

Final Report

Fisk and Crawford Reuse Task Force: Process, principles and recommendations

September 2012



Prepared by the City of Chicago's Mayor's Fisk and
Crawford Reuse Task Force

Acknowledgements

The Task Force gratefully acknowledges Delta Institute, the facilitator, for guiding the group towards points of consensus and for taking the lead in preparing this report. The Task Force thanks all participants and contributors to Task Force meetings, public hearings and conversations in the community. Finally, the Task Force gratefully acknowledges the Joyce Foundation and the Sierra Club for their financial support.

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Executive Summary

In August 2012 the Fisk and Crawford generating stations, occupying about 115 acres in Chicago's Pilsen and Little Village neighborhoods, closed. This will mean two substantial land parcels, on the waterfront and near transportation, will be available for redevelopment. Prompt, astute redevelopment of the sites can enhance the health, pride and economic strength of the neighborhoods and the city.

Mayor Emanuel established the Fisk and Crawford Reuse Task Force (the Task Force) to collect community input on future uses of the sites, and to consider economic development and job creation options for the land.¹ For the past five months, the Task Force has brought together diverse interests: Midwest Generation (the site owners), ComEd, community organizers, organized labor, two aldermen and the City's Department of Housing and Economic Development. Productive and generous participation by all members has been at its core. Following site visits, community input, dialogue and analysis of other brownfield redevelopments, the Task Force has drafted Guiding Principles and Recommendations designed to promote, ideally, redevelopment that is most valuable to the community and the city. These principles and recommendations were refined in light of public input; the Task Force evaluated and reflected feedback gathered at two public hearings and in hundreds of comments and survey responses collected by the community groups, the aldermen and the Mayor's office.

While it retains the right to enter into agreements to sell the properties, Midwest Generation has agreed, along with the Task Force, on principles and recommendations to guide the redevelopment of the sites.

The Task Force has set out nine Guiding Principles for redevelopment of the sites, which broadly include:

- Enhancing the ability of residents and businesses to live, work and play in a healthy environment
- Prioritizing quality, living wage jobs
- Identifying and pursuing resources for redevelopment
- Recognizing existing constraints and context for the redevelopment, and
- Encouraging collaboration of stakeholders on redevelopment, noting that it will likely lead to the best outcome for all.

The Task Force has listed 13 specific near-term recommendations to move redevelopment of the sites in this direction. The recommendations focus on:

- Decommissioning and practical steps for site preparation
- Community engagement and opportunity for public space and water access
- Marketing and future use
- Improving public sector infrastructure, and
- Immediate next steps.

¹ City of Chicago 2012b

Introduction and context

Fisk and Crawford sites

The Fisk and Crawford Generating Stations produce electricity, primarily from coal-fired turbines. Fisk and Crawford are owned and operated by Midwest Generation, a subsidiary of California-based Edison Mission Energy.

Fisk, located on a 43 acre site at 1111 W. Cermak in Pilsen, has generated electricity from coal-burning turbines since 1903. Its 326 MW capacity can produce enough electricity to power over 380,000 households. The site is also home to six natural gas-fired peaking plants and to ComEd transmission and distribution equipment. Crawford, located on a 72-acre site at 3501 S. Pulaski in Little Village, is newer – commissioned in 1925 – and larger, with a 542 MW rated capacity. ComEd transmission and distribution equipment is also located on the Crawford site.



**Fig. 1 – Fisk Generating Station
Pilsen**



**Fig. 2 – Crawford Generating Station
Little Village**

The owner of the plants, Midwest Generation, decided earlier this year to retire and decommission the generating stations. The stations shut down in August 2012, due in part to the advocacy activities of the Chicago Clean Power Coalition (see below) and in part to market realities. When the plants closed, around 175 jobs – predominantly union – were lost from these sites. Midwest Generation will decide what happens to the sites now that the generating stations are closed. The company is legally obliged to ‘secure and maintain’ the sites, but any additional redevelopment is voluntary. However, together with the Fisk and Crawford Reuse Task Force, Midwest Generation is actively exploring options for reclamation and redevelopment of the sites by itself or a third party. The company believes that reclamation and economic development as soon as economically practical is desirable, as are uses of the sites that are supported by the City and surrounding communities.

