

PRESSRELEASE

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For Immediate Release

Date: January 30, 2003

Michigan City moves to protect environment while promoting economic development and tourism

Michigan City, IN (January 30, 2003) Mayor Sheila Brillson joins Representative Scott Pelath in supporting the creation of the Singing Sands – Lighthouse Trail project in Michigan City.

"The project offers great potential for our community as well as the entire Northwest Indiana Region," Mayor Brillson said, "because of the economic development and tourism benefits as well as the creation of green space which protects our environment."

Green space is property, both land and water, which is permanently protected as undeveloped. Mayor Brillson said, "Open public space makes an essential contribution to the quality of life of urban citizens. It provides a recreational resource, a peaceful retreat, a medium for social interaction, safe and exciting play areas for children, a reserve for urban wildlife, as well as an attractive backdrop to new and existing economic development."

"The creation of a biking trail that connects the greater Michigan City area with Porter County, Indiana and Berrien County, Michigan, is one of the first steps toward creating increased economic development opportunities along that same corridor," said Mayor Brillson. "But that promise of potential new businesses and new jobs for our community is not the only reason I support this project."

Mayor Brillson continued, "My family and I have been avid bicyclists for decades, riding along county roads, city streets and through our city and county parks. We've ridden bicycles in other communities while vacationing, and there is no better way to become intimately involved with a community than to travel its streets on an open bicycle. You get a clear vision of the buildings, the people, and the scenery while absorbing the smells and sounds along the way.

Michigan City will offer tourists and residents an amazing experience while bicycling along our new trail, said the Mayor. "The beauty of our dunes and lakeshore, the call of gulls riding the winds over Lake Michigan, and the mouth-watering aroma of cookies baking that you smell on the southwest side of Michigan City are only a few of the memorable aspects this new trail promises."

The Michigan City Common Council unanimously adopted a resolution in support of a \$1.27 million grant application for a regional, multi-use trail system in the city. Scott Pelath, State Representative House District 9, said, in a letter of support to the Michigan City Parks & Recreation Department, the Northern Indiana Regional Planning Commission, and the Indiana Department of Transportation, "The Singing Sands-

Lighthouse Trail bike path will provide users with direct access to downtown Michigan City and the Lake Michigan shore. In addition, it will connect many areas of importance in Michigan City including City Hall, the Library, Post Office, Parks and Recreation Office, Senior Citizens Center, Historic Lighthouse, Washington Park and Zoo, City Marina, Indiana State Fishing Access Site, and the Blue Chip Riverboat Casino. Each of these assets is vital to our region and would be linked for convenient access.”

The proposed route of the 12-foot-wide trail would begin at the Porter County line and proceed 2.8 miles to Washington Park. It would cross U.S. 12 and head northeast, utilizing South Shore Line easements. The trail would continue along the south side of the railroad tracks to the Franklin Street bridge over Trail Creek, where existing walkways attached to the bridge would carry the trail to the north side and into Washington Park.

The trail would then follow Lake Shore Drive to the east end of Washington Park, where two routes would be considered for Phase 2, which would run to Washington Park Boulevard. Phase 3 would take the trail to the New York Central Railroad corridor, stretching 3.5 miles to the city's corporate boundary at Meer Road. The trail would continue along the railroad corridor one mile to the Indiana-Michigan state line.

Mayor Brillson said, “Once the Singing Sands – Lighthouse Trail is completed, hikers, walkers and bicycle riders will be able to travel a non-motorized route from the Illinois/Indiana state line all the way into Michigan. The existing trails, which travel through both large and small communities, include the Grand Calumet River/Marquette Trail Corridor, the Calumet Trail Corridor, the Little Calumet River Trail Corridor, and the Oak-Savannah/Prairie Duneland Trail Corridor.”

The Parks and Recreation Department has received a favorable recommendation from the Northern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC) and hopes to receive funding from the Indiana Department of Transportation to implement the plan for the new trail.

“Public support for this project is crucial,” said Mayor Brillson. “I encourage our residents and visitors to send letters of support for the Singing Sands-Lighthouse Trail to City Hall, the Michigan City Parks & Recreation Department, NIRPC, Representative Scott Pelath and the Indiana Department of Transportation. This is a very worthwhile project for our community.”

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Send letters about the Singing Sands-Lighthouse Trail to:

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Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission
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Representative Scott Pelath
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Contact (re Press Release): Cindi Walus **Phone:** 219/873-1400 **E-mail:** cindiw@niia.net

FYI:

At least 29 **rail trail projects** are underway in Indiana, with ten at least partially open; a detailed database is available at: <http://www.state.in.us:80/dnr/outdoor/railtrail.htm>

Another list of **Indiana Rail Trails** with dates and basic facts is at: <http://www.kiva.net/%7Etrails/st/in.html>

The **B&O Trail** is a proposed rail trail from Indianapolis westward through Indiana to North Salem, Roachdale, Russellville, and Marshall, until it reaches Montezuma, Indiana: <http://www.rcdi.org/>

The **Cardinal Greenway** is the longest rails-to-trails project in Indiana:
<http://www.cardinalgreenway.org/index.html>

Delphi Historic Trails include abandoned railroads and the Wabash & Erie Canal:
<http://www.carlnet.org/canal/>

A visualization of the **Erie-Lackawanna rail trail** project in Griffith is at:
<http://www.nwibike.com/griffithtrail/update.htm>

The **Heritage Trail of Madison** is a planned rail trail in Madison, Indiana:
<http://www.heritagetrailofmadison.org>

The **Hoosier Rails to Trails Council** promotes rail trails in Indiana: <http://www.indianatrails.org>

The **Monon Trail** in northern Marion County runs 7.5 miles to Fall Creek, and will extend another three miles to 10th Street: <http://www.indygreenways.org/monon/monon.htm>

The **Pumpkinvine Nature Trail** is a 16-mile rail trail in North Central Indiana; the web site has information on rail trail issues, a newsletter archive, and photos: <http://www.pumpkinvine.org/>

Discover Indiana Riding Trails (D.I.R.T.) works to maintain riding opportunities in Indiana: <http://off-road.com/~dirt/index.html>

The **Indiana Bicycle Coalition** site has a newsletter with trail descriptions and access to current state legislation affecting cyclists: <http://www.bicycleindiana.org/>

A list of **Indiana/Michigan mountain biking trails** with brief descriptions:
<http://www.cris.com/~mheyes/trails.html>

Mountain Biking in Bloomington has several trail maps and other biking information:
<http://ezinfo.ucs.indiana.edu/~adpeters/mtb/trails/top.html>

Northwest Indiana Bike has trail and route maps, news on rails to trails, and local rides:
<http://www.nwibike.com/>

Three Rivers Velo Sport Club of Fort Wayne has bike route maps and other info: <http://www.3rvs.com/>

For information on the coast-to-coast **American Discovery Trail** in Indiana:
<http://www.discoverytrail.org/state-by-state/indiana.html>

The **Indiana Horse Council** has information on trails as well as other equestrian information:
http://www.indianahorsecouncil.org/01_home.html