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How It Works: When Mayors Use TIFs To Steer Investment Dollars

Millennium Park, Lincoln Yards and INVEST South/West are three signature projects from Daley, Emanuel and Lightfoot. But what's really going on?

This story is part of the [Re-Imagine Chicago project](#), a collaboration between the University of Chicago's Center for Effective Government and WBEZ's Reset, investigating how city government, community investment, public safety and schools could work better.

In March 2018, former Mayor Rahm Emanuel tweeted a 90-second video. It begins with the melancholy call of a single horn against an otherwise dark screen. As swirls of white form ribbons of light, the words "Amazon Makes Its Second City The Second City" come into focus.

A few seconds later, William Shatner, known for his role as Captain Kirk on Star Trek, tells the viewer that Chicago is a modest but resilient place, one with a story that parallels Amazon's own humble origins. "Really the press release writes itself," Shatner intones.

The video was released on the heels of Emanuel's bid for the corporate behemoth's second headquarters, a move that secured Chicago a spot on Jeff Bezos's shortlist. During his tenure, Emanuel spent much of his time wooing large companies to the city. He was successful, too.

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