

Englewood Line Trail

*Making Green Healthy
Neighborhoods a Reality*



APRIL 2022



TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1. Project At A Glance 1
- 2. Project Description 2
 - Statement of Work 4
- 3. Project Location 5
- 4. Grant Funds, Sources, and Uses 7
- 5. Merit Criteria 8
 - Primary Criteria 8
 - Safety 8
 - Environmental Sustainability 10
 - Quality of Life..... 13
 - Mobility and Community Connectivity 16
 - Secondary Criteria 18
 - Economic Competitiveness and Opportunity 18
 - State of Good Repair (SOGR) 21
 - Partnership and Collaboration 22
 - Innovation 25
- 6. Project Readiness: Environmental Risk 26
 - Project Schedule..... 26
 - Required Approvals 26
 - NEPA Status 26
 - Reviews, Approvals, and Permits..... 26
 - Right-of-Way Acquisition 27
 - Public Engagement 27
 - State and Local Approvals..... 28
 - Assessment of Project Risks and Mitigation Strategies 28
 - Public Engagement 28
 - Capacity to Successfully Implement..... 29
- 7. Benefit Cost Analysis 29

- Appendix A: Letters of Support
- Appendix B: Letter of Funding Commitment
- Appendix C: Benefit-Cost Analysis Spreadsheet
- Appendix D: Benefit-Cost Analysis Methodology Memo
- Appendix E: Draft Categorical Exclusion Application
- Appendix F: February 2022 Englewood Line Trail Planning and Urban Design Framework
FINAL Task Order Request

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Project Summary 1
Table 2. Project Budget 7
Table 3. Funding Request 7
Table 4. Benefit Cost Analysis Summary Table 30

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Project Overview..... 2
Figure 2. Grow Greater Englewood Vision of the Englewood Line Trail 3
Figure 3. Project Scope 5
Figure 4. Project Census Tracts 6
Figure 5. Crashes Near the Englewood Line Trail, 2016-2020..... 9
Figure 6. EJScreen Demographic Index Near the Englewood Line Trail 12
Figure 7. EJScreen Environmental Justice Indices Near the Englewood Line Trail..... 12
Figure 8. Vacant Land 13
Figure 9. Lead-Contaminated Parcels Adjacent to the Trail Corridor 14
Figure 10. Transportation Facilities Near the Englewood Line Trail..... 17
Figure 11. Environmental Remediation and Urban Agriculture Sites..... 19
Figure 12. Growing Home Urban Farm 20
Figure 13. Examples of Existing Infrastructure Along the Englewood Line Trail..... 22
Figure 14. The Englewood Line Trail in the Green Healthy Neighborhoods Plan 23
Figure 15. Project Schedule 26
Figure 16. Community Meeting for the Green Healthy Neighborhoods Plan..... 27

1. PROJECT AT A GLANCE

TABLE 1. PROJECT SUMMARY

Project Information	
Project Name:	The Englewood Line Trail
Project Sponsor:	City of Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT) and Department of Planning and Development (DPD)
Project Location:	Chicago IL-IN Urbanized Area, and Census Tracts 6701, 6702, 6703, 6704, 6705, 6805, and 8347 within Cook County, Illinois. The project is located within an area of persistent poverty, historically disadvantaged community, and Opportunity Zone. See Section 3 for details.
Total Project Cost:	\$68,236,854
RAISE Request Amount:	\$35,000,000
Benefit-Cost Ratio:	1.25

The **City of Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT)** and **Department of Planning and Development (DPD)** are pleased to submit an application for Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) funding for the Englewood Line Trail. This project will convert a 1.75-mile abandoned railway corridor into a grade-separated multiuse path for walking and biking in the neighborhood of Englewood, Chicago. This investment will provide a major catalyst for inclusive revitalization, centering a community that has been organizing on its own to strengthen its assets after decades of challenges with depopulation and economic hardship due to historic disinvestment.

This project will provide an equity-focused investment in the economic development of the Englewood neighborhood. It closely aligns with grassroots initiatives to use the trail not just as a physical connector, but also a connector of opportunity along the corridor – thematically linking active living, access to nature, and urban agriculture. In addition, it will realize significant safety, health, and climate benefits by providing a dedicated right of way for people walking and biking – the most vulnerable road users – tying into key high-frequency transit lines, catalyzing new neighborhood destinations to reduce trip lengths, and supporting a shift away from motor vehicles and towards other travel modes. **The project will accomplish important goals under the signature 2014 Green Healthy Neighborhoods Plan by converting an abandoned barrier into a new community asset.**

The Englewood Line Trail has been under development for years. Preliminary engineering and environmental assessments (resulting in a Project Development Report produced in 2017) have been completed, and final design is anticipated to start in Federal Fiscal Year 2023. Based on preliminary planning, it is believed that the project will qualify for a Categorical Exclusion under NEPA. Additionally, through this and other neighborhood initiatives (including the Englewood Line Trail Health Impact Assessment and INVEST South/West), **the City of Chicago has a community engagement and partnership process in place to ensure that the project is driven by and directly benefits neighborhood residents.**

For supporting documentation, please see the appendices, related plans, and additional information compiled on the [Englewood Line Trail Grant webpage](#).

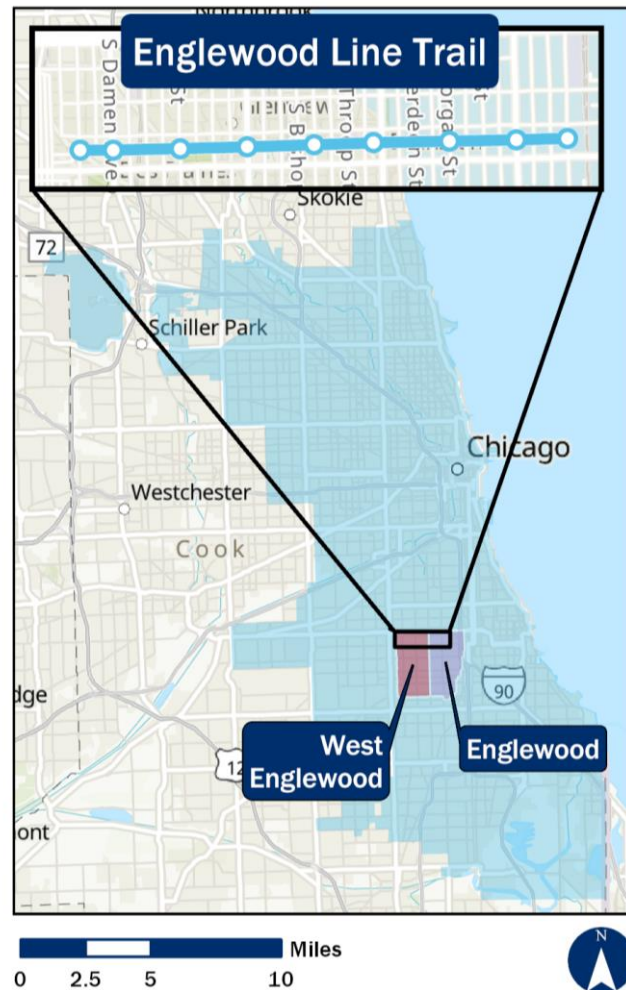
2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The purpose of this proposed project is to construct a 1.75-mile-long multiuse path on an abandoned elevated railroad right-of-way in the historically burdened neighborhoods of Englewood and West Englewood (hereafter referred to as “Englewood”) (Figure 1). This neighborhood is a predominantly African-American and low-income community, where over 80 percent of residents are African-American and nearly 50 percent of households have an annual income below \$25,000.¹ Additionally, there is a growing Latino population located in the western edge of the neighborhood. Finally, the population of Englewood skews older, where 18 percent of residents are over 65 years old, compared with the citywide average of 12 percent.²

This project is the result of the extensive public collaboration that created the Green Healthy Neighborhoods Plan in 2014.³ **This plan envisions a revitalized neighborhood that has seen abandoned lots converted into productive urban agricultural parcels soon tied together by safe and inviting park space and multiuse paths.** The City is committed to realizing this vision hand in hand with the community partners that drove its creation and progress.

Constructing this path will transform a contaminated, overgrown, and underused structure

FIGURE 1. PROJECT OVERVIEW



The Englewood Line Trail has a benefit-cost ratio of 1.25, providing significant benefits from improved traffic safety, property value increases, and environmental remediation.

¹ Based on the combined demographics from the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning’s August 2021 Community Data Snapshot for Englewood

(<https://www.cmap.illinois.gov/documents/10180/126764/Englewood.pdf>) and West Englewood (<https://www.cmap.illinois.gov/documents/10180/126764/West+Englewood.pdf>).

