



**Calumet Collaborative Brownfield Working Group
Brownfield Mapping Project
March 30, 2020
2:00pm – 3:30pm**

Present:

Jennifer Birchfield, NWI Urban Waters
Barb Scapardine, MWRD
Liz Castaneda, Southland Development Authority
Serrater Chapman, Calumet Collaborative
Tess Conway, Calumet Collaborative
Sarah Coulter, Calumet Collaborative
David Doig, Chicago Neighborhood Initiatives
Mollie Dowling, Opportunity Advancement Initiative
Jack Eskin, Delta Institute
Joe Exl, NIRPC
Cherie Fischer, US Forest Service
Matt Freer, Chicago Park District
Kai Funahashi, GIS Analyst SSMMA
Theresa Johnston, MWRD
Lisa Krause, IDNR Coastal Management
Kim Kreiling, IDNR Coastal Management
Julia Linares, AmeriCorps
Kathy Luther, NIRPC
Kay Nelson, NWI Forum
Emily Rhodes, Illinois International Port District
Paula Robinson, Bronzeville Community Partnership
Janice Simmons, Far South CDC
Janet Smith, UIC
Anne Wright, MWRD
Kathryn Vallis, IDNR Coastal Management

AGENDA + NOTES

I. Welcome & Introductions
(Sarah)

2:00 – 2:15pm

- Sarah Coulter welcomed all participants of the Brownfield Working Group and introduced her new staff. Serrater Chapman is the new program manager and will be in charge of managing all of the Calumet Collaborative's programming, including Brownfield redevelopment. Tess is the new program coordinator and will be focusing on the Calumet National Heritage Area as well as all communications.
- Each attendee stated their name and provided a short description on their organization.

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Current Tool Update

- Serrater explained the status of the Brownfield map which was previously hosted on a server by the Voorhees Center at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC). Jessica Kursman has recently left the Voorhees Center UIC and in her transition it has been decided that the Calumet Collaborative should now manage the data and Brownfield map on a new server.
- Serrater explained that she is currently transferring the UIC data and map onto GitHub, a cloud-based server. On the current server, the Brownfield mapping tool tends to glitch when more than one user is using the tool.
- Serrater stated that the transfer will be complete by the end of the week and she will be placing the Brownfield data and map in the cloud-based site GitHub which will hopefully stop the Brownfield map from glitching/crashing.
- Once the Brownfield map has been uploaded onto GitHub there will be a new link available to use.
- The working group was asked if anyone has had the opportunity to use the mapping tool shared as a link in the email for the meeting and if so, how did it work? Some comments include:
 - There were issues with zooming.
 - It crashed each time he attempted to use it.
 - Some could not access it because their organization has potentially blocked it.
 - Able to access the map without it crashing but an issue was that “clicking on a particular site for more info brought me to uneven information on various websites.”

Narrative of the Map

- Sarah shared the importance of changing the narrative around the Calumet region and the perception of Brownfields in the region. The Calumet is frequently characterized by its landfill sites, contamination, and widespread disinvestment and the Calumet Collaborative is working to change that perception as well as have people see Brownfields as an opportunity and not an obstacle. Calling the tool a *Brownfield* mapping tool might carry some negative connotations due to the stigma around Brownfields. It was also mentioned that this was the first phase of the project and that additional data can/will be added to the map such as unmanaged natural areas and underutilized residential and commercial properties. Sarah asked the working group if the name Brownfield Mapping Tool was the best name we could use and asked the group to brainstorm ideas for alternative names. After a number of alternative names have been submitted and the narrative has been reviewed, they will be presented to the group at our next meeting.
- Could the map be better named to showcase the opportunity within the region – such as Opportunity Sites map rather than Brownfield map?

- Kathy Luther stated “I read the problem with Brownfields from an economic point of view is the lack of information. Maybe we could come up with names that reflect these are sites that we HAVE more information on.”
- Lisa Krause added “I agree that the language ‘Brownfield’ may be unclear to the broader audience – ‘potentially contaminated’ is clearer.”
- As far as the broader narrative, there is currently a statement on the tool that states the basic overview of the project and its purpose. Should this be re-written to tell a broader story and/or should the data dictionary be included in that opening paragraph and housed somewhere accessible so that users can have a clearer understanding of what they are viewing?

Action Item: A survey will be distributed after the meeting to all attendees. We will be asking for your feedback on other names for the map as well as other information pertaining to the meeting.

Launch

- The next steps for the tool launch are for staff to send the new link to the Brownfield Working Group. We would like to start with beta testing with Brownfield Working Group members to get feedback about how the tool is working, potential uses for the tool, and other insights.
- Additionally, it would be helpful to get input from affiliate organizations to understand how they would use the tool. These organizations have not been part of the tool’s development and could give us an outside perspective. This step will act as a soft launch to see how these organizations might view this tool as a resource for them and how it can be applied in their work. The Collaborative would like suggestions from the working group members to determine who these affiliate organizations are and what would be good questions to ask during the soft launch.
- When the soft launch with affiliate organizations has been completed and any minor adjustments made, we will release the tool to a broader audience and the general public.
- The proposed timeline is as follows:
 - By the end of April, the Collaborative staff will have completed the beta testing with the working group and finalized preparations for the soft launch by developing potential questions and surveys for affiliate groups. A small ad hoc group of volunteers is needed to create and review user experience questions.
 - At the beginning of May, the results of the naming and narrative review as well as the beta testing will be completed.
 - The launch to a broader audience and the general public at the end of May/beginning of June.

