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Rehabilitation Approved for Historic Bronzeville Apartment Complex

Financial measures approved by City Council today will enable the \$110 million rehabilitation of a historic Bronzeville apartment complex that was home to poet Gwendolyn Brooks, music producer Quincy Jones, singer Nat "King" Cole, and boxer Joe Lewis.

Vacant since 1999, Rosenwald Courts, at 47th Street and Michigan Avenue, will be rehabilitated as 239 apartments for seniors and families earning up to 60 percent of area median income.

"The Rosenwald has a long and storied history, but the City's support for its comprehensive rehabilitation will ensure its best days are yet to come," Mayor Rahm Emanuel said.

Built in 1929 by former Sears, Roebuck & Co President Julius Rosenwald to provide workforce housing for African Americans, the complex consists of interconnected five-story buildings and an interior courtyard. Its proposed redevelopment by Rosenwald Courts Apartments LP will include new interiors, building systems, elevators, and a variety of exterior repairs and upgrades. The rehab plan also includes retail, office and community spaces along 47th Street.

City support will include a \$58.6 million bond issue, \$34.2 million in low income housing tax credit equity, \$25 million in Tax Increment Financing, a \$5 million Neighborhood Stabilization Program grant, and \$2.8 million in donations tax credits. Five adjacent City-owned lots, valued at \$155,000, will also be sold to the developer for \$1 each and used for parking.

Designed by Rosenwald's nephew Ernest Grunsfeld Jr., the complex is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

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TIF Approved For New Pullman Factory

One of the country's fastest-growing home and personal care products companies will establish a \$39 million manufacturing facility in Pullman through financial assistance approved today by City Council.

Planned for 21 acres of vacant land near 111th Street and Ellis Avenue, the 150,000-square-foot facility will be used to manufacture a variety of non-toxic consumer products under the Method brand. It will employ 65 company workers and 25 employees affiliated with a leading Method supplier.

"It's entirely appropriate that a fast-growing and environmentally conscious company like Method would choose a traditional manufacturing setting like Pullman for this kind of project," Mayor Emanuel said. "The infrastructure, the transportation resources, and the workforce are all in place for a very successful manufacturing operation."

City support will include \$8.1 million in Tax Increment Financing (TIF) assistance, which will be used for site preparation costs by Chicago Neighborhood Initiatives Inc., the facility developer. An additional \$800,000 in TIF assistance will be provided to Method for job training.

Founded in 2001 and based in San Francisco, Method is a certified B Corporation that aligns environmental and social benefits into its business plan. Sustainable portions of the facility will include solar panels, a wind turbine, rooftop green house, and a new rail spur.

With more than \$100 million in sales in 2012, Method products are produced by suppliers and contract manufacturers. The Pullman factory will be the first to be owned and operated by the company.

Method Co-founder Adam Lowry said Pullman's rich industrial heritage will provide "a fitting backdrop to an inspiring new model for urban renewal and sustainable manufacturing."

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Tax Incentive Will Support Southwest Side Film Production Studio

The ongoing rehabilitation of a former North Lawndale steel plant as a film production studio will be assisted through a property tax incentive approved today by City Council.

The Class C incentive, valued at more than \$3.5 million over 12 years, will enable Chicago Film Studio Holdings LLC to continue the transformation of the former Joseph T. Ryerson & Son Steel complex at 15th Street and Rockwell Avenue for movie and TV production purposes, along with other uses.

“TV and film production are important aspects of the Chicago economy, for local talent as well as for out-of-town production companies that use local facilities,” Mayor Rahm Emanuel said. “By lowering the cost of doing business, the tax incentive will make this facility more viable for this kind of work.”

Chicago Film Studio Holdings has completed approximately \$39 million in rehabilitation and environmental remediation work since acquiring the 48-acre complex in phases starting in 2011. Known as Cinespace Film Studios Chicago, it has been used for a variety of one-time and ongoing commercial production projects, including the “Chicago Fire,” “Chicago Code” and “Boss” television series. DePaul University finalized a five-year agreement this spring to use a portion of the complex for its film production program.

As a planned collection of soundstages, production rooms, and support spaces, the facility currently employs 45 to 65 full-time staff people, depending on production schedules. It could accommodate more than 3,000 part- and full-time workers when operating at full capacity.

Related rehabilitation work on the 1.3 million-square-foot complex will accommodate other tenants, including a planned 150,000-square-foot brewery by Petaluma, CA-based Lagunitas Brewing Co.

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Shuttered Fire Stations Will Be Sold For New Uses

Former Chicago Fire Department fire stations in Woodlawn and Chicago Lawn will be sold and redeveloped for new uses through proposals approved by City Council today.

Engine Co. 122, 6858 S. Indiana Ave.

Emmanuel Community Development Corp. will renovate the two-story, 4,500-square-foot firehouse as a community and day care center. Built in 1915 and valued at \$36,000, the building will be sold for \$1. Total project costs are estimated at \$764,000.

Engine Co. 88, 3500 W. 60th St.

Jean Paul and Laura Burgos will renovate the two-story, 5,100-square-foot firehouse as a single-family home. Built in 1910 and valued at \$180,000, the building will be sold for \$81,500.

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Park, Bike Trail Improvements Approved for South and West Sides

Five open space improvement projects on the South and West Sides will be made possible through financial measures approved today by City Council.

Lindblom Park, 6054 S. Damen Ave.

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) assistance in the amount of \$2 million will support the construction of a combination soccer and football field at Lindblom Park in West Englewood. The artificial turf field will be used by community residents and students of nearby Lindblom Math & Science Academy High School. It will replace two existing baseball fields at the north end of the 17-acre park, which is named for Chicago businessman and philanthropist Robert Lindblom.

Union Park, 1501 W. Randolph St.

The field house at Union Park in the Near West Side will be renovated with \$2.1 million in TIF. The two-story facility will receive a new roof, windows, and heating and cooling system, along with masonry repairs. Earlier work to the 13.5-acre park resulted in pool enhancements and upgrades for people with disabilities. The park is named in honor of the United States' federal union.

Mamie Till-Mobley Park , 6410 S. Ellis Ave.

Mamie Till-Mobley Park will receive \$92,550 in Open Space Impact Fees for the installation of new fencing, landscaping, lighting and benches. The park will also be expanded onto .08 acres of adjacent land, nearby doubling its size. The park is named for the mother of Emmett Till, the 14-year-old Chicago boy who was accused of whistling at a white woman and subsequently murdered in 1955 in Mississippi. Open Space Impact Fees are collected by the City of Chicago from new residential developments to help expand the amount of open space in each of the city's community areas.

Beehive Park, 6156 S. Dorchester Ave.

Beehive Park will receive \$145,440 in Open Space Impact Fees for new seating, fencing, landscaping, lighting and a drainage system. The .43-acre park will also be expanded onto .14 acres of adjacent land. The park is named in recognition of the old Beehive jazz nightclub in Hyde Park.

Major Taylor Bike Trail

The southernmost segment of the Major Taylor Bike Trail on the Far South Side will receive a new lighting system to increase safety and usability through \$400,000 in Open Space Impact Fees. The funds will be used by the Chicago Park District to light the two-mile section of trail that runs from roughly 107th Street and Racine Avenue to 127th Street and Normal Avenue through the Washington Heights, Morgan Park and West Pullman communities. Opened on a former rail line in 2007, the 6.5-mile trail is named for African American cyclist Marshall "Major" Taylor, who set numerous world speed records near the turn of the last century.

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