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**CITY OF CHICAGO ANNOUNCES PROJECT TO ASSESS MEMORIALS AND MONUMENTS IN THE CITY’S PUBLIC ART COLLECTION**

**CHICAGO** — The City of Chicago, in partnership with the Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE), Chicago Park District (Parks) and Chicago Public Schools (CPS), today announced a racial healing and historical reckoning project to assess the memorials, monuments and other art across Chicago. The project will grapple with the often unacknowledged – or forgotten – history associated with the City’s various municipal art collections, and will provide a vehicle to address the hard truths of Chicago’s racial history, confront the ways in which that history has and has not been memorialized, and develop a framework for marking public space that elevates new ways to memorialize Chicago’s true and complete history. The project will have four main objectives, including:

* Cataloguing monuments and public art on City or sister agency property;
* Appointing an advisory committee to determine which pieces warrant attention or action;
* Making recommendations on any new monuments or public art that could be commissioned; and
* Creating a platform for the public to engage in a civic dialogue about Chicago’s history.

“This project represents the first step in a deliberative and long-needed process by which we as a city can assess the many monuments and memorials across our neighborhoods and communities,” said Mayor Lightfoot. “This effort is not just about a single statue or mural, but how we create a platform to channel our city’s dynamic civic energy to purposefully reflect our values as Chicagoans and uplift the stories of our city’s residents, particularly when it comes to the permanent memorialization of our history and shared heritage.”

This project is a first-of-its-kind effort in Chicago to take stock of its public art collection and channel the powerful civic energy that has organized around these issues. The project will begin with the assembly of an advisory committee in August, which will be co-chaired by Mark Kelly, Commissioner of DCASE, Bonnie McDonald, President & CEO of Landmarks Illinois and Jennifer Scott, Director/Chief Curator of Jane Addams Hull-House Museum. In addition to the co-chairs, the committee will be comprised of artists, historians, and elected officials from all over Chicago. The advisory committee will review the City’s current public art inventory and identify and prioritize artworks that may be problematic. The advisory committee will produce a report that recommends next steps for the existing collection as well as processes for the city’s commission of monuments moving forward, which will include speculative proposals by committee artists.

"We appreciate the opportunity to move forward with this critically important process, to revisit and evaluate the City's public art collection – a defining characteristic of Chicago – and to commission new monuments that equitably acknowledge Chicago’s shared history," said DCASE Commissioner Mark Kelly.

The work of the advisory committee will be largely informed by an artist-led community engagement process, which will create opportunities for public engagement and dialogue around the future of the City’s memorials and monuments. The community engagement process, which will begin this summer and last through the fall, will take a variety of creative forms and expressions that use the unique talents of artists to capture public input through storytelling, oral history, archiving and other educational programs.

“Monuments and memorials have served as overt or subliminal symbols of power crafted through a particular narrative lens. The committee’s imperative work is to listen to Chicagoans through a broad and accessible public engagement process to reckon with public art considered antagonistic to our shared history,” said Landmarks Illinois President & CEO Bonnie McDonald.

“This city-wide collaboration is necessary to reckon with the injustices of false histories and incomplete narratives, locally, nationally and internationally. It is a chance to engage in sustained public dialogue and work with Chicago’s brilliant creative communities —not to just re-imagine new ways to memorialize the ‘dead’ mythical past— but also to embrace the living present as we chart our collective future,” said Jane Addams Hull-House Museum Director Jennifer Scott.

The City will also commission a series of temporary public artworks that focus on a broader range of topics around COVID-19, inequality, and racial reconciliation. Artwork development will begin this summer and will be informed by ongoing conversations with stakeholders and members of the community.

“The Chicago Park District embraces the opportunity that the Project will present to help examine public art and statues in our City’s parks” said Michael Kelly, General Superintendent and CEO, Chicago Park District. “As we move forward together as a City, it is important to have open, honest and, at times, spirited debates about our history – the type that offer Chicagoans a chance to share their perspectives in a safe and welcomed manner.”

Using feedback collected through the upcoming public art and engagement efforts, the City, along with various stakeholder groups, will create a plan to erect a series of new monuments that equitably acknowledge Chicago’s shared history. The project aims to have a final set of recommendations for addressing existing and new memorials and monuments by the end of 2020.

"Diversity is one of our district's greatest strengths, and we are committed to continued engagement to ensure the artwork inside and outside of our buildings represents the values and diversity of Chicago Public Schools," said CPS Chief Education Officer LaTanya D. McDade. "We are pleased to join this citywide effort to create a more welcoming Chicago that celebrates our identity as one of the most diverse cities in the nation."

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