



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 27, 2022

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MAYOR LORI E. LIGHTFOOT, CHICAGO FIRE FOOTBALL CLUB, CHICAGO HOUSING AUTHORITY BEGIN TALKS FOR NEW NEAR WEST SIDE TRAINING FACILITY

Sports performance center and training fields proposed for vacant land in the Roosevelt Square neighborhood on the Near West Side; community meetings begin in March

CHICAGO – Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot, Chicago Fire Football Club, Alderman Jason Ervin (28th Ward), and Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) CEO Tracey Scott today announced the start of preliminary discussions on a proposed new performance and training facility for Chicago's Major League Soccer (MLS) team in the Roosevelt Square area on the Near West Side.

"The Chicago Fire, which is one of our city's greatest sports teams, deserves to have a high-quality training facility that not only meets their needs but fosters the growth of talented athletes," said Mayor Lightfoot. "This potential new facility will not only fulfill this need, but also provide the surrounding West Side community with job, recreational and other incredible opportunities in the future. I look forward to discussing this exciting project further with the Fire, Alderman Ervin, and the CHA in the coming days."

The discussions will explore using approximately 30 acres of vacant CHA land as a headquarters and training center for the Fire. As part of a long-term lease agreement, the Fire would develop the multi-million-dollar facility and provide a variety of community benefits and public investments into neighboring public housing sites, long-term employment for community members, and recreational opportunities for youth. The proposed site is generally bounded by Roosevelt Road, Ashland Avenue, 14th Street and Loomis Street.



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“I am excited to join Mayor Lightfoot, CHA, and the Chicago Fire Football Club to explore using this open space to support affordable housing, employment, and recreation on the Near West Side,” said Alderman Jason Ervin, 28th Ward . “I am committed to working closely with the Fire and the residents of the 28th Ward to ensure that this opportunity for economic investment creates a long-term positive impact on our community.”

A public engagement process to discuss the proposal, including community meetings, will begin in March. Meetings will be hosted or co-hosted by the CHA, Department of Planning and Development (DPD), the Fire, and Alderman Jason Ervin (28th Ward). More information on the public meetings will be forthcoming. The Fire also plans to meet with multiple community organizations in the weeks ahead.

“The Chicago Fire Football Club is committed to making a difference in the lives of young people and communities through soccer,” said Chicago Fire FC President Ishwara Glassman Chrein. “In neighborhoods across the city, soccer brings people together, fostering a strong sense of history and community while showing immense passion for the game. We look forward to presenting the project to the local community, hearing their feedback, and creating new opportunities for residents of the Near West Side to enjoy the game.”

“CHA sees this partnership with the Chicago Fire as an opportunity to invest in our families and in this community. By repurposing this unused land, we can secure substantial funds to rehabilitate CHA housing and develop new affordable housing while also creating employment opportunities for our residents and community members,” said CHA CEO Tracey Scott.

Tentative facility plans include world-class practice fields and a performance center where team members prepare for matches. The facility would also house the Fire’s Youth Academy, offering programmed activities for youth, teens, and young adults in CHA housing and the broader community. Additional facility details will be determined through the community engagement process and ongoing discussions between the Mayor’s Office, CHA, and City agencies.

The planning process will have an overall goal of creating an economic anchor that provides employment, recreational opportunities, and affordable housing resources for the community, including the rehabilitation and preservation of nearby CHA properties, resources for minority- and women-owned businesses, and community green space.

The site was previously occupied by portions of CHA’s former ABLA Homes, which is already in the process of being replaced by the mixed-income Roosevelt Square community as part of CHA’s ongoing commitment to develop mixed-income, mixed-use housing.



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The Chicago Fire Football Club was founded in 1997 on the 126th anniversary of the Great Chicago Fire and will kick off its 25th season in Major League Soccer in 2022. The Fire have won six major domestic championship titles, including the 1998 MLS Cup, the 1998, 2000, 2003 and 2006 Lamar Hunt U.S. Open Cups, as well as the 2003 Supporters' Shield. The Club's charitable arm, the Chicago Fire Foundation, was recognized as ESPN's 2019 Sports Humanitarian Team of the Year. The Fire plays their home matches at historic Soldier Field. For more information, visit chicagofirefc.com.

A proposal overview page is located at chicago.gov/chicagofire. DPD staff welcomes initial comments at dpd@cityofchicago.org.

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