



***Liberation in
Landscape
Education means
to change not only
what we do, but
also how we do it***

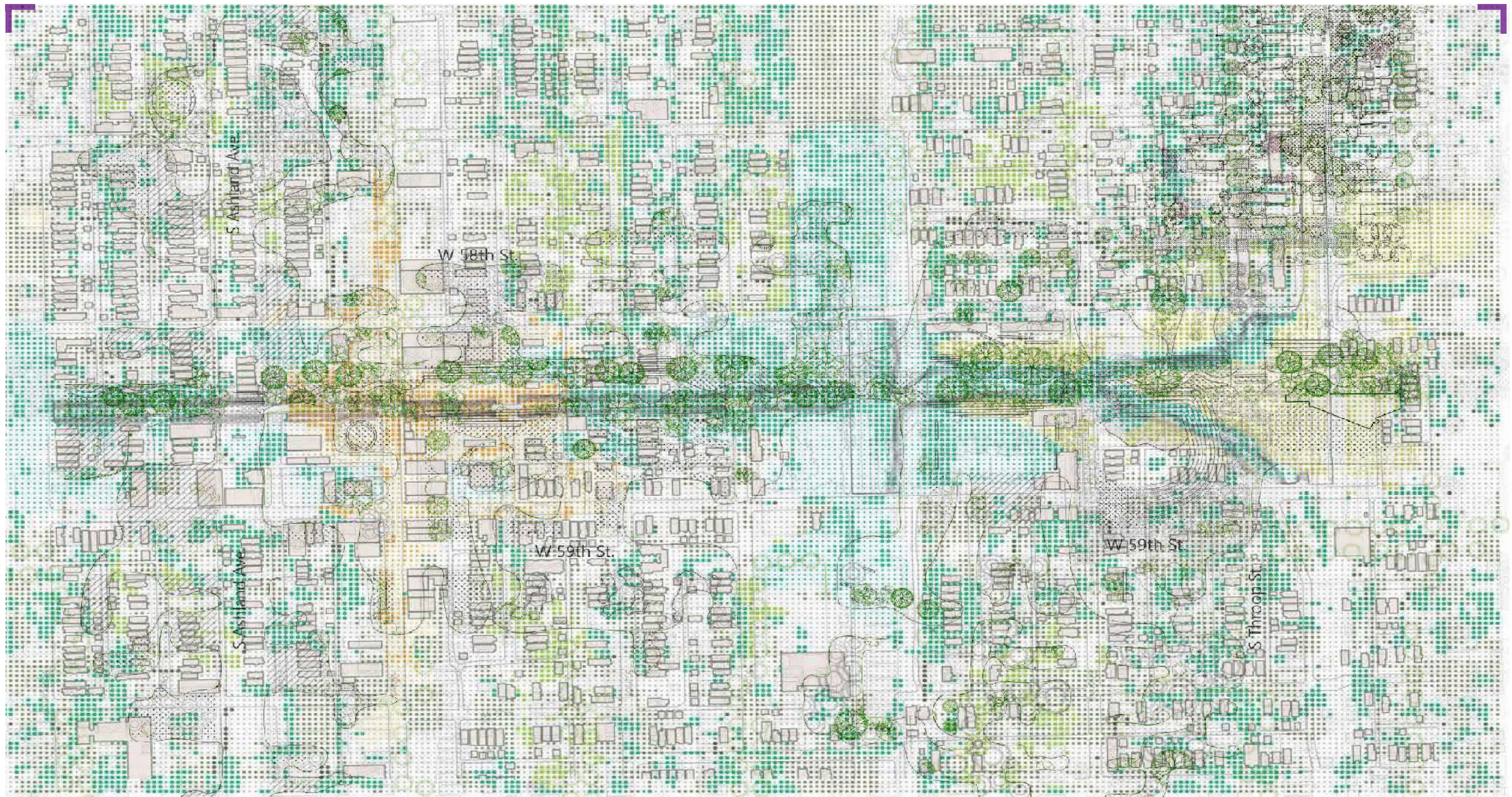
DuSable (North Chicago), Living Tracks (South Chicago), Hosting Life (North Chicago), Monterrey (Latin America), and Vineyard of Change (Chile, Napa, Barcelona) prove that communities, public agencies, NGOs, private actors, and academia—across ages, languages, and regions—can collaborate without competition, hierarchy, or the urge to standardize methods, aesthetics, or outcomes. These works show how landscape architecture can hold difference, urgency, and care—without compromise.

They intervene in real soil, entangled with botany, culture, emerging technologies, and community-led ambitions. Threads in a broader, more turbulent curriculum, where design justice is a current—coursing through core studios, experimental electives, and transdisciplinary collisions. We begin in the streets, enter the classroom with dirt and love on our hands, build triangular solidarities, then return to the streets to grow, test, and disrupt.

Our urban pact and impact reclaim the profession after decades of prioritizing wealthy geographies and colonizing agendas. Rooting justice is our method—restoring land, memory, and the right to belong. This is about pragmatic good. We work with clarity, depth, and care. Receiving this award will honor our ambition—and signal what landscape architecture education must become.

