



DESPOT PARK CHICAGO



COMPREHENSIVE PROPOSAL & INVESTMENT PACKAGE

JULY 2025

CONFIDENTIAL DRAFT

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All cost figures, financial models, and schedules are preliminary estimates based on currently available information, third-party data, and prevailing market assumptions as of **July 2025**. They are subject to change without notice due to engineering refinements, permitting outcomes, financing market conditions, supply-chain constraints, or other factors.

5 | Regulatory & Zoning Approvals

Project execution is contingent upon successful completion of:

- City of Chicago zoning amendments and permits
- Cook County and State of Illinois environmental, labor, and safety reviews
- Federal aviation, EB-5, and other federal approvals (as applicable)

Failure to obtain, or material delays in obtaining, any of the above may adversely impact scope, schedule, or feasibility.

6 | Risk Factors (Summary)

Prospective stakeholders should carefully evaluate, among others, the following risks:

- **Construction risks:** schedule overruns, cost escalation, labor shortages, force-majeure events.
 - **Market demand:** lower-than-forecast attendance or spending; heightened competition.
 - **Financing:** interest-rate volatility; availability of debt or equity capital on acceptable terms.
 - **Regulatory/political:** legal challenges to eminent domain, zoning, community opposition, or changes in tax policy.
 - **Operational & safety:** ride malfunctions, guest incidents, security threats, pandemic-related shutdowns.
- A full risk discussion will appear in the definitive offering materials.

7 | Third-Party Information

Portions of this proposal rely on data from government sources, industry reports, and third-party consultants believed to be reliable; however, DPH makes no representation as to the accuracy or completeness of such information.

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9 | Cultural & Historical Depictions

The project employs satirical representations of historical regimes for educational purposes. Consultation with academic and community advisers is ongoing; nevertheless, some content may be perceived as sensitive or offensive. DPH reserves the right to modify thematic elements at any stage.

10 | Updates & Revisions

DPH may revise, supplement, or withdraw this proposal at any time. Receipt of this document implies acceptance of the foregoing terms.

Despot Park Holdings LLC

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Despot Park Chicago: Making Oppression Fun Again

Executive Summary: This proposal outlines the development of **Despot Park Chicago**, a groundbreaking urban amusement park in downtown Chicago themed around the world's most notorious dictators and authoritarian regimes. The project will replace the current Trump International Hotel & Tower site with a **world-first vertical theme park** – a skyscraper packed with thrill rides, immersive environments, and educational exhibits that let visitors experience the grandeur and gloom of history's great dictatorships in a darkly humorous, tongue-in-cheek fashion. The park will be an iconic, **skyline-defining** structure of approximately 1,500 feet tall (surpassing the Willis Tower) and filled with state-of-the-art attractions, cultural performances, themed food venues, and interactive experiences. We plan a single-phase, multi-year development culminating in a spectacular grand opening "Dictators' World Fair" year in 2033 – marking 100 years since Chicago's 1933 World's Fair, but with a decidedly dystopian twist.



Trump International Hotel & Tower (center, by the Chicago River) – the proposed site for “Despot Park.” Chicago’s 98-story Trump Tower, opened in 2009, stands ~1,388 feet tall and cost ~\$850 million to build. It infamously replaced the Sun-Times Building in 2005, after a hyped but underwhelming demolition event (Donald Trump once promised a spectacular send-off, only to stage a modest wrecking-ball show). Now, in an ironic full-circle, we propose to **seize and demolish Trump Tower via eminent domain** and use the prime riverfront land at 401 N. Wabash Ave. for a bold new public attraction. By invoking eminent domain for public benefit (a practice upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court to include economic development as “public use”), the City can acquire the site and clear the way for construction of our vertical theme park. The demolition itself will be a **celebratory spectacle** – a cathartic event kicking off the project as we symbolically topple a contentious namesake tower in favor of an inclusive, entertaining civic landmark.

Project Vision: Despot Park will be an **authentic, immersive, and world-class theme park** unlike any other, using dark humor and historical context to educate and entertain. Guests will travel through time and across cultures, encountering the grandeur of empires and the theatrics of totalitarian regimes – from imperial palaces to propaganda rallies – all within one vertical complex. The park’s design emphasizes experiential authenticity: in-character staff (costumed

as royal guards, revolutionaries, commissars, etc.), period-appropriate music and pageantry, daily “military” parades and rallies, and themed cuisine from each represented culture will bring the past to life. Despite the dark theme, the tone will be dry, wry, and tongue-in-cheek. Visitors might one moment find themselves “imprisoned” (lightheartedly) in a mock gulag or navigating a hedge maze of secret police, and the next moment sipping champagne in a gilded dictator’s palace – a roller coaster of emotions that is equal parts thrilling and thought-provoking. By satirizing history’s tyrants, the park aims to provoke reflection on power and freedom, while remaining family-friendly and fun in execution. This project will celebrate Chicago’s global connections by involving the city’s diverse ethnic communities and international sister cities in crafting each cultural experience, ensuring **cultural accuracy and respectful representation** amid the satire. Ultimately, Despot Park will become a **signature Chicago destination** – boosting tourism, educating the public, and revitalizing the skyline with an iconic tower that proclaims Chicago’s creativity on the world stage.

Site Selection and Analysis

Several prominent downtown sites were evaluated for this project, including Navy Pier, Northerly Island, and Grant Park. After careful analysis of space, accessibility, community impact, and iconic potential, the Trump Tower site emerged as the **most advantageous location** for Despot Park.

- **Navy Pier (600 E. Grand Ave.):** Navy Pier is Chicago’s second-most visited attraction (50 acres, ~9 million visitors annually) and already hosts rides (e.g. the Centennial Ferris Wheel). However, the Pier’s available area and structural capacity are limited. A large vertical park could overwhelm the Pier’s layout and conflict with its existing uses. Additionally, Navy Pier’s distance from mass transit (relying on buses/taxis) and the logistical challenges of building a 1000+ ft tower over Lake Michigan make it suboptimal. The Pier is better suited as a complementary attraction – for example, Despot Park could partner with Navy Pier to host off-site events or ferry visitors, rather than serve as the primary construction site.
- **Northerly Island (1521 S. Linn White Dr.):** This 91-acre peninsula (former Meigs Field) offers ample space and lakefront views. It was famously reclaimed as parkland in 2003 when Mayor Daley covertly bulldozed the runway overnight. While bold land reclamation is in Chicago’s DNA, developing Northerly Island would reverse its current nature preserve status and likely face public resistance. The island lacks existing infrastructure (roads, utilities) for a major theme park and is slightly removed from downtown foot traffic. We considered Northerly Island for a ground-level park, but its isolation and the City’s prior commitment to keep it green argued against it.
- **Grant Park:** Often called “Chicago’s front yard,” Grant Park is a historic public park protected by charter from most development. Erecting a theme park on this lakefront parkland would violate public trust and legal covenants (Chicago has a proud tradition, dating to A. Montgomery Ward’s efforts, of preserving open lakefront parks for free public

use). Converting any part of Grant Park into a commercial theme park would be extremely controversial and likely blocked by litigation or public outcry. The park's terrain is also flat and expansive – suitable for fairgrounds but not for a vertical tower that would cast long shadows on surrounding neighborhoods and Buckingham Fountain. Grant Park was thus deemed not feasible.

- **Trump Tower Site (401 N. Wabash Ave.):** The current Trump International Hotel & Tower occupies a prime downtown riverfront parcel, centrally located near Magnificent Mile, public transit (multiple 'L' stations and bus routes), and major tourist foot traffic. The site's existing zoning (planned development for a high-rise) and foundation can support a tall structure, reducing engineering unknowns. Replacing Trump Tower with Despot Park yields **multiple benefits:** (1) It transforms an underutilized private building into a public-oriented civic asset and economic engine; (2) The symbolic act of removing the Trump name and repurposing the site for an attraction that playfully critiques authoritarianism is a powerful statement aligned with Chicago's values; (3) A vertical theme park here would enhance the skyline and draw visitors more effectively than at peripheral sites. By leveraging eminent domain for "public purpose" – a tool affirmed in cases like *Kelo v. New London* – the City can justify the takeover on grounds of job creation, tourism, and education. Fair market compensation will be provided to the current property owners (the Trump Organization and condominium owners), funded as part of the project budget. The tower's removal, while complex, is achievable: although no 98-story building has been demolished before, careful deconstruction floor-by-floor (or an engineered partial implosion) will mitigate risk. The demolition phase will be highly publicized and managed with top contractors and safety oversight. Ultimately, this site offers the **highest visibility, access, and symbolic impact** for Despot Park, making it the preferred choice.

Conclusion of Site Analysis: Replacing Trump Tower via eminent domain is the **recommended approach.** It allows us to utilize an existing skyscraper site in the heart of downtown, ensuring the new park is transit-accessible and immediately iconic. The political will and public support for this move are expected to be strong – Chicago's City Council can frame it as both an economic development initiative and a cultural moment (many Chicagoans might welcome removing the Trump name from the skyline). Our plan includes working closely with City legal teams and planners from day one to execute the acquisition smoothly, respecting the rights of current owners while firmly advancing the public interest. In sum, the Trump Tower site provides the optimal foundation on which to build our vision of an **immersive "dictator-world" theme park in the heart of Chicago.**

Park Concept and Design Overview

Immersive Theming and Visitor Experience

Despot Park's design will transport visitors into the heart of various historical regimes. Instead of sprawling horizontally, the park stacks multiple themed “lands” vertically within a single skyscraper structure – a concept inspired by cutting-edge vertical theme park prototypes. Each level or section of the tower will represent a different dictator's realm or era, realized with meticulous detail. Guests will move between eras via high-speed elevators (“history lifts”) and grand stairways, encountering a mix of thrill rides, dark rides, live shows, museums, and interactive attractions in each zone. Key themed areas under development include:

- **Imperial Rome (Caesars' Court):** Step into the Roman Empire at its peak – marble arches, forum plazas, and costumed centurions. The highlight is “*Nero's Wild Fire Coaster*,” a multi-launch roller coaster spiraling around a facade of the Colosseum and Trajan's Column. The coaster features bursts of flame and animatronic screaming fiddles (a dark nod to Nero's legend). Guests can dine at *Brutus's Banquet Hall* (serving Mediterranean feasts) and enjoy gladiatorial stunt shows in a mini-arena. The atmosphere satirically contrasts the glory of Rome with its decadence: think palace grandeur mixed with tongue-in-cheek stage skits about chaotic imperial succession.
- **Third Reich Rally Grounds:** A sobering yet educational land depicting 1930s Germany. Visitors arrive to the sound of militaristic marching music in a vast Zeppelinfield-inspired courtyard draped in red banners (with fictional symbols). This area will be handled with appropriate gravity and irony: for instance, the “*Führer's Fury*” ride is a high-speed indoor dark ride through a bunker, simulating the downfall of Hitler's regime in a surreal, metaphorical way (ending with a literal “*Blaze of Defeat*” finale to reinforce the moral). There will be a museum exhibit curated with local Holocaust educators to ensure historical facts are presented; our approach is to educate about the dangers of fascism even as we lampoon its pomp. A satirical live show, “*Springtime for Hitler Revue*,” will play in a cabaret theater – a dark-comedy musical performance inspired by Mel Brooks' humor to underscore the absurdity of Nazi propaganda. (**Note:** All sensitive content will be reviewed by cultural and historical advisors for propriety.)
- **Stalin's Soviet Union (Iron Curtain Heights):** This level plunges visitors into a Cold War-era Soviet cityscape, complete with brutalist concrete architecture and ubiquitous propaganda posters of Stalin. Ambient experiences include bread lines that actually serve pumpernickel and borscht at *Comrade Café*, and patrolling actors posing as KGB agents (offering playful “interrogations” and scavenger-hunt style secret missions for guests). The star attraction is “*The Gulag Escape*”, an escape-room meets maze experience where families work together to “break out” of a mock Siberian labor camp – all in good fun but with an eerie atmosphere. There's also the “*Five-Year Plan Ferris Wheel*” – an ironically sluggish Ferris wheel that takes exactly 5 years (in simulation time – actually ~5 minutes) for a rotation, symbolizing Soviet inefficiency (don't worry, guests can exit at quarter-turn intervals!). For adrenaline junkies, “*Trotsky's Ice Axe*” is a drop tower ride themed to a KGB drop torture – riders are “dangled” 200 feet high in near-darkness while hearing a dramatic reading of an enemies list, before a sudden

20-story plunge.

- **Mao's China (Red Revolution Plaza):** A cultural revolution awaits in this area themed to 1960s China. Enter through a replica Tiananmen Gate, greeted by performers enacting a hyper-enthusiastic "Little Red Book" dance. The "*Great Leap Forward Freefall*" is a thrilling flume ride: guests ride in "grain barrel" boats through scenes of a communal farm, ascending a lift hill inside a grain silo and then plunging down 60 feet into water – a darkly comic reference to failed agricultural policies (complete with splashy ending). The decor features giant Mao portraits and colorful propaganda murals. A dumpling house eatery serves Chinese street foods, and a nightly "*Mao to Now*" acrobatic show on an outdoor stage will celebrate China's culture while satirizing the cult of personality (e.g. performers juggle giant red books and form human pyramids resembling the CCP Congress).
- **North Korea (Kim's Kingdom):** Designed as a kitschy, retro-futuristic take on Pyongyang, this zone has **in-character staff who treat visitors like VIP foreign dignitaries** under Kim Jong-un's watch. Guests can tour a replica of the Kumsusan Palace (with comically over-the-top adulation for the "Great Leader" announced on loudspeakers). The featured ride is "*Missile Launch Coaster*," a launched roller coaster that shoots riders through a vertical loop and corkscrew, themed as riding a North Korean "rocket" (the queue winds through a faux underground missile silo). The land's humor is tongue-in-cheek: e.g. the *Kimjong Burger* diner sells "Dear Leader's favorite burgers" and cotton candy shaped like nuclear mushroom clouds. Periodically, a mass choreographed dance parade erupts, with cast members in military uniform performing synchronized moves in the style of DPRK's famous mass games – but dancing to a K-pop remix of a patriotic march, blending the grim and the playful.
- **Others:** Additional micro-experiences and exhibits will highlight figures like Idi Amin, Saddam Hussein, Genghis Khan, and more. Rather than full lands, these will be **side attractions** sprinkled throughout the tower: for example, "*Vlad's Impalement Gauntlet*" in a medieval section (a haunted walk-through with jump scares referencing Vlad the Impaler's methods), or a "*Hall of Infamy*" wax museum featuring dozens of dictators with interactive AR displays telling their life stories. A possible partnership with the **Field Museum or Illinois Holocaust Museum** could create a thoughtful exhibit on genocide and human rights, providing real-world context amid the entertainment. To balance the darkness, the top of the tower will feature "**Hall of Heroes: Democracy Rising**" – an observation deck and exhibit celebrating freedom movements, where visitors can learn about people who fought against tyranny (e.g. Churchill, Václav Havel, Nelson Mandela). This provides a hopeful, uplifting finale as guests take in panoramic views of Chicago's skyline – a visual reminder of the resilience of open societies.

Every zone will incorporate **food, music, and performances authentic to its culture** (with appropriate satirical twists). For instance, the Soviet section's cafeteria might mimic a 1980s

Moscow canteen, serving blini and stroganoff on plastic trays as violinists play somber folk tunes; the Roman area offers wine and roasted meats with roaming actors reciting Latin insults; the Nazi Germany section, while not offering themed dining for sensitivity reasons, could have a biergarten just outside that transitions to a modern German pub, symbolically “liberated” territory. Chicago’s own ethnic communities and sister cities will be engaged to consult on authenticity – e.g. the city’s Polish and Ukrainian communities for Soviet-era details, Chinese community groups for the Mao era costumes and cuisine, etc. This collaboration ensures that while the park satirizes dictators, it **respects the cultures of the ordinary people** who lived under them. By incorporating Chicago’s 28 sister cities (cities on almost every continent ranging from Athens to Shanghai to Warsaw) in programming and exhibits, we reinforce Chicago’s global ties and make Despot Park a truly international celebration (and roasting) of world history.



Architectural Design and Tower Layout

Structure: The new tower will rise approximately 1,500 feet with ~110 floors, becoming one of the tallest buildings in the U.S. Its architecture will be iconic – perhaps featuring a dramatic silhouette that evokes a fortress or palace spire. We envision a tapering form with multiple setbacks (an homage to Trump Tower's design, which had setbacks aligning with neighboring building heights, now repurposed as thematic terrace levels). Each major setback could serve as an **outdoor sky park** corresponding to a theme (e.g. a Hanging Gardens of Babylon terrace for an ancient empire theme, or a “rooftop gulag exercise yard” for the Soviet section with safely enclosed open-air space). The tower's crown might include stylized turrets or an observation dome reminiscent of a dictator's capitol building. Importantly, the facade will be designed to accommodate ride systems: external coaster tracks spiraling around the tower, sky-drop shafts along the sides, and maybe even a **giant Ferris wheel integrated into the structure** (similar to the proposed “360° World” Ferris wheel concept in a vertical park). The engineering team will work closely with ride manufacturers to ensure the building's structural integrity while it hosts dynamic loads from rides.

Vertical Zoning: Internally, the tower is divided into zones by altitude. For example:

- Floors 1–10: Grand Entry Hall and Base Plaza (ticketing, main lobby themed as a “Victory Square” with grandiose statues; also houses administrative offices and park operations center disguised behind thematic facades).
- Floors 11–30: Lower-tier Dictator Lands (perhaps ancient and medieval tyrants).
- Floors 31–60: Mid-tier Dictator Lands (20th-century totalitarians like Nazi and Soviet sections, which require taller show spaces for grand architecture).
- Floors 61–90: Upper-tier Dictator Lands (cold-war era and modern dictators, plus any large thrill rides that need significant vertical height, like drop towers reaching up here).
- Floors 91–100: Observation and Education (Hall of Heroes, skydeck, event spaces).
- Roof: “*Dictators' Club*” – an exclusive themed restaurant and lounge with 360° views, ironically styled as a U.N. Security Council chamber where animatronic dictators “converse” at midnight in an Easter-egg show for guests.

Each zone will be separated by safety buffers and utilitarian floors for ride machinery, utilities, and structural bracing. One advantage of a **vertical park** is the minimal ground footprint relative to the attractions provided. By building up instead of out, we avoid urban sprawl and integrate into Chicago's dense environment. This aligns with modern sustainable thinking: a downtown high-rise park means most visitors can arrive by public transit or walking (reducing car traffic and parking needs), and the building itself can incorporate green technologies like solar panels, wind turbines at high altitude, rainwater harvesting, and efficient HVAC designs.

Rides and Systems: We will incorporate many of the **latest amusement ride technologies** proven in similar projects. For instance, *Skyrise Miami* – a 1,000-ft vertical entertainment tower now under development – plans features like a controlled free-fall ride dropping 540 feet at 95 mph, a base-jumping experience, and transparent exterior slides. These demonstrate the feasibility of extreme vertical rides in a skyscraper. Despot Park will include:

- Two or more high-speed observation elevators (double as thrill rides) on the exterior, offering a “*Great Escape*” experience with glass walls as they rocket guests up/down with dramatic views.
- At least one **spiraling roller coaster** wrapping around the building’s exterior from top to bottom – an engineering marvel where coaster trains descend hundreds of feet, weaving in and out of the facade. (As envisioned by architect Ju-Hyun Kim’s vertical park concept, a coaster can circle down a tower providing incredible aerial views and intense G-forces.)
- Multiple drop towers inside the tower’s spine, possibly themed differently (e.g. one drop ride in darkness for a “dungeon” feel, another with VR headsets for a simulated “bomb dive”).
- A large **indoor theater** (likely around floor 10 or 11) for grand stage shows and parades that can be viewed from multiple levels. We will choreograph a daily “*March of the Dictators*” parade that actually *travels vertically*: performers might start marching on a lower level, then board a lift disguised as a giant elevator platform that brings them to higher floors, allowing guests on different levels to witness the parade sequentially – a novel approach to the theme park parade concept, utilizing vertical space.
- Simulators and dark rides (using trackless vehicle technology or 4D motion simulators) in various zones, to give immersive story experiences where coasters can’t be used. For example, an **immersive tunnel ride** in the North Korea zone might simulate a covert car journey to defect across the DMZ, with motion-base seating and wraparound screens.
- Intimate attractions like haunted walks, mirror mazes, interactive shooting dark rides (perhaps “*Whack-a-Gorbachev*” or “*Revolution Whack-a-Mole*” games for humor), and virtual reality experiences for content that is too sensitive to depict physically (VR can allow visitors to “witness” historical moments, like a VR tour of the Berlin Wall, while keeping physical footprint small).



