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A Report by
The Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission
and Indiana Landmarks
2015

For more information visit
http://www.rdatransformation.com/

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The Marquette Plan is a comprehensive and collaborative vision for guiding future decision-making across all 45 miles of Indiana’s Lake Michigan shoreline, an area that holds a tremendous amount of opportunities and challenges. Phase I of the Marquette Plan (2005) had set the goal of increasing public access and redeveloping the region’s urbanized coastal areas, from the Illinois state line to the Port of Indiana. Phase II of the Marquette Plan (2008) identified the needs of the smaller communities east of the Port, and created a vision that identified greenways for protecting and accessing the coastline ecosystem, and possible watertrails along the lakeshore.

The Marquette Plan 2015 will serve to integrate the vision and strategies of these two earlier phases, by establishing more consistency amongst the plan’s priorities and policy frameworks, across the entire region. This update will celebrate successes achieved since the plan’s inception, identify challenges towards implementation, explore new opportunities, and review shifts in the economic development, environmental conservation, and neighborhood development goals across different sub areas of Northwest Indiana’s lakefront.

The Marquette Plan 2015 builds on the vision and principles of the original phased plan. It continues to emphasize the importance of Lake Michigan as the greatest natural asset of our region, and the need to increase public access to its shoreline. The plan prioritizes improving the physical, social, and economic connections throughout Northwest Indiana’s lakefront communities, expanding and improving the region’s trail and transportation infrastructure, and protecting the long term health of our environment and natural resources.
Marquette’s strategies focus on sustainability, collaboration and partnership. It also anchors this visionary effort within the larger regional context by incorporating principles from complementary regional plans like NIRPC’s 2040 Comprehensive Regional Plan for Northwest Indiana, the Beyond the Beach Discovery Trail, the Greenways and Blueways Plan, and the Creating Livable Communities Report, and other initiatives.

In addition to providing progress updates on the previously laid out concepts, The Marquette Plan 2015 includes recommendations regarding the cultural and historic resources within the Marquette study area. These resources are valuable assets that support the heritage of our region’s coastline, the identity of individual communities, regional sustainability, and the economic potential of our tourism industry.

The Marquette Plan 2015 maintains its focus on the implementation of these policies and projects at the sub area level. As with the prior phases of the plan, throughout all of Northwest Indiana’s lakefront sub communities. To better reflect the constantly evolving nature of regional projects and community priorities, this plan has realigned the sub-areas identified in Phase I and Phase II as follows:

- Hammond Lakefront
- Whiting Lakefront
- East Chicago Roxana-Calumet
- East Chicago North Harbor
- Gary West Lakefront
- Gary Downtown-East Lakefront
- Porter County West
- Duneland
- Downtown Porter-Chesterton
- LaPorte County
Subsequent to the development of Marquette Plan Phase II, a stakeholder group met and determined that maintaining the Marquette Plan as a living document was critical to ensure its long term implementation. This resulted in an agreement between three regional entities to partner for sustaining, maintaining, and implementing the plan. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) entitled ‘Coordination of Marquette Vision Efforts’ was cosigned between the Indiana Department of Natural Resources’ Lake Michigan Coastal Program (IDNR LMCP), the Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority (RDA), and the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC). The responsibilities of these partners are as follows:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Lake Michigan Coastal Program (IDNR)</th>
<th>Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC)</th>
<th>Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority (RDA)</th>
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<td>(1) Planning assistance in coastal program area</td>
<td>(1) Comprehensive regional planning (economic development, environment, transportation)</td>
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<td>a. Smart growth concepts</td>
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<td>(2) Administration of funds and assurance of coordination between and among funded projects</td>
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<td>b. Planning projects</td>
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<td>c. Model ordinance development</td>
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<td>d. Comprehensive Plan development</td>
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<td>(3) Coastal grant funding for Marquette-related planning projects</td>
<td>(3) Corridor planning</td>
<td>(3) Oversight of the Marquette Vision Implementation process, in collaboration with NIRPC and INDR</td>
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<td>(4) Coordination with Indiana state agencies</td>
<td>(4) Coordination and collaboration with units of government</td>
<td>(4) Coordination and collaboration with shoreline communities</td>
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<td>(5) Public access planning and management</td>
<td>(5) Regional data clearinghouse</td>
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<td>(6) Priority setting for trail development and related enhancements</td>
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<td>(7) Maintaining and updating the Marquette Vision</td>
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Since each of these agencies has its own policy-making board and mission, the MOU called for creation of a Marquette Advisory Committee (MAC), to be composed of a variety of shoreline stakeholders that provide Marquette-specific oversight. Subsequent to entering into the MOU, the Indiana state legislature created the Lake Michigan Marina and Shoreline Development Commission (LMMSDC), IC 36-7-13.5. The LMMSDC included in its defined membership the local jurisdictions, major land holders, and many other stakeholders. To avoid duplication, the LMMSDC agreed to serve as the steering committee for the Marquette Plan 2015.
Planning Process

In 2012, the Northwest Indiana RDA applied to the Indiana Dunes Lake Michigan Coastal Program for a grant to update the Marquette Plan. The goals of this update were four-fold, to:

• Integrate the prior phases of the plan.
• Celebrate progress and identify barriers to implementation.
• Showcase our heritage and strengthen the cultural and historic resources of the coastal area through the creation of a new framework.
• Create an interactive Marquette Plan website, and a detailed Marquette Plan-specific geodatabase.

