

Calumet Area Land Use Plan and Design Guidelines Update

Working Group # 5 Meeting Summary

Tuesday, April 8, 2025 | 6:00 – 7:30 PM | Zoom

The below summarizes the content presented and feedback received during Working Group Meeting #5 for the [Calumet Area Land Use Plan and Design Guidelines Update](#), led by the City of Chicago Department of Planning and Development (DPD). The summary is organized by a presentation section followed by a summary of the discussion. For questions, please reach out to Dhara Shah at dhara@musecommunitydesign.com.

WELCOME + INTRODUCTIONS

Dhara Shah (MUSE Community + Design) and Luke Mich (Chicago DPD) were the lead facilitators in Working Group #5 with a short presentation from Ryan Ritcher (Chicago Department of Transportation).

Working group participants present for this meeting:

Name	Organization
Adam Flickinger	Friends of the Chicago River
Alaina Bridges	Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT)
Alexandra Rosander	Chicago Transit Authority (CTA)
Benet Haller	Cook County Department of Transportation and Highways (DoTH)
Beth Dybala	Calumet Area Industrial Commission (CAIC)
Christina Harris	Metropolitan Planning Council (MPC)
Doug Nelson	Calumet Area Industrial Commission (CAIC)
Daniel White	Forest Preserves of Cook County
Felicia Minley	Southeast Environmental Task Force (SETF)
Gaby Wagener-Sobrero	Chicago Department of the Environment (DOE)
Gail Walker	EnviroCom
Haley Sanders	Chicago Park District
Isis Bazaldua	Bridges // Puentes Justice Collective
Jack Rocha	UIC Great Cities Institute
Janie Pochel	Chi Nations
Lauren Umek	Chicago Park District
Laura Verden	Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR)
Lolita Thompson	Metropolitan Water Reclamation District (MWRD)
Maggie Catania	Calumet Connect

Isis Bazaldua	Bridges // Puentes Justice Collective
Quinn Kasal	Chicago Transit Authority (CTA)
Roxy (Margaret Cortes)	Parents of Extraordinary Children
Ryan Richter	Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT)
Stephen Ostrander	Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP)
Tracy Murray	9th Ward
Thomas Daniels	9th Ward
Vanessa Bly	Bridges // Puentes Justice Collective
Vanessa Schwartz	Metro Family Services
Yessenia Balcazar	Southeast Taskforce (SETF)

AGENDA:

1. Welcome
2. CDOT Presentation
3. Understanding Opportunity Areas
4. Next Steps

WORKING GROUP #4 and River Ecology Governance Task Force RECAP

1. Introduction
2. Open Space Network
3. Access to Open Space Network
4. Open Space and Surrounding uses
5. Next Steps

FOCUS OF WORKING GROUP #5

The following content is an overview of the Working Group #5 presentation. Ryan Ritcher, coordinating planner at the Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT), presented several ongoing transportation infrastructure improvements in the Calumet area being led by CDOT, the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), and the Cook County Department of Transportation and Highways (DoTH). Following CDOT's presentation, Working Group participants discussed "Opportunity Areas" within the study boundary and considerations for future land uses in these areas including current zoning, ownership, overall focus areas and amenities.

CDOT PRESENTATION

CDOT Complete Streets Program

Project	Improvements	Construction Date
118 th Street Connection to Burnham Greenway	Design of two-way protected bike lanes on 118th St and an off-street multi-use trail connection (Burnham Connector) between Ave O and existing Burnham Greenway Trail. 1. Sidewalk replacement 2. ADA ramps 3. Drainage improvements	Summer/Fall 2026
Burnham Greenway Extension	Extend existing Burnham Greenway Trail to fill in a missing three-mile gap This will create a 10-mile uninterrupted trail	2027

CDOT Bridge Improvement Programs

Project	Construction Date
92 nd Street and Ewing Bridge	2025
95 th Street Bridge	2026
100 th Street Bridge	2027
106 th Street Bridge	2028
130 th Street Bridge	2025

CDOT and IDOT Roadway Improvements

Project	Purpose	Construction Date
111th Bishop Ford Interchange, I-94	The preferred alternative appears to have the most positive attributes from CDOT's perspective: No grade change for trail Minimizes trail intersections with streets/ramps (two, both signalized)	At least 5 years out

	Eliminates trail conflicts with NB on ramp traffic Directly integrates Doty East into the local street network	
Burnham Greenway Extension	Extend existing Burnham Greenway Trail to fill in a missing three-mile gap This will create a 10-mile uninterrupted trail	2027

Cook County Improvements

Project	Improvements	Construction Date
Burnham Avenue Rail Crossing	Phase I study for the grade separation of South Shore, CSX and NS railroads Improvements to Brainerd and Burnham Avenue intersection Burnham multimodal corridor will run west of Ave O Bridge span to cross the south shore and the CSX tracks	Phase I expected completion Summer 2025

OPPORTUNITY AREAS

For the Calumet Area Land Use Plan, Opportunity Areas have been defined as properties and clusters of properties that have the strongest potential to change within the next 10-20 years.

