



CITY OF WASHINGTON, ILLINOIS Committee of the Whole Agenda Communication

Meeting Date: February 10, 2025

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Joanie Baxter, CPA, Finance Director

Agenda Item: Proposed Dee Amphitheater Neighboring Impacts

Explanation: A presentation was made by a representative of the Hengst Foundation (the “Foundation”) and its development partners in December 2024 regarding a feasibility study that was completed for a proposed outdoor amphitheater (the “Dee Amphitheater”) to be constructed on a portion of the City’s 223 property. While the exact location would be subject to completing its engineering, it would be located just south of U.S. 24 within the northeastern quadrant of the parcel on roughly 47 acres including parking, landscaping, and open space. The facility is proposed to have 2,000 fixed seats and 3,000 lawn seats. If a development agreement is approved by the City Council, it is anticipated that the final design for the Dee Amphitheater would be completed in 2025, construction would largely be completed in 2026, and the facility would open later in 2027. Based on discussions with representatives of the Foundation, staff believes the Foundation will propose that: (1) the Foundation will be responsible for the construction of the Dee Amphitheater; (2) the City will be responsible for public infrastructure construction consisting of an east-west road from Dallas Road to connect to the site, storm sewer, sanitary sewer, and water; and (3) the Foundation will construct a detention basin to be located on the southeast portion of the property that the City will be responsible to maintain.

Staff expects that the Foundation’s attorney will send a proposed Letter of Intent to the City Attorney prior to the February Committee of the Whole meeting. The proposed Letter of Intent will be discussed at a City Council meeting in the near future. Staff recommends that any agreement have language that requires the Foundation to have sufficient capital, as determined by the City, irrevocably be set aside in an acceptable manner prior to the start of construction of public infrastructure and the Dee Amphitheater that covers the cost of the future demolition of the Dee Amphitheater should it become non-operational.

