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MAYOR EMANUEL AND REI CO-OP OPEN NEW STORE LOCATION ALONG THE CHICAGO RIVER

New, expanded space offers direct access to the Chicago River, connecting residents to outdoor experiences along the North Branch

Mayor Rahm Emanuel and REI Co-op today opened a new two-story store on the banks of Chicago River's North Branch. The 40,000 square-foot retail space will connect residents to the river, offering kayak and paddleboard rentals with direct access to the Chicago River and expanded assortments of quality outdoor gear. With over 75 employees at this new location, REI will continue to offer a full-service bike, ski and snowboard shop and outdoor programs and events in its new Lincoln Park location.

"By investing in Chicago's riverfront, we have transformed it into the city's next recreational frontier and companies like REI are taking notice," Mayor Emanuel said. "REI is helping residents and visitors reconnect with the Chicago River by creating new recreational opportunities and adding to a more active, more vibrant and more inclusive City than ever before."

REI Co-op is located along the North Branch Canal, which will soon include habitat improvements, pedestrian walkways, fishing stations, vegetative islands, viewing platforms, canoe launches and other amenities that cater to the public and wildlife. This location will be REI Co-op's second waterfront space along the Chicago River. REI offers paddle experiences, rentals and outdoor programs at the REI Boathouse in Ping Tom Park on the Chicago River's South Branch.

"Our new store location on the banks of the Chicago River is one of REI's most exciting locations. While our new store is larger and offers a wider selection of gear for hiking, biking and camping, it is so much more than a place to shop," says Mike Daurio, REI Lincoln Park store manager. "With access to the Chicago River, it's a place where people can gather and enjoy the outdoors, directly from the store."

The enhancements are among the strategic goals of the "North Branch Framework Plan," developed by Mayor Emanuel to revitalize the North Branch Industrial Corridor with a variety of land use, open space and transportation improvements.

The new REI location also builds on Mayor Emanuel's comprehensive Building on Burnham plan to protect, preserve and invest in natural areas and recreational opportunities in neighborhoods across the city. Building on Burnham was inspired by renowned architect Daniel Burnham's 1909 Plan of Chicago, which recommended a series of projects focused on the protection and

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preservation of parkland in Chicago's neighborhoods. Developing recreation and supporting private investments along the Chicago River is a major component of Building on Burnham, under which 985 acres of parks have been acquired and 5.5 miles of waterfront have been developed.

Chicago is one of five U.S. cities where REI is investing in rewilding efforts to transform urban spaces into areas for outdoor recreation. Over the last three years, REI has partnered with the Chicago Parks Foundation, Active Transportation Alliance and Friends of Big Marsh to support the long-term transformation of Chicago's Southeast Side into a thriving outdoor recreation community. This project has included efforts to develop the Big Marsh property to include mixed-use trails, future paddling opportunities and one of the biggest mountain bike parks in the country.

About the REI Co-op

REI is a specialty outdoor retailer, headquartered near Seattle. The nation's largest consumer co-op, REI is a growing community of more than 17 million members who expect and love the best quality gear, inspiring expert classes and trips, and outstanding customer service. REI has 154 stores in 35 states and the District of Columbia. If you can't visit a store, you can shop at [REI.com](https://www.rei.com), [REI Outlet](https://www.rei.com/outlet) or the free [REI shopping app](#). REI isn't just about gear. You can take the trip of a lifetime with REI Adventures, a global leader in active adventure travel that runs more than 170 custom-designed itineraries worldwide. The REI Outdoor School is run by professionally-trained, expert-instructors who teach beginner-to advanced-level courses about a wide range of activities. To build on the infrastructure that makes life outside possible, REI invests millions annually in hundreds of local and national nonprofits that create access to—and steward—the outdoor places that inspire us all.