

## **City of Gary, Northwest Indiana The Marquette Plan**

### **Description**

The Marquette Plan, completed in January of 2005, is a comprehensive land use vision intended to create a lasting legacy that is community-based, action oriented and geared to achieving tangible quality of life improvements along Northwest Indiana's Lake Michigan shoreline and beyond.

At the heart of this planning initiative is the creation of a green ribbon of connected dune and swale landscapes, river corridors, lakes, beaches, reclaimed industrial canals and a range of diverse habitat that provides the natural counterpart to the industrialized setting that has dominated Northwest Indiana for the past century.

Connecting it all are miles and miles of trails, including nature trails, bike trails, boardwalks, riverwalks and water trails, many of which follow Native American routes and glacial landscapes established long ago.

### **Background**

Along the south shore of Lake Michigan, just east of the Illinois-Indiana state line, lies an unparalleled challenge – and opportunity. Along Indiana's lakeshore is an opportunity for the rebirth of a region looking for away back to a livable lakefront. The Marquette Plan, a collaboration between the lakeshore communities of East Chicago, Gary, Hammond, Portage, and Whiting, the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), and the office of Congressman Pete Visclosky, is focused on creating a catalyst for such a rebirth through reinvestment along a twenty-one mile segment of Indiana's Lake Michigan shoreline.

In summary the Marquette Plan aims to:

- Recognize Lake Michigan as the most important asset in our own survival – from drinking water to climate to property value
- Increase Public shoreline access from approximately 33 percent today to over 75 percent in the future and provide generous minimum setback for new development to ensure this access
- Establish physical, social and economic connections including a continuous trail network linking people to the lake, to features along it, and to each other
- Change perceptions of the lakefront and the lakefront communities as a destination and a place that attracts new residents and new investment
- Recognize a changing economy in the region and capitalize on new opportunities such as technologies associated with the remediation and re-use of industrial brownfields properties
- Leverage available resources including political resources that span city, county and state boundaries to broaden the pool of funds and support needed to achieve the vision

- Continue and expand the partnerships that are necessary to achieve the vision, including an effective management and funding structure to ensure long-term success and preservation of the vision

The Marquette Plan initiative was funded through a grant from the Indiana Department of Natural Resources Coastal Program and matching dollars from the five participating cities. The total cost of the project was \$240,000. The planning team consisted of JJR, SEH, Huff & Huff, The Trust for Public Land, and J.F. New.

### **Results**

Key achievements of the plan will include over 10 miles of reclaimed, publicly accessible lakeshore with up to 2,500 acres of voluntarily reclaimed land for parks and open space and nearly one hundred miles of land and water based trails that connect to miles of the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore to the east and Chicago's 23 mile green ribbon of parks to the west. The plan proposes approximately 1,500 acres of reclaimed industrial brownfields and underutilized lands for economic development including tax based diversification to ease the burden on area homeowners and new job creation in existing and new employment fields. In addition, the resulting air and water quality improvements, buffers between incompatible uses, reconnected communities and renewed interaction with the lake will achieve an elevated value of life for the everyday resident, employee, or visitor of the region.

### **Contacts**

City of Gary Mayor's Office – 219 881 1301  
City of East Chicago Mayor's Office – 219 391 8200  
City of Hammond Mayor's Office – 219 853 6301  
City of Portage Mayor's Office – 219 762 5425  
City of Whiting Mayor's Office – 219 659 7700  
Office of Congressman Peter Visclosky – 219 795 1844