

Information Regarding Walgreens Development at Lawrence & Kimball Prepared by Albany Park Neighbors

About Albany Park Neighbors

- Formed in 2012
- Facebook community of more than 550 members
- Key issue areas include litter abatement and beautification, business development and preservation, pedestrian and traffic safety, crime, advocacy with government, police, and NGOs, and increase of Level 1 public school opportunities.
- Monthly meetings have featured topics and speakers such as post-2012 flood recovery, CAPS and local crime, presentations by prospective businesses, forum with an alderman, litter strategies, and more
- Coordinated three clean-up events in 2012 across the 39th, 33rd, and 35th wards
- Engaged press coverage with more than a dozen media mentions: <http://www.dnainfo.com/chicago/search?q=%22albany+park+neighbors%22>
- Joined forces with other community groups to present a forum with aldermen and state representatives
- Developed relationships with several local aldermen, a state representative, the Albany Park Chamber of Commerce, and Albany Park Community Center to highlight community challenges and community resources
- Created several neighborhood guides promoting local businesses: <http://albanyparkneighbors.wordpress.com/area-guides/>
- Introduced a program recognizing positive local businesses: <http://albanyparkneighbors.wordpress.com/supporting-business/block-star-business/>

Core Concerns Re: Walgreens at Lawrence & Kimball

(Concerns based on description of project as follows: full demolition of existing building and attached diner, set-back retail, parking lot for 17 cars, 30' driveways on both Lawrence and Kimball)

Pedestrian & Cyclist Safety: We are very concerned that the sizeable driveways on both streets in such close proximity to heavily trafficked bus stops, train station, and major crosswalks is a significant safety hazard. This intersection is also slated for a Divvy station sometime in the future, and APN currently advocates for bike lanes in the area.

Many wait here for the Kimball/Homan bus or cross to the Kimball Brown Line station. This intersection is also a major thoroughfare of student traffic, as five campuses serving k-12 students sit within a half-mile. Parents are concerned that these curb cuts combined with heavy traffic into a retail lot will eliminate a safe route to school.

Car Traffic Flow: Because of the heavy numbers of pedestrians crossing, this intersection is very congested at most times. Residents fear that the driveways will cause traffic backups and unpredictable driver behavior as drivers try to cross against oncoming traffic. We are also concerned that many drivers will use the lot not as a place to park whilst shopping, but a place to wait for their passengers to get of the train or bus, which would further back up traffic as customers wait for a space to free up. This actually already happens in other nearby lots and it is a certainty for any new, Kimball-side lot. In addition, residents are concerned about delivery schedule and logistics.

Retail Character: This corner has always been used for street-level retail. In fact, street-level retail is the norm in Albany Park's commercial strips. Preserving this characteristic is recognized as a key way to enhance economic opportunity in urban areas.

Data on Pedestrian and Public Transit Traffic Near Lawrence & Kimball

(2012 data compiled from reports from the Chicago Transit Authority: http://www.transitchicago.com/news_initiatives/ridershipreports.aspx)

The CTA records an average of 4,187 entries each day at the Kimball Brown Line station, an increase of 2% over the previous year.)

Data from the City of Chicago's portal shows that approximately 1,900 passengers board the Kimball bus at Lawrence, while 1,400 passengers board the Lawrence bus in this area. While some of the population of bus and train riders intersects, this data demonstrates that the area is flush with pedestrians and warrants special consideration with regard to safety.

Data on Student Population Within Walking Distance of Lawrence & Kimball

Roosevelt High School: .3 mi away on Wilson with 1,379 students, all from the Albany Park neighborhood

Edison: .4 mi away with 277 K-8 students. This selective-enrollment elementary school draws students from all over the city, some of whom walk to school or public transit.

Albany Park Multicultural Academy: .4 mi away with 279 junior high students all from the Albany Park community

Hilbard: .4 mi away with 1,225 K-8 students all from the Albany Park community

Von Steuben: .3 mi away with 1,650 students, mostly from the Albany Park and North Park community, though some honors students travel from across the city via public transit

Albany Park Community Center: A site .1 mi away has 235 pre-k students, while its other Kimball location .3 mi away provides after-care to 155 children each school day

A total of 5,036 pre-school through high-school students within .5 miles of Lawrence & Kimball. Many students walk through or near this intersection as they travel to or from school.

