

April 13, 2023

Dear CMAP Committee on CMAQ-TAP Local Planning:

Grow Greater Englewood (GGE) is a 501 (c)(3) social enterprise that works with residents and developers to create sustainable local food economies, green businesses, and land sovereignty to empower residents to create wellness and wealth. GGE manages 7 programs including the Englewood Nature Trail and Englewood Agro-Eco District. The Trail will anchor the Agro-Eco District and serve as a connector between Englewood's growing network of farms and foster local food access, community health and wellness, and business and job development.

Today, we wish to thank the CMAQ-TAP Selection Committee and the Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT) for sponsoring the Englewood Nature Trail in its FY 2024-2027 Program (\$45 million FY 2026). It is indeed wise to continue the drive to fully fund the Nature Trail. Clearly, the district is experiencing severe levels of air and soil pollution that requires action from municipal agencies and responsible industries to mitigate public harms with a green solution. The Nature Trail will allow the community to build out its green infrastructure, expand its tree canopy, reduce vehicle use, and create a walker/biker venue to introduce clean and green future programming.

We believe this positive work should be fast-tracked and that the program request should occur in FY 2025 instead of FY 2026. If you recall, the Federal RAISE grant request was higher than \$20 million. We must anticipate funding and program priority shifts due to the Federal election season and cost containment matters. We do not want our regional project shortchanged!

To this end, thank you for this opportunity to share with you both our excitement and cautionary note on fully funding the Nature Trail and its Agro-Eco District.

Thank you and please feel free to contact me via email at laseals@growgreater.org if you have any questions.

Very truly yours,



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