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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 7, 2022

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**MAYOR LIGHTFOOT RELEASES "WHERE WORLDS CONNECT" REPORT
FINDINGS FROM THE MUSEUM CAMPUS WORKING GROUP**

The plan presents recommendations for campus activations through arts and culture, transportation, education, youth services, and more

CHICAGO — Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot and the Museum Campus working group today released "Where Worlds Connect," a report detailing key analysis and recommendations to enhance the Museum Campus.

This report is the culmination of the effort to reimagine the Museum Campus that Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot announced in February. The working group was composed of 23 civic leaders and chaired by Richard Price, Executive Chairman of Mesirow.

"Our beloved Museum Campus is an essential part of this city and requires special attention and care," said Mayor Lightfoot. "The Museum Campus working group has provided us with a useful framework to guide that work, as well as to enhance the Campus overall. This report will also ensure our vision is aligned when it comes to creating a more enriching and rewarding Museum Campus experience for all who visit."

The Campus is a crown jewel of Chicago with premier institutions including the Shedd Aquarium, the Field Museum, the Adler Planetarium, Soldier Field, and the Lakeside Center of McCormick Place. It also includes important natural and recreational areas including the 12th Street Beach, Northerly Island Park, and the Lakefront Trail.

"I am delighted to share the strategic blueprint for the Museum Campus that has the potential to spur diverse economic growth in the region and create a more inclusive environment for all to enjoy," said Richard S. Price, Executive Chairman of Mesirow. "Reimagining the Museum Campus to create a global, year-round destination was the result of a thorough and collaborative effort by the Museum Campus Working Group. I am confident that the vision outlined for the Museum Campus can build a brighter future for generations in our great city."



The report outlines the group's vision for the Museum Campus along five key themes of recommendations for an enhanced Campus experience and exciting activations that will drive transformative economic development year-round for generations to come.

"The vision outlines strategic improvements that will reinforce the area's role as a destination and gathering place for both people and wildlife in one of the most unique urban settings to be found anywhere," Department of Planning and Development Commissioner Maurice Cox said.

"Nature has been central to this new vision," said Jerry Adelman (Open Space & Recreation Lead), President and CEO, Openlands. "Creating native habitats and a natural oasis adjacent to the downtown will amplify the natural beauty of the museum campus, support its function along a major migratory flyway and make it a model for sustainability in the age of climate change. Putting into motion the recommendations of this plan will demonstrate Chicago's role as a global leader in urban climate resilience."

An Exciting Place to Be: Transformational place-making with enhanced programming and amenities will activate currently underutilized spaces and buildings across the Museum Campus to enrich the visitor experience. A renewed Soldier Field will deliver a world-class visitor experience in and around the stadium, and, along with Lakeside Center, anchor a vibrant entertainment corridor. With a greater diversity of experiences that expand the use of the Campus throughout the day and into the evening, visitors will want to linger on the Campus and return often.

An Urban Nature Retreat: The transformative power of landscaping with native species will amplify the natural beauty of the Museum Campus, creating a destination where visitors can immerse themselves in nature. Far more than simply filling the spaces between institutions, it will tie the Campus together, improve its function as a major flyway stop, and make it a model for sustainability. Paired with innovative approaches to environmental preservation, the Museum Campus will demonstrate Chicago's role as a leader in urban climate resilience.

A Place Everyone Can Enjoy: New amenities, inclusive design, and coordinated programming will create a Museum Campus that attracts and welcomes all, from each Chicago neighborhood to our neighbors from across the world. To attract and be relevant to all, features and programming will appeal and be accessible to people with different interests, lifestyles, and needs. Access to the Campus will go beyond



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physical connections and extend to building a true sense of belonging and ownership.

A Connected Destination: World-class connectivity will take full advantage of all modes of mobility to connect Chicago’s neighborhoods, the Chicagoland region, and the world to the Campus. Whether for daily access or a special event, transportation to and from the Campus will be more convenient and enjoyable, while disruptions to major transit corridors and adjacent communities will be minimized. Visitors will have a distinct sense of arrival regardless of how they access the Campus and be greeted by new and exciting ways to move around the Campus.

Bringing It All Together: The vision for the Campus will be pursued in a coordinated way that maximizes the mutually reinforcing aspects of individual recommendations to compound the benefits of future investment. Coordinating these efforts will give the Campus a more cohesive identity, make it more sustainable, and ensure its longevity as an attractive, year-round destination for everyone.

“Chicago’s Museum Campus is a world-class destination that should be easy to access no matter your mode of transportation or which neighborhood of the City you are traveling from,” said Gia Biagi, Commissioner of the Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT). “CDOT looks forward to collaborating with the working group and community stakeholders on ways to improve transportation to and within the Museum Campus.”

