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Laurino and Mayor Break Ground for Albany Park Tunnel

CHICAGO (May 23, 2016) – Alderman Margaret Laurino (39th) and Mayor Rahm Emanuel broke ground Sunday for the Albany Park Storm Water Diversion Tunnel.

They were joined at the groundbreaking by Senator Dick Durbin, Congressman Mike Quigley, Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago Board of Commissioners President Mariyana Spyropoulous and officials of the Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT).

“This drainage tunnel will eliminate the danger of floods that have plagued our northwest side neighborhood for more than a century,” Alderman Laurino said. “In the meantime, we’ve coordinated protective safety measures with CDOT and the Chicago Office of Emergency Management and Communications (OEMC) against potential flooding. We’ve also pledged to keep residents updated on the tunnel project completion.”

The 18-foot diameter tunnel 150 feet below ground level will divert a flow of 2,300 cubic feet of water per second about 1.4 miles from the North Branch of the Chicago River to the North Shore Channel. It will have an intake shaft at a bend in the river in Eugene Field Park just east of Pulaski Road and kick into operation before the water level reaches flood stage. The \$70 million project will produce an estimated 250 construction jobs. Completion is scheduled for spring of 2018.

“No resident of the City of Chicago should have to live in fear of the type of devastating floods that Albany Park residents have lived through twice in recent years,” Mayor Emanuel said. “A project of this magnitude takes team work and we are very pleased to work with our partners at the federal, state and local level to get this work under way and deliver the 21st Century infrastructure that the residents of this neighborhood need and deserve.”

Work on the project will be visible at two ground-level locations: the inlet shaft off Foster east of Pulaski Rd. and at the outlet shaft in River Park on the east side of the North Shore Channel. This month and next, staging for construction will take place with park closures and relocation of the walking/ hiking path.

From July through the end of the year, excavation and construction of the concrete inlet and outlet shafts will occur with community informational meetings prior to any blasting. Next year’s work will include below ground tunnel boring.

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