



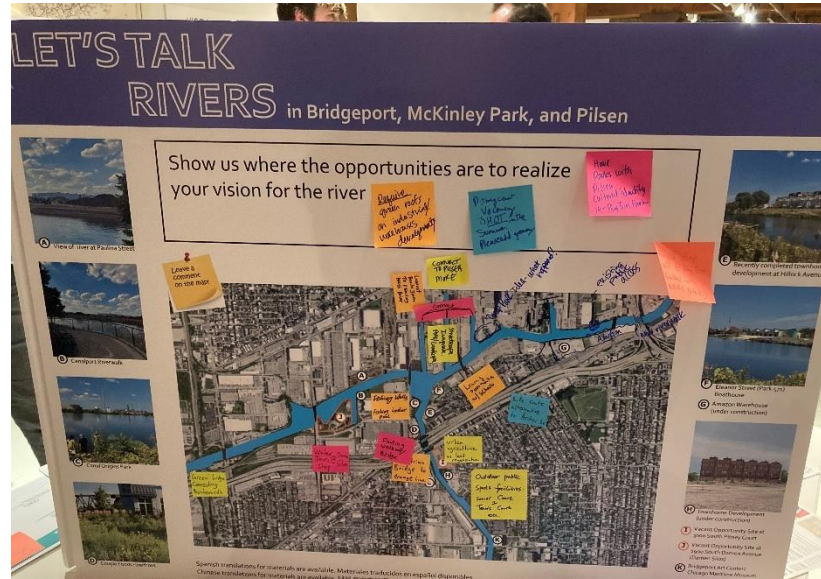
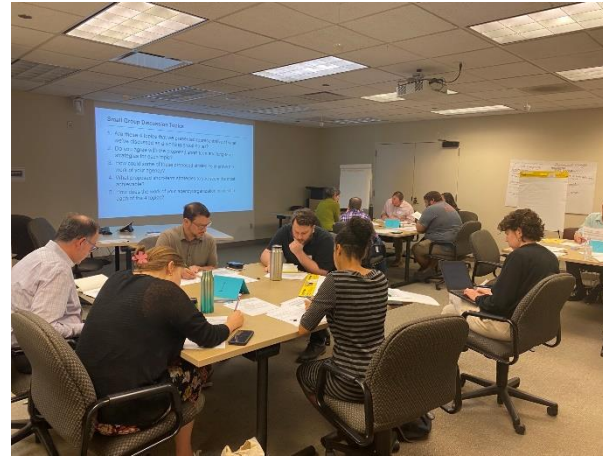
# River Ecology & Governance Task Force

March 18, 2025 3:00 PM – 4:30 PM

# Agenda

- 3:05 Calumet Land Use Plan and Design Guidelines Update and Discussion
- 3:50 2025 Task Force Work Plan Outcomes and Objectives
- 4:00 What are you working on this year?
- 4:15 Government Partner Project Updates
- 4:28 Project Challenges Check-in
- 4:30 Adjourn and 2025 Task Force Meeting Dates





- Established through an executive order in 2019
- Forum for river specific issues discussion, project coordination, and feedback
- Covers all riverfronts within the City limits (Calumet and Chicago River systems)
- Co-managed by the City's Department of Planning and Development, Metropolitan Planning Council, and Friends of the Chicago River

## City of Chicago: River Ecology & Governance Task Force

# River Ecology and Governance Task Force Objectives

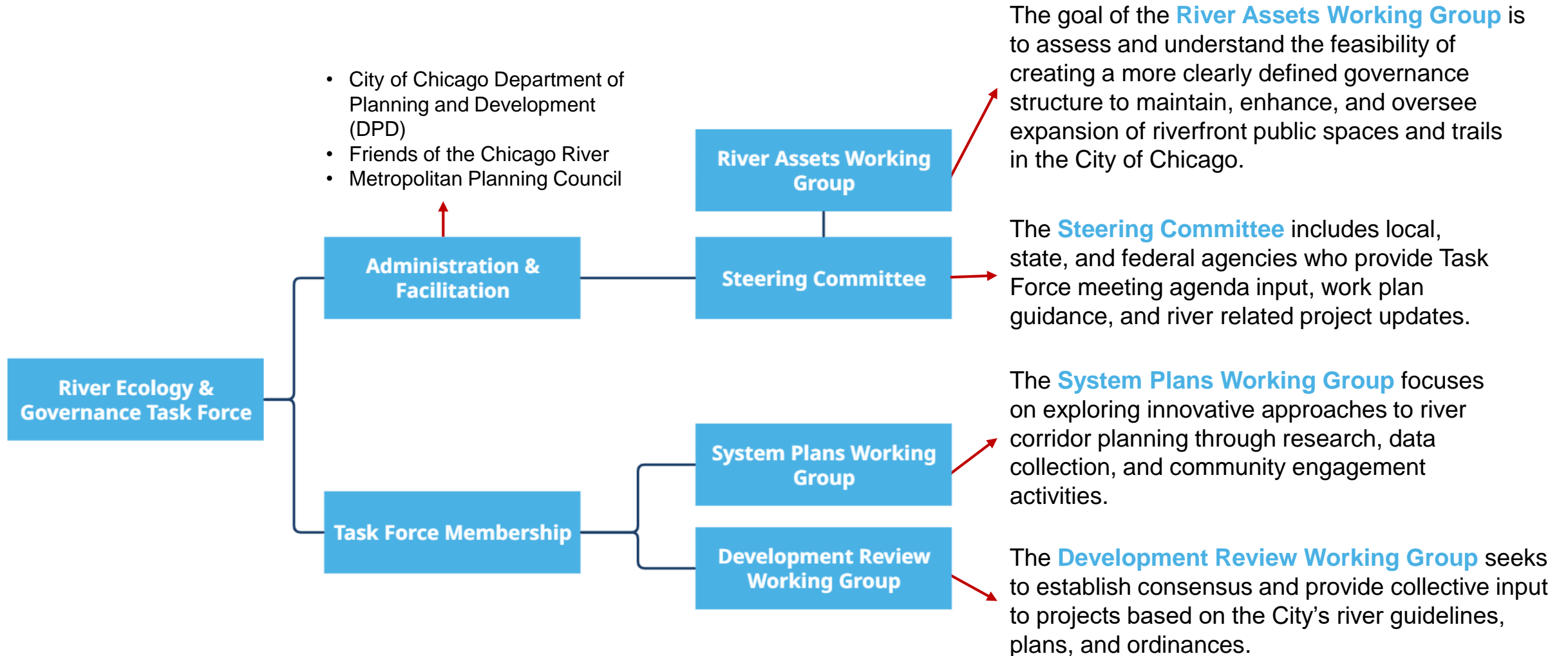
Transforming Chicago's unique waterway system into a **thriving and ecologically integrated natural asset**, capable of accommodating the needs of people, requires **coordinated planning**, investment and management.

Aspire to, and realize no later than 2040, inland waterways in Chicago that are **inviting, productive and living**, that **support wildlife in-stream and on their banks**, and that **contribute to our city's resiliency**



# River Ecology and Governance Task Force

## Current Structure Diagram





# Calumet Land Use Plan and Design Guidelines Update and Discussion

River Ecology and Governance Task Force



# **CALUMET AREA LAND USE PLAN & DESIGN GUIDELINES**

## **RIVER ECOLOGY GOVERNANCE TASK FORCE FOCUS GROUP MEETING**

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT  
COMMISSIONER CIERE BOATRIGHT

March 18, 2025

# Agenda

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1. Introduction  
[5 Minutes]

- **Team Introductions**
  - **Room Introductions**
- 

2. Project Overview  
[10 Minutes]

- **Project Overview**
  - **What is a land use plan?**
  - **What are design guidelines?**
- 

3. Riverfront Access Analysis  
[15 Minutes]

- **Land Use**
  - **Points of Interest**
  - **Vessel Access**
  - **Bike Access**
  - **Pedestrian Access**
- 

5. Next Steps  
[2 Minutes]

- **Next Steps**
-



1

# Introduction

## Agenda and Introductions

# Before we begin...



Mic is enabled



Camera is on (if possible)





# Instructions



Introduce yourself: Name, Organization, What spring activity are you looking forward to the most?

Craig Shillinglaw,  
Openlands, gardening

Coaching baseball

Adam Flickinger, Friends of  
the Chicago River. Soaking  
up sunshine.

Alex Perez, Active Trans,  
Biking on the lakefront  
trail

Angela Larsen, Alliance for  
the Great Lakes, splashing  
in muddy puddles (and  
gardening :)

Becky, Friends of the  
Chicago River,  
gardening

Lauren Umek, Chicago Park  
District - checking for spring  
ephemerals

Nick Wesley, Urban  
Rivers, Walking without  
layers



Introduce yourself: Name, Organization, What spring activity are you looking forward to the most?

Amy, Friends of the  
Chicago River, watching  
wildlife

Ryan Richter, Chicago  
Department of  
Transportation. Looking  
forward to spring break with  
my family next week

Phil Nicodemus - Urban  
Rivers - Cubs Games

Tara Jagadeesh, IDNR  
Coastal Program, lake  
walks

Lisa Thomas, DPD, looking  
for spring ephemerals in the  
forest preserves

Jered Pruitt, CASL,  
planting in my back yard.

Eladio Montenegro,  
Mckinley Park  
Development Council,  
grilling

Maggie Catania, Calumet  
Collaborative, is napping a  
spring activity?

Introduce yourself: Name, Organization, What spring activity are you looking forward to the most?

Eric Van Dreason, DPD.  
Biking around Chicago!

Alex Rosander, CTA,  
walks by the lake

Becky Rupel with Living  
Habitats. Getting out on the  
river in a kayak!

Margaret Lobbig, Argonne  
National Lab, most looking  
forward to (continuing) of  
plant my garden!

Angela Larsen, Alliance for  
the Great Lakes, splashing  
in muddy puddles (and  
gardening :)

Yessi Balcazar,  
Southeast  
Environmental Task  
Force, long walks

Beth Dybala Calumet Area  
Industrial Commission  
Sitting on my porch after a  
run

Sarah Tang. Coalition for a  
Better Chinese American  
Community. Excited to get  
gardening and biking!



Introduce yourself: Name, Organization, What spring activity are you looking forward to the most?

Pam Sielski, Forest  
Preserves of Cook  
County, gardening

Eve Miller, North River  
Commission, walking on  
the beach!

Jackie, City of Chicago,  
starting to plant my  
garden!

Krista, Ross Barney  
Architects, dining  
outdoors

kayaking the river!!

Christina Harris, MPC,  
running outside by lake

Daniel Goldfarb, director  
ecosystem restoration at  
Tandem Global (formerly  
WHC) and hiking in spring!

Jack Paul Rocha UIC Great  
Cities Institute Passing time  
until it is Winter again.

Introduce yourself: Name, Organization, What spring activity are you looking forward to the most?

Michelle Uting, Forest Preserves of Cook County, looking forward to seeing and hearing more birds

Xochyl Perez, Southeastern Environmental Task Force. Spring activity I look forward to is running outdoors again

Laura Guderyahn, Field Museum, catching frogs

Kate Eakin, McKinley Park Development Council Kayaking!

Alaina M. Bridges, CDOT. To see the flowers bloom and warmer weather!

# Why are we here today?

- ➊ Discuss potential opportunity sites for Calumet River access.
- ➋ Discuss the considerations for river access at potential sites.
- ➌ Begin to discuss potential programming for the sites.



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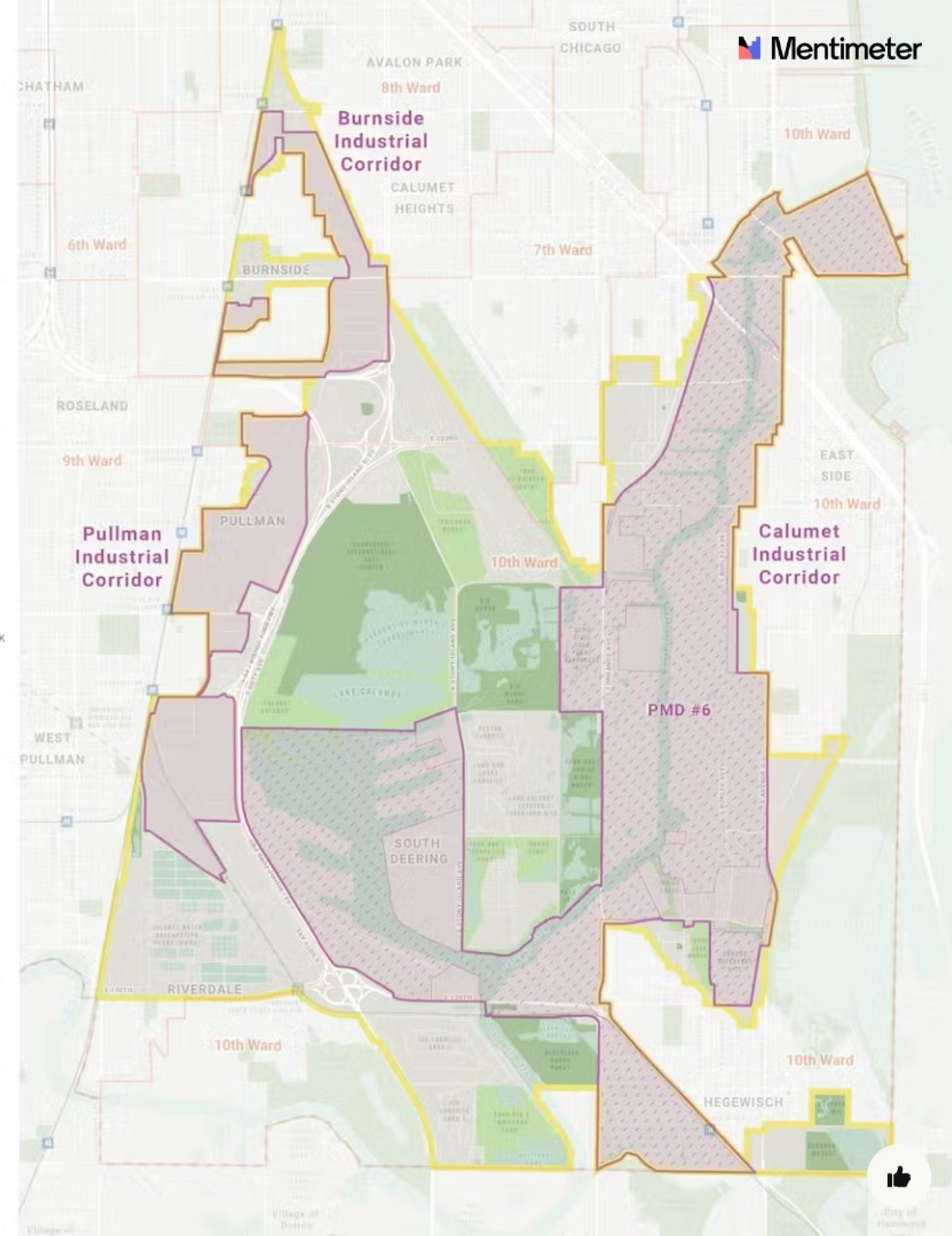
# Plan Overview

# Plan Overview

Part of DPD's citywide industrial corridor planning initiative, the **Calumet Area Land Use Plan and Design Guidelines Update** includes the Calumet, Burnside, and Pullman Industrial Corridors, along with additional industrial areas adjacent to those corridors.

The two-year planning process will update the 2002 Calumet Area Land Use Plan and 2004 Calumet Design Guidelines to establish a 10- to 20-year vision for the region that ensures **future development balances economic, job creation, health & safety, and environmental goals.**

The plan's design guidelines will incorporate best practices and new technologies related to landscape, stormwater, site and building design, and sustainability, with a particular focus on the negative impacts of air and noise pollution.





# What is a Land Use Plan

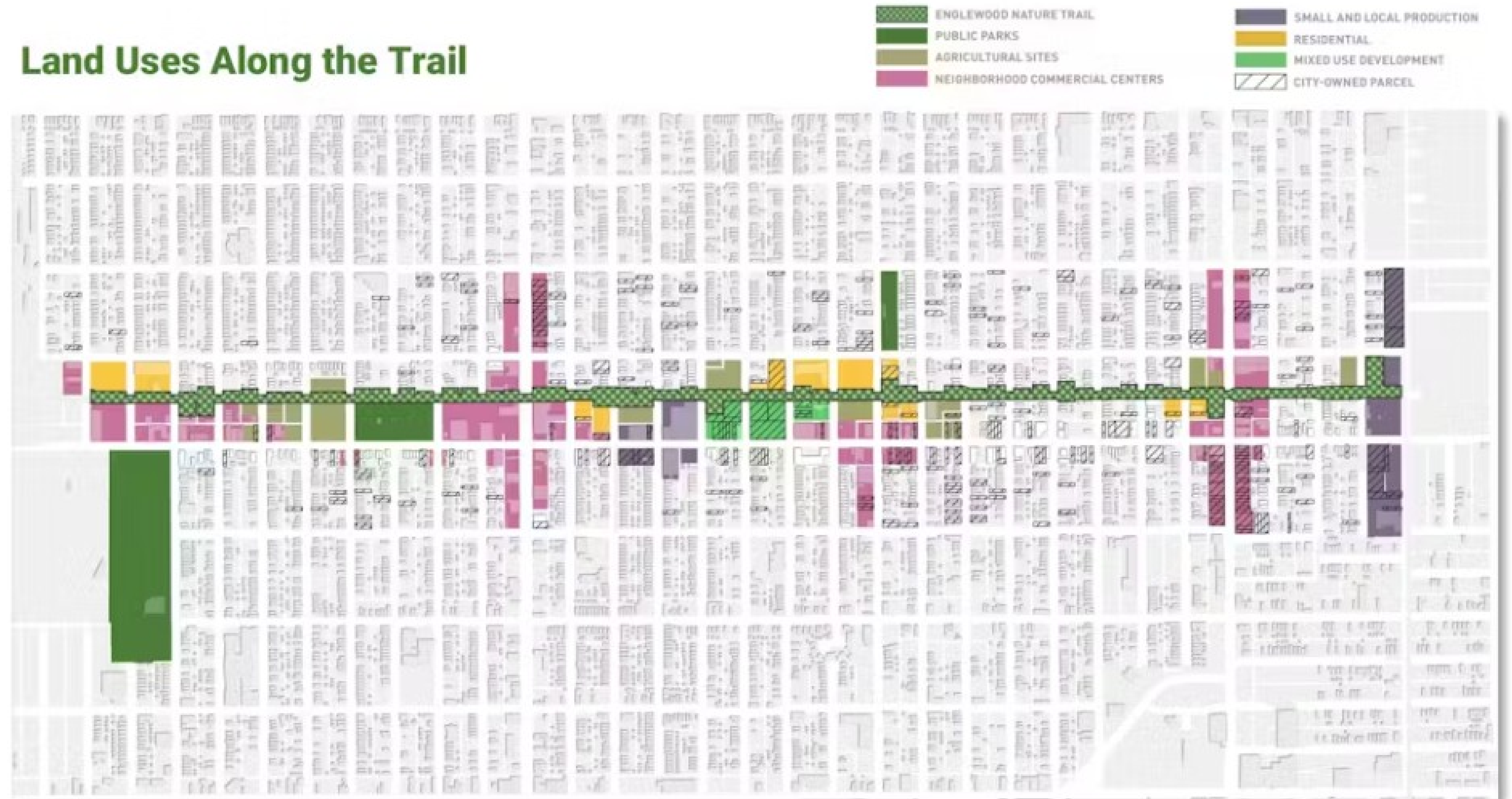
## Overview

A land use plan is a planning tool that **communicates a community's vision for how a collection of properties should be used.**

The plan details specific recommendations for each type of use (e.g., industrial, open space, commercial, etc.).

