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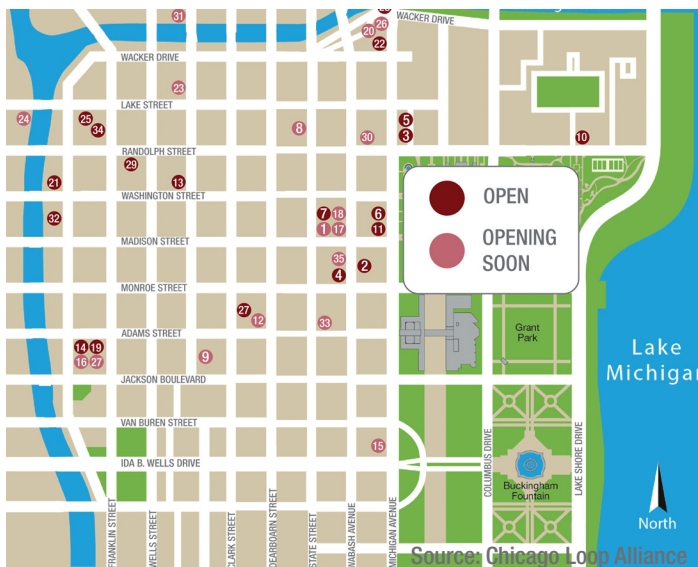
State of the Loop

Q3 2025 (July-September)

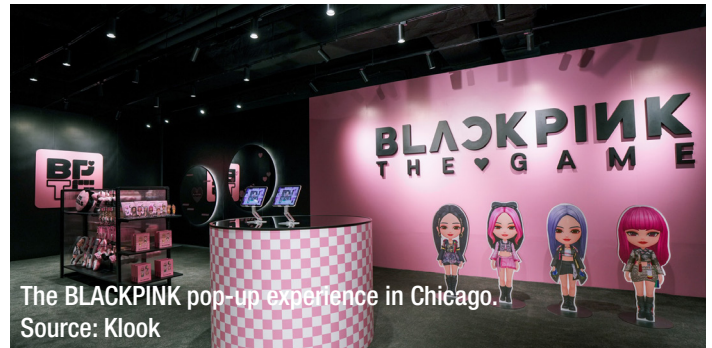
Executive Summary: Summer Festivities Support Emerging Businesses

Late summer and early fall continued the year's trend of energy and investment in the Loop. New restaurants, retail stores, and cultural events drew more Loop visitors, surpassing pre-pandemic weekend pedestrian levels. Pop-up experiences, high-profile performances, and popular festivals filled public spaces, while residential development, policy changes, and increased office occupancy pushed the Loop further toward becoming a vibrant, mixed-use neighborhood. This report captures the key developments from Q3, showcasing how economic activity, cultural programming, and infrastructure shifts are shaping the Loop's next chapter.

Economic Investment



This map highlights **30+ new dining experiences and retail stores** that recently opened or are set to open in 2025, including the popular Gap Factory Store on State Street. New investment in the Loop shows interest in serving hundreds of thousands of office workers and millions of tourists, positively contributing to the Loop's economy.



This summer and fall drew significant enthusiasm for retail pop-ups. In July, a State Street pop-up accompanying the K-pop group, BLACKPINK's, Soldier Field performance generated a multi-block line over three days. This event, along with a pop-up by metal group Avenged Sevenfold, provided additional proof of the opportunity to **activate vacant storefronts** on State Street and throughout the Loop.

Residential Development

New residential development and progressive parking policy led the Loop further into its evolving role as a complete urban district.

