



WEST WALKER WIRE

OCTOBER - NOVEMBER 2026

www.westwalkercivic.org

After Years of Disrepair, West Walker Alley Finally Gets a Fix

By Stephen Brown

For more than a decade, the alley serving Harding and Springfield, from Berteau to Belle Plaine, was a source of frustration for neighbors. Years and perhaps decades of harsh winters made it into a pothole-minfield intimidating to navigate.

Jeanne and Joel Pozy, who have lived in West Walker for 13 years, remember when the alley wasn't a problem at all. But over time, the city's patchwork approach to maintenance, filling one pothole with black patch only for new ones to appear nearby, created a vicious cycle. "As the city patched the alley each year, the surface became increasingly worse," they said. One or two garages flooded when it rained; more commonly, neighbors dealt with clouds of dirt and dust blowing into their yards. City workers who had seen their share of Chicago alleys reportedly called it "the worst alley in Chicago."

Longtime resident Pat McKee had raised the issue with the ward office for years, but progress stalled. Getting the city to act would take something more: a collective action of enduring neighbors.



The alley during construction.

Continued on page 3

WITHIN THE WIRE...

- 2 Dear Neighbor
- 3 WWCA Membership Info
- 4 Irving Park Food Pantry
- 6 Independence Parka • Independence Library
- 8 Carlson Community Services
- 10 Irving Park Lutheran • St. Edward

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Sat, Oct. 10 - Sun., Oct. 11

Oktoberfestiversary
1820 W Belle Plaine Ave
\$5 suggested donation; proceeds go to
The Friendship Center
oktoberfestiversary.com

Sat, Oct. 17 - Sun., Oct. 18

Open House Chicago
City-wide
Free; openhousechicago.org

Sat., Oct. 24 • 6:30 pm

Carlson Community Services Trivia Night
Irving Park Lutheran Church gym
3938 W Belle Plaine Ave
See page 5 for more details.

Sun., Oct. 25 • 12-3 pm

Explore Irving Park Chicago
3rd Annual Trunk or Treat
Midtown Funeral Home parking lot
3918 W. Irving Park
Free; exploreirvingparkchicago.com

Sun., Nov. 8

Carlson Community Concer Series:
Susan Platts, Mezzo Soprano
Irving Park Lutheran Church
3938 W Belle Plaine Ave
Free; carlsoncommunityservices.org

Sat., Nov. 21

GIPNA Wine and Cheese Night
More details posted soon at gipna.org

Sat., Dec. 12

Holiday Party at Color Club
Free; more details posted soon on the
Facebook group and WWCA website.

You can also visit us online at:
[www.facebook.com/groups/
WestWalkerCivicAssocChicago/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/WestWalkerCivicAssocChicago/)



Dear Neighbor,

I hope everyone is enjoying these first few weeks of fall!

A big thank-you to everyone who joined us for our porch parties on August 7th and October 2nd. It was wonderful to see so many neighbors come out, spend time together, and enjoy some great music. We're especially grateful to our hosts, Sue Gregoire & Jim Medd and Mike & Cindi Webber, and to our fantastic bands: Kenny James Duo, Erik & Liz, Denim Daisy, and Sunflower Summit. We're already looking forward to bringing the porch parties back next spring!

If you haven't renewed your membership in the West Walker Civic Association—or if you've been meaning to join—now is a great time. You can sign up and pay your dues through our website at westwalkercivic.org. Your membership helps support this newsletter and the events and activities that bring our neighborhood together, including the porch parties, annual meeting, Winter Dance Party, Neighbors Nights Out, and more.

West Walker traditionally operates on a very tight budget, so every membership and every bit of support truly makes a difference. Thank you for helping us continue to make these neighborhood events possible.

Please mark your calendars: West Walker will be co-sponsoring a Holiday Party on December 12th with GIPNA, Explore Irving Park, and the Color Club. There will be no cost to attend the event. We'll share the time and additional details as they become available, so please keep an eye on our website and Facebook page for updates.

Until next time,
Erin Hunter

Don't Forget to Vote! 2026 Elections Information

Register to Vote:

Online by Oct. 18, or at any early voting site or your election day polling place with two forms of ID.

