

**Walden School Project**

**Public Comment**

**July 7, 2026**

July 6, 2026

Dear Board of the Village of Deerfield,

In anticipation of the Village meeting this Thursday, July 9, 2026, we are writing to urge the rejection of District 109's plans at Walden.

We moved into our house at 623 Ambleside in 2017. When we bought the house, we asked our realtor who owned the land on which the park sits and she told us the Deerfield Park District, not the school district. We thought the Park District would protect the only park space in the Northeast quadrant of Deerfield but we now must seek the Village's help to protect its residents by fairly enforcing the Special Use Rules on construction of new buildings.

We are not opposed to new schools in Deerfield, despite paying some of the highest property taxes in the United States. In fact, we fully support a new school being built at Walden. And we do appreciate that the District has changed the plans since it published them in the fall of 2025. But by rushing to build and operate two schools with over 900 students on a

piece of land that is not big enough to support them -- not to mention ever-shifting plans and start dates -- we cannot support the District's proposal.

Rushing to build a new school right next to houses would have a drastic effect on the neighborhood and would not be compatible with existing development. Walden school and park sit in the middle of residential properties on all four sides. Building a school right next to an existing, functioning school presents a number of issues, including safety of the more than 900 children during the construction process as well as the safety of the children and the community to operate a school and a construction site simultaneously. Not only will it be unsafe for the children, they will find it difficult to concentrate as an entire school is being built next to them. There will be no recess, park, ball fields, and soccer fields for two to three years. A swing site would have none of these issues; it is clear that there is a better way to do this.

The building of a two-story school right next to existing homes will clearly lower property values of those homes. The Village Board would never allow a private developer to engage in this construction given its incompatibility with existing development and effect on the neighborhood.

Just because a school is seeking a construction special use permit does not change how the Village approaches this issue. Under the law, the District must be treated the same as any other developer – particularly where the District comes to the Village with no evidence of having done anything to find a swing site.

There is a need for a swing school while the new school is being constructed. By swing sites, we mean somewhere other than the current school where the children can learn while a new school is under construction. That could consist of mobile classrooms, Highland Park elementary schools not in use, churches, temples, Sachs, Patty Turner. Or the District could build at Kipling and using that as a swing site (i.e. 3+1 plan), or use Wilmot as a swing for all 3 schools, since each of these schools has more land and can be staged off in a safer manner than Walden. And each is located on major public roads with multiple access roads and not immediately next to residential homes as at Walden.

For reasons only the District can answer, it has insisted that it has to take over Park land and there is no evidence that it seriously sought a swing site. If the District now complains about timing, it had four years to find a swing site and did

virtually nothing to do so during that time. The homeowners and community should not suffer because the District never seriously considered a Plan B.

We thank the Village for its open-minded consideration and believe the Village should uphold the law and order the District to find a swing site to build the new Walden School.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ken + Jodi Wittenberg". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the names connected together.

Ken and Jodi Wittenberg

## Daniel Nakahara, AICP

---

**From:** Bryan Kirchen <kirchen@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, July 6, 2026 9:32 PM  
**To:** Plan Commission Comment  
**Cc:** Daniel Nakahara, AICP; Jeffery Ryckaert, AICP  
**Subject:** [PUBLIC COMMENT] Special Use Permit for Walden

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

---

Dear Members of the Plan Commission,

I am a property owner directly north of Walden Park. I have reviewed the submission about the Walden site plan and have concerns with the plan's ability to satisfy the Special Use Criteria.

**Compatibility-** The proposed building is not compatible with the scale or character of the existing neighborhood. Walden has historically functioned mostly as a low, one-story school set well within a park-like setting, with the largest building elements thoughtfully kept away from nearby homes. The proposed plan is a significant change. It moves a much larger two-story structure much closer to the residential edge and places it on higher ground than the homes and walking path to the north.

From the north/Ambleside side, the mechanical screening will feel closer to the low-40-foot range, and the stairwell tower will approach 50 feet from the northwest path. That scale is not a reasonable transition to adjacent single-family homes, and the pedestrian path. It demonstrates that the lot, as proposed to be used, is not sufficient for this design without materially changing the neighborhood experience.

**Lot of sufficient size-**The Walden site is of insufficient size for the proposed project. There is not enough space in Walden for a second school to be built and operate concurrently. This approach is requiring significant compromises that are not in the best interest of our community, neighbors, or the children. The years-long elimination of both community and school amenities such as blacktops, open fields, a baseball diamond, and basketball courts remove a vital part of the community as Walden park is the only park in this quadrant of Deerfield with these amenities.

No other area in Deerfield is being asked to give up so much. Many neighborhood youth experience their first sense of independence learning how to ride their bikes on this blacktop and meeting independently at this park with friends. The removal of these amenities are not only a loss for our youth and anyone who enjoys our neighborhood park, but also a loss for our school children during recess.

**Adequate Facilities-** There are already serious water concerns around this site, and the plan does not include enough detail to instill confidence that the current conditions have been fully studied or that surrounding homes will be protected from new water issues. Before approval, I believe the District should be required to explain how the proposed grading, underground detention, infiltration systems, and geothermal installation will work together without increasing groundwater, saturation, or basement-water risk for nearby homes.

This is the first time I have heard that geothermal heating and cooling is included in this project. Geothermal has many benefits, but it is also significantly more expensive to install. It would be very helpful for the district to provide cost comparison, payback analysis, and other factors that led to this approach being selected.

The Village passed a referendum to rebuild Walden but it doesn't have to be done at the detriment of the Walden community. There are other options that could mitigate all these concerns and the lack of representation from the Walden community in the planning is evident in this solution.

The proposed plan creates years of disruption for the community and places the most serious long-term impacts on the homes immediately surrounding Walden. Those impacts are not evenly shared. The immediate neighbors face permanent changes to building scale, open space, drainage, sight lines, neighborhood character and negatively affect our property values.

Respectfully,

Bryan Kirchen  
647 Ambleside Drive

**Dear Chairperson and Members of the Plan Commission:**

My name is Carrie Kirchen, and I have lived on Ambleside Drive immediately north of Walden Elementary School and Walden Park for the past thirteen years. My property is among those most directly affected by the proposed redevelopment.

I appreciate the significant effort that School District 109, the Deerfield Park District, Village staff, and their consultants have devoted to this application. The materials before the Commission reflect extensive planning, engineering, architectural design, traffic analysis, and public engagement. I also recognize the importance of providing modern educational facilities for Deerfield students.

As I read the Village's Zoning Ordinance, the question before the Commission is whether the applicant has demonstrated compliance with each finding required by Section 13.11-D.

After reviewing the application, supporting reports, and the staff memorandum, I respectfully question whether the current record contains sufficient information to support several of the findings required by Section 13.11-D.

Rather than attempting to address every aspect of the application, these comments focus on six issues that I believe are most directly relevant to the Commission's review:

1. The effect of the proposal on surrounding residential property values.
2. The compatibility of the proposed building with the surrounding single-family neighborhood.
3. Whether the site is sufficient to accommodate both the expanded school and the existing public park.
4. Whether the record presently supports the required findings regarding drainage and stormwater management.
5. Whether the proposed second-story exterior learning area raises public safety concerns and concerns regarding compatibility with the neighborhood.
6. Whether the proposed construction phasing raises questions regarding student safety and the adequacy of the current record.

Each of these issues appears to relate directly to one or more of the findings required under Section 13.11-D.

Has the applicant met its burden of demonstrating that the proposal satisfies each of the specific findings for a Special Use Permit?

**1. Effect on the Neighborhood – Property Values**

Section 13.11-D(5) of the Village of Deerfield Zoning Ordinance requires the Commission to find that the proposed Special Use:

*"...will not be significantly or materially detrimental to the health, safety and welfare of the public or injurious to other property or improvements in the neighborhood, nor will it diminish or impair property values in the surrounding area."*

Commissioner David Rauhen emphasized this requirement during the April 23, 2026 pre-filing conference, specifically identifying potential impacts on neighboring property values as an issue requiring further support. In response, District 109 acknowledged that it did "not have a definitive answer" regarding property value impacts and indicated it intended to review anecdotal information from other communities.

Illinois law likewise recognizes that the relationship between institutional development and neighboring residential property is an appropriate subject of municipal zoning review. The Village's Special Use process exists precisely because even beneficial public or institutional projects may have land-use impacts that require careful evaluation when located adjacent to residential neighborhoods. Accordingly, the proximity of institutional structures to neighboring residences—and the resulting impacts on surrounding property—is not merely a policy consideration but a proper subject of the Commission's review under the Village's Special Use standards.<sup>1</sup>

Unlike many zoning proceedings where concerns regarding property values consist primarily of anecdotal testimony or speculation, the record before the Commission includes a professional appraisal prepared in accordance with the Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice ("USPAP") by a Certified Residential Real Estate Appraiser licensed in the State of Illinois. USPAP establishes nationally recognized ethical and professional standards governing real estate appraisal practice. (Exhibit A.)

The appraisal concludes that relocating the proposed school building substantially closer to neighboring residences is expected to reduce the market value of my property by approximately \$64,000 (approximately eight percent). Using paired-sales analysis, the appraiser found that otherwise similar homes located adjacent to school buildings sold for approximately eight percent less than comparable homes not similarly situated and concluded that this same reduction would be expected to apply to the Ambleside homes backing directly to the proposed school relocation. (Exhibit A.)

When neighboring homeowners purchased their properties, the land immediately south of our homes functioned—and continues to function today—as publicly accessible parkland owned by the Deerfield Park District. Although Walden Elementary School has long existed within the neighborhood, the existing site configuration provides a substantial open-space buffer separating the school from adjacent residences immediately north of Walden Park. That longstanding

---

<sup>1</sup> *Gurba v. Community High School District No. 155*, 2015 IL 118332. The Illinois Supreme Court held that school districts are subject to municipal zoning regulations and municipal special-use review. In doing so, the Court recognized that municipalities retain authority to evaluate the location, size, configuration, setbacks, and neighborhood impacts of school facilities when applying their zoning ordinances.

relationship is a defining characteristic of the neighborhood and one that reasonable purchasers would naturally consider when evaluating residential property.

The proposed redevelopment fundamentally changes that longstanding relationship. Rather than maintaining the existing transition between public parkland and the adjacent residential neighborhood, the proposal replaces a substantial portion of that open space with a substantially larger two-story institutional building and associated circulation routes immediately adjacent to neighboring homes.

The appraisal attributes its opinion of diminished value to the proposed relocation of the school building into substantially closer proximity to neighboring residences. The proposed site plan further illustrates the land-use changes accompanying that relocation, including the elimination of the existing open-space buffer between the school and neighboring homes, the introduction of a substantially larger two-story structure immediately adjacent to residential properties, and the resulting change in the physical relationship between the institutional use and the surrounding neighborhood. These are objective land-use characteristics reflected in the proposed design and are precisely the types of impacts that municipal zoning review is intended to evaluate under the Village's Special Use standards.

The question before the Commission is not whether the project serves an important educational purpose or whether its public benefits outweigh its impacts on neighboring property owners. Rather, the ordinance requires a narrower determination: whether the applicant has demonstrated that the proposed Special Use will not diminish or impair surrounding property values.

To date, the applicant has not submitted a professional appraisal, market analysis, or other valuation evidence concluding that neighboring residential property values will remain unaffected. Although District 109 indicated during the pre-filing conference that it intended to obtain additional information regarding property value impacts, the current application materials do not include any professional valuation evidence addressing this required finding.

By contrast, the only professional valuation evidence presently before the Commission concludes that measurable diminution in surrounding residential property values is likely to occur as a result of the proposed relocation of the school building.

Accordingly, I respectfully question whether the current record is sufficient to support the affirmative finding required by Section 13.11-D(5).

## **2. Compatibility with the Surrounding Neighborhood**

One of the required findings under Section 13.11-D of the Village of Deerfield Zoning Ordinance is that the proposed Special Use be compatible with the existing development and not impede the normal and orderly development of surrounding property.

Compatibility is not determined solely by whether minimum setbacks or height limitations are technically satisfied. Rather, it requires consideration of how the proposed development relates

to the surrounding neighborhood in terms of its scale, mass, placement, and relationship to adjacent residential properties.

Although the proposal replaces the existing school building, it also fundamentally changes the long-established relationship between Walden Elementary School, publicly accessible parkland, and the surrounding single-family neighborhood by relocating and expanding the institutional use onto land that has historically functioned as publicly accessible parkland owned by the Deerfield Park District.

The existing neighborhood has developed around a relationship that has remained largely unchanged for decades. Homes adjacent to portions of the existing school have long existed next to a predominantly one-story institutional building, and those homeowners purchased their properties with that relationship already established.

The homes immediately north of Walden Park, however, developed under a fundamentally different relationship. Those homeowners purchased properties adjoining publicly accessible parkland, with the school building located well beyond that open space. For decades, the park has served as both a physical separation and a visual transition between the institutional use and the surrounding residential neighborhood. That long-established relationship has become part of the existing character of the neighborhood that the Commission is now asked to evaluate for compatibility.

The proposed redevelopment fundamentally alters that relationship. Rather than preserving the existing transition between the school and neighboring homes, it relocates the institutional use onto land that currently functions as publicly accessible parkland. In doing so, it replaces a long-established open-space buffer with institutional development immediately adjacent to residential properties.

During the April 23, 2026 pre-filing conference, members of the Plan Commission requested that the applicant explain the methodology used to evaluate alternative construction approaches, including the potential use of swing-site options such as Wilmot Elementary. The application summarizes the District's conclusions but does not appear to include the underlying comparative analysis requested during that discussion, including the evaluation of specific alternatives and the basis upon which they were rejected. Because the selected site configuration relocates the institutional use onto existing parkland immediately adjacent to neighboring homes, the comparative analysis requested by the Commission appears directly relevant to evaluating whether that design is compatible with the surrounding neighborhood.

The change is not limited to the building's relocation. The proposed redevelopment also substantially changes the scale and visual character of the development. While portions of the existing school approach approximately 28 feet in height, those taller elements are located within the interior of the existing campus. The proposed redevelopment introduces a two-story building approximately 32 feet in height, rooftop mechanical screening extending to approximately 39 feet, and a stair tower reaching approximately 44 feet 8 inches in an area that has historically remained open between the school and adjacent residences.

Based on the materials currently before the Commission, I respectfully question whether the record presently supports this required finding.

### **3. Sufficiency of the Site**

One of the required findings under Section 13.11-D of the Village of Deerfield Zoning Ordinance is that the proposed site is of sufficient size, shape, and area to accommodate the proposed Special Use and all associated activities without adversely affecting surrounding properties or the public.

The applicant characterizes this project as the reconstruction of an existing elementary school. The proposal, however, represents more than reconstruction of the existing school building. It expands the institutional use onto land that currently functions as publicly accessible neighborhood parkland and permanently reallocates portions of that park to school buildings, parking, internal roadways, bus circulation, and other school infrastructure.

Whether that expanded program can be accommodated on this site without materially affecting the existing public recreational use of Walden Park is the question presented by this required finding.

During construction, the application acknowledges that significant portions of Walden Park will be unavailable to the public. According to the applicant's phasing plans, approximately three consecutive summers will include the loss or substantial restriction of major neighborhood amenities, including:

- the baseball field;
- the blacktop;
- soccer fields and open recreational space; and
- portions of the park that will be closed to all public access.

The application further states that public activities will not be permitted within portions of the site during construction.

