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**MAYOR BRANDON JOHNSON AND CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
CELEBRATES \$8.7 MILLION "SOUL CITY WEST" CORRIDOR STREETScape PROJECT
COMPLETION IN AUSTIN**

*Major infrastructure investment delivers safer streets, wider sidewalks and continued
economic development along the Chicago Avenue corridor*

CHICAGO – Mayor Brandon Johnson joined the Chicago Department of Transportation, 29th Ward Alderman Chris Taliaferro, 37th Ward Alderwoman Emma Mitts and Austin community partners today to cut the ribbon on an \$8.7 million streetscape improvement project along Chicago Avenue in the Austin neighborhood – part of the area's revitalized "Soul City" corridor.

"This project shows what's possible when we invest in our neighborhoods and work hand-in-hand with the people who live and work here," said **Mayor Brandon Johnson**. "The Soul City Corridor is becoming a reflection of the Austin community's pride and potential. These infrastructure improvements create opportunity, support small businesses, and build a stronger West Side for future generations."

The Soul City West project redesigned Chicago Avenue between Austin Boulevard and Central Avenue to create a safer, more vibrant, and walkable street. Upgrades include wider sidewalks, new street trees and landscaping, upgraded lighting, and a range of safety and mobility enhancements for all users. This is the first of three planned sections, with future phases extending east to Cicero Avenue.

"This project brings long-overdue investment to Chicago Avenue, delivering traffic safety improvements, upgrading aging infrastructure, and creating a vibrant, welcoming corridor that reflects the strength of the Austin community," said **CDOT Commissioner Tom Carney**. "CDOT worked closely with community stakeholders throughout this project and



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looks forward to continuing these improvements in future phases.”

“This streetscape is a great addition to the 29th Ward and supports the local businesses and organizations that make Chicago Avenue such a vital corridor for our community,” said **29th Ward Alderman Chris Taliaferro**.

“I’m proud to stand with our partners and neighbors to celebrate this milestone and look forward to seeing the Soul City corridor continue to grow and thrive,” said **37th Ward Alderwoman Emma Mitts**.

Key project enhancements include:

- Roadway and intersection safety improvements;
- Wider sidewalks with natural parkway pavers with bold accent colors;
- Site furnishings, new street trees and landscaping to create a more vibrant, inviting corridor;
- Curb extensions and raised crosswalks for pedestrian safety and vehicle speed reduction;
- Bus boarding islands for improved transit access;
- Upgraded street lighting;
- Full-width roadway resurfacing, drainage improvements, and new curb and gutter to address longstanding infrastructure needs;
- Bicycle facilities, including raised bike lanes; and
- New pavement markings and high-visibility crosswalks.

“We see this as not just a streetscape improvement project. This project means hope, it means investing in our businesses, our community and our future,” said **Malcolm Crawford, Executive Director of the Austin African American Business Networking Association**.

The improvements were shaped directly by community feedback gathered through public meetings and workshops throughout the design process. Residents highlighted concerns about speeding, the lack of street trees and amenities, and narrow sidewalks – all of which this project addresses.

As part of the construction, the streetscape will also feature a series of custom circular benches known as Peace Circles, which were designed in partnership with Territory, a youth-focused design organization based in Austin. Local youth helped shape the vision for



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these new gathering spaces, contributing original artwork and building prototypes as part of a broader effort to reflect community identity through design.

CDOT is preparing for the next phase of improvements, Soul City Central, which will include upgrades between Central Avenue and Laramie Avenue. That will be followed by Soul City East, the third and final phase, extending the corridor from Laramie to Cicero Avenue.

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