Early Voting: Oct. 19 - Nov. 3

All early voting sites are ADA accessible and open to any voter, regardless of precinct.

Weekdays Hours: 9 am - 6 pm

Saturday Hours: 9 am - 5 pm

Sunday Hours: 10 am - 4 pm

Election Day: November 3

Hours: 6 am - 7 pm

Find early voting sites, polling places and your election and school board districts at chicagoelections.gov/voter-info

WEST WALKER CIVIC ASSOCIATION

West Walker Mission Statement

"The pursuit of the West Walker Civic Association is to make our diverse neighborhood the best it can be by securing the services, safeguards and improvements the West Walker community is entitled to have."

*Celebrating over 100 years of service
to the West Walker Community*

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Treasurer	Stephen Brown

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WEST WALKER EMAIL BLASTS

Brian Hunter

The West Walker Wire is published every other month year-round by the West Walker Civic Association.

Finished articles and ads are due 7 days prior to the 1st of each even numbered month. Submit story ideas at west_walker_wire@yahoo.com.

Please include a phone number in case we need to follow up with you. We reserve the right to edit all submissions for space and content. For information on advertising, please contact Shannan Bunting at shannan@solsticepr.com.



Continued from cover.

A Slow Start, Then Momentum

That endurance came from Heidi Xu and her husband Dave, who moved to West Walker in January. Just weeks after settling in, they began talking with neighbors about the alley's deteriorating state. Heidi used the alley every day in taking her kids to school and running errands, and she and Dave decided to document what they were experiencing. They took video driving through, capturing the car bouncing on the broken pavement, the navigation painful and slow. With this visual evidence, they approached the ward office with a formal request for resolution.

But getting action wasn't quick. Heidi had to follow up monthly with the ward office, each call a quiet reminder that the block was waiting, that the issue hadn't gone away. These weren't dramatic moments, but persistent, patient pressure. Fortunate in their timing, they caught the wave of the 39th Ward's vote on roadway and sidewalk improvements ("participatory budgeting"), and positioned the alley where it needed to be.

Momentum built further in April. At the WWCA's All Members' Meeting, the alley emerged as one of several topics raised by residents concerning the neighborhood. Alderman Nugent acknowledged her office was already tracking the issue and working with the city to secure a budget for resurfacing. The commitment was public now.

Finally, something shifted.

From there, Heidi kept the pressure on. Biweekly calls to the ward office, each one a gentle reminder that the block was waiting. On the first day of construction, she met with the crew and the city's project manager to review the scope and timeline. A month after breaking ground (or tearing up asphalt rather), pouring fresh concrete, it was finished. Through the process, Heidi gained a new understanding of how city infrastructure projects move forward. "I hadn't interacted much with the wards before moving to West Walker," she said, "but coordinating on the alley project revealed all the parties involved – the city, the ward, and local contracting companies."

Project Completion & Hope for Future

The finished work is clean and smooth, properly pitched so water flows where it should. No more standing pools in front of garage doors. No more dust clouds rising from the pavement. Heidi and Dave call it beautiful. For Jeanne and Joel, the benefit is practical: the alley can finally be plowed when winter comes, no longer an obstacle course of broken asphalt. For longtime resident Pat, the completion marks not an end but a beginning. The willingness of neighbors to show up makes West Walker the community it is: "Each of us has a role to play in maintaining our streets, parkways, and alleys".

Enjoy the Wire? Join the West Walker Civic Association!

Joining the West Walker Civic Association or renewing your membership is quick and easy. Scan the QR code to the right or go to <https://www.westwalkercivic.org/membership/become-a-member> to join or renew. Rates offered for individuals, families, seniors, and businesses!



WWCA Membership runs

January 1 through December 31 annually. Your dues help fund a variety of items:

- Six (6) issues per year of the Wire, delivered free to residences and businesses
- The annual community garage sale and biennial garden walk (as featured in this issue), as well as other community activities throughout the year.
- Support for area non-profit groups like the Irving Park Community Food Pantry, Independence Park, and Independence Library
- Free email updates on neighborhood events, area crime, and a LOT MORE!

Thank you to our new and renewing members!

Kelly Fox & Family
Susana Meza & Family

Stephanie Olsen
Peter Wilhelm & Family

Irving Park Community Food Pantry News

by John Psiharis, Executive
Director. Photos by Craig Shutt, Publicity & Special Events
Coordinator, unless noted.

