



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
CITY OF CHICAGO

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 24, 2013

Mayor's Press Office
(312) 744-3334
press@cityofchicago.org

**MAYOR EMANUEL HIGHLIGHTS INVESTMENTS IN ENGLEWOOD AGRICULTURAL
EXPANSION AS A CRITICAL CHICAGO NEIGHBORHOODS NOW PROJECT**

*Growing Home Organic Farm Expansion Will Triple Farm's Produce in a Chicago Food Desert,
Increase Economic Activity in Community*

Standing with the staff and farm stand customers of the Growing Home urban, organic farm, Mayor Rahm Emanuel, today highlighted the new project as one example of the more than \$363 million in public and private investments in greater Englewood. These investments are helping establish one of the nation's largest urban agricultural districts, expanding industrial and housing opportunities, and coordinating open space development throughout the community. The public and private investments in Englewood will lead to thousands of new jobs in construction, food production, transportation, and other industries.

"The purpose of Chicago Neighborhoods Now investments is to bring the public and private sectors together to help targeted neighborhoods across the city achieve their potential," Mayor Emanuel said. "By investing in the expansion of community projects like Growing Home, we are making more strategic use of Englewood's assets and proving that when the city, public sector and neighborhood residents come together, there is no limit to what we can accomplish."

For example, Growing Home and the City worked together to utilize city-owned vacant lots to expand to 1.5 acres. Growing Home is also quadrupling its workforce training initiatives to 80 people per year and tripling its produce output to 40,000 pounds of produce per year, much of which will be sold to local residents.

"The growth of urban agriculture in Englewood and throughout Chicago means more fresh food, but it also means more workforce training, more income for participants, and more productive uses for vacant land," said Harry Rhodes, Growing Home executive director.



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
CITY OF CHICAGO

Growing Home is also participating in a recently announced farmer incubation network that is helping to train individuals for the urban farms of tomorrow. More than 40 acres of land are envisioned for agriculture-related uses in Englewood, primarily along the “Englewood Line,” a three-mile-long abandoned railroad viaduct adjacent to 59th Street that’s being planned as both a linear park and the spine of the Englewood agriculture district.

Overall, the Growing Home project is one of multiple productive uses that are leveraging the approximately 2,500 City-owned vacant lots in Englewood. Other City-owned land, is being planned for new housing, retail, recreational, and industrial opportunities, primarily through the Department of Housing and Economic Development’s (DHED) forthcoming “Green Healthy Neighborhoods” plan, and through the cooperation of community based agencies like Neighborhood Housing Services, the NeighborSpace land trust, and the *Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC)*.

Norfolk Southern railroad, for example, is purchasing more than 100 City-owned lots to double the size of its 47th Street intermodal facility, which will create more than 300 permanent jobs for the community. The \$285 million project is expected to start later this year, followed by additional industrial investments that will enhance the area’s viability for distribution and warehousing.

The \$23.5 million Hope Manor II apartments will provide 73 units of affordable veterans’ apartments after it opens next year on 25 parcels of formerly City-owned land. Also supported by \$1.9 million loan and \$16.7 million in tax credit equity from the City, the 2.3-acre Volunteers of America project is scheduled to break ground Thursday, April 25th, at 6000 S. Halsted Street.

The City’s Micro Market Recovery Program, which helps to stabilize neighborhoods impacted by the foreclosure crises, is also active in Englewood. In the last 18 months, the program has allocated \$2.7 million in public funds to acquire and rehabilitate more than 100 local homes.

Other recent and planned public investments include improvements to Lindblom High School Career Academy; renovations to Holmes and Henderson elementary schools; the creation of a protected bike lane along three miles of Damen Avenue; and new mixed-use development at 63rd and Halsted streets.

The Chicago Neighborhoods Now initiative includes Englewood, Pullman, Rogers Park, Uptown, Little Village, Bronzeville, and the Eisenhower Corridor. These areas were



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
CITY OF CHICAGO

identified by City departments and sister agencies that convened together to discuss how past, current, and future projects can foster quality-of-life synergies for area residents and businesses.

###