

# From the Streets: Chicago 2016 hard sell



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trust the city of Chicago to keep their best interests in mind given the municipal government's track record. The Chicago 2016 committee repeatedly stressed that it's not a government entity but rather a group of volunteers. However, the "guarantee" referenced by Brown refers to a sum of money Chicago must commit to providing should private funding fall through, or if its hosting duties run significantly over budget.

Another opposition group, No Games, says the one thing that's guaranteed is that the city will be required at some point to pony up those funds. According to community coordinator and No Games spokesman Tom Tresser, no city has earned any profits from hosting the Olympics in the modern era, and the only real beneficiaries of hosting duties will be the games' corporate sponsors.

"Chicago already is in the red," Tresser said. "Our city is falling apart."

No Games contends there will be at least three direct negative effects if Chicago hosts the 2016 Summer Olympics: the city will be forced to pay money it doesn't have, residents will be displaced from their homes, and parklands will be damaged. Tresser also said he believes the city will attempt to clear its streets of people it deems undesirable.

"It's like a mini police state," he said. "Young men of color will be swept off the streets."

At any rate, the next significant date for the bid to host the 2016 summer games is something everyone can agree on. On October 2 the IOC will vote to determine which of the remaining contender cities gets to host the games; between now and then, Chicago 2016 will attempt to convince Chicago residents that the games will be profitable and that the exposure the city receives will be positive and attract tourists in the future.

"We believe we can truly change the city and become world-class," said Chicago 2016 president Lori Healey. "We need your support. We need the support of the people of Chicago in order to win."

No Games will carry the opposite message to the people of Chicago as well as the voting members of the IOC. The group shadowed the IOC in protest as it toured Chicago in April, and it distributed information to dissuade the committee from voting for Chicago at a recent meeting to discuss the four finalists in Switzerland.

Meanwhile, at the July 15 meeting, a woman who didn't identify herself as a member of No Games repeated a mantra that's become associated with the group: "No blank check." The phrase refers to the guarantee required of the city of Chicago in order for it to continue with its bid for the 2016 summer games. After rolling out a poster board emblazoned with the slogan, she attempted to rouse the crowd into chanting it along with her.

It didn't take.

the beginning of a new era for Chicago—one of renewed civic pride, expanded sport programs for youth, an elevated international profile and a stronger economic foundation," Pat Ryan, local insurance magnate and Chicago 2016 Chairman and CEO of the nonprofit says on the Chicago 2016 Web site. Supporters say also that the Olympic and Paralympic Games will create the equivalent of 315,000 full time jobs for one year, over half of which would be in Chicago, at over \$7 billion in wages. Economic development over 11 years would amount to \$22.5 billion. The proposed site of the Olympic athletes village would become mixed income housing and retail with up to 30 percent affordable housing.

"You should expect that Chicago 2016 will ... stage an outstanding Olympic Games that will make our city very proud. ... [We will] manage the games efficiently and within our budget [and] ensure that the benefits from hosting the games will be shared by the entire city," Ryan said.

But some groups aren't about to take Chicago 2016 at its word. The Kenwood Oakland Community Organization offered a similar view to that of Brown and other attendees of the recent meeting: according to a group spokesperson, the organization would support the Olympics coming to Chicago only if it receives "a legally binding community benefits agreement."

Others at the meeting wondered if they could

By Shea Gibbs  
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At a recent neighborhood meeting of South Shore residents, there was vocal opposition to the proposed 2016 Summer Olympics. It's not that residents don't want the games to come to Chicago—they just want to make sure the Olympics benefit their neighborhood.

"Where's our guarantee?" asked Douglas Brown, an area man who was among more than 100 individuals who attended the July 15 meeting at the South Shore Cultural Center. It offered residents of the 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th wards a chance to come out and respond to a presentation given by Chicago 2016, a nonprofit launched to attract the Olympics to the Windy City. Chicago's currently in the running with Tokyo, Rio de Janeiro, and Madrid to host the 2016 summer games; the host city will be voted on and decided by the International Olympic Committee on October 2.

According to Chicago 2016, hosting the games would be a boon to the infrastructure—not to mention the coffers—of Chicago, and residents have nothing to worry about, particularly when it comes to displacement of renters and home owners.

Chicago 2016 supporters point to the international spotlight - a worldwide viewing audience of four billion - that Chicago would gain from hosting the Games. "It's my hope that 2009 will be

## Contributing Writers

**Ginny & the Chef:** Originally a professional chef, Chef J now writes a syndicated weekly newspaper column on food and fitness in Chicago. He's also the president of the Chicago Research Chefs LLC and president emeritus of the Chicago Nutrition Association. Ginny has written nutrition and fitness articles for several local and national publications, such as the *Chicago Tribune* and *On-Health* magazine. She has a bachelor's degree in nutrition science and dietetics and a master's degree in nutrition communications and marketing.

**Alex Filipowicz** was born in 1992. He is a student at Northside College Preparatory high school. He learned to speak Polish from a young age. He enjoys making surreal drawings. He also enjoys listening to obscure music and watching dark comedies. He plans on becoming a fiction writer.

**Brenna Daldorph**, a summer intern at *StreetWise*, covered topics of immigration for the magazine. She became passionate about immigration issues after first-hand experience volunteering with undocumented migrants crossing the

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