Building Our Future, Feeding Our Community

The Irving Park Food Pantry has launched its Building Our Future, Feeding Our Community program, a capital campaign dedicated to constructing a permanent home on property owned by Irving Park Lutheran Church at 4111 North Pulaski Road and funding an expansion of our services.

Pantry volunteers have been serving our neighbors in the 60641 and 60618 ZIP codes for more than 40 years. The new location will ensure we can improve and expand our mission by allowing us to accommodate more clients and provide more opportunities for food distributions as well as add more services on more days than our current location allows.

The building will put our clients first: ground-level, ADA-compliant access; expanded storage and distribution space; more waiting room; and a dedicated space for our social worker to meet one-on-one with clients. As the sole occupant, we will be able to provide services throughout the week to an expanded client base. We hope to open our doors at the new location in summer 2027.

We have received several generous grants and are well on our way to meeting our goal of raising \$1.8 million from supporters. To get a glimpse of our exciting future, visit www.irvingparkfoodpantry.org/capital-campaign.

Our success will be possible only with help from supporters such as you donating whatever you can. Every dollar brings us closer to a space our community deserves and helps us better meet our mission of being “Neighbors Helping Neighbors.”



Mae and Sara Yoest greeted visitors to the Pantry's booth at the GIPNA Farmers Market and told them about our capital campaign now underway. Photo by Liz Mills



Hats, scarves and gloves are being given to clients for all their family members this month.

Hat, Scarf, Glove Drive Underway

The Pantry is giving out new hats, scarves and gloves to our registered clients in the 60641 and 60618 ZIP codes this month to keep them and their families warmer this winter. The program will run through October.

To donate through our Amazon registry, use the QR code below. Local donations can be taken to the Big Helpers store at 4184 N. Elston Ave. from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday or to the front porch at 4242 N. Hamlin Ave. any time.



If you would like to make a monetary donation so we can purchase the specific items we need, please donate at our website, www.irvingparkfoodpantry.org, via PayPal, Venmo, credit cards or Google Pay. You also can mail a check to Irving Park Food Pantry, 4256 N. Ridgeway Ave, Chicago IL 60618 and mark it for “special programs.”

Thank you to everyone who donated to our school-supply drive in August! We gave out more than 420 packs, our biggest total yet. We appreciate everyone helping our neighborhood kids start the school year strong!



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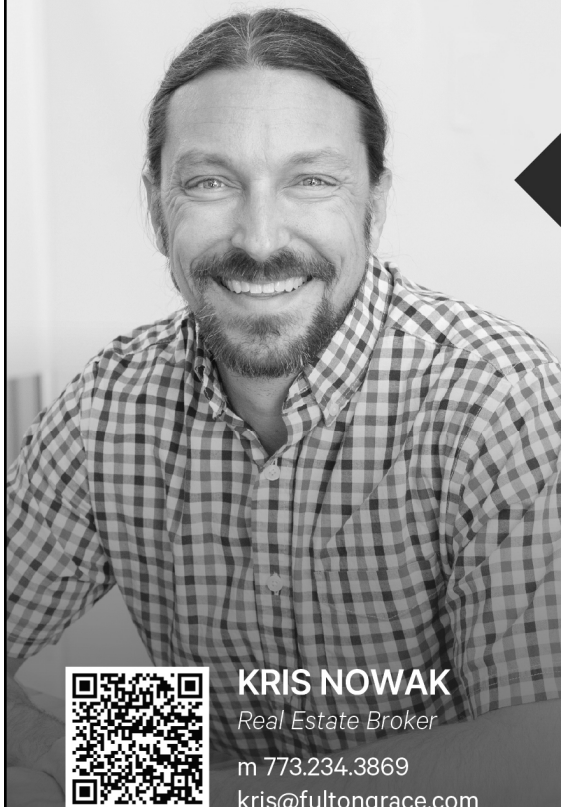


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— Carol A.

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— John B.

Scan the QR Code!

Read more about the Quality of Service your neighbors have received. Reach out today to find out how I can help you.

