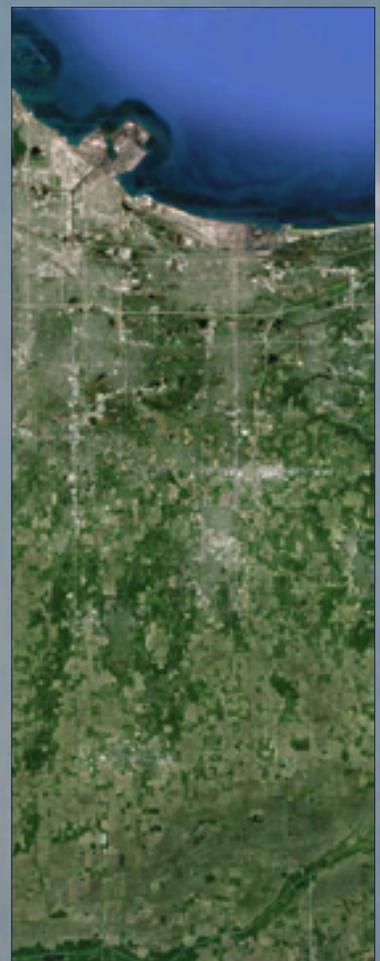


Comprehensive Plan

Unincorporated Area Land Use Plan Lake County, Indiana



Lake County Comprehensive Plan

Adopted September 11, 2018

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Contents

| | | |
|----------|---|-----------|
| 1 | Introduction | 1 |
| | PURPOSE OF THE PLAN..... | 2 |
| | PLANNING PROCESS..... | 3 |
| | PLANNING OBJECTIVE..... | 4 |
| | ORGANIZATION OF THE PLAN..... | 5 |
| 2 | Community Engagement | 7 |
| | ONLINE RESOURCES..... | 10 |
| | PUBLIC OUTREACH..... | 10 |
| | FINDINGS | 12 |
| 3 | Community Profile | 15 |
| | REGIONAL SETTING | 16 |
| | HISTORY | 18 |
| | SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC PROFILE..... | 20 |
| | TOWNSHIP PROFILES..... | 26 |
| 4 | Existing Conditions | 31 |
| | LAND USE..... | 32 |
| | ZONING AND DEVELOPMENT CONTROL | 34 |
| | HOUSING | 35 |
| | PARKS, OPEN SPACE..... | 36 |
| | NATURAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES | 38 |
| | CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL RESOURCES | 41 |
| | TRANSPORTATION AND CONNECTIVITY | 44 |
| | PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES | 50 |
| 5 | Vision and Goals..... | 53 |
| | VISION | 54 |
| | GOALS AND POLICIES | 55 |
| 6 | Future Plan | 63 |
| | LAND USE..... | 65 |
| | 1. URBAN FRINGE AREA | 66 |
| | 2. CLUSTER NEIGHBORHOOD | 69 |
| | 3. AGRICULTURE..... | 72 |
| | 4. RESIDENTIAL..... | 74 |
| | 5. NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER..... | 77 |
| | 6. CORRIDOR | 80 |
| | 7. BUSINESS PARK CENTER..... | 82 |
| | 8. CONSERVATION DISTRICT | 84 |
| | FUTURE LAND USE MAP..... | 86 |
| 7 | Transportation Plan..... | 89 |
| | ROADWAY IMPROVEMENTS..... | 91 |
| | PUBLIC TRANSIT | 96 |
| | TRAILS AND PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES | 97 |
| 8 | Implementation | 99 |
| | PRIMARY ACTION ITEMS | 100 |
| | SECONDARY ACTION ITEMS..... | 103 |

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Introduction

1

Lake County's Comprehensive Land Use Plan is a community vision for the unincorporated area of the County, also referred to as the Planning Area. The Land Use Plan establishes a blueprint for the County's agricultural, residential, commercial, and industrial areas. It further provides a series of land use, transportation, and public policy recommendations that can help the County achieve its mission of "preserve, grow, sustain, and collaborate" in its land use decisions.

Since the adoption of Lake County's 1996 Comprehensive Plan Update, continued growth and a shift in population have led to an evolving set of issues in the County that require a thorough evaluation of the development trends for the unincorporated areas.

The new Comprehensive Plan will serve as a policy document which will guide new growth while protecting the important attributes of the community. The Comprehensive Plan also aims to relate long-range objectives to a number of interdependent elements such as population profile and characteristics, housing, transportation networks, infrastructure, land use, and other factors that impact the quality of life for Lake County residents.

The Plan was prepared through a collaborative effort involving the Lake County Plan Commission, interested officials and entities, citizen input, assessment of data, and analysis of trends. The input received from citizens through the public engagement process also garnered valuable results which have served as the basis for this Plan.

Purpose Of The Plan

The purpose of the Plan is to provide a snapshot of where the County currently is, and to set forth goals for future land use and development with specific actions and recommended policies for achieving these goals. The Plan will guide decision-makers in formulating policies and laws regarding the future development, provision of community facilities, and preservation of natural and cultural resources. The Plan also intends to generate local pride and enthusiasm about the future of the community, thereby ensuring that citizens are involved with the implementation of the Plan.

The goals in this Plan do not supersede those adopted by individual jurisdictions bordering unincorporated areas. The Plan, however, does identify areas where coordinated planning should be considered on inter-jurisdictional issues that affect both the County and its municipalities. The result is expected to be a concise, user-friendly document that will operate in conjunction with adopted zoning and land use regulations, to preserve the quality of life of residents, and to ensure the long-term sustainability of the County.

| Planning Process | |
|------------------|--|
| 1 | Project Start Up, Needs Identification |
| 2 | Vision Goals, Idea Generation |
| 3 | Analysis and Assessment, Growth Trends |
| 4 | Framework Plan, Land Use Policies |
| 5 | Draft Plan |
| 6 | Final Plan |

Planning Process

The preparation of the Lake County Comprehensive Plan consisted of several community-driven activities aimed at the development of a locally-based plan that not only garners local support, but also creates a long-term vision for the Planning Area. The process included:

- ▶ Several community outreach efforts, including one-on-one interviews, stakeholder input, traditional community workshops, and web-based tools in order to engage residents, elected officials, and key stakeholders;
- ▶ An assessment of existing conditions, consisting of analyzing the physical conditions of the Planning Area and the County as a whole through field reconnaissance;
- ▶ Examination of social and demographic conditions from a variety of sources, previous County and municipal plans, the code of ordinances, external studies, and more;
- ▶ Community visioning workshops to identify the desired future character and long-term goals for Lake County;
- ▶ The development of a framework for growth and preservation consisting of goals and recommendations that outline policies or actions that can help realize the County's vision;
- ▶ Open house review of the draft Comprehensive Land Use Plan;
- ▶ The formal adoption of the Comprehensive Plan as the official land use policy document for the unincorporated area of Lake County by the County government.

Planning Objective

The planning process for the Lake County Comprehensive Plan represents an important opportunity for the County to manage future land use and development. For this Plan, the County engaged a team of consultants to facilitate the plan development process. The team's primary goal was to craft a set of countywide land use policies and development strategies for implementation over the next 10-20 years. The document produced by the team aims to:

- ▶ Create a tool to address multiple, interrelated countywide land use and development issues;
- ▶ Identify citizen priorities;
- ▶ Integrate local objectives into a larger countywide plan;
- ▶ Craft development and land-use policies that are compatible with the residents' goals and needs;
- ▶ Preserve and enhance the unincorporated area's historic and natural character;
- ▶ Develop and maintain an efficient transportation system;
- ▶ Establish steps for plan implementation;
- ▶ Update the 1996 Master Plan.

This Land Use Plan is intended to address the relevant provisions of the state law and provide a future land use map that can be used by the Lake County Plan Commission and the County Commissioners to make decisions in land use and development policies for the unincorporated areas of the County. The Land Use Plan further sets the stage for the County and its municipalities to align their long-term land use planning and zoning goals.

Legal Authority

Indiana State Law establishes the legal planning and zoning authority of governmental entities within Lake County. Title 36, Article 7, as amended, establishes the respective roles and responsibilities of county government and municipal agencies. The Lake County government has the legal authority to both plan and zone the entire county, outside the limits of cities and incorporated towns, which have their own municipal zoning ordinances in effect.

Local governments, including county governments, are further charged with the purpose of improving "the health, safety, convenience, and welfare of the citizens." (IC 36-7-4-201) To that end, the County is tasked with planning for its future development to ensure:

- That highway systems and street systems are carefully planned;
- That new communities grow only with adequate public way, utility, health, educational, and recreational facilities;
- That the needs of agriculture, industry, and business are recognized in future growth;
- That residential areas provide healthful surroundings for family life; and
- That the growth of the community is commensurate with, and promotive of, the efficient and economical use of public funds.

Indiana law further provides for and requires the development and maintenance of a comprehensive plan by the Plan Commission (IC 36-7-4-501). Indiana Code (IC 36-7-4-502) identifies three elements that a comprehensive plan must address related to future land use and development. They are:

1. A statement of objectives for the future development of the jurisdiction.
2. A statement of policy for the land use development of the jurisdiction.
3. A statement of policy for the development of public ways, public places, public lands, public structures, and public utilities.

Other appropriate statements may be included in a comprehensive plan, based on local conditions.

Chapter 1: Introduction - an introduction to the Comprehensive Plan, with a description of the Plan's purpose and overview of the legal requirements, planning process, and the organization of the Plan.

Chapter 2: Community Engagement - a summary of the input received, issues identified, and suggestions made through a variety of engagement efforts, including community workshops and web-based tools such as community surveys or comment forms.

Chapter 3: Community Profile - a summary of the state of Lake County, including its regional context, history, and demographic profiles for the County as a whole, the Planning Area, and each township. Future trends are also discussed in this chapter.

Chapter 4: Existing Conditions - a review of existing land use, current zoning, and other physical characteristics. The Chapter also describes community facilities, transportation networks, open space, recreational sites, and environmental features.

Chapter 5: Vision and Goals - presents the "vision" for the Planning Area and provides specific policy objectives and recommendations to realize the desired vision.

Chapter 6: Future Plan - identifies appropriate land uses, development areas, and recommendations for the Planning Area for the next 10 to 20 years. The Future Plan will include specific recommendations for each of the planning elements identified in Chapter 5.

Chapter 7: Transportation Plan - provides guidance and strategies that ensure the County's transportation network is of high quality, and can safely and efficiently move vehicles and pedestrians throughout the County and its regional destinations.

Chapter 8: Implementation Plan - presents specific actions that the County should undertake to implement the Plan. A set of recommendations is also provided to ensure coordination.

Organization Of The Plan

The Lake County Comprehensive Land Use Plan, also referred to in this document as "the Plan", is organized in several chapters, each describing a relevant element of the Plan. Chapters 2-4 present a social and community profile, as well as a summary of the physical conditions. These chapters collectively aim to answer the critical question of "Where are we now?" The goals, objectives, and vision are provided in Chapter 5, which answers the question of "Where do we want to go?" The detailed plans and implementation strategies found in Chapters 6-8 provide answers to the question of "How will we get there?"



Community Engagement

2

Lake County actively solicited the engagement of a wide range of residents, groups, and stakeholders in the development of the Comprehensive Plan. The primary objective in this effort was the desire of the County to have a community-driven planning process. To this end, the County actively sought input from a broad range of stakeholders, farmers, businesses, service providers, residents, public and elected officials, and the County Plan Commission, as well as Planning staff.

The Lake County Comprehensive Land Use Plan is a community-driven plan, where the County solicited the active participation of residents in a variety of activities designed to shape its vision, direction, and implementation

The County used a variety of outreach methods to obtain input related to all aspects of life in the County, including local issues and needs, and the long-term vision for the County. This Chapter summarizes the community engagement and outreach efforts that were completed during the plan development process. Issues, concerns, and ideas identified by participants have been compiled and presented in the following sections. These issues and ideas have been addressed by the Comprehensive Plan. The major elements of the community outreach consisted of the following:

- ▶ On-line input and survey
- ▶ Community Meetings
- ▶ Visioning Workshops
- ▶ Municipal Input Session
- ▶ Project Website
- ▶ Draft Plan Open House
- ▶ Final Public Meeting and Adoption

- Planning Area
- Existing Municipalities

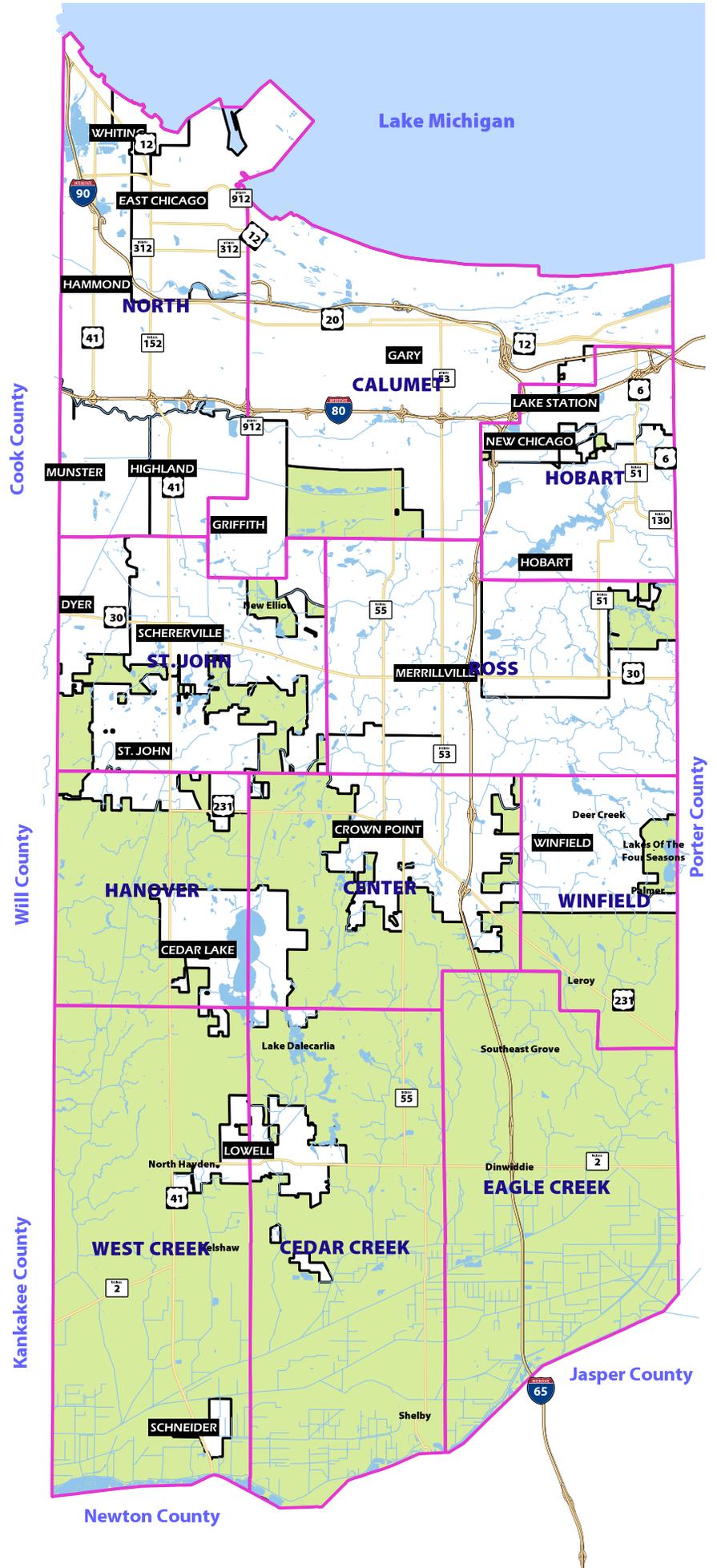


FIGURE 1 - PLANNING AREA

Online Resources

To help facilitate communication about the project, a project website and Facebook page were established. The project website (www.lakecountyplan.org) was developed to be the primary resource for background information, the planning process, and important meetings and milestone dates. Various surveys and comment forms were also published on the site as a means to gather direct input from the site's visitors. The project Facebook page (www.facebook.com/LakeCountyPlan) provided more immediate updates about the progress of the Plan, as well as advertised upcoming dates for public meetings and served as a platform to communicate and get input.

Public Outreach

A wide variety of different public outreach activities were devised and used to get further input for the Plan. First and foremost was a series of four public meetings and workshops. The **first public meeting** was held on October 24, 2017 at the Lake County Courthouse Auditorium. Approximately 28 members of the public were in attendance. The meeting focused primarily on the overall goals and existing conditions of the unincorporated areas of the County. The attendees were also given the opportunity to complete a written questionnaire, which asked residents to identify the focus areas of the Plan. Comment cards were also provided for further comments, as well as an open discussion period where attendees could ask questions and offer additional input.



Two **public visioning workshops** were held: one on December 12 at Lowell Middle School, and one on December 13 at Calumet New Tech High School in Calumet Township. Over 40 people attended the workshop in Lowell, while approximately 18 residents attended the workshop in Calumet Township. Both workshops included a summary of the planning process and a recap of the research completed to date. A summary of the October meeting survey was also discussed.



SCENES FROM VISIONING WORKSHOPS (LOWELL, TOP; CALUMET TOWNSHIP, MIDDLE) AND DRAFT PLAN PRESENTATION (BOTTOM)

To gather additional input, the consultant team facilitated a visioning exercise at both meetings. There were two main products that were to be produced. First was a vision statement to guide the future of the Plan and unincorporated Lake County. The second was a series of concerns, opportunities, and strategies from eight different categories:

- ▶ Land Use/Growth
- ▶ Housing
- ▶ Community Character
- ▶ Economic Development
- ▶ Parks/Open Space
- ▶ Agriculture
- ▶ Transportation
- ▶ Community Facilities

A **Draft Plan Presentation** was made to the public on April 11, 2018. Over 30 members of the public were in attendance. The main focus of this meeting was an overview of the Draft Plan, where the goals, recommended actions, and concepts for the Plan were introduced.

A special presentation was made to the **16-Plus Group**, attended by a variety of Lake County town managers, city and town staff members, and other officials. Copies of the initial survey were made available to all attendees to fill out. The presentation began with a review of the demographic information for the Planning Area, as well as a summary of public input received to date. The attendees were then presented with potential strategies for the Plan, and asked to provide comments and insight on them. The topics presented and discussed generally focused along two main areas:

- ▶ **Growth Zones** – How to resolve conflicts among communities (regarding future annexation), and what are the best future uses for these areas.
- ▶ **Corridors**, with potential development scenarios for US 41, IN-2, and I-65.

Findings

The County's wide range of meetings and outreach efforts produced a broad set of comments and suggestions. This input provided a strong roadmap for the development of the Comprehensive Plan. The following is a summary of this input, categorized based on the eight principal elements of the Plan.

LAND USE

Overall land use issues were wide ranging, but were mainly focused on rural issues. One of the most prevalent concerns was about curbing urban sprawl while protecting existing farmland. Limiting new development in rural areas, in particular, was mentioned in later meetings. In the north county, promoting new businesses in Calumet Township was also suggested. Overall, neighborhood-type development or cluster development was the preferred type for any new uses. With the main goal of the Plan being to guide land development, there was also the desire for the Plan to give guidance to municipalities on how the County plans to grow.

The incorporation of new development into existing municipalities was expressed by the County as an objective which will reduce urban sprawl and help preserve farmland. Although many areas within the County are not in close proximity to the municipalities, such an objective, if implemented, will benefit new residents with access to public facilities and other amenities offered by the municipalities.

Lake County also has several unincorporated "islands" within the urbanized areas. These urban neighborhoods require a variety of infrastructure and facilities normally offered by neighboring jurisdictions. Annexation of these islands has been an issue for the County for a variety of reasons. Residents residing in these island areas identified many land use issues related to infrastructure and public and community services. Most of these issues are beyond the capacity of the County to address.

Lastly, significant input was received related to preservation of farmland and natural areas. The loss of family farms and promoting the capacity for alternative farming activities were also expressed in the meetings.

HOUSING

Depending on the location, residents' comments for housing-related issues varied significantly. In the south county area, controlling the growth of housing developments was one pressing issue. The size of the housing units, such as large-lot development, was not as much of a concern, so long as lots are properly maintained. Similarly, housing conditions and vacancy rates were not generally considered issues. In contrast, the viability of the existing housing stock appeared to be an issue in the northern part of the County. A lack of quality housing, an abundance of vacant units, and a lack of diversity of existing the housing stock were expressed as issues. Multiple people also stated that more apartments may be needed in northern unincorporated Lake County.

