



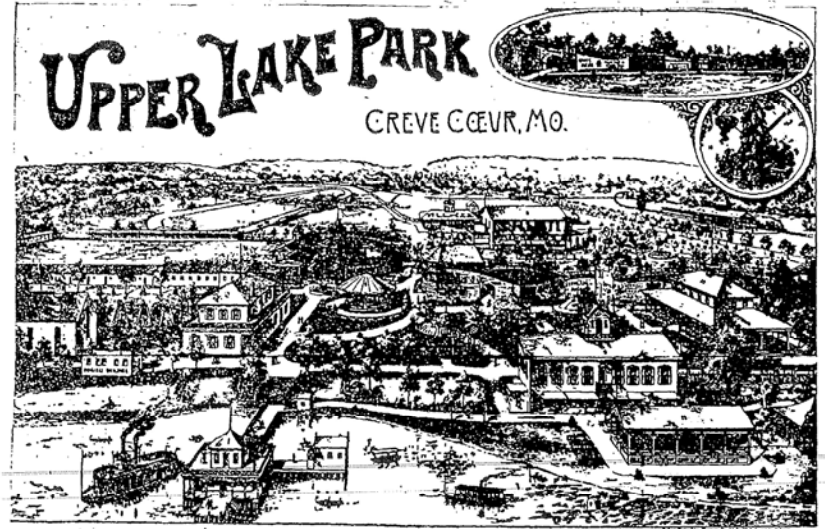
# CITY PLANNER'S REPORT

## *A Brief History of Howard Bend*

With the applications of Maryland Pointe and Maryland Park Commerce Center, the Howard Bend Planning Area has been brought to the forefront this year. Encompassing approximately 8,100 acres (8,600 when counting areas within the Missouri River), the Howard Bend Planning Area encompasses roughly half of the City of Maryland Heights. As we look to the future of this important part of the City, it is worthwhile to examine its past.

### CREVE COEUR LAKE

It is interesting that Creve Coeur Lake, rather than the Missouri River, has historically driven much of the interest in the Howard Bend area. The lake was once part of the Missouri River but over time it was cut off from the river, forming what geologists call an "oxbow" lake, named for its U-shape reminiscent of a yoke for oxen. A map from 1929 shows a crescent-shaped lake with Creve Coeur Creek flowing in at the lower part of the "U" in the south. In the late 1800s, sedimentation resulted in a separation of the lake into two bodies of water - the larger Creve Coeur Lake and the smaller Upper (or Little) Creve Coeur Lake. However,



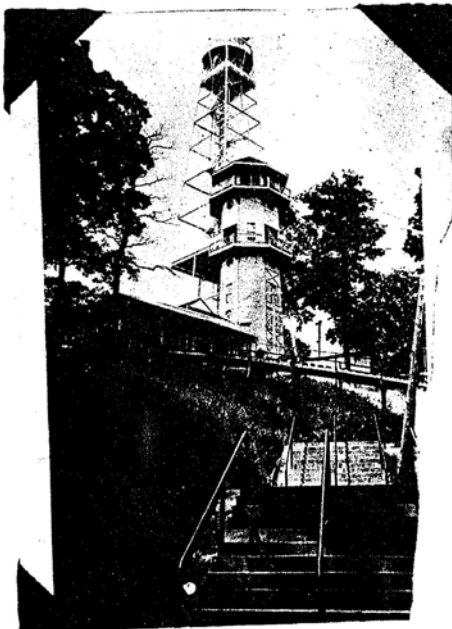
THIS LITHOGRAPH, SENT OUT around the turn of the century by Jacob Studt Jr. as an advertisement, shows how Creve Coeur Lake, with some of the St. Louis County Fair setup, looked at that time. Note the excursion boat in the lake at the left foreground.

by 1940 Upper Creve Coeur Lake had all but dried up, likely through sedimentation due to Missouri River floods and increased development around the lakes in the late 1800s.

