

Final Red Line Extension Memo

To: Dr. Warren, Professor Turner, and Gwendolyn Brooks High School students

From: Chelsea Birchmier, Alexis Stewart, Isra Rahman, Aubria Myers, David Rios, Andrew Campoverde, Jahnisi Aymerich, and Cori Burke

Date: 12/17/2019

Subject: Red Line Extension Memo and Guide

Table of Contents:

[Introduction & Background](#)

[Student Transportation Survey](#)

[RLE Issues](#)

[Community Mapping](#)

[Civic Engagement Opportunities](#)

[Social Media Engagement and Activities](#)

Introduction

As Urban Planning students from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, our primary focus has been increasing the visibility of the Red Line Extension by engaging a younger audience and community stakeholders, Gwendolyn Brooks College Preparatory Academy high school students. We aimed to inspire young people to get involved and push for the development of the Red Line Extension, which would extend Chicago's Red Line to the far South Side of Chicago. As university students, we have studied and learned about the RLE over the course of four months. During this time, we created a community engagement plan which involved a meeting with community stakeholders such as the Endeleo Institute at Trinity Church and TCA Clinic at Altgeld Gardens and meetings with the city agencies, CMAP (Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning), the CTA (Chicago Transit Authority), and CDOT (Chicago Department of Transportation). In the second part of our community engagement plan, we distributed a survey to Brooks students, held a Zoom meeting and presentation with live polls that they responded to on their phones. Now in our final phase of the plan, we provided a guide accompanied by this memorandum so that students can continue to be involved in the conversation that surrounds the RLE and can inspire others to get involved as well. The results from the Zoom session would indicate that students are already fairly familiar with the RLE and would be affected by its development.

Background

The Red Line Extension (RLE) is the proposed extension of the Chicago Red Line's current 95th street stop to 130th street, through a total of four new stops (103rd, 111th, 115th/Michigan Avenue, and 130th). The RLE is expected to increase access to jobs and other resources to the Greater Roseland Area, which includes the community areas of Roseland, Pullman, West Pullman, Morgan Park, and Riverdale, as well as provide benefits throughout Chicago and the region of

Northeastern Illinois. The Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) is the planning agency responsible for moving the RLE forward. Planning for this project officially began around 13 years ago, although the CTA first developed plans to extend the Red Line in the 1970s. After decades of residents calling for transit in the far South Side of Chicago, the Developing Communities Project (DCP), a faith-based organization originally started by Barack Obama, petitioned the residents of Greater Roseland to put the RLE on the ballot. In 2004, 39,000 residents voted in favor of the Red Line Extension. Through community engagement, a project that had been stalled for the last 30 years finally made headway.

Since 2004, development on the RLE has been slow and its phases have been pushed back due to a variety of reasons, such as funding. The RLE has a total of nine phases described by the Chicago Transit Authority. These are federally mandated phases for every federally funded transportation project. From 2006 to 2009, the CTA did an alternatives analysis, which weighs the costs and benefits of alternative projects and routes to the RLE. In 2009, they held scoping meetings, where they engaged the public on important issues that would be relevant to the next part of the Environmental Impact Process. From 2014-2016, they produced a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), which studied the positive and negative impacts the RLE would have on people and how they will prevent or reduce the negative impacts. There are nine documented phases for the Red Line Extension and the project is currently at the Final EIS (Environmental Impact Statement) and Preliminary Engineering phase and is estimated to produce a Final Environmental Impact Statement within the next few years.

The projected estimate was provided by the CTA, but it is likely that the next phase date will continue to be pushed back, provided that the community remains unaware and uninvolved. This is why project visibility is crucial in determining when the next phase will actually occur. Based on intel gathered from the meetings with the community stakeholders and city agencies, we have learned that youth involvement is not present within this process which is why students should educate their peers, their families, and whomever else is to be affected by the RLE so that its development can be prioritized.

Engaging young people through social media and technology can help to promote distributed democracy and create a platform for information sharing for Chicago's students, who represent key transit consumers. As a part of our community engagement plan, youth voice is a very important component that we are trying to emphasize. Brooks students can become involved, connect with city agencies, and express their thoughts through our Twitter social media account (RedUIUC). Additional steps on how to get involved can be found in the following sections.

