

EXCERPTS from NWI RDA APPLICATION for FINANCIAL SUPPORT PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Hammond Lakes' Area Marquette Plan Improvement Projects

The Hammond Port Authority Mission Statement – The Hammond Port Authority provides maximum public recreational access to Lake Michigan waters, Wolf Lake waters, George Lake waters, Lost Marsh Golf Course, Forsythe Park, Wolf Lake Memorial Park, for all who come by land or by sea, striving towards the highest quality of professional Port Authority management for customers and citizens while promoting economic development for the city of Hammond.

For years, The City of Hammond has realized the importance of its location on Lake Michigan and amenities in Wolf Lake and George Lake for the recreational, tourism, economic stimulus and quality of life impact the Lakes have on the community and all of northwest Indiana. The community has continually focused on the “Vision of the Marquette Plan - Creating a Livable Lakefront” where we Live, Work, Play and Stay” pre-dating the Marquette Plan’s creation. Recently, the City has focused on the Wolf Lake and George Lake areas to expand recreational areas, recapture brownfields and expand opportunities to improve the quality of life along these important waterways.

Hammond has been a leader in creating recreational opportunities on the shoreline since the mid 1980’s. As a charter member of the Lake Michigan Marina Development Commission, the five lakeshore communities had a vision of enhancing the public access to the shoreline through the planning and development of marinas and public infrastructure improvements. Hammond realized this dream in 1991 when they officially opened their \$23 million, 1,113-slip marina. Subsequent to marina development, the Empress Casino was opened in 1996. Access across multiple railroad corridors to the casino and lakefront was facilitated by the construction of the Empress Casino Bridge and Casino Center Drive. At the same time, the Hammond Lakefront Park and 16-acre Sanctuary were established for public access and recreation on Lake Michigan.

The next major recreational infrastructure project in the Hammond Lakes Area was the development and construction of the award winning Lost Marsh Golf Course at George Lake. The project was a reclamation of the Bairstow “brownfield” site into a championship 18-hole course and 9-hole youth course. The youth course was opened in 1999 and the championship course was opened in 2003.

In 2002, the City of Hammond Parks and Recreation Department organized a focus group to develop the “Wolf Lake Recreation Area Development Study.” Recognizing the City’s focus on tourism and recreation in the Hammond Lakes Area associated with the Hammond Marina, Lakefront Beach, Casino and Lost Marsh Golf Course the master plan for the Wolf Lake Area was seen as the next opportunity for enhancing the quality of recreational opportunities in the area.

The 2002 Wolf Lake Recreation Area Development study focused on public improvements to Forsythe and Wolf Lake Memorial Park including enhanced trail

system, beach improvements, fishing piers, a boat ramp, a conservatory, an amphitheater, ball field complex, shoreline stabilization, formal gardens and access improvements. Additionally, the study envisioned the expansion of Wolf Lake Memorial Park through acquisition and remediation of current or former industrial properties.

The 2002 Wolf Lake Recreation Area Development Study was reviewed by the Marquette Plan consulting team and the plans recommendations were incorporated into the final Marquette Plan's project framework. The Wolf Lake Area Plan is consistent with and mirrors the principals of the Marquette Plan:

- Showcase Our Heritage
- Redefine the Edges
- Bridge the Gaps
- Preserve, Protect & Enhance Environmental Systems
- Protect and Cherish Drinking Water, and
- Formulate an Effective Management Funding Strategy.

In May of 2008, the Hammond Port Authority organized a Working Group to evaluate the projects under consideration for funding by the Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority. Based on a series of meetings for refinement of the project lists for the Lake Michigan Shoreline, Wolf Lake Recreational Development Area and George Lake recreational trail systems and connections, the City is pleased to present the following Hammond Lakes' Area Marquette Plan Improvements Projects for consideration for RDA grant funding:

Lake Michigan Shoreline Enhancement Projects – The City has developed a project parallel to the shoreline to enhance the recreational, public access, environment and aesthetics quality of Hammond's shoreline.

Lakefront Park Public Access & Landscape Enhancement – The City will design and construct public access improvements including landscape buffers, pedestrian path, and dedicated public access parking along the northern boundary of the current marina overflow parking lot and south of the Lakefront Park and Sanctuary fence line. This project component is included in the Marquette Plan "Greenways Framework," on page 9 of the Executive Summary;

- Create buffer between sanctuary and any development towards the south.
- Connect with existing/proposed trails in the vicinity at controlled points.

Wolf Lake Recreational Area Development Projects – The 2002 Master Plan, updated May 2008, included seven goals for implementation that correlate to the principals of the Marquette Plan:

- Establish pedestrian access and improves internal circulation
- Enhance the identity of the recreational area and establish community ownership
- Enhance existing park facilities and provide opportunities for new recreational activities

- Promote environmental improvements that reduce pollution, improve shoreline stability, and re-establishes natural habitats
- Designs park elements to minimize construction and maintenance costs
- Enhances personal security, and
- Establishes a program of activities that are compatible with the neighborhood.

