

Cal City seeks public input on improving its east side

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CALUMET CITY | City officials plan to hold a session at 7 p.m. Feb. 20 to give residents a chance to tell them how their community can be improved in the future.

The session, to take place at City Hall, 204 Pulaski Road, is part of a series of hearings that began last year and will continue to take place to help Teska Associates prepare a comprehensive plan for future economic development of Calumet City.

The upcoming hearing will focus on the Town Center portion of the 121-year-old municipality.

Town Center focuses on City Hall at Wentworth Avenue and Pulaski Road, and goes as far north as Sibley Boulevard, south to 156th Street, east to State Line Road and west to Lincoln Avenue.

"To come up with a really good plan requires a lot of input," said Bryan Swanson, the economic development coordinator for Calumet City. "The more people we can get to come out and express their thoughts, the better our plan will be."

Teska Associates officials will hold more hearings for other parts of Calumet City throughout the year, before preparing a Comprehensive Plan that will be presented to municipal officials late this year.

Swanson said that although the upcoming hearing will focus on the area surrounding City Hall and the Fire Station, all residents are invited to attend the hearing.

"We want to hear from all our residents, the business owners, as many people as we can," Swanson said.

This upcoming hearing is not the first public action taken by city officials toward developing a Comprehensive Plan. In October, city officials conducted a survey seeking public input on various aspects of daily life in Calumet City.

Officials also created a new planning commission in September that consists of business and community officials from across Calumet City.

Swanson said the effort is bolstered with financial help from the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, which provided Calumet City government with two grants totaling \$50,000 to help finance these efforts.

Mayor Michelle Markiewicz Qualkinbush has said she is looking forward to learning what kind of ideas get proposed in a new Comprehensive Plan for Calumet City.

While Creg Williams, the superintendent of Thornton Fractional Township High School District 215, who is among the planning commission's members, has said he wants to make sure the city includes the needs of its schools when crafting any future plans, since the current school demographics give a picture of what the city's population will be like in coming decades.