



NATIONAL
ASSOCIATION *for*
OLMSTED
PARKS

PRESS RELEASE

August 10, 2020 -- The National Association for Olmsted Parks today announced that it would not sign the [Memorandum of Agreement](#) that effectively gives a go-ahead for current planned construction of the Obama Presidential Center (OPC) in Jackson Park.

NAOP “solidly supports the planning and construction of a vibrant presidential center to honor our 44th president in a locale that will retain and recognize the value of Chicago’s historic Olmsted parks,” the statement said. “However, the current construction plans in Jackson Park and minimal mitigation efforts set out in the MOA are unacceptable. Accordingly, the National Association for Olmsted Parks will not be a signatory.”

In a statement submitted by the president and CEO, NAOP bemoaned the flawed process that will permit a project whose “combined effect . . . will be to destroy the integrity of this historic and nationally recognized landscape designed by visionary social reformer Frederick Law Olmsted.”

“The City and the Obama Foundation know there are alternative locations that would allow for a new Center with all its amenities, without radically altering Jackson Park and the Plaisance,” said NAOP. “The fact that this desirable outcome—and other avoidance measures—were never genuinely explored illuminates the flawed process that has produced the MOA.”

NAOP has served as a “consulting party” in the federally-mandated Section 106 review of proposed changes to the landscape and infrastructure caused by plans for the OPC. As a consulting party, NAOP was invited to sign on to the draft Memorandum.

You can read the full statement [here](#).

NAOP is the only organization in the country dedicated to advancing the legacy, vision and values of Frederick Law Olmsted. For 40 years, NAOP has helped preserve and protect historic Olmsted landscapes; provided advocacy as well as technical assistance at the national and local level; offered key resources and educational material about Olmsted landscapes and landscape design; and published and promoted definitive scholarship through the Papers of Frederick Law Olmsted. NAOP is the managing partner of Olmsted 200, a national celebration in 2022 marking the 200th anniversary of the birth of Frederick Law Olmsted, www.olmsted.org

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