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**MAYOR EMANUEL, GOOGLE ANNOUNCE FREE WI-FI AT TWO OF THE CITY'S MOST POPULAR
PARKS**

Garfield Park and South Shore Cultural Center Outfitted with Wireless Internet Service

Mayor Rahm Emanuel announced today that, through a partnership between the City of Chicago and Google, free wireless service is now available at two of Chicago's largest and busiest parks: Garfield Park and the South Shore Cultural Center.

The new network will enable hundreds of thousands of people to get online and will enhance the park experience, improve civic engagement, and offer park patrons and community residents the benefit of extended connectivity.

"This partnership with Google supports our efforts to boost wireless services to public places in neighborhoods across the City," said Mayor Emanuel. "Increasing the access to high speed internet in Chicago homes, businesses and public places like our parks helps our residents to stay better connected and fortifies our reputation as a tech-savvy City."

"Google is proud to join with Mayor Emanuel's goal to ensure that the City of Chicago is one of the most connected cities in the world. This is core to our mission, to make the world's information universally accessible", said Jim Lecinski, Vice President of Customer Solutions at Google Chicago. "We know that the Internet has the power to not only connect people around the world but also bring together communities like the Garfield Park and South Shore which have so much to offer. And we know the Internet is a powerful tool for education, businesses and for connecting people around the world."

Internet access around Garfield Park will extend to the park's tennis court, artificial turf area, and the nearby Garfield Park Conservatory located at 300 N. Central Park Avenue. Wireless access around the South Shore Cultural Center will include the main building and beach house area.

“The Chicago Park District is pleased to partner with Google to offer wireless internet services in our parks,” said Chicago Park District General Superintendent and CEO Michael Kelly. “The opportunity to improve connectivity in our parks helps us further our efforts to expand park amenities and enhance the park experience for our patrons.”

Over the last 14 years, Google’s Chicago Offices have gone from a staff of two to more than 500 employees representing all sorts of key organizations in the company, including Large Customer Sales, Google Enterprise, the Google Transparency Report and more.

This latest venture is part of the Broadband Challenge in which Mayor Emanuel seeks to create a gigabit speed fiber network in targeted commercial and industrial corridors, establish free wireless service in parks and public spaces and increase accessibility and affordability of internet service in underserved areas across the city. To support these efforts, the City is leveraging assets, including existing City-owned fiber; right of way access to freight tunnels and sewers; coordination with planned City construction work to modernize water and sewer infrastructure; and other investments.

Last year, Mayor Emanuel and the Chicago Park District launched free Wi-Fi at North Avenue, Osterman/Hollywood, Montrose, Foster and Rainbow beaches.

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