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October 16, 2009

Re: New Solution to Address North Dearborn Traffic Congestion

I am writing to provide you with an update regarding the proposed traffic congestion solution for Dearborn Parkway. I have been working closely with city infrastructure departments, neighborhood representatives and school administrators to identify the best approach to end this ongoing traffic problem.

Initially, city traffic engineers recommended the implementation of a 12-hour parking restriction on the east side of Dearborn Parkway, between Burton Place and North Avenue, from 6:00 am to 6:00 pm, on school days only. They made this recommendation to benefit neighborhood residents by creating an additional lane of traffic (school days only) to eliminate this ongoing daily traffic gridlock.

As promised in my previous correspondence, I convened a meeting with representatives from city infrastructure and police departments; Latin School administrators; the North Dearborn Association, representatives from neighboring condominium associations; and local homeowners to discuss the city's recommendation and identify other possible solutions to this problem.

I am pleased to inform you that our recent meeting was very productive and a great success. This discussion helped us identify a far more modest proposal that dramatically scales-back the originally proposed 12-hour parking restriction. We reached consensus on a new approach that will provide real long-term benefits to the North Dearborn community - adding additional Residential Permit Parking to the neighborhood while also creating an additional lane of traffic to alleviate the congestion problems related to school traffic in the afternoon.

Reduced Parking Restrictions for Eastside of Dearborn Street

Instead of implementing the city's recommended 12-hour parking restriction – we reached agreement with all parties to limit this restriction to a significantly shorter 3-hour period only during peak afternoon pick-up hours at Latin School.

This new solution will restrict parking on the east side of Dearborn Parkway, between Burton Street and North Avenue, only for three hours - between 1:00 pm and 4:00 pm on school days only. To be clear, there will be no parking restrictions whatsoever on holidays, weekends and the entire summer season.

This change is scheduled to be implemented by the Chicago Department of Transportation in the first week of November at which time new restricted parking signage will be installed. Please take this time to share this information with your guests, tradesmen and other service providers so they are fully aware of this new 3-hour parking restriction and can plan accordingly for the future.

Please note: Traffic engineers and the Chicago Police Department will closely monitor this new traffic policy over the next two months. We will re-evaluate the effectiveness of these restrictions and determine whether or not these restrictions should be adjusted or eliminated at the end of that two month period.

New Neighborhood Benefit: Additional Residential Permit Parking

Since taking office in 2007, I have received countless requests for additional Residential Permit Parking (RPP) zones on Dearborn Parkway. This recent traffic proposal raised concerns that a substantial portion of residential on-street parking would be eliminated.

Because I understand the importance of on-street parking in this neighborhood, I will be passing a new ordinance expanding Residential Permit Parking to **both sides** of Dearborn Parkway from Burton Place to North Avenue – 24 hours a day / 7 days a week. The only time any residential parking will be prohibited in this area is from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm on the east side of Dearborn Parkway, between Burton and North, during school days only.

This represents a **significant increase** in (what is typically scarce) Residential Permit Parking storage for neighborhood residents. This new policy won praise and strong support from neighborhood representatives present at our meeting.

Increased Traffic and Parking Enforcement on North Dearborn

As you know, enhanced city enforcement will be critical to ensure these changes to local traffic and parking protocols on North Dearborn Parkway are effective. It is my understanding that the Chicago Police Department is unable to detail any additional personnel to supplement the one police officer currently assigned to police the intersection of Burton Place and Dearborn Parkway.

That said, I am currently working with the City of Chicago to try and secure additional enforcement officers (from the Department of Revenue and possibly OEMC) to issue citations for parking and double-parking abuses related to pick-up and drop-off at Latin School. Once this enforcement issue is resolved, I will follow-up with you directly to share the details.

Thank you again for your continued patience as we work to implement the best possible solution to eliminate this long-standing traffic concern once and for all.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Brendan Reilly". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Brendan Reilly
Alderman, 42nd Ward

The 42nd Ward Office has moved one block south, to 325 W. Huron Street, Suite 510, Chicago, IL 60654. Phone and Fax number remain the same.