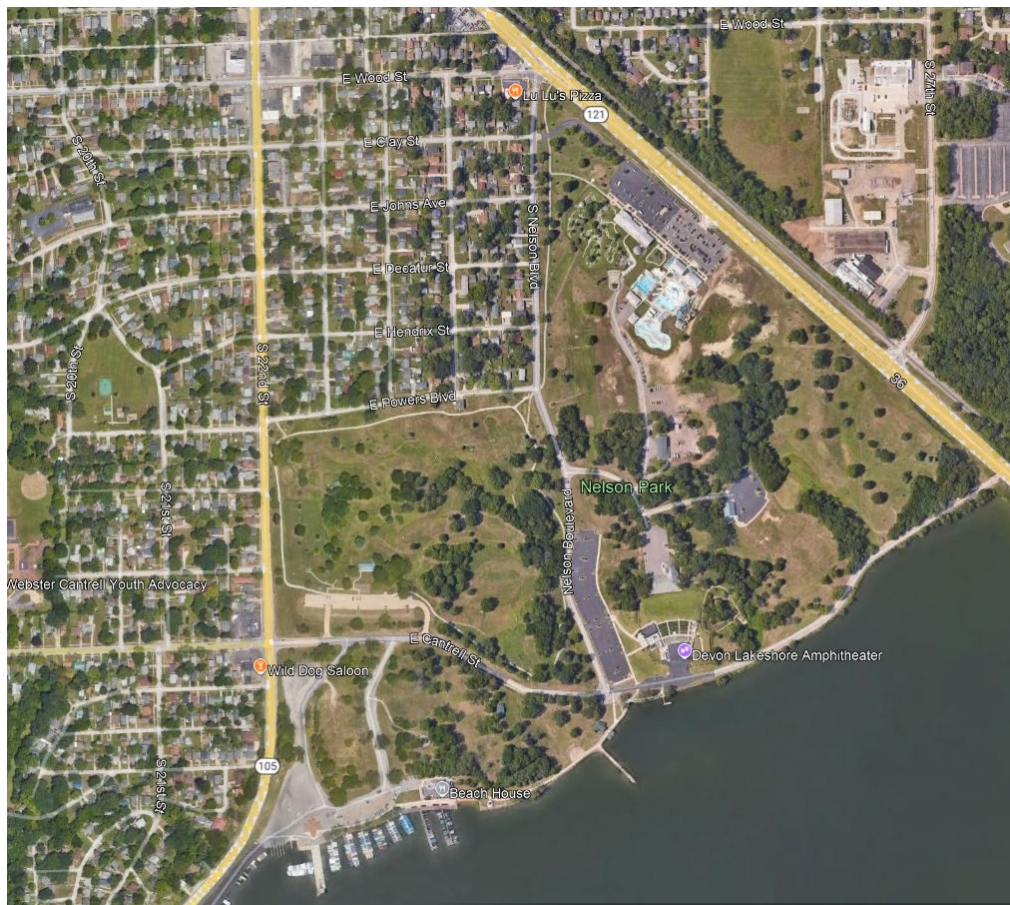
Noise

Section 36-5 (Noise Control) of the Municipal Code addresses the standards for noise on any property located in the city limits. It states: “Between the hours of 10:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. Sunday through Thursday and between the hours of 11:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. Friday and Saturday, it is unlawful for any person within the city to make, continue or cause to be made or continued, any loud, unnecessary or unusual noise which either annoys, disturbs, injures or endangers the comfort, repose, convenience, health, peace or safety of others, within the limits of the city, where such loud, unnecessary or unusual noise can be clearly heard 100 feet from the boundary of the property upon which the sound is produced or reproduced.” Violations of such section of the Municipal Code are punishable by a fine of not less than \$100.00 and not more than \$750.00 (Section 36-5(c) of the Municipal Code).

Staff had phone calls with the retired and current Executive Directors of the Decatur Park District (the “Park District”) to understand the impact of the Devon Lakeshore Amphitheater (“Devon”) on nearby properties. The Park District led the long-term planning and design of Nelson Park, which is where the Devon was built. It is located southeast of downtown Decatur and sits just north of Lake Decatur near U.S. 36. The Park District contracted for the Devon to be built and it now owns and operates the facility at a profit.

The City's GIS Specialist assembled an attached map that compares a roughly 6,000-foot radius circle around the Devon to that of the proposed amphitheater site in Washington. The intent behind this map is to show real world comparisons of what was built in Decatur, where noise complaints have been received, and how that would compare to the proposed Washington location.

The Devon is oriented a few degrees west of facing directly to the north (see aerial photo image below). Each of the Directors indicated that noise complaints are received during some concerts. Not all concerts have the same volume and there was some uncertainty about whether the complaints generally correlate with the music genre. However, the area that the Park District has received calls from is in or is very near the path of the speaker field. Staff has drawn very rough pie shapes that are oriented similarly to the geometry of the proposed Dee Amphitheater. As can be seen on the maps, the complaints received from the Devon are within that cone or very close to it. The Directors were not aware of any complaints that came from the directions where our residents currently reside. The current Director stated that on nights where there is no wind or waves on Lake Decatur, the lake can act like a sheet of glass and the sound can echo, but it is not loud enough to be a nuisance at the Scovill Zoo or Children's Museum of Illinois, both of which are on the south side of the lake.



Comparisons to the stage and canopy at the Devon versus those provided in the feasibility study for the Dee Amphitheater show that the Devon only has a canopy over the stage and it is not shaped to focus the noise forward (see photos below). There is also a large air gap above the back-of-house building and the canopy, which also tilts up and could potentially allow more sound to travel behind the facility. On the contrary, the Dee Amphitheater concept shows the canopy over half the fixed seats with an arc shape that would aid in focusing the noise in the northwest direction. The canopy appears to be connected to the back-of-house and stage area in an effort to reduce the noise to the rear direction.



Staff recommends that infrastructure construction not begin until further design is completed to satisfactorily reduce noise generation during daytime and nighttime hours in compliance with the

Municipal Code and applicable state regulations. However, staff believes the Foundation needs the assurance from the City Council that the City will not require a more stringent noise generation standard than applicable state law before continuing with further design work given the additional cost.

