

Calumet Corridor Vision

SETF's Calumet Corridor Vision has been the focal point of our open space program for the past year. The project links historic, cultural and natural areas into a system of open spaces and multi-use trails. It sews together our fragmented industrial landscape and restores the region's natural unity.

The Calumet Corridor Vision promises many benefits for our communities. Residents will some day enjoy high quality open spaces and an expansive network of greenways and trails. New opportunities will open for economic development. Bicycle and auto tours will bring visitors into our region.

The project receives generous support from Chicago Wilderness, Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation, Prince Charitable Trusts, and the Searle Funds at The Chicago Community Trust.

How It Works

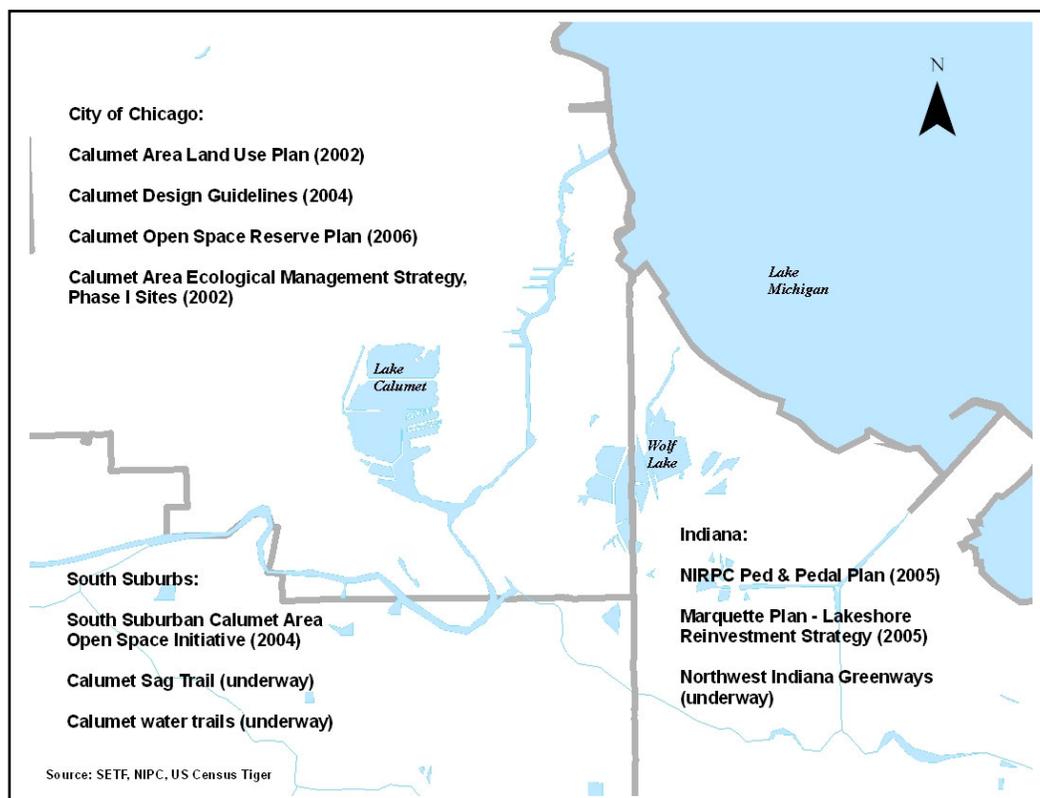
The Calumet Corridor Vision project includes three main areas of work:

- 1) Implementing Calumet area plans that already exist;
- 2) Planning for multi-use trails, wayfinding signs and maps;
- 3) Creating a Calumet regional identity.

Calumet Area Plans

SETF works with governmental and non-governmental partners in two states and many jurisdictions. Many of them have plans for part of the Calumet Region. When combined, these plans promise to maximize benefits for the whole region. All of them together make our Calumet Corridor Vision.