COMMUNITY CHARACTER

Participants recognized that there are distinct urban (primarily north and central) and rural (primarily south) characters and neighborhoods in Lake County. These characters should be preserved for both types of communities. The residents expressed the need to maintain mixed-use and cluster developments in the urbanized areas. Similarly, preservation of farmland and rural character in agricultural areas was uniformly supported. To support these unique characters, residents expressed the desire that any new development should conform and respect the local character to build a stronger community image and sense of place.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Planning for economic development brought several concerns related to the balance between preservation and economic development. The impact of development on existing agricultural land was strongly expressed. Residents conveyed the desire that new development should include measures that will address preservation and reduce the long-term impact on agricultural lands. At the center of these concerns was a large proposed industrial development project which was proposed earlier in 2018.

Nonetheless, residents generally supported economic development in order to diversify the economic conditions of the County. In general, residents appeared to give preference to two types of development: commercial and light industrial development, particularly along major corridors. Where development currently exists, infill development should be encouraged in urban areas, identified "hot spots", and where infrastructure exists and could support increased development.

PARKS/OPEN SPACE

Similar to limiting development, protecting open spaces and natural areas was an important issue for many participants. Protections for these areas should be a part of all new developments. In particular, the Kankakee River was mentioned as an important river corridor for preservation. In terms of parks, participants favored the expansion of existing parks over creating new parklands. In addition, they felt the County should do more to increase the usage of existing parks. The expansion of trail systems, including increasing connectivity between existing parks and trails, was also promoted.

AGRICULTURE

As agricultural uses are an integral part of south Lake County, many people wanted to make sure such uses remain viable and sustainable for future generations. In particular, small family-scaled farming sizes should be promoted. Allowing farmers to utilize "creative" solutions to increase their financial stability should also be supported. In addition, farming should be made more feasible for younger farmers and smaller farming operations. Programs such as tax credits, land buyback programs, and facilitating the generational transfer of farmland were mentioned as possible ways to achieve this goal.

TRANSPORTATION

Many community participants noted several concerns about traffic conditions. East-west travel, in particular, can be problematic due to a lack of connecting roads. The presence of I-65 also creates a barrier to connectivity. Vehicular traffic was also a significant concern. Many people noted that existing roads are very congested, with new and proposed development exacerbating the problem as the current road network is unable to handle additional demand. Overall maintenance of existing roads was also seen as a concern. Several people also expressed concern about the proposed Illiana Expressway (though its potential development has been pushed back in the most recent NIRPC plans), as well as extending major roads into farmland.

The general theme from the respondents was that in the past, the County was not proactive enough in recognizing transportation issues. In order to soothe traffic concerns in the future, the County must be more proactive in combating congestion issues, particularly as growth continues to move southward. As part of this growth, the funding for road improvements must be part of future transportation planning. This could include developers paying for any required transportation improvements as part of their development plans.

There was also some indication that unobtrusive transit and alternative transportation passages could be welcomed. Although there was little desire for any major transit expansion in the south (such as further South Shore expansion), programs such as ride sharing services could be welcomed. Similarly, there appeared to be support for extending trails into south Lake County to connect with the existing trail network. Sidewalks and bike lanes on rural roads could also be a solution for improving connectivity.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Similar to the transportation network, many respondents felt that existing utilities and facilities were insufficient. Many areas are reliant on septic systems, several of which do not appear to be maintained properly. In addition, newer subdivisions often tie into existing municipalities' water and sewage systems, which are already overtaxed. The overall sentiment was that, before any new development is approved, there should be guarantees that existing infrastructure (water, sewage, etc.) can handle the new development. If not, those concerns should be fully addressed before issuing building permits, including having developers pay for new infrastructure as needed. To the extent possible, septic systems should not be approved for new development. Multiple issues with drainage and stormwater management, particularly as a result of new development, were also reported.



Community Profile

3

This chapter presents an overall profile of the County. The profile consists of an overall presentation of the demographic conditions, as well as the social and economic conditions of the County. Additional information is further provided for the eleven townships that exist in the County. For the township information, additional focus has been placed on the demographic conditions of the unincorporated areas.

Regional Setting

Lake County, located along the shoreline of Lake Michigan, is best known for its wide beaches and ample natural landscape, combined with contrasting heavy industrial uses dominating the skyline along the lakeshore. The County occupies about 626.54 square miles in the northwest corner of Indiana, immediately on the eastern border of Chicago and Cook County in Illinois.

Lake County dates its origins back to the retreat of prehistoric glaciers some 25,000 years ago. This retreat left land in the southern part of the County that is unique and full of a variety of different ecosystems. The northern portion of Lake County was primarily grassland with extensive marsh and wet prairie areas in a dune and swale environment. The central uplands of the County were covered mostly with prairie, oak-savannah, and hickory forests. This helped make the area, particularly south of the Grand Calumet River, very fertile for agriculture. The southern part of the County consisted of a mixture of agricultural low lands bordered by a vast wetland community fed by the Kankakee River floodplain. The River provided plenty of resources for the original settlers, as well as opportunities for westward travel.

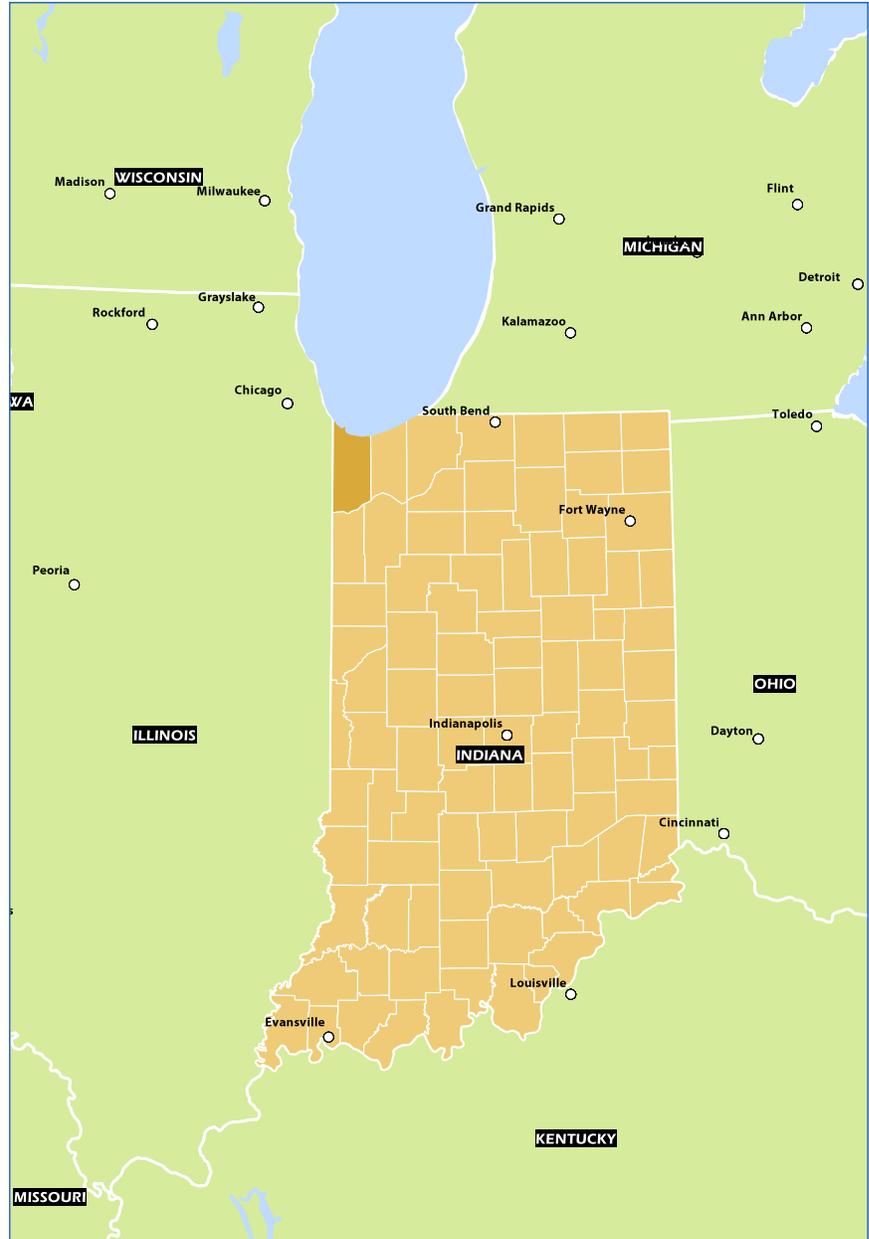


FIGURE 2 - REGIONAL MAP



INDIANA DUNES NATIONAL LAKESHORE

Lake County boasts the western portion of Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore as its home, as well as a host of state parks, preserves, and the Grand Kankakee Marsh. These resources offer thousands of acres for outdoor exploration, fishing, hunting, biking, and more. These attractions have always been a magnet to draw people into the County. The trend continues today as many people not only enjoy these attractions, but are choosing to live in the County because of them. Lake County has long been considered part of the “Chicagoland” region. As one of the Chicago metropolitan counties, Lake County interacts with and is greatly influenced by the growth and activities of its northern and western neighbor. Due to Illinois’s higher cost of living, many of the towns and cities in the County serve as bedroom communities for Chicago.

The County also benefits from a strategic regional location, being labeled for many decades the “Crossroads of America”. The regional transportation connections provided by I-80, I-94, I-65, and other state and federal highways link the County to the major population centers, and other centers of economic activities in the Midwest and the Nation. The County sits at the heart of the Chicagoland metropolitan area, with nineteen municipalities containing a population of almost ½ million people that call the County home.

History

Until the 17th Century, the area known as Lake County was mainly inhabited by Native American tribes, particularly the Potawatomi. These tribes eventually developed a series of trails, including the Old Sauk, Calumet, and Tolleston. Some of these trails survive as major transportation corridors in the County today.

New settlers began arriving in the area in the early 1800s, first settling in areas around Crown Point, Hobart, and Cedar Lake. The County was officially established on February 16, 1837, with Crown Point being designated as the county seat soon afterward. Railroads began to be developed in the County in 1850. Although the railroads helped southern County farmers in selling and receiving goods, they made a much bigger impact in the northern parts of the County, where the rail lines helped to spur new industrial development. By the 20th Century, cities such as Hammond, Whiting, and East Chicago grew rapidly, accounting for over half of the County's population by themselves. The establishment of US Steel in 1906 led to the incorporation and growth of Gary, strengthening the northern County's reputation as an industrial center.



EARLY MAP OF LAKE COUNTY



RAILROAD DEPOT IN SCHNEIDER (DATE UNKNOWN)



JOHN ROSS FARM (DATE UNKNOWN)



US STEEL CAMPUS & DOWNTOWN GARY (1951)

Rapid growth in North, Calumet, and Hobart Townships continued until the Great Depression. During World War II, the demand for new jobs led to a large influx of new residents and immigrants, particularly African American and Mexican. Tensions arising between the older and newer population, coupled with the development of the Interstate Highway system, began a population shift to more southern communities. The steep decline of the steel industry in the 1970s further decimated the northern industrial cities. From 1970 to 1990, Hammond, Gary, and East Chicago alone lost nearly 30% of their total population. In contrast, the County's population outside of those cities rose over 12%. By 1990, more than half of the County's population lived outside of the northern industrial cities.

Today, despite several efforts by the northern cities to diversify their economy, the overall impression and fabric of Lake County remains unchanged: older, industrial cities in the north giving way to rapidly growing suburban areas in the center, leading in turn to more agricultural and rural areas in the south. Thus, Lake County remains an area of interesting contrasts: ecologically, culturally, and demographically.

Social And Economic Profile

The following sections provide an overall profile for the County, as well as individual townships. The countywide data provided here aims to describe a broader sense for the community as a whole. Where available data permit, this section provides additional, specific analysis at the township level to better describe the existing conditions.

POPULATION

The overall population in Lake County, based on 2015 Census estimates, was 487,649, approximately a 1.7% decline from 2010. Despite this decline, Lake County remains the second-most populous county in Indiana. The number of households in the County has fallen even farther: almost 2.1% since 2010. Conversely, the size of households has slightly increased. Median income has also increased by almost 3% since 2010, though the median income is still below the 2000 level in real terms.

Population growth since 2010 is primarily focused in the townships in the central part of the County. These consist of Winfield, Hanover, Center, and St. John. These townships include both older communities such as Crown Point and Cedar Lake, as well as newer communities such as St. John and Winfield. The remaining townships show a population loss. The net loss of population is a major concern for the County, as it appears the trend will continue in the long term. Major efforts will be required to change this trend.

| Category | 2000 | 2010 | 2015 Est. | % Change |
|--------------------------------|---------|---------|-----------|----------|
| Population | 484,564 | 496,005 | 487,649 | -1.7% |
| Households | 181,633 | 188,157 | 184,140 | -2.1% |
| Average Household Size | 2.64 | 2.6 | 2.65 | 1.9% |
| Housing Units | 194,992 | 208,750 | 209,868 | 0.5% |
| Median Age | 35.9 | 37.4 | 38.1 | 6.1% |
| Median Household Income | 53,065 | 48,723 | \$53,600 | 10.0% |

TABLE 1 - LAKE COUNTY POPULATION (SOURCE: US CENSUS & 5 YEAR ACS)

| Area | 2010 | 2016 | Change | % Change |
|------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|--------------|
| Calumet | 104,258 | 99,551 | -4,707 | -4.5% |
| Cedar Creek | 12,097 | 12,097 | 0 | 0.0% |
| Center | 31,756 | 32,890 | 1,134 | 3.6% |
| Eagle Creek | 1,668 | 1,609 | -59 | -3.5% |
| Hanover | 12,443 | 13,166 | 723 | 5.8% |
| Hobart | 39,417 | 38,069 | -1,348 | -3.4% |
| North | 162,855 | 155,945 | -6,910 | -4.2% |
| Ross | 47,890 | 47,774 | -116 | -0.2% |
| St. John | 66,741 | 66,993 | 252 | 0.4% |
| West Creek | 6,826 | 6,785 | -41 | -0.6% |
| Winfield | 10,054 | 10,967 | 913 | 9.1% |
| Total- Lake Co. | 496,005 | 485,846 | -10,159 | -2.0% |

TABLE 2 - LAKE COUNTY POPULATION BY TOWNSHIP (SOURCE: IBRC, 2016 ANNUAL POPULATION ESTIMATES)

| Township | 2010 | | 2015 | |
|--------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| | Total | Unincorporated | Total | Unincorporated |
| Calumet | 104,258 | 7,268 | 100,401 | 7,106 |
| Cedar Creek | 12,097 | 5,586 | 12,074 | 5,465 |
| Center | 31,756 | 6,903 | 32,596 | 6,251 |
| Eagle Creek | 1,668 | 1,668 | 1,618 | 1,618 |
| Hanover | 12,443 | 2,581 | 12,999 | 2,511 |
| Hobart | 39,417 | 520 | 38,351 | 508 |
| North | 162,855 | 0 | 157,092 | 0 |
| Ross | 47,890 | 227 | 47,945 | 212 |
| St. John | 66,741 | 9,577 | 66,957 | 9,387 |
| West Creek | 6,826 | 3,754 | 6,782 | 3,647 |
| Winfield | 10,054 | 5,671 | 10,834 | 5,431 |
| Total | 496,005 | 43,755 | 487,649 | 42,136 |

TABLE 3 - POPULATION ESTIMATES BY TOWNSHIP

| Age Group | Number | Pct Dist. in County |
|------------------------|---------|---------------------|
| Preschool (0 to 4) | 30,199 | 6.2% |
| School Age (5 to 17) | 86,667 | 17.8% |
| College Age (18 to 24) | 43,143 | 8.9% |
| Young Adult (25 to 44) | 120,316 | 24.8% |
| Older Adult (45 to 64) | 130,646 | 26.9% |
| Seniors (65 and older) | 74,875 | 15.4% |
| Median Age | | 38.7 |

TABLE 4 - POPULATION ESTIMATES BY AGE, 2016 (SOURCES: US CENSUS & 5 YEAR ACS; INDIANA BUSINESS RESEARCH CENTER)

Outside the four growing townships, the population for the unincorporated areas shows continuing decline. All of the townships in the County have lost population in unincorporated areas since 2010 (except for North Township, which has no unincorporated area.) The overall loss of population in unincorporated areas is estimated to be about 3.7%. The loss appears to be due to several factors which include aging population, a loss of agricultural-based employment, the decline of industrial jobs, as well as land/population loss due to annexation.

AGE

The County as a whole is increasing in age. This trend is expected to continue for the next twenty years. The median age of the residents has increased to 38.7 years based on 2016 Census data. This represents an increase of 2.8 years since 2000. Among different population cohorts, the older adult age group (55 and over) constitutes the largest segment, with about 25% of the total population. This group is expected to continue to gain a larger share of the total population over the next two decades.

HOUSING

Total housing units in the County have increased by about 8% since 2000. The growth in the number of housing units continues despite an overall loss of population. According to Census data, the number of housing units has increased by about 14,876 units since 2000. Most of these units are within the incorporated area, but in recent years, a growing portion of new development is occurring within the unincorporated areas. Since 2010, there has generally been a steady rise in the number of new housing permits. County data indicates that 457 new permits have been issued since 2010. Nonetheless, overall housing in the Planning Area appears to be stable, with over 86% owner-occupancy and less than 6% vacancy. Both of these figures rank ahead of Lake County as a whole. Hanover Township saw the most housing permits in unincorporated areas, followed by Center and Cedar Creek Townships.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) considers homes to be affordable or within the means of a family if the rental or mortgage costs do not exceed 30% of the household's combined annual income. The building cost data from the County and reported median income for census tracts in the County indicate that a large number of households exhibit housing cost burden, despite the relatively low cost of existing homes. The 2016 Census Estimates indicate that a large number of residents show monthly housing expenses exceeding 30%. The median monthly housing costs for homeowners with a mortgage is reported by the Census to be about \$1,206, and for renters, \$831. At these rates, a typical Lake County family, within the 80% of median income threshold, will be able to afford a mortgage. In reality, however, the housing values significantly diverge in different parts of the County and median income is lower in rural areas,

| HOUSING SUMMARY | | |
|-------------------------------|----------------|---------------|
| Owner Occupied | 126,228 | 60.1% |
| Renter Occupied | 57,086 | 27.2% |
| Vacant | 26,554 | 12.7% |
| TOTAL | 209,868 | 100.0% |
| POPULATION BY TENURE | | |
| Owner Occupied | 341,237 | 70.2% |
| Renter Occupied | 144,541 | 29.8% |
| TOTAL | 485,778 | 100.0% |
| HOUSEHOLD SIZE | | |
| Owner Occupied | | 2.70 |
| Renter Occupied | | 2.53 |
| AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD SIZE | | 2.65 |
| HOUSE VALUE | | |
| Median Value | | \$136,100 |
| MORTGAGE PAYMENTS | | |
| Median Value (Monthly) | | \$1,218 |
| RENT PAYMENTS | | |
| Median Value (Monthly) | | \$819 |

TABLE 5 - LAKE COUNTY HOUSING SUMMARY (SOURCE: ACS - 5 YEAR 2011-2015)

| HOUSING SUMMARY | |
|-------------------------------|---------------|
| Owner Occupied | 12,376 |
| Renter Occupied | 1,913 |
| TOTAL | 15,212 |
| PERCENTAGE OWNERSHIP | 87% |
| POPULATION BY TENURE | |
| Owner Occupied | 34,214 |
| Renter Occupied | 5,099 |
| TOTAL | 39,852 |
| HOUSEHOLD SIZE | |
| Owner Occupied | 2.76 |
| Renter Occupied | 2.67 |
| AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD SIZE | 2.79 |

TABLE 6 - PLANNING AREA HOUSING SUMMARY

| HOUSING TYPE | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------|---------------|
| Single Family, Detached | 148,620 | 70.8% |
| Single Family, Attached | 14,351 | 6.8% |
| Two Units/Duplex | 8,122 | 3.9% |
| Multi-Family | | |
| 3-19 Units | 27,513 | 13.1% |
| 20+ Units | 8,256 | 3.9% |
| Mobile Home | 2,969 | 1.4% |
| Boat/RV/Van, etc. | 37 | 0.0% |
| TOTAL | 209,868 | 100.0% |
| UNITS BY NUMBER OF BEDROOMS | | |
| Studio | 1,974 | 0.9% |
| 1 Bedroom | 17,160 | 8.2% |
| 2 Bedrooms | 61,989 | 29.5% |
| 3 Bedrooms | 89,991 | 42.9% |
| 4 Bedrooms | 31,018 | 14.8% |
| 5+ Bedrooms | 7,736 | 3.7% |
| TOTAL | 485,778 | 100.0% |
| TOTAL NUMBER OF ROOMS | | |
| Median | | 5.5 |

TABLE 7 - LAKE COUNTY HOUSING STATISTICS (SOURCE: ACS - 5 YEAR 2011-2015)

| 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | Total |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| 49 | 41 | 47 | 68 | 89 | 64 | 99 | 457 |

TABLE 8 - LAKE COUNTY RESIDENTIAL BUILDING PERMITS 2010-2016

resulting in families often having a larger housing cost burden than what can be reported.

