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MAYOR LIGHTFOOT ANNOUNCES 15 COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS SELECTED TO PARTICIPATE IN *CHICAGO ALFRESCO*, A CDOT & CHOOSE CHICAGO PARTNERSHIP

Chicago Alfresco builds on Expanded Outdoor Dining with an added opportunity for community organizations to design creative outdoor areas that support neighborhood businesses, arts and culture

CHICAGO – Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot, the Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT) and Choose Chicago today announced that applications from 15 community organizations have been approved to participate in the first round of the City's new [Chicago Alfresco](#) program, an integral part of Choose Chicago's push for more neighborhood tourism and a pillar of the City's broader initiative to open streets and create places for dining, public life, community, arts, culture, walking, and biking. The applications produced an outpouring of creative ideas for transforming the public way into active community spaces for eating, street vending, storytelling, movie nights, and music and arts programming with the use of street furniture, pavement treatments, plantings, lighting, and other placemaking tools.

"Outdoor dining became a lifeline for many of our restaurants last year, which makes today's announcement all the more exciting," said Mayor Lightfoot. "I am thrilled that so many community organizations across our city have stepped up to participate in Chicago Alfresco and improve their neighborhoods by creating and enhancing spaces for residents to enjoy themselves in. With more and more proposals, Chicago Alfresco will only build on the success we have had with similar initiatives, beautify our city, and further ensure that our economic recovery from this pandemic is inclusive of all of our communities."

Chicago Alfresco demonstrates Mayor Lightfoot's commitment to supporting neighborhoods and businesses as the City continues to rebound from the COVID-19 pandemic. Last year the City introduced special permits that allowed bars and restaurants to operate outside in private parking lots, on the sidewalk or in closed streets through the Expanded Outdoor Dining program. While that program continues, the City encouraged chambers of commerce and other neighborhood community groups to think beyond emergency traffic barricades and construction



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cones to propose and build design-forward outdoor community spaces through Chicago Alfresco. The new program is part of the City's broader initiative to open streets and create places for dining, public life, community, arts, culture, walking and biking.

"We were truly impressed with the range of innovative ideas for re-purposing the public way that were developed in response to the Chicago Alfresco call for proposals," said CDOT Commissioner Gia Biagi. "For the next step, we will be working with these applicants to turn their plans into reality for this coming summer season. As Chicago continues to rebound from the pandemic, we are committed to working with our community partners and putting our streets in the service of what people and small businesses need in their neighborhoods to keep everybody safe and moving, while keeping us all together."

Choose Chicago, the City's tourism bureau, is providing \$2.3 million in grants to approved applicants of projects intended to help create more outdoor public space thanks to sponsor Diageo, owner of brands such as Guinness, Smirnoff, and Crown Royal.

"This partnership is an outstanding example of what makes Chicago the Best Big City in the U.S.," said Glenn Eden, Board Chair of Choose Chicago. "By leveraging generous financial support from our partner Diageo North America, and amazing designs from our neighborhood chambers of commerce, these community spaces will provide more access to our local treasures and create new, enriched pedestrian environments, especially in communities that have been severely impacted by COVID. Residents and visitors alike will be able to enjoy the summer months outdoors in more locations across Chicago thanks to this exciting program." "We are thrilled to partner with Choose Chicago to fund initiatives aimed at improving outdoor public spaces, prioritizing underrepresented communities and small business areas disproportionately harmed by the pandemic," said Dr. Danielle Robinson, Head of Corporate Responsibility at Diageo North America. "We are proud to help Chicago, home of one of our corporate offices, revitalize and emerge even stronger."

"The Austin Chamber of Commerce is honored to be a recipient of the Chicago Alfresco fund which will aid the Chamber with economic development in the community," said Tina Augustus, Executive Director of the Austin Chamber of Commerce. "A spotlight will now be on the rich arts and cultural community that exist in this neighborhood while enhancing the curb appeal of restaurants and creating an enjoyable and relaxing atmosphere outside of those restaurants."



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"We believe the Mercadito in the Manuel Perez Jr. Memorial Plaza will directly support local artisans and vendors," said Kim Close, Chief Operating Officer of Little Village Community Foundation. "Increased programming in the plaza will promote and preserve the cultural identity of Little Village."

"Commercial Avenue provides a rich blend of shopping, dining, cultural attractions and business services for South Chicago residents and visitors alike," said Dave Price, Program Manager for SSA 5 and South Chicago Parents & Friends. "This Chicago Alfresco grant will strengthen this historic main street by providing a welcoming and lively experience for shoppers and pedestrians."

