



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
CITY OF CHICAGO



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CONTACT:

Mayor's Press Office

312.744.3334

press@cityofchicago.org

REI Co-op

Caitlin Goettler

253.437.8643

PRRequests@rei.com

MAYOR RAHM EMANUEL AND REI CO-OP ANNOUNCE NEW STORE LOCATION IN RIVERFRONT DEVELOPMENT

New location will offer direct access to the Chicago River, connecting residents along the North Branch to outdoor experiences

Thanks to the city's focus on renewing the Chicago River, Mayor Rahm Emanuel and REI Co-op today announced the relocation of its Lincoln Park store to a larger, two-story location on the banks of the Chicago River's North Branch in early 2019 to better connect residents to the river. The new 40,000 square-foot retail space will offer kayak and paddleboard rentals with direct access to the Chicago River, expanded assortments of quality outdoor gear, and dedicated indoor parking. In addition, REI Lincoln Park will continue to offer a full-service bike, ski and snowboard shop; and outdoor experiences with REI Outdoor School. With more than 161,000 active REI members in Chicago, the relocation to the Chicago Riverfront is part of the co-op's mission to make the outdoors more accessible for all.

"REI is joining our efforts to invest in Chicago's riverfront and transforming it into the city's next recreational frontier," said Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel. "Together we are building on the blueprint of Daniel Burnham's Plan for Chicago, so that our children inherit a more active, more vibrant and more inclusive city than ever before."

This 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 preservation of parkland in Chicago's neighborhoods. Developing recreation and supporting private investments along the Chicago River is a major component of

121 NORTH LASALLE STREET, ROOM 507, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60602

Building on Burnham, under which 985 acres of parks have been acquired and 5.5 miles of waterfront have been developed.

The new store location is within a planned “wild mile” along the North Branch Canal that will include habitat improvements, pedestrian walkways, fishing stations, vegetative islands, viewing platforms, canoe launches and other amenities that cater to the public and wildlife. The enhancements are among the strategic goals of the “North Branch Framework Plan,” adopted by City Council last spring to revitalize the North Branch Industrial Corridor with a variety of land use, open space and transportation improvements.

The new REI location will be the co-op’s second waterfront space along the Chicago River. REI offers paddle experiences, rentals and REI Outdoor School programs at two locations around Chicago, including the [REI Boathouse at Ping Tom Memorial Park](#) on the Chicago River’s South Branch, and at the [REI Boathouse at Saganashkee Slough](#) in Willow Springs. As a national leader in outdoor experiences, more than 375,000 people across the country joined REI Outdoor School last year to paddle, bike, camp, climb and more. The co-op offers a wide variety of programs across Chicago for residents and visitors to lead an outdoor life, including [Introduction to Mountain Biking](#) at Big Marsh or Palos Forest Preserve.

“The relocation of our Lincoln Park store will help us better connect people in Chicago to a life outdoors,” said Mike Daurio, REI Lincoln Park store manager. “When complete, our new Lincoln Park location will be one of the co-op’s most exciting retail spaces. We’ll offer direct access to kayak and paddleboard adventures on the Chicago River and a wider selection of gear for hiking, biking and camping.”

REI first came to Chicago’s Lincoln Park neighborhood in 2008 and has continued to support the local outdoor community. This year, REI invested nearly \$230,000 in Chicago-area nonprofits including the [Friends of the Chicago River](#), [Urban Rivers](#) and [Friends of the Forest Preserves](#). REI also has stores in Northbrook (opened 2007) and Oakbrook Terrace (opened 2001).

Chicago is also 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. Read more about REI’s rewilding efforts [here](#).

About 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 152 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](https://www.rei.com/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.

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