Safety and comfort are paramount. The building will have robust structural support to handle dynamic loads of rides and crowds. (Notably, the Stratosphere Tower in Las Vegas and *SkyRise Miami* show such designs are achievable; SkyRise is using a concrete-and-steel combo structure to withstand hurricane winds and ride forces.) We will implement advanced damping systems to minimize vibrations from coasters. Multiple large-capacity elevators and emergency stairwells will be in place to move visitors efficiently and evacuate in case of emergency, meeting all fire and life safety codes for high-rises. A comprehensive vertical circulation plan (including an express elevator to the top and local elevators for mid-levels) will prevent bottlenecks.

The tower's base will integrate with the Chicago Riverwalk. We plan to create a **public plaza and waterfront park** at ground level (approximately 1.5 acres, similar to what exists now but reimagined) that welcomes not just ticketed guests but all Chicagoans. This plaza can host outdoor performances (e.g. a nightly fountain and projection show on the river, with imagery of "falling regimes" set to dramatic music and fireworks) and provide space for food trucks and community events. It ensures the development contributes open space and doesn't wall off the river.

In summary, the design marries **the spectacle of a theme park with the sophistication of urban architecture**. By stacking experiences vertically, we make the most of limited land and provide an unrivaled panoramic thrill. As one observer wrote, "stacking the park into a

skyscraper... the altitude will only add to the speed and excitement of rides" – Despot Park will exemplify that principle, delivering extraordinary altitude and adventure in the heart of the city.



Community and Cultural Integration

Despot Park is at its core an **international cultural experience**. We are committed to working hand-in-hand with Chicago's communities and global partners to ensure authenticity, inclusivity, and mutual benefit:

- **Local Ethnic Communities:** Chicago is a mosaic of cultures, many of whom have historical connections to the regimes featured. We will establish advisory councils with representatives from communities such as Polish, Ukrainian, Russian (for Soviet content), Jewish (Holocaust awareness in Nazi section), Chinese, Korean, Southeast Asian, Middle Eastern, African, and Latin American groups. Their input will guide

everything from architectural details to food menus and performance casting. For example, we'll collaborate with the Chinese American Museum of Chicago for the Mao-era exhibits and consult Chicago's Korean American community leaders for the North Korea parody elements, ensuring we don't cross into offensive territory. We intend to **hire performers and staff from these communities** to bring genuine language skills and cultural knowledge to the in-character roles (e.g. Russian-speaking actors as Soviet officers, etc.). By involving communities, the park becomes a source of pride and opportunity – not a caricature created in isolation.

- **Chicago Sister Cities Program:** Chicago has 28 sister cities worldwide, including many in countries that experienced authoritarian rule (e.g. Warsaw, Prague, Moscow, Kyiv, Belgrade, etc.). We will coordinate with **Chicago Sister Cities International** to create programming that highlights these connections. This could include rotating "Sister City Cultural Days" at the park, where, for instance, the **Warsaw, Poland** day features special performances about the Solidarity movement (the pushback against communist dictatorship) to add an uplifting educational dimension. The sister city of **Casablanca, Morocco** can contribute to content on colonial-era sultans or authoritarian governance in that region, ensuring a broad global coverage. Through sister city involvement, foreign governments or cultural institutes might lend artifacts or endorse certain exhibits, giving the park credibility as an educational venue. These partnerships reinforce Chicago's image as a global city celebrating cultural exchange – even if through the lens of past dark chapters.
- **Educational Partnerships:** We will seek partnerships with institutions like the **Chicago History Museum, Illinois Holocaust Museum**, local universities (University of Chicago, Northwestern, UIC) and global human rights organizations. The aim is to balance entertainment with factual history. These partners can assist in curating exhibits, training staff docents, and developing educational materials for school groups. Yes, Despot Park will welcome field trips – we will have age-appropriate program options emphasizing the lessons of history (e.g. tailored tour for high school world history classes, focusing on how dictators rise and fall). Our content development will include consultation with historians to avoid gross inaccuracies. Done right, the park could become an unconventional but effective educational tool, aligning with Illinois learning standards for social science by providing immersive historical simulations.
- **Community Benefits Agreement (CBA):** Prior to construction, we will negotiate a CBA with the City and local aldermen to guarantee that the project delivers tangible benefits. This will include local hiring quotas (for both construction jobs and permanent operations jobs, we will hire from Chicago's neighborhoods, with a focus on underemployed areas), job training programs (in hospitality, entertainment, and technical fields), and perhaps commitments to community use of space (e.g. making the park or plaza available for certain free community events annually). We will also invest in improving local infrastructure (streetscaping, traffic management, possibly contributing to public transit enhancements like a new water taxi stop on the River at the park). The goal is to ensure

Chicagoans feel *ownership* of this park – it's not just a tourist enclave but a civic asset that reflects the city's diversity and humor.

- **Cultural Sensitivity:** By design, this park treads on potentially sensitive historical events. Our approach is guided by respect – we aim to **parody the dictators, not their victims**. Each attraction will be vetted to ensure we are punching up (mocking tyrants' pomposity or brutality) and not trivializing suffering. For instance, while we feature a "Gulag Escape" maze, it will focus on themes of camaraderie and hope rather than the grimness of actual gulags, and signage at the end will briefly acknowledge the real history of Stalin's repressions with links for those curious to learn more. The Nazi section will not use actual swastikas or Nazi salutes; we will create fictitious symbols and names to get the point across without violating sensitivities or Germany's strict laws on Nazi imagery. Similarly, actors will *never* glorify the dictators – their in-character personas will either be buffoonish caricatures or oppressive figures that ultimately get comeuppance in the narrative of each show/ride. This careful balance, informed by community advisers, will allow the park to maintain a darkly comedic tone without crossing into offense.

In summary, community and cultural integration is not just a PR afterthought but **core to the project's DNA**. By involving local and international partners at every stage, we ensure Despot Park remains authentic, educational, and welcomed by those whose histories it portrays. Chicago's ethos of community engagement and cultural celebration will permeate the project, making the park a point of civic pride.



Stakeholders, Partnerships, and Responsibilities

Successfully delivering a project of this magnitude requires a coordinated effort between numerous stakeholders: public authorities across all levels, private developers and financiers, engineering and construction firms, specialty consultants, community organizations, and more. Below we identify key stakeholder groups and outline their roles and responsibilities in both development and operation phases:

- **Lead Developer / Investor (Proponent):** *Despot Park Holdings LLC* – the consortium led by the primary investor (us, as the lead proponent) – will spearhead the project. As developer, we are responsible for overall project vision, securing financing, assembling the professional team, and managing execution to completion. Our duties include conducting feasibility studies, preparing proposal documents (like this one) for city approval, and maintaining the project schedule and budget. We will hire and coordinate the **specialist services team**: the architects, engineers, ride design consultants, etc., exercising executive control over design development. The developer's team will also handle economic analyses (attendance and revenue projections), ensure the business model is sound, and adjust plans as needed to meet financial viability. During

construction, the developer provides project management oversight, regularly reports progress and finances to investors and public stakeholders, and resolves high-level issues. Post-construction, the development entity transitions into (or appoints) the **operating company** that will run the park day-to-day. In that operational phase, the developer/operating company will act as the “*Master Operator*”, setting safety standards, maintenance schedules, marketing strategy, and overall guest experience quality. The operator will continuously train staff, manage ticketing and admissions, handle merchandising and sponsorship deals, and report financial performance to investors and any public partners. Essentially, the developer is the **quarterback** of the project from inception through long-term operation, ensuring the vision is realized and sustained.

- **City of Chicago:** The City is a crucial partner, providing political support, regulatory approvals, and possibly financial incentives. The City’s first role is to exercise **eminent domain** to acquire the Trump Tower site. The Corporation Counsel’s office will lead the legal process to condemn the property for public use, negotiating compensation or litigating as necessary (hopefully with cooperation from current owners to avoid extended court battles). Once acquired, the City (likely through the Department of Planning and Development and the Chicago Infrastructure Trust) will transfer or lease the land to the developer under terms that ensure the public interest (for example, a long-term ground lease at favorable rates in exchange for revenue-sharing or public access provisions). The City’s Department of Buildings and Zoning will fast-track zoning amendments to allow theme park use and increased height if needed. We expect a Planned Development (PD) amendment process with community hearings where the City will champion the project’s benefits to gain public support. The City will also coordinate infrastructure support: improving road access, adjusting traffic signals, and possibly expanding public transit options (e.g. adding a CTA bus route or encouraging a nearby ‘L’ station enhancement to serve the park). City departments like CDOT (Transportation) will review our traffic management plans, and the Mayor’s Office will likely set up a dedicated **Project Task Force** to streamline inter-agency coordination (including police, fire, public works, etc.). Chicago will also facilitate **financing mechanisms**: for instance, designating the site as a Tax-Increment Financing (TIF) district to reinvest new tax revenue into the project, or issuing revenue bonds for public portions of the development (such as the Riverwalk expansion). The City Council’s Finance Committee may help authorize bonds or infrastructure funding, given the expected boost in tax receipts and jobs. Throughout construction, City inspectors ensure code compliance; Chicago Fire Department and Buildings will particularly ensure our unique rides in a high-rise meet safety codes. Closer to opening, the City’s tourism bureau (Choose Chicago) will collaborate on marketing, branding Despot Park as a marquee attraction in city promotions. In summary, the City’s role is to **enable and oversee**: from acquiring land and approving plans, to supporting infrastructure and ensuring public safety, to marketing the finished park as a jewel of Chicago.
- **Cook County and State of Illinois:** The county government’s role is relatively limited but not insignificant. Cook County may assist with property tax arrangements – for

instance, offering a temporary property tax abatement or classification incentive to make the project's early years more financially sustainable. The county also manages certain permits (like demolition permits for large structures in coordination with the City) and will be involved in any required county transit or road modifications. The State of Illinois can be a valuable partner in funding and promotion. We will seek inclusion of Despot Park in the state's economic development programs, possibly obtaining grants or low-interest loans via the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) for job creation aspects. The Illinois Tourism Office can provide marketing support and potentially grants for tourism infrastructure. Since the project will draw national/international visitors, we may request the State to designate it as an official "Illinois Centennial Project" (for 2033) to justify some state investment. Also, if any legislative changes are needed (e.g. to authorize certain bonding or to strengthen eminent domain case for economic development), we will coordinate with state lawmakers. Illinois might also assist via its **infrastructure programs** – for example, if improvements to nearby state-managed roads or transit (Metra or regional rail) are beneficial, those could be funded in part by the state. In the operational phase, state agencies like Illinois OSHA will monitor ongoing ride safety, and the Illinois Emergency Management Agency might advise on security protocols for such a high-profile site. Overall, the State and County serve to **augment the project's support structure** – financially and regulatorily – beyond what the City alone can do.

- **Federal Government:** While primarily a local project, certain federal involvement will be pursued. For funding, the project might tap into federal economic development grants (e.g. from the EDA if a case is made for significant job creation and urban redevelopment). Given the educational angle, we could seek a National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) grant for the historical exhibits, or Department of Education support for innovative learning environments. One intriguing financing route is the **EB-5 Investor Visa program**: similar to SkyRise Miami, which raised overseas investment via EB-5 by offering visas for capital, we could raise a portion of funds from foreign investors – this involves federal oversight by USCIS. We will engage with Illinois's EB-5 Regional Center to structure this if needed. Federal agencies will also be involved in oversight: the U.S. Department of Labor (for workforce standards), and perhaps the U.S. Department of Homeland Security for security considerations (as a tall building and tourist site, Despot Park could be seen as a potential target; we will collaborate on anti-terrorism design and will likely invite DHS to do a security assessment). If our grand opening draws international dignitaries, the State Department and customs might coordinate to facilitate their visits as well. Finally, if a Worlds Fair-like expo is planned for the opening year, we might interface with the Bureau of International Expositions (BIE) – though our event is not an official Expo, we will produce something analogous that might benefit from some federal cultural support (similar to how the 1893 and 1933 World's Fairs had federal commissioners). In summary, the federal role is supportive: providing **funding opportunities, visa-enabled investment, and ensuring safety/standards** at a site of national interest.

- **Design & Engineering Team:** This encompasses the **architectural firm, structural engineer, civil engineer, mechanical/electrical/plumbing (MEP) engineers, theme park design consultants**, and various sub-consultants (acoustics, vertical transportation, facade engineering, etc.). We will select a renowned architecture firm with skyscraper experience (candidates include Skidmore, Owings & Merrill – who designed Trump Tower, poetic justice to have them redesign the site; or Gensler, or Adrian Smith + Gordon Gill). The architect will lead the overall design aesthetic and ensure functional layout of spaces. Structural engineering will be handled by a top firm (e.g. Thornton Tomasetti or Magnusson Klemencic Associates (MKA) – MKA is actually on the SkyRise Miami project). They must devise a core and outrigger system capable of supporting ride loads and perhaps asymmetrical weight distribution. They'll also incorporate dampers for wind and ride movement synergy. Ride engineering consultants (like Intamin for tower rides, Bolliger & Mabillard for coasters, or Simworx for simulators) will integrate the attractions into the building design from the start – positioning track routes, calculating forces, and working with the structural engineer on support placements. MEP engineers will design high-capacity ventilation (important for indoor attractions with special effects), robust electrical systems to power dozens of rides and show systems, and backup generators for safety (ensuring riders can be evacuated even in power outages). Fire/life safety engineers will shape the egress routes, fire suppression (perhaps a water mist system for large volume spaces), and smoke control for the tall, compartmentalized structure. This professional team is essentially responsible for **turning the concept into a buildable plan**, meeting all codes and our creative goals. During construction, they will do construction administration: reviewing shop drawings, inspecting key moments like coaster track installations, and solving onsite issues.
- **Construction Contractors:** We will conduct a competitive bid or negotiation to hire a **General Contractor (GC)** or a consortium (perhaps a GC teamed with a ride installation specialist). Given the complexity, a **Construction Manager at Risk** approach may be used, bringing the contractor on early in design for input. We anticipate involving firms with supertall building experience (e.g. Lendlease or Turner Construction, or local powerhouse Walsh Construction) possibly in partnership with specialty firms for demolition (Heneghan Wrecking or similar for the delicate teardown of Trump Tower) and for ride erection (companies that have built major coasters or observation wheels). The GC will be responsible for all on-site work: site prep and Trump Tower demolition, foundation reinforcement (we likely can reuse the deep caissons of Trump Tower, but modifications might be needed), vertical construction of the tower (likely a steel frame or steel-reinforced concrete core with outriggers), facade installation, interior build-outs for themed areas, and integration of ride hardware. A project of this scope will involve numerous subcontractors (steel fabricators, concrete formwork, elevator installers, electricians, plumbers, finish trades, scenic fabricators for theme sets, etc.). The GC/CM's job is to coordinate these trades, maintain quality and safety, and keep to schedule. They will also set up heavy cranes (possibly a tower crane climbing with the structure) and maybe barges on the river for delivering large components. Given the tight downtown site, careful logistics and possibly street closures will be needed, to be

coordinated with the City. The **contractor also handles procurement** of materials – we'll require top-grade steel and concrete; we might source specialty materials globally (e.g. high-strength steel from Luxembourg or Japan for slender structure members). The GC ensures testing and commissioning at the end: test every ride, every elevator, every fire alarm in a dry run to be ready for certification by safety inspectors (including the State's amusement ride inspectors). In short, the contractors bear the **responsibility of physically realizing the park**, safely and to spec.

- **Ride Manufacturers and Vendors:** Parallel to the building construction, we will engage ride manufacturers to design, fabricate, and install the major attractions. Companies like **Intamin Amusement Rides**, who specialize in tower rides and coasters, or **S&S – Sansei** (known for drop towers and launch coasters) will likely be contracted for pieces like the spiral coaster and drop rides. **Simworx or Triotech** can provide media-based dark rides and simulators. These vendors will work under the main contractor or directly with the developer (depending on procurement strategy) to ensure ride spaces are built to their requirements and then to deliver the ride systems (track segments, vehicles, control systems). They will do on-site assembly, supervised by their engineers, and extensive testing with weighted dummies before handover. We will also contract specialty theatrical suppliers for items like show lighting, sound systems, animatronics (e.g. Garner Holt Productions for lifelike moving figures of historical characters), and special effects (smoke machines, pyrotechnics for show scenes). This network of **equipment suppliers** is crucial for creating the immersive environment. We'll coordinate their schedules – for example, the coaster track must be installed when the building structure reaches certain heights, meaning structural steel erection and track erection go hand in hand. The ride manufacturers also have a long-term role: many provide maintenance services or at least training for our maintenance staff, and some rides need periodic factory recertification. We will likely sign maintenance contracts to ensure spare parts and tech support for critical systems over the years.
- **Finance and Insurance Partners:** A project of this scale (multi-billion dollar) will involve complex financing. We anticipate a **finance syndicate** including banks, private equity, possibly bond investors, and perhaps a city-state-federal funding mix. An investment bank or financial advisor (e.g. Goldman Sachs or JP Morgan's municipal finance division) will help structure the capital stack. Part of the funding may come from issuing **municipal bonds** (if the City/State backs certain public portions like infrastructure or land acquisition). These could be tax-exempt bonds repaid by project revenues – essentially making it a public-private partnership (P3). We might also consider a **Project Revenue Bond** where future ticket sales and concessions revenue are pledged to bondholders; insurance/bond rating agencies would evaluate our projections. We will hire accounting firms (like Deloitte or KPMG) to audit and validate financial models, and eventually to provide ongoing accounting, bookkeeping, and compliance reporting once operations start. On the insurance side, we must secure comprehensive coverage: during construction, **builder's risk insurance** to cover any structural damage or accidents, and general liability to cover construction-site injuries or third-party damages.

For operations, we'll need **amusement park liability insurance**, property insurance for the tower (likely through a consortium of insurers given the high value), and specialty coverage such as terrorism insurance (given the profile), and event cancellation insurance for the grand opening events. Surety bonds will be obtained to guarantee the performance of contractors (standard in construction to protect the developer/City against contractor default). We will work with major insurers/brokers (like Aon, which is incidentally headquartered in Chicago) to put together an insurance program. They will also advise on risk management strategies. Financially, we plan a **multi-pronged investment approach** (detailed in the Investment section below), and each investor class will have its due diligence: we'll involve legal and financial experts to ensure all stakeholder interests (public and private) are protected in agreements.

- **Legal Team:** Legal services are needed throughout. We will engage a top law firm (or a few with different specialties). Key legal tasks include: eminent domain proceedings (led by attorneys experienced in land use law, likely coordinating with the City's Law Department), contract drafting for construction and procurement (ensuring all contracts with GC, consultants, vendors allocate risks properly), intellectual property (trademarking the park name/branding and ensuring no infringement in how we depict historical figures or use parody content), labor law (for hiring union contractors and complying with prevailing wage requirements on any public funds), finance and securities law (for issuing bonds or getting EB-5 investments, possibly preparing a private placement memorandum or public offering statement), and ongoing compliance with safety and operational regulations (liaising with Illinois Department of Labor's amusement ride safety division, etc.). We anticipate needing to negotiate a **Development Agreement** with the City – our lawyers will negotiate terms like project milestones, City incentives, community benefit commitments, and default remedies. Additionally, a **Management Agreement** might be needed if the City retains some ownership (for example, if the land is city-owned and leased, we'd have an operating lease). All this will be under legal review. The legal team will also set up the corporate structure (perhaps a special purpose entity for the project, with appropriate liability protections). Given the edgy nature of our theme, lawyers will review content for defamation or cultural sensitivities – while dead dictators can't sue, we must be careful if any living individuals or sensitive symbols are involved (e.g. avoiding forbidden symbols or hate speech laws for international tourists, etc.). Finally, they'll handle any claims or litigation that arise (for example, if any party challenges the eminent domain or if any resident group files suit – we will prepare robust defense that the project serves a public good with precedent on our side).
- **Community and Public Relations Partners:** We will retain a professional PR and communications firm (or use an in-house PR team) to manage community outreach and media relations. Pre-construction, they will organize public meetings and presentations to local stakeholders (residents, businesses, civic groups) to explain the project benefits and listen to concerns – essentially helping fulfill our community partnership approach. They will help craft the narrative (emphasizing job creation, removal of a divisive

landmark, Chicago leading innovation, etc.). A clear communications plan is crucial especially around the Trump Tower demolition (to ensure public safety info is disseminated and to manage any political sensitivity). During construction, PR will keep neighbors informed of schedules (for any disruptive work like loud demolition blasts or street closures). As opening nears, the PR/marketing team will kick into high gear to promote the park regionally and globally. This involves coordinating the **press releases** (as included at the end of this proposal) at each milestone, arranging press tours, and managing social media buzz. We'll also partner with local tourism bureaus to include Despot Park in travel campaigns. **Marketing firms** may be contracted to develop the park's branding, logo, and advertising creatives (the dry humor can extend to ads – e.g. "Join the Revolution – Opening 2033!" slogans on billboards). We will allocate budget for an opening-year marketing blitz including traditional media, digital campaigns, and possibly cross-promotions (maybe with airlines or hotels). In operations, ongoing marketing and PR will keep attendance strong – offering new seasonal events (e.g. a "Reign of Terror" Halloween event, or special exhibits during relevant anniversaries of historical events). PR will also manage any crises or controversies in a transparent manner, should they arise.