The applicant characterizes these impacts as temporary. While construction will ultimately conclude, the closures will extend through approximately three consecutive summers—the period when neighborhood park use is at its highest. For many neighborhood children and teenagers, three summers represent a substantial portion of the years during which they regularly use these facilities. These are not merely short-term inconveniences. Rather, they demonstrate that the site cannot accommodate both the expanded school program and the existing public recreational functions during construction without eliminating major public amenities.

Walden Park is more than another recreational facility within the Deerfield Park District system. It functions as a true neighborhood park. Children, teenagers, and families routinely walk to the park independently from surrounding homes to use the baseball field, blacktop, playgrounds, and

open green space without requiring transportation elsewhere. Although other parks exist within the community, they do not provide the same neighborhood accessibility or serve the same role for residents living immediately adjacent to Walden Park.

Exhibit B contains photographs documenting ordinary use of Walden Park by neighborhood children, teenagers, and families. They demonstrate that the baseball field, blacktop, playgrounds, and open green space are not unused or surplus land awaiting redevelopment. Rather, they are actively used public amenities supporting informal recreation, neighborhood gatherings, and independent use by neighborhood children and teenagers throughout the year.

As I understand it, the question presented by the ordinance is not whether Deerfield has other parks or whether the educational objectives are worthwhile. Rather, it is whether this particular site is sufficiently large to accommodate both the expanded school and the existing public recreational functions that currently occupy it.

The proposal itself illustrates the practical limitations of the site. If the property were sufficiently large to accommodate both the expanded school program and the existing public recreational functions, the elimination of major park amenities for approximately three consecutive summers would not be necessary. The applicant's own plans therefore demonstrate that the site cannot accommodate both uses simultaneously without materially reducing the existing public recreational use of the site.

Based on the materials currently before the Commission, I respectfully question whether the record presently supports this required finding.

#### **4. Drainage and Stormwater**

One of the required findings under Section 13.11-D of the Village of Deerfield Zoning Ordinance is that adequate drainage, stormwater management, and related public improvements have been provided so that the proposed Special Use will not adversely affect surrounding properties or the public.

Stormwater management is not a peripheral issue for this project. It is a central component of the proposed redevelopment. The proposal replaces substantial areas of existing permeable open space with buildings, pavement, and other impervious surfaces, relies upon extensive underground stormwater detention infrastructure to manage runoff, and includes installation of a geothermal system requiring substantial subsurface excavation throughout the project site.

The importance of stormwater management within this watershed has long been recognized by the Village of Deerfield. In 2019, the Village of Deerfield partnered with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Lake County Stormwater Management Commission, and other governmental agencies in a comprehensive study of flooding within the Middle Fork watershed. That study updated hydrologic and hydraulic models, incorporated revised precipitation data, calibrated those models using recent flood events, and evaluated watershed conditions to assist local communities in future flood-risk management planning. (Exhibit C.)

Since the pre-filing conference, portions of the site design have changed. Although some grading revisions have been made, the proposal continues to rely upon substantial underground improvements, including stormwater detention facilities and a geothermal system requiring extensive subsurface excavation. The current record does not appear to explain in detail how these combined subsurface improvements were evaluated with respect to groundwater conditions, construction sequencing, or protection of adjacent residential properties during installation.

The materials presently before the Commission also do not appear to explain how stormwater will be managed during each phase of construction while large portions of the existing permeable parkland are disturbed and before the permanent detention facilities become operational. Because construction itself can materially affect drainage conditions, this information is relevant to whether the required finding can presently be made.

The applicant's own submission acknowledges that stormwater engineering review remains ongoing. The staff memorandum specifically states that preliminary engineering plans have been submitted and that the applicant will continue working with the Village Engineering Department to demonstrate compliance with applicable stormwater requirements. The application also indicates that underground detention systems will be constructed as part of the project. Accordingly, the staff memorandum itself recognizes that additional engineering review remains necessary before compliance with the Village's stormwater requirements can be demonstrated.

While the application includes site-specific stormwater calculations intended to demonstrate compliance with applicable detention requirements, I have not identified any discussion explaining how the proposed detention design, stormwater discharge, and substantial subsurface improvements—including the geothermal system—were evaluated in light of the broader watershed conditions identified in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers study. Nor have I identified any discussion explaining how those watershed conditions were considered in the proposed drainage design.

Because the Village's engineering review of these issues remains ongoing, I respectfully question whether the current record presently contains sufficient information to support the affirmative drainage finding required by Section 13.11-D.

---

## **5. Second-Story Exterior Learning Area**

One feature of the proposed design raises questions regarding both the compatibility of the proposed development with the surrounding residential neighborhood and the required finding regarding public health, safety, and welfare: the proposed second-story exterior learning area located along the north side of the building immediately adjacent to neighboring residences.

Unlike classrooms enclosed within the building, this space is intended to be an outdoor learning area located on the second story overlooking the homes immediately north of Walden Park. It introduces an elevated outdoor learning space in a location where no second-story outdoor use currently exists.

The application materials refer to this area as a "screened" learning space. However, the current record does not appear to explain the nature or purpose of that screening or how it addresses the privacy implications associated with elevated views into neighboring residential backyards. Nor have I identified any discussion explaining how the operational characteristics of this outdoor space—including anticipated frequency of use, class size, hours of operation, supervision, or the effects of outdoor instructional activities, including associated noise resulting from activities within this elevated outdoor learning space—were evaluated in relation to the immediately adjacent residential properties. Because this outdoor space is located on the second story in the portion of the site closest to neighboring residences, those considerations appear relevant to the Commission's evaluation of the proposed Special Use.

The proposed learning area also raises a separate public safety question. Over the years, I have personally observed unauthorized access to the roof of Walden Elementary School on multiple occasions and have contacted the Deerfield Police Department regarding those incidents. Based on those firsthand observations, unauthorized access to elevated portions of the building is not merely hypothetical but a condition that has occurred repeatedly.

Although the plans reference a screened exterior learning area, the current record does not appear to describe what access controls, architectural features, physical barriers, or other design measures are proposed to discourage unauthorized after-hours access or otherwise address the security considerations associated with this elevated exterior space.

Based on the materials currently before the Commission, I respectfully question whether the current record contains sufficient information to support the required findings regarding the compatibility of this proposed design feature with the surrounding residential neighborhood and whether it will be significantly or materially detrimental to the public health, safety, and welfare.

## **6. Construction Phasing and Student Safety**

One of the required findings under Section 13.11-D of the Village of Deerfield Zoning Ordinance is that the proposed Special Use will not be significantly or materially detrimental to the health, safety and welfare of the public.

### **A. Revised Construction Schedule**

Earlier materials presented to the Board of Education and the community during the referendum process depicted construction of the new Walden and Wilmot schools beginning after the conclusion of the 2026-2027 school year in June 2027. The current Special Use application instead provides that major construction activities will begin in March 2027, while Walden Elementary School remains fully occupied for approximately the final three months of the academic year. (Exhibit D.)

This revised schedule is significant because it shifts major construction activities—including earthwork, excavation, foundation construction, utility installation, and steel erection—from the summer recess to a period while the elementary school remains occupied. It also advances the loss of Walden's existing outdoor recreation areas into the spring semester.

The current application explains that temporary playgrounds and outdoor recreation space will be available during a later phase of construction. However, I have not identified any discussion explaining how outdoor recess and other outdoor activities will be accommodated during the period beginning in March 2027, after major construction commences and before those temporary facilities become available.

The current record likewise does not appear to explain why this material change in construction sequencing was made following the schedule presented during the referendum process or whether the resulting impacts on school operations, the student learning environment, and outdoor recreation were evaluated as part of the revised phasing plan.

Because the proposed construction schedule has materially changed from what was previously presented to the Board and the community, I respectfully question whether the current record contains sufficient information to support the required finding regarding the public health, safety, and welfare.

## **B. Emergency Operations During Dual-School Occupancy**

During Phase 3, both Walden and Kipling students will occupy the Walden campus for approximately one academic year. The application describes operational measures for this temporary arrangement, including staggered schedules, transportation accommodations, traffic management, and parking operations.

I have not identified comparable discussion regarding emergency operations during this period, including emergency response procedures, evacuation planning, coordination with first responders, or how emergency vehicle access would be managed while two schools occupy a single campus. Because the proposed temporary co-location of two elementary schools is unique to this project, those considerations appear relevant to the Commission's evaluation of the required finding regarding public health, safety, and welfare.

---

## **Conclusion**

These comments are submitted with respect for the substantial effort that has gone into this proposal and with recognition of the importance of modern educational facilities for District 109 students.

As I understand the Village's Zoning Ordinance, approval of a Special Use Permit requires support in the record for each of the findings set forth in Section 13.11-D.

For the reasons discussed above, I respectfully question whether the current record presently contains sufficient information to support several of the findings required by Section 13.11-D. Accordingly, I respectfully request that the Commission deny the requested Special Use Permit or defer action pending the submission of additional information sufficient to support each of the required findings under Section 13.11-D.

---

Respectfully submitted,

*Carrie Kirchen*

Exhibits submitted in Support of These Comments:

Exhibit A – Selected Excerpts from Residential Appraisal Report: This exhibit contains selected excerpts from a residential appraisal report prepared by an independent licensed appraiser concerning the property located at 647 Ambleside Drive. The excerpts are submitted solely because they relate to the issues discussed in these comments. The complete appraisal is available upon request

Exhibit B – Existing Neighborhood Use of Walden Park

Exhibit C – Summary and Excerpts from the US ACOE Study

Exhibit D – Historical Construction Timeline from Presentations

# APPRAISAL OF REAL PROPERTY



## LOCATED AT

647 Ambleside Dr  
Deerfield, IL 60015  
See attached addenda.

## FOR

Carrie Kirchen  
647 Ambleside Dr  
Deerfield, IL 60015

## OPINION OF VALUE

800,000

## AS OF

03/20/2026

## BY

Edyta Szydlowska  
Opteon AMC, Inc  
5500 Pearl St #260 (Corporate Office)  
Rosemont, IL 60018  
(888) 440-8258  
orders@opteonusa.com

# RESIDENTIAL APPRAISAL REPORT

File No.: 721367127

COST APPROACH	<b>COST APPROACH TO VALUE (if developed)</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The Cost Approach was not developed for this appraisal.	
	Provide adequate information for replication of the following cost figures and calculations.	
	Support for the opinion of site value (summary of comparable land sales or other methods for estimating site value): <span style="float: right;">N/A</span>	
	ESTIMATED <input type="checkbox"/> REPRODUCTION OR <input type="checkbox"/> REPLACEMENT COST NEW	
	Source of cost data:	OPINION OF SITE VALUE _____ = \$
	Quality rating from cost service: _____ Effective date of cost data: _____	DWELLING Sq.Ft. @ \$ _____ = \$
	Comments on Cost Approach (gross living area calculations, depreciation, etc.):	Sq.Ft. @ \$ _____ = \$
		Sq.Ft. @ \$ _____ = \$
		Sq.Ft. @ \$ _____ = \$
		Sq.Ft. @ \$ _____ = \$
	Sq.Ft. @ \$ _____ = \$	
	Garage/Carport Sq.Ft. @ \$ _____ = \$	
	Total Estimate of Cost-New _____ = \$	
	Less Physical Functional External	
	Depreciation _____ = \$( _____ )	
	Depreciated Cost of Improvements _____ = \$	
	"As-is" Value of Site Improvements _____ = \$	
	_____ = \$	
	_____ = \$	
Estimated Remaining Economic Life (if required): _____ Years	<b>INDICATED VALUE BY COST APPROACH</b> _____ = \$	

INCOME APPROACH	<b>INCOME APPROACH TO VALUE (if developed)</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The Income Approach was not developed for this appraisal.	
	Estimated Monthly Market Rent \$ _____ X Gross Rent Multiplier _____ = \$ _____	<b>Indicated Value by Income Approach</b>
	Summary of Income Approach (including support for market rent and GRM): <u>The income approach is not applicable to this report as homes in the area are typically owner occupied.</u>	

PUD	<b>PROJECT INFORMATION FOR PUDs (if applicable)</b> <input type="checkbox"/> The Subject is part of a Planned Unit Development.
	Legal Name of Project: _____ Describe common elements and recreational facilities: _____

RECONCILIATION	<b>Indicated Value by: Sales Comparison Approach \$ 800,000 Cost Approach (if developed) \$ _____ Income Approach (if developed) \$ _____</b>
	Final Reconciliation <u>The cost approach is not applicable. Insufficient data is available to compute the income approach. Thus the Sales Comparison Approach is most readily reflects active buyers / sellers.</u>
	This appraisal is made <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> "as is", <input type="checkbox"/> subject to completion per plans and specifications on the basis of a Hypothetical Condition that the improvements have been completed, <input type="checkbox"/> subject to the following repairs or alterations on the basis of a Hypothetical Condition that the repairs or alterations have been completed, <input type="checkbox"/> subject to the following required inspection based on the Extraordinary Assumption that the condition or deficiency does not require alteration or repair: <u>No special conditions</u> are noted. Personal property is not included in this valuation.

ATTACHMENTS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> This report is also subject to other Hypothetical Conditions and/or Extraordinary Assumptions as specified in the attached addenda.
	<b>Based on the degree of inspection of the subject property, as indicated below, defined Scope of Work, Statement of Assumptions and Limiting Conditions, and Appraiser's Certifications, my (our) Opinion of the Market Value (or other specified value type), as defined herein, of the real property that is the subject of this report is: \$ 800,000, as of: 03/20/2026, which is the effective date of this appraisal. If indicated above, this Opinion of Value is subject to Hypothetical Conditions and/or Extraordinary Assumptions included in this report. See attached addenda.</b>
	A true and complete copy of this report contains <u>25</u> pages, including exhibits which are considered an integral part of the report. This appraisal report may not be properly understood without reference to the information contained in the complete report.

SIGNATURES	Attached Exhibits:
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Scope of Work <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Limiting Cond./Certifications <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Narrative Addendum <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Photograph Addenda <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sketch Addendum <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Map Addenda <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Additional Sales <input type="checkbox"/> Cost Addendum <input type="checkbox"/> Flood Addendum <input type="checkbox"/> Manuf. House Addendum <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hypothetical Conditions <input type="checkbox"/> Extraordinary Assumptions <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____

Client Contact: <u>Carrie Kirchen</u> Client Name: <u>Opteon AMC, Inc</u> E-Mail: <u>carrie.kirchen@gmail.com</u> Address: <u>5500 Pearl St #260 (Corporate Office), Rosemont, IL 60018</u>	SUPERVISORY APPRAISER (if required) or CO-APPRAISER (if applicable)
APPRAISER  Appraiser Name: <u>Edyta Szydłowska</u> Company: <u>Opteon AMC, Inc</u> Phone: <u>(888) 440-8258</u> Fax: _____ E-Mail: <u>orders@opteonusa.com</u> Date of Report (Signature): <u>03/27/2026</u> License or Certification #: <u>556.005165</u> State: <u>IL</u> Designation: _____ Expiration Date of License or Certification: <u>09/30/2027</u> Inspection of Subject: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Interior & Exterior <input type="checkbox"/> Exterior Only <input type="checkbox"/> None Date of Inspection: <u>03/20/2026</u>	Supervisory or Co-Appraiser Name: _____ Company: _____ Phone: _____      Fax: _____ E-Mail: _____ Date of Report (Signature): _____ License or Certification #: _____      State: _____ Designation: _____ Expiration Date of License or Certification: _____ Inspection of Subject: <input type="checkbox"/> Interior & Exterior <input type="checkbox"/> Exterior Only <input type="checkbox"/> None Date of Inspection: _____

**Supplemental Addendum**

File No. 721367127

Borrower/Client	N/A				
Property Address	647 Ambleside Dr				
City	Deerfield	County	Lake	State	IL Zip Code 60015
Lender	Carrie Kirchen				

**LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

WYATT & COONS SCATTERWOOD UNIT NO 2; LOT 44 (EX PT LYG SWLY OF A LN DRN FR A PNT IN S LN 40 FT E OF SW COR TO A PNT IN WLY LN 30 FT CHORD MEAS NELY OF SD SW COR)

**APPRAISAL DEVELOPMENT AND REPORTING PROCESS**

This is an Appraisal Report presented in a concise reporting format which is intended to comply with the reporting requirements set forth under Standards Rule 2-2(a) of the Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice. As such, it presents only summary discussions of the data, reasoning, and analyses that were used in the appraisal process to develop the appraiser's opinion of value. Supporting documentation that is not provided with the report concerning the data, reasoning, and analyses is retained in the appraiser's file. The depth of the discussion contained in this report is specific to the needs of the client and/or its assigned for the intended use stated in this report. The appraiser is not responsible for the unauthorized use of this report.

