



## 2023 CHICAGO MUNICIPAL ELECTION QUESTIONNAIRE

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***A completed questionnaire must be received by Friday, January 27 to have answers distributed to our stakeholders as early voting starts. Please return to [rachelbr@fotp.org](mailto:rachelbr@fotp.org).***

### ABOUT YOUR BACKGROUND AND PRIORITIES RELATED TO PARKS

A. Briefly describe any accomplishments or projects you have been involved with related to parks.

Response: I worked as an arts instructor for the Chicago Parks District Hamilton Park in Englewood for the Teens Reimaging Arts, Community, and the Environment Program. It was a great teen program that paid high schoolers stipends to attend summer and afterschool sessions where they learned about local efforts to preserve the natural environment. I was lucky enough to be their lead teacher and connect young people with organizations like Grow Greater Englewood, teach lessons about aquaponics food production systems on the south side, and infusing it all into an arts based curriculum. This program only exists in two parks year round but I am ready to push for more programs like it across the entire city. Our parks hold vast potential for inspiring young minds and directing their energy to enriching activities and even job prospects into adulthood. I want to use my position as Alderwoman to turn this potential into action.

B. Are you planning to introduce legislation or initiatives to address any environmental justice issues? Do you have particular environmental priorities, park programming priorities, or see connections with other priorities for your community? If so, please identify those here.

Response: *Of course I have environmental and park programming priorities. The 15th ward has a diverse biosphere with Western and Garfield cutting through the ward which we need to restore its canopy compared to the industrial corridors in back of the Yards and Canaryville. In terms of environmental issues within the ward, we have to halt the expansion of Norfolk, we have to tax these polluters who are harming our residents. In terms of park programming, it has to be free or at least more affordable than they are now.*

C. Chicago's motto is Urbs in Horto (City in a Garden). In the most recent *We Will Chicago* planning process, park discussions were thinly and inadequately spread across all the pillars and not a central focus of planning. How will you prioritize parks or demonstrate that parks are critical to healthy, thriving communities and the entire city and its residents?

Response: *Green space is not an amenity - it is a key part of our ability to live full lives and enjoy safe recreation in clean and healthy neighborhoods. As alderwoman, I will plan for green space*



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throughout planning and development processes, rather than hoping they fit in somewhere at the end. Through the community-driven zoning and participatory budget processes I will initiate, I will have many opportunities to hear from my constituents about their priorities and concerns around parks. Improved parks and green spaces are a cornerstone of my holistic approach to public safety, which calls for increased programming for youth and young adults, new green spaces, and the revitalization of our existing parkland.

### GENERAL QUESTIONS

*Below are 11 topics related to parks. Please share your thoughts and policies on each subject using the list of bulleted questions as a guide.*

#### 1) EQUITY PLAN FOR CHICAGO'S PARKS

Forty years ago, On May 13, 1983, the [Chicago Park District entered into a consent decree with the federal government](#), resulting from a three-year investigation and a 1982 federal lawsuit addressing racial discrimination in the allocation of resources within the park district. The decree sought to promote equal and non-discriminatory treatment of Black and Latino communities by establishing rigorous and detailed systems, procedures and schedules that could assure equity, responsiveness, and transparency for these neighborhoods and their parks. It was in effect for six years, and Friends of the Parks registered our displeasure when the court lifted the order even though the Chicago Park District was not in full compliance with the terms of the Consent Decree.

Many other large cities have a written equity plan or framework to guide work for their park district, but Chicago has no such plan or codified standards despite documented racial inequity in park access and resources per our 2018 State of the Parks report. Public parks on the South and West Sides of Chicago often have less access to building facilities, fewer programs, and less investment in parks.

- What policies do you support to address this inequity and improve the park-going experience in South and West Side neighborhood parks?

We need to make full use of the programming dollars already allocated to our parks so that programming is available to all our residents - toddlers, youth, adults, and senior citizens. We also need to investigate the ongoing inequity in capital improvement spending to close the gap between high and low income communities and black and white communities.

