

STATE STREET COMMISSION
State Street Commission Meeting
Tuesday, November 18, 2025
2:00 PM
190 North State Street, ABC 7

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE

Commission Members Present

Greg Cameron
Kristin Duncan
Konstantine "Gus" Drosos
Brian Grossman
John Idler
La Verne Morris
Ryan Segal

AFFILIATION

Joffrey Ballet
Renaissance Hotel
Palmer House Hilton
Walgreens
ABC 7
20 N. State Condo Assn.
Acadia Realty Trust

Commission Members Absent

Mark Anderson
Ciere Boatright
Clinèe Hedspeth
Aimeabilomon Ochiekeleye
Cole Stallard

Hines
DPD
DCASE
Macy's on State Street
Streets & Sanitation

Others Present

Arturo Rodriguez
Cindy Roubik
Erika Coldman
Noel Valenzuela (Debbie De Lopez proxy)
Michael Edwards
Ryan Greenlaw
Kate Guercio
Randall Harrington
Dan Luna

CDOT
DPD
Chicago Loop Alliance
Streets & Sanitation
Chicago Loop Alliance
DPD
Hard Surface Finishers, Inc.
Ald. Reilly's Office
Ald. Conway's Office

Call to Order

Ryan Segal called the meeting to order at 2:03 PM.

Public Comment

No comments were made by the public.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by John Idler and seconded by Greg Cameron to approve October 2025 Minutes as presented. Motion carried.

Financial Statement as of October 31, 2025

Abel Rodriguez reviewed the financial statements as of October 31, 2025, noting only minor changes from the previous month. No new SSA revenue has been received; current activity reflects regular monthly expenses, including landscaping, sidewalk cleaning, the ambassador program, and rent. Abel reported that the second half of property tax bills were issued on November 14, and funds are expected by the end of the month, allowing CLA to begin paying vendors and reducing the line of credit balance. CLA has fully drawn its line of credit, totaling \$400,000, and the SSA is responsible for the interest incurred due to the delay in tax collections.

Abel also referenced a DPD document included in the Commission packet outlining the impact of the 9.7% drop in SSA EAV. While the current cap remains at 0.575 and budgets for 2025 and 2026 are unaffected, the tax rate has increased. For 2025, the rate rose from 0.3455 to 0.3825, and for 2026, from 0.3554 to 0.3935. Abel emphasized that these changes do not alter the actual dollar amount of the SSA budget.

A motion to approve the October financial statements as presented and discussed was made by Greg Cameron and seconded by John Idler. The motion carried.

Sole Service Provider Report

State of State Street – Retail

Ryan Segal initiated a discussion on the state of State Street, focusing on retail challenges and opportunities. He noted that retail remains difficult, and while the SSA and CLA cannot act as brokers for available spaces, they can implement strategies to improve retail prospects. Ryan emphasized the importance of pop-up shops and programs designed to increase foot traffic and boost sales, suggesting that frequent events and activations are key. He shared that his company is investing heavily in marketing, social media, and placemaking events to attract visitors to its properties, and encouraged similar efforts by the SSA. Retailers have reported increased sales following such events, which could help reduce vacancies.

Ryan acknowledged that while individual events may not draw visitors from outside the city, bundling multiple activities could create a stronger attraction. He highlighted positive news, noting that one international retailer reported its State Street location as one of the highest-grossing stores in the country. When asked by Michael Edwards about trends in neighborhood versus State Street locations, Ryan confirmed that neighborhood retail remains strong but added that smaller spaces at the Sullivan Center have recently filled, including the opening of a new Thai restaurant. He observed that rents have declined from previous levels but stressed the need to accept lower rates to fill vacancies. Overall, Ryan concluded that retail activity on State Street is beginning to move in the right direction.

State Street – Office

Mark Anderson of Hines reported that the office market continues to face significant challenges, although there is limited office space directly on State Street. He noted a positive development—a large lease at 2 South State Street (131 South Dearborn)—which will bring additional employees to the area and help support restaurants and retail. However, Mark emphasized that the GSA buildings to the south remain a concern, and overall, office leasing in the Loop is still struggling. The West Loop continues to be the strongest submarket, while the east side lags behind.

Mark suggested that any efforts to improve the south end of State Street would be beneficial. The committee discussed the strategic advantage of the CTA Red and Blue Lines, which provide strong connectivity to State Street and surrounding office locations. Marketing this enhanced transit access could help drive interest and support the modest uptick in office leasing activity.

State Street - Arts & Culture

Greg Cameron expressed concern that ongoing negative headlines—such as reports involving ICE, the National Guard, and tragic incidents like the recent attack on the Blue Line—are harming arts and culture in the Loop by discouraging patrons from visiting theaters, museums, and other cultural venues. He noted that colleagues at The Art Institute, The Auditorium, Broadway in Chicago, and The Goodman share similar concerns, as public perception of safety remains poor despite data showing otherwise. Greg emphasized that the collaborative efforts between SSA, CLA, and arts organizations to invite people back to the Loop are the right approach, but these efforts are often undermined by high-profile incidents occurring just as major seasonal events launch, such as The Goodman's *A Christmas Carol*, Joffrey's *Nutcracker*, Christkindlmarket, and holiday shopping.

While Joffrey is seeing an uptick in ticket sales, Greg noted that inventory remains high across cultural institutions and hotels, underscoring the need to attract more visitors downtown. He stressed the importance of working collectively to reinforce the message that the Loop offers vibrant cultural experiences and is no more dangerous than other parts of the city. The discussion briefly touched on the influence of media coverage and the need to amplify positive stories to counteract negative perceptions and encourage attendance.

