

IMPROVE our beautiful public beaches & create more green space all over the South Side!

PRESERVE the “structural integrity field” of the South Shore Cultural Center!

REPAIR the existing bike lanes, which are in a shameful and dangerous condition!

but

DON'T spend Million\$\$\$\$ on an offshore bike detour!

The proposed island development would suck resources away from any neighborhood projects west of the lakefront. **Daniel Burnham recommended** “an acre of park land for every 100 residents of Chicago.” But just glance at the South-Side map on the “Friends of the Parks” website: you will see precious few little postage-stamps of green -- except at the lakefront.

Burnham envisaged Chicago's parks as being *within neighborhoods*, adding to the vitality of communities through socializing, contemplation, recreation. But an isolated structure like this is a thoroughfare for moving people through the area at high speed, nothing more. They do not come to look at the flowers. This neighborhood is not their destination.

Would this “island” structure even be used by all cyclists from the north? It would be a detour. It is not the shortest line between 2 points; it would not be appealing in the frequent high winds. Many riders – and walkers - would opt for the straight-line route instead.

To the neighborhood, the project would offer no advantages – and no “direct access” either! Local people would have to “access” it at 71st or 75th Street – by then they're already at the beach! Go north or south, then east, to get to this island, and once there, there's nothing to do but jump out of the way of the fast bikes, or head north or south yourself.

No swimming: no beachhouse, no food concessions, no toilets, no lifeguard. To prevent illegal swimming by children, especially in the warm and very shallow water toward shore, some kind of high barrier would be needed – like the chain-link fence around the golf course, not pretty.

Walls would be needed to protect users of the bike speedway, and to hold the structure together against full exposure to Lake Michigan. To picture this, consider the 12-foot high concrete walls that conduct the bike path around Shedd Aquarium where it contacts the lake.

We won't speak of the “unforeseen uses” of the island, after hours or in the 8-months off-season, when this isolated and invisible area becomes the “playground of miscreants.” Of course there would be no “direct access” for the police. The Alderman's office might assign a full-time staffer to deal with the neighborhood reactions to this.

Do you see a Lagoon? The *Plan of Chicago* valued lagoons, but not as the mere by-product of a construction project. They were to be a respected element within the park system, bordered by parkland, carefully planted and maintained on all sides by the City. And in fact Chicago has *no lagoons bordered by private land*. Such a thing would be unprecedented. Think for a moment about how many things fall into neglect in our city, how much is left half-done. What South Shore would get from this is an afterthought, a pseudo-lagoon, with very shallow depth and pinched-off circulation. At best the summer water would revert to swamp; at worst it would be a casual dumping-ground, outside of City responsibility, the makings of an eyesore.

And in winter there are big icebergs. The quiet water near shore tends to form an icepack; ice expands [!] against anything that tries to restrict it, such as the sides or low bridge of a narrow channel. Robert Frost once put it this way:

SOMETHING there is that doesn't love a wall,
That sends the frozen-ground-swell under it,
And spills the upper boulders in the sun;
And makes gaps even two can pass abreast.