Plan recommendations may include:

- Types of Land Use
- Zoning changes
- Transportation and Infrastructure investments
- Policies, programs, and more



Source: Englewood Agro-Eco District Land Use Plan



# What are Design Guidelines

## Overview

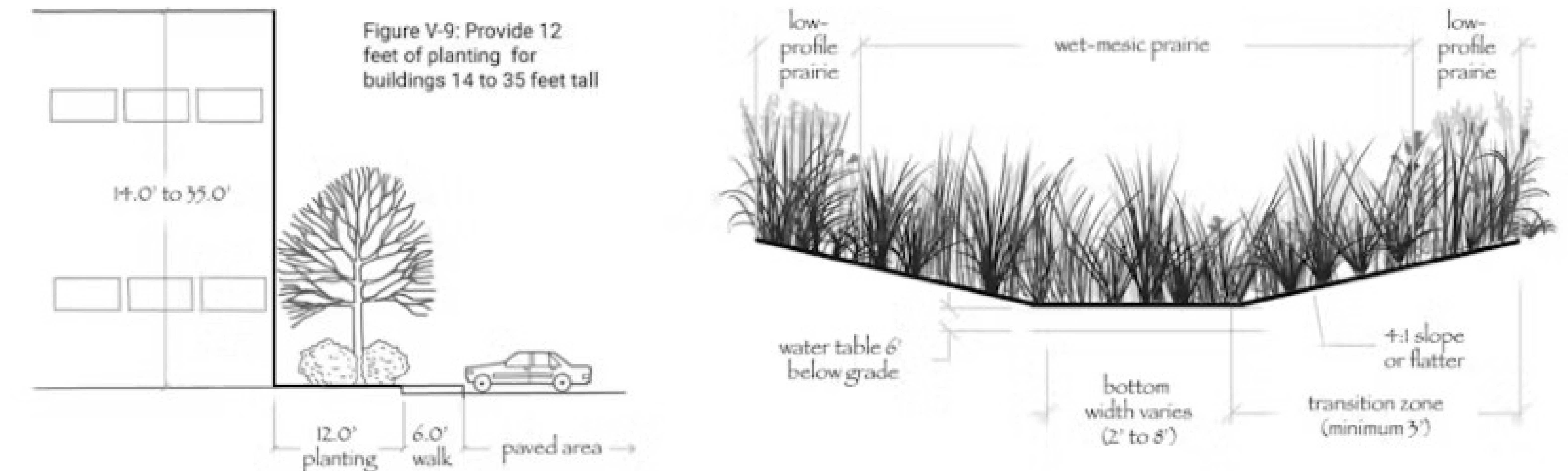
Design guidelines are a set of recommendations that shape to the **physical form of an individual property**.

Design Guidelines apply to new development, redevelopment, and expansion.

Not all elements are strictly required; requirements vary by code.

Design guidelines may cover such topics as:

- **Site Design:** Building orientation, layout, open space, parking and services
- **Building Design:** Bulk / massing, height, architectural expression
- **Landscape:** Plant species, fences, soil treatments, lighting and amenities
- **Sustainability:** Stormwater management, renewable energy, climate change resilience



Source: Calumet Design Guidelines, City of Chicago, 2004



Source: Industrial Area Design Guidelines, City of San Francisco, 2001

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# **Riverfront Access Analysis**

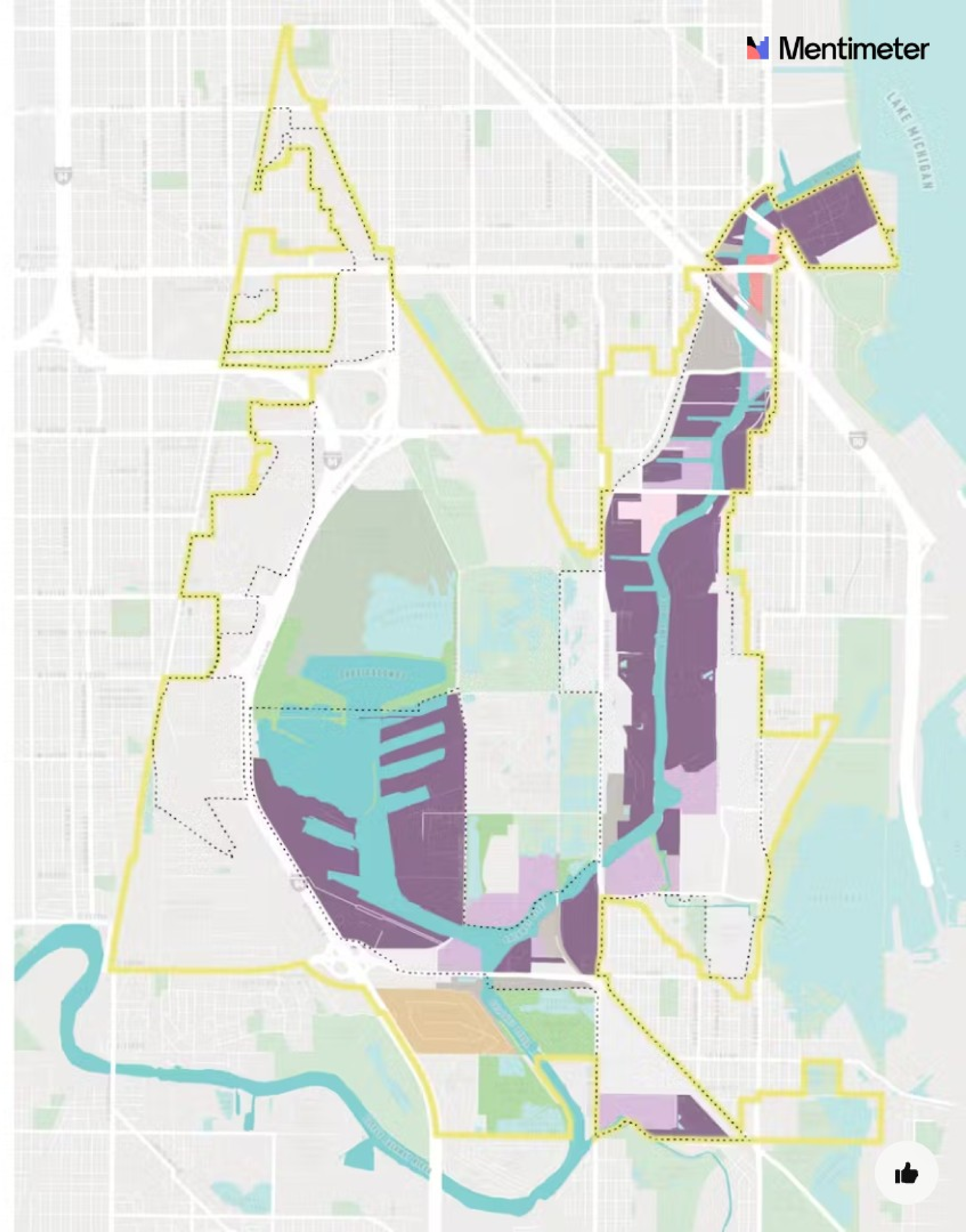


# Land Use

## Existing Riverfront Properties

The predominant land use present across river-adjacent parcels today is industrial.

- Intensive industrial:
  - Calumet River between 100<sup>th</sup> and 122<sup>nd</sup>
  - Lake Calumet (IIPD)
- Light industrial:
  - Calumet River between 122<sup>nd</sup> and 130<sup>th</sup>
  - Some between 100<sup>th</sup> and 106<sup>th</sup>



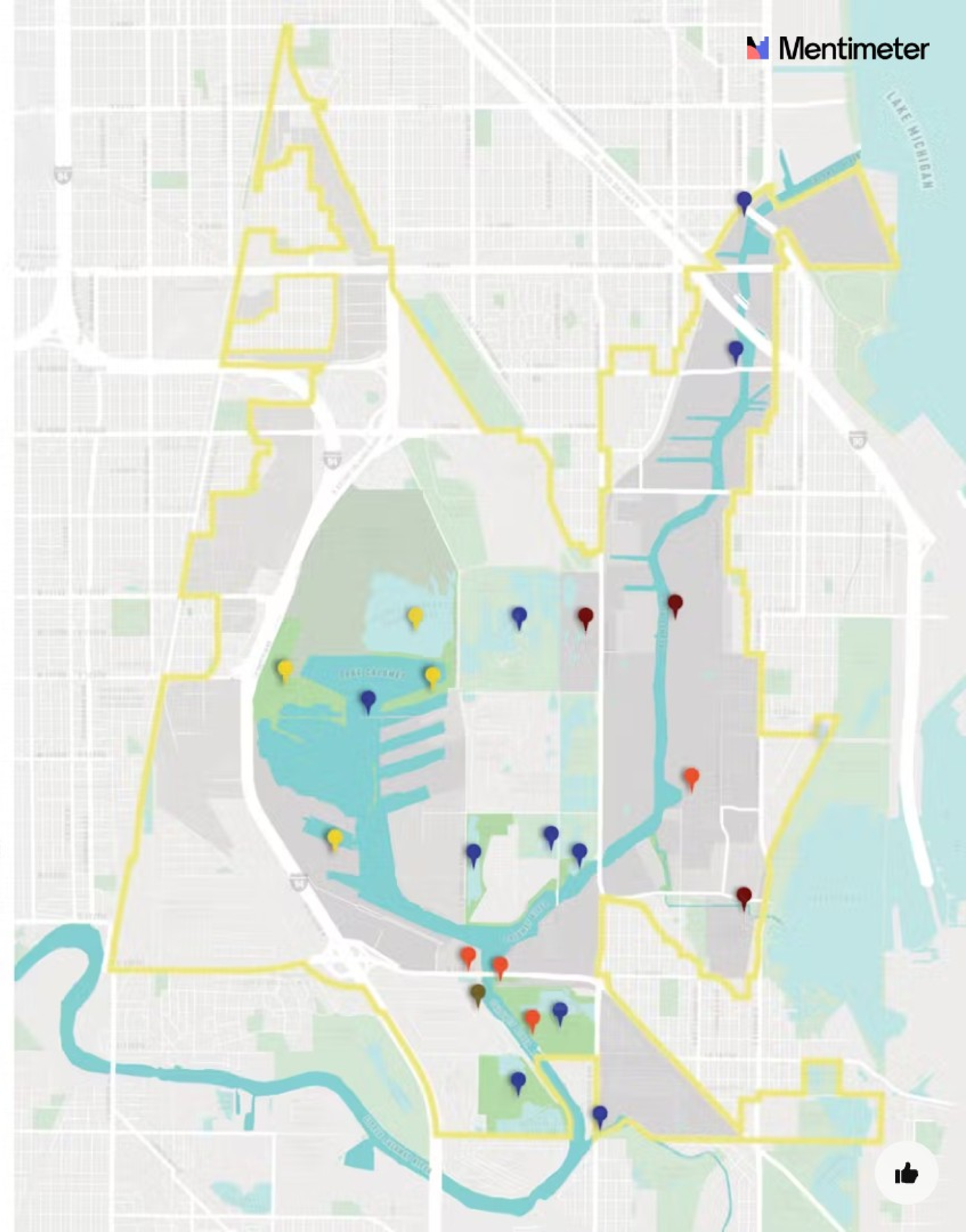


# Points of Interest

## Previously Proposed Improvements

Past planning efforts have pinpointed potential areas for river access or investment across the Calumet River, Lake Calumet, and the Little Calumet.

- Chicago Waterways Restoration Framework Plan
- IIPD Master Plan
- Hegewisch Neighborhood Plan
- Calumet River Communities Plan
- Little Calumet River Conservation Action Plan
- Friends of the Chicago River tracking



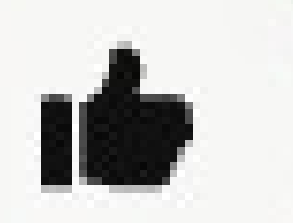
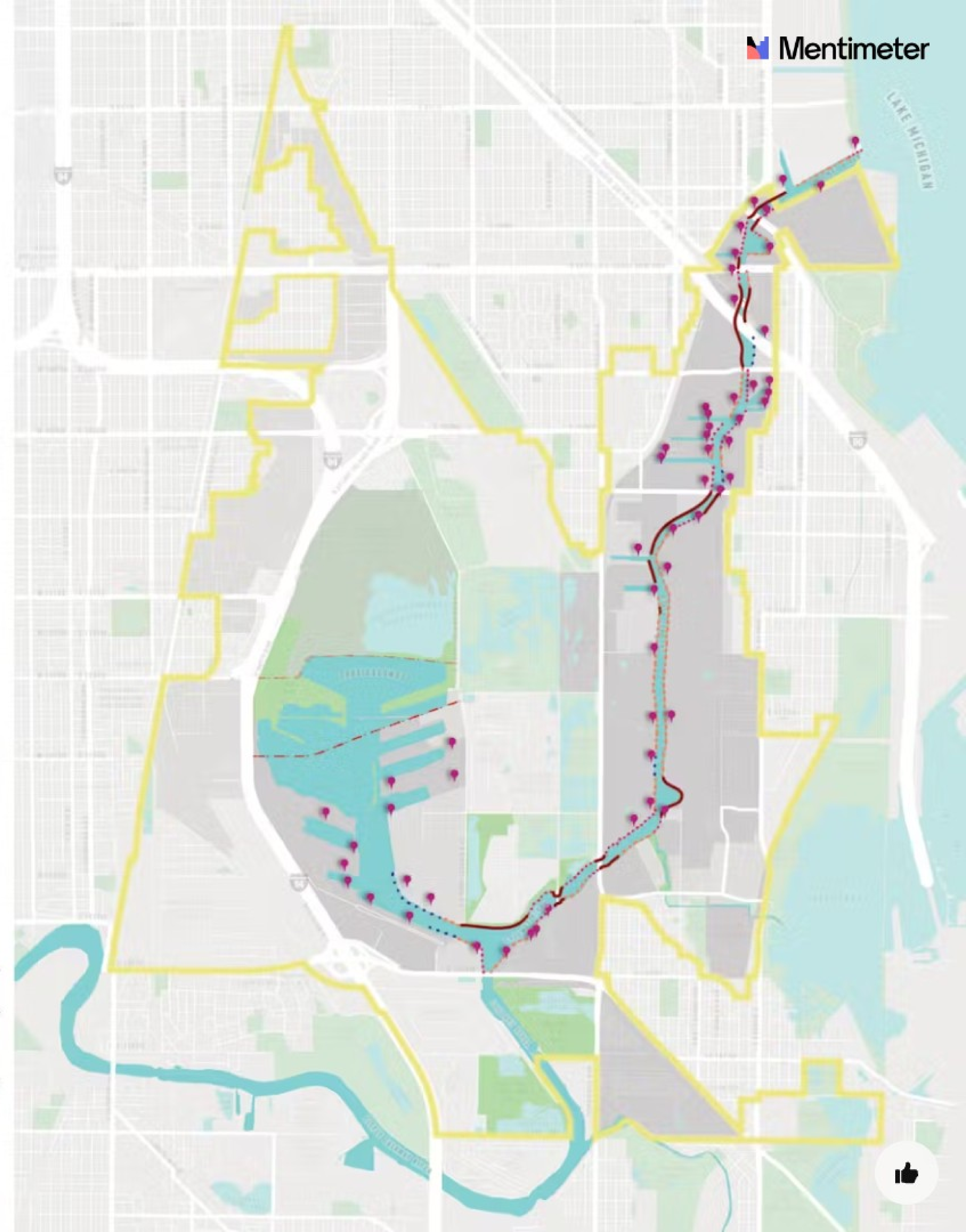


# Vessel Access

## Barge Docks and Mooring

Significant barge and vessel activity along Calumet River and into Lake Calumet.

- 55+ barge docking locations
- Most stretches of the Calumet River allow mooring of vessels up to 75ft wide
  - Some sections allow 105ft wide; others limit to 35ft wide or do not allow any mooring



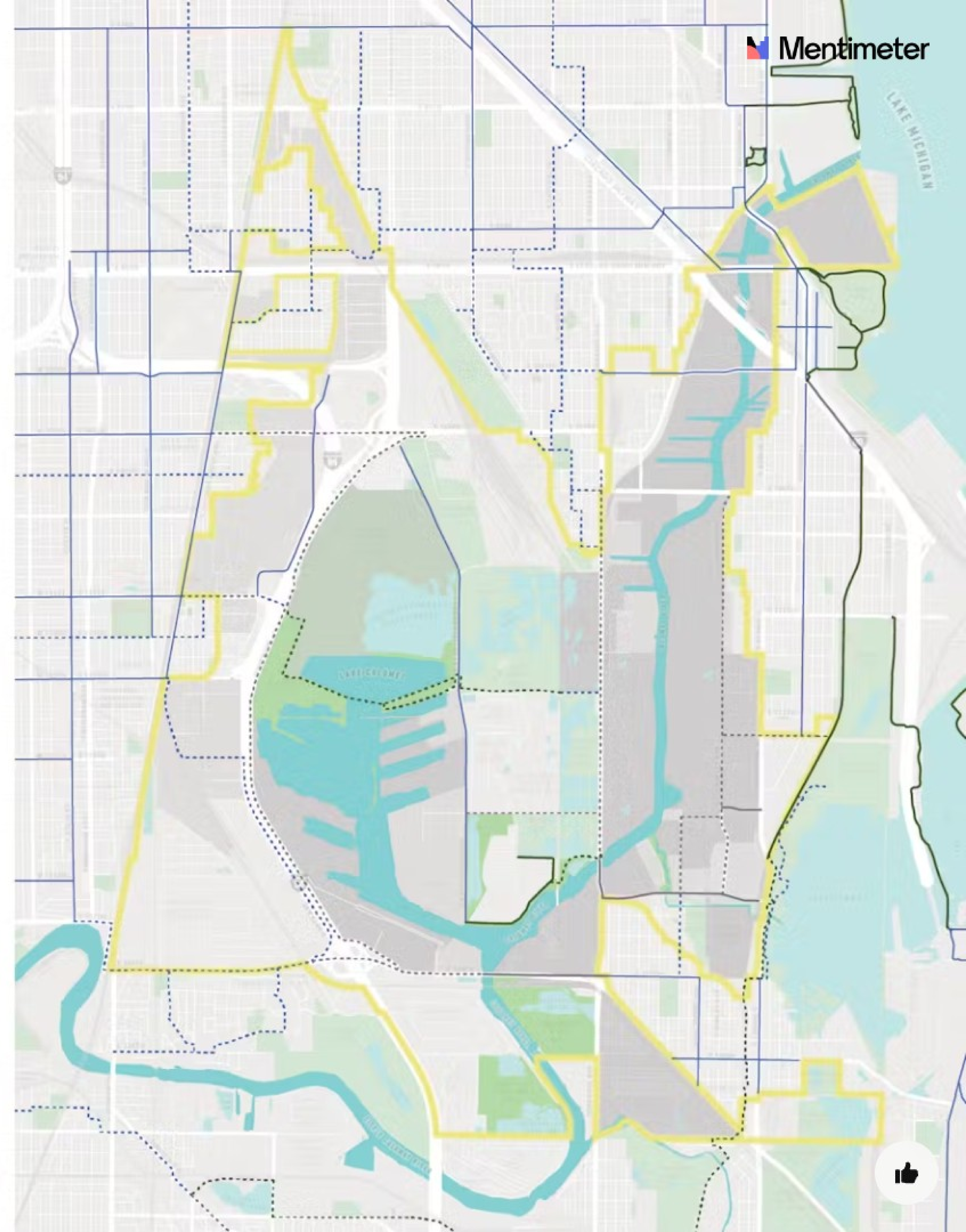


# Bike Access

## Existing and Previously Proposed

Previously proposed additions to the cycling networks would connect across both Lake Calumet and the Calumet River at key points.

