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Featured Business of the Week: The Chunky Scone



This month, [The Chunky Scone](#) celebrated two years in business! Talented owner Oscar Narvaez has been baking for more than 15 years. Inside his Ravinia District location, you will find an assortment of sweet and savory items, including pizza rolls, Tres Leches, cinnamon rolls, empanadas, conchas, and delicious scones! Every menu item is vegan, and many are also gluten-free. The Chunky Scone also hosts regular pop-ups featuring some of the best vegan chefs in Chicagoland. Head to the Ravinia District and indulge in guilt-free, cruelty-free baked goods today!

733 St. Johns Ave. / 847.780.3838 / thechunkyscones.com

**Anticipated Restaurant on Central Avenue, Indus,
Featured in Eater Chicago**



Highland Park residents Ajit and Sukhu Kalra, the creators of Bhoomi restaurant in Chicago, are gearing up to unveil a full-fledged restaurant in downtown Highland Park called Indus. Diners can anticipate a menu that marries traditional flavors with contemporary flair, from curries to wagyu steaks, smoked delicacies, and a thoughtfully curated wine and cocktail selection. **Indus plans to open on May 16.** Read the [full article here](#).

617 Central Ave. / 847.208.4691

Featured image: Indus co-owners Ajit (left) and Sukhu Kalra (right) pose at Urban Space in 2021. Pat Nabong/Sun-Times

April 17 Restaurant Meeting Recap



On Wednesday, April 17, Highland Park food and beverage providers were invited to meet with City staff, elected officials, and representatives of the Business & Economic Development Advisory Group at City Hall to discuss key initiatives aimed at supporting and enhancing Highland Park's vibrant restaurant scene.

Staff provided updates on the City's [existing incentives](#), including the recently expanded Exterior Improvements Grant Program, Sales Tax Rebate Program, and Boutique Incentive. These incentives are tailored to empower our local businesses by providing support for growth and success. Additionally, the City sought feedback on a potential new incentive program for food & beverage providers to help support investment, reinvestment, and expansion efforts by new and existing restaurants. Staff also discussed existing and exciting expanded marketing efforts through [Enjoy Highland Park](#) and the Weekender. The city staff also updated attendees on [key infrastructure projects](#), many of which have a direct effect on placemaking for our business community.

Most importantly, representatives from the City listened intently to our restaurateurs' input on how the City can best support their businesses. Their insights will continue to guide the City in tailoring programs to meet their evolving needs.

Are you a restaurant and want to give your feedback? Contact the Office of Business Development at businessdevelopment@cityhpil.com or at 847.926.1000.

Spring Promotional Opportunity



Spring has arrived in Highland Park, and there's so much to celebrate! We've created an ever-growing, [downloadable digital Spring Guide](#) of things to do in Highland Park this season.

Featuring over 60 pages of events, promotions, workshops, specials, and more, this downloadable Guide is a great way to advertise your business at no cost. The Guide is distributed weekly from March – April via the Weekender (approximately 8,200 recipients), linked to social media, and housed permanently on enjoyhighlandpark.com.

Want your local business to be featured in the Guide? If your business has an event, promotion, special, workshop, or something else exciting happening now through April 30, please reach out to Marketing Coordinator Diane Larson (dlarson@cityhpil.com) for information on how you can be included.

Second St. Parking Lot Reconstruction Mid-March - May

The Second St. Parking Lot Reconstruction Project began on Monday, March 18. Below you will find the most recent update regarding the Second St. Parking Lot Reconstruction Project.

Reconstruction of the lot is anticipated to be complete in late May. The project will enhance available parking for customers accessing businesses along Second St. The project includes reconstruction of the pavement to convert it from an asphalt pavement to an environmentally friendly permeable pavement. Other improvements include LED lighting and conduit for future EV Charging Stations.

The City has been in direct communication with impacted businesses that rely on the parking lot for customer parking, deliveries, and refuse, recycling, and compost containers. Construction fencing will be placed around the perimeter

of the lot, including the sidewalk in front of the parking lot.

Access to businesses and customer parking along Second Street will be maintained throughout the reconstruction of the parking lot. Parking options include:

- On-street parking (with the exception of two 15-minute parking spots in front of Terry's Toffee, which have been designated for use by the construction team for placement of recycling containers)
- Parking in the Renaissance Place Garage

To learn more about the reconstruction of this parking lot, and to explore additional improvements planned for Second Street during spring/summer 2024, please visit cityhpil.com/construction.

