APPLICATION FORM

RTA Community Planning Program and CMAP Local Technical Assistance Program

Deadline: Noon on Friday, October 26, 2018

This application form is online at www.rtachicago.org/applications. You may submit the form by email to applications@rtachicago.org. Please submit one application per project as a PDF package. Please avoid submitting multiple PDFs for the same application.

Name: Friends of the Parks
Applicant

Name: Sandra DelToro
Main Contact of Application

Title: Deputy Director

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TYPE OF APPLICANT
(please check all that apply)

☐ Local Government
☐ Multijurisdictional group*
☒ Nongovernmental organization*

Please list the members of the group (including government and nongovernmental organizations):

When Friends of the Parks held a charrette in preparation for making the Last Four Miles Plan (2006) we engaged many groups, councils, and individuals. This is a partial list of the people who contributed to our efforts:

* Friends of the New Lakefront
* The South Shore Cultural Center Advisory Council
* Edgewater Community Council
* Edgewater Chamber of Commerce
* Bush Neighbors Association
* Alliance for the Great Lakes
* Loyola Park Advisory Council
* Berger Park Advisory Council
* Rainbow Beach Advisory Council
* Lincoln Park Advisory Council
* Sierra Club
* Chiagoland Bike Federation
* Burnham Park Advisory Council
* Bird Conservation Network
* Southeast Environmental Task Force
* Edgewater Historical Society
* Harbor Advisory councils
* Howard Area Community Council
* Denvor North
* Rogers Park Community Council
* Centre Romero

Since we would like to refresh this plan, we acknowledge that we would like to re-engage stakeholders on the southern end who have expressed an interest in being involved in a long-term way. These include some individuals, organizations, and groups Friends of the Parks engaged through its Listening Tour Series including:

* Southeast Environmental Task Force
* Rainbow Beach Advisory Council
* Bush Neighbors Association
* The South Shore Cultural Center Advisory Council
* 10th Ward Ald. Susan Sadlowski Garza
* Alliance of the Southeast (ASE)
* Chicanal Associates
* Centro de Trabajadores Unidos
* Calumet Ecological Park Association

*Applications submitted by multijurisdictional groups and nongovernmental organizations must include a letter indicating support from each relevant local government. See the FAQs for more information. Nongovernmental applicants are strongly encouraged to contact CMAP or the RTA prior to submitting their application to discuss their project and the demonstration of local support.
1. Project Location. Please provide a brief description of the location of your project. You may include a map if that helps to describe location, but this is not required. If your project helps to implement a past plan, please include a link to that plan.

The Last Four Miles Plan would add almost 500 acres of new parks and beaches, which provide recreational and health benefits for urban dwellers. The plan would complete a single lakefront-long park to knit the city together and extend the lakefront trail for walkers, runners, and cyclists—to Evanston on the north and to the Indiana border on the south.

For the purposes of this project, Friends of the Parks is examining the lakefront miles on the southern end of the project. This encompasses the following:
* Limited park expansion between 71st and 75th Streets to connect South Shore Cultural Center with Rainbow Beach Park;
* Additional park and beach development at the former U.S. Steel South Works; (This is the current site of Park 566 and Steelworkers Park)
* The South Side plan also envisions the northward expansion of Calumet Park on land that is not used by the Illinois International Port District Authority for its maritime activities (i.e. the Confined Disposal Facility);

The 2006 concept plan includes completion of the lakefront path from 71st Street to the Indiana State Line, with connections to neighborhoods and bike trails in South Chicago and the Calumet region.

Based on engineering and environmental studies, the 2006 design resulting from the community charettes included almost 400 acres of new parkland, with new beaches, recreational fields, greenways, and nature areas for South Chicago neighborhoods.

Information on the previous plan can be found at: https://fotp.org/issues/projects/last-four-miles/
2. Project Description. Please tell us what you would like to do in your community, and what assistance is
needed. If you have more than one idea, please submit a separate application for each project. Please be specific,
but also brief (less than two pages per project idea)—we simply want to have a basic understanding of what
you want to do. For plan updates please tell us how you will be building upon (or replacing) the previous work.
Program staff will follow-up with you if we need any additional information to fully understand your proposed
project. (Please limit your responses to 6000 characters including spaces).

The completion of the lakefront parks system is integrated into Friends of the Parks ‘ Last Four Miles
desire for parks, beaches, and open space, and set the stage for formation and enhancement of Park
vision plan, which was publicly launched in 2009 in conjunction with the 100-year anniversary of Daniel
Barnes Burnham’s “Plan of Chicago,” which called for a publicly-accessible lakefront along all 30 miles of
Chicago’s lakefront. The charrettes for the Last Four Miles framework engaged more than 2000 people in
planning process that originated in 2006.

Friends of the Parks seeks to refresh this plan and begin a formal planning process, with the assistance of
CMAA, specifically focused on the southern end of the Last Four Miles. We feel our prior work has laid
the foundation for this process and we are poised to be successful. For the past three years, Friends of the
Parks (FOTP) has been leading conversations on the southeast side to help residents articulate their
desires for parks, beaches, and open space, and set the stage for formation and enhancement of Park
Advisory Councils (PACs) in these areas. This work was meant to refresh our prior plan for the region, the
Last Four Miles, (L4M) which was released in 2009, in commemoration of the Burnham Plan Centennial.
Over the course of the past year and a half, Friends of the Parks reached out to more than 200 residents
through one-to-one meetings, listening tours, and southeast coastal zone planning meetings in 19 sites in
South Chicago, South Shore, East Side, and Hegewisch. We have undertaken this work with very little
dedicated funding ($11,000) but moved forward it because of the high priority we place in resident
engagement and the region.

