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**BLOOMINGDALE PARK AND TRAIL PROPOSALS ARE AMONG FINAL DETAILS
BEFORE SUMMER CONSTRUCTION**

The long-anticipated Bloomindale Park and Trail on the Northwest Side would be on track for a summer groundbreaking through a trio of management and operational agreements proposed to City Council today by Mayor Rahm Emanuel.

Planned for the top of an abandoned, 2.7-mile railroad viaduct between Ashland and Ridgeway avenues, the approximately \$70 million linear park would be managed by the Chicago Park District under a proposed \$1 lease with the City of Chicago, which recently acquired the viaduct from the Canadian Pacific Railway. The City would maintain the viaduct's walls and bridges and the Park District would maintain the trail and 13 acres of open space planned for the top, according to terms of the 25-year lease.

"The Bloomingdale Trail will be one the most unique and user-friendly open spaces to be developed anywhere in the country," Mayor Emanuel said. "I am pleased that this project continues to move forward and I look forward to the start of construction."

The other agreements would secure public access along specific portions of the 16-foot-high structure. One involves the City's \$95,000 purchase of vacant land at 1759 N. Milwaukee Ave., which would be used as one of a half-dozen planned entry points to the trail. The triangular, 2,700-square-foot site's acquisition would be paid for with Open Space Impact Fees. The other agreement involves easements and City funding for the creation of two new rail spurs on land near the viaduct's western terminus. The spurs, to be paid for with \$2.9 million in Tax Increment Financing, would accommodate rail users who continue to use tracks at the end of the viaduct for car staging and switching operations. The spurs would be constructed near the Healy and Western passenger stations along Metra's Milwaukee District North Line.

The viaduct, which runs adjacent to Bloomindale Avenue, ceased to be used for regularly scheduled rail operations in 2001. It was originally constructed starting in 1910.

Approximately half of the Bloomingdale's development cost is being financed through federal highway and transportation grant funding. The remainder is being raised through a partnership between the City of Chicago, the Chicago Park District, and the Trust for Public Lands, a national open space conservation and development entity.

The project could be open to visitors by the end of 2014.

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