



# Community Visioning Workshop Summary

## East Hazel Crest Comprehensive Plan | July 10, 2025

A Community Visioning Workshop was hosted on July 10<sup>th</sup>, 2025, at the East Hazel Crest Village Administration Building. The workshop allowed residents, business owners and operators, and other stakeholders to discuss the community and provide visioning input for East Hazel Crest. The feedback received will help guide the planning process and help Village leaders make thoughtful decisions for the community. The Community Visioning Workshop was designed to allow participants to voice their thoughts on the Village before the Plan recommendations are crafted.

*Total participants engaged: 25 attendees*

### Workshop Format

The workshop included a brief presentation introducing the Comprehensive Plan's purpose and planning process, and a group mapping exercise. Participants worked together in breakout groups at tables. Each group was provided with a packet that included guidelines for discussion along with a large map of the Village. Groups worked as teams to prepare their visions for the community, including mapping desired improvements and development. The exercise allowed community members to identify where they believe future uses should be developed within the Village, as well as opportunity sites and other improvements. Each group was then tasked with translating their maps into a written vision statement or set of big ideas that explained their envisioned future for the Village. At the end of each workshop, groups presented their maps and summaries of their big ideas and vision statements.

### **Note on Summary Context**

*The items identified in this summary are not recommendations or observations of the consultant. They represent feedback and comments received from those who participated in the workshop exercises.*



## Summarized Results

A summary of community input received from the maps, activity packets, and the ensuing discussion is provided by topic area on the following pages.

### Housing and Residential Areas

- **Code Enforcement.** Participants expressed the need for better code enforcement throughout the community. Multiple groups were concerned about the vacant lots and blighted homes. Groups also did not know who oversaw and enforced code enforcement.
- **Housing.** Participants identified where housing or apartments could be improved or renovated such as Bremerton Woods. Ashland Avenue was also highlighted as an area for new housing development by one group.
- **Senior Housing.** One group identified new locations for senior housing along Ashland Avenue and 171<sup>st</sup> Street between Wood Street and Dixie Highway.

### Commercial Areas

- **Downtown.** Groups indicated that a small-town downtown along Center Street would be good for the community by allowing retail, restaurants, and small shops. Another group identified that improving signage, street lighting, and new video billboards could attract residents and visitors.
- **Mixed-Use Hub.** Participants envisioned a mixed-use hub and transit-oriented development with a mix of uses including housing, retail, and restaurants near of the Calumet Metra Station commuter parking lots.
- **Commercial Reinvestment.** One group was interested in supporting all types of businesses to be able to invest and upkeep all commercial or industrial lots/buildings across the Village. Another group reimagined the vacant housing near the train station to reintroduce new commercial uses that commuters desire. While other participants saw an opportunity to invest in and redevelop Ashland Avenue as a commercial corridor with uses such as a brewery, gym, recreation center, and other commercial uses.

### Industrial Areas

- **171<sup>st</sup> Street.** Some groups expressed that the 171<sup>st</sup> Street corridor should be all industrial uses, while another group expressed that it should be all commercial uses to create more of a Village center. Participants indicated that residential uses should be torn down or repurposed into industrial or commercial uses. One group said that the Village should purchase all the properties within this corridor and improve it with more opportunities for small business retail and restaurants.
- **Relocate Industrial.** One group outlined how no residents want to live next to industrial land uses, and that uses such as Homewood Disposal should be relocated.

### Community Facilities and Infrastructure

- **Community Center.** Groups expressed the need for a new community center as the Village's old community center was demolished with the tollway expansion. Participants identified possible locations for the community center along Ashland Avenue, at the Helen M. Minnis Community Park, or on the old Lincoln School property.
- **Street Lighting.** One group voiced that better street lighting throughout the Village would improve the feel and safety of the Village. Participants identified that decorative lighting could also be incorporated, specifically along Center Street.



- **Bremerton Woods.** One group identified that the infrastructure in this area is deteriorating and needs replacement of old water mains, new streetlights, and a new park in the area.
- **Relocate Facilities.** One group voiced the possible relocation of the Public Works facility to 171<sup>st</sup> Street and Lathrop Avenue, which would allow the Police and Fire Departments to utilize the entirety of the existing facilities at Throop Street and 173<sup>rd</sup> Street.

## Other

- **Park Space.** Participants voiced their desire for new park space and better-built-out park space within the Village. Improving amenities or facilities at the existing Helen M. Minnis Community Park should also consider youth of all ages, including teenagers and young children, with basketball courts, baseball fields, small water parks or a splash pad, and walking/bicycling paths.
- **Buffering Wall.** Groups expressed the desire for a barrier wall between the train viewing platform just west of Ashland Avenue to better buffer noise and pollution from the rail yard for residents.
- **Wind Creek Casino.** One group identified that the public storage facility should work with the Wind Creek Casino to create a better community partnership. Other participants identified the need to work together with Wind Creek Casino to reimagine its partnership with the Village, businesses, and residents.
- **Paths/Trails/Sidewalks.** Participants identified the need for walking paths, bicycling paths, and sidewalks throughout the community with better-marked crosswalks, specifically across Center Street. Another group expressed the desire for a pedestrian and vehicular bridge on 175<sup>th</sup> Street over the railyard.



# Visioning Maps

Images of each map are included on the following pages and high-resolution images are available to view and download by clicking [HERE](#).





## Group Vision Statements – *What are your group’s “big ideas?”*

Each group was tasked with translating their maps into a written vision statement or set of big ideas that explained their envisioned future for the Village of East Hazel Crest. Vision or “Big Idea” statements are presented here largely “as written,” with minor edits for spelling, grammar, and clarity, as needed.

- Community center, recreation center, park off Center Street
- Transit-oriented development near Metra Station (residential high-rise/mid-rise and commercial)
- Road/lighting improvements
- Property improvement/code enforcement
- How to improve or redevelop industrial buildings
- Recreational area for kids and young residents
- No industrial—replace with small businesses
- Develop 171<sup>st</sup> Street into an attractive town center with small businesses and food stops
- Develop a community center, park, recreation center, and walking/bicycling paths
- New senior housing at 171<sup>st</sup> Street (Dixie Hwy to Wood St) and at commuter lots (A Lot and north B Lot)
- Lathrop to Laffin (171<sup>st</sup> Street corridor) light industrial or commercial with no residential
- Small-town Village center or “downtown” at Center Street and 175<sup>th</sup> Street