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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 5, 2013

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Property Tax Incentives Would Support Commercial Projects

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

West Town Center

A Class L property tax incentive would support the \$17 million rehabilitation of a historic commercial building at 1275-95 N. Milwaukee Ave. in the West Town community.

AGC West Town Center Owner LLC, which purchased the 80,000-square-foot building in 2011, would use the Class L incentive to help rehabilitate the interior and exterior. The Class L incentive, which encourages the preservation and rehabilitation of landmark structures, would reduce property taxes on the building by \$1.8 million over the next 12 years.

Located in the Milwaukee Avenue Landmark District, the building originally opened as a Wieboldt's department store in 1897.

Kingsbury Center

A Class C property tax incentive would support the cleanup of a contaminated industrial site at 1415 N. Kingsbury St. on the Near North Side.

Completed two years ago at a cost of \$780,000, the clean-up work involved the removal of underground storage tanks that had contaminated the property in the mid-1900s. Their removal enabled Kingsbury Center SPE LLC to construct a 60,000-square-foot, \$20 million retail plaza on the site in 2012. The plaza is today occupied by four stores and employs 200 people

The Class C incentive encourages the cleanup of contaminated industrial, commercial or vacant sites by lowering the assessment rate for 12 years. Total tax savings over period is estimated at \$2.9 million.

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Open Space Projects Proposed for Three Chicago Neighborhoods

Open space proposals introduced to City Council today by Mayor Rahm Emanuel would expand a park on the Northwest Side and create a community garden and urban farm on the West Side.

Ogden Garden

A 13,000-square-foot community garden would be constructed at 4228-36 W. Ogden Ave. in North Lawndale through \$300,000 in Open Space Impact Fees. The garden would be constructed by Openlands, a not-for-profit open space agency, and owned by the NeighborSpace land trust, which would provide liability insurance for its use by local residents. Open Space Impact Fees are collected from new residential developments to help finance new open space projects within each of the city's 77 community areas. The remainder of the \$450,000 project's cost would be paid for with 22nd Ward Aldermanic funds.

Chicago Farm Works

Eleven City-owned lots in Humboldt Park would be sold to the NeighborSpace land trust and developed as a 2.5-acre urban farm through \$1.75 million in Tax Increment Financing (TIF) assistance. In providing transitional jobs and fresh produce to local residents, the farm would be managed by Heartland Human Care Services Inc., a leading human rights and social services organization. Located on the 400 blocks of North Whipple, Kedzie and Albany avenues, each lot would be sold for \$1.

Eugene Field Park

A \$345,000 TIF proposal would support the expansion of Albany Park's Eugene Field at 5100 N. Ridgeway Ave. The funds would pay for new walking paths, fencing and landscaping.

Streetscape Proposal Would Enhance Cermak Road

TIF assistance up to \$400,000 would pay for the design and construction of streetscape improvements along a one-block stretch of Cermak Road near the McCormick Place Convention Center.

To include new trees, parkways, sidewalks and other features between Prairie and Calumet avenues, the improvements would support the Metropolitan Pier and Exposition Authority's ongoing expansion of convention center amenities by improving nearby pedestrian connections.

Financing Proposal Would Foster Business Improvement Projects

The Small Business Financing Fund (SBIF) would be introduced to the 35/Wallace Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district in Bridgeport and renewed in six other TIF districts under a financing plan proposed to City Council today by Mayor Rahm Emanuel.

“Tax Increment Financing is the City’s best economic development tool and the SBIF program provides opportunities for local businesses to directly participate and benefit,” Mayor Rahm Emanuel said.

Under the proposal, commercial and industrial properties within the 35/Wallace TIF district would be eligible to receive SBIF grants for upgrades and repairs involving windows; floors and roofs; tuck pointing; building systems; signs; and doors; among other eligible costs.

The grants, up to \$150,000, would be provided after the work is complete. Up to \$500,000 would be distributed to businesses in the district through the program.

Additionally, \$500,000 would be renewed for existing SBIF programs operating within the 35/Halsted, Jefferson Park, and Portage Park districts; \$750,000 would be allocated for the Madison/Austin district; and \$1 million would be allocated to the Austin and Fullerton/Milwaukee districts.

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