Student Transportation Survey

We sent you a Student Transportation Survey before our meeting to get to know a little bit about you, how you get to school, and how you use public transportation and social media. We received responses from 31 of you on the survey—thank you to all who participated! We compiled your responses and found some interesting results that we want to share with you. Data is presented visually in charts at the appendix at the end of this memo. We learned that most of you

live in neighborhoods in the South Side or the far South Side of Chicago (see Chart 1 for a more detailed breakdown of neighborhoods). In addition to being students, a lot of you also have jobs or are looking for jobs (see Chart 2). We also learned that most of you drive or take the bus to school, and some of you walk, carpool, use ridesharing (e.g., Uber, taxis), or take the Metra (see Chart 3). A lot of you take public transportation (the bus or L) to school, work, and friends and family's places, and for shopping (retail and groceries) and entertainment purposes (see Chart 4). On a scale of 1 to 5, your class ranked the importance of public transportation as 3.21 on average, meaning that public transportation is somewhat important to you; this varied from person to person, with some ranking transportation as not important at all and others as very important. We also asked you to list 3 words that describe how you feel when you take public transportation and one word or phrase that describes what public transportation means to you; you can see some of your responses in Word Clouds 1 and 2 in the appendix.

On average, Brooks students who completed the survey spend \$23.16 per week on transportation costs. Most of your parents pay for your transportation costs, although many of you split costs with your parents or pay on your own or through your school as well (see Chart 5). It takes the majority of you between 30 minutes to an hour to get to and from school, although for many students it takes less than 30 minutes and for others, it takes more than an hour (see Chart 6). You also shared what time you wake up in the morning and what time you would *like* to wake up in the morning. On average, most of you wake up around 6:20 a.m., but if you had the choice, you would wake up around 8 a.m. Related to this, we asked, if your travel time to school was cut in half, how would you use that extra time? The majority of you said you would use that time to get more sleep, and many of you also said you would eat breakfast, study, do homework, or get ready for the day during that time. For example, one student shared that they would get, "more sleep or finish up homework because I work every night." Working in the evening was a shared experience among many students; 12 of 31 reported that they go to a job after school.

We asked you some specific questions about the bus and the L. We asked, on a scale of 1 to 5 how safe you feel when taking the bus and the L. For the bus, your average safety rating was 3.21, meaning that most of you felt neutral in terms of safety on the bus. Some of the things that you shared that make you feel safe on the bus are the bus stop being close to your neighborhoods, the bus being well-lit, being around more people, and seeing the same people every time. Some things that made you feel unsafe were waiting for the bus, especially in the dark, and loud and aggressive passengers. For the L, your average safety rating was 3.14, meaning that most of you also felt neutral in terms of safety on the L. Some of you described feeling unsafe due to physical violence, drug use, aggressive passengers, and sexual harassment. Out of those who take the L, the most common line you take is the Red Line (see Chart 7).

Finally, we asked about the Red Line Extension (RLE). About 55% of you had heard of the Red Line Extension before, and 45% had not. For those of you who had heard of it before, most of you knew some or few details about the extension (see Chart 8). We asked students who were familiar with the RLE the negative and positive things you had heard about the RLE, and we also

asked how the RLE might impact you personally in positive or negative ways. You can see some of your responses in Word Clouds 3 and 4 in the appendix. To summarize, some of the negative impacts you mentioned were negative environmental and pollution impacts, trains that are dirty and smell bad, added traffic and crowding, and people and friends being displaced and having to move out of their homes. Some of the positive aspects of the RLE you described were being able to take the train to school in a safer and faster way, increasing access to school and other resources, particularly for residents in the far South Side of Chicago, reducing travel time, and saving money.

Both the negative and positive impacts you described are important issues that should be taken into account by the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) and the city of Chicago when moving forward for the project. Ensuring that the new Red Line stations and trains are clean, environmentally-sound, do not cause displacement or gentrification, allow for access, and are cost-effective are all essential. Your concerns for safety are also important, and you should have input into how the Red Line stations at the 103rd, 111th, 115th, and 130th St. stops should be designed and resourced in a way that prioritizes young peoples' safety. You can also have a say in how the stations look and sound and the art that you want to see in the station. A lot of you reported that you had seen visual or performance art on the L or at an L stop, such as "singers," "people playing the guitar," "live bands" and "people drumming on buckets." Would you want to see performance art at the 111th St. stop nearby your school or a DJ booth like the one at the 95th St Red Line station? Would you want to see visual art? These are all questions that you can ask the CTA and other agencies working on the Red Line going forward. A lot of you also shared that you use social media on your way to school. Social media is a great way to share some of the experiences that you shared in this survey to a wider audience. Sharing photos and videos on social media of what you like and don't like and what feels safe and unsafe on public transportation can help inform what the Red Line Extension should look like.