By identifying appropriate uses in these key locations, these “catalytic” sites can help to shape land uses in surrounding parts of the corridor as well.

Discussion during this Working Group meeting focused on the Opportunity Areas defined by the identification of large vacant properties and excludes sites for which community plans have already been established. Additional areas that are not currently vacant may also be considered as the planning process continues.

The following considerations were used to select the opportunity areas:

1. Is the property vacant?
2. Are there more than approximately 15 acres of contiguous vacant land?
3. What does ownership look like?
4. What are the edge conditions / surrounding uses?
5. Is this an area of interest for the community?

DEEP DIVE OPPORTUNITY AREAS

The Working Group participated in an extensive discussion focused on three out of the ten identified opportunity areas. An overview of existing surrounding land uses, area amenities, property ownership, zoning, and edge conditions for each of these three opportunity areas was presented.

Opportunity Area 1: Burnside

Opportunity Area 1 can be described as non-contiguous vacant parcels and vacant buildings along 87th, 90th, Drexel, and Woodlawn. The scattered properties each have unique edge conditions. The current zoning includes B1 (Neighborhood Shopping) to the north, with some areas zoned C1 near 87th Street, reflecting more intense commercial use. There are also M1-zoned parcels supporting industrial and manufacturing uses, and one parcel is surrounded by residential zoning. The current land uses, and zoning do not represent permanent forms of development or redevelopment but rather reflect what is presently allowed.

Acreage	35.1 vacant acres
Surrounding Land Uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Heavy Industrial uses• Light Industrial uses• Commercial offices• Parks and Open Space• Healthcare facilities
Nearby Amenities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Rink• Daycare• Youth programs• Metra Electric stations• CTA 87 Bus

Edge Condition Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South Woodlawn Ave (SE corner) adjacent to residential • No freight access
Ownership	All of the land is privately owned by multiple individuals or entities, based on data primarily sourced from the county assessor.

After the presentation on this opportunity area the working group responded to the following questions:

- What types of land uses would be appropriate in this area and why?
- What types of land uses should be avoided in this area and why?
- What is most important to consider when making land-use decisions here?

Large Group Discussion Summary:

Opportunity Area 1: Burnside

Question	Response
What types of land use would be appropriate in this area and why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 10 participants said retail or commercial – 7 participants said housing or transit-oriented development – 6 participants said manufacturing, industrial, or logistics – 3 participants said workforce development or business support – 3 participants said health and social services
What types of land uses should be avoided in this area and why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 13 participants said industrial, heavy industry, manufacturing and logistics should be avoided – 7 participants said environmental degradation and pollution should be avoided – 5 participants said residential and community uses should be avoided – 1 participants said retail should be avoided
What is most important to consider when making land-use decisions here?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 9 participants said community input and impact - 8 participants said public transit access and connectivity - 7 participants said current land use context - 5 participants said environmental and health impacts - 4 participants said jobs and economic development

Opportunity Area 2: Pullman

Opportunity Area 2 is located in the Pullman Industrial Corridor at 115th St. and Champlain Ave and consists of a large vacant property owned by Sherwin-Williams that is currently undergoing environmental remediation. The property is bordered by the Sherwin-Williams Chicago Emulsion Plant to the west, the parking lot for the House of Hope church to the north, and several industrial and transportation-related uses to the south. The MWRD Calumet Water Reclamation Plant is located approximately a half mile south of the site. The site is zoned M3 (heavy industrial) and is bordered by additional M (manufacturing / industrial), C (commercial), PD (planned development) and PMD (planned manufacturing district) zones.

Acreage	71.5 vacant acres
Surrounding Land Uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Heavy Industrial uses• Light industrial uses• Multi-family homes• Transportation infrastructure• Recreation
Nearby Amenities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Single and multi-family homes• Community gardens• House of Hope Church• Pullman Commercial Corridor• Metra Electric station• Several CTA Buses
Edge Condition Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Entirely bound by existing active industrial and interstate
Ownership	Sherwin Williams

After the presentation on this opportunity area the working group responded to the following questions:

- a. What types of land uses would be appropriate in this area and why?
- b. What types of land uses should be avoided in this area and why?
- c. What is most important to consider when making land-use decisions here?

