



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MAYOR EMANUEL LEADS GROUNDBREAKING ON BLOOMINGDALE TRAIL

*2.7-Mile Multipurpose Elevated Trail to Open Fall 2014 as Centerpiece of The 606,
Linking Five Community Parks and Amenities*

Mayor Rahm Emanuel today joined officials from the Chicago Park District, the Chicago Department of Transportation, and The Trust for Public Land to break ground on the Bloomingdale Trail, the signature project of Mayor Emanuel's push to create 800 new parks, recreation areas and green spaces throughout Chicago over the next five years.

The Bloomingdale Trail, a nearly three-mile long elevated trail, will be linked to five ground-level neighborhood parks, as well as an observatory, wheel-friendly event plaza, various art installations and other amenities, to form the park and trail system known as The 606. The name is an homage to the 606 zip code prefix all Chicagoans share. The first phase of the project, including the Bloomingdale Trail, will open to the public in the fall of 2014.

"It is essential that all Chicagoans have access to world-class parks and open spaces – including playgrounds for children, gathering places for families, and alternative transportation routes for bicyclists and pedestrians," said Mayor Emanuel. "In all these ways, we are connecting communities, and I thank all of the partners helping make this dream a reality. The Bloomingdale Trail is a major, exciting project that will improve quality of life for many of our residents."

"The Bloomingdale Trail and Park will be the first space of its kind in Chicago," said Senator Dick Durbin. "When it opens, this federally funded project will help connect the vibrant neighborhoods along Chicago's West Side, and give residents from across the city an opportunity to enjoy the urban landscape of their own backyard."

The Bloomingdale Trail is a 2.7 mile, multi-use recreational trail and park system along an elevated, unused rail line. It runs west to east along Bloomingdale Avenue (1800 N), from Ridgeway Avenue (3750

W) on the west to Ashland Avenue (1600 W) on the east. The 606, with its multiple parks and other facilities in addition to the trail, serves as both an urban oasis and a community connector for the Bucktown, Wicker Park, Logan Square, and Humboldt Park neighborhoods, turning the physical barrier of old railroad embankments into a unifying park and trail system.

The 606 park and trail system will provide an urban oasis for the 80,000 people, including 20,000 children, who live within a ten-minute walk. It is also planned as a resource for Chicagoans citywide, a transportation alternative as well as a tourist attraction which is already garnering attention nationally and internationally.

Emanuel was joined by Beth White, Chicago Area Office Director of The Trust for Public Land, the lead private partner on this project. A national land conservation organization, The Trust for Public Land is supporting the planning and implementation process in partnership with the City of Chicago and the Chicago Park District.

“An unprecedented public-private partnership is making this project a reality,” said White. “Mayor Emanuel’s vision and leadership fast-tracked this project and brought us to this day. We’re pleased to assist with an inclusive process that brings together city, regional and federal agencies, private funders, community leaders and neighbors to turn The 606 into Chicago’s next great park and trail system.”

Mayor Emanuel made a 2011 campaign pledge to build the Bloomingdale Trail and the project has grown under his leadership to include the amenities that now will comprise The 606. Being built in phases, the Bloomingdale will be open end-to-end in Fall 2014, with additional construction phases continuing to embellish landscaping and other amenities.

Funding for the project comes from a mix of federal, City, county and park district funds, as well as private donations. The Trust for Public Land is overseeing the fundraising campaign for private donations, and individuals can contribute at www.the606.org.

The 606 is a decade in the making, starting with the public meetings initiated by the City’s planning department to increase open space in Logan Square, which had the least amount of open space per capita of any Chicago neighborhood. The City presented the idea of using the elevated Bloomingdale line for a park and it was such a powerful idea that neighbors formed Friends of the Bloomingdale Trail to help make it happen. The concept was included in the Logan Square Open Space Plan, adopted by the Chicago Plan Commission in 2004, which prompted the Chicago Department of Transportation to begin applying for federal transportation funding for the project.

Please note: during construction, the upper level and portions of some parks will be closed to the public. Please observe all posted signage and check <http://The606.org> for the latest info. And, join us on Facebook and Twitter: The606Chicago.

About The 606

The 606 takes Chicago's legacy of great parks to new heights. This Northwest side project is transforming nearly three miles of unused rail line into the elevated Bloomingdale Trail, linked to five ground-level neighborhood parks, as well as various art installations and other amenities. The park and trail system is named for the 606 zip code prefix all Chicagoans share. Set above city streets, it will serve as both an urban oasis and a new way to explore Chicago on trails for biking, running and strolling. The 606 also connects parks, people, and communities; what once physically separated four neighborhoods now will knit them together and attract visitors from throughout Chicago and beyond. It is yet another Chicago icon that brings together innovative urban planning, green space, and the arts. The 606 will change the way you see our city.

For more information visit The606.org.

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