As the regional planning entity, with expertise in land use, transportation, environmental planning, and geo-spatial mapping, NIRPC was contracted by the RDA to execute the scope of the grant. The RDA separately contracted with Indiana Landmarks to develop a new Marquette policy framework for the Cultural and Historic Resources along the shoreline area.

Public Outreach

A planning team comprised of NIRPC staff (Kathy Luther, Jack Eskin, Sarah Geinosky, and Eman Ibrahim) and Indiana Landmarks Northwest Region Coordinator (Tiffany Tolbert) outlined a plan for the update. From that point on, the partnership spent the eighteen months seeking input on the update of the Marquette Plan from key stakeholders like city officials, representatives from manufacturing, utility, and railroad companies, transportation officials, environmental advocates, political staffers, tourism groups, and members of the general public. This transpired through a series of private meeting meetings, presentations and discussions with established committees, and public open houses.
Presentations
Chicago Wilderness Executive Council (July 2012)
Lake Michigan Marina and Shoreline Development Commission (December 2012)
NIRPC 2040 Urban Core Committee (March 2013)
NIRPC Pathway to 2040 Committee (July 2013)
Lake Michigan Forum Industrial Environmental Committee (August 2013)
NIRPC Local Government Assistance Committee (October 2013)
Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority (November 2013)
NWI Urban Waters Federal Partnership (December 2013)

Stakeholder Meetings
Congressman Peter Visclosky’s Office (January 2013)
Small Business, Tourism, Chambers, Historic District groups (July 2013)
Environmental Activists, Non-Governmental Organizations & Land Trusts (July 2013)
NIRPC Ped, Pedal, and Paddle Committee (July 2013)
NIRPC Rail VISION Working Group (November 2013)
City of East Chicago Planning Department (April 2014)
City of Gary Planning Department (November 2013 & April 2014)
Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore
Hammond Marina and Shoreline Development Commission Executive Director
City of Michigan City Planning and Park Department
BP
Arcelor Mittal
NIPSCO/NiSource
US Steel
South Shore Convention & Visitors Authority
Indiana Dunes Tourism

Public Open Houses
City Gary (November 2013)
City of Whiting (November 2013)
City of Portage (November 2013)
City of Michigan City (November 2013)
Vision & Principles

The vision statement and principles serve as a guide in developing the recommendations, frameworks, and sub area maps that are included in this study. They were developed through an extensive public participation and review process and served to define the priorities from each phase of the Marquette Plan.

The Vision

Create a Livable Lakefront
- A Place to Live, Work, Play and Stay
- An Environmentally, Economically and Socially Sustainable Environment
- A Place for Mixed Uses and New Uses
- A Place to be Proactive and Think and Act Strategically

The Principles

1. Showcase Our Heritage
   - Industrial
   - Natural
   - Community and People
   - Tourism

2. Redefine the Edges
   - Increased Recreation, Circulation & Population
   - An Accessible Lakefront (Public / Multi-Modal)
   - Mixed Use (including New Jobs / Investment Centers)
   - Prioritize Livable Centers

3. Bridge the Gaps
   - Span Physical, Political & Trust Gaps
   - Create National Lakeshore Communities
   - Leverage Existing Assets / Resources / Initiatives
   - Overcome Regulatory Hurdles
   - Blur the Edges

4. Preserve, Protect & Enhance Environmental Systems
   - Lake Michigan Frontage, Stream and River Corridors
   - Dune and Swale Complexes
   - Remnant Natural Areas on Industrial Lands
   - Watersheds & Viewsheds

5. Protect & Cherish Our Waters
   - Recognize the value of Lake Michigan as the region’s drinking water source and the critical role adjacent lands and tributaries have in protecting it.

6. Formulate an Effective Management & Funding Strategy
   - Inter-Governmental Cooperation
   - Direct Lakefront Revenues to Lakefront
   - Improvements
   - Adopt Development Standards in Cities’ Ordinances
   - Public-Private Partnerships and Land Trusts

7. Balance Resident, Visitor and Industry Need
   - Build consensus between communities, industry, and public agencies
   - Create visitor management plan
   - Improve visitor wayfinding to and within the region

8. Invest in Community Infrastructure
   - Raise the bar; enhance quality of life of residents
   - Offer tools and resources to communities to implement community initiatives
Regional Marquette Goals

- Comprehensive vision for the Lake Michigan Shoreline
- Recapture 75 percent of the lakeshore for public use;
- Establish a minimum setback from water’s edge of 200 feet;
- Create a continuous trail network through northwest Indiana from the Illinois to the Michigan state line
The Goals and Principles of the Marquette Plan will only be achieved through the action of coastal communities, property owners, and organizations throughout the region.

The Vision can be reached through

- The application and implementation of the strategies and recommendations presented in the following policy frameworks throughout the region and;

- The imagination and completion of visionary projects suitable to the opportunities, needs, and character of each unique area of the coast.

“Sweeping changes will not come overnight. Nor can they be dictated by one person or one governmental body. We in Northwest Indiana must sit together as a unified community and reach a consensus on our future”

Congressman Pete Visclosky