



# Office of the City Clerk

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## Legislation Details (With Text)

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### OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

CITY OF CHICAGO

RAHM EMANUEL  
MAYOR

January 23, 2019

Anna Valencia City Clerk  
Room 107, City Hall Chicago, IL  
60602

Dear Ms. Valencia:

I transmit herewith for filing Executive Order No. 2019-1, which I have signed this date. Your prompt attention to this matter is appreciated.

Mayor

Sincerely,

**Executive Order No. 2019-1**

WHEREAS, The City of Chicago's Department of Planning and Development ("DPD"), Chicago Park District ("Park District"), Forest Preserve District of Cook County ("Forest Preserve District") and Metropolitan Water and Reclamation District ("MWRD") each has a unique role to play in promoting the responsible development of Chicago's waterways, and in identifying long-term cumulative goals for transforming the Chicago Metropolitan Area's river system into an asset that is inviting, productive, environmentally sound, and sustainable; and

WHEREAS, Since 2013, the Park District has opened four new boathouses in neighborhoods along the Chicago River enabling Chicago residents to better connect with nature; and

WHEREAS, Since the 1980s, the City has required private developers undertaking new development projects along Chicago's inland waterways to provide a publicly accessible, 30-foot set back from the river bank to accommodate a range of amenities, such as pedestrian and bicycle paths, fencing, seating and landscaping; and

WHEREAS, Since 1998, the City has collected Open Space Impact Fees ("OSIFs") from new residential developments to ensure that adequate open space and recreational facilities are available to serve the residents of those developments. The City awards OSIF grants to public agencies and not-for-profit organizations for use in connection with open space acquisition and capital improvement projects that can be lawfully financed using open space impact fees. In cases where the new residential development is located along a waterway, such as the Chicago River, these OSIF-funded projects have the potential to improve the waterway's ecology, promote public accessibility to and along the waterway, and foster environmental stewardship of the river bank; and

WHEREAS, More recently, the Chicago Department of Transportation established a Waterways Safety and Congestion Committee to enhance interdepartmental coordination of activities occurring on Chicago's inland waterways; and

WHEREAS, Transforming Chicago's unique waterway system into a thriving and ecologically integrated natural asset, capable of accommodating the needs of people, requires coordinated planning, investment and management; and

WHEREAS, Currently, no single governmental body is responsible for facilitating such coordinated planning, investment and management within Chicago; and

WHEREAS, The City, Park District, Forest Preserve District and MWRD recognize that the wide variety of resident and migratory wildlife species within the City's boundaries is dependent on well-maintained natural open spaces and corridors; and

WHEREAS, The Park District, Forest Preserve District and MWRD share the City's commitment to rehabilitating and maintaining our precious local waterways in a manner that provides suitable habitats for

animals and birds, minimizes bank erosion, and improves water quality to provide increased recreational and aesthetic opportunities to local residents and tourists, while simultaneously enabling wildlife to thrive; and

WHEREAS, The City, Park District, Forest Preserve District and MWRD share a commitment to creating and promoting new healthy habitats along river edges and within natural areas and to connecting those habitats; and

WHEREAS, It is in the interest of the City, Park District, Forest Preserve District and MWRD to work together to realize this shared vision for unlocking the untapped full potential of our great rivers, including the Chicago, Calumet and Des Plaines Rivers; now, therefore,

I, RAHM EMANUEL, Mayor of the City of Chicago, do hereby order as follows:

1. The Chicago Department of Planning and Development ("DPD") shall initiate negotiations with the Park District, Forest Preserve District and MWRD (collectively, "governmental entities") to establish a Chicago River Ecology and Governance Group ("Group"), the purpose of which shall be to:

a. provide coordinated planning, investment, management, stewardship and programming along those portions of the Chicago River, North Shore Channel, Sanitary and Ship Canal, Little Calumet River and Des Plaines River located within the corporate limits of the City and, to the extent legally possible and achievable in the future, beyond the City's corporate limits;

b. aspire to, and to realize no later than 2040, inland waterways in Chicago that are inviting, productive and living, that support wildlife instream and on their banks, and that contribute to our City's resiliency;

c. develop processes for soliciting proposals from public agencies and not-for-profit organizations for open space acquisition and capital improvement projects along Chicago's inland waterways that are ecologically sound, publicly accessible, and lawfully subject to financing using OSIFs collected pursuant to Chapter 16-18 of the Municipal Code of Chicago or other applicable ordinances or statutes, and other future funding opportunities identified by the Group;

d. review and issue reports in connection with the feasibility for ecological restoration and recreational use of large, complex river areas and projects, including but not limited to: (i) boulevard connections to and at the Chicago River at Diversey Avenue on the north and Damen Avenue on the south; (ii) restoration of the North Avenue Turning Basin;

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iii) development of the North Branch Canal as an instream park and wildlife habitat;

iv) rehabilitation of Bubbly Creek; (v) rehabilitation of the Collateral Channel; (vi) Chicago Riverwalk expansion from Lake Street to Ping Tom Park; and (vii) expansion of Beaubien Woods west to the City limits along the Little Calumet River; and

(e) formalize the structure of the Group as necessary or appropriate, and in consultation with the Department of Law, in an Intergovernmental Agreement or Memorandum of Understanding with the relevant governmental entities to achieve the purpose of the Group as stated in subparagraphs (a) through (d) of this paragraph (1).

2. As part of the negotiation initiation process required under paragraph (1) herein, and prior to establishing the Group, DPD shall convene a meeting ("Working Group Meeting") to discuss the structure, membership and purpose of the Group. The invitees to such Working Group Meeting shall include representatives from:

- a) the Park District, Forest Preserve District, and MWRD;
- b) aldermanic offices located in wards containing inland waterways;
- c) City departments that perform functions relating to public land management, public programming or ecological restoration;
- d) non-governmental or neighborhood groups: (i) with significant experience in river bank ecology and restoration, river access, programming, open space or park management or maintenance; and (ii) actively engaged in such work in any of the following areas of the City: (A) Chicago River, Des Plaines River, and North Shore Channel between the City limits to the north and Diversey Avenue to the south; (B) Chicago River between Diversey Avenue and Chicago Avenue; (C) Chicago River between Chicago Avenue to the north, 16<sup>th</sup> Street to the south, including the Main Branch of the Chicago River to Lake Michigan; (D) Chicago River between 16<sup>th</sup> Street and Ashland Avenue, including Bubbly Creek; (E) Sanitary and Ship Canal from Ashland Avenue to Cicero Avenue; and (F) Little Calumet River;
- e) non-governmental groups with significant experience in private fundraising and philanthropy related to river bank ecology and restoration, river access, programming, open space or park management, or maintenance; and
- f) the Waterways Safety and Congestion Committee.

3. DPD shall convene the Working Group no later than April 22, 2019.

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Mayor

This Order shall take effect upon its execution and filing with the City Clerk.

Received and filed January 23, 2019

City Clerk