#### RESPONSE EQUITY PLAN FOR CHICAGO'S PARKS:

#### 2) GREEN SPACE AND CREATING NEW PARKS



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While more than [98% of Chicagoans](#) live within a 10-minute walk of green space or a playground, **Chicago lags behind most other high-density cities in park acreage per capita and total city acreage committed to public parkland (9%)**. Residents' access to recreational amenities and facilities they hope to find in their parks is not equitable across the city. The West Side of the city has the least parks or green space. While most parkland is on the city's South Side, these parks receive less capital investment and programmatic funding than North Side parks and much of it is undeveloped or underdeveloped brownfield sites that do not yet support much or any public use. These facts demonstrate that Chicago continues to experience systemic racial inequity when it comes to accessing or creating new green spaces.

- How will you prioritize the creation of new green spaces and parks in your ward? How will you include the community in the planning and development process?

[I will begin a community driven zoning process to bring neighbors and residents into the planning and development process from the very beginning. New parks and green spaces are a cornerstone of my holistic approach to public safety, which calls for increased programming for youth and young adults, new green spaces, and the revitalization of our existing parkland. Neighbors should feel good about visiting their local park and facilities such as field houses and bathrooms should have increased availability to neighbors.](#)

- What metrics or factors will you use to determine which communities should receive new green space? What equity considerations will you include in your assessment?

[I will consider the density and accessibility of existing parkland, gun violence incidence rates, and the history of investment or lack thereof when considering new green space investments. Those neighborhoods and blocks with a history of disinvestment, the least access to parks and highest burden of violence will be prioritized for new parks. However, all decisions will be made in conjunction with the community-driven zoning process and the priorities made clear by that work.](#)

- The 10-minute Trust for Public Land “walk score” mentioned above includes Chicago Park District spaces (parks, playlots, and beaches) and any green space in the city, including Forest Preserves, spaces managed by NeighborSpace, the 19 boulevards managed by the Chicago Department of Transportation, and privately owned public spaces (POPs). With all these various groups stewarding green spaces, coordination and comprehensive planning can be difficult and complex. How will you sort through the different managers to coordinate increasing access to parkland and green spaces in your ward?

[One of our strongest assets is the residents of the ward ourselves. By including neighbors' voices in the process, we can get to the heart of issues across our ward, and clearly identify priorities to help us organize inter-agency cooperation.](#)



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- The Illinois state standard is 10 acres of green space for every 1000 residents. As urban planning and development occur in your ward, how will you ensure there is adequate green space for the community to thrive?

Green space is not an amenity - it is a key part of our ability to live full lives and enjoy safe recreation in clean and healthy neighborhoods. As alderwoman, I will plan for green space throughout planning and development processes, rather than hoping they fit in somewhere at the end. It will be important to complete a community needs assessment, to have data on the current state of parkland in the 15th Ward, as well as information from community members about their experiences with and access to green space.

- Developers and the City have often tried to assert that publicly owned private spaces (POPs) will always be accessible to the public, just as if they belonged to the Chicago Park District. Historically POPs have not always been equally accessible to all residents as the private owner ultimately controls the space. What is your vision for ensuring true public access to new green spaces being created in mega-developments and other planned developments?

Privatization of municipal assets has been a huge setback for Chicagoans over the years. As alderwoman I will ensure that public dollars are used to fund public spaces that are available to all people. I will not support any venture that puts public dollars to work for a wealthy few, rather than all Chicagoans.

- As the Chicago Park District plans construction of new facilities (pickleball courts, basketball courts, fieldhouses, etc.), how will you allocate resources to address the realities of racial inequity in Chicago and historic disinvestment and neglect of some communities? How will you include the community in determining what facilities and amenities are needed?

Many Black and Brown communities, especially on the South Side, have been faced with disinvestment for years. In allocating resources for the next four years, I will fight to prioritize those communities which have faced the most entrenched disinvestment. We can look to the many well-funded parks and facilities across the city to identify what is possible for our communities in the 15th Ward but we should look to our own blocks and neighbors to establish our final plan. What are young people looking for? Parents? Senior citizens? These are not questions I can answer on my own; I will rely instead on community driven processes and decision-making.

- Golf courses count as green space and as park acres for residents, but the use is restricted to those playing a particular sport and paying a fee for service. What initiative do you support to make such spaces dual purpose or to expand usage to more residents?



