

Hello, my name is Fiona McCarthy. I am here tonight to talk about the potential impacts that the current proposals in front of the committee could have to the neighborhood, and most importantly, to our children.

Here are a few pictures as I share a little background about me; I've been working as an engineer in Evanston for 13 years. After living two blocks away from Wrigley Field, escaping that crazy to move to Ravenswood, my mother who has Alzheimer's needed to come live with us. When house hunting, we wanted to maintain that urban feel and find a place that we could grow a community, raise kids, and take care of my mother, while still having access to the lake, restaurants, and shops like we did in the city.

Central Street was a perfect solution, a small but thriving business district with neighborhoods tucked all around. The house we found is less than 1,000 ft from the stadium. My husband's uncle played football at NU in the 90's, so we had been to plenty of tailgates. It didn't seem that bad and our house was right next to the expansive McCulloch park. That park and Central Street sold us.

We now have two kids and we are out and about all the time. There are 15 parks, 4 schools, multiple beaches, all within a mile of our house. We spend Friday evenings with friends at Independence Park ordering out DeSalvos pizza. We get ice cream at Hartigens and frequent DB3, Backlot, and Tags for coffee and treats. We take the dog everywhere, we go to block parties, do take-out picnics, and learn to ride bikes in the alleys. Neighbors meet twice a week for tai chi in the basketball court, there are weekly summer night pickup baseball games in the grass. McCulloch Park and Central Street are about building community and providing a safe space for us all to have fun.

This is where I (and I'm sure many hard-working members of Parks and Rec and city staff) take objection to some of the statements by both NU and their supporters about Central St. and Evanston.

It's been called a "ghost town" and had references to "tumble weeds" and been called "blighted"

And the worst one, "Evanston is where fun goes to die."

The reality is that Evanston is a fun town. On this slide you see pictures and a scrolling list of just some of the festivals, block parties, and events that happen. Everyone (adults, children, and businesses) are still recovering from the pandemic. All the hard work done in the past year by city staff and residents proves that there is vibrancy and life and fun in Evanston. We are all here because we love Evanston and want to grow its success. But what happens to the events that make Evanston special, if city streets are clogged by traffic or shuttle busses and concert attendees are competing for parking with the Northlight Theater, Space, or the movie theater?

When preparing for this meeting, I reached out to neighbors and asked if their stories were similar to ours. Here are a couple quotes:

"Ours is a neighborhood where we take care of one another, we meet at the local park and watch each others' children. We put casseroles on porches for the new baby or the grieving family. We volunteer for the PTA."

"My child has special needs and the calming gross motor play [in the park] helps him do better at life."

"We call this a "morning neighborhood." People are up early, walking their dogs and riding bikes with children, getting coffee, working in their garden, and by the time the sun sets it is peaceful and quiet. We left the city

specifically to get away from the noise, traffic, safety concerns, tourists, etc. Please respect our home and our peaceful community.”

That is the essence of McCulloch Park and Central St. The neighborhood has cohabitated with the stadium, and both NU and Central St. have mutually benefited from the relationship.

But not everything is seen through rose-colored glasses. Here's what were told about NU and living next to the U2 district:

“it's fun, we're here to support the football team, there's lot's of traffic, but it's manageable, it's just 6 game days, we just hunker down, we tailgate, it's worth it, just buy it, it's not that bad...Well that doesn't always align with reality.

The reality is, there's lots and lots of traffic and not enough parking. Our street is often full of cars before 8am or even the night before. We put games on our home calendar the second the schedule is released and start planning around them. We know we can't leave and come home 2-3 hours before or an hour after. Cars trying to find parking cut through alleys and speed through residential streets if there happens to be an opening. There's never been a communication or traffic management plan to direct neighbors on game day operations or what streets will be blocked off, either from NU or EPD, and that has been formally requested. Buses idle in the neighborhoods, but there's no one to write a ticket, there aren't enough parking enforcement officers to go around. Cars are parked illegally, not the kids parking cars in their lawns, I'm talking about cars in alleys and on curbs and in front of fire hydrants. Music shakes 100 year old house windows and night game lights stream into kid bedrooms. Porta potties get tipped over and trash is left in alleys then neighbors get the fines if they don't pick it up. When tailgating goes too late, it's left to the neighbors to walk over and ask attendees to turn off the music. Calls to EPD have been answered with “we can't do anything about it.”

