

SOAR TOWN HALL

Is there any possibility that free movies on Tuesday nights in Grant Park might return?

At this point, I am not aware of plans to renew the free movies in Grant Park on Tuesdays. Unfortunately, given the City's massive budget deficit, the administration has been forced to eliminate non-essential City services, including the free movies in Grant Park.

While I am a supporter of the free movies in Grant Park, the City must make hard decisions to avoid property tax increases and other increased fees.

When will construction begin on North Michigan Avenue (street repaving and sidewalks)?

At this time, the City of Chicago is still working with the State of Illinois to acquire the necessary funding for this project. Given the lack of a state-wide Capital Funding Bill, the project is still several years away and no designs have been submitted to the City.

I continue to work with our local state legislators to push for passage of a Capital Funding Bill, and once we receive an update on this state funding issue we will communicate this timeline to SOAR.

Can the Park District add more adult programming to Lakeshore Park?

Lake Shore Park is a property maintained by the Chicago Park District, which is a City agency that operates independently of the Chicago City Council. As such, I do not have purview over the operations or maintenance of Chicago Park District properties. However, I have forwarded this request to Tim Mitchell, Superintendent of the Chicago Park District, who has direct oversight of all Chicago Park District properties, including the Lake Shore Park.

There are no designated cab stands on St. Clair, but taxis line up as if there were. What can be done?

We have reported this issue to the Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection and the Chicago Police Department, 18th District, and have requested additional attention and enforcement in this area. If there is a specific location that should be addressed, please report these issues in real-time to the Chicago Department of Revenue.

Per my request, the Chicago Department of Revenue has established a 24-hour phone line so that you, and others with parking concerns, can contact the Department of Revenue hotline at 312-744-4500 in real-time to report potential violations.

This hotline is generally manned at all hours, but there is a voicemail system to accept calls if someone steps away from the phone. When calling, please provide the following details and Department of Revenue staff will be dispatched at the earliest opportunity to address the issue:

Name (optional)	Street Address of Potential Violation
E-mail (optional)	Time of Potential Violation
Phone number (optional)	# of Vehicles Potentially in Violation
Type of Violation	Vehicle Descriptions

There is a hazard present for cars exiting the parking garage on Superior St., by Neiman Marcus. Vision is obscured as they exit. What can be done?

The building may apply for a driveway clearance sign to improve the sight lines for vehicles exiting their garage. In order to install these signs, the building must have a valid, "paid in full" driveway permit and submit their application to the Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT). The initial sign installation fee is \$100, and the annual maintenance is \$50 per sign.

What are the regulations for staging of "Free Enterprise" shuttle buses? Are they allowed to stage on Fairbanks?

The City does not regulate tour bus routes in the City. They are able to utilize whatever routes are appropriate to transport their passengers to their destination. However, buses are subject to the State and Municipal Codes related to excessive idling, and must abide by any and all parking or traffic restrictions in the area. We are working with CDOT and the Law Department to implement "Shuttle-Free" Zones.

Can Walgreen's be made to clean up their storefront?

Walgreens is a tenant in the building at 777 N. Michigan Avenue, and as a term of their contract, any build-out or alterations to the space is subject to the approval of the condominium board at 777 N. Michigan.

After lengthy negotiations, the property owner has agreed to significant aesthetic improvements to the storefront. The renovation will be starting shortly, and will transform this store into Walgreens' flagship location.

Is the City of Chicago still maintaining its reputation for cleanliness?

The City of Chicago's Department of Streets and Sanitation programs include hand sweeping of sidewalks and streets, mobile units that clean areas that require cleaning/removal of debris from streets; refuse trucks that empty litter baskets; power washing and sidewalk flushing; and graffiti removal, among other programs. These initiatives are in place 24 hours per day, seven days a week.

The City struggles with maintaining appropriate staffing levels due to the massive budget deficit, numerous furloughs and staff reductions that affect all City departments, including the Department of Streets and Sanitation. That said, we're doing all we can to maintain the highest level of service possible.

Should residents notice any locations that need added attention, please contact my Constituent Service Office at (312) 642-4242 or via email at office@ward42chicago.com.

Can the Festival of Lights Parade be moved to Columbus, like the St. Patrick's Day Parade?