Traffic/Parking

Section 56-299 (Off-street parking) of the Municipal Code addresses the minimum required parking for the proposed facility. The Dee Amphitheater would be classified among other places of public assembly which requires a minimum of “one off-street parking space for each four seats provided for patrons’ use, or for each four persons in average attendance when seats are not provided for all patrons.” (See Section 56-299(b)(1)(h) of the Municipal Code). The facility is planned to have a capacity of 5,000. Therefore, the City’s zoning code regulations require a minimum of 1,250 off-street parking spaces. The Foundation’s feasibility study plans for 1,700 spaces, which would far exceed the required number under the City’s zoning code regulations.

This issue was also discussed with the past and current Park District Executive Directors. The facility parking diagram below for the Devon shows parking spread out over multiple lots that exit onto two-lane residential streets. They also switch all post-show traffic to one-way for a period of time. According to both Executive Directors, traffic is cleared in about 30 minutes after an event completion. There is a traffic signal that slows traffic, which would be similar to the proposed location in Washington. According to the website for the Credit Union 1 Amphitheater in Tinley Park, the facility has a capacity of over 28,000 and their parking facility can take around one hour to empty after an event. Their parking is serviced by two roadways that can exit at either end, but with the larger volume traveling west to I-80. Those patrons leave through two roads (four exits) in an hour.

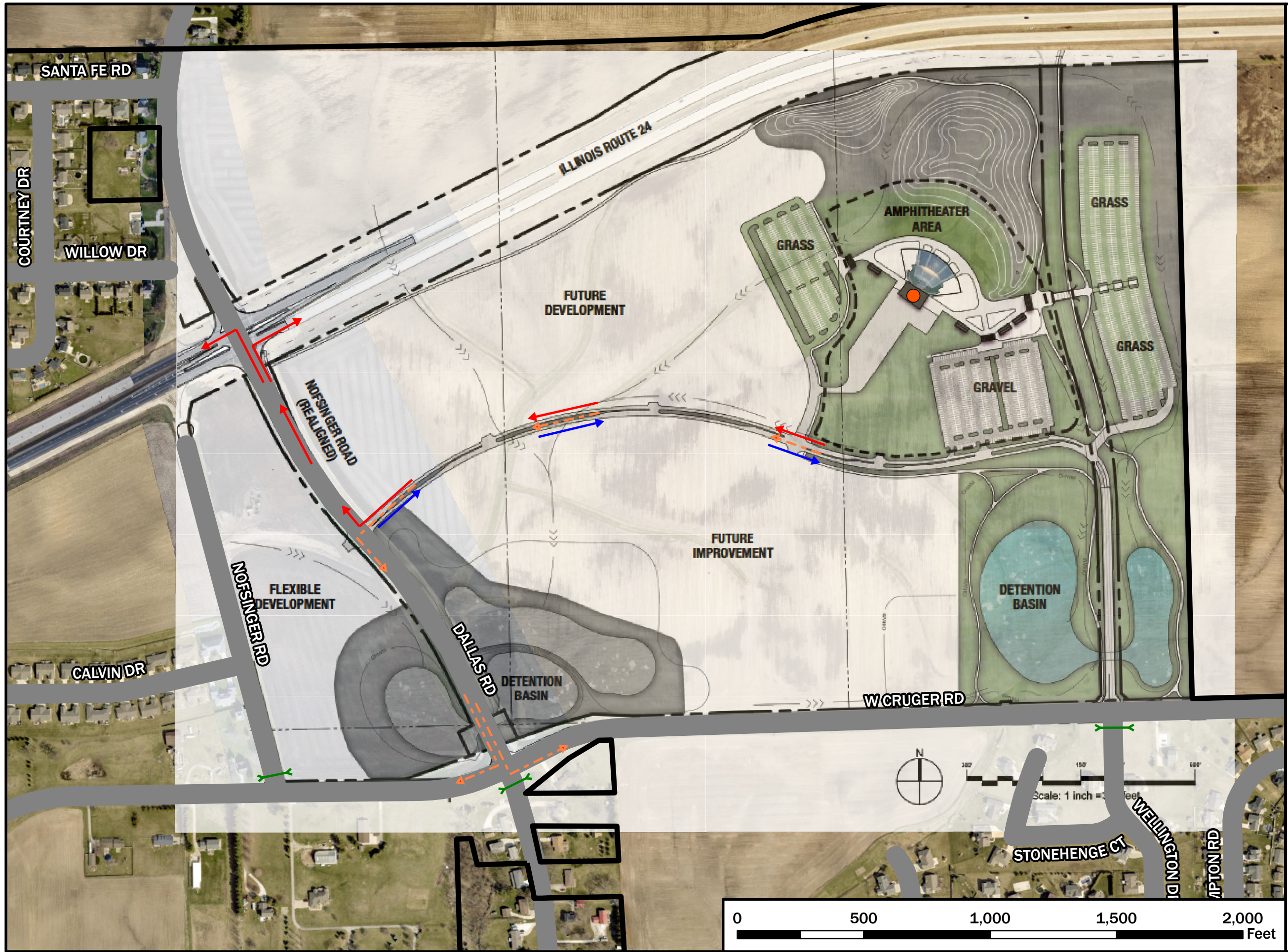
Traffic from the Dee Amphitheater could be adjusted to push two lanes of traffic, utilizing both the westbound lane as well as the center turn lane for a period of time after an event ends. Traffic can be