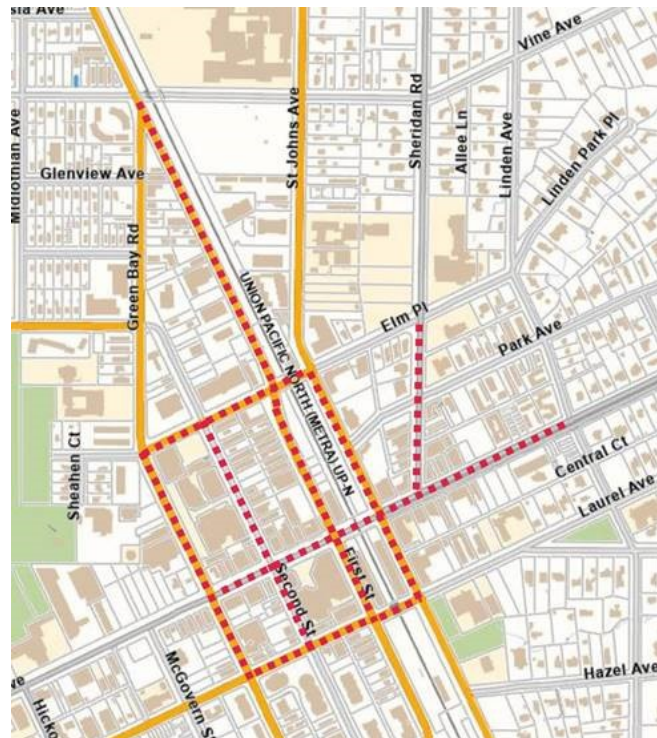
If you're interested in receiving updates about the project, you can sign up for the dedicated project email list by emailing cityhp@cityhpil.com.

Central Business District Resurfacing Project

As part of the City's core priorities of infrastructure investment and economic development, a number of exciting projects are underway in the Central Business District! This spring and summer, the City will be undertaking a streets resurfacing project in Downtown Highland Park. When complete, this work will enhance access to businesses.

Here are the resurfacing project limits listed below and on the map.

- 1) Elm Place (From Green Bay Road to St Johns Avenue)
- 2) Green Bay Road (From Elm Place to Laurel Avenue)
- 3) Central Avenue (From Green Bay Road to Linden Avenue)
- 4) Laurel Avenue (From Green Bay Road to St Johns Avenue)
- 5) Second Street (From Central Avenue to Laurel Avenue)
- 6) First Street (From Green Bay Road to Laurel Avenue)
- 7) St Johns Avenue (From Elm Place to Laurel Avenue)
- 8) Sheridan Road (from Elm Place to Central Avenue)



The majority of the work will be done overnight to minimize disruption to businesses. Improvements will include pedestrian crosswalk enhancements, curb replacement and repair where needed, storm/sanitary grate updates as warranted, and ADA Upgrades to sidewalks at corners where warranted. Work is tentatively scheduled to start at the beginning of May 2024 with completion

by September 2024.

For questions about the project, please call the Public Works Department at 847.432.0807.

Please note: Starting the week of April 29, the City will be reaching out to businesses impacted by the construction to assist with promotional initiatives. The City will start with businesses directly impacted by the Second Street resurfacing. For more information, please contact Marketing Coordinator, Diane Larson at: dlarson@cityhpil.com.

Old Skokie Road Construction to Begin Mid-May

Construction of Old Skokie Valley Road will begin in mid-May and last through late summer as part of the Briergate Business District Improvements Project. The upcoming project plans to convert existing gravel parking spaces to an environmentally friendly permeable pavement, clear vegetation, improve roadway lighting with new LED lighting, and improve drainage.

For more information and updates on this project and other key infrastructure improvements, visit the [Capital Improvement Program \(CIP\) dashboard](#).

Update to the City's Alcoholic Beverages Code

There have been several recent amendments to the City's Alcoholic Beverages Code (Chapter 119), including updates to hours of business and beer keg tags, the codification of cocktails "to go," new license classifications, and amendments to existing classifications.

In regard to license classification, the city approved a new licensing for caterers ([Ordinance 019](#)), provisions for BYOB establishments, service of complimentary alcohol at a place of business where the sale of alcoholic liquor is incidental or secondary to the primary activity and pop-up dining ([Ordinance 033](#)), as well as amendments to regulations regarding hours of operation ([Ordinance 020](#)).

The following ordinances were approved at the February 12, 2024 City Council Meeting: [Ordinance 019](#) and [Ordinance 020](#). [Ordinance 033](#) was approved at the April 10, 2024 City Council Meeting.

Prohibition of Sales and Possession of Illicit THC Products

Prohibition of Retail Sales of Illicit THC Products and Possession of Illicit THC Products by People Under Age 21

- New regulations prohibiting the retail sales of illicit THC products and possession of those products by individuals under the age of 21 took

effect on April 1, 2024.

- The prohibition includes but is not limited to delta-8 tetrahydrocannabinol (“THC”), delta-10 THC, THC-O, kratom, and products containing delta-9 THC above specified thresholds. More information is available in [Ch. 125 of the City Code](#).