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Marquette Park, which lies just outside the 15th Ward, is one of those public golf courses but some longtime residents of Chicago don't even know that it is there! To spread awareness and encourage more residents to use the space, we should use spaces like this for youth programming, free or low cost adult beginner classes, and offer initiatives such as free days to residents in nearby zip codes.

- As Chicago deindustrializes and closes former industrial sites, like General Iron and Damen Silos, large swaths of land and former buildings can be re-imagined and re-developed. For example, with the recent closing of General Iron in Lincoln Park and the development of Lincoln Yards, neighborhood advocates have asked for the site to be used as part of a new North Branch Park and Preserve. The preserve could expand access to the river for the whole city and decrease the green space deficit the community currently experiences and will get worse with the added residential density proposed for Lincoln Yards. How do you think comprehensively about the opportunity these sites and the transition across the city offers? How will you coordinate a vision across the city using these spaces to increase green space for all communities? How will you prioritize which neighborhoods or communities should experience development of these new de-industrialized green spaces first?

We should use cumulative impact studies to identify which communities face the greatest environmental burdens and lowest parkland ratios or tree canopy covers. As we then design green space in these communities we should consider how they can support all the needs of a community, including flood mitigation, supporting biodiversity and native species, bioremediation, and community recreation and beautification needs. I will also support my colleagues in City Council as we educate each other about the needs and current realities of their own communities. As we listen to neighbors and those closest to the problems at hand, it will be important to remember that we have a duty not only to our own constituents but to all Chicagoans.

### RESPONSE GREEN SPACE AND CREATING NEW PARKS:

#### 3) LAKEFRONT

Chicago's lakefront is a gem of the city and our city is unique in preserving the lake for all people. Currently, 26 of the 30 miles are publicly available for use and protected for the public, but two miles to the north and south remain cut off from public parks, beaches, and paths.

- What policies do you support to ensure the lakefront remains free and clear for all Chicagoans to enjoy? Please consider both the preservation of space (such as the Lakefront Protection Ordinance and Public Trust Doctrine) and practices that affect use (such as facilities and policing).



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Within the Lakefront Protection Ordinance we have to increase the application fee this will help reduce the possibility of development in the proximity of the lake front and the environmental hazards that are part of construction. We must ensure the lakefront remains for all people. I do support the rendering of the better streets Chicago of the lakefront redefined. I have reviewed it and it is inclusive and made through a holistic perspective.

- What efforts do you support to increase access to the city's lakefront by pedestrians, transit riders, cyclists, and people using wheelchairs and other mobility supports?

The lakefront can use more ADA friendly bridges or tunnels over or under Dusable Dive similar to those near the Field Museum and Planetarium. These add ons will increase access for all people.

### RESPONSE LAKEFRONT:

#### 4) ADDRESSING CLIMATE CHANGE

In February 2020, Chicago declared a climate change emergency in response to severe storms and lakeshore erosion. Lakefront parks and beaches across the city suffer a battering of lake waves and the loss of sand and erosion at alarming rates. It is estimated that the storms of 2020 caused [\\$37 million in damages](#) to beaches and parks. Erosion, intense storms, and the failing of concrete revetments, metal girders and rock barriers installed by U.S. Army Corps of Engineers have caused [4 beaches in Roger Park](#) to be washed away and closed; revealed infill at Rainbow Beach as sand was lost; resulted lake water levels reached the top of the stairs at Calumet Park Beach House; and led to the permanent closing of a third of the [Northerly Island walking path](#)—merely a year after it was opened in 2015.

The threat is only going to continue. Concrete, metal and rock barriers push higher water to unprotected places. Lake levels have always fluctuated, but scientists believe lake levels will continue to trend higher. Regardless of lake level, the increased severity of storm surges due to climate change place our [shoreline communities at greater risk](#) of flooding and damage.

**Nature-based solutions are a resilient, long-term, cost-effective method to manage the impact of climate change along the lake and across the city.** This approach uses natural ecosystems to provide protection such as wetlands for flood mitigation; trees and prairie spaces to combat the heat island effect; and mangroves to reduce the impact of waves, storm surge, and coastal erosion. These ecosystems also soften climate impacts, such as extreme weather, and reduce climate pollution by capturing carbon dioxide from the air and sequestering it in plants and soils.

