



SOUTH SHORE COMMUNITY SHORELINE RESILIENCE PLANNING

Delta Institute is working with local groups and public agencies to complete a community-led resiliency plan backed by science and centered on shoreline infrastructure implementation for the South Shore neighborhood of Chicago. For years this community has been impacted by extreme weather and Lake Michigan events, and a comprehensive community planning process is essential to ensuring a resilient and healthy future for South Shore.

Why our work is needed today

In Chicago, and South Shore specifically, climate change is resulting in more intense rain events and [dramatic fluctuations in Lake Michigan water levels](#) that damage infrastructure and accelerate erosion. Disproportionate consequences in South Shore are partially due to historical efforts limiting community resources and influence to change environmental and economic challenges. Additionally, the Lake Michigan shoreline is interrupted at multiple points in South Shore, impacting important continuity for natural habitats, parkland, and bike/ped pathways.

Efforts to address the South Shore neighborhood's shoreline problems date back to the 1970s. These efforts, however, have

lacked a unified, collaborative, and inclusive planning process, resulting in plans that do not account for community priorities and needs. Despite City, State and Federal planning efforts, a unifying community-led resiliency plan does not exist. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and City of Chicago are currently beginning [evaluation of lakefront infrastructure and resiliency within the City](#) – as well as [other Lake Michigan communities](#). These processes will investigate coastal storm risk and potentially recommend projects for implementation. These efforts will need to be heavily informed by community priorities and needs, making an in-depth community engagement and planning process to identify preferred strategies and infrastructure in South Shore more important now than ever.

Brief Overview of What We're Doing

Delta Institute is partnering with local groups and relevant public agencies to complete a community-led resiliency plan for South Shore. Delta is convening community members and technical experts to guide the planning process and provide input on strategies and infrastructure that should be implemented to help mitigate coastal erosion and flooding impacts. Delta will obtain this input via a Community Advisory Council (CAC), public surveys and workshops, face-to-face discussions with community members at local events, and data-sharing and analysis with relevant agencies.

The overall objectives of this project are to create an outreach, education, and engagement process with community stakeholders responsible for and/or impacted by Lake Michigan coastal erosion and flooding that identifies a clear path forward to a more resilient future and includes nature-based and hybrid infrastructure that provides multiple environmental, social and economic benefits. The plan will review past and present plans, summarize community priorities, identify actionable strategies and projects, provide conceptual designs, and detail opportunities for funding and investment that will help move strategies and projects forward.

Our priority is to create an actionable strategy and to align with the many planning and engagement processes without being redundant or duplicative. Efforts will include and dovetail with the City of Chicago's [South Shore Corridor study](#), the [South Shore Quality of Life](#)

[Plan](#), and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' [General Reevaluation Report](#) and [Great Lakes Coastal Resiliency Study](#).

Our partners and collaborators

We at Delta Institute thank those at the Illinois Department of Natural Resources for selecting us to manage this important project. We would also like to thank our many project partners, including Sierra Club - Illinois Chapter, a local resident stakeholder group, state agency representatives, aldermanic representatives, along with many community organizations for contributing their thoughts and acumen.

More about who we are

Delta Institute collaborates with communities to solve complex environmental challenges throughout the Midwest. This project is part of our Sustainability and Support Services initiative, which responds to the needs of our partners and to what they define as being the most important goal, activity, project, or approach to improving their local environmental and economic outcomes. We forecast that by 2025 Delta will work with more than **250 partner communities** while securing **\$40 million in external investment** and creating **100 practical tools, resources, strategies, and municipal/county-level plans**.

Please learn more about this project by visiting delta-institute.org/project/south-shore-resilience. We would love to hear from you.

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



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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.