split on Dallas with traffic proceeding immediately onto the Bypass with other traffic using Cruger to either N. Cummings or N. Main. Barricades could be placed at the intersections of Cruger/Wellington and Cruger/Devonshire to stop concert traffic from utilizing the subdivisions. It should be noted that traffic from home football games and elementary/high school drop-offs and pick-ups have large impacts on traffic as well as being centrally located. An attached map references the possible accommodations that could be made to allow for traffic to exit more efficiently and safely.

Fiscal Impact: Staff has estimated the cost to construct the east-west road, storm sewer, sanitary sewer, and water to be \$3.5 million. This is a cost that staff feels would be borne by the City if private development is ever desired on the property. The City would receive funds from the Foundation as part of a lease or sale of the property. Each of the jurisdictional taxing bodies would receive proportional shares of property tax generation and there is anticipated to be sales tax generation from the Dee Amphitheater.







Action Requested: This information is provided to help address questions and comments that have been offered by citizens pertaining to the proposed development. Staff can field other questions that are within the City's purview at the February 10 Committee of the Whole meeting.



Amphitheater Traffic Map

Dee Amphitheater Traffic Map

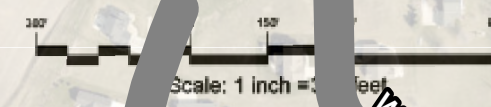
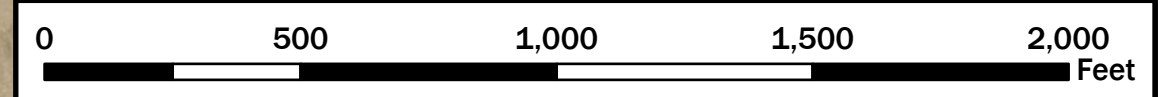
Legend

-  City Boundary
-  Roads
-  Dee Amphitheater
-  DEE TRAFFIC
-  IF NEEDED
-  LOCAL CLOSURES - IF NEEDED

