

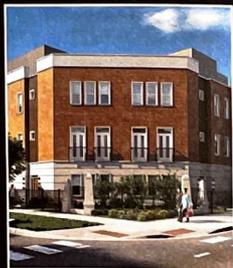
GAZETTE

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FREE

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University Village Row Homes offers variety of styles. See page 12.



Workers' skills topic of discussion at Urban Forum. See page 16.



Haley Carlton, *Gazette* reporter, passes away at 46. See page 31.

Other highlights:

Resurrection Project saves remaining Pilsen SRO. See page 3.

Chinatown SSA progresses, taxes may increase. See page 18.

UI Health System ranks eighth locally and state-wide. See page 30.

Planned bike lanes will mean safer cycling, walking in South Loop area

By Monica M. Walk

Bicyclists in the South Loop will have better and safer access to the neighborhood beginning next year.

At an Aug. 23 residents meeting hosted by South Loop Neighbors at Grace Place on south Dearborn Street, City officials presented a plan for more bike lanes.

Construction will occur in summer and fall 2017, with funding coming from the Federal Highway

Administration's Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality funds.

"It was a very interesting, well attended meeting," said Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT) Assistant Director of Transportation Planning Mike Amsden, estimating about 50 area residents attended the two-hour meeting. "Some very vocal concerns dominated the meeting for awhile. When others spoke up, they got excited about the project. The alderman

[Sophia King of the 4th Ward] asked who supported the project, and a majority did."

New bikeways will come to Polk (Dearborn Street to Plymouth Court), Plymouth (Polk to 9th Street), and 9th Streets (Plymouth to Grant Park).

Workers will extend the Polk/Plymouth Neighborhood Greenway's Dearborn Street protected bike lane and upgrade a section of barriers on Dearborn from
Continued on page 14

Variety of new projects planned for West Loop

By Dolly Duplantier

A variety of new developments are coming to the Randolph-Fulton Market/West Loop area.

Bridgford Foods and its vice president of industrial relations and safety Richard Bridgford want to turn their properties at 171 and
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Properties located on the 900 block of West Randolph Street will form part of a large-scale redevelopment by Tucker Development and Acadia Realty Trust.

Automatic voter registration veto could be overturned

By Monica M. Walk

Overtaking Governor Bruce Rauner's August veto of an automatic voter registration (AVR) bill passed by both houses of the Illinois General Assembly is not a sure outcome, despite bipartisan support of the bill (SB250) by both Republican and Democratic legislators.

"Governor Rauner makes it clear he will attack those not in agreement; some Republicans will 'peel off' over a veto" and not vote to override it, said Cook County Clerk David Orr, an AVR bill proponent.

"This is good legislation," Orr

noted. "It cleans the rolls and protects people. But it's tough to fight a veto."

Senate Bill 250, sponsored in the state Senate by Sen. Andy Manar (D-Decatur) and in the House by State Rep. Robyn Gabel (D-Evanston), passed the legislature in May with broad bipartisan support: 86-30 in the House, 50-7 in the Senate. Rauner vetoed the bill Aug. 12. Legislators are scheduled to reconvene and consider an override in mid-November.

The legislation would make both registering to vote and updating voter registration automatic when individuals apply for a new or updated driver's license at

Illinois Secretary of State facilities. It also would expand the registration system to allow individuals to register to vote whenever they conduct business or interact with the State's Department of Human Services, Department of Health-care and Family Services, Department of Employment Security, and Department on Aging. Individuals would be free to opt out of registration if they wish.

Currently, Illinois voter registration is "opt in"—citizens seeking services at these sites are asked if they would like to register to vote or update voter registration rather than having their updated
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Automatic voter registration veto could be overturned

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information automatically shared for voter registration purposes.

Rauner veto questioned

In his written veto response statement, Rauner cited concerns about conflict with Federal law and potential voting fraud. Rauner also wrote that the transition to AVR would make Illinois one of the first states in the nation to use such a system. At the time of the veto, five other states already had approved AVR.

"The legislation had very substantial bipartisan support and was supported by the Secretary of State, State Board of Elections, and many local election authorities—the people and agencies who are entrusted under State law to ensure that our elections are conducted in accordance with the law, making Governor Rauner's supposed objections to the bill even more puzzling," said Congressman Danny K. Davis (D-7th District), another AVR bill proponent.

He added that, if the legislation were implemented, it could add up to two million Illinoisans to the voter rolls.

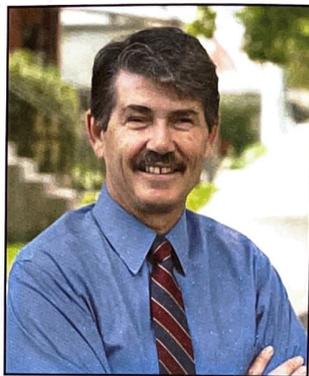
"Study after study has demonstrated that in-person voter fraud such as the Governor invokes in his veto is a myth," said Davis.

Citing the Debunking the Voter Fraud Myth report from the Brennan Center for Justice (www.goo.gl/gxjGA), Davis said, "Most reported incidents of voter fraud are actually traceable to other sources, such as clerical errors or bad data matching practices. The report reviewed elections that had been meticulously studied for voter fraud and found incident rates between 0.00004 percent and 0.0009 percent.

"Given this tiny incident rate for voter impersonation fraud, it is more likely, the report noted, that an American 'will be struck by lightning than that he will impersonate another voter at the polls,'" Davis said.

Just Democracy fights for bill

In addition to bipartisan support by State politicians, the bill has won support from and promotion by organizations throughout Illinois. More than 50 groups statewide signed on to support the campaign promoted by Just Democracy



Cook County Clerk David Orr has advocated strongly for the Illinois General Assembly's overriding Governor Bruce Rauner's veto of automatic voter registration.

