

## 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.*

<b>ENVIROMENTAL JUSTICE ACTION PLAN</b>
<p><b>Department Name – Action Name:</b> DPD – Planned Development Engagement Standards</p>
<p><b>Department Scope and Authorities:</b>            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 Chicago Plan Commission (MCC §§ 2-120-370) reviews Planned Development (PD) applications, Lake Michigan and Chicago Lakefront Protection applications, proposed zoning map amendments within designated industrial corridors, and interagency referral items.</p>
<p><b>Environmental Justice Strategy:</b>            DPD will initiate a <b><i>review of its community engagement standards for planned developments</i></b> as an implementation step for the recently adopted We Will Chicago citywide framework plan. This review process will include updates to internal checklists, materials required of applicants and possible enhancement to notices for public meetings. Per MCC 17-8-0903, all planned developments going forward need to be consistent with the goals and objectives of We Will Chicago. After completing the review process through the We Will Chicago framework, DPD will commit to putting forward a proposal for community engagement and updated materials available for public comment.</p>
<p><b>Supporting Department(s):</b>            DPD may need to collaborate across multiple departments (including the Department of Transportation, the Department of Buildings, and others) to accomplish this strategy.</p>
<p><b>Impact Measures:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete review of existing practices related to engagement</li> <li>• Creation of development project engagement standards</li> <li>• Creation of development project status website / transparency materials</li> </ul>

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### 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:

#### CIVIC & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Goal #2: Increase public access and participation in civic and democratic processes.

Goal #3: Improve government transparency and Chicagoans' access to data.

#### 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.

#### HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOODS

Goal 3: Attract and retain residents and increase density to strengthen neighborhood vibrancy, especially on the South and West Sides.

Action Steps	Timeline	Status
Release Task Order Request (similar to RFP) to engage consultant team	Q1 2023	Completed
Engage community stakeholders, ward offices, and developers to understand current development engagement practices	Q2 – Q3 2023	Not started
Develop engagement best practices	Q3 – Q4 2023	Not started

### Community Input & Response

**Community Input:** Multiple comments from the community input sessions related to providing more meaningful opportunities for community voices to be heard and for community residents to provide input into planning and zoning decision processes. Many of the comments were presented as quotes and summarized points directed specifically to DPD or through general comments/questions. These comments were summarized in the

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Preliminary Public Input document that was prepared for CDPH and OCEE by their consultant team. A sample of those comments and points are below.

- Provide more opportunities for community voices to be heard in zoning reform, zoning decisions and environmental improvement projects.
- Need changes to City zoning and planning practices.
- “Often times, the financial and practical considerations of development and industry are thought of as separate from environmental and health concerns but they are all related to the quality of life in neighborhood communities and the larger city.”
- Need more meaningful, community-driven decision-making. Involve the community and listen to their input before decisions are made (address perception of community input after things are a “done deal”)
- Make sure to include businesses in community decisions. Businesses and community at the same table.
- All meetings should be language accessible (translated) and should have some form of food and childcare to incentivize single parent household participation
- Meet residents in their communities with materials that are easily digestible for them.
- Listen and stop ignoring people and groups on the Southwest side.
- Improve community engagement overall.
- “I would love to have more community input in these processes, though I do worry about NIMBY-like folks and folks who don’t believe these implementations are necessary. Maybe it would be possible to specify different community input events so that they aren’t open forums for people to complain and hold up the process for necessary change. A lot of extremely positive environmental work will be an annoyance for some businesses, drivers, and some landlords.”
- “Please make sure any community engagement is FULLY ACCESSIBLE. Countless times, I cannot speak out because the meetings are not physically accessible.”
- Will your Assessment include input from all stakeholders, including members of the business community that perform the essential functions of any modern society such as recycling?
- Data sharing from all departments. People need to know what’s happening in their community.

### **Response to Community Input:**

*This is helpful insight that highlights the need to make zoning and planning information and engagement processes more accessible to a wider variety of people and stakeholders. DPD is currently reviewing existing community engagement requirements and practices being applied today and will continue to consider this information as we move towards developing process improvement recommendations.*