1. It’s hard for me to imagine a life outside of my bubble. I don’t know about you but I live in a quaint house, in a safe, suburban neighborhood. I don’t have a silver spoon in my mouth by any means but I haven’t had to worry about when my next meal will be or if my home will be shot up tonight. Citizens of Englewood, Chicago are not always that lucky. Limited resources and constant violence are the norm for those citizens.

2. This is the intersection of Halsted & 63rd. The intersection was once the home of Englewood’s finest shops and eateries; today it is a major hotspot for violent crimes ranging from robbery to murder. The shopping hub disappeared after losing consumer interest with the birth of competing centers like Evergreen Plaza and Ford City in 1974.

3. As more and more businesses left Englewood the crime rate rose. Gangs took over the abandoned buildings and turned Englewood into a constant turf battle. The gangs roam freely through the modest community without reproach from the police force. With that said, there are many citizens who wish to leave Englewood. When the people living there talk about Derrick Rose or Jennifer Hudson, former residents of Englewood, they don’t say that Rose and Hudson ‘moved’, they say that people like Rose and Hudson have finally ‘made it out’.

4. People want to leave Englewood but it is not as easy as packing up everything they own and changing neighborhoods. Most citizens of Englewood do not have the money to decide to just up and leave. In Englewood the only places residents can get what they need are discount grocery stores or corner stores. The place once described as a business hub is a virtual desert. The shop- owners in Englewood are well aware of the advantage they hold in the community and their prices reflect that.

5. The Englewood community needs more resources – more options to raise their standard of living. Due to the high crime rate the limited resources problem the Englewood community faces is not easily resolved. Potential investors are at a crossroads because while they know they can make money in an area that will rely on their services, they also know that their business will in no means be in a safe location.

6. The fact of the matter remains, Englewood residents need options. The families, the children especially, are in need of fresh produce, and the resources to grow up healthily. Englewood residents should not need to travel via train or subway just to get to a grocery store. It is our job to find a solution to this limited resources urban problem.
7. Urban planners can decide a plan of action to put into place in the Englewood neighborhood. The community already has a large transportation system in place but it is obvious that, that is not enough. Security, innovation, and business; these are the things Englewood needs. If we do not accept the challenge of renovating Englewood we are denying the children living there two of the ten rights of a child adopted by the United Nations; The right to grow up in a healthy way (Right #2), and the right to good food and services (Right #4). Together we can provide for this community in need.

8. Whole Foods, working in part with Mayor Rahm Emanuel, has devised a plan to break ground in Englewood, in 2016. The erecting of a Whole Foods in Englewood will bring new jobs to the community and it will provide a service that will be highly valued to the community’s residents. If this plan goes through it will be one large step forward for the area but it is only the first step.

9. One solution that does not rely on corporations deciding to break ground in Englewood is the construction of a community garden, similar to the White House Kitchen Gardens. The members of the community could plant the food in the gardens and stop by to get what they need to sustain their lifestyles. The project has had great results in the White House’s surrounding communities and the same could happen in Englewood. If we wanted to get really fancy an aquaponics system could be attached to the garden to produce fish that could be sold to generate communal income.

10. Another solution is simple renovation. I say simple because the idea itself is quite easily comprehended however it will require money to enact. Intersections like 63rd & Halsted are breeding grounds for danger, and community parks are hotspots for drive-by shootings. People don’t always take too kindly to policemen in their neighborhoods but security should be made readily available for the members of the community. On college campuses security lights are stationed on every street corner, the same could be done in Englewood to ensure fast responses to the crime that does occur.

11. The problem with the majority of these solutions is money. Illinois just does not have a lot of money budgeted to renovate neighborhoods like Englewood but the money can be raised. Fundraising frequently tends to garner thousands of dollars, if not more, to support different causes. Representatives of the community or of Chicago can apply for grants to begin breaking ground on any one of these projects after they pass the necessary court regulations.
12. A few new grocery stores and a community garden would be great ways to fill the need for the food and fresh produce that the residents require but they don’t solve the problem of gang violence and the plague of crimes that haunt Englewood. A community identity needs to be added to Englewood to remove the cycle of crime that exists there. Studies have shown that communities with an identity are more cohesive and more cohesive communities have less crime.

13. So say we have now solved the problem of limited resources and we have at the very least slowed down criminal activity in the neighborhood, the projects enacted still need to be verified to be sustainable, or long-lasting. If they are not sustainable the work done, the money spent, will all have been for nothing and it is quite possible that the community will not benefit at all.

14. The idea of planting a community garden could easily turn into wasted money if no one is tending to the garden to allow it to grow. Schools in the community could use the garden as a learning tool or someone could be hired to maintain the garden, providing not only sustainability but employment. The garden may also require some form of physical shelter to survive its environment, Chicago weather is, after all, very bipolar.

15. The security light is less easily viewable as sustainable however if the light was created in a more environmentally friendly manner then it would be using sustainable design. It is actually much easier to make a light sustainable than one might think; Fluorescent lighting and other green material could be used to make it eco-friendly. If the design was first used in Englewood perhaps the community could receive some sort of royalties that go towards more renovation and innovation in the area.

16. Making a grant sustainable is as easy as forming a community chest or other savings account. Not all of the money garnered from a grant needs to be used immediately; some can go towards renovation and what is left should go into an account with compound-annual interest to grow before the community needs to use the money again. If all of the money is required to complete the projects in Englewood there is still no need to worry because grants can be given out multiple times, Englewood could even write its own grant.

17. To create sustainable community cohesion, sanctioned community events should be held frequently. The trick with the events held is that they must be cross-generational, people from my generation, the Millenials, may not enjoy all of the things that Baby Boomers enjoy but we
do share some common ground. No one can be excluded from the events held in the community; if they are the cohesion is not truly cohesive.

18. The Englewood district of Chicago can be saved. With innovative and sustainable ideas the community can go from the United State’s own version of Syria, to a thriving, green, environment. It is obvious that Englewood needs some work but it is even clearer that a substantial difference can be made there.

19. Englewood is home to a lot of criminal activity but it is also home to citizens who want to escape the troubles that plague them there. For many of those families leaving is not an option, renovation is. If we can restore this community back to the way it was when its shopping center was the best around the residents would be grateful and a few more lives, both plant and human, could be saved.

20. The information in this presentation is true and if the time is taken to delve into the proffered solutions one may even find that they could actually work. Englewood is not a lost cause but if we do nothing about the problems the residents face, we are writing it off as one.