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MAYOR EMANUEL CUTS RIBBON ON WESTERN/BELMONT IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

The Redevelopment Project Removes 60 Year Old Viaduct to Enhance Traffic Flow and Pedestrian Safety along the Roscoe Village Corridor

Mayor Rahm Emanuel today joined Chicago Department of Transportation Commissioner Rebekah Scheinfeld to cut the ribbon on the completed Western Ave. Corridor Improvement Project. Key to the redevelopment project was the removal of the nearly 60 year old Riverview viaduct; that made way for the roadway improvements to enhance traffic flow and pedestrian safety along the 1.27 mile stretch of Western Ave. between Logan Blvd. to Waveland Ave in Chicago's Roscoe Village neighborhood.

"Removing the deteriorating viaduct on Western was a major step forward for the community and for the City of Chicago. It is making the streets safer, the quality of life better and creating new opportunities for economic development and neighborhood businesses," Mayor Emanuel said.

Working together with input from local Aldermen and community residents, the Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT) made the decision to remove the viaduct and replace it with a new five-leg at-grade intersection at Western, Belmont, and Clybourn. The intersection now has three lanes of traffic in each direction during rush hours, with curbside parking in some areas of the corridor during off-peak hours.

The project also includes synchronized traffic signals to speed bus and vehicle traffic. The traffic signals are programmed for the new configuration and have the capacity to provide Transit Signal Priority for CTA buses, speeding up bus service.

"We want to thank the residents and business owners of this community for their patience during construction," said CDOT Commissioner Rebekah Scheinfeld. "The department took into account your input and the pedestrian bump-outs, wider sidewalks and landscaped medians were included with you in mind. Our hope is that it creates a safer environment and enhanced traffic flow while helping to improve the quality of life for the surrounding neighborhood."

Pedestrian safety improvements include refuge islands, bump outs, high-visibility crosswalks, wider sidewalks, and the addition of pedestrian countdown signals at all signalized intersections. ADA ramps were also installed at all corners along the project corridor. In addition, the project provides new lighting to improve public safety and landscaped medians along much of the corridor.

Additional work that took place as part of this project included repairs to the Western Avenue Bridge over the North Branch of the Chicago River, as well as improvements along Western and at the intersections of Western with Schubert, Diversey/Elston, Belmont, Roscoe and Addison.

The \$27.3 million construction project was funded through a mix of federal, state and TIF resources. The project began on March 1, 2016 and was completed weeks ahead of schedule. It created more than 130 jobs during the 18 month construction period.

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