



During the formation of the 2040 Comprehensive Regional Plan (CRP), NIRPC conducted a regional forum with over 500 citizens from varying backgrounds, led multiple public workshops, and worked with key focus groups. This citizen feedback guided the development of the CRP's vision and goals for the region. The Coalition will build on this type of approach for community involvement in the grant project.

This web site is part of that outreach. Hard copies of the draft Work Plan will be available at the RDA and NIRPC offices and City Halls and public libraries to ensure access for those without computer availability, knowledge, or experience. The public will be able to provide comments verbally to RDA staff, via the internet, and in writing via email or letters. Comments will be discussed during a public meeting hosted by the RDA. The comments will be documented, and the draft Work Plan will be modified in response to the comments.

Following Work Plan approval, the Coalition will schedule three public kick-off meetings to acquaint the community with the project. The meetings will be held in each of the Coalition members' jurisdictions. One of the kick-off meetings will be broadcast via a webinar for citizens who cannot attend the meetings, and additional meetings will be scheduled, if needed.

The next community outreach/involvement effort will occur when a site/project has been selected for an RLF loan, a remediation approach tentatively has been selected, or a draft ABCA has been prepared. The ABCA and supporting documents will be made available in readily accessible document repositories established at the appropriate City Hall and library and posted on the internet.

A public meeting will be held at a readily identifiable and accessible public building in or as close as possible to the target neighborhood at the end of the comment period to receive and discuss additional comments and discuss steps that will be taken to protect the public during response activities. All comments will be documented, and appropriate modifications will be made to the cleanup plan. Additional public meetings will be held at the conclusion of site cleanup and during the cleanup if citizens so request or circumstances warrant. Translators will be provided at the meetings, as needed. Coalition project team representatives will attend city and/or community organization meetings to discuss the project and/or specific site cleanup activities and redevelopment plans, and will continue to solicit community input throughout the process.

The following community-based organizations will be directly involved in the RLF Grant project:

Lakeshore and Gary Chambers of Commerce: The Chambers work to represent and promote the region's businesses and encourage business and industrial investment in the community. The Chambers will support redevelopment planning in the region, help market remediated brownfields, and inform business and potential developers of the availability of grant funds.

Downtown Hammond Council (DHC): The DHC is a non-profit organization that works to revitalize and promote Hammond's downtown district. The DHC will inform existing and potential downtown businesses of the availability of grant funds, promote businesses that invest in downtown district brownfields, and work to attract residents/visitors to downtown Hammond.

Foundations of East Chicago (Foundations): Foundations works to improve the quality of life in East Chicago by providing grants to area non-profits, municipal agencies, and scholarships to local students. Foundations will disseminate information on the availability of the grant to impoverished and minority residents and businesses owners, share news on what sites have been selected for assessment, and provide the results of the assessments to effected residents.

Pulaski Park Neighborhood Association, Inc.: The Association works to enhance the quality of life for residents of the impoverished Pulaski Park area of northern Hammond. The Association will disseminate information on the availability of grant funds to area residents and businesses, and will share news on what sites have been selected for cleanup, and will provide the results of the cleanups (impact mitigated, potential health concerns, etc.) to affected residents.

East Chicago Community Health Center: The Center seeks to improve the health of East Chicago residents by offering quality primary health care that is affordable and accessible. The Center will disseminate information on the availability of the grant to East Chicago's impoverished and minority residents and businesses owners, and will share news on what sites have been selected for cleanup, and provide the results of the cleanups to effected residents. If health threats are identified during cleanup activities, the Center will provide residents with information on available medical treatments and/or actions they can take to reduce exposures.

Shirley Heinz Land Trust: The Trust is a non-profit group that works to preserve/protect the ecosystems of the Indiana Dunes region, and has acquired over 1,100 acres of land near southern Lake Michigan for preservation. The Trust will assist the Coalition in identifying brownfields impacting sensitive environmental areas, assist in integrating ecological enhancements as part of the remediation and redevelopment of these brownfields, and provide educational programs for residents and businesses on the importance of protecting the unique regional ecosystems.

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