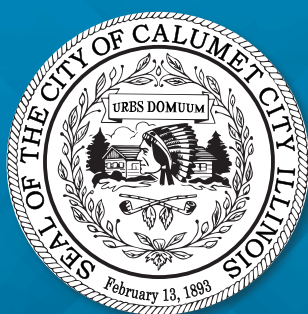




# **CITY OF CALUMET CITY COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT 2024 END OF THE YEAR REVIEW**



**Mayor Thaddeus M. Jones  
and the Calumet City, City Council**



December 2024

Dear Residents and Businesses:

As we approach the New Year 2025, I would like to thank each one of you for your commitment to the City of Calumet City; and wish you a Happy Holiday season. I'm wishing you peace, love, and joy as we close the end of the year; and may your holiday be filled with warmth, love, and laughter.

As a resident, you and your family are crucial to this town as you form the very foundation of our community, contributing to its economic vitality, social fabric, overall character by actively participating in local businesses, supporting community initiatives, and contributing to our town's many cultural identities through presence and engagement. I am grateful!

As a business, you are crucial to our city's economy by creating jobs, generating tax revenue, supporting community initiatives, and contributing to the overall character and vitality of our neighborhoods. Essentially acting as a key pillar to our continued success. I am grateful!

In addition, I would like to thank the administration's departments which include Community and Economic Development, Building and Zoning, Fire Department, Police Department, Public Works, Crime-Free Housing, Business Licensing, Finance, and more. These departments have proven to be some of the best in the region. And it's important to note, the City Council's support is vital to the continued success of our community. Again, I am grateful.

As we reflect on 2024, I would like to call your attention to some of the projects the City has underway that began within the last few years, recent projects, projects that are completed, and discuss some of the initiatives that will take us into 2025. You'll find information of interest in the following pages.

Again, thank you for your support and commitment to the community. Best wishes for a happy Holiday Season and a joyous New Year. God Bless You!

Sincerely,

Thaddeus M. Jones  
Mayor, City of Calumet City



### **First-Time Home Buyer Program**

The City is acquiring tax delinquent, abandoned, residential properties for the purpose of conveying to qualified developers that will provide affordable housing to those who would like to reside in Calumet City; and to those who currently live in Calumet City who would like to become homeowners. We believe homeownership is very important for many reasons, including financial security and improved quality of life for those starting out. The first-time home buyer program will help young people build wealth and equity over time; and hopefully bring them back to our neighborhoods from where they grew up. Homeownership helps with stability.



## **Burlington Coat Factory is Coming to Town**

The Burlington Coat Factory, a major big-box retail chain, will be moving to the former Petco location in River Oaks West. Sign permits have been already secured. We understand online shopping has caused big box retail chains to lose a lot of its in-store shopping; and many are closing their doors. However, Calumet City has worked hard to secure this company because we also understand that big-box retail chains are still important. They offer our residents a convenient one-stop shop for a wide variety of products at generally lower prices due to their economies of scale, allowing customers to purchase many times in one location, often with significant cost savings compared to smaller specialty stores.



## **River Oaks Shopping Center – Reimagining the Location**

The City has plans underway for the acquisition and redevelopment of the River Oaks East Shopping Center and is working with developers about new uses now under negotiation. See the City's website for the reimagining of the River Oaks East and Sears locations. Our purpose is to not only revitalize the area but by curating a diverse mix of retail, dining, entertainment, and recreational offerings, our shopping center will be a gathering point where our community can come together to shop, dine, socialize, and participate in a variety of activities.





## Blues Water Run

We understand that the Blues Water Run development has taken more time than anticipated. Permitting from the State has caused significant delays but be assured the project is still underway. This outdoor entertainment venue and nature park is expected to open Spring-Summer 2025. The City has received over \$2 million in grant money for construction. In addition to being a venue for entertainment activities, the project is designed to be a safe and beautiful place to spend time outdoors. This will allow our residents to experience more outdoor activities that help to reduce stress, improve sleep, improve overall physical health, and create opportunities for connection and community. And what is community? “Community is a feeling and a set of relationships among people who meet common needs and have a sense of trust, belonging, and caring.” Blues Water Run will become that place that helps feed that feeling.





