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CULINARY FOOD HUB BREAKS GROUND IN ENGLEWOOD

*INVEST South/West project will repurpose landmark firehouse as economic anchor,
business incubator*

Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot joined Englewood community members today to break ground on Englewood Connect, a \$13.9 million culinary food hub that's restoring the landmark Engine Co. 84 firehouse as a commercial kitchen and event space in the heart of the neighborhood.

"I am thrilled to break ground on our city's latest INVEST South/West project," said Mayor Lightfoot. "Englewood Connect and the many other investments we are making in our communities will ensure that Englewood residents have abundant opportunities to live, work, and play in their neighborhood."

The McLaurin Development Partners and Farpoint Development project at 6204 S. Green St. is repurposing the Tudor-style fire house, built in 1929, as a 9,000-square-foot culinary center and business incubator that's expected to employ more than 45 people. A landscaped public plaza adjacent to the building will host special events and other neighborhood activities.

City support for the project includes \$6 million in Tax Increment Financing assistance and the sale of the firehouse and nearly two acres of City land, valued at \$417,000, for \$1.

"This project is creating a new community anchor in the heart of Englewood, showcasing the landmark firehouse and the talented culinary professionals that will leverage its new role within the city's thriving food-related economy," Department of Planning and Development Commissioner Maurice Cox said.

Englewood Connect is part of the ongoing redevelopment of vacant City land on the northwest corner of Halsted and 63rd streets. In March 2021, the project was



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selected from four private development proposals submitted in response to an INVEST South/West RFP issued by DPD.

In addition to activating the former firehouse and vacant land with community-oriented goals, the project will create food-related synergies with the Washburn Culinary and Hospitality Institute at nearby Kennedy-King College, multiple urban farms within Englewood's nearby urban agriculture district, and nearby retail amenities at Englewood Square, a 48,000-square-foot shopping center that repurposed vacant City land in 2016.

“Our development platform is built with a laser focus on community vitality, identifying and helping local businesses grow while leveraging strategic partnerships with large institutions,” McLaurin Development founder Zeb McLaurin said. “INVEST South/West is the perfect toolbox to corral resources and implement a sustainable economic development approach across all of Chicago’s neighborhoods.”

The project includes architecture and design services by SOM and TnS Studios. During construction, the site will feature fencing with artwork by South Side artist Isiah "ThoughtPoet" Veney, supported by the Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events' INVEST South/West programming.

INVEST South/West is an urban revitalization strategy being implemented by Mayor Lightfoot that is leveraging nearly \$2 billion in public and private investment commitments within 10 West and South side community areas. Englewood Connect joins a growing list of INVEST South/West projects across those 10 community areas that are under construction or completed, including Auburn Gresham Apartments, the Healthy Lifestyle Hub, 4400 Grove, 43 Green Phase I, Ogden Commons, and more.

Other Englewood INVEST South/West projects include the Thrive Englewood mixed-use housing project at 914 W. 63rd St., the E.G. Woode business incubator at 1122 W. 63rd St., the Go Green Community Fresh Market at 63rd and Racine Avenue, and a CDOT led streetscape along the 63rd/Halsted corridor.

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