

IEPA Log No.: **C-0735-14**
CoE appl. #: **LRC-2014-927**

Public Notice Beginning Date: **January 4, 2018**
Public Notice Ending Date: **January 25, 2018**

Section 401 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act
Amendments of 1972

Section 401 Water Quality Certification for Discharge of Dredged or Fill Material

Public Notice/Fact Sheet Issued By:

Illinois Environmental Protection Agency
Bureau of Water
Permit Section
1021 North Grand Avenue East
Post Office Box 19276
Springfield, Illinois 62794-9276
217/782-3362

Name and Address of Discharger: Park District of Highland Park – 636 Ridge Road, Highland Park, IL 60035

Discharge Location: Near Highland Park in NW 1/4 of Section 24 of Township 43N, Range 12E of the 3rd P.M. in Lake County.

Name of Receiving Water: Lake Michigan

Project Description: Proposed mechanical maintenance dredging of public boat launch area with offshore open water disposal.

The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) has received an application for a Section 401 water quality certification to discharge dredged or fill material into the waters of the State associated with a Section 404 permit application received by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The Public Notice period will begin and end on the dates indicated in the heading of this Public Notice. The last day comments will be received will be on the Public Notice period ending date unless a commenter demonstrating the need for additional time requests an extension to this comment period and the request is granted by the IEPA. Interested persons are invited to submit written comments on the project to the IEPA at the above address. Commenters shall provide their names and addresses along with comments on the certification application. Commenters may include a request for public hearing. The certification and notice number(s) must appear on each comment page.

The attached Fact Sheet provides a description of the project and the antidegradation assessment.

The application, Public Notice/Fact Sheet, comments received, and other documents are available for inspection and may be copied at the IEPA at the address shown above between 9:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. Monday through Friday when scheduled by the interested person.

If written comments or requests indicate a significant degree of public interest in the certification application, the IEPA may, at its discretion, hold a public hearing. Public notice will be given 30 days before any public hearing. If a Section 401 water quality certification is issued, response to relevant comments will be provided at the time of the certification. For further information, please call Darren Gove at 217/782-3362.

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Fact Sheet for Antidegradation Assessment
For Park District of Highland Park
IEPA Log No. C-0735-14
COE Log No. LRC-2014-927
Contact: Abby Brokaw 217/558-2012
Public Notice Start Date: January 4, 2018

The Park District of Highland Park (“Applicant”) has applied for a 401 Water Quality Certification for impacts associated with the proposed annual dredging at the Park Avenue boat ramp and surrounding area of Lake Michigan located in the City of Highland Park, located at 31 Park Avenue in Section 24, Township 43 North, Range 12 East, of Lake County, Illinois.

Dredging is required to maintain a depth of six feet at the launch area as well as its approaches. The proposed project would be covered under a 10-year maintenance dredging permit (2018 to 2027), which would authorize the dredging and the associated in-lake disposal of no more than 1,800 cubic yards of clean sand annually. Dredged sand would be placed within Lake Michigan approximately 350 feet south of the dredged location in waters with depths no less than four feet.

Identification and Characterization of the Affected Water Body.

Lake Michigan is classified as a Lake Michigan Basin Use Water and has zero cfs of flow during critical 7Q10 low-flow conditions. Lake Michigan, Waterbody Segment IL_QLM-01, is listed on the draft 2016 Illinois Integrated Water Quality Report and Section 303(d) List as impaired for fish consumption use with potential causes given as mercury and polychlorinated biphenyls and aesthetic quality use with potential cause given as phosphorus. Aquatic life, public and food processing water supply, primary recreational contact, and secondary contact uses are fully supported. Lake Michigan is not listed as a biologically significant stream in the 2008 Illinois Department of Natural Resources Publication *Integrating Multiple Taxa in a Biological Stream Rating System*, nor is it given an integrity rating in that document. A Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Report has been prepared and approved by the USEPA for 51 beaches along Illinois’ Lake Michigan shoreline to address Primary Contact Use Recreation impairments due to excess bacteria. The proposed activity occurs within an area identified by the report “Shoreline Segments in Suburban Cook County, Illinois” May 15, 2013 as a Beach Protection Area subject to that TMDL.

Identification of Proposed Pollutant Load Increases or Potential Impacts on Uses.

The pollutant load increase of total suspended solids during the proposed dredging and fill activities would be local and temporary. These increases, a normal and unavoidable result of dredging and filling, may occur in the lake at the project site. Benthic habitat will also be disturbed in the project area, but impacts to aquatic life uses of this area are not anticipated.

All fill material will be clean. Sand and water samples were analyzed for particle size distribution, asbestos, and supernatant testing, from three locations within the boat launch facility. Each sample showed less than two percent passing through a # 230 U.S. sieve and no asbestos was detected. Ammonia-nitrogen, chloride and phosphorus were above the required limits of detection, so monitoring was conducted during previous dredging activities. Additional monitoring would be required during proposed activities.

Fate and Effect of Parameters Proposed for Increased Loading.

The increase in total suspended solids would be local and temporary. No adverse impacts associated with the dredging and disposal of material to the water body are expected. No mitigation plan has been proposed.

Purpose and Social & Economic Benefits of the Proposed Activity.

The project is a necessary maintenance activity for the Park Avenue boat launch. A minimum depth of six feet is required at the launch area as well as the approach areas to allow for boater access to and from the launch. The project would provide social and economic benefits by allowing for continued recreation of Lake Michigan along the Highland Park coastline.

Assessments of Alternatives for Less Increase in Loading or Minimal Environmental Degradation.

Option 1: Do Nothing

- Will result in unsafe harbor conditions, economic loss to the Applicant and loss of Lake Michigan recreational benefits

Option 2: Excavator Dredging with Open Water Disposal

- Routine annual maintenance, shown to be successful with prior, similar projects
- 1,800 cubic yards to be dredged and placed 350 feet south of dredged area offshore (open water disposal)

Option 3: Barge Dredging

- Not economically feasible
- Will not decrease turbidity due to project size

Option 4: Beach Disposal

- Existing, small public beach is at peak elevation
- Disposal not possible due to beach size and current elevation

The Applicant has selected Option 2 (Excavator Dredging with Open Water Disposal) for implementation. The proposed dredging and fill activities will follow conditions set forth by the Agency and USACE. The least intrusive alternative would be to not complete the project. This is not an acceptable alternative given the need to provide safe recreational access to Lake Michigan. Completion of the project will improve recreational opportunities for the local community.

Summary Comments of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Regional Planning Commissions, Zoning Boards or Other Entities.

On December 26, 2017, IDNR's Division of Ecosystems and Environment issued notification under Project #1804167 that an EcoCAT endangered species consultation determined that adverse effects from the proposed activities are unlikely and the consultation has been terminated.

Agency Conclusion.

This preliminary assessment was conducted pursuant to the Illinois Pollution Control Board regulation for Antidegradation found at 35 Ill. Adm. Code 302.105 and was based on the information available to the Agency at the time this assessment was written. We tentatively find that the proposed activity would result in the attainment of water quality standards; that all technically and economically reasonable measures to avoid or minimize the extent of the proposed increase in pollutant loading have been incorporated into the proposed activity; and that this activity would be socially and economically beneficial by allowing for continued recreational opportunities in Lake Michigan. Comments received during the 401 Water Quality Certification public notice period will be evaluated before a final decision is made by the Agency.