The redevelopment of the sites offers a great opportunity for the communities of Pilsen and Little Village, and for the city as a whole. Some current uses will continue: grid infrastructure will remain for the foreseeable future, as will gas-fired peakers at Fisk (see Appendix 1). Though not

all land on the sites will be vacant, the parcels of land that *are* available will be significant. It is expected that at about 40-50% of the land at Fisk and about 75% at Crawford can be redeveloped for a new use.

The sites have many appealing features. They are in the city, relatively close to downtown, and the nearby areas are densely populated, offering a supply of labor and a pool of future users of the sites. Both sites are on the water, which could be both an asset for community recreation and also an important economic feature for potential future industrial users. Further benefits come from the existing electricity transmission and internet infrastructure on site. The sites, however, are likely to have some environmental issues resulting from their age and decades of heavy industrial use. Remediation may be required for future development, but will be determined by the nature of next use (discussed further below). The issue of remediation was discussed by the Task Force but the Task Force was unable to reach consensus on a recommendation for further action.

The broader context— the land use, economic activity and zoning – of the sites is important as redevelopment is considered. The generating stations are located in industrial corridors that have close proximity to strong inter-modal transport infrastructure, including I-55 and abutting waterways (see Appendix 1). Zoning and other incentives, such as Tax Increment Financing (TIF), support continued use of this land by industry. Fisk is located in a Planned Manufacturing District, and Crawford in a Heavy Industrial District, and residential use is prohibited for both sites.

The redevelopment of the Fisk and Crawford sites occurs in the context of a broader planning initiative by the City to promote industrial growth, as set out in its 2012 *Sustainable Strategies Initiative*. The City is increasingly focused on coordinating the economic, social and environmental aspects of Chicago's manufacturing sector, and aims to support sustainable industrial developments that align with the assets of their location and provide well-paying jobs to residents. Ultimately, these goals will be set out in a formal plan for Chicago's industrial future.²

History of stakeholder engagement

For well over a decade, the communities of Pilsen and Little Village have taken a close interest in the Fisk and Crawford generating stations. A primary concern has been the alleged health effects of the stations. A group of 17 environmental, health and community organizations, in recent years under the banner of the Clean Power Coalition, have campaigned for greater regulation and closure of the two facilities. Three community groups, Pilsen Alliance (est. 1998), Little Village Environmental Justice Organization, and Pilsen Environmental Rights and Reform Organization (PERRO) (est. 2004) have been particularly active and are represented on the Reuse Task Force (see below).

Though the Pilsen and Little Village neighborhoods have strong networks of community organizations and a history of advocating for community improvement, the characteristics of the communities presented some challenges to broad engagement. First, there is a language barrier,

² See City of Chicago, 2012a

with many residents lacking fluency in English. Second, since both communities are low income, working class, immigrant neighborhoods,³ residents face a host of other concerns – such as housing costs and living wage jobs – that often take precedence over environmental concerns. It took proactive community groups and translation of campaign materials into Spanish and into visual formats before there was substantial engagement of the residents.

The last two years have been critical in the more than 12 years of stakeholder engagement. Large, high-profile groups, including Greenpeace, Sierra Club and Chicago's Environmental Law and Policy Center, lent their support to the Clean Power Coalition. Debate over the future of Fisk and Crawford became more prominent as media coverage rose and previously frustrated residents re-engaged with the issue. The current Mayor's office also provided city support for closure of the plants, and eventually a challenge to Midwest Generation to clean up or shut down the plants.⁴

The community is heavily invested in the future of the Fisk and Crawford sites. In recent years, residents have participated in numerous workshops, surveys and visioning exercises regarding the sites (see Appendix 5). From these, several themes have emerged, including the desire for a clean environment, sustainability of the neighborhood, affordability, local education and jobs. Members of the Little Village community, for instance, describe a vision for a vibrant site that sets the tone for those coming into the neighborhood: some would like to see a combination of light industry (for example, solar panels, recycling center), commerce or services, education – to complement nearby Westside Tech – and public access for river-side recreation. The community is hopeful that their engagement can be ongoing, and that any future developer will be realistic, provide transparent updates and remain accountable. Residents in Pilsen came to similar conclusions, overwhelmingly supporting multiple uses of the Fisk site, including green space and access to the river, as well as clean, light manufacturing to create living wage jobs. Residents were particularly enthusiastic about a potential river walk. These goals were reiterated in the recent public hearings and are reflected in the Guiding Principles and Recommendations of the Task Force (below).