Fortunately for the neighbors, not all games sell out and so the severity isn't always as bad. 311 or 911 usually is unable to respond, so we just don't complain much. We deal with it because we knew what we were buying into. But those games with more than 20-30,000 in attendance you feel the shift in the neighborhood, you feel it start to squeeze and it's at capacity. It's no longer livable.

And it's not just about drunk people and traffic. During a past Friday night football game, schools closed early to release students before traffic made bussing and student safety an issue. A priest at St. A's told a parishioner not to schedule a wedding on a game day due to lack of parking. A friend scheduled her C-section at Evanston hospital around a home game because she wanted to ensure she could get to the hospital without incident where others may not be so lucky and have unplanned deliveries or unexpected health emergencies.

In addition to the lack of full-fledged plans from NU for traffic or parking, or managing 200 shuttles, there is no plan to reduce the very real health impact from the proposed sound transmission.

We've heard from both sides about sound, but I want to boil it down for you. Without a fully enclosed stadium, that means a solid roof, you cannot contain noise. It will travel. Performers will bring in their own sound equipment so NU's “state of art” system will be useless during a concert. NU will have no control.

I know we want to “have fun”, but this matters because less than 1,000 ft from the edge of the football stadium are 520 single family homes and 21 multi-family homes. Homes with brand new fresh out of the Evanston Hospital NICU babies all the way to elderly adults with Alzheimer's and everyone in between.

There are at least 89 kids under the age of 12, and at least another 26 between 12 and 18. This doesn't count the kids east of the stadium or north in Wilmette.

Noise pollution has serious consequences for our health. Low frequency sound travels greater distances and passes through walls more than high frequency sound.

Children are especially susceptible to noise pollution. Kids will experience impaired concentration and possible developmental delays. How well do you think any of those kids will sleep with 3-4 hours of throbbing concert music. Kids won't be able to play outside in the summer or fall evenings due the extreme loudness of the concert music in the neighborhood.

When asked what NU's plan is for making sure that concerts end on time, they had no response. We know from experience EPD doesn't know what to do when complaints are made. Bands knowingly play past curfew and are "happy to pay the fee". These are well known issues in the concert industry and yet NU has no plan. The reason it's not as big of a deal elsewhere is because literally nowhere else hosts concerts at a venue in the middle of a residential neighborhood.

Here is the sound map from NU's consultant. I circled Independence Park, McCulloch Park, and Evanston Hospital.

NU was repeatedly asked to have their consultant expand the map to include both Central St. and Evanston Hospital, but they have refused. So I did it for them. I'm an engineer, I can extrapolate, and I know how to use a highlighter.

90 dB are shown in red spreading out down to 70 dB right at Evanston Women's Hospital. For reference, the World Health Organization recommends 35 dB during the day and 30 dB at night for patient rooms.

The problem is this map is one estimate of time with wind in a "typical" direction with average sound pressures for the area. We can hear ETHS marching band over 2 miles from our house, Dillow Day, and Out of Space concerts depending on the weather.

NU knows this because in a recent email to neighbors they said "we recognize that certain environmental factors, including wind direction, can sometimes amplify sound in unpredictable ways".

On the screen are words of concern pulled from letters written to this committee about the proposed zoning changes: Parking, traffic, noise, safety were the most frequent.

If NU wants to build an almost \$1B stadium and then thinks it cannot afford to operate it without concerts, then that's on them. Maybe it forgot to consult its own business school, but typically you don't buy it if you can't afford it. It is not our responsibility to make sure a university with a \$15B endowment, over \$100M operating surplus, and a football team that just signed a TV rights deal worth another \$100M is able to afford the operations of their facility.

We want Evanston to thrive. Do you recognize these pictures from NU's presentation at the last meeting? We want to support graduation ceremonies, students and athletes. We want winter festivals, movie nights, and community events. And the best part is that we can have all of that right now. NU's current zoning allows 35 days of community concerts and events. Those events can and will drive real economic benefit that is *manageable* for the city and neighborhood.

The changes they are proposing are not just about 18 hours of concert time, but 60 large events plus 6 concerts, in addition to the football, men's and women's basketball, softball, BIG10 and NCAA tournaments and other events in the U2 district. This is about fundamentally changing the character of the neighborhood and impacting the health of our kids.