The County's population is projected to decline by about 3% between 2010 and 2040, from 496,005 to 479,571 people. Projected employment data similarly indicates only a small gain in the number of jobs in the County by 2030. With a lack of meaningful job growth, future demand for residential development may be limited in most parts of the County.

The availability and quality of affordable housing units should be monitored, and the County should work with developers to ensure seniors are able to either "age in place" or obtain housing that meets their unique needs, such as apartments or senior/congregate housing.

INCOME

Overall in Lake County, the median income has increased by almost 3% from 2010 to 2015. Income trends in the County as a whole and in the townships are more varied. West Creek and Winfield Townships had the highest income growth, both with over 10%. Only four townships had income decreases in the same time period: Calumet, Cedar Creek, Center, and Eagle Creek. For the County as a whole, it appears income growth is a major issue that needs attention.

| Income | 2010 | 2015 |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| < \$15,000 | 26,232 | 25,727 |
| \$15,000 - \$24,999 | 21,306 | 21,032 |
| \$25,000 - \$34,999 | 20,006 | 19,454 |
| \$35,000 - \$49,999 | 25,874 | 25,190 |
| \$50,000 - \$74,999 | 36,198 | 35,089 |
| \$75,000 - \$99,999 | 24,014 | 22,651 |
| \$100,000 - \$149,999 | 20,829 | 22,704 |
| \$150,000 - \$199,999 | 5,187 | 6,844 |
| \$200,000 > | 3,306 | 4,623 |
| Total Households | 182,952 | 183,314 |
| Median Household Income | \$48,723 | \$50,135 |

TABLE 9 - LAKE COUNTY HOUSEHOLD INCOME (SOURCE: ACS - 5 YEAR 2011-2015)

LABOR FORCE

The ratio for employment and available labor force is estimated to be slightly higher than 57%. For individuals age 20 and older, the employment ratio is estimated to be about 72%. The top 3 labor categories in the County are Health and Education, Manufacturing, and Retail Trade. Total employment in the agricultural sector is reported to be only about 1,030. As mentioned earlier, the median age in the County is rising. This may correlate to an aging workforce that may impact the availability of labor in the future. Projected workforce data indicate that the labor force may begin to decrease after 2025. This projection includes a gradual decrease in the workforce for ages 45-60. At the same time, the projections show an increase in the 65+ workforce in 2020, before topping off in 2030. Reduction of the labor force is a major concern that may impact the growth of the County as a whole, and it is a major issue that needs to be addressed in the next decade.

| Year | 16-24 | 25-44 | 45-64 | 65+ | Total |
|-------------|--------|---------|--------|--------|----------------|
| 2010 | 32,280 | 101,510 | 94,820 | 8,110 | 236,720 |
| 2020 | 30,870 | 102,520 | 91,380 | 13,010 | 237,780 |
| 2025 | 30,450 | 102,450 | 86,800 | 14,530 | 234,230 |
| 2030 | 29,950 | 101,650 | 85,230 | 14,570 | 231,400 |
| 2035 | 30,670 | 101,540 | 84,940 | 13,410 | 230,560 |
| 2040 | 30,840 | 100,870 | 85,930 | 12,880 | 230,520 |

TABLE 10 - LAKE COUNTY LABOR FORCE PROJECTION (SOURCE: STATS INDIANA)

| 2010 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 |
|------|------|------|------|
| 10.8 | 6.8 | 6.3 | 5.1 |

TABLE 11 - LAKE COUNTY UNEMPLOYMENT RATES (SOURCE: STATS INDIANA)

| Employment Sector | Number |
|--|---------|
| Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining | 1,030 |
| Construction | 14,249 |
| Manufacturing | 32,321 |
| Wholesale trade | 4,734 |
| Retail trade | 25,209 |
| Transportation and warehousing, and utilities | 14,223 |
| Information | 2,937 |
| Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing | 10,516 |
| Professional, scientific, & management, and administrative & waste management services | 17,920 |
| Educational services, and health care and social assistance | 49,878 |
| Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services | 22,147 |
| Other services, except public administration | 10,069 |
| Public administration | 7,190 |
| Civilian employed population 16 years and over | 212,423 |

TABLE 12 - EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY (SOURCE: US CENSUS & 5 YEAR ACS)

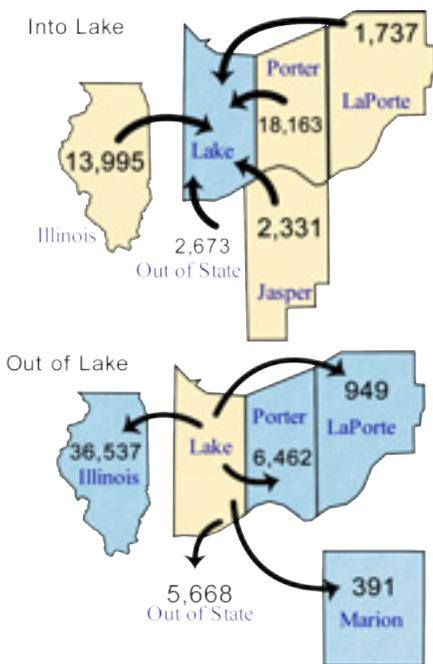


FIGURE 3 - COMMUTING STATISTICS FOR LAKE COUNTY (SOURCE: STATS INDIANA COMMUTING PROFILES, TAX YEAR 2016)

EMPLOYMENT

Employment rates in Lake County have been steadily improving since the Great Recession in 2008. For 2017, the average unemployment in Lake County was reported at 5.1%, less than half of 2010's unemployment rate. The unemployment rate for adults (age 20-64) was lower than for those in the 16 and older category. Specific employment information for the Planning Area is not available; however, it is expected that employment will remain tight as the labor pool continues to decline. Access to locally-generated high paying jobs will also continue to force a large number of residents to seek employment outside the area. In 2016, Stats Indiana reported that about 50,007 Lake County workers are employed outside the County. Of this total, over 36,500 people (about 73%) commuted to Illinois for employment.

The agricultural employment sector fills less than 0.5% of the total County employment pool. The Census Bureau Earning Data for Lake County shows that while 1,030 individuals are directly engaged in agriculture and related activities, only about 787 earn their living in businesses related to farming. The cost of operation for a farm appears to be forcing many smaller farms to close and sell for other uses. The loss of family farms is a major concern that deserves regional attention.

As a whole, about 12.6% of the County's labor force works in Illinois. The vast majority of these residents (91%) travel to work alone by private automobile. Commute times range from less than 10 minutes to more than one hour, with the mean travel time to work being about 28 minutes.

Township Profiles

There are 11 different townships in Lake County. Below is a brief summary of the characteristics and demographics of each. Except where noted, the demographic information provided reflects each township as a whole.

CALUMET TOWNSHIP

Calumet Township includes Gary and Griffith, plus a small portion of Lake Station. Most of the unincorporated area of the township is in the southwest corner, bordered by Gary, Griffith, and Merrillville. Calumet Township experienced a population loss of approximately 3.7% since 2010, and has the lowest median income of all townships in Lake County. Despite this loss, the number of housing units in Calumet Township has increased by 4.4% since 2010.

| Category | 2010 | 2015 | % Change |
|--------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|
| Population | 104,258 | 100,401 | -3.7% |
| Households | 40,711 | 39,770 | -2.3% |
| Average Household Size | 2.54 | 2.55 | 0.4% |
| Housing Units | 49,554 | 51,738 | 4.4% |
| Median Age | 36.6 | 37.3 | 1.9% |
| Median Household Income | \$32,165 | \$31,332 | -2.6% |

TABLE 13 - CALUMET TOWNSHIP STATISTICS (SOURCE: US CENSUS & 5 YEAR ACS, IBRC 2010)

CEDAR CREEK TOWNSHIP

Cedar Creek Township, located in the south central part of the County, includes most of Lowell and small portions of Cedar Lake. Two larger, unincorporated communities are also found here: Lake Dalecarlia (adjacent to the southeast corner of Cedar Lake) and Shelby (along IN-55 to the south.) Most of the remainder of the township is unincorporated farmland. The overall demographics of Cedar Creek Township have remained stable since 2010. Although the number of households has decreased in that period, this was offset by a similar increase in household size.

| Category | 2010 | 2015 | % Change |
|--------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|
| Population | 12,097 | 12,074 | -0.2% |
| Households | 4,355 | 4,175 | -4.1% |
| Average Household Size | 2.76 | 2.87 | 4.0% |
| Housing Units | 4,675 | 4,500 | -3.7% |
| Median Age | 38.6 | 38.7 | 0.3% |
| Median Household Income | \$63,800 | \$63,309 | -0.8% |

TABLE 14 - CEDAR CREEK TOWNSHIP STATISTICS (SOURCE: US CENSUS & 5 YEAR ACS, IBRC 2010)

Townships

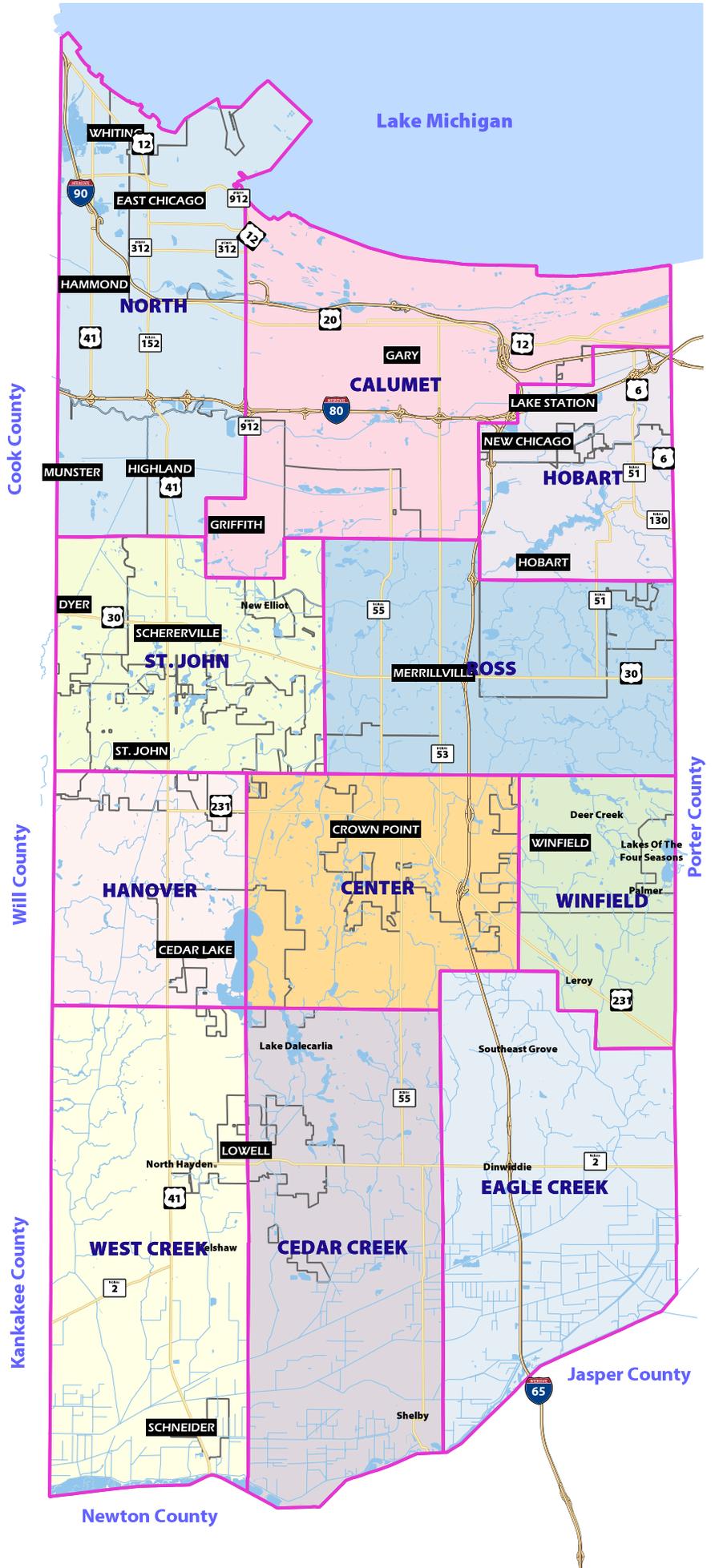


FIGURE 4 - TOWNSHIP MAP

CENTER TOWNSHIP

Center Township, as its name implies, generally makes up the geographical center of the County. It includes most of Crown Point, plus portions of Cedar Lake and St. John. Despite having the second largest median income decline in the County, the township has experienced a major increase in both population and households by over 2.6% for the last decade.

EAGLE CREEK TOWNSHIP

Eagle Creek Township is entirely unincorporated. Very little of the township is developed. There are two areas in the township where notable organized development has occurred. Dinwiddie, centered at the intersection of I-65 and IN-2, has a collection of highway commercial uses, with Apple Valley Mobile Home Park located to the west of I-65. Southeast Grove is a loose collection of subdivisions just east of I-65, roughly between 153rd-161st Avenues. Most of the population and income demographics for the township have decreased in recent years. In addition, Eagle Creek has the highest median age population in the County.

HANOVER TOWNSHIP

Hanover Township includes most of Cedar Lake and the southern portions of St. John. As population growth has moved southward, many unincorporated subdivisions are being developed among the older, unincorporated residential uses. Hanover Township saw notable increases in population, household size, and median income, and as noted earlier, had the highest number of new housing construction permits.

| Category | 2010 | 2015 | % Change |
|-------------------------|----------|----------|----------|
| Population | 31,756 | 32,596 | 2.6% |
| Households | 12,109 | 12,442 | 2.8% |
| Average Household Size | 2.59 | 2.55 | -1.5% |
| Housing Units | 12,875 | 13,256 | 3.0% |
| Median Age | 39.7 | 40.9 | 3.0% |
| Median Household Income | \$67,657 | \$63,883 | -5.6% |

TABLE 15 - CENTER TOWNSHIP STATISTICS (SOURCE: US CENSUS & 5 YEAR ACS, IBRC 2010)

| Category | 2010 | 2015 | % Change |
|-------------------------|----------|----------|----------|
| Population | 1,668 | 1,618 | -3.0% |
| Households | 679 | 626 | -7.8% |
| Average Household Size | 2.45 | 2.51 | 2.4% |
| Housing Units | 709 | 626 | -11.7% |
| Median Age | 45.2 | 45.9 | 1.5% |
| Median Household Income | \$57,083 | \$53,750 | -5.8% |

TABLE 16 - EAGLE CREEK TOWNSHIP STATISTICS (SOURCE: US CENSUS & 5 YEAR ACS, IBRC 2010)

| Category | 2010 | 2015 | % Change |
|-------------------------|----------|----------|----------|
| Population | 12,443 | 12,999 | 4.5% |
| Households | 4,497 | 4,517 | 0.4% |
| Average Household Size | 2.76 | 2.83 | 2.5% |
| Housing Units | 4,861 | 4,825 | -0.7% |
| Median Age | 38.0 | 37.6 | -1.1% |
| Median Household Income | \$64,150 | \$68,732 | 7.1% |

TABLE 17 - HANOVER TOWNSHIP STATISTICS (SOURCE: US CENSUS & 5 YEAR ACS, IBRC 2010)

| Category | 2010 | 2015 | % Change |
|-------------------------|----------|----------|----------|
| Population | 39,417 | 38,351 | -2.7% |
| Households | 15,065 | 14,859 | -1.4% |
| Average Household Size | 2.6 | 2.60 | 0.0% |
| Housing Units | 16,366 | 16,069 | -1.8% |
| Median Age | 37.0 | 37.6 | 1.6% |
| Median Household Income | \$49,247 | \$50,834 | 3.2% |

TABLE 18 - HOBART TOWNSHIP STATISTICS (SOURCE: US CENSUS & 5 YEAR ACS, IBRC 2010)

| Category | 2010 | 2015 | % Change |
|-------------------------|----------|----------|----------|
| Population | 162,855 | 157,092 | -3.5% |
| Households | 61,511 | 58,240 | -5.3% |
| Average Household Size | 2.62 | 2.71 | 3.4% |
| Housing Units | 67,828 | 67,302 | -0.8% |
| Median Age | 35.7 | 35.8 | 0.3% |
| Median Household Income | \$44,344 | \$44,334 | 0.0% |

TABLE 19 - NORTH TOWNSHIP STATISTICS (SOURCE: US CENSUS & 5 YEAR ACS, IBRC 2010)

| Category | 2010 | 2015 | % Change |
|-------------------------|----------|----------|----------|
| Population | 47,890 | 47,945 | 0.1% |
| Households | 18,491 | 18,414 | -0.4% |
| Average Household Size | 2.48 | 2.53 | 2.0% |
| Housing Units | 19,951 | 19,827 | -0.6% |
| Median Age | 37.2 | 39.0 | 4.8% |
| Median Household Income | \$51,519 | \$55,594 | 7.9% |

TABLE 20 - ROSS TOWNSHIP STATISTICS (SOURCE: US CENSUS & 5 YEAR ACS, IBRC 2010)

HOBART TOWNSHIP

Hobart Township includes the northern part of Hobart (north of 61st Avenue), plus New Chicago and most of Lake Station. The vast majority of this township is incorporated, as only a small island of land east of New Chicago, plus a handful of parcels to the northwest corner of I-65 and Ridge Road, are unincorporated. Hobart Township saw slight decreases in population, households, and housing units, but still saw a modest increase in median income.

NORTH TOWNSHIP

North Township, at the far northwest corner of the County, is completely incorporated. It includes the cities and towns of Hammond, Whiting, East Chicago, Munster, and Highland.

ROSS TOWNSHIP

Ross Township includes all of Merrillville, plus the southern part of Hobart and a northern portion of Crown Point. Most of Ross Township is incorporated. The only unincorporated area is in the northeast corner, which includes portions of Deep River County Park and River Pointe Country Club. Ross Township saw notable increases in median age and median income. Most other demographic categories in the township remained relatively stable.