Since 2010, the engagement between Midwest Generation and the community has been more regular and increasingly constructive, evolving from the original 'community versus company' dynamic and lawsuits filed in 2009. In February 2012, a memorandum of understanding was signed by Midwest Generation and three community groups. It includes a timetable for plant closure and a plan for ongoing community engagement (see recommendations, below). The steps taken and agreements reached offer a model for other interest groups seeking to resolve similar issues. Now that a timetable for discontinuing operations has been set, stakeholders' focus has shifted to viable, long-term redevelopment of the sites.

³ City Data.com, 2011; Metropolitan Planning Council, 2009

⁴ See, for example, Dardick and Hawthorne, 2012

The stakeholder consultation process

In early 2012, just a year after becoming Mayor, Rahm Emanuel initiated the Fisk and Crawford Reuse Task Force to collect community input on future uses of the sites, and to develop economic development and job creation options for the land (see Appendix 2).⁵ This input, and subsequent deliberations, led to the articulation of guiding principles and recommendations for reuse of the sites. The process and outcomes of the Task Force are the focus of the remainder of this report.

Task Force members

The primary means of stakeholder collaboration on site reuse has been through the Reuse Task Force, members of which were selected by the City of Chicago. The Task Force included community leaders, aldermen, not-for-profits, private sector, labor and utility representation.

- Kathleen Dickhut, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Housing and Economic Development, Bureau of Planning and Zoning
- Doug McFarlan, Senior Vice President of Public Affairs & Communications, Edison Mission Group (EMG)
- Bill McNeil, Vice President of Energy Acquisition, Commonwealth Edison
- Jerry Mead-Lucero, Organizer, Pilsen Environmental Rights and Reform Organization (PERRO)
- Ricardo Munoz, Alderman, City of Chicago (22d Ward)
- Daniel Solis, Alderman, City of Chicago (25th Ward)
- Nelson Soza, Executive Director, Pilsen Alliance
- Tom Villanova, President, Chicago & Cook County Building & Construction Trades Council
- Kimberly Wasserman Nieto, Executive Director, Little Village Environmental Justice Organization (LVEJO).

The Task Force consultation process was facilitated by Jean Pogge and Thomas Cushing from Delta Institute.

Biographies for the Task Force members and facilitators are contained in Appendix 3.

The consultation process

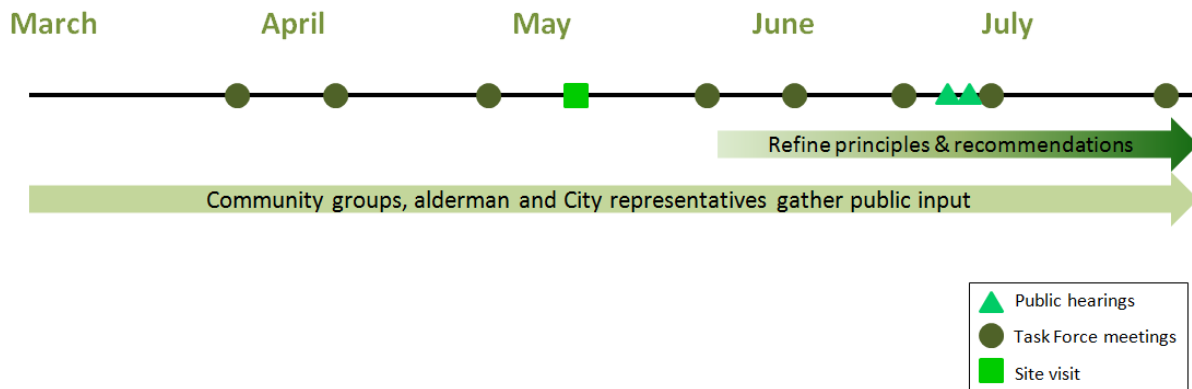
Between March and August 2012, the Task Force held regular facilitated meetings, designed to develop a shared vision for redevelopment of the sites and to build consensus on suggestions for

⁵ City of Chicago, 2012b

potential reuse. Ten meetings of two to three hours duration were held at Delta Institute, where members gained a deep understanding of the sites and the context for redevelopment, and also received presentations on brownfield redevelopment and public sector financing options for the project (see Appendix 4). Members also engaged in individual meetings with Delta Institute to share concerns or preferences. The Task Force was an effective tool for communication. It provided the group with a regular forum for information exchange, conversation and debate, and it served as a point of dissemination for information that could be shared with the general public.