To summarize this stakeholder structure: **Despot Park Chicago is a true public-private-community partnership.** Each party – the developer/investor, the city/state/federal authorities, the contractors and consultants, the cultural/community groups, and service providers – has clearly defined responsibilities that interlock like gears to drive the project forward. By securing commitments and aligning incentives for all stakeholders from the outset, we will mitigate risks and ensure everyone works collaboratively toward the common goal: delivering a revolutionary (pun intended) amusement park that Chicago and the world can be proud of.

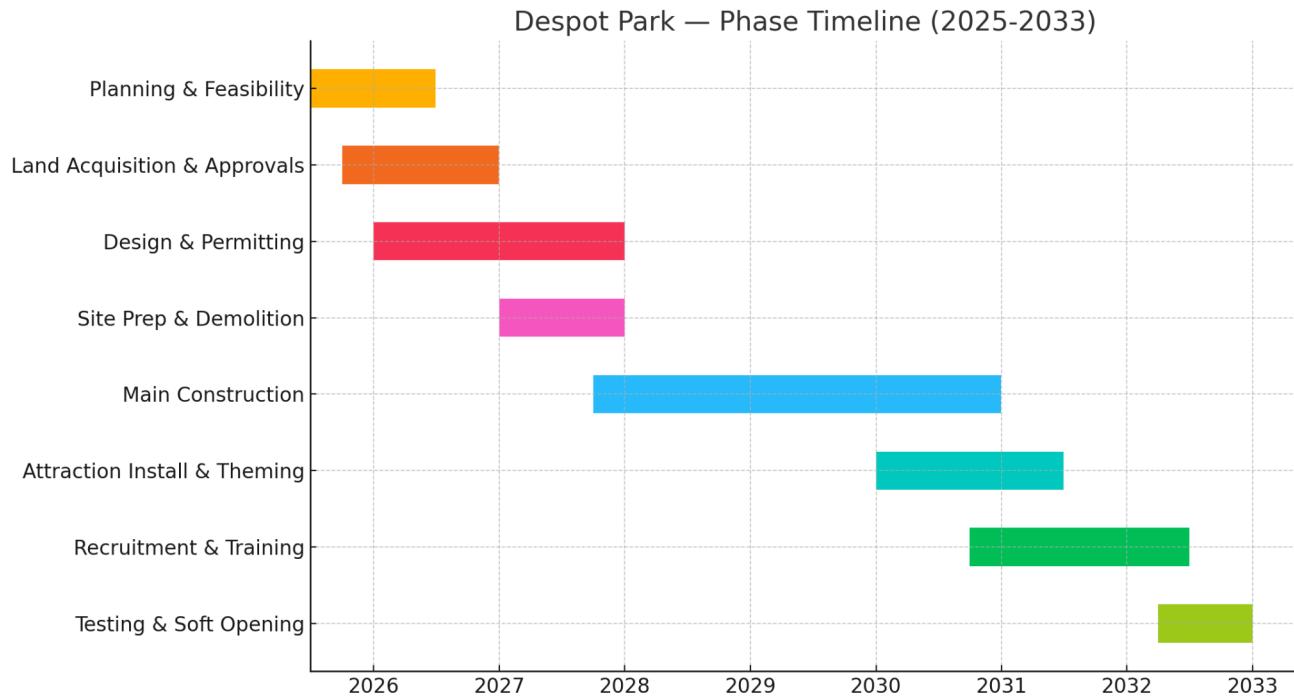
The following table outlines major stakeholder responsibilities at a glance:

| Stakeholder | Key Responsibilities |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Lead Developer/Investor | Concept & design oversight; securing financing; hiring team; project management; reporting; ultimately operating the park (staffing, maintenance, marketing, financial performance). |
| City of Chicago | Land acquisition via eminent domain; zoning and permits; possible funding (TIF/bonds); infrastructure upgrades (roads, transit); inspections/code enforcement; facilitating community input; promoting tourism. |
| Cook County & Illinois | Permitting support; potential tax incentives; state grants/loans; integration into state tourism campaigns; infrastructure aid (state roads, transit); regulatory oversight (ride safety, labor) at state level. |

| | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Federal Agencies | Economic development support (grants); EB-5 investment framework; safety/security advisories (DHS); upholding labor and accessibility standards; potential participation in opening expo events. |
| Architects & Engineers | Master planning and themed design; structural/HVAC/electrical systems design; integrating ride systems structurally; ensuring code compliance; construction drawings; on-site supervision and problem-solving during build. |
| Construction Contractor | Demolition of existing tower; procurement of materials; construction of new skyscraper and all facilities; schedule and cost control; subcontractor management; safety management on site; testing & commissioning of building and rides. |
| Ride Manufacturers | Detailed design of coasters, towers, simulators, etc.; fabrication of ride components; on-site installation of rides; testing and certification of ride safety; training maintenance staff; ongoing technical support for ride systems. |
| Community/Cultural Orgs | Advisory on content authenticity and sensitivity; collaboration on cultural programming; helping public outreach; benefiting from jobs and engagement opportunities the project provides. |
| Financial Partners | Providing capital (loans, equity, bonds); conducting financial due diligence; possibly managing bond issuance; establishing construction draws and disbursement controls; monitoring project financial health. |
| Insurance & Legal | Insuring construction and operations (covering accidents, liability, property damage, etc.); obtaining surety bonds; handling contracts (development agreement, construction contracts, leases); guiding regulatory compliance; managing any legal disputes. |
| Operating Team (post-opening) | Day-to-day park operations: ride operations and audits, maintenance, guest services, security, food & beverage, merchandising, marketing & promotions, finance & accounting; continual training and safety drills. |

By clearly delineating these roles and forging partnerships (e.g. with ride suppliers Intamin/Simworx as official partners, with community groups via MOUs, and with government via formal agreements), we set the stage for a smooth project execution. Each stakeholder will be engaged through regular coordination meetings led by a Project Steering Committee (with reps from developer, city, contractors, community, etc.), ensuring transparency and issue resolution collaboratively.

Project Phases, Timeline, and Milestones



Despot Park will be developed in a single grand phase but with many sub-phases and milestones along the way. The **overall project duration** is expected to span approximately 8 years (late 2025 through mid-2033) from initiation to grand opening. Below is an overview of the key phases and their timeline:

- 1. Planning & Feasibility (Q3 2025 – Q2 2026):** Immediately following proposal acceptance, we will undertake detailed feasibility studies, market analysis, and schematic designs. During this phase, the project team (developer, architects, finance, legal) refines the master plan and solidifies the business case. By Q1 2026, we aim to present a finalized plan to the City Council and Plan Commission for initial feedback. Community town halls will occur to gather input. By Q2 2026, the project should secure preliminary approvals and commitments from investors, enabling us to move forward confidently.
- 2. Land Acquisition & Approvals (Q4 2025 – Q4 2026):** In parallel with planning, the City's legal machinery for eminent domain will commence by late 2025. We expect the City Council to authorize acquisition of 401 N. Wabash by early 2026. Negotiations or court proceedings with the Trump Tower ownership (Trump Org and condo owners) would occur through mid-2026. A fair compensation package will be determined (we estimate ~\$1.0 billion, see Investment section), and the City will take title to the land. By late 2026, we expect to have full site control. During this time, formal zoning approvals will be obtained: the site's Planned Development zoning amendment to allow theme park use and increased height likely by mid-2026 after public hearings. All major permits for

demolition and construction will be in process by end of 2026. Also in this phase, we will finalize any public incentive agreements (TIF district creation, bond ordinances) and close on financing sources.

3. **Design & Permitting (Q1 2026 – Q4 2027):** After feasibility, the architectural and engineering teams proceed with detailed design (design development and construction documents). By Q4 2026, we'll have design development drawings to solicit contractor bids and to submit for building permit review. Permitting will be staged: a demolition permit for Trump Tower by early 2027, foundation permit for the new tower by mid-2027, and full building permit by late 2027. The ride systems also go through design during this time, with vendors producing shop drawings and prototypes. Coordination between theme designers and architects is intense in this phase. By late 2027, 100% construction plans are ready and all necessary permits and approvals (including FAA approval for tall structure if needed) are secured.
4. **Site Preparation & Demolition (Q1 2027 – Q4 2027):** Once owners vacate Trump Tower (we will assist with relocation for residents/hotel etc. by end of 2026), demolition begins in earnest early 2027. Given the tower's height, we expect a hybrid demolition approach: **top-down deconstruction** floor by floor using cranes and scaffolds. This meticulous process will take around 9-12 months. We plan publicity around key moments (perhaps the ceremonial removal of the Trump sign or toppling of the spire). By Q4 2027, the old structure is fully removed and the site cleared to ground level. During this phase, we also begin foundation work for the new tower (it's possible to start while demolition of upper floors continues, after ensuring structural separation). The existing deep caissons from Trump Tower can hopefully be reused or augmented – engineers will verify their integrity and capacity; reinforcing or adding piles might be needed to support any changed loading. Utility rerouting and initial earthworks happen here too.
5. **Main Construction (Q4 2027 – Q4 2030):** The new tower's construction will span roughly 3 years. Foundation and substructure work through early 2028, tower superstructure erection from mid-2028 to late 2029 (roughly 100 stories in ~18 months means a pace of ~1 floor per week, feasible with modern construction). By mid-2029, the tower should be "topped out," an occasion we'll mark with a press event when the final beam is placed (likely with an evergreen tree and flags, per topping tradition). Concurrently, ride installation will occur in segments – e.g. coaster track segments will be attached as soon as the structure in those areas is ready; the big drop tower shaft might be built into the core as the core rises. The facade (curtain wall) will be installed from 2029 into 2030, enclosing the building. Interior theming and fit-out will start on lower floors as soon as those floors are built and enclosed (we'll employ a "stacked trades" approach, so while upper floors are still being built, lower floors are being fitted out). By late 2030, all major construction and exterior work will be complete. The building will have permanent power/water by then and will be largely weather-tight, moving us to the next phase.

6. **Attraction Installation & Theming (Q1 2030 – Q2 2031):** This phase overlaps with late construction but extends beyond structural completion. Specialized crews will install show elements: scenery, props, animatronics, lighting, sound, and ride control systems. Ride manufacturer teams conduct final assembly of coasters, simulators, etc., and begin rigorous testing with our engineers and state ride inspectors. We will also outfit restaurants, retail stores, and museums with their equipment (kitchens, display cases, etc.) during this period. By the end of 2030, we should have the majority of attractions physically in place. The first half of 2031 is for fine-tuning: programming the synchronized multimedia (music, lights, special effects) in each attraction, rehearsing performer acts on-site in their actual venues, and conducting **test runs** of rides. We'll run each coaster a thousand cycles empty, then with test riders (engineers/staff) to tweak speed and comfort. Life-safety systems (fire alarms, sprinklers, evacuation route drills) will be tested thoroughly tower-wide. Theming crews will apply final paint, signage, and detailing to ensure every corner meets the immersive standard. Meanwhile, City inspectors and fire marshals will do final inspections by zone. We plan to obtain a Temporary Certificate of Occupancy for certain areas by Q1 2031 to start training staff inside.
7. **Recruitment & Training (Q4 2030 – Q2 2032):** Even before construction completes, we will ramp up hiring. By late 2030, we'll hire key operations managers (general manager, heads of maintenance, food service director, security chief, etc.) so they can establish procedures. Mass recruitment of frontline staff begins around mid-2031, roughly one year prior to opening. We expect to create ~3,000 permanent jobs (ride operators, entertainers, guest services, retail, food service, custodial, technicians, etc.). We will host job fairs in Chicago neighborhoods, working with workforce agencies to ensure local hiring. Once hired, staff will undergo extensive training: safety protocols, customer service, and role-specific skills (e.g. ride ops learn each ride's controls, actors memorize scripts and practice interactions). For roles that involve **in-character acting** (like historical guards or narrators), we'll even run a "Despot Boot Camp" – a training program where cultural consultants and theater directors coach staff on accents, improvisation within historical context, and balancing humor with sensitivity. By early 2032, all departments should have full staff on board. We'll conduct trial operations (soft openings) with staff to practice: inviting employees' families or selected community members as test guests to run through park operations in spring 2032. This will reveal any operational kinks (like load/unload times too slow, or crowd flow issues) that we can address with adjustments or more training.
8. **Testing, Commissioning & Soft Opening (Q2 2032 – Q4 2032):** In mid to late 2032, we'll gradually commission the entire facility. This includes obtaining all final certifications: the City will issue the Certificate of Occupancy when all building systems pass tests, and the Illinois Department of Labor's Amusement Ride Safety Division will license each ride after thorough inspection. We anticipate inviting safety experts and maybe independent theme park consultants to double-check everything – there's no room for error in safety. We plan a "*soft opening*" period in late 2032 where the park

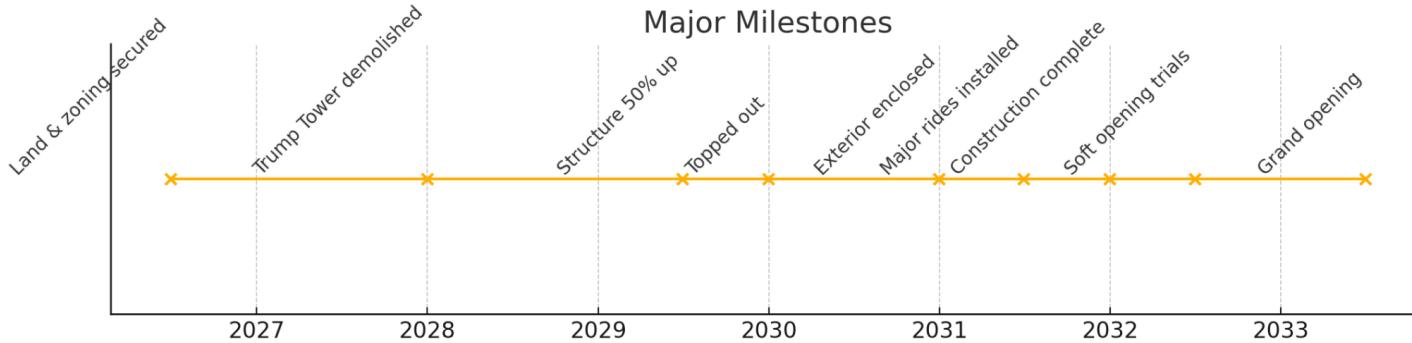
opens in a limited capacity (perhaps select invite-only days or limited hours for the public at discounted rates) to further test real-world use. This period helps us refine operational efficiency and gauge guest reactions to content. Any needed tweaks (either physical or in show programming) can be made before the grand opening. Marketing during this time will intentionally be low-key to manage attendance until we're fully polished. By end of 2032, all systems should be running smoothly, staff fully up to speed, and the park ready for its close-up.

9. **Grand Opening & World's Fair Year (Q3 2033):** We target summer 2033 for the official grand opening gala and the kickoff of a year-long "Dictators' World Fair" celebration. Planning for grand opening events will, of course, have started much earlier (around 2031 we will have a dedicated team for events). But the execution comes in 2033: an opening ceremony extravaganza with fireworks, performances from partner countries (maybe marching bands from sister cities, cultural dances, etc.), and ribbon-cutting by Chicago's Mayor and other dignitaries – possibly even international guests from countries whose history is represented. This event will be globally covered by media, given the unique concept. Following opening day, we'll roll out a series of special events in the inaugural year to sustain momentum: e.g. **Dictators on Parade** summer festival (weekly parades with extra floats), a "Tyrants of Taste" food festival featuring global cuisine each month focusing on one region, academic lecture series in our Hall of Heroes or partnership with the University of Chicago's history department for panel discussions (to lend gravitas), and a climactic "Freedom Day" one year after opening to symbolically "liberate" the park (perhaps an annual tradition where for one day, staff switch from dictator costumes to national dress of liberated peoples and celebrate democracy – a cathartic inversion of the theme). By the end of the opening year, we expect to have firmly established Despot Park as a must-see attraction, with operations normalized and a strong brand identity.

The Gantt chart below provides a visual timeline of these phases and milestones:

Figure: Project Timeline Overview. Key phases from planning through grand opening are shown. Overlap between phases (e.g. design overlapping with approvals, recruitment overlapping with construction) is deliberate to compress the overall schedule. The goal is to open by mid-2033, aligning with the centennial of the 1933 Chicago World's Fair.

This schedule is aggressive but achievable with efficient management and strong stakeholder support. We have built in some float for potential delays (for example, legal delays in acquisition or permit reviews). If everything proceeds optimally, the park could potentially open a bit earlier (late 2032), but our target of 2033 ensures we have contingency time. Regular schedule reviews will be conducted by the project management team, and a critical path method (CPM) schedule will be maintained in detail by the construction manager to track thousands of tasks.



Intermediate milestones to gauge progress include:

- **Q2 2026:** Zoning and land acquisition secured – Green light to start demolition planning.
- **Q4 2027:** Trump Tower demolished – Site is clear.
- **Q2 2029:** Structure halfway up (~55 floors) – Coaster and drop tower installation begins.
- **Q4 2029:** Building topped-out at full height – major structural work done.
- **Q4 2030:** Exterior enclosed – safe from weather, focus shifts inside.
- **Q2 2031:** Major rides installed – start testing them.
- **Q4 2031:** All construction complete – begin extensive testing and training.
- **Mid-2032:** Soft opening trials – final rehearsal for grand opening.
- **Mid-2033: Grand Opening Day** – open to the world.

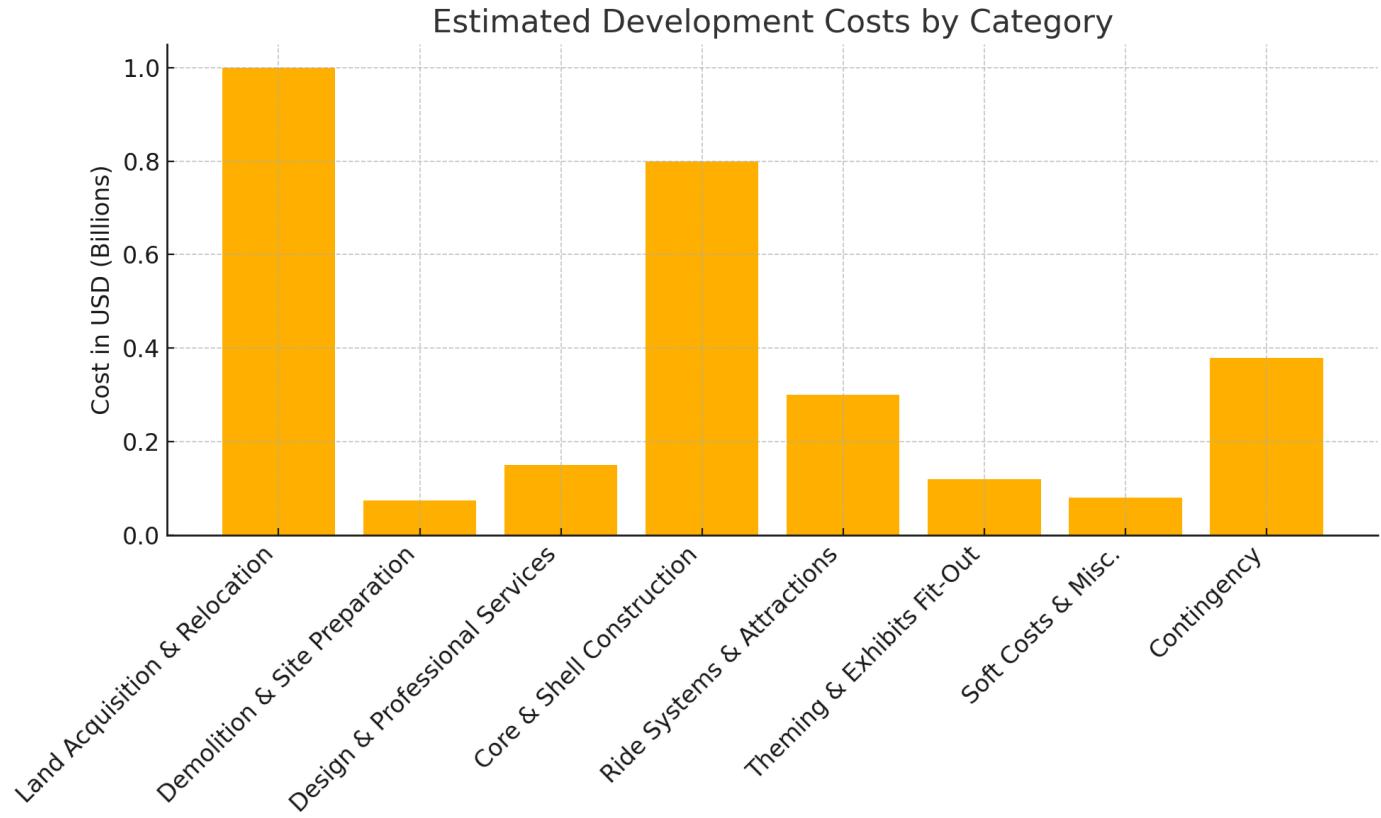
We will continuously update the City and investors on milestone achievements as reflected in our press releases (see Appendix). By adhering to this timeline, we align the grand opening with summer 2033, allowing us to capitalize on a centennial marketing theme (“Century of Progress to Century of Regress – see how far we’ve come by looking into how low we could go!” might be a cheeky tagline referencing the 1933 fair).

