Shoreline project options being evaluated

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The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality and the city of Marquette say they will host a public meeting Tuesday to allow input on the first set of conceptual designs for the future of a long standing shoreline dispute.

The meeting — hosted by the city of Marquette and the Superior National Forest Partnership at 7 p.m. at Customs Annex — will focus on the planning process for a half-mile stretch of public beach between Hankey and First streets.

"There is a whole broad range of options," Superior National Forest Supervisor Carl Lindquist said. "We're putting all public input and we will share that with the city commission and eventually the city will make a decision.

Artistic Pictures

Using a $55,000 coast zone management grant from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, the city of Marquette has held public meetings to discuss the future of this area.

Discussion includes removal of all metal objects, a boulevard north into the former O.K. Bar property the city now owns, and removing or covering the walk of rock around the city bordering the shoreline from view and erosion.

Grant funds were used to develop conceptual five conceptual designs for the area, which will be presented Tuesday.

"There is everything from very elaborate change to the dramatic redesign and restoration of some natural beaches, yet having to maintain some engineered shoreline," Lindquist said.

Lindquist said estimates for the five plans vary widely and money will factor into any recommendations made to the city commission.

Last month, the commission approved acceptance of a second coastal zone management grant, this one for $24,500, which requires a city match of $24,500 in local contributions.

The second phase will involve the development of a final engineering plan based on the selected concept design.

This phase, which is estimated to be completed by March 2004 according to the grant application, will lead to project implementation.

The project would be funded from the city's budget and probably well exceed $1 million over a period of years.

"The goal of Marquette's beach is to educate the public on the issue and some of them and then to continue to gather feedback on the beach outside elements," said Dennis Whitney, Marquette's director of planning and community development.

If the city commission approves one of the options and engineering work begins soon, Whitney said actual work could start in 2004.

Lindquist said the public is urged to attend the meeting and provide some level of public input.

"Most of those scar are, I believe all of them, still have some kind of walk or something that's a hillside," he said. "All of them have increased public access, better viewing.

The total amount of shoreline varies from simply removing the existing walk barrier to the creation of a2mile2 mile beach or varying perpendicularly to the shoreline.

Other options include restoration of the current barrier and inclusion of a public access park; the creation of a large sand beach, coupled with a handful of new shorelines (beaches) and the crafting of a handful of small beach areas, along with the restoration of original of the current barrier.

Most of the plans include the relocation of Lakeview Boulevard.

"We'll be in contact by phone or written at (906) 225-2000," Lindquist said.

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