

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Wednesday, Oct. 9, 2024

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Expedited Process Approved for Select Land Sales, Acquisitions

City land dispositions will undergo an expedited sales process following procedural improvements identified by Mayor Brandon Johnson's Cut the Tape initiative and approved by City Council today.

Intended to streamline neighborhood revitalization initiatives involving the nearly 10,000 parcels of vacant land under City ownership, the changes eliminate the City's practice of submitting proposed sales and acquisitions to the Chicago Plan Commission for omnibus approval. It also limits the Community Development Commission's (CDC) review of land sales for City parcels that were originally acquired through TIF funding or that are being sold for projects to be developed with TIF funding.

Previously, Plan Commission voted on all City land sales and acquisitions via omnibus resolutions, typically five to 10 per meeting. CDC voted on all City land sales and acquisitions in Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts, typically two per meeting. Neither commission is required by state law or the municipal code to make recommendations regarding City land transactions.

The new procedures reserve the review and approval process for most sales to City Council, shaving weeks off typical timelines and freeing commission staff for other responsibilities.

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East Garfield Park Performing Arts Center to Receive TIF Funding

BandWith Chicago, a youth performing arts and wellness advocacy organization, will create a \$12.3 million permanent headquarters in East Garfield Park with City financial assistance approved by City Council today.

The nonprofit organization will receive up to \$5 million in Tax Increment Financing (TIF) support to improve a 21,460-square-foot building at 134-56 S. California Ave. for its free performing arts programs. The work will create new rehearsal and performance spaces and classrooms for music, dance, drumline, sound engineering and choral instruction.

Located one block from where BandWith began operations in 2013, the work also includes a cafe and a Horizons for Youth educational resource center.

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TIF Funding to Support Upgrades at Three North Lawndale Schools

Three North Lawndale public schools will collectively receive \$10 million in Tax Increment Financing (TIF) assistance for facility upgrades following approval by City Council today.

- James Weldon Johnson STEAM Elementary School, 1420 S. Albany Ave., will receive \$3.75 million in TIF to renovate four classrooms, modernize common areas and address critical facility needs.
- Thomas Chalmers STEAM Elementary School, 2745 W. Roosevelt Road, will receive \$3.75 million to renovate four primary classrooms, replace a roof, modernize common areas and address critical facility needs.
- Collins Academy STEAM High School, 1313 S. Sacramento Drive, will receive \$2.5 million to renovate four classrooms, upgrade a parent center and specialty career room, and address critical facility needs.

TIF will pay for the entirety of all three projects with funding from the Midwest TIF district.

###

Uptown's TimeLine Theatre Will Receive TIF Support

TimeLine Theatre's planned \$40 million Uptown performance venue will be supported by up to \$14 million in Tax Increment Financing approved by City Council today.

Being built within the vacant W.C. Reebie & Brother warehouse at 5035 N. Broadway, the four-story project will create a 250-seat theater and rehearsal, office, hospitality and community spaces.

Founded 25 years ago in Lake View, TimeLine Theatre's move to a new location will increase educational opportunities and expanded programming with Chicago Public Schools, among other enhancements.

The TIF funding will be provided from the Lawrence/Broadway TIF district as a \$10 million forgivable loan and a \$4 million loan to be repaid after project completion.

The project is estimated to retain 12 permanent full-time jobs, 14 part-time jobs, and create 200 construction jobs. Initial performances are anticipated in early 2026.

###

TIF Funding Approved for Restoration of Uptown Music Venue

The Double Door music club will finalize the restoration and reopening of Uptown's historic Wilson Theater through \$5 million in Tax Increment Financing (TIF) approved by City Council today.

The long-anticipated \$11.5 million project at 1050 W. Wilson Ave. will create a live performance venue with capacity for 700 people. The Double Door Liquors 2.5 LLC project will also create a tuition-free after-school music program in partnership with Uplift High School, The People's Music School and Black Ensemble Theatre.

The Double Door operated for more than 20 years in Wicker Park before closing in 2017. Built in 1909, the Wilson Theater building is part of the Uptown Square Landmark District. In January, the project was awarded a \$125,000 Adopt-A-Landmark grant for eligible restoration costs.