## **Fifth Third Bank**

Fifth Third Bank has submitted a proposal to Calumet City to relocate its store to the Former Pepe's location on River Oaks Drive. This is a major advancement for the enhancement of the River Oaks Drive commercial corridor. Community banks are an integral part of corridor development; they reinvest local dollars back into the community and help create local jobs. The Fifth Third relationship banking philosophy is ingrained in the way they conduct business, one loan—one customer—at a time.



## Wentworth Woods Proposed Development

After 20 years of trying, the City has now gained control of all the property located at the SW corner of Wentworth Avenue and 159th Street - some of it formerly known as Sterk's grocery store. The plan includes a community center, retail, and some mixed use – in addition to infrastructure enhancements and redevelopment. The plan will totally revitalize the area by bringing in more community services, jobs, property tax and sales tax income, and more. Specifically, to revitalize this area means to restore it to life and give it a new beginning. The area will soon become alive, strong, and flourishing again.



## Staja Health Patchwerkz

Staja Health Patchwerkz (formerly known as Sweet Potato Patch), established in 2019, is a food manufacturing company that produces packaged food that is medicine inspired, medically tailored, and culturally intentional prepared meals. The company has submitted a proposal to acquire the former John's Restaurant property located on State Street (one block of vacant property). The company's primary customers are managed-care organizations that manage Medicare and Medicaid Insurance, Community Health Systems, and Area Departments on Aging (similar to Meals on Wheels). In addition, the company is focused on reducing food, health, workforce, and wealth creation equity gaps in under-resourced communities and marginalized racial/ethnic groups. The vision is to create healthy and holistic communities of color, leading to outcomes which include: improved mental and behavioral health; improved physical health; and sustainable community eco-systems that work communally and embrace belonging.



## **Global Water Technology, Inc.**

Global Water Technology, Inc. has come to the City of Calumet City and is currently rehabilitating the former Kay's Manufacturing facility for its new operation. It's a full-service water treatment company that specializes in custom water treatment services including cooling tower treatments, steam boiler treatments, closed loop treatments, and wastewater services. The company provides high-paying technological employment as well as non-skilled labor jobs to our community. When a manufacturer or industrial business comes to town, it contributes to the development and maintenance of essential local infrastructure like energy, water supply, transportation, and roadways. These kinds of businesses help to bring value to our community.



## Reyes Meats

Reyes Meats is now located at the former Linz Meats operation on State Street. The City's long-time relationship with Linz Meats allowed for the opportunity to bring in another meat wholesale supplier. Reyes Meats sells meat products in bulk to foodservice operators and retailers at wholesale prices. They offer a variety of cuts, types, and grades of meat, including fresh, frozen, and other meat products. Such foodservice operators that purchase wholesale meats include restaurants, pubs, cafés, hotels, and retail and convenience stores such as supermarkets.





## **Bold-Age PACE New Development – Former Ingalls Facility**

Bold-Age PACE (Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly) has plans to locate at the former Ingalls facility just off Torrence Avenue. PACE meets the evolving needs of older adults by providing personalized interdisciplinary solutions that consider both their physical and mental well-being. The owner-operated PACE model is aimed at expanding the ability for older adults to live happily and healthfully in their own homes for as long as possible. The facility is undergoing rehabilitation for PACE's occupancy in 2025.



### Three-Community Corridor Planning

Under the umbrella of SSMMA (South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association), the City of Calumet City is continuing to work with the villages of Lansing and South Holland to provide certified comprehensive planning for Torrence Avenue and River Oaks Drive as it connects to these other communities. The SSMMA received over \$500,000 in grant money to work with these communities as well as our own in this specific regard. The purpose is to improve our collectively identified shopping corridors to bring more national retail businesses and other services into each of our communities. The effort will help solidify the City's effort to reimagine the River Oaks Shopping Center as well. The purpose of certified plans (although subject to change at any time depending on need) helps to serve as a community's long-term vision and roadmap for future development, outlining goals and policies for land use, housing, transportation, economic growth, and other critical aspects. This provides a framework for making informed decisions about our community's future while ensuring that development aligns with our values and priorities. This framework also assists with securing additional grant money throughout the upcoming years.



