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**MAYOR EMANUEL BREAKS GROUND ON NEXT PHASE OF BURNHAM'S
CHINATOWN-TO-DOWNTOWN ROADWAY**

*The multi-phase project will improve safety while better connecting the City's renowned
Chinatown neighborhood to the loop*

Mayor Rahm Emanuel today joined community leaders to break ground on the next phase of the Wells-Wentworth Connector - a multi-phase project to create a direct link between Chicago's renowned Chinatown neighborhood and the south loop. Phase II will realign Wentworth Avenue between Archer Avenue and Cermak Road to improve safety for both pedestrians and motorists, while creating better pedestrian connectivity between New Chinatown Square and the traditional Chinatown south of Cermak Road.

"Chicago makes no small plans and today the City is taking an important next step forward in making Daniel Burnham's Chinatown-to-Downtown roadway a reality," said Mayor Emanuel. "Providing safer, better connectivity between these two areas will help create more jobs, promote continued economic growth and improve the quality of life for local residents."

As part of the Phase II project, a new plaza will also be built on the east side of Wentworth at 19th St., to highlight the entrances to both parts of Ping Tom Memorial Park.

"We are very excited to get this phase of the Wells-Wentworth project started," said Alderman Daniel Solis (25th Ward). "This project will help bring new visitors to Chinatown and make the neighborhood more pedestrian and bike friendly."

The project will enhance pedestrian safety and traffic flow with new traffic signals at Cermak, and at the new section of Wentworth. Existing traffic signals will be updated with new Accessible Pedestrian Signals and a mid-block pedestrian refuge island will also be installed on Archer at Chinatown Square.

Smart LED lighting will be installed along Wentworth between 19th Street and Cermak, and special decorative lighting installed along Cermak.

Green features of the project will include 77 new trees to be planted in tree pits, parkways and landscaped planters. Landscape plantings will also be added to help reduce storm water directed into the sewers.

The Wells-Wentworth project has been coordinated by the Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT) and the Department of Planning and Development (DPD). CDOT is also coordinating relocation of bus stops with the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) along Wentworth and Archer, including installation of new concrete bus pads.

“CDOT is pleased to launch this project that will greatly improve safety and accessibility to and from Chinatown,” said CDOT Commissioner Rebekah Scheinfeld. “It demonstrates the City’s strong commitment to fostering growth in the area and securing improved pedestrian, roadway, transit and bicycle access to and from the neighborhood’s thriving commercial center.”

In June, the Chicago City Council passed ordinances to allow construction on the third and final phase of the Wells-Wentworth Connector project. When completed, the new roadway will extend Wells Street south from Roosevelt Road through the recently announced “The 78” project and connect to a new section of Wentworth at 16th Street on the north side of Chinatown.

Phase I of the project was completed in 2017 and reconstructed Wentworth Avenue between 17th and 19th Streets, adding a buffered bike lane and improving pedestrian and bicycle access to the Ping Tom Memorial Park Fieldhouse.

The Wells-Wentworth project compliments Building on Burnham, the Mayor’s comprehensive plan to invest in the Lakefront, the Chicago River, natural areas and recreational opportunities in neighborhoods across the city.

Ping Tom Memorial Park boathouse became the first new Chicago River boathouse and serves as the community’s anchor to the River. The Ping Tom Park field house has also helped provide new recreational opportunities to residents, while the new Chinatown Library Branch has maintained its status as the busiest branch in the Chicago Public Library system, serving approximately 21,000 patrons a month.

Chinatown's population increased 24 percent between 2000 and 2010;
neighborhood investments will help Chinatown continue to grow and thrive.

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