ST. JOHN TOWNSHIP

St. John Township includes all or portions of Dyer, Schererville, Griffith, and St. John. There are several areas of unincorporated lands within the township, including the New Elliot community between Griffith and Schererville. Overall, St. John Township saw modest increases in most demographic categories.

| Category | 2010 | 2015 | % Change |
|--------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|
| Population | 66,741 | 66,957 | 0.3% |
| Households | 24,861 | 24,550 | -1.3% |
| Average Household Size | 2.63 | 2.70 | 2.7% |
| Housing Units | 25,691 | 25,811 | 0.5% |
| Median Age | 40.8 | 41.9 | 2.7% |
| Median Household Income | \$74,310 | \$75,960 | 2.2% |

TABLE 21 - ST. JOHN TOWNSHIP STATISTICS (SOURCE: US CENSUS & 5 YEAR ACS, IBRC 2010)

WEST CREEK TOWNSHIP

West Creek Township, in the far southwest corner of the County, includes Schneider, plus portions of Lowell and Cedar Lake. Two smaller communities – North Hayden and Belshaw – are also located here. Although the number of households and housing units dropped drastically, this was offset by a sharp increase in household size. Hence, the overall population saw only a slight decrease.

| Category | 2010 | 2015 | % Change |
|--------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|
| Population | 6,826 | 6,782 | -0.6% |
| Households | 2,484 | 2,282 | -8.1% |
| Average Household Size | 2.75 | 2.98 | 8.4% |
| Housing Units | 2,664 | 2,475 | -7.1% |
| Median Age | 39.5 | 40.0 | 1.3% |
| Median Household Income | \$64,817 | \$72,667 | 12.1% |

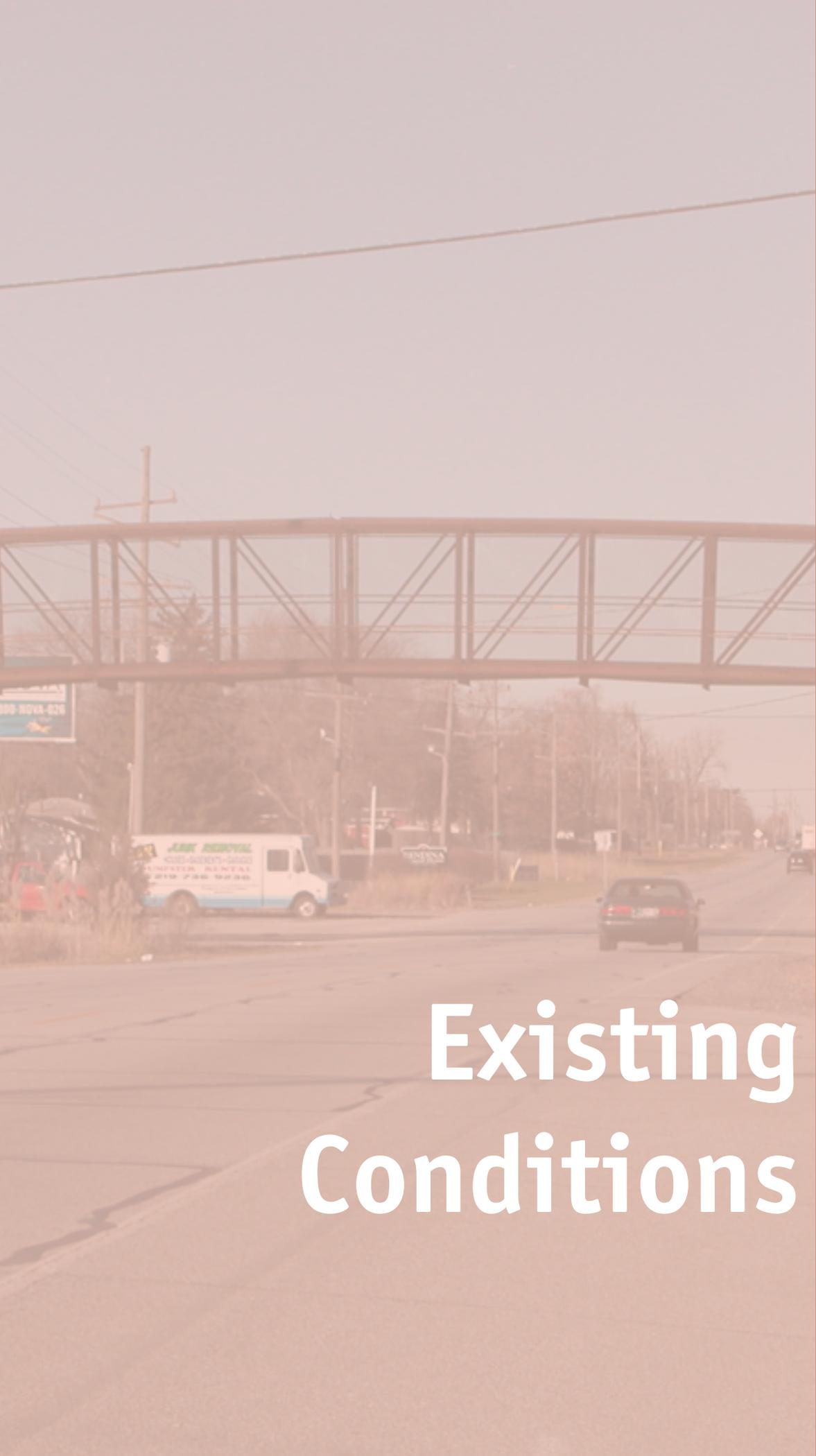
TABLE 22 - WEST CREEK TOWNSHIP STATISTICS (SOURCE: US CENSUS & 5 YEAR ACS, IBRC 2010)

WINFIELD TOWNSHIP

Winfield Township includes the town of Winfield, the newest municipality in Lake County. Also located here is the private community of Lakes of the Four Seasons. Two other unincorporated areas – Palmer (immediately southeast of Lakes of the Four Seasons) and Leroy (centered along US-231 and Gibson Street) – are located in this township. Winfield as a whole had the largest population increase by percentage in the County, despite having an almost 3% decrease in households and almost 4% decrease in housing units. By contrast, the 7.5% increase in household size is one of the highest in the County.

| Category | 2010 | 2015 | % Change |
|--------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|
| Population | 10,054 | 10,834 | 7.8% |
| Households | 3,394 | 3,308 | -2.5% |
| Average Household Size | 2.93 | 3.15 | 7.5% |
| Housing Units | 3,576 | 3,439 | -3.8% |
| Median Age | 38.0 | 37.5 | -1.3% |
| Median Household Income | \$80,453 | \$88,908 | 10.5% |

TABLE 23 - WINFIELD TOWNSHIP STATISTICS (SOURCE: US CENSUS & 5 YEAR ACS, IBRC 2010)



Existing Conditions

4

The following assessment aims to establish a base of information that serves as the foundation for the Plan. This assessment further serves to identify opportunities that exist and help develop a community vision for the Planning Area. The findings of this assessment also contribute to identifying strategies which address the needs of the Planning Area. Lastly, a review of the existing conditions and the assessment of needs are intended to meet, in part, the statutory requirements for the Comprehensive Plan.

The existing conditions assessment consists of the following elements:

- ▶ Land Use
- ▶ Zoning and Development Control
- ▶ Housing
- ▶ Parks and Open Space
- ▶ Natural and Environmental Resources
- ▶ Cultural and Historical Resources
- ▶ Transportation and Connectivity
- ▶ Public Facilities and Services

Land Use

The unincorporated areas of Lake County make up approximately 240.36 square miles of area, or about 38% of Lake County as a whole. While there are pockets of unincorporated areas in northern Lake County, the majority of unincorporated areas are in the southern part of the County, particularly south of 129th Avenue. Figure 5 shows the land use breakdown of the unincorporated areas. Agricultural areas – both active and vacant – account for nearly 75% of these areas. Single-family residential uses – over 13% - are the next most prevalent use.

The northern and central parts of the County tend to be more residential in character. Residential areas in the north tend to be standalone, single-family homes. While there are similar types of housing in the center of the County, there are several residential subdivisions that have been recently developed. There are also multiple unincorporated neighborhoods found in this part of the County, with Lakes of the Four Seasons and Lake Dalecarlia being among the largest.

The southern portion of the County is almost exclusively agricultural in character. There is a small cluster of housing and supporting commercial uses around Shelby. Otherwise, most residential uses in the area are rural residential homes located in conjunction with the surrounding farmland. Multi-family residential uses are not a prevalent use in the unincorporated areas. The “Residential, Other” classification generally refers to accessory structures adjoining residential homes, but found on separate parcels.

Approximately 4.3% of land in unincorporated Lake County is considered vacant. Vacant land is defined here as undeveloped land parcels within areas already developed or currently under development. It does not include agricultural lands that are not being farmed. Because of this, most land classified as vacant is found among more developed parts of the County.

Most of the remaining land uses in the unincorporated areas are small in overall area and scattered throughout the County. Industrial uses in the area primarily consist of various quarries, with a larger mining area along Austin Street south of 205th Avenue.



HOUSING CONSTRUCTION IN LAKE DALECARLIA



APARTMENTS IN CALUMET TOWNSHIP



COMMERCIAL USE IN DINWIDDIE



AGRICULTURAL USE IN EAGLE CREEK TOWNSHIP



HEAVY INDUSTRIAL USE IN EAGLE CREEK TOWNSHIP

Existing Land Use

- Agriculture
- Commercial/Office
- Government
- Industrial
- Institutional
- Residential
- Vacant
- Other

Parks & Open Space

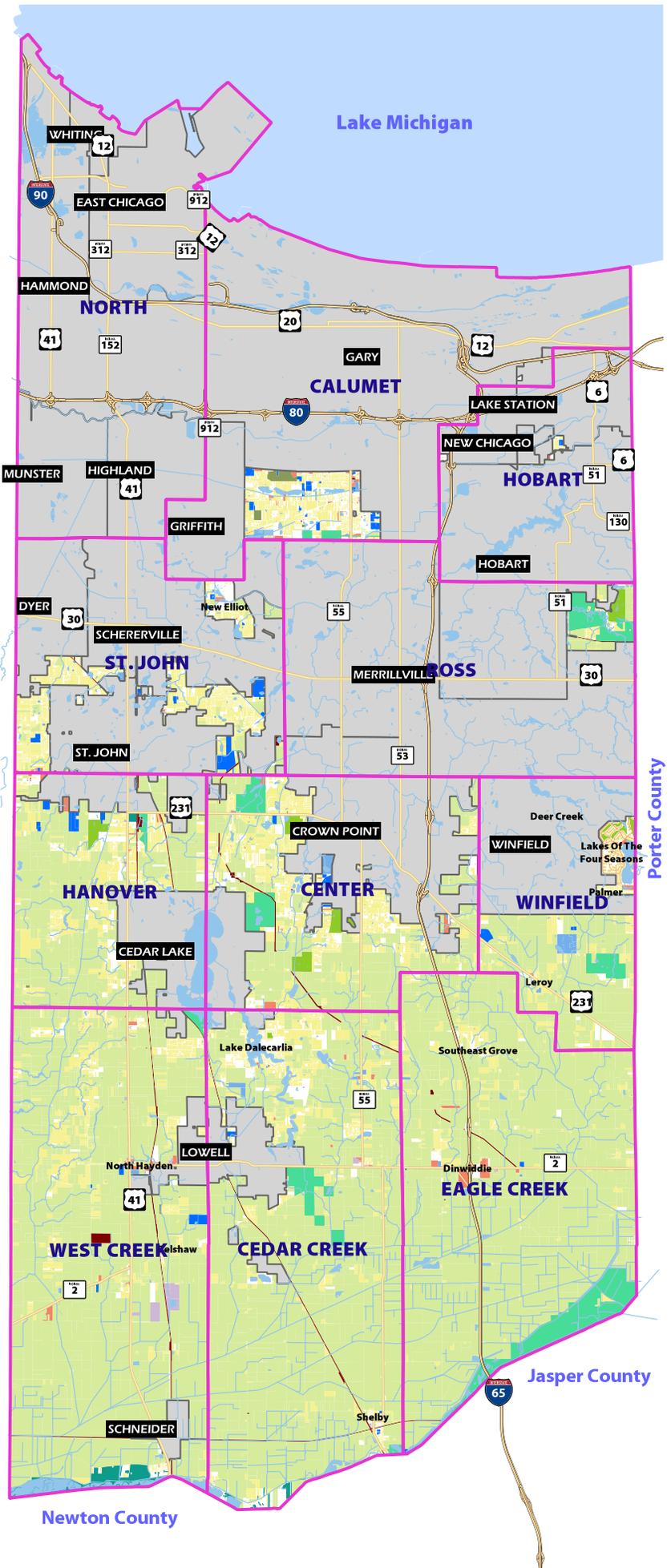
- County Parks - Existing
- State Parks
- Golf Course

| LAND USE | ACREAGE | SQ. MILES | % of Total |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Agriculture | 114,724.7 | 179.26 | 74.6% |
| Commercial | 892.9 | 1.40 | 0.6% |
| Government | 2,751.3 | 4.30 | 1.8% |
| Industrial, Heavy | 198.4 | 0.31 | 0.1% |
| Industrial, Light | 74.6 | 0.12 | 0.0% |
| Institutional | 1,080.3 | 1.69 | 0.7% |
| Office | 25.5 | 0.04 | 0.0% |
| Parks/Open Space | 4,470.9 | 6.99 | 2.9% |
| Railroad | 627.1 | 0.98 | 0.4% |
| Residential, 2-4 families | 278.8 | 0.44 | 0.2% |
| Residential, multi-family | 173.6 | 0.27 | 0.1% |
| Residential, Other | 588.2 | 0.92 | 0.4% |
| Residential, single-family | 20,972.8 | 32.77 | 13.6% |
| Utility | 300.1 | 0.47 | 0.2% |
| Vacant | 6,661.6 | 10.41 | 4.3% |
| Other | 10.7 | 0.02 | 0.0% |
| TOTAL (Unincorporated) | 153,831.4 | 240.36 | 100.0% |
| TOTAL (Lake County) | 400,982.78 | 626.54 | 38.4% |

Cook County

Will County

Kankakee County



Porter County



FIGURE 5 - EXISTING LAND USE

Zoning and Development Control

The Lake County, Indiana, Zoning Ordinance was first approved and adopted on April 15, 1957, and has been amended multiple times since then. The ordinance sets out 23 different land use zones, which can be categorized as follows:

- ▶ **Floodway (3 zones)**
- ▶ **Agriculture**
- ▶ **Rural Residential**
- ▶ **Residential, one-family to multi-family (4 zones)**
- ▶ **Planned Unit District** – This designation allows for the creation of planned unit developments for residential uses.
- ▶ **Business (Commercial) Zones (3 zones)** – The B-1 zone allows a wide variety of small commercial uses. The B-2 Zone, or Rural Business Zone, includes a variety of uses pertinent to farming and agricultural uses, such as farm equipment and material sales, creamery & ice cream manufacturing, and greenhouses. B-3 General Business Zone includes larger commercial uses not found in the previous business zones.
- ▶ **Highway Service Zones (2 zones)**
 - These 2 zones specifically permit auto-oriented uses that, due to their nature, must be located on highways or similar major arterials. These uses include car washes, various drive-in establishments, restaurants, vehicle sales (large and small), motels, and various recreational uses
- ▶ **Professional Office** – This zone permits uses of a professional or administrative nature.
- ▶ **Shopping Centers (3 zones)**
 - Also referred to as Planned Business Centers, these three zones permit the same general commercial and retail uses, but are classified by their size: minimum 1½ acres for BP-1, minimum 5 acres for BP-2, and minimum 10 acres for BP-3.
- ▶ **Industrial (3 zones)** – There are three different zones in this category: light industrial, heavy industrial, and planned industrial centers.
- ▶ **Conditional Development** – This category covers a special set of environmentally impactful uses such as quarries, landfills, airfields, go-kart tracks, concrete mixing, etc.



TYPICAL HOME IN CENTRAL LAKE COUNTY



HOMES IN LEROY



TYPICAL HOMES IN CALUMET TOWNSHIP

Housing

The County as a whole has about 209,868 housing units, with a significant number (about 12%) being vacant. Total housing units for Lake County grew by about eight percent (8%) from 2000 to 2015, and the trend continues despite the fact that population continues to decline in most townships. The Planning Area has about 15,212 housing units. Of this total, about 94% are occupied, while about 6% remain vacant. In the Planning Area, an overwhelming majority of the housing stock is owner-occupied single-family homes, with only 14% being used as rental units. These units typically occupy a parcel of land averaging about 1.2 acres.

The majority of the housing growth in the Planning Area can be attributed to new residential development in the western section of the County, as well as a number of rural subdivisions scattered throughout the County. The largest residential growth is observed in Hanover Township, where about 123 new housing units have been permitted since 2010. The housing conditions are generally good in the outlying area. Several locations, such as Shelby and Calumet Township, show signs of decline due primarily to a lack of public facilities.

Parks, Open Space

Nearly 7 square miles of land – or approximately 3% of unincorporated Lake County – is classified as park and open space uses. These parks and open spaces tend to be concentrated in larger facilities and parcels of land. There are generally four types of parks and open space in these areas.

- ▶ **Lake County Parks** – The Lake County Parks and Recreation Department currently owns and maintains 15 different parks and facilities in the County. Within this, all or portions of 10 of these facilities are located in unincorporated areas, accounting for over 5 square miles of land. Figure 6 shows these facilities. The Parks Department also owns land intended for two future parks: Beaver Dam and Cedar Lake Marsh. These parks offer a variety of active and passive recreational facilities.
- ▶ **State Parks** – The Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) also owns and operates several parks in Lake County. Most of the state-owned facilities are found in incorporated areas, such as Hoosier Prairie, Cressmoor Prairie, and McCloskey’s Burr Oak Savannah. However, there are several parks found in unincorporated areas. The largest of these is in the southwest corner of the County along the Kankakee River, as part of the larger LaSalle Fish and Wildlife Area. Biesecker Prairie, at the southeast corner of US 41 and US 231, is a smaller nature preserve with limited public access.

- ▶ **Privately held Preserves** – Several local non-profit agencies or individuals control a substantial amount of land for conservation or preservation. These agencies typically transfer such lands to state or local governments for long-term preservation. A list of such properties is not readily available, but agencies active in preservation include Isaac Walton League, Shirley Heinze Land Trust, and Nature Conservancy among others. The Arsh Group has further identified a site called Tom Sporre Wildlife Area south of Leroy.
- ▶ **Privately-Owned Golf Courses** – There are also 6 privately owned golf courses in unincorporated areas, mostly found in the center portion of the County. They are:
 - * Lakes of the Four Seasons Country Club (private access)
 - * Oak Knoll Golf Course
 - * Palmira Golf Course
 - * Pheasant Valley Golf Course
 - * River Pointe Country Club
 - * Youche Country Club (private access)



BIESECKER PRAIRIE



TOM SPORRE WILDLIFE PRESERVE



YOUCHE COUNTRY CLUB



LEMON LAKE COUNTY PARK

- Parks & Open Space**
- County Parks - Existing
 - State Parks
 - Golf Course

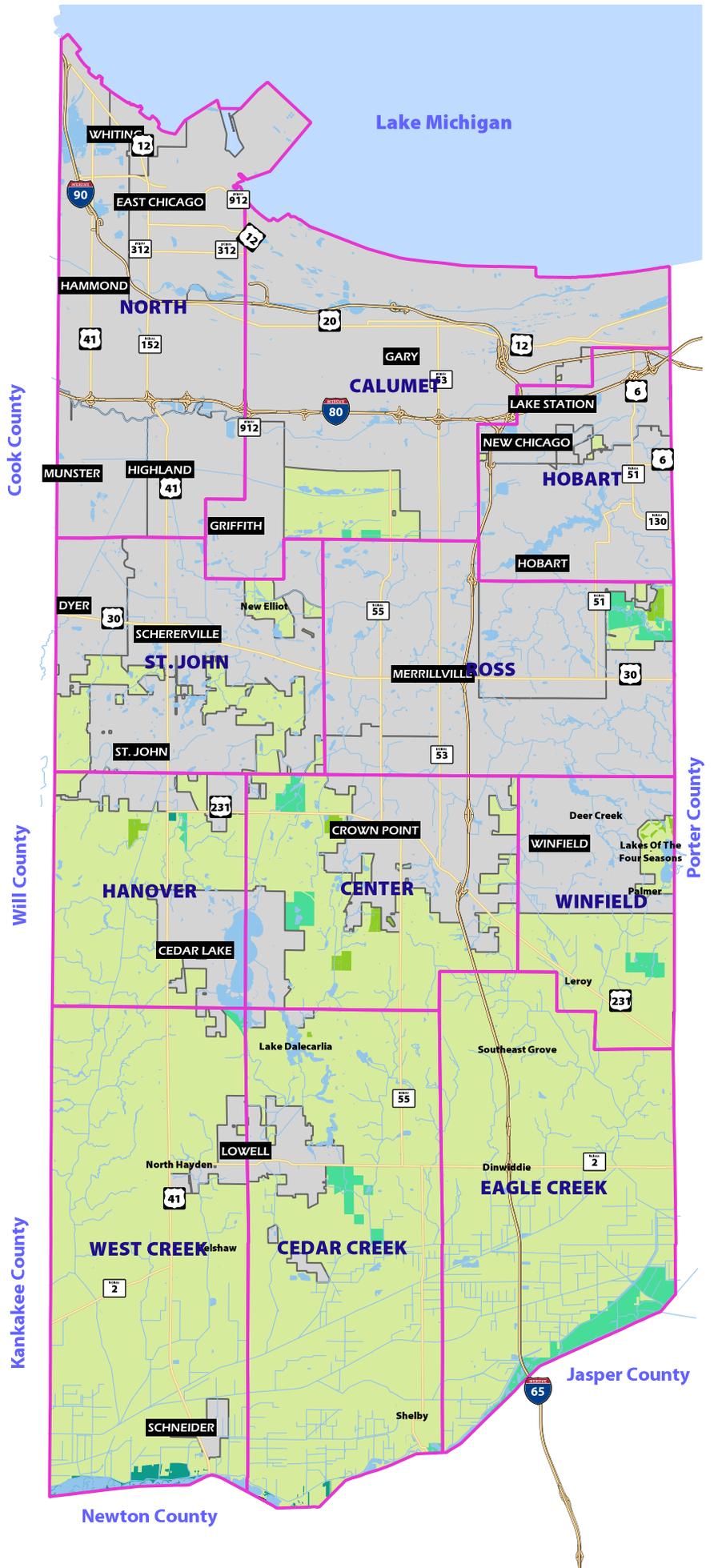


FIGURE 6 - EXISTING PARKS

Natural and Environmental Resources

The unique location of Lake County has created one of the most diverse natural ecosystems in the nation. This diversity was most prevalent in three regions. In the northern region, a band of dune and swale habitat surrounded the shores of Lake Michigan. The central uplands were covered with mesic prairie, oak-savannah, oak-hickory forest, and a few small areas of beech-maple forest. The southern portion of the County was a vast wetland area resulting from the Kankakee River floodplain.