RLE Issues

A big part of our presentation was engaging students around satellite issues and the Red Line Extension. During the presentation we gauged student understanding of issues such as gentrification, health justice, environmental justice, workforce development, community- and transit-oriented development, and TIF funding.

Gentrification is related to the Red Line Extension because housing costs on the South Side are lower than anywhere else in the city, which may pave way for gentrification in the areas of the extension. This is of importance because of how South side and West side communities are affected by gentrification. Based off of student's responses to our questions related to gentrification, they are very aware of this issue. When asked, "who has heard of gentrification?" 31 students said yes and 10 said no. Students were also asked about gentrification and one student expressed how it is often white people coming into predominantly African American communities and displacing them from their homes. Valuable data that we used on gentrification was compiled from the UIC Voorhees Center. The impact area of the RLE has either been in

consistent extreme poverty or serious or moderate decline but with the access that the RLE would offer coupled with the affordable housing, there is a possibility that more people could be displaced than anticipated. The main takeaway for this section was that currently in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement published by the CTA on the Red Line Extension, there is no mention of gentrification. Students' passion and concern for this issue can be used to ensure that gentrification is adequately addressed by the CTA in the Final Environmental Impact Statement. You posed many important questions relevant to the issue of gentrification that can also be asked to the CTA or other planning agencies; for instance, "Will the operation tear down houses?", "Wouldn't the train being in neighborhoods cause gentrification?", and "If the operation affects people's houses, how will you guys come to an agreement with someone who doesn't want to move?"

Jobs and Workforce Development are pivotal to ensuring that the Red Line Extension has a positive impact on the community. The Greater Roseland Area, where the proposed RLE stops will be has one of the highest unemployment rates in Chicago, even though employment has increased in other parts of Chicago since the 1990s. Unemployment, especially in Riverdale is a lot higher than the rest of Chicago. So in that sense, the Red Line Extension is a proposed solution to the problem of unemployment. A 2012 Livability Report by CMAP, CTA, and DCP showed that the Red Line Extension would increase access to jobs in the Far South Side of Chicago by 56%. Many individuals and stakeholders in the community have expressed wanting access to opportunities in the Loop, but also training for jobs and development of areas around the Red Line Extension. This goes into the broader issue of opportunity deserts that many residents on the South Side experience. In prior iterations of Red Line Extension plans done under the Developing Communities Project (DCP), Workforce Development was a key component. When students were asked about issues that interest them, 23 of 31 students said jobs/workforce development. In our survey of students, most students have or are looking for jobs and more than one-third spend time after school working, so jobs and workforce are issues that are very relevant in the lives of many students. Within the conversation of jobs and workforce development, we also brought up one of the protections, which are CBAs. CBAs, or community benefits agreements, are legal agreements between the developer—the CTA in the case of the RLE—and community stakeholders. They usually protect community stakeholders against any sort of threats to the community like gentrification, noise pollution, toxic waste, etc. They are flexible agreements that can be upheld in the court of law if developers don't follow certain mandates that they agreed to live up to and are one way to hold developers accountable. A CBA with the CTA could ensure that that jobs from the construction of the Red Line will go to community residents and that residents from the area will receive adequate training for these jobs.

Another key issue was that of health justice, tied together with environmental justice. Students were asked how many of them think about climate change and its impact, 24 of 37 responded with "they think about it a lot" or "they think about it sometimes." Initially, we thought students would be thinking about climate change and its relevance because of the youth climate marches that have been happening across the country. However, the movement and those who

lead it are rarely ever from poor black and brown communities which was easily reflected in the conversation we had with students. However, the strength in this conversation came in tying environmental justice and climate justice; centering marginalized communities affected by government interventions. For example, environmental justice involves talking about the disparate impact of unclean water on black communities in Flint, or the way toxic sites like in Altgeld Gardens unfairly target African American communities on the south side. By combining both environmental justice and climate activism, students were activated to think about their experiences related to both. In the last question on the survey regarding issues they care about, 18 out of 32 put environment/environmental racism.

Another issue we spoke about was health justice related to pharmacies and lack of access to health centers on impact area of the RLE. Majority of students didn't know about the lack of access to health and this may have been due to the fact that the pharmacies closed before the high school students were born and they may not be aware of what doesn't exist in their community. An incident most students remember was how difficult it was to open the south side trauma center, a clear example of health injustice. The Red Line Extension hopes to solve issues of access to resources, one of which is health care. This segued into the conversation on TIF funding because pharmacy opening and closure isn't just dependent on when a CVS wants to build, but also how the city is investing in this which is usually done through TIF funding.