Parkland and beaches are already a nature-based solution. The sand, soil, and plantings provide buffering and absorption that helps manage the fluctuation in lake levels and more frequent and severe



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storms. These green spaces furnish lakefront with recreational or contemplative areas and habitats for humans and wildlife to enjoy.

- How will you support the preservation or expansion of parkland, native plants, and healthy, mature trees and new tree planting across the city to combat climate change impacts that affect the shoreline and inland communities?

I support the use of sustainable nature-based interventions which will protect our city for years to come without fighting nature. Mangroves, prairie spaces and increased tree canopies are all mitigations which both fight the effects of climate change and immediately improve our communities.

### RESPONSE ADDRESSING CLIMATE CHANGE:

#### 5) COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND PARK ADVISORY COUNCILS

About 200 of Chicago's over 600 parks, beaches, playlots, and playgrounds have recognized Park Advisory Councils (PACs), resident groups of committed volunteers who support their parks through volunteerism, fundraising and other activities. Many PACs want influence over programs and maintenance and decisions about how parks will be used, but in reality, many feel left out of those decisions. At times, new permits are handed out for large events or art installations and PAC members or leadership don't find out until the event is underway or changes are being made to the park.

- Across the city there is no required or standard process around public notice and community input for park projects. How will you make sure that the public is informed and engaged in development, capital improvements, urban planning, large event or space rentals, and park planning decisions in your ward?

If elected, I will make sure any developments are community driven. The community will have the stamp of approval. We will engage community member in the proximity where the development will take place and include them in the process.

- How will you engage with Park Advisory Councils in urban planning, budgeting, funding decisions, considering capital improvement, determining park programming, and deciding what events or installations are placed in parks in your ward?

Yes, Park Advisory Councils are members of the community and know first hand what the park needs.

- How will you support the formation or the rebuilding of Park Advisory Councils in your ward?





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I will engage with members of the community that use the park facilities often and inform them of the PACs. I will then host periodic meetings and events to engage the PACs interest.

### RESPONSE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND PARK ADVISORY COUNCILS:

#### 6) PARK PRIVATIZATION AND REVENUE

The Park District generates most of its income from property taxes, and over the last decade, its share of those taxes has declined from 6.1% to 4.7%. The average property tax unit pays \$260 towards the Park District's budget.

To supplement income, the Chicago Park District has increased revenue generating activity – raising fees for harbor and golf courses; issuing permits and renting out parks for private festivals; contracting with more concessionaires or other vendors; adding billboard or advertising; renting space for Amazon lockers; increased renting out park buildings and facilities as special event spaces. Some of these activities close off parkland and public facilities for weeks during the summer and over popular weekends, damage park facilities, and create a distraction for park users who seek tranquility or a natural oasis. While some renters and permit holders repair park damage, it takes months for vegetation to regrow or capital improvements to be finished, impeding park use far beyond the closures.

Some of the most notable examples of these revenue generating activities have been new contracts with Lollapalooza, the NASCAR race planned for 2023, and mega-festivals in Douglass Park. Residents across the city cite a feeling that parks have been commercialized and are no longer public, community spaces for people.

- As park district spaces have refocused on revenue-generating outside events, many community partners and programs have been booted from park district buildings and grounds, or can no longer afford to use the space. What policies do you support to prioritize the use of park space for residents and community groups over revenue generating activities and improve community engagement by private groups seeking to operate for profit in public parks?

I do not support the privatization of public to subsidize private profit. They should go to venues designed for that type of entertainment. I do support community events lead by members of the community. Overall the community, not a commission should have the final vote whether such events should arrive to the park.

- The income from these events does not go a specific park, but rather to the Park District budget as a whole, leaving some residents to feel their park bears the brunt of the burden without reaping benefits. How do we ensure the impact and benefits of these rental events or fees are spread equitably?





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Perhaps this can be solved by introducing an ordinance which specifies the income of event fees stays at the park where it occurred for the purpose the park deems necessary. That way we can ensure that the income stays where the event took place.