Financial Plan and Investment Overview

A project of this scale requires a robust financial plan with realistic cost estimates and a diversified funding strategy. We have carefully projected capital costs, operating revenues/expenses, and identified potential funding sources to ensure the project's feasibility

and long-term success. All financial figures are given in 2025 dollars (we include expected inflation in contingency).

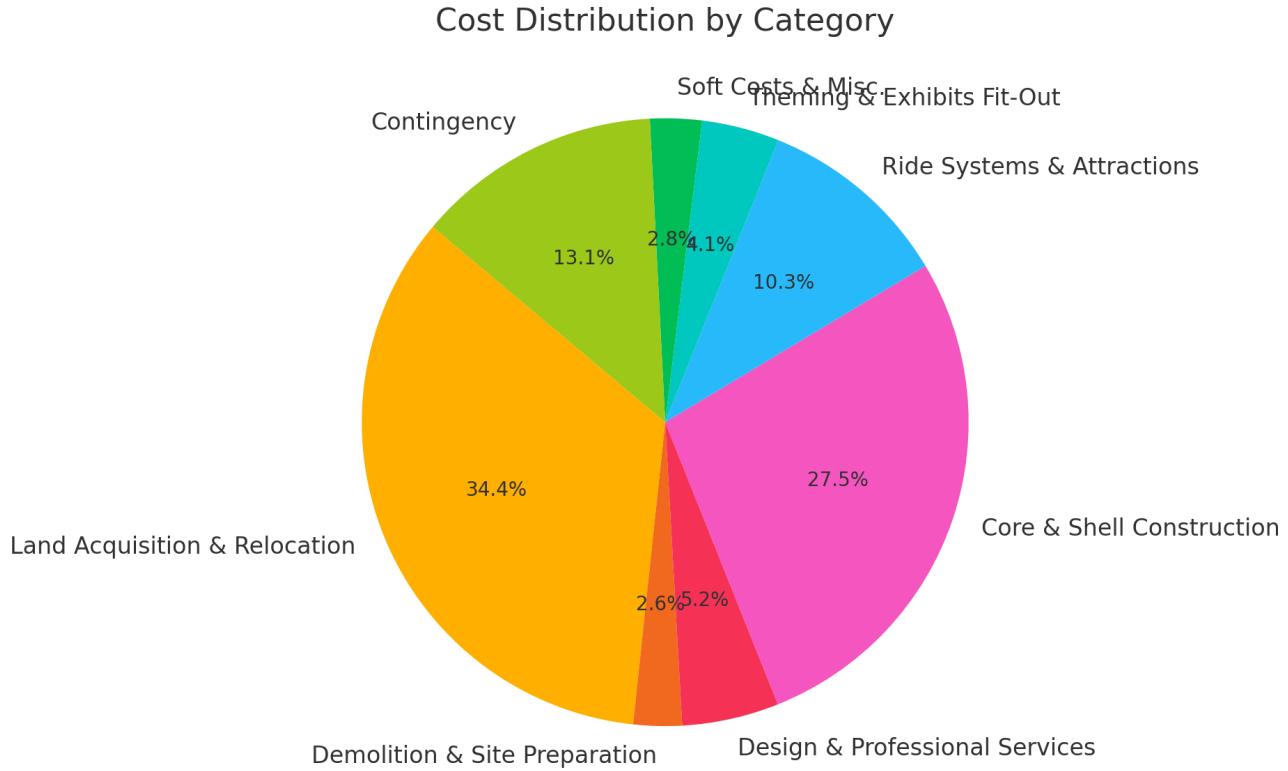
Estimated Development Costs



Based on preliminary quantity surveys, industry benchmarks, and consultation with cost experts (including data from comparable projects like skyscraper constructions and theme park rides), we present the following summary **cost breakdown** for the project:

| Cost Category | Estimated Cost (USD) |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Land Acquisition & Relocation | \$1,000,000,000 (<i>Est. fair market compensation for Trump Tower property, including buyouts of 486 condo units and commercial interests; budgeted generously to ensure successful eminent domain settlements.</i>) |
| Demolition & Site Preparation | \$75,000,000 (<i>Careful deconstruction of 98-story tower, debris removal, site clearing, and foundation modification work.</i>) |

| | |
|--|--|
| Design & Professional Services | \$150,000,000 (<i>Architectural and engineering design fees, specialty consultants for rides, legal, permits, project management fees, insurance during construction, etc. Approximately 10% of construction cost.</i>) |
| Core & Shell Construction | \$800,000,000 (<i>Erection of the 110-story tower structure, foundations, steel/concrete superstructure, exterior curtain wall, basic mechanical/electrical/plumbing systems, elevators, life-safety systems, etc.</i>) |
| Ride Systems & Attractions | \$300,000,000 (<i>Design, fabrication, and installation of all major ride hardware: roller coaster, drop towers, simulators, Ferris wheel, show control systems, etc. Includes integration costs.</i>) |
| Theming & Exhibits Fit-Out | \$120,000,000 (<i>Scenic fabrication, set pieces, lighting and sound systems, animatronics, museum exhibit installations, theatrical equipment, signage, and décor across all themed areas.</i>) |
| Soft Costs & Misc. (Permits, fees, financing) | \$80,000,000 (<i>Permit fees, development charges, interest during construction, marketing pre-opening, staff recruitment/training prior to opening, etc.</i>) |
| Contingency (≈15%) | \$380,000,000 (<i>Reserve for unforeseen costs, design evolutions, or inflation beyond projections over the multi-year build. This also covers potential cost escalation due to schedule acceleration or supply chain issues.</i>) |
| <hr/> <hr/> | |
| Total Project Cost (Rounded) | \$2,905,000,000 (~\$2.9 billion)* |



(Cost figures are preliminary and will be refined in the next design phase. They err on the side of caution to ensure funding adequacy. By comparison, SkyRise Miami's 1,000-ft tower was valued at \$430 million (with far fewer attractions), and Chicago's 2009 Trump Tower cost ~\$850 million. Our cost is higher due to extensive ride systems, premium finishes for theming, and inflation over the next years.)

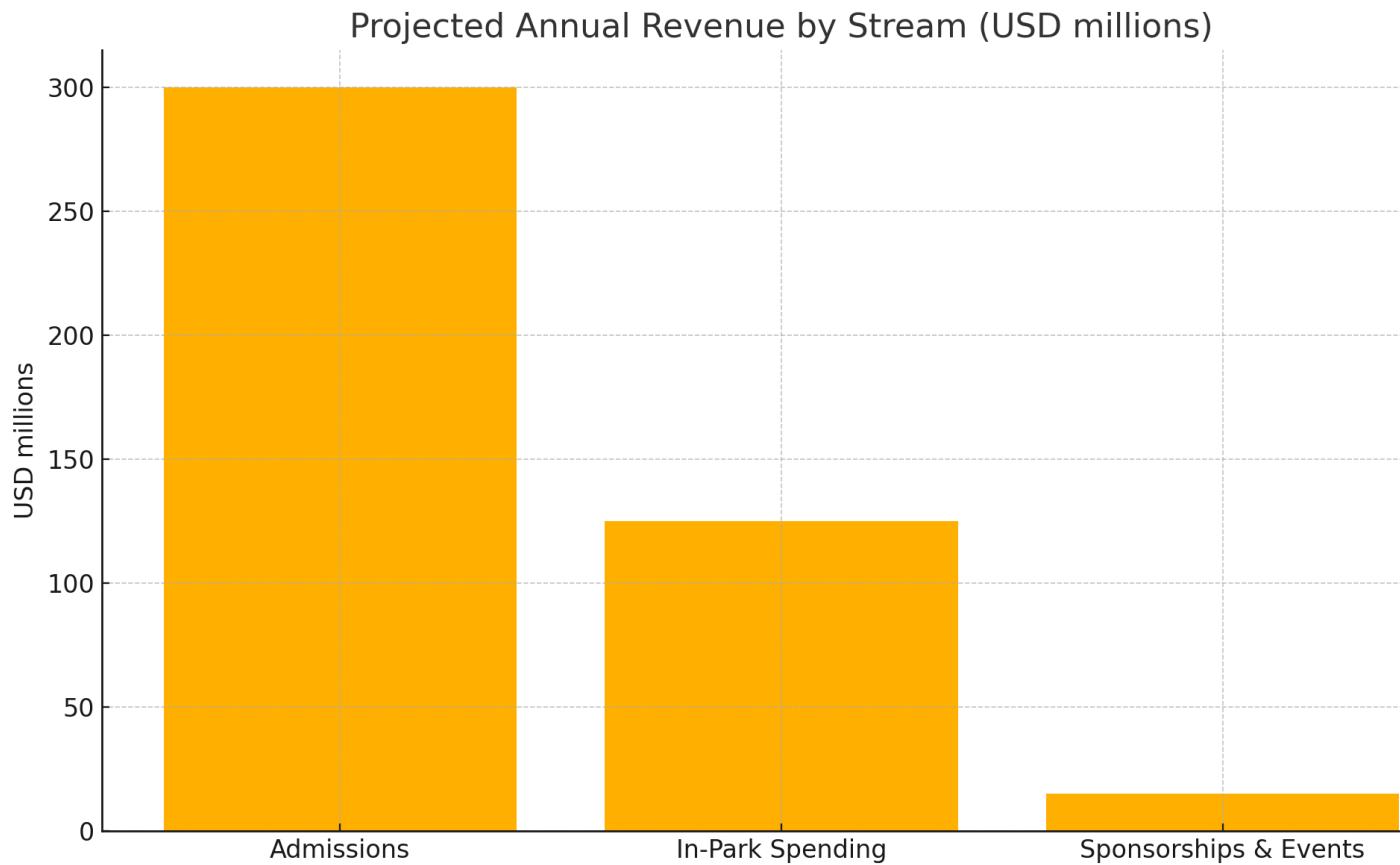
Several points of note on costs:

- The **land acquisition** cost is significant. We assume roughly \$1B to compensate owners. (Trump Tower's residential condos sell for upwards of \$1,000 per sq.ft.; with ~2.6M sq.ft. total area, we budget ~\$385/sq.ft. on average to account for the mix of hotel, residential, and retail value and any legal fees/settlements). If negotiations go smoothly or if certain owners donate or discount (for civic reasons), this may come in lower. Alternatively, if legal battles occur, the City might incur additional legal expenses (we have allocated some in soft costs).
- **Construction core & shell** at \$800M is in line with other supertalls. The Trump Tower's core cost was ~\$847M in 2005-09. We anticipate similar magnitude; efficiencies from reusing foundation might offset the additional complexity of incorporating rides.
- **Ride systems \$300M:** This covers numerous custom attractions. For context, a single high-end indoor dark ride can cost \$20–30M; a custom coaster of record-setting scale

might be \$40M; drop towers and simulators in the single-digit millions each. Given we have multiple major rides, this budget is reasonable. (SkyRise Miami's rides were included in its ~\$430M total; ours are more numerous, hence the larger allocation.)

- The **contingency** of \$380M (~15% of hard costs) is prudent for a first-of-its-kind endeavor. This also acts as a buffer for inflation: if construction mid-way faces cost increases (e.g. material price spikes), we have a cushion to cover it without needing additional funding. If contingency remains unused, it reduces debt or can fund enhancements.

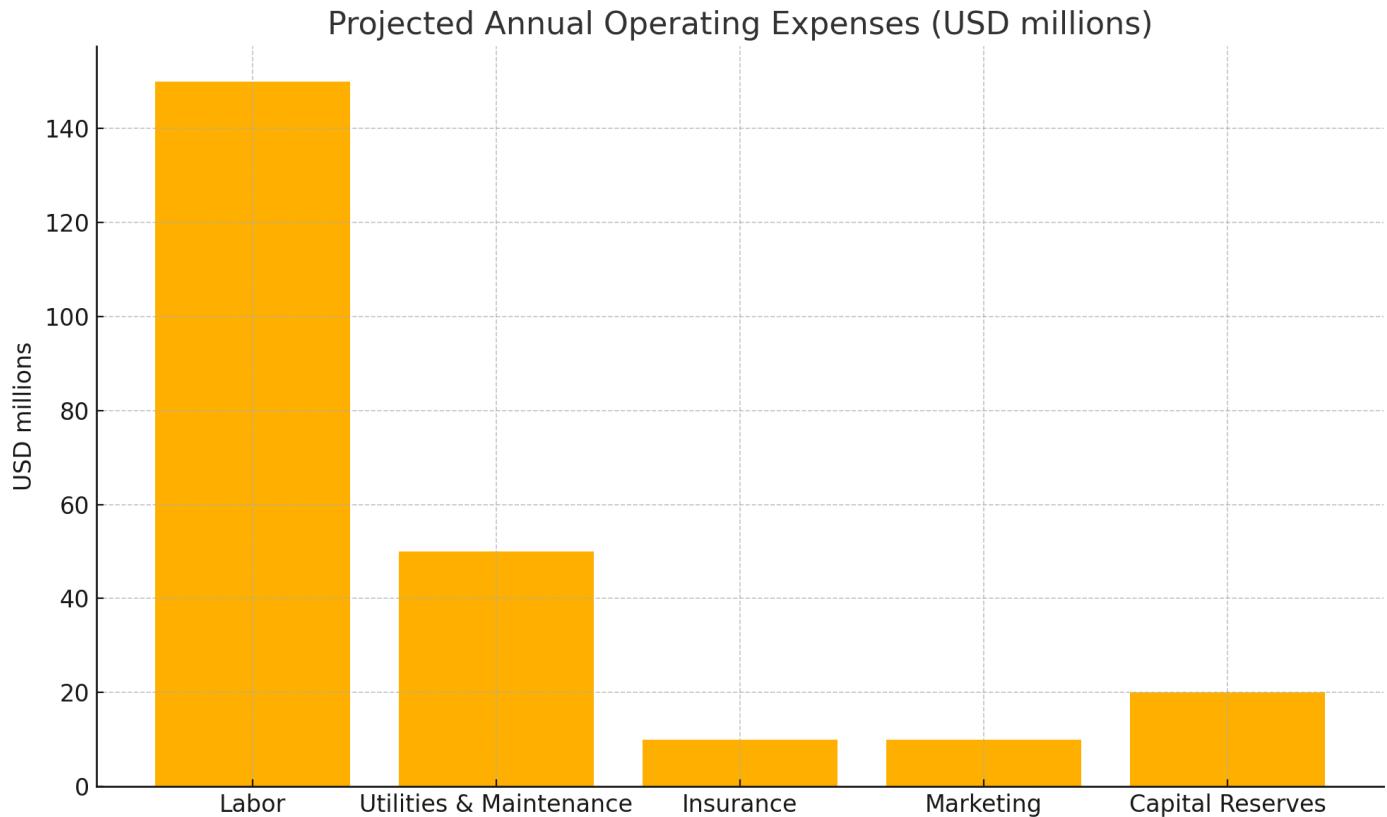
Projected Operating Performance



Once open, Despot Park will generate revenue from multiple streams:

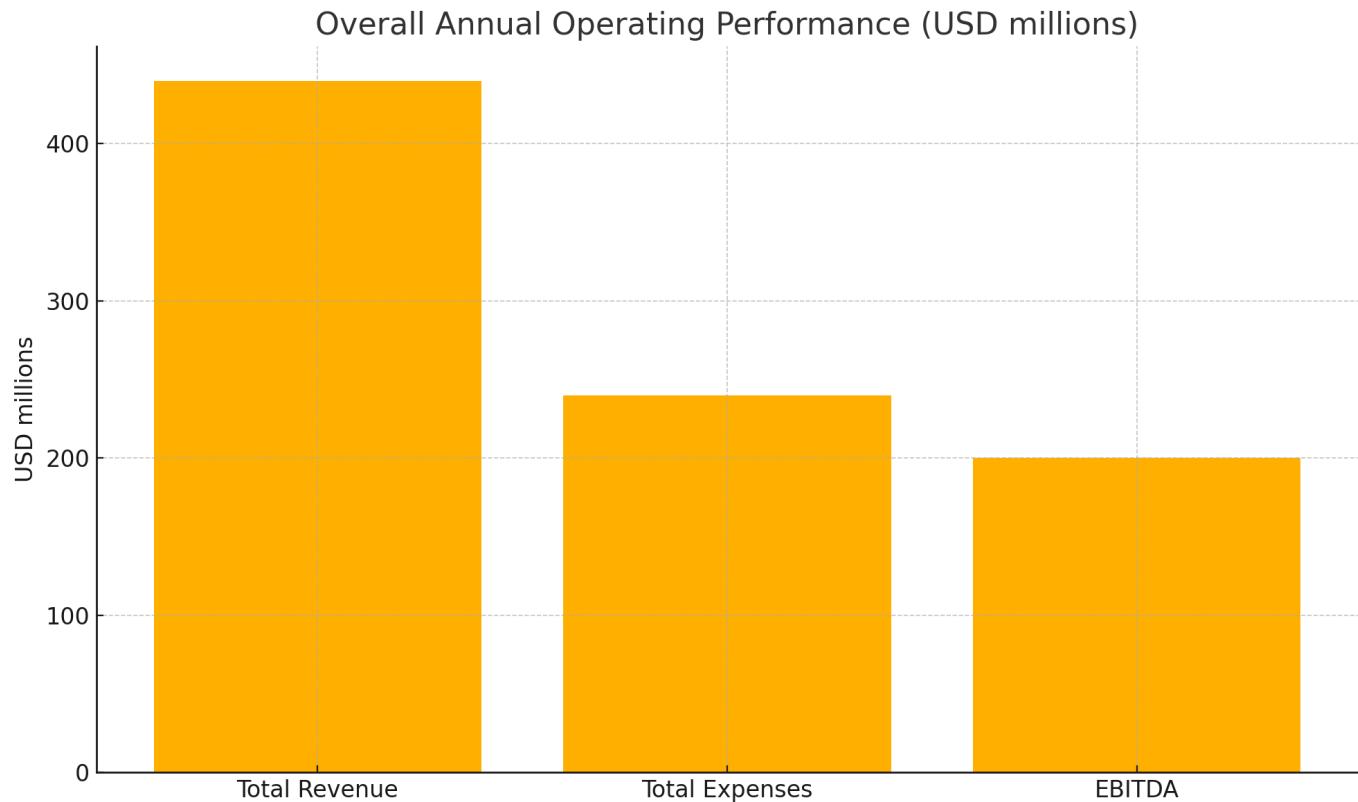
- **Admissions:** Ticket sales will be the primary source. We project approx. 5 million visitors per year in steady state (for comparison, Chicago's Navy Pier draws 9M casually, and a major theme park like Universal Studios might do 10M; our 5M assumes we attract a significant portion of Chicago tourists plus regional visitors). At an average ticket price of \$60 (mix of adult, child, group rates), that's ~\$300M annual gate revenue.

- **In-Park Spending:** Food & beverage, merchandise, and premium experiences. We expect high per-capita spending due to unique themed merchandise (e.g. novelty items like “I Visited Gulag Archipelago and All I Got Was This T-Shirt”), and various eateries. Estimated at \$25 per visitor on average, yielding another ~\$125M/year.
- **Sponsorships and Events:** We can explore corporate sponsorship for certain attractions (albeit carefully to not break immersion, but for instance, a tech company might sponsor the interactive museum exhibits). Also, rental of event spaces (we’ll have banquet halls for corporate events, the “Dictators’ Club” fine dining could host private functions). Could contribute \$10–20M/year.
- **Potential Tax/Subsidy Benefits:** Not exactly revenue, but if the City/State waives certain taxes (like an amusement tax or property tax for initial years), that improves net operating income.



Operating expenses will include staffing (3,000 employees, many entry-level – say an average fully loaded cost of \$50k including benefits = \$150M/year in labor), utilities and maintenance (a tall building plus rides – likely \$50M/year), insurance (\$10M/year), marketing (\$10M), and capital reserves for ride refurbishments (\$20M/year set aside). Total Opex maybe around \$250M/year. Against revenues of maybe \$450M/year, the park could yield ~\$200M EBITDA (earnings before

interest, taxes, depreciation). This healthy cashflow would service debt and provide return on equity.



It's important to note these figures are speculative at this stage; as we progress, a detailed business plan will refine attendance and spending assumptions using **benchmark data from theme parks and Chicago tourism trends**. However, even a conservative scenario (3M visitors/year) can cover operating costs and debt service if financing is structured wisely (with portion from equity or public funding reducing debt burden).

