

# Calumet Area Land Use Plan and Design Guidelines Update

## Working Group #6 Meeting Summary

Tuesday, May 14, 2025 | 6:00 – 7:30 PM | Zoom

The following 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 discussion summary. For questions, please reach out to Dhara Shah [at dhara@musecommunitydesign.com](mailto:dhara@musecommunitydesign.com).

## WELCOME + INTRODUCTIONS

Dhara Shah (MUSE Community + Design) and Luke Mich (Chicago DPD) were the lead facilitators in Working Group #6.

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)
Beth Dybala	Calumet Area Industrial Commission (CAIC)
Christina Harris	Metropolitan Planning Council (MPC)
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
Stephen Ostrander	Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP)
Thomas Daniels	9th Ward
Vanessa Schwartz	Metro Family Services
Yessenia Balcazar	Southeast Taskforce (SETF)

## AGENDA:

1. Welcome
2. Revised Draft Plan Goals
3. Goal 4 Draft Objectives
4. Goal 4 Draft Strategy Topics
5. Next Steps

## WORKING GROUP #5

In the prior working group, we reviewed:

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

## FOCUS OF WORKING GROUP #6

The following is an overview of the Working Group #6 presentation. During this meeting, participants reviewed updated project goals and public health data and discussed how land uses and design guidelines can address public health challenges.

## REVISED DRAFT PLANS GOALS

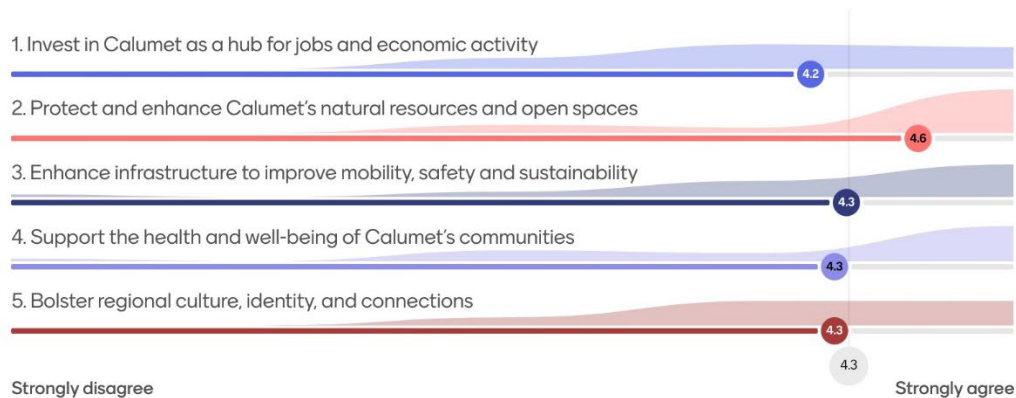
Draft plan goals were developed as an evolution of the Citywide Industrial goals shared in Working Group #1. The goals evolved based on feedback from the working group and Community Meeting #1.

The revised draft plan goals are:

- Goal 1: Invest in Calumet as a hub for jobs and economic activity
- Goal 2: Protect and enhance Calumet's natural resources and open spaces
- Goal 3: Enhance infrastructure to improve mobility, safety, and sustainability
- Goal 4: Support the health and well-being of Calumet's communities
- Goal 5: Bolster regional culture, identity, and ~~connections~~ **collaboration** (Goal 5 text as presented did not reflect recent revisions)

Following the presentation, the working group participated in an activity to evaluate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the goals.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following goals?



**Figure 1: Results from the poll on draft goals during the working group meeting.**

## Public Health in Calumet:

An overview of the City of Chicago's published Cumulative Impact Assessment findings was presented. The team presented findings for the Calumet Area Communities, which extends beyond the study boundary to depict the public health of residents in neighboring community areas.

The considerations from the Cumulative Impact Assessment help identify communities facing the most significant combined environmental and health burdens, highlighting where the City must prioritize efforts to understand and mitigate cumulative impacts.