FULTONGRACE

Carlson Community Services' Annual Trivia Night Returns October 24! A Great Night for a Good Cause! *By Liz Drew*

Carlson's Annual Trivia Night has become a fall highlight for many of our friends and neighbors in West Walker and we are delighted to host this exciting fundraiser once again. On October 24th, trivia lovers will gather in the Irving Park Lutheran Church gym to compete for a cause. All proceeds benefit Carlson's core programs: the Magic Afterschool Place (MAP) program which offers up to 45 students (K-8th) from a nearby Chicago Public School aftercare with a sliding scale, flexible tuition model; the volunteer-run Three Brothers Community Garden, which grows organic produce for the Irving Park Community Food Pantry; and the Carlson Community Concert Series which offers free public concerts and a venue for local artists to perform.

We are thrilled to welcome back emcee extraordinaire Nicole Kawell who will keep us all on our toes. Trivia questions are always eclectic and wide-ranging so the most competitive teams will span multiple generations and life experiences. There is no telling which decade's pop culture or what geographic region's lesser-known quirks will feature!

Bring together a group of 8 to make your own team (bonus points for creative team name- shoutout to last year's winners, The Brainy Bunch) or buy individual tickets and get matched to other contestants. Bring your own snacks for a family-style picnic. Wine, beer, and soft drinks will be available for purchase. You'll also have a chance to win raffle prizes and beat out other contestants in the heads-or-tails game.



2025 Trivia Night winners The Brainy Bunch

Thank you to the local leaders and businesses who are sponsoring this event- if you'd like to sponsor a round, we would love your support.

Tables or tickets can be purchased via the QR code to the left, or by visiting: carlson.auctionsnap.com/trivia2026/event

Independence Parka

by erica dreisbach



"The squirrels in the park were stalking me!"

"I saw one boldly steal a sandwich the other day."



"It's a squirrel recession indicator!"

No, no no, I saw someone FEEDING the squirrels!"



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Barry Bebart, AIA Architect

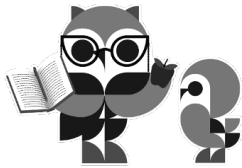
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Chicago Public Library, Independence Branch

Monday & Wednesday 10-6 / Tuesday & Thursday 12-8
Friday & Saturday 9-5 / Sunday 1-5

For Kids

Play Day For ages up to 5.

Mondays at 10:30 am

Bring a friend or meet a new one during our open and unstructured play group time.

Homework Help

Tuesdays and Thursdays at 3 -6 pm.

A licensed teacher will be available to help with homework questions.

Story Time For ages up to 5.

Wednesdays at 10:30 am

Talk, sing, read, write, and stay to play with us!

Cookie Club

Thursday, October 8 and November 5 at 4:30 pm

Kids, eat cookies and read!

One Story Time, One Chicago

Wednesday, October 14 at 10:30 am

This special edition will feature the book *Here We Are* by Oliver Jeffers. For ages up to 5.

Make Your Mark: Meet Fritz Pollard - the Fredrick Douglass of Football

Thursday, October 15 at 4:30 pm

Kids, make a team pennant and learn about Fritz Pollard.

Puking Pumpkin

Thursday, October 29 at 4:30 pm

Step 1: Design and carve a pumpkin with your group. Step 2: Make them barf. For ages up to 5.

One Book, One Chicago: Young Readers

Thursday, November 17 at 4:30 pm

Pick up a copy of *The Lion of Mars* by Jennifer Holm and join us for a discussion of what living in space could be like.

Lego Club For ages 5+

Thursday, October 22 and November 19 at 4:30 pm

Build and inspire others with your creations. All builds will be displayed with a juice box reception to follow.

Holiday Closings

Thursday, November 26 (Thanksgiving)

All Ages

Irving Park Food Pantry Drop-Off

See requested donations below.

Community Cinema

Saturday, October 24 at 11 am and 1 pm

Minions & Monsters (2026, Rating: PG)

Sunday, October 11 at 2 pm

The Long Walk (2025, Rating: R)

Saturday, November 21 at 11 am and 1 pm

Moana (2026, Rating: PG)

Sunday, November 22 at 1:30 pm

Project Hail Mary (2026, Rating: PG-13)

For Adults

American Red Cross Blood Drive

Tuesday, October 6 at 1- 6 pm

Register at redcrossblood.org.

