

# BLUE ISLAND: A CMAP COMMUNITY SUSTAINABLE BROWNFIELDS PROGRAM

May 9, 2009 - Society for Risk Analysis Workshop: Public Health Benefits of Sustainable Development

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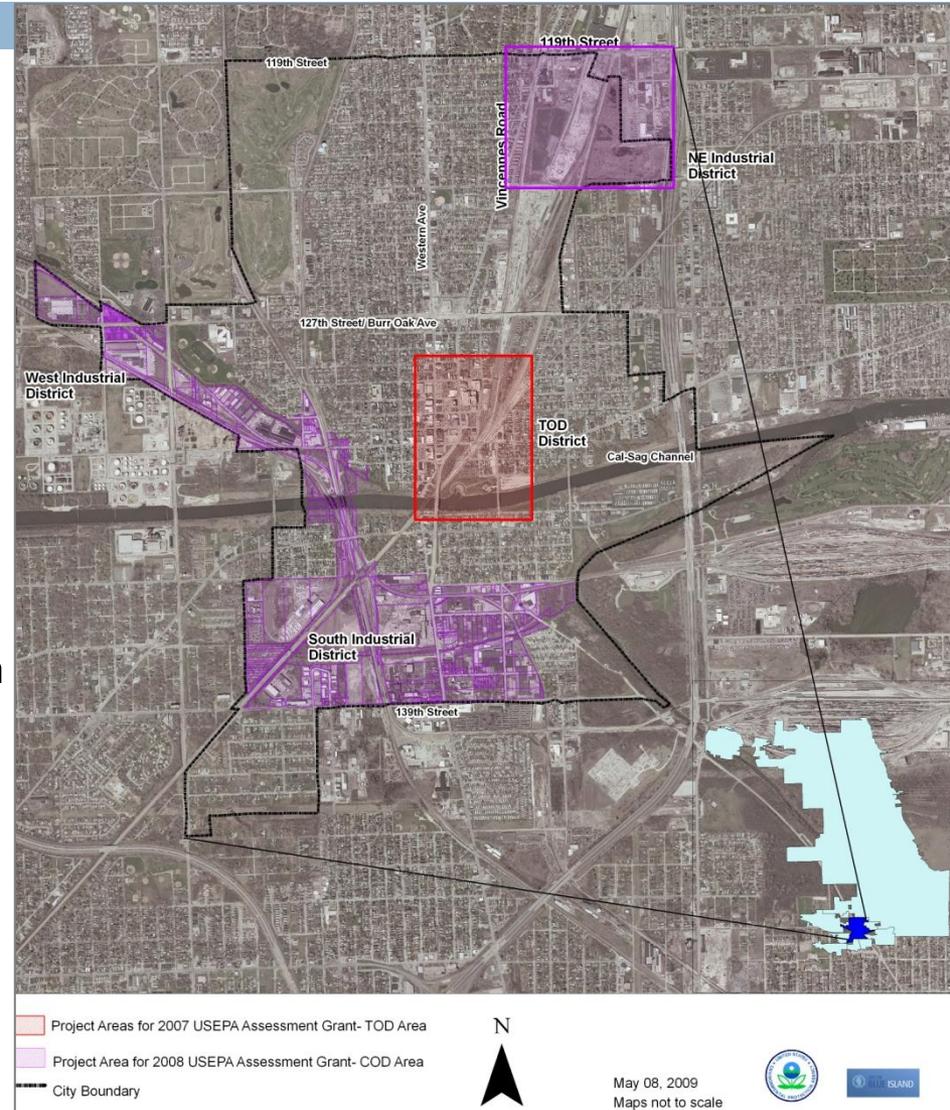
# About Blue Island

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- 180-year old, inner-ring suburb located just south of Chicago
- Population: 23,463 (2000 Census)
- Median income: \$36,520
- Ready Industrial Workforce
- 54.2% - high school or community college
- Transportation Assets: I-57, I-294, Metra
- Traditional downtown business district with walkable neighborhoods

