

ST. LOUIS RIVERVIEW CASINO BACKGROUND

North County Development LLC seeks St. Louis County's permission to construct the Riverview Casino complex, in part on 376 acres along Riverview Drive, about a mile north of Interstate 270 and 500 feet south of the Columbia Bottoms Conservation Area. Located in the Spanish Lake community on both currently developed and recently rezoned undeveloped floodplain, the proposed project stretches to the Mississippi River and includes a casino, convention center, hotel, 18-hole golf course, theater, wind turbines and more than 8,000 parking spaces.

Proponents indicate the development means \$350 million in spending, 5,000 jobs in construction and 2,250 permanent jobs. The Hazelwood School District Board said they support the complex, estimating it would generate \$10 million in revenue for the district.

The majority of residents in the area, including the Spanish Lake Community Association, state the development is too intense and inconsistent with the Spanish Lake Area Study, a 10-year guideline adopted for development in the area and approved by the St. Louis County Council in 1999, at which time the County's Comprehensive General Plan also was amended to include this area study. Area organizations interested in the integrity of the floodplain indicate this would effectually wipe out the last stretch of major wetlands and undeveloped natural area in the urban core of St. Louis.

Adjacent to Columbia Bottoms Conservation Area, the project area is also within an Audubon Important Bird Area and designated as a critical Conservation Opportunity Area by the Missouri Department of Conservation.

Against the will of neighbors and the local community, on November 3rd the St. Louis County Council approved the rezoning of this property in order to advance the project forward.

At What Cost?

The proposed development includes one of the last stretches of undeveloped landscape on the river channel and conflicts with modern principles of sound flood plain management. Given the requirement for casinos to be no more than 1,000 feet from the main channel, a large portion of the development is located directly in the floodway.

- To provide a comparison, one acre equals about one football field, so 376 acres equals about 376 football fields. It also means even more vital flood plain and green space will potentially be reduced to parking lots, buildings, infrastructure, and manicured and fertilized landscapes of little value to wildlife, and detrimental to our already compromised water quality. And 8,000 parking spaces: that's a lot of polluted stormwater runoff.
- The area includes views of the last natural habitats of America's Great Rivers' Confluence area—the Mississippi and Missouri rivers. These places are the sentinel remnants of our natural heritage in the urban core and are significant for their natural habitats, water quality value, and quiet enjoyment of St. Louis citizens now and in the future.

- The siting of this project also undermines the \$25 million of taxpayer investment in this area. The Missouri Department of Conservation and Army Corps of Engineers just completed development of the adjacent Columbia Bottom Conservation Area, an important migratory and breeding area for birds and other wildlife. While clean energy sources are vital to sustainable energy development, wind turbines on-site directly conflict with millions of migratory birds as they access the bottoms area for feeding, breeding, and nesting in one of North America's most important flyways.
- This effort also effectively spoils the natural beauty and sidelines efforts of dozens of government, NGO and private organizations working to bring sustainable eco-tourism and the national spotlight to one of the most significant natural treasures in the nation - the confluence of the two greatest rivers in North America, the Missouri and the Mississippi.

What Can You Do?

- Contact the St. Louis County Council to respectfully voice your opinion in support of our community's natural heritage:
Or, contact the St. Louis County Council to respectfully submit your thoughts:
Monday-Friday 8:00AM - 5:00PM
(314) 615-5000
- Although the St. Louis County Council recently approved the advancement of this project, there are still many junctures along the way to voice your opinion. Please watch for continued updates from:
Audubon Missouri <http://mo.audubon.org>
Missouri Coalition for the Environment <http://moenviron.org>
- Contact St. Louis area legislators affected by this proposal:
Representative Chris Carter, District #61: 573-751-7605
Representative Gina Walsh, District #69: 573-751-6845
Representative Steve Webb, District #74: 573-751-2135