



A pedestrian bridge will connect the Eleanor Street Boathouse area with Canal Origins Park at Ashland Avenue.

of riverfront in Chicago. It is an untapped resource for economics, recreation, and ecological restoration and connects far more neighborhoods than the lakefront does."

The plan specifies improvements to Bubbly Creek, including a pedestrian footbridge to connect both transit and riverfront pathways.

Making it your riverfront

Neighborhood leadership and support will be key. Ellis said the MPC is creating tool kits to help neighborhood organizations and volunteers create programs, including instructions for getting permits for fishing derbies and other events and how to apply for grant funding for programs such as river clean-up.

"While the City and other government agencies lead on some of the recommended actions, we need residents and local stakeholders across the city to play a lead role in creating a future for our rivers that we can all be proud of," Ellis said.

He encourages neighborhood residents to connect with the South Branch Advisory Council, an all-volunteer watchdog group focused on local waterways. It meets the second Monday evening of the month at the Duck Inn, 2701 S. Eleanor St.

"We want people of all levels

of dedication," said South Branch PAC president James Burns, of the group currently focusing on programming for the new Park 571 boathouse, slated to open in 2017. "The more people, the better community representation and the more utilized the boathouse will be. We want it filled with programs: inside, on the water, around the boathouse with fitness equipment outside. This goes hand in hand with Bubbly Creek—it is the ground floor to effect great change.

"When the plan is seen through, there is going to be tremendous change for the community," Burns said of Our Great Rivers. "This is a piece of the solution to reverse the notion that the rivers are only industrial arteries. The community is beginning to understand the great resource in its yard. We can make it great for the city as a whole, and get people on the water."

Burns believes the MPC and its partners have defined an accurate vision. "They did a phenomenal job of hearing what the community had to say," he said.

He invites interested community members to join the South Branch PAC Facebook page (www.facebook.com/SouthBranchPAC/); email him at southbranchpac@gmail.com; call him at (312) 479-2636; and attend the monthly meeting.

MPC, the city, and partners will

keep working together to move the plan forward and find the best ways to coordinate the host of people and groups involved, marshal resources, and ensure ongoing public participation.

Sweeter smelling days

Eliminating Bubbly Creek's infamous odor will require a combination of remediation and pollution reduction.

Ellis noted the creek's sole source of new water comes from sewer overflow consisting mainly of rain run-off from the street (which can include litter, oil, and other pollutants) along with some sewage. "That takes awhile to move out of the area; we need to reduce it," Ellis said.

According to Ellis, the Army Corps of Engineers has a framework in place to cap the creek bed to contain old pollutants and to install manmade wetlands for habitat that will provide natural water cleaning. The plan will move forward after the Army Corps completes a conversation with a private company about potentially funding the cleanup.

Even without the cleanup, the neighborhood already has new townhouse development near the shoreline, a new Chicago Maritime Museum in Bridgeport, the Chicago Park District's Eleanor Street Boathouse under construction in Park 571, and the active Bridgeport Art Center.

"They are still building on the Bridgeport side," Ellis said. "Clearly, people want to be on the water."

Our Great Rivers will lead to a much more inviting Bubbly Creek, Ellis said.

"It will have better odor and water quality, less detritus, and will be more comfortable," he said. "It will be realistic to walk down to read a book and eat a sandwich. I kayaked there this summer and saw egrets and herons and a bunch of turtles. There are no barges or boat traffic; it is a more intimate river experience."

Great Rivers plan includes Bubbly Creek

Bubbly Creek figures significantly in several sections of the Our Great Rivers vision plan. Various components have completion dates of 2020, 2030, and 2040.

In the plan's "Inviting" category:

A pedestrian bridge will span Bubbly Creek between the new Eleanor Street Boathouse and Canal Origins Park to provide access to the Ashland CTA Orange Line station, buses on Ashland Avenue and 31st Street, and a water taxi stop; give better access to and from Bridgeport on the creek's east side; and help complete a continuous riverfront trail system.

A nearby vacant lot has potential for mixed-use development featuring housing, retail, and riverfront recreation. Development there would offer a gateway for residents, nearby employees, and visitors to enjoy surrounding river-oriented activities and amenities: birdwatching from Canal Origins Park, rowing from Eleanor Street boathouse, commuting via water taxi, and exercising along a new riverfront trail.