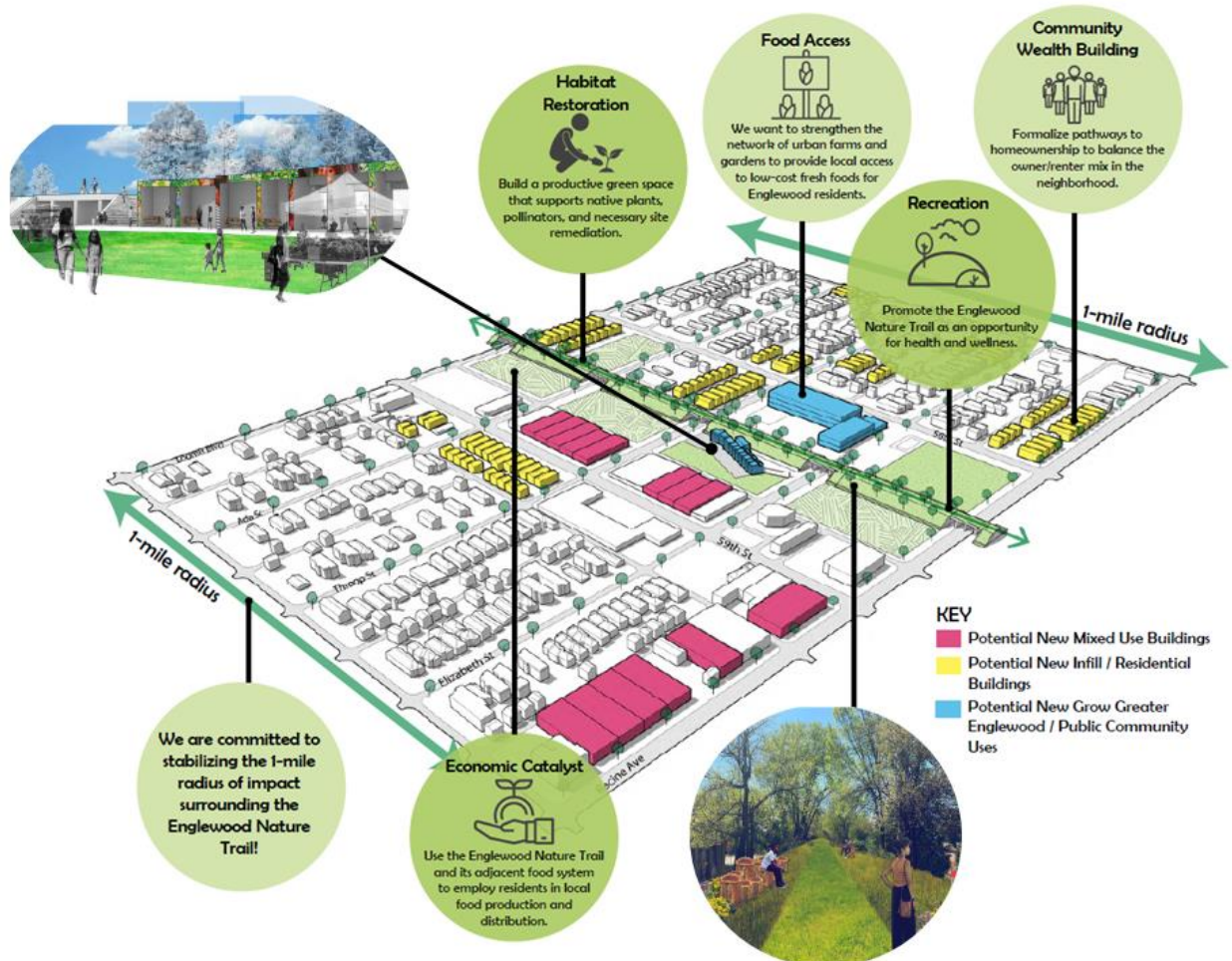
² Ibid.

³ Green Healthy Neighborhoods (GHN). https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/dcd/supp_info/green-healthy-neighborhoods.html

into a community asset that connects rather than dissects this historically burdened neighborhood.

Englewood has a rich history as a hub of residential and commercial activities starting at the turn of the 20th century.⁴ The population swelled by the 1940s, with significant arterial corridors along Halsted Street, Ashland Avenue, 59th Street, and 63rd Street. However, beginning in the 1950s and 60s, unfair housing policies and disinvestment in communities of color accelerated deindustrialization and a shift in the metropolitan population toward the suburbs. Jobs and population in Englewood began to decline.

FIGURE 2. GROW GREATER ENGLEWOOD VISION OF THE ENGLEWOOD LINE TRAIL



Source: Grow Greater Englewood. This image refers to the project as the “Englewood Nature Trail.”

Today, Englewood community members are rewriting their own story with many initiatives underway to realize the opportunity that exists in its people and place, reimagining commercial corridors, stabilizing housing, and promoting new uses for vacant land.

⁴ Greater Englewood Community Plan.

<http://www.cct.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/GreaterEnglewoodCommunityPlan2008.pdf>

However, environmental contamination from past industrial land use remains in several parts of the neighborhood, including along the original railway constructed by the Pennsylvania Railroad in 1917 and on the adjacent lot that will be converted to the Englewood Line Trail.

This tension exemplifies the present-day status of Englewood. The community has generated momentum toward a new future for the neighborhood, as exemplified by the vision that local, active organizations like Grow Greater Englewood have for the Englewood Line Trail (Figure 2 on the previous page).⁵ However, legacy assets have been abandoned and now act as barriers to community connectivity. **The future, therefore, lies in revitalizing these assets and converting them into spaces that bring the community together.** By integrating with the active urban agriculture in the area and other economic development initiatives and remediating environmental degradation, the Englewood Line Trail will provide a key investment for accelerating the neighborhood's future as a model of sustainability for people, place, and planet.

Statement of Work

This project seeks to convert the unused railroad right-of-way parallel to and north of West 59th Street in the Englewood neighborhood of Chicago into a 1.75-mile-long elevated multiuse path. This project underwent preliminary engineering and environmental assessments as part of a Project Development Report (PDR) completed in 2017. It is funded to enter final design in Federal Fiscal Year 2023, queuing it up for construction during the FFY 2026 – FFY 2027 construction seasons should funding be awarded.

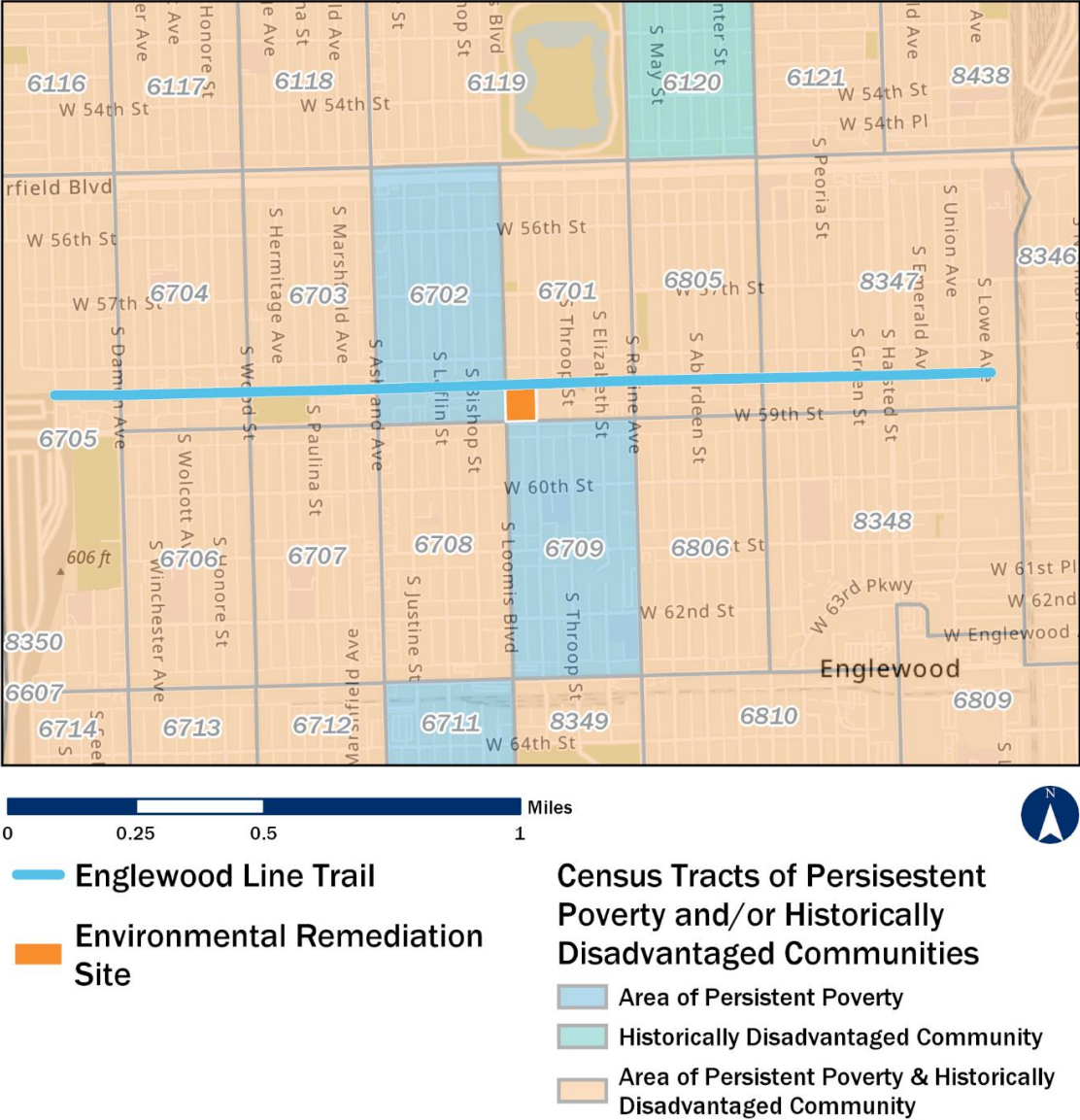
To deliver the project, multiple tasks must be undertaken as outlined in Volume 1 of the PDR contained [on the project website](#). Specific elements include:

1. Construction of a 12-foot-wide bituminous surface with an adjacent 5-foot-wide grass area on each side.
2. Construction of 11 proposed ADA-accessible access ramps at regularly spaced intervals along the length of the trail, with two primary access points at Hoyne Avenue and Halsted Avenue for emergency service vehicles.
3. Installation of CA-7 gravel as subbase and to provide stormwater detention, as well as a drainage structure with restrictor that is connected to the existing City storm sewers, consistent with the Drainage Study contained in PDR Volume 3.
4. Rehabilitation of the 26 viaducts consistent with the findings in the approved Illinois Department of Transportation Bridge Condition Reports, the approval letters for which are contained in Exhibit 4 of the PDR Volume 1.
5. Rehabilitation of 17 retaining walls.

⁵ Englewood Line Trail Website. <https://englewoodline.org/>

Planning (CMAP). The project directly intersects with seven census tracts: Census Tracts 6701, 6702, 6703, 6704, 6705, 6805, and 8347 within Cook County, Illinois. Six of these seven census tracts are classified by the U.S. DOT as both areas of persistent poverty and historically disadvantaged communities. The remaining census tract (Census Tract 6702) is classified as an area of persistent poverty. Of the forty-seven census tracts within one mile of the project location, all but two are either an area of persistent poverty, a historically disadvantaged community, or both. These project census tracts are shown in Figure 4.

FIGURE 4. PROJECT CENSUS TRACTS



Source: U.S. DOT Areas of Persistent Poverty & Historically Disadvantaged Communities

This facility connects to sidewalks, bicycle facilities, and public transportation facilities as detailed in the Mobility and Community Connectivity section.

The majority of the project is also located within census tracts that have been designated as Opportunity Zones by the State of Illinois and the Internal Revenue Service.⁶ Of the seven census tracts that directly intersect with the project, all but one (Census Tract 6703) is an Opportunity Zone.