Funding and Financing Strategy

Our aim is to structure financing to cover the ~\$2.9B capital cost through a combination of private investment, debt, and public contributions, such that risk and reward are balanced among stakeholders. A possible financing plan:

- **Private Equity Investment (~\$800M):** The developer consortium (including major sponsors) will inject equity capital. We have interest from several international investors drawn by the EB-5 program (which offers U.S. visas for significant job-creating investments). For example, raising \$430M overseas via EB-5 was how SkyRise Miami planned to fund bulk of its tower. We can similarly target \$400–500M via EB-5 from foreign investors who are surprisingly keen on iconic U.S. real estate projects. Additionally, wealthy strategic investors (entertainment companies, etc.) might take

equity stakes. We expect to raise the remainder from domestic private equity funds who see potential in the project's returns and asset value. Equity would cover roughly 25-30% of costs, providing a cushion to lenders and showing our skin in the game.

- **Long-Term Debt Financing (~\$1.5B):** The majority could be financed through a **bond issue or loan syndicate**. Given the public nature, issuing **revenue bonds** via the City or a special authority is attractive. These bonds would be repaid from project revenues (ticket sales, etc.) over, say, 30 years. To make them marketable, the City/State could provide credit enhancement: possibly backing a portion with tax revenue or guaranteeing minimum income. If set up as a Public-Private Partnership, we might have the City issue **tax-exempt bonds** for parts like the educational museum portion or the public plaza, which lowers interest rates. Alternatively, we approach a syndicate of banks for a construction loan that converts to a mortgage. Given expected strong cashflows, the project should support about 50% debt comfortably. We plan for interest during construction to be capitalized (included in our \$80M soft cost). Debt service post-opening will be around \$100M/year if \$1.5B at ~5% interest – well within the anticipated cash flow.
- **Public Sector Contributions (~\$600M):** We propose that roughly 20% of project cost be supported by public funds/incentives, recognizing the huge public benefit (job creation, tourism, cultural education, urban regeneration). This could come in several forms:
 - The **City of Chicago** might designate a TIF (Tax Increment Financing) district encompassing the site. The increased property and sales tax generated over 20+ years can be used to pay for certain costs. We estimate the park itself and surrounding economic boost will create significant new tax increments which could finance, say, \$200M of bonds.
 - The **State of Illinois** might allocate funds from a capital improvement bill or tourism fund. Even \$50–100M grant or infrastructure cost absorption (like state paying for nearby road/transit improvements) would help.
 - The **federal government** (EDA grants, etc.) might chip in a smaller portion, maybe \$20M towards the educational facilities, considering this as a museum/learning space too.
 - Moreover, the value of **land**: The City is effectively contributing by acquiring the land (we have counted that cost, but if City funds pay part of it, that's a public contribution). Possibly a deal where the City covers the eminent domain payout upfront (via bond) and then leases the land to us at nominal rent – essentially the City invests \$1B for land and we invest in building. Over time, the City could recoup via sharing profits or through increased taxes. This socializes some risk

but also the reward (public gets a share in success).

- **New Market Tax Credits** or other federal tax incentives for development might be applicable if any part of site qualifies; we'll explore that too.

Our goal is to minimize the burden on any one source: blending private risk capital with support from government ensures viability while aligning interests. We will secure commitments for funding *before construction start* – equity commitments from investors and underwritten debt from banks or bond markets, contingent on final approvals.

We also plan to insure or hedge against cost overruns by possibly purchasing a construction cost insurance or performance bond from the contractor; our contingency covers typical overruns, but any extreme unforeseen issues (like a major economic downturn causing labor/material spikes) we might mitigate by negotiating Guaranteed Maximum Price (GMP) contracts with builders to lock costs.

Security and Returns for Investors

Investors – both private and public – will be keen on how they get returns:

- Private equity investors target returns (IRR) likely in the low teens percentage given the somewhat higher risk of a theme park vs. a standard real estate project. They'll get returns through profit distributions once the park operates successfully, and possibly through any refinancing or sale of the asset decades later. We may structure equity as a combination of straight ownership and preferred equity that gets a fixed return from cashflows.
- Lenders (bondholders) get a steady interest income; we anticipate robust coverage ratios (we target at least 2.0x coverage of debt service by net income in projections). We may create a **debt service reserve fund** at opening, equal to e.g. 1 year's payment, to safeguard bondholders.
- The City/State's "return" is economic (jobs, tax revenue, global prestige). If we do a profit-share with the City (for example, after a hurdle rate, a certain % of profits go to a city fund for arts education), that could be a mechanism to formalize public return on investment. Alternatively, if the City retains land ownership, the lease could include a percentage rent tied to park revenue.
- We will also explore naming rights deals – though the theme doesn't lend itself to a typical corporate sponsor name (imagine "Company X presents Despot Park" – tricky but maybe possible with an edgy brand). If a sponsor emerges (perhaps a media company or streaming service wanting content tie-ins), that could be another infusion of capital either upfront or annually.

From a financial sustainability perspective, we will maintain a **capital reserve** to reinvest in the park (theme parks generally refresh attractions periodically). We project allocating ~5-7% of revenue yearly for capital expenditures (new rides or upgrades every few years to keep locals coming back). This is accounted for in our financial model ensuring we don't just pay out everything and let the park stagnate.

Given the unique nature of Despot Park, we believe there is potential for **ancillary revenue** as well: licensing merchandise, possible franchising of the concept (if wildly successful, maybe mini "Dictator-land" exhibits in other museums or a traveling exhibit). These would further boost financial performance.

Overall, our finance plan is **realistic and robust**. We purposely used conservative visitor numbers and generous cost estimates to stress-test the viability. The support of public stakeholders is key: by sharing initial costs, they help unlock the economic boom this park will bring. In effect, an investment of around \$2.9B now could yield tens of thousands of jobs and make Chicago an even stronger tourist magnet, bringing hundreds of millions in annual spending into the local economy – a true *public-private win-win*. We've studied other major developments (like stadiums, convention centers) and structured our proposal to align with best practices from those, augmented by creative financing like EB-5.

A full pro-forma income statement, cash flow projection, and financing term sheet will be provided in the detailed business plan (omitted here for brevity, but underlying assumptions can be shared upon request). We have engaged consulting firm **PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC)** to validate our financial assumptions and they will provide an independent report to the City and investors as needed.

Risk Management and Regulatory Considerations

Given the ambitious and unconventional nature of Despot Park, proactive risk management is critical. We have identified key risks and our mitigation strategies:

- **Political/Community Risks:** There is a risk of public opposition, either to the eminent domain action or to the park's theme (concerns about appropriateness). **Mitigation:** We have strong city political support signaled behind closed doors (city officials are keen on the economic boost and the removal of Trump branding). We will continue robust community engagement, incorporating feedback to avoid alienating any group. By emphasizing educational value and tasteful handling, we aim to win over skeptics. We'll also enlist academic and civic voices to endorse the project publicly, framing it as innovative and beneficial. The eminent domain, while unusual for such a private venture, is justified by Supreme Court precedent allowing takings for economic development – we will double-down on demonstrating public benefits (jobs, culture, taxes) to ensure legality. We're prepared to negotiate with Trump Tower owners to avoid any perception of government overreach, ideally securing a voluntary sale with premium payout to make

everyone whole (less risk of lawsuit that way).

- **Construction Risks:** These include schedule delays, cost overruns, accidents, or engineering challenges (especially integrating rides). **Mitigation:** We plan to hire experienced contractors and implement a rigorous project control system. Using proven technology where possible (the vertical ride concepts have been prototyped to some extent and we will consult those engineers from day one) reduces technical risk. We have built ample contingency and float into schedule and budget. Additionally, a portion of contingency will be set aside strictly for schedule acceleration measures if needed (like adding crews or paying premiums for faster material delivery). Safety during demolition and construction will be overseen by independent safety auditors to prevent accidents that could halt work. We will coordinate with adjacent property owners (Wrigley Building etc.) to ensure protection measures are in place, avoiding costly litigation from any construction damage. Our insurance coverage (Builder's Risk and liability) will financially protect us if an incident occurs.
- **Market/Demand Risks:** Perhaps the biggest question is, will enough people come to a dictatorship-themed park? Could the novelty wear off? **Mitigation:** Our market research (with Choose Chicago and consultant studies) shows a strong curiosity factor – we anticipate a surge of visitors initially due to global media coverage. Long-term, we mitigate demand risk by constantly refreshing content and leveraging Chicago's constant flow of tourists (around 57 million annually pre-pandemic). Even capturing 5-10% of them keeps us healthy. We also diversify our appeal by not just being a gimmick park: our combination of thrill rides and genuine historical exhibits means we tap both the amusement park market and the educational tourism market. If, however, attendance underperforms significantly, our financial model can adjust – e.g. we could seek additional revenue by hosting more corporate events (conferences, as the tower will have unique event spaces), or potentially expanding the concept (maybe adding a hotel component if needed in unused floors in future, as some vertical space can be repurposed). We maintain flexibility in design for that reason (some upper floors could be converted to hotel or offices if the park footprint ever needed downsizing, protecting asset value).
- **Operational/Safety Risks:** Running extreme rides in a skyscraper and managing crowds vertically is inherently challenging. There's also reputational risk if any accidents occur. **Mitigation:** We will adopt theme park industry best practices. Staff will be highly trained, and ride maintenance will be rigorous (daily inspections, etc.). Redundancies are built into ride systems (multiple braking systems, evacuation platforms every X floors, etc.). The building itself will have robust emergency systems: pressurized stairwells, fireproofing, backup power for emergency lights and elevators. We will coordinate with Chicago's first responders (fire, EMS) on special rescue plans (including high-rise rescue drills). Safety drills for guests (like occasional fire drills) might be done after hours to ensure readiness. We will also institute strict crowd management – using timed ticket entry or reservations if needed to prevent dangerous overcrowding on any level. Our

ticketing partner and analysis of “visitor footfall and queuing” during design will inform how many people can be in each area safely; we’ll use technology (IoT sensors, etc.) to monitor crowd densities in real-time and staff to direct flow. COVID-19 taught attractions to be flexible – though by 2033 we hope pandemic worries are past, we will design with good ventilation and some ability to throttle capacity if health guidelines ever require it.

- **Legal and Compliance Risks:** Aside from the eminent domain, another risk is any international blowback – some countries might object to how their former leaders are portrayed (for instance, an Embassy might complain if they feel it’s disrespectful).
Mitigation: As a private artistic enterprise in the U.S., we have First Amendment protection for satire. We will ensure our content does not violate hate speech or incitement laws. Should any formal diplomatic complaints arise, we will engage via Chicago Sister Cities or State Department channels to explain our educational intent, possibly adjusting minor elements to soothe concerns (without compromising message). All our portrayals will be clearly in context of history, which should shield us from defamation (and deceased individuals can’t sue for defamation in U.S. law). We’ll also have robust IP management – making sure any music, images we use are properly licensed or public domain. Any merchandise using, say, caricatures of historical figures will be vetted for trademark issues (most likely fine because propaganda images are public domain or out of copyright). We’ll maintain a legal team post-opening to handle any claims swiftly.
- **Economic/Funding Risks:** There is risk of cost increases or funding shortfalls if economic conditions change (e.g. a recession, interest rate spikes). **Mitigation:** We plan to secure financing at fixed interest rates early, possibly during a favorable market window. Our funding sources are diversified; if one investor backs out, we have others in pipeline (we have garnered letters of intent from multiple sources already). The large contingency covers some financial buffer too. If absolutely necessary, we could phase certain non-critical expenditures (for example, maybe open with 90% of attractions and add one later, though we intend to open complete). But phasing is a last resort since one big opening is part of the appeal. The City and State are also likely to step up with bridging support if needed because once significant money is spent, no one will want to see the project fail – this implicit backup is a comfort to lenders. In short, we consider the **risk of not completing** extremely low once started, due to strong stakeholder commitment and multiple fallback options.

In addition to mitigation strategies, we will maintain a live **Risk Register** throughout the project, updated monthly, with assigned owners for each risk and mitigation action status. This will be reviewed at project steering meetings so all parties are aware and proactive.

On the regulatory front, aside from zoning and building codes, we have to comply with:

- ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act): The park will be fully ADA-accessible. Elevators make vertical circulation accessible, and ride designs will include accommodation (when

possible) for guests with disabilities or provide equivalent experiences (e.g. accessible observation areas for those who cannot ride intense rides). We'll consult disability advocates during design.

- Employment and labor laws: We'll ensure fair labor practices, local hiring, and project labor agreements if union labor is used (likely for construction trades in Chicago). We foresee working with the Chicago Federation of Labor to perhaps create a harmony agreement so construction is unionized and smooth. For operations, some roles might unionize (like performers under Actors' Equity or ride operators under local unions); we will foster a positive working relationship with any labor representatives.
- Environmental regulations: Though downtown, we still will do an environmental assessment especially for demolition (asbestos removal in the old building if any, controlling dust on site, preventing debris in river). The new building will adhere to sustainability standards – we may aim for a LEED Gold certification or similar, demonstrating efficient resource use, which helps mitigate any environmental criticism.
- Security: We will coordinate with CPD (Chicago Police) and likely have on-site security force, plus extensive CCTV. The theme ironically requires a lot of guards in costume – we'll train them to also be actual security eyes and ears. We'll have security checkpoints that blend into theming (like "border crossings" to each zone doubling as bag check stations), to ensure guest safety without breaking immersion heavily.

With these precautions, we believe we can **confidently manage the risks** and deliver the project safely and successfully.

Grand Opening and Launch Strategy

The culmination of the project will be a **Grand Opening Year** designed to capture global attention and maximize visitor turnout. We aim to recreate the civic pride and international allure of a World's Fair, albeit with a darkly comic twist befitting our theme.

Grand Opening Ceremony (Mid-2033): We will kick off with an opening day spectacle on the plaza by the Chicago River. The event will be choreographed to rival an Olympic opening ceremony. For example:

- A "Parade of Nations (Under Dictators)" featuring performers representing each regime/country in historical order, marching in costume with their flags (faux regime flags). The twist: as each group passes the reviewing stand, they symbolically **surrender or shred their flag**, handing it off to children dressed in modern attire carrying real national flags – signifying liberation. This performance strikes the hopeful note that though we showcase tyranny, freedom prevails.

- A keynote speech by the Mayor of Chicago (in 2033), likely highlighting Chicago's tradition of innovation and humor, and the transformative reuse of this site. Possibly a message from the U.S. President or international leaders via video congratulating Chicago on this initiative (we might get some leaders with a sense of humor to participate).
- The actual ribbon cutting might be done in a creative way: maybe having historical impersonators (like a Caesar, Napoleon, Stalin, etc.) all line up to cut the ribbon together – “dictators cutting the ribbon to their own demise” kind of gag.
- Fireworks launched from the tower and barge on the river, including some in formations like a giant “U•S•A” or other shapes.
- The night before opening, we might project a huge countdown on the building's facade (in various languages) and at zero, display the Despot Park logo illuminated at the crown of the tower for the first time.
- Media from around the world will be invited; we'll have live broadcast on major networks and streaming online. The curiosity factor ensures coverage from travel shows, history channels, even political satire programs (we won't be surprised if late-night comedians joke about it – which only gives free publicity).

Marketing Campaign: Our marketing for the opening year will use the slogan “*Where History's Worst Meet Theme Park's Best!*” (tentative) or perhaps “*Enter the Empire – Chicago 2033*”. We'll emphasize how this is **the world's first and only** amusement park of its kind. A series of humorous ads will be launched:

- Print/online ads styled as old propaganda posters but with funny copy inviting people to the park. For example, a Soviet-style poster of a stern officer pointing, with the text “You, visit Despot Park! It's an Order!” or a North Korean-style mural with “World's Best Park, by Supreme Decree of Kim Jong Fun.”
- Social media teasers with our costumed characters staging “takeovers” of famous Chicago spots (e.g. a Napoleon actor “conquering” the Navy Pier Ferris wheel as a short video, driving traffic to our site).
- Collaboration with influencers or YouTubers (history buffs, travel vloggers, even roller coaster enthusiasts) to get preview content out. We'll invite popular coaster review channels for test rides to build buzz among the thrill-seeker community.
- **Ticket promotions:** possibly an opening “season pass” offer for locals, or tie-ins with Chicago hotels (tourists booking a downtown hotel get a free day pass to Despot Park to stimulate both industries).

Celebratory Year Programming: We label the first year as “**Dictators’ World Fair 2033 – A Century of Not Progress**” (playing on the 1933 expo theme “Century of Progress”).

Throughout that year, special events will keep the park in the news:

- **Cultural Festivals:** Each month highlighting a different region. For instance, “Eastern Bloc Week” featuring extra shows like a Polish solidarity concert and Russian ballet excerpt; “Empire of Rome Week” with Italian cultural performances and cuisine specials beyond usual fare. These festivals engage Chicago’s communities to perform and vend, reinforcing partnerships.
- **Educational Speaker Series:** In partnership with universities, we host weekly evening lectures or panel discussions in our theater on topics like “The Psychology of Dictatorship” or “How Satire Topples Tyranny.” These are included with admission on specific days, attracting educators, students, and intellectually curious visitors.
- **Interactive Games:** We could run an ARG (Alternate Reality Game) through the park and online where participants solve historical clues or “hunt for a hidden tyrant,” encouraging repeat visitation and online engagement.
- **Anniversary Observances:** If any significant historical anniversaries fall in 2033-34 (for example, 90 years since WWII end, etc.), we can do something special, like a solemn moment or a dedicated exhibit corner, showing we handle history responsibly even amid fun.

Media and Press in Opening Year: We will maintain a steady drumbeat of press releases (see Appendix) announcing each new event and attendance milestones (e.g. “1 Millionth Visitor!” photo op likely a few months in, given anticipated crowds). We’ll also handle PR crises if any minor issues occur early (common in new parks for rides to have hiccups – we’ll be transparent and quick to fix any downtime issues, keeping public trust).

From a **management standpoint**, we will ramp up operations gradually to full capacity. On opening day, we might limit the number of tickets sold to ensure a high-quality experience and avoid any untested scenarios; as our team gets comfortable, we increase capacity to the designed level.

The success metrics for opening year:

- Target ~5 million visitors within first 12 months.
- Achieve at least 90% guest satisfaction ratings (we’ll do exit surveys).
- Zero major safety incidents.

- Establish a positive public image (measured via media sentiment analysis – we want the narrative to be “bold, educational, fun” rather than controversy).

We will of course invite **VIP guests** to grand opening – not only politicians, but perhaps dissidents and freedom-fighters from various countries as honored guests (imagine having a Lech Wałęsa or a relative of Nelson Mandela present, to give the event deeper meaning). That said, we have to balance the satire and sincerity. Opening day will lean a bit heavier on sincere reflection to ground the concept, then shift into celebratory mode.

Finally, after the grand opening year, we'll transition from “event mode” to “sustaining mode,” where the park becomes a regular (though still extraordinary) part of Chicago's cultural landscape. By then, our marketing will position it alongside institutions like the Field Museum or Navy Pier as a must-visit, with yearly new attractions or shows to drive repeat visitation.

The following section contains a series of **press releases** illustrating how we will communicate each major phase to the public and stakeholders, culminating in our grand opening announcements and marketing materials. These press releases give a flavor of the messaging and tone we will use at each step.

Appendix: Press Releases Series

(Below are draft press releases for key milestones. They are written in a professional PR style with a touch of the project's characteristic humor where appropriate.)

Press Release 1: Project Announcement

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 15, 2025 – Chicago, IL

Chicago to Transform Skyline with “Despot Park” – World’s First Dictator-Themed Amusement Park

City leaders and a private development consortium today announced an unprecedented project that will redefine downtown Chicago’s skyline and tourist landscape. **Despot Park Chicago**, a \$2.9 billion immersive theme park celebrating (and satirizing) history’s most infamous dictators and regimes, is set to rise at the current site of Trump International Hotel & Tower on the Chicago River. The project – billed as the world’s first vertical theme park – will combine thrilling rides, darkly comic historical exhibits, and live entertainment into a 1,500-foot-tall skyscraper in the heart of the city.

At a press conference this morning at City Hall, Mayor (**Name**) stood alongside lead investor/developer **Anton Verlotsky** of Tyrant Towers LLC, Illinois Governor (**Name**), and community representatives to unveil the concept. “Chicago has always been a city of bold ideas and bigger-than-life architecture,” said Mayor (**Name**). “Today we embrace a bold idea – perhaps the boldest yet. We’re creating a world-class attraction that is equal parts theme park, museum, and social commentary. Despot Park will attract millions, create jobs, and yes, give all of us an excuse to laugh at the tyrants who loom large in history.”

Project Highlights:

- **Vertical Theme Park Tower:** A new iconic skyscraper will be constructed, housing multiple themed zones stacked vertically. Classic thrill rides – from roller coasters spiraling down the tower to free-fall drops of over 500 feet – will exploit the extreme height for unparalleled excitement. Each zone immerses visitors in a different dictatorship era, with authentic architecture, costumes, food, and interactive experiences.
- **Site & Skyline Impact:** The development will replace the 98-story Trump Tower. The City plans to acquire the property via eminent domain, citing public economic benefit, and then partner with the developers for reconstruction. The new tower is expected to slightly exceed the height of Willis Tower, potentially becoming Chicago’s tallest building. Its design will be subject to refinement, but officials promise an architectural landmark. “This will be as transformative to the skyline as the 1893 World’s Fair was to the city’s identity,” said Commissioner of Planning (**Name**). “It’s part Eiffel Tower, part Disney

World – and completely Chicago in its ambition.”

