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**MAYOR EMANUEL PRESENTS MULTI-PHASE PLAN TO CITY COUNCIL
TO BETTER CONNECT CHINATOWN TO LOOP**

Wells-Wentworth Connector to Improve Access and Safety for Motorists and Pedestrians

Mayor Rahm Emanuel introduced a plan to City Council today to build the Wells-Wentworth Connector, a multi-phase project that will create a new road between the Loop and Chinatown.

“This project will create a better link between Chinatown and the Loop, improve access to Ping Tom Memorial Park, and increase the safety for motorists and pedestrians at the busy intersection in the heart of this great neighborhood,” Mayor Emanuel said.

The mayor introduced two ordinances to the Council to assemble the land required to realign Wentworth Avenue at Cermak Road, including a parking lot owned by the State of Illinois and three private parcels.

The project will realign Wentworth between Archer Avenue and Cermak to bring this portion of Wentworth in line with the portion of Wentworth south of Cermak. The realignment of Wentworth will greatly improve safety for both motorists and pedestrians, while forming better links between New Chinatown Square and the traditional Chinatown south of Cermak Road.

The Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT) and the Department of Planning and Development (DPD) have, since 2002, been actively planning for an improvement to address the safety and congestion problems particularly coming off the Dan Ryan ramps at Cermak.

The project's first phase will provide improved access along Wentworth to Ping Tom Memorial Park Fieldhouse near 19th Street. Construction is anticipated to start in the fall of 2014, and complete by the end of 2015.

The second phase would include the realignment of Wentworth at Cermak. Construction is estimated to start in the late fall of 2015.

The third phase north of the Ping Tom Memorial Park Fieldhouse, will provide access to undeveloped land adjacent to the River, and dedication and construction of the right-of-way will be coordinated in conjunction with a future mixed use redevelopment agreement. The alignments were considered for how they would best accommodate new development, maintain existing development, and improve connections within Chinatown and to the River South area.

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