

1807-1815 N. Kimball Ave. Brownfield Cleanup Site: Community Involvement Plan September 2024

Overview & Purpose

The Community Involvement Plan (the Plan) proposed in this document presents an inclusive, accessible, and transparent process the City of Chicago, Department of Fleet and Facility Management (2FM), will use during the environmental remediation of the 1807-1815 N. Kimball Avenue Brownfield Cleanup Site (the Site). The Plan will ensure the cleanup process aligns with community interests and incorporates community feedback.

Initial community outreach has demonstrated strong support for this project along with the need to ensure the community will continue to be involved through public meetings, neighborhood outreach, digital updates, and social media outlets. This Plan details a list of comprehensive engagement objectives and associated strategies to provide community members an opportunity to learn project updates, impacts, and provide feedback in a timely, comprehensive manner.

Project Background

The Site is located in the Logan Square neighborhood near the boundary with the Humboldt Park neighborhood in the northwestern portion of Chicago, IL, and it occupies 0.4 acres of vacant land covered in grass and concrete. Three residential properties border the Site to the north and east, Kimball Avenue to the west, and The Bloomingdale Trail, an elevated greenway, borders it to the south. EPA awarded a Brownfields Cleanup Grant to 2FM, which will provide funding to assist the City in Site cleanup, including focused soil remediation (i.e. reducing concentrations of trichloroethylene (TCE) in Site soil).

Historic uses of the site included a lumberyard, machine manufacturer, and fluorescent light fixture manufacturer. In 2005, the vacant Site was acquired by the City of Chicago. Numerous environmental assessments identified high concentrations of TCE in deep soils along the eastern portion of the Site that require active treatment or removal to prevent human health risks from exposure. The City plans to clean up the TCE through in situ chemical oxidation treatment of soil (via soil mixing) and the eventual placement of engineered barriers and institutional controls. Following the TCE cleanup and future remediation, the Site will be able to be redeveloped as a public park and access point to the Bloomingdale Trail. Community meetings held in 2019 and 2021 presented the planned cleanup and envisioned redevelopment, and feedback was overwhelmingly in support of the project.

In 2020, the project received a \$500,000 EPA Brownfields Cleanup Grant with a \$100,000 cost match provided by the City. The Brownfields Cleanup Grant will help fund the treatment of the TCE source area (the Project). The remaining placement of barriers and implementation of controls will be completed in a later phase, under separate funding during the Site's redevelopment. The bid documents for the remediation contract were issued on August 13, 2024, with responses due September 23, 2024. The grant-funded cleanup of the TCE source material is scheduled to start in June/July 2025 and end in August/September 2025.

The Site was originally located within the 1st Ward, which was represented by Alderman Daniel La Spata. As of 2024, the Site is in the 26th Ward, which is represented by Alderperson Jessie Fuentes.

Plan Objectives

Community involvement is a critical component of this project to ensure the preliminary support is continually upheld through completion. The communities most affected by the Site reside in Logan Square and Humboldt Park. Community members must be aware, understood, and engaged to garner broad project support. To accomplish this, the Plan's objectives are as follows:

- **Objective 1: Increase public awareness** of the key project details. Campaigns should assume that community members have little background of the Site, need for remediation, cleanup process, and envisioned redevelopment; thus, materials must be comprehensive, yet understandable for the general public. It is critical to provide details of what the Site will look like and what residents can expect to see, hear, and smell during each stage of the project with a reasonable amount of notice prior to the commencement of significant field work actions.
- **Objective 2: Identify community priorities** that need to be taken into consideration during the duration of the project. Members of the community should be given the opportunity to provide input on their priorities throughout the project. Involvement strategies should demonstrate how these priorities are being considered in the project design and remediation.
- **Objective 3: Establish broad communication channels** for disseminating information equitably. Channels should be accessible to the broad public, including non-English speakers, elderly, and disadvantaged community members. Additionally, communication must be updated routinely throughout the duration of the project to ensure community voice is heard and support maintained.
- **Objective 4: Establish a documented, transparent and equitable community involvement process** that can be accessible to all members of the public.

Community Involvement Strategies

Involvement strategies that fulfill the Plan Objectives were determined from City and EPA requirements along with previous project experiences. Additionally, best practices from local leaders were gathered through an interview held in November 2020 with a representative from the 1st Ward Alderman Daniel La Spata's office. The interview focused on identifying existing communication channels, impacts of COVID-19 on outreach methods, and recommended community partners and leaders to engage. These strategies are based on the current learnings and are encouraged to be updated throughout the project duration as needed.