These conversations have yielded important results, which we hope to shape into an updated plan for park
development for the region. For instance, residents identified that the existing parkland on the southeast
side should be expanded, by making the land adjacent to the North Slip public parkland due to its status as
an important cultural and recreational resource. Specifically, residents discussed the fact that the area is
used extensively for fishing and remains an important recreational asset. This is consistent with the Last
Four Miles vision. New park amenities are being developed at Steelworkers Park, including a boat launch
and a climbing wall at the site of the current ore wall, at the south lakefront and at the mouth of the Calumet
River. FOTP is working with local residents to develop a sense of ownership of these amenities so they can
benefit from them and maintain local identity. While it is indeed important to make the lakefront path and
park systems available for all Chicagoans to enjoy, residents must benefit from them and also have a stake
in the planning for their local parks. Residents expressed a desire to shape the recreational amenities at
their local park which Friends of the Park is working to develop in conjunction with community members.
We plan to work with the alderman, local residents, and stakeholders to advocate that the current confined
disposal facility, at the mouth of the Calumet River is remediated and turned into parkland consistent with
the L4M plan and reflective of local resident environmental concerns. A major issue that has been brought
to the attention of FOTP by residents is the Confined Disposal Facility (CDF), a triangular shaped container
for dredged sediment from the Calumet River occupying 45 acres at Calumet Harbor and the river. The
CDF contains sediment that is dredged from the Calumet River and placed into the lined container. Built by
the US Army Corps of Engineers and operating since 1984, the CDF is nearing capacity even after its life
was extended until 2022. Once closed, the property will be turned over to the Chicago Park District (CPD).
Remediation and reuse will be needed. FOTP will engage residents and public officials on the benefit of
remediating/capping the CDF and converting it into parkland. We have already participated in meetings
with local stakeholders, the CPD, the Illinois International Port District, Alderman Susan Sadlowski
Garza, and the Army Corp of Engineers on discussions of a future new site of another CDF in the 10th
Ward. This has been vehemently rejected by residents who have expressed strong environmental justice
concerns of locating another site into the ward.
A compounded set of factors leads Friends of the Parks to the conclusion that this is the best opportunity to engage a cross-sector or residents, public officials, coalition members and the Illinois International Port District in efforts to connect the existing lakefront park system to the creation of additional parkland. Currently the Army Corps of Engineers is working to identify a new location for safe placement and management of dredged sediment needed to maintain the Calumet Harbor and River for navigation. They have extended the life of the current confined disposal facility on the lakefront, which will soon close. Residents are angered over the continued use of their ward as a site for landfills and dumping grounds for toxins. Friends of the Parks was also recently awarded a grant from the Chicago Community Trust to lead activation efforts around river adjacent, lakefront parks and examine the connections to the Confined Disposal Facility. Finally, the Chicago Park District is making investments to lakefront/river adjacent parks which has the potential to connect the parks to wetlands along the river.

However, as FOTP considers the engagement of additional stakeholders in planning, it is important to underscore that FOTP heard directly from residents that the southeast side has a long history of plans. Some residents expressed strong desires of being incorporated into long term planning and leadership roles rather than simply being called upon for single planning meetings. They stressed that the area had been looked at for planning in years prior and residents felt nothing had come of that.

For these reasons, FOTP wishes to develop a plan which is inclusive of resident concerns and includes leadership of local residents in its implementation. We feel we are positioned to undertake this effort and develop an actionable work plan to guide our work in the region.
3. Additional Strategic Partnerships. Please list any additional partners you may want to include in this planning project, and specify if you have made contact with them in advance of submitting this application. (Please limit your response to 1400 characters).

In addition to the neighborhood groups included above, strategically, we know it is critical to engage 5th Ward Ald. Leslie Hairston, 7th Ward Ald. Greg Mitchell and 10th Ward Ald. Susan Sadlowski Garza. We have enjoyed relationships with all three. We have also been engaged as a stakeholder with the Army Corps of Engineers, Ald. Sadlowski Garza, community residents, and the Illinois International Port District as they seek to secure a site for the new Confined Disposal Facility, now that the current location is reaching the end of its life. We have engaged with all through our Last Four Miles work. In addition, our executive director, Juanita Irizarry has met individually with IIPD Director, Clayton Harris III to share our plan for the Last Four Miles and the Confined Disposal Facility.

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**PLAN CHARACTERISTICS**

My project involves:

- [x] The preparation of a plan.
- [x] Updating an existing plan.
- [ ] Implementation of a previous plan.
- [x] My project has direct relevance to public transit and supports the use of the existing transit system.
- [ ] My project is not directly related to transportation or land use, but addresses ON TO 2050 and/or Invest In Transit in other ways.

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**ON TO 2050 ALIGNMENT**

(Please check all that apply)

- [ ] Inclusive Growth
- [x] Prioritized Investment
- [x] Resilience

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**RTA INVEST IN TRANSIT ALIGNMENT**

(please check all that apply)

- [x] Deliver Value on our transit investments
- [x] Build on the strengths of the transit network
- [ ] Keep transit competitive