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**MAYOR EMANUEL INTRODUCES ORDINANCE TO ADVANCE FIVE NEW BRIDGES ALONG SOUTH LAKE SHORE DRIVE TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO THE LAKEFRONT FOR THE SOUTH SIDE**

*City is Replacing Four Bridges and Creating One New Crossing*

Mayor Rahm Emanuel introduced an ordinance to the City Council today that will advance plans to improve access from the South Side of Chicago to the Lakefront through the construction of five new bridges along South Lake Shore Drive. The ordinance would authorize real estate agreements needed for the replacement of vehicular bridges at 31st St. and Oakwood Blvd. (39th Street). It will also cover the replacement of pedestrian bridges at 35th and 43rd Streets and the addition of a new bridge at 41st Street – all three of these pedestrian bridges will be fully ADA accessible, ramped structures that will accommodate bicycles, wheel chairs and emergency vehicles.

The replacement bridge at 35th Street is already under construction and is scheduled for completion by the end of next summer. The other projects are still in the design phase, but several will be bid for construction in 2016 and all five are expected to be completed by the end of 2018.

“The South Side of Chicago is blessed with a beautiful lakefront but people can’t enjoy Lake Michigan and the green splendor of Burnham Park if they don’t have adequate access,” Mayor Emanuel said. “These new structures will improve access to the lakefront and the overall quality of life for everyone in Bronzeville and the South Side, particularly for bicycle riders, families with strollers and people who use wheel chairs.”

The five construction projects are all being managed by the Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT) and will be paid for primarily with federal funding, with matching contributions from local and state funds.

The proposed ordinance involves various real estate agreements with the Chicago Park District and the amendment of easements with the Illinois Central Railroad and Metra which own the rail road tracks the bridges all cross over.

The projects are being developed in coordination with the Chicago Park District and local community stakeholders. The reconstruction of the replacement bridge at 43rd Street will include a new pocket park at its western end.

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