

URBAN LIGHT

The ULI Chicago Newsletter

Commissioner Gainer Honored with ULI Chicago Leadership Award for Initiating Cook County Land Bank



Cook County Commissioner Bridget Gainer was the recipient of the Leadership Award as part of ULI Chicago's Second Annual Vision Awards, held on June 5th at the Bridgeport Arts Center on Chicago's south side. Ms. Gainer, whose foresight identified the need to support housing and economic development in areas hardest-hit by the foreclosure crisis in Cook County, played a leading role in forming the Cook County Land Bank.

Ms. Gainer is the Commissioner on the Cook County Board for the 10th District representing the North Lakefront and Northwest side. Commissioner Gainer joined the Cook County Board in 2009, where she has focused her efforts on three areas: pension reform, the needs of women and children in the County's jail and juvenile detention center, and the linked crises of foreclosure and vacant buildings.

She saw in working with constituents going through foreclosure that comprehensive solutions are needed for both foreclosure and vacancy. These efforts led to the development of court mediation in 2010, the passage of the County's Vacant Building Ordinance in 2011 and most recently the creation of the Cook County Land Bank.

In the Fall of 2012, ULI Chicago was approached by Commissioner Gainer, in partnership with Cook County president Toni Preckwinkle and the Cook County Land Bank Advisory Committee, to lend its expertise to the discussion surrounding the proposed land bank. ULI Chicago conducted a Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) in October 2012. The ULI Chicago TAP provided input from the development community and potential end users of a land bank, and provided recommendations on operations,

mission, governance structure and finance, and property acquisition and disposition strategies for the land bank. Review the [Cook County Land Bank TAP Report](#)

Ms. Gainer was very pleased with ULI's assistance in forming the land bank. "ULI was a neutral umbrella that aggregated multiple disciplines in order to provide a comprehensive recommendation for the organization of the land bank," said Gainer.

Scott Goldstein, Principal at Teska Associates, Inc. and co-chair of ULI Chicago's Public Policy Committee since 1999, chaired the thirteen-member technical assistance panel for the land bank project. Mr. Goldstein was especially enthusiastic about the study, emphasizing that "the Land Bank TAP is absolutely in line with ULI's mission and ULI Chicago provided the county with a strategic approach to the land bank's formation." For Mr. Goldstein, one of the most rewarding aspects of being part of the panel was helping to define ULI's role and applying it to the very important issues addressed by the Cook County Land Bank.

The purpose of the land bank is to acquire, hold, manage and reposition abandoned, underdeveloped or tax delinquent properties throughout the county, creating useful development opportunities that enhance the surrounding community. To this end, the land bank will provide clean and marketable title to properties with complicated liens to allow a private developer to begin the process of redevelopment. Ms. Gainer states that, "The land bank will act as an intermediary between the public arena and private development to facilitate attracting developers by mitigating some of the risks of obtaining clear title to these properties."

In January of this year, the Cook County Board of Commissioners approved the Land Bank Ordinance, which established an independent agency. Cook County has retained an executive search firm to hire an Executive Director for the land bank, who will report to the 13-member Cook County Land Bank Board. Consistent with the technical assistance panel's recommendations, the Cook County Land Bank will hold open meetings and will facilitate transparency in its dealings. According to the ordinance, the land bank's Executive Director will have the ability to make individual transactions without specific Board approval to make decisions and act quickly. Google is currently lending its expertise to the County through the utilization of three of its data scientists. These experts are developing a custom database that will allow the land bank to visually assess potential sites for the program.

While the land bank was conceptualized during the foreclosure crisis that the county continues to face, the program addresses the long-term redevelopment issues that municipalities face during all stages of an economic cycle. The land bank will endure beyond the current foreclosure crisis, providing support for the land use priorities of local municipalities within Cook County. ULI Chicago continues to advise Cook County and its land bank program as the program takes shape. Ms. Gainer anticipates a "continued relationship between the County and ULI" as a result of her positive experience with the Land Bank TAP.

For more information, review the ULI Chicago [Cook County Land Bank TAP Report](#) and [related news coverage](#)

Second Annual Vision Awards Recognizes Thirteen Outstanding Projects, Programs, & Leaders



The second annual ULI Chicago Vision Awards were held on June 5th at the Bridgeport Arts Center located on the city's south side. The historic building, the former Spiegel Catalog Warehouse, provided both award winners and the hundreds of audience members panoramic views of the Chicago skyline on this magnificent evening. [See photos from the event](#)

Twenty-two projects, programs, and young professionals were named

as finalists in the 2013 ULI Chicago Vision Awards. The Awards Committee reached out to a broad spectrum of project and program types. Finalists were selected based on projects and programs that best exemplified creative development practices, inventive partnerships or sharing of resources, imaginative problem solving, or visionary ideas that have contributed to the growth of vibrant communities. The relative size of a program or project, whether square footage or total budget, was secondary to the innovative characteristics contributing to its success. The Young Visionary Award finalists were selected based on outstanding young leaders in the land use and development fields. These younger professionals set the bar for career advancement, goal-setting, community service and a strong commitment to ULI's principles of land use.

