SUB-AREA PLANS

While many of the recommendations in this study are of a large scale, systems-wide nature such as an east-to-west trail or connected waterway system, six key areas exist where more detailed planning occurred. These “sub-areas” are located in each of the five cities and illustrate exciting long and near term projects that are critical to achieving the Marquette Plan’s vision. The following sub-area plans are included in this section:

1. Hammond Lakefront
2. Whiting Lakefront
3. East Chicago Canalway
4. Gary West Lakefront
5. Gary Downtown Lakefront
6. Portage Lakefront
HAMMOND LAKEFRONT

The primary focus for projects in the Hammond Lakefront sub-area is making connections. Trail connections, potential water connections, local connections and bi-state connections. It also focuses on achieving the highest and best use for lakefront properties currently used for infrastructure that may be better suited elsewhere. Highlights include:

- A trail link from Hammond Marina to Calumet Park in Chicago that could provide a continuous trail from the north side of Chicago to East Chicago and beyond with proposed connections in Whiting, East Chicago, Gary and Portage;
- Potential redevelopment of a large, underutilized casino parking lot if development standards can be created to ensure that an adjacent bird sanctuary can be buffered and protected from light and noise pollution and other detrimental impacts to wildlife (it should be noted that this development could be a way to fund and build the aforementioned trail to Calumet Park as a part of a comprehensive development package);
- Potential redevelopment of the State Line Energy plant with potential adaptive re-use of select structures and continuous public access along the water’s edge with generous setbacks for new structures;
- Potential restoration of an historic water linkage between Wolf Lake and Lake Michigan if deemed physically, economically and environmentally feasible and desirable; and
- North-south trail and greenspace linkages connecting Wolf Lake and neighborhoods to the south to Lake Michigan and the connected system of parks and trails envisioned in this study.
WHITING LAKEFRONT

Whiting is fortunate to have established and protected Whiting Park - a wonderful waterfront park with direct access to the lake, attractive park structures and a variety of trails and special features. This sub-area focuses on improving this park and providing connections to the east and west as part of the larger greenway network. Highlights include:

- A new lakefront promenade that would replace the unsightly rubble that is currently used for wave protection and obscures public views of the water;
- Additional lakefront parkland east of Whiting Park by reclaiming industrial land at the site of a BP water purification plant that is proposed to be relocated adjacent to inland facilities in the near future;
- A relocated rail spur that would allow continuous park road and trail access from Whiting Park to the new public beach and parkland at the former ISG plant (now Ispat Inland Steel);
- A continuous greenway that could connect East Chicago to Chicago with proposed trail connections in Hammond; and
- An expanded commercial district that links Whiting's existing "Main Street" commercial district to the lakefront.
EAST CHICAGO CANALWAY

The East Chicago Canalway sub-area demonstrates how one or two strategic actions can lead to massive quality of life improvements. Two key moves - the consolidation of refinery storage tanks and a re-routed Cline Avenue to provide improved industrial access - trigger potential land uses changes that could result in new neighborhoods, strengthened industry, new lakefront parkland and a reclaimed industrial ship canal with public greenspace, trails and mixed-use development. Highlights of this sub-area include:

- A “Heritage Campus” that integrates the historic Marktown neighborhood into a setting of new parkland, adaptive re-use of a World War I era steel mill into an Industrial Heritage Museum that celebrates the area’s working past, and a memorial in a park setting that pays homage to workers who lost their lives constructing Cline Avenue and creates an improved environment for lakefront residents;
- A new “Canalway” neighborhood along a reclaimed Indiana Harbor Ship Canal, including new linear greenspaces and trails, mixed-use developments to broaden the tax base and new residential areas to populate the lakefront;
- A re-aligned and improved Cline Avenue, lowered but still providing grade-separated, direct access for lakefront industry and destinations such as Gary-Chicago Airport while utilizing new urban design standards to better fit into improved community surroundings created by its relocation; and
- New public beach and lakefront parkland, voluntarily divested from existing industry due to aforementioned Cline Avenue changes, that could connect to adjacent Whiting Park and ultimately Chicago’s lakefront with other recommendations included in this study.

