

August 15, 2024

RE: Englewood Nature Trail and Agro Eco Planning District

Submitted by: Sustainable Englewood Initiatives (SEI)

Good morning, Chairwoman Laura Flores, Vice Chairman Andre Brumfield, fellow Commissioners, Alderman and department staff.

Sustainable Englewood Initiatives (SEI) is writing to support the Presentation before the Chicago Plan Commission (CPC) to advance initial design concepts for the Englewood Nature Trail, along West 59th Street.

SEI is a local advocacy organization dedicated to introducing environmental justice, cultural and human relations, transportation planning, community benefit strategies, civic engagement practices and infrastructure programming.

We believe the scheduled Englewood Nature Trail, an abandoned 1.7 mile elevated railroad track along West 58th Street will become a premier model for land development in disadvantaged communities. The combined work of Grow Greater Englewood, Chicago Department of Planning and Development, Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT), Botanical Gardens, Gensler, SmithGroup and local stakeholders throughout the region helped to bring on line this significantly important, agricultural driven and culturally enriched plan.

Initiated in the spring of 2021 (following the FY 2013 Norfolk Southern Railroad Expansion Ordinance and FY 2018 Land transfer of Elevated Railroad Track ordinance) the plan is based on eight guiding principles: 'Community First;' 'Strength;' 'Health and Security;' 'Stabilize;' 'Pathways to Work and Wealth;' 'Farming as a Political Act;' 'Art rooted in Local Culture;' and 'Design for the Community.' The plan includes unique goals, objectives, and zoning recommendations for six land use categories; namely, 'Public Parks,' 'Agricultural Sites,' 'Neighborhood Commercial Centers,' 'Small and Local Production,' 'Residential,' and 'Mixed-Use Development.

We very much support this Agro- Eco Planning District design concept and request the Commission's support. It's our hope the community will garner additional municipal support through environment remediation, Green infrastructure investment, Complete Streets Programming along Halsted Street, Blvd District Enhancements, Renovation of Historic Racine Station, ADA Compliance modeling and Climate Pollution Reduction Programming to Homes, Industry and Buildings.

In addition, we request the city to add the following names to the community participation list of stakeholders, they are Lonnetta Jones, Laura MiSweet and John Paul Jones.

If any questions arise, please feel free to contact me at sustainableenglewoodin@gmail.com.

Thank you,

John Paul Jones

John Paul Jones
President
Sustainable Englewood Initiatives
And
Community Coordinator
Norfolk Southern Intermodal Advisory Committee

cc: Englewood Elected Officials
SEI Board Members
Grow Greater Englewood
Teamwork Englewood