- In the need to find new funding sources or expand programming, the Park District often balances private or non-profit partners and community programming, users, or needs. At times the interests of these different park users can be at odds. One example is a private baseball program that would like to pay for and install new lights at [Welles Park](#), but some community members are opposed. How will you manage the competing interest of various stakeholders when money is involved?

I will facilitate negotiations and deals between opposing interests of various stakeholders and perhaps bring in partners from various levels of government where we may be able to expand the funds available for projects in that park.

- When permits are issued for large music festivals or events, like the NASCAR race, the Park District does not have to consult alderpeople, but the event requires resources and time from multiple city departments, such as the police department to manage crowds, CDOT to reorganize traffic, and Streets and Sanitation to clean up. What policies do you support to increase coordination between city agencies, community members, and the Park District when determining what large events happen in parks?

We need to examine if the city is the losing partner when large festivals or organizations like Nascar have events in the city. Once we have examined the total cost and the revenue made from events, then we can talk about what role the city will play if such events will continue to take place in Chicago. We should be responsible stewards of the people's money and I do not support using the people's money to subsidize the profit of private companies.

- To what extent should the Park District's budget rely on private, revenue generating events vendors and concession stands, fees for service, advertisements (i.e. billboards), and renting the parks to for-profit groups?

The Park District's budget should not become overly reliant on revenue generating events. Perhaps an examination if there is room for the parks assets to generate more revenue from business contracts without privatizing our assets. In addition, perhaps there can be a way to increase TIF from 2% to 4%. Another fiscal decision that may assist the parks is finding ways to reduce the debt Chicago Park District holds.

### RESPONSE PARK PRIVATIZATION AND REVENUE:



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### 7) BUDGET PROCESS AND RESOURCE ALLOCATION

The Chicago Park District's annual budget process offers a public hearing, an online forum for input, and a vote at an open board meeting. It is questionable whether there is adequate space for resident input or sufficient power and influence ascribed to their input. Many park activists are unaware that the online forums exist or how they would have access them and they face barriers to attending the public meetings.

- The Chicago Park District should actively engage park stakeholders across the city in the budgeting process, particularly with the Capital Improvement Projects. Efforts should be made to understand and address any barriers to participation from historically disenfranchised populations. What will you do to help the Chicago Park District find ways to extend more budgetary control to the public and incorporate community participation into their annual budgets?

It is important to examine the established avenues for participation and evaluate whether they are actually accomplishing their stated goal. If already engaged park patrons and park activists are unable to participate meaningfully in budget proposals, then it is likely that other park-goers and community residents face the same challenges. It is not enough to post something online and hope people find the information - we have to meet Chicagoans where they are. That may mean something as simple as changing the times of meetings or having consistent interpretation. It may mean we need to step out of our offices and field houses to meet patrons on the fields and pathways, or focus on other ways of meeting neighbors. As alderwoman, I will work with the Park District as well as park enthusiasts to meet our neighbors where they are.

- Each year, the Park District accepts submissions for capital improvement requests from a variety of sources. More than one in three requests from elected officials are approved, while only about one in five requests from the public are approved. As an Alderman, how would you use your influence to support capital improvement requests for parks in your ward and across the city?

I will be an alderwoman for the people. My position and office mean nothing if they are not being used to fight alongside my neighbors. Through the community-driven zoning and participatory budget processes I will initiate, I will have many opportunities to hear from my constituents about their priorities and concerns around parks. These authentic conversations will prepare me to be a better representative of my constituents during budget proceedings and ensure that all 6 neighborhoods of the 15th Ward are well represented at the Park District.

- Park Advisory Councils have advocated for Menu Money, Tax Increment Financing District Funding, Capital Improvement Programs, Open Space Impact Fees, and Special Service Area Program Funding as resources to supplement Park District funding. As Alderman you have access to and influence over a variety of city funding streams to support projects in your ward. How will



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you use your influence to support investment and improvement of parks in your ward and the city? What funding priorities would you promote?

I know that thriving communities have well funded parks, programming for youth, adults and seniors, and community spaces for recreation. I also know that some parts of our ward have been neglected for years and even decades. But my funding and priority decisions will be made using this information *alongside* the vision and funding priorities raised by constituents.

