



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

Press Release

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Mayor Emanuel, Rep. Quigley, MWRD and Ald. Laurino Announce Funding Secured for Albany Park Storm Water Tunnel

Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel, Rep. Mike Quigley, 39th Ward Ald. Margaret Laurino, and officials from the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District (MWRD) announced the city of Chicago has secured the remaining funds needed to build the Albany Park Stormwater Diversion Tunnel through a federal Community Development Block Grant. The stormwater diversion tunnel will reduce the danger of floods that have plagued the northwest side neighborhood in recent years. Construction on the mile long tunnel to divert storm water from the North Branch of the Chicago River is to break ground this summer.

“This is another essential investment we can make today to reduce the risk of flooding and improve the quality of life in our neighborhoods for tomorrow,” said Mayor Emanuel. “Whether it is repaving our streets, rebuilding our bridges, or responding to the threat of flooding, we will continue working together to give every neighborhood the 21st century infrastructure they deserve.”

Since 2008, Albany Park has experienced two major floods that have affected hundreds of homes in the northwest side community. After the last round of serious flooding in April 2013, Mayor Emanuel pledged to work with the MWRD to address the problem and he directed Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT) to move forward with design and engineering of a drainage tunnel.

“Two storms of the century in just three years damaged homes and businesses in Albany Park. I’ve spoken with constituents whose homes and businesses were damaged, and I walked the streets that were turned to rivers from storm waters. Many of their homes and businesses could be protected with modern infrastructure and flood mitigation projects like the one we are announcing here today,” said Rep. Quigley. “On the Appropriations Committee, I will continue to work to bring funding for proj-



In the photo (L-R): 39th Ward Alderman Marge Laurino, Congressman Mike Quigley, 40th Ward Alderman Patrick J. O’Connor, Mayor Rahm Emanuel, MWRD Commissioners Cynthia Santos and Kari Steele, and Chicago Dept. of Transportation Commissioner Rebekah Scheinfeld during a press conference to announce that the city of Chicago has secured the remaining funds needed to build a storm water tunnel in Albany Park through a federal Community Development Block Grant.

ects like this back to the Northwest side and ensure that we have peace of mind that our homes and businesses are better protected from damaging and costly flooding.”

The Mayor also announced an additional \$10 million is available to help residents who suffered damage from the April 2013 flood. Later this year, residents will be able to apply for funds to compensate them for unreimbursed costs associated with flood damage.

“I applaud the mayor for moving forward so quickly on this complex project,” said Alderman Laurino. “The people of Albany Park deserve a long term solution to the reoccurring destruction of flooding. This tunnel will provide the needed relief for our community.” (continued)

Established in 1889, the MWRD (www.mwr.org) is an award-winning, special purpose government agency responsible for wastewater treatment and stormwater management in Cook County, Illinois.



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In the photo: MWRD Commissioner Cynthia Santos speaks to reporters during a press announcement pertaining to the Albany Park project.

The diversion tunnel will start in Eugene Park and extend for approximately one mile under Foster Ave. to the North Shore Channel. The tunnel will divert water during times of heavy rains, and will not affect the river's water level in normal times.



In the photo: A map depicts the proposed Albany Park Stormwater Diversion Tunnel.

"Flooding is the number one concern for citizens in Cook County," said MWRD President Mariyana Spyropoulos.



In the photo: (L-R) Congressman Mike Quigley discusses the proposed Albany Park Stormwater Diversion Tunnel project with Commissioners Cynthia Santos and Kari Steele.

"Through public partnerships like this one, we can work together to solve these problems for our communities. Mayor Emanuel shares these concerns regarding flooding and provides a great example of the kind of leadership we need to address this critical issue. The District will continue working to build a resilient Chicago that can withstand the new weather patterns we are experiencing today."

The drainage tunnel is expected to cost between \$45 and \$55 million, and the final determination on cost will be made at the conclusion of the design phase. The City of Chicago and MWRD have already committed \$40 million to the project, and the new federal Community Development Block Grant will complete the funding.

"At Mayor Emanuel's direction, CDOT made the Albany Park storm water tunnel a high priority project, and we have moved quickly to finish the design," CDOT Commissioner Rebekah Scheinfeld said. "We will move forward this summer with construction of this storm water diversion project, which will deliver relief from the threat of flooding that Albany Park has had to live with for far too long."

CDOT will seek bids on the project this spring. Construction is expected to begin this summer and be completed in less than two years.

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