



# GENERATING CRITICAL GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE DATA ON CHICAGO'S SOUTHSIDE

delta institute



Delta Institute is working with community partners to install and monitor the impacts and benefits of nature-based Green Infrastructure projects in the BIPOC-majority Chicago neighborhoods of Washington Park, Woodlawn, and South Shore in concert with Emerald South's Terra Firma project to develop replicable resources for communities throughout the region. Our goal is to streamline green infrastructure implementation, maintenance, and assessment strategy.

## Why our work is needed today

Delta Institute (Delta) knows from our experience working in communities throughout the Midwest and Great Lakes Basin that climate and environmental problems are most acute in areas living with legacy quality-of-life issues and historical disinvestment. The Chicago neighborhoods of Washington Park, Woodlawn, and South Shore experience chronic flood events that are made worse by more frequent climate-impacted precipitation and failing stormwater infrastructure. These neighborhoods continue to lose tree canopy coverage while hundreds of properties sit vacant and underutilized. Underlying all of this is an ongoing response to systemic injustices that extracted wealth, prevented economic development, and limited important resources and infrastructure in these neighborhoods.

Along with other investment, Green Infrastructure (GI) can help communities manage their stormwater runoff, improve air and water quality, increase property values, and build social cohesion but a lack of implementation guidance and critical data often prevents it from being installed. Easily accessible data and information needs to be generated and distributed to demonstrate to community groups, elected officials, and municipal agencies that GI is a viable solution.

## Brief Overview of What We're Doing

Delta's work with our community partners—most notably the [Emerald South Economic Development Collaborative](#)—to install and monitor the impacts of nature-based Green Infrastructure projects in the Chicago neighborhoods of Washington Park, Woodlawn,

and South Shore will offer learnings, best practices, and results with other stakeholders and practitioners to inform GI installation in other Chicago neighborhoods and throughout the broader Midwest. Following GI installations, Delta will use lessons learned to create a suite of resources to be utilized by groups in disinvested communities to create a streamlined GI implementation, maintenance, and assessment strategy.

The first phase of this project includes deep involvement with community partners, neighborhood groups, and residents to ensure community priorities are reflected in the final design of the sites. Authentic and inclusive community involvement will be consistently incorporated into all quality-of-life and environmental planning.

### Our Project's Impact

- Implement at least four GI projects on community-prioritized properties.
- Assess real-world effectiveness of different nature-based GI solutions compared to modeled estimates.
- Utilize existing and new monitoring technologies to assess effectiveness.
- Streamline planning and implementation to lower costs, making GI a more affordable and viable option for EJ communities to consider as part of their long-term quality of life planning.

### Our partners and collaborators

We at Delta Institute thank those at the Walder Foundation for selecting us to manage this important project. We would also like to thank our project partners for contributing their thoughts and acumen to our work, including Emerald South, MPC, numerous community organizations, residents, and many others.

### More about who we are

Delta Institute collaborates with communities to solve complex environmental challenges throughout the Midwest. This project is part of Delta's Nature-Based Climate Solutions initiative, which assists municipalities by integrating natural climate solutions and GI to reduce climate change impacts by capturing **100 million stormwater gallons** and leveraging **\$100 million in municipal GI investment**. We focus on communities that are disproportionately affected by flooding and climate change, to collaboratively improve their environmental indicators, mitigate local impacts of climate change, and strengthen their neighborhoods' resilience.

Please learn more about this project by visiting [delta-institute.org/project/chicago-gi-data](https://delta-institute.org/project/chicago-gi-data).

**We work every day to create a more resilient region for all our Midwestern family, friends, and neighbors. Please join our efforts today.**



**Delta Institute collaborates with communities to solve complex environmental challenges throughout the Midwest.**

35 E Wacker Dr Ste 1760 | Chicago, IL 60601 | [delta-institute.org](https://delta-institute.org) | 312-554-0900



DeltaGreatLakes



delta-institute



YouTube

Delta Institute



Delta Institute is a 501c3 nonprofit with a 2023 Platinum Seal of Transparency from GuideStar and a Four-Star Rating from Charity Navigator for our strong financial health and accountability.