### RESPONSE BUDGET PROCESS AND RESOURCE ALLOCATION:

#### 8) PARK ACCESSIBILITY, FACILITIES, & AMENITIES

In the South and West sides of the city, larger park or natural areas are not easily accessible by public transportation. Many parks and natural areas typically lack accessibility for people with disabilities, or only a portion are accessible. While some heavily-trafficked areas like the Lakefront trail may tend to have open and clean bathrooms, many other parks have dirty, locked, or no bathroom facilities. Without access to a bathroom, the time residents can spend or activities they can engage in at a park are limited. Some parks lack lights, clear parking spaces, signs at the entrance, multi-lingual signage or signage throughout to identify elements of the park. In some cases, roads leading into parks are blocked with gates and barricades at all hours.

- What steps will you take to ensure our parks, playlots, beaches, and trails are welcoming and accessible places for everyone?

Improving public facilities is a key priority for me. I have personally experienced the difficulties that can arise because of locked field houses and bathrooms, broken sidewalks, barricaded roads, and inadequate lighting. Correcting these situations is the bare minimum we can do for our neighbors and I intend to start here as soon as possible. Following up with routine maintenance, completing 311 requests and proactively checking on facilities can go a long way to maintaining truly accessible parks.

- Pet owners bring their dogs to parks, playlots, paths, and beaches across the city. Dogs can also be a barrier to other residents' enjoyment or a threat to wildlife. How will you engage with various points of views about dogs in parks?

I myself am a dog owner and know the joy and benefit of visiting parks with my pet. But I also know how problematic animal excrement can be at a park, the disruption to native animals in prairie plantings and other people enjoying the parks in other ways. I have experience working with people who hold many viewpoints and am an organizer - together with mutual respect, we can find ways to make parks enjoyable for all patrons.



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- As the Chicago Park District plans improvement and maintenance of fieldhouses, playgrounds, and other recreation facilities, how will you prioritize resources based on historic disinvestment faced by some parks and communities? How will you include the community in the decision-making process? How will a commitment to racial equity impact your actions?

I will consider the density and accessibility of existing parkland, gun violence incidence rates, and the history of investment or lack thereof when considering new green space investments. Those neighborhoods and blocks with a history of disinvestment, the least access to parks and highest burden of violence will be prioritized for new parks. However, all decisions will be made in conjunction with the community-driven zoning process and the priorities made clear by that work.

- Field houses across the city are often closed on weekends and evenings. These closures mean people lack access to bathrooms, staff assistance or programming. Similarly, park bathrooms outside field house are often locked, or many parks have no bathroom. What will you do to make sure park field houses and the resources they provide can reach more residents?

Parks need to be available when people want to use them. I will work with park supervisors to identify obstacles to adequate staffing and operational hours and possible solutions. Park resources should be used strategically to provide for these changes.

- Often, new construction developments are allowed to use developer-owned "publicly accessible" green spaces to satisfy open space requirements rather than Chicago Park District-controlled land. When private corporations dictate the development, management, and public access to green spaces, it seldom leads to park spaces desired by Chicago. These privately administered spaces are subject to different operating hours and rules than local parks. Additionally, when departments in the City government collaborate for new development or capital improvement to be "shared," the park users miss out on access or design of the space. An example is Whitney Young's Sports Complex, funded entirely with tax-increment financing. What is your vision to ensuring true public access to new green spaces, facilities, or amenities that are a funded with public dollars or promise public access during construction? How will you use your position to support that vision?

Privatization of municipal assets has been a huge setback for Chicagoans over the years. As alderwoman I will ensure that public dollars are used to fund public spaces that are available to all people. I will not support any venture that puts public dollars to work for a wealthy few, rather than all Chicagoans.

### RESPONSE PARK ACCESSIBILITY, FACILITIES, & AMENITIES:

#### 9) PARK PROGRAMMING



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Annually, more than 350,000 people participate through the Chicago Park District in thousands of sports, recreational, cultural, and environmental programs across the city. Yet the distribution of programs is often inequitable and mismatched, failing to meet the needs of local communities effectively. Even preliminary research indicates dramatic inequities across the city in the amount of programs and services offered. At times, programs feel dropped into a community without community input or research. In addition, the programs families are looking to for their health, cultural, and recreation may also be financially out of reach.