State Street – Events

John Idler shared that his station is preparing to broadcast the Lights Festival Parade this weekend. Although the event does not take place on State Street, it draws significant crowds downtown, benefiting the Loop. John noted that the parade is a signature event for Chicago and expects close to one million people to attend, as in previous years.

He also announced that *Dick Clark's Rockin' New Year's Eve* will feature Chicago as the primary national broadcast location for the Central Time Zone for the first time in the program's history. ABC 7 is collaborating with Choose Chicago, the City of Chicago (DCASE), and other

partners to maximize the event's impact by driving overnight stays, visitation, and increased food and beverage spending. John expressed excitement about the opportunity and the potential economic boost for downtown.

State Street - Residential

La Verne Morris shared her perspective as a State Street resident, noting both benefits and challenges of living in the area. The primary concern among residents is homelessness. While some residents offer assistance as temperatures drop, others are troubled by the presence of individuals referred to as "regulars", whose behavior occasionally borders on harassment. La Verne acknowledged the efforts of Street Ambassadors, who engage with these individuals, but noted the limitations when assistance is refused. Another significant concern is the number of vacant storefronts along State Street.

During the discussion, Greg Cameron suggested that the SSA Commission consider inviting Chris Brown, Commissioner of the Chicago Public Library, to join the SSA Commission.

Safety Ambassador Survey Results

Hanna Abera, CLA Planning Intern, was introduced to the Commission and presented findings from the recently completed on-street survey of 582 State Street visitors. This annual survey measures visitor awareness of the Ambassador program and perceptions of clean and safe services. Hanna reported that 59.5% of respondents were aware of the program, an increase from 55% in 2024. Additionally, 52% reported seeing Ambassadors daily or weekly, up from 21% last year. However, only 15.3% felt panhandling had decreased (down from 21% in 2024), and just 27.3% felt safer compared to 39% last year. The program's overall rating averaged 8.08 out of 10, slightly lower than 8.56 in 2024. Hanna noted that these findings have been shared with Streetplus, and adjustments will be made to improve clean and safe services.

The Commission engaged in a discussion about survey validity, timing, respondent demographics, inclusion of businesses, and methodology. Suggestions included exploring cross-tabulation of the data for deeper insights. Following the discussion, Ryan Segal thanked Hanna for her presentation and led a round of applause.

Attractiveness of Global Business Districts Study

Michael Edwards directed Commissioners to an executive summary of the recently completed *Attractiveness of Global Business Districts* report, sponsored by ULI Europe and prepared by EY in France. Michael announced that the Chicago Loop ranked **16th out of 30** among the most attractive business districts worldwide. Chicago scored particularly well in categories such as access, talent, market proximity, influence, and real estate. He noted that the report will be shared with both local and national media to highlight the Loop's global competitiveness.

Status Reports/Outstanding Issues

Security

No report.

Streets & Sanitation

Deb DeLopez stated the department is gearing up for the coming holiday events in the Loop and across downtown. The tree lighting, Magnificent Mile Lights Festival, and New Year's Eve celebration and others. She continues to provide support to commissioners who see dirty alleys and the need for cleaning services in and around State Street.

CDOT

Art Rodriguez provided an update on CDOT projects, noting that the State Street bridge over the river is behind schedule but is expected to reopen before year-end. He also reported that work on the Lake Street CTA bridge is beginning and confirmed Michael Edwards' statement that demolition of the State and Lake CTA station will not start until January 2026. Art added that Craig Turner continues to serve as Acting CDOT Commissioner.

Art informed the Commission that CDOT is addressing lighting issues on State Street and distributed a photo of 50 new lamp shades purchased to replace 22 broken or missing lower white globes on the lamp posts. Installation will begin tonight to ensure all fixtures are in place for the weekend. Art noted that the new globes differ slightly from the existing ones, which have a more transparent appearance. Michael offered CLA's Palmer House basement storage space for CDOT to store the globes along with other State Street infrastructure materials.

Planning & Development

Mark Roschen reiterated Abel Rodriguez's earlier update, confirming that second-quarter tax bills have been issued and noting that State Street and other city SSAs are managing the impact of changing property assessments.

Heidi Sperry, Supervising Planner for the Chicago Central Area at DPD, provided two key updates. First, the Chicago Plan Commission will meet this Thursday to seek approval for the *Central Area 2045 Plan*, an initiative that has been in development for more than two and a half years. Second, Heidi reported that the RFP for the Plymouth Court/Pritzker Park site, located immediately north of the Harold Washington Library, has closed. The RFP sought proposals for a mixed-use development featuring both market-rate and affordable housing. Several responses were received and are currently under review. In addition to housing, the project will include a reimagining of Pritzker Park to better serve neighborhood residents and educational institutions along South State Street, as well as enhance the southern entrance to the Loop.

Dan Luna – Alderman Conway

Dan Luna, representing Alderman Conway's office, reported they are preparing for the annual Thanksgiving Day Parade, which will take place on Thanksgiving morning. Additionally, efforts continue with a business interested in the 100 South State Street location. Finally, Michael Edwards was commended for ongoing improvements to the Pedway. Dan noted personally walking the Pedway three times a week and expressed appreciation for the progress, encouraging CLA to maintain its current efforts.

Randall Harrington – Alderman Reilly

Randall Harrington, representing Alderman Reilly's office, reported they are actively managing road closures and preparations for upcoming holiday events in the Loop and across the district. He also noted that the office is deeply engaged in ongoing City budget discussions.

Other Business

With no other business before the Commission, Ryan Segal wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving and reminded them that our next meeting is on Tuesday, January 20, 2026 at 2:00 PM.

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 3:05 PM.

La Verne Morris, Secretary