



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

# Press Release

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For immediate release  
May 23, 2016

## Mayor Emanuel, President Mariyana Spyropoulos Help Break Ground For Albany Park Stormwater Diversion Tunnel

***Tunnel Will Have Capacity to Divert 2,300 Cubic Feet of Water Per Second, Preventing Types of Floods that Devastated Neighborhood Twice in Recent Years***

Mayor Rahm Emanuel was joined yesterday by Senator Dick Durbin, Alderman Margaret Laurino (39th Ward), Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) President Mariyana Spyropoulos and other partners in breaking ground for the construction of a new Stormwater Diversion Tunnel to relieve the threat of catastrophic flooding in Albany Park. The joint Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT)/MWRD project will take two years to construct a tunnel 150 feet below ground level to divert stormwater about 1.4 miles from the North Branch of the Chicago River to the North Shore Channel.

“No resident of the City of Chicago should have to live in fear of the type of devastating floods that Albany Park residents have lived through twice in recent years,” Mayor Emanuel said. “A project of this magnitude takes teamwork and we

are very pleased to work with our partners at the federal, state and local level to get this work under way and deliver the 21st Century infrastructure that the residents of this neighborhood need and deserve.”

Since 2008, Albany Park has experienced two major floods that have affected hundreds of homes in the northwest side community along the North Branch of the Chicago River. After the last round of serious flooding in April 2013, Mayor Emanuel pledged the city would address the problem in a comprehensive way and directed CDOT to move forward with design and engineering of a drainage tunnel. The approximately \$70 million project will produce an estimated 250 construction jobs.

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## Mayor Emanuel, President Mariyana Spyropoulos Help Break Ground For Albany Park Stormwater Diversion Tunnel *(continued)*

The 18-foot diameter tunnel will have an intake shaft at a bend in the river in Eugene Field Park just east of Pulaski Road. It will kick into operation before the water level reaches flood stage and will divert a flow of 2,300 cubic feet of water per second, bypassing Albany Park and emptying at an outlet shaft at River Park just south of Foster Avenue into the North Shore Channel. The tunnel will not have an adverse impact upstream or downstream or on wildlife. The project cost is being funded through a combination of federal, state and local funds. In addition to the 39th Ward, the project also affects the 33rd Ward, represented by Alderman Deborah Mell, and the 40th Ward, represented by Alderman Patrick O'Connor.

"After seeing firsthand the devastation caused by flooding in Albany Park, it's gratifying to help break ground on a long-term solution that will prevent future problems," said Sen. Durbin. "It seems that 100 year floods are now happening every few years – something with which the residents of this neighborhood are all too familiar. This project is the product of federal, state, and local groups working together, and I look forward to the peace of mind its completion will provide for the residents of Albany Park and North Park."

"Our neighbors in Albany Park and Lincoln Square deserve the peace of mind that will be the final result of this innovative and creative solution to severe flooding," said Congressman Mike Quigley.

"Building this tunnel allows our residents to continue enjoying this beautiful parkland and still have peace of mind about the safety of their neighborhood," Alderman Laurino said. "City departments will continue to monitor and respond to potential flooding while the tunnel is being constructed."

"Working collaboratively to solve neighborhood problems like this one in Albany Park is what government partnerships are all about," said Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago Board of Commissioners President Mariyana Spyropoulos. "We are committed to the success of this project."

"The Albany Park Stormwater Diversion Tunnel is a high priority project for CDOT and we are looking forward to completing construction as quickly as possible and delivering

relief from the fear of flooding for residents of the area," CDOT First Deputy Commissioner Randy Conner said. "In the short term, CDOT has been working hard to put temporary barriers in place that are intended to protect the neighborhood from potential floods until the project is complete."

Work on the project will be visible at two ground-level locations: the inlet shaft off Foster east of Pulaski Rd and at the outlet shaft in River Park on the east side of the North Shore Channel.

Following is the project timeline:

**May and June:** mobilize for construction—park closures and relocation of the walking/biking path.

**July – December:** Excavation and construction of the concrete inlet and outlet shafts; will require use of explosives to remove bedrock, from August through October at the outlet shaft and November through December at the inlet shaft. Community informational meetings will be held before blasting occurs; explosives will be used once per day during weekday, daytime hours, approximately every other day; properties within 500 feet will be surveyed and monitored for impacts from vibrations.

**December – July 2017:** Tunnel boring and construction using an advanced tunnel-boring machine; this will not be noticeable at ground level.

**May 2016 – December 2017:** Inlet and outlet construction

**December 2017 – May 2018:** Site work and restoration

**May 2018:** Project completion and demobilization of construction sites; River Park will re-open with new ball fields in place.

Improvements at Eugene Field Park at the western end of the tunnel include landscaping, new trees, a new walkway, benches and a water fountain.

River Park, at the east end of the project, will be significantly improved. The City is building a new regulation size baseball field and diamond, complete with backstop fence, batter cage, and also a soccer field. There will also be landscaping and trees planted at River Park.



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### Recovering Resources, Transforming Water

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