- Sidepaths on Torrence Ave and 130<sup>th</sup> Street would better connect Riverdale and Hegewisch to the Calumet River
- IIPD Lake Calumet crossing would connect east and west sides shorelines



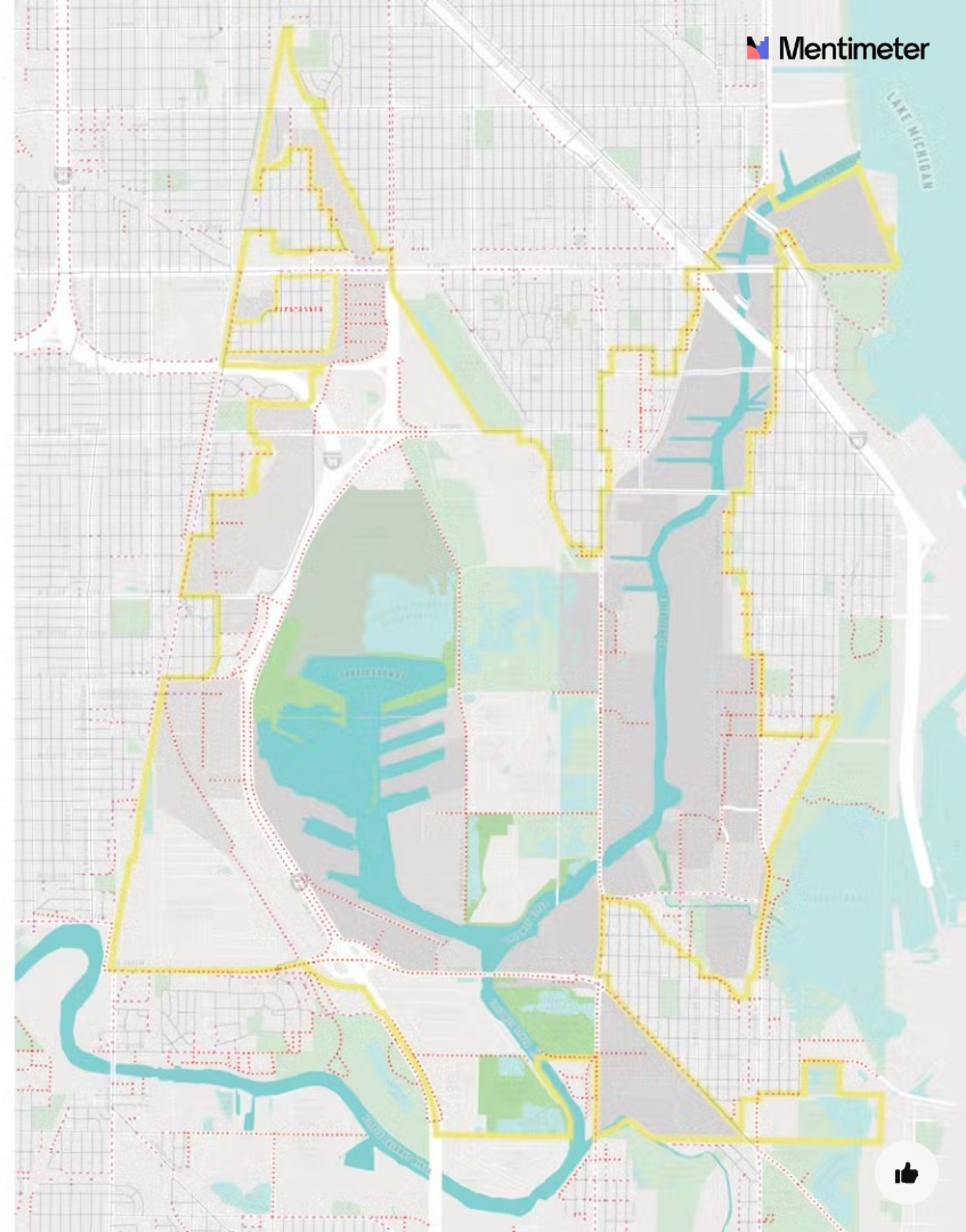
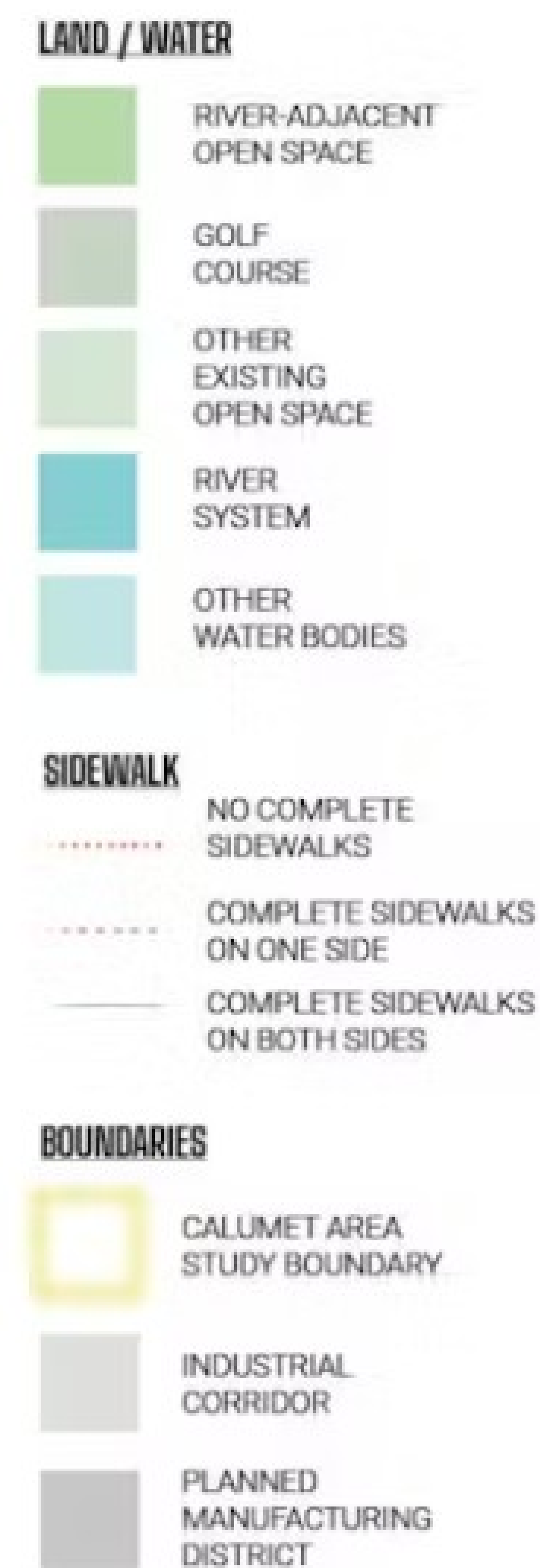


# Pedestrian Access

## Existing and Gaps

There are gaps in sidewalk infrastructure across the study area, particularly in areas that might provide pedestrians with access to the River.

- Stony Island Ave
- Torrence Ave
- Doty Ave
- 103<sup>rd</sup> St
- 130<sup>th</sup> St





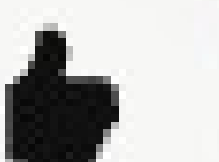
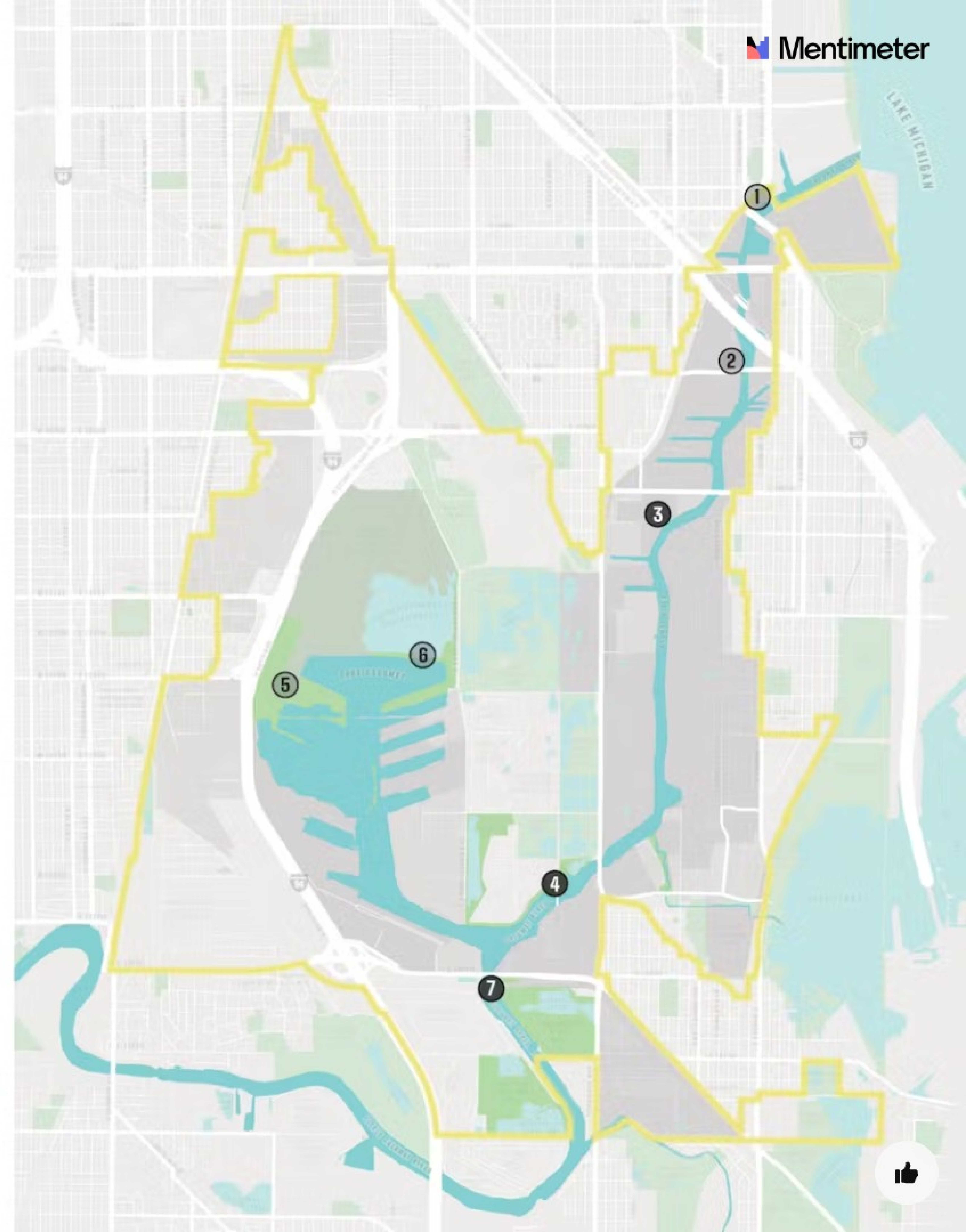
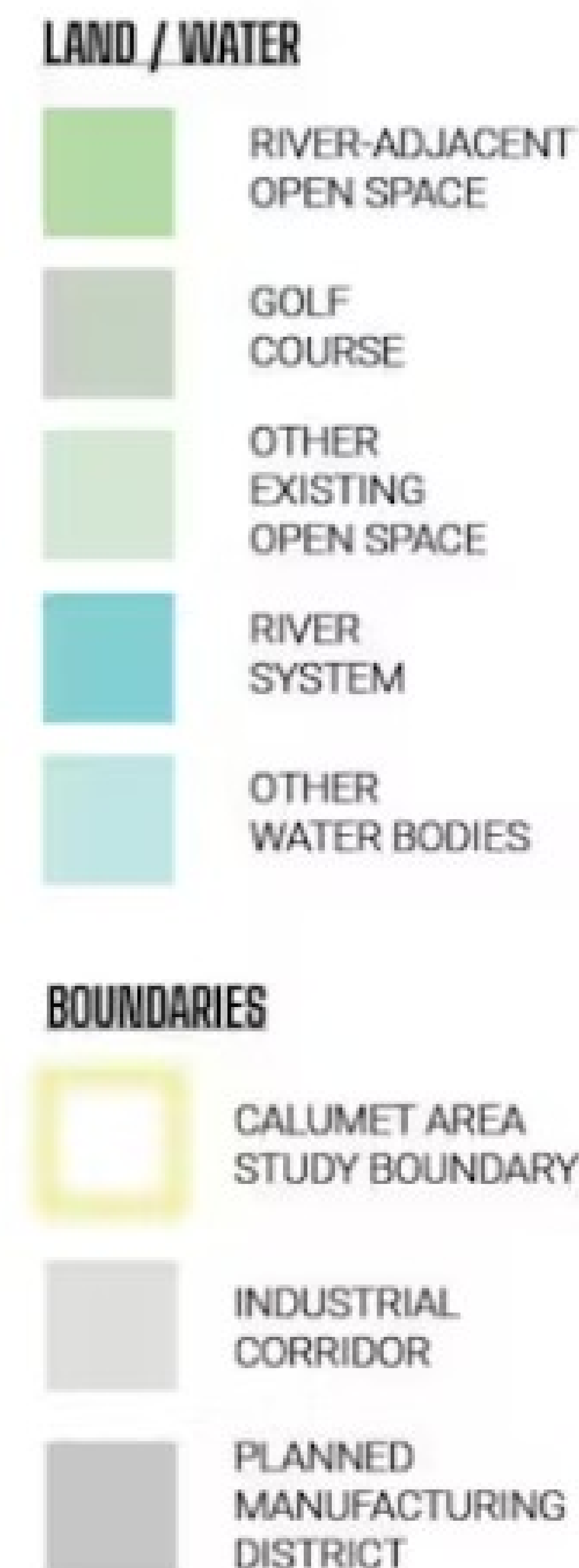
# Opportunity Sites

Sites that are appropriate for potential riverfront access based on:

- Compatible land uses (vacant / open space)
- Previously identified in prior plan(s)
- Limited barge interference
- Potential for bike / pedestrian connections

- ① Ewing Ave\* – *Claretian Associates / Neighborspace*
- ② 100<sup>th</sup> Street Site\* – *UIC Great Cities Institute*
- ③ **Former Wisconsin Steel Site**
- ④ **SEPA #1 / Auto Warehousing Lot**
- ⑤ Calumet Gateway\* – *IIPD Master Plan*
- ⑥ Square Marsh / Finger District\* – *IIPD Master Plan*
- ⑦ **Hegewisch Marsh / CID Landfill**

\*Site covered by prior / ongoing visioning process





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# Opportunity Sites



# Opportunity Site #3

## Former Wisconsin Steel Site

**Address:** 10802 S Calumet River

**Ownership:** Private

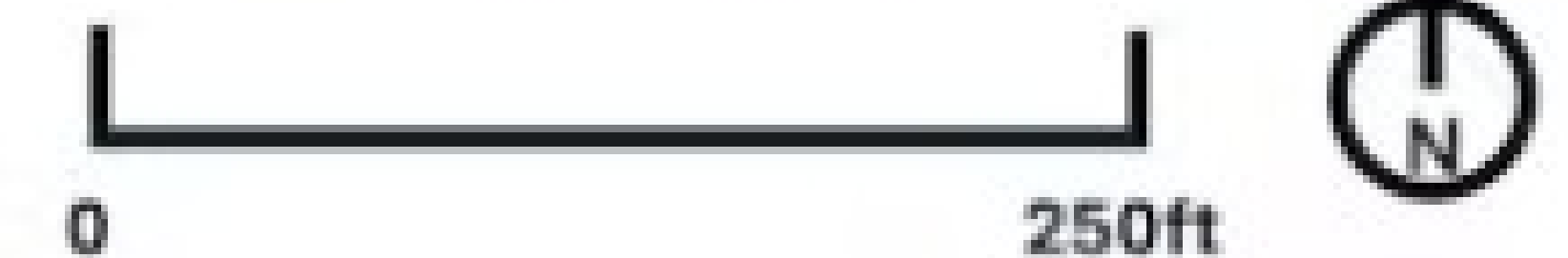
**Current use:** Vacant

**Why this site?:**

- Significant river frontage
- Currently used as informal open space
- Accessible from 106<sup>th</sup> St

**Challenges / considerations:**

- Surrounding industrial uses (views, odors, etc.)
- What is the appropriate future use of the rest of the site?





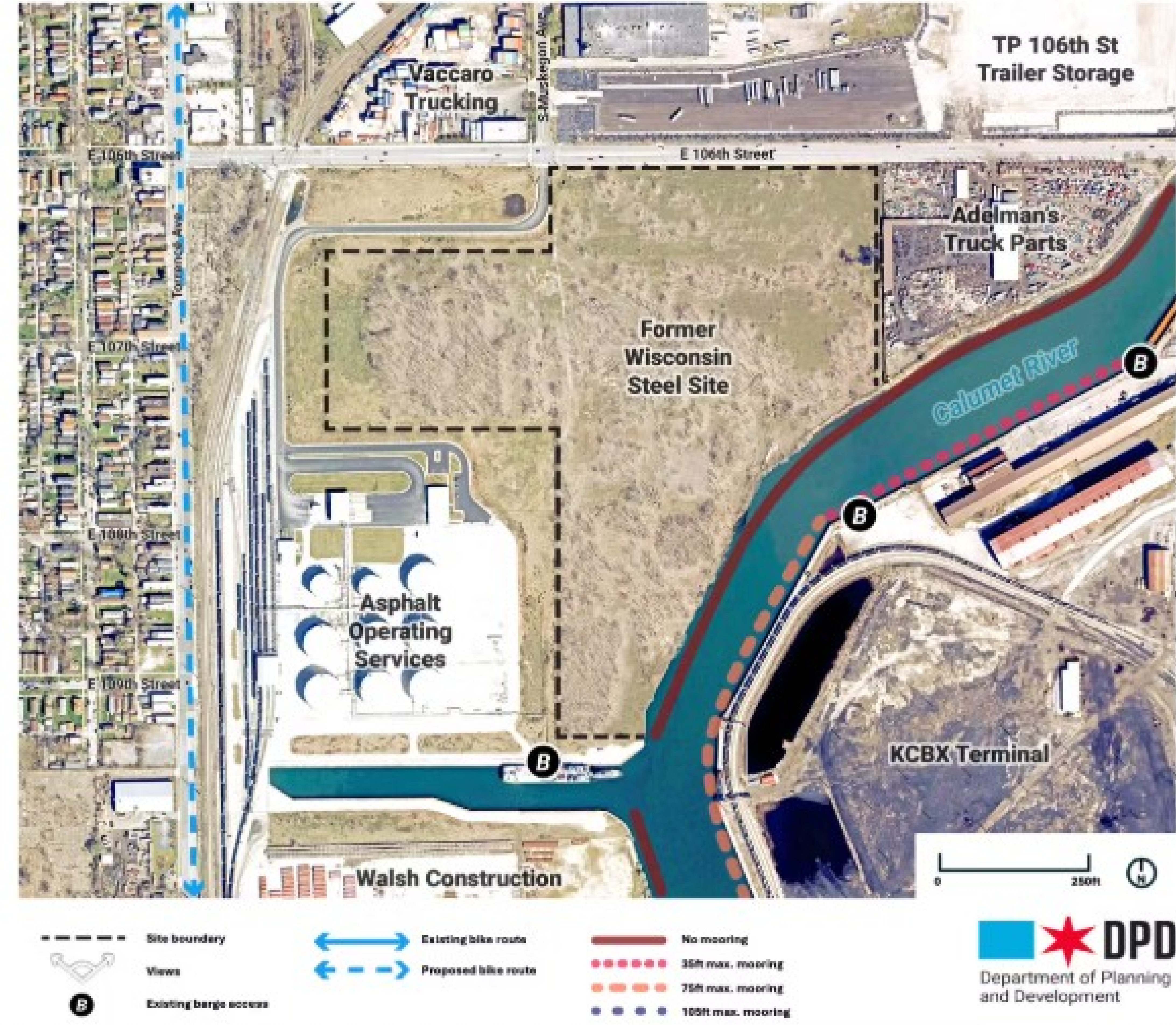
To what extent do you agree the site should be recommended for riverfront access?

