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FALL 2022



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Chris Stone recently filed a request for a zoning permit to open in an 18,800-square-foot vacant warehouse site on the city's northeast side at 3451 Lumber Lane.

PHOTO BY STACIE LEWIS

# First craft-grow site plan filed

## Chris Stone hopes to receive approval for city's first craft-grow operation

By Dean Olsen

Cannabis entrepreneur Chris Stone hopes to receive city approval for a proposed craft-grow business in Springfield this fall on behalf of a company called Cyclone Labs.

The Springfield resident recently filed a request for a zoning permit to open in an 18,800-square-foot warehouse site on the city's northeast side at 3451 Lumber Lane. The plan will be considered at the Springfield Planning and Zoning Commission's Oct. 19 meeting.

Stone told *Illinois Times* he was acting as a consultant on behalf of Springfield-based Cyclone Labs when he recently filed a request for a conditional permitted use, or CPU, for the six-acre Lumber Lane site.

The site contains 16,800 square feet of empty warehouse space and 2,000 square feet of office space. It is in an industrial zone that complies with the city's setback requirements, Stone said. The site would undergo \$4.7 million in renovations and create 20 to 25 permanent full-time jobs, he said.

"It's going to be economically impactful for the area," Stone said. "More importantly, though, it's a business that will hopefully continue to elevate the entrepreneurial nature of

current businesses in Springfield as well as attract businesses to Springfield that either are in cannabis or have ancillary benefits to cannabis."

No craft grows have opened yet in Illinois since the cultivation, sale and use of recreational marijuana became legal in 2020. The state has awarded about 50 craft-grow licenses to investors throughout the state, and those licensees are working to find suitable sites for indoor facilities that can grow cannabis plants in 5,000 square feet of space.

The law allows craft-grow operators to ask the state for permission to eventually expand to 14,000 square feet.

Holders of licenses to open the small-scale, indoor cannabis cultivation centers have complained that Springfield's setback requirements from schools and residential zoning are so onerous that they eliminate almost all options in the city's industrial parks where many buildings sit empty.

Current rules for industrial zones in Springfield require cannabis craft grows to be at least 1,500 feet from residential zones, schools and daycare centers. The setback requirement is at least 2,500 feet for cannabis

infusers.

A majority on the City Council turned down a proposed ordinance by Mayor Jim Langfelder and Ward 3 Ald. Roy Williams in August that eventually would have reduced the setbacks for craft grows and infusers to at least 200 feet from residential zoning and 500 feet from schools and daycare centers.

The proposal was supported by several cannabis entrepreneurs, including craft-grow license holder Jeff Fulgenzi, a north-end native, Sherman resident and former Sangamon County Board member.

Langfelder has asked the Springfield-Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission to conduct a study and make recommendations on potential new setbacks in industrial zones. The council is expected to receive those suggestions in the next month or two, the mayor said.

Stone was involved in the startup of the city's first medical and recreational marijuana dispensary downtown. That site is operated by New York-based Ascend Wellness.

Stone said he purchased the Lumber Lane site this year through his company, EMS

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Midwest, from owners who previously stored landscaping materials and equipment there. The site, on the east side of Interstate 55 and south of East Sangamon Avenue, is adjacent to R.P. Lumber.

Stone said he doesn't know of any opposition to the Lumber Lane site, which he would sell to Cyclone Labs if the project moves forward.

The Lumber Lane site could be ready to open in the next seven or eight months, Stone said.

He wouldn't divulge the names of Cyclone Labs' owners. But the Illinois Secretary of State website lists six managers for Cyclone Labs LLC: Ben Call, Joe Hubbell, Adam Springer, Darrel Thoma and Courtney Hinman, all of Springfield, and Richard McCormick of Chatham.

The conditional permitted use application, required by city officials even when zoning specifications are met, will be considered Oct. 19 by the Springfield Planning and Zoning Commission. The commission's nonbinding vote will be considered by the City Council, which has the final say, on Nov. 15.