4. GRANT FUNDS, SOURCES, AND USES

The budget for this project is broken down in Table 2 and is based on the estimate provided in the PDR combined with independent estimates for the environmental remediation required on the Loomis Cluster parcel.

TABLE 2. PROJECT BUDGET

Project Category	Estimated Cost
Environmental Remediation	\$4,037,629
Construction	\$39,710,539
ROW Acquisition	\$248,999
Contingency (20%)	\$8,799,433
Construction Engineering	\$9,665,254
Final Design*	\$5,775,000
Total	\$68,236,854

*Final Design funding is included in the FFY 2023 TIP with funding source to be determined

Because the majority of project expenses are incurred in Census Tracts that are listed as Areas of Persistent Poverty and/or Historically Burdened, the City is eligible to request federal funding for up to 100 percent of the project costs (as confirmed via email by U.S. DOT during the preparation of this grant). The City of Chicago is committed to funding the remainder should RAISE funds be awarded, as detailed in the Letter of Funding Commitment (Appendix B), though will pursue state or federal funding sources as they are available. The requested RAISE and non-federal funding are shown in Table 3. The City of Chicago will be responsible for any costs which exceed the estimated total shown in that table.

TABLE 3. FUNDING REQUEST

Project Funding	Funding	Percentage
RAISE	\$35,000,000	51.3%
Non-Federal*	\$33,236,854	48.7%
Total	\$68,236,854	100%

*Final Design funding (\$5.775 million) is included in the FFY2023 TIP with funding TBD. The City of Chicago has committed to funding this project if RAISE funding is awarded and anticipates pursuing state and federal funding as it is available given the eligibility for 100 percent federal funding for this project.

⁶ Illinois Opportunity Zones. <https://www2.illinois.gov/dceo/Pages/OppZn.aspx>

The City of Chicago intends on using local funding to perform the environmental remediation on the Loomis Cluster parcel and right of way acquisition. This is in addition to the complementary remediation taking place on the Throop Cluster parcels in tandem with this project should it be awarded, also performed using local funding. Additionally, the City is committed to this project and is willing to negotiate with U.S. DOT for a partial award if needed to ensure that the project can still be delivered.

5. MERIT CRITERIA

Primary Criteria

Safety

Safety

The primary safety benefits of the Englewood Line Trail include:

- The project will help achieve Vision Zero goals and equitably invest in a high-crash area that sees a 60 percent higher crash rate than the rest of the city
- It will create a grade-separated trail as a designated travel corridor
- It will result in safety benefits worth \$24.7 million (discounted to 2020 dollars)
- It will help reduce crime in the community

The Englewood Line Trail would help the City of Chicago achieve several goals it set out under its Vision Zero Action Plan.⁷ That plan was created following a data-driven and community-influenced investigation of high-crash areas in the City. It identified Englewood as a high-crash area, with 481 serious injuries or fatalities per 100,000 residents (compared with the citywide average of 301 crashes per 100,000 residents). Additionally, one of the high-crash corridors, on Ashland Avenue running north/south between 59th Street and 69th Street, is located proximate to the project, just to the south of one of the main access points to the trail.

The Vision Zero Action Plan laid out four goals for achieving its objectives, two of which would be directly supported through the Englewood Line Trail. First, the project supports the goal to invest equitably in communities that are most affected by severe traffic crashes. Second, the project supports the goal to make streets safer for all users, specifically by creating a grade-separated trail as a designated area for these vulnerable roadway users.

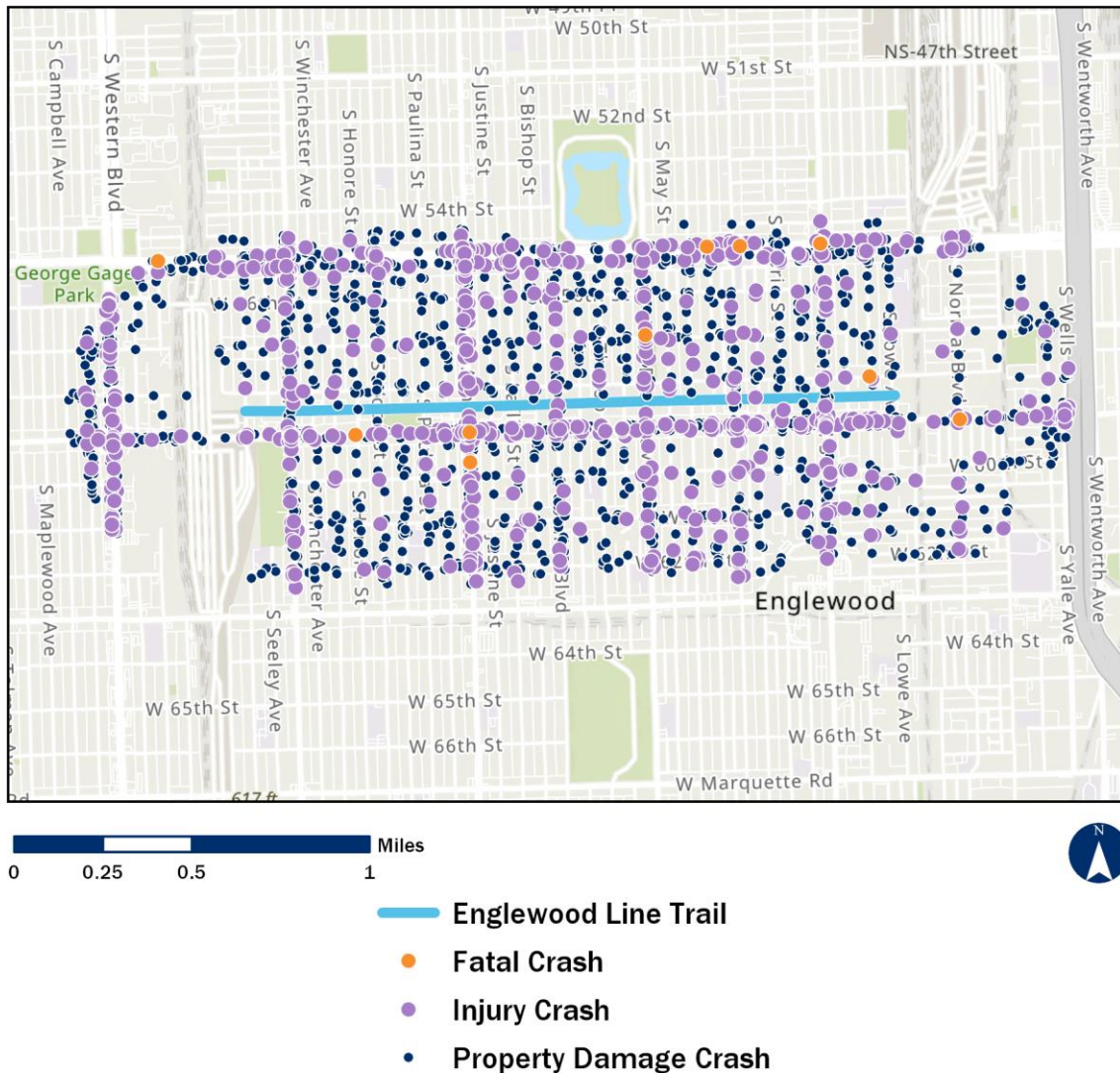
Between 2016 and 2020, there were 4,005 crashes located within a half-mile of the Englewood Line Trail.⁸ Of these, 11 were fatal, 871 involved an injury, and 3,123 involved only property damage. As shown in Figure 5, a significant number of these crashes,

⁷ Vision Zero Action Plan. https://secureservercdn.net/198.71.233.109/8gq.ef1.myftpupload.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/17_0612-VZ-Action-Plan_FOR-WEB.pdf

⁸ Using data from IDOT. See the Benefit-Cost Analysis Methodology Memorandum (Appendix D) for more details.

including two fatalities, were located along 59th Street in an area parallel to the project location. As explained further in the Benefit-Cost Analysis spreadsheet and methodology memo (appendices C and D, respectively), the project is expected to reduce crashes and provide \$24.7 million in benefits to the community.⁹

FIGURE 5. CRASHES NEAR THE ENGLEWOOD LINE TRAIL, 2016-2020



Source: City of Chicago Crash Data

Another safety benefit of the Englewood Line Trail would be a reduction in crime. A 2016 study of the Bloomingdale Trail in Chicago found that the trail had a significant impact on

⁹ All benefits values cited in the Project Narrative have been discounted to 2020 dollars.

decreasing crime, including violent, property, and disorderly crime.¹⁰ Additionally, this study found that the decrease in crime was greater in historically overburdened and underserved neighborhoods similar to Englewood. Investment in infrastructure like the Englewood Line Trail would complement other crime reduction efforts, such as the Englewood Public Safety Initiative which has been funded by the U.S. Department of Justice.¹¹

Environmental Sustainability

Environmental Sustainability

The primary environmental sustainability benefits of the Englewood Line Trail include:

- The project contains an explicit brownfield redevelopment component and will spur contamination remediation at adjacent sites
- It will induce a mode shift from passenger vehicle to active transportation such as walking or biking
- It will help the City of Chicago achieve its climate and Green Healthy Neighborhoods goals
- It will invest in a community that ranks high on Environmental Justice needs

The Englewood Line Trail would have several environmental benefits. First, the project includes an explicit component for **brownfield redevelopment**, as described above, by (1) remediating containments along the abandoned railroad right-of-way; and (2) by remediating the Loomis parcel that lies next to the trail. According to an environmental site assessment conducted in 2015, there are detectable and harmful containments within the soil of these sites, including lead. These kinds of brownfield redevelopment projects have many benefits, including reduced environmental harms, improvements to stormwater runoff, and improved land use in urban areas.¹²

Second, building the trail will support **mode shift** from passenger vehicles to active transportation such as biking or walking. The Englewood Line Trail will be the next in a series of open space & trail corridors being developed by Chicago.¹³ Under the City's plans, this trail will connect two existing on-street bike connection corridors, on Damen Avenue and Halsted Street. The project also connects with several high-frequency public transportation routes (as detailed in the Economic Competitiveness and Opportunity and Mobility and Community Connectivity merit criteria). Together, the active and public transportation benefits will encourage trips using a mode other than a passenger vehicle.