Illinois Institute of Technology
College of Architecture
Master of Landscape Architecture +
Urbanism Towards Design Justice

The five projects representing the IIT Master of Landscape Architecture + Urbanism are declarations—living embodiments of Towards Design Justice, a pedagogy grounded in care and the belief that landscapes prioritize people over property, ecology over extraction, and joy over compliance. Each project was chosen for conceptual clarity, engagement with justice through design, and ability to spark collective action across language, territory, and difference.



“I am not a map/i am a city with no name/and i am built for love.”
—from *The January Children*, by Safia Elhillo.

Landscape is the protagonist in overcoming urban erasure and reclaiming identity. The studio reframes Englewood and Bronzeville not as forgotten corridors, but as living cities—built for connection, dignity, and place-based love.



Country/City

United States, Chicago, South Side.

University / School

Illinois Institute of Technology, College of Architecture, Master in Landscape Architecture and Urbanism. Towards Design Justice.

Academic year

2020

Title of the project

Living Tracks: The Englewood and Bronzeville Trails

Authors

Tao Xu, Olaloluwapo Odukoya, Yichen Qian, Alexis Arias Betancourt, Migel Santos, Anwar Aluqbi, Seong Cheol Kim, Diamantina Sanchez.

Title of the project	Living Tracks: Englewood Agro-Eco District and Nature Trail.
Authors	Tao Xu, Olaoluwapo Odukoya, Yichen Qian, Alexis Arias Betancourt, Migel Santos, Anwar Aluqbi, Seong Cheol Kim, Diamantina Sanchez.
Title of the course	Living Tracks: Englewood and Bronzeville Trail.
Academic year	2020
Teaching Staff	Maria A. Villalobos H. and Maurice Cox.
Department / Section / Program of belonging	Master in Landscape Architecture and Urbanism. Towards Design Justice.
University / School	Illinois Institute of Technology, College of Architecture.



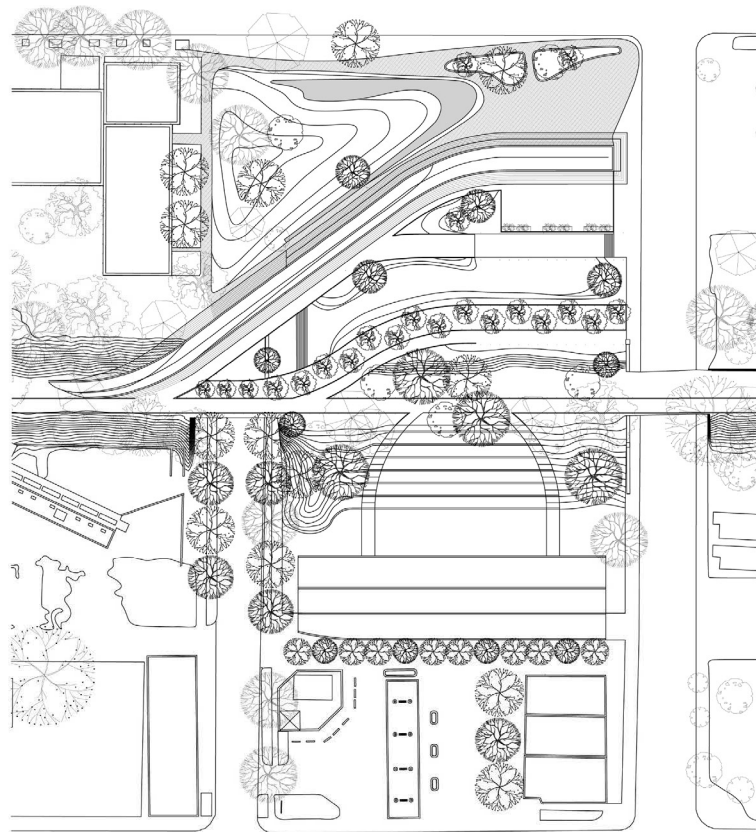
Written statement, short description of the project in English, no more than 250 words

This studio marked the start of a deep, place-based collaboration between the City of Chicago’s Department of Planning and IIT, within the broader INVEST South/West initiative launched under Mayor Lori Lightfoot. What began as an academic inquiry quickly evolved into an active landscape project, with one student eventually taking on the role of project manager for its real-world implementation. The studio reimagined two disused elevated railway lines—threading through Englewood and Bronzeville on Chicago’s South Side—not as abandoned infrastructure, but as living civic armatures for justice, cultural memory, and community-led regeneration. Elevated on berms and retaining walls, these 2-mile-long corridors offered both spatial and symbolic elevation, reclaiming views, connections, and futures. Through fieldwork, archival research, and participatory workshops organized by the Department of Planning and community leaders, the studio foregrounded the land as narrator and catalyst. Projects embraced themes of ecological resilience, sustainable urban production, and cultural healing, translating speculative design into actionable frameworks. The work directly informed public-facing processes, including two official Requests for Proposals (RFPs) in Englewood and North Lawndale. The studio’s contributions were later taken up by grassroots organizations such as the Bronzeville Trail Task Force and Grow Greater Englewood, transforming academic imagination into civic possibility. What began in the classroom evolved into a funded reality, securing millions for Englewood, establishing the Agro-Eco District, and constructing the Village Plaza.