Following are the project proposals submitted by the 15 community organizations selected for the first round of Chicago Alfresco projects:

- **Austin Chamber of Commerce (W Madison St. and W Chicago Ave.):** Pockets of arts and cultural spaces along the curb anchored by restaurants. These will include the installation of large planters filled with annuals and perennials as well as metal partitions with small planters creating a perimeter section for art performances, art exhibits, art projects and other meetings/events.
- **Back of the Yards Neighborhood Council (W 47th St. & S Honore St.):** The Back of the Yards Caminata will provide spaces for dining, lounging, performing, and flexible programming opportunities.
- **Greater Chatham Initiative (E 75th St., E 79th St. & E 71st St.):** Eight mobile wood modular rectangular parklet units with street barriers, planters, lighting, tables and chairs, will promote dining and community activity.
- **Lakeview East Chamber of Commerce (N Broadway St.):** Dine Out program extending the outdoor space near restaurants for full service and pick up orders. The installations will include planters, lighting, signage, and decorative fencing, and will incorporate arts and music programming.
- **Little Village Community Foundation (Perez Plaza):** The Mercadito will provide a space for local craftspeople to converge on a weekly basis while promoting additional activity on the plaza. The goal is to promote a seasonal market made from semi-permanent structures that reflect the cultural vibrancy of the various regions on Mexico.
- **Logan Square Chamber of Commerce (Woodard Plaza):** Elements including LED fixtures and picnic tables will promote the use of Woodard Plaza for outdoor dining, performances, craft markets, and social gatherings.
- **Morgan Park Beverly Hills (103rd St. & Wood St.):** Installation of a CDOT standard design People Spot in coordination with local businesses.
- **Northwest Side CDC (W Fullerton Ave. & W Grand Ave.):** Creation of a plaza space to support street vendors (elotero, paleta, tamale carts and other



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- popular Latin American street foods) in organized “stalls” to support culturally-relevant dining, public life, community, arts, and culture.
- **Puerto Rican Cultural Center (W Division St.):** Curbside and street activation along the Paseo Boricua commercial corridor, incorporating outdoor dining spaces and placemaking to promote foot traffic, foster community engagement and stimulate economic development along the corridor. The project will include artistic interventions and murals, visually appealing wood kiosks, gathering areas, seating arrangements, furniture, and programming, in at least 5 different hubs, each one with its own theme and purpose.
 - **Rogers Park Business Alliance (W Jarvis Ave. & N Glenwood Ave.):** Expanding on an existing EOD closure along Jarvis Avenue by providing landscape, furnishings and design elements to promote community activities, including daily alfresco dining, as well as special events like live performances, moonlight ice cream socials, festivals, movie nights, and a monthly artisan market from May to September. Closing vehicular traffic along a stretch of Glenwood Avenue and incorporating decorative lighting, seating, signage, performance space, bike parking, and ADA accessible platforms to make the space adaptable for daily alfresco dining use as well outdoor performances and special events.
 - **South Shore Chamber of Commerce (E 71st St.):** “Walk -Shop- Dine” curbside activation including planters, patio sets with umbrellas and signage. Bi-weekly entertainment will include live musical performances, outdoor fitness events, paint parties and outdoor movies.
 - **South Chicago Parents & Friends (S Commercial Ave.):** “Who Tells Your Story” is a block long activation and installation comprised of a base module of structures that will incorporate art, seating, planting and programming zones.
 - **Uptown United (W Argyle St.):** Expanded dining and placemaking using north and south curbside parking along Argyle between North Broadway and Sheridan Road.
 - **West Ridge Chamber of Commerce (W Devon Ave.):** Devon Potluck Plazas” will serve as pop-up public plazas on side streets with movable street furniture and temporary surface treatments to encourage carry-out dining and programming.
 - **Woodlawn Chamber of Commerce (E 62nd St. and S Ingleside Ave.):** Activation of an underutilized plaza by creating an attractive and accessible space where people will want to gather by bringing local business owners, from caterers to yoga teachers.

CDOT is continuing to accept Chicago Alfresco proposals from organizations interested in creating longer-term active community spaces that support outdoor



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dining or highlight community-focused placemaking, support community identity, and provide opportunities for public enjoyment. Interested neighborhood organizations can find more information at chicago.gov/alfresco.

Businesses may also continue to apply for Expanded Outdoor Dining permits at chicago.gov/specialeventspermits.

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