



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



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POP! PLAZAS PLANNED FOR NINE CHICAGO NEIGHBORHOODS

Projects to be supported by more than \$4 million in Chicago Recovery Plan funding

CHICAGO — Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot today announced that 10 new public plazas will create spaces for recreation, performances, pop-up shops, gardening, and other neighborhood activities at strategic locations across the South, West, and North sides. These projects will be supported with funding from the Chicago Recovery Plan.

“These transformational projects will bring back what these sites have been missing for years: people and socioeconomic activity,” Mayor Lightfoot said. “With their colorful, artistic design and multipurpose spaces, Public Outdoor Plazas, POP, will give residents a reason to spend time outside in their own neighborhood, patronize local businesses and enjoy the unique offerings of our great city.”

Selected through a Request for Proposals (RFP) issued this spring through the Department of Planning and Development’s Public Outdoor Plaza (POP!) program, each plaza will be constructed and managed by community organizations using up to \$500,000 in Chicago Recovery Plan funding.

“These highly designed and accessible spaces will become focal points for arts and culture, passive recreation, and public amenities that underscore the City’s commitment to an equitable and sustainable economic recovery,” DPD Commissioner Maurice Cox said.

Awarded projects and development teams include:

Aspire POPFIT

5500 W. Madison St., Austin

Planned by the Westside Health Authority in collaboration with the Lamar Johnson Collaborative for a portion of the former Robert Emmet Elementary School campus, plaza plans include public art, a walking trail and play area that can be converted into an ice-skating rink in the winter.



Fresh Market Plaza

1201 W. 63rd St., Englewood

Planned by Inner-City Muslim Action Network with Wheeler Kearns Architects, plaza plans include a walking trail, outdoor art, and passive recreational amenities that collectively emphasize health and well-being.

IAYV Secret Garden

Washington Park

Planned by IAYV Inc. with Future Film for a location to be finalized this summer, the plaza is expected to include a walking path, playground, vendor spaces, gardens, and a variety of public art and passive recreational amenities.

Overton Center for Excellence

221 E. 49th St., Grand Boulevard

Planned by Borderless Workshop Inc. in collaboration with the Site Design Group for a portion of the former Overton Elementary School campus, the project will create multiple areas for art, nature, performance, and sports-related activities.

POP! Heights

11249 S. Halsted St., Roseland

Planned by the Far South CDC in collaboration with the Lamar Johnson Collaborative, the plaza will feature a public lawn, basketball court, public art, community garden, performance stage, and parking for food trucks, among other features.

WACA Bell Park

1921 S. Drake Ave., North Lawndale

Planned by the New Covenant CDC in collaboration with the Site Design Group, the work will improve an existing public space with enhanced basketball facilities, a mural, new seating, art installations, playground equipment, and space for large public gatherings.

WHiP POP!

3342 W. Chicago Ave., Humboldt Park

Planned by the West Humboldt Park Family & Community Development Council in collaboration with the Lamar Johnson Collaborative, the plaza will create an engaging, family-oriented playscape with space for performance art, and other cultural activities.

Winthrop Garden

4628 N. Winthrop Ave. Uptown



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Planned by Uptown United in collaboration with MKSK Design and Human Scale, the work will improve access to an existing community garden while creating amenities for outdoor workshops, performances, and other group activities.

POP! Blocks

5850 W. Chicago Ave., Austin

Planned by the Austin African American Business Association in collaboration with Lamar Johnson Collaborative, the plaza will create a new community gathering space capable of hosting events like the Soul City Blues Festival, the Austin Power 5K, and the Soul City Say No to Drugs parade.

Englewood Breakroom

1539 W.63rd St., West Englewood

Planned by Teamwork Englewood in collaboration with Beehyvve, the Breakroom will host small festivals, performances, retail popups, and other special events that foster community cohesion and a destination for residents.

The selected projects were among 18 responses to the RFP, issued in March 2022. Proposals were evaluated based on viability, local needs, and project design. Work is expected to start this summer.

A previous POP! RFP issued this winter produced two finalists that started construction this spring: POPGrove at 4453 W. Madison St. in West Garfield Park and Mahalia Jackson Court at 1 E. 79th St. in Chatham.

Eight of the 10 projects awarded are in INVEST South/West communities totaling more than \$3.8M out of the \$5.3M awarded. INVEST South/West is an unprecedented community development initiative to coordinate the resources of multiple City departments, community organizations, and corporate and philanthropic partners toward 12 commercial corridors within 10 South and West Side community areas. The initiative has already marshaled over \$1.4B in public and private investments that will support small businesses, create public realm improvements, restore historic buildings, and foster equity and resilience where it's needed most.

POP! is part of the Chicago Recovery Plan's \$1.2 billion strategy for equitable economic recovery and support for thriving and safe communities.

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