Prepared for: The Cities of East Chicago, Gary, Hammond, Portage, Whiting, Indiana Department of Natural Resources; Congressman Pete Visclosky

Prepared by: JLR, LLC (Chicago, IL); SEH Inc. (Munster, IN); Huff & Huff Inc. (Joliet, IL); The Trust for Public Land (Chicago, IL); JF New (Wallaston, IN)
GARY WEST LAKEFRONT

The focus for this sub area is the reclamation of lakefront lands currently occupied by industrial uses such as Mitchell Generating Plant and U.S. Steel. Working collaboratively with these industrial users and the Gary/Chicago Airport, the goal is to create mixed-use development that capitalizes on the lakefront setting and diversifies Gary’s tax base. Plans for Gary’s west lakefront include:

- Closing and removal of the Mitchell Generating Plant near Buffington Harbor and preparing the site for re-use;
- Redevelopment of this site as part of a larger mixed use development and potential Gary-Chicago Airport expansion while providing 200’ minimum setbacks from the lakefront to all new structures for public use;
- Creating new public access and recreation opportunities along the shoreline and new green space on former U.S. Steel property that will provide a connection between the Lakeshore Ecological Park and Lake Michigan.
GARY DOWNTOWN LAKEFRONT

The focus for this sub area is the reclamation of lakefront lands currently controlled by U.S. Steel in their massive Gary Works plant that dominates miles of Gary's lakefront. Working collaboratively with U.S. Steel, the goal is to create linkages from downtown Gary to the lake and to create mixed-use development that capitalize on the lakefront setting and diversifies Gary's tax base to give much needed tax relief to area residents hit hard by recent property tax adjustments. Plans for Gary's lakefront include:

- A more compact, effective Gary Works plant that is a viable employer in the short and long term;
- Reclaimed industrial land east of the existing U.S. Steel shipping canal, allowing a continuation of Tennessee Street to the lakefront, a new I-90/I-65 link and mixed use development to the east;
- A restored Grand Calumet River with riverwalk connections downtown and restored, historic water connections to Lake Michigan in Marquette Park if deemed physically, economically and environmentally feasible and desirable;
- Extensive new public access and recreation opportunities along the shoreline including 200' minimum setbacks in new developments to the west and nearly ¼ mile setbacks for new waterfront recreation areas east of the ship canal that link to the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore;
- A rejuvenated Lake Street in Miller that capitalizes on tourism-oriented and transit-oriented developments due to proximity to the National Lakeshore and South Shore stations, respectively;
- An improved Lake Street Beach in Miller with upgraded public facilities and integration with an adjacent school to create a "Lakefront Learning Campus" with indoor and outdoor educational attractions focusing on the lakefront environment; and
- An extensive trail network as envisioned in the Gary Greenlink project.

Prepared for: The Cities of East Chicago, Gary, Hammond, Portage, Whiting; Indiana Department of Natural Resources; Congressman Pete Visclosky

Prepared by: JRL, LLC (Chicago, IL); SEH Inc. (Munster, IN); Huff & Huff Inc. (LaGrange, IL); The Trust for Public Land (Chicago, IL); JF New (Cullerton, IL)
PORTAGE LAKEFRONT

The catalyst for this sub area is a reclaimed sixty-acre lakefront parcel of land slated to be co-developed between the City of Portage and National Park Service as new lakefront parkland adjacent to lands within the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore. Coupled with its location along the Burns Waterway, proximity to a South Shore commuter rail station, a public marina slated for expansion and a proposed waterfront/ marina development, the opportunity exists for a coordinated development that could include the following:

- A new sixty-acre lakefront park with public facilities and vehicular access to the adjacent Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore;
- A new public riverwalk along Burns Waterway linking the lakefront park to Portage Marina, Lefty’s Coho Landing development and the existing South Shore station;
- A long-desired trail linkage between the east and west units of the national lakeshore;
- A model for transit-oriented development and water/marina oriented development at Lefty’s Coho Landing if properly executed;
- Park and public access improvements at Portage Yacht Club with potential water trail links on the Little Calumet River; and
- The long-term opportunity for a canal link between the lakefront properties and downtown Portage.