In addition, North Park University educates and houses 3,200 students at their campus and dorms .7 mi away. At a still-walkable 1 mi away, Northeastern University boasts a student population of 11,000.

Data on Pedestrian & Cyclist Crash Incidents

(Crash data for Chicago in 2005-2012 where a bicyclist or pedestrian was the first point of impact by a driver's automobile, as collected by responding law enforcement and maintained by the Illinois Department of Transportation. Via ChicagoCrashes.org. All data cited taken within 150 feet of intersection.)

Bike Crashes: 9

Total Injuries: 8

2008: 3 crashes with 1 person injured & 5 people uninjured

2009: 1 crash with 2 people injured & 1 person uninjured

2010: 1 crash with 1 person injured & 1 person uninjured

2011: 1 crash with 1 person injured & 1 person uninjured

2012: 3 crashes with 3 people injured & 4 people uninjured

Pedestrian Crashes: 26

Total Injuries: 28

2005: 3 crashes with 3 people injured & 3 people uninjured

2006: 3 crashes with 3 people injured & 3 people uninjured

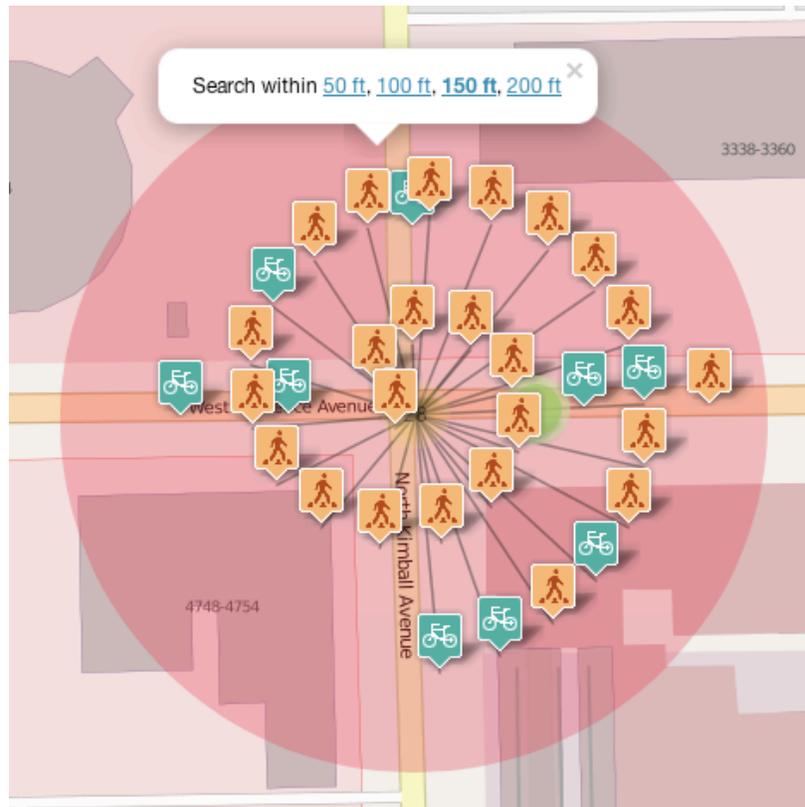
2007: 6 crashes with 6 people injured & 7 people uninjured

2008: 5 crashes with 6 people injured & 5 people uninjured

2009: 2 crashes with 2 people injured & 2 people uninjured

2010: 4 crashes with 4 people injured & 5 people uninjured

2012: 3 crashes with 4 people injured & 5 people uninjured



Note: Ald. Mell's office has confirmed that the Chicago Department of Transportation has plans in the works for a project to widen sidewalks on the narrow stretch of Kimball by up to two feet.

Input Regarding This Project Provided by the Active Transportation Alliance

General Recommendations

- Driveways in heavy pedestrian areas create conflict points between walkers and cars and potentially increase opportunities for crashes to occur.
- The city of Chicago prioritize pedestrian systems first according to the city's "complete streets" design guide and policy. The design guidelines prioritize pedestrian systems over vehicular systems.

Project-Specific Recommendations

- Maximize building storefront on public right-of-way. Flip location of parking lot and building (building at intersection and driveway further away from intersection).
- Minimize crossing distance for driveway. Check standards in the new city of Chicago guidelines with CDOT engineers.
- Keep sidewalk level.
- Sidewalk going through driveway should feel continuous to pedestrians.
- Intergrade sidewalk into any proposed driveway islands.
- New curb-cuts should be as far away from existing curb-cuts as possible or possibly be combined with other adjacent curb-cuts.
- Check minimum number of car parking spots required based on proximity to brown line CTA stations.
- Check city of Chicago ordinance for required number of bike parking spots (bike racks).