To develop the opinion of value, the appraiser performed a complete appraisal process, as defined by the Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice.

If this appraisal report was transmitted as an "electronic record" containing my "electronic signature," as those terms are defined in applicable federal and/or state laws (excluding audio and video recordings), or a facsimile transmission of this appraisal report containing a copy or representation of my signature, the appraisal report shall be as effective, enforceable and valid as if a paper version of this appraisal report were delivered containing my original hand written signature.

**PURPOSE OF THE APPRAISAL**

The purpose of this appraisal is to estimate AS IS condition and as of the date of viewing with a HYPOTHETICAL CONDITION, based on the plans and specifications related to the proposed school relocation, for the purpose of analyzing market reaction, if any, to the identified external change.

**INTENDED USE / USER / CLIENT**

The Intended Use is to evaluate the property that is the subject of this appraisal for market value purposes, subject to the stated Scope of Work, purpose of the appraisal, reporting requirements of this appraisal report form, and Definition of Market Value. No additional Intended Users are identified by the appraiser.

**APPRAISAL DATA**

The appraiser has taken all appropriate steps to collect and consider the best and most relevant data available. See the Scope of Work Statement. The appraiser has relied on data provided by typical industry third parties, such as MLS, public documents, flood map services and others. While data collected is not warranted as flawless by the supplier or the appraiser, the Appraiser believes the data provided is reliable and reasonable to meet the need for this report. Should any information that was provide by any third party later be proved unreasonably inaccurate or unreliable, this appraiser reserves the right to consider the impact of the newly discovered information and the conclusions in this report may or may not be modified as a result.

**SITE COMMENTS**

The site is typical of the neighborhood in terms of topography, view and general appeal. It provides a suitable setting for the improvements and is consistent with market expectations in this area. Unless otherwise noted, standard utility and right of way easements are insignificant to value. However, a current locational or boundary survey or title report may reveal encroachments, easements, zoning violations or other matters of interest that could warrant modifications of the appraised value.

**SUBJECT PROPERTY IDENTIFICATION**

The appraiser has viewed all readily accessible areas of the dwelling (and any other building structure located on the property). This complete visual inspection is not intended to be the same depth of for the same purpose as a home inspection. The appraiser has viewed the property solely for valuation purposes and to observe property characteristics that a typical purchaser would consider in their decision-making process, as well as those items outlined in the assumptions and limited conditions and certification to this appraisal. The appraiser is not a qualified home inspector or engineer and does not represent those services. This appraisal is not a warranty against any defect of the improvements.

**HIGHEST AND BEST USE**

The subject property fulfills all four stages of the test; (1) Physically possible; (2) Legally permitted; (3) Economically feasible; (4) Maximally productive. The subject property is within the conformity of the surrounding neighborhood and is a legally permissible use based on its current zoning. The lot size, shape, physical condition, and land-to-building ratio allow the present structure and indicate a good utilization of the improvements. Based upon the current market conditions, the present use is its financially feasible and maximally productive use. The highest and best use is its present use.

**CONDITIONS OF APPRAISAL**

The subject property is appraised in fee simple title, assuming no liens or encumbrances other than normal covenants and restrictions of record. The comparable photographs may have been provided by the Multiple Listing Service. The photographs depict their appearance at the time of market exposure and sale.

Signature E. Szydlowska  
Name Edyta Szydlowska  
Date Signed 03/27/2026  
State Certification # 556.005165 State IL  
Or State License # \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Date Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
State Certification # \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_  
Or State License # \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

Supplemental Addendum

File No. 721367127

Table with 5 rows: Borrower/Client (N/A), Property Address (647 Ambleside Dr), City (Deerfield), County (Lake), State (IL), Zip Code (60015), Lender (Carrie Kirchen)

SALES COMPARABLE COMMENTS

The 5 comparables used in the analysis were the best available at this time to compare to the subject property. All 5 comparables offer similar overall utility and function. The overall amenities are also very similar. Comparables 1 through 5 were reported closed.

Gross living area adjustments were made at \$70 per square foot. The remaining adjustments are indicated on the sales comparison grid. ALL ADJUSTMENTS WERE DERIVED FROM THE SUBJECT MARKET AND THE APPRAISERS EXPERTISE IN THE MARKET PLACE.

FINAL ANALYSIS

The 5 sold comparables bracket the potential value of the subject property in adjusted range of \$747,540 and \$848,180. All factors considered, it is reasonable the subject would have a market value of \$800,000.

The appraisal was ordered for two evaluations of the property. Firstly, the property was valued as of the date of viewing in its current "AS IS" condition, considering its existing state and characteristics.

HYPOTHETICAL CONDITION

Secondly, there is a valuation based on a "HYPOTHETICAL CONDITION", incorporating the prospective plans and specifications associated with the proposed school relocation.

This dual approach aims to analyze potential market reactions to the identified external change, providing insights into how the proposed development may influence property values in the area.

A sale at 1445 Hackberry Rd, MLS #12023298, sold for \$582,500, two story home, with GLA 2,222 sq ft, with 4 bedrooms and 2.1 bathrooms, sold on 06/18/2024, located in close proximity to a school building, serves as a relevant comparable property. Additionally, the sale at 159 Plumtree Rd, MLS #12129671, sold for \$690,000, two story home, with GLA 2,853 sq ft, 4 bedrooms and 2.1 bathrooms, sold on 11/14/2024 has been assessed and determined to share similar characteristics, yet it is not influenced by its location relative to educational facilities. Adjustments were made to this sale for the market driven differences between it and the sale at 1445 Hackberry Rd, other than the location backing to a school. This resulted in an adjusted value of \$635,830. This comparative analysis reveals an 8.39% price differential attributed to the location near the school building.

An additional pair of comparables was also analyzed. A sale at 452 Longfellow Ave, MLS #11982914, sold for \$405,000, one story home, with GLA 880 sq ft, with 2 bedrooms and 1 bathroom, sold on 05/06/2024, located in close proximity to a school building, serves as a relevant comparable property. Additionally, the sale at 659 Deerpath Dr, MLS #11991390, sold for \$451,500, one story home, with GLA 1,064 sq ft, 2 bedrooms and 1 bathroom, sold on 04/15/2024 has been assessed and determined to share similar characteristics, yet it is not influenced by its location relative to educational facilities. Adjustments were made to this sale for the market driven differences between it and the sale at 452 Longfellow Ave, other than the location backing to a school. This resulted in an adjusted value of \$438,620. This comparative analysis reveals a 7.66% price differential attributed to the location near the school building.

Based on a paired market analysis, it has been determined that properties in close proximity to schools command a value difference of approximately 8% less. Considering the hypothetical conditions associated with the subject property, including the prospective plans and specifications related to the proposed school relocation, the opinion of value of the subject property is \$736,000.

The discount percentage would be consistent for all of the homes on Ambleside that will back directly to the new school and be within similar proximity to the school building .

The lack of available market data prevents a precise measurement of the impact difference between one-story and two-story buildings. Consequently, any assessment of the relative value or desirability of these construction types cannot be definitively established.

RECONCILIATION AND FINAL VALUE CONCLUSION

The COST APPROACH was considered and determined to be unnecessary to produce credible assignment results. The Cost Approach to value estimates the property value as the value of its components, the underlying land, and the depreciated value of the improvements. Because there is insufficient market evidence to credibly support the derivation of total depreciation, the cost approach is not given any consideration in the appraiser's final analysis. Use of the data, in the whole or in the part, for other purposes is not intended by the appraiser.

The INCOME APPROACH to value estimates the value of a property based on the income of the property. This approach was not considered applicable due to the fact that the majority of housing stock in the area is owner-occupied and not typically used for investment property and the subject is not currently used as an income-producing property.

The SALES COMPARABLE APPROACH is considered the best indicator of value because it reflects the attitudes of the buyers and sellers in the marketplace. It is considered the most reliable method for a supported market value and is relied upon for this report.

Signature [Handwritten: E. Szydlowska]
Name Edyta Szydlowska
Date Signed 03/27/2026
State Certification # 556.005165 State IL
Or State License # State

Signature
Name
Date Signed
State Certification # State
Or State License # State

# Appraiser's License

**State of Illinois**  
**Department of Financial and Professional Regulation**  
**Division of Real Estate**

LICENSE NO.  
556.005165

The person, firm, or corporation whose name appears on this certificate has complied with the provisions of the Illinois Statutes and/or rules and regulations and is hereby authorized to engage in the activity as indicated below:

EXPIRES:  
09/30/2027

CERTIFIED RESIDENTIAL REAL ESTATE APPRAISER

EDYTA SZYDLOWSKA  
2244 N CHAMPLAIN ST  
ARLINGTON HEIGHTS, IL 60004-2910



*Mario Treto, Jr.*  
MARIO TRETTO, JR.  
SECRETARY

*Laurie Murphy*  
LAURIE MURPHY  
DIRECTOR

The official status of this license can be verified at [DFPR.Illinois.gov](http://DFPR.Illinois.gov)

20414204

## **EXHIBIT B**

### **Existing Neighborhood Use of Walden Park**

Photographs of Ordinary Use of the Baseball Field and Blacktop — May 2026

#### **Purpose of this Exhibit**

This exhibit is submitted in support of the undersigned's written comments regarding the Special Use Permit application for the proposed Walden Elementary School redevelopment, and in particular the finding required by Section 13.11-D of the Village of Deerfield Zoning Ordinance that the site be of sufficient size, shape, and area to accommodate the proposed Special Use and all associated activities.

This exhibit focuses on two amenities in particular: the baseball field and the blacktop, including its basketball courts. According to the applicant's phasing plans, both will be removed or closed to public access for approximately three consecutive years during construction.

The photographs on the following pages document ordinary, unstaged use of these two amenities by neighborhood residents. They show that the baseball field and the blacktop are not unused or surplus land awaiting redevelopment. Rather, they are actively used public amenities supporting informal recreation and independent use by neighborhood children, teenagers, and families of varying ages. Two additional photographs are included at the end of this exhibit for context, showing the adjacent playground and open green space in active use on the same ordinary, informal basis.

#### **How the Photographs Were Taken**

The photographs were taken by the undersigned from her property, which directly adjoins Walden Park. They are casual observations made on ordinary days in May 2026, in the course of the undersigned's normal daily activities, when residents happened to be using the park and it occurred to her to take a photograph. They do not capture every instance of park use the undersigned observed during this period. They do not depict organized events, scheduled programming, or staged activity. No effort was made to select dates or times expected to maximize park activity. The dates and times shown were recorded by the camera at the time each photograph was taken.

The faces of all individuals have been blurred to protect their privacy, particularly that of minors. No other alterations have been made to the photographs.

#### **Relevance to this Application**

Because the baseball field and the blacktop — including its basketball courts — will be unavailable for approximately three consecutive years under the applicant's phasing plans, these photographs are submitted to assist the Commission in evaluating what the neighborhood will lose during that period, and in determining whether the site is sufficient to accommodate both the expanded school program and the existing public recreational functions that currently occupy it.

## Index of Photographs

No.	Date	Time	Amenity Depicted
1	Friday, May 8, 2026	6:26 PM	Baseball Field
2	Friday, May 8, 2026	6:26 PM	Blacktop
3	Sunday, May 10, 2026	11:19 AM	Baseball Field
4	Sunday, May 10, 2026	2:02 PM	Baseball Field
5	Sunday, May 10, 2026	4:34 PM	Baseball Field
6	Sunday, May 10, 2026	4:51 PM	Baseball Field
7	Sunday, May 10, 2026	6:48 PM	Baseball Field
8	Sunday, May 10, 2026	6:53 PM	Baseball Field
9	Sunday, May 10, 2026	7:29 PM	Baseball Field
10	Sunday, May 17, 2026	3:15 PM	Baseball Field and Blacktop
11	Sunday, May 17, 2026	3:36 PM	Blacktop
12	Sunday, May 17, 2026	6:16 PM	Blacktop
13	Monday, May 18, 2026	8:18 AM	Blacktop
14	Friday, May 15, 2026	6:24 PM	Open Green Space (context)
15	Friday, May 15, 2026	7:10 PM	Playground and Open Green Space (context)

**Photograph 1**

Friday, May 8, 2026, 6:26 PM — Baseball Field



Teenagers using the baseball field on a Friday evening. Additional park users are visible near the blacktop and playground in the background.

**Photograph 2**

Friday, May 8, 2026, 6:26 PM — Blacktop



A child and an adult playing basketball on the blacktop on a Friday evening.

**Photograph 3**

Sunday, May 10, 2026, 11:19 AM — Baseball Field



Multiple families, with children of varying ages, using the baseball field and outfield late Sunday morning.

**Photograph 4**

Sunday, May 10, 2026, 2:02 PM — Baseball Field



Children playing baseball on the field on a Sunday afternoon. The playground and blacktop are also in use.

**Photograph 5**

Sunday, May 10, 2026, 4:34 PM — Baseball Field



Children using the baseball field near the backstop. Adults and young children are visible at the playground.

**Photograph 6**

Sunday, May 10, 2026, 4:51 PM — Baseball Field



Young children playing at the backstop area of the baseball field.

**Photograph 7**

Sunday, May 10, 2026, 6:48 PM — Baseball Field



Middle school and high school students using the baseball field in the early evening.

**Photograph 8**

Sunday, May 10, 2026, 6:53 PM — Baseball Field



Teenagers using the baseball field, including the pitching areas, in the early evening.

**Photograph 9**

Sunday, May 10, 2026, 7:29 PM — Baseball Field



The same group of teenagers still using the baseball field at 7:29 PM. Together, Photographs 3 through 9 document use of the field by residents of varying ages observed throughout the day, from 11:19 AM to 7:29 PM, on this single day.

**Photograph 10**

Sunday, May 17, 2026, 3:15 PM — Baseball Field and Blacktop



Simultaneous use of the baseball diamond and the blacktop on a Sunday afternoon.

**Photograph 11**

Sunday, May 17, 2026, 3:36 PM — Blacktop



Parents helping young children ride bicycles on the blacktop.

**Photograph 12**

Sunday, May 17, 2026, 6:16 PM — Blacktop



Residents playing basketball on the blacktop courts in the early evening.

**Photograph 13**

Monday, May 18, 2026, 8:18 AM — Blacktop



Children riding bicycles on the blacktop on a Monday morning.

## **Additional Context — Adjacent Amenities**

The two photographs that follow fall outside this exhibit's principal focus on the baseball field and the blacktop. They are included for context, to show that the adjacent playground and open green space are used by neighborhood residents on the same ordinary, informal basis.

### **Photograph 14**

Friday, May 15, 2026, 6:24 PM — Open Green Space



Teenagers playing frisbee on the open green space near the soccer goals on a Friday evening.