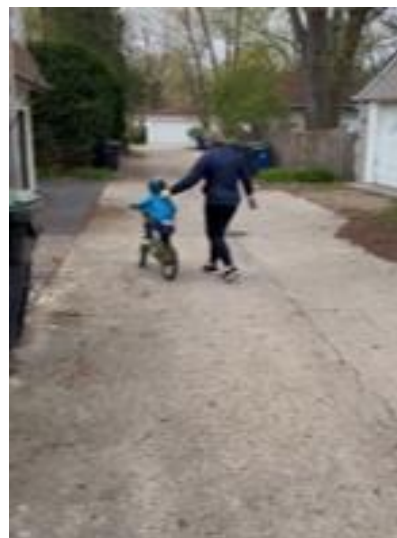
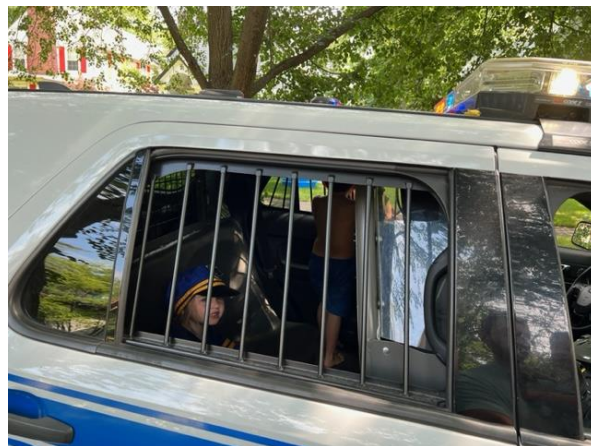
We need this committee to recognize and understand our desire for our community to thrive, to be fun, to protect our kids, our neighborhood, keep peace, and let the zoning continue to protect the balance between the university and city.

Presentation to Land Use Commission

Fiona McCarthy

9/27/2023

McCulloch Park/Central St.



Evanston Events



Evanston Art and Big Fork Festival

Out of Space Concert Series

Starlight Concerts

Starlight Movies

Movies in the Park

First Fridays

Harvest Fest

“Unplug Day”

Juneteenth Parade



McCulloch Park/Central St.