A continental divide runs through Lake County, dividing the County into two different watersheds: Little Calumet River Watershed in the north (draining toward Lake Michigan), and the Kankakee River Watershed in the south. Figure 7 shows the watershed boundary, as well as associated floodplains. In general, most of the unincorporated parts of the County – save for Calumet Township and the northern scattered islands – are part of the Kankakee River Watershed, along with most of St. John, Cedar Lake, Lowell, and Schneider. The rest of the County is a part of the Little Calumet River Watershed.

Much of Lake County's original natural features have been lost to development and modern agricultural practices. Most of the remaining wooded or prairie areas are located along major rivers and streams. A considerable amount of undeveloped land remains as lowlands and marshes. This land is not suited for urban development, and in many cases is not tillable. Such land offers an excellent opportunity for conservation and open space preservation. A large area of such lands is located in the north along the Little Calumet River and in the south along the Kankakee River, which was once one of the largest freshwater marshes in the country. Another example is the German Methodist Cemetery Prairie, which has one of the best black soil prairie remnants in Indiana, with more than 200 species of native plants. IDNR has identified more than fifty sites as valuable resources throughout the County. These sites should be considered for preservation and conservation.



This is what most of the Kankakee River has become since it was channelized in the late 19th Century. The LaSalle Fish and Wildlife Area, the Grand Marsh, and where the Kankakee and Yellow Rivers meet are the only remnants of a once vast marsh in northwest Indiana.

- Floodplains
- Watershed/Continental Divide

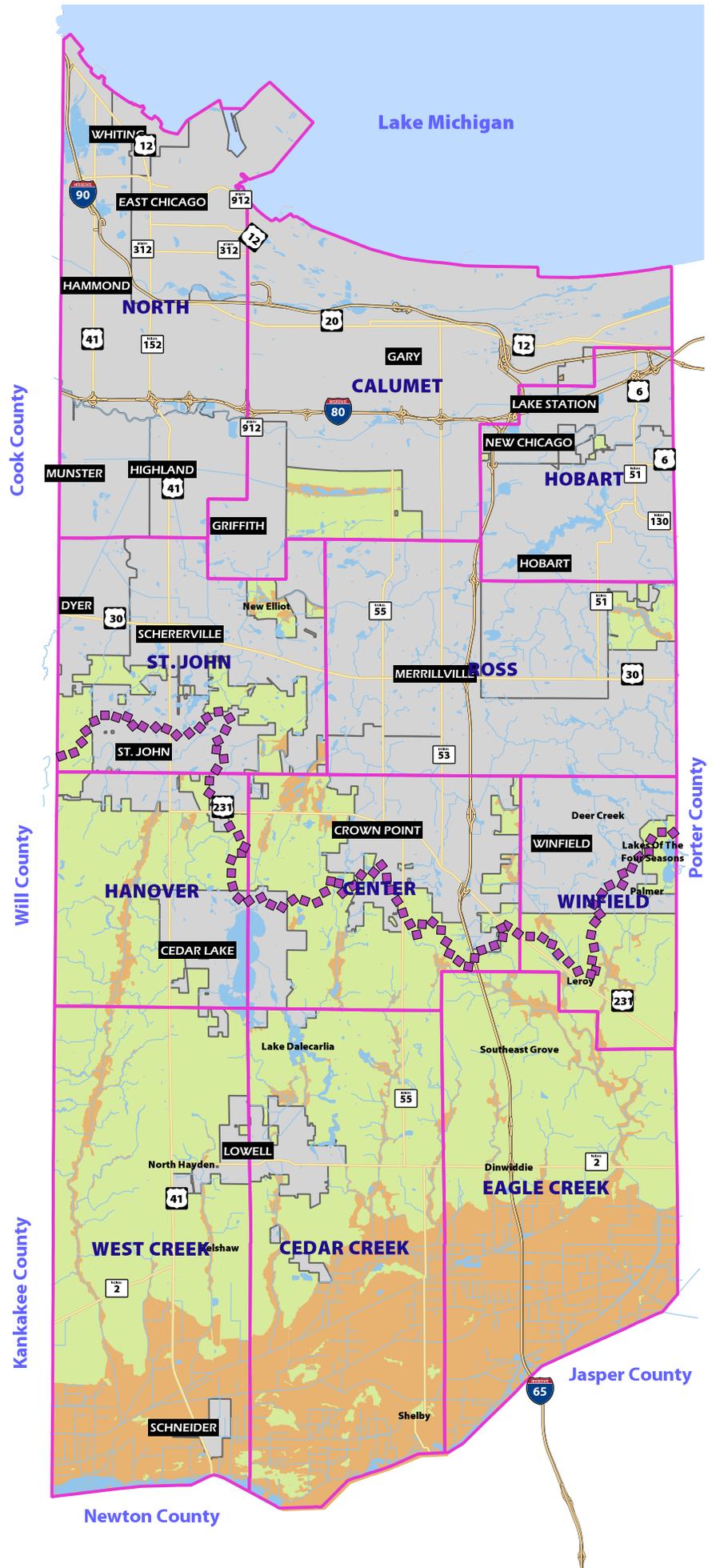


FIGURE 7 - LAKE COUNTY FLOODPLAINS

GEOLOGY, TOPOGRAPHY, AND SOILS

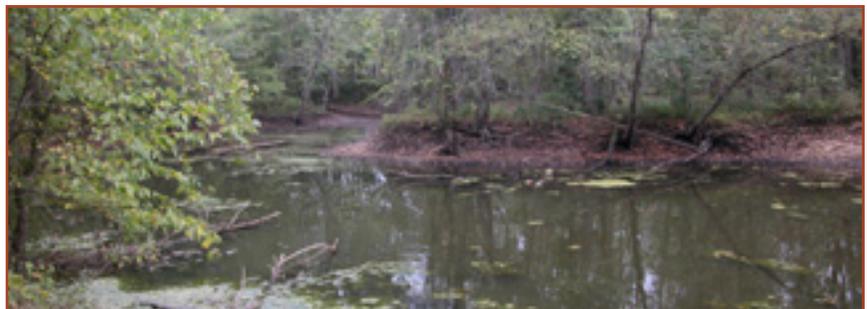
The physiographic character of Lake County consists of three different deposits: the Calumet Lacustrine Plain in the northern region, the Valparaiso Morainal Area in the central region, and the Kankakee Outwash Plain in the southern region. The Calumet Lacustrine Plain is a sandy region surrounding the southern end of Lake Michigan. The Valparaiso Morainal Area is a composite of several end moraines, one super-imposed atop the other. This region averages about 150 feet higher than the adjacent plain to the north. The Kankakee Outwash is a low, poorly drained sandy area covering most of southern Lake County. It primarily consists of extensive glacial outwash, and/or lake and river deposits.

The soil and geologic conditions of the land in Lake County have contributed to the natural life of the region since the Ice Age. In recent history, they have provided the opportunity for industrial development of the region in the north, while agricultural uses have been the mainstay of many areas in the southern part of the County. Many of the local and regional parks are located on land that is not suitable for urban development, but have remained intact due to their development limitations.

WATERWAYS

Several major waterways flow through Lake County. The Little Calumet River and Grand Calumet River are larger rivers in the north. The Kankakee River, running along the southern border of the County, is a major waterway that connects to South Bend to the east, and eventually joins the Des Plaines River in the west, forming the Illinois River. Several other significant creeks and streams are found throughout the County. One example is Turkey Creek, formed by a waterway leading from Lake George in Hobart. Though mostly found in Hobart and Merrillville, some western portions of the Creek wind through unincorporated areas of St. John Township.

Many of Lake County's major waterways show flooding potential. The Kankakee River is particularly prone to flooding events. Much of this can be traced back to the mid-late 19th century, when much of the original wetlands were drained via the construction of an elaborate drainage system. Although this activity created hundreds of square miles of prime farmland, it left the river basin and resulting dry land extremely vulnerable to flooding events. As recently as February 2018, significant rainfall and melting snow produced record river levels and flooding along the river basin. The Little Calumet River has also seen flooding events. The construction of the Little Calumet River Levee, begun in the early 1980's, is a major engineering project designed to prevent flooding.



KANKAKEE RIVER

Cultural and Historical Resources

| LOCATION | HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE |
|---|-----------------------|
| Kingsbury-Doak Farmhouse (AKA Steele Farmhouse) 4411 E 153rd Ave., Hebron | Architecture |
| John Ross Farm 3815 East US 231, Leroy | Event |
| Buckley Homestead 3606 Belshaw Rd., Lowell | Event, Architecture |

TABLE 24 - LAKE COUNTY HISTORIC RESOURCES



BUCKLEY HOMESTEAD

Lake County possesses a number of cultural and scenic resources. These resources play an important role in the County's economic base by supporting tourism. IDNR maintains an inventory of these resources to ensure they are preserved. Many of the cultural resources are located within the municipalities, and some are within the Lake County Parks Department properties. Many important sites, in the modern era, have become centers for cultural activities celebrating the diversity of the Lake County community. These activities range from a variety of festivals on the lakefront to historic car shows in Buckley Homestead. Table 24 identifies several resources that are located within the Planning Area. It is important that these resources are protected and shared with the greater Lake County community.

HISTORIC SITES

Lake County was settled in the early 19th Century and became an agricultural and industrial center (primarily wood-related products) soon after. The earliest settlement was in the Ross area where John Wood was an early settler. Within the cities and towns, several historic districts have been established to protect and celebrate the history of the County. Several properties in Lake County are on the National Register of Historic Places. These buildings serve as examples and reminders of the County's rich history and should continue to be preserved with respect for that history.

HISTORIC SETTLEMENTS AND COMMUNITIES

Outside the above identified sites, there appears to be no other recognized historic settlement areas within rural Lake County. Typically, these settlements characterize the agricultural heritage of the County. While the advent of industrial agriculture and the growth of residential development may be contributing to this loss, strong consideration should be given to how development of land adjacent to remnants of these resources in the County may impact their character. Opportunities exist to designate resource management corridors or to direct clustering of new development in such a way that the important or notable settlements are not adversely impacted.



EARLY 20TH CENTURY HOME IN EAGLE CREEK TOWNSHIP



EARLY 20TH CENTURY HOME IN CEDAR CREEK TOWNSHIP



SCENIC AND RECREATIONAL RESOURCES

The bulk of scenic resources within Lake County consist of natural resources described in other sections of this Plan. As a major contributor to quality of life, natural resources provide scenic value as well as cultural and recreational opportunities. From the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore to the Grand Kankakee Marsh and several rivers and creeks, these resources create character that defines Lake County's landscape. Most of these resources have not been identified and continue to be lost to new development, i.e. the West Creek corridor.



WEST CREEK, SEEN IN SOUTH LAKE COUNTY (TOP) AND ST. JOHN (BOTTOM)

Transportation and Connectivity

In recent decades, mobility has taken on a much broader meaning beyond motorized travel. The broader definition takes into consideration the needs of persons of all ages and physical capabilities, as well as the availability of all modes of transportation. Accommodations for pedestrians, bicyclists, and other non-motorized travelers have become equally important in transportation planning. Such considerations require addressing issues such as health concerns and leisure time, opportunities for economic development, and less reliance on automobiles.

TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS

As the economic character of Lake County continues to change from an industrial based economy in the north County to a more service economy in the central County, population shifts are observed. This shift in economic and population growth demands the establishment and maintenance of an efficient transportation system which meets the modern needs of the residents. The transportation network of the Planning Area is intimately linked with the regional transportation network. While the County has limited ability to directly address issues related to the effectiveness of the transportation system within the unincorporated area, it does have a voice in regional transportation planning as a member of northwest Indiana's metropolitan planning organization: Northwest Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC).

Figure 8 identifies roadways that are the responsibility of the Indiana Department of Transportation. All other roads are considered county roads and are the responsibility of the Lake County Highway Department. Once the adjoining land is annexed, the roadway typically becomes the jurisdiction of the annexing municipality.

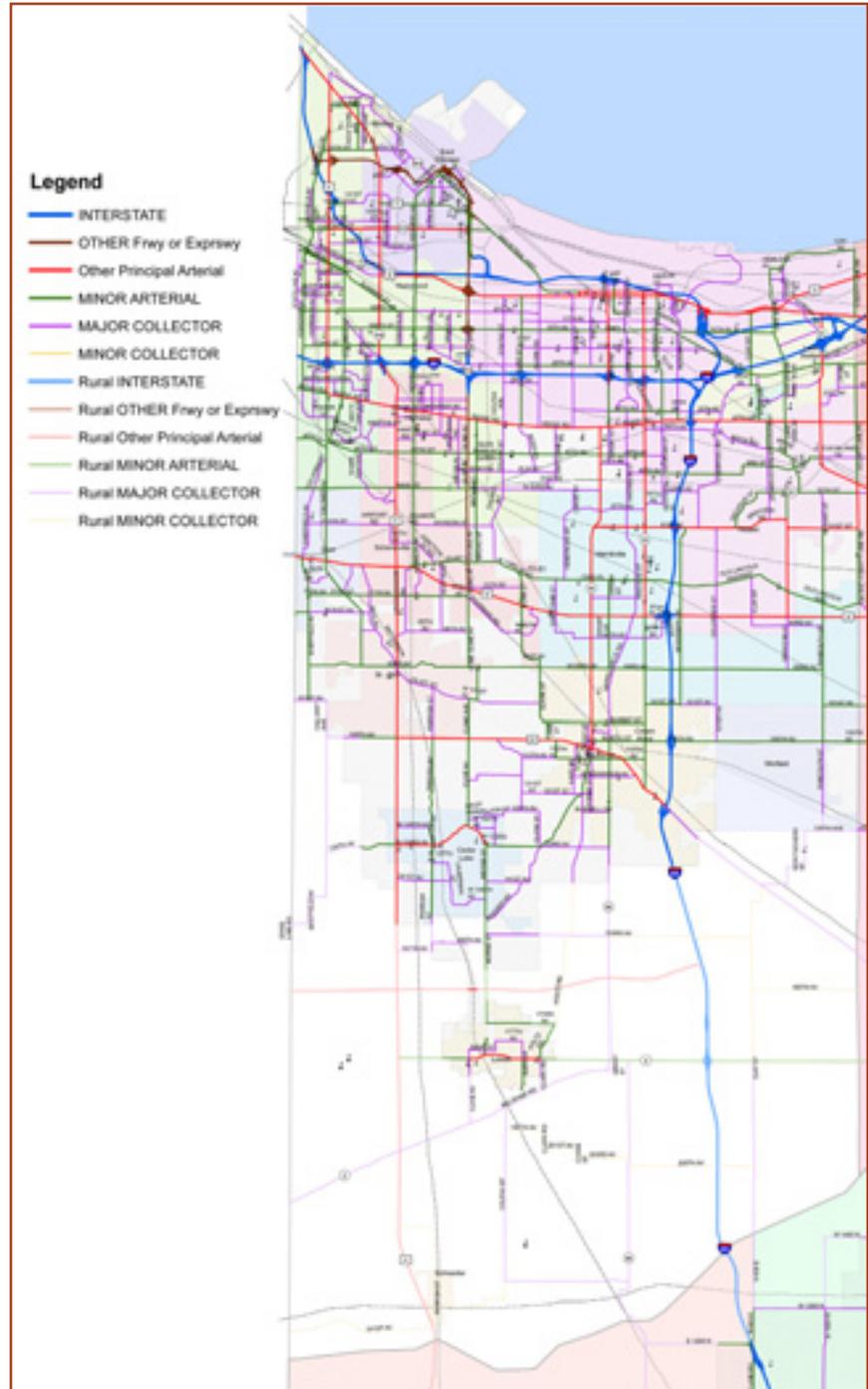
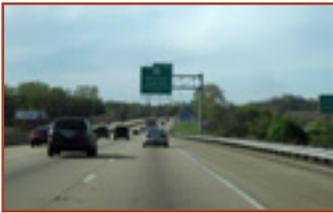


FIGURE 8 - LAKE COUNTY ROAD NETWORK



EXAMPLES OF DIFFERENT STREET TYPES IN LAKE COUNTY. FROM TOP TO BOTTOM: INTERSTATE (I-65), MAJOR ARTERIAL (CLEVELAND STREET), MINOR ARTERIAL (IN-2), LOCAL STREET (ORCHARD AVENUE)

FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has classified roads and highways into groups according to their function. Using this methodology, Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) utilizes twelve different classifications for roadways in Lake County. These classifications include Interstates, Other Principal Arterials, Minor Arterials, Major Collectors, Minor Collectors, and Local Roads. Major road classifications that are found in Lake County are described in the following paragraphs.

Interstates - Freeways provide the highest degree of mobility, with access limited to grade-separated interchanges to preserve capacity for high volumes of traffic and high travel speeds. Interstates in the Planning Area include I-65.

Arterials - Principal arterials provide a high degree of mobility and function as the primary travel routes through urbanized areas. In Lake County, these arterials include some of the US and Indiana state routes, i.e. IN-55 (Cleveland/Taft Street) and US-231. Minor arterials augment the principal arterials by accommodating somewhat shorter trips with less stringent access controls. In Lake County, minor arterials include some of the US and Indiana state routes, Lake County highways, and major municipal streets, i.e. 109th and Cline Avenues.

Collectors - Collector roads consist of medium-capacity, medium-volume streets that have limited continuity and serve to link higher level arterials with the lower level local streets. Collectors provide some direct land access, but to a more limited degree than local streets. In Lake County, these collector roads include major local roads such as 133rd and Colorado Streets. Grant Street (IN-55 in southern Lake County) is considered a Rural Collector Road.

Local Streets - Local streets provide direct land access and are typically connected to arterial and collector roads. Trip lengths on local streets are typically short, and volumes and speeds are generally low. All remaining roads in Lake County not designated as one of the classifications described above are classified as local streets.

Lake County Highway Department maintains about 530 miles of roadway. Maintenance work generally involves keeping surfaces in good repair and free of debris, maintaining associated drainage facilities, and plowing snow. In 2016, the County initiated a comprehensive pavement management system called the Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating (PASER) program. This program involves collecting data and assessing several road characteristics: roughness (ride), surface distress (condition), surface skid characteristics, and structure (pavement strength and deflection.) This data can be combined with economic analysis to develop short and long-range plans for a variety of budget levels. Although this is a new program, the PASER ratings, combined with other inventory data (width, length, shoulder, pavement type, etc.), can be very helpful in planning future budgets and priorities.

The above notwithstanding, the County has limited resources to maintain county roads. A lack of available funds has left many local roads in less than desirable condition. This is particularly evident in older residential subdivisions, where many incomplete roadway segments have long been abandoned and now require complete reconstruction. Improving these road segments can enhance opportunities for infill and connectivity.

TRANSIT/HUMAN SERVICE TRANSPORTATION

NIRPC serves as a recipient for federal transit funds on behalf of seven local providers of public transit. NIRPC's role can help minimize administration and oversight costs for the participating operators. It also creates an opportunity to coordinate and promote alternative modes of transportation on a regional basis. The Gary Public Transportation Corporation (GPTC) provides transit service in several areas, including Ridge Road, that makes transit service available to some residents of the unincorporated areas. GPTC plans to expand its services to outlying areas in the near future as a part of its Livable Broadway Plan.



DEMAND-RESPONSE BUS SERVICE, SIMILAR TO THIS, IS AVAILABLE TO SOUTH LAKE COUNTY RESIDENTS

In south Lake County, demand response public transit service is provided by South Lake County Community Services Inc. (SLCCS). SLCCS is funded through federal, state, and local contributions from the townships it serves. Demand-response transit, often referred to as dial-a-ride, is a transportation services in which individual passengers can request a ride from one specific location to another specific location at a certain time. SLCCS operates up to fourteen vehicles which include small buses or vans. Lack of transit service reduces the quality of life for those that cannot drive. It also makes an area less desirable to live in for those who seek alternative forms of transportation. The opportunity exists for improved linkage in the southern part of the County to create a full multi-modal system by integrating different transit modes to serve the area.

NORTHWEST INDIANA REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION (NIRPC) 2040 PLAN

NIRPC is the regional agency that is responsible for coordinating planning activities in Lake, Porter and LaPorte counties. NIRPC performs environmental, land use, and transportation planning on a regional level. NIRPC further serves as the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for the region. Federal funding for transportation projects and programs are channeled through the MPO to ensure that existing and future expenditures for transportation projects and programs are based on a coordinated planning process. NIRPC's policies are supported in the Comprehensive Regional Plan (CRP) 2040 for Northwest Indiana. In addition, NIRPC prepares a short-term transportation improvement plan (TIP), which has a four year horizon and also serves as a short-term investment plan for the agency. Lake County projects that are included in the current TIP are found in Table 25. INDOT also has numerous projects that are included in the TIP.

