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MAYOR EMANUEL, CHICAGO PARK DISTRICT BREAK GROUND ON PARK #526 UNDER BUILDING ON BURNHAM PLAN

Conversion of lot will increase parkland, expand neighborhood recreation

Mayor Emanuel, Chicago Park District Superintendent Michael P. Kelly, Alderman Debra Silverstein (50th) and North Park community members today broke ground to expand Park #526 at 3271 W. Devon Avenue. The 1.8 acre parcel is a former Metropolitan Water Reclamation District (MWRD) owned parking lot and is situated along the riverfront trail. This investment is part of the Mayor's Building on Burnham plan, a comprehensive vision to invest in Chicago's parks and open spaces.

"By transforming a former parking lot to parkland, we are providing residents with a community anchor for recreation and leisure," Mayor Emanuel said. "This is another step forward in our goal to add 2,020 acres of protected natural areas in the City of Chicago by the 2020."

The park design includes hills and asphalt walking paths, fitness equipment geared towards seniors, a new drinking fountain, a small multi-purpose field and additional landscaping.

"We are thrilled to have the opportunity to expand Park #526 and increase recreational and fitness options in the North Park and West Ridge communities," said Chicago Park District General Superintendent Michael Kelly. "The project is yet another example of our commitment to investing in our city's riverfront and reclaiming it as an invaluable resource for recreation."

"This park will serve as a great addition to the 50th ward and along the riverfront trail," Alderman Silverstein said. "I am pleased that residents will have fitness equipment and a space for the community to enjoy."

Increasing open space is a key component in 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. This plan follows the Mayor's successful expansion of Chicago's park system in his first mayoral term, which has already added 750 acres of new parkland, 256 new playgrounds and more than \$800 million in capital investment from neighborhoods and private sources.

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The Chicago Park District is the 2014 Gold Medal Award winner, recognized for excellence in park and recreation management across the nation. For more information about the Chicago Park District's more than 8,300 acres of parkland, more than 585 parks, 26 miles of lakefront, 12 museums, two world-class conservatories, 16 historic lagoons, nearly 50 nature areas, thousands of special events, sports and entertaining programs, please visit www.chicagoparkdistrict.com or contact the Chicago Park District at 312/742.PLAY or 312/747.2001 (TTY). Want to share your talent? Volunteer in the parks by calling, 312/742.PLAY.