Former Wisconsin Steel Site (2800 E 106th)

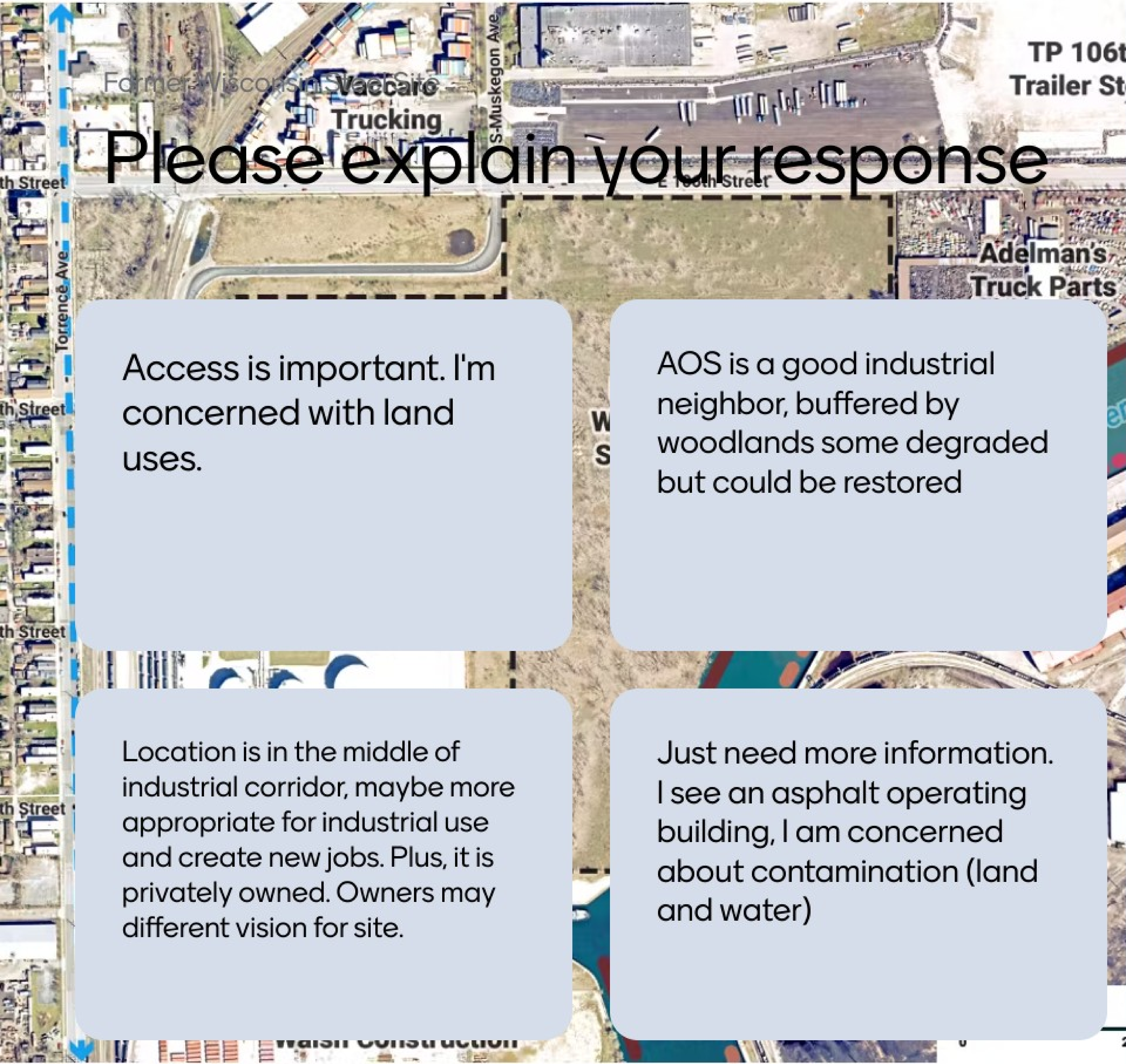
3.9

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree







Access is important. I'm concerned with land uses.

AOS is a good industrial neighbor, buffered by woodlands some degraded but could be restored

More opportunities for public access for recreation including fishing.

We live near an asphalt plant and it's a deterrent to enjoying the outdoors. I'm less familiar with this particular plant.

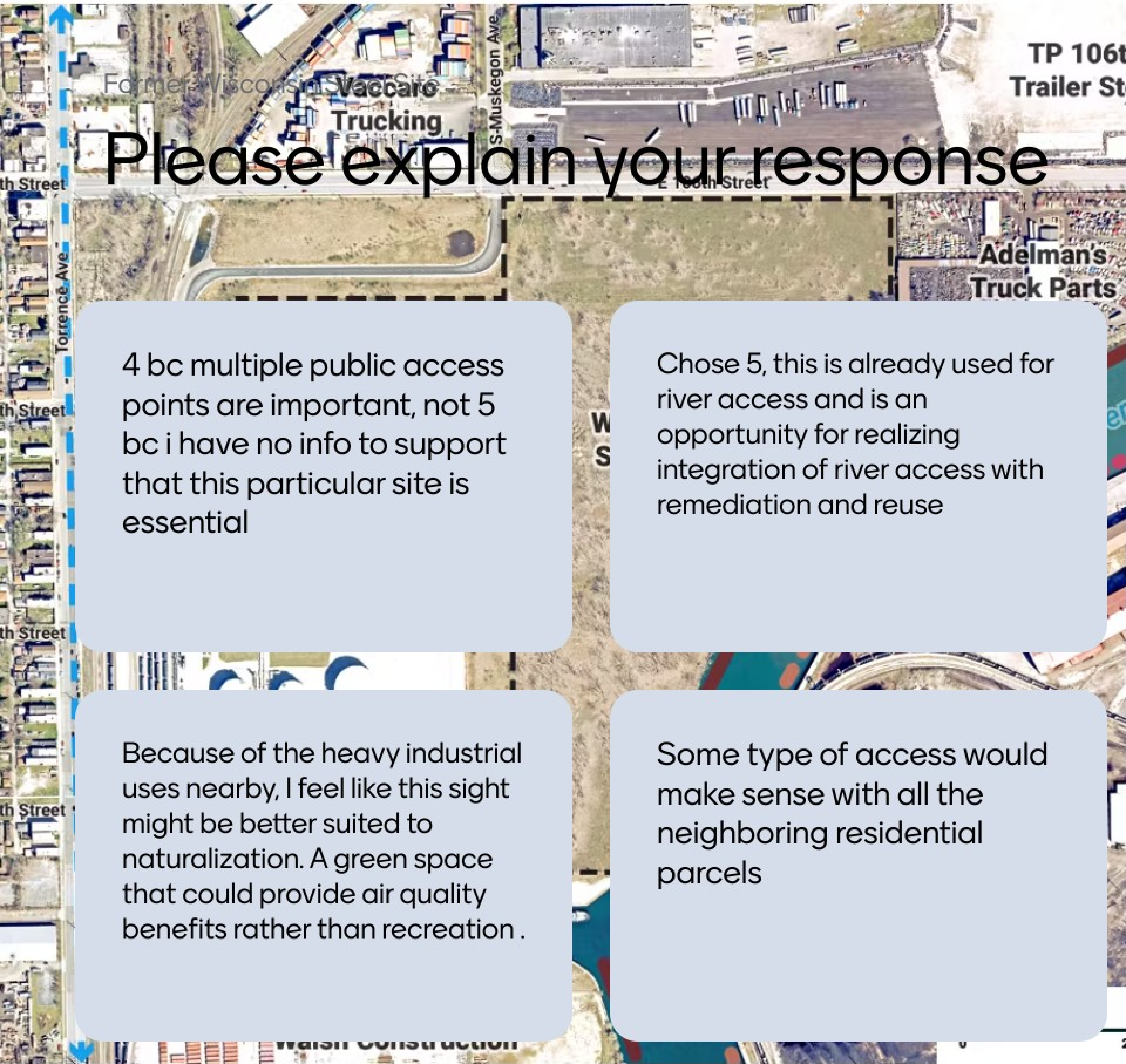
Location is in the middle of industrial corridor, maybe more appropriate for industrial use and create new jobs. Plus, it is privately owned. Owners may different vision for site.

Just need more information. I see an asphalt operating building, I am concerned about contamination (land and water)

the space looks great but not excited about the asphalt plant next door and those black sections of land across the river

I think more needs to be explored around potential contamination exposure both at the site and from adjacent land use





4 bc multiple public access points are important, not 5 bc i have no info to support that this particular site is essential

Chose 5, this is already used for river access and is an opportunity for realizing integration of river access with remediation and reuse

Seems like a large, blank canvas that could be amazing. Converting underused space into a community asset is a great approach.

No strong opinions on this site.

Because of the heavy industrial uses nearby, I feel like this sight might be better suited to naturalization. A green space that could provide air quality benefits rather than recreation .

Some type of access would make sense with all the neighboring residential parcels

Large contiguous space is unique ecologically, and bypasses existing industrial uses, has a direct path to neighborhoods close by

The former owner, Navistar did extensive RCRA remediation, site completed about 2012?





It is large enough to pull aspects of the river into the site itself and add unique sheltered environmental areas and possible access opportunities

Close to residential neighborhoods so easy access for residents

If there's a long term goal to convert away from industrial use, you have to start somewhere. But if this would be an island for the long haul, it's less desirable

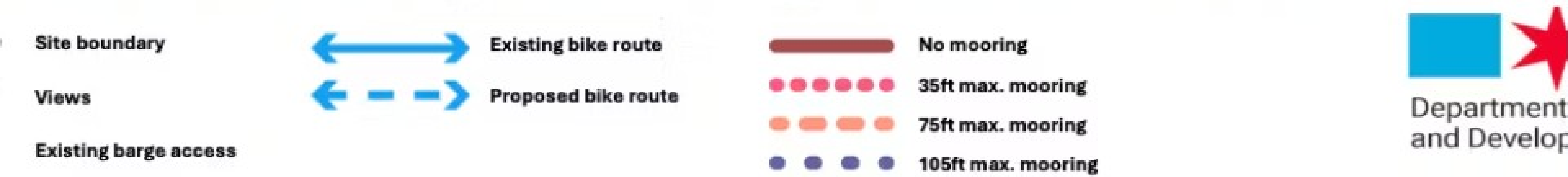
Depends on what some of the buffering will look like in relation to existing land uses; and if any site clean up is needed

Access for community that have been limited. Opportunities for anglers and other community members to enjoy the river

Seems like it could be a polluted site given the name "Steel Site". Barge Traffic in this area is extensive and thus not conducive to on-water uses.

Nice river frontage, but industrial uses may be an issue.

Create a new access to the site. More open space for the communities nearby.





# Please explain your response

Strongly always support giving residents access to the river - just need adequate remediation measures taken in place for the land

Concerned about potential air quality issues that would not be compatible with outdoor activities

Larger sites like this are rare, so it would be good to protect it

Important to create healthy open space - has a lot of potential because it's such a big parcel

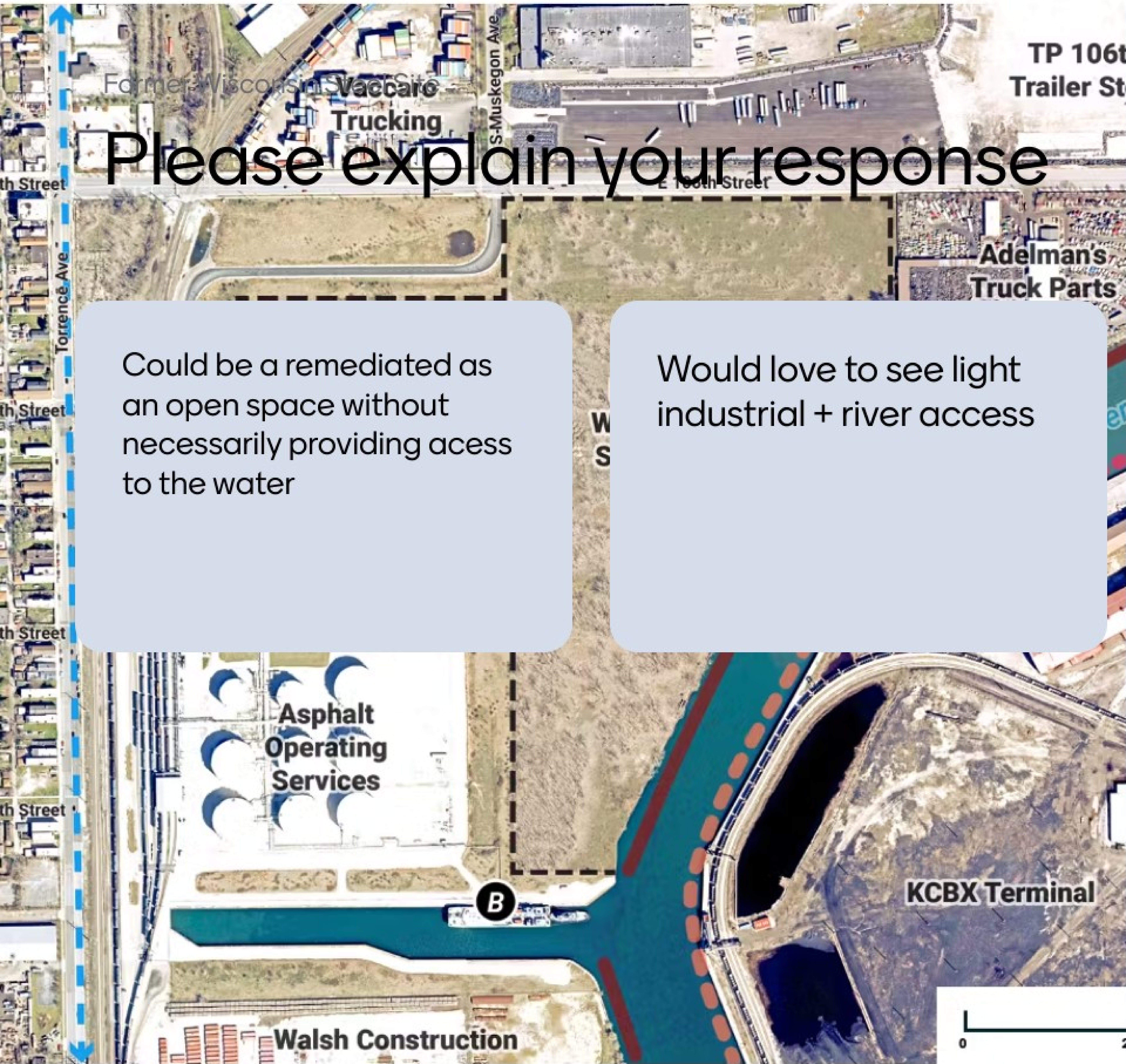
Identified pros are meaningful, but challenges including future heavy industry use are concerning, especially bc the contiguous size. Would need some assurances tha future use is comparable with acce

Access to the river for human powered vessels would not be safe because of the river curvature.

more access is better,, as long as it's designed to be safe from adjacent uses, it could also spur further non-industrial development

Natural areas for bird and butterfly habitats





# Please explain your response

Could be a remediated as an open space without necessarily providing access to the water