The Magnificent Mile Festival of Lights is organized by the Greater North Michigan Avenue Association, a non-profit organization with a mission of preserving, promoting, and enhancing one of Chicago's most unique neighborhoods.

2009 marked the 50th anniversary of the lighting of the trees along North Michigan Avenue, which marks the start of the holiday season along the Michigan Avenue corridor.

Today, the Magnificent Mile Lights Festival procession is highlighted by the illumination of one million lights on 200 trees along North Michigan Avenue, and the festival draws approximately one million spectators annually from around the country.

The Magnificent Mile Festival of Lights is a celebration of the Michigan Avenue corridor and will not be moved to an alternate location. The Mayor's Office of Special Events (MOSE) works with all appropriate City of Chicago departments, including the Office of Emergency Management and Communications, the Chicago Police Department, and the Chicago Department of Transportation, to ensure that the event is run efficiently and with as minimal disruption as possible to the surrounding area.

Why are so many tour buses being ticketed now?

My office frequently receives residential reports of idling buses throughout the 42nd Ward, and I routinely place a request with the appropriate City departments to increase their monitoring of troublesome spots. While bus idling is currently prohibited by Illinois statute, it continues to be a routine practice in downtown Chicago.

I am pleased to announce that in May of 2009 the Illinois General Assembly – at my urging - approved legislation that significantly increased fines for buses that violate the idling statute in an attempt to mitigate these violations.

Further, in March of 2010 the City Council followed the state legislation's lead and amended the Municipal Ordinance that governs bus staging and idling; this ordinance now allows for enforcement by the Department of Environment and the Office of Emergency Management and Communications, in addition to the Chicago Police Department and the Department of Revenue.

What are your thoughts on crime statistics? Is local crime on the rise?

Due to the economy and subsequent financial hardships faced by the City of Chicago, many City departments – including the Chicago Police Department – have been forced to cut back on their workforce.

However, the police have had significant success in deterring crime in Streeterville, and do have routine police patrols that occur on neighborhood streets. Additionally, the police station plain clothes police officers on the Magnificent Mile portion of Michigan Avenue that monitor any potential criminal activity.

That said, crime is statistically on the decrease for the current year, due in no small part to continued partnerships between community residents and the Chicago Police Department. To become further involved in CAPS program, please visit my website to find your meeting information, or contact the 18th District CAPS Office at (312) 745-5880.

Newspaper boxes are blocking the bus stop on St. Clair and Grand Ave. Can they be moved?

I requested an inspection of the newspaper boxes at St. Clair and Grand Avenue. As of the most recent inspection, the newspaper boxes were found to be in compliance with Municipal Code.

Streeterville needs a good “mom and pop” bakery. Please comment.

Market conditions, not the Alderman, determine the type of stores that open in neighborhoods; thus far, I have not received any formal proposals for any such establishment to open in Streeterville. With that being said, should such a proposal be submitted to my office, I would certainly give it the same consideration as other ventures.

Can we have traffic control aides on Michigan & Delaware, and Michigan & Chestnut during busy shopping times?

TCA's were posted at the following Michigan Avenue intersections for the holiday season of November 22 – December 31.

Delaware
Chestnut
Pearson
Ohio
Ontario
Chicago
Superior
Huron
Erie

The TCAs only leave their post for lunch hour, to walk the neighborhood to issue citations for idling buses, or to address manpower shortages (due to illness or furlough) and TCA's are sometimes needed further south to cover a higher traffic area (such as the Theater District or Christkindlmarket)

The crosswalk on Chestnut, between Water Tower Place and the Hancock needs a sign to warn vehicles about pedestrians.

I am very pleased to report significant upgrades to the mid-block crosswalk located on Chestnut Street between Michigan Avenue and Mies van der Rohe Way! This mid-block crossing is frequently used by pedestrians to travel between the Hancock Building and the Water Tower Place shopping center.