The long-range transportation plan identifies roadway and capacity expansion projects, as well as transit expansion projects that are to be completed through the year 2040. Funding sources have been identified for these projects. The only project in unincorporated Lake County that is listed in the long-range transportation plan is an expansion of Indiana State Route 2 at I-65. NIRPC is currently in the process of preparing their 2050 Plan. This plan is expected to address several issues related to south Lake County transportation needs.

| Route | Work Category | Work Type | Location | Federal Fund Type | Year |
|----------|-------------------------|--|--|--------------------|------|
| 45th Ave | Local Road Project | Added Travel Lanes | 45th Ave. from Whitcomb to Chase (Ph 2B) | STBG I Chicago UZA | 2019 |
| 45th Ave | Local Road Project | Added Travel Lanes | 45th Ave. from Whitcomb to Chase (Ph 2B) | STBG I Chicago UZA | 2018 |
| 45th Ave | Local Road Project | Intersect. Improv. W/ Added Turn Lanes | at Colfax St. | STBG I Chicago UZA | 2018 |
| | Local bridge inspection | Bridge Inspections | countywide inventory program for 2018-2021 | Local Bridge | 2019 |
| | Local bridge inspection | Bridge Inspections | countywide inventory program for 2018-2021 | Local Bridge | 2020 |
| | Local bridge inspection | Bridge Inspections | countywide inventory program for 2018-2021 | Local Bridge | 2020 |
| 45th Ave | Local Road Project | Added Travel Lanes | Colfax to Whitcomb St. | STBG I Chicago UZA | 2019 |
| IR 1043 | Local Bridge Project | Bridge replacement | #61 135th Ave over West Creek | Local Bridge | 2018 |
| | Local Safety Project | Safety Planning | Road Safety Audit (101st/ Sheffield/109th Ave) | HSIP Chicago UZA | 2018 |

TABLE 25 - LAKE COUNTY TIP PROJECTS (SOURCE: NIRPC)



EXISTING BRIDGE ON CLAY STREET

TRAILS AND BIKEWAYS

In contrast to the availability of several trails on the northern and central part of the County, there are no bicycle paths and trails in southern Lake County. Planning for trails is primarily the responsibility of NIRPC. In the most recent Greenways and Blueways Plan, NIRPC identifies several proposed bikeway corridors that pass through unincorporated areas in the southern part of the County. These bikeways generally will be along paths adjacent to railroad, river, or utility corridors. These bikeways will be expensive and likely take many years before they are completed. An alternative approach would be to designate roadways that are adjacent to these bicycle routes as on-street bicycle routes on an interim basis. Proposed or planned trails for Lake County include:

The American Discovery Trail The American Discovery Trail (ADT) is a 6,800-mile route stretching across 15 states from Delaware to California. The northern route of the ADT has been planned to pass through Lake County, and coordination has begun to secure this route along the planned Veterans Memorial Trail into Illinois via the proposed (but not funded) Pennsy Greenway from Crown Point, Indiana to Lansing, Illinois.

Erie-Lackawanna Trail Corridor – 30 miles The most developed corridor to date in the region is a high-priority project. It begins in downtown Hammond at Sibley Boulevard, and extends south to Crown Point at Summit Street. Funded segments include the Veterans Trail from southeast Crown Point to Hebron along US 231. A vast majority of the Erie-Lackawanna Trail corridor is owned by NIPSCO.

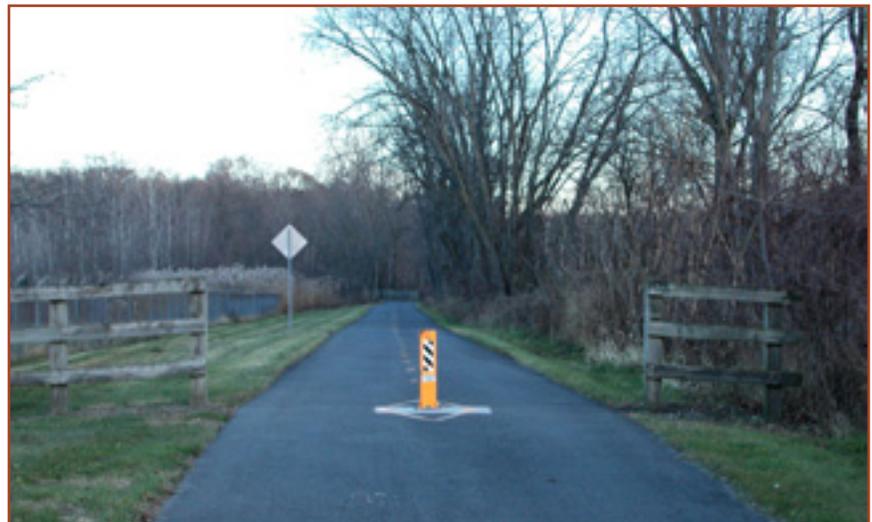
The following are low priority projects that would be in south Lake County.

West Creek Corridor – 23 miles A corridor proposed to connect a series of planned Lake County parks along West Creek in west Lake County.

Southlake Corridor – 18 miles Proposed corridor to run through Lowell and Cedar Lake, and terminate north at IN-2. Most of the corridor is planned in existing NIPSCO properties.

Kankakee River Trail – 60 miles Proposed trail along the largest river in the region. Most adjacent property is privately owned, but many parcels have been purchased for increased environmental use, including trail development, along its levees.

Winfield Corridor - 20 miles East from the Lake/Porter County line, through Kouts, into southwestern LaPorte County.



OAK SAVANNAH TRAIL, CALUMET TOWNSHIP

- Trails
- Existing
 - - - Under Development
 - Bike Lane
 - Planned Trail
 - - - Planned Expansion

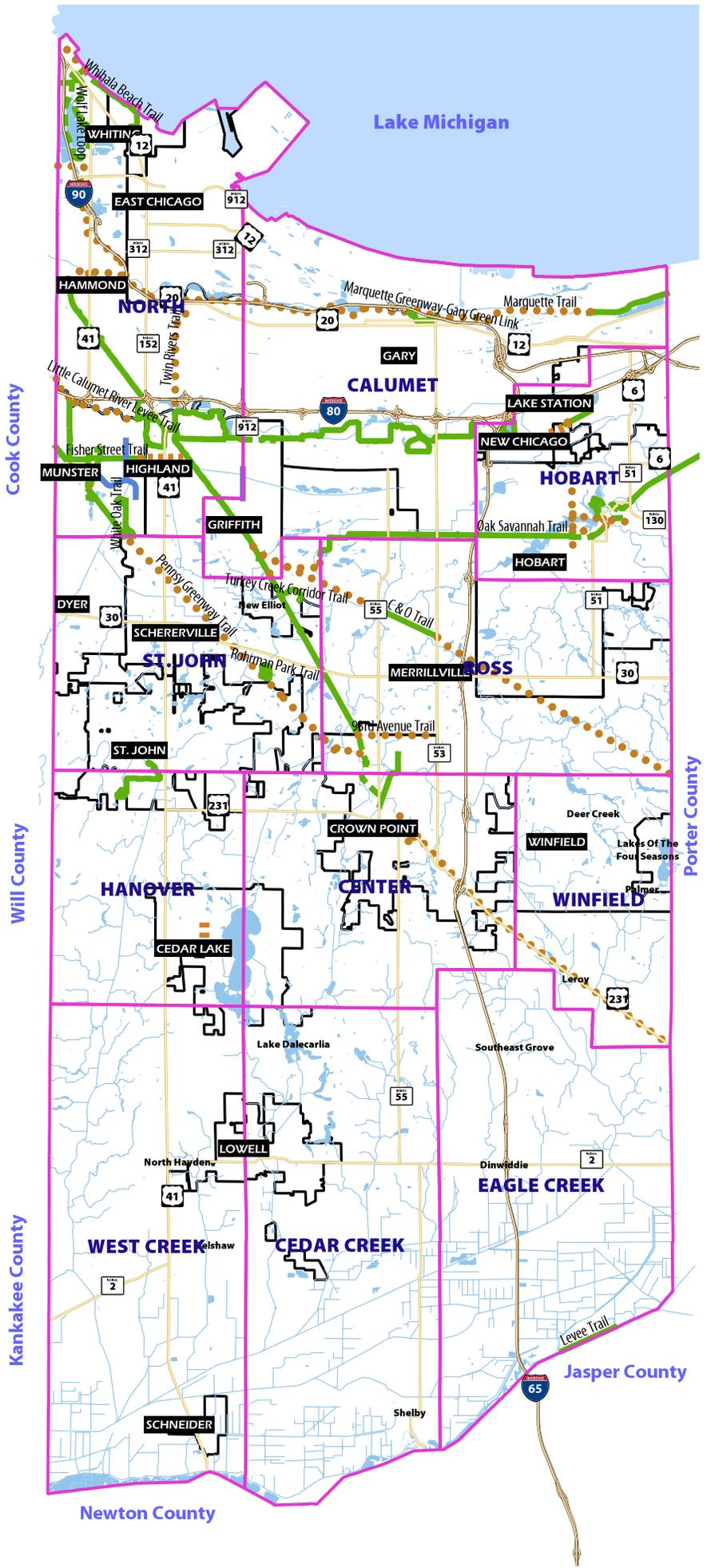


FIGURE 9 - LAKE COUNTY TRAIL NETWORK

Public Facilities and Services

Community facilities and services such as adequate fire and police protection, access to quality schools, or availability of utility services, are important elements for maintaining quality of life of the residents.

WATER AND SEWER

Water and sewer service is typically provided by the property owners through the construction of well fields and localized septic systems on site. Some subdivisions are serviced by independent wastewater treatment providers. Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) identifies nine agencies that provide localized wastewater treatment service for the residents. Two examples of these providers are Lakes of the Four Seasons Utility or Lake Dalecarlia Regional Waste District.

Several well fields are also located around the County that provide water for larger developments. These private providers typically share water among different users. Rural stormwater and drainage are handled through a system of legal drains and swales. The drains and swales empty into the network of tributaries of the Kankakee River.

UTILITY SERVICES, GAS, ELECTRICITY

Utility services are typically provided by Northern Indiana Public Services Company (NIPSCO), the local private utility company. The company does have adequate capacity to serve the residents of the County. However, there are scattered areas where access to natural gas is not available. In these areas, residents will have to rely on electricity as a source of energy for heat. In these areas, however, opportunity exists to promote the use of renewable energy alternatives.

PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY

Lake County government provides a number of services to not only residents of the unincorporated areas, but also all residents of the County to ensure adequate public safety. Lake County, in coordination with other municipal agencies, provides services ranging from health and public safety, to library and some social services directly or indirectly through funded agencies. Most of the County facilities are located in Crown Point; thus, they are easily accessible by most residents. The Lake County Highway Department also has a facility south of Cedar Lake on US 41 which is used for maintenance purposes.

EDUCATION

The unincorporated area student population is served by five public school districts. All of these districts provide services to students from unincorporated areas as well as incorporated municipalities within these townships. Among these districts, Lake Central School Corporation has the highest number of students, followed by Crown Point school district. The enrollment patterns among these districts are difficult to follow, but two districts - Lake Ridge and Tri-Creek School Corporations - show some reduction in enrollment for the last five years (2013-2017). Tri-Creek School District, enrolling the three townships of West Creek, Cedar Creek, and Eagle Creek, shows the highest decline among all districts of about 3.2% for the last five years. Other school districts all show continued increase in enrollment. Since the population of the unincorporated area is also showing a decline, it is reasonable to assume that most of the enrollment increase should be associated with the families residing in municipalities rather than unincorporated areas.

Public Facilities

Schools

- 1. Calumet High School
- 2. Longfellow Elementary School
- 3. Lake Ridge Middle School
- 4. Gary Lighthouse Charter School: Upper
- 5. John I Meister Elementary School
- 6. Lincoln Elementary School
- 7. Winfield Elementary School
- 8. Lake Prairie Elementary School
- 9. Lowell Middle School

Fire Station

- ▲ 1. Lake Ridge Volunteer Fire Department
- ▲ 2. Gary Station #5
- ▲ 3. Lake Hills Volunteer Fire Department
- ▲ 4. Lake Dalecarlia Fire Station
- ▲ 5. Shelby Fire Department

Police Station

- ◆ 1. Lakes Of Four Seasons Security

Health Care

- 1. Franciscan Dyer Medical Center South

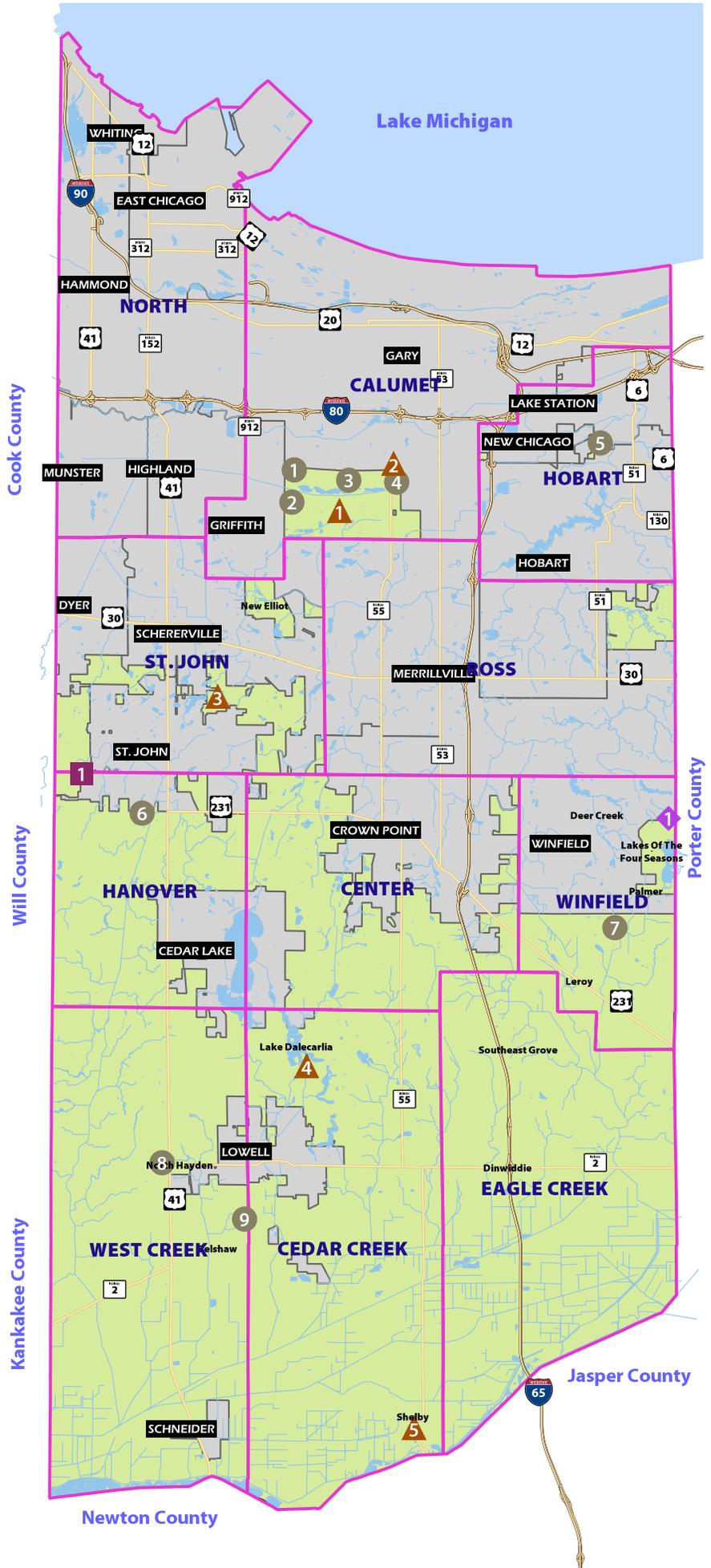


FIGURE 10 - LAKE COUNTY PUBLIC FACILITIES

A photograph of a clear incandescent lightbulb lying on a dark chalkboard. The lightbulb is positioned in the upper right quadrant. On the chalkboard, there are several white chalk drawings: a large lightbulb outline to the left of the real one, and several smaller circles of varying sizes scattered below it. The background is a textured, greyish surface, possibly a wall or a large board. The overall lighting is soft and even.

Vision and Goals

5

Vision

Lake County, at its core, is a Midwestern community with diverse heritage and character. It is both a thriving center for industry and commerce, and a rural community with a strong connection to agriculture and nature. For two centuries, the County has balanced its agrarian heritage with the opportunities obtained from becoming an industrial hub.

Throughout the planning process, the citizens' input, stakeholder comments and the Steering Committee's sentiments consistently embraced the sustainable principles of land use planning. They presented ideas and concepts to promote preservation, protect community character, and support economic development. In several meetings and workshops, ideas expressed included concerns over issues such as urban growth, adequate infrastructure, and quality of life, with hopes for a planning outcome which will result in advancing the preservation of community character and improving quality of life.

The collected information and the expressed statements lead to the following overall vision for the County, presented at right.

VISION

Lake County is a diverse region that embraces its history and culture while promoting economic growth. The County will continue to promote sustainability and livability by utilizing the following four guiding principles for the Comprehensive Land Use Plan:

I - Preservation

Lake County contains a thriving agricultural industry and rural economy that must be protected through managed growth and development policies.

II - Managed Growth

Lake County is well positioned for continued development, given its strategic location. The Land Use Plan will protect agricultural land while advancing new cutting-edge industries, provide the foundation for economic diversity, and drive new infrastructure investment in key growth areas.

III - Sustainability

Lake County offers a wealth of environmental assets. The Land Use Plan must protect and enhance these assets and will encourage sustainable development by protecting natural resources, limiting the impacts of development, and maintaining quality of life for rural communities.

IV - Coordination

It is important to understand that the Land Use Plan can have a serious impact on the fiscal health of local and county governments, and on the ability of agencies to maintain services. The County's Land Use Plan should be closely coordinated with the municipalities and supporting agencies, particularly those in Urban Fringe Areas.

Goals and Policies

The following section describes goals and policies or strategies which will provide the framework for planning recommendations, future projects, and actions. Citizen input played a significant role in development of these goals and policies.

- ▶ Goals describe aspirations toward which planning efforts will be directed. Goals are long range and broad. They typically represent an end to be sought and achieved.
- ▶ Policies are specific strategies that the County will employ to implement the goals. They will guide the decision making by different agencies or entities.
- ▶ Actions are specific and detailed activities. They support the policies and goals with tasks and a specific timeline to be met by the responsible agency or department.

The Goals and Policies are organized into the following categories. The Actions are typically presented in the form of recommendations or are included in the Implementation Schedule:

- ▶ Land Use
- ▶ Housing
- ▶ Community Character
- ▶ Economic Development
- ▶ Parks, Open Space
- ▶ Agriculture
- ▶ Transportation
- ▶ Community Facilities

LAND USE

GOAL 1. Ensure sustainable growth in the County.

- ▶ Limit development only to areas identified as Target Areas.
- ▶ Focus development near existing cities and towns, particularly to areas contiguous to existing development.
- ▶ Develop area and density standards for new residential neighborhoods and subdivisions in different areas.
 - * Urban Fringe Areas: Min. 20 acres, min. 4 dwelling units/acre
 - * Rural Subdivisions: Min. 40 acres, min. 4 dwelling units/acre
 - * Rural Standalone Residential: Min. 1 dwelling unit/20 acres
- ▶ Promote development of agricultural businesses.

GOAL 2. Protect the County's agricultural land while managing growth opportunities.

- ▶ Establish Urban Fringe Areas (UFA) as future growth zones.
- ▶ Promote annexation of lands in Urban Fringe Areas by municipalities for new development.
- ▶ Limit and minimize development outside of Urban Fringe Areas.
- ▶ Promote infill development in existing rural neighborhoods, subdivisions, and town centers. (Examples: The Galleries, Copper Creek, Bryridge Valley, etc.)
- ▶ Limit non-farming activities on prime farmlands.
- ▶ Protect floodplain areas for only agriculture, recreation, and conservation uses.

GOAL 3. Promote development of Complete Neighborhoods.

- ▶ Encourage the clustering of housing units within subdivisions to conserve open space.
- ▶ Encourage residential development that is contiguous and connected to existing development.
- ▶ Encourage a mix of uses within new developments.

GOAL 4. Support diversified employment opportunities.

- ▶ Promote mixed-use development in and around established neighborhoods where appropriate infrastructure exists.
- ▶ Encourage development of quality employment centers in designated areas.



MIXED-USE BUILDING CONCEPT

HOUSING

GOAL 1. Ensure the availability of diverse housing options.

