



Robbins Heritage Park and Midlothian Creek Restoration Project

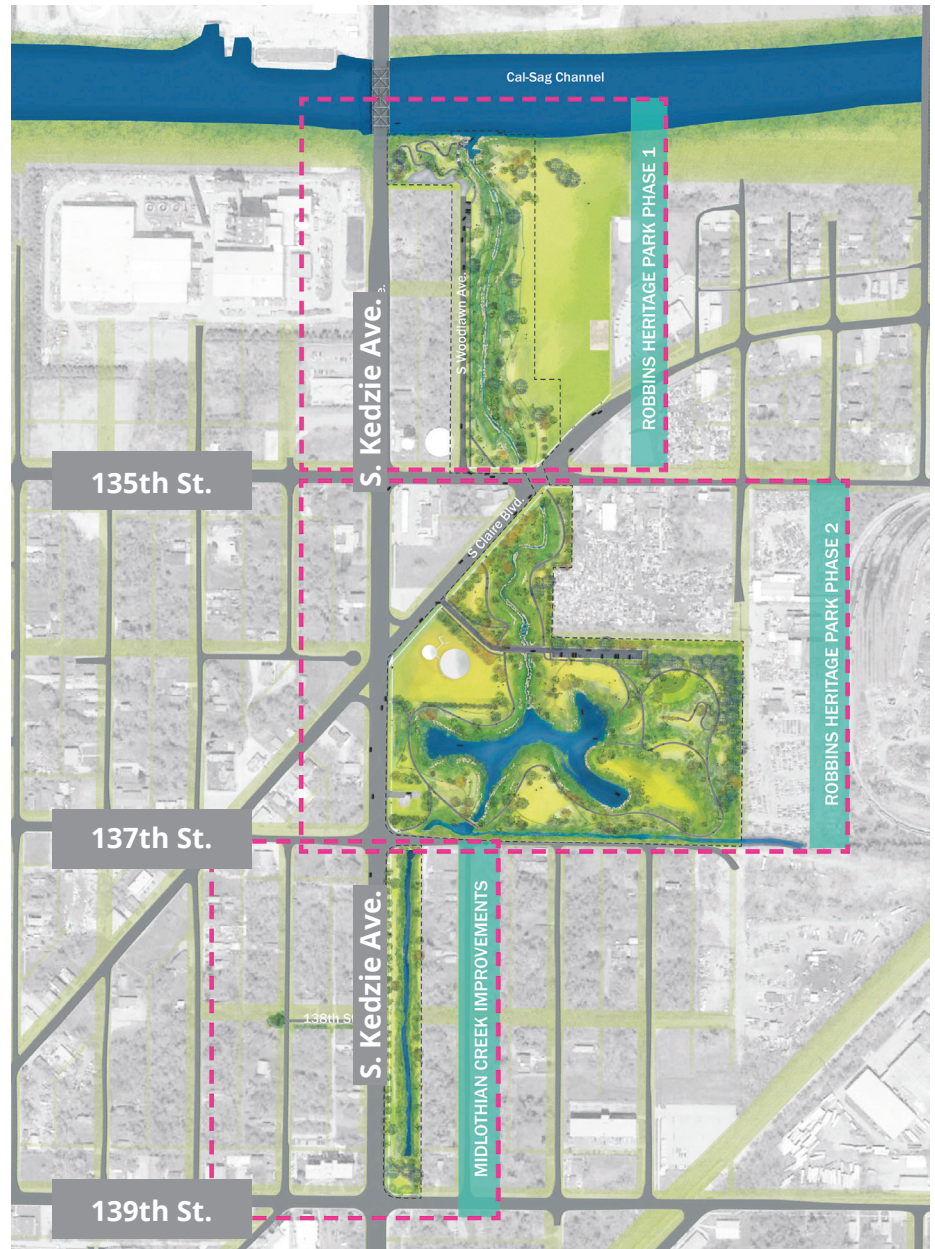
Project Overview

The MWRD is working with the village of Robbins and other partners to help mitigate local flooding, restore Midlothian Creek and create recreational and economic development opportunities to strengthen and revitalize Robbins. The Robbins Heritage Park and Midlothian Creek Restoration Project will help address overbank flooding through a new stormwater park and pond, along with improvements to Midlothian Creek and an overflow channel that connects to the Cal-Sag Channel. The park stems from the MWRD’s 2014 plan to address flooding along the creek. From that initial work, a series of partnerships have led to new opportunities of growth and community benefits for Robbins.

Project Description

The project is being completed in two phases. Stormwater improvements will extend along Midlothian Creek and east of Kedzie Avenue from 139th Street on the south to the Cal-Sag Channel on the north. The first phase of the project involved establishing a diversion channel that will connect a control flow stormwater pond to the Cal-Sag Channel. The MWRD has constructed a culvert under 135th Street and three drop structures to control flow. Stone armoring has been installed along the diversion channel waterline.

