



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



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CONTACT:

Mayor's Press Office

312.744.3334

press@cityofchicago.org

**CITY OF CHICAGO CELEBRATES ARBOR DAY WITH TREE PLANTING AT
NICHOLSON STEM ACADEMY**

*Mayor Lightfoot invests \$6 million to plant thousands of new trees through the
Chicago Works capital plan*

CHICAGO – City of Chicago today celebrated Arbor Day with a ceremonial tree planting at Nicholson STEM Academy. Over the course of the past week, 109 trees have been planted around the campus to mark the 149th anniversary of Arbor Day in the United States. These trees are part of the collective 7,580 trees the Department of Streets and Sanitation (DSS) and the Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT) will be planting this year in neighborhoods across Chicago. The tree planting will serve to remind the students of the significant importance of protecting the environment.

"Planting more trees is a smart, sustainable investment in our communities that provides an incredible number of benefits," said Chicago Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot. "Not only do they filter the air we breathe and moderate the ongoing impacts of climate change, but they also increase property values and beautify our neighborhoods. I want to thank DSS and CDOT for organizing this event and look forward to seeing even more trees come to our neighborhoods in the coming weeks."

With funding provided through Mayor Lightfoot's Chicago Works Capital Plan, CDOT will be planting 1,000 more trees than in 2020. The Department will be planting 2,000 new parkway trees on the south and west sides of the city as part of the Capital Improvement Plan. They have already installed 1,000 of those trees and are working on the next 1,000 trees.

In addition, 380 new trees will be installed on the arterial streets funded through the Arterial Resurfacing Program and a grant provided through the Morton Arboretum's Chicago Regional Tree Initiative program. These efforts are in conjunction with newly paved roads and areas of low canopy cover on the South and West Sides.



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“Trees provide so many benefits in our city, from improving the health and well-being of our residents to cooling the urban heat island to simply providing shade and beauty,” said CDOT Commissioner Gia Biagi. “The Mayor’s Chicago Works program enables us to make big investments in tree-planting along arterial streets across the city, particularly in neighborhoods on the south and west sides.” DSS is planting 5,200 trees in Chicago neighborhoods this year. In total the trees cover 16% of the area, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. And each year, Chicago’s Urban forest removes approximately 654,000 tons of carbon and about 810 tons of air pollution.

“Every year our crews work hard to maintain and protect the City’s landscape to keep every neighborhood in Chicago healthy, vibrant and beautiful,” said Department of Streets and Sanitation Commissioner John Tully. “Tree planting is an investment in the quality of life for residents both today and in the future.”

In addition to planting a diverse set of tree species to enhance and protect the urban canopy, DSS’s Bureau of Forestry also maintains more than 500,000 parkway trees a year, addressing insect and disease problems and tree trimming and removals.

The Chicago Department of Public Health developed a data-driven selection process to determine which communities are high priority for increased tree planting in the City of Chicago. Numerous factors such as tree coverage, health and social variables were included in the analysis. CDOT, DSS and the Mayor’s Office will work with local leaders and stakeholders to identify areas within these communities where trees can bring additional benefit and help support a thriving environment.

Residents who have had a parkway tree removed recently or lost one due to last year’s storms and would like to request a new tree to be planted on the parkway should call 311 for assistance. For more information, please visit Chicago.gov/DSS.

Last week Mayor Lightfoot announced a plan for a green economic and social recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and hosted the City’s annual Clean and Green Day of Service with over 200 groups participating the citywide cleanup and beautification event.

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