**Photograph 15**

Friday, May 15, 2026, 7:10 PM — Playground and Open Green Space



Families gathered at the playground and a child flying a kite on a Friday evening, with residents also on the blacktop and walking path. The baseball diamond is visible in the foreground.

# EXHIBIT C

## U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Planning Assistance to States Report

*North Branch Chicago River – Middle Fork and Skokie Rivers (July 2019)*

### Selected Findings Relevant to Stormwater and Drainage Review

#### Purpose of this Exhibit

This exhibit is submitted to provide context for the Commission's consideration of the drainage and stormwater criterion contained in Section 13.11-D of the Village of Deerfield Zoning Ordinance.

The exhibit is not offered to suggest that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers approved or disapproved the proposed Walden Elementary School redevelopment. Rather, it demonstrates that the Village of Deerfield previously partnered with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in a comprehensive evaluation of flooding within the Middle Fork watershed, demonstrating that stormwater management within this watershed has long been the subject of detailed hydrologic and hydraulic study.

The excerpts included in this exhibit are not intended to summarize the entire report. They have been selected because they relate to the watershed in which the proposed Special Use is located and provide context for the Commission's evaluation of the required drainage criterion.

---

#### Relevant Findings

The attached excerpts demonstrate that:

- The Village of Deerfield served as a non-federal sponsor of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers watershed study.
- The purpose of the study was to update hydrologic and hydraulic models and assist local communities in developing future flood-risk management strategies.
- The study incorporated updated precipitation frequency data, HEC-HMS and HEC-RAS modeling, FEMA mapping, USGS stream gage data, and calibration using recent flood events.
- The study evaluated watershed hydrology using updated peak-flow frequency analyses, stage-versus-flow relationships, and hydrologic modeling for the Middle Fork at Deerfield.

---

#### Pages Included

- Executive Summary
- Study Purpose
- Scope of Work
- Hydrology and Hydraulic Modeling
- Peak Flow Frequency Analysis
- Stage-versus-Flow Relationships

---

#### Relevance to this Application

The proposed Special Use includes substantial site regrading, new underground stormwater detention facilities, and installation of a geothermal system requiring extensive subsurface excavation throughout the project site.

While the application includes site-specific stormwater calculations intended to demonstrate compliance with applicable detention requirements, the undersigned has not identified any discussion explaining how the proposed detention design, stormwater discharge, and substantial subsurface improvements - including the geothermal system - were evaluated in light of the broader watershed conditions identified in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers study. Nor has the undersigned identified any discussion explaining how those watershed conditions were considered in the proposed drainage design.

Accordingly, this exhibit is submitted solely to assist the Commission in determining whether the current record contains sufficient information to support the affirmative drainage finding required by Section 13.11-D of the Village of Deerfield Zoning Ordinance.

---

#### Excerpts Included on the Following Pages

*Highlighted text has been added by the undersigned solely for ease of reference.*



**Final**

# **North Branch Chicago River**

Middle Fork and Skokie Rivers

**U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
Chicago District**

---



## **Planning Assistance to States Report**

---

**July 2019**

# Executive Summary

---

This Planning Assistance to States (PAS) Report documents the purpose, methods and findings of a watershed evaluation of the Middle Fork and Skokie River of the North Branch of the Chicago River in Lake County, Illinois. The study was completed by the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) at the request of the following non-federal sponsors (NFSs): City of Highland Park, the Lake County Stormwater Management Commission, the City of Lake Forest, the Village of Deerfield, and the East Skokie Drainage District. The purpose of this study was to aid NFSs in developing future plans for addressing flood damages. Recent flooding prompted communities in these watersheds to seek a better understanding of the current conditions. This report presents updated hydrology and hydraulic data, and an estimate of average annual economic damages to provide a better understanding of the problem and determine the potential for future flood risk management efforts.

To characterize existing flood conditions, this watershed evaluation made use of available hydrology and hydraulics models and updated precipitation frequencies. The hydrology and hydraulics were updated using data from the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRDGC), the United States Geological Survey (USGS) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). USACE analyzed the sourced data and performed calibrations, as needed. Updated Illinois State Water Survey (ISWS) Bulletin 70 data was incorporated into the models. The models were used to produce outputs in the Hydrologic Engineering Center's River Analysis System (HEC-RAS) software for the economic analyses.

In addition, an evaluation was completed to test the performance of a reservoir on each river and demonstrate the possible effectiveness of structural features. The effectiveness of these structural features were estimated by reduced flood stages, and the resulting reductions in structure damages. The following reservoirs were selected based on the primary areas reported as flooded during the July 2017 flood event: a 130 acre-foot reservoir at the Highland Park Country Club and a 250 acre-foot reservoir at the Prairie Wolf Forest Preserve. It is assumed that reservoirs located upstream near the primary flood sites would be most efficient reservoir location for reducing flooding at the selected flood areas downstream.

USACE partitioned its economic analyses into two primary tasks. The first task involved developing an updated structure inventory and inputs for the Hydrologic Engineering Center's Flood Damage Analysis (HEC-FDA) software using source data from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR). The second task involved performing an economic evaluation to understand the frequency, severity, and location of flood damages anticipated within the study area while also analyzing the effectiveness of the two reservoirs in reducing flood damages.

The economic evaluation compared the economic damages over a 50-year period of analysis, from 2019 to 2068, for two conditions. The future without-project (FWOP) condition assumed that there would be no measures taken to mitigate flood damages within the period of analysis. The future with-project (FWP) condition assumed the construction of the two reservoirs to reduce flood damages. The estimated flood damages for both conditions were compared to understand the efficacy of these structural alternatives and their economic viability.

The economic evaluation revealed that the reservoirs would not significantly reduce flood damages in the Skokie River or Middle Fork watersheds; less than 5% of the total average annual damages were reduced under the evaluated FWP conditions, for both rivers. Additionally, the scale of damages for the entire study area indicates that it is unlikely a structural measure would be a cost-effective (i.e., the average annual reduction in structural flood damages (benefits) would not exceed the average annual cost of implementing a structural measure). Furthermore, the ability to expand the capacity of the reservoirs or change the location is difficult because of the high level of urban development.

Given the evaluated reservoirs had little impact on reducing flood damages, USACE does not believe there is a federal interest in proceeding to a specifically authorized study. Based on the analysis, it is unlikely an economically viable structural alternative (i.e., one resulting in a benefit-to-cost ratio greater than 1.0) could be identified. Factors considered in this assessment are the locations of the evaluated structures which are geographically spread across a large area, as well as limited real estate available to implement structural measures, and the scale of damages for the entire study area indicates that it is unlikely a structural measure would be a cost-effective. USACE recommends nonstructural alternatives be considered by the local communities, including: structure elevation, structure relocation, buyouts, floodproofing, implementation of a flood warning system, and floodplain regulation.

# Chapter 1 Introduction

---

## 1.1 Background

The United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) last studied the North Branch Chicago River watershed, extensively, in the early 1980's at the request of Lake and Cook Counties. At that time, both counties had recently completed a study of the Watershed Implementation Plan of the North Branch of the Chicago River. The study resulted in the construction of several reservoirs, but primarily focused on the West Branch. Since then, the North Branch of the Chicago River has not been evaluated, in-depth, by USACE.

State and local authorities have conducted more recent analyses. In 2009, the Lake County Stormwater Management District and the East Skokie Drainage District evaluated the Skokie River Watershed. In 2011, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) completed an investigation of two sites owned, partially, by the State of Illinois along the Middle Fork and Skokie River to determine the potential for future flood risk management efforts. The effort included more recent hydraulic modeling as well as an updated structure inventory. These efforts, as well as others, were incorporated into this study effort.

## 1.2 Study Purpose

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the watersheds of the Middle Fork and Skokie River (or East Fork) of the North Branch of the Chicago River. Recent flooding due to heavy rainfalls, most notably in July and October of 2017, prompted communities in these watersheds to seek a better understanding of the current conditions. This study updated the hydrologic and hydraulic data within the study area of the Skokie River and the Middle Fork in addition to evaluating estimated economic damages. The intent of updating the data and evaluations was to provide a better understanding of the flood conditions along both rivers and help to determine the potential for future flood risk management efforts. The purpose of this study was to aid non-Federal sponsors (NFS) in developing future plans for addressing flood damages. The NFSs of this study are: the City of Highland Park, the Lake County Stormwater Management Commission, the City of Lake Forest, the Village of Deerfield, and the East Skokie Drainage District.

## 1.3 Scope of Work

TAs described in the scope of work dated 16 January 2018, the study was partitioned into two categories, hydrology and hydraulics (H&H) and economics. The scope of work included updating the existing hydrology and hydraulic models with current data. Flood inundation maps were created using updated water surface profiles (WSPs) developed by the H&H models. The scope was later modified to test performance of previously evaluated structural measures. Given available funds, study team (USACE and NFSs) decided to evaluate two possible reservoirs, to demonstrate the possible effectiveness of structural features. The two possible reservoir projects, were evaluated for potential flood risk reduction benefits. The reservoirs evaluated were a 130 acre-foot storage basin along the Skokie River and a 250 acre-foot storage basin along the Middle Fork.

Furthermore, an economic evaluation was conducted using the Hydrologic Engineering Center's Flood Damage Analysis (HEC-FDA) software. The economic evaluation utilized an updated structure inventory that was developed using data collected by IDNR and local communities and, later, cross-referenced with the National Structure Inventory (NSI). The analysis evaluated estimated without-project economic damages which could be expected due to flooding over a 50-year period of analysis and also the potential economic benefits that would be associated with

the implementation of the two proposed reservoirs represented in the hydraulic model. The effectiveness of the reservoirs would be estimated by reduced flood stages (as determined by the H&H analysis), and the resulting reductions in structure damages (as determined by the economic analysis).

Table 1-1 outlines the scope of work for the study.

Table 1-1: PAS-22 NBCR Study Tasks

<b>PAS: NBCR Study Tasks</b>	
<b>Description</b>	
<b>Overall Task</b>	<b>Sub-Task</b>
<b>H&amp;H: Utilize Existing Hydraulic Model and Create New Hydrology Model</b>	Update Hydrology Model (HMS)
	Incorporate Updated ISWS Bulletin 70 Data into Models
	Geo-reference H&H Cross-Sections and Bridge Structures
	Produce HEC-FDA H&H Input Files
	Produce GIS Shapefiles (Inundation Maps, etc.)
	Provide Maximum Inundation Area for Inventory Development
	Perform Analysis and QA/QC Evaluation
<b>Economics: Develop Structure Inventory</b>	Collect Parcel Data for Structure Inventory (GIS & Assessor)
	Assign Damage Categories & Occupancy Types
	Identify Damage Reach Declinations
	Assign River Stationing
	Assign Ground Elevations
	Survey Structure Elevations (FFE & Low Entry)
	Compile HEC-FDA Input Files
<b>Economics: Construct HEC-FDA Study &amp; Perform Evaluation</b>	Construct new study in current HEC-FDA version
	Perform analysis and QA/QC evaluation
	Produce output files and summary data
	Create damage maps
<b>Economics/Planning: Document Analyses</b>	Document analyses results, recommendations, assumptions, and uncertainties

### 1.3.1 H&H Scope Description

The updated hydrology and hydraulic analyses were used in existing models to create water surface profiles and inundation maps for various flood frequency events for evaluation in the economic model. A secondary objective was to evaluate whether the existing models provide a reasonable representation of real world conditions; this was necessary to determine if recalibration of the hydrology model or development of a new, or updated, hydraulic model would be expected to provide a better representation of current flood damages. This was accomplished by comparing hydrologic model results from previous calibration against flow frequency analysis at available gage locations and any available high water marks or gage information relative to damage locations.

The existing hydraulic models for the Middle Fork and Skokie River were used for analysis. Existing hydrology models include the FIS HEC-1 model and the HEC-HMS model developed by the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRDGC) for the North Branch Chicago River – Detailed Watershed Plan (NBCR-DWP). An updated hydrologic model was developed using assumed values from the Illinois State Water Survey’s (ISWS) Bulletin 70, released in March 2019. Routing reaches in the hydrology model were used to represent

overbank flood storage and attenuation. The only known hydraulic models available were the FIS HEC-2 models, as updated for previous efforts. The steady-state HEC-2 model included detailed cross-sections and bridges, but did not include the geo-referenced model geometry necessary to develop inundation mapping. Key cross-section locations were used, along with the Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA) delineations, to estimate inundation areas for the economic modeling.

### **1.3.2 Economic Analyses Scope Description**

The primary objectives of the economic analyses were to evaluate the baseline condition in order to understand the frequency, severity, and location of flood damages anticipated within the study area and to evaluate the effectiveness of two reservoirs, in terms of reducing flood damages, within the study area. These analyses were performed using standard USACE methods and tools. The required work to perform the economic analyses was broken into two tasks. The first task focused on data development while the second consisted of an economic evaluation.

The data development task consisted of several required sub-tasks for collecting, transforming, and combining information into the appropriate input files for the economic evaluation software.

These sub-tasks included:

- (1) Collecting parcel and assessor data
- (2) Assigning damage categories and occupancy types
- (3) Identifying damage reach delineations
- (4) Assigning river stationing
- (5) Assigning ground elevations
- (6) Estimating structure elevations
- (7) Compiling HEC-FDA input files

These sub-tasks required the use of ArcGIS Pro and Microsoft Excel to create the final text files. Based on the availability of digital structure information and generic depth-damage functions, the data development task can be performed on a wide range of inventory sizes without a significant change in overall effort. Utilizing Geographic Information Systems (GIS) software for the spatial data, the individual structure locations, in reference to the source of flooding, were developed efficiently. Microsoft Excel was used to combine the spatial data with tabular and survey data. For a given structure, it was important to identify the value, use, elevation (first floor and low entry), and location along the stream (river station). This information, along with a few other key descriptors, were provided in the final Hydrologic Engineering Center Flood Damage Analysis (HEC-FDA) software input file.

The economic evaluation task also consists of several sub-tasks required for estimating the annual expected damages, as well as event-based damages. These sub-tasks include:

- (1) Constructing new study in the current version of HEC-FDA
- (2) Performing analysis and QA/QC
- (3) Producing output files and summary data
- (4) Creating damage maps

The economic evaluation task required both H&H and economic input files and then used a Monte Carlo simulation to evaluate the estimated impacts while accounting for the associated uncertainty with the inputs. Once the output files from this evaluation were developed, they were combined with the GIS files used to develop the inputs to produce damage maps. These maps, combined with damage estimates, provided the basis for identifying potential flood risk management measures and alternatives.

## 1.4 Location and Description

The study area consisted of two forks of the NBCR, the Skokie River and the Middle Fork. The study focused on the portion of these waterways within Lake County, Illinois (Figure 1-1).