### Calumet Area Communities Key Indicators:

- EJ Neighborhoods (48% of Calumet Area Census Tracts)
- Average Annual PM 2.5 (73rd Percentile)
- Children with elevated lead levels (72nd Percentile)
- Adults with coronary heart disease (80th Percentile), Adults with asthma (74th Percentile)

## **Draft Public Health Objectives:**

Each of the draft goals has corresponding objectives and strategies. The draft objectives for Goal #4 are listed below:

Revised Draft Goal 4 Objectives:

- Objective 4.1: Mitigate public health impacts of historical, existing, and future industrial uses and freight movement
- Objective 4.2: Minimize existing land use conflicts and prevent future conflicts
- Objective 4.3: Strengthen enforcement of public health regulations and pursue violators

## **STRATEGY TOPICS:**

The strategy topics to reach the objectives for Goal #4 were then shared.

The strategy topics are below:

- **Land Use Intensity:** How might we organize, distribute, and separate future allowable uses to minimize public health risks?
- **Vegetated Buffers:** Where can vegetated, buffers be implemented to screen or separate incompatible land uses?
- **Pollution Mitigation:** In what ways can land use policies and design guidelines address various forms of pollution, including air, water, noise, and light?
- **Site Remediation:** How can site cleanup be incentivized through redevelopment processes?
- **Regulatory Enforcement:** What measures can ensure that code violations result in meaningful and enforceable consequences?

## **Focus Area #1: Land Use Intensity**

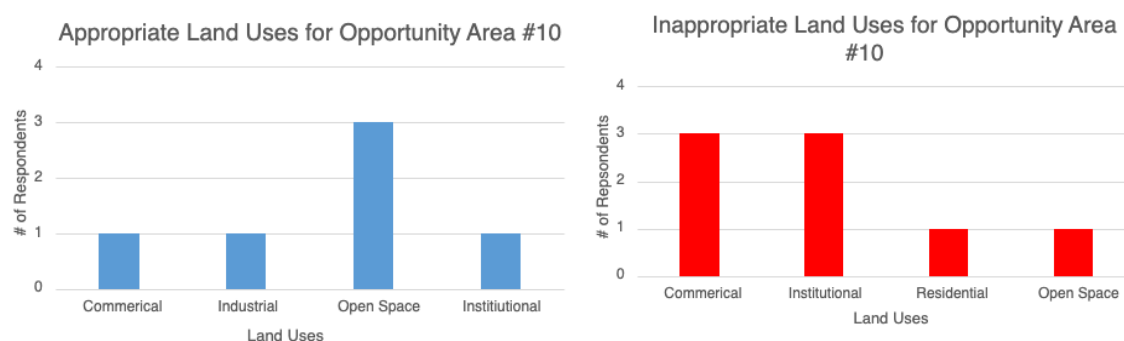
The strategy topics were applied to a specific area within the study boundary. Key questions to guide discussion and strategy development:

- The session focused on an opportunity area and portions of the broader study area to ground the discussion and mapping activity in physical space.

The selected area on the screen is located along the Calumet River—from Torrence Avenue to Avenue O (west to east) and the Chicago Skyway to approximately 107th Street (north to south). This area was chosen due to its diverse range of land uses, including industrial operations, residential zones, and vacant properties, making it a particularly rich context for analysis.

Participants reviewed existing conditions data related to the area, including vacant properties, river-dependent uses, edge conditions, pollution records, and CDPH enforcement data. In Working Group #5, the participants filled out a survey to provide input on types of land uses that may be appropriate and land uses that would be inappropriate. Those survey results are presented below.

### Survey Results:



**Figure 2: Results from the Opportunity Area Survey.**

The working group members then participated in an activity to discuss what land uses may be appropriate in the area, considering the existing shared conditions.

Participants were asked to envision how these uses might evolve and to help shape a long-term vision for the area. This included thinking through how current uses might shift, and what guidance the plan should offer in the event of land use changes.

Key questions for this activity included:

- What types of uses should be limited or restricted in the future?
- What types of uses should be encouraged or supported?
- How might vegetated buffers enable the coexistence of different land uses while minimizing conflicts?