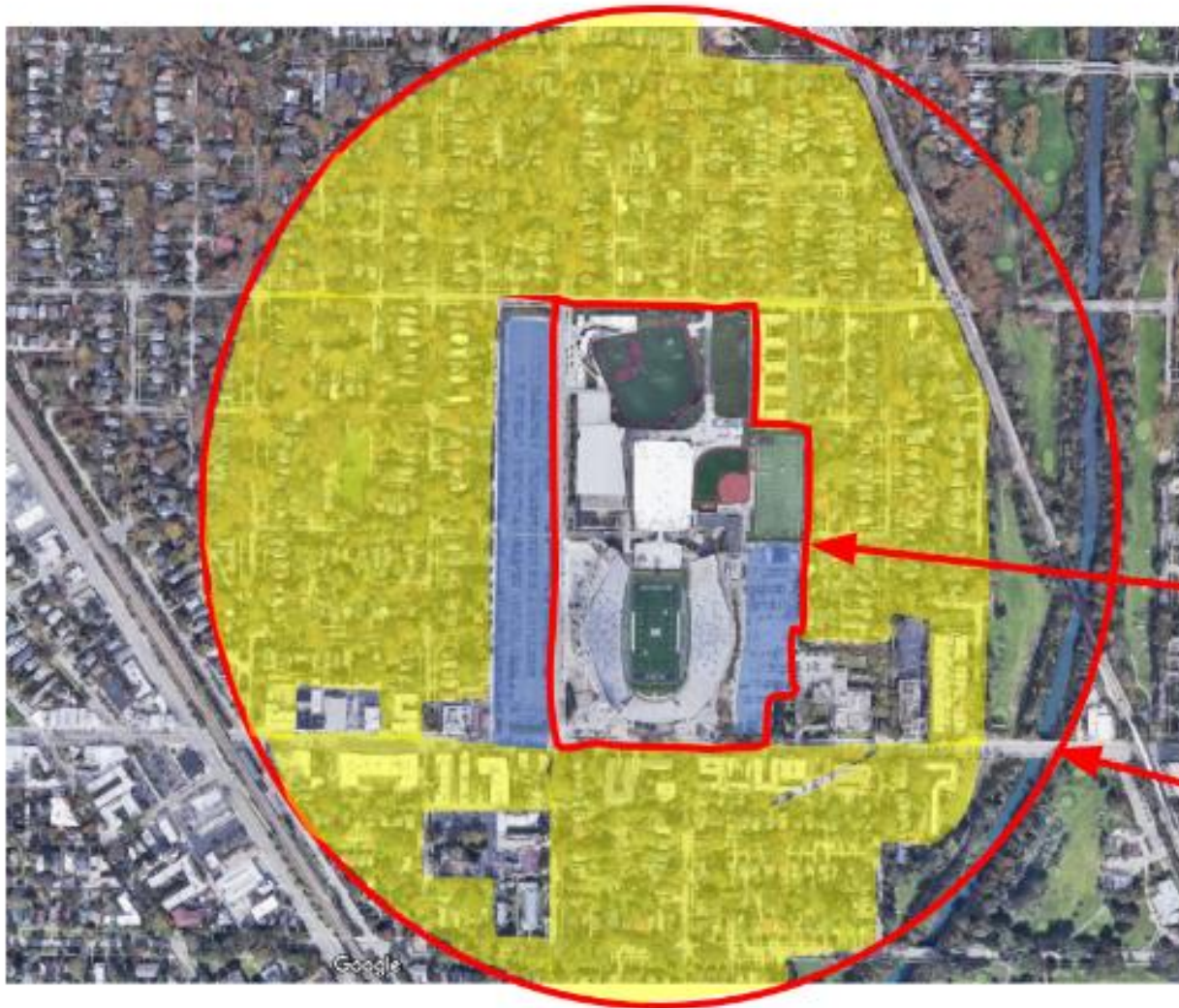
What we were told about NU

friendly
great.neighborhood lovely
just.gamedays
6.games
neighbors not.that.bad
traffic
hunker.down
basketball.in.winter
no.big.deal support.the.team
worth.it! just.buy.it

