

Chicago Tribune



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THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2024

BREAKING NEWS AT CHICAGOTRIBUNE.COM

Key interest rate cut by half-point

Move could jump-start residential development across downtown

By **Brian J. Rogal**
Chicago Tribune

The Federal Reserve announced on Wednesday its first interest rate cut since the pandemic, a move real estate developers say could eventually help kick off the construction of new apartment complexes across downtown Chicago and dot the skyline with cranes.

Thousands of residents want to move downtown, especially to amenity-rich neighborhoods in the West Loop, such as Fulton Market, and developers have been aching to break ground on new projects, but some proposals got too costly after the Fed began hiking interest rates in 2022.

“We need to have cranes in the

sky,” said Regina Stilp, founding principal of Farpoint Development, one of the developers aiming to build a 7 million-square-foot innovation hub on the former site of Michael Reese Hospital in Bronzeville. “We have a (Fulton Market) multifamily that we want to get in the ground but can’t. The cost of construction is too much.”

Fed Chair Jerome Powell said Federal Open Market Committee members decided to cut the target range for interest rates 50 basis points to between 4.75% and 5%, a strong move after anemic job growth numbers, coupled with cooling inflation, sparked fears the U.S. could fall into a recession.

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Federal Reserve Board Chairman Jerome Powell announces the lower interest rate Wednesday in Washington. **BEN CURTIS/AP**

The Fed’s move reflects a new focus on bolstering the job market

By **Christopher Rugaber**
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Federal Reserve on Wednesday cut its benchmark interest rate by an unusually large half-point, a dramatic shift after more than two years of high rates that helped tame inflation but also made borrowing painfully expensive for American consumers.

The rate cut, the Fed’s first in more than four years, reflects its new focus on bolstering the job market, which has shown clear signs of slowing. Coming just weeks before the presidential election, the Fed’s move also has the potential to scramble the economic landscape just as Amer-

icans prepare to vote.

The central bank’s action lowered its key rate to roughly 4.8%, down from a two-decade high of 5.3%, where it had stood for 14 months as it struggled to curb the worst inflation streak in four decades. Inflation has tumbled from a peak of 9.1% in mid-2022 to a three-year low of 2.5% in August, not far above the Fed’s 2% target.

The Fed’s policymakers also signaled that they expect to cut their key rate by an additional half-point in their final two meetings this year, in November and December. And they envision four more rate cuts in 2025 and two in 2026.

In a statement, the Fed came

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Art exhibit explores heyday of Ebony, Jet

How old Chicago offices turned into Theaster Gates’ latest exhibition

By **Christopher Borrelli**
Chicago Tribune

Theaster Gates stared hard at a room full of furniture.

There were credenzas, chairs, desks, chests, a cube resembling an office refrigerator. Behind them, framed correspondence, photographs. Much of it came to him in 2010 after Johnson Publishing Co., home of Ebony and Jet magazines, vacated South Michigan Avenue. An office tower’s worth of furnishings, loose magazines, books, art and history needed a new home, and fast. Johnson Publishing was going through the final pains of watching its traditional place on newsstands vanish. So Columbia College stepped in and bought 820 S. Michigan. Johnson had occupied it since the early 1970s. It was the first building in downtown Chicago owned by a Black man. It’s still the only downtown skyscraper from a Black architect (John Warren Moutoussamy).

But Gates got a lot of the *stuff* from the landmark building. At least 15,000 objects in total, roughly 6,000 square feet of office ephemera, the majority of it from the 1950s, ’60s and ’70s.

Thinking of those frantic days when the building was closing, he smiled sadly.

“I am always thriving in decay.”

He said this in the lobby of the Stony Island Arts Bank near Jackson Park, the Prohibition-era savings and loan building he bought in 2012 for \$1. Soon

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Artist and educator Theaster Gates stands inside a piece titled, “New Jerusalem,” included in his exhibition, “When Clouds Roll Away: Reflection and Restoration from the Johnson Archive,” at the Stony Island Arts Bank in Chicago. **JOHN J. KIM/CHICAGO TRIBUNE**



Ald. David Moore, 17th, speaks regarding a motion to extend the city’s contract with SoundThinking’s ShotSpotter service during Wednesday’s City Council meeting in City Hall. **TESS CROWLEY/CHICAGO TRIBUNE**

Council continues push to maintain ShotSpotter

Johnson pledges veto after aldermen pass ordinance to keep technology

By **Jake Sheridan**
Chicago Tribune

The City Council again rebuked Mayor Brandon Johnson’s plan to rid Chicago of ShotSpotter Wednesday, voting to keep the gunshot detection technology around just days before it was set to go offline.

Aldermen passed in a 33-to-14 vote an ordinance supporters say would compel police Superintendent Larry Snelling to reach a contract to continue using the tool.

However, Johnson appears poised to nonetheless move

ahead with his plan to boot the technology from the city. He has previously sidestepped similar City Council decisions by arguing that only the mayor, and not the council, has power over the city’s contracts.

“This is not an ordinance to keep ShotSpotter,” the mayor insisted to aldermen during debate, nodding to his broad contract authority.

After the meeting, city Corporation Counsel Mary Richardson-Lowry joined the mayor at a news conference, where she said the ordinance violates the separation of powers in city govern-

ment because it would constitute the legislative branch forcing the executive branch to take action. Johnson will therefore veto it, Richardson-Lowry said.

The mayor said he will continue to seek ways to make residents safer, including considering gunshot detection technology. “The technology that exists right now ... are people still afraid? Yes,” Johnson said when asked whether Chicagoans will feel anxious that ShotSpotter is being removed.

Johnson’s council opponents meanwhile talked Wednesday about filing a lawsuit to keep the

system in place.

And at a City Hall news conference Wednesday morning, supporters of the sensors laid the groundwork to blame him for gunshot deaths that follow ShotSpotter’s termination.

“If certain people are allowed to make certain decisions without certain common sense, then all I can say is, there will be blood,” said street pastor Donovan Price, known for working with gun violence victims.

The mayor has cited expert reports to argue the

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INSIDE

Groups join forces to oppose stadium

A coalition of public groups opposes a new Chicago Bears stadium on the lakefront, saying the billions of dollars at stake would be better used for things like affordable housing and health care. **Chicagoland, Page 3**

DirecTV deal inked, but issues remain

The Chicago Sports Network and DirecTV formally announced an agreement Wednesday to carry the new TV home of the White Sox, Bulls and Blackhawks. But there’s no agreement with Comcast yet. **Business**



ARMANDO L. SANCHEZ/TRIBUNE

Williams, Bears prepare for Colts

Struggling offensively vs. the Titans and taking multiple hits from the Texans, quarterback Caleb Williams looks for better communication, in-game adjustments to deal with defensive pressure. **Chicago Sports**