CALUMET AREA PLANS

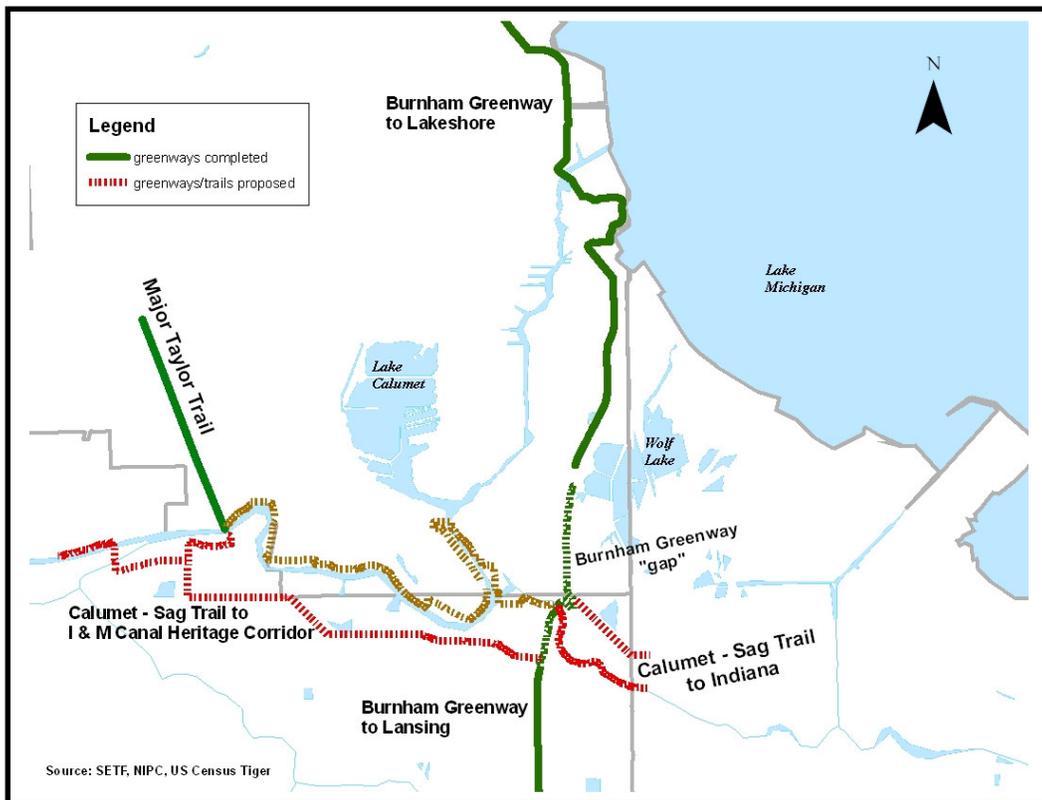


Multi-use Trails

An expansive network of multi-use trails will link places together. The main regional trails include:

- Burnham Greenway, a north-south trail through the south suburbs and southeast side to the lakefront;
- Calumet-Sag trail, for east-west movement between Indiana and the I&M Canal National Heritage Corridor;
- Major Taylor Trail, which follows a former railway from Riverdale through West Pullman.

REGIONAL MULTI-USE TRAILS



These regional trails will lead to many local trails and bike routes. Currently, the Burnham Greenway and the Major Taylor Trail are partially built. The Calumet-Sag Trail is still getting planned. When they are complete, a whole system of trails will connect people to our historic, cultural and natural areas.

Historic and cultural sites include:

- Acme Coke Plant site;
- Ford Calumet Environmental Center (when complete);
- Calumet Park / Southeast Chicago Historical Museum;
- John Ton Farm (Underground Railroad site—public access plan under development);
- 92nd Street and 95th Street Bridges (and other historic sites along the Calumet River);
- Memorial Day Massacre site;
- Historic Pullman.

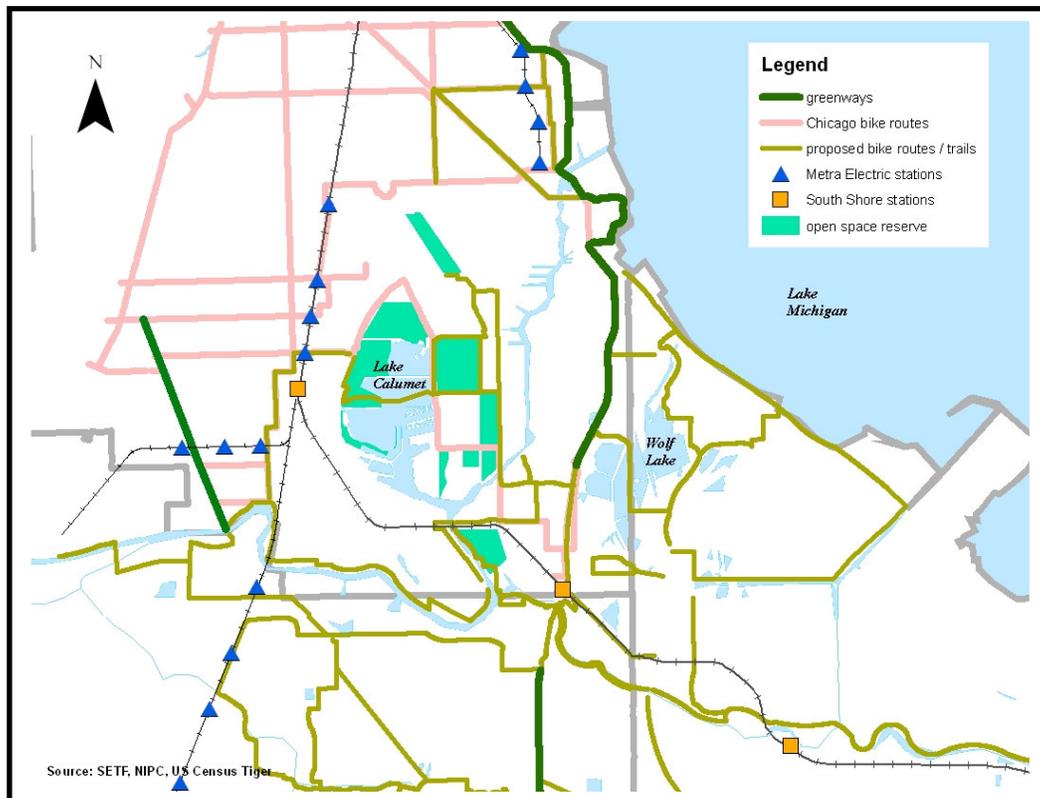
Natural areas include many within the city’s Calumet Open Space Reserve:

- Hegewisch Marsh, which will be site of the Ford Calumet Environmental Center;
- Hyde Lake Wetlands (with wildlife viewing platforms just off Carondelet);
- Marian R. Byrnes Natural Area/Van Vlissingen Prairie, still in the site planning process;
- Big Marsh, currently owned by Waste Management and undergoing remediation;
- Indian Ridge Marsh, which the city is purchasing through a tax-reactivation program;
- Heron Pond, also being acquired through a tax-reactivation program;
- West Shore of Lake Calumet, which SETF wants transferred to the Forest Preserve District of Cook County.

The Task Force also wants to make sure that connections go across the state line. SETF is currently working with planners in Indiana to explore opportunities for cross-state connections, including: Lakefront/Calumet Park; 112th Street; 129th Street; 136th Street; Brainard Avenue; Grand Calumet River; Little Calumet / I-80; and the Pennsy Greenway in Lansing.

All proposed cross-state connections shall lead to the Burnham Greenway. They will allow trail users to make many “loops” through the Calumet area. They will also open exciting opportunities for statewide and national bike routes. The I & M Canal Corridor, the Grand Illinois Trail (a 500-mile route through northern Illinois) and the American Discovery Trail (a national coast-to-coast route) will eventually pass through our region. Visitors may bring bicycles into the area by South Shore and Metra Electric trains.

MULTI-USE TRAIL CONNECTIONS



Regional Identity: Future Goals

We want to restore our fragmented industrial landscape to its natural unity and beauty. This will raise the quality of our communities. It will lay the basis for recreation, tourism, ecotourism and new forms of economic development. Therefore, we need to consider our region's unique identity.

Plans are underway to extend the Illinois & Michigan Canal National Heritage Corridor, from southwest suburban Lemont eastward to the Calumet area. This extension, which could occur as early as next year, offers an important occasion to consider regional identity. It suggests the need to think about themes, places, and stories that make the Calumet area special.

Eventually, we will communicate regional identity using everything from Internet-based virtual maps to on-the-ground tours and special signs. Communicating a strong identity will require the following:

- Calumet region web site, with a colorful map and links to information on interesting places;
- Printed bicycle map showing routes through the Calumet region in detail;
- Interpretive signs at natural areas and places of historic and cultural interest;
- Maps or way-finding signs at trail heads and trail intersections.

We shall build up these communication abilities gradually over time as funding becomes available.

Here's Where We Stand

SETF has made some important progress after one year of the Calumet Corridor Vision project. We shall continue with the following activities in 2006:

- Advocate for completion of the Burnham Greenway "gap" – a 2.5-mile missing link from 126th Street in Chicago to State Street in Burnham.
- Pursue opportunities for public access to historical sites and green spaces on the Calumet River.
- Participate in a working group for the Calumet-Sag trail, which includes communities along the Little Calumet and Cal-Sag Channel. SETF works with Burnham, Calumet City, Riverdale, Dolton and other communities along the eastern leg of the trail.
- Work with partners at Sierra Club and Field Museum to develop a Calumet region web site. We shall retain a graphics/map designer as soon as funding becomes available. The Task Force will identify possible local sponsors for the web site, bike map and interpretive signs.
- Host half-day workshop this fall, for local planners and civic leaders, to consider regional identity and the national heritage area extension. We'll consider an overall theme or message for the Calumet region, the important sub-themes, sites and stories associated with sites. We may discuss a common symbol or logo for interpretive signs.¹

For More Information: Contact ALAN at the Southeast Environmental Task Force,
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¹ The I & M Canal National Heritage Corridor offers good examples of maps and interpretive signs. See Internet - <http://www.canalcor.org/>