The zoning commission also will consider a CPU for a Maribis cannabis dispensary at 2452 Denver Drive, also on Springfield's northeast side, in a building that formerly housed an AT&T cellphone store.

Stone said he has a contract to purchase the site and would rent to Maribis, which would move its current medical and recreational cannabis dispensary operation in Grandview to the new Springfield location in January.

Chicago-based Maribis is interested in moving to the new site, near Interstate 55 and Dirksen Parkway, because of its greater visibility and higher traffic counts, Stone said.

Stone, who owns the Parkway Pointe location where Maribis operates another recreational cannabis facility, said he hopes to file for a CPU soon that would allow his craft-grow company, Inlabs LLC, to open at the same site. The building formerly housed a multi-screen movie theater.

But for that proposal to become reality, the Springfield zoning ordinance would need to be changed regarding craft-grow setback requirements from a specific type of residential zone, he said.

*Dean Olsen is a senior staff writer for Illinois Times. He can be reached at [dolsen@illinoistimes.com](mailto:dolsen@illinoistimes.com), 217-679-7810 or [twitter.com/DeanOlsenIT](https://twitter.com/DeanOlsenIT).*



Michael Mendenhall, a senior structural engineer for Hanson Professional Services Inc., is the project manager for the Third Street rail corridor redevelopment. PHOTO BY DEAN OLSEN

# Replacing the trains

Public weighs in on options for Third Street corridor

By Dean Olsen

An elevated viewing area near the Capitol and a paved trail for pedestrians and bicyclists are among options that could revitalize neighborhoods and attract business and residential developers to Springfield's urban center along a corridor now used by trains.

"This has the potential to create what

we call a historic impact for the city of Springfield and promote a lot of businesses to be downtown," said Michael Mendenhall, a senior structural engineer for Hanson Professional Services Inc.

"It's going to be very attractive for people to want to live next to, and build a business next to, because you've got

pedestrians and bicyclists coming along that would be willing to potentially stop and spend money," said Mendenhall, project manager for the Third Street rail corridor redevelopment.

The project will focus on the approximately five miles to be vacated when train traffic in Springfield is transferred to the 10th

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Street corridor by late 2025.

Railroad relocation, funded by the state, federal and local governments, is a \$315-plus million effort that involves consolidating and improving rail lines by moving rail traffic from the Third Street corridor to the 10th Street corridor and building underpasses at rail crossings throughout the city.

Redevelopment efforts could extend beyond the Third Street rail line and include the area where the Interurban and Wabash trails meet on the south to the Illinois State Fairgrounds on the north, Mendenhall said.

Tracks on the Third Street corridor could be removed in 2026, with redevelopment potentially beginning in 2027 and wrapping up in 2029, he said.

There's no price tag for the work other than Hanson's "rough," mid-range estimate of \$14 million for design, engineering and construction, he said.

Hanson solicited opinions from the public about the project at a Sept. 1 meeting at Bank of Springfield Center and displayed artistic renderings of suggestions first created for Hanson's 2011 study on rail relocation.

The company is working on a feasibility study that will provide more detailed cost estimates for various options and a framework Springfield and Sangamon County officials can use to seek grants for improvements along the five-mile-long corridor.

Funded with \$250,000 from county government, the study will be released later this year or early next year, Mendenhall said.

"It gives us a rough idea of grants we would need to pursue," he said. "The point of this is getting public feedback and really trying to narrow the focus."

With major infrastructure improvement programs taking place at the state and federal level, "we're at a time right now when there is a lot of grant funding that's available," Mendenhall said.

Many decisions will need to be made by Springfield and Sangamon County officials on firm plans for the corridor, which is about 60 feet wide, he said. The city and Union Pacific Railroad own various sections of the land, and Union Pacific is expected to eventually transfer

its land to the city, he said.

