

OBAMA PRESIDENTIAL CENTER

UNITING AND EVOLVING JACKSON PARK



The Obama Foundation is working to bring the Obama Presidential Center to historic Jackson Park on the South Side of Chicago. Far more than a museum, it will be a tribute to Chicago's rich history, its defining legacy of progress, and its bright future.

TODAY

The history of Jackson Park is made up of slow starts, shining moments, bold moves, and substantial transformations over time. From filling portions of the original lagoons to the construction of Cornell Drive — a six-lane highway cutting through the heart of the historic location — modern changes have interfered with the original 1871 vision for the site of Jackson Park. But soon that could change.

Today, Jackson Park is no longer the place for active recreation or quiet meditation that famed landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted envisioned. In fact, on a current day you could walk through the future site of the Obama Presidential Center in Jackson Park and see almost no one, with the site disconnected from the rest of the park by Cornell Drive.

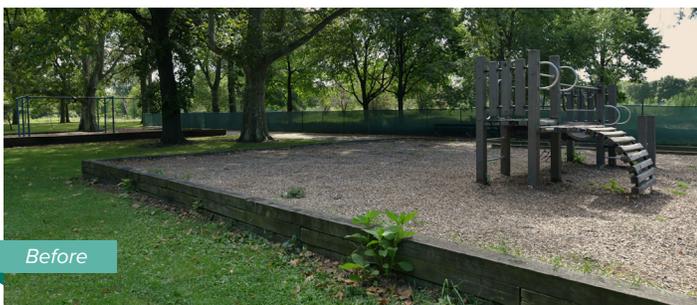
TOMORROW

The Obama Presidential Center provides a unique opportunity to unite, evolve, and enhance the iconic public park, consistent with its fundamental character and history. Our goal is to make sure Jackson Park feels like home to both everyone who lives in the South Side community and visitors from around the world. With the vast majority of our site dedicated to open, green space for the public, we are cultivating and creating spaces for:

- › Active enjoyment and community activities, including picnics, child recreation, sledding, movie nights, performances and more.
- › Reflection and reading, along with new paths for walking, running and biking.

Working to enhance the complex physical conditions we find in Jackson Park today is a challenge, but also a privilege because we understand how important this place is for the community.

Improved playground experience



Increased access to green space



Key highlights of these plans include improvements to:



WATER

Jackson Park's connection to water is a crucial part of its history and identity. The Center will not only run alongside Jackson Park's interior waterfront, but provide solutions to some of the challenges water presents for the park space.

Currently, the park does not manage stormwater — any excess stormwater runs off of the site and Cornell Drive, draining directly into the lagoons or into city systems. The Center, by contrast, has a goal of accommodating a 100-year storm event on the site bringing it into alignment with the City of Chicago Stormwater Ordinance. The landscape design weaves a series of depressional storage areas and swales to slow, capture, and infiltrate stormwater, greatly reducing the impacts to the city stormwater system and improving the quality of water entering the lagoons. Additionally, the Center will host a refreshed circulation strategy around and into the Women's Garden, which, once complete, will retain the existing circular form of the historic sunken lawn of this portion of Jackson Park and improve the current drainage strategy ensuring that these lower portions of the park are allowed to drain while accentuating the park's gardenesque character.



PLANTS AND BIODIVERSITY

In Jackson Park's current state, over 40 percent of the trees are in decline. Portions of the site's soils, most of which were dredged from the lagoons as fill in the 1800s, are in equally tenuous territory. The lack of biodiversity on the site today — with only three types of trees accounting for nearly half of those currently on the Center's site — represents a challenge as we face increasing pressures from the shifts and seasonal extremes of our changing climate.

The new landscape at the Center will include more trees than exist today and, more importantly, will include an increase in biodiversity at all levels of planting, helping to bolster the site's resilience while adding experiential value, habitat, and environmental improvements.

Jackson Park is an important stopover for the numerous species of migratory birds that move along the Lakefront each year and, given the importance of this stopover location, it is also frequented by many bird-watching groups and individuals. The Center's plan recognizes this important use and has made strides to improve the qualities of the park that accommodate these activities. The landscape design includes bird-friendly plant selections and vegetative layering strategies that will serve both an aesthetic function and as vital habitat to these migratory birds. The landscape planting design also aims to incorporate pollinator friendly species as well as the relevant host plants for pollinators further contributing to the Center's emphasis on improving the park's biodiversity and ecological health.



WOODLAND

The Center's proposed Woodland Walk will replace some of the space currently occupied by Cornell Drive, and offer a quiet walking path and wildlife observation space for visitors. The proposed plan also creates a space for youth to enjoy the park with a nature-inspired playground, highlighting plants and animals native to the lake shore ecosystem, which will complement and celebrate the natural environment of Jackson Park.



SUSTAINABLE AMENITIES

Plans for the Center and the surrounding area include a commitment to sustainable urban environments and we will work toward this goal in all aspects of the campus.

In fact, the Center has three green roofs: atop the Forum, the Library, and the Program, Activity, and Athletic Center. The Library rooftop will feature a Fruit and Vegetable Garden similar to the First Lady's White House Kitchen Garden where community members can grow fruits and vegetables. Additionally, the Great Lawn will serve as a communal space, hosting movies, performances and events, offering an incline and grade change for city views and winter sledding.