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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Initiative Would Improve Food Quality, Appearance of Convenience Stores**

A pilot program to expand healthy food choices and improve the aesthetics of neighborhood convenience stores was proposed to City Council today by Mayor Rahm Emanuel and Alderman Lona Lane.

The "Healthy Corner Store Pilot Project" would provide a \$40,000 grant to the Inner-City Muslim Action Network (IMAN) to work with select retailers on expanding fresh produce and dairy products as part of their stores' regular inventory. IMAN would also market various City of Chicago programs that help store owners to improve the appearance and operation of their places of business.

"We know there can be a cultural disconnect between store owners and the people they serve, especially when it comes to healthy food options. This pilot program will help owners to incorporate and leverage fresh food and store improvements as part of their business plans," Mayor Emanuel said.

The year-long pilot would provide training, technical assistance, and business resources to IMAN's existing network of Muslim store owners, along with other store operators, that operate in low-income sections of the West, Southwest, and South sides of the city. The work would include assistance with the procurement of fresh produce from Chicago-based farms and fresh food distributors.

IMAN is a community-based 501©(3) organization founded in 1995 to address business, social and cultural issues involving Muslims in Chicago. In 2007, it launched a "Campaign for Health, Wellness and Healing," which sought to mitigate cultural tensions between certain store owners and customers. The Healthy Corner Store program would expand the premise of that initiative by helping owners with alternative business planning, access to healthy food, and resources for facility improvements. IMAN would provide a first-quarter, mid-year and final report to the Department of Planning and Development that details the number of stores that adopt and sustain program objectives.

Funding for the program would come from the City's corporate budget.

# # #

### **TIF Would Support Site Prep Work for Englewood Whole Foods Store**

A commercial complex anchored by a Whole Foods grocery store would move forward in Englewood through a \$10.7 million in Tax Increment Financing (TIF) proposal introduced to City Council today by Mayor Rahm Emanuel.

The TIF assistance would pay for environmental work and infrastructure improvements to 13.9 acres of vacant, City-owned land on the northwest corner of 63<sup>rd</sup> and Halsted streets, which would be comprehensively prepared for the commercial complex by a City of Chicago contractor.

The work would include the creation of development-ready foundations on a five-acre portion of the site, specifically for four commercial buildings totaling 48,000 square feet. The Whole Foods store, announced by Mayor Emanuel in September 2013, would occupy 18,000 square feet. Once completed, the store would employ 100 people and provide expanded food options for neighborhood residents.

As the first part of a two-phase project, the environmental and infrastructure work would be performed by Chicago Neighborhood Initiatives, a community-based, non-profit development organization. The second phase would involve the sale of the land to a developer that would construct the retail complex for Whole Foods and other tenants.

# # #

### **TIF Proposed for Renovation of Blue Line's Medical District CTA Station**

Renovations to the Illinois Medical District (IMD) transit station on the CTA Blue Line would be supported by \$23 million in Tax Increment Financing (TIF) assistance under a financial proposal introduced today to City Council by Mayor Rahm Emanuel.

The funds would help rebuild the main station house at 1841 W. Ogden Ave., upgrade entrances to the commuter platform, and install an elevator for people with disabilities. The project would also include the reconstruction of two auxiliary entrance ramps, improve station and platform lighting, install bus and train tracker displays, and repair the station's canopy.

Constructed in 1958, the station serves the IMD, which is home to four major medical centers and a variety of other institutions and businesses. Ridership increased by more than 53 percent over the last five years to 1.1 million passengers in 2013.

The project would be entirely funded by TIF. Work would be completed in 2016.

# # #

### **New TIF Districts Proposed for North and South Sides**

A pair of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts would be designated on the North and South sides under proposals submitted to City Council today by Mayor Rahm Emanuel.

The proposed 107<sup>th</sup>/Halsted district would include 887 acres of commercial and residential properties in portions of the Morgan Park and Roseland communities. The purpose of the district would be to provide resources for property rehabilitation, to address foreclosure issues in the area, and to support improvements to infrastructure and other public amenities. The district would be generally bounded by 107<sup>th</sup>, State, 115<sup>th</sup>, and Green streets.

The proposed Foster/California TIF district would include 24 acres of institutional buildings and other properties in the Lincoln Square community. The primary purpose of the district would be to provide resources for healthcare improvements at Swedish Covenant Hospital, along with upgrades to area infrastructure and other public amenities. The district would be generally bounded by Carmen, Farragut, Francisco and Lincoln avenues.

The two districts were approved by the Community Development Commission in February 2014.

Once adopted, new property tax growth in each of the districts would be used to support improvement projects in the respective areas for the next 23 years.

# # #

### **Landmark Status Proposed for Former North Side Elementary School**

The former Mulligan Public School building in Lincoln Park would be designated an official City of Chicago landmark through a proposal submitted today to City Council.

Featuring Italianate and Queen Anne-style decorative details at 1855-63 N. Sheffield Ave., the 114-year-old building is a significant example of late 19<sup>th</sup> century school architecture in Chicago. Its airy and light-filled design reflects the changing educational standards of the late 1800s, when handsomely designed school buildings included a variety of ventilation and sanitation standards to encourage student achievement.

The school was designed by Board of Education architect Charles Rudolph and named for James A. Mulligan, a Chicago lawyer who served as a Union Army colonel during the Civil War.

The designation was recommended by the Commission on Chicago Landmarks in February 2014.

The masonry, four-story building was sold in 2013 to private developer and is currently being rehabilitated into market-rate apartments by 1855 Sheffield LLC.

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### **Property Tax Incentives Proposed for Two Northwest Side Commercial Projects**

Property tax incentives introduced to City Council today would support a pair of commercial redevelopment projects on the Northwest side.

**Market Properties**, 501 N. Sacramento Blvd.

A Class 6(b) property tax incentive would help Market Properties Inc. renovate a 492,000-square-foot building in the Kinzie Industrial Corridor for its food and paper wholesale businesses and for lease to other tenants. The \$515,000 project includes new lighting, loading dock improvements, and other upgrades. The company relocated to the building in January 2014 and currently employs 17 people. It would create an additional eight positions and save an estimated \$913,000 in property taxes over the next 12 years through the incentive.

**Royal Industries Inc.**, 4100 W. Victoria St.

The renewal of a Class 6(b) tax incentive for Royal Industries Inc. in the Peterson Pulaski Industrial Corridor would help the company complete a \$150,000 reconfiguration of its production space within the building. The original Class 6(b) incentive, issued in 2004, supported the purchase and renovation of the 77,000-square-foot structure for the company's operations as a distributor of furniture and food service projects. The estimated \$752,000 in tax savings through the 12-year renewal period would support the addition of 10 new jobs.

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### **City Seeks Acquisition Authority For Former Rail Yard**

A proposal introduced to City Council today would give the City the authority to acquire 62 acres of vacant land on the Near South Side.

Bounded by Roosevelt Road, Clark Street, 16<sup>th</sup> Street and the Chicago River, the site was last used as a rail yard. It is currently owned by General Mediterranean Holdings.

The site's mixed-use redevelopment was one of the primary goals of the River South TIF district, which was established in 1997. In lieu of no development project moving forward, the Department of Planning and Development (DPD) intends to issue a request for proposals (RFP) to develop the site after acquisition authority is approved by City Council. The chosen respondent to the RFP would fund the acquisition costs.

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