Would love to see light industrial + river access

Habi

Site boundary

Views

Existing barge access

Existing bike route  
Proposed bike route

No mooring  
35ft max. mooring  
75ft max. mooring  
105ft max. mooring

Department and Develop

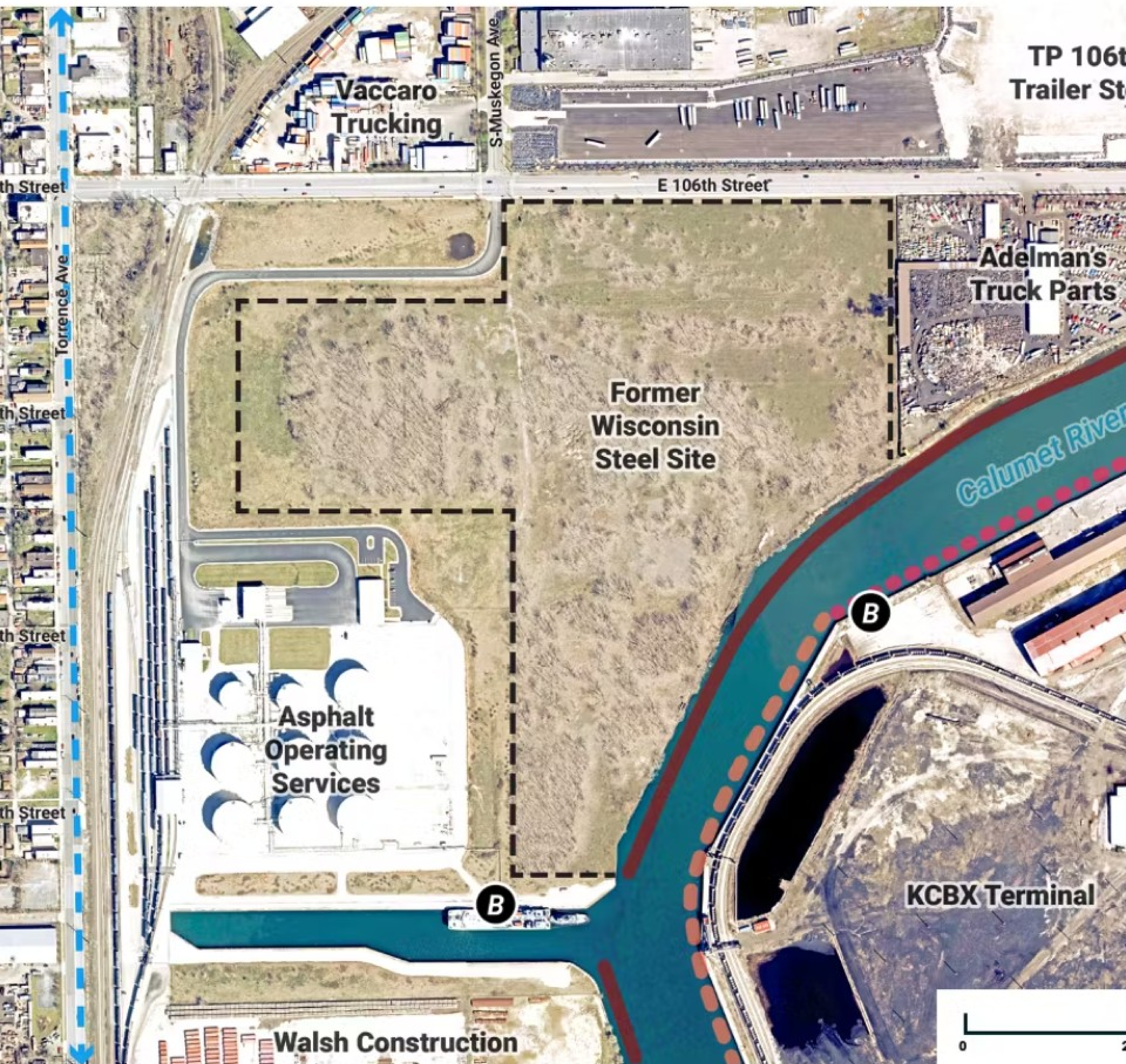
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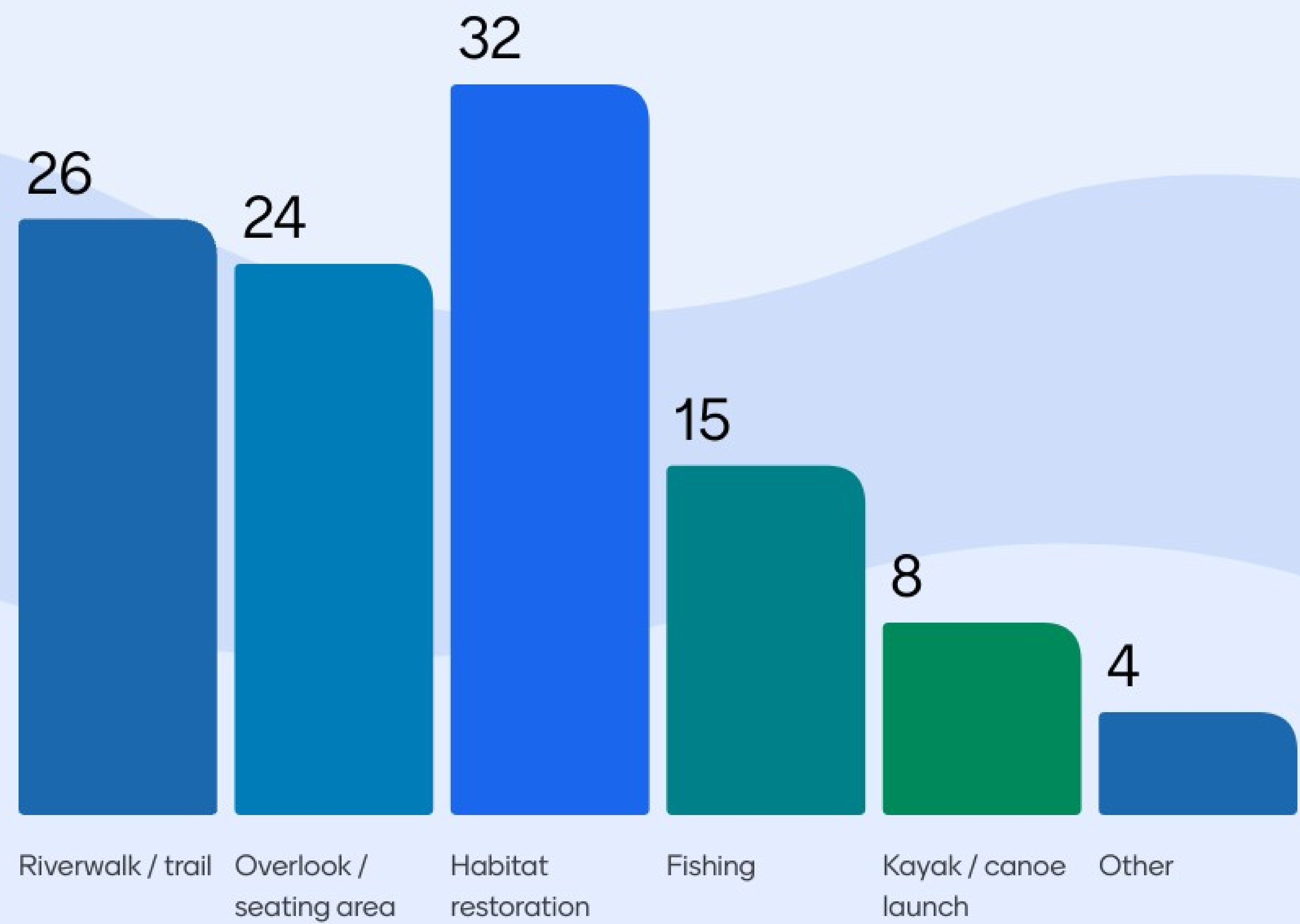
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Former Wisconsin Steel Site

What types of river-edge programming would be appropriate for this site (Former Wisconsin Steel Site)?



Site boundary

Views

Existing barge access

Existing bike route

Proposed bike route

No mooring

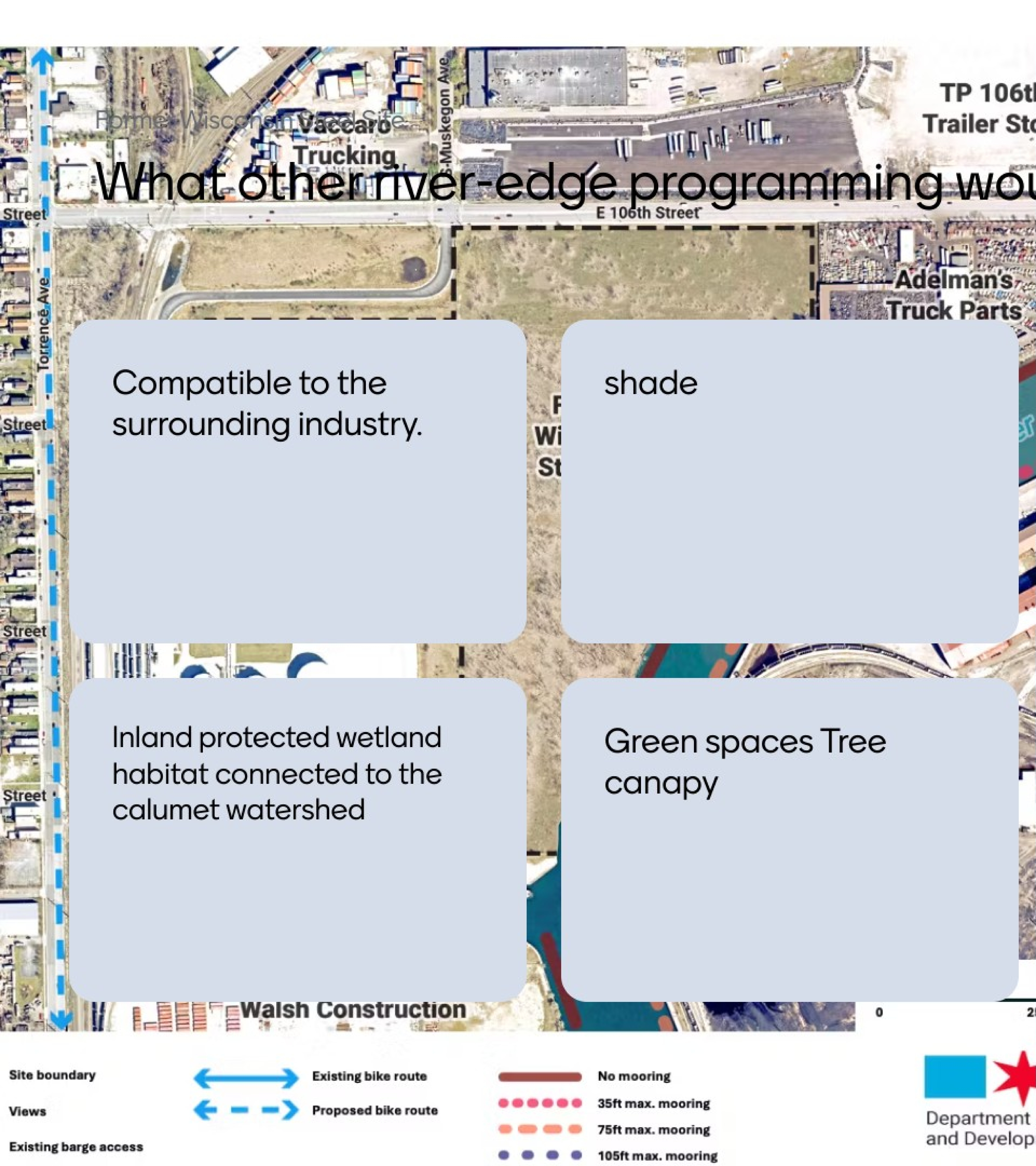
35ft max. mooring

75ft max. mooring

105ft max. mooring

Department and Develop





What other river-edge programming would you want to see at this site and why?

Compatible to the surrounding industry.

shade

Community led art / activation

Stormwater capture through green infrastructure

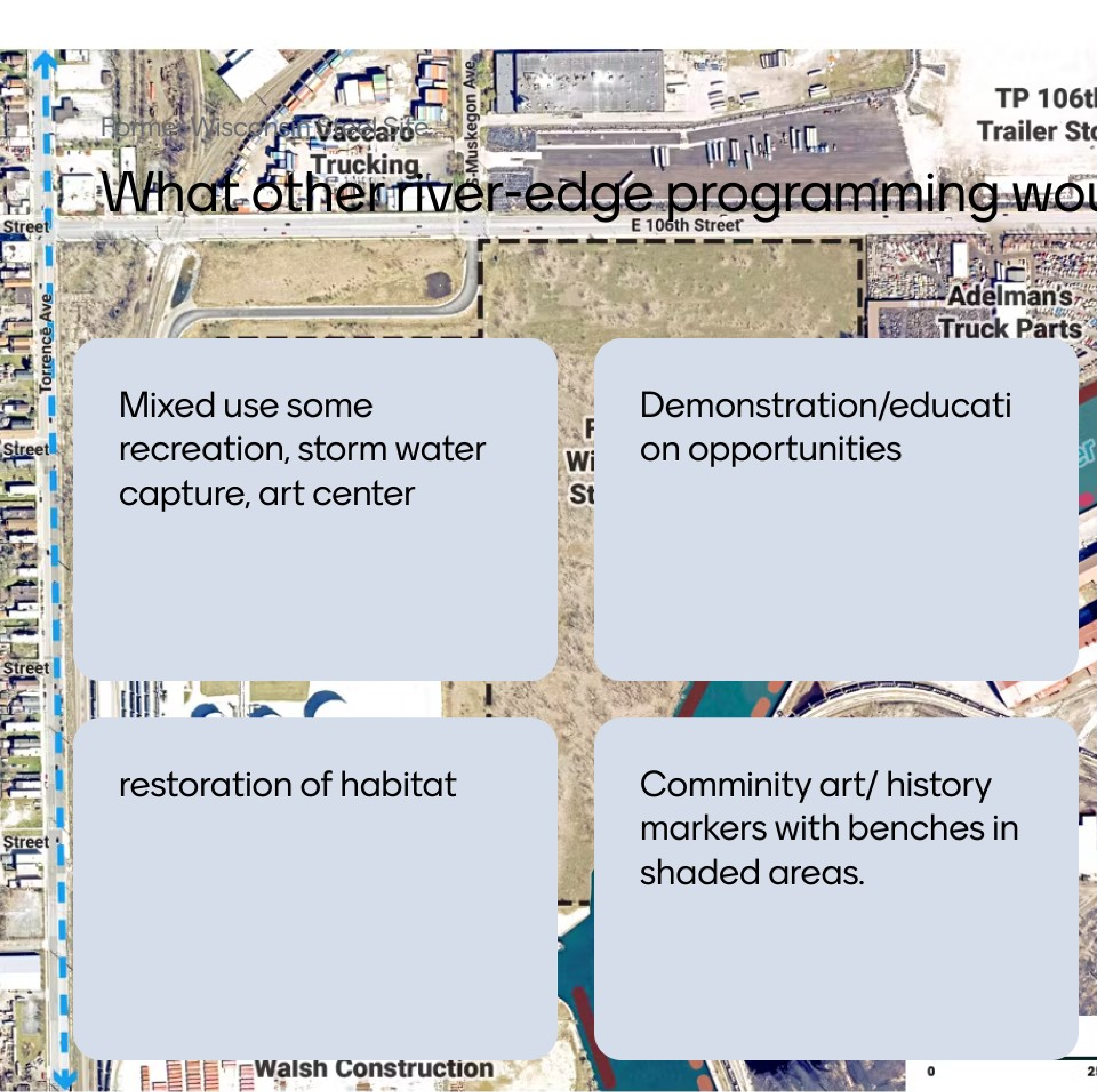
Inland protected wetland habitat connected to the calumet watershed

Green spaces Tree canopy

Community art centered around environmental justice storytelling

Community solar





What other river-edge programming would you want to see at this site and why?

Mixed use some recreation, storm water capture, art center

Demonstration/education opportunities

naturalized river edge

Community gardening site (if soil is made healthy)

restoration of habitat

Community art/ history markers with benches in shaded areas.

If City was making big efforts here, it would be great to support both river access and light industrial that builds community wealth

History





What other river-edge programming would you want to see at this site and why?



# Opportunity Site #4

## SEPA / Auto Warehousing Lot

**Address:** 12534 S Calumet River, 2500 E 130<sup>th</sup> St

**Ownership:** MWRD (SEPA), private (Auto Warehousing)

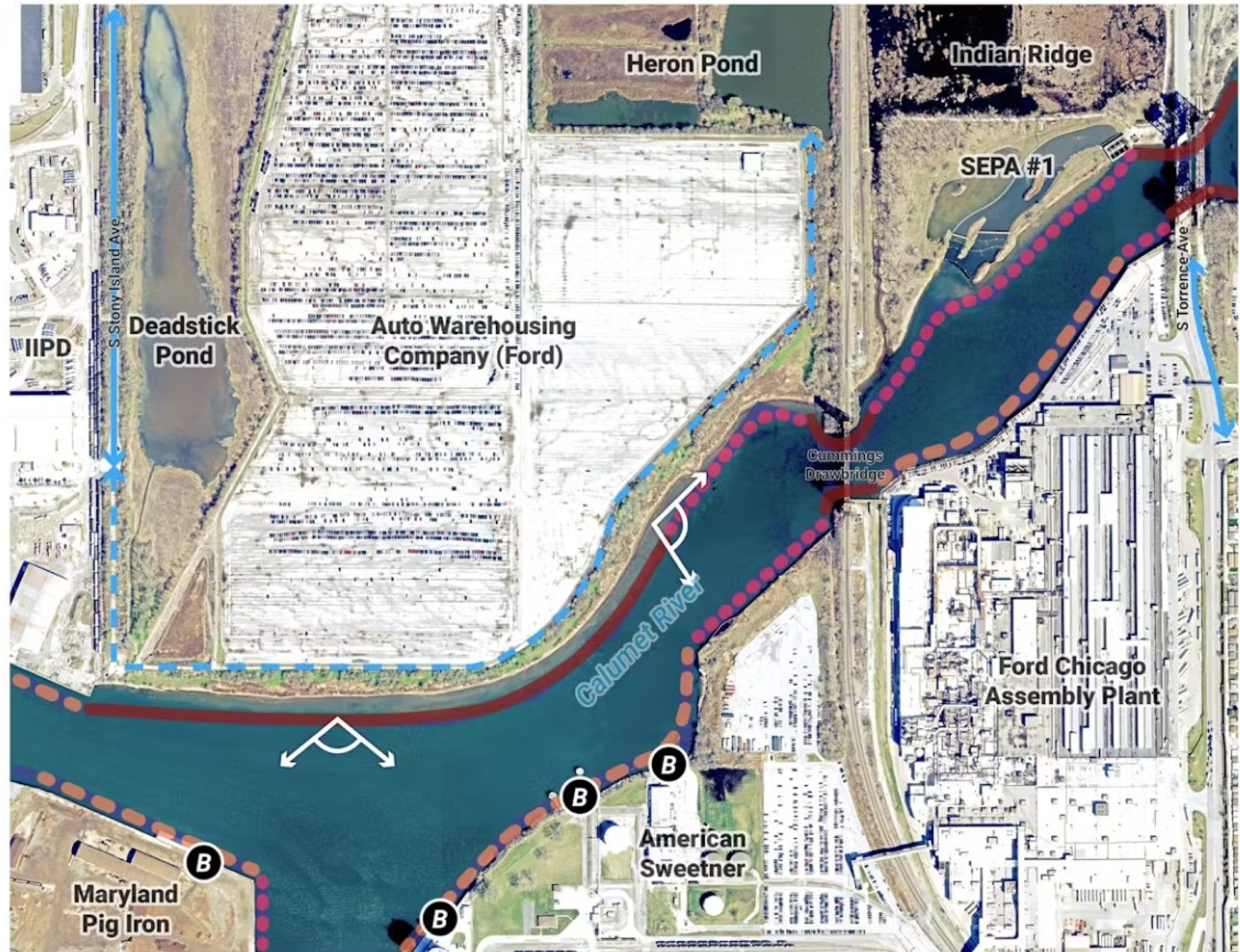
**Current use:** Open space (SEPA), vehicle storage (Auto Warehousing)

### Why this site?:

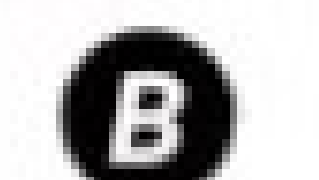
- Previously identified for potential access (CAWS Framework Plan)
- Existing open space at SEPA
- Existing trail infrastructure at Auto Warehousing
- Good potential bike network access
- Bridge views

### Challenges / considerations:

- Security for adjacent use
- Can access be provided between sites?