- **Assign a point of contact** for community members to submit general inquiries to via email or phone. The point for this project is:
 - Paul Waite, Environmental Engineer
City of Chicago, Department of Fleet and Facility Management
Telephone: 312-744 9667
E-mail: paul.waite@cityofchicago.org
 - Related Objective: 3
- **Leverage community partnerships** with the Friends of the Bloomingdale Trail (FOTBT), a community steward of the trail located next to the Site, and the local Alderperson's office. Both partners have a large active following with numerous existing methods to engage their audience including news articles, blogs, events, public meetings, social media outlets, bi-weekly newsletters, and roundtables. Information and materials related to project status and updates will be provided by the Project Team for both parties for them to disseminate in their networks. During the first year of the project, the team intends to utilize existing community outreach methods instead of dedicated methods focused solely on the project. Additional ancillary partners will be engaged as needed to implement the Project. The team has identified the Chicago Park District, The Trust For Public Land, and Friends of Kimball Park as partners in this category.
 - Related Objectives: 1, 2, 3, 4
- **Use traditional outreach channels**, such as flyers and fact sheets, that are more accessible for residents without digital capabilities to disseminate information about project status and updates. Information included in these materials will be taken from the analysis of brownfield cleanup alternatives (ABCA), site investigation reports, the cleanup plan, and verification report. Community partners will be responsible for identifying key locations to strategically disseminate the materials provided by the Project Team.
 - Related Objective: 1, 3, 4
- **Hold a virtual public commentary meeting** to present the envisioned project plan, safety procedures, and ABCA. The meeting will be in combination with existing community meetings held by local partners and may be held virtually. Residents can provide feedback during the meeting, through phone or mail (to the Department of Fleet and Facility Management (2FM)), or email (2FM_EHS_Notifications@cityofchicago.org).
 - Related Objective: 1, 2

- **Translate key materials**, such as handouts and fact sheets, to Spanish, as many residents in the area are predominately Spanish speaking. Based on feedback from project partners, certain components of key materials that are be as easily translated by online tools, such images containing informative text, will also be translated to Polish. Large documents, such as the ABCA, will be made available online for translation.
 - Related Objective: 1, 3, 4
- **Establish a public record** to monitor project documentation, feedback, response to feedback, key decisions, and project results at Humboldt Park Branch Public Library, 1605 N Troy Street, Chicago, IL 60647. A supplementary repository of documents will be available online (at 2FM’s project website, www.chicago.gov/kimball) to support translation needs and provide remote public access to the documents. Documents in the record shall include the ABCA, site investigation reports, the cleanup plan, cleanup standards used, responses to public comments, and verification that shows that cleanup is complete.
 - Related Objective: 4

Proposed Schedule

It is anticipated, at a minimum, that community engagement events will occur quarterly and at critical milestones including prior to completion of the remedial design phase (ABCA), before cleanup begins, and after the cleanup has completed. This may include workshops, meetings, and roundtables. Between specific events, the City will provide updates and access to the project team through email, the project website, project partner’s websites, and social media. Additionally, the team will be in close contact with the local Alderperson. Table 1 details the proposed community engagement schedule.

Table 1 – Activities, Deliverables, and Completion Dates for Community Involvement

Activity	Deliverable	Completion Date
Share with the public the Comprehensive Site Investigation Report (CSIR), Remediation Objectives Report (ROR), and Remedial Action Plan (RAP) submitted to the IEPA.	Provide Humboldt Park Branch Public Library hard copies of reports, upload main reports on project website (www.chicago.gov/kimball).	Reports to be shared upon completion (Winter 2020/2021)
Hold community meeting to provide update on the ABCA, final cleanup plan, safety plan, and respond to comments.	Copies of advertisements, social media posts, meeting minutes/presentation materials and responses to comments. To be provided in EPA quarterly grant reports.	Spring 2021 and Fall 2024
Distribute information flyers to adjacent neighbors impacted by construction at the Site prior to cleanup commencing.	Copy of the flyer will be provided in EPA quarterly grant reports.	Fall 2024 and Summer 2025

Inform project partners of project status and work tasks.	Correspondence with partners via email/meeting	Ongoing for duration of project.
Inform public of cleanup progress and results via project partner outreach networks (meetings, website updates, email blasts, etc.). Information should be offered in other languages as needed.	Copies of communication and summary provided in EPA quarterly grant reports.	Ongoing for duration of project. Public meetings will be held as needed.

Public Outreach Reporting and Evaluation

It is critical to ensure community involvement strategies outlined in this Plan adequately achieve and align with the needed objectives, especially as the ongoing impacts of COVID-19 may present challenges to in-person engagement. Quantitative and qualitative evaluation methods will be used to analyze the impact of engagement strategies. Evaluation criteria are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Performance metrics to measure impact of community outreach tactics.

Performance Metric	Type	Data Source	Frequency of Measurement
Number of community meetings held and attendance for each.	Quantitative	Sign-in Sheets	Quarterly
Number of digital outreach methods and engagements (likes, comments, etc.) for each.	Quantitative	Online Sources	Quarterly
Participants in existing outreach methods such as newsletters or blast email chains.	Quantitative	From Partners	Quarterly
Number of materials developed to target under-represented and disadvantaged community members.	Quantitative	Translated/Targeted Materials Developed	Quarterly
Feedback from community members on Site cleanup process.	Qualitative	Q&A Documented Responses	Quarterly
Feedback from community members on outreach methods.	Qualitative	Q&A Documented Responses	Quarterly

Results will be documented and reported as part of the EPA quarterly grant report. The team should evaluate the need for revisions to the engagement process to further improve community involvement from the results as necessary.