



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 20, 2020

CONTACT:

Mayor's Press Office

312.744.3334

press@cityofchicago.org

**MAYOR LIGHTFOOT AND ALDERMAN MICHELLE HARRIS BREAK GROUND ON NEW
HUDDLE HOUSE IN CALUMET HEIGHTS' PILL HILL NEIGHBORHOOD**

Local entrepreneur bringing popular southern restaurant's first location to Chicago's south side

CHICAGO – Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot today joined Alderman Michelle A. Harris (8th) and local entrepreneur Siraj Elahi of American Antwan Land, LLC, for a groundbreaking ceremony for Chicago's first Huddle House restaurant on the south side. The Calumet Heights neighborhood will be the chain's first Chicago location on a newly developed five-acre site at 9401 S Stony Island that will also be home to the Montclare Senior Residence, a seven-story, mixed income independent living development. Huddle House will operate 24 hours a day and bring up to 80 permanent jobs to the neighborhood.

"Talented and dedicated local entrepreneurs like Sam Elahi show the value of stepping up to lift up our city's most neglected neighborhoods," said Mayor Lightfoot. "Huddle House will bring needed food alternatives, critical job opportunities and a southern charm and hospitality to our city's South Side. As we continue enriching our city's South and West Sides with our INVEST South/West initiative, I look forward to working closely with Sam and other entrepreneurs who are working hard to bring out the economic vibrancy of the neighborhoods they represent."

The estimated \$3.2 million project was awarded \$1.1 million in Neighborhood Opportunity Fund (NOF) Grant assistance in 2019. Announced in 2016, NOF grants were designed to strengthen neighborhoods by leveraging development in and around downtown toward investment in Chicago's South and West sides. The NOF uses these grants to support development in commercial corridors in Chicago's underserved neighborhoods. Once open, Huddle House will be one of only two eateries in the 8th Ward with a dine-in option, serving a critical need for food alternatives within the Calumet Heights community.

"I am excited to be able to bring Huddle House Restaurant to the 8th Ward and the greater south side community. I'm thrilled that the leadership of Huddle House has chosen my ward to locate their first Chicago restaurant," said Ald. Michelle A. Harris (8th). "Even as we continue to deal with the impact of the Coronavirus, I remain committed to bringing important and necessary resources to our ward. I am excited to add Huddle House as a partner in my efforts to improve the quality of life for my constituents."



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



Based in Atlanta, Huddle House restaurants have earned adoration in their communities for their warm, friendly atmospheres where every conversation, sip of coffee and bite of home-cooked meals are savored. Known for its delicious breakfast, Southern hospitality and big portions at fair prices, Huddle House embeds itself into every community it serves by bringing friends and families together over delicious food, served from the heart.

“We are so excited to have Sam bring the Huddle House brand to Chicago,” said Tim Linderman, Chief Development Officer at Huddle House. “Sam truly embodies our service, spirit and focus on bringing friends and families together over delicious food, served from the heart.”

Siraj Elahi, a Chicago entrepreneur and developer with more than 30 years in the food and beverage industry wanted to bring Huddle House to Chicago to address the lack of breakfast options for residents on the city’s South Side, while also creating jobs for neighborhood residents. In addition to grant assistance for construction costs, the NOF award includes a Local Hiring Bonus, which reimburses up to 25% of total eligible project costs for the hiring and training of local employees. African American firm of Brown & Momen will serve as the general contractor, and project will create up to 60 temporary construction jobs. Following the opening of the Calumet Heights’ location, Elahi plans to open two additional Huddle House restaurants in the Chicago area, each bringing up to 80 permanent jobs.

“My team and I have been working hard to secure the perfect location for our restaurant and this groundbreaking is an exciting event for the local community,” said Elahi. “We know Huddle House is a concept that is not only a great investment but also a wonderful addition to the Calumet Heights neighborhood. We’re excited to bring the delicious food and a welcome gathering spot to the city’s South Side.”

In February, Mayor Lightfoot announced reforms to the Neighborhood Opportunity Fund, to increase grant funding for new construction projects to enable more capital for individual community improvements along the South, West and Southwest side commercial corridors as part of the city’s Invest South/West initiative. The initiative creates a network of communities for planned growth, with priority projects identified by the community, for the community. These projects may include new retail, transportation, parks and other infrastructure and quality of life investments for local residents.

About Huddle House

Committed to serving “Any Meal, Any Time,” Huddle House restaurants have become icons in the communities they serve throughout the country by “Bringing Friends and Family Together, Over Delicious Food, Served from the Heart”. The core values on which the brand was founded – serving freshly prepared, quality home-style food in a warm, friendly environment that brings the community together – are as true today as they were when it was founded 54 years ago. Today, the brand has more than 400 locations open or in development. Named one of the Top 200+ Franchises by Franchise Times and ranked among Thrillist’s list of “Regional Breakfast Chains that Should Be Everywhere,” Huddle House continues to be adored in each of the markets it serves.



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



###