

To: Calumet River Fleeting Development Team

From: River Ecology and Governance Task Force Development Review Working Group

Date: April 14, 2023

The River Ecology and Governance Task Force Development Review Working Group appreciated the opportunity to learn about and provide input on the Calumet River Fleeting Property proposal located at 3025 E 104th St. on April 4, 2023. The presentation provided Task Force members with an overview of the proposal including the site's history, use, context, and current landscape plans to comply with the Calumet Design Guidelines as required. Following the development team's presentation there was a 'Question & Answer' session that allowed Task Force members to highlight specific areas of the plan, ask clarifying questions, and provide general feedback verbally and via an online form.

The following comments are representative of the group's input and include summaries of both the written and verbal responses from meeting participants.

Our understanding of the Calumet River Fleeting site plan proposal

The business has been on the site for 20 years, and is a barge and vessel maintenance and cleaning facility that provides services for marine transport and other watercraft. The current business owner wishes to reapply for a license and is therefore required to file a Planned Development application and to bring the site into compliance with the relevant City guidelines and policies. The site is considered a river-dependent use and therefore is exempt from some of the requirements of the Calumet Design Guidelines, including river edge setbacks. The tenants plan to add landscape, improve a parking lot, and incorporate sustainability components to the building. There is an existing building on the site, and no additions to the building are planned. There are plans to add approximately 3,000 square feet of paved parking surface, 16 new canopy trees, bicycle parking, an EV readiness station, and native plantings.

Project-specific recommendations for the development team from the REGTF Development Review Working Group

- **Filter runoff using nature-based stormwater solutions before it enters the Calumet River:** We acknowledge that extensive stormwater management is not required for this project, but due to its close proximity to the Calumet River, we encourage the site's stormwater to be directed through a landscaped rain garden or bioswale to slow and filter the water before it is released into the river. Additionally, in the parking areas and gravel lot areas, landscaped strips or medians and/or porous pavement can help with stormwater management. Rain gardens can also serve to expand habitat for insects, birds and other river wildlife if they are planted with a diverse array of native plants and shrubs. We also recommend that the site owner have a strategy for securing trash receptacles and collecting litter that can blow or be washed into the river during storms. Floatable plastics

continue to be a challenge for our waterways and can be captured with filtering storm drains and other practices.

- **Ensure that new landscape and trees succeed by preparing soil and understanding potentially contaminated run-off from neighboring uses:** We understand that there has been no history of heavy industrial use on this site, however, the neighboring uses raise concerns of soil contamination and/or contaminated run-off that could harm the planned new landscape areas. It is recommended that proper soil preparations including soil amendments and appropriate soil volumes in the landscape areas (especially for trees) be undertaken to ensure that the plants are able to thrive and provide the intended benefits.
- **Plan for a diverse planting palette of native plants, trees, and shrubs and a maintenance plan to support their growth:** We appreciate the plans to add landscape area with 16 canopy trees on the site, and would recommend that this landscaped area include variety of native trees, shrubs, and plants to provide pollinator and bird habitat area. Small landscape patches like these may seem insignificant, but can provide much needed micro-habitat for birds, insects, and other wildlife. Please refer to planting lists provided in the appendix of the [Calumet Design Guidelines found here](#) or this plant guide from [Friends of the Chicago River](#). Wafer ash is a shrub that does well in limey sites.

In order to ensure the survival of the new plantings, we recommend moving the planted area and trees to a location away from potential sources of off site contamination (such as the salt storage to the north and lime storage to the west). It is also important that the vegetation is taken care of in the early stages of growth. It is recommended that the development team also work with a landscape contractor to plan for a tree and vegetation maintenance strategy to ensure that trees reach full growth potential.

Additional comments for the Department of Planning and Development with regards to compliance with the Sustainable Development Policy (SDP)

In response to this development team's proposed compliance with the SDP, we would like to see the project implement menu options that are more relevant to the environmental opportunities of this site's unique location along the Calumet River. While EV readiness, bike racks, and low-water-usage plumbing fixtures are important sustainability features, we feel that other menu items that would have been more applicable to this river edge property, such as:

- Stormwater management BMPs and nature-based solutions to capture and filter run-off, while providing habitat.
- A low-cost green roof such as a retrofit pan system could capture additional rainfall, reduce heat island effect, support good air quality, and provide pollinator habitat.

- A transition to electric equipment use, which we understand may be incorporated into future iterations of the SDP. This approach could be particularly relevant for uses like the one proposed here, that could utilize electric forklifts and other equipment which would result in a significant environmental benefit.

Lastly, we would also like to emphasize that the REGTF does not represent the perspective of the broader community or other local stakeholders, but rather a vision for improved rivers citywide. In the spirit of transparency, we feel that the Alderperson and/or DPD should engage other relevant stakeholders and community residents about the proposed changes to this site.

Thank you for taking the time to present to the River Ecology and Governance Task Force Development Review Working Group. We appreciate the opportunity to provide feedback in the planned development process and look forward to the ongoing coordination as the project moves on to future phases. We hope that implementing the above recommendations can be mutually beneficial for the development team, community residents, and the river itself. We welcome the opportunity for feedback, offer our services in the future, and look forward to your responses and collaboration.

Sincerely,

River Ecology Governance Task Force
Development Review Working Group