2013 Vision Awards Winners

LEADERSHIP CATEGORY

10th District Cook County Commissioner, Bridget Gainer

PROJECT CATEGORY

31st Street Harbor – 3155 S. Lake Shore Dr., Chicago

City Winery Chicago – 1200 W. Randolph St., Chicago

Metra Market – 131 N. Clinton St., Chicago

Roosevelt University's Vertical Campus – 425 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago

Roseland Senior Campus – 10400 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago

Sullivan Center – 1 S. State St., Chicago

PROGRAM CATEGORY

1871

GO TO 2040 Comprehensive Regional Plan, CMAP

Growing Home, Inc.

University of Chicago – Arts Incubator in Washington Park

West Cook County Housing Collaborative, IFF

YOUNG VISIONARY CATEGORY

Tom Hussey, Associate Director, Skidmore, Owings & Merrill LLP

The 31st Street Harbor is just the type of innovative and creative project that ULI Chicago wanted to recognize and celebrate with the Vision Awards. Learn more about this winning project and how it came to fruition.

The 31st Street Harbor, Chicago



Located just south of the existing 31st Street Beach, the LEED Certified Gold harbor is the newest addition to Chicago's lakefront, offering stunning views of the lake and skyline. The 31st Street Harbor, one of the largest harbors built in Chicago in the last 50 years, transforms an underused portion of Lake Michigan lakeshore into a new public amenity on the city's south side. With its focus on enhancing the quality of the public realm, the

development perfectly blends natural aesthetic treatments with engineered function and efficiency. In lieu of tapping into tax payer dollars, the \$103 million harbor was funded purely by revenues from the approximately 1,000-slip marina. The project includes a 63,300-square-foot accessible green roof parking garage, designed by Desman Associates, a great lawn, promenade, terraced steps, a community room and approximately 4 acres of new park space including a new fully accessible playground. The Harbor Building, designed by Brook Architecture, is smoothly integrated with the other elements of the project. Other amenities include Peninsula Park, shaped in cooperation with the landscape architects at Site Design Group, a triangle-shaped park built at the meeting point of the breakwater and the 31st Street pier that was created on a peninsula of land formed by a half-mile-long, open coast, stone breakwater sheltering the harbor.

AECOM's vision and leadership throughout the project helped provide a number of best management practices for water management including rain gardens, bioswales, infiltration vaults, and treatment structures which will accommodate storm water flows on site and provide natural filtration. The Harbor

Building and parking garage are heated and cooled via a geothermal system that utilizes water from Lake Michigan, a strategy that will greatly reduce its energy demands. The project also included the adaptive reuse of removed trees that were carved and painted by local artists or used to create new fish habitats in the lake.

The project should encourage the adaptive reuse and construction of new homes and businesses in the nearby community. The LEED Gold certification is the result of a collaborative effort put forth by the team to highlight environmental and social sustainability throughout the project.

COMMITTEE UPDATES

Our committee update section highlights some of the most recent committee activities. Contact [ULI Chicago](#) to get involved with a committee or initiative.

Communications

Urban Inspiration Contest



This quarter's topic is the wave of Chicago Public School closings and the effect on children, communities, and public education. In the wake of this controversial issue, the Urban Inspiration Contest asks the questions: **What recommendations would you provide City officials as they continue to debate closing schools? And how should the City approach the adaptive reuse of recently closed school buildings?** [Read more](#)

All entries should be posted by July 31, 2013. [Submit your contest entry today](#)

The Communications Committee for ULI Chicago invites all ULI Chicago LinkedIn members to participate in the *Urban Inspiration* contest. The

quarterly contest challenges participants to provide their expertise in resolving a local land use issue. The topic is posted on [ULI Chicago's LinkedIn Group](#) and respondents should provide their

answers by commenting on the initial contest topic post. In addition to gaining recognition among their colleagues, the best entry will win a complimentary ticket to the next ULI Chicago Breakfast meeting or networking event.

The winning entry will be selected by members of ULI Chicago's Communications Committee and announced on LinkedIn. The contest is held on a quarterly basis, in coordination with *Urban Light*. You do not need to be a member of ULI to participate in the ULI Chicago LinkedIn Group. [Join the ULI Chicago LinkedIn Group](#)

Young Leaders

REAP Chicago Accepting Applications – 2013 Fall Semester

REAP, the Real Estate Associate Program, builds bridges between talented minority professionals and commercial real estate companies. The thirteen week program, taught by Chicago's real estate industry leaders, focusses on brokerage, development, financial analysis, management, leasing, law and other topics within the office, retail, multi-family, and industrial sectors. Application deadline is Friday, July 26, 2013. [Learn More and Submit an Application Online](#)

Programs

Upcoming Events

September 25, 2013

Monthly Breakfast Meeting

Union League Club of Chicago

7:45 am – 9:15 am

November 5-8, 2013

ULI Fall Meeting

McCormick Place, Chicago

[More Details](#)



Volunteers Needed for Fall Meeting

Attend the Fall Meeting at no charge in exchange for 10 hours of volunteer work during the event. A great opportunity for Young Leader and Student members! [Learn more](#)

This eighth issue of Urban Light

has been edited and designed by the ULI Chicago Communications Committee, including:

Dan Huml (co-chair), Adam Simon (co-chair), Mike Anguiano, Mark Hahn, and John Mays (committee liaison) with invaluable assistance from Chris Lambert and the ULI Chicago staff.