Input Regarding this Project from Preservation Chicago

Preservation Chicago would like to see this corner building housing so many resources and organizations preserved. It's our opinion that Walgreens could operate within the existing building and perhaps restore it as part of the development program, in the same spirit as they have done in other Chicago neighborhoods.

In Wicker Park/Bucktown, Walgreens restored the former Noel State Bank/Fairfield/Midwest Bank Building into one of their most successful operations. Similar renovations and remodelings have also occurred in other neighborhoods in Chicago and other cities.

With Transit-Oriented Development plans being promoted by the City for higher density and commercial and residential developments and the Vanishing Urban Corner cited as one of our neighborhood initiatives, Preservation Chicago would like to help the Albany Park Community to seek the sensitive redevelopment of this corner within this existing historic structure.

Ward Miller, Interim Executive Director
Preservation Chicago

Verbatim Comments from Albany Park Neighbors Members

(Unedited comments contributed by members via Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/AlbanyParkNeighbors/posts/335431376598062>)

Susan A. "I think adding a Walgreens on that corner would be a nice addition, but I definitely oppose the 'strip mall' type setup described. That corner is way too busy for that type of layout. There are some Walgreens locations in the Lakeview neighborhood that have more of a city feel—basically no parking lot or small parking behind only. I think that would be much better. I also think they need to remember the virtue of the vertical space in this location--the building should not be replaced by a single story medium-sized store, when there is a great opportunity for several levels of stores and offices/living spaces."

Maria T. - "The Walgreens would be a good addition—I know I for one would find it very useful!—but as it's proposed and outlined in the newsletter, it sounds like it will be a mess during busy transit times. As someone who regularly takes the buses/train from there I know how busy that corner can get. Perhaps the parking can be tucked behind, or on the west as someone else mentioned? I've not really looked behind the building as it stands now, but if that much renovation is to be done surely they can work on making accessible parking that works for drivers AND transit commuters/pedestrians."

Elliott M. - "The thing about the Walgreens in that location is that it's right at a transit terminus, in the middle of a dense residential neighborhood, and easy walking distance from a college campus—why do they need to have parking at all? Anyone wanting to hit a Walgreens by car has multiple good options nearby (if you're already driving, go on over to Pulaski, no biggie). I bet that store will have all the foot traffic it can handle if built in a properly urbanized, foot-friendly way. And bonus points to them if they widen the sidewalks, too!

At minimum, the developer should 'give back' another couple feet of new sidewalk width on both street frontages, just to make things sane. And no 4-foot fence! I know McDonalds and Village Thrift both have them, but that's just a chance to see how very badly they work for pedestrians."

Kris C. - "No parking needed as the [Walgreens location] on Pulaski takes care of that. I support a Walgreens though and think it will be a good addition."

Jeffrey G. - "I oppose anything with a parking lot at Kimball and Lawrence. I don't oppose a Walgreens without a parking lot."

Robert G. - "I think the new Walgreens conversion is a fantastic addition. My main concern is traffic backup. As we all know Lawrence is already a bit of a mess at times but I think this will be a good thing"

Aaron F. - "Wondering if the Walgreens would be open to the same building footprint as it exists now - parking on the west? Might also be nice if it was stepped back on the east slightly to allow more sidewalk/bus waiting room."

Erin J. - "As seems to be the theme here, I am 100% in opposition of any visible parking lots at the Walgreens. As someone mentioned, Lakeview has a Walgreens at Belmont/Sheffield without a parking lot and there is one at Barry/Clark with a parking lot. I lived equidistant from the 2 and ALWAYS went to the one without a parking lot as it felt much safer as a pedestrian. Having a large, mostly empty parking lot encouraged loitering, panhandling, and litter so I refused to go."

Lorna W. - "That corner is too busy to support such a project. Too many pedestrians, the L station, two HS's with students everywhere waiting for busses. How would this project help to reduce the current congestion? Seems to me that two driveways opening onto two already busy streets would only increase the congestion."