- ▶ Support neighborhood conservation in Calumet Township, Leroy, and other communities.
- ▶ Continue to enforce existing building and maintenance codes to protect housing quality.
- ▶ Promote development of housing types which allow residents to stay in place.

GOAL 2. Conserve and enhance established neighborhoods.

- ▶ Establish standards that promote buffering and transition areas between residential and other land uses.
- ▶ Limit greenfield residential development only to where such development can be substantiated by market conditions or local needs, i.e. senior housing.
- ▶ Encourage subdivision developers to work with municipalities for developments planned in Urban Fringe Areas.

COMMUNITY CHARACTER

GOAL 1. Foster distinctive rural and urban characters which reflect the residents' values.

- ▶ Promote the development of Town Centers and pocket neighborhoods in Target Areas.
- ▶ Promote cluster developments that protect sensitive areas and preserve land for open space uses.
- ▶ Apply design standards that are complementary to the character of the adjoining uses.
- ▶ Protect existing historic and environmental resources.
- ▶ Protect visual resources to ensure that Lake County's traditional landscape remains a valuable civic and economic resource.
- ▶ Coordinate with surrounding municipalities to ensure the County's plans are compatible with those of other municipalities.

GOAL 2. Maintain agricultural heritage and family farming as part of the Lake County character and lifestyle.

- ▶ Maintain a 40 acre minimum area for agriculture parcel divisions.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

GOAL 1. Promote the development of employment centers in strategic locations.

- ▶ Establish a Mixed-Use Commercial Target Area on US-41 from 137th Avenue – 151st Avenue.
- ▶ Establish a North Hayden Target Area centered at the northern intersection of US-41 and IN-2.
 - * Mixed-use commercial development: within ¼-mile of the intersection.
 - * Supporting pocket neighborhoods: up to ½-mile from the intersection.
- ▶ Designate IN-2 around the IN-55 intersections as a Target Area for future mixed-use commercial development.
- ▶ Designate IN-2 from Georgia Street to Clay Street as a Highway Commercial Target Area, with business park uses permitted within 1-mile of IN-2 in this area.

GOAL 2. Create economic opportunities for residents in urban corridors.

- ▶ Promote redevelopment of Ridge Road as a retail and mixed-use focused corridor.

GOAL 3. Promote diversification of the farm economy.

- ▶ Partner with agricultural agencies to identify opportunities for agribusiness ventures.
- ▶ Encourage in-home businesses supporting diversified on-site farm-based uses.
- ▶ Encourage the development of agriculture-based businesses such as bed and breakfasts, organic farming, food service and sales (including farm-to-fork restaurants), and farming-based tourism activities.



A FARMER'S MARKET CAN BE A DESIRABLE AGRICULTURAL BUSINESS IN THE DISTRICT

PARKS/OPEN SPACE

GOAL 1. Preserve open and green space for all County residents.

- ▶ Expand the countywide green recreational corridor along the Kankakee River.
- ▶ Explore the development of a regional recreational facility between Colfax St. and Cleveland St., along Cady Marsh Ditch, in Calumet Township.
- ▶ Support development of green corridors along existing waterways for conservation, flood protection, and recreation.
- ▶ Pursue acquisition or preservation of properties that contain unique natural features and are located in areas that are deficient in public parks.

GOAL 2. Provide adequate access to recreation space throughout the County.

- ▶ Ensure that the residents of each township have access to at least one park facility.
- ▶ Identify new park opportunities in Calumet Township.

GOAL 3. Make recreational trail systems accessible to all residents of the County.

- ▶ Improve pedestrian access to parks and recreational facilities via sidewalks, bike paths, and other non-motorized pathways.
- ▶ Establish a trail corridor along West Creek, connecting to St. John and future county parks.
- ▶ Establish a trail corridor along Singleton Ditch, connecting to Stoney Run Park.
- ▶ Establish a trail corridor along Cedar Creek, connecting to Lowell and Cedar Lake.
- ▶ Work with municipalities to construct a trail along the Michigan Central rail corridor in Calumet Township.
- ▶ Extend the trail corridor along the Kankakee River.



PRESERVE AND PROVIDE ADEQUATE PARK AND RECREATIONAL SPACE, SUCH AS EXPANDED PARK FACILITIES (LEFT) AND TRAILS (RIGHT)

AGRICULTURE

GOAL 1. Ensure that the agricultural and family farming heritage remains a part of the Lake County character and lifestyle.

- ▶ Limit lands in floodplain areas for only agriculture, recreation, and conservation uses.
- ▶ Promote the creation of farming clusters to encourage synergy and resource sharing among county farmers.

GOAL 2. Make farming and agriculture a feasible option for younger generations.

- ▶ Support the development of an agriculture land bank program, making those parcels available to young and new farmers.
- ▶ Promote the generational transfer of property for the purpose of maintaining existing farming uses.
- ▶ Encourage urban farming in areas that are already developed.
- ▶ Refrain from practices that would fragment the farmland.



TRANSPORTATION

GOAL 1. Protect major corridors as viable facilities for mobility and connectivity.

- ▶ Support the development of Ridge Road and Cleveland Street as multi-modal corridors with walkable and bikeable facilities.
- ▶ Convert Cleveland Street into a pedestrian accessible corridor with access to regional trails and corridors.
- ▶ Continue the conversion of 45th Avenue into a Complete Street.
- ▶ Develop design guidelines for streetscape enhancement, including landscaping, lighting, and pedestrian use.

GOAL 2. Ensure the availability of alternative transportation modes for all residents.

- ▶ Promote expansion of the regional trail systems into south Lake County.
- ▶ Promote sidewalks and on-street bike lanes on lower traffic roads, and incorporate them in all new subdivisions.
- ▶ Promote the availability of regional transit in urbanizing areas.

GOAL 3. Ensure the existing road network is safely maintained and meets the needs of the County.

- ▶ Develop a comprehensive maintenance plan for road repairs and reconstruction.
- ▶ Ensure mandatory traffic studies are conducted with all proposed development.
- ▶ Establish rules that require developers to fund road and street improvements in conjunction with new development.

GOAL 4. Ensure the adequacy of the road system to meet future needs of the County.

- ▶ Identify roads that can be extended to create a more robust grid system and relieve traffic on heavily traveled roads. (Ex.: Sheffield, White Oak, 137th, Belshaw, Burr, Grant, etc.)
- ▶ Promote an extension of the US-231 designation using existing roads that could connect to IL-394.
- ▶ Explore options to reroute IN-2 truck traffic south of Lowell.
- ▶ Explore options for a new east-west truck route south of Lowell and connecting to Peotone, IL.
- ▶ Develop an access management plan for US-41 and IN-2, including potential funding sources for eligible improvements.



ENSURE AVAILABILITY OF ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION MODES FOR ALL RESIDENTS.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

GOAL 1. Require all developments to have access to safe water supply and wastewater treatment.

- ▶ Encourage the integration of new water and sewer systems, as well as other public facilities, with adjoining developments and communities.
- ▶ Limit the use of septic systems in all new development, except for farms and undeveloped lots in existing subdivisions.

GOAL 2. Meet the infrastructure and technology needs of residents.

- ▶ Provide infrastructure improvements in developed areas that can support existing and new development.
- ▶ Coordinate the future connection of sewer, water, and other public facilities with existing municipalities in Urban Fringe Areas.
- ▶ Create partnerships that support the establishment of water and sanitary sewer service districts to serve rural communities.
- ▶ Work with service providers to expand internet, cable, and other telecommunication services to underserved areas.



NATURAL FEATURES, SUCH AS THIS CHAIN OF LAKES, CAN BE AN EFFECTIVE PART OF NATURAL STORMWATER MANAGEMENT PRACTICES.



Future Plan

6

The Future Plan articulates appropriate land uses for the unincorporated areas of Lake County for the next 10 to 20 years. The policies and recommendations presented in this chapter recognize the vastness and diversity of the County and its population. With this diversity in mind, the Plan aims to present a flexible and balanced approach for future decision making. This will allow the County to manage its growth, while protecting and enhancing the County's rural character and natural environment.

The Future Plan is the central chapter of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan as required by Indiana code (36-7-4) Section 501. The Plan defines the type, location, and mix of land uses desired by the County in the future. The elements contained in this Plan aim to implement goals, strategies, and policies articulated by the residents in several community meetings to guide the future of the Planning Area.

The Future Plan is guided by the four guiding principles identified in Chapter 5: preservation, managed growth, sustainability, and coordination. These principles have influenced the policy direction for the Land Use Plan. They also establish the priorities for the County as it engages in the implementation of the Plan. The County will use these principles to direct most new residential and commercial growth into several land use typology categories ranging from urban fringe areas to natural and open space. The County will further focus on agricultural preservation, infrastructure enhancement, open space protection, and the development of employment centers that can create new employment and investment opportunities for the County.

The Future Plan addresses the following issues:

- ▶ Distribution, location, and extent of the uses of land for agriculture, housing, business, open space, recreation, infrastructure, and related categories of land uses.
- ▶ Standards of housing density and building intensity for the identified land use designations.

The Future Plan is organized into several sections, each describing specific patterns or characters for different land use typologies identified by the Plan. These land use typologies establish the framework for the proposed Land Use Plan. The recommendations included for different land uses are intended to form the basis for the development of zoning decisions and zoning amendments as desired by the County.

The Transportation Plan is outlined separately in Chapter 7. The steps necessary to implement the policies and recommendations are provided in Chapter 8.

Land Use

The Land Use Plan is intended to shape the future physical character of the Planning Area by recommending a series of proposals which will focus development in several identified Target Areas. The Plan also establishes a process in which development is not impeded, while sustainability and preservation of the County's resources are achieved. The primary focus of the Future Plan, however, will be to direct development toward municipal boundaries and in contiguous "Urban Fringe Areas (UFAs)." The Plan will further focus on already developed county neighborhoods by promoting policies which strengthen these communities and create complete neighborhoods. The corridor land use typology aims to support an orderly process for several corridors in the County that could be developed in the near future.

LAND USE CATEGORIES

The Future Plan proposes eight different land use categories for the unincorporated area of Lake County. Each land use designation describes the primary land use and development intensity of parcels under County jurisdiction. Such description is intended to provide the basis for future zoning. Under the State law, the County's zoning code is the regulatory tool that can be used to implement land use policies. As such, the County's subdivision and zoning ordinances are expected to be amended to reflect the proposed recommendations in this Plan.

1. Urban Fringe Area

The Urban Fringe Area (UFA) is a comprehensive land use designation comprising all land uses found within the UFA designated area. The UFA is a land area that is defined by location, not by a single land use. The UFA does not intend to prescribe a specific land use, but is intended to be used as a tool to manage growth and prevent uncontrolled development around existing municipalities. This land use typology typically covers areas adjacent to municipalities.

The UFA designated district, shown in Figure 11, primarily consists of a land area spanning the center of the County, south of St. John, Schererville, Crown Point, Winfield, and certain land area around Cedar Lake and Lowell. This area encompasses approximately 45.4 square miles, representing approximately 19% of the existing unincorporated area and 7% of the entire County.

It is recommended that the existing land uses – mostly agricultural or residential – will remain intact. Development in the UFA is by and large anticipated to be incorporated by an adjacent municipality as development occurs. Given the fact that access to municipal infrastructure will be required for all new development, UFA designated districts could perhaps be the primary location for most future development in the unincorporated area of the County.



CONTRASTING USES THAT MAY EXIST IN THE URBAN FRINGE AREA: NEIGHBORHOOD RESIDENTIAL (TOP AND MIDDLE) AND AGRICULTURAL USES

- Urban Fringe Area**
-  Existing Municipalities
 -  Urban Fringe Area
 -  Future Unincorporated Area

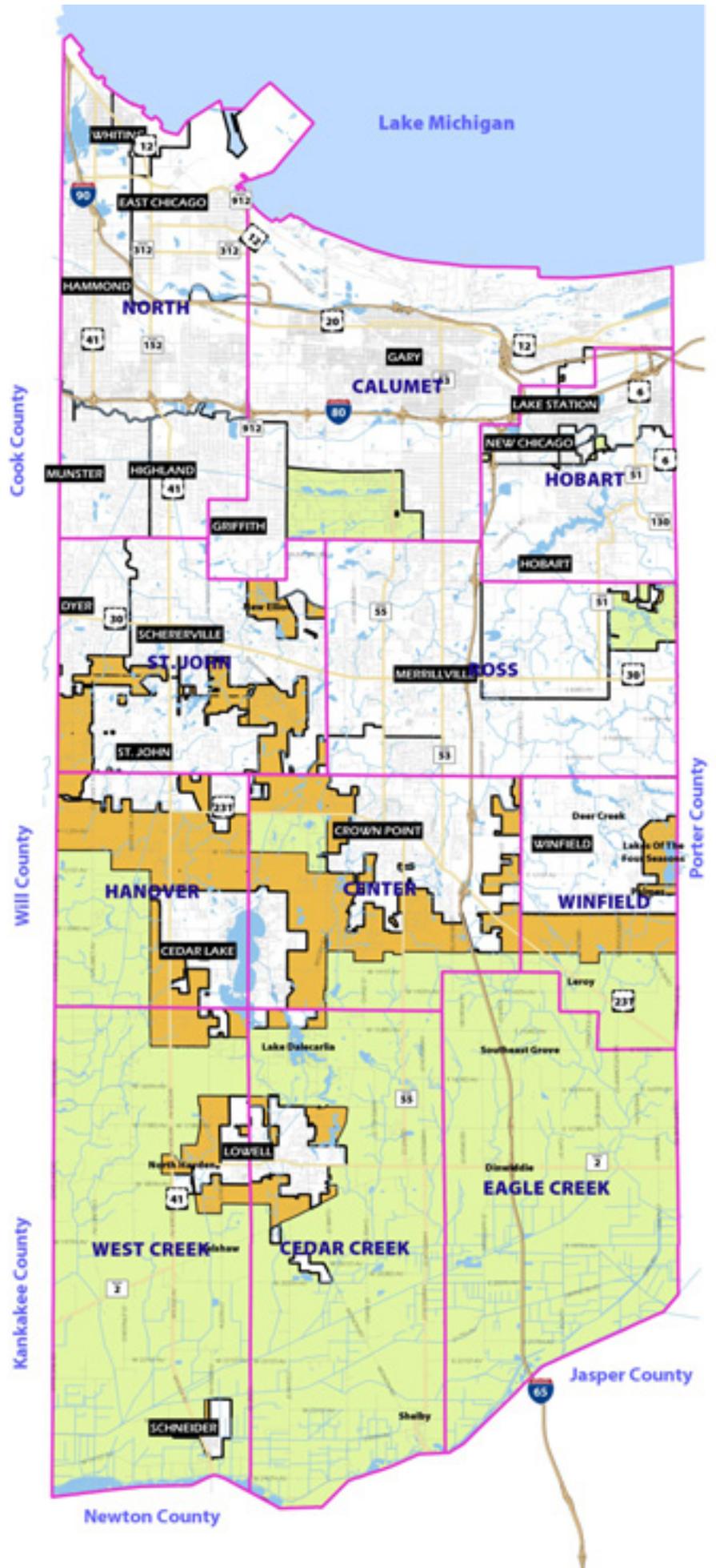


FIGURE 11 - URBAN FRINGE AREAS

In addition to the requirement for infrastructure and public utilities, the UFA should typically be master planned and be compatible with adjoining uses. This will require coordination between the County and the municipalities for installation of infrastructure and other improvements (i.e. sidewalks) as development occurs. Such coordination will allow the continuation of a sense of community and prevents the development of disjointed subdivisions. Further coordination may be required with respect to existing development or structures within the UFA District that do not have access to public facilities. Most of these structures are expected to eventually be connected to municipal public facilities. Development agreements should be employed to ensure that any required infrastructure improvements are carried out. These agreements should also include provisions for future incorporation into an adjoining municipality in the future.

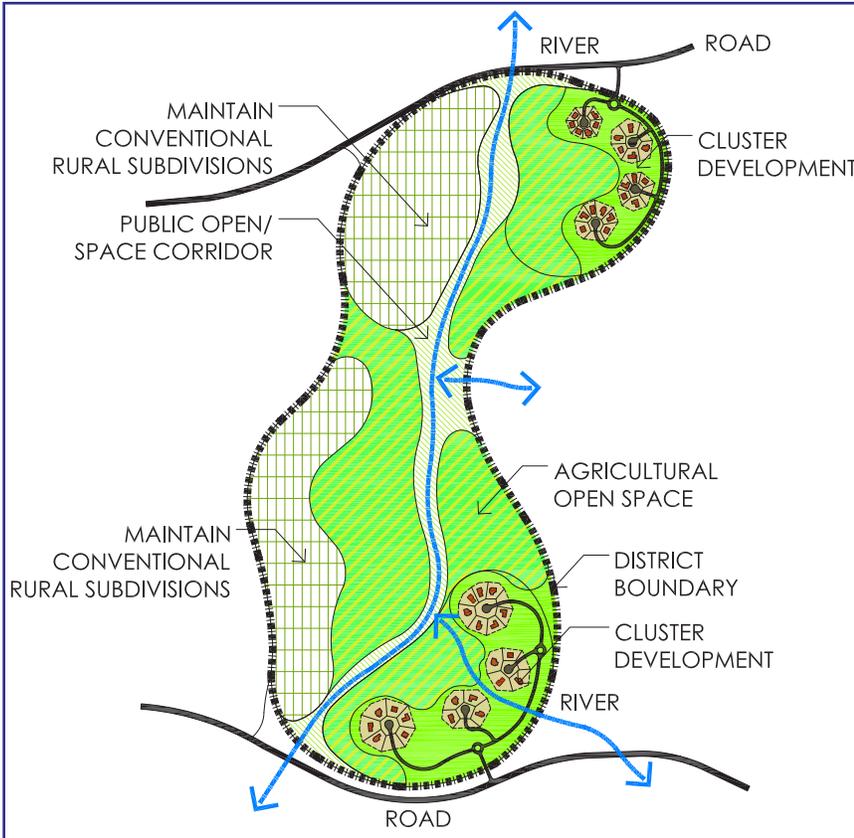
PRIMARY USE:

Land use typology within the UFA district should typically retain its existing uses. With the exception of the existing residential uses, most of the land should remain as agriculture or open space until future development occurs, and a zoning change may be required to accommodate the proposed use. New development will have a pattern that is similar in character and scale to adjoining uses. In most cases, new development is expected to be planned residential uses, mixed with other supportive uses as appropriate for the area.

Outside the UFA, the remaining portions of the County should maintain agricultural and open space characteristics to preserve the County’s rural character.

| APPROPRIATE LAND USES |
|---|
| Residential |
| Mixed Use |
| Parks, Recreation, Open Space |
| Institutional |
| Agriculture |
| ZONING |
| Planned Development (20 Ac. Min.) |
| Agriculture (40 Ac. Min.) |
| Density: 2-4 units per Ac. |
| Intensity: 0.5-2 Floor Area Ratio (FAR) |
| BUILDING TYPE |
| Single Family, detached & attached |
| Mixed Use: 2-3 story |
| Commercial: 1-2 story |
| Corridors: 2-3 story |

2. Cluster Neighborhood



CLUSTER NEIGHBORHOOD ZONING CONCEPT



EXISTING NEIGHBORHOOD, WITH POTENTIAL INFILL LOTS HIGHLIGHTED IN YELLOW

The Cluster Neighborhood land use category includes numerous concentrated residential neighborhoods and rural subdivisions – typically 10+ housing units – that are scattered throughout the County, but may not be near or contiguous to existing municipal boundaries. In some cases, they may be “master-planned” communities with a strong suburban character. In others, they may be neighborhoods that have developed more naturally over time, with varying housing styles and sizes. Large lot, single-family detached homes are the predominant housing type, and are typically found concentrated in a rural or natural scenic setting.

Existing Cluster Neighborhoods are not typically connected to municipal infrastructure and utilities. Streets do not have curbs and gutters, and homes are served by wells for water and septic systems for sanitation. In master planned neighborhoods, wells and septic systems may be shared by homes within the subdivision. In such communities, efforts should be made to link such development to public utilities to the extent feasible.

