

Public comment(s) for the April 12, 2023 CMAP Board Meeting

Received: April 11, 2023 @ 10:23 a.m.

From: John Paul Jones on behalf of L. Anton Seals, Jr. for Grow Greater Englewood

Re: Englewood Nature Trail and the Agro-Eco District

Good morning, CMAP Board and Staff:

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, GGE thanks both the Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT) and CMAP for their zeal to advance and secure \$3 million in ITEP funding for the Englewood Nature Trail project. Introducing alternative transportation projects like the Nature Trail, offers new ways to repurpose entire districts through strategic investment, collaborative planning, and purposeful engagement.

Currently, the project cost is \$72 million (CMAP is reporting \$65 million). It is important that we move toward a shared agreement on capital cost, public finance, environmental remediation, planning modules and ADA compliance. We see the Englewood Nature Trail project as a National Model, and it would be important for the region to leverage the project's full potential.

Furthermore, GGE appreciates CMAP's arrangement with the University of Illinois at Chicago, College of Urban Planning and Public Affairs (UIC) to research tax exemptions and incentive classifications and abatements via Cook County Property Tax Working Group 23-125. GGE foresees significant value in this project for it will support our Community Compact Framework Plan to initiate an Anti-Displacement strategy for Agro-Eco District - Nature Trail. The three-year project will deeply help the community determine how best to proceed to protect and assist property owners, while simultaneously streamlining and reforming municipal taxation.

To this end, we look forward to exchanging ideas and information with CMAP in a positive and mutually beneficial partnership to build out the Englewood 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,

L. Anton Seals Jr.
Lead Steward
Grow Greater Englewood