Bloomingdale Trail opening set for June 6

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An artist's conception shows part of the long-planned Bloomingdale Trail, a nearly three-mile long elevated trail, will be linked to ground-level neighborhood parks. The trail and connected parks, nicknamed 'the 606,' will open June 6. | Provided

Grand-opening festivities for a new recreational trail connecting several North Side neighborhoods has been set for early June.

Dozens of processions and a street festival will mark the official June 6 opening of The Bloomingdale Trail, also known as “The 606.”

Access to the entire length of the trail will open about 8 a.m. that day, possibly with little ribbon-cutting ceremonies at each access point, said Beth White, director of the Chicago office of the Trust for Public Land, which has developed the idea in partnership with the city and the Chicago Park District. “The 606″ draws its name from the city’s ZIP code prefix.

“People can expect a real celebration,” White said. “This has been over 10 years in the making, and people have been very patiently waiting for it.”

At the point where the trail intersects with Humboldt Boulevard, a two-block section of Humboldt Boulevard will be closed off between Cortland Street and Wabansia Avenue to accommodate a giant party that starts about 10 a.m. and will include bands, dancing and food vendors.

A parade and procession will culminate at that location.

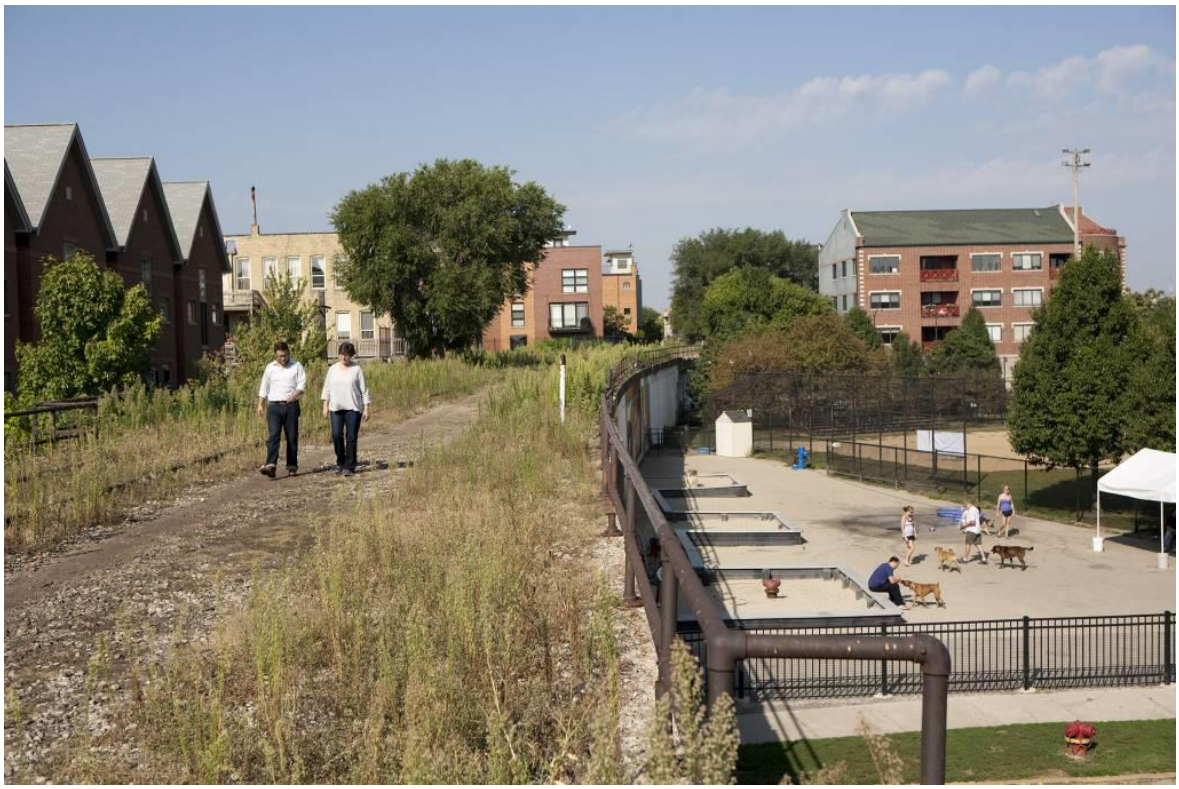
“This has been an item of curiosity for people because it’s such an unusual park,” White said. “Everyone is welcome.”

Opening weekend celebrations will continue Sunday, June 7, with a pancake breakfast between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. at the Ridgeway Trailhead, 1821 N. Ridgeway Ave.

The Bloomingdale Trail is a 2.7-mile trail along an elevated, unused rail line. It will tie together Logan Square, Bucktown, Humboldt Park and Wicker Park. It has been under construction since 2013 and will include several entry points and connect to several existing ground-level city parks.

Sports, arts and nature-centered activities will be held on opening weekend at those parks: Walsh, Churchill, Milwaukee/Leavitt and Julia de Burgos.

Of the $95 million overall cost of the project, about $74 million has been raised so far, including $56 million in public money and $18 million in private donations, according to the trail’s website.



Ben Helphand, co-founder and president of Friends of the Bloomingdale Trail, and Beth White, Chicago office director of The Trust for Public Land, walk then-unfinished Bloomingdale Trail near Bucktown in 2013. | Sun-Times File Photo