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**MAYOR LIGHTFOOT ANNOUNCES THE START OF OVER \$200 MILLION IN  
PARKS AND TRANSPORTATION WORK IN JACKSON PARK**

*The utility, infrastructure and recreational improvements signal more economic development opportunities in the South Side communities near the future site of the Obama Presidential Center*

**CHICAGO, IL** — Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot today joined by Governor J.B. Pritzker, Martin Nesbitt, Board Chair of the Obama Foundation and various City leaders and community stakeholders announced the beginning of the pre-construction work in Jackson Park. Preliminary work includes relocating utility lines and other necessary steps ahead of construction on the center which is expected to start in the latter half of the year.

"COVID-19 has provided us with a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to create and expand opportunities for residents in our most disinvested communities," said Mayor Lightfoot. "The set of investments we are making in tandem with the development of the Obama Presidential Center will not only help to kickstart our economy, but spur the inclusive economic growth we need to rise above this pandemic by uplifting our historic South Side. Through the creation of jobs, infrastructure enhancements and more, these investments and economic developments will bring about the transformative change our Black and brown communities deserve."

This important infrastructure work follows a years-long process to gain federal approval for City initiatives supporting the Obama Presidential Center on Chicago's South Side. In February, final determination came from the National Park Service and Federal Highway Administration that the federal actions requested by the City in support of the development of the OPC and the roadway improvements being considered would not have significant impact on the environment.

"Pairing state and city initiatives alongside the development of the Obama Presidential Center unlocks far more jobs, tourism, and economic activity than any one entity could pursue alone," said Governor JB Pritzker. "While we work to get



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everyone vaccinated to overcome COVID-19's health challenges, we must invest in job growth to overcome its economic impacts – and I'm proud to have the Obama Foundation's partnership in the mission to renew Illinois for generations to come."

The Chicago Department of Planning and Development, Department of Housing, Department of Transportation, Park District and Public Library will move forward with several capital investment projects in the surrounding communities that will support economic development opportunities in the community. The Obama Foundation is expected to start construction of the OPC in the second half of this year.

"The Obama Presidential Center, coupled with essential investment from the City of Chicago in and around Jackson Park, will be a beacon of hope and a catalyst for additional development nearby," said Valerie Jarrett, Obama Foundation President. "We will create new economic opportunities for South Side residents, enrich an historic park for both our neighbors and visitors to enjoy, as well as inspire, prepare and connect the next generation of leaders to solve the challenges that we face here in Chicago and around the world."

Through an extensive community engagement process, the Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT) has developed a plan to improve the safety and comfort for all modes of travel, with an emphasis on people walking and biking to and through Jackson Park. The plan will provide more and better-connected green space in Jackson Park by closing roadways, including Cornell Drive between Hayes Drive and 59th Street, and replacing them with park paths that connect to new wide, well-lit underpasses that eliminate the need to cross roadways such as Hayes Drive when moving through the park.

"The transportation plan for Jackson Park and the communities around the new Obama Presidential Center will leave a legacy of improvements whether you bike, walk, use your car, or take public transit," said CDOT Commissioner Gia Biagi. "By creating new parkland and pedestrian underpasses, these mobility improvements will make it safer and easier to get around the park and ensure that you will be able to get where you need to go, even with increased future traffic demands."

To balance the priorities for a better-connected Jackson Park with local and regional travel needs, CDOT will install a series of strategic safety and operational improvements by adding lanes on Lake Shore Drive and Stony Island Avenue, closing roads interior to the park (starting with South Midway Plaisance this summer), and providing spot improvements at existing bottlenecks. These improvements will include new and modified traffic signals, new crosswalks and accessible pedestrian signals to improve access to Jackson Park, and travel times



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will remain relatively unchanged once all improvements are complete. CDOT's construction work is anticipated to begin later this summer, starting with Lake Shore Drive. The initial transportation improvements will be funded through a larger \$174 million source of funds programmed by the State of Illinois.

The design also includes off-street trail and pedestrian underpasses improvements based on recommendations from the Streets for Cycling 2020 Plan to extend the existing network of trails in Jackson Park, providing ability to travel throughout Jackson Park on bike or foot on off-street trails that will go underneath street with wide well-lit underpass crossings.

The Chicago Park District will begin necessary utility work and mitigation measures including a design process for the Midway Plaisance, as well as move forward with a new track and field facility at the corner of Stony Island Avenue and 63rd/Hayes. The new running track, opening Summer 2021, will be constructed with a multi-use artificial turf field striped for soccer, football and lacrosse and newly installed sports lighting to allow for evening play.

"We are excited to celebrate the recent and future investments in and around Jackson Park," said Chicago Park District General Superintendent and CEO Michael Kelly. "This park boasts a long and rich history that precedes the 1893 Columbian Exposition World's Fair which was held here. The new track and field, harbor improvements, new dog friendly area, utility work and the new beach house at neighboring South Shore will help fulfill the long term vision for this park and surrounding communities."

The Park District will also begin the design and community outreach process on several other projects in the South Lakefront Framework Plan including renovating the Iowa Building, relocating the Jackson Bark dog-friendly area and renovating the ball diamonds west of Cornell Drive.

The Departments of Housing (DOH) and Planning and Development (DPD) are implementing multiple community-driven resources to coordinate future private investment in areas near the future Obama Presidential Center. The "Woodlawn Plan Consolidation Report" formalizes nearly two decades of local planning priorities involving housing, commercial development and the public realm. The 2021 priorities include public engagement efforts to help develop design guidelines for new construction and to establish local priorities for the private redevelopment of City-owned land, especially along 63rd Street.

The Woodlawn Housing Preservation Ordinance will provide nearly \$10 million in finance resources to help rehabilitate existing affordable housing through the



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Woodlawn Revolving Loan Fund with support from JP Morgan Chase Bank, CIBC, Fifth Third Bank, Byline Bank, First Midwest Bank, Wintrust Bank and TCF Bank. Additionally, the ordinance mandates affordability requirements on all rental and for-sale housing developed on City-owned residential land; and creates a Right of First Refusal Pilot Program that requires owners of buildings with 10 or more units to give tenants an exclusive opportunity to make an offer on the property prior to their sale.

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