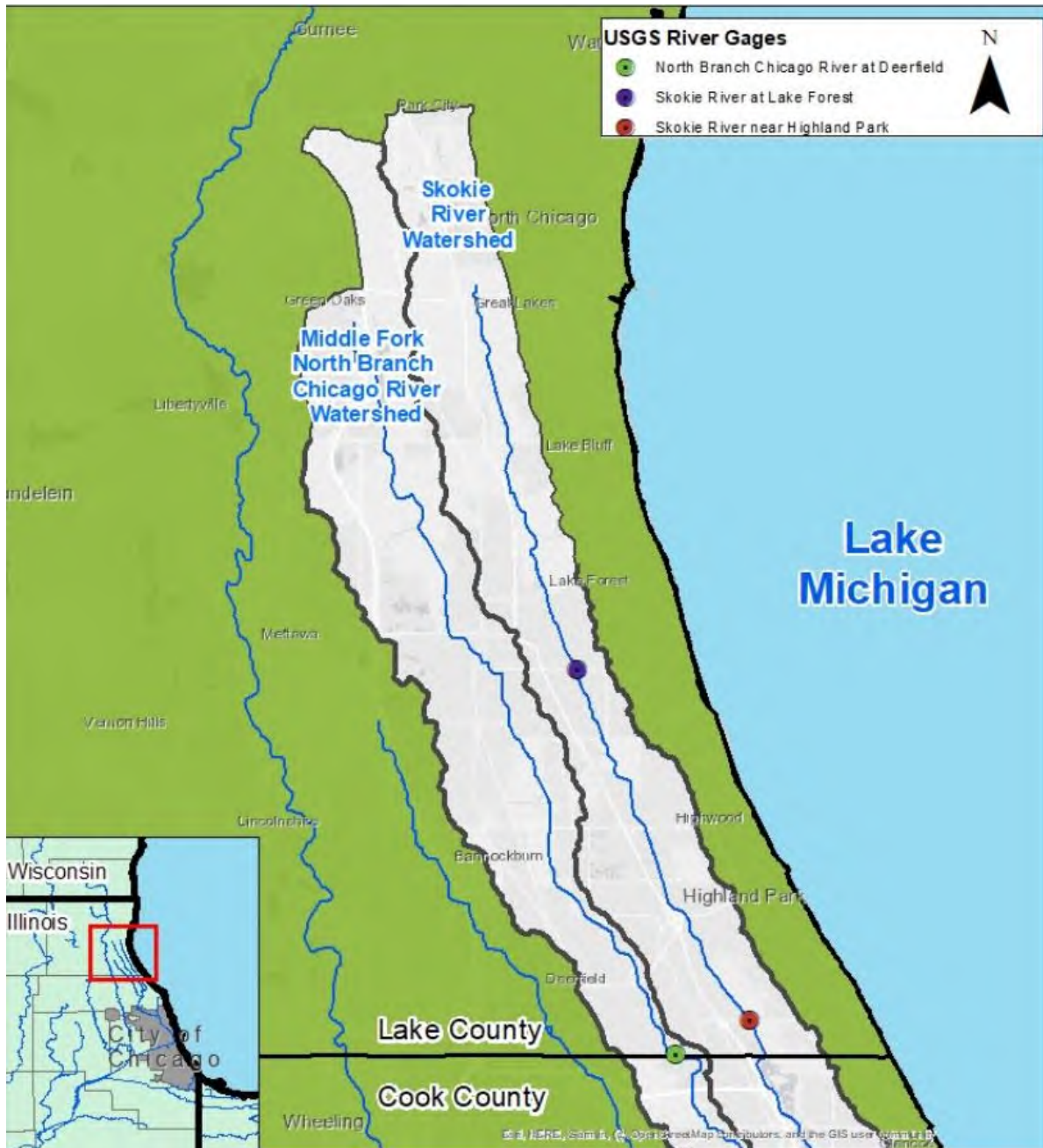


Figure 1-1: Project Study Area

The Skokie River and the Middle Fork run parallel and flow from north to south in the study area. The river centerlines, included in Figure 1-1, represent the extents of the study area for each river. The easternmost river that is outlined in Figure 1-1 was the portion of the Skokie River examined in this study. The westernmost river that is outlined in Figure 1-1 was the portion of the Middle Fork examined in this study. The study area for the Skokie River was between Park City, to the north, and Highland Park, to the south. The study area for the Middle Fork was between

Waukegan, to the north, and Deerfield and Highland Park, to the south. The study area's southern boundary was the county line between Lake County and Cook County.

# Chapter 2 Hydrology & Hydraulic Analyses

---

## 2.1 Introduction

The hydrologic and hydraulic (H&H) analyses are instrumental in establishing a set of base data which was used to understand the frequency and location of flooding within the study area. The H&H data created in the Hydrologic Engineering Center River Analysis System (HEC-RAS) software provided the inputs necessary to evaluate the economic severity of flooding in HEC-FDA.

## 2.2 Hydrology Data and Model

The hydrology model used in this PAS study was developed from the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago's (MWRDGC) Hydrologic Engineering Center Hydrologic Modeling System (HEC-HMS) model of the North Branch Chicago River drainage basin which was used in the Detailed Watershed Plan (DWP) study. The DWP included an HMS version of the Lake County watersheds.

## 2.3 Hydraulic Models

The hydraulic models were developed using the available 1997 FEMA Flood Insurance Study (FIS) HEC-2 models, which were converted to HEC-RAS data. Minor editing (completion of bridge data, etc.) was performed, as needed, to run the models in HEC-RAS (Version 5.0.3).

Since the HEC-2 model was not spatially geo-referenced, manual geo-referencing of the HEC-RAS model was required. A graphical stream centerline was imported to approximately geo-reference the cross-sections in the HEC-RAS study model. For the Middle Fork, the cross-sections were geo-referenced using cross-section locations provided by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources – Office of Water Resources (IDNR-OWR). For the Skokie River, the cross-sections were geo-referenced approximately with available information such as distance from bridges and cross-section locations in the FIS profiles and mapping. The graphical extents of the cross-sections, in both cases, were extended to include the 500-year flood extents. The placement and extension of the graphical cross-sections extents were for mapping purposes only. The cross-section station-elevation data for water surface computation was not updated from the HEC-2 models.

## 2.4 Calibration

To validate that the model reasonably predicts simulated storm events, **calibration to three recent storm events was performed**. The **July 2017**, **April 2013**, and **September 2008** flood events were selected as calibration events because they represent three of the largest and most recent flood events experienced within the study area.

The July 2017 flood event in Lake County Illinois was driven by an intense cell of rainfall resulting in six to eight inches of rainfall over a 24-hour period. The April 2013 flood event was part of a widespread storm system stretching from Northeast Illinois to Quincy, Illinois. In Lake County, approximately three to five inches of rainfall fell within 24 hours, with some rain preceding which saturated the soil. The September 2008 flood event precipitation extended over most of the Chicago metropolitan area and caused extensive flooding. The rainfall in Lake County was less intense than in other areas, where around two to three inches fell in a 24 hour period.

Next-Generation Weather Radar (NEXRAD) gridded precipitation datasets were provided by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). NEXRAD data for the three storms, used for calibration, were created and used as precipitation inputs for the HMS model. Figure 2-

1, below, shows the total precipitation grids for the July 2017 flood overlaid on the North Branch Chicago River watershed as an example of NEXRAD data inputted. Similar data was used for the other two calibration events.

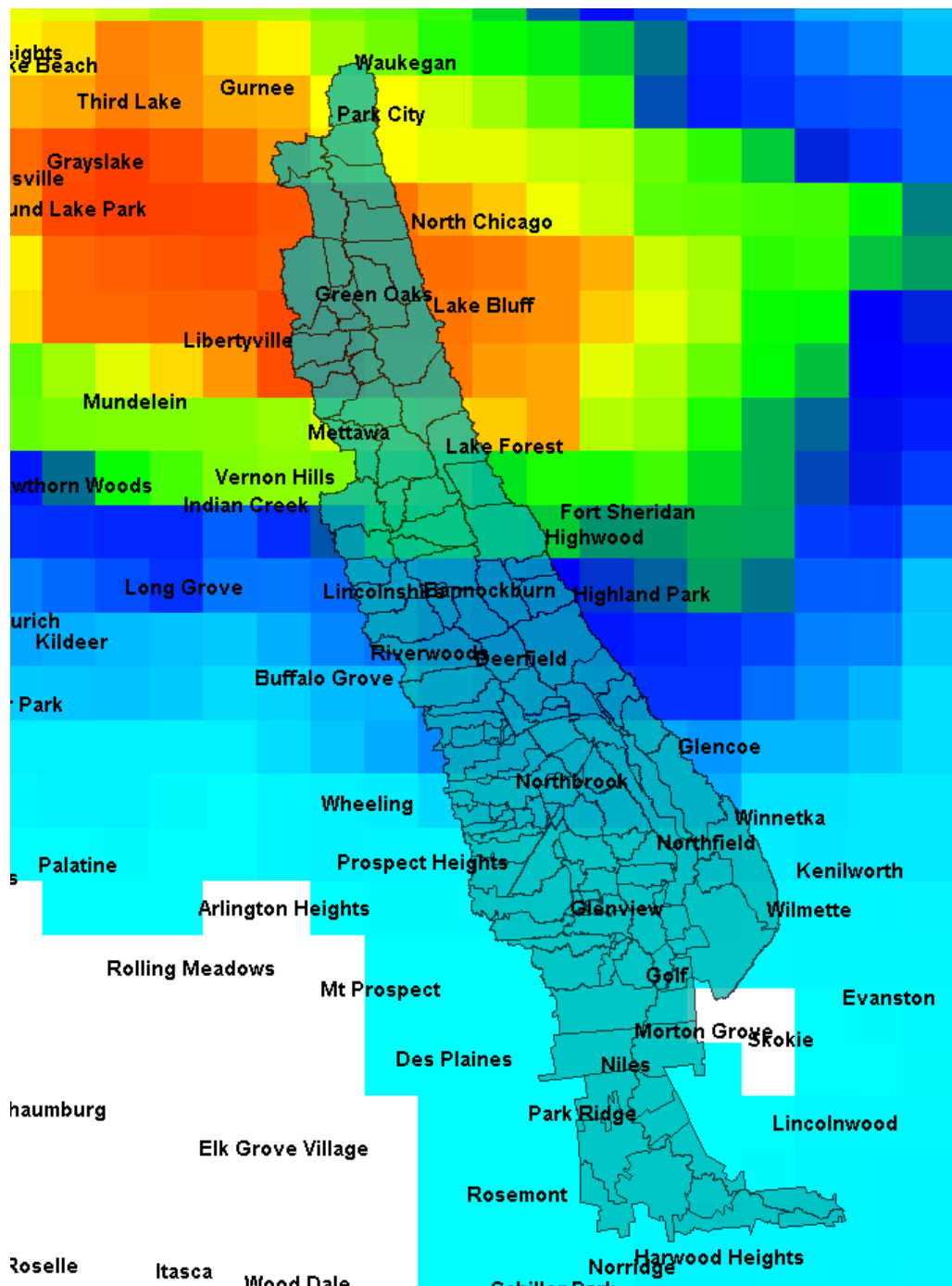


Figure 2-1: July 2017 NEXRAD Precipitation Grids overlaid on the North Branch Chicago River Watershed

The HMS flow hydrographs were compared to the observed flows at the United States Geological Survey (USGS) gages at Highland Park (Skokie River) and Lake Forest (Skokie River) and at Deerfield (Middle Fork) for the three historic flood events modeled. The location of these gages are included in Figure 2-1. Figures 2-2 through 2-10, below, present comparisons of the HMS

high water mark was taken. The differences were mostly due to the updated HMS hydrologic modeling and the updated ISWS Bulletin 70 precipitation.

## 2.5 Frequency Analysis

Peak annual flows for the three USGS gages located at Highland Park, Lake Forest and Deerfield, Illinois, are shown in Figures 2-12, 2-16, and 2-20, respectively. The USACE Non-Stationarity Tool was used to analyze the gage record. The heat maps from the tool indicated strong non-stationarities, for the three gages, beginning at water year 1992 for Highland Park and Lake Forest and water year 1981 for the Deerfield gage (Figures 2-13, 2-17 and 2-21). Peak annual flow frequency analyses were performed for the period of record and also from the point of non-stationarity to the present. Comparisons for the period of record versus the record from the point of non-stationarity are shown in Figures 2-14, 2-18 and 2-22. The shortened recent record was adopted for each gage with results compared to the DWP HMS peak flow values (24-hour duration) for both the 1989 Bulletin 70 and the updated 2019 Bulletin 70 values and the FEMA FIS values in Figures 2-15, 2-19 and 2-23. The updated Bulletin 70 precipitation was adopted for the synthetic event modeling for this analysis.