Action item: **Beta testing group.** Are there any BFWG members interested in being a part of the beta-testing group? Please identify yourself in the post-meeting survey and we will schedule a meeting (Zoom) with everyone.

Access

- The Collaborative staff needs assistance with reviewing the terms and conditions and disclaimer language for a broader audience and the general public to access the Brownfield tool. Serrater went over some draft disclaimer language with the group.
 - Kathy Luther asked if the Brownfield tool will include the dates of the data. Therefore, if some data is newer/older would the user know? Should the date of the data be displayed on each layer or should the dates of all the data be listed comprehensively somewhere on the page?
 - Barb Scapardine agreed that language in the disclaimer should state whether data is accurate and current.
 - Jack Eskin added that the assessments that confirm there is contamination on sites only lasts 6 months before they need to be updated. There is only a brief snapshot in time from a legal standpoint for knowing the actual soil health of a site.
- Should the Collaborative have a lawyer look at the disclaimer?
 - Kathy Luther stated that NIRPC uses legal disclaimers on all the GIS maps within the organization and that they do not use lawyers to do it. She offered to send an example of the disclaimers they use.
 - Please send any disclaimer language your organization uses to Serrater for us to consider when drafting our version.
 - Kay Nelson then stated that in order for the Collaborative to protect itself from legal action from unscrupulous developers the disclaimer needs to be much more specific.
- The Collaborative has considered including a user agreement and a disclaimer before receiving access to the map (including name, organization, and purpose). Serrater suggested the Collaborative staff could also individually grant access to avoid misuse of the map. This way users would have to state how they plan on using the data and the Collaborative staff would have more control over who is accessing the data and why.
- The map could also be connected to a bit.ly link in order track how often and who is using the tool which could be a good way to evaluate its value or usefulness for regional partners.

Action item: **Disclaimer and user agreement review.** Are there any BFWG members interested in reviewing the disclaimer language? Please identify yourself in the post-meeting survey and we will schedule a meeting (Zoom).

Long Term Sustainability

- The Brownfield mapping tool is not a simple GIS map and the long-term sustainability of the tool is more complicated because of the need for HTML experience is needed in order to maintain and update the tool.
- The Collaborative might consider an annual summer intern with HTML/coding experience to update the data and maintain the tool website each year.

- Financial long-term sustainability is also something to consider as site maintenance costs can be between \$6,500-\$8,000 annually. Sarah asked if any attendees are aware of any funding opportunities to please reach out to her.
- Jack Eskin then stated that the tool being open source is a high priority as in his professional experience he only uses free GIS maps. He also stated that the Gary Counts website (garymaps.org) costs approximately \$10,000 a year to update and maintain through Amplify Labs.
- Maybe identifying a sponsor to contribute to the maintenance of the Brownfield tool or of course traditional grant funding from Calumet Collaborative's fundraising activities could be used. This summer the funds from an older CCT grant will be used to pay for the intern program

Action item: Resource Information. If working group members know of any resources, please feel free to indicate them in the survey.

III. Next Steps

2:50-3:00pm

(Sarah & Serrater)

- Collaborative staff is going to create a survey monkey survey to get feedback from the meeting as well as answers to some questions discussed during the meeting.
- Serrater will be finalizing the GitHub transfer and then convening with a small group from the Brownfield Working Group to review the user agreement language. She will then bring the results of that small group meeting as well as the results of the initial beta testing to the next Brownfield Working Group meeting in early May.
- The May meeting (date TBD) will also include an introduction to the next steps of scenario planning and prioritization.

IV. Group Announcements

- Jack Eskin stated that Delta Institute is working with Cook County on the South Suburban Coalition Project and that the first round of engagement has just wrapped up and that a second round will be happening in the fall. Jack also added that this fall the EPA Technical Assistance for Brownfields (TAB) partnership could be coming to the region for Brownfields workshop and that more information will be shared in the coming weeks.
- Mike Charles of the Illinois EPA is also working with the TAB program and believes it would be productive to try to align and leverage different aspects of funding and expertise to make an impact on current contaminated sites that need funding and investment especially those that may come from nontraditional areas.
- MWRD's biosolids program has interest in Brownfield restoration in the Calumet region and is currently looking for sites that would allow for research and potentially citizen science projects.
- Matt Freer of the Chicago Park District stated that they have been working with MWRD on a biosolids study within non-public Brownfield sites and that they will have more information to share soon. He also added that the Ford Calumet Environmental Center at Big Marsh will hopefully be opening in June. Also, a new (almost publicly accessible) natural area along Little Calumet River at MWRD's outfall station will be coming soon.

- Emily Rhodes stated that the Illinois International Port District is currently going through a master planning process and that there is a survey available on their website that she requested the attendees complete.
- Kathy Luther state that that Greater Northwest Indiana Coalition is hoping to have a kickoff workshop event in June to explore the use of their revolving loan funds to target opportunities for NW Indiana economic development.
- Theresa Johnston stated that MWRD is hosting a sustainability summit in October in which they hope to highlight revegetating Brownfield sites and to please reach out if anyone is interested in participating.
- Sarah shared that a continuation of the work done with Delta Institute related community engagement around Brownfield redevelopment was awarded a small amount of funding to co-create or design a program with community leaders that would educate, engage and include residents in the redevelopment processes in their communities.

V. Adjournment

- The meeting adjourned at 3:10pm.