

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.*

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| Department Name – Action Item: DPD – Sustainable Development Policy Update |
| Department Scope and Authorities (Related to Strategy Identified Below): As the principal planning agency for the City of Chicago, the Department of Planning and Development (DPD) promotes the comprehensive growth and sustainability of the City and its neighborhoods. The department also oversees the City’s zoning and land use policies and employs a variety of resources to encourage business and real estate development, historic preservation, accessible waterfronts, walkable neighborhoods, and related community improvements. 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). Per Municipal Code 17-8-0900 Standards and Regulations, 17-8-0902 Other Regulations: Planned Developments (PDs) must comply with any special regulations that apply to the subject property including the Department of Planning and Development’s Sustainable Development Policy. Per 2022 Air Quality Ordinance, 17-9-00117-G.5: All such uses [identified by the Air Quality Ordinance] are subject to compliance with the Department of Planning and Development’s Sustainable Development Policy. Compliance with the Sustainable Development Policy is specifically called out in each PD ordinance: The [PD] applicant shall obtain the number of points necessary to meet the requirements of the Chicago Sustainable Development Policy, in effect at the time the Part II review process is initiated for each improvement that is subject to the aforementioned policy and must provide documentation verifying compliance. Full compliance with the policy is verified at the time a building permit is issued by way of the Part II review. |
| Environmental Justice Strategy: DPD will update the Chicago Sustainable Development Policy to account for changes in development codes and building technologies, and to align with local climate and decarbonization goals. The policy update will include new and revised strategies to help improve environmental performance and mitigate negative impacts of industrial projects on surrounding communities – such as renewable energy, vegetative buffers and electrification of commercial fleets. |
| Supporting Department(s): |

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DPD will need work with the Department of Transportation, the Department of Buildings, the Department of Public Health, the Department of Housing, the Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities, and potentially others to accomplish this strategy.

Impact Measures:

- Number projects (PDs or others) required to comply with the SDP in or adjacent to identified “Environmental Justice” geographies
- Number of stakeholders who participated in the update process
- Public reporting of SDP benchmarks (strategies, locations, estimated impacts, etc.)

Related Department Investments & Prior Commitments:

DPD’s strategy is strongly aligned with the goals of We Will Chicago. DPD holds the following WWC pillar goals and objectives as being most relevant to environmental justice:

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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

Objective 2.1 Support Chicago’s economic clusters that have high potential for growth and benefit Chicagoans and their neighborhoods.

LIFELONG LEARNING

Goal 2: Create new sustainable educational pathways to the workforce, especially for Black, Latino and Native American residents and those negatively affected by the criminal-legal system.

Objective 2.2 Strengthen the capacity of workforce training programs and partnerships for people negatively affected by the criminal-legal system.

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

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

Objective 3.1 Make freight corridors safe for all, prioritizing the safety of people walking, using transit and biking.

Objective 3.2 Mitigate the health, safety and environmental burdens caused by trains, trucks and delivery vehicles.

| Action Steps | Timeline | Status |
|---|-------------------|-------------|
| Engage stakeholders on potential SDP strategies and process | Q2 2022 – Q2 2023 | On-going |
| Release draft SDP for public review | Q2 2023 | Not started |
| Informational presentations and public comment | Q3 2023 | Not started |
| Finalize SDP and implement update | Q4 2023 | Not started |
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Community Input & Response

Community Input:

There were not any specific comments related to the Sustainable Development Policy. 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:

The intent of the Sustainable Development Policy is to incorporate sustainable elements and technologies into redevelopment projects. DPD is working on incorporating strategies to help mitigate impacts of industrial projects and strategies that may have broader community benefits associated with public health, housing and stormwater management.