This activity aimed to inform land use recommendations that balance industrial activity with public health, environmental quality, and community priorities.

The discussion raised balancing river-dependent industrial operations with increasing public access and recreational opportunities along the Calumet River. A key theme was maintaining the economic and logistical benefits of river- and rail-based freight movement while addressing community desires for cleaner industries, local ownership, and improved health outcomes. Other themes from the discussion included:

- **Industrial Operations in harmony with River Access:** Challenges were noted in reconciling river-dependent uses with future visions for the river, especially as operators change over time. Some participants stated that concentrated industrial use should not dominate the corridor, and more public space integration along working rivers should be included.
- Some industrial businesses expressed interest in trails and other public amenities, providing clarity in creating policies and regulations that affect industrial businesses and protections for their active operations.
- **Lower Emissions Transportation Strategies:** A participant noted that using barges and rail would help reduce truck traffic and associated emissions, allowing industrial businesses to benefit from river proximity.
- **Public Health and Local Impact:** There was broad agreement that river-dependent uses could be supported if they generate local jobs and do not negatively impact public health. The group prioritized job-generating with locally owned uses over uses with high environmental impact.
- **Buffers and Environmental Mitigation:** Landscape buffers were recommended to mitigate industrial impacts through pollutant capture, cooling, noise reduction, and visual screening. The need for green infrastructure and land use controls to reduce pollution was supported.
- **Vision for Future Industry:** It was urged that if businesses vacate, only clean, green industries should replace them. Without detailed information on past violations, assessing future risks remains difficult, underscoring the need for stronger policies and transparency.
- **Policy Alignment and Local Ownership:** Strong support was voiced for policies promoting local ownership and small business support. These priorities align with broader citywide goals and should be incorporated into land use.

## **Group Discussion: Pollution Mitigation. Site Remediation and Regulatory Enforcement**

Participants discussed the different strategies for achieving Goal #4's objectives following the mapping activity.

### **Strategy Topic #3: Pollution Mitigation**

Discussion focused on how land uses and design guidelines could address air, water, noise, light, and other types of pollution. Suggestions included incorporating air monitoring devices throughout the area, even in locations without EPA requirements, and implementing soundproof walls to minimize noise impacts.

### **Strategy Topic #4: Site Remediation**

The group discussed incentives for site cleanup as part of the redevelopment process. Questions were raised regarding the existence of a comprehensive inventory of private and public lands requiring remediation. Recommendations included allocating additional funds beyond current fees exclusively for remediation purposes, particularly where existing funds are not designated for cleanup activities.

### **Strategy Topic #5: Regulatory Enforcement**

The discussion addressed measures to ensure that code violations result in meaningful consequences. Emphasis was placed on the importance of significant fees and fines, with suggestions to direct such funds into remediation programs supporting the clean-up of other sites.

### **Additional Strategies for Public Health:**

- Encouragement of community benefits agreements between industries and community leaders to ensure transparency about remediation needs and commitments.
- Development of more advanced definitions and standards for “clean industrial” operations.
- Promoting policies encouraging local ownership of businesses to align operator priorities with community health and environmental goals.