TIF funding was an important point to mention because of how relevant it is for anyone in the city of Chicago. TIF funding is transit incremental funding in which certain districts by the city experienced increased taxes and that same money goes back into the community through redevelopment funds. Almost all of the RLE impact area is in different TIF districts and because of that, there is potential to use that funding for transit development or transit oriented development. The takeaway for the TIF funding is that residents should have the right to control where it goes through their aldermen, and since it is so, students should feel control over TIF funding too. The point in explaining this point, was to tie it into the RLE stage we are at right now which is the CTA waiting for funds to proceed. The CTA requires on funds from the city, state, and federal level; some of which can come from TIF funding to speed up the process.

If you weren't familiar with the Red Line Extension before our meeting, we hope that you found it informative and that you learned something interesting about the RLE. If you knew about the RLE already, we hope you learned something new or started thinking about it in a new way. And for all of you, we hope our conversation got you thinking about how you can play an active role in the Red Line Extension going forward! All of these issues are issues that you—as young people, students, and residents of Chicago—can impact.

Community Mapping

It was vital that we conveyed the significance of 'Community Mapping' to you, the stakeholders, to initiate radical social change. In our presentation we identified Community Mapping as a tactic to formulate the experiences of people interacting within their community. Transparency, inclusion, and empowerment are all enacted in the formation of community

mapping. Institutions and organizations capable of implementing community reconstruction should take into consideration the vision and input of the people. Most disenfranchised communities are skeptical about receiving community development assistance due to the worry of gentrification. To receive needed assistance without igniting gentrification, Brooks students must join the table of decision makers leading the RLE. Being both active and vocal in the duration of the RLE project phases will allow for more community control.

To enlighten Brooks students on how to create their own community map collectively, we staged three questions. The three questions posed were: 1. As your travel on public transportation throughout the Greater Roseland Region, to and from school, what do you see?, 2. What are the places and things you see in Downtown and the North Side of Chicago that aren't present in the Greater Roseland Region?, 3. What would you like to see on your route traveling through the Greater Roseland Region to and from school? In Community Mapping, it's important to identify the existing conditions, contrasting elements, and desired outcomes. In doing so, the future physical maps of the Greater Roseland Region will depict the perspective of reality of the testimonies and inventiveness of those within it.

The responses of Brooks students in answering "As your travel on public transportation throughout the Greater Roseland Region, to and from school, what do you see?" were fairly negative. The elements which students mentioned were unclean parks, abandoned buildings, impoverished people, family dollars; all of which signify a disinvested neighborhood. The second question "What are the places and things you see in Downtown and the North Side of Chicago that aren't present in the Greater Roseland Region?", students had contrasting remarks. Students stated that there's existing beautiful architecture, various types of commercial development, diverse demographics, joggers, and clean places. Lastly, in answering "What would you like to see on your route traveling through the Greater Roseland Region to and from school?" students illustrated total physical restoration. Brooks students noted that they would like to see different types of architectural buildings, activities and space permitting children to play outside, and shopping centers. This activity's ability to gauge students experiences is worth publicizing for the higher purposes of seeing their aspirations be manifested. Brooks students' participation is representative of the depiction and passion of voiceless people within the Greater Roseland Region.

Civic Engagement Opportunities: What is "civic engagement"?

The Encyclopedia Britannica defines civic engagement as a social science, a broad set of practices and attitudes of involvement in social and political life that converge to increase the health of a democratic society. In community development, civic engagement represents intellectual and action-oriented involvement with organizations, stakeholders, and groups that can affect, guide or influence a cause, project or policy. For the Chicago Transit Authority's (CTA) Red Line Extension (RLE) project, there are many opportunities to engage and work for a communally desired outcome and create social capital in the process by forming and maintaining relationships and cooperating with different groups along the way.

