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**MAYOR EMANUEL ANNOUNCES HUNDREDS OF PLAYGROUNDS TO BE REBUILT AS  
PART OF NEW INVESTMENTS IN PARKS, PLAYGROUNDS AND RECREATIONAL AREAS  
THROUGHOUT THE CITY**

*Rebuilding Effort to Take Place Throughout the City Within Five Years;  
Every Child Will Have Access to a Clean, Safe, and Vibrant Playground in Their Neighborhood;  
Most Comprehensive Strategy of Any City to Invest in Public Spaces*

Mayor Rahm Emanuel today announced a comprehensive strategy to invest in parks, playgrounds and recreational spaces throughout the City. In a speech before dozens of community leaders and community members, the Mayor announced that over the next five years, the Chicago Park District will rebuild, repair or refurbish 300 playgrounds in communities across Chicago, the largest investment of its kind in this city and one of the largest and most comprehensive efforts of any city in the nation.

“Throughout Chicago, we’ll invest in better public spaces and build stronger communities,” said Mayor Emanuel. “The 300 playgrounds we are rebuilding in every neighborhood will be a catalyst for a better quality of life and higher standard of living for every Chicagoan.”

The new “Chicago Plays” Playground Program, which was launched with the speech, is a five-year playground renovation project. The program targets the replacement of equipment at over 300 aging playgrounds throughout the city. Immediate work plans currently scheduled include the completion of 50 playground upgrades by November 2013. The Chicago Park District is cooperating with the Park Advisory Councils and the Friends of the Park closely in the implementation of this program.

This will underscore the major announcements the Mayor has previously made regarding parks, including that every child in Chicago will live within a ten-minute walk from a

neighborhood park. As part of his speech, the Mayor outlined critical investments being made in the park system throughout the city, including the following:

- **Maggie Daley Park** (20 acres), located to the immediate east of Millennium Park, rests atop a major underground parking structure, earning the city the claim of the first and second largest green roofs in the nation. Maggie Daley Park will offer city patrons a thoughtful mix of habitat, ecology and recreation features such as rock climbing sculptures, an ice skating ribbon and play garden. The park unfolds a connective landscape of environments designed to highlight changing seasons, as well as unparalleled views of the lake, city and Grant Park.
- **The Northerly Island project** spans nearly 50 acres and presents an environment and opportunity for people to coexist with nature through several thoughtful developments, including: the creation of a four-acre pond controlled hydraulically via Lake Michigan; the re-grading of land to create hills and vistas; the management of native plantings to welcome local and migratory birds and wildlife; nature education opportunities for visitors, day campers and school children, planned urban camping events; a natural oasis for city walkers, runners, bikers, para-triathletes and cross country skiers.
- **The Little Village Park**, largest USEPA superfund-to-park conversion in a major American city. The Little Village Park in the former Celotex's 22 acre park development includes two artificial turf athletic fields, three natural grass athletic fields, a large playground with water spray feature, a skate park, comfort station, lighting, promenade, trails, parking, native plantings and storm water infrastructure.
- **Bloomington Trail** is the longest urban elevated rails-to-rails conversion in the world. A 2.7 mile conversion of an underutilized elevated train line into a connective, multiple access point trail for bikers and pedestrians. The trail will link a new route through four neighborhoods and create more than 15 acres of new parkland.
- **West Ridge Nature Preserve** is a 20-acre wooded site along the north western edge of Rosehill Cemetery that will be developed as a new park and trail thanks to funding from a Federal grant matched with TIF funds. West Ridge Nature Preserve offers a complete restoration of degraded land; a trail for walking, biking, and hiking; designated fishing and wildlife viewing areas; canoe and kayak launch; new elevated overlooks of the city and park.

- **Slam Dunk & Take the Field** has helped Chicago produce the greatest variety of artificial turf surfaces seen in any urban system in the country- from football and soccer to lacrosse and rugby.
  - Slam Dunk refurbished 100 basketball courts around the city in 2012, more than any other major city in North America. In 2013, 48 Slam Dunk courts will benefit from new lighting improvements.
  - Take the Field, offers 39 artificial turf fields. Additional projects in development in the Take the Field program will raise this number to 45.
  
- **New park land**, including 190 acres of new park land acquired in 2012. The city will acquire another 200 acres in 2013.
  
- **New park developments**, including four new parks located throughout the city, all of which were created in partnership with various community partners, for the benefit of the city's citizens and immediate neighborhoods, including:
  - Fred Anderson Park - a 1.8 acre park offering open parkland, community event space, a dog friendly area and concession space.
  - Park # 569 - a 0.4 acre dog friendly area across from Skinner Park.
  - Park # 574: Rockwell Gardens - a 2.7 acre park offering a new playground, spray feature, fencing, pathways, walking trail, landscaping and utilities.
  - Park # 567 at Milwaukee & Leavitt - a 0.3 park development adjacent to the Bloomingdale Trail, created in partnership with the Trust for Public Land.

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