About 80 people attended the Sept. 1 public meeting. Enthusiasm about the project was evident, Mendenhall said after it was over.

"The biggest thing I've heard tonight is, 'How quick can you get this done?'" he said.

Some members of the public have said they want to see the railroad bridge over Capitol Avenue developed into a spot for viewing the Capitol, Mendenhall said.

Renderings depict that idea as well as another area of the corridor – between Capitol Avenue and East Washington Street – that could be a prime spot for a farmer's market and sites where merchants could sell food.

Springfield resident Marcia Wherry, a retired state worker who attended the public meeting, said: "I'm glad that there's serious thought being given to this. We don't want to see that land wasted. ... Some of the photographs are pretty idealistic."

Wherry said she wonders how any path would be made safe for pedestrians and cyclists crossing streets that intersect with the corridor. Mendenhall said there are several possibilities, including raised elevations at crossings to make people on the path more visible.

Springfield Mayor Jim Langfelder said he would like to see a solar-powered trolley line considered for at least part of the corridor.

There will be several more opportunities for the public to weigh in on the future of the corridor, he said.

Hanson's renderings can be viewed online at [bit.ly/ThirdStreetRenderings](http://bit.ly/ThirdStreetRenderings). Other plans and timelines are available [bit.ly/PublicMeetingPlans](http://bit.ly/PublicMeetingPlans).

Hanson has used drone video footage to create an aerial view of the corridor that is available at [bit.ly/ThirdStreetCorridor](http://bit.ly/ThirdStreetCorridor).

*Questions and comments can be directed to Hanson senior technician Jimmie Austin at [jaustin@hanson-inc.com](mailto:jaustin@hanson-inc.com) or 217-747-9257.*

# Companies adapt to remote work

Demand for office space shifts as more employees choose to work from home

By Pamela Savage

Since 2020, workplaces have changed dramatically. Both employers and employees have had to figure out remote and hybrid work options, and these flexible alternatives to traditional office hours are predicted to endure for at least a little while longer.

The difference between now and 2020, of course, is that more office employees are working from home by choice, as opposed to necessity. According to a 2022 study published by the consulting firm McKinsey & Company, 58% of Americans reported having the opportunity to work from home at least one day a week, and 35% of survey participants said that they had the option of working from home five days a week. When asked whether or not they would take an opportunity to work from home versus in the office, 87% of employees choose to stay home or work flexibly.

The Pew Research Center reported a similar embrace of flexible work across American workplaces. The pros and cons of flexible work are varied, but 64% of Americans working from home have cited an easier balance of their work and personal lives, and flexible working arrangements have become a more important factor for employees looking for a new job.

Logistically, fewer workers in the office means fewer chairs and desks filled in commercial buildings. It also means that some businesses are permanently closing or downsizing their office space due to simply not needing as much office space.

Springfield's commercial real estate market is following this national trend. Tom Frost, a commercial Realtor with The Real Estate Group, agrees that the current demand for office space is not as strong as in years prior to the pandemic because employers have learned how to be productive within hybrid arrangements.

Blake Pryor of Coldwell Banker Commercial Devonshire Realty anticipates that companies that have not done so yet will soon reevaluate their space needs based on employee preferences. He said these compa-



Sikich LLP recently relocated to the third floor of 3051 Hollis Dr. At just over 13,000 square feet, the new space is small than its previous office on West White Oaks Drive. The company cited the new reality of working from home as one of the reasons for the relocation; employees are able to choose between working remotely and working in the office or some combination of the two. PHOTO BY STACIE LEWIS

nies may look to downsize or consolidate their operations if their employees wish to work remotely or with a flexible arrangement. Pryor also shared that his group has seen more demand for smaller office spaces from companies wishing to curtail costs or simply better fit their needs.

Glen Garrison of Garrison Group has also been busy moving clients into more suitable spaces as these workforce changes have become embedded in our everyday lives. Garrison said that both sales and leasing transactions are up considerably, and he's seeing more clients wanting to move into existing spaces.