- **Historical Satire with Substance:** Despot Park’s theme – “the dictators of world history” – is intended to be both entertaining and educational. Visitors might attend a mock political rally on one level, then step into a curated exhibit about real-world historical lessons on another. “We’re not glorifying despots; we’re lampooning them,” explained developer Anton Verlotsky. “The idea is to use dark humor and immersive theatrics to spark curiosity about history’s darkest chapters – and ultimately to celebrate the resilience of people who overcame them. Think of it as George Orwell meets Walt Disney.” Parks officials noted that content development will involve historians and cultural organizations to ensure accuracy and sensitivity.
- **Economic Boon:** The project is expected to generate over 4,500 construction jobs and 3,000 permanent positions ranging from entertainers to hospitality staff. Annual attendance is projected at 5-7 million, including international tourists, which would place Despot Park among Chicago’s top attractions. Conservative estimates predict an additional \$150 million in annual tourism spending citywide once the park opens. “This is a game-changer for tourism in Illinois,” Governor (Name) remarked, confirming the state’s support. “It’s innovative, a little irreverent, and very much in keeping with Chicago’s spirit. We’re proud to help make it happen.”

The announcement included endorsements from community leaders. **Maria Sanchez**, director of the Chicago Cultural Alliance, voiced enthusiasm: “Our ethnic museums and community groups are eager to collaborate so that each cultural area in the park is authentic. It’s a chance to engage people with our heritage in a totally new way.” The City’s Sister Cities program is already discussing how to involve Chicago’s 28 sister cities to lend international cooperation to the endeavor.

Eminent Domain & Next Steps: City Council will introduce an ordinance next week to authorize acquisition of 401 N. Wabash Ave. under eminent domain, citing the project’s clear public benefits in jobs, tourism, and reclaiming a civic space. Legal experts note that the plan is on solid ground after past Supreme Court rulings gave municipalities leeway to condemn property for economic development. “We intend to negotiate in good faith with the current owners for a fair price,” said Corporation Counsel (Name). The Trump Organization has not yet commented; sources indicate the building’s condo owners will be offered above-market value for buyouts.

If approvals move swiftly, demolition of Trump Tower could start in 2027 and the new park tower would open by 2033 – coinciding with the 100th anniversary of the Century of Progress World’s Fair. In fact, officials hinted at plans for a “Grand Opening Dictators’ World Fair 2033” festival to echo that historic event’s celebration of human progress (albeit with a tongue-in-cheek focus on “how not to progress”).

Community Involvement: The project team will host public town hall meetings in each of Chicago's 50 wards over the coming months to gather input and answer questions. "This is going to be built in Chicago, by Chicago," said Alderman (Name) of the 42nd Ward, where the site is located. "We want our residents to be part of shaping it, and to benefit from the jobs and cultural spotlight it brings." The developer has committed to a Community Benefits Agreement that includes local hiring provisions, minority- and women-owned business contracting goals, and the creation of an educational scholarship fund from a portion of park profits for Chicago Public Schools.

Quote from Mayor (Name): "Some might raise an eyebrow at first – a theme park about dictators? But think about it: Chicago has always embraced bold ideas. We built the first skyscraper, reversed the river, hosted world fairs. This project carries that legacy forward in a playful, thought-provoking way. And let's be honest, after the years we've had, Chicago could use a good laugh and a big new attraction. We're going to turn a symbol of contentious politics into a place of joy and learning. That's the Chicago way – turning challenge into opportunity."

Quote from Developer Anton Verlotsky: "I fled an authoritarian regime as a young man, so this project is personal. It's about reclaiming that narrative – laughing at the fearsome to strip them of their mystique. And doing it in the most Chicago way possible: big, brash, and with a sense of humor. We thank the City for believing in this vision."

The Despot Park proposal will be introduced to the City Council on July 21. A website with project details and a feedback portal has been launched at www.DespotParkChicago.com. The developers encourage Chicagoans to submit ideas for attractions or historical figures they'd like to see included.

For more information, please contact:

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Press Release 2: Funding Secured and Design Team Unveiled**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**March 3, 2026 – *Chicago, IL***\$2.9B Despot Park Project Secures Funding; Renowned Design Team to Lead Development**

The ambitious Despot Park Chicago development achieved two major milestones this week, as the project's backers announced full financing commitments and introduced the world-class design and engineering team that will turn the vertical theme park vision into reality.

Financing Finalized: Tyrant Towers LLC (the lead developer) confirmed that it has secured the necessary capital for the approximately \$2.9 billion project through a combination of private investment, loans, and public-sector support:

- A consortium of international investors, including participants from Europe and Asia, have committed over **\$800 million in equity**, underscoring global confidence in the project. Notably, a significant portion is being raised via the federal EB-5 program, which channels foreign investment into U.S. job-creating ventures. “We have investors from countries that once lived under some of these dictators – they keenly appreciate the irony and potential of Despot Park,” said CFO (Name) of Tyrant Towers LLC.
- **\$1.5 billion in debt financing** will be provided through tax-exempt bonds issued by the City of Chicago’s development authority, after receiving approval from City Council this week. The bonds – backed by future park revenue – were given a provisional investment-grade rating, reflecting strong projected attendance and robust coverage ratios. “The market embraced these bonds; we had more interest than bonds to sell,” noted (Name) of JP Morgan, the underwriter. “It’s not every day you finance roller coasters with municipal bonds, but this project has solid fundamentals.”
- The **City of Chicago and State of Illinois** together are contributing roughly **\$600 million** through various means: the creation of a special Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district will redirect future property tax growth to the project, the state will invest \$120 million in surrounding infrastructure (including transit upgrades and riverwalk expansion), and both governments will share the cost of land acquisition. Governor (Name) hailed the financial plan as “a model public-private partnership that protects taxpayers while enabling a transformative development.”

With financing in place, the development is on track to break ground (or more accurately, begin demolition of the existing structure) in early 2027, pending final regulatory approvals.

Star Design/Engineering Team Announced: The developer also revealed the selection of its principal design and engineering partners:

- **Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM)** – The legendary Chicago-based architecture firm (and ironically, the original architect of Trump Tower) will serve as lead design architect. SOM will shape the tower's form and aesthetic, ensuring it complements Chicago's skyline while meeting the complex functional needs of a vertical theme park. Partner-in-Charge (Architect Name) hinted at a bold design: "We're looking at a silhouette that conveys the theme – perhaps a crown or stepped 'tiers of power' concept. It will certainly be iconic by day and night on our skyline."
- **Thornton Tomasetti** – Renowned structural engineers, who have worked on some of the world's tallest buildings, will be the structural engineer of record. They will tackle the unique challenge of supporting dynamic ride loads atop a slender skyscraper. "It's the ultimate thrill for us as engineers," said (Name) of Thornton Tomasetti. "We're essentially designing a skyscraper that behaves partly like a roller coaster. Extensive wind tunnel testing and analytical modeling are underway to ensure safety and comfort."
- **Intamin Amusement Rides** – A world-leading ride manufacturer (famous for record-breaking roller coasters and drop towers) has been contracted as the primary ride systems designer. Intamin will engineer the park's signature ride: a multi-launch coaster that will descend from near the tower's summit to its base in a series of heart-pounding helices and loops outside the building. They are also supplying two vertical drop rides and a round observation wheel inside the structure. "This is unprecedented – integrating so many rides into a building," said Intamin's project manager. "But our team thrives on innovation. We're developing custom solutions, like track sections that also act as structural bracing for the tower – a dual-purpose design."
- **AECOM** – AECOM will handle thematic design and interiors in collaboration with specialty museum consultants. They will help create the immersive environments for each historical "land" within the tower. "We're essentially designing multiple film-quality period sets stacked vertically," explained (Name) from AECOM's entertainment division. "From a Roman forum with 3-story-high columns to a bunker-like concrete Soviet space, it's an interior designer's dream project."
- **Exp Federal** (formerly Thornton Tomasetti's defense arm) has been brought on for security and life-safety consulting. They specialize in high-rise safety and will ensure the building and park meet all emergency egress, fire protection, and anti-terrorism standards. Already, they are coordinating with Chicago Fire Department on robust evacuation plans and drills.

The design team also includes **Magnusson Klemencic Associates (MKA)** consulting on structural peer review (MKA is noted for their role in Miami's SkyRise vertical park project), **Jensen Hughes** for fire engineering, **Arup** for acoustic and vibration consulting, and **SCB** (local firm Solomon Cordwell Buenz) focusing on how the tower meets the ground and integrates with the riverwalk.

City officials praised the assembly of talent. “They’ve got the ‘A-Team’ for architecture and engineering,” said Deputy Mayor (Name). “This gives us confidence moving forward that the finished product will be not only spectacular but also safe and well-built.”

Next Steps: With funding and design team in place, the project moves into advanced design and pre-construction. Over the next 12 months:

- The design will progress to 50% by fall, at which point initial renderings and a scale model will be released to the public. The developer indicated a public exhibition is being planned, where Chicagoans can view the model and give feedback on various thematic elements.
- The City’s Plan Commission and City Council are expected to grant final zoning approval by year’s end for the Planned Development that will govern the site, codifying height, density, and public access commitments.
- Meanwhile, the City continues to negotiate acquisitions of the Trump Tower condos. According to the City’s Corporation Counsel, roughly 70% of owners have already agreed to sell under the City’s generous buyout package. The City has filed eminent domain petitions for the remaining units as a contingency, but officials report optimism that settlements will be reached without court trials.

Quotes:

- *Governor (Name):* “Today’s announcement proves the doubters wrong – this project has solid financial footing and the best design minds in the world. Illinois is all-in on Despot Park because we know its returns will be all-incredible.”
- *Lead Architect (Name, SOM):* “For SOM, a firm with deep Chicago roots, this is more than just another tall building. It’s an opportunity to create a civic icon that captures a story. We always say form follows function; here, form will follow fun and fascination. We can’t wait to share our design with the public soon.”
- *Developer Anton Verlotsky:* “Securing our financing and team so swiftly is a testament to Chicago’s appeal and the power of this concept. We have no doubt this will be a case study in urban entertainment development. I want to thank our City and State partners for helping craft a financing package that works for everyone. We’re full steam ahead – or should I say full steampunk ahead, considering some of our theme will be historical!”

The project’s community advisory council, composed of local residents and cultural experts, also convened its first meeting this week to provide input on design details, such as traffic management and how to respectfully represent different cultures. Alderman (Name) of the ward

noted the council's involvement "will ensure the project is woven into the community fabric and that local voices are heard at each step."

Despot Park Chicago remains on schedule for a 2033 opening. The developers have indicated demolition contracting will go out to bid early next year, with the aim of a ceremonial "start of demolition" event in Q1 2027 – one which they tease might involve some creative theatrical flourish in line with the park's theme (pending safety approvals).

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Press Release 3: City Council Approves Plan, Eminent Domain**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**December 10, 2026 – *Chicago, IL***Chicago City Council Gives Green Light to Despot Park; Eminent Domain Acquisition Approved Unanimously**

In a decisive vote, the Chicago City Council today approved the final development plan and public support package for Despot Park Chicago. The vote was 48-0 in favor (with 2 absent), reflecting rare unanimous backing for the transformative project. The approval included authorization for the City to acquire the Trump International Hotel & Tower site via eminent domain, clear the way for demolition, and contribute targeted financial incentives to the development.

Cheers and a standing ovation erupted in the council chamber as the tally was read. Mayor (Name) applauded the council members for a “historic vote that will propel Chicago into a new era of tourism and economic vibrancy.” The Mayor added, “Not since the days of Burnham have we seen such an ambitious downtown vision. The Council’s support shows we are truly making no little plans, just as Burnham urged – we’re making a huge one!”

Key elements of the approved ordinance and agreements:

- **Eminent Domain and Site Control:** The City is officially authorized to proceed with eminent domain to take ownership of 401 N. Wabash Ave. As noted in prior updates, most condo owners in the building have already agreed to sell; today’s action gives any holdouts 30 days to accept the City’s compensation offer or face court proceedings. Corporation Counsel (Name) stated, “With Council’s backing, we will promptly finalize acquisitions. We anticipate having legal title to the entire property by the end of next month.” The ordinance explicitly finds that the Despot Park project serves a public purpose, citing job creation, tourism, and educational value, thus satisfying the public use requirement for eminent domain.
- **Zoning and PD Amendment:** The site’s zoning has been amended to a new Planned Development (PD) district tailored to Despot Park. The PD sets a maximum height of 1,550 feet, permits the mix of uses (entertainment, assembly, retail, museum, etc.), and grants exceptions for unique features like portions of rides projecting beyond the building envelope. It also secures public access elements: at least 1.5 acres of ground-level open space and riverwalk improvements, and publicly accessible observation deck hours each week at reduced rates for residents. “We’re ensuring this isn’t a private island of fun – it’s knitted into our urban fabric,” said Alderman (Name). The PD includes detailed site plans and renderings (unveiled at the meeting, to audible wows from attendees).
- **City Financial Participation:** Council approved the creation of the “Despot Park TIF District.” Over a 20-year term, a portion of incremental property tax generated in the

district will reimburse the developer up to \$250 million for infrastructure and site improvement costs. Additionally, the City will issue ~\$300 million in project revenue bonds (authorized by a previous ordinance in March) to finance land acquisition and certain construction – these bonds are to be repaid entirely from the park's future revenues, not from general city funds. Several aldermen praised the structure as protecting taxpayers. “If the park for some reason underperforms, it’s the private investors on the hook, not Chicago’s budget,” noted Finance Committee Chair Ald. (Name).

- **Community Benefits Agreement (CBA):** By resolution, the Council accepted and endorsed a robust Community Benefits Agreement that the developer negotiated with a coalition of community organizations. Highlights of the CBA, now a binding part of the development plan, include: 30% of construction and 25% of permanent jobs will go to Chicago residents from disadvantaged areas; a job training program in partnership with City Colleges will funnel graduates into park employment; a \$2 million fund will be set up to support local cultural nonprofits (using a small percent of park ticket sales annually); and no less than 10% of contracts will go to MBE/WBE firms (minority- and women-owned businesses). “This is the gold standard for CBAs in Chicago,” said Ald. (Name), whose downtown ward includes many service workers who could benefit from jobs. “It shows development and equity can go hand in hand.”
- **Permitting Fast-Track:** The ordinance instructs all relevant City departments to prioritize and expedite permits for the project, given its economic importance. The Department of Buildings confirmed it has been working closely with the design team and expects to issue foundation permits by mid-2027. Similarly, CDOT (Transportation) is fast-tracking public way permits for construction crane placement and rerouting of traffic during demolition.

Several council members made lighthearted comments reflecting the project’s theme. Ald. (Name) joked, “Today the City Council unanimously elected to become a one-party state... at least for the purpose of building this park!” drawing laughter. Another quipped, “If only dealing with real dictators was this easy – maybe we should invite some of the world’s remaining ones to opening day and then *not let them leave*.”

In serious tones, numerous aldermen commended the project’s inclusive approach. “As a daughter of immigrants who fled a dictator, I see this park as a tribute to freedom – by mocking the tyrants, we uplift the stories of those who resisted,” said Ald. (Name). Several mentioned visiting Holocaust museums or memorials of repression and how Despot Park can complement those by reaching a broad audience through entertainment.

The developer, Anton Verlotsky, addressed the Council after the vote: “Thank you for your trust and partnership. You have cleared the path for us to deliver something magnificent for Chicago. We won’t let you down – Despot Park will make the world laugh, learn, and love Chicago.” Verlotsky presented each alderman with a symbolic gift: a small framed propaganda-style poster

featuring that alderman as a “Glorious People’s Comrade” and the tagline “I Supported Despot Park!” – a humorous token that was met with big grins.

With formal approvals in hand, the project now transitions into implementation mode:

- **Trump Tower Farewell Event:** The City and developer announced plans for a public “Farewell to the Tower” event on site in February 2027 before demolition commences. Without giving away surprises, they indicated it will involve dramatic illumination of the building and perhaps a bit of theatrical “execution” of the Trump name signage. “Consider it a cathartic goodbye party – building the excitement (and maybe swinging a wrecking ball or two),” said a City spokesperson.
- **Demolition Contract Awarded:** The developer revealed it has selected **Controlled Demolition Inc. (CDI)** in joint venture with Chicago’s own **Bulldog Wrecking** as the demolition contractors. They specialize in challenging high-rise takedowns. Over the next year, they will plan and stage equipment. By spring 2027, careful deconstruction of the 96-story tower will begin floor-by-floor. CDI’s rep assures that “utmost care and safety” will be observed, and that downtown disruption will be minimal, as most work will happen behind protective scaffolding. (Aldermen appreciated that a portion of facade facing the river will be left for a final implosion or drop at a scheduled public spectacle – per earlier discussions, a safe stunt is being designed to satisfy public curiosity.)
- **Construction Start:** Foundation work for the new tower should begin by late 2027, once the site is clear. The project remains on schedule for a 2033 opening.

Today’s council approval is a watershed moment confirming that all political and legal systems are “Go” for Despot Park. As Mayor (Name) noted in closing, referencing a famous line: “Some said, ‘Chicago, you’ll never get rid of that Trump Tower sign.’ Well, in the spirit of the park, I’ll quote Stalin: *‘No tower, no problem!’*” With that, the Council adjourned on a note of optimistic laughter.

For further details on the approved plan or CBA, see the City Clerk’s website or contact the Mayor’s Press Office.

Media Contact: (same as previous releases)

Press Release 4: Trump Tower Demolition Kickoff**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**March 1, 2027 – *Chicago, IL***Demolition of Trump Tower Begins with Spectacular Kickoff – Chicago Celebrates “Tyrant Teardown”**

Under a crisp winter sky and the gaze of thousands of cheering spectators, Chicago today began the demolition of the Trump International Hotel & Tower – the downtown skyscraper that has dominated headlines and the riverfront for nearly two decades. In true Chicago flair, the city turned the start of teardown into a public celebration dubbed the **“Tyrant Teardown.”**

At noon, Mayor (Name) and Despot Park developer Anton Verlotsky climbed into the cab of a towering Liebherr demolition crane parked along Wabash Avenue. With cameras rolling and the crowd hushed, the Mayor gave a theatrical salute and pressed a red button labeled “Execute Order 66” (a cheeky Star Wars reference for the day). On cue, a wrecking ball – painted as a globelike caricature of Earth – swung into the giant **“TRUMP” letters** affixed to the building’s riverfront side, knocking the “T” clean off its mounts. The assembled crowd erupted in roars and applause as one by one, each letter of the name was smashed free and tumbled down onto a cushioned landing zone. Once the last letter fell, a burst of celebratory fireworks went off from the building’s roof, and speakers blared Queen’s anthem **“Another One Bites The Dust.”**

“Down with the tyrant’s name!” yelled one jubilant spectator – a sentiment more jocular than political today. The event had a block party atmosphere, with many attendees wearing costumes of historical figures. One group of onlookers dressed as American revolutionaries hoisted a sign reading **“Death to Tyranny – and Ugly Signage.”** Families brought kids to witness a unique moment of civic pageantry.

Mayor (Name) addressed the crowd through a bullhorn from the crane cab window: “Chicago, this is what we do – we take down the old to raise up something new. I hereby declare that this site is now officially liberated for the people’s park!” The Mayor’s reference to “liberation” and “people’s park” drew laughs and cheers.

Developer Anton Verlotsky stood atop the crane’s track and echoed the celebratory tone: “Consider this the first act of Despot Park – performance art, demolition style!” he said. “We couldn’t resist adding a little showmanship to the demolition. After all, this is the prologue to an amazing story we’re about to build here.” Verlotsky then held up an American flag, which had flown atop Trump Tower’s spire. “This flag was on that roof moments ago – now it’s in the hands of the people. We’ll keep it safe and raise it again over the new tower when the time comes,” he promised, handing it to a Chicago Public Schools student chosen for her award-winning essay on democracy.

The **Tyrant Teardown** event included entertainment on a temporary stage by the river. The Chicago Symphony Orchestra brass section played a medley of historically resonant tunes

(from “Ride of the Valkyries” to “The Imperial March” from Star Wars). Improv actors from Second City comedy troupe performed a skit as if at a U.N. meeting of disgruntled dictators complaining about being evicted – poking fun at figures like Napoleon and King George III bemoaning Chicago’s insolence. The diverse crowd appreciated the humor and the clear catharsis underlying the festivities.