Wolf Lake Recreational Area Development Projects – Projects for plan development, design and construction in the recreational area include but not limited to; park access improvements, amphitheater/performance area, paved and wooded paths, bridge connections, shore/fishing access improvements, conservatory, formal garden, promenade and pier, playgrounds, promote wetland revitalization and re-vegetation of slag fill, athletic field improvements, pavilions, aquatic play area, parking enhancements, shoreline and habitat enhancements, informal open space, use of stormwater Best Management Practices (BMP's) and water quality features, expansion of park area and industrial property remediation and reuse.

Feature projects within the recreational area for immediate construction are:

- Amphitheater/Performance area – this is planned to be a signature structure located in the south side of Wolf Lake Memorial Park. The permanent structure will be utilized for concerts during the Hammond Festival of the Lakes and host other local entertainment venues as programmed by the City, and establish the Hammond Lakes Area building identity.
- Continuous trails connecting to regional trail systems both in Hammond, Whiting and By-State connector trail to Chicago's Burnham Trail.
- Promenade and Pier – this feature will provide pedestrian access into Wolf Lake enabling the public to “touch the water.”
- Wolf Lake Memorial Park Expansion – Purchase of adjacent and contiguous industrial parcels to expand the park's area, remediate and reuse industrial properties, and enhance the lakes environment.

The Wolf Lake Recreational Development projects are cited in various sections of the Marquette Plan including; Hammond Lakefront small area plan, Greenway Framework, Multi-Use Trails Framework and Community Investment Framework.

George Lake Trail Bridge – This project includes the plan development, design and construction of the George Lake Trail Bridge for pedestrians over Indianapolis Boulevard connecting the George Lake Trail to the Whiting Lakefront Park Trail project recently funded by the RDA. The goal of this project is to construct a signature pedestrian bridge that will provide safe access across a busy industrial/commercial road corridor that will be a considered a public amenity, to aide and connect two communities with a shared goal: Lake Michigan Public Access.

The Marquette Plan cites the George Lake/Whiting Connector Trail in the Motorized Transportation Framework, Greenway Framework, Multi-Use Trails Framework and Community Investment Framework.

ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

As indicated in the Comprehensive Economic Development Plan for the Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority the land use changes that are envisioned by the Marquette Plan contemplate enhanced and additional recreational opportunities for the residents of Northwest Indiana. The land use assumptions coupled with \$400 MM in public investment can yield \$8 B in private investment over the next ten years. As indicated earlier in this submittal, the Hammond Port Authority is desirous to link the current investment of the Hammond Marina, Horseshoe Casino, Lost Marsh Golf Course, and Wolf Lake into a comprehensive network of amenities for all residents of and visitors to Northwest Indiana.

Policy Analytics indicates that the City of Hammond Marquette Project could produce \$115 MM in investment and have a total economic impact of over 650 MM over the next three years. At this time, the removal or replacement of the Stateline Energy facility cannot be achieved. The non-vehicular links, greenway and bikeways proposed will actually exceed the original thoughts of the Marquette Plan regarding public access and land reclamation.

Additionally, the positive impact on the tourism in Hammond is also a critical component of the lakeshore improvements. As provided by the Lake County Tourism bureau, the economic impact on tourism in Lake County is \$840M, with 25,000 employed. Lake County is the second largest CVB in the state and second most visited area, accounting for 9% of Indiana's market share.

The Lake Michigan Shoreline & Wolf Lake Recreational Area Development Project will continue to support the economic development initiatives associated with the previous investments in tourism and recreation at the Hammond Marina, Horseshoe Casino and Lost March Golf Course. Hammond, currently a destination location as the west gateway to the Indiana shoreline has tremendous potential to attract tourism and economic development investment in Hammond and the neighboring communities. Enhancement of the Hammond Lakes Area Project provides even greater opportunities for the public to enjoy the amenities of the Hammond Lakes Area.

Much of the current entertainment (marina, casino, championship golf course) options are geared more toward the adult population. The proposed Hammond projects create greater opportunities for outdoor family oriented recreation. It is envisioned, by the community leaders that the Hammond Lakes Area recreational opportunities will generate longer visitors stays based on the variety of entertainment options offered. The Lakes of Hammond can become the vacation destination that was envisioned over 25 years ago when the marina was planned. Casino entertainment combined with the world class marina, beaches, aquatic play areas, golf, hiking, biking and fishing available within a two mile radius create a regional recreation venue.

Future commercial development to support the existing and enhanced regional tourism character is envisioned to continue as these project enhancements are completed.

Increased residential reinvestment and infill are anticipated as the visitors to the area are introduced to the amenities offered in Hammond and NW Indiana.

In the short-term, local businesses, including planners, engineers, contractors, construction trade representatives, manufacturers and suppliers will be positively impacted by the development and construction projects.