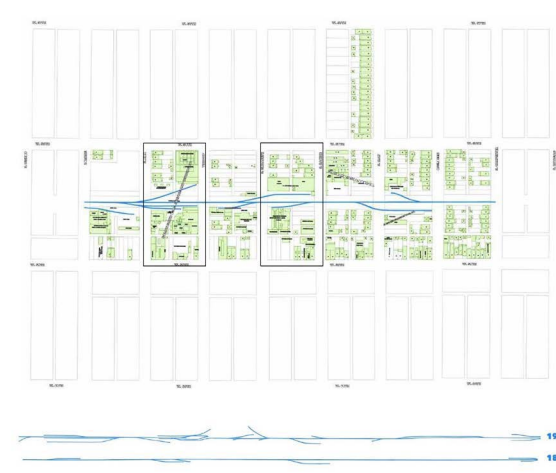
Barcelona International Landscape Biennial

Contact via email:
biennialadm@coac.net

Venue:
COAC - Col·legi Oficial d’Arquitectes de Catalunya
Carrer Arcs 1-3, 08002 Barcelona - Spain



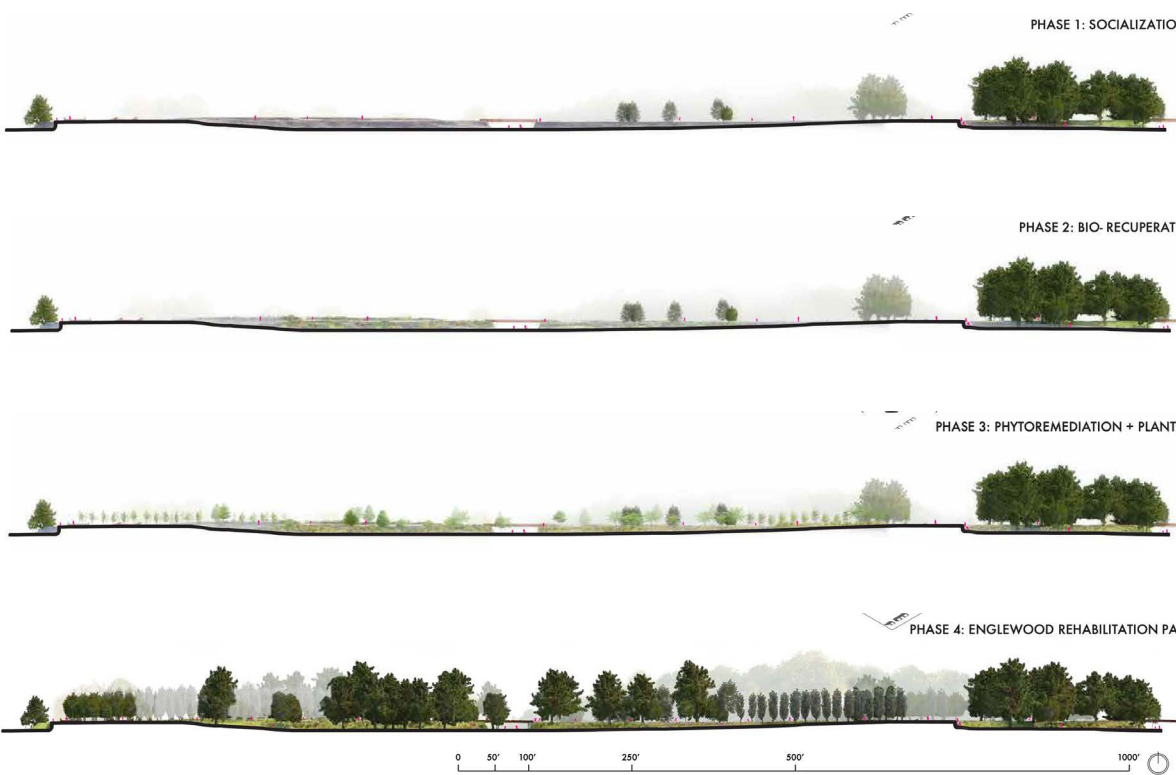
SANDBORN MAPS 1926



ENGLEWOOD TODAY



ENGLEWOOD 1950



***The change is in the how
and with whom, not the
look.***

Progressive care in Englewood—from streets to classrooms—has raised millions, launched the Agro Eco-District, and built public spaces led by the same students and faculty behind the academic work.



“Let the landscape tell you what it remembers.”
—from Chicago-based landscape poems, by Ed Roberson.

The Englewood trail is rich in industrial, cultural, and ecological history. Here, the land is a narrator of suppressed histories—and a seeder of liberatory ones.