



## **APPENDIX C**

### **CURRENT STATE OF GREEN/OPEN SPACE IN THE WEST LOOP**

#### **1. Publicly Owned Open Space**

##### **A. Chicago Park District Parks**

There are six public parks owned by the Chicago Park District in the West Loop. Union Park is the largest at 3.4 acres and located on the Western edge of the West Loop. Union Park is not considered to be in the West Loop by the City of Chicago but residents considered it part of the West Loop neighborhood due to its proximity. Even with the annexation of Union Park, the West Loop is still short 20+ acres in open space based on the 2010 population. Union Park was recently improved with a new playground and new fieldhouse windows.

Skinner Park (5 acres) comprises of 1 square block and is bounded by Throop, Loomis, Adams, and Monroe and like Union Park is located on the Western part of the neighborhood. Skinner's playground and athletic fields currently support the recreational and athletic needs of not just residents but over 4,000+ students from private schools and the two adjacent public schools: Skinner West Elementary and Whitney Young High School. Recent improvements include a large playground, community ornamental and vegetable gardens, new basketball courts, large DFA, and a newly sodded sports field.

Heritage Green Park (1.0 acre), located at Adams and Desplaines, just east of St. Patrick's Church was built to add more park space in the park deprived sub-area east of the Kennedy. It's a passive park with a small garden, pathways, and a small grass field and is used for sports by local residents such as cricket and football. Heritage Green is also popular as an event space for many companies located nearby. Fulton River Park and Heritage Green Park are popular with dog owners.

Fulton River Park (Park No. 551, 1.0 acre) is situated at Desplaines and Kinzie, just south of Blommer's Chocolate Factory and has a small playground, a small dog run, and a grass hill creating a "terraced" park. Both Fulton River and Heritage



Green were built to address the lack of green space east of the Kennedy, specifically in the Fulton River and West Loop Gate sections of the West Loop.

Bartelme Park (1.5 acres) was built in 2010 to help address the lack of green space in the West Loop. Bartelme is bounded by Sangamon, Green, Monroe, and Adams and currently hosts the Green City Farmer's Market in the summer as well as other special events during the year. Mary Bartelme Park offers a large playground, a dog park, and iconic public art.

Skinner DFA (Park No. 569 | 0.4 acre) is located on the NE corner of Monroe and Loomis across from Skinner Park. This large size DFA resulted from many years of advocacy by SPAC's Dog Advocacy Committee.

There are currently three active Park Advisory Councils (Union, Skinner, and Bartelme) and they are tasked with representing the community voice as well as being the advocates for these parks. PACs are the official community liaisons to the Chicago Park District. Many PAC members help to fund raise as well as volunteer for their respective parks for improvements, programs and special events. The Skinner Dog Friendly Area is also supported by a DFA committee.

## **B. City Owned Parks & Community Gardens**

In addition to the Chicago Public Parks, there is a small number of City-owned pocket parks that were built as part of a development agreement.

- Trio Park ( 0.5 acre pocket park )
- Riverpoint Park (1.5 acre pocket park & riverwalk).
- Loomis St. Gardens (0.5 acre closed section of Loomis St. between Adams and Monroe that was “greened”).

These city-owned public spaces are currently maintained without public funds thru developer agreements or community garden agreements. There are concerns associated with the Trio agreement which suggests that these operational maintenance agreements are not viable for small condo buildings and corresponding small pocket parks. These agreements seem to be more feasible as part of a large commercial / large rental development.



## **2. Other Open Space & Facilities**

### **A. Chicago Public Schools (CPS) – Publicly Owned**

The Chicago Public Schools also owns open space and sports/recreation facilities in the West Loop that are part of the Whitney Young High School Campus and Skinner West Elementary.

The Whitney Young HS Physical Education Building and outdoor athletic fields and courts west of Loomis St. were built and financed by the Chicago Park District as a field house and expanded park space to serve the West Loop community and Whitney Young High School in 1975. In 1995, the Chicago Park District transferred ownership of the WYHS PE building and the outdoor sports fields to CPS and the community lost use of these facilities. In 2000, the newly formed Skinner Park Advisory Council successfully advocated for part of the Whitney Young facilities (pool & small gym) to be reopened for Park District programming to serve the community. Swim and indoor programs were added to serve the community and after school needs of Skinner West Elementary school. The Park District also run part of the after school program in the lunch room of Skinner West.

There is limited public access to these CPS facilities via the Park District and public community access is further challenged by the privatization of these taxpayer funded public facilities to for-profit businesses. Alderman Ervin during the State of the 28<sup>th</sup> Ward has suggested that the privatization of CPS facilities should be revisited in light of the need for community access.

### **B. Privately owned open space that is open to the community**

There are several examples of privately owned open space that is open for public use. The most notable is the 0.5 acre dog park that is part of the K2 apartment building. Another example is the PepsiCo building roofdeck which is open to the general public during normal businesses hours. The main difference between these two examples is that the public use of the K2 private dog park is that there is a formal agreement granting public use of the dog park.