The CTA is directly responsible for the RLE project, and they are legally required to preserve the environment and engage all stakeholders in the project's study area that can be impacted by the project. This includes residents, workers, students, organizations, and all parties involved. Since the RLE will serve neighborhoods and communities south of 95th street in Chicago, we have compiled a list of organizations and stakeholders to engage with, that can influence the development of the Red Line to reflect community desires and objectives:

Endeleo Institute

The institute focuses on creating a culture of health in the Washington Heights community, specifically along the West 95th Street Corridor area. They are connected to Trinity Church, an anchor institution in the community, and dedicate their efforts into fostering community and economic development. The group was large involved in the restoration of the Carter G. Woodson Regional Library renovation through community-led effort of this previously disinvested library, one of the two regional libraries in the city. The renovation efforts included a technology center, a safe space for teens to hang out and explore digital technology called YOUMedia, with the purpose of encouraging the community's youth to develop interest in STEM (Science, Technology, Math and Engineering) professions; displaying the organization's commitment to the community's future and opportunities. Endeleo is also involved in the plans for revitalization of the 95th street corridor, as well as engaged in the housing sector with their Sustainable Home Ownership Program, which aims to promote affordable and sustainable housing for Washington Heights residents. Endeleo is located within the study area of the RLE because of its proximity and heavy involvement around the 95th street CTA station, with significant potential to engage the project.

Contacts:

Melvin Thompson (community development)

Bob Wordlaw (jobs/workforce development)

People for Community Recovery

This organization strives to achieve environmental justice for residents of neighborhoods affected by environmental pollution. People for Community Development (PCR) educates and advocates policy and programs in an effort to coordinate local residents on issues of the environment, health, housing, training, neighborhood safety and economic equity. The organization offers "Toxic Tours" of the Lake Calumet Industrial Area, which is located on the southeast side of Chicago, to show the conditions of the old industrial facilities, surrounding landfill, and pollution on the waterways; all in close proximity to residential communities in this area. PCR engages with community residents by offering internships and volunteering opportunities; they also offer Employment Services to promote economic development through workforce development workshops helping people prepare resumes, develop interview skills and etiquette. PCR also helps people receive fair and equal treatment in housing issues through their Housing Rights and Advocacy program. The RLE project is required to develop an Environmental Impact Statement because of the magnitude and extension of the project, and PCR has the potential to engage the

project and address environmental justice issues such as polluted land remediation, environmental issues with the Calumet water system, and other housing-related issues that could be affected by the RLE.

Contacts:

Cheryl Johnson

TCA Clinic

TCA's mission is to improve the health of Chicago's south side residents by delivering high quality, patient-centered primary care and related support services that assure barrier-free access to health education, prevention and treatment. TCA is the only healthcare provider servicing the large community of Altgelt Gardens public housing development and nearby communities. Their services include internal/family medicine, dental services, pediatric services, obstetrics & gynecology services, behavioral health services, optometry, pharmacy, laboratory, ultrasound and care coordination services. TCA's position as primary healthcare provider for many south side residents puts them in a position to be a valuable stakeholder in the RLE project and the health implications that the project may bring for south side residents.

Contacts:

Dr. Williams

We Keep You Rollin Bike & Wellness Group (WKYR)

This organization aims to help create more liveable, sustainable, vibrant communities in Chicago's south side, engaging people through community service opportunities for adults, as well as service-learning hours for high school students for participating in community events and activities. WKYR primarily serves the neighborhoods of Golden Gate, Concordia Place, Riverside Village, Pangea Lakes & Altgelt Gardens, as well as maintaining connections with South Riverdale, Greater Roseland and Pullman. WKYR offers Bike Safety Events, Workshops and Nature Field Trips and Eco Tours in nearby Calumet region; promoting wellness through biking.

Chicago Transit Authority (CTA)

The CTA is Chicago's main transit agency, managing the city's local bus and rail service. This agency is directly responsible for the development of the RLE project and is the agency in charge with the development of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Their mission is to deliver quality, affordable transit services that link people, jobs and communities. Engaging with the CTA directly is a good opportunity to discuss transportation related issues specially, but they are also the agency that all other organizations on this list will engage with when discussing the RLE project. The CTA is in the process of finalizing the final version of the EIS and has committed funds for the continued development of this project. The process however, is long and complex, needing to address issues such as engineering and design of the extension, displacement of homes, the potential for gentrification, environmental impacts on the Calumet waterways system, among other important topics.

