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Shop Local

The City recognizes that the reinvestment projects taking place in the Central Business District impact the business community. During these projects the City is utilizing all of its communication modalities to share out information that businesses are open, highlight parking options, and convey the importance of supporting local. Whether you are located in the CBD or in one of the City's other business districts, we also want to direct share your events, new menu items, services, and product lines with the community by amplifying your messaging through the Weekender and the EnjoyHP Summer Guide and social media. Please connect with Marketing Coordinator Diane Larson dlarson@cityhpil.com to learn more and submit content for these publications.

RTA Expands Pre-Tax Transit Benefit Program, Offering Savings and Sustainability



Transit Benefit Fare Program

Get on board with the pre-tax benefit that gets people moving.



The Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) has expanded the pre-tax [Transit Benefit Fare Program](#) across Cook, DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry, and Will Counties. This program offers significant financial benefits for both employers and employees while promoting eco-friendly commuting. Employees can contribute up to \$300 monthly in pre-tax income towards various transit options, reducing their taxable income. Businesses enjoy a waived first-month fee and reduced payroll taxes. This program expansion aims to solidify public transportation as a preferred regional travel option, benefitting businesses, employees, and the environment.

Employers who enroll in the RTA Transit Benefit Fare Program can see their first month of fees waived by using promo code **TRANSIT2024**.

Second Street Parking Lot Closed June 5-7

Starting the night of Wednesday June 5, through Friday, June 7, the Second Street parking lot between Central Ave and Elm Place will be unavailable for parking as crews install the new sewer under the street in front of the entrance and exit areas of the parking lot as part of the Second Street Infrastructure Project. The parking lot will re-open for parking again on Saturday, June 8.

Central Business District Capital Investment Projects

Central Business District Capital Improvement Projects will continue to revitalize the downtown. These investments will provide vibrancy for those who live, work, and visit Highland Park. In addition to

refreshed roadways the Resurfacing Project will provide increased ADA access with updated ramps and new pedestrian signaling. Phase 1 of this project will conclude no later than June 28 and Phase 2 which includes the grinding down the existing asphalt and resurfacing will begin July 8. This project is being conducted primarily during overnight hours to reduce impacts on the business community.



Work is well underway on the Second Street corridor between Elm Place and Central Avenue beginning with sewer replacement and storm water mitigations. Signage marking pedestrian access points, “businesses open” information, and other directionals have also been placed this week.

Throughout the duration of the projects, access to all businesses will continue to be available. City staff continues to meet with businesses throughout the district to understand their marketing needs and highlight businesses through the City’s communication modalities. It is important that we continue to support all local Highland Park businesses through communication and supporting local. The City will continue to provide updates as the work progresses.

Please visit the City’s Capital Improvement Program page for more information related to the Central Business District Capital Projects. If you have any questions specific to the investment projects taking place, please contact Ashley Palbitska, Assistant to the City Manager at **847.926.1034** or apalbitska@cityhpil.com.

Sewer Lining Begins on June 10

Sewer lining is set to begin in the CBD on June 10. Sewer lining is a cost effective construction technology to rehabilitate and extend the functionality of sewers. The work is performed without the disruption or added expense of open-cutting the streets, damaging mature trees along streets, or inconveniencing residents. Lining locations are determined by the Public Works Department based on pipe condition, televising existing sewer lines and sewer surcharge concerns.

A letter was previously sent from the City to businesses within the rehabilitation areas. You will receive written notice from the City’s sewer lining contractor, Hoerr Construction, Inc., in the form of a door hanger informing you of the time and date of your 12 hour limited water use period. If work is canceled for that date, you will receive a green door hanger notifying you of the cancellation. [View this map](#) of sewer lining locations in the Central Business District.

Normally, each section of sewer to be lined will require up to 12 hours to be completed. During this time the sewer connection to your business will be sealed off. Consequently, you will be asked to make limited use of your toilet facilities and refrain from doing laundry, running dish washing machines, or other uses that send significant water down the drain for a 12 hour period. Work will begin early AM hours in the CBD to reduce business interruptions.

For updates on this project and other capital improvement projects visit the [City's Capital Improvements Program dashboard](#). For more information on the Sewer Lining Program visit the Water and Sewer Projects tab on the dashboard.