Our Experience



U2 Zoning and Surrounding Neighborhoods

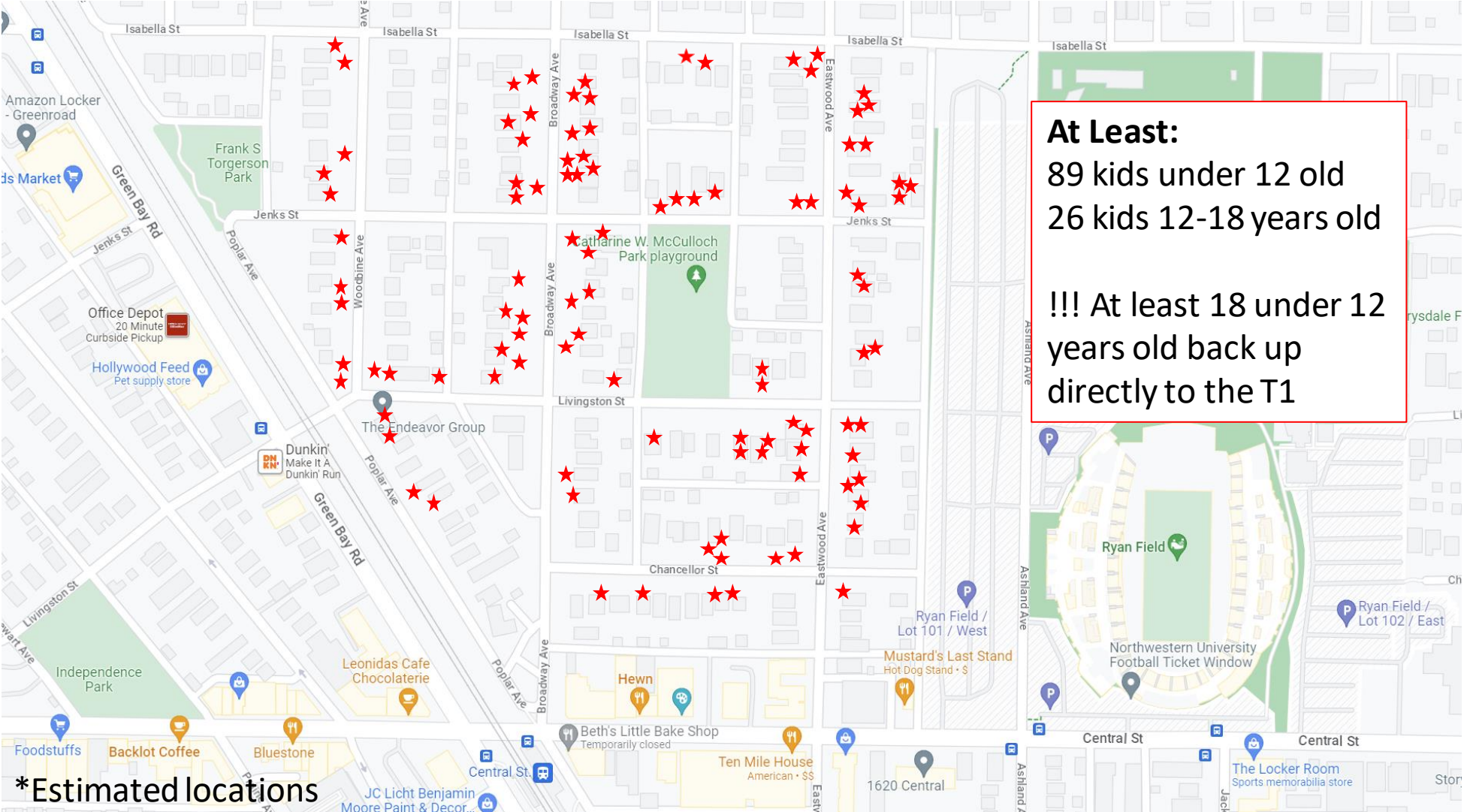


- 520 single-family homes within 1000 feet of U2 zoning district
- 21 multi-family residential buildings within 1000 feet of U2 zoning district

U2 district boundary

1000 feet from U2 district perimeter

McCulloch Park Houses with Kids



Concerts – Are you Listening? Can you hear?



- Damage to hearing is possible after 2 hours at 80 dB SPL and after 50 minutes at 95 dB SPL.
- The decibel scale is logarithmic, not linear. With every 10 dB increase, the **sense of loudness to the ear doubles.**
- So when the sound levels increase from 60 to 80 dB SPL in a neighborhood, the **noise level sounds 4 times louder.**
- louder, repetitive, and more intense concert noise, a “C” weighted scale is required.

