



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
CITY OF CHICAGO



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**MAYOR EMANUEL AND METROPOLITAN WATER RECLAMATION DISTRICT
ANNOUNCE ALBANY PARK TUNNEL PROJECT MOVING FORWARD**

Critical Project Designed to Prevent Flooding Events That Have Occurred Twice in Five Years

Mayor Rahm Emanuel and Metropolitan Water Reclamation District (MWRD) President Kathleen Meany announced today that the City of Chicago will join MWRD to move forward on an extensive tunnel project in Albany Park -- a below-ground construction effort that will dramatically reduce the potential for flooding on the city's northwest side.

"From the time I was a Congressman in this area, until just this week as Mayor, I have seen a community that has dealt with uncertainty as a result of extreme storms," said Mayor Emanuel. "This project can provide security to the residents and businesses of Albany Park by helping ensure that they don't have to deal with this sort of flooding in the future. It will also allow the City to continue the critical work of modernizing our infrastructure and advancing our collective interests."

The Albany Park neighborhood has been particularly prone to flooding due to its proximity to the Chicago River and its geographic location within the Chicago River watershed. Twice in the last five years, this neighborhood has seen extensive flooding, affecting residents, business, and community organizations.

The project is expected to cost between \$45 and \$55 million. The final determination of cost will be made at the conclusion of the design phase. The City of Chicago and the MWRD have already committed a total of \$40 million to the project.



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"It is clear to the MWRD that the Albany Park neighborhood is in need of additional flood water protection," said MWRD President Kathleen Meany. "The District is committed to working as a partner with the City of Chicago to provide that protection."

The project would entail the creation of a tunnel that would extend east under Foster Avenue for a distance of about one mile, from Eugene Park to the North Shore Channel. During normal weather conditions, the River would flow as it normally does.

In a situation where the river reached a flooding stage, the water would overflow into the tunnel instead of into the neighborhood. It would drain directly into the North Shore Channel and avoid massive flooding that the neighborhood saw this past week.

This week's torrential rainstorms resulted in severe flooding in the Albany Park neighborhood and surrounding communities. Floodwaters affected hundreds of homes. More than 600 homes were without natural gas. Several hundred employees from at least seven city agencies (CFD, CPD, DSS, CDOT, OEMC, DWM, DFSS) and three utilities (ComEd, Peoples Gas, Comcast) worked together to restore services in the community.

The first phase of the project will include a full analysis, and then it will move forward into design and execution. The Chicago Department of Transportation is running initial tests on the area; subsequent to the completion of the tests the project will enter the design phase. The final costs of the project will be determined during the design phase. Once the design phase is complete, construction would take approximately 18 months.

"Albany Park is a wonderful community of outstanding, hardworking Chicagoans who have unfortunately been subject to multiple terrible flooding experiences over the years," said Ald. Margaret Laurino, 39th Ward. "I look forward to working with the Mayor and other governmental bodies to rectify this issue so that the residents of Albany Park can enjoy their neighborhood and feel comfortable in their homes."

A project of this magnitude is expected to provide approximately 200 jobs.



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