

Exhibit A – Executive Summary

Cook County, Illinois

ExhibitAExecutiveSummary.pdf



Cook County is pleased to submit this Phase 2 proposal which sets forth a comprehensive resilience-focused solution that will enhance disaster recovery, facilitate economic and community revitalization, promote social cohesion, better support vulnerable populations, and address the risks and vulnerabilities outlined in the County's Phase 1 submission from March, 2015.¹ The strategies outlined in this Phase 2 proposal focus on a south suburban demonstration area - including the municipalities of Blue Island, Calumet City, Calumet Park, Dolton, Riverdale, and Robbins - but are designed with effective countywide and regional replication in mind.

Cook County is part of the Northeastern Illinois Resilience Partnership's (the Partnership) unprecedented regional effort to build resilience. This multi-jurisdictional, bipartisan Partnership - led by Cook County, City of Chicago, DuPage County, and the State of Illinois, in coordination with the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) - formed in response to the severe, repetitive, and chronic effects of flooding. National resilience is largely dependent on that of northeastern Illinois, located between the Great Lakes and Mississippi River watersheds and steward of 84 percent of the country's freshwater volume. The region's strengths are its geography and natural assets. It is uniquely poised to bridge the divide across watersheds, grounded in local resilience-building. While the region does not have well-known mega-storms, even small storms pose significant risk and there is a growing frequency of high intensity storm events, resulting in flooding and polluted runoff. The resulting economic, environmental, and social toll of this flooding and other hazards stems from vulnerabilities across social, natural, and built systems and disproportionately impacts low- and moderate income communities and vulnerable households who typically have less capacity both financially and practically to contend with disasters.

¹ Available at

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/84qpa25ikpnlmth/AABWXnmjZhsMjB4QNAQjHmgla?dl=0>

Cook County is well positioned to implement local resilience-building strategies and drive regionwide efforts that build upon existing partnerships and enhance current initiatives. The County is at the heart of the Chicago region, comprising more than half of its population, jobs, and businesses. It is the second most populous county in the United States, a regional and national transit hub, and anchors the nation's third largest metropolitan economy with 2.6 million jobs and \$308 billion in annual output.² Despite its many assets, the County also has a disproportionate share of vulnerabilities, regionally and nationally. Industrial decline and shrinking job opportunities coupled with the more recent foreclosure crisis have contributed to the increasing suburbanization of poverty, particularly in the south suburbs.³ The County has also experienced multiple natural hazard events over the last few decades and currently leads the nation in disaster fatalities.⁴

Cook County's replicable strategic local approach - inclusive of a portfolio of four programs and seven projects - builds physical, individual, and governmental capacity to enhance resilience in the demonstration area. It incorporates extensive stakeholder and public input, aligns with the County's *Planning for Progress* strategic plan, and embodies Board President Toni Preckwinkle's priority focus on economic development to revitalize the south suburbs. This approach is anchored by four overarching programs. First, in partnership with CMAP and the South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association (SSMMA), a resilience-enhancing community planning program will be implemented. The County will also collaborate with Neighborhood Housing Services of Chicago (NHS) to implement a Residential Resilience Program that installs flood-resistant and resilient features in eligible single-family homes. A workforce development program, in partnership with

² <http://blog.cookcountyil.gov/economicdevelopment/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Appendix-B-Partnering-for-Prosperty.pdf>

³ <http://confrontingsuburbanpoverty.org/the-communities/south-cook-co-chicago/>

⁴ Spatial Hazards Events and Losses Database for the U.S. -- <http://hvri.geog.sc.edu/SHELDUS/>

OAI, Inc. will train local residents for careers in manufacturing and green infrastructure management. Lastly, an education program will be deployed in partnership with the Chicago Botanic Garden to educate communities and residents regarding resilience resources. Seven targeted housing and infrastructure projects serve as replicable models of resilient approaches. The County will partner with the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District (MWRD) and SSMMA to develop and implement green and gray infrastructure solutions through two “complete communities” projects focusing on commercial, industrial, and residential property, parkland, and the public right-of-way, as well as two “green streets” projects. In collaboration with Mecca Companies, Inc. and Related Companies, the County will develop two resilient, affordable housing projects. Finally, the County will support completion of the multi-use Cal-Sag Trail, acting as connective social tissue between these programs and projects towards realization of the County’s broader resilience vision.

Cook County along with the Partnership, and its diverse public, private, and non-profit partners, will continue to advance a regional resilience framework that maintains and improves the quality of life by minimizing exposure, reducing sensitivity, and increasing the built, natural, and social systems adaptive capacity to current and future hazards, stressors, and shocks. This multi-faceted strategic approach, which aims to provide further relief from and future resistance to flooding, will create and expand employment opportunities, facilitate public and private investment, enhance overall economic growth, expand recreational options, promote environmental stewardship, and increase social cohesion. It will foster stronger connections between and within communities and their residents. The full complement of resilient programs and projects will ensure Cook County and its most vulnerable citizens survive and thrive in the face of future disasters. *Note – 5 extra pages have been included for each program/project description in Exhibit E in accordance with County interpretation of HUD requirements. Supporting files can be accessed via provided password at: https://www.dropbox.com/sh/mueptvaxk2x3xl5/AAA7gsztl0L3_o02TKul76GNa?dl=0.*