¹⁰ Harris, Brandon & Larson, Lincoln & Ogletree, Scott. (2017). Different Views From The 606: Examining the Impacts of an Urban Greenway on Crime in Chicago. Environment and Behavior. 50. 001391651769019. 10.1177/0013916517690197. Available at https://www.researchgate.net/publication/313591919_Different_Views_From_The_606_Examining_the_Impacts_of_an_Urban_Greenway_on_Crime_in_Chicago

¹¹ <https://bj.a.ojp.gov/funding/awards/2017-aj-bx-0005>

¹² <https://www.epa.gov/brownfields/brownfields-program-environmental-and-economic-benefits>

¹³ https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/mayor/press_room/press_releases/2022/march/CitywideVisionTrailsCorridors.html. Previously, Chicago has developed four rails-to-trails projects in other parts of the City.

Additionally, the construction of the Englewood Line Trail will fulfill one of the **Open Space** strategies in the Green Healthy Neighborhoods Plan. This plan articulates the neighborhood residents' vision of the future of the community and its pathway to revitalization through maximizing the use of vacant land and other resources. It was funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The Open Space goal seeks to provide open space within walking distance of every home in Chicago, and the Englewood Line Trail was named as an opportunity to create a unique space in Englewood.

“Continuing to make cycling a greater part of how we get around in Chicago requires a biking network that serves all neighborhoods and makes every day bicycling safe and convenient for people of all ages and abilities. Biking must feel safe, in addition to being statistically safe... The network of protected lanes, neighborhood greenways, and off-street trails will continue to grow citywide, and traffic flows will continue to be evaluated to optimize bike routes for safety and convenience.”

-The Draft Chicago 2022 Climate Action Plan

The Englewood Line Trail also fits within the City of Chicago's **climate change** goals. The City's first Chicago Climate Action Plan was released in 2008 and identified making walking and biking easier as one of the key actions under the Improved Transportation Options strategy.¹⁴ Following this plan, the City of Chicago implemented numerous actions to achieve this step as part of the 2015 Sustainable Chicago plan, including adding 200 miles of bike lanes across the City since 2011 and deploying the Divvy bikeshare program in 2013.¹⁵ Under the updated Chicago 2022 Climate Action Plan, this trail would fall under Pillar Three, which seeks to enable personal mobility and improve air quality by (in part) expanding off-street bike trails.¹⁶

The Englewood Line Trail would complement recent investments in climate actions. This includes the 2022 Climate Bond, which invests \$188 million in climate actions including \$75 million in community and environmental justice investments (such as low carbon mobility and historic trail development).

Together, these investments reflect a decision to focus investments in Englewood, an **Environmental Justice** (EJ) neighborhood. According to the Environmental Protection Agency's EJScreen, the population within a half mile of the project location is in the 95th percentile on the Demographic Index, meaning it is in an area with a disproportionately large population of low-income and minority populations (Figure 6). In addition, this population ranks in the 80th percentile or above in all but two (Superfund Proximity and Wastewater Discharge) of the EJSCREEN's Environmental Justice Indices (Figure 7). Therefore, the completion of the Englewood Line Trail would represent an investment in climate mitigation

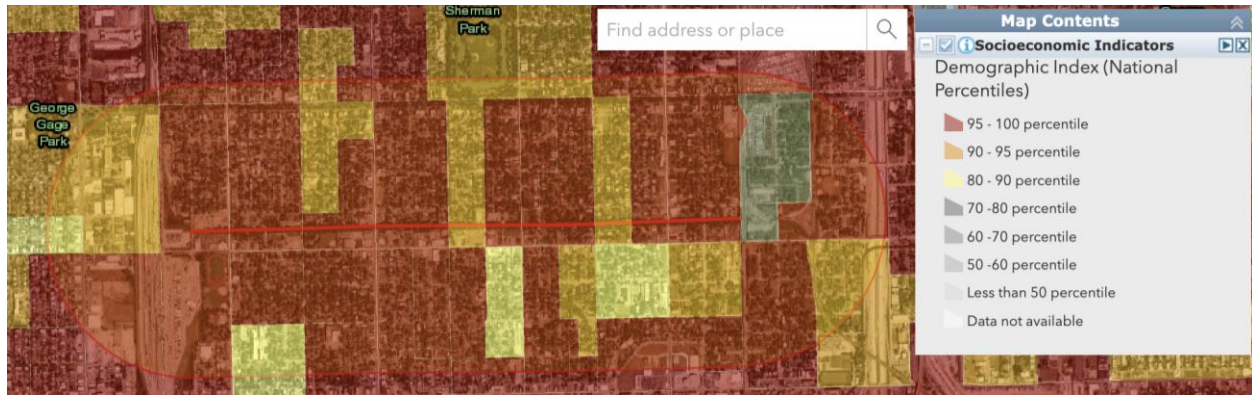
¹⁴ Chicago Climate Action Plan. <https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/progs/env/climateaction.html>

¹⁵ Sustainable Chicago 2015. https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/progs/env/sustainable_chicago2015.html

¹⁶ 2022 Chicago Climate Action Plan (CAP). https://www.chicago.gov/content/dam/city/sites/climate-action-plan/getinvolved/Chicago%202022%20Draft%20CAP_for%20public%20comment.pdf This plan is currently released as a draft.

and environmental justice within a community that is in significant need of such investments.

FIGURE 6. EJSscreen DEMOGRAPHIC INDEX NEAR THE ENGLEWOOD LINE TRAIL



Source: Environmental Protection Agency's EJSscreen

FIGURE 7. EJSscreen ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE INDICES NEAR THE ENGLEWOOD LINE TRAIL

Selected Variables	State Percentile	EPA Region Percentile	USA Percentile
Environmental Justice Indexes			
EJ Index for Particulate Matter 2.5	84	92	83
EJ Index for Ozone	83	91	82
EJ Index for 2017 Diesel Particulate Matter*	89	96	90
EJ Index for 2017 Air Toxics Cancer Risk*	83	92	80
EJ Index for 2017 Air Toxics Respiratory HI*	86	94	83
EJ Index for Traffic Proximity	93	95	91
EJ Index for Lead Paint	87	93	92
EJ Index for Superfund Proximity	84	89	79
EJ Index for RMP Facility Proximity	94	97	96
EJ Index for Hazardous Waste Proximity	82	90	84
EJ Index for Underground Storage Tanks	87	94	93
EJ Index for Wastewater Discharge	N/A	N/A	N/A

Source: Environmental Protection Agency's EJSscreen. Indices are based on the population within a half mile of the Englewood Line Trail.

Quality of Life

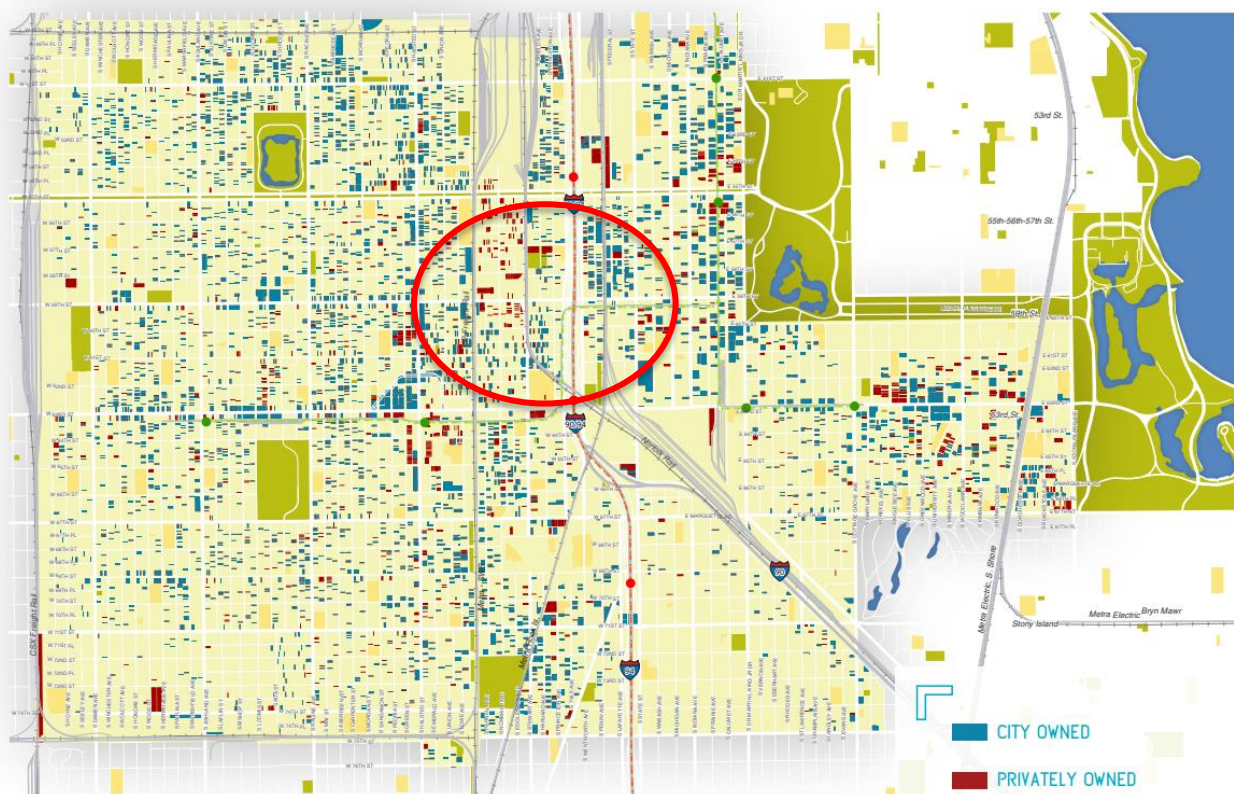
Quality of Life

The primary quality of life benefits of the Englewood Line Trail include:

- The project will help implement the Green Healthy Neighborhoods strategy by revitalizing an abandoned asset and spurring development on vacant land
- It will remediate environmentally contaminated plots near the project site, leading to \$39.1 million in economic benefits (discounted to 2020 dollars)
- It will increase residents' access to park space, which comes with a range of physical, mental, and behavioral health improvements. Additionally, this will provide over \$275,000 in property value benefits (discounted to 2020 dollars)

The Englewood neighborhood and surrounding areas are challenged with a legacy of disinvestment that has resulted in depopulation and abandonment of many of the community's assets. As described in the Green Healthy Neighborhoods plan, the current population is less than 40 percent of its peak in the 1940s and there is more than 800 acres of vacant land (Figure 8, project area circled red).

