



Rideshare Zone Placement — New Ryan Field

Context for Submission of Updated Ryan Field Transportation Plan

We have heard the concerns raised regarding the originally proposed rideshare locations on Lincoln Street and Poplar Avenue, specifically the conflicts with bike lanes and the designated shuttle path. We are not relitigating that discussion.

If the City feels that the requests made in advisory board meeting are in the public interest, we will agree to implement them. We recognize that the board plays a real role in how this City reaches decisions, and we respect it.

We do so with concerns, and they center on a specific group of our guests who are too easily overlooked. The Northwestern fan base includes many mature fans in their seventies and eighties. They do not have disabilities under the ADA. They have the natural challenges of walking longer distances that come with age. While they are able to get to and from their seats, a long walk before and after a game is a different matter.

These are not fans who are driving. They are taking Uber and Lyft to and from the game — and they will be doing so in much larger numbers now, given the loss of 2,500 parking spaces near the stadium.

We would rather surface this now than discover it on a cold, rainy Saturday in November.

What the walk requires

We have benchmarked the walking distances for the comparable venues in the Chicago area at the pace of fans 70+. As you can see, the median distance of comparable venue is a mature fan friendly 3 minutes. New Ryan Field's original proposal was a 10 minute walk. The proposal of the advisory board requires a 14-17 minute walk for mature fans, the longest of any comparable venue in the Chicago area.

Location	Walk, older pedestrian	Round trip
Median of comparable facilities	~3 min	~6 min
Original Proposal — Lincoln St / Poplar Ave	~10 min	~21 min



Location	Walk, older pedestrian	Round trip
Advisory Board Proposal: Haven Middle School	~14 min	~28 min
Advisory Board Proposal: 2500 Ridge (COS Building)	~17 min	~34 min

Our original proposal already asked more than three times what the typical comparable facility asks. Under the Advisory Board proposal, New Ryan Field would have the furthest rideshare walk of any comparable stadium or arena in the region.

Seventeen minutes each way, for a guest who has already sat for three hours, in November weather, in the dark, over wet sidewalks, through post-event crowds. That assumes an older guest walking steadily and without difficulty. For a slower guest it is longer.

The parking losses

This is not landing on a stable baseline. We have lost an estimated 2,500 parking spaces near the stadium: approximately 500 to changes in City parking regulations, and approximately 2,000 to the renovation at Canal Shores Golf Course.

Those spaces do not represent guests who will stop coming by car. They represent guests moved into rideshare as their remaining option, and they are disproportionately local — Evanston residents and North Shore neighbors who drove because the trip was short, and who are among our longest-tenured season-ticket holders.

More people will need rideshare than would have. Those people skew local and older. And the walk they face would be the furthest of any comparable facility in the region. Those decisions were made separately. They will not be experienced separately.

Who this falls on

For these guests, rideshare is not a convenience. It is the only practical way they can attend. They cannot walk in from remote parking. Some no longer drive at night. The loss of 2,500 nearby spaces has made that more true, not less.

They will not appear in an accessibility count, because they are not disabled under the ADA. They will not appear in public comment, because they are not organized to speak up. They will either be unreasonably burdened or excluded — and the decision will appear costless, because the people who paid for it were never counted.



Closing

While we will reluctantly agree to what the advisory board is requiring, we are documenting these concerns in advance because the effects described here are foreseeable today. The walk times, the parking losses, and the guests who will absorb them are known quantities. They should not come as a surprise a year from now.

We believe deeply in Evanston's commitment to equity and empathy. It is why we have worked so hard on workforce development with disadvantaged communities, on MWBE participation, and on being responsive to the asks of our neighbors throughout construction. That commitment is one of the reasons this community is what it is.

Which is why our concern here is not a small one. New Ryan Field will be the most accessible stadium ever built in the world. The decision to force older fans to walk further than any venue in the Chicago area is incompatible with those values — it quietly transfers its cost onto older fans who will not organize, will not object, and will simply stop coming. We do not believe Evanston intends that outcome. But we are concerned that a value this community holds so deeply is not being respected here.

Walk times are calculated at 3.0 feet per second, a recognized pedestrian design speed for facilities serving a significant share of older pedestrians, and exclude crowd congestion, crossing delay, and weather effects. Underlying distances are approximate pedestrian walking distances from each venue's published rideshare location to the nearest practical guest entrance; where a venue publishes a range or multiple zones, the midpoint is used. Comparable facilities are seven Chicago-area stadiums and arenas — United Center, Rate Field, Wrigley Field, Soldier Field, Allstate Arena, Wintrust Arena, and SeatGeek Stadium — using each venue's own published rideshare guidance.