

DEPARTMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ACTION PLAN

CITY OF CHICAGO'S GOAL: *Take a whole-government approach to improve and protect the environment, health, and quality of life in environmental justice (EJ) communities through changes to internal policies, processes, practices and/or budgets.*

ENVIROMENTAL JUSTICE ACTION PLAN
Department Name – Action Name: DPD – Calumet Design Guidelines Update
Department Scope and Authorities: <p>Chapter 17 of the Municipal Code, commonly known as the Chicago Zoning Ordinance, is “adopted for the purpose of...promoting the public health, safety, and general welfare; preserving the quality of life for visitors and residents; retaining and expanding the city’s industrial base; maintaining orderly and compatible land use and development patterns; encouraging environmentally responsible development practices; and, accommodating growth and development that complies with the preceding stated purposes” (MCC § 17-1-1500) and “[t]he Zoning Administrator is responsible for administering and enforcing the provisions of this Zoning Ordinance” (MCC §§ 17-14-0202). The Zoning Administrator is also responsible for reviewing “each proposed text amendment application” and forwarding “a recommendation on the proposal to the City Council Committee on Zoning, Landmarks and Building Standards before the Committee’s public hearing. The recommendation of the Zoning Administrator must also be forwarded to the City Council when the report of the City Council Committee on Zoning is initially submitted to the City Council.” (MCC §§ 17-13-0202). This authority also extends to zoning map amendment applications, both those proposed outside of (MCC §§ 17-13-0305) or within (MCC §§ 17-13-0400) Industrial Corridors or as part of Planned Developments (MCC §§ 17-13-0603).</p> <p>The Calumet Design Guidelines, adopted by the Chicago Plan Commission on March 11, 2004 and referenced in the Chicago Zoning Ordinance (MCC §§ 17-11-0401), are intended to “act as a guide for developers, design professionals, city staff, and other city departments or public agencies; coordinate site development, landscape design, storm water management and environmental issues; [and] provide sustainable landscapes for industrial sites that complement the city’s Calumet Land Use Plan and Calumet Open Space Reserve Plan.”</p>
Environmental Justice Strategy: <p>DPD will work with local stakeholders, including residents, industrial business owners, environmental justice and community organizations, and others to develop and submit to the Chicago Plan Commission proposed <i>updates to the Calumet Design Guidelines</i>, which are site guidelines adopted by Chicago Plan Commission in 2004. DPD will begin reviewing the Calumet guidelines for an update beginning in September 2023, which will include a robust engagement process, with a focus on addressing the negative impacts of air and noise pollution, using the U.S. EPA’s research on vegetative barriers as a starting point. After completion of the Calumet guidelines, DPD commits to developing an approach for site guidelines for other industrial corridors that the CIA identifies as being located in Environmental Justice Neighborhoods.</p>
Supporting Department(s): <p>DPD may need to collaborate across multiple departments (including the Department of Transportation, the Department of Public Health, and others) to accomplish this strategy.</p>

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Impact Measures:

- Adoption of updated Calumet Design Guidelines by the Chicago Plan Commission
- Number of stakeholders engaged

Related Department Investments & Prior Commitments:

The We Will Chicago (WWC) citywide plan is a 10-year framework for citywide growth and vibrancy. WWC is a critical tool to guide the city's future annual budgets, capital projects, and policy priorities to ensure public decision-making is focused on the needs of the entire City and all of its residents. Approved by the Chicago Plan Commission after three years of intensive neighborhood-based and virtual public engagement, WWC consists of more than 40 goals and 150 objectives to guide the City's governance across eight "planning pillars" for the next decade. The pillars include Housing & Neighborhoods; Arts & Culture; Environment, Climate & Energy; Lifelong Learning; Public Health & Safety; Transportation & Infrastructure; Civic & Community Engagement; and Economic Development.

DPD holds the following WWC pillars and goals as being most relevant to this EJ Action:

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Goal 2: Support business growth throughout Chicago, especially businesses owned by Black and Latino people.

ENVIRONMENT CLIMATE & ENERGY

Goal 1: Prioritize climate resiliency efforts in overburdened communities and for low- income individuals through both public- and private- sector efforts.

Goal 2: Use environmental justice principles to establish criteria and policies for geographies harmed by environmental degradation.

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

Goal 3: Balance the economic benefits of moving goods with negative impacts on communities, eliminating, then equitably distributing burdens.

Action Steps	Timeline	Status
Release Task Order Request (similar to RFP) to engage consultant team	Q3 - 2023	In progress
Engage local stakeholders, including industrial business groups and environmental justice organizations	Q4 2023 – Q4 2024	Conversations have begun
Draft updated Calumet Design Guidelines	Q4 2023 – Q4 2024	Not started
Informational presentations and public comment	Q1 2025	Not started
Submit Guidelines for adoption by Chicago Plan Commission	Q2 2025	Not started

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Community Input & Response

Community Input:

There were not any specific comments related to site design guidelines. However, several comments were related to this issue including comments about considering environmental and health concerns; the need to emphasize preventing conflicts/problems before they arise instead of reacting to them.

Response to Community Input:

Through this process DPD will work with community residents and businesses to update the Calumet Design Guidelines. Some negative impacts may be lessened or avoided with innovative site design or through use of building and infrastructure placement, and/or buffers or other green infrastructure. Lessons learned for this project can be applied in other industrial locations in the City.