Contacts:

Sonali Tandon (Senior Manager)

Marlise Fratinardo (RLE Project Manager)

Barbara Stubblefield (Community Outreach, Workforce Development)

Leah Mooney (Director of Strategic Planning)

Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP)

Chicago's metropolitan planning organization, CMAP, provides oversight for regional planning efforts around Chicagoland and north-east Illinois, including the CTA RLE project. CMAP engages youth across Cook, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Lake, McHenry and Will Counties through the FLIP (Future Leaders in Planning) program; a free leadership development program for high school students where teens learn about the issues that shape the region and collaborate with other students to think of potential solutions to those issues. Participants get to meet and interact with regional leaders who make key planning decisions in local communities. The agency is responsible for implementing the region's long term ON TO 2050 plan, which envisions the region's goals and objectives as we move towards year 2050. CMAP is a planning agency that can influence the neighborhood's around the RLE's future economic development plans and regional transportation plans, placing them as another stakeholder to engage in the RLE project.

Contacts:

Katanya Raby (FLIP, Roseland Medical District)

Lindsey Bailey (Maps, Geographic Information Systems)

Elevated Chicago

This organization works to improve the built environment (physical structures and spaces available to people) for greater climate resiliency, to increase exposure to arts and culture, and to improve public health outcomes for residents, without residential displacement, for people of color in ways that acknowledges racial inequalities that have long existed in opposition to this work. Elevated Chicago works on equitable transit-oriented development (TOD) around the CTA Green Line South, Pink Line – California, Kedzie Corridor and Blue Line – Logan Square. This type of work could also aggregate value to the development of the RLE project, since transit equity is one of the most prominent goals of the RLE.

City Bureau: Open Reports - Report Card

The organization is a nonprofit civic journalism lab based on the South Side of Chicago, bringing journalists and communities together in a collaborative spirit to produce media that is impactful, equitable and responsive to the public. The City Bureau engages with emerging journalists and those interested in journalism through their Civic Reporting Program, a paid, 11-week opportunity to work in teams to produce a journalism project on a single, big-picture sociopolitical issue facing communities on Chicago's South and West Sides. Journalism and reporting are crucial for the RLE project as they provide the visibility and voice for the project to become noticeable in traditional

media sources like newspapers and television. Combining journalism and social media has the potential to further increase the RLE's visibility and put the project on the map, and on everybody's radar.

South Side Weekly

This nonprofit newsprint magazine and radio show are dedicated to supporting cultural and civic engagement on the South Side of Chicago, providing educational opportunities for developing journalists, writers and artists. South Side Weekly published in-depth coverage of the arts, issues of public interest (like the RLE project), oral histories, poetry, fiction, interviews, and artwork from local photographers and illustrators. This organization has published articles about the RLE before, and is another great channel to engage with and increase the project's visibility in the media.

Social Media

Social media is the most underutilized platform in the process of engaging community members with the Redline Extension Project. This can be attributed to the generational gaps that influence social media users; however, this is not reason enough to ignore its functionality. Social media provides the unique opportunity for interactions to happen without those involved having to be faced to face. As seen in recent events such as the Me-Too movement, Black Lives Matter, and the Chicago Teacher's Strike, various social media sites were used to unify the general public around the issue as well as spread awareness. Our study has found that while many have heard of the RLE Project, few know much about the details of the extension or the process that has gone underway to accomplish its completion. Utilizing social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, and Tik-Tok provides the opportunity to share that information. This also serves as the opportunity to bridge some of the gaps in understanding as younger community members are able to introduce older ones to the innerworkings of these networks.

The idea of starting a social media platform has been something that we have been looking to take leadership and initiative in creating for that visibility to be seen. Twitter has been the idea for this social media platform. In today's modern society, we see information get spread so fast among communities, even internationally, through viral content. With the students being able to share and spread the good news, we can start a new wave of communications towards public officials, who have the power to move the project to a priority, which Far South Side residents have been fighting for for years. By taking polls and posting and re-Tweeting images, videos, and updates on the RLE, we'll be able to work from a community-based perspective to fight for a battle of the voiceless in the city of Chicago. It's time to support all community areas of the city, not just for higher income residents.

This will accomplish more than just visibility but will also amplify the voices of the next generation of Chicago citizens that'll help create for a better community in the Far South Side. By facilitating a direct democracy, we can create a bridge between the community and city officials.

With more support towards pushing for the Red Line Extension, we'll be able to get the ball rolling to something bigger in sight. With the Twitter account being made, Red Line Extension UIUC (@Reduiuc), being able to expose key issues and spreading awareness and information about the project will assist the visibility that Professor Lou has presented for us to run with. By executing surveys/polls, podcasts, photos and links, we can properly engage real individuals to create a digital information hub and began building a digital network for the Red Line Extension.

