

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: AIS EHS Vacant Lot Reduction Program		
<p>Department Scope and Authorities: <i>Based on your internal power audit, what specific authorities does your department have that can help to improve and protect the environment, health, and quality of life in EJ communities?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AIS EHS has the authority to investigate and remediate properties in the City, unilaterally and in cooperation with public and private entities 		
<p>Environmental Justice Strategy: <i>Departments are encouraged to consider strategies that will improve existing conditions for EJ communities and/or prevent future impacts. Describe your strategy with attention to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What specific change do you propose to a department policy, process, practice, and/or budget?</i> • <i>What EJ community concern(s) does this strategy address (see Community Input Assessment-Key Findings)?</i> • <i>How will this strategy minimize burdens and/or maximize benefits for EJ communities?</i> 		
Proposed Change to Improve Existing Conditions/ Prevent Impact	EJ Community Concern	Minimize burdens/Maximize benefits
<p>For the Vacant Lot Reduction Program, utilize Historical Environmental Review data to prioritize investigation and sampling of City-owned vacant lots. Add EJ GIS layer to focus activities. Improve decision making on priorities, measurement, and transparency with community. Improve environmental health by removing toxins in the neighborhood to meet IEPA standards. Utilize the data to prevent the sale of contaminated land to residents.</p> <p><i>Currently underway, three additional FTEs are approved but unfilled, currently limited funding is available for sampling, \$600k in annual bond funding is in place for remediation through 2025.</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) EJ Focus Areas 2) Environmental Health 3) Socio-Economic Impact 4) Decision-making 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Minimize burdens by reducing polluted sites. 2) Find potential hidden toxins and prevent sale to residents without remediation or protection 3) Provides investment in communities. 4) Maximize transparency and community engagement in decision-making process.
<p>Supporting Department(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CDPH notifies AIS of EJ GIS layer changes; assists with assessing community health impacts from identified contamination, engaging with and providing education to the community on environmental contamination. • DPD provides information on other factors to help prioritize sites like proximity to sensitive receptors and green space; investigate opportunities to share limited environmental data through ChiBlockBuilder. • DPD and DOH will incorporate environmental requirements received from AIS for redevelopment agreements, RFPs, etc. 		

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Potential Impact Measures:

- Percentage of reviews (number); sampling conducted (\$); remediation conducted (\$) in EJ communities – 40% federal goal
- Amount of toxic material removed (number)

These Impact Measures will be shared with the community through a dashboard on the AIS EHS website. Additional methods of communication and data sharing will be identified with community input.

Related Department Investments & Prior Commitments:

Briefly describe current/planned initiatives related to this strategy – for example, through the Chicago Recovery Plan, Climate Action Plan, or We Will Chicago.

- \$5 million spent to evaluate approximately 10,000 vacant lots owned by the City through a Historical Environmental Review funded by Chicago Recovery Plan (CRP) and CDBG as part of Vacant Lot Reduction Program (VLRP).
- Additional \$7 million of CRP funding to support VLRP with further assessment of sites with concerns and staff.
- Total of \$88 million of CRP funding to support Community Development activities, which includes VLRP.

Action Steps	Timeline	Status
<i>Describe 2 or more specific actions that you will take to advance this strategy. At least one action step should discuss steps you will take to engage people who live in EJ communities to help you plan, implement, and evaluate the success of this strategy.</i>	<i>Note when this step is targeted to be completed</i>	<i>Note any progress to date</i>
Utilize Historical Environmental Review data to prioritize investigation and sampling of City-owned lots.	02/2023	Complete
Add EJ communities GIS layer to prioritize activities.	03/2023	Complete
Update EJ GIS layer after CDPH CIA completion	Q3/2023	Not started
Establish draft Impact Measure data collection, monitoring and reporting	09/2023	Started
Engage Environmental Equity Working Group to obtain guidance on community engagement content/timing	Q4/2023	Not started
Conduct work, reporting and engagement	2024-2026	
Complete additional investigation and sampling funded through CRP (end of bond program)	Q4/2026	

Community Input & Response

Community Input:

No AIS-specific input received. General community input applicable to AIS included calls for meaningful community engagement; transparency; easily digestible information; reinvestment in Environmental Justice communities; presence of toxic chemicals; minimum standards for pollution and contamination exposure; random, routine testing of air, water, soil; data sharing; and more specifics on the benefit to the community.

Response to Community Input:

Added an explicit commitment to engage with EEWG for direction on “meaningful community engagement.” Added content about transparency, educational materials, IEPA standards, data sharing, and benefit to the community.