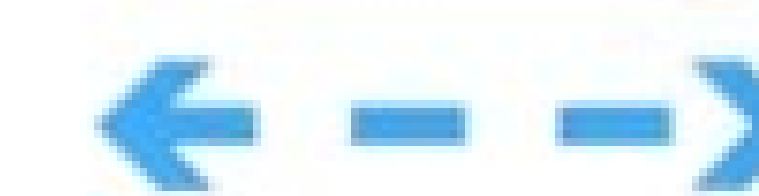
Views



Existing barge access



Existing bike route



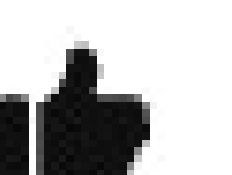
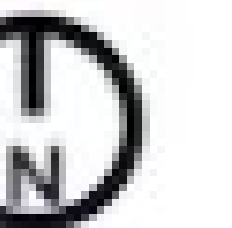
Proposed bike route

No mooring

35ft max. mooring

75ft max. mooring

105ft max. mooring





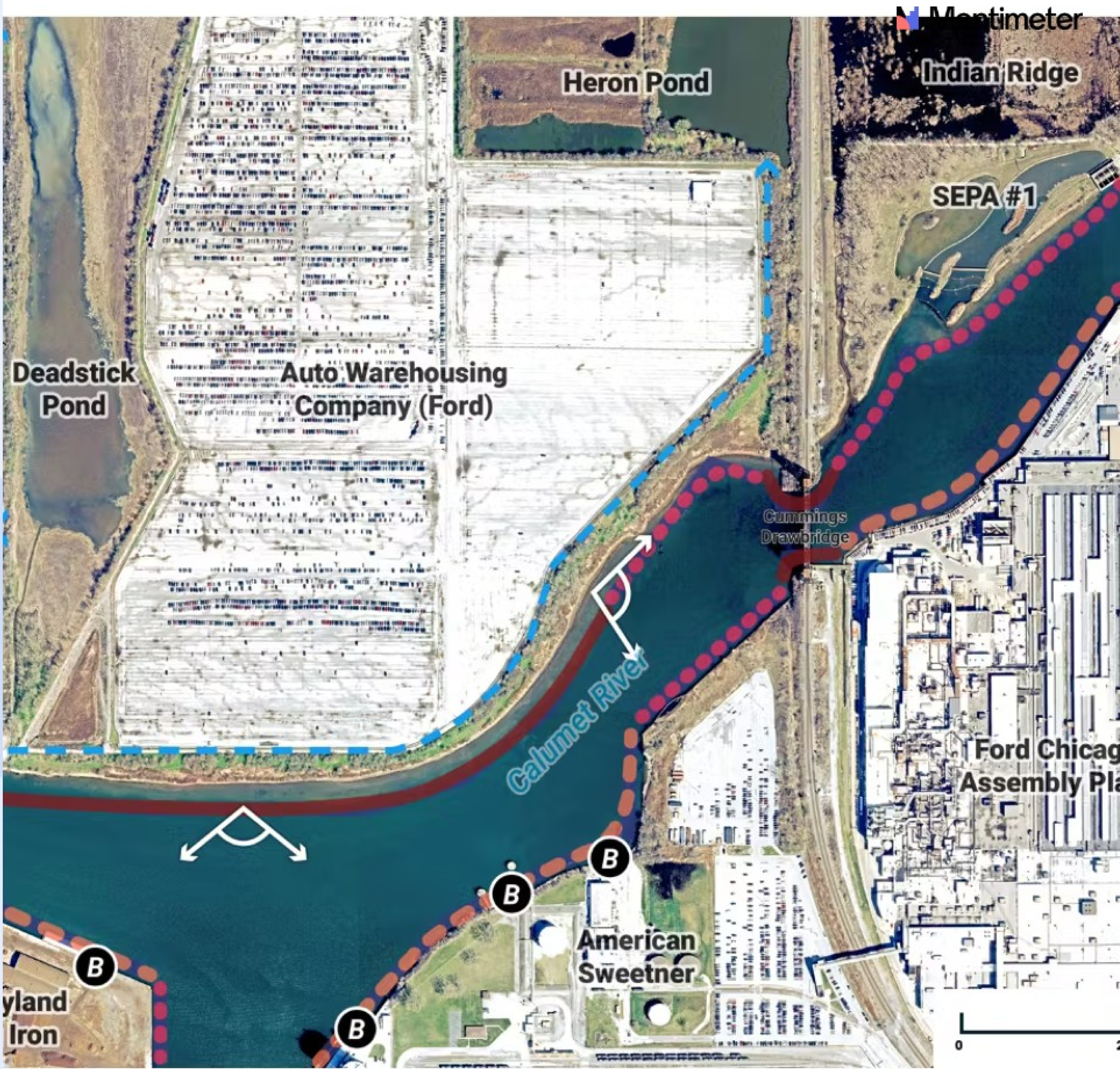
To what extent do you agree the site should be recommended for riverfront access?

SEPA / Auto Warehousing

4.4

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree





# Please explain your response

The build out of a Calumet River trail.

Especially for the SEPA site - great connectivity opportunity with Indian Ridge

Middle of industrial area with barge traffic.

Some challenging connection points, like at the elevated rail, but this connectivity is strongly desired!

This is already a place where people get to the river edge.

A good site to help establish a green corridor from big marsh down to the river

Proximity of existing protected sites and bike routes

Great connection opportunities for people and wildlife

Views

Existing barge access



Existing bike route

Proposed bike route



No mooring

35ft max. mooring

75ft max. mooring

105ft max. mooring



Department  
and Development



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I think some kind of river front access should be available.

potential for unique viewing given nearby widening of river

This site looks to have a nicer natural river edge versus the other site that looks to have a sea wall edge

Existing infrastructure/trail seems like a relatively low-cost place to make a big impact

(1) The presence of a potentially supportive land owner (Ford), (2) Connectivity to an MWRD site with improved water quality education, and (3) closes a key gap in connecting far south side areas.

River edge restoration and access improvements at the bridge near the SEPA station is a great spot that needs to be made more welcoming to the public

Seems like there's more potential for habitat enhancement and public recreation

A space people already informally access, would be great to have that formal connection





# Please explain your response

Great site ecologically but seems really hard to get to

Good for river edge trail and lookout. No water access. Natural river edge.

Large variety of restoration and programming options (connectivity, pond habitat restoration, etc)

A place to celebrate the industrial history (bridges)

Easy access from Stony Island, shoreline accessible and would need infrastructure for access but it's safe, headstock pond access would be an amazing opportunity in addition to the SEPA site

A connection under the Torrance would be huge for connecting east to west which is otherwise super difficult

Views

Existing barge access

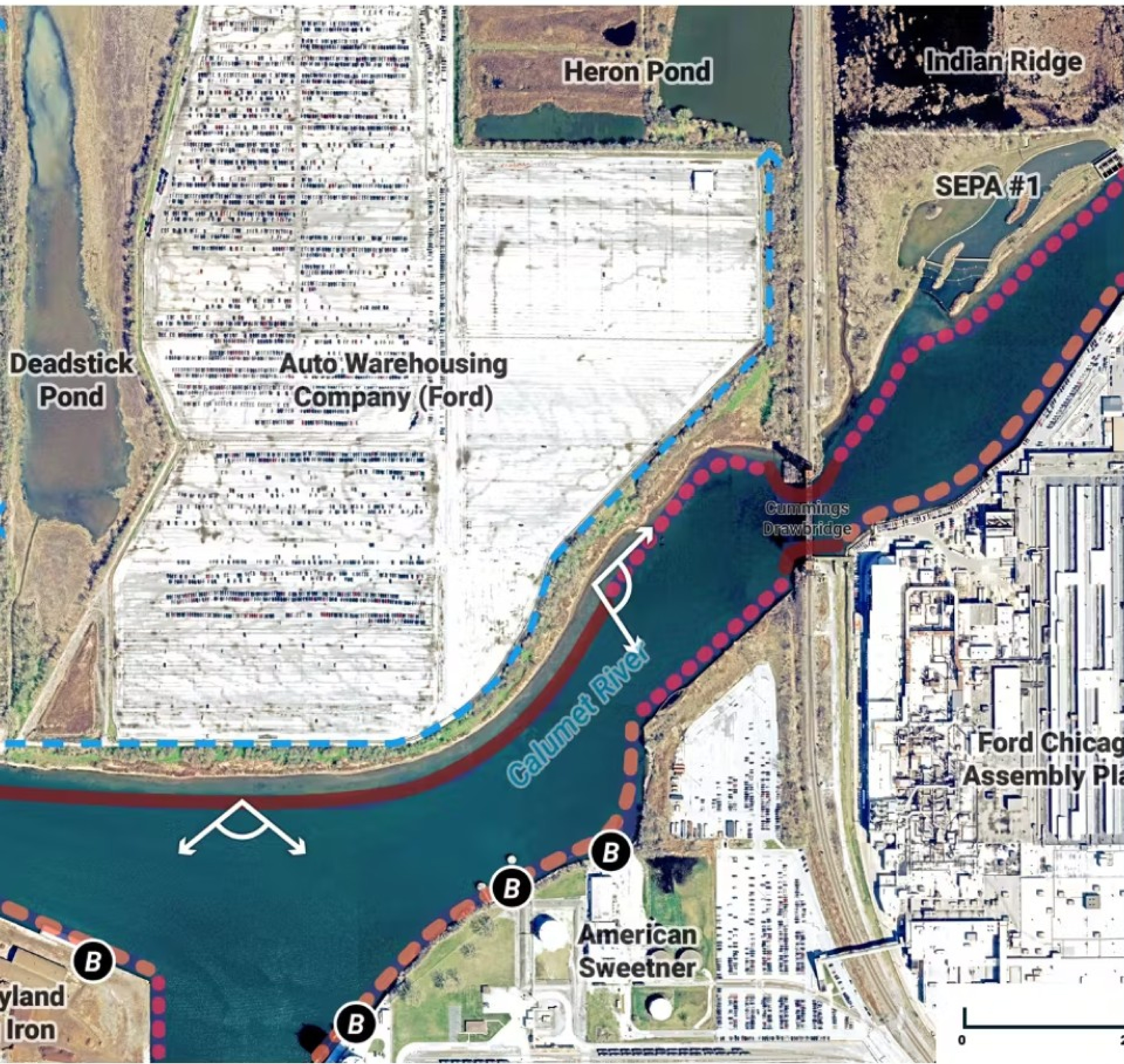


Existing bike route

Proposed bike route

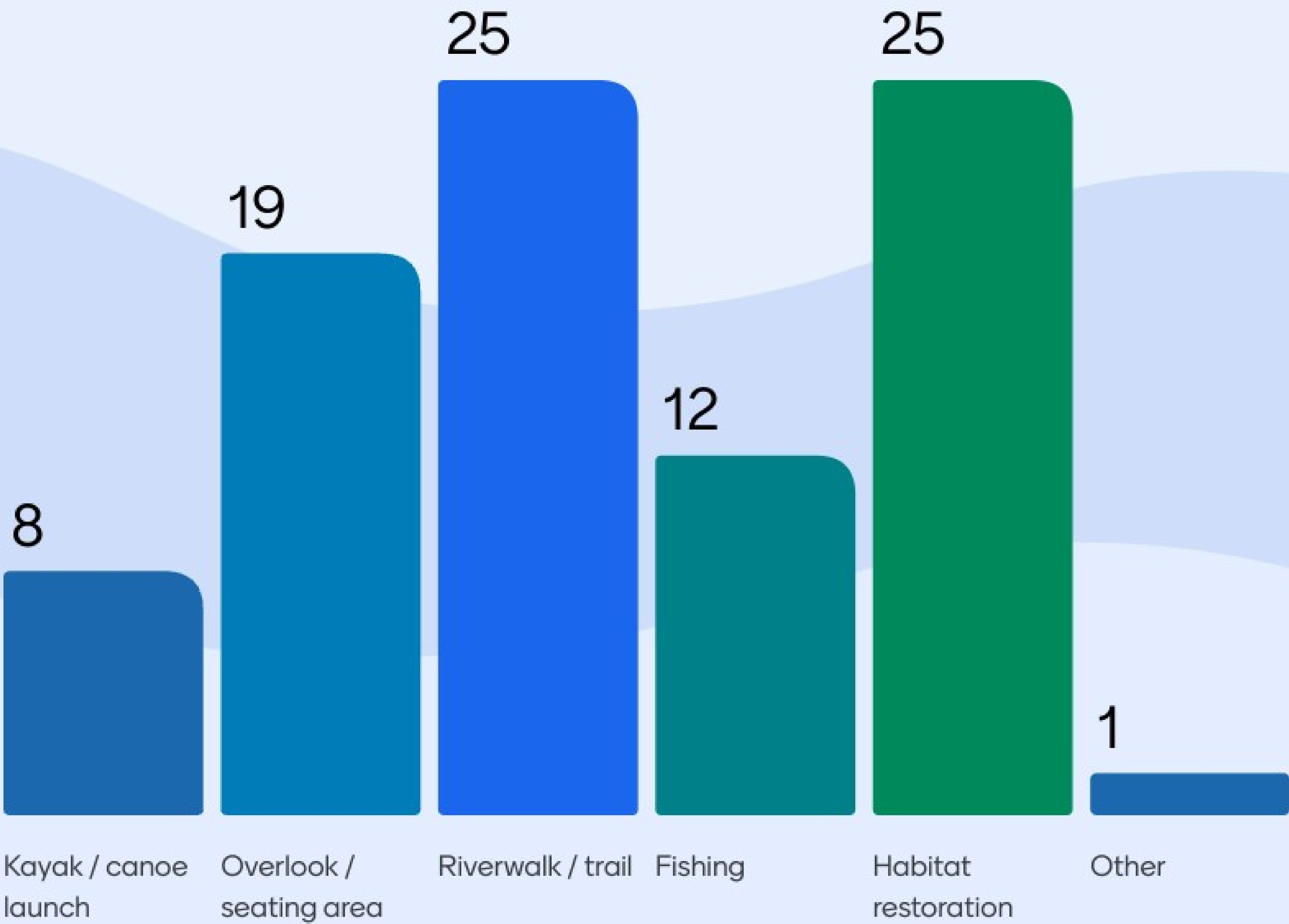
- No mooring
- 35ft max. mooring
- 75ft max. mooring
- 105ft max. mooring





SEPA / Auto Warehousing

What types of programming would be appropriate for this site (SEPA Station And Auto Warehousing)?



- Views
- Existing bike route
- Proposed bike route
- Existing barge access
- No mooring
- 35ft max. mooring
- 75ft max. mooring
- 105ft max. mooring



# What other types of uses would you want to see at this site and why?

Water quality monitoring site: would help to add another data point at a unique location in the river.

Lunch Area for employees, who work in the Corridor.

Kayak course through the sepa falls 😊.

Continuous loop trail through all marshes to the Big Marsh visitor center, to the riverfront, etc.

Some riverwalk artwork - similar to the Canalport Riverwalk project done by UIC Freshwater Lab

Picnic gazebo

Artificial fish habitat islands

Perhaps some indoor recreational space or center for the community along with a river walk

Views

Existing barge access



Existing bike route

Proposed bike route

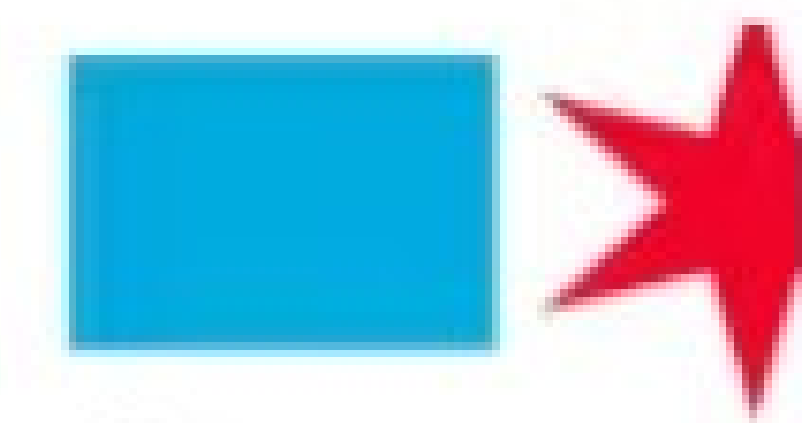


No mooring

35ft max. mooring

75ft max. mooring

105ft max. mooring



Department  
and Development



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# What other types of uses would you want to see at this site and why?

The auto warehousing is another place that could be potentially transitioned to light industrial with local jobs and local shared ownership that integrates with river access.

Green infrastructure

murals on exiting buildings

Native habitat demonstration areas

Dead  
Po

Heron Pond

Indian Ridge

SEPA #1

Ford Chicago  
Assembly Pla

American  
Sweetner

yland  
Iron

Views

Existing barge access



Existing bike route

Proposed bike route



No mooring

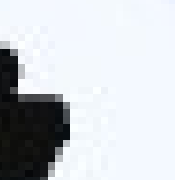
35ft max. mooring

75ft max. mooring

105ft max. mooring



Department  
and Develop



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# Opportunity Site #7

## Hegewisch Marsh / CID Landfill

**Address:** 13000 S Torrence, 13124 S Calumet River

**Ownership:** Cook County (stormwater), NICTD (rail ROW), Chicago Park District (Hegewisch Marsh), WM (CID landfill), USACE (CID shoreline)

**Current use:** Open space (Hegewisch Marsh, stormwater), former landfill (CID)

### Why this site?:

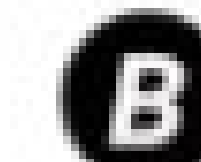
- Previously identified for potential access (CAWS Framework Plan, Hegewisch Neighborhood Plan)
- Access from 130<sup>th</sup> / Hegewisch Marsh
- Existing open space at Hegewisch Marsh
- Bridge / lock views

### Challenges / considerations:

- Security for adjacent uses (CID, USACE)
- Limited vehicle access for kayak launch



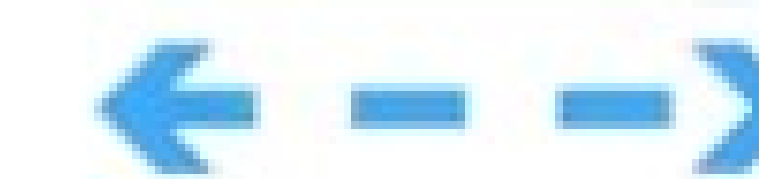
Views



Existing barge access



Existing bike route



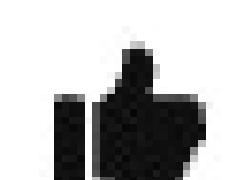
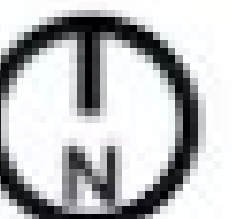
Proposed bike route

No mooring

35ft max. mooring

75ft max. mooring

105ft max. mooring





To what extent do you agree the site should be recommended for riverfront access?

Hegewisch Marsh, CID Landfill

3.9

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree







# Please explain your response

Challenging access

No strong opinions about this site.

Hegwisch is the largest marsh in the City of Chicago. It is a great natural resource, but need some improvements to make it more clear how to visit it.

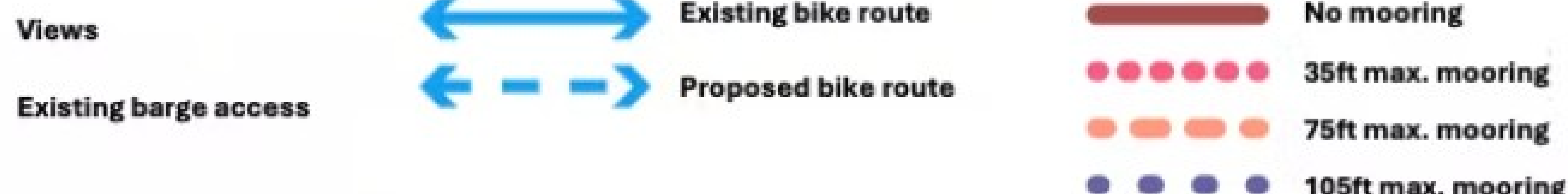
Lock and dam might limit allowed activities

Ample frontage provides opportunity for combination of naturalized edge and access / rec

The lack of connectivity to this site makes it difficult to identify as a priority - with many factors that may not change for awhile.

Some river front access but would be great to retire habitat and. Ecosystems for plants and wildlife. Mini oasis

Make the connection to access the 130th sidepath from the west side of the Calumet River







# Please explain your response

It may be a tight area for barge and kayak/canoe access.

Appropriate remediation is needed on the west side.

