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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

City of Buchanan partners with Cities Initiative to develop St. Joseph Riverfront Restoration Project

Project will help restore Buchanan's connection to the St. Joseph River and create a world-class destination in small town Buchanan, Michigan

Buchanan, Mich. – November 19, 2024 – The City of Buchanan is collaborating with the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative to develop designs to stabilize the shoreline and restore natural features along the St. Joseph River. The City's goal is to revitalize community amenities along the river and address challenges such as shoreline erosion, flooding, invasive species, public access constraints, and limited recreational opportunities. The project builds on the 2024 Buchanan St. Joseph Riverfront Master Plan.

Located in Berrien County in southwest Michigan, the City of Buchanan owns two parcels along the St. Joseph River that have been identified for improvements. The restoration project will address approximately 16 acres and 1,600 feet of river shoreline. The area is commonly referred to as Redbud Riverfront Park and currently includes a boat ramp, parking area and bathrooms.

"There is significant positive momentum in our community to forge a collective vision for an accessible, healthy, restored riverfront to be enjoyed by both residents and visitors," said Buchanan Mayor Mark Weedon. "The St. Joseph Riverfront Restoration Project will help the city take key steps toward realizing this vision."

Buchanan has unique access to the St. Joseph River via two public parks along pristine river frontage. The project will address several important ecological goals for the city property, including protecting and restoring natural features; increasing fish habitat; and stabilizing shorelines to reduce erosion using nature-based solutions.

Potential future improvements in the project area include increased recreational opportunities along the riverfront (kayak launch, trails, parking); outdoor recreation and family-friendly amenities (toilets, pavilion); and improved connections to the river from the bluffs (trails connecting to the lower park, vista points, benches, boardwalks and neighborhood gathering spaces).

The current preliminary design project is expected to be completed in early 2025, after which the city will seek funding for final designs, permits, and eventual construction of the recommended improvements.

The Cities Initiative is proud to support the St. Joseph Riverfront Restoration Project under its Resilient Coastal Projects Initiative (RCPI), which is helping cities across the Great Lakes region to protect property owners and infrastructure from the impacts of climate change. Funding is provided by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation with support from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

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About the Resilient Coastal Projects Initiative

The RCPI supports local communities in planning sustainable, fundable projects that protect shorelines and community assets. These projects address coastal hazards like flooding or erosion, while adding community benefits such as public spaces, recreation, wildlife habitat, and improved water quality. More information on the RCPI is available on the Cities Initiative's website at: <https://glslcities.org/initiatives/resilient-coastal-projects-initiative/>

About the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative

The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative is a multinational coalition of local governments led by mayors and chief elected officers working collaboratively to safeguard the economic, environmental and social health of communities in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin. The organization is committed to stewarding the basin's freshwater and ensuring that all residents have access to clean, safe and affordable water as the foundation for sustainable, vibrant, inclusive and resilient communities.

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