## Dolton Road/State Street Industrial Region (DSIR)

For a few years now, the City has been in the process of facilitating its DSIR plan for State Street regarding the revitalization of streets, curbs, sidewalks, gutters, and lighting – including beautification of the project area. Please be patient, these efforts are well underway. The City has received nearly \$11 million in grant money. The DSIR region includes State Street/ Dolton Road; Plummer; Riverside Drive; Marble Street (33 acres); and North State Line Road. The effort is reflective of business vibrancy and community character. Spanning nearly three miles between Interstate 94 and State Line Road in Illinois, the DSIR Corridor serves some of the region’s most successful industrial businesses, single-family and multi-family residences, commercial businesses, and Forest Preserve open spaces. This study has made recommendations for roadway and right-of-way improvements to best serve the growing business community of the Dolton Road State Street Industrial Corridor. The study has also recommended solutions for a safe and efficient truck route while also meeting the community’s goals of improving access to regional bike trails and enhancing the overall character of the corridor. The corridor traverses the City of Calumet City and the Village of Burnham. As such, Calumet City staff has collaborated with Village of Burnham staff and leadership. Village of Burnham representatives have indicated that the corridor planning effort reflects current and past Village initiatives relative to complete streets, bike connectivity and corridor enhancements. Both communities recognize the opportunities to continue to develop Dolton Road / State Street as a vibrant mixed use corridor with regional connections to the market and natural open spaces. Global Water, Reyes Meats, HB Taylor, Staja Health Patchwerkz, the demolition of Park Harbor, and the remedial investigations of Marble Street proves the City is moving forward.



## **New Senior Lifestyle Development**

The City is working with PHZ Senior Housing Developers to build a New Senior Lifestyle facility that will soon be located at 348 Torrence Avenue. Development is slated to begin in Summer 2024 pending weather and State permits. The project encompasses a mixed-use format which will add public service and retail to its amenities. The facility will provide a supportive environment with access to activities and social interaction – allowing seniors to maintain independence while enjoying a high quality of life – all within a community of peers. This will alleviate burdens on family caregivers and promote overall well-being of our seniors. The project is deemed independent living which is a housing option designed for seniors who are capable of living on their own. This will provide older adults with the opportunity to maintain an active and fulfilling lifestyle.



### **Pace Suburban Bus Stop Enhancement (Ring Road)**

Pace received several million in grant money to improve its bus stop locations. Pace is investing approximately \$2 million in its Ring Road Bus stop location in Calumet City. It will soon become a three-transfer bus station with vending, heating, and bathroom facilities. A great convenience for the nearby senior housing facilities.



### Lead Service Line Program

The City continues to implement replacement of lead service lines which means running new lines from the water main in the street all the way to homeowners' properties. This is part of an effort to repair current problems and keep residents' utility bills low and limit the costs of future repairs. Most communities do not offer this program. Typically, residents are responsible for the service line connection from their property line to the connection where the City's infrastructure begins.



## **Grants! Grants! Grants!**

Calumet City is famous for its ability to secure grants. Many communities and regional organizations have commented and commended the City for its capacity to do so; and have sought direction and assistance to do the same. Within 2024, the City has continued to receive significant amounts of grant money for youth services, public safety and public safety equipment, public infrastructure, demolition, housing, and much more. The utilization of grant money alleviates the burden on taxpayers within the community.



## Increased Businesses - Just to Name a Few

The Business License Department reports, since Mayor Jones Administration began, 140 new businesses added and 46 businesses added in 2024. The following are just some of the premier projects underway:

- New restaurant development by Cal City Bakery coming to 646 Burnham
- Calumet City Taco coming to 1625 Sibley
- DA's Banquets & Events, 757-777 River Oaks Drive, is thriving.
- HB Taylor, 800 Riverside Drive
- Buddy Bear, 300 Block of Torrence Avenue
- Former Family Dollar on Burnham/River Oaks Drive – grocery store development underway
- Wilder Fields (former Target)
- 79th Street BBQ (former Applebee's)
- Omega Psi Phi (the Qs) Community Outreach Facility, 308 Torrence
- Dollar General (Former Walgreens) River Oaks Drive
- Baymont Hotel redevelopment complete, now a beautiful facility
- Richards Building Supply new location, 1400 Huntington Drive
- Bold-Age PACE (Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly) opening soon (Former Ingalls Facility)
- And many more.