### **NEXT STEPS:**

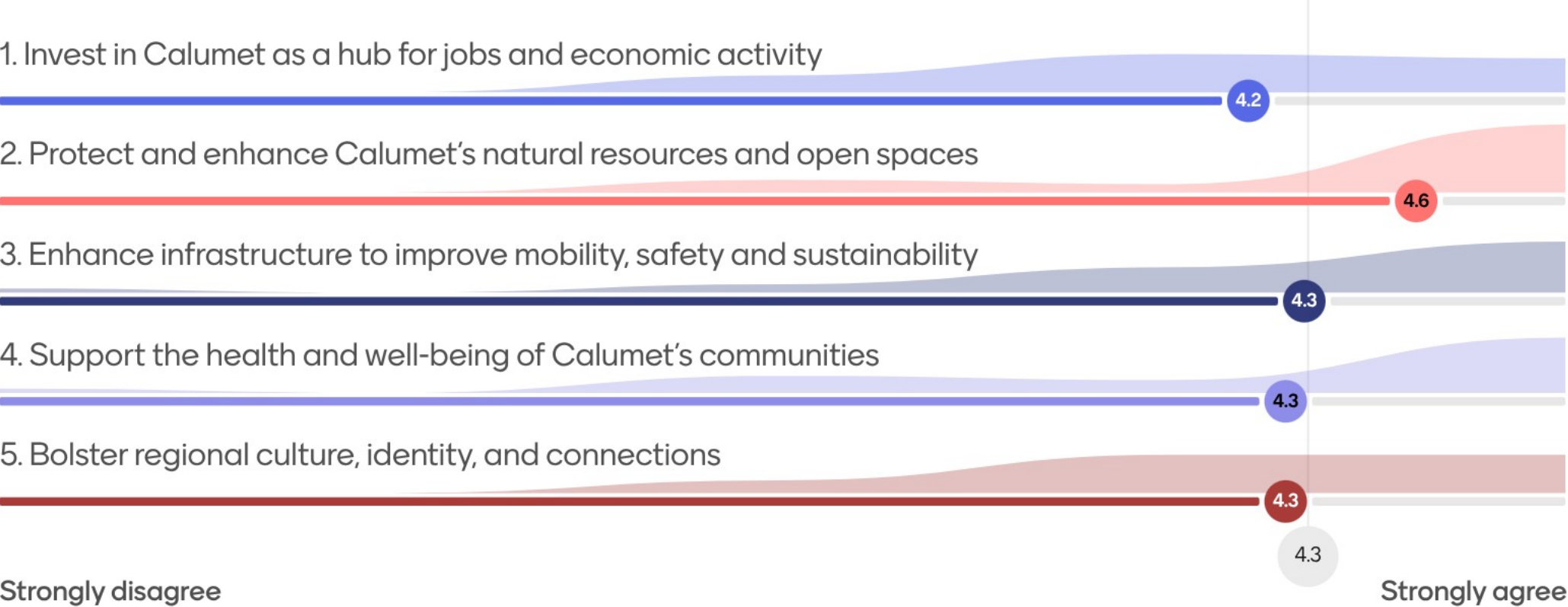
Working Group meeting #7 will be held on July 8th. The calendar invite has been sent out.

The second public meeting will be at the end of July, and the location and time will be announced soon.

There will be two virtual public meetings held in early August.



# To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following goals?



# If you disagree with any of the goals, please share why

N/A

Agree with goal 1, but want there to be emphasis on jobs and economic activity that lead to local wealth building

N/A

N/A

N/A

The goals are generally fine as very general statements, but there needs to be more information associated with them--explanatory information.

N/A

Depending on the type of jobs, goal 1 could conflict with the other goals stated such as protecting open space or supporting health

# If you disagree with any of the goals, please share why

Did not disagree with any of the goals but are they all possible to achieve? Are all goals compatible?

N/A

I don't disagree maintaining good public or natural resources, how we did it is the question

At best, this plan can influence regional culture as a spillover effect from economic/natural support. Harder to gauge how we can directly support culture and instead should be local group-oriented





I don't understand the Bolster Regional Community goal, I think that needs to be clearer about what we are really trying to achieve

Agree with goal 1 but not to exclusion or competition with strengthening neighborhood, residential, etc

# Opportunity Area 10

## Near Calumet | Survey Results

### Boundaries

-  Study Boundary
-  Industrial Corridor Boundary
-  Opportunity Area
-  Opportunity Area Vacant Parcels

### APPROPRIATE LAND USES IN OPPORTUNITY AREA #10



### LAND USES TO AVOID IN OPPORTUNITY AREA #10





### Strategy Topic #3 Pollution Mitigation: How can land uses and design guidelines address air, water, noise, light, and other pollution?