Social Media Activities

We developed 10 activities that you can complete as part of your civic engagement around the RLE. These assignments are below. If you don't have social media, there are alternatives included so that you can still engage without social media. There are many ways to raise visibility of the RLE both online and off!

Activity 1:

- 1) Follow us on Twitter @RedUIUC
- 2) Check out our website at: <http://publish.illinois.edu/rle-communityengagement/>
- 3) Tweet one interesting thing you learned from either our Zoom meeting/presentation or the website about the Red Line Extension (RLE) or any of the issues that are relevant to the RLE, like gentrification, jobs & workforce development, environmental justice, health justice, TIF funding, the RLE timeline. Tag @RedUIUC in the Tweet and use #MyRLE. If you think of any other ideas for hashtags that will get peoples' attention, include those too!
- 4) If you don't have Twitter, we would love for you to create an account and follow us! But you also have to option to post on any other social media, or share one interesting thing you learned with a family member, friend, teacher, or neighbor in person.

Activity 2:

Sign up for e-mail updates on the Red Line Extension on the CTA's website by e-mailing RedExtension@transitchicago.com and asking to be added to the e-mail list for RLE updates. If you have social media, share the next update you receive on social media. If you don't have social media, give a summary of the update to a family member, friend, teacher, or neighbor.

Activity 3:

Document and share your transportation experiences:

- 1) Choose one day of the week and share on social media how you got to school that day and how long it took you to get to school.
- 2) Share a video of your travel on the Red Line on social media. If you don't ride the Red Line, share your one of your classmate's videos by re-tweeting, reposting, etc.
- 3) Post a video or take a picture of either visual or performance art that you saw in the L/subway or in a transit station or stop.

- 4) Post a photo or video about something that makes you feel safe or unsafe on public transportation.
- 5) Take a selfie and share it on social media with a short caption about why public transportation is important to you.

Remember to use #MyRLE or any other hashtags that you come up with whenever you can (although some social media like Snapchat or Youtube don't really use hashtags – so you can be creative with thinking about how to get the word out on those platforms). If you don't have social media, share your videos, photos, and experiences with public transportation with a family member, friend, or neighbor and Dr. Warren or another Civics teacher.

Activity 4:

Visioning for the 111th St. Station

1) As students at Brooks, you should have a say in how the proposed Red Line Extension station stop at 111th St. nearby your school looks. Share on social media three things you would want to see at the 111th St. stop or three amenities you would like the stop to have, with the #MyRLE if applicable.

If you don't have social media, write down your three things/amenities you want to see for the 111th St Station and submit to Dr. Warren or another teacher for your Civics Class.

Activity 5:

1) Post one question you have for the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA), the planning agency responsible for moving the RLE agency forward and addressing any issues related to the RLE. A lot of you asked really great questions during our meeting, and those questions are questions you can ask the CTA as well—for example, a lot of you had asked about gentrification and people having to move, and the timeline for when the RLE will move forward. You can tag the CTA on social media when you ask your question. If you don't have social media, you can e-mail them, and/or ask them in person if they end up coming to your school. Their information is below:

- Twitter: @cta
- Instagram: @chicagocta
- Facebook: facebook.com/thecta
- Youtube: youtube.com/ctaconnections
- Email: RedExtension@transitchicago.com

Activity 6:

Interviews with stakeholders

Do an interview with someone from one of the organizations from the Civic Engagement section that is a key stakeholder who will be impacted by the Red Line Extension, such as Melvin Thompson or Bob Wordlaw from the Endeleo Institute, Dr. Williams from TCA Clinic, Cheryl Johnson from the People for Community Recovery, or someone else you're interested in interviewing who would be impacted by the Red Line Extension. You can post your interview on

Youtube or make it into a podcast on SoundCloud or another music/podcast app and then share it on social media.

Activity 7:

In order for the Red Line Extension to move forward, funding is necessary. While the project has received federal funding, City and State funds must also be provided in order to receive the federal funding and move the project to the next phase. As mentioned in the issues section of the memo, TIF funding, which is revenue collected from a given district and set aside for future use in that district, could be used to help fund the Red Line Extension (In fact, the idea of a transit TIF was first proposed by the Developing Communities Project (DCP) in the Far South Side of Chicago; Transit TIFs are currently being used to fund the Red-Purple Modernization line in the North Side!). The Greater Roseland Area contains a TIF district, whose revenue could be used for the RLE. This requires a vote from the Chicago City Council. The information for the aldermen in Greater Roseland is below. You can also reach out to other aldermen in your community area. Tag them in social media posts asking about their support for the Red Line Extension and using TIF to help fund the RLE! You have leverage over them as future voters.