Where processes existed under the 1983 Consent Decree to ensure equitably distributed and responsive programming, many parks now lack the programs that are culturally relevant and affordable.

- Parks can be essential resources for people of all ages in a community, especially because they offer classes, camps, pools, exercise equipment and facilities, and chances to socialize. What resources will you invest in parks to prioritize use by diverse populations – seniors, families and children, people with disabilities, and teenagers? How will you ensure park programming is culturally relevant to BIPOC communities that have experienced exclusion and disinvestment?

We have to invest in the parks where BIPOC communities live. For example, in the 15th ward, at the moment this questionnaire is submitted, does not have an enclosed pool. That means, in the fall and winter families have to travel out of their communities to have those amenities. Often, the travel may discourage the involvement in these programs.

- What will you do to support residents and community groups to have access to park space and programming for no or low cost?

In the meantime, while we look for ways to reduce the debt the Park District has and non regressive manners to increase revenue residents in proximity or with certain financial strains can have subsidized cost of programs. Likewise community groups can apply for a subsidized cost to access the park only if the community groups conducts work in the proximity of the park.

- Parks across Chicago do have the same access to sufficient, culturally relevant, and affordable programs or have space maintained to meet the needs of the community. What will you do to ensure equity in park programming and resources (facilities, maintenance, etc.) for parks in your ward and across Chicago, keeping in mind the historic underinvestment in West and South Side parks?

Honestly, the 15th ward has been historically disinvested at the park are not excluded from that condition. While Chicago Park District headquarters will be in the ward, the parks in the ward need investments in their facilities and resources to attract more user throughout the year. Working across levels of government can assist with investment in the parks throughout the ward I plan to serve.



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- How will you include the community in program design and program offering in their parks to make sure it is sufficient, relevant, and affordable and to proactively account for external community problems related to public safety and violence?

I will work with the PACs, community school, community groups, and parents to collectively design what the parks offer and how the park can work in conjunction with the community's efforts.

### RESPONSE PARK PROGRAMMING:

#### 10) SAFETY

Feelings of safety and security greatly shape how park spaces are experienced. While some park users feel vulnerable when parks are too empty, others want quiet, wide-open, empty spaces. Some fear gun violence, and others fear oppressive police presence. Some are worried about playground conditions, and others are worried about vandalism. Some want more lights or call boxes. All of these are important considerations as we address safety concerns.

In the summer of 2022, as a response to the death of Chicago teenager, a curfew was enacted at Millennium Park to restrict event access to the park for young residents not accompanied by an adult or attending a ticketed event. In multiple Listening Tour sessions in different parts of Chicago, we heard similar statements that represent a specific loss of access to park amenities after violence occurred in their parks. If the response to select instances of violence in parks is to close, restrict, or remove certain amenities, this seems like the beginning of a very dangerous trend of the Chicago Park District punishing entire communities for the actions of a few.

- How will you approach safety in a way that does not unfairly punish entire communities for the behavior of the few?

Cultivating and maintaining public safety is about more than reacting to violence or harm when it occurs. To prevent violence, we need to invest in the very communities that are risk - we need to increase programming for all age groups, encourage public use of parks, and invest in evidence-based violence prevention, such as street outreach and de-escalation teams, that protects all residents without punishing them.

- How would you ensure residents of all ages can access public amenities while balancing concerns for public safety?

Programs directed at different age groups will help all members of communities foster positive social relationships and model different recreation activities. However, mixed age programming can also strengthen ties throughout a community and across age groups, provide near peer models, and safe adults for young people to look up to and seek guidance from. Community members with these



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relationships will more effectively be able to mediate disagreements and come to effective solutions within park spaces.

- What steps will you take or policies will you support to increase the public safety of Chicago's parks, playlots, playgrounds, paths, and beaches beyond increasing police presence?