Seems like there are good opportunities for stormwater management and restoration through green infrastructure

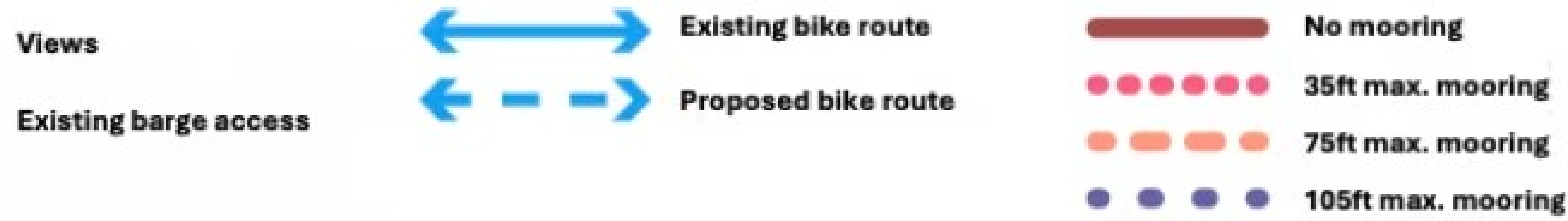
seems very hard to get to, and the landfill is not appealing

Concerned about the toxins in the area. Air, water, soil

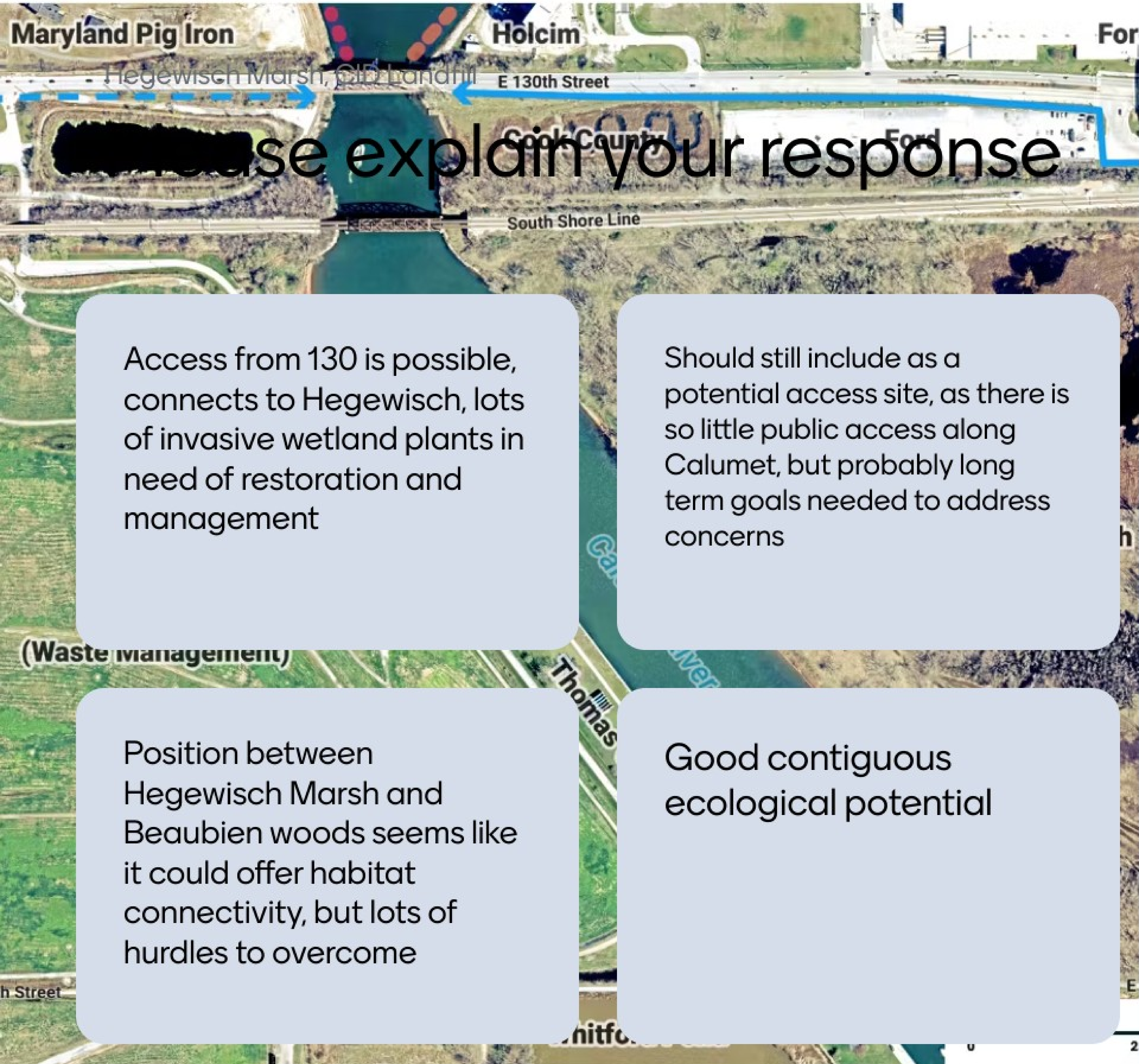
Depends on community buy-in, not sure how this site shows in public health research. Great for habitat at least

Good views from the top of the landfill but would need to be safer and cleaned up

Not exactly at this site but in this area if you could find a replacement site of the CDF, you would gain a lakefront park.







# Please explain your response

Access from 130 is possible, connects to Hegewisch, lots of invasive wetland plants in need of restoration and management

Should still include as a potential access site, as there is so little public access along Calumet, but probably long term goals needed to address concerns

Improvements to the site including planting trees or other native vegetation could help turn site around to becoming an amenity

Traffic noise from highway is a deterrent

Position between Hegewisch Marsh and Beaubien woods seems like it could offer habitat connectivity, but lots of hurdles to overcome

Good contiguous ecological potential

There are some good examples of these types of sites becoming park spaces in the US. (Munster IN, NYC, etc)

Add a railway stop at north end of marsh?!





Please explain your response

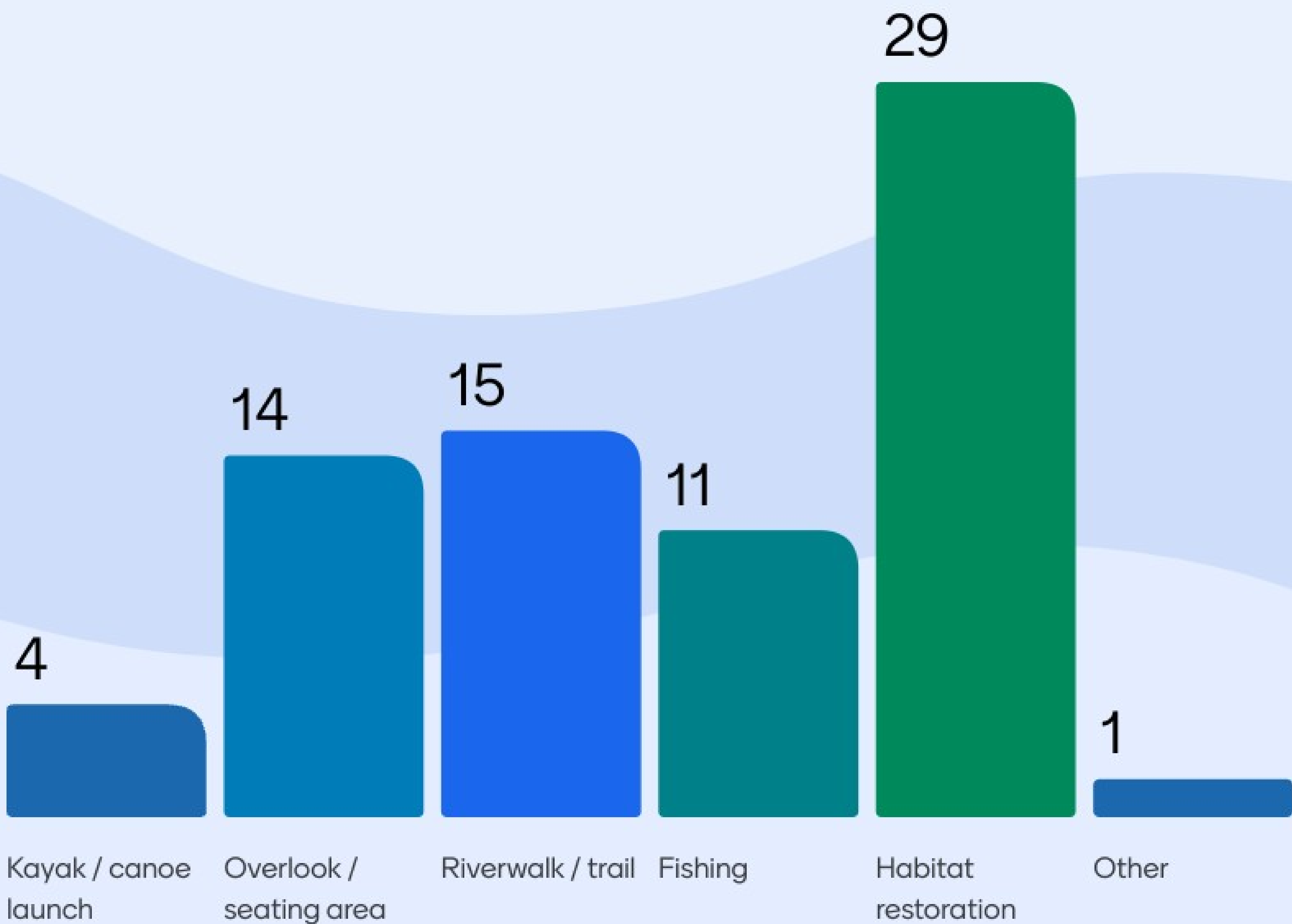
A river overlook at Hegwisch Marsh, great views and intersting to see the lock





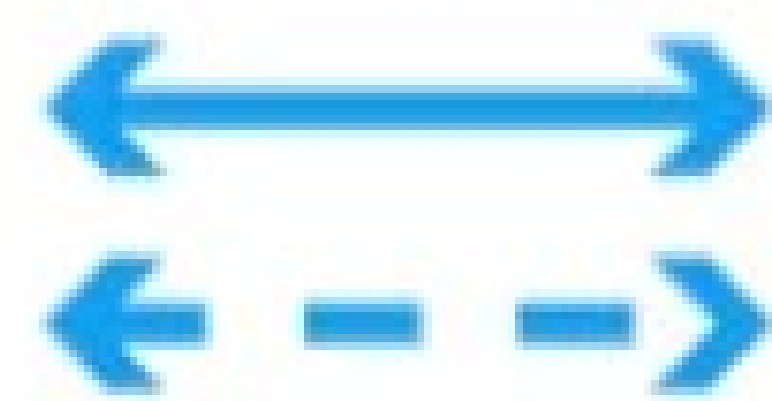
Hegewisch Marsh, CID Landfill

What types of programming would be appropriate for this site (Hegewisch Marsh, CID Landfill)?



Views

Existing barge access



Existing bike route

Proposed bike route

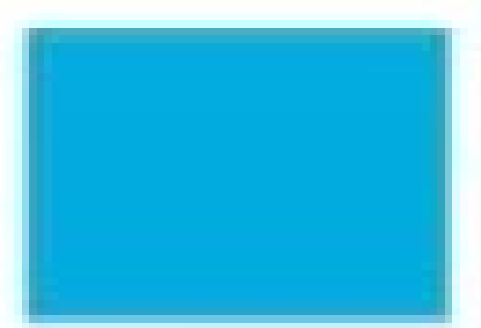


No mooring

35ft max. mooring

75ft max. mooring

105ft max. mooring



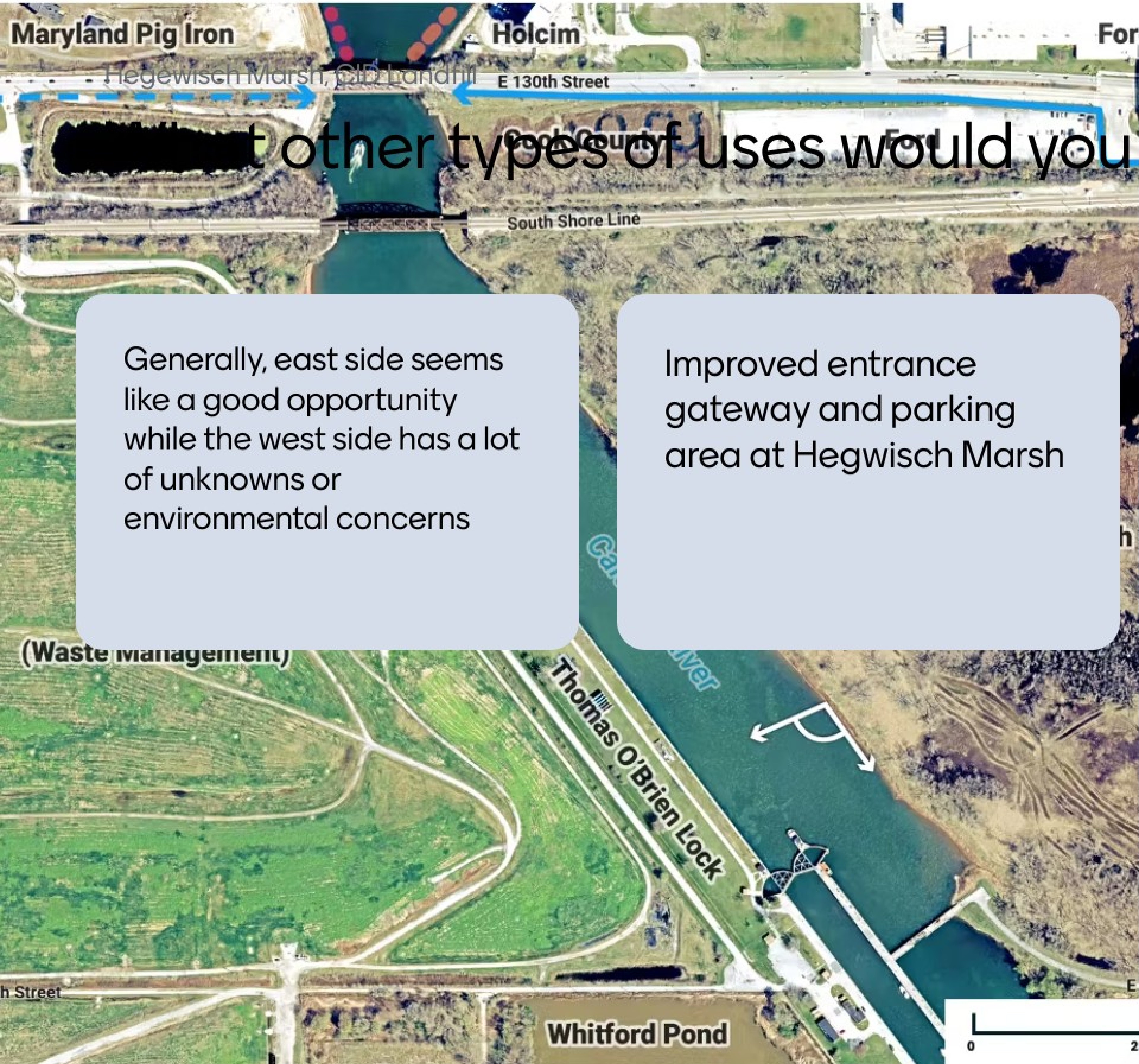
Department and Development



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# What other types of uses would you want to see at this site and why?

Generally, east side seems like a good opportunity while the west side has a lot of unknowns or environmental concerns

Improved entrance gateway and parking area at Hegwisch Marsh

west side has space for picnic / rec area

I'm wondering if there are sensitive nesting sites in the marsh that would be impacted by too much human activity?

Views

Existing barge access



Existing bike route  
Proposed bike route

- No mooring
- 35ft max. mooring
- 75ft max. mooring
- 105ft max. mooring



Department and Develop



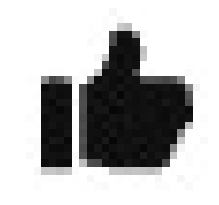
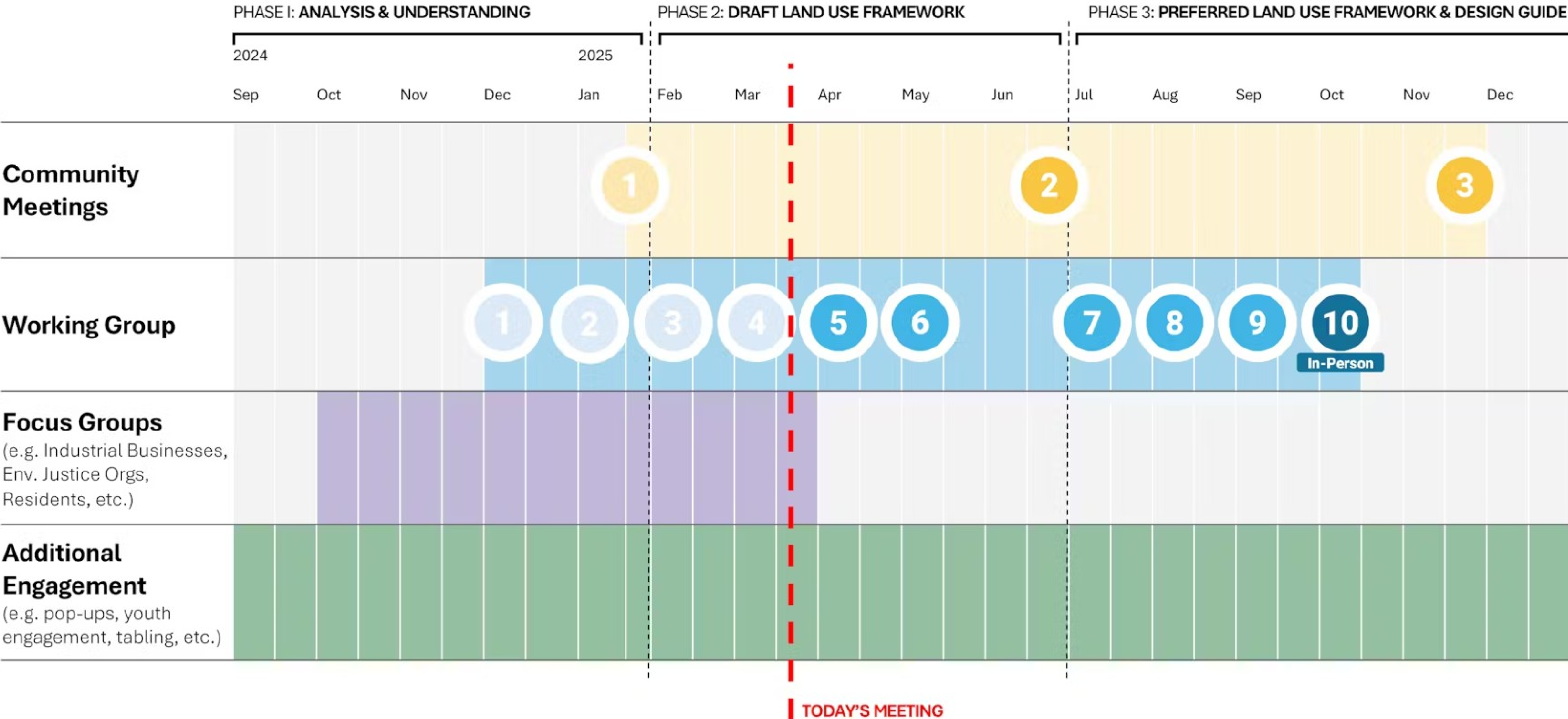
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# Next Steps



