



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
CITY OF CHICAGO

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Mayor Emanuel Introduces Housing Assistance Proposal  
to Authorize New Incentives for First-time Homeowners**

Mayor Rahm Emanuel today introduced to City Council a housing assistance proposal that would authorize \$75 million in new bond financing incentives for first-time homeowners.

"Helping residents become first-time homeowners is another important tool in our efforts to build stronger neighborhoods throughout Chicago," said Mayor Emanuel. "From the Neighborhood Opportunity Fund to Retail Thrive Zones to the Industrial Corridor Modernization Initiative, my administration remains focused on spurring economic development and neighborhood revitalization, and this initiative is another important step in achieving that goal."

The incentives would be made available through the Department of Planning and Development's (DPD) TaxSmart Mortgage Credit Certificate Program, which works with local lenders to provide an income tax credit for a portion of the interest on a borrower's mortgage or home improvement loan. The 2019 funding round would assist approximately 400 homebuyers over the next three years.

Applied at tax time every year, the credit is equivalent to 25 percent of a homebuyer's mortgage interest or 50 percent of an existing owner's home improvement loan interest, resulting in a dollar-for-dollar reduction in federal income tax liability. Program participants are projected to receive credits up to \$2,500 per year.

TaxSmart is authorized by the Internal Revenue Service and administered by DPD through a network of local mortgage lenders. To participate, applicants must be Chicago residents who qualify for a loan from a participating lender. Eligible properties must be between one and four units and serve as an applicant's primary residence. Participants cannot have owned a home in the past three years, unless they are buying a home in a targeted area. Income and purchase price restrictions also apply.

Program participants still remain eligible for the standard itemized mortgage deduction on federal tax returns.

121 NORTH LASALLE STREET, ROOM 507, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60602

Since 2005, TaxSmart has helped more than 2,000 households purchase homes with mortgages valued at over \$298 million

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### **Proposals Would Terminate Five TIF Districts**

The Department of Planning and Development (DPD) introduced today to City Council a proposal to terminate two South Side and three North Side Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts. The terminations would dissolve the districts prior to the end of their statutory designation periods.

The Read Dunning TIF district in the Dunning community would be terminated nine years before its planned expiration date, having successfully achieved its goal of supporting the mixed-use redevelopment of the former Chicago-Read Mental Health Center. Established in 1991, the 225-acre district has an unallocated balance of approximately \$5,000. Upon its termination, all unallocated increment would be distributed to the various taxing jurisdictions that receive tax revenues from district properties. The City of Chicago's share is estimated at \$1,100.

The Ravenswood Corridor TIF in portions of Lake View, North Center, Uptown and Lincoln Square would be terminated 11 years before its planned expiration date due to inactivity. The 78-acre district was established in 2005 to help facilitate the rehab and development of high-tech and light industrial employers. Upon its termination, an unallocated balance of approximately \$1.4 million would be proportionally redistributed to the various taxing bodies that receive tax revenues from district properties. The City of Chicago's share is projected at \$322,000.

The Calumet/Cermak TIF district on the Near South Side would be terminated three years before its planned expiration date, having successfully achieved its goal of supporting the mixed-use redevelopment of the former R.R. Donnelley & Sons printing complex and adjacent land. Established in 1998, the 11-acre district has an unallocated balance of approximately \$13.5 million. Upon its termination, all unallocated increment would be proportionally redistributed to the various taxing bodies that receive tax revenues from district properties. The City of Chicago's share is projected at \$3.1 million.

The Weed/Fremont TIF on the Near North Side would be terminated 14 years before its planned expiration date due to lack of redevelopment activity. The 2.6-acre district was designated in 2008 to revitalize vacant land and a large industrial building. Upon the district's termination, an unallocated balance of approximately \$933,000 would be proportionally redistributed to the various taxing bodies that receive tax revenues from district properties. The City of Chicago's share is projected at \$215,000.

The Drexel Boulevard TIF would be terminated eight years before its planned expiration date, having successfully achieved its 2002 goal of supporting the redevelopment of vacant land in the Oakland community with new mixed-income housing. Established in 2002, the 16-acre district has an unallocated balance of approximately \$314,000. Upon its termination, all unallocated increment would be proportionally redistributed to the various taxing bodies that receive tax revenues from

district properties. The City's share is projected at \$72,000.

None of the districts have pending projects or obligations. The terminations would take effect on Dec. 31, 2018.

