



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

October 30, 2024

**CONTACT:**

Mayor's Press Office

312.744.3334

[press@cityofchicago.org](mailto:press@cityofchicago.org)

Department of Planning and Development

312.744.9267

**Revised Sign Guidelines Will Support Downtown Business Vitality**

New sign regulations along three downtown shopping corridors will increase advertising flexibility for local businesses following changes approved by City Council today.

Based on input from retail tenants and property owners, the Michigan Avenue Special Sign District and the Street Street/Wabash Avenue Special Sign District are being amended to expand the sizes and types of signs allowed within each area.

The amended regulations accommodate new technology and best practices involving retail signage while maintaining the historic character of each shopping corridor, said Ciere Boatright, commissioner of the Department of Planning and Development (DPD), which administers sign guidelines within the City's zoning code.

"Retailers across the country are facing existential challenges involving brick-and-mortar stores, and more flexible sign regulations are a proven way to reach customers and increase sales," Commissioner Boatright said. "These refinements reflect a commitment to businesses while also protecting each area's legacy as a premiere, one-of-a-kind shopping destination."

The amended Michigan Avenue Special Sign District adjusts corridor advertising regulations between Roosevelt Road and Oak Street. The refinements increase a business's maximum total sign area from two to three square feet per linear foot of street frontage. They also allow previously prohibited signs, including:

- Banner signs, with maximum dimensions of four feet by 15 feet
- Projecting signs, with maximum dimensions of four feet by three feet.
- Illuminated letters and logos for cabinet signs, with maximum dimensions of three feet by 10 feet.



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



- And interior dynamic image display signs up to 30% of each window size and up to 64 square feet per lot. Operating hours are limited to between 5 a.m. and 11 p.m. with one change per 15 minutes.

Additionally, the Michigan Avenue sign district refinements:

- Increase the maximum size of window signs from 15 to 30% of a window's area.
- And increase the maximum size of lettering on awning signs from 9 to 12 inches.

The updated State Street/Wabash Avenue Special Sign District amends corridor advertising regulations between Wacker Drive and Harrison Street. The refined regulations allow previously prohibited:

- Projecting signs, with maximum dimensions of four feet by three feet.
- Window signs, up to 30% of a window's area.
- And interior dynamic image display signs up to 30% of each window size and up to 64 square feet per lot. Operating hours are limited to between 5 a.m. and 11 p.m. with one change per 15 minutes.

Additionally, the State/Wabash sign district refinements:

- Eliminate setback requirements for signs located within shop windows, previously set at three feet.
- Allow lettering on awning signs to include content other than a business's name and address.
- And leave unchanged previous sign area maximums of four square feet per linear foot of street frontage on State, and six square feet per linear square foot of frontage on Wabash.

Both special sign districts include updated regulations for live theaters, allowing dynamic image displays on the endcaps of exterior marquees. Marquee signs do not count towards the maximum sign areas for each lot.

The public-private working group that helped create the changes was formed as a result of Mayor Johnson's "Cut the Tape" initiative and recommendations from the Urban Land Institute, which recently convened technical assistance panels to restore mixed-use vitality for Michigan and State.

Additional sign district amendments could be considered in the future that address more complex proposals involving contemporary advertising innovations.



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



###

### **Tax Rebate Approved for South Chicago Quantum Computing Park**

A new Cook County property tax rebate program approved by City Council today will support the planned Illinois Quantum and Microelectronics Park (IQMP) in South Chicago.

The Cook County Class 8 MICRO incentive identifies approximately 480 acres of the former U.S. Steel site at 8080 S. DuSable Lake Shore Dr. as eligible for the incentive, which lowers the tax rate on properties used for quantum computing from 25 percent to 10 percent for 30 years.

Cook County established the program in September to align with the State of Illinois' Manufacturing Illinois Chips for Real Opportunity (MICRO) Act, which offers significant tax reductions to research and development companies, and manufacturers of semiconductors, microchips and quantum computers.

The IQMP is a multi-billion-dollar global center for quantum-enabled research and technology.

The initial phase is being developed by Related Midwest and computing company PsiQuantum, which will anchor a 300,000-square-foot operations center. The initial phase is expected to generate more than \$125 million in new property taxes, inclusive of the rebate, compared to current tax levels.

