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**MAYOR EMANUEL OUTLINES THE FUTURE OF CHICAGO AS A TWO WATERFRONT CITY IN
THE SECOND BUILDING ON BURNHAM ADDRESS**

985 new acres of parks acquired and 5.5 miles of new waterfront access developed since 2011

Mayor Rahm Emanuel today announced that 985 acres of parks have been acquired and 5.5 miles of waterfront access have been developed under the Building on Burnham plan. The comprehensive plan to invest in the Lakefront, the Chicago River, natural areas and recreational opportunities in neighborhoods across the city will continue, with plans to acquire additional parkland and further develop the waterfront in the coming years.

“By preserving, protecting and improving our natural areas, we are building on the blueprint of Daniel Burnham’s Plan for Chicago,” said Mayor Emanuel. “Efforts like making our lake more accessible, reconnecting the city with the River and building new neighborhood parks and playgrounds are not just for the Chicago of today; these efforts ensure the city our children inherit is even more vibrant, more beautiful, more prosperous, and more inclusive than ever before.”

Building on Burnham, which launched two years ago, outlined a comprehensive plan to invest in public spaces across the city. This built on expansions made since 2011 to Chicago’s park systems, which now include 985 acres of new parkland, 327 new playgrounds under the Chicago Plays! program and generational park projects such as Maggie Daley, 31st St. Harbor, The 606 trail and park system and La Villita, the Big Park in Little Village.

“The second phase of Building On Burnham and Mayor Emanuel’s vision will bring major improvements to our beloved parks, lakefront, riverfront and neighborhoods and create a legacy that will help build a better Chicago,” said Chicago Park District Superintendent & CEO Michael P. Kelly. “It is critical that we invest in our urban green spaces and support the recreational opportunities that breathe life into our city.”

Since 2011, the Chicago River has been transformed into the city’s next recreational park, with vast opportunities for residents and visitors to access and enjoy the river at almost every mile. Completed projects include the four new boathouses in neighborhoods along the river, including the River Park Boathouse in Albany Park, Clark WMS Boathouse in North Center, Ping Tom Boathouse in Chinatown and the Eleanor Boathouse in Bridgeport.

“The Chicago River flows right through the heart of our city, connecting people and neighborhoods to each other and to nature,” said Margaret Frisbie, Executive Director of Friends of the Chicago

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River. “Increasing access, improving water quality and allowing wildlife to thrive sets Chicago apart and makes us healthier. Healthy rivers are good for everyone – physically, emotionally and economically.”

The Chicago Riverwalk, which covers 1.25-miles through the heart of the city, was completed in 2016 and continues to offer new and improved ways to enjoy Chicago’s waterfronts and architecture. The highly-decorated, world renowned project was designed by a team of architects including Chicago’s Ross Barney Architects and Sasaki. It was constructed by Alfred Benesch & Co. Engineers and Walsh Construction under the supervision of the Chicago Department of Transportation. The idea of a riverfront promenade was first put forth in Burnham’s Plan for Chicago.

“The river is back! Chicagoans can look forward to new educational and recreational opportunities made possible by reinvesting in our river,” said Carol Ross Barney, Founder of Ross Barney Architects.

“2FM is proud to maintain the Riverwalk as part of Mayor Emanuel’s effort to build on Daniel Burnham’s vision for Chicago,” Department of Fleet and Facility Management Commissioner David Reynolds said. “The Riverwalk changed the way people interact with the Chicago River, promoting economic growth and transforming the waterfront into the city’s newest recreational frontier.”

Building on the success of the Riverwalk, the North Branch Framework Plan and the Chicago Urban River Edges Ideas Lab the City is engaging select architectural firms with experience in designing award-winning riverfronts, parks and public spaces to update the river design guidelines for use by developers who will be building much of Chicago’s riverfront in the near future.

“It’s vital for the City, its sister agencies and the private sector to be innovative and collaborative to develop a next generation of open spaces that will still be important a century from now,” Department of Planning and Development Commissioner David Reifman said. “Building on Burnham will ensure the city’s natural resources provide sustainable, quality-of-life benefits for generations of Chicagoans to come.”

