



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
CITY OF CHICAGO

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CONTACT:

Mayor's Press Office

312.744.3334

press@cityofchicago.org

MAYOR EMANUEL BREAKS GROUND ON NAVY PIER FLYOVER

*Construction Begins Next Week; Right Lane and Shoulder of Lake Shore Drive Closed
Temporarily Between Illinois Street and Grand Avenue*

Mayor Rahm Emanuel, Senator Dick Durbin and local officials broke ground today on the Navy Pier Flyover project, an elevated path for safer walking and biking along the Lakefront Trail near Navy Pier, one of the most heavily used portions of the 18.5-mile trail.

"The Lakefront Trail has grown to become one of the most popular features of our shoreline, and we are taking the first steps in making it more enjoyable, more accessible and safer for future generations," Mayor Emanuel said. "We break ground today to elevate a practical public space to the newest jewel of Chicago's shoreline."

The dedicated bike and pedestrian path will extend from south of the Chicago River Bridge to Jane Addams Park to provide a safer and scenic alternative to several congested intersections along the Lakefront Trail. The flyover will also include stairs and ground-level entrance and exit points for easy access.

"Many think of the Lakefront as the heart of Chicago. The Navy Pier Flyover will help Chicagoans access this treasure more quickly and safely. The project will be partially funded by federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality grants, which have also helped upgrade CTA stations, reduce congestion at intersections and launch the Divvy bike-sharing program," said U.S. Senator Dick Durbin. "These types of smart federal investments have an important role to play in building a sustainable infrastructure that includes all forms of transportation – from walking to biking to driving – for the next generation."

The 16-foot-wide flyover will provide grade separation at Illinois Street and Grand Avenue for the Lakefront Trail. It will reduce crossing conflicts between the multi-use path users and cars going to and from Navy Pier area.

"The State of Illinois is proud to be a partner on the Navy Pier Flyover, as well as other projects like it throughout the state, that do so much to enhance pedestrian and bicyclist safety," said Illinois Transportation Secretary Ann L. Schneider. "Chicago's lakefront is the envy of the world. This project will only serve to further improve public access to one of the state's prized landmarks."

The new elevated path will wind its way up from this park to Upper Lake Shore Drive and around Lake Point Tower. Then it will head back down to reconnect with the sidewalk on the bridge over the Chicago River.

“This new dedicated bike and pedestrian path will provide a safer and scenic alternative to the several congested intersections along this section of the Lakefront Trail,” said Chicago Department of Transportation Commissioner Rebekah Scheinfeld. “It will be a functional and architecturally stunning addition to this part of the lakefront.”

Construction will be done in three overlapping phases, with the first phase beginning between Jane Addams Park and Ogden Slip, the second between the slip and the river, and the third phase improving the path over the Chicago River Bridge. The entire \$60 million project is expected to be completed in 2018.

The first phase of the Navy Pier Flyover is primarily funded by the US. Department of Transportation using Congestion Mitigation Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ), with additional funding from the State of Illinois. The first phase of construction is budgeted at \$26.4 million.

“The Navy Pier Flyover is an excellent example of how Chicago is leading the way on sustainable transit options. This innovative project will provide safe alternatives to driving, connect downtown to neighborhoods and parks and put Chicago at the forefront of pedestrian and bike-friendly cities,” said U.S. Representative Mike Quigley (IL-05).

The construction will begin in earnest next week. Most notably, it will involve the temporary closure of the right travel lane and shoulder of northbound Upper Lake Shore Drive for one block between Illinois Street and Grand Avenue.

On the morning of Monday, March 24th, the temporary lane reductions on Lake Shore Drive will be put into place. The off-ramp from Upper Lake Shore Drive to Illinois Street will also be reduced to one lane.

“This is another example of Mayor Emanuel making much needed improvements to the infrastructure of the City of Chicago,” said Tom Villanova, President, Chicago & Cook County Building & Construction Trades Council. “This project will join the CTA upgrades and the Bloomingdale Trail as another project that will improve transportation options while providing thousands of jobs for members of the Chicago building and construction trades.”

Throughout the construction, the Lakefront Trail will remain open to pedestrians and cyclists, but the path will detour around the construction activity. All businesses and residences will remain accessible. The intersection of Grand Avenue and Lower Lake Shore Drive may be impacted by construction periodically, but will remain open.

The traffic impacts on Upper Lake Shore Drive are expected to last into September. The first construction phase is expected to be complete in December 2015.

More project information is available at www.navy PierFlyover.com.

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