# Engagement Schedule

## Entering Phase 2





# Thank you and let's stay in touch

**Website:** [Chicago.gov/calumet](https://chicago.gov/calumet)

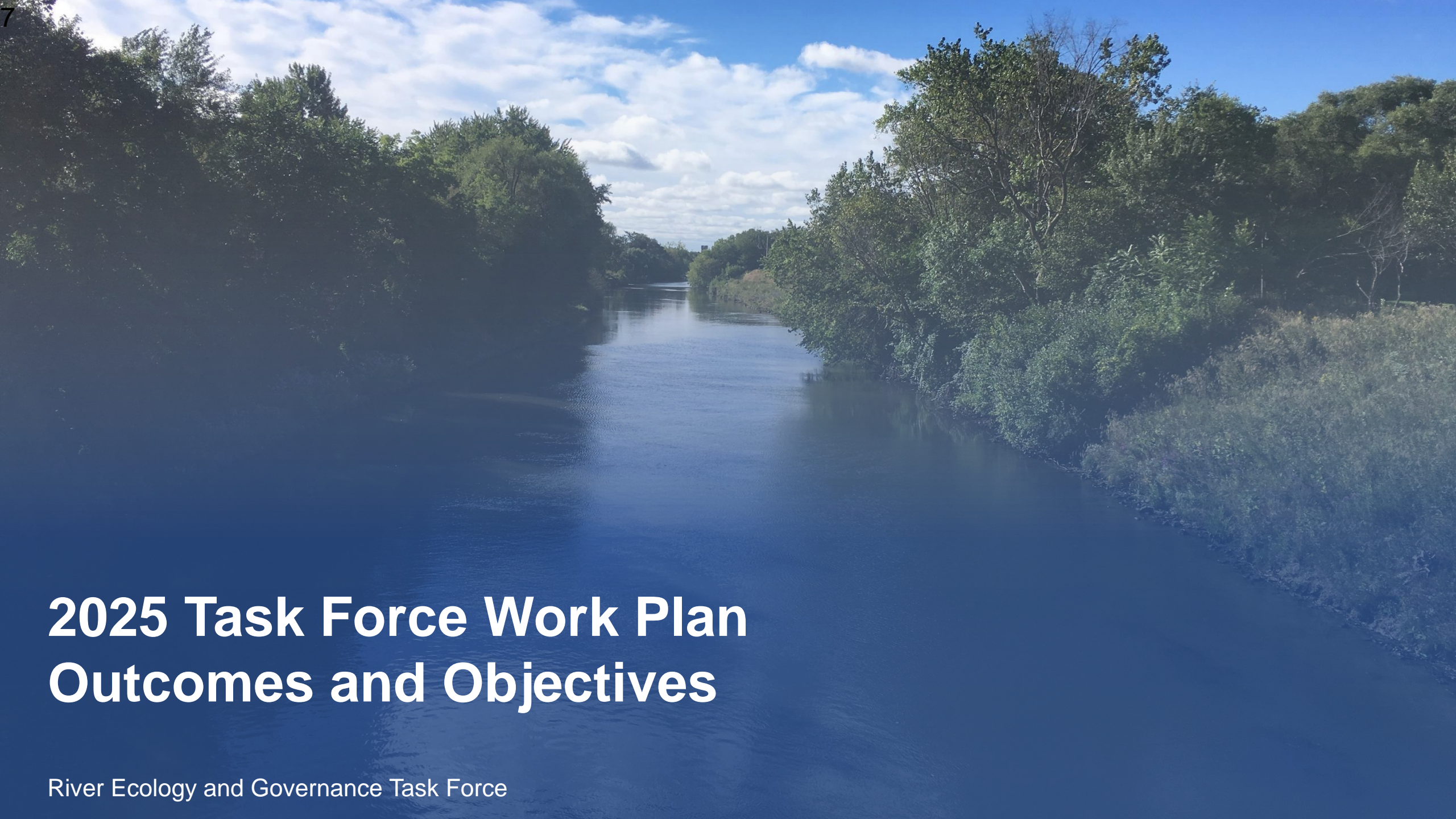
**Email:** [dhara@musecommunitydesign.com](mailto:dhara@musecommunitydesign.com)

Do you have events coming up where we might be able to share more about this plan? Let us know!



**Sign up for our newsletter!**





# 2025 Task Force Work Plan Outcomes and Objectives

River Ecology and Governance Task Force



## **Task Force Work Plan for 2025 +**

**Goal #1:** Create recommendations to inform river-related policies, plans, and projects to advance collective priorities.

**Goal #2:** Leverage Task Force and community expertise to help advance future river investment priorities.

**Goal #3:** Work collaboratively with agencies to improve river asset governance and management methods.

**Goal #4:** Ensure process for river development reviews is followed and continues to improve new riverfront developments.

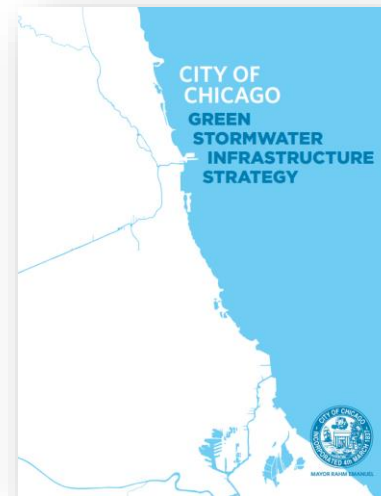


**Goal #1:** Create recommendations to inform river-related policies, plans, and projects to advance collective priorities.

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Plan Input Opportunities:

- DPD: Calumet Area Land Use Plan and Design Guidelines Update
- DOE: Citywide Green Stormwater Infrastructure Strategy Update



Facilitate points of integration with the Task Force, when appropriate, to weigh in on these key river edge projects.



## Goal #2: Leverage Task Force and community expertise to help advance future river investment priorities.

---

### Information Gathering Opportunities:

- Collect ecological and local community data about river edge “soft” sites
- Explore the successes/challenges with implementation of river projects, post construction, to document best practices in river edge construction, design, and maintenance
- Learn from local perspectives gathered from partner organization’s engagement activities to include with Task Force advocacy and river project input efforts





## **Goal #2:** Leverage Task Force and community expertise to help advance future river investment priorities.

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### Policy Research Opportunities:

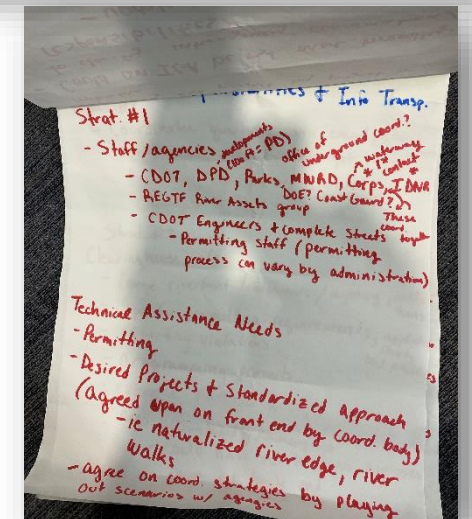
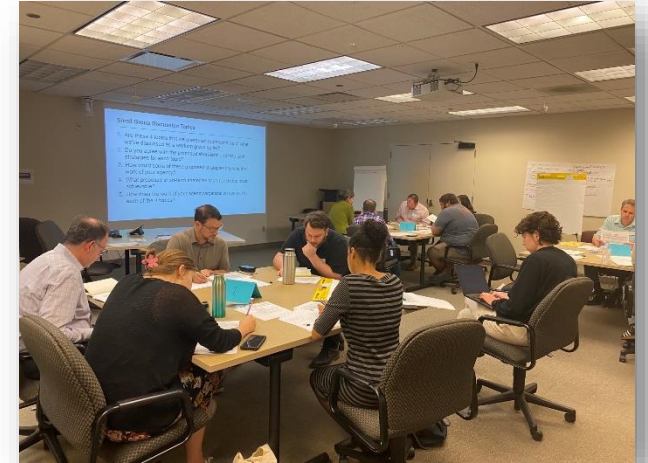
- Water trail system modernizations / water access infrastructure, in collaboration with the Harbor Safety Committee
- Quantify value of investments in river edge development and infrastructure





## Goal #3: Work collaboratively with agencies to improve river asset governance and management methods.

- Evaluate and understand the feasibility of creating a more clearly defined governance structure to maintain, enhance, and oversee expansion of riverfront public assets in the City of Chicago.
- Using the information and feedback gathered in the River Assets Working Group and broader Task Force discussions, we will propose a short term and long-term work plan for improving and/or expanding river asset governance and management.





## **Goal #4:** Ensure process for river development reviews is followed and continues to improve new riverfront developments.

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- Review and update the Task Force's development review process to ensure that it reflects current needs and opportunities
- Document and report about how the development reviews have impacted projects (including any post construction data gathered under Goal #2)
- Host monthly (as needed) River Development Review Working Group Meetings







# What are you working on this year?

## *Miro Board Activity*

River Ecology and Governance Task Force



# Activity Instructions

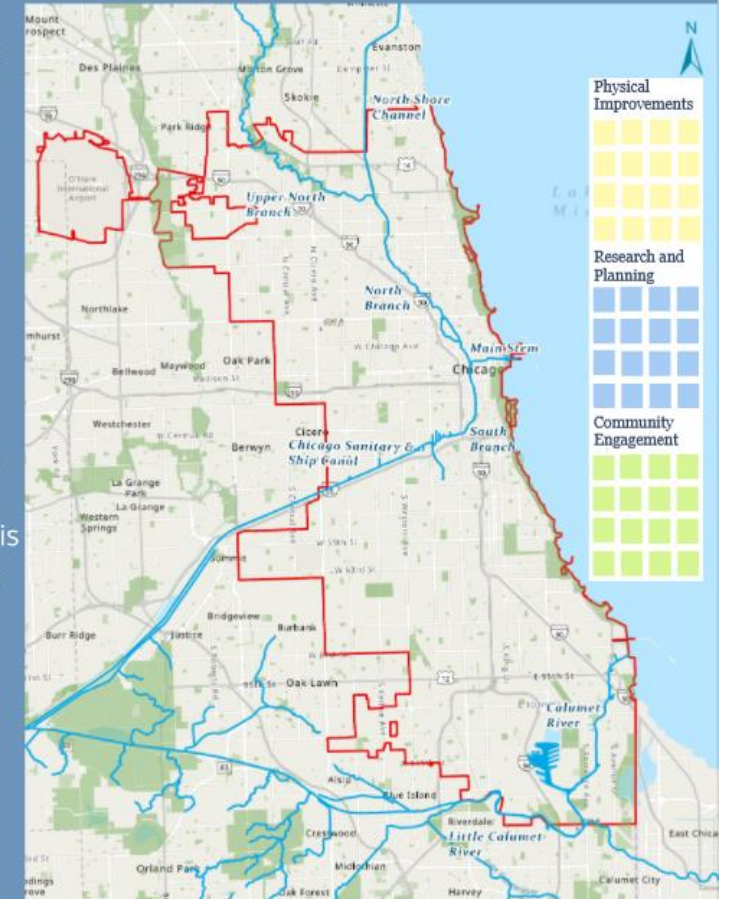
[https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVIYFMA2k=/?share\\_link\\_id=604624492211](https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVIYFMA2k=/?share_link_id=604624492211)

1. Open the Miro link
2. Select a sticky that corresponds to the type of project you're working on this year (only include your top 3 projects)
3. Write the requested information on the sticky:  
Project name, Organization, Location, Brief description
4. Place your sticky on the map

## What are you working on this year in the City of Chicago?

1. Choose the top 3 most important projects you're working on this year.
2. Select a sticky note on the right that corresponds with the type of project.
3. Write the information below in the note, and place the sticky note in the location of the project. If your project is citywide, place it at the top of the map.

- Project Name  
- Organization  
- Location  
- 2 Sentence Description







# Government Partner Updates

River Ecology and Governance Task Force



# Chicago Green Infrastructure Strategy 2025

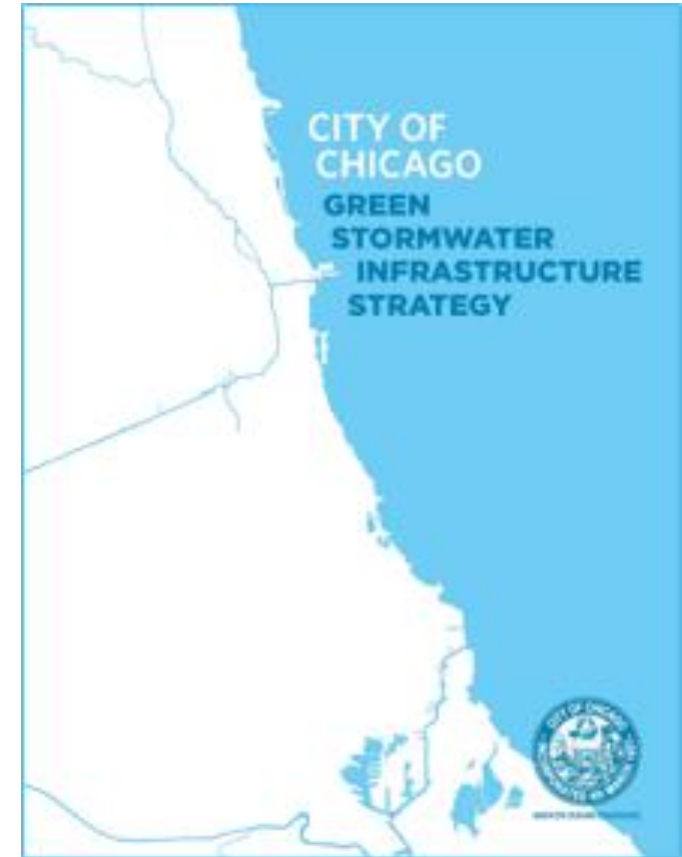




# ★ Project Overview

Project goals:

- Equitable distribution of future GSI
- Maximize impact of implemented GSI
- Improve citywide coordination
- Meaningful engagement and discussion
- Provide recommendations
  - Policy and funding
  - Maintenance





# Project Status

- Current phase
  - Data collection & mapping
  - Existing conditions research
  - Engagement planning
  - Finalizing scope and timeline

- Next steps
  - Stakeholder engagement
  - Policy & funding recommendations
  - Publication in late 2025



# **Next Steps & Engagement**

- First week of May
  - 3 community engagement sessions (in person)
- May 21: REGTF & Greater Chicago Watershed Alliance Meeting
  - Hosted by Greenprint Partners & Rudd Resources
  - Review community feedback
  - GSI Typologies
  - Strategy Ideas



# Project Updates

- **Chicago Dept. of Planning and Development**

- Planning for industrial corridors is occurring for the Armitage Industrial Corridor and the Calumet, Burnside, and Pullman industrial corridors. DPD is undertaking a process to determine what industrial corridor should be next for review.
- City departments and agencies have continued to meet to align goals for the next phase of the US Army Corps Waterways Restoration Framework Plan.

- **Chicago Dept. of Transportation**

- South Branch Riverwalk design is in procurement stages. Anticipate NTP in Q3/Q4 2025.
- Western Ave bridge construction expected to start Q3 2025. Chicago Ave bridge over Chicago River construction expected to start Q3 2025. Both Division St bridges over North Branch Canal and Chicago River construction is expected to start Q4 2025. Chicago Ave and Division St bridges are all designed to accommodate future riverwalk extension.

- **Chicago Dept. of the Environment and Dept. of Public Health**

- Update to the City's Green Stormwater Infrastructure plan will be completed by October 2025.
- Healthy Chicago 2025 Strategic Plan was released with an increased focus on six health outcomes across five community areas.

# Project Updates

- **Forest Preserve District of Cook County**

- **Des Plaines River** - Trail updates:

1. Segment 4, Lawrence Ave to Irving Park Rd - construction has started. Improvements will include installation of two separate sections of elevated boardwalk, realignment of trail sections prone to flooding, and resurfacing.
2. Segment 7, North Ave to Fullerton - Phase 2 Engineering (preparation of construction documents) is underway – this segment will be done in partnership the Village of River Grove. The Forest Preserves has secured federal funding (approx. 80% of project costs) secured for construction of this segment.

- **Little Calumet and North Branch Rivers** - Restoration and Development updates along:

1. Little Calumet River: 21 acres of former turf grass were planted to prairie at the Beaubien boat launch in partnership with Openlands. Boat launch at Beaubien Woods 95% complete; other amenities (restroom, shelter, etc.) still underway
2. North Branch River: New vegetation monitoring points were established at Bunker Hill and baseline vegetation data collected in summer 2024. Volunteers stewarding Bunker Hill, Forest Glen, and LaBagh Woods. Caldwell Woods Wellness Center (Devon & Milwaukee) will open later this spring.



# Project Updates

- **Chicago Park District**

- A number of projects at various parks are underway:
  - **Park 571:** New Nature Play space is being installed and will be finished by the end of the month. Approx. 1 acre of new natural area was added in 2024.
  - **Canal Origins Park:** Existing Natural area is being maintained through the removal of invasive species as well as introduction of more native species through seeds and plugs.
  - **Canalport Riverwalk:** New and existing natural areas are being maintained through the removal of invasive species as well as introduction of more native species through seeds and plugs.
  - **DuSable:** The Park District is working with CDOT, Related Midwest, and DPDA to continue refining the design in preparation for Plan Commission review.
  - **River Park:** Planning summer programming and canoe/kayak storage logistics and native planting.
  - **Legion & Kiwanis:** Tree, shrub, and extensive plug planting scheduled for spring.
  - **Ronan Park:** Water line for Global Gardens to be installed in spring. Plaza construction permitting still in progress for 2025 start.

- **Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago**

- Field season will begin in late May with in-kind collection of fish for the Shedd's tagging study. After that they will begin conducting fish surveys (biological monitoring).

# REGTF – River Questions Google Form

- Reminder - New form for directing river related questions:

<https://forms.gle/TB6m2CocpmYdBgew6>



Do you have a question for the facilitators and/or government partners of the City of Chicago River Ecology and Governance Task Force?

Please complete the below form to submit your question, comment, or suggestion. The purpose of this form is to provide a way for REGTF participants to submit questions and/or discussion topics that were not covered as part of our regular workshops. Friends of the Chicago River and the Metropolitan Planning Council (the REGTF co-facilitators) will work to direct your river related questions to the appropriate contact to receive an answer and/or will include the topic in future meeting agendas. To help us in this task, please be as concise as possible in your questions and limit each submission to one topic.



# 2025 Task Force Meeting Dates

## Combined Sewer Overflow Public Notification Planning Meeting

- March 19<sup>th</sup> 6:00 – 7:30 pm (virtual)
- March 26<sup>th</sup> 6:00 – 7:30 pm (Horner Park Fieldhouse)

## Quarterly Meetings: 3:00 – 4:30 pm

- June 3<sup>rd</sup>
- September 16<sup>th</sup>
- December 9<sup>th</sup>

## System Plans Working Group: 1:00 – 2:00 pm

- May 21 – Tentative City GSI Plan Workshop
- August 20<sup>th</sup>
- November 19<sup>th</sup>



*Photo credit: Urban Rivers via the South Branch Chicago River*



*Video credit: Wateriders*