Food Truck Thursdays Kick Off in Ravinia



[Food Truck Thursdays](#) return to the Ravinia Business District starting June 6th at Jens Jensen Park!

Featuring over a dozen rotating food trucks and live music, [Food Truck Thursdays](#) will continue weekly through September 26, 4:30 PM until dusk. This week's lineup includes 20 diverse food vendors, including local Highland Park establishments: [BellaRu Catering](#), [Pixca](#), [Abigail's](#), and [Ravinia Brewing Company](#). Stick around for live music from bluegrass duo, Despina Pafalides and La Tosca Italian Mambo Ensemble's unique blend of jazz and folk.

If you are interested in participating as a food truck vendor, please contact [Besnidoun USA](#) at: bensidounmarkets@gmail.com.

French Market Sundays at The Lot, Through Sept. 29

The City of Highland Park, in partnership with [Bensidoun USA](#), is excited to present a reimagined weekly French Market featuring produce, baked goods, pet treats, jewelry, luxury accessories, ready to eat food, home goods, apparel, live music, and more. The French Market will take place every Sunday, June 9 through September 29 from 10 AM - 2 PM at The Lot.

If you are interested in participating in the French Market review [Bensidoun USA's vendor application](#).

City Council to Consider Zoning Amendment regarding Animal Daycares and Vet Clinics

During the [Plan and Design Commission meeting on Tuesday, May 21](#)., the following changes were recommended for [Draft Zoning Ordinance 1997](#):

- Domestic Pet Day Care be created and allowed in all commercial and industrial zoning districts and as a Conditional Use** in the B5 downtown and B2 and B2-RW districts.
- Create new definitions and off-street parking regulations related to these changes.
- Require Special Use Permit for the above uses if any outdoor activities onsite are proposed and for Domestic Pet Day Care if any residential uses exist above the proposed day care.
- Animal Hospital and Clinic be expanded to the B2 and B2-RW as a Conditional Use.

***A conditional use requires a Special Use Permit and a mailed notice to property owners within 400 feet of the subject property prior to the public hearing on the application, with the hearing before the Plan and Design Commission for recommendation and then a final decision by the City Council.*

At the next City Council meeting on [Monday, June 10](#), the City Council will consider these amendments to [Ordinance 1997](#).

If you have any questions or comments regarding the text amendments, please contact Senior Planner Karl Burhop at kburhop@cityhpil.com or 847.926.1852.

Exterior Improvement Grant Program

The City's [Exterior Improvement Grant Program](#) is designed to provide both assistance and encouragement to commercial property owners as well as sales-tax-generating local businesses citywide. The [Exterior Improvement](#)

[Grant Program](#) can assist property owners and local businesses with making improvements to their appearance and functionality of their storefronts. 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 and enhance their appeal while lessening 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 Specialist Angela Shaffer at **847.926.1008** or ashaffer@cityhpil.com.

SCORE: Low to No Cost Mentoring & 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 Webinars:

Business Plan: Product & Services, Value Proposition, VPMF Test - June 11, 10:00AM CST

Discuss products and services, value proposition, VPMF test, how to develop a strong value proposition. Review case studies with examples then engage in



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practical exercises and group activities.

[Reserve your spot.](#)

Zero to Launch: A Walk-Through of the Website Process - June 11, 6:00PM CST

Learn effective strategies to audit your current site, choose themes, organize site structure, and how to maintain your website once it goes live.

[Reserve your spot.](#)

Community Navigator Business Support Program

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

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 the Business Development Team:

- **Manager, Carolyn Hersch** at chersch@cityhpil.com or 847.926.1027
- **Specialist, Corey Cohn** at ccohn@cityhpil.com or 847.926.1046
- **Specialist, Angela Shaffer** at ashaffer@cityhpil.com or 847.926.1008

To learn more about the [Business Development Economic Advisory Group \(BEDAG\)](#), which supports community programs that promote City business and economic development, visit the City's [website](#).

Additional Resources

[Available Commercial Space](#)

[Business Directory](#)

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

[Job Center of Lake County -](#)

[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](#)

[Business Services](#)

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

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

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