## SCAC (Calumet City's Senior Citizen Advisory Committee)

The SCAC has been a complete success! SCAC members are 62 years of age and older and are retired professionals with a diverse background of professional disciplines and the ability to provide those life-long skills learned to Calumet City. The City has determined that significant senior residential community interests are served by establishing the SCAC to help promote and enhance quality of life for seniors, and senior citizen involvement within the community. The SCAC has proven to be essential to the performance of the duties of the city administration in serving senior residents to help investigate the needs of senior citizens, seek grant opportunities, develop programs, activities, and services specifically to serve senior citizens, and help disseminate and provide public information regarding senior citizens' programs and services.



## **CC-RAP (Calumet City's Residential Assistance Program)**

The Calumet City administration has helped hundreds of residents through the utilization of the Calumet City Residential Assistance Program (CC-RAP). A City program since its establishment during the beginning of Mayor Jones' tenure. The purpose is to directly pay for PAST-DUE utilities, rent, mortgage, appliances, medical bills, and other qualifying expenses (as determined) that would help to improve quality of life. Many residents benefited from this program in 2024 as well. The purpose of this program is to help those who are in temporary dire need; or who are trying to find work and need temporary assistance. There is a cap to funding requests and all requests must be approved by City Council.



## Youth Programs, 542 Pulaski

The City has received approximately \$2 million for the establishment of Youth Development Programs including Violence Prevention, Youth Employment, and Youth Development as a concept of its own. The administration of these programs are housed at 542 Pulaski (a tax delinquent, abandoned property acquired by Calumet City). Some specific student activities and program implementations are held at the City's Library. The purpose of these programs is to empower Calumet City's youth by helping them to grow and develop skills and connections they need to take part in society and reach their potential. Youth development is about our young people gaining a sense of contributing something of value to our society. Those that implement the City's programs are experts in the field. This is to ensure that the City's youth programs offer huge benefits to tweens and teens. Our team of experts refer to the six Cs for program facilitation: Competence, Confidence, Character, Connection, Caring, and Contribution. The six Cs represent a holistic approach to fostering positive development in our young people by building skills, self-esteem, ethical behavior, social ties, empathy, and a sense of giving back to the community.



## **Jazz on the Grass**

This weekly musical event held on Thursday evenings, is an outdoor community gathering that provides hundreds of residents with an enjoyable evening of live jazz and other genres of music - including gospel night. Residents also enjoy free food and free entertainment.

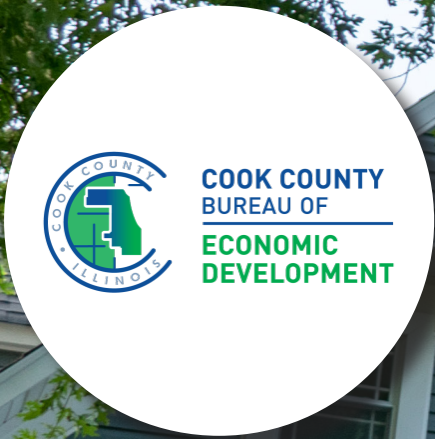
*The Origin of True Jazz:* Jazz is a music genre that originated in the African-American communities of New Orleans, Louisiana, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, with its roots in blues, ragtime, European harmony, African rhythmic rituals, spirituals, hymns, marches, vaudeville song, and dance music.



### **(McGee's Café) Calumet City Library**

Mayor Jones lost his best friend (Robert McGee) in 2022; and in 2023, a Café was opened in his honor – which was supported by everyone in the community. The Café is still going strong and strongly supported by not only the community but the entire region as it gained popularity in 2024. Rob was a wonderful man who provided IT services to the City. His loss was devastating, not only to the Mayor, but to the City Council, staff, and the entire community. So, stop by and enjoy McGee's Café housed in the Calumet City Library - the food, the company, and the camaraderie, are wonderful.





## **No-Cash Bid Task Force – Combatting Abandoned Properties**

The Cook County No Cash Bid (NCB) Program is an economic development tool designed to assist municipalities, and other taxing districts, in acquiring tax delinquent property for reuse as private development and tax reactivation or for tax exempt municipal use. The City established a No-Cash Bid (NCB Task Force) and has been successful with utilizing the County's program to acquire tax delinquent (defined by Cook County), abandoned residential and commercial properties. Properties that have turned from productive use to disuse are found in cities, suburbs, and rural areas throughout Cook County and the entire country. They vary widely in size, shape, and former use – and are located within all communities throughout this nation. This problem is not limited to just Calumet City and Cook County.