For 2020: The plan will make water, including Bubbly Creek, clean enough for "primary contact," based on standards set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. That designation will mean swimming, paddling, fishing, and other water activities will be safe. Capital investments will ensure safe water quality.

Goals for activities, safety, wayfinding, water quality, and real-time water quality information also will have a positive effect on the Bubbly Creek area.

For 2040: Rivers fully free of litter and odor, with Bubbly Creek and the Collateral Channel as priorities, will demonstrably improve odor issues through a combination of instream and sidestream

Continued on page 20



URBAN
COUNTERTOPS

GRANITE • QUARTZ • MARBLE



1.312.282.1445
1.773.893.5259
urbancountertops@gmail.com
urbancountertops.com

Urban Countertops, Inc
3734 S. Saint Louis Ave
Chicago, IL 60632
Mon-Sat: 8am-5pm

OVER 15 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE

WE SPECIALIZE IN:
• Contractors • Builders • Home Owners • Flippers

D'Andrea & Associates, Ltd.

BUSINESS, TAX, AND FINANCIAL ADVISORS

D'Andrea & Associates, Ltd. is a firm specializing in business, tax, and financial advisement. In addition to offering all the services of a full service accounting and consulting firm, we specialize in representing individuals and businesses in tax controversy, such as IRS/IDR examinations, offers in compromise, and installment agreement requests.

Call us today to arrange for a FREE, no obligation, review of your business tax return, and/or tax controversy.



D'Andrea & Associates, Ltd.
53 W. Jackson Blvd., Suite 260, Chicago, IL 60604
312-341-9999 • www.dandrealtd.com

Wishing you a happy and healthy 2017!



Family Law

CALL TO SCHEDULE A FREE CONSULTATION

Kathleen M. Walsh

attykmw@aol.com
708-447-8081

Convenient conferencing center:
3236 S. Racine, Chicago, IL 60608
(Bridgeport area)

Our Great Rivers plan cites specific improvements for Bubbly Creek

Continued from page 19

aeration stations, capping or removing problem sediments, and increasing water flow. Innovative in-pipe treatment technologies installed at priority sewer outfalls further will reduce litter and other river pollution, especially at points that once discharged high volumes on a regular basis.

Plans in the “Productive” category include:

For 2020: New visions for modern working rivers include waterways at the Pilsen Industrial Corridor, with the confluence of the South Branch of the Chicago River, Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal, and Bubbly Creek supporting a diverse mix of wholesale trade, manufacturing, transportation, and distribution businesses. Plans also support riverfront productivity and position land parcels for development and growth, including transit-oriented and riverfront amenities, new jobs, and public access to the riverfront.

For 2030: Goals with potential positive impact on Bubbly Creek include integrated transit on land and water and local tourism jobs, bolstered by easier site-hopping from downtown to business-based boat docks in Pilsen and Bridgeport, along with creating iconic riverfront destinations and productively



A pedestrian bridge will connect the Eleanor Street Boathouse area with Canal Origins Park at Ashland Avenue.

using and reusing water.

For 2040: Bubbly Creek would form part of the planned Chicago Area Waterway System, seen as a

global model for integrated and coordinated infrastructure management between two of the world’s largest freshwater ecosystems.

Plans in the “Living” category include:

For 2020: Goals affecting the Bubbly Creek area include active stewardship for every park, ecologically sensitive shoreline development, aggressively managing invasive species, and expanding Park District natural areas.

For 2030: The rivers as parks goal re-imagines non-navigable sections of waterways—including Bubbly Creek—as instream parks planted with wetlands vegetation to restore habitat. These places will become locations for fishing, learning to kayak and canoe safely, and quietly meditating in nature. Native wetland vegetation also helps clean water, prevent erosion, and nurture fish and wildlife.

—Monica M. Walk

Pilsen’s largest vacant lot may be developed by Resurrection Project

Continued from page 8

The Midwest Jesuits, an order of Roman Catholic priests, currently owns the site.

TRP works to create community ownership and build community wealth through various initiatives,

including housing development.

Solis did not respond to requests for comments for this article.

To learn more about Pilsen Alliance and TRP, visit www.thepilsenalliance.org/ and <http://resurrectionproject.org/>.

**READ
THE
eEDITION**



eedition.gazettechicago.com