Since taking office in May of 2007, I have been working closely with the City of Chicago's Department of Transportation (CDOT) and the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) to resolve the pedestrian safety issues that have been a source of chronic frustration for Hancock Building residents. I directed CDOT to conduct a detailed traffic study and make recommendations to improve pedestrian safety in this area, and I am pleased to report those recommendations have recently been implemented:

Reconfiguration of planters on north side of crosswalk:

A large planter was previously located directly in front of the pedestrian crossing on the north side of the street – obstructing pedestrian access to the crosswalk. This forced pedestrians to walk around the planter and cross Chestnut Street well outside of the crosswalk. City transportation engineers surveyed the location, observing vehicular and pedestrian traffic volumes and recommended a section of the planter be removed to provide pedestrians with safe and direct access to the crosswalk.

The planter was originally installed and maintained by Golub and Company. After several months of negotiations with Mr. Golub and his commercial property management team at the Hancock, a significant portion of the existing planter was removed to help improve crosswalk access. Further, I facilitated the installation of an ADA compliant sidewalk ramp at the access point to the sidewalk to better aid pedestrians utilizing walking aides.

I am also very pleased to report the removal of the planters was funded solely by the commercial property owner – at no cost to taxpayers. I am very grateful to Lee Golub for his very generous assistance in helping to expedite the removal of the planter.

Installation of “Pedestrian Crossing” signage at crosswalk:

Upon inspection, CDOT also recommended the installation of new “pedestrian crossing” signage on both the north and south sides of Chestnut Street. I am happy to report these signs have been installed and should serve as an effective notice to motorists to signal the upcoming pedestrian crossing.

Repainting of crosswalk markings:

Last summer, I directed CDOT to dispatch a maintenance team to repaint the crosswalk to improve visibility of this crossing. The crosswalk was re-stripped in July.

Relocation of CTA Bus Layover Location for Routes #10 and #125:

The CTA had previously installed a bus layover location for routes #10 and #125 directly adjacent to the mid-block crosswalk (immediately east) on Chestnut Street. Because the bus-staging blocked visibility of the crosswalk, I petitioned the CTA to relocate this bus layover area to a location approximately 50 feet east—closer to the intersection of Mies van der Rohe Way and Chestnut.

This new location will provide drivers with better visibility of pedestrians entering the crosswalk and gives pedestrians a better line-of-site to see oncoming traffic.

I am very pleased to report these significant improvements to the mid-block crosswalk on Chestnut, between Mies van der Rohe Street and Michigan Avenue.

Cars with flashing lights in “30 minute loading zones” are being ticketed even when they are there for less than 30 minutes, with lights flashing as required. What does the law say about these zones? Can cars use them?

Please note the following restrictions which apply to “Loading Zones”:

- Loading zones are designated for use by commercial vehicles ONLY - passenger vehicles are not permitted to park in loading zones
- Passenger vehicles parking in loading zones are subject to citation and towing
- Any commercial vehicles — not just those delivering to the business adjacent to the loading zone — are permitted to use the loading zone for up to 30 minutes

Alternately, “Standing Zones” may be used by ANY vehicles - drivers of vehicles are not required to patronize or visit buildings of the businesses/individuals who requested the standing zone. The following restrictions apply to “Standing Zones”:

- Vehicles parking in standing zones are limited to 15 minutes and must have their hazard lights flashing while the driver is away from the vehicle
- Vehicles parking in standing zones for more than 15 minutes are subject to citation and towing
- Posting signage, whether on the standing zone sign or in the public way, to claim ownership of a standing zone is not permitted per Chicago Municipal Code

Can we get a stop sign on Erie St, at Northwestern Hospital?

I recently contacted the Chicago Department of Transportation to request a traffic study, to determine if a mid-block STOP sign would be appropriate on Erie Street, between St. Clair Street and Fairbanks Avenue.

CDOT conducted a detailed survey of pedestrian and vehicular traffic at this location. Based on the results of the survey, CDOT does not recommend installing mid-block stop signs for speed control. According to CDOT, installing a stop sign at this location would create a considerable safety risk as drivers would not expect the mid-block stop sign, and may fail to stop, potentially endangering pedestrians or drivers exiting the driveway / alley who are anticipating vehicles would obey the stop sign.

Instead of a mid-block stop sign, CDOT recommended additional enforcement of no parking regulations along Erie Street. CDOT met with representatives of NMH to discuss several options to improve pedestrian safety on the NMH campus.