Occupying lakefront land north of the Calumet River, the site was used for steel production from 1880 to 1992 and is currently vacant.

The Class 8 MICRO incentive joins the existing Class 6, 7, 8 and L Cook County property tax programs used by the City to encourage the revitalization of underutilized industrial and commercial properties. Unlike other County tax incentives, the Class 8 MICRO program is not eligible for renewal.

###

### **TIF Approved for East Garfield Park Construction Training Center**

An East Garfield Park workforce development organization will receive \$3.71 million in Tax Increment Financing (TIF) assistance for its planned headquarters rehabilitation project following approval by City Council today.



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



Revolution Workshop plans to upgrade its 14,700-square-foot building at 3410 W. Lake St. with new learning spaces, expanded social enterprise facilities, new lobby areas, and upgraded building systems.

The \$4.9 million project will help the six-year-old non-profit launch its Construction Professional Pre-Apprenticeship Program, which will prepare underemployed individuals for careers in drafting and project management. The organization also plans to partner with organizations such as Habitat for Humanity to build and renovate homes for low-income residents.

Revolution Workshop served more than 300 trainees at its East Garfield Park workshop in 2023. A second workshop on the Far South Side serves the greater Roseland and Pullman communities.

Funding will be provided through the Chicago/Central Park TIF district.

###

### **City Assistance Will Support School Improvements**

Improvement projects at two Chicago Public Schools (CPS) facilities will be supported with more than \$6 million in City assistance approved by City Council today.

- Chicago Vocational Career Academy High School, at 2100 E. 87th St. in Avalon Park, will receive \$5 million Tax Increment Financing (TIF) support for improvements to the school's aquatic center, including locker rooms, pool deck, and building systems. The balance of the \$7.3 million project will be paid by CPS.
- Goethe Elementary School, at 2236 N. Rockwell St. in Logan Square, will receive \$504,000 in Open Space Impact Fee (OSIF) proceeds for construction of a 12,000-square-foot youth soccer field, asphalt running track and drainage improvements. The balance of the \$1.5 million project will be paid by the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity.
- LaSalle II Elementary School, at 1148 N. Honore St. in West Town, will receive \$500,000 in OSIF for installation of an 11,000-square-foot artificial turf field and running track. The balance of the \$1 million project will be paid by CPS and LaSalle II's parent-teacher organization.



Chicago's TIF program allocates property tax growth within designated TIF districts for public improvement projects, affordable housing, economic development, and other goals.

The OSIF program allocates fees paid by residential construction projects for open space improvements that offset the impact of new residents on community parks and related resources.

###

### **Tax Incentive Approved for Redeveloped Lake View Site**

HSG Belmont Clark LLC will receive a Cook County Class C property tax incentive to support its recently completed commercial structure in Lake View following approval by City Council today.

The two-story, \$29.9 million project replaced a parking lot and bank at 3179 N. Clark St. and included extensive environmental remediation.

The incentive will reduce taxes on the property by an estimated \$2.9 million during the 12-year term.

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

###

### **Lower West Side Will Get New Garden With City Support**

A new garden and public space will be created on the Lower West Side through a \$455,000 Open Space Impact Fee (OSIF) allocation approved by City Council today.

Located at 947 W. Cullerton St., the half-acre site will include a play area, dog run, landscaping and public art.

The property was occupied by Lowenthal Metals before being environmentally remediated by the U.S. EPA in 2013 and acquired by the City. It has been owned by the NeighborSpace land trust since 2022.

The project will be funded entirely through OSIF. The OSIF program allocates fees paid by residential construction projects for open space improvements that offset the impact of new residents on community parks and related resources.

###



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



## **Uptown Garden to Receive Open Space Funding**

A community garden will be created in Uptown along the 4800 block of North Ravenswood Avenue with support from \$303,000 in Open Space Impact Fee (OSIF) funding approved by City Council today.

Consisting of .9 acres along a Metra rail line, the linear garden will be designed and managed in cooperation with Friends of Winnslie Parkway and the NeighborSpace land trust.

Approximately 20 parking spaces along Ravenswood will be removed to accommodate the project.

The OSIF program allocates fees paid by residential construction projects for open space improvements that offset the impact of new residents on community parks and related resources.

###