Illinois Environmental Protection Agency
Bureau of Water, Permit Section
(IEPA)

1021 North Grand Avenue East, Post Office Box 19276, Springfield, Illinois 62794-9276, 217/782-3362

The IEPA has issued a Public Notice of a request for a Clean Water Act Section 401 water quality certification that would allow the issuance of a federal permit for the discharge of pollutants to waters of the State.

Public Notice Beginning Date:	**Public Notice Ending Date:**
Tuesday, April 15, 2025	Tuesday, April 29, 2025

Agency Log No.: C-0231-24

Federal Permit Information: Federal permit/license no. LRC-2014-927 is under the jurisdiction of Chicago District, Regulatory Branch U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Name and Address of Discharger: Park District of Highland Park, Brian Romes - 636 Ridge Rd, Highland Park, IL 60035

Discharge Location: In Section 23 of Township 43-North and Range 12-East of the East 3rd Principal Meridian in Lake County. Additional project location information includes the following: 8 Park Avenue, Highland Park, IL 60035

Name of Receiving Water: Lake Michigan

Project Name/Description: Park Avenue Boat Launch - Maintenance Dredging Project - proposed annual mechanical dredging of approximately 2,400 Cubic Yards (CY) of sand material at the entrance of the boat launch facility and placement in an open water location within Lake Michigan

Construction Schedule: Immediate (Planned project duration is approximately 3667 days)

The Public Notice period will begin and end on the dates indicated in the heading of this Public Notice. Interested persons are invited to submit written comments on the project to the IEPA at the above address. Commenters must provide their name and address along with comments on the certification request. The IEPA Log number must appear on each comment page. Commenters may include a request for public hearing. Only hearing requests and comments that pertain to Clean Water Act Section 401 authority will be considered. This authority provides consideration of whether the permit or license would be consistent with Sections 301, 302, 303, 306, or 307 of the CWA, as well as "any other appropriate requirement of State [or tribal] law". Requests for additional comment period must provide a demonstration of need. The final day of comment acceptance will be on the Public Notice Ending date shown above, unless the IEPA grants an extended notice period. The attached Fact Sheet provides a detailed description of the project and the findings of the IEPA's antidegradation assessment.

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 see the contact information below.

Name: Webert Deslien Email: webert.deslien@illinois.gov Phone: 217/782-3362

Post Document. No. C-0231-24-04152025-PublicNoticeAndFactSheet.pdf

401 Water Quality Certification Fact Sheet for Park Ave Boat Launch

IEPA Log No. C-0231-24

Contact: Angie Sutton 217-782-9864

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 0.75 miles northeast of the intersection of Central Avenue and St. Johns Avenue in Township 43 North, Range 12 East, Sections 23 and 24 of Lake County, Illinois.

Dredging is required to restore adequate water depths for safe navigation at the boat launch while keeping the sand within the littoral system. The proposed project would be covered under a 10-year maintenance dredging permit (2026 to 2035), which would authorize the dredging and the associated in-lake disposal of no more than 2400 cubic yards of clean sand annually. Dredged sand would be placed within Lake Michigan near the adjacent beach area to the southwest.

Information used in this review was obtained from the application documents dated October 7, 2024 October 16, 2024, October 21, 2024, March 19, 2025 and April 3, 2025.

Identification and Characterization of the Affected Water Body.

Lake Michigan (Waterbody Segment IL_QLM-01) has 0 cfs of flow during critical 7Q10 low-flow conditions. Lake Michigan is classified as a Lake Michigan Basin Use Water. 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. Lake Michigan, Waterbody Segment IL_QLM-01, is listed on the 2024 Illinois Integrated Water Quality Report and Section 303(d) List as impaired for fish consumption use with potential causes given as aldrin, dieldrin, endrin, heptachlor, mercury, mirex, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), and toxaphene, and aesthetic quality with a potential cause given as total phosphorus. Aquatic life, primary contact, and public and food processing water supply uses are fully supported.

Park Avenue Beach, Waterbody Segment IL_QJ-05, is listed on the 2024 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 (PCBs) and for primary contact recreation use with a potential cause given as E-coli.

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 May 15, 2013 report "Shoreline Segments in Suburban Lake County, Illinois" as a Beach Protection Area and is therefore subject to this 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 location within the boat launch facility was conducted. Each sample showed less than twenty percent passing through a # 230 U.S. sieve and no asbestos was detected. Testing was performed on the samples taken March 14, 2024, and May 6, 2024. Supernatant testing was done at the 0- and 1-hour marks, and again at the 4-hour mark. These results were analyzed using Method 2540 F for Settleable Solids and yielded results indicative of potential elevations of zinc, sulfate, chloride, phosphorus, total dissolved solids (TDS) and ammonia. Monitoring of these parameters during dredge spoil placement is recommended.

Fate and Effect of Parameters Proposed for Increased Loading.

The increase in total suspended solids would be local and temporary. The existing aquatic life use in the shallow, nearshore zone will be temporarily disturbed, but will recover over time. The proposed work will minimize impacts to Waters of the US to the maximum extent practicable. The work is anticipated to be conducted by mechanical means and will be conducted in a manner that limits the potential for environmental impacts, therefore, compensatory mitigation is not planned.

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 Highland Park.

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

The Applicant has provided the following alternatives:

Option 1: Onsite beach disposal was considered; however, the existing, small public beach may be at peak elevation during the project timeline and disposing the dredge material on the beach will not return the sand back to the littoral system in the best manner possible.

Option 2: A “do nothing” approach will result in unsafe harbor conditions, economic loss for the Park District, and the launch will not be functional for the personal watercraft users, thus resulting in a loss of Lake Michigan recreational benefits.

Option 3: Barge mounted excavator or hydraulic dredging with an open water disposal approach is considered the least environmentally damaging practical alternative due to previous permitting efforts with neighbors to the south, it replenishes the sand material back into the littoral system as soon as possible, and the economic feasibility based on previous successful dredging projects over the last 10+ years.

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

On October 7, 2024, an IDNR EcoCAT consultation (Project # 2504603) was initiated and concluded that the natural resource review provided by EcoCAT identified protected resources that may be in the vicinity of the proposed action. The Department has evaluated this information and concluded that adverse effects are unlikely. Therefore, consultation under 17 Ill. Adm. Code Part 1075 and 1090 is terminated. The consultation was terminated on October 21, 2024.

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 (antidegradation standard) 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 benefit the placement areas 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.