A highlight of the Task Force's work was the tour of both the Fisk and Crawford sites on May 11, 2012. Hosted by Midwest Generation, the site visits made concrete many of the details about the size and characteristics of the land parcels. The tours led to the Task Force discussions regarding sites for parks/open spaces, the realities of the substantial grid infrastructure remaining on the sites, and the amount of land available at each site, and location and size of the buildings.

Figure 3 - Timeline of Task Force consultation process



Public feedback

Task Force members actively collected input from their constituents and the broader community. The three community groups – Pilsen Alliance, Little Village Environmental Justice Organization, and Pilsen Environmental Rights and Reform Organization (PERRO) – Alderman Solis and the Mayor carried out broad surveys about preferences for site reuse. From June 2012, the Mayor also established Online Forums at the Fisk and Crawford Reuse Task Force Website for the public to submit ideas and feedback openly, or privately, to the Task Force to inform this report. These findings, presented in Appendix 5, were reflected in the development of principles and recommendations by the Task Force.

Finally, comments from the wider community were gathered in public hearings held on June 26 and 28 in Pilsen (National Museum of Mexican Art) and Little Village (Little Village High School), respectively. The hearings were promoted in English and Spanish by the community

groups and the Mayor's Office and attended by 75-100 community members in Pilsen and 50-70 people in Little Village.

After presentations and remarks from Delta Institute, the community groups, Midwest Generation and the aldermen, Delta Institute moderated subsequent comments from meeting attendees. Approximately 25 public statements were received at Pilsen, and approximately 18 in Little Village. The overwhelming message from public hearings was the desire for future uses of the sites to create local jobs, including in "green" industries. Examples were put forward, including light manufacturing or repair of renewable energy systems, bicycles or wheelchairs, or a recycling center. Several speakers suggested an education facility on site – a community college or trade school – that could support such employment. Others were interested in commercial development that could provide service to the local community, such as a sports center, a funeral home or a disability services center. A smaller but sizeable number of speakers proposed the sites enable recreation, including with parks, boating on the river and public markets. Whatever the future use, attendees at the hearings expressed a strong desire for the community to be involved as development continued. Finally, several speakers voiced concern about potential contamination from the generating stations, plans for remediation, and the need for future uses to have a minimal impact on the environment. The feedback received at these meetings was taken into account in the development of the Guiding Principles and Recommendations developed by the Task Force.

Guiding principles and recommendations

Over three months, the Task Force developed and debated Guiding Principles for the short- and long-term redevelopment of the sites. The Task Force developed a list of principles intended to be positive, aspirational and realistic.

Guiding principles

As Midwest Generation explores the disposition/sale and reclamation/redevelopment of the Fisk and Crawford power plant sites by itself or third party(ies), representatives of the Pilsen and Little Village Communities and Midwest Generation entered into a collaborative process through the Mayor's Task Force to solicit and evaluate community input on potential uses of the sites that could meet economic development and quality of life goals of the city and surrounding neighborhoods. While Midwest Generation retains the sole right to enter into agreements for sale/redevelopment/reclamation/usage of the properties, the following guiding principles for future use have been developed by the Task Force:

1. The Fisk and Crawford sites provide opportunities as useful community assets that can enhance the ability of local residents and businesses to live, work and play in a healthy environment.
2. Broad-based stakeholder input on the redevelopment of the sites should be encouraged, building upon existing forums and agreements, but including new parties as the project evolves. Such collaboration is likely to lead to the best outcome for all involved.
3. As sites are redeveloped and used in the future, pollution and waste should be minimized, with an emphasis on sustainability.
4. Located in industrial corridors with ongoing operation of grid infrastructure at both locations and a peaking plant at Fisk, the sites are not suitable for residential development.
5. Redevelopment provides an opportunity to create quality, living wage jobs for residents of these communities.
6. Redevelopment of each site may include parceling the sites for more than one use, owner or occupant.
7. Neither site is intended to be used entirely as a park or open space; however, where feasible there should be public access to the river and canal.
8. Potential sources of public and private resources for reclamation and redevelopment should be identified early and actively pursued.
9. Parties involved in future redevelopment should be aware that the communities prefer clean, advanced light manufacturing, and not large scale retail, for the sites.