"If someone is coming in looking for a space to move, they intend to do so," he said,

noting that most clients are taking action, as opposed to simply researching the market. "People are wanting to lease or buy a building, and from that standpoint, it's been good for business."

Springfield-area commercial real estate agents agreed that suburban spaces are currently more popular than urban spaces, due to the demand for warehouses, drive-thru lanes and surface parking lots. But due to the increasing cost of new construction, many companies are seeking out existing buildings with vacancies. Area real estate companies will continue to rise to the challenge of finding spaces that work for both employers and employees in this new era of work.



Springfield Clinic broke ground June 8 on a new 40,000-square-foot-pediatrics building at 3500 Conifer Drive on Springfield's west side.

# Construction projects underway

By Michelle Ownbey

## CENTRAL

**U.S. Bank Corp Real Estate** obtained a commercial remodel permit for 205 S. Fifth St. The project is valued at \$250,000.

Work is underway at the **Sangamon County** building at 200 S. Ninth St. to consolidate government services onto the first floor. R.D. Lawrence Construction is the contractor for the project valued at \$7.8 million. The county has also purchased the former *State Journal-Register* building to the south, which will house the county morgue and evidence storage areas for the sheriff's office. R.D. Lawrence Construction is also the contractor for the remodel of 915 E. Capitol Ave., valued at \$645,000. Have photo

**Springfield Electric** will be impacted by the Springfield Rail Improvements Project, and the company plans to demolish its warehouse and loading dock to accommodate the expanded railroad right-of-way. A new 19,400-square-foot

warehouse and three-bay truck dock will be constructed in its place. Evans Construction Co. is the contractor and the project is valued at \$2.5 million.

Sangamo Ventures Group, LLC obtained a commercial remodel permit for work at 308 E. Adams St., which will be the home of **Ad Astra Wine Bar & Market**. Brian Frieze is the contractor and the project is valued at \$40,000. Frieze also obtained a remodel permit for 306 E. Adams St., a project valued at \$60,000. That space will be leased to **Wildly Rooted Boutique**.

HMN Properties, LLC obtained a commercial remodel permit for 628 E. Washington St. to create executive apartments for **Horace Mann**. Evans Construction Co. is the contractor and the project is valued at \$1 million.

CGM Management, LLC obtained a commercial remodel permit for a façade remodel from 421 E. Adams Street to 5 SW Old

State Capitol. Colin McHale is the contractor and the project is valued at \$39,000.

## MEDICAL

**HSHS St. John's Hospital** obtained a commercial remodel permit for 800 E. Carpenter. O'Shea Builders is the contractor and the project is valued at \$2.5 million.

**HSHS St. John's Hospital** also obtained a commercial remodel permit for 2901 Old Jacksonville Road. R. D. Lawrence Construction Co. Ltd. is the contractor and the project is valued at \$1 million.

**Memorial Medical Center** obtained a commercial building permit for 420 E. Miller. O'Shea Builders is the contractor and the project is valued at \$14.5 million.

**Springfield Clinic** obtained a commercial demolition permit for 730 E. Vine St., the former Family Service Center headquarters. Clancy

Coleman Excavating was the contractor for the demolition valued at \$120,000. O'Shea Builders is constructing a new 25,000-square-foot lab that will replace the medical lab currently in the basement of the clinic's Main Campus East complex. The project is valued at \$5.3 million and expected to be complete in late summer or early fall of 2023. Have photo

**Springfield Clinic** is building a new two-story, 40,000-square-foot pediatrics building on a former farm field at 3501 Old Jacksonville Road. O'Shea Builders is the contractor for the \$21 million project, scheduled to be completed in fall 2023.

## NORTH

Ginobon I, LLC obtained a commercial remodel permit for 2325 N. Dirksen Parkway. The contractor is Stasica Construction and the project is valued at \$385,000. The north portion of the building, which previously housed an HSHS Priority Care, is being remodeled for **Chipotle Mexican Grill**. The second Springfield location for the fast-causal Mexican restaurant should open this winter.