The first known commercial activity on the lake involved the *Polar Wave Ice Company* which cut ice on the lake for shipping to St. Louis ice houses. The first organized recreational festivities were likely in 1881 when Daniel E. Carroll scheduled a "grand festival at the new summer resort" to include music, dancing, boat racing, athletic events, and even a fireworks display. In the early 1900s, the lake was the scene of the County Fair and by the 1920s, development around the lake included an amusement park and a resort which boasted a hotel, roadhouse, restaurant, shooting ranges and stables. A 255-foot lookout tower originally set up at the 1904 World's Fair was also reassembled at Creve Coeur Lake. In 1926, a small subdivision of single-family homes was started on the northern edge of the lake along Marine Avenue. Transportation to the lake from St. Louis was provided by both rail and, by 1900, streetcars.

By 1930, the popularity of the lake had declined due in part to the Great Depression and in part to the rise of the automobile which provided improved

Tower and Scenic Railway at Creve Coeur Lake.



Mr. and Mrs. A. Van Mill

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access to a variety of other recreation options. The amusement park was abandoned by 1934 and several of the buildings were razed. The hotel building remained until 1966 when it was destroyed by a fire.

## CREVE COEUR LAKE MEMORIAL PARK

In 1939, the State of Missouri contemplated purchasing the area around the lake for a state park, but failed to do so due to budget constraints. Instead, in 1945 St. Louis County dedicated Creve Coeur Lake Memorial Park as the first county park and the first World War II memorial in St. Louis County. Today, at 2,200 acres, the park is the largest in the St. Louis County Department of Parks and Recreation's system.

In 2005, the park was rezoned to "MXD" Mixed Use District to facilitate the implementation of St. Louis County Department of Parks and Recreation's 2003 *Creve Coeur Park Master Plan*. The plan separates the park into nine separate planning areas. Detailed descriptions for improvements within each of these areas are included in the plan with the exception of the Crystal Springs Golf Course area. A variety of passive and active recreational uses are envisioned. It is noteworthy that the portion of the park along the southwest side of Route 364 is planned for passive recreational purposes only as it serves to mitigate the impacts of this roadway project.

## HOWARD BEND LEVEE DISTRICT

The Howard Bend Levee District was incorporated in 1987 for the purpose of protecting and reclaiming land within the boundaries of the district from the effects of overflow and other water, wash, and bank erosion and for sanitary and agricultural purposes. Its predecessor, the Howard Bend Levee Association, was formed in 1935 with the purpose of constructing and maintaining a levee system to protect low-lying property.

Taxing themselves, the landowners of the district have undertaken numerous improvement projects over the years including repairs to private levees and the construction of new levees to protect from both external and internal flooding. Most significantly, in 1999 the district began construction of an earthen levee to protect the land within the district from a 500-year flood. This levee runs from the Missouri-American Water Treatment Plant in the south to the Riverport levee in the north. The construction of this levee, along with the extensions of Maryland Heights Expressway and Missouri Route 364, had a substantial impact on development opportunities in the Howard Bend Planning Area.

## ROUTE 364 AND THE EXPRESSWAY

Missouri Route 364, also referred to as the Page Extension, bisects the Planning Area. Formal plans to extend Page Avenue from Interstate 270 across the Missouri River began as early as 1969 but the federal government didn't grant final clearance for the project until 1995. The project commenced in 1997 and Phase I (I-270 to Route 94/Harvester Road including Veterans Memorial Bridge) was completed in 2003. The I-270/Route 364 interchange is currently being upgraded with two-lane flyover ramps to replace the previous cloverleaf configuration.

## ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) were required for the construction of Maryland Heights Expressway and Missouri Route 364, and for the anticipated development of the Howard Bend Planning Area resulting from the construction of the 500-year levee. An EIS is a document required by the National Environmental Policy Act for proposed actions which could significantly affect the quality of the human environment. An EIS describes the positive and negative environmental impacts of a proposed action and examines alternatives. In his Record of Decision on the *Final Environmental Impact Statement - Howard Bend Floodplain, Maryland Heights, Missouri*, Colonel Lewis F. Setliff III of the Army Corps of Engineers states:

*In spite of the prevailing trend toward future land development, the Howard Bend study area also entails the integration of planned land areas dedicated to open space, wildlife habitat, and recreation. Creve Coeur Lake Memorial Park, coupled with the open lands of the Missouri Riverfront (i.e., lands outside the 500-year levee), account for approximately 4,200 acres that will remain undeveloped wildlife habitat or that will be available for recreational uses. These areas will provide for sustained recreational use, the maintenance of wildlife habitat, and continued wetland support functions. Due to the proximity of these areas to existing and future transportation facilities, these areas will, however, be subject to on-going visual and noise impacts.*

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Route 364 drew opposition from several groups who opposed the project due to its cost, potential to fuel sprawl into St. Charles County, and potential environmental impacts - particularly its impact on Creve Coeur Lake Memorial Park. Enough signatures were collected to force a referendum in 1998. St. Louis County voters authorized St. Louis County to provide an easement to MoDOT through Creve Coeur Lake Memorial Park. In exchange, MoDOT granted St. Louis County an additional 1,005 acres for the park, much of which is to be preserved as mitigation land.

Maryland Heights Expressway is an equally important factor in the future development of the Howard Bend Planning Area. Originally, this roadway improved access to Riverport, Harrah's, Sportport, and Creve Coeur Park. Ultimately, Maryland Heights Expressway will connect with Highway 141 to the south. St. Louis County terms the project to connect these roadways the "Page to Olive Connector." According to the County, the primary purpose of the project is to relieve traffic on local roads. The Page to Olive Connector is the middle link in an expressway corridor extending from U.S. 61-67 in Jefferson County to Missouri Route 370 in northwest St. Louis County. This project is expected to be completed next year. To date, the City has contributed approximately \$43 million toward the planning, design, and construction of Maryland Heights Expressway.



## PLANNING EFFORTS

In 1969, St. Louis County prepared a plan that dealt with the entire Missouri River flood plain area within the County. That plan, which called for the intensive commercial and industrial uses, was based upon the premise of constructing a 500-year levee from the Missouri River's confluence with the Mississippi River southward to the southern limits of Chesterfield.

The City's first Comprehensive Plan, adopted in 1987, contemplated two growth scenarios for the Howard Bend area - one that assumed no levee would be constructed (with the exception of the levee at Riverport) and one that assumed a 500-year levee would be constructed. The first scenario anticipated infill development within in the developed portions of the area and the second scenario anticipated developments of regional significance such as a world trade center, a domed stadium, or a dog or horse racing track.

In 2002, the City amended the Comprehensive Plan for the Howard Bend Planning Area due to two major infrastructure projects - the construction of the 500-year levee by the Howard Bend Levee District and the extension of Page Avenue (Route 364) into St. Charles County. The 2002 plan established a development vision of approximately 15-18 million square feet of office campus and similar uses, predicated on high quality design, sufficient amounts of integrated open space, connected transportation improvements, and the design of a multi-functional stormwater management system.

The City revisited the Comprehensive Plan in 2006-2007 because progress was made on infrastructure plans and improvements in a more expedited manner than was accounted for in the 2002 plan. This effort was focused on a refinement of the 2002 plan and a more defined implementation strategy. The projected build-out anticipated by HNTB was 28 to 33 million square feet of development. However, it should be noted that these expectations were reduced by Crawford, Bunte, Brammeier's 2008 *Development Threshold Study*, which examined the relationship between potential development and transportation improvements in the Howard Bend Planning Area. This study found that the Howard Bend

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Planning Area could potentially support up to 22.5 million square feet of development, but only if all foreseeable roadway improvements were constructed. Portions of the Plan were updated in 2008 based on this study and the City is currently in the process of amending portions of the Plan related to the Crystal Springs Planning District.

The City's Comprehensive Plan is unique in that it is expressly implemented by the Zoning Code, which requires consistency with the Plan for Zoning Map amendments and Conditional Use Permits. In the Planned District process, as exhibited by the Maryland Pointe and Maryland Park Commerce Center projects, the first step (the Conceptual Development Plan) is to determine whether the project is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. Overall, this process is intended to ensure that projects not only meet the requirements of the Municipal Code, but are also in keeping with the long-term vision of the City of Maryland Heights.

*Special thanks to Dan Human, President of the Howard Bend Levee District, for providing documentation on Creve Coeur Lake and the Howard Bend Levee District and City Engineer, Bryan Pearl, for providing documentation on Maryland Heights Expressway.*