Trees can address all of that except noise

require site infrastructure that mitigates / captures water pollution

Creating standards for set backs or buffer distances depending on the type of industrial use

Naturalized Stormwater basins with non piped discharge. Previous surface parking and drives, green roof requirements.

Emphasize buffers, try to create a central region for industry (around the river at best); potential ordinances for reducing pollution at later hours

require enclosures for rather than open storage of materials that can cause air and water pollution

Take in consideration of how companies can mitigate emissions as part of operations

Using Native Plants to remediate the soil and prevent flooding

Strategy Topic #3 Pollution Mitigation: How can land uses and design guidelines address air, water, noise, light, and other pollution?

Ban uses adjacent to waterways that cause direct water pollution.

Create guidelines or incentives ie fast tracking permits that achieve those goals

Site lighting standards that incorporate dark sky rated fixtures

Design guidelines can include air monitoring for all the airways

A lot of these can be approached with responsible landscape design and \*maintenance\*

Soundproof walls minimize noise

Standards for securing trash receptacles and stormwater filtering storm drains that capture waterborne pollutants and floatables

Light Industrial zoning can prevent heavy industries from locating to the planning area.

Strategy Topic #3 Pollution Mitigation: How can land uses and design guidelines address air, water, noise, light, and other pollution?

Design guidelines for commercial buildings adjacent to industry's properties

## Strategy Topic #4 Site Remediation: How can site cleanup be incentivized as part of the redevelopment process?

Use cook county property taxes for brownfields

Isn't site clean-up already required as part of a redevelopment by other permitting agencies?

Provide resources - expertise for approach or materials ie. clean clay from city projects for remediation

Tie TIF breaks for companies to the amount of remediation they do, permit compliance, and violation elimination.

Tax incentives

It should be a requirement during developments - any new industry/company comes in, should do it. It shouldn't be on the funds of residents or the city as these are private entities

Could enforcement violation data be put into remediating land?

Material and trucking for capping is a big cost for remediation-this seems like a need the city could help meet with creative repurposing and coordination of materials from other projects



## Strategy Topic #4 Site Remediation: How can site cleanup be incentivized as part of the redevelopment process?

Follow through on the consequences

Some review of OSHA standards for each business in the area

Strategy Topic #5 Regulatory Enforcement: What measures can be taken to ensure code violations result in meaningful consequences?

Take their operating permit away after repeat consequences

Ensure regular enforcement/inspections and that the consequences are substantial enough to deter violations

fees should be significant, putting that into a fund that can go to remediation of other sites

+ to taking away permit after repeat offenses, small fines dont work

Exponential violation fines with few loopholes

Train local residents on the importance of pollution prevention, health, and safety. Give them jobs regarding air monitoring and other health methods and let them teach others in the area.

What additional strategies should we consider during this planning process to support the health and well-being of Calumet's communities?

More parks and open space

Proper follow-up. Have agency that issues the violations copy the local enforcement agencies. Have local inspectors follow-up to insure violations are corrected

consider consolidating heavy industrial away from residential

Provide opportunities to provide feedback passively- not attending an in person or virtual meeting

Don't allow anymore pollutants in the area

Some review of OSHA standards for each businesses in the area

any industries should engage in community benefits agreements that will discuss proper remediation and information about the true degree of remediation that is needed with community leaders

Develop more advanced definitions and requirements of clean industrial

What additional strategies should we consider during this planning process to support the health and well-being of Calumet's communities?

Like being able to read and provide comments on your own time. Some folks are shy or feel that meetings aren't for them. Ie only to yell or cheer

Create and promote an exciting 21st century vision for a healthier industrial corridor, based in modern industries. Have the City lead the realization of this new vision.

business attraction strategies and training for local ownership

Provide an ongoing department or team to lead the implementation and follow-up

Actually show quantitative data that show a link between industry and public health. Health issues such as heart problems and asthma can be caused by different factors including diet, genetics, allerg

Identify funding to move initiatives forward

Could be for this and other question, tax incentives or lower tax rate for violation free companies and tax increases for repeat violators