

Creve Coeur Lake Memorial Park Indoor Ice Hockey Facility

Special Interest Gain or our Future Enjoyment of Creve Coeur Lake Park?

The American Institute of Architects St. Louis Chapter, the Open Space Council, the Missouri Coalition for the Environment, the Sierra Club, the Greenway Network, the St. Louis Audubon Society and the St. Louis Chapter of the Green Building Council have joined together in concern and opposition to the proposed Legacy Ice Foundation indoor hockey facility in Creve Coeur Lake Memorial County Park, St. Louis County's best outdoor recreation site. Consuming 40 acres of land, the facility would require 1000+ parking spaces and have a building footprint of almost six acres, making it the largest ice hockey facility in the region.

The recently released Environmental Assessment report, attempts to redefine this massive building as "outdoor recreation", suggesting this facility is acceptable. We believe, however, that the park would be irreparably damaged by this egregious development in the following ways:

It would forever change the park character and emphasis from multiple outdoor lake district uses, making ice hockey use so dominant that boating, biking, sailing and picnicking would be severely compromised.

Traffic congestion may eventually cause the other park users to go elsewhere. The unique experience of being in a large open lake district park with distant horizons would be replaced with a 50 foot-high industrial-scale building dominating a landscape that floods regularly.

Although long-established Land and Water Conservation Act may allow the developer to replace the land taken for indoor recreation this replacement land, subsidized by taxpayers, may likely be located elsewhere with no benefit to the park.

Here are the reasons why the ice hockey facility is a bad idea for the park:

1. It would remove park land and open space from the general use of St. Louis County residents, diminishing the park's rural character. Parks and open space are of great importance to developed urban areas and are as such, jealously guarded. Committing this piece of the park to a single indoor use would be a mistake lamented in the future.
2. This facility is an indoor use unrelated to Creve Coeur Lake. Existing uses such as sailing and rowing need small support buildings that are lake-related. The planned indoor ice hockey facility would not benefit from being located near the lake but it would certainly detract from the lake and the park's rural character. The large building would be visible from the lake, beaches, bike path and park entrance approaches destroying the pastoral environment.

3. This area floods. We should stop approving development in the flood plains of our major rivers. This is a process with no good endgame. Developing floodplains leads to higher levees, higher flood levels and more public funds for flood protection and flood insurance. This is a bad plan for our region.

The public sector should be setting a good example, not misusing park land and not encouraging building construction in hazardous and environmentally sensitive areas. Forward thinking governments resist short term opportunities in favor of long term sustainability.

This sacrifice of public park land for acres of indoor ice hockey building and parking is not justified or appropriate. Is the Legacy Ice Foundation, a powerhouse of hockey interests including the St. Louis Blues, unable to procure funds to purchase a suitable site for its facility?

Build this indoor ice hockey facility elsewhere. This area in Creve Coeur Lake Park should be developed for outdoor lake-related recreation uses. The park should maintain its unique open environment as indicated in the County's master plan for the park.

In 2016 the National Parks Service celebrated its 100th anniversary. St. Louis County does not have the magnificence of the Grand Canyon, the solitude of Glacier National Park or the limitless horizons of the Gulf Islands National Seashore. But we have one of the few large natural lakes in Missouri. We enjoy Creve Coeur Lake and its surroundings and we use them well. Let us keep the park's horizons as distant as we can, avoid a massive industrial-like building in the park and reject the congestion and over-use that will come.

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Submitted on behalf of the organizations mentioned in the first sentence.

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