Enric M. - "Putting parking at this high pedestrian traffic location is also not good (or needed). Could Walgreens be talked into doing something more site-specific and friendlier. Have you seen what's been done at Damen & Milwaukee or Ashland & Division (CVS, in this case)"

Michael S. - "Absolutely backwards thinking on all fronts of modern urban planning. This must be stopped! There is no need for parking. It is across the street from a CTA station! If they insist that parking is needed it should be behind the building with an alley accessed drive thru. Rehab the existing building. Demand an immediate public hearing."

Nik P. - "Walgreens recently won an award for historic preservation in Chicago and now they want to tear down a historic building in our neighborhood and build a shoebox with a parking lot. I don't think it should be that easy to be a corporate hypocrite."

Brigid B. - "I am super excited about having a Walgreen's so close to my home, and that seems like an ideal location for one in many ways-- it's near the train and 2 busy bus lines, and about a half block from a dentist. I bet they'd also get a lot of foot traffic from people at the laundromat coming in for snacks. That said, wow, is that an ugly/generic building with no grace or style. I really wish they could do something with the existing building, which is lovely and has been rehabbed not too long ago, and has big sunny shop windows. Like the rest of you, I'm also leery of the driveway issue. That is a VERY busy corner, and I know that when I've waited to cross the street, the sidewalk has been jammed with pedestrians and cyclists. I like the alley suggestion, although that might create too much traffic for the area, I don't know."

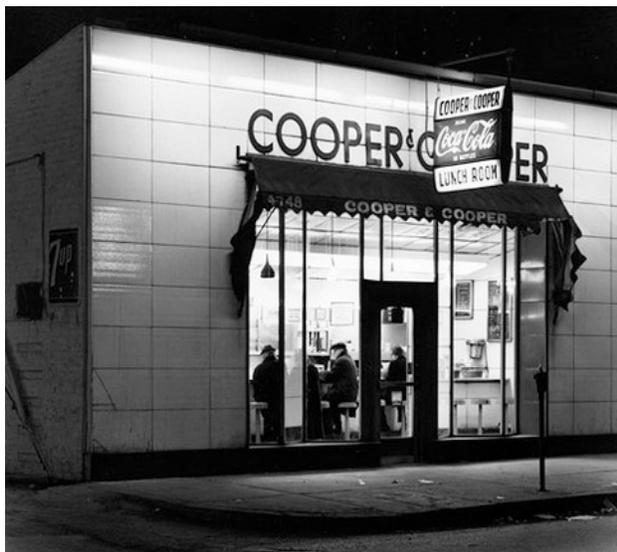
Ruth B. - "I'm not against Walgreen's, but they can certainly do better on such a prominent and high traffic corner than what they are proposing here. Check out the Walgreen's in Wicker Park in the old bank building across from the Blue Line on North. This building's no where near that elaborate, but it's still a lot better urban concept."



Historical Information about SW Corner of Kimball and Lawrence

This corner has been home to street-level retail for as long as Albany Park has been a neighborhood.

Prior to tenants such as Payless Shoe Source, in the '70s, the space was home to a groovy jeans store called A Different Circle. Before Different Circle, the store on the corner (3401 W. Lawrence) was called Devin-Klein Men's Store (circa 1962) Devin-Klein previously was located at 3242 W. Lawrence, so they had expanded into the better location at the corner of Kimball. Both stores are remembered in the area as convenient places to do shopping for the family.



A previous incarnation of the diner currently called Huddle House was an iconic restaurant called Cooper & Cooper. Albany Park teens in the '40s and '50s hung out here—famous for its burgers. A local historian interviewed its butcher, who still lives in Albany Park on Monticello, and he said that the kitchen went through nearly 25 pounds every day and perfected the idea of the burger assembly line long before McDonald's started business.

In 1976, the musician Tom Waits recorded a song ("Eggs & Sausage") at this diner, which aired on Sound Stage: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O3IEnRWvf18>

Neighborhood-Friendly Walgreens Developments Across Chicago

We recognize that Walgreens locations across Chicago often have large parking lots; however, some stores in dense neighborhoods have limited parking, and a handful have no parking. The Walgreens store in Bucktown just has a small lot in the back with just six spaces. However, in other cities, the standards are different. Most stores in NYC and San Fran have no parking and are more integrated into the neighborhood.

Bucktown Walgreens

- Minimal parking,
- Street-level retail
- Building re-use

Belmont/Sheffield Walgreens

- Transit station-adjacent
- Street-level retail
- Building re-use