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CITY COUNCIL APPROVES ORDINANCE TO CREATE PEOPLE PLAZA PROGRAM

Offshoot of CDOT's Make Way For People Program Identifies Communities' Strengths and Builds on them to Create Vibrant Public Spaces that Promote Economic Vitality

City Council approved today an ordinance to launch the city's People Plaza Program, an innovative initiative designed to create public spaces in the city's plazas, malls and traffic triangles that will host community activities and cultural events in Chicago neighborhoods. The program will be launched in ten locations this summer and will be expanded by ten additional locations each year.

"Chicago is known as the 'City of Neighborhoods,' and the People Plaza Program is designed to create spaces where our residents can gather and celebrate the unique characteristics of their neighborhoods," said Mayor Emanuel. "The People Plaza Program sets the stage for local entrepreneurs, merchants and artists to take part in revitalizing communities across the city."

The public-private partnership is designed to generate self-sustaining revenue through sponsorships, limited advertising and retail sales as well as grants, donations and other innovative fundraising mechanisms.

The People Plaza Program grows out of the Chicago Department of Transportation's (CDOT) Make Way for People Program which employs the urban planning strategy of "placemaking" to support innovative uses of the public way in the city's streets, parking places, alleys and other public spaces in order to create hubs for community activity.

The goal is to improve street safety, promote walking and support the quality of life and economic vitality of all of the city's neighborhoods. The program is run by CDOT in partnership with the Department of Finance and the Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events.

"CDOT is very excited to be working with our sister city departments to launch the People Plaza Program this summer," said CDOT Commissioner Rebekah Scheinfeld. "Many areas of the city have untapped potential and the People Plaza Program will identify opportunities and support local stakeholders as they work to create places that will serve as magnets for creative community development."

Under the ordinance introduced to the City Council, CDOT will be authorized to enter into a contract with Latent Design Corporation for the management and implementation of the People Plaza Program. The company was selected through a competitive RFP process. The initial program cost is a modest investment of \$50,000. The revenue generated by the Program will then be used to activate and maintain the plazas.

Key features of the People Plazas Program include:

- Year-round activation of People Plazas that reflect an emphasis on neighborhood culture and history of each location.
- Local community participation in activation, planning and programming of performances, art exhibitions, temporary markets, etc.
- Use of local merchant partners in providing services in order to boost local economic development.
- Generating revenue to support the People Plaza Program. The revenue will pay for annual costs of the Activation and Maintenance Services. Revenue streams can come from sponsorships, limited advertising, grants, donations, retail or other innovative solutions.
- Equitable geographic distribution of People Plazas. The city has been divided into five regions; at least one plaza from each region must be activated each year, with ten plazas the first year and ten additional plazas in each additional year, up to a total of 50.
- Maintenance services above and beyond current city obligations for the first two years and full maintenance services thereafter.
- Minor capital improvements to support proposed activation services.

For more information on CDOT's Make Way for People Program, go to:

http://www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/cdot/supp_info/make_way_for_people.html

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