

The Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago Comprehensive Land Use Policy: Criteria for Leasing District Real Estate

In 2014, the Board enacted the Comprehensive Land Use Policy (“Policy”) as an element of the Green Infrastructure Program Plan required by the District’s Consent Decree in *United States of America, et al., v. Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago, Case Number 11 C 8859*. The Program was reviewed and approved by the United States Environmental Protection Agency on October 7, 2015.

The Policy’s goals are to: ensure that the District’s real estate program is well-planned; treat all citizens and organizations seeking to lease District real estate equally and uniformly; balance the needs of commerce and industry, which provide valuable jobs to people living in our region, with the needs of municipalities and local park districts for open green space for public and recreational opportunities; protect District land and surrounding communities from environmental degradation; and ensure that green infrastructure is incorporated in all new public leases and encouraged in all commercial/industrial leases.

In furtherance of these overarching goals, it is also the stated policy of the District that when leasing any parcel of District real estate, the District will, in consideration of local, regional, national, and global needs, apply the following criteria when assessing each leasing opportunity, and include the information in Board letters, as applicable, for each parcel:

1. Compliance with the District’s Leasing Statute
2. Engagement in public-facing opportunities to announce leasing opportunities
3. Compliance with the Comprehensive Land Use Policy
4. Compliance with the District’s Waterway Strategy
5. Consideration of the applicability to the District’s Strategic Plan
6. Assessment of the need for a corporate use and availability determination
7. Multi-departmental staff technical review, including environmental justice considerations
8. Evaluation of the highest and best current and future use of land
9. Assessment of adjacent and surrounding land uses to ensure compatibility with those uses
10. Secure support and approval from the local municipality
11. Provide opportunities for impacted community groups to voice concerns about the proposed use for the land
12. Address the concerns raised by impacted community groups in a public forum
13. Apply the tenets of the District’s Environmental Justice Policy
14. Review the historical use of the land
15. Collaborate with the Engineering Department to ensure compliance with stormwater regulations
16. Assess applicable stormwater best management practices as recommended by the Engineering Department
17. Ensure green infrastructure installation compliance for public leases
18. Encourage voluntary implementation of green infrastructure installations for commercial/industrial leases
19. Ensure tree mitigation policies and practices will be followed to facilitate supporting the District’s trees/restore the canopy program

An ongoing review of the above criteria list will ensure that the process for reviewing lease requests continues to align with the District’s Land Use Policy and the Strategic Plan, or signal the need for additions, deletions, or modifications to the criteria.

Dated this ____ day of _____, 2022

DRAFT