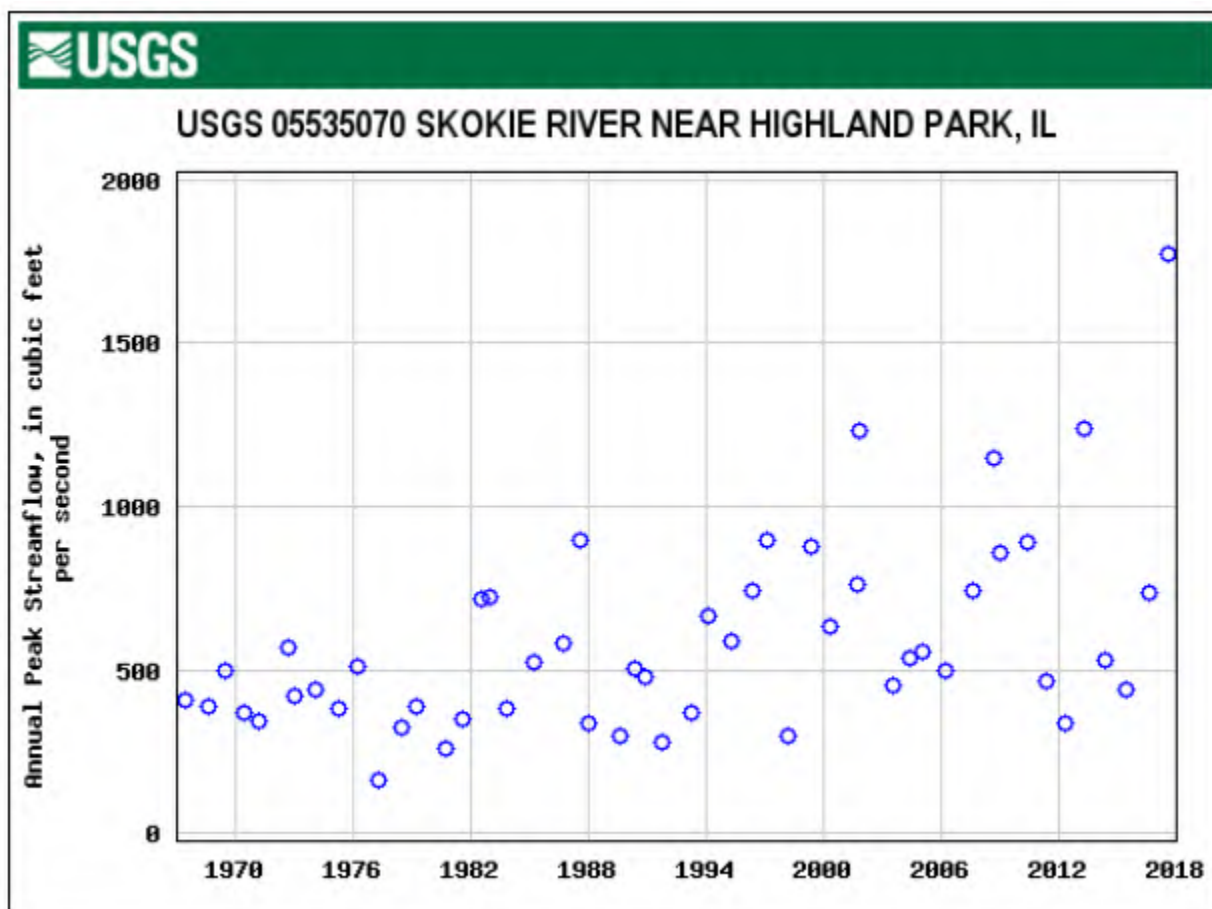


Figure 2-12: Peak Annual Flows for the Skokie River at Highland Park, Illinois

### USGS 05534500 NORTH BRANCH CHICAGO RIVER AT DEERFIELD, IL

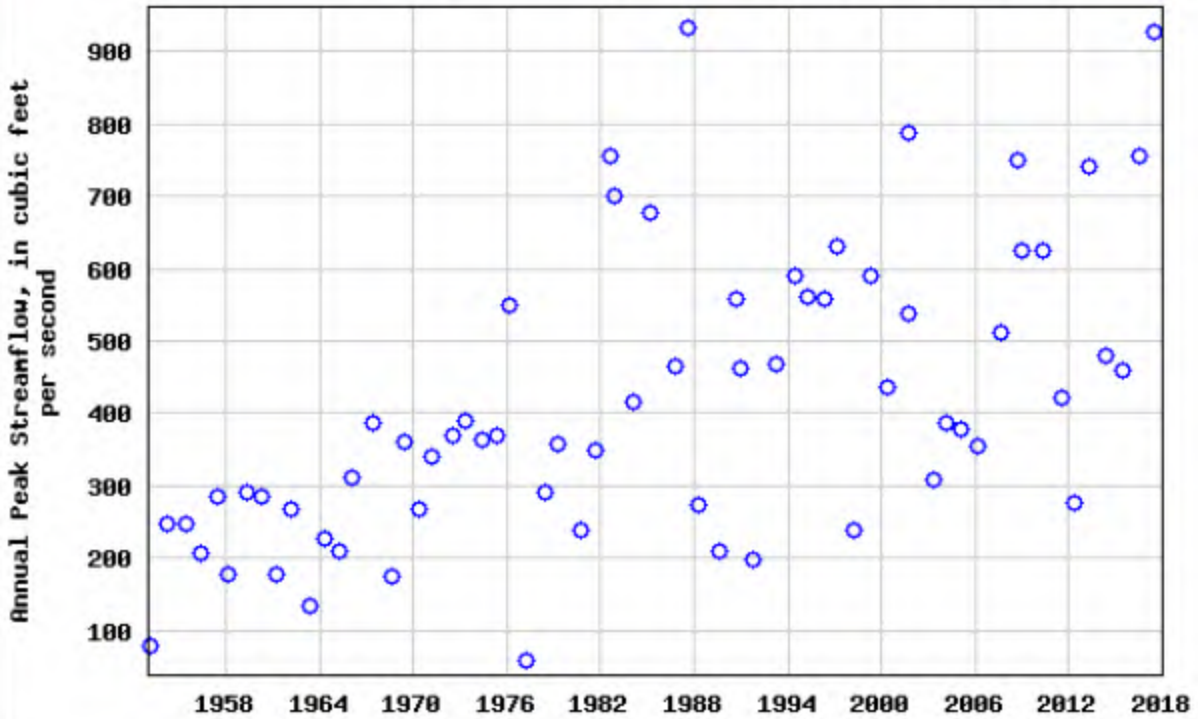
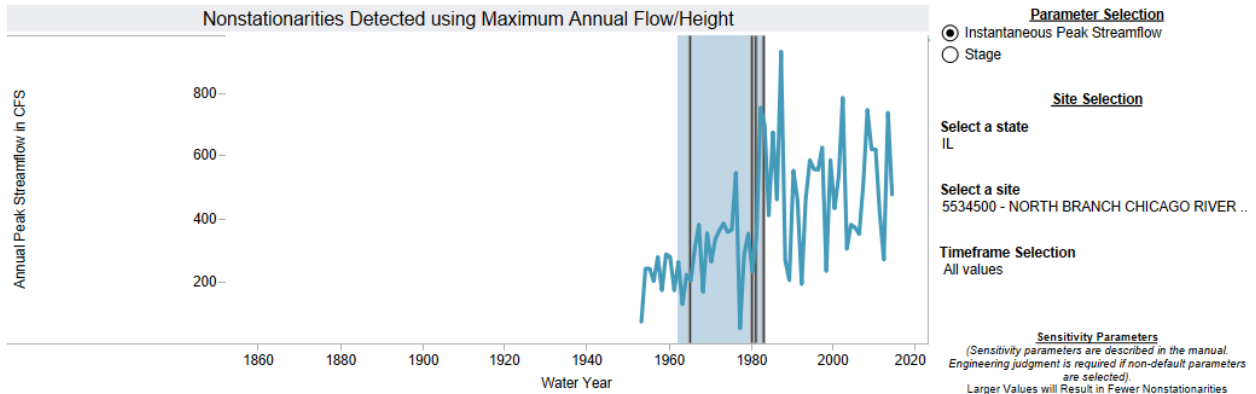


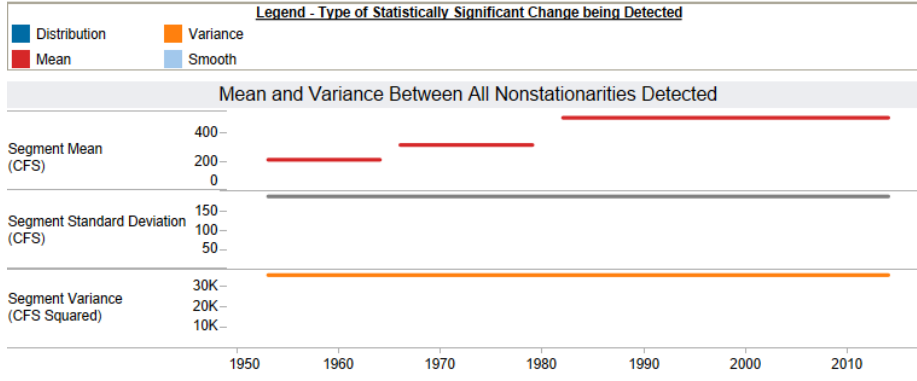
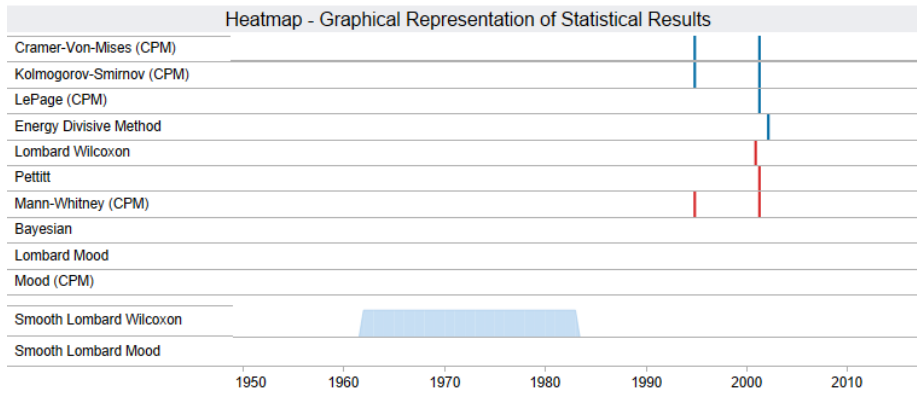
Figure 2-20: Peak Annual Flows for the Middle Fork at Deerfield, Illinois



This gage has a drainage area of 19.70 square miles.

The USGS streamflow gage sites available for assessment within this application include locations where there are discontinuities in USGS peak flow data collection throughout the period of record and gages with short records. Engineering judgment should be exercised when carrying out analysis where there are significant data gaps.

In general, a minimum of 30 years of continuous streamflow measurements must be available before this application should be used to detect nonstationarities in flow records.



- CPM Methods Burn-In Period**  
(Default: 20)  
20
- CPM Methods Sensitivity**  
(Default: 1,000)  
1,000
- Bayesian Sensitivity**  
(Default: 0.5)  
0.5
- Energy Divisive Method Sensitivity**  
(Default: 0.5)  
0.5
- Lombard Smooth Methods Sensitivity**  
(Default: 0.05)  
0.05
- Pettitt Sensitivity**  
(Default: 0.05)  
0.05

Please acknowledge the US Army Corps of Engineers for producing this nonstationarity detection tool as part of their progress in climate preparedness and resilience and making it freely available.

**Figure 2-21: USACE Non-Stationarity Tool Heat Map for the Middle Fork near Deerfield Gage**

1953-2017

1981-2017

<< Frequency Curve >>

NBCR\_Lake-DEERFIELD, IL-FLOW-ANNUAL PEAK

<< Frequency Curve >>

NBCR\_Lake-DEERFIELD, IL-FLOW-ANNUAL PEAK

Computed Curve FLOW, CFS	Expected Probability	Percent Chance Exceedance	Confidence Limits		Computed Curve FLOW, CFS	Expected Probability	Percent Chance Exceedance	Confidence Limits	
			0.05 FLOW, CFS	0.95				0.05 FLOW, CFS	0.95
1,383.6	1,458.1	0.2	1,773.2	1,142.3	1,391.4	1,501.8	0.2	1,838.5	1,142.8
1,222.7	1,273.4	0.5	1,538.0	1,023.2	1,260.5	1,337.0	0.5	1,630.3	1,049.5
1,101.8	1,138.3	1.0	1,364.7	932.2	1,159.8	1,215.6	1.0	1,473.9	976.5
981.2	1,006.0	2.0	1,195.1	839.9	1,057.1	1,095.8	2.0	1,317.8	900.7
821.0	834.5	5.0	975.6	714.8	916.6	938.2	5.0	1,110.9	794.5
697.6	704.9	10.0	811.9	615.8	804.7	816.7	10.0	952.1	707.1
569.5	572.7	20.0	648.1	509.7	684.2	689.6	20.0	788.6	609.4
379.6	379.6	50.0	420.7	342.7	494.6	494.6	50.0	552.1	443.5
247.2	245.6	80.0	276.0	217.4	350.9	347.7	80.0	393.8	304.8
195.6	193.2	90.0	222.0	167.7	291.1	285.9	90.0	331.8	245.3
160.5	157.2	95.0	185.3	134.0	248.5	241.3	95.0	288.2	203.2
109.3	104.5	99.0	131.3	86.4	182.8	171.2	99.0	220.5	140.3

Figure 2-22: Peak Annual Flow Frequency Analyses for the Middle Fork near Deerfield Gage

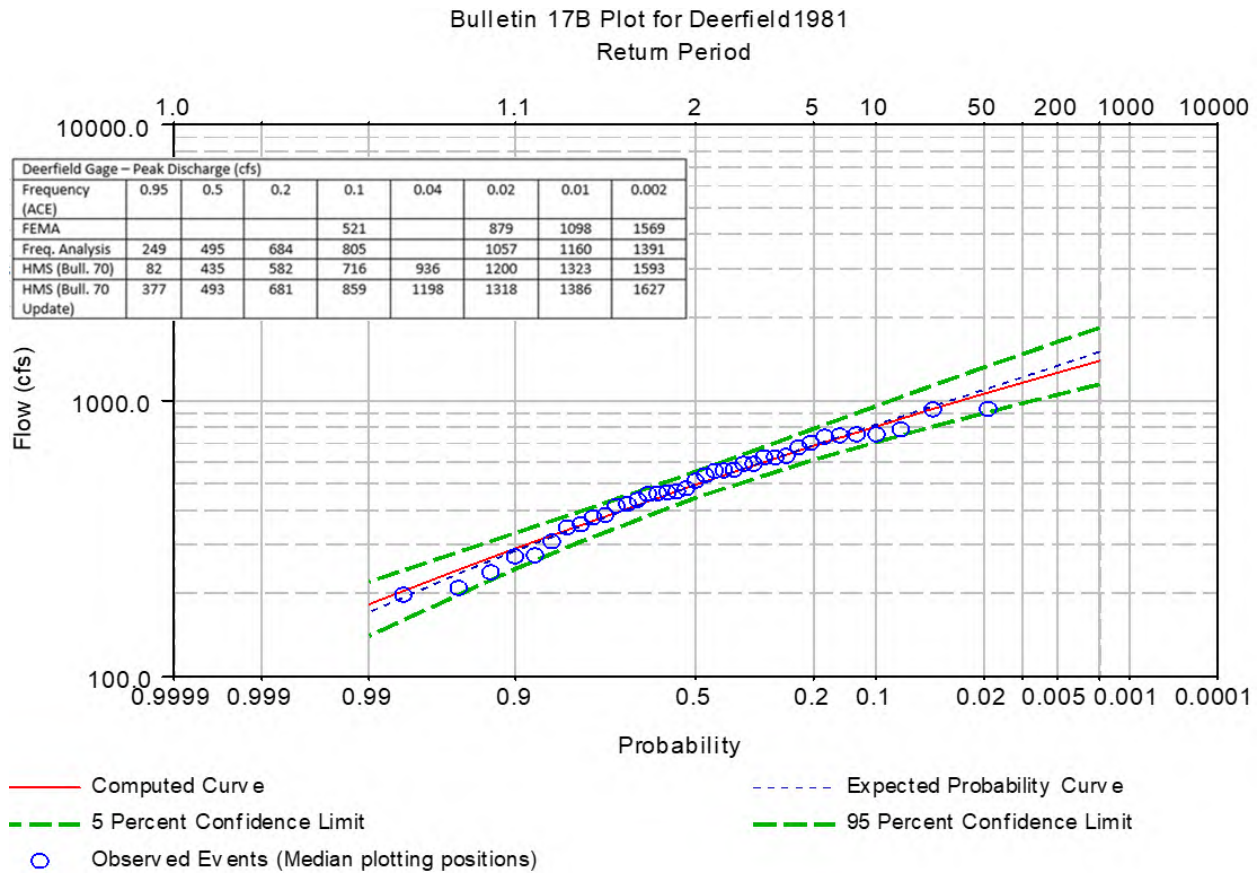


Figure 2-23: Comparison of Peak Flow Frequency at the Middle Fork at Deerfield Gage

## 2.6 Stage Versus Flow Relationships

Rating curves were approximated at each gage for the three historic events by plotting stage versus flow. Measured stage versus flow data was also shown. These were compared to the synthetic event model results. Lake Forest showed three distinct rating curves; however, note that the model had very close stage calibration at this gage for all three events. For the other two gages, the modeled values seemed to most closely follow the 2017 flood curve.

# Exhibit D

Prior public presentations regarding the referendum depicted Walden construction beginning after the conclusion of the 2026-2027 school year. The current Special Use application instead proposes construction beginning in **March 2027**, while Walden Elementary School remains occupied. This exhibit is submitted solely to illustrate the construction timeline presented in those earlier public presentations.

Figure 1. Board of Education presentation (July 24, 2025).