Adult Craft

Tuesday, October 20 at 5:30 pm

Shoobox Ofrendas for Day of the Dead. Supplies will be provided. Bring items to personalize your altar.

Sunday, November 8 at 2 pm

Arts & Craft Circle. Bring your own work in progress.

Help the Irving Park Community Food Pantry by donating any of the following items:

Non-perishable food:

- Shelf stable milk/powdered milk*
- Canned fruit
- Cereal- especially corn flakes
- Jelly
- Granola Bars*
- Salt, pepper and seasonings
- Mayonnaise
- Gluten free noodles
- Cake and cookie mixes
- Items with an asterick (*) are greatly appreciated

Toiletries:

- Toothbrushes and toothpaste
- Body wash and lotion
- Travel size shampoo & conditioner
- Disposable razors
- Deodorant
- Disposable diapers (sizes 4-6)
- Baby wipes
- Bar soap

Dollar Store Dinners- create a meal in a bag based on a recipe. All items can be purchased at a dollar store. We provide the recipe(s).

Pet Food: Dog food cans, Bird seed, Turtle, Hamster, and Fish food accepted.

These are a few ways that you can help the Pantry. If you'd like additional information, please email us at: community@irvingparkfoodpantry.org

Questions? Contact Jessica Kimpel, Children's Librarian, at 312-744-1135 or jmccarney@chipublib.org, or visit the library at 4024 N. Elston Ave.

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Carlson Community Services News and Events

A 501(c)(3) non-profit connecting the Irving Park community with programs that enrich lives through education, culture and service.

Help us reimagine our growing space at Three Brothers Garden

We are coming to the close of the growing season with some beautiful new updates to the garden and a smaller but still mighty team of Tuesday night volunteers. Stay tuned for announcements of special volunteer workdays as we begin fall cleanup, building projects, and final harvests. Are you a Master Gardener with community gardening experience? Do you have native habitat garden design expertise? We are looking for volunteers to help us reimagine the front third of our garden alongside Pulaski. We hope to increase our yield for the Irving Park Community Food Pantry while also enhancing our garden as a beautiful and ecologically valuable resource in our neighborhood.

We are also excited to connect with and learn from other community gardens across Chicago this year; in September we participated in the Chicago Community Gardeners Association perennial give-away in Garfield Park. In addition to receiving a bounty of native plants for Three Brothers Garden we made new friends! We met other gardeners who are now interested in bringing their surplus of vegetables to Carlson so we can get it to the Food Pantry. If you're a community gardener and you'd like to connect with or visit our space or host a visit from Carlson, please let us know.

After School Program Provides Support to Neighborhood Families

Our Magic Afterschool Place (MAP) program is going strong, with 45 enthusiastic and energetic students enrolled and keeping our team busy. Overheard last week at 5:30p.m. a kindergartner almost burst into tears upon seeing her dad: "I told you not to pick me up early!" In addition to getting daily real time feedback from students, we survey parents each year to hear how the program meets their needs and hear similarly affirming sentiments. One parent shared recently, "My children love MAP and feel happy and safe there. Wonderful staff. My husband lost his full-time job this year and having affordable, high-quality childcare was such a blessing. Thank you!"

Save the date for the launch of this year's Carlson Community Concert Series:

November 8, 2026, Susan Platts, Mezzo Soprano

Check our website for more updates, or even better, join our email list! <https://carlsoncommunityservices.org/>.

Please contact Executive Director Liz Drew to learn more: lizdrew@carlsoncommunityservices.org



Top: Harvesting in Three Brothers Garden

Middle: The Garfield Park perennial give-away

Bottom: Students in the Magic Afterschool Place Program



Events at Irving Park Lutheran Church

Come to the Table for Adult Faith Formation

In October we are reading and discussing *Take this Bread: A Radical Conversion* by Sara Miles. The memoir details how an atheist discovered Christian faith through a hunger for the sacrament and started nearly a dozen food pantries in the poorest parts of their city. All are welcome at Adult Bible Study, no matter your theological background or Biblical awareness.

