

Friends of the Civic Center

January 30, 2009

Honorable Richard Durbin
Honorable Roland Burris
Honorable Jan Schakowsky
The Congress
Washington DC



Dear Sirs and Madam,

We am writing in reference to a recent submission by the City of Evanston to your offices listing a number of 'shovel ready' projects that could be considered for funding under the stimulus package currently making its way through Congress. I am not sure how this list of projects was developed since there was no public discussion, but one of the suggested projects deserves your reconsideration.

One of the 13 projects in the request is listed as the "Civic Center Reconstruction Project" and has a \$90 million price tag, which is 63% of the total funds requested.

The City's request is actually seeking funding for the construction of a new Civic Center. The use of the word 'Reconstruction' is misleading. The City Council has for some time tried been trying to find a way to finance a move to a new building. Despite years of trying, they have not only been unable to find a way to fund this project, they do not even have a site that is identified, even after analyzing 16 locations. So their \$90M 'reconstruction' project is not only far from 'shovel' ready – there is no virtually no location from which to shovel any dirt.

The City Government currently resides in a perfectly good, 100 year old building that architecturally fits with the character of Evanston and is on the National Register of Historic Places. Over the past 5 years, while the City Council looked for a Civic Center, it neglected the maintenance on the current building to the point where it does need extensive rehab. The costs for this have been estimated in the range of \$15 to \$20 million. These projects include a new roof, improvements to HVAC, making changes for ADA, and improving the buildings energy efficiency. All are 'shovel ready'.

While this issue has had a history of controversy, a citywide referendum in 2007 demonstrated that 83% of the voters agreed to "rehabilitate and continue to reside in the Civic Center".

In closing, President Obama has spoken to the need for all of us to become more fiscally responsible and conscious of the environment as we deal with the current economic crisis. We feel that a project that rehabs a perfectly good building, keeping it from occupying more landfill, fits this objective far more than the \$90 million proposal by the city to build a new Civic Center.

Regards

Hon. Lorraine Morton
Mayor of Evanston

John B. Kennedy
Founder, Friends of the Civic Center

Jay Lytle
Former Mayor of Evanston

Emily Guthrie
Former Alderperson of Evanston
Current Vice-Chair, Preservation Commission

Vito and Mary Brugliera
Preservation League of Evanston

Ed Noonan and Tom Forman
Architects of record for the building rehab in 1977