During construction of the diversion channel, work will begin on the second phase, which includes the stormwater park and pond and conveyance improvements along Midlothian Creek. The MWRD will stabilize 1,990 linear feet of streambank along Midlothian Creek, controlling erosion by cutting back both banks and providing a stable slope that features native plants appropriate to the moisture and soil conditions. The 18-acre flood-control pond will be constructed east of Kedzie between 135th and 137th streets and north of Midlothian Creek. The Robbins Heritage Park will allow for a naturalized wet-



land detention area along with channel improvements to resemble a park-like setting in central Robbins. Bioswales will be planted along Spaulding and Sawyer Avenues from 137th to 139th streets, capturing stormwater runoff. A rain garden and bioswales will also be installed in the 138th Street right-of-way

between Saw-yer and Kedzie Avenues to absorb runoff. This will help mitigate flooding and improve water quality by collecting contaminants that formerly could have been released into Midlothian Creek and caused overbank flooding.

The estimated construction cost of the two phases is \$30 million. The MWRD is funding the project with support from Cook County via Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery funds, the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Chi-Cal Rivers Fund.

Project Impact

The Robbins Heritage Park and Midlothian Creek restoration will increase the existing stormwater drainage system from less than a 5-year storm level of protection to a 100-year level of service. As a result, the project will remove approximately 140 acres from the flood plain, protect 92 structures and remove more than 1,300 parcels from the 100-year floodplain. The project will also bring increased awareness for the watershed, provide critical drainage for an area with no existing stormwater infrastructure, promote green infrastructure and maintenance, im-

prove local water quality and attract further housing, transportation, recreation and economic development opportunities. The project is also expected to improve the Cal-Sag Channel through increased aeration from the diversion channel outfall, while also enhancing public interaction with the waterway through new waterfront access and trails for biking and hiking among native prairie and wetland plantings.

The MWRD's vision for Robbins received an award from the American Planning Association Illinois Chapter, a grant from the Chicago Community Trust and support from the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning and UIC College of Urban Planning and Policy.

Project Timeline

Ground was broken in 2022, with the second phase set to begin in 2024 after the MWRD Board of Commissioners authorized contract advertisement. The project will be completed by 2026.

Partners

Village of Robbins
 Cook County
 United States Department of Housing and Urban Development
 Illinois Environmental Protection Agency
 National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
 Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning
 Chicago Community Trust
 Regional Transportation Authority
 UIC College of Urban Planning and Policy
 Waterwell
 OAI
 Calumet Collaborative
 CNT Rain Ready
 Morton Arboretum
 F.H. Paschen, S.N. Nielsen & Associates
 Donohue & Associates
 Skidmore, Owings & Merrill
 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers-Chicago District



Planners and engineers hold a workshop to incorporate community residents' vision for the Robbins Heritage Park and Midlothian Creek Restoration Project. Community engagement has unlocked project potential.



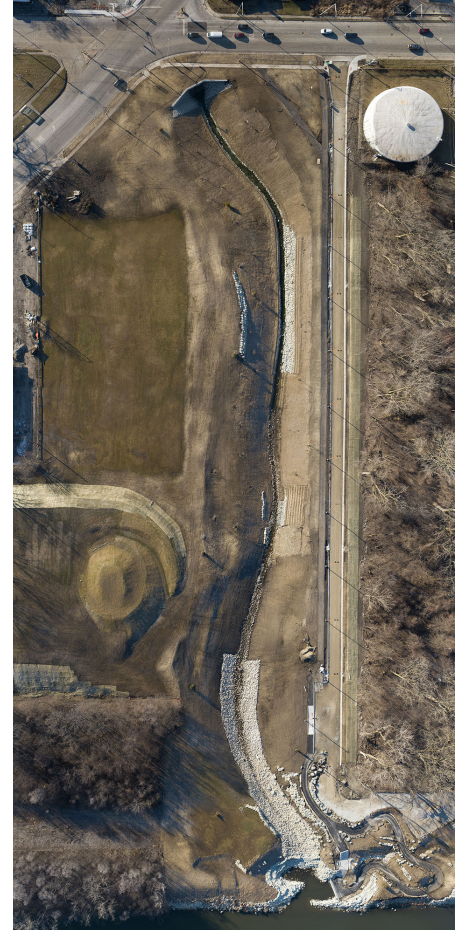
Construction on the Robbins Heritage Park and Midlothian Creek Restoration Project begins with the creation of a diversion channel. The project will significantly increase the drainage capacity in Robbins.



Flow from the new stormwater park and pond is controlled by three drop structures and conveyed through a culvert under 135th Street. The MWRD anticipates additional work south of the street to begin in late 2024, making way for the new park anchored around a naturalized stormwater storage pond. This pond will provide native habitats for wildlife and a place to fish and gather surrounded by other potential opportunities for recreation and economic development.



Work on the diversion channel nears completion in spring 2024, connecting flow to the Cal-Sag Channel with stone armoring along the channel waterline, a trail, waterfront access and scenic backdrop. The MWRD is transforming a generally abandoned industrial area and expanding livability with numerous enhancements. The project increases stormwater capacity, mitigates flooding, improves water quality and adds 38 acres of public greenspace with accessibility to parks, natural areas and waterways in Robbins.



In addition to water capacity, the new diversion channel creates additional natural areas with native plants that capture runoff and pollutants, leading to improved water quality in the Cal-Sag Channel.