



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



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**MAYOR LIGHTFOOT ANNOUNCES SEVEN WINNERS OF CHICAGO WORKS  
COMMUNITY CHALLENGE**

*Seven out of five hundred submissions were selected and will receive up to \$1.5M each  
for infrastructure improvements*

**CHICAGO** – Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot announced today more than \$10 million in infrastructure improvements selected through the Chicago Works Community Challenge. These projects will reinforce the roles of seven public facilities as neighborhood anchors throughout the city.

Mayor Lightfoot launched the initiative in May 2021 to give Chicago residents an opportunity to tell the City what public investments they wanted to see prioritized in their neighborhoods. The winning projects, valued up to \$1.5 million each, will improve four Chicago Park District (CPD) facilities, a pair of Chicago Public Schools (CPS) facilities, and a Chicago Public Library (CPL) branch.

“As City leaders, one of the most impactful actions we can take is giving our residents the resources they need to transform their own neighborhoods,” said Mayor Lightfoot. “This is one of the driving principles behind the Chicago Works Community Challenge, which demonstrates our commitment to empowering residents and improving the facilities they rely on every single day. I want to thank everyone who submitted a proposal for review, extend a huge congratulations to our winners, and am beyond excited to see their projects come to fruition in the very near future.”

The Chicago Works Community Challenge invited neighborhood stakeholders to submit ideas for improvements to public parks, schools, libraries, and City-owned residential lots. The City received nearly 500 submissions through an online application process last summer. A City of Chicago selection committee evaluated the applications and short-listed 21 projects for consideration. The semi-finalists were presented for public review during regional planning meetings in the fall that included more than 1,000 attendees.



“Children and families look to parks daily for recreation and enrichment opportunities, therefore the investments we make in these spaces have a real impact on the lives of neighboring residents,” said Chicago Park District Interim General Superintendent Rosa Escareño. “We are excited to bring these community-driven investments to our parks through the Chicago Works Community Challenge. Thanks to the vision and generosity of Mayor Lightfoot, we can realize these important park projects and enhance recreation opportunities in their respective neighborhoods.”

The evaluation committee selected the winning projects this winter based on project viability, facility need, neighborhood activation, and the input of nearly 7,500 survey respondents.

The winning proposals, by region, include:

**Matthew Gallistel Language Academy, 10347 S. Ewing Ave.**

*Far South*

Submitted by Rogelio Lopez, a school counselor at Gallistel Language Academy, the project will modernize an antiquated playground with contemporary climbing equipment, landscaping, and areas for active and passive recreation. The work will also include the creation of new spaces for outdoor instruction and community socialization.

**Rainbow Beach Park, 3111 E. 77<sup>th</sup> St.**

*Southeast*

Submitted by Carolyn Vazquez, a racquetball advocate and volunteer coach, the project will repair an outdoor handball and racquetball complex with new play surfaces, seating areas, and landscaping. The work is also expected to include clubhouse improvements involving the building roof, plumbing, windows, ADA-accessible entrances, and artwork.

**Claremont STEM Academy Playground, 2300 W. 64<sup>th</sup> St.**

*Southwest*

Submitted by Layla Treuhaft-Ali, a middle school teacher at Claremont Academy, the project will transform the school’s unimproved lawn spaces with a cohesive playground that provides structure for recreation for students and neighbors, along with opportunities for outdoor learning.

**Columbus Park, 500 S. Central Ave.**

*West*

Submitted by Samantha Jordan, an Austin resident and artist, the multi-dimensional proposed enhancements include an outdoor stage for live performances and



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movies; upgrades to existing basketball and tennis courts; select landscaping and accessibility improvements; and improvements to natural spaces that foster social interaction.

**Warren Park, 6601 N. Western Ave.**

*North*

Submitted by Pamela Stauffer on behalf of the Warren Park Advisory Council, the project includes site improvements for activities such as cricket, horseshoes, bocce, and pickleball to foster multi-generational engagement and healthy lifestyles.

**Kelvyn Park, 4438 W. Wrightwood Ave.**

*Northwest*

Submitted by Casey Guerra on behalf of the Kelvyn Park Advisory Council, the project will repair the roof of the park fieldhouse and auditorium and make long-needed building upgrades, including ADA accessibility.

**Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Library, 3436 S. King Dr.**

*Central*

Submitted by Janell Nelson, a Douglas/Bronzeville neighborhood parent, the project will renovate the library's children's section to foster family-based learning and engagement. The work is expected to include greater emphasis on Dr. King's legacy in Chicago, as well as the beautification of select interior and exterior public spaces to help build stronger community relations.

Project scopes and designs are expected to be finalized and approved by the respective agencies later this year, with work expected to start in late 2022 or early 2023.

The 14 runners-up projects will be considered for implementation as funding becomes available.

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