

URBAN LIGHT

The ULI Chicago Newsletter

Neil G. Bluhm Named ULI Chicago Lifetime Achievement Award Honoree



Congratulations to 2014 ULI Chicago Lifetime Achievement Award Honoree Neil G. Bluhm, founder and managing principal, Walton Street Capital, LLC; a founder and president JMB Realty Corporation; and, founder, Rush Street Gaming. Mr. Bluhm will accept the award at the 20th Annual Lifetime Achievement Award Dinner, December 4, 2014, at the Four Seasons Hotel, Chicago. [Read more about our 2014 Honoree](#)

Lifetime Achievement Award Dinner
December 4, 2014
Four Seasons Hotel Chicago

6:30 pm Cocktails
7:30 pm Dinner and Award Program
[Reserve a Ticket or Table](#)

Continuing the Conversation on Repurposing Closed Chicago Schools



One year after Chicago's Board of Education voted in favor of closing fifty Chicago schools, ULI Chicago members, a variety of industry experts, City officials, and representatives from CPS met in May 2014 to brainstorm ideas for repurposing eight of the closed schools. Specific sites were selected, with assistance from the Public Building Commission of Chicago, based on perceived neighborhood challenges, unique building configuration or the number of vacant buildings nearby. The schools included in the brainstorming session were Dett School, West Town; Leland School, South Austin; Marconi

School, West Garfield Park; Overton School, Bronzeville; Pope School, North Lawndale; Ross School, Washington Park; Wentworth School, Englewood; and, West Pullman School, West Pullman.

Participants were divided into small groups of ten to twelve people and were assigned the task of developing specific recommendations for the school assigned to them. Common themes that many of the groups discussed included:

- Convert the school to a residential use (apartments, senior housing, single room occupancy facility)
- Create a work force training facility
- Leverage unique space attributes
- Provide essential neighborhood services (a community health clinic, preschool or day-care facility)
- Play a part in an overall neighborhood strategy for economic development and revitalization

A **summary report** from the ULI Chicago brainstorming session was provided to Chicago Public School officials and they are reviewing the feedback. Mike Nardini and Mitchell Adams of CBRE are the listing brokers for the vast majority of the fifty closed schools and are facilitating the sales for the City of Chicago through a public bid process. CBRE has posted feedback on its website regarding the ideas they and CPS have received from local community members for repurposing the vacant schools. Many of the ideas from the community members parallel ULI's brainstorming ideas including a job training facility; community/educational center; and, transitional housing.

ULI Chicago's Advisory Board has recommended the District Council remain engaged in the conversations on repurposing CPS schools. Through its diverse and multidisciplinary membership, ULI Chicago could bring expertise and resources to the table to further the discussion. Watch for more information in the coming months.

ULI Chicago Receives Grant to Advance Healthy Economies and Healthy Environments in the Great Lakes Basin



Six District Councils around the Great Lakes have together received an Innovation Grant from ULI national in order to continue research, identify sustainable development practices, and form strategic partnerships to promote the environmental and economic health of the Great Lakes region. The Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence River Basin extend from Duluth, MN to Quebec City in Canada

and contain 84% of North America's surface fresh water – an enormous global asset that should be carefully preserved for generations to come. Because the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence River Basin extend across two countries and includes hundreds of cities, the coordination of preservation efforts is an enormous task. The ULI District Councils are able to offer expertise within their membership for a multi-disciplined approach that will facilitate greater collaboration at the regional and bi-national level.

The grant is an outgrowth of a regional Great Lakes meeting that took place on September 3 and 4, 2014 in Chicago which included ULI representatives from five District Councils. During the meeting members discussed opportunities for ULI to further the Great Lakes Initiative started by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM) and to seek funds for further action. The ULI Innovation Grant, awarded to the six District Councils collectively, will fund an incremental approach to creating awareness, making connections, identifying and sharing best practices, and developing a strategic framework for ongoing involvement.

ULI believes the Great Lakes Region can rally around this vital resource, to protect and benefit from it and become a globally competitive economy at the same time. ULI member Phil Enquist, who leads SOM's global city design practice, believes that achievements in this region could make the Great Lakes "the fresh water laboratory of the world" and that "we could be globally connected because we know more about fresh water than anyone else."

The region has faced challenges over the years. Just this summer, nearly 45 years after the Cuyahoga River in Cleveland caught fire, 40,000 residents of Toledo, Ohio were without fresh water due to an algae bloom caused by agriculture run-off contaminated by fertilizer. "Toledo was a big wake-up call; we are not managing this asset (water) as well as we could be," says Enquist. He believes the answer is not a top-down solution, but will occur at a local level with cities coming together.

Water management is not a recent concept. Enquist related that in Valencia, Spain a tribunal has been meeting periodically for nearly 1,000 years to discuss and solve issues around water and water use. Phil believes that we need unique governance of the Great Lakes in order to preserve the resource and thrive as a region. ULI's District Council structure could facilitate greater collaboration at the regional and international level to leverage it as a driver of health and economic growth.

Mr. Enquist expressed a sense of optimism and excitement about ULI's involvement and the resources and ideas its members can bring to the table. He believes collaboration between the respective ULI District Councils will have a positive impact and help to further the vision of a clean and economically prosperous region around the Great Lakes.

Watch for further details as the work funded by the grant begins to take shape.

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

ULI's social media channels are alive with news, events, resources, research and new and ongoing programs. Don't forget about this valuable line of communication. You can set your own notifications and control the flow of information so you won't be overwhelmed. Visit us on [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#), and our own [ULI Chicago Newsfeed](#) ... and Get Connected!

Programs

Upcoming Events

November 6, 2014

Real Estate Forecast 2015

Union League Club of Chicago

7:45 am – 9:15 am

[Register Now](#)

November 8, 2014

YL Volunteer Event: Beautification Day at Burke Elementary School

Burke Elementary School

9:00 am – Noon

[Register Now](#)

November 13, 2014

YL Brown Bag: Cook County Land Bank and The Future of Our Regional Economy-SOLD OUT

Noon – 1:00 pm

Related Midwest

**this event is SOLD OUT*

December 4, 2014

20th Annual Lifetime Achievement Award Dinner Honoring Neil G. Bluhm

6:30 pm – 9:30 pm

[Sponsor a Table](#)

This thirteenth issue of Urban Light has been edited and designed by the ULI Chicago Communications Committee, including: Mark Hahn (chair), Mike Anguiano, Eric Turrin, K.C. Wigle and Martin Hansberry with assistance from the ULI Chicago staff.