## Land Bank Property Acquisitions

In addition to properties acquired by the City's NCB (No-Cash Bid) program described above, the administration is in partnership with both the Cook County Land Bank Authority (CCLBA) and South Suburban Land Bank & Development Authority (SSLBDA) to acquire tax delinquent, abandoned properties as well. Calumet City has mastered the facilitating efforts of these organizations and is doing all it can to secure abandoned properties to put them back into use.

- CCLBA Mission: To acquire, hold, and transfer interest in real property throughout Cook County to: promote redevelopment and reuse of vacant, abandoned, foreclosed or tax-delinquent properties; support targeted efforts to stabilize neighborhoods; and stimulate residential, commercial and industrial development -- all in ways that are consistent with goals and priorities established by local government partners and other community stakeholders.
- SSLBDA Mission: Through collaborative efforts, breathe new life into communities and create vibrant spaces for residents and businesses of the Chicago Southland. The ultimate goal is to specialize in the strategic redevelopment of vacant and abandoned properties.



## **CRS (Calumet City's Community Rating System)**

Within 2024, the City maintained its Class 5 rating as defined by NFIP (National Flood Insurance Program). The City has one of the best CRS ratings in the state of Illinois as determined by FEMA. A “good CRS rating” means the City has a high ranking within the NFIP Community Rating System (CRS), indicating the City of Calumet City actively implements floodplain management practices that go beyond minimum requirements, resulting in lower flood insurance premiums for residents in that community. Essentially, the higher the CRS rating, the greater the discount on flood insurance premiums for residents. This means residents and business owners can receive up to 25% Flood Insurance Discount upon request from their insurance agencies if they are located within a qualifying area.



Watermain 157th Street



Yates Stormwater



Buffalo Ave Sewer Lining



Green Alley Construction

## Planning/Engineering/ Construction - Public Infrastructure

The following projects are underway or just completed – much of which is paid for by grant money from Cook County and State of Illinois grant programs – as well as Federal Government grant programs.

### Roadways:

- Pulaski Road Complete Streets
- Burnham Avenue Streetscape
- Dolton Road/State Street Improvements
- 157th Street Reconstruction
- Wilson Avenue Reconstruction
- River Oaks Drive Resurfacing
- Torrence Avenue Pavement Resurfacing
- State Line Road Development
- And more

### Utilities:

- Arthur Street Watermain Repair (96 River Oaks Center)
- River Oaks Elevated Tank Rehabilitation
- 166th Street Sewer and Water Reconstruction
- Lead Service Line Program – Phase I
- And more

### Transportation:

- PACE Bus Transfer Facility (1414 Ring Road)
- I-94 and Dolton Road Planning and Environmental Linkage Study
- And more

### Economic Development:

- Blues Water Run (1455 Ring Road)
- Reimagining River Oaks Plan and Former Sears Site
- Park Harbor Reclamation and Development Plan
- Riverside Drive Industrial Park
- And more

### Sewer and Stormwater Infrastructure:

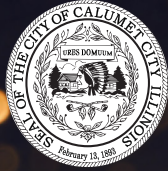
- United States Army Corp of Engineers Little Calumet River
- Levee Improvement Project
- Yates Stormwater Basin Backup Generator Replacement
- Alley Improvement Program (green alleys)
- Buffalo Avenue Sewer Lining
- Cleaning and jetting of 5 miles of sewer
- Removal of invasive species in detention facilities
- And more

### Recreation:

- Michigan City Road Path
- River Oaks Trail (96 River Oaks Center Drive)
- And more

### Municipal:

- Public Library Renovations (660 Manistee)
- Public Works – New Facility & Community Center (1701 Dolton Road)
- Proposed New Police Station
- And more



MAYOR THADDEUS M. JONES  
INVITES YOU TO

# SHOP CALUMET CITY



## Shop Calumet City

Although the Shop Calumet City program is a major effort for the holiday season, its purpose is ongoing. This City campaign is all about love for our community – an effort to ensure the sustainability and viability of our local businesses and to give back to those companies that have shown their commitment to our residents and neighborhoods. So, please! Continue to Shop Calumet City.