Recommendations

After considering a range of options for redevelopment, and examples of similar industrial brownfield redevelopments, the Task Force has developed a list of recommendations for near-term use of the site and its future redevelopment. The following recommendations reflect the intent of the principles in a number of proposed specific, near-term measures.

Decommissioning, demolition, and remediation

1. Midwest Generation will conclude generating operations by September 30, 2012 and promptly decommission plants:
 - using the balance of coal pile at Crawford
 - disabling generating equipment and disconnecting from the grid
 - continuing to plan for salvage/resale/scraping of materials.
2. Midwest Generation to establish specifications for demolition of facilities and reclamation of materials, and:
 - seek quotes for demolition and reclamation/salvage work by Fall of 2012.
 - encourage demolition contractors to consider where possible diverting building materials from landfills.
3. In compliance with City ordinances and consistent with ongoing operation of other electrical infrastructure, Midwest Generation will maintain the properties in a safe and secure manner while opportunities for third party purchase/reclamation/redevelopment and funding of such are pursued. Sites will be remediated at the appropriate time, consistent with uses and requirements of applicable City laws and environmental regulations.
4. The historic value of buildings should be documented.
5. While ComEd will remain on the sites to operate and maintain equipment necessary for reliable transmission and distribution of electricity, ComEd will evaluate its needs for easements and use of the sites to accurately define its space requirements.

Community engagement and open spaces

6. Two water-edge locations at Crawford and one water-edge location at Fisk have been identified as potentially suitable public access sites. The City should work with Midwest Generation, ComEd, community groups and aldermen to determine feasibility of making public access available at those locations now. The parties responsible for the redevelopment of the sites should continue to explore the possibility of further public access to the water's edge.

7. The City and Park District should consider integrating the abandoned rail line into a trail between the former Celotex site (2800 South Sacramento Ave) and the river.
8. Communication and engagement with the Midwest Generation Community Engagement Council (the Council), established by a Memorandum of Understanding dated February 29, 2012 (the MOU), should proceed as planned, including Midwest Generation's commitment to provide the Council prior notice of potential sale or disposition of the property and to seek and obtain input from the Council in those circumstances, all in accordance with the terms of the MOU.

Marketing and future use

9. Delta Institute to arrange a meeting with Midwest Generation and Urban Land Institute to explore the promotion of sites through an Urban Land Institute panel evaluation⁶ and through other organizations.
10. Explore private sector interest:
 - Delta Institute will work with representatives of Midwest Generation to identify known, credible, capitalized industrial developers to test marketplace interest in the parcels and to expand the vision for re-use options consistent with the Guiding Principles of the Task Force.
11. In developing job opportunities on the sites, the redevelopment process should consider the potential to:
 - include opportunities to train workers and others in the community
 - connect community residents to existing training opportunities for manufacturing and other types of jobs
 - prioritize the creation of living wage jobs.

Public sector infrastructure

12. If the buildings are deconstructed, the City of Chicago should use the opportunity to replace underground sewer and water mains.

⁶ The Urban Land Institute (ULI) is a nonprofit research and education organization, which facilitates an exchange of ideas, information and experience among the land use and real estate development disciplines in private enterprise and public service. The ULI can undertake assessment – through a ‘panel’ – of land resources and provide materials to market the property to interested parties.

Next steps

13. To promote the optimal redevelopment of the sites, build public support, and continue to foster cooperation within the community, the Task Force should convene for a second phase to provide input and to serve as a communication channel in the redevelopment process.
 - Maintain open communication channels between members of the Task Force.
 - Meet with firms representing Midwest Generation and potential buyers to ensure that they are aware of and consider the input provided by the Guiding Principles established through the Task Force.

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