



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



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MAYOR LIGHTFOOT ANNOUNCES THE CHICAGO RIVERWALK COMMUNITY MARKETPLACE TO REOPEN

Chicago's popular recreation and restaurant destination opens for residents and visitors.

CHICAGO – Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot today announced the opening of the Community Marketplace on the Chicago Riverwalk. The Community Marketplace enhances the already popular Chicago Riverwalk Concession Program and is located on the Chicago Riverwalk between Michigan Avenue and Wabash, between the McCormack Bridgehouse and Chicago River Museum and O'Brien's Riverwalk Café. The Community Marketplace opened in 2019 with the intention to allow small, minority and women owned neighborhood businesses the opportunity to get exposure to the high number of Riverwalk visitors and inspire visits to neighborhood locations.

"The Riverwalk is not only an economic engine for our city but a part of the lifeblood of Chicago's iconic summers," said Mayor Lightfoot. "I am thrilled to announce the 2022 concessions program, and I look forward to welcoming residents and tourists alike to this space."

Vendors in the Community Marketplace for 2022 include:

ChiBoys – New to the Community Marketplace, ChiBoys is a Chicago-themed clothing line that tells the city's story through stylish and innovative fashion with a mission to provide unique designs to display the beauty of Chicago's diversity.

Chiya Chai – Returning to the Community Marketplace for a third season, Chiya Chai is a chai food and libations concession featuring south Asian cuisine including chia, curry bowls and unique savory pies.

Colores Mexicanos – Also returning this year after its 2021 inaugural season, is "Chicago's Mexican Gift Shop," showcasing the talents of more than 50 artisan families across 12 states of Mexico through handmade, fair-trade art, gifts, décor, and clothing. The store offers one-of-a-kind, hand embroidered Mexican clothing,



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beaded jewelry and handcrafted home decorations representing and providing vital economic support to about 35 Mexican indigenous communities.

Feed Your Head – New to the Riverwalk, Feed Your Head is a woman owned business that provides fully plant-based meat and cheese alternatives. Vegan sausages, meats, and cheeses influenced by flavors of Louisiana, West Africa, Italy, Eastern Europe, Mexico and beyond will be available. This is the first vegan concession on the Chicago Riverwalk!

Freddies – A Bridgeport institution, new to the Community Marketplace represents Chicago’s South Side Italian American history, serving a true taste of what Chicago is all about. Popular menu items from their south side location that will be available include pizza by the slice, Italian beef, all beef hot dogs, freshly made Italian Ice and made to order milkshakes.

Neighborly – Also returning to the Community Marketplace for a third year, Neighborly will offer a unique retail experience where visitors can shop a variety of affordable products that are made right here in Chicago, as well as a collection of “modern souvenirs,” design-driven and ethically made Chicago-themed merchandise.

Throughout the pandemic, the Riverwalk has provided a much-needed outdoor space for Chicagoans to connect to nature walking along the path, resting in one of the many seating areas, partaking in the various food and beverage options and enjoying the public art installations. Revenues from the 2021 season were the highest they had ever been at \$23 million which includes over \$2 million in generated tax revenue. Pre-pandemic revenues from the 2019 season were \$16.5 million.

Vendors of the concession program include Island Party Hut, Beat Kitchen on the River, Northman Beer & Cider Garden, Chicago Brewhouse, Mercury Cruise lines & Chicago’s First Lady Cruises, City Winery, O’Brien’s Riverwalk Café, Urban Kayaks, Downtown Docks, Chicago Electric Boats, Chicago Cycle Boats, Sweet Home Gelato, Tiny Tapp & Café, Chicago Water Taxi and Wendella.

“The Riverwalk is one of the largest public spaces maintained by the Department of Assets, Information and Services, and we are thrilled to support the small businesses that make up the concession program on the Riverwalk,” said Sandra Blakemore, Acting Commissioner of AIS.

In addition to extensive public art throughout the walkway, cultural and recreational programs are also available on the Chicago Riverwalk, provided in



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collaboration with other City Departments, Sister Agencies, and non-profit organizations.

“Sounds of the Riverwalk” is returning for its second year and will expand to a 12-week music series featuring musicians from the DCASE Chicago Band Roster. The free, public performances will run through early October. Concerts take place on Sundays at 1pm at the Confluence, located between Franklin and Lake Streets on the Chicago Riverwalk.

Join the Chicago Park District (CPD) on the Riverwalk to learn about what makes the Chicago River so incredible in this free family program. Located at “The Jetty” (between Wacker and Wells St) this program offers visitors the opportunity to catch a fish, hold a beaver skull, and learn about the ecosystem of the river hidden beneath the surface. Did you know that the River is now home to over 40 unique species of fish? CPD’s team of educators is on-site every Thursday and Friday from 12-6pm, and Saturdays and Sundays from 10am- 4pm rain or shine through mid-August.

The McCormack Bridgehouse & Chicago River Museum is open Wednesday through Sunday from 10am to 5pm. Admission is only \$6, and all proceeds support the mission of protecting the Chicago River System for people, plants, and animals. 45-minute tours of the museum are offered on Fridays and Saturday for an upcharge – reservations are recommended. Special programming for this season is being developed including a speaker series and the popular fall Bridge Lift Viewings. All special events will be posted on www.bridgehousemuseum.org

The Chicago Riverwalk provides a 1.25-mile continuous path along the Main Branch of the Chicago River from Lake Street to the Lakefront. The path is open from 6:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. every day. For more information about the Chicago Riverwalk, please visit www.cityofchicago.org/chicagoriverwalk.

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