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### **Financial Proposal Would Acquire Land for New Chicago Park District HQ in Brighton Park**

Seventeen acres of land at 4800 S. Western Ave. in Brighton Park would be acquired for park space and the Chicago Park District's planned new headquarters through a financial proposal introduced today to City Council by Mayor Rahm Emanuel.

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) assistance in the amount of \$8.6 million would support the property's acquisition from the current owner, Lexington Homes. The funding would be provided through the Stevenson/Brighton TIF District.

"The development of the Brighton Park site for the Chicago Park District headquarters is a win-win situation for the District and the community," said Chicago Park District General Superintendent & CEO Michael Kelly. "In addition to the efficiencies of owning our headquarters, we are bringing much needed parkland and amenities to the children and families of this community."

The site would be used for the planned \$45.3 million Park District main administration building, in addition to three sports fields, a playground, pool, parking lot, and field house. A Chicago Park District request for proposals to improve the site is anticipated in coming months. Once complete, the project would bring 200 permanent jobs to the area.

Populated by more than 40,000 people, Brighton Park is among the top five most open-space deprived communities in Chicago. The Park District is currently headquartered in leased space in Streeterville.

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### **\$1 Lot Program Poised to Sell Another 142 Vacant Properties**

One hundred and forty-two City-owned lots across the West and South sides would be sold for \$1 each to local property owners under a plan proposed to City Council today by Mayor Rahm Emanuel.

"The dollar lots program is helping transforming vacant lots into community assets and building a new Chicago block by block, and neighborhood by neighborhood," Mayor Emanuel said. "Empowering residents to invest and develop in their own communities will make neighborhoods across Chicago even better places to live, work and raise a family."

The lots were advertised in early 2018 through the Department of Planning and Development's Large Lots program, which makes vacant, city-owned lots available to qualifying property owners

for \$1. Typically sized at about 3,125 square feet, the properties would be sold “as-is” via quit claim deeds to applicants who successfully applied to the program. Most lots are being planned as green space, gardens or related uses.

Nearly 1,250 lots have been sold through the Large Lots program to date. Applicants were required to own property on the same block, be current on their property taxes and have no outstanding debt to the city, among other requirements. Up to two lots were available per application.

A new, six-week application round is projected to start in December. Visit [LargeLots.org](http://LargeLots.org) for more information.

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### **Proposed Financing Would Enhance Two North Side Open Spaces**

LaSalle Language Academy in Lincoln Park and West Ridge Nature Center in Lincoln Square would receive Open Space Impact Fee (OSIF) funding for proposed improvement projects under a proposal submitted to City Council today by Mayor Emanuel.

Chicago Public School’s LaSalle Language Academy, at 1734 N. Orleans St., would receive \$750,000 in OSIF for the replacement of an asphalt schoolyard with a new a multi-use artificial turf field and playground for use by community residents and students. The balance of the \$1.5 million project would be paid for by Chicago Public Schools.

The Chicago Park District’s West Ridge Nature Preserve, at 5801 N. Western Ave., would receive approximately \$88,000 in OSIF for the installation of children’s play area to provide outdoor space for hands-on nature experiences. The improvements would include a hill, climbing logs, wooden benches, boulders, musical wind chimes, and other amenities.

Open Space Impact Fees are generated by new residential development projects to improve and expand public open spaces within the City’s 77 community areas.

### **Property Tax Incentives Would Support a Pair of Commercial Projects**

Property tax incentives introduced today to City Council by Mayor Rahm Emanuel would support a pair of commercial redevelopment projects on the North and Near West sides.

**EWA Chicago LLC**, 4150 N. Knox Ave.

A Class 6(b) property tax incentive would support the construction of a 41,000-square-foot speculative warehouse in the Knox Industrial Corridor. The already completed \$3.1 million facility features 30-foot ceiling heights, four dock doors, two drive-in doors, and a 48-car parking lot. The estimated \$824,000 in tax savings over the 12-year period would support the creation of 40 and the retention of 40 jobs for up to two tenants when fully leased.

**Epiphany Center for the Arts**, 201 S. Ashland Ave.

A Class L property tax incentive would support the \$4.8 million rehabilitation of the former Church

of the Epiphany into a performance and events venue with an art gallery and studios. 201 S Ashland LLC would use the incentive to perform masonry and stained-glass window repairs and upgrades to the sanctuary and parish house. The Class L incentive, which encourages the preservation and rehabilitation of landmark structures, would reduce property taxes on the building by \$3.9 million over the next 12 years. Located in the Jackson Boulevard Landmark District, the building originally opened in 1885.

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