Feedback from key stakeholder groups expressing concern about unregulated THC and kratom products was considered by the City Council, staff, and corporation counsel. **Business owners may share feedback with the City Manager's Office at 847.926.1000 or cityhp@cityhpil.com.**

Exterior Improvement Grant Program



The ***Exterior Improvement Grant Program*** offered by the City is designed to provide both assistance and encouragement to commercial property owners and sales-tax-generating local businesses citywide to improve their storefronts' appearance and functionality. The program has the following key features:

- The cost of eligible improvements is shared equally between the applicant and the City.
- The maximum grant is 50% of the project cost up to \$20,000 per year for up to five consecutive years or a total of \$100,000; however, a grant for the same improvement would not be considered within the same five-year period.
- The eligible improvements must be visible from the right-of-way.

The annual program budget is \$100,000 and is available on a first-come, first-served basis.

The program is an excellent opportunity for local businesses and property owners to revamp their storefronts, enhance their appeal, and lessen the

financial burden. Please visit [Exterior Improvement Grant Program](#) to learn more and download the [application](#).

If you have questions about the program, please contact Business Development Manager Carolyn Hersch at 847.926.1027 or via e-mail at chersch@cityhpil.com.

Featured image: [Norton's Restaurant](#) used the exterior improvement grant program to obtain new outdoor furniture.

SCORE Mentoring at the Highland Park Public Library & Free Webinars

SCORE offers in-person or virtual sessions using phone, email, or video

All sessions are free and confidential. SCORE mentors are successful business professionals, some retired, some working, from all industries and experiences.



SCORE recently added a new [YouTube channel](#) where all previously recorded webinars can be accessed.

To schedule an in-person or virtual session, visit score.org/northchicago and register to “Find a Mentor”. You will be asked to provide the nature of your business interest. Please include whether you prefer in-person or virtual mentoring (phone, email, video) and note the **Highland Park Public Library** even if you prefer a virtual session.

Upcoming Free Webinar: Women’s Masterminds April 25 12pm CDT
A Basic QuickBooks Guide for Small Business Owners
[Reserve your spot.](#)

Community Navigator Business Support Program

[Community Navigators](#) is a support program to assist small businesses, particularly minority, women, rural, and veteran-owned businesses. They provide outreach to raise awareness on federal and state programs, and provide 1:1 technical assistance, etc. For more information, please click [HERE](#).

Small Business Development Center: Low and No-Cost Business Services



[Small Business Development Centers](#) (SBDC) are located throughout the state and provide information, confidential business guidance, training, and other free resources for start-ups and existing small businesses. If you need help with a business plan, marketing, financial bookkeeping, finding grants, starting and growing a business, click [HERE](#). To find a Center near you, click [HERE](#). Please note that many SBDCs do provide Spanish assistance. If you need help finding an SBDC that provides Spanish assistance, please contact Diana Alfaro at diana.alfaro@illinois.gov.

Hello Alice Small Business Grant Program



Discover small business grants for every stage of your small business adventure. Grant opportunities are recommended based on your unique profile and delivered to your inbox weekly. The search for free money doesn't get any easier! In partnership with the Global Entrepreneurship Network (GEN) and with funding from Etsy and Progressive, [Hello Alice](#) is a free online platform that helps businesses launch and grow through every step of their entrepreneurial journey. The Small Business Growth Fund provides small business owners with knowledge, funding, networking opportunities, and peer-to-peer connections with more than one million small business owners.

[Learn about Hello Alice funding opportunities.](#)

Contacting the Office of Business Development

This newsletter is produced by the City of Highland Park's Office of Business Development. The City encourages business owners and managers to share information regarding upcoming events, promotions or news for possible inclusion in the City's marketing modalities, including [The Weekender](#), [Enjoy Highland Park](#), and [social media](#). Please send these items to the City via email to: businessdevelopment@cityhpil.com. The City reserves the right to edit and/or filter submissions.

For general business inquiries and assistance, contact Business Development Manager Carolyn Hersch at chersch@cityhpil.com or

Additional Resources

[Available Commercial Space](#)

[Business Directory](#)

[City of Highland Park Business Development Strategic Plan](#)

[Chamber Of Commerce](#)

[College of Lake County Small Business Development Center](#)

[Hello Alice](#)

[SCORE](#)

[SCORE YouTube Channel](#)

[U.S. Small Business Administration](#)

[Job Center of Lake County - Business Services](#)

[Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity:](#)

- [Small Business Development Centers of Illinois](#)
- [Community Navigator Business Support Program](#)
- [Grant Opportunities](#)

[Visit Lake County](#)

[Women-in-Business Resources](#)

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