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CITY LIGHTS UP CONGRESS PARKWAY STREETSCAPE

600 LED Color-Changing Lights Illuminate Bollards and Trellises Create Dramatic Streetscape Along Downtown Gateway Corridor

Mayor Rahm Emanuel and the Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT) today turned on the 600 LED color-changing lights that comprise the new dramatic lighting scheme along Congress Parkway, and marking the completion of the \$24 million roadway reconfiguration and improvement project along the half-mile stretch of the South Loop parkway.

Located on Congress Parkway between Michigan Avenue and Wells Street, the roadway improvement project provides a world-class gateway into the City of Chicago and improves the conditions for the 63,000 vehicles per day that need to pass safely and efficiently through this corridor.

"Congress Parkway now provides a beautiful and innovative gateway into the heart of downtown Chicago, promoting economic development and improving pedestrian mobility and safety," Mayor Emanuel said. "The streetscape welcomes pedestrians and motorists as they enter the Loop, which houses some of our key cultural and educational institutions."

The two-year project, which was done simultaneously with the reconstruction of Wacker Drive, includes:

- A complete redesign of the parkway to realign the roadway geometry to eliminate weaving traffic lanes
- The narrowing and reducing of traffic lanes to provide wider sidewalks and improve pedestrian safety.
- Interconnected traffic signals with countdown pedestrian timers that improve the flow of vehicles and pedestrians through the intersections.
- Landscaped and irrigated medians with five pedestrian refuge areas.

- In-ground and above-ground landscaped planters, new decorative street lighting, and street furniture along the length of the project.
- A decorative and programmable lighting system with more than 600 LED lights, including free-standing fixtures in the median and lineal fixtures attached to decorative metal trellises throughout the parkway and on the viaduct walls under One Financial Place.

CDOT utilized a number of funding opportunities to finance the \$24 million project, including \$11.8 million from the Near South Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District; \$9 million in federal stimulus funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA); and \$3 million in funds from the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) Program of the U.S. Department of Transportation.

“Those entering the western gateway to the city will now be greeted by a striking streetscape while they drive on a road far safer and more efficient in traffic flow than it has been in the past,” said Senator Dick Durbin. “This latest upgrade to one of downtown Chicago’s key arteries promotes sustainability, innovation and safety for vehicles and pedestrians alike, all while further beautifying the Loop. Projects like this provide an excellent return on investment, which is why the federal government prioritized transportation in the Recovery Act and will continue to do through the Federal Highway Fund.”

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