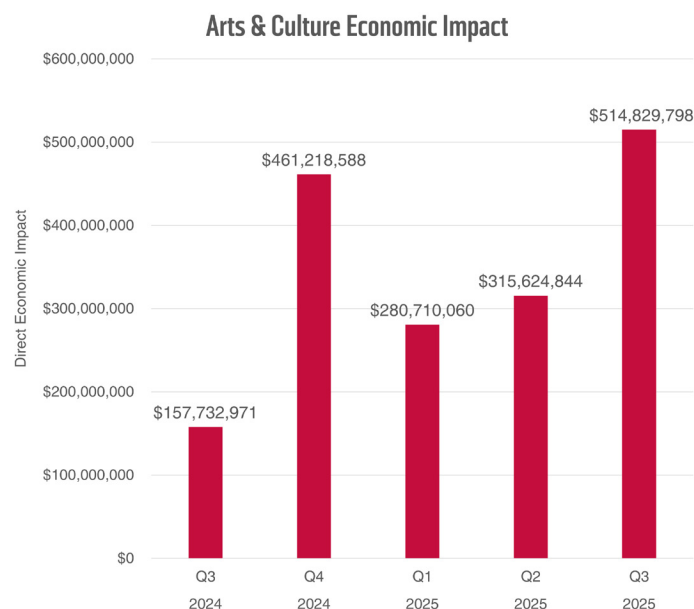
Adaptive reuse conversions continued in Q3 as a part of the LaSalle Corridor Revitalization Initiative. With financial assistance from the LaSalle Central TIF district, vacant office floors within 105 W. Adams and 135 S. LaSalle were approved by City Council to be converted into mixed-income residential units. Outside of the LaSalle Corridor Revitalization Initiative, developers plan to convert the remaining office space in the historic Pittsfield Building into new residential units.

In August, City Council unanimously approved an ordinance removing parking minimums for new apartments near transit lines. While downtown developers will have to seek permission to cut parking below 50%, the change encourages developers to build with reduced parking in areas like the Loop, discouraging reliance on cars and **incentivizing public transit use** at a time when the CTA faces a looming fiscal cliff.

Arts and Culture



Late summer in the Loop was filled with events, which collectively created **over \$514 million in direct economic impact**, surpassing Q4 2024 impact.* In July and August, Grant Park Music Festival welcomed 142,391 attendees, while Lollapalooza attracted 400,000 music fans to the park. The Chicago Triathlon followed with more than 8,000 participants competing over two days, solidifying the event as one of the largest triathlons in the world.



*Data Source: Choose Chicago, DCASE, Art Institute of Chicago, Grant Park Music Festival, CLA estimates

In September, DCASE festivals and Sundays on State drew **nearly one million collective visitors** to the Loop. Theater performances attracted over 375,000 patrons, **11% higher than Q3 last year**, reinforcing the growing appeal of the Loop's evolving arts district.

Office

Chicago's Q3 office occupancy rate averaged **57%, the highest number outside of Texas**, demonstrating that workers are back in the office even during peak summer vacation season. Companies are investing in office space in the Loop too—notably, CRC Group announced their lease of the 19th floor at 123 N. Wacker after the building's recent \$25 million upgrade and Arrive Logistics plans to move into three floors of new offices at 30 S. Wacker. Despite remote work's stronghold, companies see the value in interacting with clients in person.

“Downtown is evolving. The hybrid work era has changed how we use office space, but it hasn't erased the need for it, especially not in professions that deal in real-time, high-stakes advocacy.”

- Jess D. Jordan, Attorney

Source: Crain's Chicago

Transportation

Millions of Chicago residents and visitors utilized CTA and Metra for the Loop's late summer events. Metra ridership increased 12% compared to last year, providing 3.6 million passenger trips in July. CTA provided over 3 million rail rides during the week of Lollapalooza, their **highest rail ridership week since 2019**. CTA's average weekday ridership in Q2 was 1,005,077, or 79% of ridership during the same period in 2019.

Pedestrian activity on State Street in Q3 averaged 89% of 2019 levels, with weekend levels topping out at **116% of 2019 levels**—another indicator that weekend programming and attractions in the Loop draw visitors who would not otherwise be in the area during the week ([MRI OnLocation](#)).

Despite these strong numbers, the future of Chicago's transit network is still uncertain. Fall congressional veto sessions will be held in October to determine if Illinois transit agency budgets will receive funding from the state before reaching a fiscal cliff in mid-2026.



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