

December 3, 2016

Dear Alderman Cappleman,

On behalf of The Magnolia/Malden Block Club, we are writing to request you take an immediate and strong leadership role on the Wilson Underline project to make this immensely popular community dream become a reality.

To paraphrase Joni Mitchell, this is a once in a lifetime opportunity to turn a parking lot into paradise.

Since the CTA Public meeting was held in 2013, the community has clearly stated their vision for a Wilson Station Public Plaza. Through our community initiated public engagement process, we have further determined the community wants a welcoming landscaped, green public space for a variety of events including food trucks, art fairs, farmers markets, and other public social gatherings.

A community survey conducted in the spring of 2016 once again showed strong support for a public plaza—with 94% of the 985 respondents overwhelming in support of the plaza design.

Renamed the Wilson Underline, this public plaza would enhance the entire transportation experience for the thousands of commuters each day. The WU will also create much needed excitement in Uptown and raise the bar for CTA stations throughout the City. The WU would also encourage increased retail sales as cited by NYC studies with increased retail sales of 17-25% when public plazas were added near retail corridors.

No one is more concerned about public safety than we are and it is because of this concern that we so strongly support this project. Every study has shown that activating public space through smart and innovative design reduces crime and creates safer neighborhoods. Projects like this in Portland, Austin and especially the New York City Queens Plaza have proven that public plazas enhance public safety.

We recognize the Wilson Underline public plaza, will draw bustling crowds and encourage positive use of our public space. As neighborhood organizations, we are committed to working with all interested parties to assure the Wilson Underline is a safe and welcoming gateway to our community.

We hope you fully support our community's vision and will now take a strong stance on the Wilson Underline. We urge you, Alderman Cappleman, to fight with us and for the Wilson Underline project.

Thank you,

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