

VILLAGE OF HOMEWOOD



BOARD AGENDA MEMORANDUM

DATE OF MEETING: March 10, 2026

To: Village President and Board of Trustees

Through: Napoleon Haney, Village Manager

From: Terence Acquah, Assistant Village Manager

Topic: Resolution Supporting Application for 2026 Invest in Cook (Cook County Department of Transportation and Highways) Grant Funding for Halsted Street Sidewalks and Crosswalks

PURPOSE

Staff requests that the Village Board pass a resolution authorizing the application for the 2026 Cook County Department of Transportation and Highways (DoTH) Invest in Cook Grant Program to fund pedestrian improvements and safety upgrades along the Halsted Street corridor, from 174th Street to Ridge Road.

PROCESS

Why are pedestrian improvements needed?

The Halsted Street corridor is the primary commercial corridor in Homewood, representing over 60% of commercial sales and providing thousands of jobs. The entire corridor is lined with high-intensity commercial development, including regional and national retailers, restaurants, and a large casino and hotel. The corridor is also the travel route for over 35,000 vehicles per day and the Halsted 352 Pace route, which is the busiest bus route in the Pace Bus system and carries thousands of riders per day.

While all of this activity converges on Halsted Street, the Village has had ongoing concerns about safety along the corridor for pedestrians and transit riders. Currently, limited pedestrian infrastructure exists along the Halsted corridor in Homewood. Sidewalks are only installed on one side of the street along a limited segment of Halsted (174th to Maple Avenue – 0.76 miles). Few crosswalks for pedestrians currently exist. Many bus stops along the corridor are not connected to a sidewalk along Halsted Street, and most businesses are disconnected from any pedestrian infrastructure along the street. Missing infrastructure frequently causes pedestrians to walk in the street or cross the street illegally, leading to severe hazards for pedestrians and motorists in the Halsted corridor.

These concerns were addressed in the 2025 Far South Halsted Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Plan, which recommended the installation of sidewalks, crosswalks, and other safety improvements. A specific set of improvements were proposed by planning and engineering consultants during the plan process, which were also informed by the Village's participation in

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the process of writing the plan (Angela Mesaros, Director of Economic and Community Development, was Homewood’s liaison on the community board for this plan). The goal of these proposed improvements is to increase safety along the corridor and to support future transit investments and development in the area, including the installation of “Pulse” bus rapid transit (BRT) service by 2030. Other plans, such as the ON TO 2050 regional plan from the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, have identified this corridor as an essential corridor for improving safety and increasing options for other modes of travel (i.e. bus travel).

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) has not identified this corridor as a priority for new improvements in the near future. IDOT has not identified any future improvements for this corridor in the agency’s planning documents, including the Multi-Year Improvement Program (MYP) or FY 2025-2030 Highway Improvement Program. Responsibility for improving this corridor is largely placed upon municipalities, with opportunities for county or regional agency support through grant funding or similar programs.

What is the Invest in Cook Program?

The 2026 Invest in Cook program allows for 100% cost matching for any eligible work completed in CMAP Community Cohort 2 municipalities such as Homewood. The program covers 50% of all project costs. The Village has partnered with the engineering firm Baxter and Woodman to provide a detailed estimate of Phase I engineering and design costs for this project, as well as estimates of future construction costs. Staff estimates that total engineering and design costs will be approximately \$150,000-\$175,000 for the project. Future phases of the project (including construction) may be covered by other programs which cover most or all of costs, for example an 80%/20% cost sharing within an Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP).

The grant may provide funding for Phase I engineering and design work which the Village would not otherwise be able to fund through the Village’s budget alone. Phase I engineering work will complete preliminary design and engineering work for the project in conformance with the requirements of IDOT and the Cook County DoTH, and will prepare these safety improvements along the Halsted corridor to become “shovel-ready” projects which are ready for future construction funding. With this preliminary engineering and design work completed, the Village will be eligible to pursue additional construction funding through the 2027 Invest in Cook program or another funding source such as ITEP or the Community Development Block Group (CDBG) program funding.

Previous Invest in Cook Application

The Village applied for funding from the 2023 Invest in Cook program to install sidewalks along the Halsted Street corridor between 175th Street and Ridge Road. This application was not approved due to County concerns about a lack of Village funding commitments and the lack of crosswalks or other infrastructure proposed to connect the proposed sidewalks to one another.

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The original projected cost of this application was \$725,315 (\$155,520 for design and engineering in compliance with IDOT procedures and \$569,795 for construction).

Partnerships

The Village began working with Pace Bus in 2025 to coordinate pad and shelter improvements for bus stops at the intersection of 174th Street and Halsted Street. These stops have seen rapid increases in usage since the opening of the Wind Creek Casino and Hotel, as employees from Harvey, Chicago Heights, and other nearby communities rely on the service. As Pace Bus has committed to partnering with the Village to construct these improvements, the Village has considered options for expanding sidewalks and other infrastructure in the vicinity of these bus stops and other nearby transit stops to ensure safety for a rising number of pedestrians and transit riders along Halsted Street in Homewood.

For the 2026 Invest in Cook application, the Village engaged Baxter & Woodman of Mokena, Illinois, to provide cost estimation services for the proposed Phase I engineering and design work for this project in the amount of \$9,730. By obtaining a detailed cost estimate, along with letters of support from local public officials, the Village aims to strengthen the competitiveness of its 2026 application and improve the likelihood of approval.

OUTCOME

The 2026 Invest in Cook program presents an opportunity to secure funding to implement safety improvements along the Halsted Street corridor as recommended in the 2025 Far South Halsted TOD Plan and other regional plans. These recommendations will create safe crossings for pedestrians and transit riders in the Halsted Street corridor, connect highly utilized transit stops to other pedestrian infrastructure, and support new development along the Halsted Street corridor.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

- **Funding Source:** N/A
- **Budgeted Amount:** N/A
- **Cost:** N/A

LEGAL REVIEW

Not required

RECOMMENDED BOARD ACTION

Pass a resolution authorizing the application for the 2026 Cook County Department of Transportation and Highways (DoTH) Invest in Cook Program to fund pedestrian improvements and safety upgrades along the Halsted Street corridor, from 174th Street to Ridge Road.

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ATTACHMENT(S)

- Resolution
- Staff Exhibit
- Far South Halsted TOD Plan – Implementation Guide