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**MAYOR DALEY LAUNCHES "URBAN FOREST AGENDA"
AS VOLUNTEERS PLANT TREES ALONG WESTERN AVENUE**

Mayor Richard M. Daley today launched the Chicago Urban Forest Agenda, which outlines goals for understanding, protecting and expanding the tree canopy and "urban forest" throughout City's streets, parks and residential areas.

"Our great urban forest is one of the city's most important assets," Daley told a group of volunteers planting trees on South Western Avenue between 47th St. and 48th Pl.

"Trees reduce air pollution, cool the air, help control flooding, reduce noise, lower our air conditioning bills and increase property values. And trees help us carry out our mission of protecting human health and the environment, which in turn promotes economic development throughout our city and improves life for all our residents," the mayor said.

The Chicago Urban Forest Agenda was developed by the City's Department of Environment with the input of partners and volunteers recruited through the City's "Chicago Trees Initiative," a public-private partnership whose goal is to plant and care for more trees in every neighborhood in Chicago.

Resulting from the research of the Chicago Climate Action Plan, which recommends an expansion of Chicago's urban forest to assist in cooling the city, the Agenda outlines four goals to align and increase the collaborative efforts made to protect, enhance, understand and expand the urban forest:

- **Maintaining and Conserving Trees**

The City can continue to maintain and conserve its urban forest by setting the standard for tree maintenance practices, continuing its commitment to tree maintenance, encouraging the preservation of existing trees and supporting urban tree reuse.

- **Expanding the Forest**

The City can expand its urban forest by continuing to prioritize new tree planting, setting the standard for tree planting practices, incentivizing tree planting on private land and improving the diversity, resiliency and function of the urban forest.

- **Integrating Green Infrastructure**

The City can continue to integrate green infrastructure by regularly inventorying the urban forest, designing a strategic plan to meet tree planting goals, providing guidance in planning and maintaining its wildlands and partnering with research and academic institutions to investigate the urban forest.

- **Fostering Stewardship**

The City can foster tree stewards by raising awareness among key stakeholders, promoting the value of a healthy urban forest to residents and encouraging citizen stewardship.

The Chicago Trees Initiative partner agencies, contributing sponsors, community groups and the general public will work to implement the agenda over the coming years.

The Mayor said that in these difficult economic times, it's more important than ever for government to work with the private and not-for-profit sectors and with volunteers to keep Chicago's progress going.

For example, the Chicago Trees Initiative brings together the resources of 20 agencies and organizations to plant, care for and advocate for trees.

"We're hoping to inspire a civic and social movement that will involve the city, the green industry, the business community, and private homeowners in increasing the number and health of trees in our great city," Daley said.

The volunteers along Western Avenue today helped plant 20 trees donated by Moore Landscapes and GRO Horticultural Enterprises. These trees, along with 170 trees donated by the American Express Company last spring, are helping the City "re-forest" Western Avenue.

Daley said that already the partners and volunteers taking part in the Trees Initiative have helped the Chicago Park District plant an additional 200 trees and are helping Chicago Gateway Green reach its goal of "15,000 Trees by 2015."

He said there is much work to do to reach the urban forest goals, because every year Chicago loses thousands of trees to severe weather, pests and disease.

“Not only do our historic parks and boulevards need trees and people to care for them, but there is an even greater need for trees on private property - whether residential, commercial, or industrial,” the Mayor said.

“Tree planting and creating more open space have always been key parts of our environmental efforts in Chicago. We know we must provide these things if we expect to attract the people who make up the modern workforce,” he said.

Daley thanked American Express for its donation of trees and other organizations that have joined the Trees Initiative -- Openlands, Gateway Green and The Morton Arboretum.

He thanked the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service for its commitment over many years to research, funding and technical assistance for Chicago’s urban forest.

He also recognized the Chicago Community Trust, which recently issued a \$25,000 challenge grant for more trees in Chicago parks and the Parkways Foundation, which matched that grant dollar-for dollar.

“As we work together to improve the size, health, diversity and stewardship of our urban forest, the Chicago Trees Initiative and its Urban Forest Agenda will serve as a model for other cities around the world,” Daley said.

For more information, visit <http://egov.cityofchicago.org/chicagotrees/>

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