



**Friends
of the
Parks**

Friends of the Parks

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Chicago, Illinois (February 17, 2016): **Lucas Museum**

After a court appearance today before U.S. District Court Judge John Darrah to set a further discovery schedule, Friends of the Parks' continues its fight to keep the proposed Lucas Museum of Narrative Art off the lakefront.

“We have already learned through discovery that the city only offered one potential site to the Lucas Museum,” said Juanita Irizarry, Friends of the Parks' executive director. **“It would be a shame if the city lost this opportunity because the mayor didn't seriously make an effort to find a site that is not subject to 100-year old public trust doctrine making it illegal to build on the lakefront.”**

Friends of the Parks supports the Lucas Museum coming to Chicago, but the organization continues to oppose its siting on lakefront open space. Long known for its advocacy to keep Chicago's lakefront “open, clear, and free” per the call of Chicago urban planners and park visionaries of a century ago, the park advocacy group believes that the siting of the Lucas Museum in this lakefront location contradicts the public trust doctrine and its central principle that the general public is the beneficiary of this public lakefront parkland.

Friends of the Parks maintains that although the proposed site is now used as a parking lot, its future reversion to parkland is possible. Once a building is in place, it is forever precluded from being public open space. The organization would rather see the City and the Chicago Park District work toward the vision cast by Skidmore, Owing & Merrill for a “Burnham Sanctuary”—19 acres of parkland that would encompass the site in question.

As Friends of the Parks has recommended previously, the organization hopes that Mr. Lucas will reconsider and locate his museum just a ½ mile south on the west side of Lake Shore Drive on the former Michael Reese Hospital site. The Reese site would

allow the Museum Campus to be expanded to the south and bring needed economic development benefits to the Bronzeville community.

“We stand on the shoulders of Chicago entrepreneur of a century ago--Aaron Montgomery Ward--who made the protection of our lakefront his labor of love. He spent many decades and a small fortune saving Grant Park from development, yet his efforts were not widely appreciated in his time,” said Juanita Irizarry, executive director of Friends of the Parks.

Friends of the Parks is a 40 year old non-profit parks advocacy group whose mission is to preserve protect, improve, and promote the use of Chicago’s parks and open spaces. We advance our programmatic, educational, and advocacy work with the support of our members, donors and volunteers, and through our governmental, community, corporate, and environmental partnerships.

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