

HARLEM AVENUE LITTLE ITALY BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

(HALIBA)

April 15, 2024

Laura Flores, Chair
Chicago Plan Commission

cc: Commissioner Tom Carney, CDOT
Commissioner Ciere Boatright, DPD

Dear Chairperson Flores,

On behalf of the Harlem Avenue Little Italy Business Association, please accept our most sincere thanks for the consideration the City of Chicago has given to the upgrade of the Harlem Avenue business district. This generations-old neighborhood has been built by European Americans and kept strong by the work ethic and ethnic pride of families still present, going back to pre-WWII.

We have thoroughly enjoyed working with Carmen Martinez from the Department of Planning and Development, her co-collaborators, and consultants. They have been tireless in their efforts to understand what is important to us, and what would be effective and efficient ways to make Harlem Avenue the gem it once was.

As a prominent organization in the area, and as a serious stakeholder, HALIBA wholeheartedly supports the adoption of the Harlem Avenue Visioning Study. We look forward to continuing our participation with the project so that the community is best served, and the legacy of Harlem Avenue is preserved.

We want to make it clear that the identification of the street as Chicago's Little Italy is of great importance to us. With the center of the district being The National Italian American Sports Hall of Fame, and with several Italian American businesses lining up to join the others in the district, we feel this identity (which was established in the early 1980s) would be a lightning rod for tourism and economic development of the area.

Once again, thank you for your consideration, and we remain at your service.

Sincerely,

Ron Onesti, Chairman of the Board

Gino Bartucci, President



April 17, 2024

City of Chicago
Department of Planning and Development
121 N LaSalle Street - 10th Floor
Chicago, IL 60602

This letter is written on behalf of the Portage Park Chamber of Commerce and its Board of Directors to express our support for the Harlem Avenue Visioning Study initiated by the City of Chicago's Department of Planning and Development. We feel the implementation of the recommendations from this study will have an exponentially positive impact on this well-established business community. Emphasizing the Italian-American culture among the businesses and many of the local residents will provide the area with a refreshed rebrand through the utilization of new and various community identifiers. However, the recommendations from this study will provide more than just a reinforcement of the Italian-American spirit along Harlem Avenue. The enhancements to the streetscape are something that everyone can benefit from by making the business district more walkable for shoppers and residents alike. This will certainly benefit the businesses. Consequently, this will make the area more attractive to potential new businesses looking to relocate into the area. The addition of public gathering spaces will provide amenities that both the businesses and visitors to the area will benefit from. This creates the possibility of having more smaller festivals/events within the study's footprint. These events will provide the local businesses with an additional opportunity to promote themselves while also increasing the quality of life for individuals and families living in the area. In closing, we encourage the Chicago Plan Commission to grant an approval to adopt this plan.

Best Regards,

Michael Giordano
Executive Director & SSA 28-2014 Program Manager

**Portage Park Chamber of Commerce - 4946 W Irving Park Road - (773) 777-2020
Sole Service Provider for SSA-28-2014 (Six Corners)**