Health Impacts

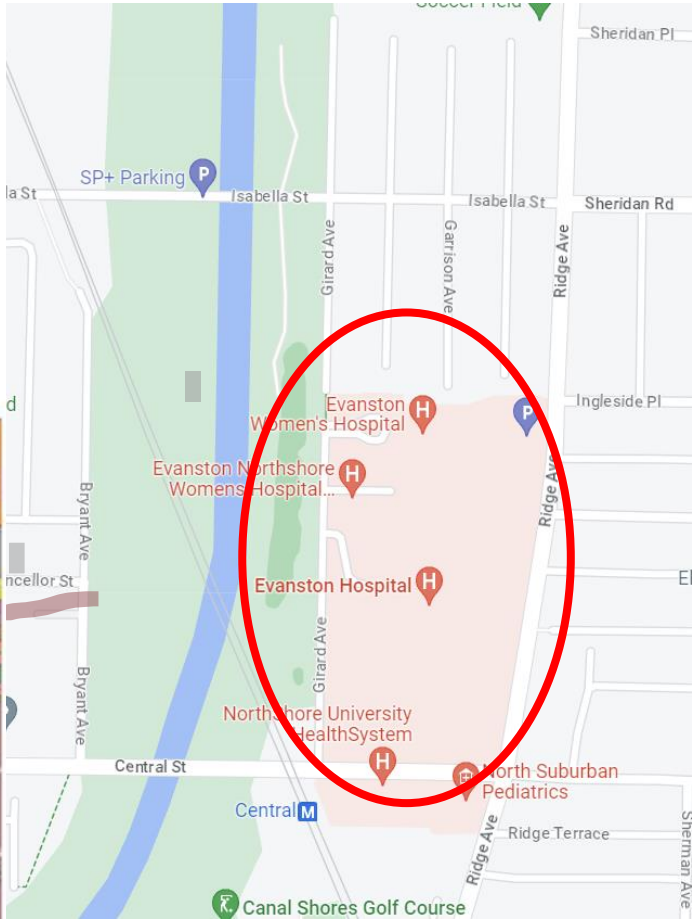
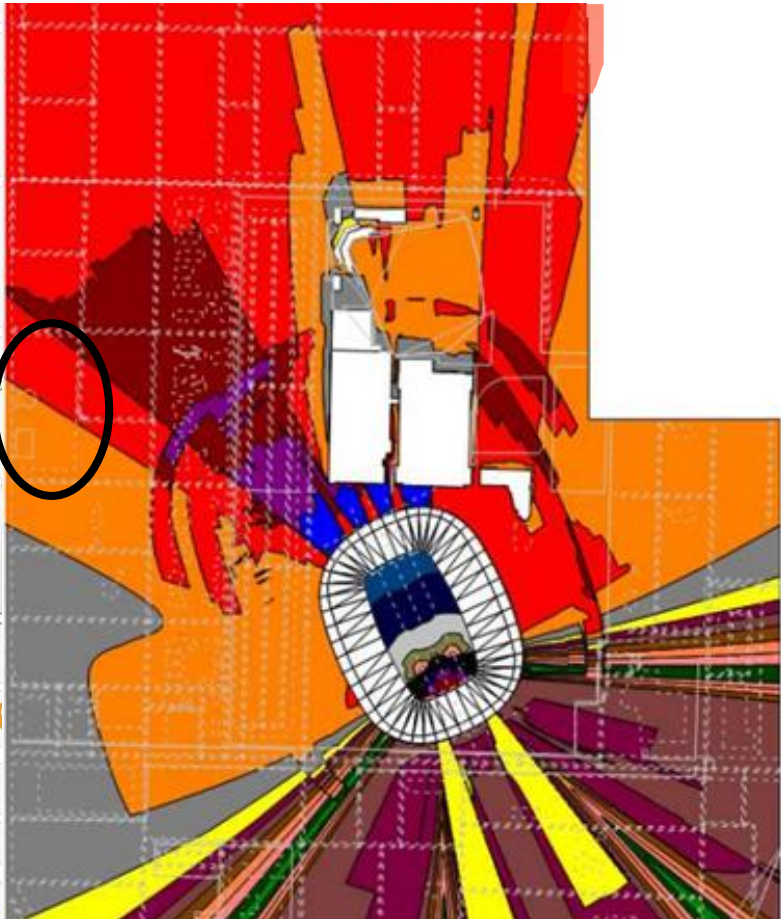
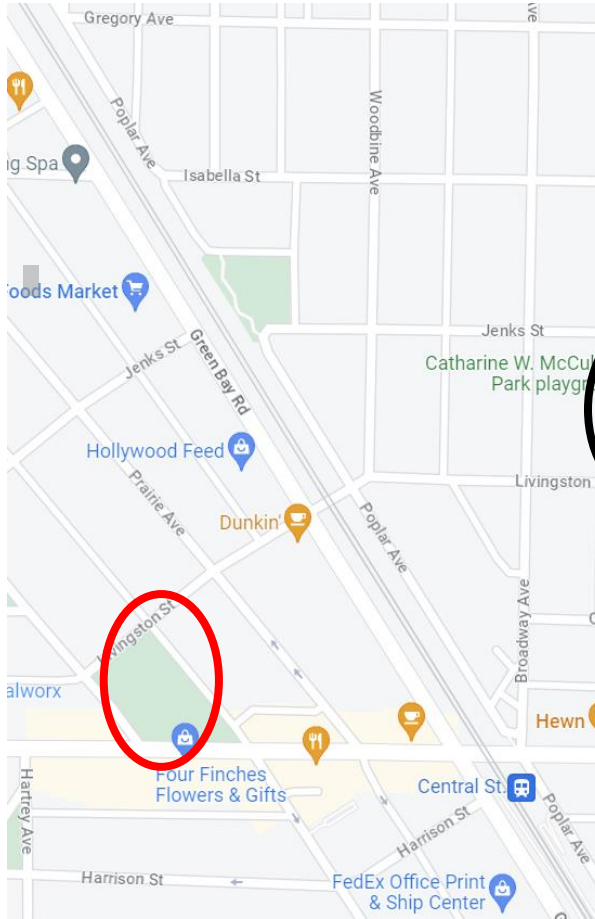
- Noise pollution drives:
 - Hearing loss, tinnitus (ringing), and hypersensitivity
 - Cardiovascular disease
 - Type 2 diabetes
 - Sleep disturbances
 - Stress
 - Mental health and cognition problems
 - Memory impairment and attention deficits
 - Links to dementia
- “Even those who tune out noise pollution, whether when awake or asleep, experience autonomic stress reactions”
- Impact on children, particularly vulnerable:
 - Difficulty falling asleep
 - Inability to stay asleep
 - Waking too early
 - Childhood learning delays
 - Low birth weight
 - Impaired concentration
 - Communication and speed development impacts
 - Cognitive performance
 - Ability to form relationships and impact to confidence
 - High blood pressure