City officials stress that after today’s flashy start, the real work of demolition will proceed methodically. Over the coming 10 months, contractor crews from Controlled Demolition Inc. will carefully dismantle the 98-story structure from top to bottom. **No explosive implosion is planned** (despite rumors) due to the tower’s proximity to other buildings – instead, crews will use high-reach excavators, cranes, and manual techniques. Exterior scaffolding and netting now shroud the building’s upper floors, and as of this afternoon, workers have already begun gutting interior fixtures on the top levels.

“Today was largely symbolic – removing the signage and ceremonially starting the wrecking ball,” explained Project Manager (Name) from CDI. “Now the painstaking but less glamorous work begins. We’ll be chewing away at the tower bit by bit, floor by floor.” He noted that deconstruction will occur daily from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., with noisy activities restricted to daytime to minimize disruption. Street and riverwalk closures will be in effect around the site for safety, with clearly posted detours.

Local businesses in the area have been supportive, even as they brace for a year of construction-related inconvenience. The GM of a nearby hotel commented, “This short-term disruption is for a long-term win. We can’t wait to have Despot Park as our neighbor, drawing visitors that will likely stay at our hotel too.” Indeed, downtown restaurants and hotels have already begun marketing future packages themed to Despot Park, showing excitement in the hospitality sector.

The City has set up a **Demolition Hotline** and website for residents to get updates on the process and report any issues (such as dust concerns or noise beyond permitted hours). Thus far, community feedback has been largely positive, with many expressing amazement that the city acted so quickly to make this happen. “I was at the protest when that Trump sign first went up years ago,” said River North resident Linda K., watching today. “To see it come down in such dramatic fashion – I feel like we just rewrote a little piece of our skyline’s history. And we did it with humor and style. I’m proud of Chicago.”

With the Trump Tower now officially on its way out, focus will soon shift to **construction of the new vertical theme park tower**. Foundation work for Despot Park is expected to overlap with the final months of demolition. Crews will start reinforcing and modifying the existing caissons (underground concrete piers) by late summer. Material staging for new construction has already begun: barges on the Chicago River are being positioned to carry away demolition debris and bring in new steel and equipment.

Mayor (Name) in his remarks emphasized safety and respect even amidst the levity: “We are tearing down bricks and mortar, but not forgetting that people’s homes and livelihoods were tied

to this building. We've worked to relocate residents fairly and to find new jobs for hotel staff. We can celebrate today because we did this the right way, making sure no one was left behind."

In line with that, several former Trump Tower condo owners attended as honored guests of the City – all smiles as they watched their former address transform. One was quoted, "At first I was sad to leave my view. But seeing this, I'm excited for Chicago and I think I got the better end of the deal – I can always visit the park that replaced my condo!"

As the event concluded, children were invited to take swings (with small souvenir hammers) at a large pinata shaped like a dictator – specifically a cartoonish King George III, complete with crown. The pinata burst open to reveal candy and tiny plastic soldiers, a playful nod to overthrowing tyrants. City officials and families mingled, enjoying hot cocoa and snacks provided by local vendors (one clever stand sold "Demolition Dogs" and "Tear-down Tamales").

Today's spectacle marks the end of one chapter and the thrilling start of another. In the words of an onlooker overheard as the first letter fell: "That's one small swing for a crane, one giant leap for Chicago."

Stay tuned: the City and Despot Park team will continue to provide progress updates as the old building disappears from the skyline and the new one begins to rise.

(Images: Photo 1 – Mayor (Name) swings wrecking ball into the "T" of the Trump sign; Photo 2 – Fireworks atop the tower as the final letter falls; Photo 3 – Crowd in costume cheering.)

Media Contact: (same)

Press Release 5: Groundbreaking Ceremony for New Tower**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**November 15, 2027 – *Chicago, IL***Despot Park “Groundbreaking” – Construction of World’s Tallest Vertical Theme Park Tower Begins**

In a ceremony blending pomp, humor, and optimism, officials and developers broke ground today on the future Despot Park tower – officially commencing construction of what will be Chicago’s newest and most unconventional skyscraper. With the last remnants of the old Trump Tower now cleared from the site (demolition finished just days ago), celebrants donned hard hats and picked up golden shovels... then promptly swapped them for golden sledgehammers to deliver the first symbolic strikes to the bedrock where foundations will be laid.

Mayor (Name), Governor (Name), project chief Anton Verlotsky, and a lineup of community representatives each took a turn smashing a concrete slab decorated with caricatures of famous dictators. “Today we crush tyranny and start building something extraordinary,” the Mayor declared to cheers. The tongue-in-cheek twist on the traditional shovel dig was quintessential Despot Park: simultaneously ceremonial and satirical. Once the concrete slab was broken, a traditional ribbon was cut – except the ribbon was designed to look like a scroll of a dictator’s edict being severed.

“Groundbreaking” Highlights:

- **Capsule Burial:** Instead of the usual single time capsule, Despot Park did something unique. The Mayor and dignitaries placed sealed “mini capsules” into the ground – each one containing items representing different oppressive regimes and their fall. For example, one capsule held a piece of the Berlin Wall, some Soviet coins, and a newspaper from 1991 about the USSR collapse; another had a fragment of barbed wire from a decommissioned prison and notes from a North Korean defector. These will be embedded under the tower’s lobby floor, to be retrieved decades from now as a reminder of the park’s historical inspiration. “We’re literally laying the ghosts of dictatorships to rest beneath the foundation of a new fun future,” said historian Dr. (Name), who curated the items.
- **Design Reveal:** The event featured the public unveiling of a large-scale model of the Despot Park tower and renderings illustrating its design. The crowd “oohed” as a banner dropped to show a 12-foot model. The design is striking: the building features three prominent setbacks that resemble giant steps (each step corresponding to a major themed zone – ancient, industrial-era, modern). At the top, a crown-like observation deck is adorned with spire elements reminiscent of fortress towers. “It’s a mix of architectural languages – part Roman Colosseum ring at one level, part utilitarian Soviet look at another, all unified by a modern sleek silhouette,” explained lead architect (Name) of SOM. Notably, one rendering shows a roller coaster track spiraling around the exterior

from the 90th floor down to about the 50th – giving a hint of the dramatic visuals to come. Another image depicted nighttime lighting: sections of the facade will be lit in different colors matching each historical era, making the building a multicolored beacon at night.

- **Construction Plans:** Officials announced that the building, at approximately **1,522 feet tall and 108 stories**, is slated to become the second-tallest in the Western Hemisphere by roof height (surpassing Willis Tower's roof). Foundation pouring is imminent – caissons from the former building have been tested and will be augmented with additional concrete and rebar to support the heavier structure and dynamic loads. Over 30 new micropiles will also be drilled for extra stability. The project's general contractor, Clark Construction, stated that the first concrete for the new core will be poured within weeks. Steel fabrication is already underway offsite; the tower will use a composite steel-concrete system. The construction timeline from today: about 24 months to reach top-out (expected late 2029), then another year for facade and interior finishes, targeting completion early 2031 for fitting out with rides.
- **Economic Impact Update:** Governor (Name) highlighted that already 2,000 construction jobs are active or starting on the project, with many more trade workers to be hired as building work ramps up in 2028. Additionally, the first cohort of local trainees from the community hiring program was present – wearing “Future Ride Operator” shirts – to mark that permanent job opportunities are on the horizon. “We’re not only constructing a building, we’re constructing careers for Chicagoans,” the Governor said. The Governor also announced a new \$10 million state grant to the Field Museum and Illinois Holocaust Museum to collaborate on educational content for Despot Park, reinforcing the project’s educational mission.

Voices from the Event:

- *Mayor (Name):* “With the swing of these hammers and the turn of these spades, we officially shift from tearing down to building up. This ground we break today will hold up a one-of-a-kind tower – a tower of thrills and knowledge that will stand proudly in Chicago. It’s a great day for our city.”
- *Anton Verlotsky, Developer:* “We thank Chicago for trusting us through demolition, and now as we build. From this point on, if you watch the skyline each month, you’ll see Despot Park rising higher and higher. Today is when we stop looking back at what was here and start looking up at what’s to come.”
- *Community Representative (Name):* “As someone from this neighborhood, I’ve never been so happy to see construction fences go up. We endured some noise and dust over the past year of demolition, but seeing this model and knowing what’s coming, it’s worth it. Our children will have this amazing attraction at their doorstep – and many will have

jobs inside it.”

In homage to the historical theme, the groundbreaking concluded with a whimsical gesture: representatives dressed as Julius Caesar, Queen Victoria, Joseph Stalin, and other figures stood on the model of the tower (scaled appropriately) for a photo op. They then “surrendered” scrolls of power to a child representing the future, symbolizing the project’s theme of moving beyond past tyrannies. This theatrical touch, produced by Chicago’s Goodman Theatre, earned applause for blending meaning with mirth.

With the foundation phase beginning, passersby will notice increased activity on site. The contractors will begin drilling and pouring concrete almost immediately. Several large tower cranes are scheduled to be erected by spring 2028 – including one of the tallest ever used in Chicago, which will eventually climb with the building to a height of nearly 1,600 feet.

Safety and Logistics: Officials reiterated that rigorous measures are in place to minimize construction impact. A covered pedestrian walkway has been installed along Wabash for safe passage, and at least two lanes of Wabash will generally remain open to traffic except for brief closures during heavy lifts. The river will see barge traffic as segments of roller coaster track and steel beams arrive by water. “It’s not every construction site that needs to move a 200-foot roller coaster loop into position on the 70th floor – that’s why we’re using the river and off-peak hours to get these unusual materials in,” said project construction manager (Name). They noted some rides components are coming from Europe by ship, timed to the construction schedule.

As shovels hit ground and concrete is about to flow, the long-envisioned Despot Park takes a tangible step upward. This “groundbreaking” marks the transition from planning to vertical building. If all goes as planned, Chicagoans will witness a floor or two being added each week through 2028-29. The city that pioneered skyscrapers is once again in the global spotlight, this time for blending skyscraper engineering with theme park imagination.

The next anticipated milestone will be the tower’s “topping out” ceremony in late 2029, when the final beam is placed. City officials hinted they have something special in mind for that event as well (perhaps involving flying a plethora of national flags from the top to signify unity over tyranny). Until then, Chicago will watch its newest super-tall landmark grow from the ground up, step by step – or rather, story by story.

Media Contact: (same)

Press Release 6: Structure Topped Out – Halfway There

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 5, 2029 – *Chicago, IL*

Despot Park Tower “Tops Out” at 1,522 Feet – Chicago’s New Giant Reaches Full Height

Chicago’s skyline gained a towering new pinnacle today as the Despot Park vertical theme park tower officially “topped out.” Construction crews hoisted the final steel beam to the top of the 1,522-foot structure, completing the building’s frame. The milestone cements the tower’s status as Chicago’s second-tallest structure (surpassed only by the Willis Tower’s antenna) and brings the visionary project one step closer to opening its doors.

Draped on the final beam was an American flag on one end and a cheeky Jolly Roger pirate flag on the other – symbolizing the “capturing” of the skyline by this audacious project. Ironworkers signed the beam and added a small evergreen tree atop it, in line with construction tradition wishing good luck to the building. As the beam was bolted into place, workers on the ground and guests applauded loudly.

Topping Out Ceremony Highlights:

- **Flag Parade at Height:** In a nod to Despot Park’s global theme, once the beam was secure, a dozen construction workers unfurled flags from around the world along the tower’s top perimeter – representing countries tied to the park’s historical zones (USA, Italy, Germany, Russia, China, etc., plus a Chicago flag). These flags will fly for a few days. Observers downtown could see the bright colors flapping nearly a quarter-mile high, a sight Mayor (Name) called “the United Nations of the skyline.”
- **Progress Report – Rides Installation:** Project officials used the occasion to update on construction progress: the building’s steel structure (30,000 tons worth) is complete; concrete floor slabs are poured up through level 100; the curtain wall glass facade has been installed up to about level 80 and will continue to enclose higher floors through early 2030. Crucially, many ride systems are already in place or in progress:
 - The **spiral roller coaster track** has been fully mounted on the exterior from level 95 down to 50. Residents have watched with fascination over recent months as bright red coaster rails gradually wound around the tower’s outside. “It’s not every day you see a roller coaster hanging off a skyscraper,” joked construction supervisor (Name). Intamin engineers on site report they will begin preliminary push-pull testing of coaster cars on the track next month – essentially moving them slowly to test clearances and alignment.
 - Two **drop tower shafts** (one 600-ft, one ~450-ft) are installed inside the tower’s core. These glossy cylindrical shafts, painted ominous black, were raised in sections and now stand ready for mechanical outfitting. These will deliver the

gut-dropping experiences of *SkyDrop* and *SkyPlunge*, akin to those planned in Skyrise Miami, but in a controlled indoor environment.

- The giant indoor **Ferris wheel (360° World)** is partially assembled between floors 40-45. Its support structure is in, and the rim segments are being connected. This wheel will eventually carry 16 gondolas in a slow rotation giving park-goers panoramic city views from mid-tower.
- Interiors: Theming construction has begun on lower levels – for example, the Roman Empire area (floors 12-18) already has plasterwork for faux marble columns and a partially built mock Colosseum wall. The Nazi Germany area (floors 31-34) has its soundproof dark ride rooms constructed, ready for scenic painting and animatronic installation next year. “Walking through, you can really start to feel the different worlds taking shape,” said Creative Director (Name). “In one elevator ride, you pass centuries of design – it’s astonishing even as bare bones.”
- **Safety Testing Milestone:** A notable event celebrated was the first successful test of the tower’s *“multi-level evacuation system.”* Because the building is so tall and uniquely used, engineers have installed refuge floors and backup elevators. Last week, a full-scale fire drill was conducted from floor 95 simulating a ride emergency, and it went smoothly: within 20 minutes, all “passengers” (test dummies and a few volunteer staff) were transported to ground safely via hardened fire elevators. “It’s an odd thing to cheer for, but we cheered,” said Safety Chief (Name). “That test is a major required milestone and it passed with flying colors.”
- **Economic Impact to Date:** Since ground-breaking, over 3,500 construction workers have logged time on the project. Today, representatives from local unions and firms joined the celebration, proud of their work erecting a one-of-a-kind structure. Union leader (Name) declared, “This project kept ironworkers, electricians, carpenters – you name it – busy through tough times. As we top out, we salute the skilled trades who made it possible.” The community hiring program reports 29 apprentices from underserved neighborhoods have now worked on-site gaining invaluable experience. Several have transitioned to full union membership.
- **Jobs Ahead:** Despot Park’s management also announced the upcoming recruitment drive for operations. Starting in mid-2030, the park will begin hiring the first wave of managers and technicians to start preparing for opening. By mid-2031, they’ll ramp up to hire front-line staff (with priority to those who participated in training programs). Positions will range from ride mechanics and show technicians to costumed performers, food & beverage, retail, and guest services. In total, about 2,800 positions will be filled by opening. A new hiring center will open on Michigan Avenue next spring to facilitate applications and auditions. “This is when the vision turns into real opportunities for individuals,” said COO (Name). “We are excited to welcome many Chicagoans into the

Despot Park family.”

Quotes at Topping Out:

- *Mayor (Name)*: “Topping out is always symbolic, but rarely is it this symbolically rich. We’ve just raised beams and flags that represent both the might of Chicago’s labor and the collective story of our world – now captured in steel and glass. The next time we gather here in celebration, it will be at opening day, marveling at a finished wonder.”
- *Governor (Name)*: “Illinois leads the nation in architecture, tourism, and yes, in big dreams. Look at that structure – it was a dream on paper not long ago, and now it’s as real as can be. And kudos, it’s on budget and on schedule – can’t ask for more!”
- *Anton Verlotsky*: “This tower may be topped out, but our excitement is still building. From this point forward, it’s all about turning this impressive shell into an immersive experience. We can see the finish line on the horizon, about as far as you can see from up there on the top floor – which, by the way, is breathtaking. I went up this morning, and I have to tell you, the view – and the thrill – even without the rides running, is beyond my wildest hopes.”

In a playful close to the ceremony, an actor impersonating Nikita Khrushchev (complete with a shoe in hand) jokingly banged it on the podium and shouted, “We will bury you... in fun!**” – riffing off Khrushchev’s famous Cold War threat, but turning it into a promise of fun. The crowd laughed and clapped; it seems everyone is getting into the spirit of Despot Park’s brand of humor.

With the structure complete, focus shifts to enclosing the top floors over the winter, then heavy interior fit-out through 2030. The next year will see the rides come alive: early 2031 is slated for comprehensive ride testing and commissioning. Officials noted that the Illinois Department of Labor’s Amusement Ride Safety division has been closely involved and will begin formal certification processes on each ride soon. “Some rides, like the coasters, we’ll likely run thousands of cycles empty before letting anyone on,” said Ride Systems Manager (Name). “Safety is paramount. We’ll debug every sensor, brake, and harness thoroughly.”

The City’s excitement grows as Despot Park moves from construction to preparation. If topping out is any indication, Chicago is fully embracing this bold addition. Media from around the world were present today – many noting that this may be the tallest building ever constructed primarily as an entertainment venue, a kind of new genre of skyscraper. Architecture critics are already praising the design’s audacity and how surprisingly well it complements the skyline, with its stepped form aligning respectfully with nearby buildings (its first setback echoes the Wrigley Building’s height, a deliberate SOM design move, bridging old and new).

As the event wrapped up, spectators were invited to sign a ceremonial banner that will hang in the employee entrance of the park later. By 2 p.m., the site was returning to work mode – crews already beginning to dismantle temporary lifts and prepare for cladding the upper levels. There's a sense of both relief and renewed energy among the team: one phase is done, and the next – arguably even more complex – phase begins.

Chicago, get ready. The structure that now firmly commands the skyline is about to be filled with wonders inside. And come 2033, the world will be invited to step in and take the ride of a lifetime.

Press Release 7: Now Hiring – Thousands of Jobs for Chicagoans**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**June 1, 2031 – *Chicago, IL***Despot Park Launches Massive Hiring Drive – 2,500 Positions Open for Chicago’s New Landmark Attraction**

As the opening of Despot Park Chicago draws closer, the park’s operators today announced the start of a major hiring campaign to staff the revolutionary downtown theme park. With construction in its final stages and ride testing underway, Despot Park is looking to build a team of enthusiastic employees to run the day-to-day operations of the vertical park. **More than 2,500 jobs** are available across a wide range of roles, promising a significant employment boost for the city.

Job Fair and Roles:

- Starting next week, Despot Park will host weekly job fairs at its newly opened Employment Center (located at 233 N. Michigan Ave). The fairs will run every Tuesday and Thursday through September. Applicants can meet hiring managers, learn about roles, and even audition on the spot for performance positions.
- **Roles Recruiting:** Ride operators, technicians, and maintenance engineers; performers (actors to portray historical characters, parade performers, stunt persons for certain shows); guest service attendants and tour guides; retail and food & beverage workers (from servers in themed restaurants to kiosk vendors); security and first aid staff; custodial and facility maintenance; ticketing and customer relations; and administrative support (HR, finance, IT, etc.). Essentially, “if you can think of a job at a theme park or a high-rise, we have it,” said HR Director (Name).
- **Positions detail:**
 - Ride operators and attendants (400+ openings) – Operating the roller coaster, drop towers, Ferris wheel, etc. and ensuring guest safety. Training will be provided, including extensive safety certification under Illinois ride regulations.
 - Entertainers (150 openings) – These include costumed “dictator” characters who roam the park in satirical roles, stage show cast for scheduled productions, and street performers (such as comedic secret police who interact with guests for laughs). Applicants should have acting or improvisation backgrounds; multilingual skills are a plus for roles that speak to the historical culture.
 - Food & Beverage (300+ openings) – Cooks, servers, bartenders for 8 themed eateries (ranging from a quick-serve Soviet canteen to an upscale Roman banquet hall), plus numerous snack carts. Some venues will be run in partnership

with local restaurateurs (e.g., a Polish bakery partnering for a themed cafe in the Soviet zone).

- Maintenance (120 openings) – Electricians, HVAC specialists (given the building scale), plumbers, plus a dedicated team of **ride mechanics** who will inspect and service attractions daily. “We’re hiring seasoned tradespeople and also trainees; we want a robust maintenance team to keep everything running flawlessly,” noted COO (Name).
- Security & Guest Safety (200 openings) – A combination of security officers and guest safety personnel (including EMS-certified staff at first aid stations). Given the building’s height and crowds, emergency preparedness is key. Already, the park’s security management (run by a former CPD deputy chief) is recruiting candidates with law enforcement or military background, as well as friendly “customer service” security for bag checks and visitor assistance.
- “Experience Guides” (100 openings) – A new role akin to museum docents, these employees will roam exhibits and rides to provide historical context and answer visitor questions. Ideal for history majors or teachers, these guides ensure the educational component doesn’t get lost amid the fun.
- **Compensation & Benefits:** Despot Park is offering competitive wages. Starting pay for entry roles (like attendants) is \$18/hour, higher for skilled roles (maintenance techs start ~\$30/hour). Full-time positions come with benefits including health insurance, retirement plan, free transit passes, and of course free park admission for employees’ families. There will also be unique perks: e.g., “costume laundry service” for performers, opportunities for continued education (the park plans to partner with local colleges for discounted courses in hospitality and history for staff). “We want this to be a sought-after place to work in Chicago,” said HR Director (Name). “The jobs are fun and dynamic, but also we value our employees and aim to provide long-term career paths.”
- **Diversity and Local Hiring:** In line with the previously signed Community Benefits Agreement, the park is prioritizing Chicago residents, especially from neighborhoods citywide, not just downtown. They are working with organizations like Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership and local aldermen to advertise jobs in communities with higher unemployment. The goal is at least 50% of hires from South and West Side neighborhoods. Additionally, Despot Park has committed to a workforce reflecting Chicago’s diversity. “We want our team to be as diverse as the visitors we’ll welcome,” said COO (Name). “We’re also particularly encouraging bilingual candidates to apply, as we expect many international tourists and want to accommodate them.”

