

**For immediate release
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**MAYOR ANNOUNCES PLANS FOR NEW ICE
FACILITY:PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP**
Much Needed Additional Space for Hockey Leagues and Skating

Fort Wayne, Ind. – Today, Mayor Tom Henry announced a long-awaited project is moving forward and will bring more than \$14.1 million in private investment to the community.

“Our community has recognized for years the need for additional ice space to meet the needs of youth and adult hockey leagues, figure skaters and recreational skating. I am proud today to announce that this project, with its intention to bring a first-class facility Fort Wayne, gives us a chance to fill that need for the region,” said Mayor Henry.

A local development group, 3 Sheets Development, LLC, submitted plans today to develop 22 acres of land on Lima and Wells Streets, across from Glenbrook Commons. The first parcel to be developed will be a facility with three sheets of ice that the group calls “Spiece on Ice,” a reference to the successful basketball center located just a mile north on Lima, to indicate the sort of regional draw they expect to bring to the facility, as hockey leagues from several states will hold tournaments and events there.

“This proposed project will redevelop a brownfield site,” pointed out Mayor Henry. “This is the sort of investment and “in-fill” development we encourage in the City, and we will be participating by providing some infrastructure improvements in the way of a road and bike path along the Pufferbelly Trail.” Henry said the City’s commitment is expected to represent about \$250,000 of this \$12 million project.

The City signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the developers, which is not a final contract, but does represent the intent of all involved to work out the details of the project. The MOU, which will require the approval of the Park Board of Commissioners will be discussed at this Wednesday's Board meeting with full support expected.

Three Sheets' spokesman Todd Ramsey said the developers anticipate a quick pace on the project. "We want to break ground yet this fall and have the ice facility ready for the '09 season, just about one year from now," Ramsey said. "This will be the only 3-sheet facility in the entire region and we are thrilled to be bringing it to Fort Wayne, along with thousands of visitors and potential retail shoppers and restaurant diners."

Third District City Councilman Tom Didier offered his support of the project. "I'm so excited that this is really coming to fruition," said Didier. "I want to commend Mayor Henry and his administration for bringing this long-discussed project off the back burner and into the reality stage. This is nothing but a benefit for our community," Didier said.

Part of the plans include a management firm to oversee both the new facility and the City-owned McMillen Ice Arena. Three Sheets is working with Canlan Ice Sports out of Canada for management services. McMillen has two sheets of ice, but Parks and Recreation Director Al Moll says one of those is in need of expensive repair and will likely be shut down. "It's always hard for the City to stop doing something it's done for a long time, and we've been in the ice business for 40 years," said Moll. "This project makes it a little easier, since we know the community as a whole will still be served by even more ice, with more opportunity and the chance to better schedule four sheets if one management firm is handling the logistics of managing and operating both facilities."

The City will still own the McMillen building and Moll said he and Mayor will be putting together a blue ribbon committee of citizens to study and suggest alternate programming which might be offered at the site or new uses for the portion of the building with the unused sheet of ice.

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