Chicago’s Lakefront spans 26 miles of the city and is one of the most utilized assets in Chicago’s park system. To alleviate areas of congestion along the 18 mile trail, the Lakefront Trail Separation project was launched to create a separate bike lane for cyclists and pedestrian trail for those on foot. During summer weekends, an estimated 100,000 people per day use this trail. The funding was provided by the Chicago Park District and a generous donation from Ken Griffin, Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Citadel. Construction on the entire path from Ardmore Avenue on the north to 71st Street on the south will be complete in 2018.

Keeping the Chicago Lakefront accessible was a vision laid out by Daniel Burnham more than a century ago. There have been several investments to improve access to the lakefront on the city’s South Side. The Navy Pier Flyover Project will connect the two halves of the trail and help separate pedestrians and bicyclists from cars crossing at Illinois and Grand Street. In addition to this 2,200 foot structure, CDOT has five significant pedestrian and bike bridge projects on the south side. The replacement pedestrian bridge at 35th Street opened in 2016, with additional bridge projects planned at 31st Street, 39th Street, 41st Street and 43rd Street over Lake Shore Drive.

“CDOT is proud to help implement Mayor Emanuel’s vision of building on the legacy of Daniel Burnham and creating new active transportation and recreational opportunities on formerly neglected waterfront areas throughout Chicago,” said CDOT Commissioner Rebekah Scheinfeld.

The lakefront has long served as a recreational frontier for Chicago residents and visitors. Investments to park assets, including those already made to the 31st Street Beach Harbor and Steelworkers’ Park at 87th Street, will continue in neighborhoods across the city. Projects include improvements to Leone Beach Park in Rogers Park, triathlon training amenities at Ohio Street Beach and the upcoming revitalization of North Avenue Beach with plans underway for a new Boardwalk and amenities. Theater on the Lake was recently transformed from a summer programming site to a year-round performance and special events venue. The historic 1920s structure is now a 19,000 square foot lakefront venue with a performance area for theater and music, a restaurant, two private event spaces and an outdoor patio. The TOTL Summer will return to its home on the lakefront this summer for the Chicago Park District’s Night Out in the Parks.

Building on Burnham will also continue to build out recreational assets and programming for children and families in every neighborhood. Continued investments, including the recently transformed Bernard L. Stone Park, support Mayor Emanuel’s goal to ensure every child in Chicago is within a 10 minute walk of a park or a playground.

“Chicago is a city like no other – an amazing tapestry of natural areas, miles of gorgeous lakefront and beautiful parks and recreation sites in every corner – all designed to create an important relationship between people and nature,” said Michelle Carr, Illinois State Director of The Nature Conservancy. “We are inspired and excited about the City’s ongoing prioritization of natural area access and protection through the expansion of Daniel Burnham’s vision. Chicago’s deep investment in our most precious natural resources makes our city an awesome destination, as well as a global leader in environmental solutions, climate adaptation and many other critical issues that create an atmosphere for the Plan for Chicago to thrive and create the next generation of city stewards.”

Construction is currently underway at the 312-RiverRun, a nearly two mile recreational hub connecting the Irving Park, North Center, Avondale and Albany Park neighborhoods to three parks with one path. Once complete, the project will provide North Side residents with direct access to a network of recreational amenities that includes wheelchair accessible baseball fields, fitness centers, playgrounds, an indoor ice skating rink, tennis courts, outdoor pool, boat houses and more.

Building on Burnham also builds on the environmental protections and sustainability initiatives Chicago has undertaken since 2011, including closing the last two coal fire power plants operating in urban America. Here, the planned El Paseo Trail through Pilsen and Little Village is underway including a roadmap for producing affordable housing along its length.

Mayor Emanuel launched Building on Burnham as a nod to Daniel Burnham’s 1909 Plan of Chicago, which recommended a series of projects focused on the protection and preservation of parkland in Chicago’s neighborhoods. An interactive map with Building on Burnham projects can be found at <http://bit.ly/BurnhamMap>.

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