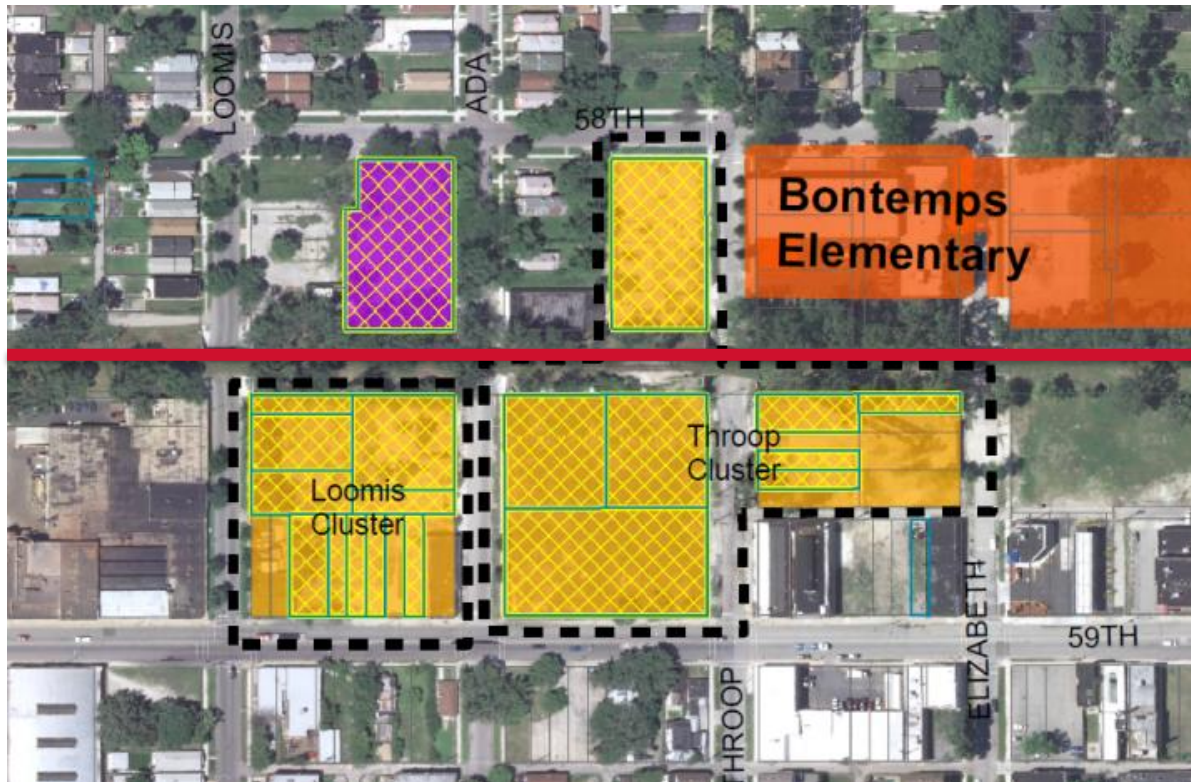
FIGURE 8. VACANT LAND



This project is one part of a broader vision for enhancing the quality of life for community residents through turning an abandoned rail line – a barrier – into an asset that enhances connectivity. This will complement other plans for expanding the nascent urban agricultural district which further converts vacant property to productive uses.

Another quality of life benefit comes from the improvement in the environmental burden this community suffers due to its industrial legacy. The original elevated railway was constructed as a part of a former industrial corridor along 59th Street. This leaves behind several environmentally contaminated lots, including two clusters of parcels, the Loomis Cluster and the Throop Cluster (Figure 9), that are adjacent to the Englewood Line Trail. These parcels are heavily contaminated with lead, which is a known toxin particularly detrimental to the cognitive development of young people.

FIGURE 9. LEAD-CONTAMINATED PARCELS ADJACENT TO THE TRAIL CORRIDOR



*Corridor shown in red

The Loomis Cluster will be remediated as a part of this project to construct an ADA-compliant ramp accessing the trail. The City of Chicago has committed to remediating the Throop Cluster as a separate but complementary project to the Englewood Trail using local funding. While the use of those remediated properties has not been determined (preliminary ideas are for a farmer's market or park space), the removal of dangerous lead-contaminated soil will be a tremendous improvement for the quality of life in this neighborhood and near the multi-use trail and recreational space.

In addition to remediating environmental contamination, completion of the Englewood Line Trail will increase the amount of park space in the community. According to CMAP, the residents within one mile of the project location have an average of 2.35 acres of accessible

park acreage per 1,000 residents, less than the city average of 2.42 acres and the regional average of 5.78 acres.¹⁷

Increased park space will help achieve health benefits that are the goal of multiple plans. First, the City of Chicago conducted a health impact assessment of the Englewood Line Trail in 2016.¹⁸ It emphasized that completing the project and increasing access to green spaces in Englewood would have several positive benefits, including increased access to nature, improved mental health status, and increased physical activity and associated physical health benefits.

“The communities surrounding the trail site are experiencing numerous health inequities and disparities... The poor health outcomes in these communities... are unlikely to change without widespread systems-level interventions. It is hoped that the construction and use of the proposed trail will provide new opportunities for the residents of the surrounding communities including improved neighborhood walkability, increased property values, improved economic and workforce development, and improved quality of life.”

-The Health Impact Assessment of the Proposed Englewood Line Trail

Next, the Englewood Line Trail will help achieve goals in the Community Health Assessments of two nearby hospitals, the University of Chicago Medical Center and St. Bernard’s Hospital.^{19, 20} Both of these assessments emphasize the need to address behavioral health disparities in the community, defined as mental health and substance abuse disorders. Though these disparities result from a confluence of factors, increasing access to green space is known to improve outcomes.²¹

The City of Chicago expects the trail to be well used by the residents of Englewood. For reference, the Bloomingdale Trail, a similar rail-to-trail project located on the north side of the city, sees trail usage counts ranging from 40,000 uses per month in the winter months to 175,000 uses per month in the summer.²² While the Bloomingdale Trail counts are higher than is expected for the Englewood Trail, it is suggestive of the robust demand for active transportation and recreational corridors in the City.

¹⁷ Calculated using data from <https://www.cmap.illinois.gov/2050/maps/parks>. See also the combined demographics from the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning’s Community Data Snapshot for Englewood (<https://www.cmap.illinois.gov/documents/10180/126764/Englewood.pdf>) and West Englewood (<https://www.cmap.illinois.gov/documents/10180/126764/West+Englewood.pdf>).

¹⁸ Health Impact Assessment of the Proposed Englewood Line Trail.

https://www.chicago.gov/content/dam/city/depts/cdph/CDPH/Englewood_Line_Trail_HIA.pdf

¹⁹ Community Health Needs Assessment & Strategic Implementation Plan - UChicago Medicine.

<https://www.uchicagomedicine.org/about-us/community/benefit/health-needs/chna>

²⁰ Community Health Needs Assessment-St. Bernard Hospital. <https://www.stbh.org/patients/community-health-needs-assessment/>

²¹ Parks and Improved Mental Health and Quality of Life.

<https://www.nrpa.org/contentassets/9c491783f73a45f89abb0443b1a3e977/parks-improved-mental-health-quality-life.pdf>

²² Based on internal DPD data that averages monthly counts between 2016-2022.

Mobility and Community Connectivity

Mobility and Community Connectivity

The primary mobility and community connectivity benefits of the Englewood Line Trail include:

- The project will enhance active transportation infrastructure in a community that faces disproportionately high transportation cost burdens
- It will connect with two other bicycle corridors to make cycling, a low-cost transportation mode, a more attractive option
- It is in proximity to two elevated rail lines and other public transportation routes

The Englewood Line Trail will improve transportation options for low-income and people of color in Chicago. As shown above in Figure 4, every census tract near the project location is identified as an area of persistent poverty, a historically disadvantaged community, or both. Such communities face disproportionate transportation costs as a percent of their household income.

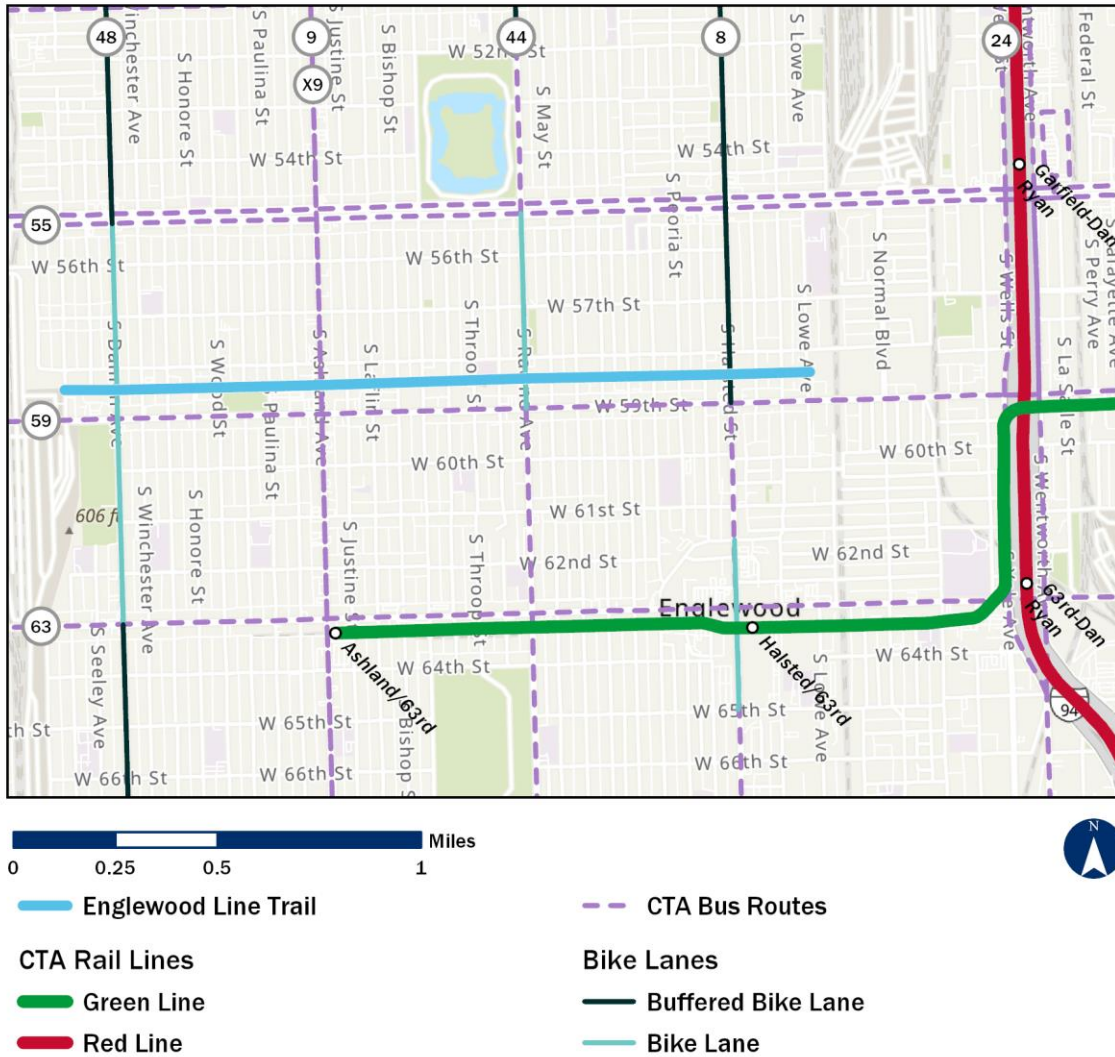
According to the Center for Neighborhood Technology, the residents near the Englewood Line Trail spend 17 to 19 percent of their income on transportation costs.²³ This is higher than the City of Chicago average of 16 percent, and significantly higher than the 8–12 percent of income paid by residents of higher-income neighborhoods on the north side of the city. According to CMAP, 54 percent of Englewood commuters drive alone to work, which is higher than the citywide average of 49 percent.²⁴ Thirty-five percent of commuters rely on transit, compared to the citywide average of 28 percent, while only 2 percent of commuters get to work by walking or biking, compared with 8 percent citywide.