Service Project: Oct 24 at Cradles to Crayons

Cradles to Crayons provides local children with the basic essentials they need to thrive at home, at school, and at play. Volunteers will work in stations to inspect, sort and package donations. Anyone twelve years or older is invited to be part of the IPLC group, which will meet at 2500 Bradley Place at 9:30 am for a two-hour shift. To participate you must register ahead of time; email pastorbouman@iplc.org.

Reformation & Confirmation Sunday October 25

Lutherans have kept a special day to thank God for the freedom that the word of God grants to believers and to pray that with the help of God's Spirit, the church will be continually reformed and renewed. On Reformation Sunday(10/25) you are invited to wear red, the color of the Holy Spirit—the source of inspiration, transformation, and reformation. On that Sunday we'll also celebrate the Confirmation/Affirmation of Baptism of six ninth graders.

All Saints Sunday Nov. 1: Naming Loved Ones, Bell Banners

On All Saints Sunday we remember people who have died, naming them aloud in worship, ringing bells, and processing with our special All Saints Day Bell Banners. Please e-mail the office@iplc.org names to speak aloud before Nov. 1. You may also write the name of someone who has died and attach it to a bell. You can bring in your own small bell, or use bells provided in the narthex.

Judging the Judges: Voting for the Most Mysterious Candidates on the Ballot, October 25

You may have asked yourself: "Why bother voting for all those judges? Does it really make a difference?" Come and learn why your vote matters from Cindy Gray, who writes and manages the blog Judicial Conduct Dispatch. Director of the Center for Judicial Ethics from 1990 to 2023, Cindy is currently a consultant with the National Center for State Courts. The session is sponsored by Irving Park Public Faith (IPPF) and will be held in the Chapel from 11:45 am to 12:45 pm.

Hanging of the Greens, Saturday November 28

The Worship Team invites everyone to join us Saturday, November 28 at 10 am for the "Hanging of the Greens"—getting the church ready for Advent and Christmas. This is a great activity for families—bring children and grandchildren! There's beautiful, meaningful decorations to arrange, there'll be coffee and juice and Pastor Bouman's homemade cinnamon rolls.

The Jade Vine

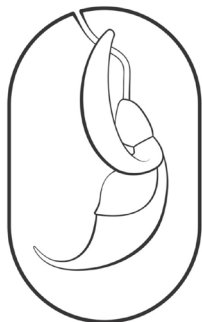
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St. Edward Parish & School News

Administer Justice Legal Clinics Begin October 3

St. Edward Parish will be hosting a Legal Clinic in conjunction with Administer Justice on the first Saturdays of the month beginning October 3rd. Many people don't have access to a lawyer, but through our clinic they can get personalized advice from an attorney to assist with a range of different issues for a small fee. If you, or someone you know needs support, you can register online at administerjustice.org. We also can use additional volunteers whether you're an attorney or someone who would like to be part of our support team. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact our site coordinator, Marty Ryczek at mryczek@yahoo.com.

Late Fall Events at St. Edward School

October is a busy month at St. Edward School! We raise money for the school in our annual fall Color Dash Walk, celebrate Homecoming on the last home football game of the season, and end the month with a spooktacular Halloween Fun Fair. Looking ahead to the holidays, mark your calendars for our popular annual Breakfast with Santa on Sunday, December 6. You can also pick-up pre-ordered wreaths and poinsettias in a variety of colors. Be sure to check social media for ticket and purchase information.

CDOT Hearing on Weber Spur Trail October 14

The Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT) will hold a public hearing on the proposed Weber Spur Trail on Wednesday, Oct. 14 from 6-8 pm at the Northeastern Illinois University Student Union Building.

This project is a "rails to trails" project that will convert a two-mile, abandoned Union Pacific rail line to a multi-use trail starting near Elston Ave and Kimberly Ave and ending near Devon Ave and Springfield Ave. It will also provide key connections in the bicycle network.

The public may provide comments in person at the hearing or online after the hearing until October 28. Public hearing materials and the online comment form are available at www.chicago.gov/weber-spur-trail.

November and December School Tours

Come tour St. Edward School and discover how we build a strong foundation for your children. Learn about our thriving community, outstanding academic programs, service work, and before and after school extended care. Upcoming school tours are on Friday, November 13 and Wednesday, December 9.

To schedule a tour or for more information, visit our school website, www.stedwardchicago.com or call 773-736-9133.

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