Training Program – The “Despot Academy”: The park is establishing an intensive training program for new hires before opening. This includes:

- **Safety and Operations Training:** All employees will undergo general safety training, evacuation procedures, guest evacuation assistance, etc. Ride operators/mechanics have months of specialized training per ride with manufacturers. Performers will go through bootcamp-style rehearsals.
- **History & Sensitivity Training:** Given the delicate subject matter, all staff will attend seminars with historians and cultural sensitivity experts. They'll learn the real history behind each attraction so they can answer questions and avoid unintended offense. "Even a food service worker in the Soviet canteen needs to know why the menu has thin soup and black bread – it reflects history," said Cultural Advisor Dr. (Name). "Empowering staff with knowledge will enrich visitor experience and ensure respectful handling of tough historical topics."
- **Customer Service with a Smile (and a Smirk):** A special customer service philosophy is being taught: maintaining theme and humor while being helpful. Staff will learn when to be "in-character" and when to break character to assist a guest. For example, a performer dressed as a stern secret police officer might jokingly "demand" a ticket, but will seamlessly guide a confused guest to the right queue with a smile once out of character. This balancing act is something management is drilling via role-playing scenarios now.
- **Emergency Drills:** Before opening, staff will participate in full-scale emergency drills, including ride evacuations, medical emergencies, and even an "active threat" scenario, in coordination with CPD and CFD. "Safety is everyone's job; on a structure this unique, we want every ice cream seller to also know how to direct guests to exits calmly if needed," emphasized Safety Chief (Name).

Community Excitement: Leaders from workforce development groups lauded the hiring push. "This is a godsend for many of our clients looking for entry to hospitality or technical trades," said (Name) of (Local org). "The fact that Despot Park offers upward mobility – a ride attendant today could become a lead technician or manager in a few years – makes it more than a job, it's potentially a career."

Even high schoolers are eyeing summer roles. At least 300 of the positions are seasonal and ideal for students (like ticket takers, parade route assistants, etc.). The park is working with Chicago Public Schools to recruit responsible teens (with parental permission and work permits) for part-time roles. They also announced a partnership with City Colleges for a "earn and learn" program where employees can take relevant courses (in history, tourism, etc.) subsidized by the park.

Timeline: Hiring will occur in waves: managerial/supervisory hires in mid-2031, followed by bulk front-line hiring in late 2031 through early 2032, to allow plenty of training time. By mid-2032, nearly all staff should be on board for soft-opening trials.

Applicants are encouraged to apply online at www.despotpark.com/careers or attend one of the in-person fairs. The website features a quirky recruitment video where current project team members dressed as historical figures tout the jobs (e.g., “I, Napoleon, am applying to be a greeter – I love saying ‘Bienvenue!’”).

Quote from Mayor (Name): “This hiring drive is one of the biggest job creation events for Chicago in recent memory. It’s not just the quantity of jobs, it’s the variety – from engineers to entertainers. These are opportunities for many young people to have their first job and for experienced workers to take on a new challenge at something truly unique. Despot Park isn’t just building a park, it’s building a workforce.”

Quote from Anton Verlotsky: “We invite Chicagoans of all stripes to join us in making history – literally. Working at Despot Park will be like nothing else, every day fun and fascinating. We can train skills, we can teach history; what we really seek are people with passion, humor, and a commitment to teamwork and guest service. If that’s you, we want you on board as we prepare to open the gates to the world.”

City residents who have been watching the gleaming tower rise are now seeing TV and billboard ads: **“Your Future Could Be at Despot Park – Now Hiring!”** with images of employees in various costumes and uniforms. It’s an exciting reminder that the countdown to opening moves forward, and that Chicagoans themselves will be running the show when the big day arrives.

Those interested should act fast – as one of the ads humorously says, “Opportunities like this come along once in a lifetime (or at most once per regime). Don’t miss out on joining the revolution... of fun!”

For more info on jobs and the upcoming fairs, visit the Despot Park careers site or call 312-555-JOBS.

Press Release 8: Grand Opening Date Announced

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 15, 2033 – *Chicago, IL*

Despot Park Chicago Sets Grand Opening Date: July 4, 2033 – Freedom Day for the Fun to Begin

The wait is nearly over: Despot Park Chicago, the world's first dictator-themed vertical amusement park, will officially open to the public on **July 4, 2033**. Park executives and Mayor (Name) announced the much-anticipated grand opening date today at a press conference, appropriately choosing Independence Day as the moment when this epic attraction will throw open its doors (and gates and portcullises) to the world.

"Mark your calendars, Chicago and everyone out there making travel plans – July 4th, our nation's birthday, will also be Despot Park's birthday," proclaimed Mayor (Name). "It's the day we invite everyone to celebrate freedom by visiting a place dedicated to the opposite – and having a heck of a time learning why freedom matters."

Why July 4th: The symbolism is obvious, but park officials also note pragmatic reasons. By early July, the weather is prime, and it gives the park time to fine-tune operations with a series of soft openings in May and June. Additionally, 2033 marks the centennial of the 1933 Chicago World's Fair, which opened in late May 1933 and celebrated progress. Despot Park's opening on Independence Day ties into that historical resonance. "100 years ago, Chicago wowed the world with a fair about progress. Now we'll wow the world with a park that showcases progress by lampooning the lack of it under dictators," said Despot Park CEO (Name).

Grand Opening Plans Unveiled:

- The opening day ceremony will be a major public event drawing dignitaries, celebrities, and fans. Mayor (Name) confirmed that invitations have been extended to leaders and cultural figures from the park's represented countries – for example, it's rumored that the President of Poland and a descendant of Winston Churchill have been invited, underlining the educational diplomacy aspect. "It's not an official state function, but we'd love to have some global guests witness this spectacle and perhaps say a few words on the lessons of history," said the Mayor's office.
- **Parade of Tyrants (and Triumph):** There will be a special opening day parade in the morning along Wacker Drive in front of the park. It will feature elaborate floats and performers from each theme zone – e.g., an ancient Roman chariot float, a tank carrying a mocking Stalin figure, etc. The parade ends with a "Triumph of Freedom" float where all the dictators are symbolically caged and Lady Liberty holds the key. Dozens of local marching bands and cultural dance troupes will participate, reflecting Chicago's sister cities and ethnic communities.

- **Opening Ceremony:** At midday, a ceremonial ribbon cutting is planned at the park entrance. But in Despot Park fashion, it's dubbed the "Chain Breaking." A giant chain "locking" the park gates will be shattered by bolt cutters wielded by a group of children (representing the next generation breaking free from the past). Expect fireworks, confetti, and perhaps some theatrical thunderclaps to accompany this. City choirs will perform a mashup of national anthems from around the world, culminating in a powerful rendition of "Ode to Joy" (Beethoven's 9th, symbolically about unity and freedom).
- **Public Opening and Ticketing:** The park will open to ticketed guests immediately after the ceremony on July 4. However, to manage crowds, the first several days will have limited capacity and require advance reservation tickets. "We anticipate extremely high demand initially, including international tourists planning trips around this," said CMO (Name). "So we're implementing a timed entry system for opening weeks to ensure everyone has a great experience." The first week has already been effectively sold out through a pre-registration that occurred last year for newsletter subscribers.
- **First Official Ride:** In a tradition akin to breaking a champagne bottle on a ship, the first official ride of the signature roller coaster (tentatively named "**The Iron Curtain Coaster**") will include a train full of VIPs and contest winners (the park ran a global essay contest on "Why freedom matters" for youths, winners get to be first riders). That will happen around 1 PM on opening day, with media cameras rolling and likely some screams of delight (and terror). "We might have a certain former U.S. President who's a noted thrill-ride enthusiast joining that ride – stay tuned," teased PR Director (Name).
- **Evening Spectacular:** To top off opening day, a large-scale evening show is planned on the river. A fleet of barges will launch fireworks and lasers in sync with a dramatic narration and music. Titled "**Liberty Rises**", the show will depict through lights and water projections the journey from oppression to freedom. Chicago's skyline will be part of the canvas – with Despot Park's tower itself lighting up in different colors (each zone's LED lights doing a choreographed sequence). Officials hint at a surprise finale: possibly a coordinated drone light display forming the faces of various historical heroes in the sky, ending with the message "Happy Freedom Day, Chicago!" The public can watch from along the Riverwalk and designated viewing areas.
- The City is treating it as a major festival day – similar to a Taste of Chicago or New Year's Eve – with street closures around the area, security zones, and crowd management. The Office of Emergency Management says they are prepared for potentially hundreds of thousands of people who might come downtown just to witness festivities even if they don't enter the park that day.

Ticket Sales Announcement: In tandem, Despot Park announced that general ticket sales for dates after July 8 will open on March 1, 2033 at 10 AM CST via their website and authorized partners. Given the hype, they expect online queues. The park is using a dynamic pricing

model: initial base price is \$75 adult, \$55 child, but specific day demand could vary it. They will also offer family packs and multi-day passes, as well as annual passes for locals (the “Frequent Comrade Pass” was one name tossed around but maybe changed for positivity). City residents get a small discount as part of the CBA commitments, and certain low-income community days will be scheduled.

Last Construction/Testing Update: The project is on track. In the press conference, COO (Name) confirmed:

- All rides have been installed. “Every bolt is in, every track piece welded. We’re now in the phase of calibration and commissioning.” The past months saw extensive testing: coasters running empty and with test dummies; show elements rehearsing behind closed doors; restaurants doing trial runs with staff.
- City inspectors and state ride safety officials have been going through each ride’s certification. “We have a sign-off on 80% of attractions, the rest are in final review and we expect full safety certification of the park well before opening,” said a representative from Illinois Department of Labor.
- Theming is essentially complete; staff are now doing “tech rehearsals.” Recently, employees in full costume have been spotted entering the building for scenario drills. One humorous anecdote: last week during a soft-test, a concerned construction worker not clued in saw a “soldier” marching with a rifle on an upper floor catwalk and nearly called security – until the soldier broke character and apologized. “We’ve had to remind ourselves that seeing SS-uniformed actors or KGB coats in the hallways is now normal here,” laughed COO (Name). “It’s all part of the show.”

Soft Opening Events: Before July 4, there will be invitation-only previews and charity fundraiser days:

- Late May: employees’ families day (to stress-test operations with a friendly crowd).
- Early June: Local community day – free admission to selected Chicago community groups, especially those who collaborated on the project (e.g., Little Warsaw cultural center, etc.), as a thank you and final practice.
- Mid-June: Media preview and travel industry day – reporters and influencers will get a first look so they can publish reviews pre-opening. Some initial impressions already leaked from insiders suggest the park is “mind-blowingly immersive” and “thrilling to both heart and mind.”
- A VIP gala is set for July 3 evening: a black-tie (with optional costume) event where donors to Chicago cultural institutions get to experience the park at night with limited crowd, raising funds jointly for the museums that partnered in content. This is also when

any VIPs who might not want to be amidst the huge opening crowd can visit. Rumor has it certain Hollywood stars with interest in history (e.g., the makers of “The Producers” perhaps?) are invited.

The City’s marketing arm Choose Chicago launched a new campaign internationally: “**DICTATE YOUR SUMMER – Visit Chicago 2033**” highlighting the park among other summer events. It’s edgy and turning heads in travel media.

Mayor’s Quote: “When we cut that chain on July 4th, it’s going to be a goosebumps moment. This project has had everything – drama, laughs, meticulous planning, and incredibly hard work by so many. To see it finally welcome the world – and on Independence Day, no less – is profoundly fitting. Chicago once gave the world the Ferris wheel at the 1893 fair; in 2033, we give the world an entire new kind of wheel – a whole new kind of park. We’re so excited to share it.”

Verlotsky’s Quote: “This park has lived in our heads and drawings for years. It’s about to live in reality. We invite everyone, from Chicago and every corner of the globe, to come be part of this crazy, enlightening adventure. Trust me, you’ve never seen anything like it. Mark July 4, 2033 – history will be made, and then made fun of, all in one day.”

Final Countdown: With less than six months to go, the countdown clock on Despot Park’s website (and on a large digital display now mounted on the tower’s base) reads “170 Days to Dictators (and Fun)”. The excitement in Chicago is palpable – hotels are reporting a surge in July bookings, and travel forums are buzzing with people planning visits.

On July 4, 2033, at the heart of America’s freedom celebration, Chicago will invite the masses to step into the shadows of tyranny – and enjoy the sunshine of liberty and laughter on the other side.

The world will be watching... and then riding, eating, dancing, and learning.

Let freedom – and the turnstiles – ring!

Press Release 9: Grand Opening Celebration & Marketing Blitz**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**June 20, 2033 – *Chicago, IL***Despot Park Grand Opening Festivities Detailed – Chicago Gears Up for “Summer of Tyrants (and Tourists)”**

With just two weeks until Despot Park Chicago’s grand opening on July 4th, the city and park officials today released final details on the opening day celebrations and rolled out a marketing campaign inviting the world to experience the unique attraction. Dubbed the **“Summer of Tyrants (and Tourists)”**, the campaign is tongue-in-cheek and citywide, ensuring that every Chicagoan – and potential visitor – knows that the most extraordinary new theme park on the planet is about to open here.

Citywide Décor and Countdown: Chicago has embraced a festive vibe reminiscent of past World’s Fairs:

- Banners line Michigan Avenue and State Street featuring caricature art of historical despots (drawn in a harmlessly goofy style) with speech bubbles like “I Demand You Have Fun – July 4” and “Visit or Else! – Despot Park 7.4.33”. The city’s famed skyline fireworks show for July 3rd (Independence Eve) is being co-branded with Despot Park this year, promising a sneak preview of the park’s own pyrotechnics and light capabilities as part of the show.
- A giant countdown clock projection now lights up nightly on the Merchandise Mart building, showing days, hours, minutes until opening. It’s become a bit of a social media magnet for selfies.
- The digital billboards on highways greet drivers with messages like “All Roads Lead to Despot Park – Coming 7.4.33” alternating with playful warnings like “Caution: Fun Ahead, 2 Weeks” with cartoon dictators waving.

Advertising Blitz: Choose Chicago, in partnership with Despot Park’s marketing team, has launched ads across TV, radio, print, and online:

- **TV Commercials:** A cinematic 60-second spot titled “Where Tyranny Meets Timeless Fun” airs on national networks and streaming platforms. It opens with dark historical footage (black-and-white scenes of marches and scowling dictators) then bursts into color as those dictators are shown stumbling into a modern park setting, slipping on banana peels or getting soaked on a log flume – undercut by lively music. A narrator intones, “They ruled with iron fists... now they ride with you for thrills and laughs. History’s heavies have met their match – **Despot Park: The Dictator of All Theme**

Parks. Opening in Chicago, July 4.” It’s an attention-grabber for sure.

- **Print Media:** Full-page ads in major papers and travel magazines show, for example, a roller coaster car with Stalin, Caesar, and Napoleon screaming in delight, with the tagline “Scream with the Supreme – Ride through History at Despot Park!” Another features a happy family clinking beer steins with a faux Hitler (in obviously parody context, perhaps at a Biergarten) with text “The only place you’ll celebrate with history’s villains – because here, fun wins.”
(These edgy ads have been vetted extensively – the park’s legal team and cultural consultants approved them as clearly satirical and not glorifying. Still, they’re daring, which is generating a lot of free buzz as people share them on social media with astonished reactions.)
- **Social Media & Influencers:** A TikTok campaign using the hashtag **#DownWithBoredom** has popular creators doing comedic skits as if they were various dictators excited to visit the park. One viral clip shows “Queen Elizabeth I” on a throne on a roller coaster, deadpanning to camera: “We are not amused... Actually, we are.” These have collectively garnered millions of views. The park’s official accounts are releasing teaser POV videos of the rides (just short, not giving away everything) to build hype among theme park enthusiasts online.
- **Publicity Stunts:** The marketing team has a few city stunts planned in the final days: There’s talk of projecting a giant “Bat-signal”-like image onto the clouds – but of Charlie Chaplin dressed as The Great Dictator – as a night spectacle. Also, costumed park actors may “take over” a downtown plaza next week in a flash mob, e.g., Napoleonic soldiers setting up a mini-camp until modern Chicago police “evict” them in a humorous performance piece. All geared to draw attention and news coverage.
- **Partnerships:** Several brands jumped on cross-promotions. An airline is running “Fly to Chicago, Rule the Sky” deals with Despot Park tickets. A soft drink sponsor has limited edition cans with park artwork in Midwest markets. Even the Illinois Lottery got cheeky with scratch-offs called “Jackpot Junta” with park tie-in (chance to win park passes, etc.).

Opening Day Logistics (public info): The City is finalizing the plan for handling the influx:

- CTA will run extra trains and buses. They created a commemorative transit pass with artwork of a king’s crown and CTA logo.
- Street closures: Wabash, parts of Michigan, and some river crossings will close or be restricted July 4 for the parade and safety near the park. The public is encouraged to use transit or walk.
- Viewing areas for the parade and evening show are designated with crowd capacity controls. Big screens will be set up in Grant Park and near Navy Pier to broadcast the

opening ceremony and parade for overflow crowds.

- Security: A multi-agency command center will monitor the events. There'll be bag checks at entry to the parade route and park vicinity. Given the presence of high-profile figures and crowds, expect metal detectors and a visible police presence. The mood is festive but authorities emphasize that for many this is like a major holiday event times two, so all standard precautions apply.
- The city has even issued a code of conduct asking attendees not to wear any hateful insignia or real Nazi symbols etc. – cosplay is fine but be mindful and respectful. (They don't want confusion between official performers and random folks potentially causing offense.)
- Hotels across the city are near capacity around July 4; the economic boost from visitors is already being felt. Restaurants are extending hours. Navy Pier is coordinating their July 4 fireworks to complement, not conflict, with the Despot Park show schedule, so both can be enjoyed.

Merchandise and Souvenirs: Despot Park's gift empire is revving up. On opening day, visitors can buy all sorts of cheeky souvenirs:

- Plush dolls of "Lil' Dictators" (a set of plushies of various tyrants but caricatured cute – e.g., chibi Napoleon with big head, small body).
- T-shirts with slogans like "I Survived The Purge – And All I Got Was This Lousy T-Shirt" with park logo (some proceeds of that specific shirt go to a human rights charity, as a nod).
- "Dictator Chic" line of hats and pins, e.g., a ushanka hat with park emblem, or a military-style cap that says "General Fun."
- A collectible dictator trading card game (one of the more educational souvenirs – stats of each historical figure, encouraging kids to read a bit about them).
- And the runaway predicted hit: a coffee mug shaped like a certain hair-parted mustache face, that when filled with hot liquid, a smiley face emerges... It's dark humor but evidently early focus groups found them hilarious. (Expect controversies on some items, but the park has prepared press statements focusing on the satirical intent and educational context behind every design.)

Excitement from Collaborators: The cultural institutions that lent expertise (museums, academics) are excited to see the final product and how the public engages. Many will be

present on opening day, some running small info booths to connect guests to deeper resources (like “If you liked learning about this, visit our museum exhibit on it.”).

As final rehearsals and checks continue inside the park, outside the world is truly watching. Major news outlets from multiple countries have requested media passes for opening day (the park has nearly 500 media personnel accredited). Late night talk show hosts are already cracking jokes – in a positive way – about the concept (one joked “Chicago is where you can go to stand in line with Stalin for a roller coaster – skip the gulag, straight to the fun!”).

All signs point to a grand opening that will be one of the most memorable events in Chicago’s modern history. The blend of celebration of freedom and satire of tyranny is hitting a cultural moment where people seem ready to partake.

As one Chicago blogger wrote, “In a time of serious issues, Chicago’s about to remind the world of the power of not taking the bad guys too seriously. We’ll laugh, we’ll learn, and we’ll loop-de-loop at 90 mph while doing it. Count me in.”

Final Words – Mayor (Name): “The stage is set, the world is coming, and Chicago is ready to shine. Despot Park’s opening will be a testament to our city’s creativity, our values, and our ability to turn even the darkest history into a beacon of light. Let’s get ready to welcome everyone on July 4th with open arms and open minds. This summer will be one for the history books – ironically, because of history’s own characters!”

See you on the 4th. Fun will reign supreme!