QUALITY of LIFE IMPACT STATEMENT

The Northwest Indiana Quality of Life Council in September, 2004 developed a report titled, "Quality of Life Indicators Report." The Hammond Lakes Area Projects addresses and substantially improves a variety of quality of life components cited in the report including:

- A Community in Balance with its Environment – The Hammond project embraces the concept of community balance with the environment through implementation of regional planning projects of the Marquette Plan, and environmental aspects of improved stewardship of our natural resources and improvements in stormwater quality through the use of best management practices in the project areas and re-vegetation of slag mounds, promoting wetlands and re-forestation.
- A Healthy Community – The Hammond Project is centered on enhancement of recreational facilities in the community. The concept of a healthy community is assisted with greater opportunities for outdoor recreation for both our adult community and children. Hiking, biking, swimming, sports and playground facilities all promote a more physically active lifestyle that has associated health benefits for the community.
- A Safe Community – Benefits of the project on public safety include greater opportunities for our young people to be involved in positive recreational and sport activities thus potentially reducing the occurrence of juvenile crime. Secondly, by promoting active use of public open spacing can have a benefit in the reduction of vandalism and juvenile crime thus promoting a safer community. Finally, implementation of lighting to promote usage and deter crime by increasing public awareness and activity.
- A Community that Appreciates the Arts and Celebrates Life – Recreation, the arts and interaction with our lakes and natural areas are cornerstones of the Hammond project. The proposed amphitheater is anticipated to host not only concerts for the Festival of the Lakes but also for additional music and theater events throughout the year. Enhancement of recreational venues as well as the ability to commune with nature will be an added benefit to the community and region.

FUNDING REQUEST

The City of Hammond, in conjunction with the Hammond Port Authority and Hammond Park Board, is requesting a three year (3-year) funding grant package from the RDA for the Hammond Lakes' Area Marquette Plan Improvements. The three grouping of improvement projects are identified as:

- Lake Michigan Shoreline Enhancement
- Wolf Recreational Area Development
- George Lake Trail Bridge

The City of Hammond created three separate concepts for the three Lakes of Hammond: the Hammond Marina at Lake Michigan, the Wolf Lake Development Plan, and the George Lake Trail and Lost Marsh Golf Course at George Lake. In beginning, the projects were on separate timelines and the City utilized gaming revenues which were earmarked for the Mayor's discretionary projects, funds received from the operation of the new facilities, and to a minor extent, governmental grants. The Marquette Plan enabled the City of Hammond to combine the three concepts into one grand project vision. The vision is then separated into Phases, with each phase containing elements of each concept. The Phasing will take place over three years.

Total Project Cost: \$54,262,700

The City of Hammond and its various boards are currently working on many aspects of these projects. Listed below, this amount comes to \$22,782,700. The total funding request will differ from the total cost of the three lakes concepts listed, Lake Michigan Shoreline Enhancement, Wolf Recreational Area Development, George Lake Trail Bridge which total \$31,480,000. The total project cost therefore, is projected at **\$54,262,700**.

Funds requested from RDA: \$31,480,000

At this point in time, the City of Hammond is requesting a grant in the amount of **\$31,480,000** to be distributed over a three year period or 36-month schedule. With the \$22,782,700 the City has and is currently investing, the RDA requested amount equals 58% of the Total Project Cost of \$54,262,700.

Total funds from other sources, both received and requested

The City of Hammond has been working on the Marquette Plan's vision of the Lakeshore even before the Marquette Plan was formulized. The history of work Hammond and private developments performed is well documented.

Potential Future Hammond Lakes' Area Marquette Plan Improvement Projects

Wolf Lake / Indiana Toll Road Flow Control Structure: The City of Hammond has proposed to INDOT, IDNR and the US Army Corps of Engineers the need to control the water flow into and out of Wolf Lake at the Indiana Toll Road I 90. This could potentially be a \$3 million dollar project and the lead time to traverse all of the permit requirements and environmental studies could take years.

Beatification of George Lake Trail: With the Trail approaching its tenth year of service, a beatification will be warranted with the increased traffic from the connection into Whiting's Lakefront Park.

Pedestrian Bridge Access to Hammond Marina: The City has always wanted a safe pedestrian access to the marina and one idea may be connecting onto the existing bridge or creating a new pedestrian bridge.

Continuation of the Lake Michigan Lakeshore Trail to Illinois: Once at the marina and west to the end of this projects limits of the Lakeshore Trail, continuing the trail west to the state line, with the elimination of the power plant, would be a logical, desired and completion project.

Sheffield Trail Extension to Pulaski Park: Having a continuous link to all Hammond Parks will bring the lakeshore south via the connecting trail system. This link would be a step in that direction.

Environmental Restoration Options for Wolf Lake North Channel: Enhancing the Wolf Lake area wouldn't make sense if the entire channel is not restored to its ultimate pristine condition.

George Lake Enhancement: Restoring all of the Lakes of Hammond is a priority and once again when traffic is increased on the George Lake, special attention will be placed on the Lake.