In response to CDOT's recommendations, I contacted Commander Angarone of the 18th District, as well as the Chicago Department of Revenue, to request additional attention and enforcement of illegal parking on this block.

Additionally, I contacted Northwestern Memorial Hospital to request the institution's attention to CDOT's recommendations, as well as an update regarding the steps their organization will take to improve pedestrian safety on the NMH campus.

What are the plans for the former VA site?

Northwestern plans to eventually develop the site; however, the planning process has not yet started. The facility will eventually be developed into a health care facility.

In the interim, Northwestern is considering implementing some landscape treatments along the exterior of the lot to help beautify the area, but have no plans to add any additional sodding or open space to the interior of the lot.

Northwestern has informed me that while they do not have a timeline for any development of the lot, they will not sell the property to a third party.

On a regular basis, can someone clean up the garbage that is floating in the Ogden Slip?

This area is the responsibility of the Department of Streets and Sanitation, and I have requested their attention to this location in past years. I will continue to request their department maintain this location on a routine basis.

Can federal stimulus funds be found to retrofit pre-1972 high rise buildings with sprinklers?

Federal Stimulus Funding cannot be used to renovate pre-1972 high rise buildings.

Can we get a security mirror in the pedestrian underpass at Oak St?

I requested a security mirror be placed in the pedestrian underpass at Oak Street. At my request, the Chicago Department of Transportation installed a security mirror in the underpass in December, 2010.



Why is a private business allowed to operate a hot air balloon on park property?

The Chicago Plan Commission (CPC) approved the Aeroballoon in August of 2009. As the project was situated along the lakefront, and therefore falls within the Lakefront Protection Zone, it was required to through the full CPC public review and approval process before it was allowed to begin operations at Navy Pier. The nearest residential neighbor, the Lake Point Tower Condominium Association, submitted a letter of support for the balloon

The addition of this attraction to Navy Pier, the number one tourist destination in the state, keeps our city competitive with other local economies throughout the nation.

Additionally, the ride is considered a “seasonal” attraction, and therefore does not entail any permanent construct that would significantly alter the present open space settings along the Lakefront. Every element associated with the ride is removed at the end of the operating season, thereby restoring the appearance of the lakefront during the “off-season.”

Repaving is inadequate because the process and materials are inferior. Can we copy other Midwestern towns that use better materials for the streets?

Each year, CDOT resurfaces and reconstructs several miles of arterial and residential streets. Reconstruction provides a new roadway subbase and riding surface, while resurfacing replaces the top layer of asphalt. On arterial streets, the work also entails building ADA-compliant sidewalk ramps at intersections.

Residential street resurfacing is funded through local tax dollars. Arterial street resurfacing/reconstruction is funded through state and federal sources.

The Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT) follows the Illinois Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction which can be found on line at <http://www.dot.state.il.us/desenv/stdspecs07.html>

The materials used in the resurfacing and reconstruction of the City of Chicago roadways are tested, verified, and checked through CDOT's Quality Assurance Program as well as through the State of Illinois Department of Transportation. The contractors and producers (aggregate, concrete, asphalt, etc.) follow established, state/city approved Quality Control programs.

The Quality Assurance program performs verification testing of split samples with Quality Control. The results of testing performed under both the Quality Control and Quality Assurance programs is compared and if needed, corrective actions are taken if test results are outside acceptable limits.

Lake Shore Park is rat infested, and in a general state of disrepair. What is being done?

Lake Shore Park is a property maintained by the Chicago Park District, which is a City agency that operates independently of the Chicago City Council. I forwarded a service request to Tim Mitchell, Superintendent of the Chicago Park District, who has direct oversight of all Chicago Park District properties, including the Lake Shore Park, and have requested additional general maintenance of the park.

I have reported the recurring issue of rodent infestation in Lake Shore Park on a regular basis to the Department of Streets and Sanitation's Bureau of Rodent Control. Although this is a Chicago Park District property, the City's Bureau of Rodent Control is responsible for baiting for rodents.

Finally, I requested that the Chicago Park District and the Department of Rodent Control send representatives to visit the park together to identify any areas where rodents are frequently sighted, and take any appropriate measures to prevent rodents from burrowing in the park.