Dirksen Realty, LLC obtained a commercial building permit for 2811 N. Dirksen Parkway. Steve Zhao is constructing a second location for **Hibachi Madness**, which he anticipates having open by November. The project is valued at \$400,000.

## WEST

Fu Ga Xing, LLC obtained a commercial remodel permit for work at 2100 W. White Oaks Drive. The project is valued at \$200,000. The building, which formerly housed **TFI Fridays**, most recently operated as **Million's Crab**. The restaurant is now preparing to reopen in October as **Empire Korean Steakhouse and Bar**.

Hedley Plaza II, LLC obtained a commercial remodel permit for 3121 Hedley Road, Suite A. Tyan Homes & Development, Inc. is the contractor and the project is valued at \$58,900.

Tran Nu has a retail strip center under construction at 3857 Stadium Drive in front of the AMC Showplace 12 Theater. Joyner Construction Services is the contractor and the project is valued at \$400,000. Women's boutique **Better With Bubbli** will be one of the tenants.

Cobblestone Place, LLC is constructing a new retail strip center at 4401-4315 Yucan Drive. Joyner Construction Services, Inc. is the contractor. **Mel-O-Cream Donuts** will occupy 1,300 square feet on the west end of the strip center, which will allow for a drive-thru and



Chipotle Mexican Grill plans to open a second location in Springfield this winter.  
PHOTO BY MICHELLE OWNBEY

outdoor patio seating. **Bungee by Dene Fitness** will also be a tenant in the center.

**White Oaks Mini Storage of Springfield** obtained a commercial building permit for 3881 Yucan Drive. The owner is the contractor and the project is valued at \$120,000.

A third location for **Grab-A-Java** is under construction at 300 Chatham Road. Joyner Construction Services, Inc. is the contractor and the project is valued at \$350,000.

Fairhills Investors, LLC obtained a commercial building permit for 1901 W. Monroe St. Innovated Construction, LLC is the contractor and the project is valued at \$600,000.

Seritage KMT Finance, LLC in care of Kmart Corporation, obtained a commercial remodel permit for 2500 Wabash Ave. Sun Industrial, Inc. is the contractor and the project is valued at \$500,000. The Western-apparel company **Boot Barn** plans to open a store in Sherwood Plaza in early 2023.

Springfield Freedom LLC, in care of Tartan Realty Group, obtained a commercial remodel permit for 3434 Freedom Drive. Ultra Built Development, LLC is the contractor and the project is valued at \$300,000.

3S&M, LLC obtained a commercial remodel permit for 2509 W. Iles Ave., Suite 102 and C. Peggy Dienstbach, CIC Company is the contractor and the project is valued at \$270,000.

ARCP MT Springfield IL, LLC obtained a commercial remodel permit for 3100 W. White Oaks Drive. Embree construction Group is the contractor and the project is valued at

\$1.8 million. The former **Casa Real** site was demolished to allow for the construction of Springfield's first **Raising Cane's Chicken Fingers**, scheduled to open by year's end.

White Oaks Plaza, LLC obtained a commercial remodel permit for 2733 S. Veterans Parkway. Commercial Contractors, Inc. is the contractor and the project is valued at \$415,000.

## EAST

The Springfield Project obtained a commercial remodel permit for 902 S. 12<sup>th</sup> St. to renovate the historic **Judge John Wickliffe Taylor House**. R.D. Lawrence Construction is the contractor for the project valued at \$164,000.

## SOUTH

Walmart RE Business Trust obtained a commercial remodel permit for 1100 Lejune Dr. Poettker Construction Company is the contractor and the project is valued at \$2.2 million.

Joseph R. Victor obtained a commercial remodel permit for 3120 Stanton St. Joyner Construction Services, Inc. is the contractor and the project is valued at \$280,000.



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