

PROCESS

In the late 1980's the Mayors of the cities of East Chicago, Gary, Hammond, Portage, Whiting and Michigan City set up the Lake Michigan Marina Development Commission with the goal of recapturing some of our valuable shoreline for public access, recreation and boating uses.

This commission was the predecessor of the Shoreline Development Commission that was created and will soon be funded as the primary tool to advance this plan. Three of the five communities successfully constructed or expanded public marinas and increased access to the Lake's resources through the Marina Development Commission and a general shift began as acres upon acres were reclaimed for public use along the Indiana shoreline.

This philosophical shift culminated in 1985 with Congressman Visclosky's visionary "Marquette Plan" that raised the bar for what a twenty-first century Indiana lakeshore should be, including setting a goal of seventy-five percent public lakeshore access, minimum setbacks and standards for new lakefront developments, rail consolidation and impact zones to establish the highest and best uses for the lakefront. The quality of life envisioned in Congressman Visclosky's bold vision would tap our most valuable resource, Lake Michigan, as our greatest opportunity to overcome our greatest challenge in redefining the region. Quality of life and economic prosperity must once again come from its water. The Congressman recognized that reclaiming our lakeshore is a task that may take many years to achieve, but project-by-project, link-by-link, jewel-by-jewel it will be achieved and the Marquette Plan is a framework to direct the process.

This plan is the result of over twenty-years of thought and discussion, culminating with an eight-month public planning process that began with a Memorandum of Understanding between the cities of East Chicago, Gary, Hammond, Portage and Whiting to act as one voice in decision-making and fundraising. It is also the product of years of tireless efforts by the Congressman to bring industry, regulatory agencies and countless special interest groups to the table for open dialog about re-use of unneeded industrial property to benefit everyone in the region. A Working Group, comprised of representatives from each city, appointed by their Mayors, along with representatives from Indiana Department of Natural Resources and

Congressman Pete Visclosky's office was established to select a planning consultant team, direct the project and provide leadership to the planning team.

The process included:

- Extensive field analysis and review of available background data to gain a thorough understanding of the study area;
- Five public visioning meetings, geographically distributed throughout the 21-mile study area for maximum representation;
- One public review meeting at the draft plan and alternatives stage;
- One public presentation at the final draft plan stage;
- The input of over 80 stakeholder groups interviewed in one-on-one or focus group format during the process and hundreds of citizens that attended public workshops in each of the five cities whose comments were recorded in meeting notes, letters, e-mails, faxes, phone messages and comment cards from public meetings;
- Stakeholder follow-up including a work session between major industries and regulatory agencies responsible for environmental quality and potential remediation; and
- The creation of a project clearing house at Purdue University-Calumet that will include a project website and archives of project background and public input data.



Field analysis visit by Planning Team - BP lakefront parcels

At each stage, input was gathered and recorded and used to draft, revised and finalize the plans and recommendations contained in this report. Upon completion, each of the participating cities, as well as IDNR and other involved agencies, intend to incorporate the Marquette Plan into their procedures and policies through acknowledgement, endorsement or adoption as appropriate.



Public visioning meeting at Ora L. Wildermuth Library - Miller



Stakeholder group interviews at Gary/Chicago Airport