The Englewood Line Trail would be placed within a larger context of transportation infrastructure. As shown in Figure 10 on the next page, the trail would provide a grade-separated connection between major bike infrastructure on Halsted Street to the east and Damen Avenue to the west. Additionally, the project is located approximately 1 mile from two stations on the CTA Red Line and just over a half-mile from two stations on the CTA Green Line. Furthermore, it is near several major bus routes, including the east-west routes of the 55, 59, and 63 buses and the north-south routes of the 8, 9, X9 (express), 44, and 48 buses.

²³ H+T® Affordability Index. <https://htaindex.cnt.org/map/>

²⁴ See the combined demographics from the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning's Community Data Snapshot for Englewood (<https://www.cmap.illinois.gov/documents/10180/126764/Englewood.pdf>) and West Englewood (<https://www.cmap.illinois.gov/documents/10180/126764/West+Englewood.pdf>).

FIGURE 10. TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES NEAR THE ENGLEWOOD LINE TRAIL



Source: City of Chicago Open Data Portal

Based on its proximity to this infrastructure, the Englewood Line Trail would increase lower-cost transportation options for the surrounding community by making transit and cycling more accessible. This will help create new connections in a community that has historically faced underinvestment and barriers to opportunity. Furthermore, all access points will be fully accessible, providing important recreational access for a neighborhood that has a larger share of residents over 65 years old compared to the citywide average.

Secondary Criteria

Economic Competitiveness and Opportunity

Economic Competitiveness and Opportunity

The primary economic competitiveness and opportunity benefits of the Englewood Line Trail include:

- The project will bring new biking and walking infrastructure to a community where a high percentage of households do not have access to a car
- It will complement and support the economic development of the surrounding land, including the burgeoning urban agriculture businesses
- The project funds will be used to compensate community organizations during stakeholder engagement and support workers in unions that historically have had local hiring agreements and apprenticeship programs

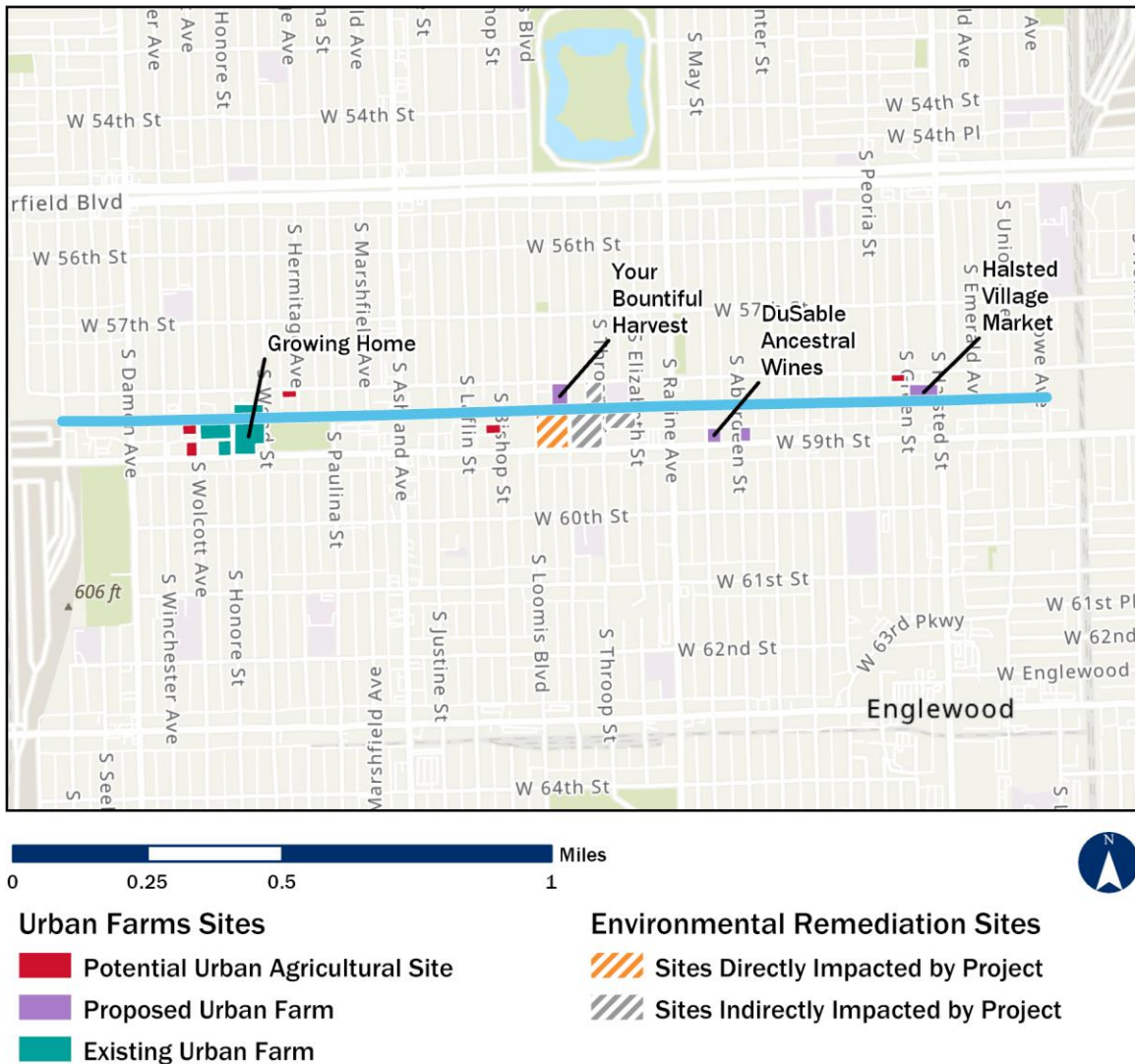
This project will enhance economic competitiveness and opportunity in this historically burdened neighborhood in multiple ways. The first is that this neighborhood is one in which car ownership rates are low due to the high percentage of low-income households. EJScreen shows that up to 48 percent of households in Block Groups along the corridor are zero-vehicle households, meaning that modes of transportation such as transit, biking, and walking are especially important to maintaining mobility. This trail will create a grade-separated pathway that improves safety for people biking and walking to work, to school, or for recreation.

Additionally, the project will enhance the economic development of Englewood by providing a neighborhood asset that will support equitable commercial and mixed-income residential development. As discussed previously in the Quality of Life merit criteria section, the project will remediate several environmentally contaminated sites (Figure 11). This includes one lot that will be directly remediated as part of the project scope for the construction of an access point on Loomis Street. There will also be several sites outside the project scope that are indirectly impacted by the project which the City of Chicago has committed to remediating.

Furthermore, this project will support Englewood's development of urban agriculture assets. Englewood is the largest urban agriculture area in Chicago because of local community efforts to utilize the vast amount of vacant industrial land. Additionally, federal programs such as the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Resources Conservation Service have funded the development of urban agriculture in Englewood.²⁵

²⁵ Funded under the National Resources Conservation Service's Environmental Quality Incentives Program, grant #69-3A75-17-55.

FIGURE 11. ENVIRONMENTAL REMEDIATION AND URBAN AGRICULTURE SITES



Source: Task Order for the Englewood Line Trail Planning and Urban Design Framework (2022)

Urban agriculture can be used to promote health benefits and food access as well as job training and educational activities. There is one major urban farm, Growing Home, already located near the trail (Figure 12 on the next page). There are several more sites currently under proposal from other organizations including DuSable Ancestral Wines, Halsted Village Market, and Your Bountiful Harvest. Beyond farming, this neighborhood’s urban agriculture vision is an environmental justice framework that uses sustainable food cultivation as a pathway to prosperity and empowerment for Englewood residents.²⁶

²⁶ For more detail, see the mission of Grow Greater Englewood, <https://www.growgreater.org/mission>.

In the Green Healthy Neighborhoods Plan, the City prioritized supporting urban agriculture in Englewood (and around the Englewood Line Trail in particular).²⁷ The project will integrate itself into the local urban agriculture economy by remediating environmental contaminants from past industrial land use and attracting Chicago residents to the area, thus making it more viable for this industry to grow on additional nearby parcels.

The project itself will also have economic benefits for the community.

The City of Chicago has used local hiring agreements when permitted by the funding agency. They have also required contractors to maximize use of U.S. Department of Labor-registered apprenticeship programs and have negotiated labor agreements that work to ensure that graduates of Chicago Public Schools (CPS) and City Colleges of Chicago have access to apprenticeships for these good-paying jobs.²⁸ This apprenticeship program benefits low-income students of color; 21 percent of CPS students are bilingual and nearly 70 percent qualified for free or reduced lunch in the 2021-2022 school year.²⁹ At the City Colleges, nearly 70 percent of students identify as students of color.