[New York Times: Noise Could Take Years Off Your Life. Here's How.](#)

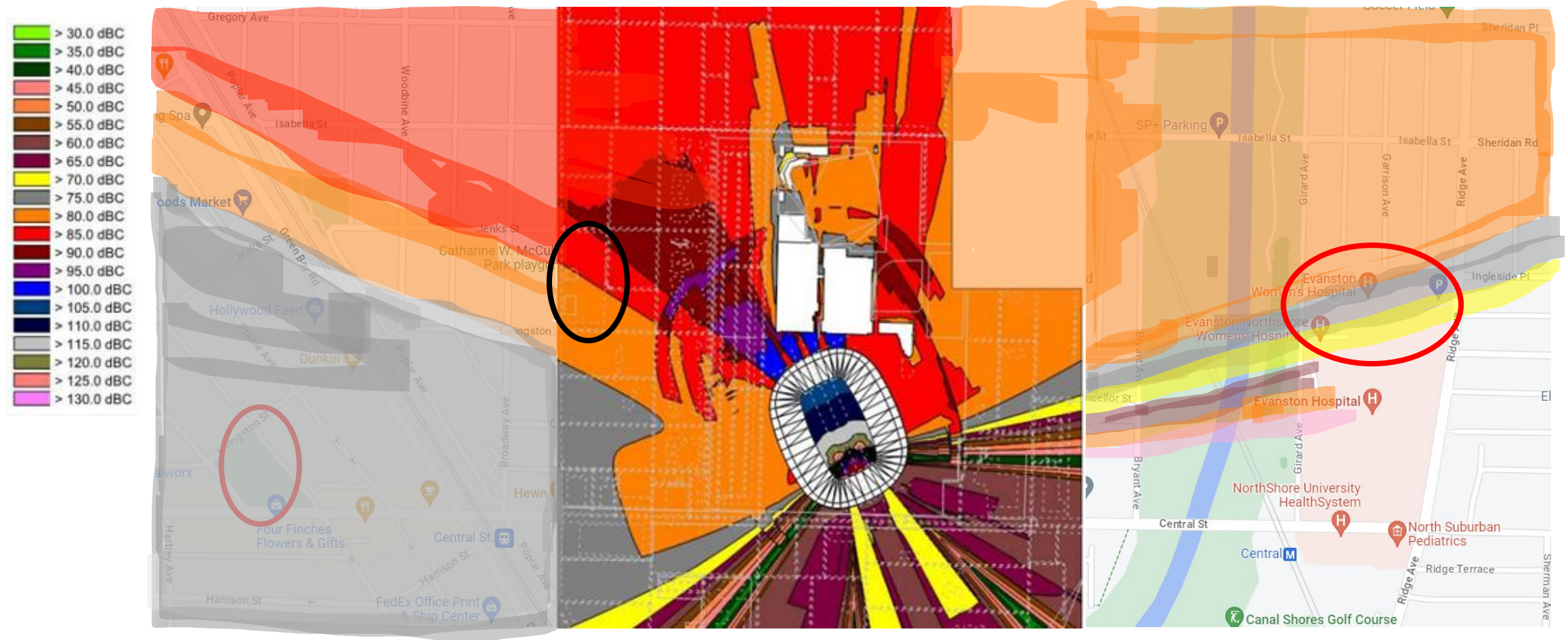
[Harvard: Noise and Health](#)

[CDC: Too Loud! For Too Long! - Vital Signs](#)