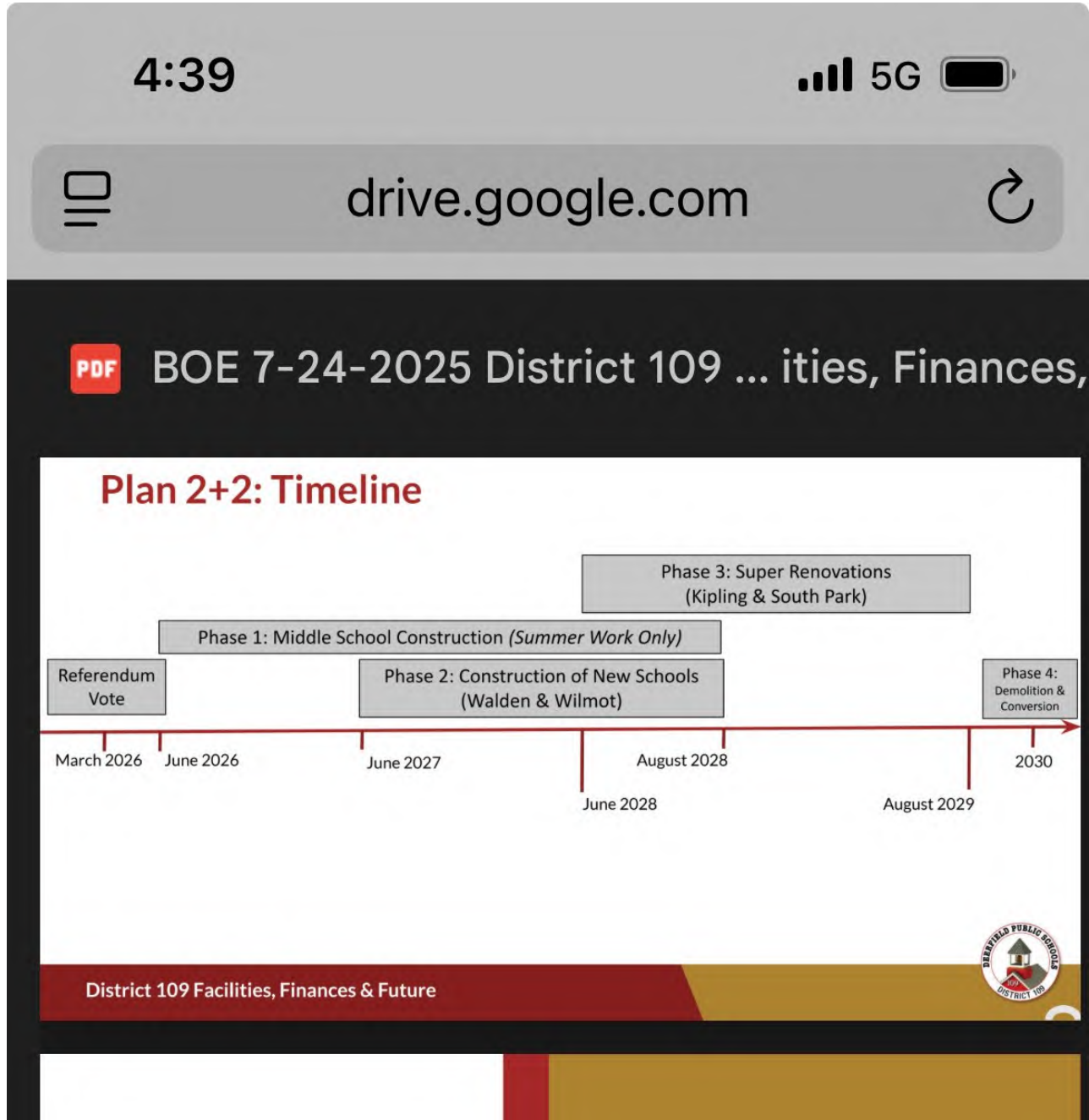
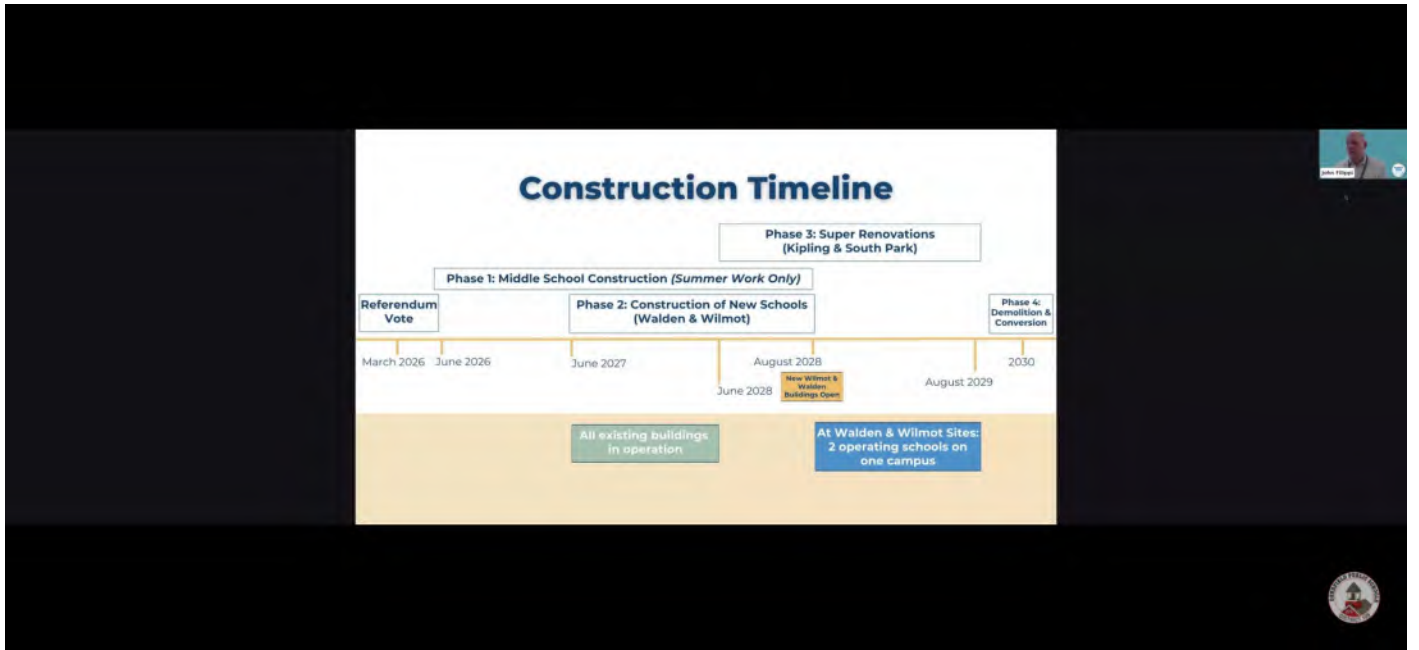


Figure 2. Referendum community meeting presentation.



## Daniel Nakahara, AICP

---

**From:** Emily Wright <emj808@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, July 6, 2026 10:20 PM  
**To:** Plan Commission Comment  
**Cc:** Daniel Nakahara, AICP; Jeffery Ryckaert, AICP  
**Subject:** [PUBLIC COMMENT] Walden Park Special Use

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

---

To Members of the Planning Commission,

I am writing to respectfully express my concerns regarding the proposed Special Use Permit for Walden Park, located near my home at 709 Ambleside Dr., for the purpose of constructing a **two-story** school building adjacent to the existing school building. Walden School is unique in that it is surrounded by residential homes on all four sides, yet the School District's current plans do not appear to fully account for that context.

I understand and respect the importance of supporting our local school district and planning for future educational needs. However, I am deeply concerned about the impact this rezoning and subsequent development would have on students' mental and physical well-being, property values, and the surrounding residential neighborhood. The purpose of zoning is to establish guidelines and expectations for real property, prevent incompatible land uses, and protect landowners from abrupt changes that could significantly affect their investments. Any new school should be built in the current location of Walden, in the **middle** of the park, to help address the concerns raised below.

Specifically, I am concerned about the following issues, which merit against issuance of a Special Use Permit:

- **Health, safety and welfare:** Ongoing construction and noise immediately adjacent to the existing school would negatively affect learning and could create safety concerns as construction trucks, students, parents, teachers, and buses all attempt to use the same road entrance. There is not sufficient space in this small park to place a new school adjacent to the existing school in a safe and responsible manner. Phase 1 of the plan, as presented to the community during the referendum process and shown in the included plans (p. 47 of 312), would not begin until students were out of session in June 2027. Now, after the referendum has passed, Phase 1 is presented as starting in March 2027. The plans now show (p. 67 of 312) Phase 1 beginning in Spring 2027 with no playgrounds. Would school be in session from March 2027 through June 2027 with no playgrounds?
- **Student well-being during construction:**
  - The plans state (p. 4 of 312) that the School District is not pursuing a phased construction approach using temporary classrooms because it would "increase [in] the time students would need to spend learning on an active construction site." However, the plans as currently presented include students being present on an active construction site beginning in March 2027, along with approximately three months without playgrounds.

- Electrical wires are not proposed to be buried along the West and North sides. Given the amount of construction digging that is included in this project, why is burial of the electrical lines and poles not included? Last December, an electrical pole fell during the school day. Parents were not notified that the North walkway was obstructed or that students should avoid walking home that way, which created a safety concern. Several students ultimately had to walk through our yard to avoid the pole. While some students walked through the caution tape and their parents likely never knew.
- **Compatibility with the surrounding neighborhood:** The proposed two-story, 88,640-square-foot school in the proposed location represents a significant change in land use and scale compared with the existing zoning and character of the current neighborhood park. It does not appear harmonious with the adjacent, pre-existing residential homes and neighborhood. A two-story school should not be located so close to residences when other options are available. Two additional concerns related to neighborhood compatibility include:
  - Air conditioning unit location are not identified in the plans. Potential noise from air conditioning equipment should be addressed.
  - School announcement system: What measures are planned to ensure overhead paging system school announcements are not carried into nearby homes? With only 45.91 feet to adjoining property, this issue should be addressed. Do plans include outdoor speaker systems?
- **Property value and privacy:** A multi-story structure located so close to residential properties will negatively affect property values and reduce privacy.

We purchased our home because it is adjacent to a park. That proximity has both financial value and value for mental health and enjoyment. The School District and Park District's proposal would remove much of the benefit of this adjacent park from the value and enjoyment of our property. The School District and Park District can not refute this statement.

- Privacy and landscaping: The plan states (p. 11 of 312) "that property is surrounded almost entirely by the adjoining neighbors' opaque fencing or dense landscaping." It should be noted that there is no opaque fencing on the entire West perimeter of the Walden property. My property line does not include fencing, and much of the dense landscaping consists of buckthorn, which does not provide privacy during the fall and winter months. When the time comes for exact tree placement, homeowners should be contacted individually by the landscaper to discuss and agree upon appropriate placement.
- Geothermal system: What is the financial cost of this system? Does the environmental benefit of this system and related financial costs outweigh the loss of Walden Park forever? Should this financial cost be used to save the park and put the funds toward Temporary classrooms? More details should be presented in the plans for the construction of the Geothermal system. What will the impact of the deep digging to install this system be to the structural foundations of nearby surrounding homes? This should be evaluated and included in

the plans, particularly given the proximity of those homes to the proposed building. 45.91' to the property line and required deep digging is likely much closer to the neighboring homes. Are all schools receiving the Geothermal systems? If the middle schools are not being updated with the Geothermal systems, maybe you don't need this at all schools.

I respectfully request that the Commission carefully consider whether this proposed rezoning aligns with the Village's comprehensive plan and long-term vision for preserving established residential neighborhoods. The contemplated plans need to serve the community for generations to come, not merely address the School District's short-term planning objectives.

The School District and Park District moved away from considering alternatives early on in this process, but I ask that the Village continue to request more detailed information regarding the cost of using temporary classrooms in combination with the existing site. Please require true figures rather than estimates and ask for a more complete explanation of alternative solutions. A one-sentence response without actual figures does not adequately address the impact this plan would have on the neighborhood park forever. The School District has funds to rebuild schools, but that does not mean the Village should approve the requested location or make exceptions to Special Use conditions that are not satisfied. We are relying on the Village to protect residents' interests while also working with the School District to identify a better solution. In the past, the Village has not allowed pickleball courts and playgrounds to be located adjacent to residential homes; I do not see how a **two-story** school in this location could be approved without far greater scrutiny. **Save our park!**

The concerns I have noted above address permanent changes to the property. In addition to these concerns, I have concerns with the adequate size of the property to be able to accommodate two schools for a temporary basis of a year or more. The streets in this neighborhood should not be given the stress of double the school activity for multiple years. We are a quiet neighborhood with a school in the middle. Two lane roads surrounding. Double the parents not abiding by drop off procedures. Double the buses. Double the foot traffic. All of this while still under construction fencing and limited green space for double the children to play. This is not a good location to house two schools for even a short period of time. We can build new schools for the future without destroying a park and adjoining residences in the process.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my perspective. I appreciate your time, service to the community, and thoughtful consideration of the concerns raised by residents.

Sincerely,

Emily Wright

July 7, 2026

George Klauke  
611 Ambleside Drive  
Deerfield, IL 60015

Village of Deerfield  
Plan Commission  
850 Waukegan Road  
Deerfield, IL 60015

Via Electronic Mail  
[plancommissioncomment@deerfield.il.us](mailto:plancommissioncomment@deerfield.il.us)

Re: District 109 Walden School Development

Dear Plan Commission Members:

I once again thank you for your dedication to Deerfield and protecting the individual residents that call Deerfield home. I wrote in opposition to several elements of District 109's plan as it relates to Waldon School at the pre-file conference and once again voice objections to the new plan. On April 23, 2026, District 109 presented the plan for a new Walden Elementary School that they had been working on for the last five years but made public in September of 2025. However, the plan was woefully incomplete, and this Plan Commission requested specific details to evaluate the plan as it relates to the factors for Special Use. On July 3, 2026, a 312 page agenda was published for the July 9, 2026, final Plan Commission hearing which included the minutes of the 4/23/2026 pre-filing conference, the special use criteria, and new submission by District 109.

District 109 claims that "from the outset, it committed to a process grounded in listening, transparency and continuance refinement." District 109 proudly proclaims that they started the process in 2022 for an assessment of the schools, then convened a Facilities Steering Committee composed of "a range of constituents". None of these constituents were direct neighbors of Walden School. The Facilities Steering Committee set up 4 options to address the schools needs. In spring 2025, District 109 convened a Referendum Task Force to conduct an *even deeper* review of facility need and financing strategies. None of the Task Force members were direct neighbors of Walden School. It was not until the final Task Force meeting that one of the contiguous neighbors of Walden School was allowed to attend. The vast majority of Task Force members were school employees, former school employees (some of whom were not even Deerfield residents), school board members or former school board members. There were very few, if any, truly independent voices. More importantly, the scope of the assignment to the Architects with respect to the Walden property was to build a new school next to the old school so both could operate at the same time. The architects drew up a plan that did just that. The scope of the assignment never had the option of tear down and rebuild in roughly the same spot. However, the architects admitted that it was feasible to do so if an alternate site was available for the students. I agree that District 109 listened, I disagree that the process was transparent or that any meaningful consideration to a swing site or

modular classroom site was considered or pursued, despite District 109's drum beat that obtaining a swing site was their number 1 priority.

District 109 pursued a tax referendum on March 17, 2026, for an aggressive renovation/rebuild of 4 elementary schools and 2 middle schools. Despite considerable opposition to the new tax proposal as well as the lack of specificity of the design plans, the referendum passed with 3700 votes. The argument of District 109 in support of the plan as indicated in bold on page 48 of the current submission states: "The community approved the plan on Election Day by a wide margin (64% -36%). The "2+2" plan as presented represents the District's promise to the voters". But the vote was for funding not the specifics of the plan. In fact, the specifics of the plan were never divulged by the district and even the plan submitted Friday 7/3/2026 lacks details. At every information session, District 109 stated that the plans were just conceptual, not final, and subject to change. Actual construction plans or architectural drawings had not been produced. In April, the Plan Commission requested far more specificity regarding the effort to obtain a swing site or modular classrooms, storm drainage issues, park access and green space issues, as well as safety issues. District 109 promised that the Walden Good Neighbor Open House on May 7, 2026, would provide the details. I attended the open house and there were no new details. As an example, the engineers could not answer questions about the storm drainage plan, size of the detention facility, depth of the detention facility, final elevation of the detention field, the details of the proposed 2 foot wall with a fence on top of the wall, or how the drainage system would impact the neighbors in the event of rain that exceeded capacity.