## USEPA Grant Recipient

- 2007 Brownfields Assessment Grant
- 2008 Brownfields Assessment Grant



# Blue Island Economic Development Plan

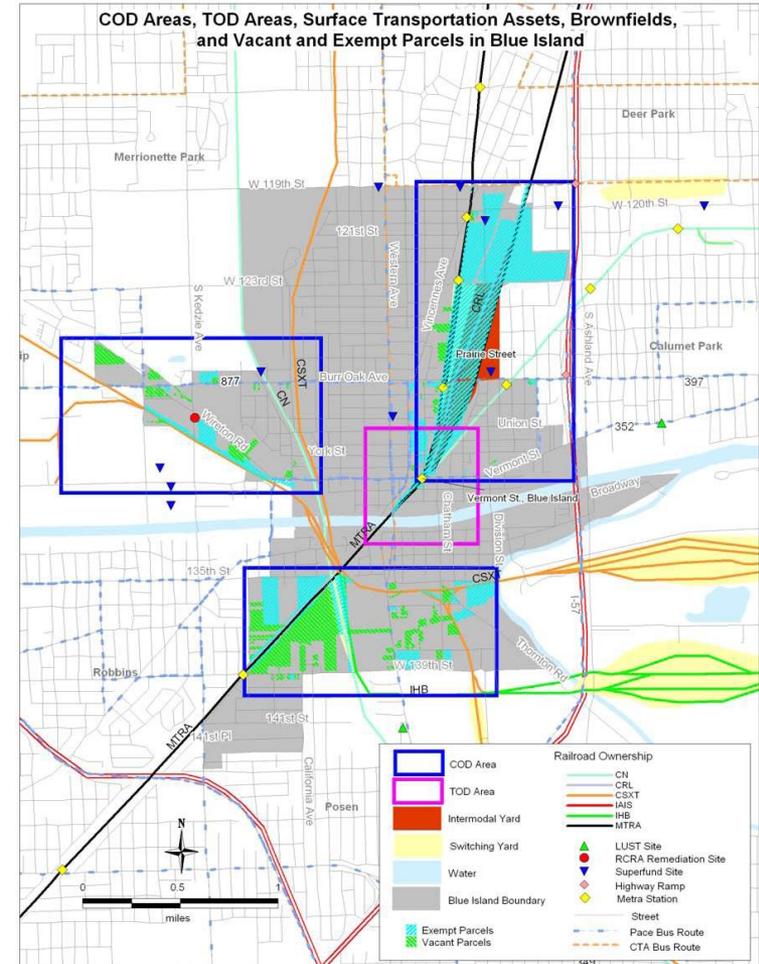
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## Goal:

Foster development that will create jobs & raise local tax revenues, while celebrating Blue Island's historic identity, preserving its diversity, enhancing its natural environment, and improving the quality of life for all residents.

## Principles:

- Affirm Blue Island's identity
- Make development inclusive
- Make development work for business & the environment
- Direct development planning & oversight from the community
- Make a practical development plan



# Priority Redevelopment Areas

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## **TOD Redevelopment Opportunity:**

Correct current negative land use & design of the built environment so that more people will have the opportunity to live and the desire to shop in the Vermont station area and main street district.

## **COD Redevelopment Opportunity:**

Use the advantages of access to freight infrastructure, existing business clusters & a ready industrial workforce to overcome impediments & restore more than *150 acres* of vacant land to productive use.

## **Benefits of TOD/COD Redevelopment:**

- Improve regional economy
- Improve regional environment by establishing new land use and transportation patterns that will eliminate thousands of truck trips and tons of air pollution per year



TOD Opportunity



COD Opportunity

# Redevelopment Obstacles

Despite numerous assets, any redevelopment project in Blue Island must overcome several serious obstacles:

- Cook County tax rates that are higher than those of any other Illinois county
- **Environmental conditions and the perception that brownfields may be more widespread and more expensive to improve than they actually are**
- The perception that Cook County industrial property values will not appreciate

# Assessment Grant Project Focus

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Extension of redevelopment priorities identified in adopted economic development plan

## Why we chose COD/TOD areas:

- Eliminate one of redevelopment obstacles
- Previous efforts using IEPA focused on a former landfill site
- Promote use of existing rail & public transit (Metra)
- Potential for job creation
- Promote healthy community by creating housing and job opportunities



139<sup>th</sup> Street – TOD Opportunity

# Project Summaries

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## 2007 Assessment Grant

- Brownfields Program
- Define priority sites within TOD areas
- Identify & evaluate potential environmental issues
- Develop strategies to address issues
- Lead/Asbestos Assessments

## 2008 Assessment Grant

- Inventory & define priority hazardous sites in the south COD area
- Inventory & define citywide priority petroleum sites
- Identify & evaluate potential environmental issues
- Develop strategies to address issues
- Community Health Monitoring

# 2007 Project Highlights

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## Establish Brownfields Program

- To build capacity of staff & volunteer BAT members to make informed and decisions
- Brownfields Nuts & Bolts Training for staff & public
- Technical report by Delta Institute

## Site Prioritization & Phase I Selection Criteria:

- City-owned or easily acquirable property
- Tax delinquent
- Poor utilization/difficult owners
- Vacant or abandoned
- Quick redevelopment turnaround potential
- Potential to spur economic activity in the surrounding area

# Community Outreach Efforts

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Public workshop #2  
Site Selection 2007 Assessment Grant



## **Brownfields Advisory Team (BAT)**

Established team of staff, agencies and local community members. Responsibilities include:

- Attending Brownfields Nuts & Bolts Training Workshop
- Attending and participating in meetings
- Providing input on brownfields issues
- Representing their community in a positive way.

## **Blue Island Brownfields Initiative Website/Blog**

<http://biplanning.wordpress.com>

## **@BIBrownfields Twitter**

[www.twitter.com/BIBrownfields](http://www.twitter.com/BIBrownfields)

## **Blue Island Brownfields Initiative Brochure**

## **Community Health Monitoring**

# Community Health Monitoring

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## Partner with ATSDR, CCHD, CMAP & USEPA to implement Action Model

- Community based; 2 public workshops
- Local Stakeholders: Healthy Communities group
- Intro Meeting: March 12
- First of 2 workshops in late May
- Hope to engage broader range of stakeholders, including youth



**Expected outcome:** Set of measurable, trackable indicators reflective of community determined public health related issues; increased community involvement in brownfields redevelopment

# Conclusion

- Next steps, future, accomplishments
- Overall lessons (re)learned
  - Be flexible; Modify approach when necessary
  - Be careful when using words like brownfields with public, especially in writing
  - Partnerships are key
  - Work closely with your USEPA grant coordinator
- Questions ?