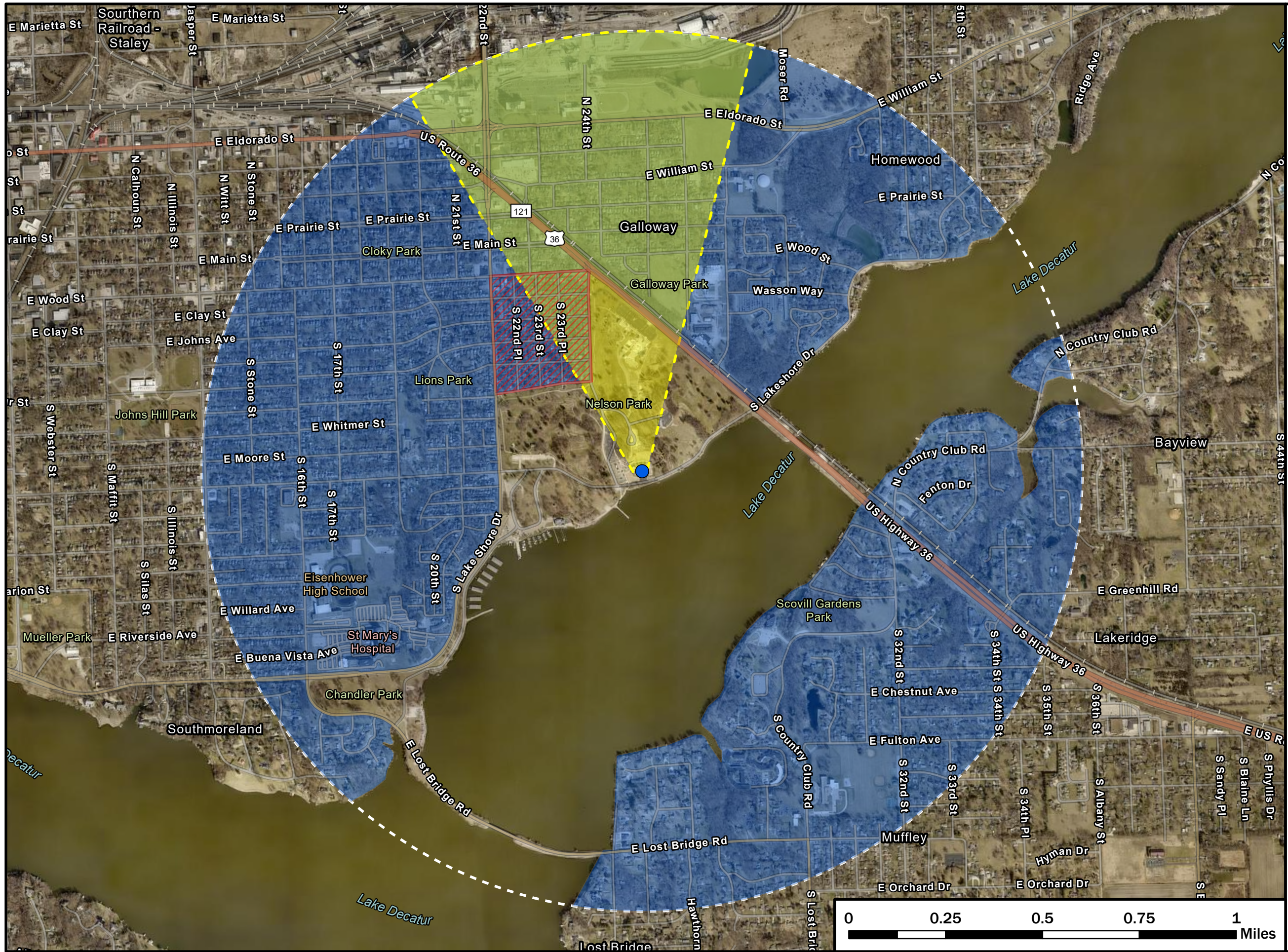


Date: 2/6/2025

This map indicates approximate data locations and may not be 100% accurate.







Scale: 1 inch = 300 feet



Decatur Sound Direction Map

Devon Lakeshore Amphitheater

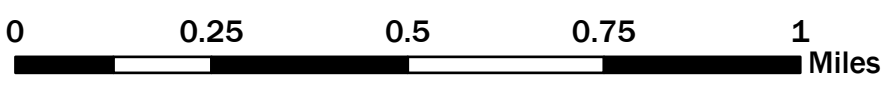
Legend

-  High-Volume Area
-  Devon Amphitheater
-  Sound Direction
-  Decatur Neighborhoods



Date: 2/6/2025





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Overlay Sound Direction Map

Devon Lakeshore
Amphitheater &
Decatur Residential Area
Overlay and Oriented
to match
Dee Amphitheater

Legend

-  High-Volume Area
-  Sound Direction
-  Devon Amphitheater
-  Decatur Neighborhoods



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