

8. Project Summary – should consist of an approximately two-page narrative covering all key points of the proposed project to be funded, in part or in full, with RISRS grant funds. Describe what project is being proposed and why, the project area including legal boundaries if applicable, and address the following:

In March of 1984, the Rochelle Association to Develop an Area Community Center (RADAC) was formed. RADAC was appointed to determine the need for and funding of a community center for Rochelle. Two professional market surveys were completed to confirm the need for the project and potential funding sources. The Illinois Metropolitan Civic Center Support Program was discovered as funding source to facilitate the Vagabond Resort Project.

In February of 1986, the project was certified by the State of Illinois and awarded a \$2.5 million grant from the State funded by racetrack revenues for Civic Center Authorities. The complex included a 400-seat theatre, health club, indoor and outdoor swimming pools and 3 professional racquetball courts. No tax dollars were involved in the renovation, construction or operation of the project.

The Ogle County Civic Center Authority (OCCCA) was established to manage and maintain the facility. The OCCCA was responsible for all building maintenance and utilities. OCCCA was not required to pay property taxes. Revenue was generated from the leasing of space. As time progressed forward, the lease payments have not been able to provide maintenance and upkeep for the facility.

The property has fallen in disrepair and the OCCCA has been dissolved. The improvement costs in 2011 to bring the facility out of disrepair were over \$3.8 million. In 2020, the restaurant and bar closed. All other tenants have vacated the space and the City of Rochelle has purchased the facility for \$1. Demolition, private development and putting the property back on the tax roll are the goals of this project.

The key points of the project to be funded are the demolition of the existing structure producing a shovel ready site for private development. Formerly, Hickory Grove has hosted many conferences and regional events for businesses such as ComEd, the US National Guard, CHS Ethanol Plant and regional law enforcement. With the deterioration of the Hickory Grove Facility, our region lacks available space for conferences, entertainment venues and social events.

Site potential could include residential, meeting space, retail shops, dining, professional offices, corporate events, tourism activities and an event center. Currently, the City of Rochelle and smaller surrounding communities no longer have access to conference or event spaces.

Anticipated specific business or tenant has not been identified, however, two developers are interested in the site. A mixed-use approach has been discussed, which would include residential, retail, event center, professional offices and small start-up business spaces.

In relationship to the Governor's Five-Year Economic Plan released in late 2019 from DCEO, the proposed site development would support small retail and dining businesses within the space, increase job opportunities within the tourism industry and allow small business start-up opportunities that would enable our community to actively recruit and grow businesses. As a part of the Governor's Plan, "aspiring goals to lay the foundation for long-term growth by investing in and fostering entrepreneurship" this specific project will enable the investment of the local economy to spur equitable growth for many underserved populations in our community and surrounding areas.

The Minority Inclusion Plan will include marketing to existing minority or women-owned businesses in the community for expansion opportunities. Grant opportunities will be explored to support minority and women-owned start-up businesses.

The projects impact is amplified by the proximity to many other assets within our community. For example, the City of Rochelle is located within two major interstates, Interstate 39 and Interstate 88. These two major interstates serve the region with thousands of travelers each day, many of which stop in Rochelle. The Lee-Ogle Transportation System (LOTS) is available to provide public transportation to and from venues as well. Our Industrial Park serves many facilities that process, store and distribute food products as well as other goods. In regards to educational institutions, we are very blessed to have Northern Illinois University and Kishwaukee College within 30 minutes of our corporate limits. The City of Rochelle owns it's own railroad, electric utilities and fiber.

With regards to the established footprint, the project will take place at the listed site and demolition will be required. Unfortunately, the Hickory Grove Facility has fallen into major disrepair. HVAC units are spread throughout the adjoined sections of the buildings, electrical work has been not upgraded over the years, mold has formed in several areas, with leakage to the exterior walls. Water damage has been a major factor into the internal deterioration of the facility. Most areas of the roof are failing and have been for several years. With the demolition of the site, all public infrastructure will remain in place and the site will be shovel ready for development.