



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
CITY OF CHICAGO

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MAYOR RAHM EMANUEL ANNOUNCES PLANS TO MAKE THE CHICAGO RIVER THE CITY'S NEXT RECREATIONAL FRONTIER

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Lisa P. Jackson announces nearly \$1 million in grants to help clean up the river and spur job creation

Mayor Emanuel, joined by U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Lisa P. Jackson, announced Monday plans to make the Chicago River the city's next recreational frontier, with four new boathouses serving as anchors of the river's future development. The EPA will provide nearly \$1 million in grant funds to help clean up the river and spur job creation.

"Much like Lake Michigan is Chicago's front yard, the Chicago River is our backyard, and should be an asset that people across the city enjoy, not avoid," Emanuel said. "Today's actions are the first of many steps that will lead to greater use of the river by Chicagoans and visitors alike."

These first steps towards developing the Chicago River include:

- The Chicago Park District, with private sector partners, will construct four new boathouses along the river designed by Chicago architects who will be assisted by Illinois Institute of Technology students.
- The Chicago Park District will open a new expanded area of Ping Tom Memorial Park.
- The Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT) will expand various trails along the river.

As part of the Obama Administration's goal to reduce pollution and grow the nation's economy, new water quality standards for the Chicago and Calumet Rivers were ordered



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by the Administration in May 2011; the EPA will provide the City free technical assistance to help meet those standards by better managing stormwater.

The EPA will also give two grants, effective immediately, to community partners that total nearly \$1 million; one grant to Friends of the Forest Preserve will help eradicate invasive plants in the river system and nearby forests, including 130 acres in Chicago, and the second grant, to OAI, Inc., will help train and place Chicagoans in jobs that focus on environmental cleanup.

"The families and businesses of Chicago know that the Chicago and Calumet Rivers and the Great Lakes are vital to their health, their environment and their economy. The EPA is proud to be working with our state and local partners on ensuring that we are supporting clean, sustainable communities that can thrive and create good jobs," said EPA Administrator Lisa P. Jackson. "We have heard for years that we have to choose between our economic strength and our environmental health, but again and again Chicago has proven that this is a false choice. Today's announcements are another example of our ability to support job creation and environmental protection."

Renowned Chicago architects Chris Lee and Jeanne Gang will be leading a team of architecture students at the Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT) to design the boathouses. The designs for the boathouses will be augmented by suggestions and ideas from the community.

The four boathouses will be located at the following addresses:

- River Park Boat House, 5100 N. Francisco—The site of the future boat house is at Argyle and the river.
- Clark Park Boat House, 3400 N. Rockwell—The site of the future boat house is at Roscoe and Rockwell, east of the river.
- Ping Tom Memorial Park Boat House, 300 W. 19th Street—The site of the future boat house is north of 18th street, through the under-bridge connection, west of the St. Charles line railroad tracks.
- 28th & Eleanor Boat House—The site of the future boat house is between Loomis and Fuller Streets on Eleanor, across the river from Ashland Avenue.

The boathouse sites were chosen to line up with improvements the Chicago Department of Transportation is making to extend trails along the river, providing easier and more consistent river access for runners, bikers, and walkers. The boathouses, constructed



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through a mix of private donations and public funds, will each contain a concession facility and will serve both as access points and attractions along the river.

The new expansion to Ping Tom Memorial Park will open along the river, north of 18th Street. The park reflects the City's commitment to river development with a \$6M investment in new parkland, riverwalk, native plantings, topography, new vistas, boat landings, and a "disappearing" staircase into the water.

Information about the EPA grants:

Friends of the Forest Preserve will receive a \$518,467 Great Lakes Restoration Initiative grant for a project that will employ workers and volunteers from adjacent EJ communities to help preserve the wetlands in the Lake Calumet region by controlling invasive species. Two of these natural areas (the Eggers Woods Forest Preserve and the Beaubien Forest Preserve) are located within the City of Chicago and comprise about 130 acres of the project.

EPA selected OAI, Inc. for a \$300,000 environmental workforce development and job training grant. OAI plans to train 45 students, place 40 graduates in environmental jobs and track graduates for one year. The training program will consist of two 11-month training cycles with five training components: Environmental Health and Safety Training (120 hours), Horticulture/Alternative Treatment Technologies (660 hours), Household Chemical and Computer Recycling (60 hours), Home Energy Efficiency Training (270 hours), and Professional Development and Career Advancement (210 hours). Courses will include 40-hour HAZWOPER, 10-hour OSHA construction safety, integrated pest management, and lead, asbestos, and mold abatement. Primary trainers will be OAI, Chicago Department of Environment, and other professional consultants. Students will be recruited from among under-represented, unemployed and underemployed residents of the South and West Sides of Chicago. OAI will work with local environmental employers, the city's Urban Management and Brownfield Redevelopment Division, and labor unions to place graduates in environmental jobs. WRD Environmental, which is the managing partner of the city's Greencorps Program, has committed to hiring program graduates.

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