The TIF assistance is being allocated through the Department of Planning and Development's Community Development Grant program.

###

Austin's Mars Candy Factory Designated as Landmark

The Spanish Revival-style Mars candy factory in Austin was designated as an official Chicago landmark by City Council today.

Located at 2019 N. Oak Park Ave. and fronted by a broad lawn, the factory's clay tile roofs, arched windows and balconets created a building more like a country club than a factory, allowing the one-story complex to easily integrate and inspire additional development among adjacent residential blocks when it opened in 1929.

The exotic design by Cleveland-based engineering firm The Austin Co. also belied the industrial innovations occurring inside, including the creation of popular confections like the Snickers, Milky Way and Three Musketeers bars.

The designation will protect the front portion of the complex along Oak Park Avenue, including the entry gate, when the 20-acre factory site is redeveloped following its anticipated 2024 closing by its owner, Mars, Inc.

###

Lease Agreements Approved for Community Plazas on City-Owned Land

A trio of new public open spaces in Grand Boulevard, Englewood and North Lawndale will operate for three more years through formal leases approved by City Council today.

Part of the Department of Planning and Development's Public Outdoor Plaza (POP!) program, the leases formalize the City's partnership with the community organizations who are managing each space on behalf of visitors:

- Teamwork Englewood has a three-year lease for Englewood Breakroom at 1534 W. 63rd St. Opened in July 2023, the plaza includes flexible lawn space, play equipment, a performance area, retail spaces and an ice-skating rink in the winter. The improvements were made possible by a \$500,000 DPD grant.
- IAYV, Inc. has a three-year lease for South Side Sanctuary at 4702-04 S. King Drive. Opened in August 2024, the plaza revitalized a long-vacant lot with amenities for all ages, including performance space, a marketplace for local vendors and multiple murals. The improvements were made possible by a \$712,000 DPD grant.
- Steans Family Foundation has a three-year lease for plaza spaces at 3907, 3921 and 3939-41 W. Roosevelt Road. Now under construction, the plazas include walking paths, landscaping, seating, large-scale public art, a pavilion and play equipment. Construction is privately funded.

DPD launched the POP! program in 2022 to revitalize underused land at strategic locations. As of summer 2024, 11 plazas have been completed through more than \$5 million in City financial assistance.

###

Four Industrial Projects Receive Property Tax Incentives

Four West Side industrial projects will save more than \$13 million in property taxes through Cook County incentives approved by City Council today.

Lake Keeler LLC, 4202-32 W. Lake St.

Industrial developer Lake Keeler LLC will use a Class 6(b) incentive to construct a \$7 million, 44,000-square-foot industrial building on 1.36 acres of vacant City land in West Garfield Park. Valued at \$2.3 million over the 12-year period, the incentive will support up to 50 full-time jobs when fully leased. In June, City Council approved the site's sale for its appraised value of \$196,000.

2525 W Taylor LLC, 2525 W. Taylor St.

Industrial developer 2525 W. Taylor LLC will use a Class 6(b) incentive to support construction of an \$8 million, 42,750-square-foot warehouse complex on the Near West Side. Valued at \$7.9 million over the 12-year period, the incentive will help create 60 full-time jobs when fully leased.

Prologis, 455 N. Ashland Ave.

Prologis real estate company will use a Class 6(b) incentive to support \$12.8 million in improvements to a 67,500-square-foot warehouse occupied by Nanograf Corp. in West

Town. Valued at \$2.7 million over the 12-year period, the incentive will help create 50 full-time jobs and retain 26 full-time jobs.

2512 W 24th LLC, 2512 W. 24th St.

Industrial developer 2512 W 24th LLC will use a Class C incentive as part of the recent acquisition and environmental remediation of a 1.3-acre industrial site in South Lawndale. Valued at \$423,000 over the 12-year period, the incentive is part of an \$880,000 effort to update the property for contemporary industrial uses.

The Class 6(b) property tax incentive is intended to encourage industrial development in areas in need of revitalization.

The Class C property tax incentive is intended to facilitate commercial and industrial investment in properties that have substantial environmental contamination.

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