The alderman for the 9th Ward, which includes Roseland, Pullman, and Riverdale, is Anthony Beale.

- www.Facebook.com/AldBeale
- Twitter: @Alderman_Beale
- Instagram: @AldBeale
- Facebook: www.Facebook.com/AldBeale
- Email: Bealeanthony31@yahoo.com
- (Note: Beale says he advocated for the RLE on his website at ward09.com/issues – you can use this to ask what he’s doing now to support the RLE)

The alderman for the 34th Ward, which includes parts of Roseland, West Pullman, Washington Heights, and Morgan Park, is Carrie Austin.

- <https://www.facebook.com/carrie.austin.39>
- <https://www.34thward.org/>
- Ward34@CityofChicago.org

Activity 8:

Contact a news outlet to let them know about this social media engagement project and how students at Brooks have been engaging with the Red Line Extension both on- and off-line. Some potential news outlets include the *South Side Weekly*, *Chicago Reporter*, *Chicago Reader*, *Chicago Tribune*, *the Chicago Sun-Times*, *Streetsblog Chicago*, and the *Active Transportation Alliance Blog*. You could also get in touch with the UIC Vorhees Center to see how they can share information about this project with urban planning students and faculty at UIC and the university community more broadly. The reporter Mary Wisniewski of the *Chicago Tribune* has written numerous articles on the Red Line Extension and could be a great source to reach out to. Her contact information by

email and social media can be found here:

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/ct-mary-wisniewski-getting-around-20160407-staff.html>. Here is an example of one article she wrote on the Red Line Extension and the issue of gentrification:

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-red-line-cta-extension-meeting-20161102-story.html>.

Activity 9:

Connect with a planning agency on social media and ask them a question about what they do and how it relates the RLE. In assignment 5, you asked questions to two planning agencies, the CTA and CMAP. Some other organizations that can help raise the visibility of the RLE and answer your questions about it are below. For example, for CDOT, one question would be: how can the RLE help reduce congestion at 95th St? For CMAP, one question might be: How can we fight gentrification with the RLE? etc.

Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT): responsible for infrastructure and freight in the City of Chicago, addressing congestion due to freight trains and traffic (e.g., the CREATE program)

- Twitter: @ChicagoDOT
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/CDOTNews>

Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP): planning agency responsible for oversight of the Red Line Extension, which means they can also address issues around gentrification, environment, health disparities, etc.

- Twitter: @ONTO2050
- Instagram: @onto2050
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/1CMAP/>
- Youtube: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning
- Email: <https://www.cmap.illinois.gov/contact>

Center for Neighborhood Technology (CNT): integrating technology, planning, and sustainability; promoting transit access

- Twitter: @CNT_tweets
- Facebook: [facebook.com/CenterforNeighborhoodTechnology](https://www.facebook.com/CenterforNeighborhoodTechnology)

Metropolitan Planning Council (MPC): planning and policy organization for the Chicago region; promoting universal mobility

- Twitter: @Metroplanners
- Facebook: @metropolitanplanningcouncil
- Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/MetroplanningChicago>

Regional Transportation Authority (RTA): oversees transportation in the region, financial and budget oversight

- Twitter: @RTA_Chicago
- Facebook: @ChicagoRTA

Activity 10:

Choose an organization that you think should include information about the Red Line Extension on their website or social media page. If you have social media, make a post on social media tagging that organization and requesting them to include information about the RLE on their website or social media page. If you don't have social media, you can e-mail or call them to ask. One example of an organization you could reach out to is Elevated Chicago, whose social media and contact info is below, but you can choose any other organization that you think should have info about the RLE on their pages as well—these can also include student organizations.

Elevated Chicago

- Twitter @elevated_chi
- Instagram: elevated_chi
- Facebook: @elevatedchicagoetod
- Youtube: Elevated Chicago eTOD
- Email: info@elevatedchicago.org

Additional Ideas:

Brainstorm how you can get the word out to other high school students in Chicago, like Carver Military Academy High School in Altgeld Gardens. How can you work together with them to increase the visibility of the Red Line Extension? How can you engage with other young people around the RLE both on- and off-line?

What other ideas do you have for making the Red Line Extension move forward in a way that benefits young people in the Far South Side of Chicago and throughout the city and region? These activities are just the start of your engagement—we're looking forward to seeing all of the ideas that you come up with for how to keep this project going as future leaders and activists!