“The transportation working group’s goal was to ensure visitors would have easy and reliable access to and within the Museum Campus,” said Darlene Hightower (Transit Access Lead), President & CEO, MPC. “The complex location and clear transportation challenges required a comprehensive set of recommendations, which we provided in the report.”

The report consists of over thirty-five recommendations the city can explore for enhancing the Campus experience from arts and recreation, education and youth services, transportation, and infrastructure, to sustainability and preservation. Implementation for each of these recommendations varies from short-term (within a year), medium-term (within 2 to 5 years), and long-term (more than five years).

“Chicago’s Museum Campus is the crowning jewel of our city’s front yard, where residents and tourists gather for world-class cultural experiences, our magnificent lakefront and historic parks,” said Chicago Park District General Superintendent and CEO Rosa Escareño. “The Where Worlds Connect reports provides a strong vision and reimagines the campus for future generations by improving public access,



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embracing new pathways to community inclusion, renewing cultural amenities, and strengthening Chicago's natural landscape with a focus on sustainability."

Key recommendations in the report include creating an iconic pedestrian bridge connecting to Northerly Island, expanding access to public transportation, exploring sustainable options for Huntington Bank Pavilion, unifying the Campus with landscaping that restores native ecosystems, creating an indoor/outdoor experience with educational programs for all ages, and establishing a coordinating body to guide these efforts.

"I commend Mayor Lightfoot and our civic leaders on this bold reimagining of Museum Campus," said Commissioner Erin Harkey of the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE). "These recommendations will activate this incredible resource in ways all Chicagoans and visitors can enjoy and feel connected to — advancing equitable access to the site's culturally diverse programming, its stunning design and natural beauty."

The full report can be accessed here: <https://www.chicago.gov/museumcampus>.

"Museum Campus is a cultural crown jewel for locals and a significant driver of the Chicago economy from tourists," said Bridget Coughlin, President and CEO, Shedd Aquarium. "The recommendations the working group has developed will make the Campus an even more exciting and accessible destination for all. A mix of both vision and pragmatic adjustments, such as significant traffic improvement measures, will ensure Shedd Aquarium, Field Museum, and Adler Planetarium continue to reach shared goals of accommodating more guests and educating and inspiring our city's youth."

"Mayor Lightfoot gave our committee a clear mandate — be bold in reimagining Soldier Field and the entire Museum Campus," said Martin Cabrera (Athletic Facilities Lead), CEO, Cabrera Capital. "It has been a pleasure to work together with civic, community, and labor leaders, as well as industry experts, to creatively envision that future. The resulting options for Soldier Field should provide not only an exceptional game day experience for fans, but also an accessible destination and entertainment attraction for visitors and all of Chicago."

[Photo renderings of recommended changes can be found here](#)

The Museum Campus Working Group is composed of Chicago leaders and policymakers with experience in key issue areas to focus on outstanding cultural amenities, recreation and open spaces, athletic facilities, and transit access, including the following participants:



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- Richard Price (Chair) – Executive Chairman, Mesirow
- Jerry Adelman (Open Space & Recreation Lead) – President and CEO, Openlands
- Michelle T. Boone (Cultural Amenities Lead) – President, The Poetry Foundation
- Martin Cabrera (Athletic Facilities Lead) – CEO, Cabrera Capital
- Darlene Hightower (Transit Access Lead) – President & CEO, MPC
- David Brown - School of Architecture at the University of Illinois at Chicago
- Bridget Coughlin – President and CEO, Shedd Aquarium
- Jaime di Paulo – President and CEO, Illinois Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
- Karen Freeman-Wilson – CEO, Chicago Urban League
- Juanita Irizarry – Executive Director, Friends of the Parks
- Perri Irmer – CEO of DuSable Museum, President of Museums in the Parks
- Michelle Larson – President and CEO, Adler Planetarium
- Jack Lavin – President and CEO, Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce
- David Narefsky – Partner, Mayer Brown
- Lou Raizin – President, Broadway in Chicago
- Bob Reiter – President, Chicago Federation of Labor
- Gary Rozier – Managing Director, Oak Street Real Estate Capital
- Bonnie Sanchez-Carlson – President, Near South Planning Board
- Allen Sanderson – Senior Instructional Professor in Economics, University of Chicago
- Julian Siggers – President and CEO, Field Museum
- Sam Toia – President and CEO, Illinois Restaurant Association
- Amanda Williams – Distinguished Visiting Professor, School of the Art Institute Chicago
- Bob Wislow – Chairman and CEO, Parkside Realty, Inc.

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