The City of Chicago also plans to invest public engagement and ongoing stewardship funds directly into the community through its Task Order Request (Appendix F) further refining the designs for this trail. As described further in the Public Engagement description in the Assessment of Project Risks section, a stipend will be set aside to compensate community members for their valuable time and input on this trail project.

FIGURE 12. GROWING HOME URBAN FARM



²⁷ Green Healthy Neighborhoods. https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/dcd/supp_info/green-healthy-neighborhoods.html

²⁸ This program is included in the city's collective bargaining agreements with unions in the Trade Coalition, and typically is Article 19. See https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/dol/supp_info/city_of_chicago_collectivebargainingagreements.html

²⁹ Chicago Public School Demographics. <https://www.cps.edu/about/district-data/demographics/>

State of Good Repair (SOGR)

State of Good Repair (SOGR)

The primary SOGR benefits of the Englewood Line Trail include:

- The project breathes new life into an abandoned elevated trail, including rehabilitation of existing viaduct structures, retaining walls, and other infrastructure
- It will help CDOT reach its strategic SOGR goals by providing an equitable investment in repairing existing infrastructure.

The Englewood Line Trail will improve the condition and make new use of an abandoned elevated corridor that was built over a century ago. Most of the rail and ties have been removed from the corridor, and it is currently a linear overgrown elevated structure with no formal uses or maintenance. There are multiple ways in which this project will contribute to a state of good repair for the region's infrastructure:

- **Viaduct Rehabilitation:** Preliminary design calls for rehabilitation of 26 railroad viaducts serving the elevated corridor, thus providing a fully grade-separated corridor for non-motorized use. These viaducts were assessed in the August 2017 PDR and were judged at that time to be in fair condition. This project will improve these viaducts to good condition.
- **Retaining Wall Rehabilitation:** Preliminary design calls for rehabilitation of 17 retaining walls serving the elevated corridor.
- **Surface Condition Improvements:** Preliminary design calls for subsurface stabilization, grading, landscaping, and construction of a bituminous paved surface for the length of the corridor.
- **Drainage Improvements:** Preliminary design calls for restoration of ductile iron pipe draining into the storm sewer.

Additionally, the Englewood Line Trail aligns with SOGR goals laid out in CDOT's Strategic Plan for Transportation.³⁰ This strategic plan includes a goal of bringing CDOT infrastructure into a state of good repair; the rehabilitation of the viaducts and retaining walls will contribute to progress on that goal. This project also helps CDOT meet the plan's larger goal to advance racial equity by distributing resources that reduce racialized inequities and improve outcomes.

The project would provide a new and productive use to an abandoned piece of infrastructure. It has been 50 years since the elevated structures have generated any kind of value for the surrounding community. Reconstructing it as a multi-use trail would convert this infrastructure into a recreational facility that would provide transportation, health, and economic benefits. Additionally, the environmental remediation near the trail would take a

³⁰ City of Chicago Strategic Plan for Transportation.

https://www.chicago.gov/content/dam/city/depts/cdot/CDOT%20Projects/Strategic_Plan/Strategic_Plan_for_Transportation21.pdf

currently unusable piece of land, remove the contaminants, and put it to productive use again. Figure 13 demonstrates some of the infrastructure conditions found on site.

FIGURE 13. EXAMPLES OF EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE ALONG THE ENGLEWOOD LINE TRAIL



Source: Pictures Taken by Project Team (2022)

Partnership and Collaboration

Partnership and Collaboration

The primary partnership and collaboration benefits of the Englewood Line Trail include:

- The project will fit within a larger community engagement strategy that has been in place in the Englewood community for years
- It will build upon past community engagement efforts conducted specifically for the Englewood Line Trail
- It will also incorporate future engagement under a new planning and urban design framework that seeks to engage with specific community stakeholders

The Englewood Line Trail project is centered around equitable investment in historically disadvantaged communities. Empowering community members and organizations to drive the conversation is key to this effort and the project's ultimate success.

The City of Chicago has been engaging the Englewood community about the project for many years, and this outreach has already had a significant impact on the project design and conception. This started with outreach conducted for the Green Healthy Neighborhood plan (see Figure 16 in the Public Engagement section below). The August 2017 PDR also included within it a series of public meetings conducted between October 2015 and April 2017. This outreach generated positive and supportive comments, with residents indicating that they believe it would be worth the investment. However, several residents raised concerns regarding gentrification or displacement of longtime residents as well as equity in the employment opportunities generated by the project.

“We want to make sure our culture and our identity is baked into the environment, so even when you come here, you’re welcome, but it’s not solely your story...Our goal is to make this project something that our people can be really proud of.”

-Anton Seals, Jr., director of Grow Greater Englewood, on the Englewood Line Trail, to Streetsblog Chicago in May 2018.

More recently, in February 2022, DPD released a Task Order Request for an Englewood Line Trail Planning and Urban Design Framework (Appendix F). This request seeks assistance from one of its previously qualified vendors to establish a framework for development of the landscape of the Englewood Line Trail. The framework would also address economic development and residential infill opportunities in the surrounding plots. This project is expected to be completed by the end of 2022. The plan requires community engagement with a

variety of groups, including student, youth, and senior organizations. It also requires a series of field trips to the trail and the surrounding area, regular meetings with community partners, at least ten public meetings, and bilingual outreach efforts.

All these efforts fit within larger initiatives by the City of Chicago to work with communities across the city in a new way. Such plans include:

- **The Green Healthy Neighborhoods Plan**, a plan to maximize the use of vacant land and other neighborhood resources and which included an 18-

FIGURE 14. THE ENGLEWOOD LINE TRAIL IN THE GREEN HEALTHY NEIGHBORHOODS PLAN



Source: City of Chicago Green Healthy Neighborhoods Plan (2014)

month community engagement process.³¹

- **The Englewood Line Trail Health Impact Assessment**, which provides a comprehensive assessment of the potential health impacts of the Englewood Line Trail project and involved an advisory committee comprised of many local organizations.³²
- **INVEST South/West**, which seeks to revitalize commercial corridors in various neighborhoods on the south and west sides of Chicago, including Englewood.³³ This includes the Englewood Neighborhood Roundtable, which meets to ensure that neighborhood voices are heard and integrated into the plan's priorities.³⁴

These plans together demonstrate the City of Chicago has a foundation for community engagement that can be applied to the Englewood Line Trail. This approach is centered on bringing community members into the planning and implementation process as partners to ensure that the results of the project meet the community's needs and provide maximum benefits to its residents. To that end, included in Appendix A and [on the project website](#) are the letters of support received for this project.

While this project is highly collaborative and community-driven, the City of Chicago is the sole project sponsor of the Englewood Line Trail and has ultimate responsibility for assembling funding and delivering the final project.

Letters of Support Received

- Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot
- U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth
- U.S. Senator Richard Durbin
- U.S. Representative Bobby Rush
- State Representative Sonya Harper
- Cook County Commissioner Dennis Deer
- Cook County Department of Transportation and Highways
- Chicago Department of Transportation
- Metropolitan Planning Council
- Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning
- Elevate
- Environmental Law & Policy Center
- Growing Home
- Urban Growers Collective
- Active Transportation Alliance
- Friends of the Parks
- Friends of the Forest Preserves
- Center for Neighborhood Technology
- Kennedy King College
- Chicago Architecture Biennial
- Chicago Park District
- Greater Englewood Chamber of Commerce
- Greater Auburn Gresham Development Corporation
- Chicago Southland Chamber of Commerce
- Chicago Urban League
- E.G. Woode

³¹ Green Healthy Neighborhoods. https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/dcd/supp_info/green-healthy-neighborhoods.html

³² Health Impact Assessment of the Proposed Englewood Line Trail. https://www.chicago.gov/content/dam/city/depts/cdph/CDPH/Englewood_Line_Trail_HIA.pdf

³³ Invest South/West – Greater Englewood. https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/sites/invest_sw/home/greater-englewood.html

³⁴ Greater Englewood Neighborhood Roundtable. https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/sites/invest_sw/home/greater-englewood-neighborhood-roundtable.html

Innovation

Innovation

The primary innovation benefits of the Englewood Line Trail include:

- The project will forge new territory in how the City of Chicago partners with the community, including new strategies to compensate community partners before, during, and after the project
- It will incorporate CDOT's innovative practices, including using recycled materials, energy efficient lighting, and ecological landscaping to the greatest extent possible.

The City of Chicago anticipates using recycled materials, energy efficient lighting, and ecologically appropriate landscaping techniques to the greatest extent possible when constructing and maintaining this facility. These types of innovations have been developed for years by CDOT, who have released extensive guidance for planning and construction projects under the Chicago Complete Streets initiative.³⁵ As an example, the Sustainable Urban Infrastructure Guidelines has requirements for a minimum amount of recycled materials, asphalt binder replacement, and cool pavement usage.³⁶

However, the most innovative aspect of this project is the approach for including the community in the conception and stewardship of this proposed community amenity. As described in the Public Engagement description in the Assessment of Project Risks section, this project is rooted in the community vision for Englewood's Urban Agricultural District and a healthier, greener neighborhood. To that end, beginning with the framework development in the February 2022 Task Order Request (Appendix F, discussed in the Partnership and Collaboration merit criteria), community partners will be compensated for their time spent providing input on how this facility should be designed and constructed. This will not only appropriately compensate community members for valuable input that most communities take for granted, but it will also directly invest project funding in a community that has suffered from decades of disinvestment.

There is also a plan for ongoing compensated stewardship undertaken by community partners to make sure that funds to maintain landscaping and other operational aspects of the trail are invested in and benefit the community. This is an additional element to the traditional management of the park elements of the trail, which is expected to be the purview of the Chicago Parks District. The framework development will also include design and visioning for the ongoing community stewardship once the Englewood Line Trail is complete.