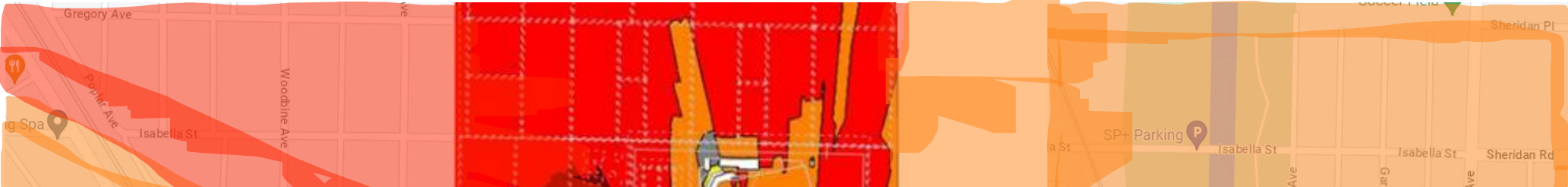
Noise Permeation



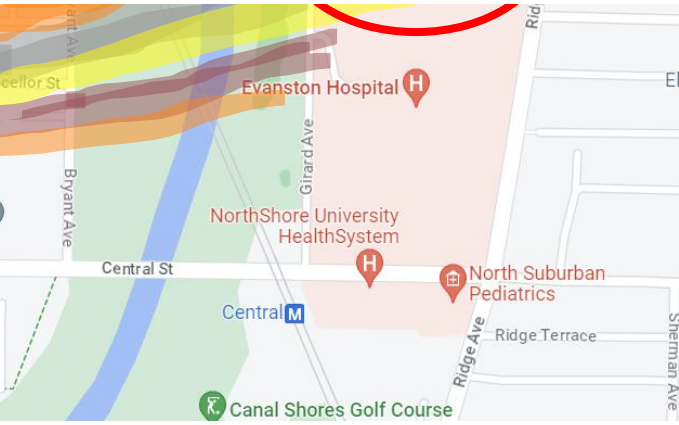
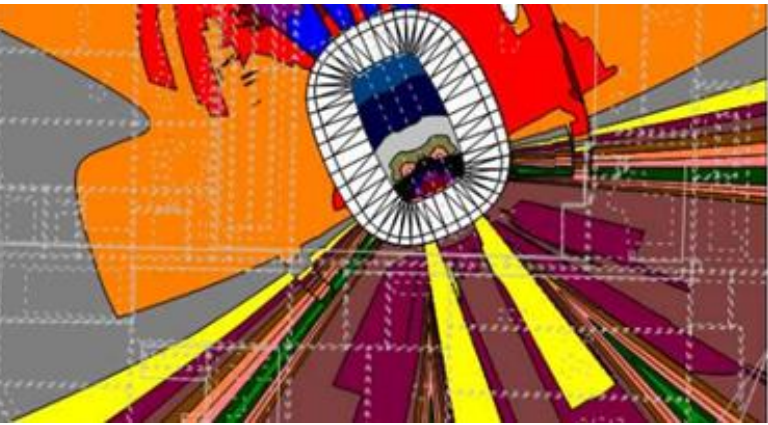
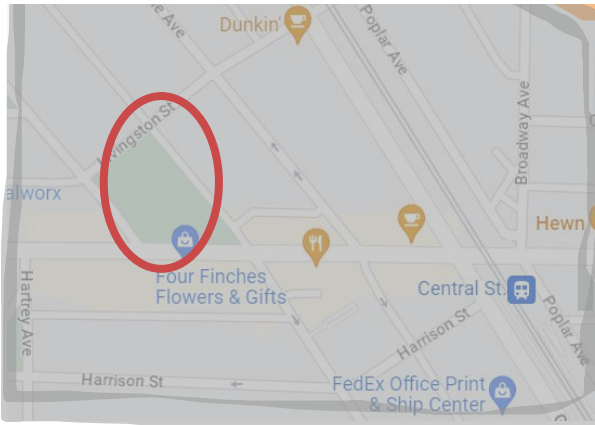
Noise Permeation



Noise Permeation



“We recognize that certain environmental factors, including wind direction, can sometimes amplify sound in unpredictable ways”
Dave Davis, 9/14/23



Real Concerns



What We Want

