



A Special Place with a Special History

There are over 350 Children's museums in the U.S. – five in the Chicago area – but there is only one Grant Park. For 171 years, Chicago's Grant Park has remained specially protected open space, "forever clear and free" for Chicagoans of every age and from every corner of the city to enjoy, thanks to four Illinois Supreme Court decisions.

You can love children, not be racist and still oppose building a Children's Museum in Grant Park.

With so much subterfuge, it's easy to lose the real issue: The lakefront is sacred ground, "forever open, clear and free." That's how it was designated way back in 1836, and that's what court rulings have declared four times since, when prior generations pushed other civic projects thought to be the perfect fit for Grant Park.

Today, the park is not an appropriate venue for an \$8-per-head glorified activity center for children, no matter how far the building is sunk into the ground or how green the roof.

- Chicago Sun-Times Editorial, September 21, 2007

Dozens of Other Projects Rejected Throughout the Past

Throughout its history, dozens of other worthy projects have been rejected in Grant Park, including the Field Museum and most recently, the DuSable Museum of African American History. If not for the courage and wisdom of previous generations, we wouldn't be having this debate today, because there wouldn't be a single blade of grass for the Children's Museum to build on.

Stand Our Ground, or the Grant Park We Know Will Be Gone

The erosion of public space doesn't happen all at once. It starts with a trickle, then a stream, then a river, and finally a flood. Already, one museum backer is floating a second proposal to build a tavern on the park, and many more proposals will follow if we don't stand our ground. If we permit the Children's Museum to build a 100,000 sq ft museum on Grant Park – with skylights as big as houses – the park as we know it will soon be gone for ever.

Broad Opposition to Building in Grant Park

Organizations that oppose building in Grant Park include Friends of the Parks, Friends of Daley Bi, Friends of Downtown, Chicago Tribune, Chicago Sun-Times, and Crain's Chicago Business, as well as thousands of individual residents across the city. Online polls by independent news organizations find that public opposition to building on Grant Park runs 3 to 1.

**For more information, to sign our online petition, or find other ways to get involved,
visit www.SaveGrantPark.org**

Get the Facts in the Grant Park Debate

Myth: There's plenty of underutilized space to build on in Grant Park.

FACT: Daley Bicentennial Plaza is enjoyed not only by thousands of neighborhood residents, but by tens of thousands from across the city each year. Chicago has less park land per capita than any big city in the U.S.; even New York City has more open green space.

Myth: If we can build on Millennium Park and the Museum Campus, we should be able to build on Grant Park.

FACT: While the Children's Museum tries to use Millennium Park and the Museum Campus to justify taking land on Grant Park, the fact is that those plots weren't built on protected green space. Millennium Park is built on abandoned railroad tracks, and the Museum Campus and Northerly Island are landfills created after the Chicago Fire for the 1933 World's Fair.

No, Mayor Daley. This debate is not about people who've chosen to live near a park that welcomes people of all races and incomes suddenly wanting to exclude poor minority kids. This is about rich people certain that they have enough influence over you to claim a part of Grant Park for their project....

The issue here, Reilly correctly wrote, is "the future of Grant Park" -- whether uncounted generations of Chicagoans will enjoy the same open space that's under the stewardship of this generation. What will we bequeath to them?

- Chicago Tribune Editorial, Sept. 19, 2007

Myth: This is the only place in downtown for the Children's Museum.

FACT: Grant Park is the only place in downtown where the Children's Museum can't be built, because it is legally protected open space. Navy Pier officials welcome a museum expansion at its current location, and many Grant Park supporters have said they would welcome the Children's Museum at the Museum Campus or Northerly Island if the museum insists on leaving Navy Pier.

Myth: Downtown Chicago is the only viable neighborhood for a children's museum.

FACT: Children's Museum officials never even gave other neighborhoods the chance to compete for the museum. However, the Indianapolis Children's Museum sees 1.1 million visitors a year, twice as many as Chicago and more than any other children's museum in the country, even though its not located in the city's center. The Indianapolis museum is located more than six miles from the heart of downtown, in a neighborhood that is 84% African American and 25% low-income.

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