³⁵ Chicago Complete Streets Design Guidelines. <https://chicagocompletestreets.org/design-guidelines/>

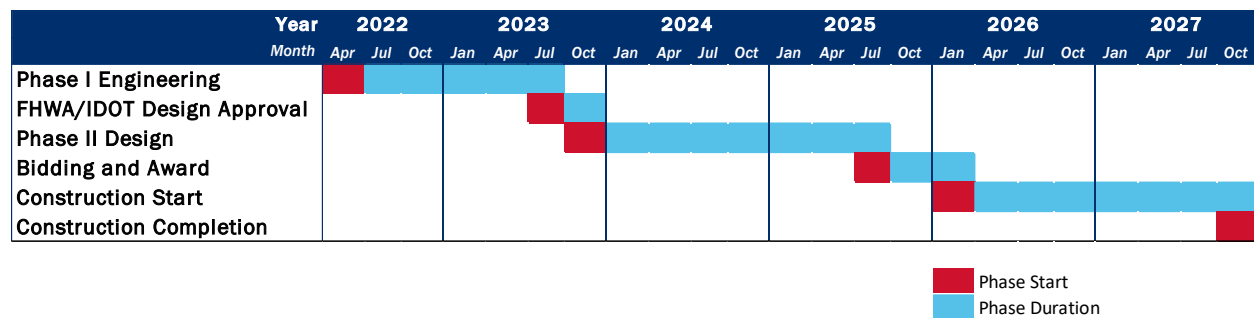
³⁶ See page 52 of Sustainable Urban Infrastructure Guidelines
<https://www.scribd.com/document/159032629/Sustainable-Urban-Infrastructure-Guidelines>

6. PROJECT READINESS: ENVIRONMENTAL RISK

Project Schedule

The project is expected to be completed by October 1, 2027 (corresponding to Quarter 1 of the Federal Fiscal Year 2028) after being constructed across two consecutive construction seasons. The schedule is presented in Figure 15. Funding awarded under this proposal will expedite entry of the project into Phase I engineering, final design approval, Phase II design, and bidding and award.

FIGURE 15. PROJECT SCHEDULE



Required Approvals

NEPA Status

Based on preliminary planning, it is believed that the project will qualify for a Categorical Exclusion under the National Environmental Policy Act. Under 23 CFR § 771.117 (c)(3), (c)(28), as multiuse paths normally qualify for Categorical Exclusions. A draft Categorical Exclusion document was prepared as Exhibit 10 in PDR Volume 1 and has been included as Appendix E.

The draft Categorical Exclusion was prepared for a 2017 Congestion Mitigation/Air Quality grant but was unsuccessful in receiving funding. The project has been proposed for TIP funding subsequent to that, but has not yet been funded (it is, however, listed in future unfunded project needs). The COVID pandemic further delayed making progress on the design and construction of the project. However, site conditions are not substantively different from the original 2017 submission.

Reviews, Approvals, and Permits

The environmental remediation on the adjacent parcel will require the involvement of the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency to issue a letter of No Further Remediation once the environmental contaminants have been abated. This is a process that the city is extremely familiar with and does not anticipate any challenges.

Upon award of the funding, the project will enter final design to queue it up for construction in FY 2026 – 2027. Upon completion of final design (expected fall of 2024), the project will begin environmental permitting. The environmental permitting process is anticipated to take one year, with approval granted prior to the commencement of construction in Spring of 2026.

Right-of-Way Acquisition

The railroad corridor is City owned. The PDR Volume 1 identified three parcels which would require takings on Ashland Avenue, Damen Avenue, and Hoyne Avenue. These parcels would be used for construction of ADA-compliant access ramps. The City follows a standard eminent domain process in compliance with relevant local, state, and federal regulations. The parcels proposed for condemnation are currently vacant land or long-unused buildings and can be found in the PDR Volume 1 in Exhibit 6.

If the owner begins reusing or revitalizing the parcels proposed for acquisition, the City will find alternative sites for access points. While the disinvestment in the Englewood neighborhood has resulted in an unfortunate loss of buildings and expanding areas of vacant lots, it has also resulted in the creation of many potential candidate locations for construction of access points along the corridor that do not require displacement.

Public Engagement

This project is the result of extensive public engagement undertaken over several years. There are three specific efforts supporting an inclusive process that developed this project proposal:

- 1. Green Healthy Neighborhoods Plan** – This 2014 plan laid the groundwork for the vision of Englewood as a vibrant, inclusive neighborhood that maximizes the reuse of vacant land. This plan was the result of an 18-month engagement process that included tours and conversations with local organizations, residents, and community leaders about the future of the neighborhood (Figure 16). Out of this, several priorities including urban agriculture and open space emerged, this project being a direct outcome of the desire for reuse of idle infrastructure for healthy food and active living.
- 2. Project Development Report** – The Project Development Report, published in August of 2017, was driven by

FIGURE 16. COMMUNITY MEETING FOR THE GREEN HEALTHY NEIGHBORHOODS PLAN



Source: City of Chicago DPD

multiple public meetings taking place over more than a year. This included initial trail outreach in fall of 2015, meetings with community groups including the Resident Association of Greater Englewood in 2016, and walking tours in April and May of 2017.

- 3. Englewood Line Trail Planning and Urban Design Framework (Appendix F)** – The City of Chicago is embarking on a framework planning process for the trail corridor and is in the final stages of selecting a firm to undertake that effort. The purpose of this framework is to better integrate the proposed trail with the Urban Agricultural District envisioned in the Green Healthy Neighborhoods Plan. A major component of this plan is the requirement to provide a stipend to a local organizational partner undertaking public engagement for the effort, thereby fully including and investing in the neighborhood residents.

These specific efforts are in addition to the ongoing community engagement that the City of Chicago undertakes on a routine basis with local organizations and community stakeholders. This project is part of a fully community-driven vision for strategic revitalization of the many vacant parcels and unused infrastructure to create a connected, active urban agricultural district in this historically overburdened and underserved area.

State and Local Approvals

This project is included in the regional Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) as well as the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). Final design and construction are both programmed in a future fiscal year with funding as of yet unidentified.³⁷ The award of this grant will allow final design and construction to be programmed into the appropriate fiscal years, and the S/TIP will be updated to reflect that upon award of the funding.

Assessment of Project Risks and Mitigation Strategies

The primary risk associated with this project is the current increase in costs associated with labor and materials. With continued global uncertainty having changing impacts on costs (at least in the short term), it is challenging to appropriately budget for a project that cannot begin construction until Spring of 2026 based on funding availability and design schedule.

To compensate for that, a 20 percent contingency line item was added to the budget and a 3 percent annual inflation multiplier was used to estimate the cost of the project.

Public Engagement

Fear of gentrification and displacement have been identified as concerns in past public processes. However, past and ongoing engagement is driving how the City addresses these concerns. Attached to this application in Appendix F is the Task Order Request that was released in February 2022 for the Englewood Line Trail Planning and Urban Design Framework. It outlines the expected public participation activities to be undertaken

³⁷ TIP Project Overview.

https://etip.cmap.illinois.gov/project_info?isReadOnly=True&project_id=1044688&version=2%20&lat=41.7879554826887&lng=-87.6547088339651&redirect=fullmap&site_list=0,1,3,2.&zoom_level=14

supporting the development and delivery of this project, discussed in Section 2: Community Engagement. This outlines several required tasks:

- Establishing a relationship with the City-selected community partner;
- Developing an Engagement Plan;
- Undertaking working meetings;
- Ensuring bilingual and culturally appropriate communication and outreach;
- Assembling a Stewardship Working Group;
- Organizing public meetings; and
- Managing external communications such as social media, newsletters, and other appropriate methods.

The activities done under this Task Order Request will form the foundation for public engagement that ensures an inclusive, community-driven process.

Capacity to Successfully Implement

The City of Chicago has delivered similar trail projects in the recent past and is confident that, should this funding be awarded, it will be able to deliver the project in a timely manner and fully compliant with federal regulations such as Buy America provisions. One recent example is the Bloomingdale Trail in the Humboldt Park/Wicker Park neighborhoods. Opened in 2013, this trail is also built on an elevated rail line that was abandoned in the 1990s. Given this recent experience, the City anticipates a similar construction process and will apply lessons from that project to this current effort.

7. BENEFIT COST ANALYSIS

The Benefit-Cost Analysis is documented in Appendices C and D and demonstrates a positive return on the investment of this project. The total costs, including operation and maintenance, are **\$45.7 million**, discounted to 2020 dollars. These costs include construction, ROW acquisition, remediation, operations and maintenance, etc.

Benefits over the 20-year period of analysis are anticipated to amount to **\$57.0 million** discounted to 2020 dollars, a **benefit-cost ratio of 1.25**. These benefits include safety benefits from avoided injury and fatal crashes with bicyclists and pedestrians, property value increases from the construction of the trail, and property value increases from remediation of the lead-contaminated Loomis Cluster parcel. See Table 4 for that breakdown.

Importantly, many of the expected benefits are difficult to quantify and not captured in the analysis. As indicated in the NOFO, special consideration is given to projects in “overburdened, underserved, or historically disadvantaged communities” for projects that demonstrate clear outcomes. As described in Section 3 of this narrative, the majority of the proposed project is in areas with a designation of historically burdened, an area of persistent poverty, and an Opportunity Zone. This project has been driven by a collaborative partnership between the City of Chicago and area residents, led by Grow Greater Englewood.

The abundance of overgrown lots and vacant land in this urban neighborhood has inspired a vision of a vibrant urban agricultural district that turns these idle resources into productive assets.

Integration of the proposed trail into the creation of a greener, healthier, economically vibrant community is essential to realization of the vision. A community that for so long has had to deal with disinvestment, deindustrialization, and depopulation is poised to launch community-driven, City-supported rejuvenation. The associated growth in jobs, housing, and social capital is the goal of this project, though the novelty of the vision and the fact that the trail is only one element of this outcome makes quantifying those benefits challenging.

TABLE 4. BENEFIT COST ANALYSIS SUMMARY TABLE

Costs and Benefits	Nominal Total Value	NPV Discounted to \$2020 (7%)
Costs		
Capital Construction	\$68,236,854	\$45,715,928
Total Costs	\$68,236,854	\$45,715,928
Benefits		
Operations & Maintenance	-\$20,000,000	-\$7,059,236
Traffic Safety Benefits	\$70,105,388	\$24,744,534
Property Value Benefits	\$441,976	\$275,241
Remediation Benefits	\$62,755,814	\$39,081,167
Total Benefits	\$113,303,178	\$57,041,703
Net Present Value (NPV)	\$45,066,324	\$11,325,775
Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR)	1.66	1.25

Appendices and other documents referenced in this narrative can be found on the [Englewood Line Trail Grant webpage](#).³⁸

³⁸ Englewood Line Trail Grant webpage. <https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/sites/englewood-trail/home/grant-application.html>