Large Group Discussion Summary:

Questions	Response
What types of land use would be appropriate in this area and why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 9 participants said industrial manufacturing – 5 participants said remediated green space/open space – 5 participants said green space or community amenities if remediated – 3 participants said green or clean industry uses residential uses – 3 participants said logistics or transportation uses
What types of land uses should be avoided in this area and why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 7 participants said residential use should be avoided – 6 participants said heavy industry or high polluting industry should be avoided – 2 participants said open space or community use should be avoided – 1 participant said auto-oriented uses should be avoided
What is most important to consider when making land-use decisions here?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 7 participants said land use context should be considered - 6 participants said environmental and health concerns should be considered - 4 participants said community wealth and economic opportunity should be considered - 3 participants said access to transportation should be considered

Opportunity Area 5: Calumet

Opportunity Area #5 is located between Ewing Avenue/Avenue O and the Burnham Greenway, south of 118th St near William Powers State Recreation Area and Wolf Lake. To the west of these properties are large-scale transportation and construction businesses and suppliers. North of 118th Street lies a commercial center that transitions into residential land uses. The Burnham Greenway runs directly adjacent to the site, providing recreational access and green space. Zoning in the area includes M2 (Light Industrial) and M1 (Limited Manufacturing) along 118th Street. Further south, zoning shifts to primarily residential, with mostly single-family homes and the nearby PMD 6 (Planned Manufacturing District).

Acreage	57.6 vacant acres
Surrounding Land Uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Light industrial uses • Single-family homes • Multi-family homes • Transportation infrastructure

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recreation
Nearby Amenities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wolf Lake / William Powers • Eggers Grove • Burnham Greenway • George Washington High School • George Washington Elem. School • Rowan Park • CTA 30 Bus
Edge Condition Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residential adjacencies along S Avenue J • Burnham Greenway along eastern edge
Ownership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 89.5% private (multiple owners) • 6.5% unknown • 3.9% City-owned, creates a similar process for redevelopment

After the presentation on this opportunity area the working group responded to the following questions:

- What types of land uses would be appropriate in this area and why?
- What types of land uses should be avoided in this area and why?
- What is most important to consider when making land-use decisions here?

Large Group Discussion Summary:

Opportunity Area 5: Calumet

Questions	Response
What types of land use would be appropriate in this area and why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 15 participants said connective open space/green space is appropriate – 6 participants said residential uses are appropriate – 5 participants said commercial uses are appropriate – 2 participants said light industrial / warehousing is appropriate
What types of land uses should be avoided in this area and why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 13 participants said industrial, heavy industry, manufacturing and logistics should be avoided – 2 participants said residential should be avoided

What is most important to consider when making land-use decisions here?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 7 participants said community impact and services should be considered - 6 participants said environmental and health impacts should be considered - 5 participants said truck traffic and road access should be considered - 3 participants said trail, park, and bike connectivity should be considered
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FEEDBACK ON OPPORTUNITY AREAS

After the presentation on this opportunity area the working group responded to the following questions:

- Where else might there be opportunity areas in the study? Please explain why.
- What are other criteria to consider when selecting opportunity areas?
- Do you have any other feedback on opportunity areas?

Participants mentioned when selecting opportunity areas, key criteria should include assessing site contamination, past land uses, and the potential for repurposing abandoned or public properties. Prioritizing areas that address community needs, such as job access and green space, is essential. Connectivity to transportation options and expanding links between people, nature, and economic opportunities were also emphasized. Environmental factors like wetlands and flooding prevention, as well as avoiding truck traffic, are important considerations. Participants stated that the goal should be to create good jobs while promoting public health and walkability.

Questions	Response
Where else might there be opportunity areas in the study boundary? Please explain why.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Near Hegewisch Marsh – 103rd east of Torrence Ave – Heron Pond / Deadstick Pond – 2 mentions of near Burnham Woods and Powderhorn Prairie – Areas close to red line extension – 2 mentions of East of Torrence along the river

What are other criteria to consider when selecting opportunity areas?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– 6 participants said environmental and pollution impacts should be considered– 3 participants said transportation and access should be considered– 2 participants said traffic should be considered– 2 participants said workforce development and community needs and history of the area should be considered– 2 participants said land ownership and current use should be considered
Do you have any other feedback on opportunity areas?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- 2 participants said edge conditions should be a focus- 1 participant said community needs should be a focus- 1 participant said connectivity and accessibility should be a focus

NEXT STEPS:

An online survey soliciting responses to the feedback questions noted above for all opportunity areas was sent to the working group.

The next Working Group meeting's topic will be Health & Community + Land Use Framework Discussion and will take place Zoom on May 13th. The calendar invite has been sent out.

The second public meeting will occur at the end of June.