Illinois, a coalition of community groups, which defined AVR as "using reliable information already in State databases to register eligible citizens to vote or update their voter registration status."

The groups worked for seven months with policymakers and legislators from both sides of the aisle to get this bill passed, according to Kathleen Yang-Clayton of Asian Americans Advancing Justice—

Chicago, one of the statewide supportive groups.

"At any time the Governor could have raised his concerns with SB 250, but instead he waited until the 11th hour and vetoed a good bill," Yang-Clayton said. "This veto signifies a step backwards for voting rights in Illinois."

After the veto, Just Democracy Illinois leaders released a statement: "The Governor has said that he is 'a big fan of simplifying the voter registration process,' but his actions show otherwise. Because of this veto, important initial measures to clean up Illinois voter lists will not go into effect before the November election—a missed opportunity to ensure a smoother Election Day for voters and elections officials."

Just Democracy Illinois stated it intends to work with allies from both parties to override the veto. Orr also noted his continuing commitment to see AVR passed in Illinois.

"Nearly 700,000 people in Illinois remain registered at addresses where they no longer live," Orr said. "AVR was going to fix this."

"This is a terribly important

Every vote counts: Check voter registration status

Every Illinois citizen should check to be sure he or she is registered to vote, advised Cook County Clerk David Orr.

"Across the State, people should check their registration," Orr said, noting that "700,000 people will be shocked if they don't realize they need to register again after moving and will be angry. Their anger should be directed toward the Governor. These people are registered to vote, but they don't now live where they are registered."

Current law allows Illinois residents to complete voter registration at the Secretary of State's Driver Services Department. According

to Rauner's written veto statement, Public Act 98-1171 was enacted last year with the intent to expand the registration system to allow individuals to register to vote whenever they conduct business or interact with the Department of Human Services, Department of Healthcare and Family Services, Department of Employment Security, and Department on Aging. Rauner noted that, while the public act requires the State Board to complete its implementation by July 1, 2016, that work has not been completed yet.

Orr shared that citizens can register and check voter registration status online at www.cook-countyclerk.com and www.chicagoelections.com.

Those eligible to vote also may register using these methods:

- Visit 69 W. Washington St., sixth floor, now through Monday, Nov. 7. Applicants must present two IDs, at least one showing current address.
 - Visit an Illinois Secretary of State's Office (only if also obtaining a new driver's license or state ID during that visit).
 - Register through an active deputy registrar affiliated with a local organization, such as a political party, ward organization, or other State-certified body.
- On Election Day, any Chicago

voter may register at the precinct and polling place assigned to that voter's home address.

To use election day registration, an individual must present two IDs; one of those must show the current residence address. Acceptable forms of ID include: Passport or military ID; driver's license or State ID card; college/university/school/work ID; vehicle registration card; lease, mortgage or deed to home; credit or debit card; Social Security, Medicare, or Medicaid card; insurance card; civic, union, or professional membership card; LINK/Public Aid/Department of Human Services card; or Illinois FOID card.

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"I am confident that Automatic Voter Registration will soon become the law in Illinois," said Congressman Danny Davis, making it easier and allowing more people to vote.

issue," Orr added. "Every day, we see attempts to suppress voting. Modern technology has ways to register. To my mind, it is criminal not to adopt those technologies. People move a lot and don't realize they have to register again. This is a solution to this problem."

Davis recalled how obstacles to voting have fallen over time, in a nation where voting once was restricted to white male property owners.

"Over the course of our history, the demands for full equality, including access to full voting rights, have removed one barrier after another," Davis said. "SB250, like other such initiatives across the country, seeks to remove one of the last such barriers, our antiquated system of voter registration, and replace it with a system

which both guarantees the integrity of the system and simplifies and encourages participation in our democracy."

Orr expressed concern that overturning the veto cannot be considered a sure thing. He said Illinois citizens can make the difference.

"Call legislators and ask if they are going to support the override," Orr said. "Call, text, or email. Get friends to do it. Pressure can help. Call or send a note, and then report it back to one of the organizations advancing this."

To contact Just Democracy Illinois and its member organizations, log on to www.justdemocracyillinois.org

Attempts to obtain a comment from Governor Rauner's office were unsuccessful.

Variety of new developments are planned for West Loop community

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three bedroom units. It also would offer 10,000 square feet of retail space and more than 200 parking spaces. The developer is seeking a zoning change, but the company did not return calls for comment.

Twenty-fifth Ward Alderman Danny Solis has not received a zoning application for the site yet. According to Solis spokesperson Tim Nazanin, officials will schedule community meetings after receiving a zoning application. Meetings will feature presentations from the developer, and the alderman will form an opinion based on input from neighbors and community organizations.

Burnett said all developers must go through a community process, including consulting with community organizations and presenting their proposals at community meetings. Aldermen then evaluate residents' and local business owners' concerns and determine what is best for them and the city.

"There are lots of changes in the neighborhood," said Aiken. "Most are good. Some are not so good. There is manufacturing, commercial, and downtown zoning mixed together. Residents are in the mix



Bridgford Foods management wants to develop its property, yet remain in the West Loop.

of it all. It is what makes this area unique and desirable for many."

Burnett hopes this type of growth will continue to move west, especially residential development. "From a bigger perspective, all of this new development has a positive effect on the city," he said. "It brings about more tourists, more people moving back to the city, and more tax dollars. It's exciting and good for the area and the city."

To contact NoWL, go to www.neighborsofwestloop.com. To contact Burnett, call (312) 432-1995.

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