



eNews



53 NEW COMMERCIAL LEASES TOTALING **127,000** SF SIGNED IN HIGHLAND PARK DURING THE LAST **12** MONTHS OF WHICH **37%** ARE RETAIL

Highland Park's current leasing environment is a positive reflection of proactive measures we've taken to support the commercial real estate market.

WHAT ELSE HAVE WE BEEN UP TO?

- Changes to Downtown POSO Boundaries
- TIF Proposed for Briergate District
- Improved Permitting Processes
- New Events
- Karger Center Sale
- HP Theater Sale



Special Thanks to the 2017 Business Summit Attendees!

Here's What People Are Saying About The Business Summit:

"Our experience at the HP Business Summit was extremely beneficial. It was valuable to connect with other business leaders in the community. We also learned customer service techniques that we were able to implement immediately at Style Shack. Darryl's lecture was so inspiring that we've already hired him for in-house staff training".

-Sherry Levin,
Owner of Style Shack

Supporting our local economy is critical to maintaining our City's vibrancy. The City of Highland Park proactively seeks ways to make doing business in Highland Park easier. With this in mind, we've encouraged development and investment by streamlining our processes and modifying our zoning code to increase height and density. To increase occupancy in the Central Business District we contracted the boundaries of our Pedestrian Oriented Shopping Overlay District (POSO) which allows only retail or retail-oriented

service businesses in ground floor storefronts. We've also focused on business attraction and retention and implemented programs that support increased and diverse economic development, jobs and revenues. Food Truck Thursdays (returning June - September 2018) brought people from local high schools, surrounding communities, and far as far

More Dining for the

2018) brought people from local neighborhoods, surrounding communities and from as far as Chicago to the Ravinia Business District. In October, the City hosted the annual Business Summit to provide a forum for learning, inspiration, collaboration and networking which help to provide our businesses with a competitive edge in the rapidly changing business landscape. Together these and many other initiatives we've implemented benefit our local businesses and help to create a vibrant future for our community!

POSO AMENDMENTS

The Pedestrian Oriented Shopping Overlay (POSO) was established in 2004 to allow only retail or retail-oriented service businesses to use the ground floor storefronts in all of the buildings along selected streets within the Central Business District. The POSO helps promote and preserve a balanced presence of retail and commercial uses and helps maintain the retail pedestrian friendly shopping character of the City's downtown. Earlier this year, staff from the City Manager's Office and the Community Development Department met with Downtown stakeholders to discuss the challenges and opportunities posed by the existence of the POSO and the retail climate in general. Following these meetings, the Plan and Design Commission conducted a public hearing and recommended changing the boundaries of the POSO.

At the September 25 City Council Regular Meeting, the City Council unanimously approved an amendment to the Pedestrian Oriented Shopping Overlay (POSO) District Boundaries. This proactive change aims to increase downtown commercial occupancy and to ensure the long-term economic viability of the Central Business District (CBD). This change will help maintain a concentration of retail uses within the CBD core, but allow new types of services such as medical or law offices in the areas outside of and adjacent to the new POSO boundaries.

Allowing additional experiential / service uses in shopping districts is a national trend in response to the increased popularity of online shopping and a large scale national contraction in the number of physical retail stores. By locating some service uses within close proximity to our retail corridor, synergistic advantages can be achieved to help support retail stores as clients and employees of service businesses patronize retail and restaurant establishments. As a next step, staff will consider and propose additional experiential uses in CBD and will review and update parking restrictions as needed.

IMPROVED PERMITTING PROCESSES

In 2016, the City conducted developer and broker roundtables to learn how we could improve our processes. As a result, the City has taken steps to improve its processes. This includes:

- Reduced Plan Review Times: 15 business days or less to first comments; 5-7 business days for expedited service (depending on volume)
- Greater Communication with Customers includes multiple touch points throughout the process
- Increased Seasonal Clerical Staffing to maintain customer service during peak season
- Cross-Training of Counter Staff to improve application screening & processing
- Transition towards Greater "Combination" Inspections to streamline inspection services

[More Praise for the Business Summit...](#)

More Information About Our Recent Activities:

[2017-2018 Strategic Plan](#)

[POSO](#)

[Business Districts, SSAs & TIF](#)

[Business Directories](#)

[City Sponsored Events](#)

[Business Summit](#)

[Karger Center Sale & Redevelopment](#)

[Highland Park Theater Sale & Redevelopment](#)

[Development Projects](#)

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