

DNAinfo quick summary of proposed and possible changes for Jackson and adjacent parks. August 8, 2017. By Sam Cholke and Tanveer Ali

Link: https://www.dnainfo.com/chicago/20170808/woodlawn/jackson-park-barack-obama-presidential-library-center-changes-map-south-shore-cultural-center-worlds-columbian-exposition/?utm_source=Hyde+Park+%26+Kenwood&utm_campaign=dfb91e14d0-Mailchimp-CHI&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_2c6ae6e68e-dfb91e14d0-175579601

Here's every huge change Obama (& Others) want at Jackson Park, Mapped



Jackson Park and South Shore

Cultural Center Park
Eric Allix Rogers

JACKSON PARK — Jackson Park is undergoing huge changes, and it's hard to keep them all straight.

We've made a map that hits on nearly 50 of the major changes that the 542-acre park recently has undergone or are proposed in the next three years. There are four main projects currently in play.

Obama Presidential Center

In July 2016, Barack Obama chose 21 acres along the western boundary of the park as the site for his presidential library, and his namesake foundation has spent the last year working on the plans for what it will look like.

The [campus consists of four main buildings](#) surrounding a plaza on Stony Island Avenue near 60th Street. There's the museum, a forum building for programming and events, a community garden and public library building topped with a scenic overlook and an athletic center.

Foundation officials said they need to close six-lane Cornell Drive from the Midway Plaisance north to Hayes Drive to fit the campus into the park and connect its gardens and lawns to the other open spaces in the park.

Originally proposed for 21 acres of the park, the center's campus has slowly expanded to include 9 more acres of the park and nearly 5 acres of the Midway Plaisance for an underground parking garage. The expansion puts the Obama Center now directly next to an ongoing [\\$8.1 million habitat restoration project started by the Army Corps of Engineers](#) in 2013.

Army Corps of Engineers

The Corps already has finished gently sloping the shores of the lagoon after it drained all the water out and is now getting new plants established along the shores and restocking the lagoon with native fish and other animals. These are sensitive plantings that have kept much of the park off limits to the public until the plants are firmly established, opening questions about how expanding the construction zone of the library would affect the project.

The centerpiece of the habitat restoration is a full-scale rehabilitation of Wooded Island, which had hundreds of trees removed and now is establishing new stands of oaks and other native trees.

The project was to extend south of Hayes Drive onto the golf course and surround the inner harbor, but has been stalled by a lack of funding.

Jackson Park and South Shore golf courses

[A proposal to combine the Jackson Park and South Shore golf courses](#) now puts that habitat restoration work into question.

The Chicago Parks Golf Alliance is leading the effort to combine the courses with the help of Tiger Woods' design firm. The plan calls for bringing in PGA-level tours, while keeping the course open to the public.

There will be trade-offs on the golf course, such as the elimination of several sports fields to make way for new links and a new clubhouse, moving a nature sanctuary away from its views of the skyline and Lake Michigan and closing sections of Marquette Drive.

At least six new buildings are proposed for Jackson Park, four at the Obama Center, a new clubhouse for the golf course and a new visitors center.

Project 120

The [visitors center is the idea of Project 120](#), a group associated with restoration efforts at the Wooded Island's Japanese garden, which brought [Yoko Ono's first public art installation](#) in the United States to the park and planted hundreds of cherry trees around the lagoons.

The visitors center plan appears to be on hold while the other plans are worked out, but the center would act as a primary stopping point for all park visitors and provide education on nature in the park and its history.

All these plans have faced sharp criticism in part because of the park's historic role in the city.

Olmsted's vision

Jackson Park was designed by Frederick Law Olmsted, who also designed Washington Park, Central Park in New York City and the National Mall in Washington, D.C.

Olmsted started designing the park in 1871 when it was still a swampy part of the lake before infill turned it into a park. He redesigned it several times, including in 1889 for the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition and again in 1895 after the fair to turn it back into a park. That constant revision by Olmsted makes any claims that refer back to the "original" plan for the park difficult to substantiate — one version even included a series of canals with gondolas connecting Jackson and Washington parks via the Midway Plaisance.

Advocates said anyone planning a project for Jackson Park has to find a way to [pay respect to the Columbian Exposition](#), which was so important to the City of Chicago getting back on its feet after the Great Fire of 1871 that one of the stars on the city flag represents the event. The lasting legacies in the park now include the Museum of Science and Industry's building, the Japanese garden on Wooded Isle and several bridges and other small structures.