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Lakefront Trail Separation Construction Continues From Montrose to Ardmore

Construction on entire trail expected to be complete by year-end 2018

Mayor Rahm Emanuel today joined Chicago Park District Superintendent Michael P. Kelly to break ground on the next segment of the Lakefront Trail Separation project to create separate bike and pedestrian paths from Montrose to Ardmore. Construction to separate the entire 18 month trail is expected to be complete by the end of 2018.

"The Lakefront Trail Separation project creates a more enjoyable experience for the thousands of people that use the path each day, and it will ensure that our children will inherit an even more vibrant, more prosperous and more inclusive Chicago than ever before," said Mayor Emanuel. "Breaking ground from Montrose to Ardmore is an important step as we continue to make the lakefront more accessible and more enjoyable for the pedestrians and cyclists living in, and visiting our city."

The Lakefront Trail Separation was designed to alleviate areas of congestion by creating two distinct paths; a bike trail and a separate pedestrian trail for those on foot. Initial funding was provided by the Chicago Park District and completion of the project was made possible by a generous donation from Ken Griffin, Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Citadel.

"The Chicago Park District is pleased to continue working toward making one of Chicago's greatest assets even better," said General Superintendent and CEO Michael P. Kelly. "This separation project will enhance the lakefront experience for residents and tourists alike."

Chicago's Lakefront Trail is one of the busiest in the United States. Used by cyclists, joggers and people enjoying the scenery, it is estimated that more than 100,000 people per day use the trail during summer weekends according to a recent study by Chicago Area Runners Association (CARA) and the Active Transportation Alliance (ATA).

The sections from 31st Street to 41st Street, Oak Street to Ohio Street and Fullerton Avenue to North Avenue are complete, with continued construction on the rest of the trail this year. Chicago's entire 18-mile Lakefront Trail, which runs from Ardmore Avenue on the north to 71st Street on the south, will be separated for cyclists and pedestrians, and is expected to be complete in 2018.

Once complete, the entire 18-mile trail will have separate paths for cyclists and pedestrians. The standard bike trail will measure 12 feet in width and the pedestrian trail will measure 20 feet in width with 14 feet of asphalt or concrete and 3 feet of compacted stone mix on both sides. In some cases due to site constraints, these standard designs could not be achieved so the dimensions have been altered as necessary; however trail separation will still have been achieved.

The Lakefront Trail Separation project is a key component of Building on Burnham, Mayor Emanuel's comprehensive plan to invest in the Lakefront, the Chicago River, natural areas and recreational opportunities in neighborhoods across the city. To date, 985 acres of parks have been acquired and 5.5 miles of waterfront access have been developed under the Building on Burnham plan.

The lakefront, which spans 26 miles across the city, will continue to see many investments under Mayor Emanuel. Investments to park assets, including those already made to the 31st Street Beach Harbor and Steelworkers' Park at 87th Street, will continue in neighborhoods across the city. Projects include improvements to Leone Beach Park in Rogers Park, triathlon training amenities at Ohio Street Beach and the upcoming revitalization of North Avenue Beach with plans underway for a new Boardwalk and amenities. Theater on the Lake was recently transformed from a summer programming site to a year-round performance and special events venue. The historic 1920s structure is now a 19,000 square foot lakefront venue with a performance area for theater and music, a restaurant, two private event spaces and an outdoor patio. The TOTL Summer will return to its home on the lakefront this summer for the Chicago Park District's Night Out in the Parks.

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