As I stated in my April 22 letter to the Plan Commission, renovation of the schools is not controversial. The community has always supported the schools. However, the plan for Walden School and surrounding park permanently negatively affects the park space as well as the neighbors of those parks. While each site of the school project (Kipling, Wilmot, South Park, Walden, Caruso, Shepard) has its own challenges, there is no question that the greatest challenge is that of the Walden location. The neighbors of Walden have been sounding the alarm regarding the initial non-final conceptual plan for the Walden site from the very first presentation by District 109. District 109 admits that Walden is the most challenging site. This is because Walden school and the surrounding park are small and have residential properties in very close proximity on all sides. Access is limited. It is unique.

District 109 proposes to build a new Walden school adjacent and to the north of the existing school while keeping the existing school operational. Despite the obvious risks to children's safety, and learning distractions while next to a construction site, there will also be a complete shutdown of outdoor space during construction. The land for this new school is owned by the Deerfield Park District and requires a special use permit from the Village. The plan changes the proposed building site from parkland to an 88,000.00 square foot two story structure, (actually a 44 foot structure which is 4 stories) and dramatically changes the use and enjoyment of the park as well as the quiet use and enjoyment of residential properties to the north and west of the park. The original plan presented to the public stated that the current Walden School of 54,040 sq ft was 20,000 sq feet too small to provide adequate space for learning. The submission to the Plan Commission in April

states that the current Walden School is already 75,000 sq feet with proposal to increase to 88,640 sq ft. The new submission now states that the current Walden School is 55,000.00 sq ft. Regardless, the plan exceeds the original stated required need.

Residents who purchased property on a park will be forced to have a 2 story plus (44 foot) building encroaching on their back yard under the proposal which will diminish the property value of those properties. Placing a new school on roughly the same footprint of the current school, solves the problem as the relative change to the neighbors would be minimal. Those who bought a house next to the school would remain next to a school and those who purchased a house on a park would also remain on a park.

The community is concerned about putting children in a construction site for safety reasons, learning reasons, ingress and egress reasons, construction traffic reasons, and lack of sufficient play areas during construction. Children should be allowed to learn in a different location, a temporary “swing site” in a non-construction zone setting for the children and teachers during the rebuild. District 109 told attendees of subsequent meetings that it was their **number 1 priority** to find a swing site to temporarily house the children off the construction site at Walden.

District 109 claims that they looked at every possibility, swing site, modular classrooms, and other existing school sites but none could be found. They claim it would cost 10 million dollars to get another existing facility, (like Holy Cross, a currently empty K-8 facility also within the Walden attendance layer) up to safety standards although there is no basis for that estimate at least published in any fashion. District 109 stated in April that their exhaustive search lasted 2 weeks and they did not have any documentation of the effort. So, in April, the Plan Commission provided some homework for District 109. They requested specific details of the search for alternate or temporary school sites. The current submission provides no such detail, just a list of requirements that were not met and the name of the commercial real estate company. The conclusion is that there has been no real analysis of offsite properties or the cost to temporarily retrofit the locations consistent with the Illinois School Code for temporary sites while a new school is being built. The School Code understands school renovation and building issues and allows for certain waivers on a temporary basis during construction.

District 109 also claimed previously that modular classrooms cost \$150,000.00 per classroom per year. The current submission puts the number at \$350,000 per classroom. (page 49). If there are 2 classes per grade and 6 grades K-5 at Walden School, the cost would be 4.2 million but would require a temporary location somewhere other than Walden Park during construction. The current Walden School footprint is 2.6 acres. The Walden attendance layer as defined in the Traffic study submitted by District 109 (pg. 42 of the redevelopment plan) includes Maplewood Park (7 acres) or Jewett Park (12.5 acres). These would be viable modular classroom sites or a combination of them. Instead of diligently pursuing these options, District 109 has elected to place K-5 students at risk of injury or even death if a construction mishap occurs not to mention contamination by construction hazards like dust, noise, and construction traffic. The Walden site is land locked; it is not like the Wilmot site which sits on 15 acres and has 2 major roads as access points. The children

at the smaller Walden are sitting ducks in an emergency and it is an unreasonable risk just to save 2% of the budget (\$4,440,000.00) or even up to 5% of the budget (\$11,000,000.00). Construction sites are dangerous. Little kids should be nowhere near construction sites, especially in a small area without easy escape routes. Construction zones are an attractive nuisance to kids. What are the increased insurance costs for keeping children next to a construction site on a daily basis in a land locked location? What is the impact of construction dust on the HVAC system of an occupied old school or vibration on the old infrastructure that we are told is failing? What is the impact of noise and vibration on learning or even just visual distraction of construction next door to an operating school in an enclosed neighborhood? This has not been well thought out. If voters of the Village were provided a choice of having children attend school immediately adjacent to a construction zone to save 2% of the budget OR to spend the 2% on a modular school off of the construction site for the safety of the children, I bet the vast majority of residents would vote for the latter. Safety should not be compromised, and any school district of K-5 kids should be leading the charge for a temporary school away from the construction zone.

The Plan Commission and Village are the final check and balance for the taxpayers and residents of Deerfield. District 109 argues that they have reviewed all of the school properties and considered all options leaving the current plan as the only viable option. They argue that they have engaged the community, empaneled an independent task force, conducted open debate, and followed the communities' recommendations. However, they have been working on this plan for 5 years and only started public notification of their plan on September 10, 2025. At that meeting, District 109 admitted that the Walden site was the most challenging due to its small size and proximity to the surrounding neighbors. They admitted that they did not engage with any contiguous neighbors of Walden Park and had not discussed the plan with the Park District or the Village. District 109 stated that they would bring the plan to the Park District and the Village before seeking a referendum. They did not. Instead, they proceeded with their informational sessions and pursued the referendum on a low turnout election day. The neighbors of Walden Park attended most of the information sessions and were finally invited to meet with the architect and the school board. The concerns were voiced but District 109 refused to pursue the alternatives noted above which would alleviate any safety concerns, learning distractions, construction traffic issues and also allow the Walden School to be built in conformance with the current location and thus minimally impacting the park space as it currently sits. It would also minimally impact the neighbors of Walden Park and school. Therefore, it would satisfy the criteria for special use. It solves all problems but most importantly keeps kids out of a construction zone.

Please carefully consider the Special Use Criteria for the Walden Park property:

1. Is the special use **Compatible with Existing Development?** Consideration of the nature and intensity of the activities involved, and the size, placement and design of any structures proposed must be planned so that the Special Use will be compatible with the existing development and will not impede the normal and orderly development or improvement of surrounding property.

**This criteria is not met.** A two story (actually 44 foot, is more like 4 stories) building in a park location closer to the neighboring residential properties is not compatible with the existing

development. It is a drastic change, and it does not improve the surrounding properties, it devalues them. The change in sight lines is detrimental, exterior lighting is detrimental, storm drain issues will increase despite any underground detention, and property values will be depleted. Plus, there are viable alternatives.

2. Is the **Lot of Sufficient Size**? Consideration of the size of the lot must also include park layout.

**This criteria is not met.** The park space is reduced despite the Park District being a joint applicant. Plus, the construction phase will completely eliminate any usable park space for those attending Walden. When 2 schools are operating in the same space, the green space will be non-existent. Young school children need outdoor play space which they will not have during all phases of the project as presented.

3. Is the **Traffic** affected? Will there be adverse effects on surrounding properties that are not minimal?

**This criteria is not met.** The traffic during construction will be a significant impact on the community especially if two schools are operating in Walden Park. The traffic study states that “construction traffic must fully avoid school arrival and dismissal operations, and a dedicated construction truck delivery circulation route must be established.” (Page 173) This restriction might be agreed to by the contractor, but it will slow down the project. There is only one way in and one way out of this construction site. If the children were learning at a swing site, this entire traffic issue would be avoided. The greater issue is ingress and egress in the event of an emergency. The construction vehicle restrictions and emergency situations can be avoided completely with an off campus site for the year of construction. Let the builder build without restrictions required by children being in the construction zone. The building would be erected quicker, safer, on time and probably under budget with no risk to children.

4. Is **Parking and Access** an issue? Parking areas will be of adequate size for the particular use and properly located, and the entrance and exit drives will be laid out so as to prevent traffic hazards and nuisances.

**This criteria is not met during construction.** Parking and access will be affected temporarily by the plan. In fact, it will most likely be non-existent on the site. The plan for the surrounding streets is temporary No Parking signs and a shuttle from Kipling to Walden. Is this adequate?

5. Is there an **Effect on the Neighborhood**? The Special Use must not be significantly or materially detrimental to the health, safety, and welfare of the public or injurious to the other property or improvements in the neighborhood, nor will it diminish or impair property values in the surrounding area.

**This criteria is not met.** Property values will diminish for properties along the north and west sides of the park with a drastic change of having a large 44 foot building (exceeding height of any

structure in the area) much closer to the neighbors without the park as a buffer. This will be a substantial change of circumstance for those neighbors and a comparative loss of property value is certain. In addition, the impact of storm water increase, and flooding exist due to the huge increase in impervious surfaces, larger parking lot, and larger school building as well as the placement of the school to the north. It is not just rain falling on the roof of the new facility that is at issue but the runoff from properties west of the park into the north part of the park that will create a problem. Again, all avoided if the new school is built in roughly the same spot as the current school.

6. Are there **Adequate Facilities**? Adequate utilities, access roads, drainage and/or other necessary facilities are being met?

**This criteria is not met.** There are issues with building the school in an area of natural drainage which will push the storm water further north and east creating flooding which currently does not exist. In 2015, The Supreme Court of Illinois found that a School Board is bound by zoning ordinances and storm water ordinances. Deerfield has adopted the Lake County Watershed Development Ordinance. The proposed school at Walden must comply with the requirements as it will disturb more than 5,000 square feet. A Designated Erosion Control Inspector must be part of the inspection process. The Plan commission should not accept any plan that alters the current natural drainage. More than 26 years ago, a berm was built along the north edge of the park and storm drains installed to prevent excess water from the park going into the north neighbors' yards and basements during heavy rainfall. The park, as currently situated, does not flood the neighbors as least as long as the current storm drains are maintained by the park district. Storm water naturally follows the contour from West to East along the north side of the park. There is no underground detention, none is needed. The system works great. Moving the school further north will change the natural drainage and will increase the volume of water runoff to the north and east from the park and from west of the park. This would violate the Lake County Watershed Development Ordinance. No drainage studies have been provided to the park neighbors.

District 109 proposes to install underground detention systems promising to eliminate any storm drainage water issues. Has a Designated Erosion Control Inspector been named? More study needs to be done to determine if such a system is viable. If the underground detention system raises the park elevation, the properties along the north lot line will still be underwater from school and park runoff as well as properties west of the park regardless of underground detention. The current submission provides additional detail of the storm drainage plan noting that part of the north watershed is unable to be included in the detention system. Overflow in extreme rain events will still flow north. This needs additional explanation. What if the underground detention fills and does not have time to drain, will the north neighbors be underwater? What is the cost of the underground detention system, how is it maintained, what the cost of the maintenance, who is responsible for its maintenance? Will District 109 and or the park district install drains in the north properties to prevent increased flooding from the change in the location of the school? What does the solid black line represent on page 165 in Appendix D Phase 4 going along the Northeast part of the property, from 1250 Warrington Road to 635 Ambleside Drive? The simple solution is to save the money from the underground detention system, house the school on a different property

during construction, and build the new school on the location of the old school. A recent conversation with the Village Engineer, Bob Phillips, confirmed that if the new school is built in the same location of the existing school, no major underground storm detention system would be required. Use the savings on modular off site classrooms to keep the kids safe.

7. Is there **Adequate Buffering**? Adequate fencing and/or screening shall be provided to ensure the enjoyment of surrounding properties, to provide for the public safety or to screen parking areas and other visually incompatible uses.

**This criteria is not met.** Screening does not address a 44 foot structure built closer to the property lines. The plan submitted by District 109 in April had a, never before disclosed, 2 foot wall 11 feet from the north property lines with a fence on top of the wall. The current version does not mention a 2 foot wall with a fence on top, but it does mention a Weir wall. Where will that be? What is the purpose? What will it look like? Is there still going to be a 2 foot wall with a fence on top?

For the life of me, I cannot understand why District 109 rejects pursuit of their stated **Number 1 Priority** of finding a place off site for the children to go to school during the short period of time the new school will be constructed. For the mere cost of 2 to 3% of the budget (basically a rounding error) District 109 could pursue an off-site location for the kids to keep them safe, and it would be far cheaper than defending a lawsuit and payment of damages if a tragedy occurs. Allowing the builder to remove the existing building and erect the new school on roughly the same spot without tip toeing around little kids, solves all problems.

If the kids are off site during construction, the new school can be built in the location as the old school and the analysis of the criteria for special use drastically changes:

- 1) **Compatibility with Existing Development:** The nature and intensity involving the size, placement and design of the structure would still fail because of the height of the building so alternate plans would have to be drawn to be compatible with surrounding existing developments but I have confidence in the architects to keep the building under the height restriction.
- 2) **Lot of Sufficient Size:** The size of the lot would be sufficient for the proposal if the school is built in the same location as that condition current exists today.
- 3) **Traffic:** Adverse effects of traffic would be minimized, no commingling of school and construction traffic, no restrictions on deliveries of materials to the job site.
- 4) **Parking and Access:** No concern of parking or access during construction if the school children are in a different location.
- 5) **Effect on Neighborhood:** The effect on the neighborhood would not be significantly or materially detrimental to the health, safety, and welfare of the public if the new school is built in the same location as the old school and would not diminish or impair property values because the surrounding properties maintain their site lines, and are in no worse position than they are now plus the green space/park would not be reduced. Thus the property values would not decline if the school were built in roughly the same location.

- 6) Adequate Facilities: Adequate facilities including drainage would not be affected even if improved in some fashion as the current system is working and the structure would be in the same location allowing the current pervious park to remain.
- 7) Adequate Buffering: Adequate buffering with landscaping would be far easier to accomplish and far less expensive with the new school in the same spot as the current school.

The bonus is that surrounding property owners would support the plan because their circumstances would not drastically change. Finally, and most importantly, the kids would not be subjected to the dangers of a construction zone, or the distraction of construction trucks, material deliveries, noise, traffic, and other distractions. They would also have adequate outdoor space to safely play.

Alternatives are a swing site of an existing school, a commercial property converted to a school, modular classrooms at another park like Woodlawn or Jewett or even Kipling, or a combination of placing Kindergarten kids at Jewett, 1-4 in modular classrooms and 5<sup>th</sup> graders going to Shepard early. Will it be tight? Yes. Inconvenient? Maybe a little, but the kids will not be in harms way, the construction employees can do their job unimpeded and get the job done quicker.

Another option would be to extend the construction window and have Wilmot as the swing site once their new school is completed. The Wilmot site is much larger and more open than Walden providing greater emergency ingress and egress, adequate green space even if two schools are operating at that site. District 109s objection to this is that the cost of construction goes up 10% every year so it will cost more. However, signing a contract for the entire project now would lock in the price except for potential material cost adjustments. But safe investment strategies in Treasury Bills would buffer the increased cost, if any. Plus, there would be cost savings at the Walden site in landscaping, storm water detention, and other savings with efficiency of prohibiting non-construction individuals from entering the construction site. The bottom line is that a small increase in cost, if there is one, should not get in the way of safety for the children. District 109 needs to re-evaluate their plan, but they might need a little push from the Village.

Please reject the current District 109 plan because it does not comply with the criteria for a special use and at the same time rejection will encourage a plan to remove the children from the construction zone thereby creating an open canvass to build the new school in roughly the same spot as the current school. Thank you for your time and consideration of these particularly important issues.