There are some basics we can ensure, including facility, lighting and grounds improvements. Parkland is an asset we should protect but we must *show* that before we ask others to follow suit. We can also invest in interventions that we know reduce harm, including violence interrupters and recidivism prevention programs.

### RESPONSE SAFETY:

#### 11) PARK DISTRICT OVERSIGHT

- The Chicago Park District is not a department of the city government, but a separate governmental entity. However, the Chicago Park District's Board of Commissioners' members are nominated by the mayor and must be approved by the Committee on Special Events, Cultural Affairs and Recreation. What policies do you support to make sure nominees have **demonstrated relevant experience, background and skills sets related to parks?**

Nominees should demonstrate they have work to facilitate spaces where children and families have had phenomenal experiences. Moreover, that their work was sustainable and not a burden to the parks' finances. Honestly, families and community members experiences with the nominees in park/recreational roles should be taken into account.

- How will you use your role to provide oversight to the parks, playlots and beaches in your ward? I will conduct recurring meeting with park personnel and PAC members to discuss matters the parks may be going through, figure out how we can work together, and how I can help the community members get the best from their parks.

### RESPONSE PARK DISTRICT OVERSIGHT:

## WARD SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

### ADDRESSING CLIMATE CHANGE ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR **WARD 5, 7 AND 10**

- In 2022, a [community ballot referendum](#) in the 5<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Wards asked the city to stop cutting down trees in Jackson Park and the area surrounding the South Shore Cultural Center passed by 82%. The trees are at risk due to the construction of the Obama Presidential Center





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and the proposals to merge Jackson Park and the South Shore Cultural Center golf courses into a new PGA golf course. As Alderman, how will you work to support the community's preference to save the trees in Jackson Park, the South Shore Cultural Center, South Shore Nature Sanctuary, and the surrounding community areas?

### ADDRESSING CLIMATE CHANGE ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR **WARD 10**

A toxic dump occupies 50 acres of shoreline on one of the last critical pieces of land on the South Side to complete Daniel Burnham's vision of a park system spanning the entire Chicago lakefront. The [Chicago Area Confined Disposal Facility \(CDF\)](#) sits on Lake Michigan between the Calumet River and Calumet Park in the 10<sup>th</sup> ward. The land is owned by the Chicago Park District but leased to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to store dredge until full. In 2022, the CDF maxed out the storage space and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has asked to expand the facility 25 feet vertically to keep it open.

The site, built in the 1980s, is a legacy of previous industrial uses of the river, the only industrial or toxic site on Chicago's shoreline, and is leaking into the Calumet River and Lake Michigan--leaking that could worsen with rising water levels and storm surges fueled by climate change.

- Chicago residents have waited almost 40 years for the land to be returned and created into a public park. As Alderman, what next steps do you support related to the CDF?

### PARK PRIVATIZATION AND REVENUE ADDITIONAL QUESTION FOR **WARD 24, 25, and 28**

- What will you do increase community engagement about the decision to hold festivals in parks, how will you respond to stakeholder feedback, and what will you do to ensure the impact and benefits of these rental events or fees return to Douglass park?

### NEW BUILDINGS IN PARKS **WARD 26**

In 2022 an unpermitted, unapproved building project was undertaken in a non-democratic process with state funds by the National Museum of Puerto Rican Arts & Culture in historic Humboldt Park next to the landmarked former stables building (and office of Jens Jensen).

- Please disclose any formal or informal leadership roles in the community that you have held or currently hold that relate to National Museum of Puerto Rican Arts & Culture and their plan to develop structures on public parkland.
- What did you know about or how were you involved with this project before construction was halted in September 2022?
- How will you offer leadership to remedy this situation?



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### ADDRESSING CLIMATE CHANGE ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR **WARD 48 & 49**

- What will you do to support vulnerable shoreline communities from the threat of flooding, erosion, and the impact of climate change?

### PARK ACCESSIBILITY, FACILITIES, & AMENITIES ADDITIONAL QUESTION **WARD 49**

- [Touhy Park](#) has seen an encampment in the park for almost 2 years. The Park District has moved some activities to neighboring parks. The Police Department and the City has a policy not to evict people staying on public land. What policies and actions do you support to address this encampment that will manage the needs of the various people involved?