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**MAYOR EMANUEL BREAKS GROUND ON OAKWOOD BOULEVARD BRIDGE
RECONSTRUCTION PROJECT IN BRONZEVILLE**

The latest example of Building on Burnham; this is the third of five new bridges over LSD that are improving lakefront access for South Side residents

Mayor Rahm Emanuel, Alderman Sophia King and Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT) Commissioner Rebekah Schienfeld today joined Bronzeville residents to break ground on the Oakwood Boulevard (39th Street) Bridge reconstruction project. The latest example of Building on Burnham projects, the renovated bridge will provide important access for the community to Lake Shore Drive and the Oakwood/41st Street Beach.

"Today, we are Building on Burnham's vision for Chicago; breaking ground on a project to bring residents of the South Side to the shorelines of the Lakefront," said Mayor Emanuel. "By investing in our Lakefront, we are ensuring our children and grandchildren in every neighborhood can enjoy our greatest natural resource for years to come."

The new vehicular bridge spanning the Metra railroad tracks will improve access to Lake Shore Drive and the lakefront featuring attractive lighting, new sidewalks and bike lanes for residents. The reconstruction project also includes an innovative federally authorized local labor pilot program that requires the contractor to meet a goal of employing at least 20 percent of the tradesmen on the project from the nearby area.

"CDOT is very pleased to break ground today and get started on construction of this new bridge that provides is a major entry point to Bronzeville from Lake Shore Drive and provides the community with access to and from the Lakefront and Burnham Park," CDOT Commissioner Rebekah Scheinfeld said. "We are also excited to debut the Local Labor Hiring Program that will create good jobs and for neighborhood residents."

The existing Oakwood Boulevard Bridge was built in 1931 and is in deteriorated condition. The replacement structure will maintain the existing bridge's historic architectural style while providing modern lighting and drainage and meet modern ADA standards.

"Today's groundbreaking represents another step forward for the Bronzeville community," Alderman Sophia King (4th) said. "I applaud Mayor Emanuel and CDOT for demonstrating their commitment local economic development by including the local hiring provisions in the construction contract for this new bridge."

Increasing and improving access to the lakefront 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.

The bridge reconstruction marks the third of a series of five CDOT projects that are strengthening connections to the Lakefront for South Side residents.

Just two blocks south of Oakwood, CDOT is constructing a new pedestrian and bike bridge at 41st Street over South Lake Shore Drive. A second bike and pedestrian bridge that will replace the outdated span at 43rd Street is expected to be advertised for bids later this year. A project to reconstruct the vehicular bridge at 31st Street is expected to start before the end of the year. In 2016, CDOT completed work on the architecturally striking new pedestrian and Bike Bridge at 35th Street.

Traffic across the bridge will be maintained in both directions with the exception of some limited, off-peak full closures that will be required for demolition activities and other work. However, vehicle traffic will be reduced to one lane in each direction.

In the first construction stage, all traffic will be shifted to the north side of the bridge, while the south half is being reconstructed. In the second stage, traffic will be shifted to newly constructed south side and the north half of the bridge will be reconstructed. Access will be maintained for pedestrians on one side at a time.

The prime contractor is Lorig Construction Company. The project, with a total estimated cost of \$15 million, is expected to be completed in early 2019.

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