



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

September 28, 2020

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**MAYOR LIGHTFOOT JOINS ALDERWOMAN SADLOWSKI GARZA, STATE REPRESENTATIVE EVANS, FORD MOTOR COMPANY AND NORTHPOINT DEVELOPMENT TO OPEN COMMERCE PARK CHICAGO**

*The new 200-acre, 2.3 million square foot industrial park will bring 500 construction and 1,400 permanent jobs to the Southeast Side by 2022*

**CHICAGO** – Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot today joined Alderman Susan Sadlowski Garza (10<sup>th</sup> Ward), State Representative Marcus Evans, Jr., (33<sup>rd</sup> District), Tony Reinhart, Regional Director for Community & Government Affairs for Ford Motor Company, and Nathaniel Hagedorn, Founder and CEO of NorthPoint Development to open the first phase and break ground on the next phase of the Commerce Park Chicago industrial campus. Located on the site of the former Republic Steel plant in the Hegewisch neighborhood, the \$164 million 200-acre industrial park will house 2.3 million-square-feet of light manufacturing, assembly and logistics space on the city's far Southeast Side. Commerce Park Chicago currently supports 500 construction jobs and once complete will bring up to 1,400 permanent jobs to the City's Southeast side.

"Our City, particularly our Southeast Side, has long been a hub for industrial and manufacturing innovation," said Mayor Lightfoot. "This impressive Commerce Park Chicago campus will not only build on this history and reputation, but it will also provide much-needed, good-paying, and sustainable jobs for our residents. I am proud to partner with Ford and NorthPoint on this exciting project and look forward working with them to restore the economic vibrancy of our City's Southeast Side for decades to come."

Republic Steel's Chicago plant began operations in 1910 and by the 1970s employed nearly 6,000 people. By the 1980s, less expensive, imported steel became more popular, and the plant, which once produced over 400,000 tons of steel annually closed permanently in 2001 and has remained vacant for nearly 20 years.

"Just as Republic Steel once was to this community, Commerce Park Chicago is an economic engine and jobs generator and will be a beacon of hope on the Southeast



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Side during a time when Chicagoans need good-paying jobs and opportunities as we battle the human and economic impacts of the global pandemic,” said 10th Ward Alderwoman Susan Sadlowski Garza. “The transformation of an abandoned relic to a state-of-the-art industrial hub signifies the beginning of a new era of employment on the Southeast Side that will continue to deliver benefits.”

NorthPoint is committed to reestablishing the site as a hub for employment and worked closely with Alderman Sadlowski Garza to ensure that local employers, sub-contractors and residents had direct access to job opportunities. NorthPoint negotiated a comprehensive Project Labor Agreement with local unions and participated in a community Apprenticeship Expo for more than 500 neighborhood residents. NorthPoint also worked with the City of Chicago to implement WBE/MBE participation programs that surpassed the City’s goals, bringing more opportunities for Chicago-based women- and minority-owned businesses.

“NorthPoint believes in Chicago, the State of Illinois, its people and communities,” said NorthPoint Founder and CEO Nathaniel Hagedorn. “When we started this project, we saw the potential of the City and the Southeast Side. Commerce Park Chicago represents the best in public-private projects and shows the value of what we can accomplish by working together. Our mission is to partner, build and manage employment hubs in ways that are both responsive to community needs and attractive to quality tenants. This win-win formula creates quality jobs, contributes to the stability of the local economy, and benefits the entire community.”

Ford Motor Company is Commerce Park’s first tenant and will use the completed 360,000 square-foot building on South Avenue O for pre-assembly work on components that will be delivered to its nearby Chicago Assembly Plant on Torrence Avenue, which was also developed by NorthPoint.

“As America’s top producer of automobiles, Ford’s commitment to the City of Chicago is demonstrated in its billion-dollar investment in local facilities and choice to build some of our most iconic American brands like the Lincoln Aviator and Ford Explorer right here on the Southeast Side,” said Tony Reinhart, Regional Director of Community & Government Affairs at Ford. “We are also investing in the future with cutting edge technology and expanding production of our hybrid and all-electric model vehicles here as well.”

This event underscores Mayor Lightfoot’s commitment to bringing jobs, opportunities and resources to all of Chicago’s 77 neighborhoods, especially on the South and West Sides of the City. The Department of Planning and Development last week opened the second round of applications for the 2020 Neighborhood



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Opportunity Fund (NOF) grants, which target small business development in commercial corridors in underserved neighborhoods. For more information and to apply please visit [neighborhoodopportunityfund.com](http://neighborhoodopportunityfund.com)

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