PRIMARY USE

Future land uses in the Cluster Neighborhood designated areas will primarily consist of suburban-style residential uses. New development in most cases will be in the form of infill development with a similar character to the existing uses with respect to form, scale, and style. Large lot infill residential uses may be permitted where required by existing site conditions. Alternatively, the subdivision of larger lots (up to 20 acres) to smaller, individual lots may be allowed in special circumstances. New planned subdivisions immediately adjacent to existing neighborhoods may be permitted, provided they consist of a minimum of 20 acres with appropriate infrastructure. The inclusion of other uses or amenities which foster the creation of a “complete neighborhood” may also be encouraged. Non-residential uses should be limited to corridor sections that are within the neighborhood or locations that conform to existing land uses.

| <i>APPROPRIATE LAND USES</i> |
|-------------------------------|
| Residential Infill |
| Planned Residential |
| Mixed Use, Corridors |
| Parks, Recreation, Open Space |
| Agriculture |

| <i>ZONING</i> |
|---|
| Planned Residential (20 Ac. Min.) |
| Agriculture |
| Density: 1-4 units per Ac. |
| Intensity: 0.5-2 Floor Area Ratio (FAR) |

| <i>BUILDING TYPE</i> |
|------------------------------------|
| Single Family, detached & attached |
| Mixed Use, Corridors: 1-3 story |



CLUSTERED RESIDENTIAL CONCEPT

Cluster Neighborhoods
 Clustered Neighborhoods

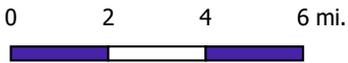
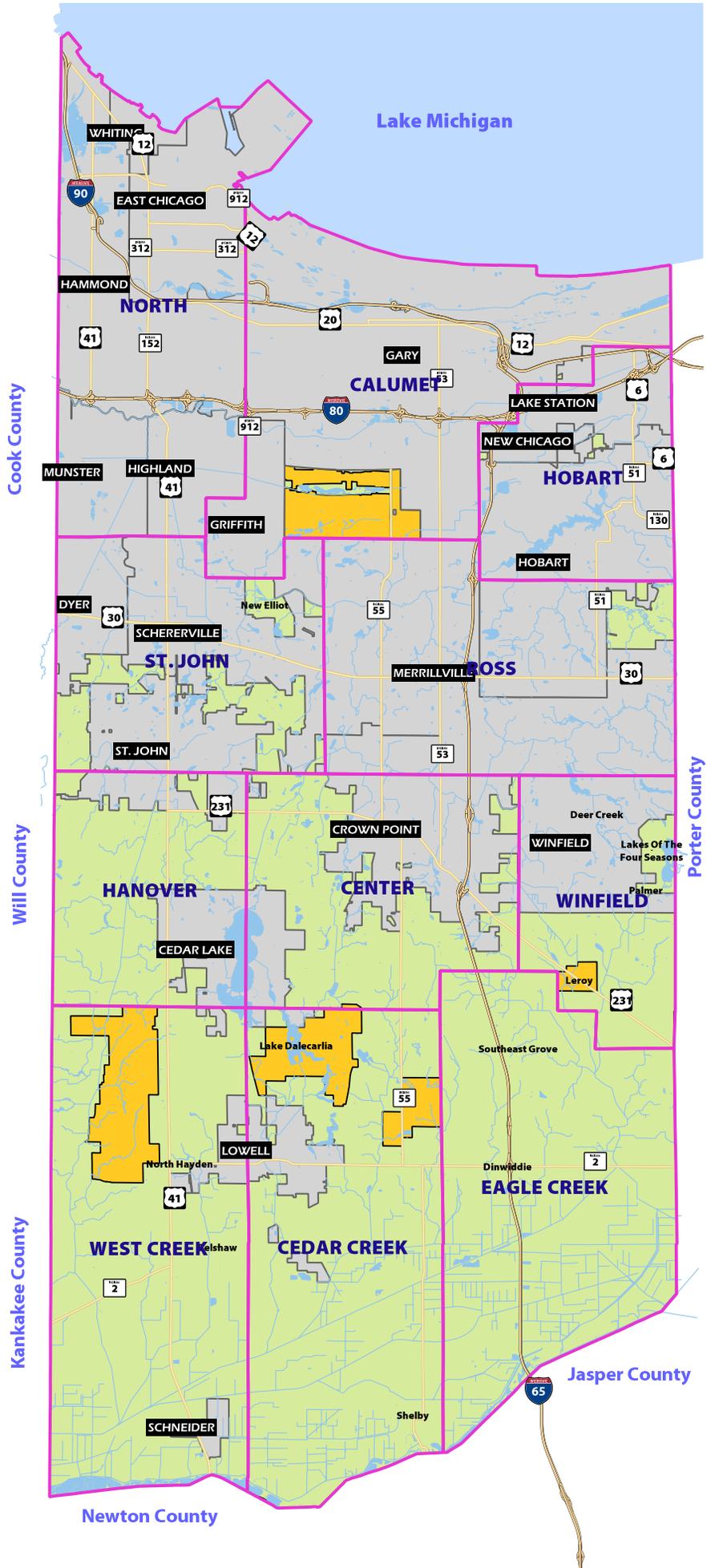


FIGURE 12 - CLUSTER NEIGHBORHOOD AREAS

3. Agriculture

The Agriculture land use category aims to protect Lake County’s farming heritage by safeguarding its fertile farmland from non-agricultural uses and development that negatively impacts farming as a lifestyle and business practice. This land use is characterized by high concentrations of “prime farmland,” as defined by the United States Department of Agriculture, as well as a scenic rural landscape with green and waterway corridors.

Residential uses in agriculture districts will be limited in density and must be complementary to agricultural uses, consisting simply of one primary residential household unit and a workers’ unit that will coexist alongside the farmland. Development not linked to agricultural or agricultural/residential purposes should not be permitted. New facilities supporting agricultural operations should preserve open spaces and environmental features, including existing wooded areas, waterways and wetlands, and natural topography.

The preservation and enhancement of family farms is also an important objective which ensures the continuation of farming in Lake County. To foster this tradition, the subdivision of farmland to less than 40 acres should be prohibited.



EFFICIENT AND SUSTAINABLE FARMING IN LAKE COUNTY CAN PREVENT THE LOSS OF AGRICULTURAL INCOME WHILE IMPROVING THE OVERALL SENSE OF PLACE.

| <i>APPROPRIATE LAND USES</i> |
|-------------------------------------|
| Agriculture |
| Parks, Recreation, Open Space |
| Residential, Ancillary |
| Farmers Market, Ancillary |
| <i>ZONING</i> |
| Agriculture (40 Ac. Min.) |
| <i>BUILDING TYPE</i> |
| Single Family, detached & attached |
| Barns and related storage buildings |

PRIMARY USE

Areas designated for agriculture are primarily intended for cultivation of the land, production of crops, and raising of livestock. In general, the central and southern parts of the County are predominantly proposed for the agriculture classification based on their high soil quality, high agricultural output, location within the Kankakee River and its tributaries' floodplain, and lack of encroachment from other types of development.



HORSE TRAINING FARM AND RANCH (TOP) AND BED AND BREAKFAST (BOTTOM) CAN ADD ALTERNATIVE AGRICULTURAL BUSINESSES SUITABLE FOR THE AREA.

4. Residential

New residential development is anticipated to occur primarily in UFA or Cluster Neighborhood designated areas. Both of these land use typologies allow for the development of residential uses. Residential characteristics of the unincorporated areas are expected to consist of the following three residential district types.

Rural Residential - This residential district consists of single-family housing developed at densities of 1-4 units per acre. Subdivisions may include large lot, single-family residential units and high proportions of open space (typically 40-70%). Some may take the form of a cluster of residential units on smaller lots to conserve open space, agricultural land, and sensitive or scenic natural features. Although separate sanitary service and water are not required for such rural residential areas, elements of green infrastructure and natural open spaces will be the predominant visual elements for this district. Rural Residential must be planned with varied types of residential structures, ample open space, rolling hills (where present), generous building setbacks, and rural fencing along the primary road.

PRIMARY USE

Single-family detached and attached units, forestry, traditional land cultivation, complementary uses, including open space and recreation, equestrian uses, schools, places of worship, and other institutional uses.

| <i>APPROPRIATE LAND USES</i> |
|--------------------------------------|
| Single Family Residential |
| Planned Residential (Cluster) |
| Parks, Recreation, Open Space |
| Agriculture |
| <i>ZONING</i> |
| Residential Infill (1-4 unit per AC) |
| <i>BUILDING TYPE</i> |
| Single Family, detached & attached |



AMPLE SETBACKS IN RURAL RESIDENTIAL DISTRICTS WILL MAINTAIN THE SENSE OF RURAL LIVING.

| APPROPRIATE LAND USES |
|------------------------------------|
| Single Family Residential |
| Planned Residential (Cluster) |
| Parks, Recreation, Open Space |
| Agriculture |
| ZONING |
| Single Family Residential |
| Planned Residential (20 Ac. Min.) |
| Agriculture |
| Density: 4-6 units per Ac. |
| BUILDING TYPE |
| Single Family, detached & attached |
| Town House, Multifamily: 2-3 story |

Suburban Residential - Low-density suburban residential units can be developed in neighborhoods that promote a sense of community and offer the opportunity for transition. This type of use can concentrate in densities and locations where it can be served efficiently by infrastructure, public facilities, and the transportation network. Neighborhoods will be developed as compact and pedestrian oriented, with a range of lot sizes and measurable open space. Development densities may average not less than 4 dwelling units per acre, depending on the adequacy of roads, utilities, and available public services and facilities.

PRIMARY USE

Single-family residential detached and attached housing, continuation of agricultural uses, open space, civic and recreation, and mixed-uses where appropriate.



AMPLE OPEN SPACE IN A SUBDIVISION SHOULD BE CONSIDERED IN SUBDIVISION DESIGN TO PROVIDE FOR THE PARK AND RECREATIONAL NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY.

Urban Residential - Moderate-density residential uses are designated for locations where such development can provide a transition from low-density suburban to either already developed residential and commercial uses, or for areas proposed to be developed for such uses. The residential character will consist of 2-3 story buildings with a maximum density of 4-6 units per acre. Areas proposed for urban residential could accommodate a variety uses and should include sidewalks and access to neighborhood amenities and transportation. To the extent possible, such residential uses should be located in neighborhood centers, corridors, and as a part of mixed-use structures and development.

PRIMARY USE

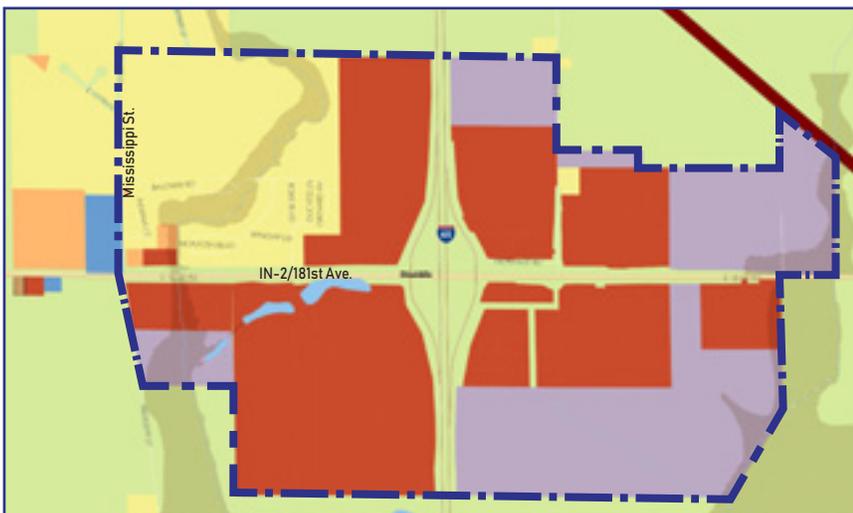
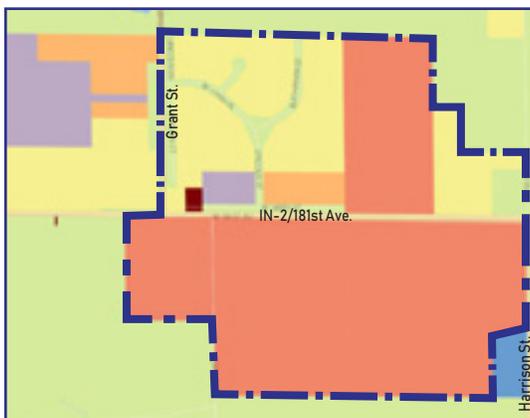
Single-family residential attached and detached housing, multi-family housing, senior housing, neighborhood-oriented mixed-uses, civic and recreation facilities.

| <i>APPROPRIATE LAND USES</i> |
|------------------------------------|
| Single Family Residential |
| Multi-family Residential |
| Planned Development, Mixed uses |
| Parks, Recreation, Open Space |
| <i>ZONING</i> |
| Single Family Residential |
| Planned Residential (20 Ac. Min.) |
| Multi-family |
| Density: 4-6 units per Ac. |
| <i>BUILDING TYPE</i> |
| Single Family, detached & attached |



MAINTAINING A BALANCE BETWEEN DENSITY AND LIFESTYLE IS AN IMPORTANT FACTOR IN AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND BUILDING COMMUNITY CHARACTER. CONTEXT-SENSITIVE HOUSING CAN BLEND IN WITH NEARBY SINGLE FAMILY HOMES.

5. Neighborhood Center



LOCATION MAPS OF NEIGHBORHOOD CENTERS: NORTH HAYDEN (TOP), GRANT/HARRISON (CENTER), AND DINWIDDIE (BOTTOM)

Neighborhood Centers are target areas that are suitable for commercial-oriented uses aimed at serving the needs of the nearby communities. Neighborhood Centers are an integral part of the residential communities they serve, particularly when established as part of a planned development or through a development agreement. The size and scale of Neighborhood Centers should relate to the size of the community it intends to serve. Neighborhood Centers are located at an intersection and typically have frontage on a major arterial or collector road, but typically should not encroach into the surrounding area for more than 600 feet. Infill and redevelopment should be encouraged in these areas where applicable.

Neighborhood Centers will accommodate a variety of uses, including retail and service options that support the common needs of the surrounding neighborhoods for goods and convenient services. The Neighborhood Center should also supply limited local office space demanded by neighborhood businesses, and may provide medium-density housing for the neighborhood. The Neighborhood Center should include a system of interconnected sidewalks and trails that will provide access to parks, recreation, and various forms of transportation, and link to other activity centers in close proximity.

The Future Plan identifies three locations that are suitable for development as a Neighborhood Center.

- ▶ North Hayden (US-41 & IN-2)
- ▶ Grant/Harrison (IN-2 & IN-55)
- ▶ Dinwiddie (I-65 & IN-2)



CONCEPT FOR NORTH HAYDEN TARGET AREA

| <i>APPROPRIATE LAND USES</i> |
|--------------------------------------|
| Retail Commercial Uses |
| Office, Professional |
| Residential (Urban) |
| Parks, Recreation, Open Space |
| Institutional uses |
| <i>ZONING</i> |
| Commercial, Neighborhood |
| Multi-family |
| Parks, Open Space |
| Agriculture |
| <i>BUILDING TYPE</i> |
| Multi-family Residential (2-3 story) |
| Commercial, office (1-2 story) |
| Institutional |

PRIMARY USE

Convenience retail, personal and professional services, institutional and community gathering places (e.g. schools, parks, churches, community centers, etc.), along with a variety of mixed-uses with higher density, and diverse residential uses that serve the population of a rural community.



MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT IN NEIGHBORHOOD CENTERS CAN BRING TRADITIONAL URBAN DESIGN INTO RURAL COMMUNITIES.

6. Corridor

This land use typology consists of concentrated areas of high quality employment facilities, integrated with or adjacent to complementary retail and commercial uses and/or medium-and high-density residential uses. The Corridor-designated target areas typically are located on a major transportation route and meet the greater needs of the residents at large. Corridors can be regulated in a manner that enhances mobility while creating an inviting and aesthetically pleasing road frontage that can accommodate multiple modes of transportation.

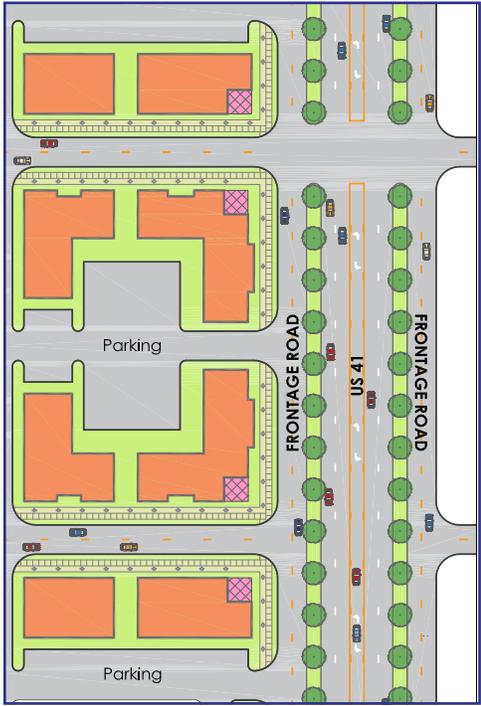
Parking is an important element of the road character. Parking lots can be placed to the side or in the back of the development to limit the number of curb cuts. This will allow for the development of larger blocks, which in turn could permit larger development with higher intensity. Development and creation of transit nodes as a part of development, linkage to pedestrian facilities, and access management are all important considerations that should be included in the planning and design of the roads.

Corridors must accommodate a variety of uses ranging from residential to commercial and mixed uses. Adequate buffering, mix of uses, sharing of parking, architectural style, and massing of the buildings are important consideration for these roadways. A floor area ratio of 1-2 will generate the appropriate density to ensure an adequate scale and massing for the road frontage.



LOCATION MAPS OF CORRIDORS: US 41 (LEFT) AND RIDGE ROAD & CLEVELAND STREET (RIGHT); BOUNDARIES ARE APPROXIMATE.

| APPROPRIATE LAND USES |
|--------------------------------------|
| Commercial Uses |
| Office |
| Mixed-Use |
| Parks, Recreation, Open Space |
| Institutional uses |
| ZONING |
| Highway Commercial |
| Multi-family |
| Parks, Open Space |
| Agriculture |
| BUILDING TYPE |
| Multi-family Residential (2-5 story) |
| Commercial, office (1-4 story) |
| Institutional (1-3 story) |



CONCEPT FOR DEVELOPMENT ALONG US 41 CORRIDOR AREA

PRIMARY USES

Future land use for each corridor will vary, as each corridor type has its own unique character. Primary uses for each corridor must reflect the opportunities that each corridor offers. The recommended uses for each corridor include:

- ▶ **US 41/Wicker Avenue:** Auto-oriented commercial retail uses, offices and commercial mixed uses between US-231 and 141st Avenue, with adequate setbacks and frontage roads to limit curb cuts on US 41.
- ▶ **State Route 2:** Neighborhood Center development, in locations defined above. Agricultural uses elsewhere in the corridor.
- ▶ **Ridge Road:** Commercial and lower-intensity office uses, as well as medium to high density residential mixed-uses. Application of Complete Street principles should be integrated in the planning of the corridor and uses assigned to it.
- ▶ **State Route 55/Cleveland Street:** Commercial and retail uses on the north, medium density housing, mixed housing development south of 45th Avenue.

7. Business Park Center

Business Park Centers offer the opportunity for economic development while preserving the overall character of the unincorporated area. The land use typology is characterized by the strategic use of land for activities which can bring employment opportunities for residents in an efficient and resourceful manner. This land use category encourages development of light manufacturing, industrial, flex space, and office uses in locations that will minimally affect surrounding properties. Commercial and retail uses are secondary to employment uses.

The availability of major highway access offers the opportunity for an inclusion of land uses which can benefit from this proximity. One such area is located near the Dinwiddie Target Area, around I-65 and IN-2, just east of Lowell. A Business Park Center at this location can consist of a variety of uses, including logistics and distribution, research and development, light manufacturing, and tech industry applications. These uses can be integrated into a planned development that is not only sustainable, but will also provide significant employment opportunities and tax revenue generation. If developed properly, it can also help establish a positive community image.

The development of a business park center can benefit from other resources in the region. The center can be planned with adequate performance standards, including those for buffering and availability of water and sewer, that can reduce or mitigate the negative impact of such development on surrounding agricultural areas.



RECENT TRENDS SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF BUSINESS AND INDUSTRIAL CENTERS THAT ARE NOT ONLY SUSTAINABLE, BUT BRING A SENSE OF COMMUNITY INTO THE LANDSCAPE WITH A VARIETY OF ON-SITE AMENITIES.

| <i>APPROPRIATE LAND USES</i> |
|-------------------------------------|
| Commercial Uses |
| Office |
| Warehousing, Distribution |
| Technology Park |
| <i>ZONING</i> |
| Business Park |
| Commercial/Office |
| Agriculture |
| <i>BUILDING TYPE</i> |
| Industrial (1-3 story) |
| Office (1-4 story) |
| Commercial (1-2 story) |

Given the character of the Business Park Center, the designated area is not conducive for mixed-use development, although in some sections, less intensive commercial and office uses may be co-located within the center to provide the transition between the higher intensity industrial uses and adjacent commercial or agricultural uses.

PRIMARY USES

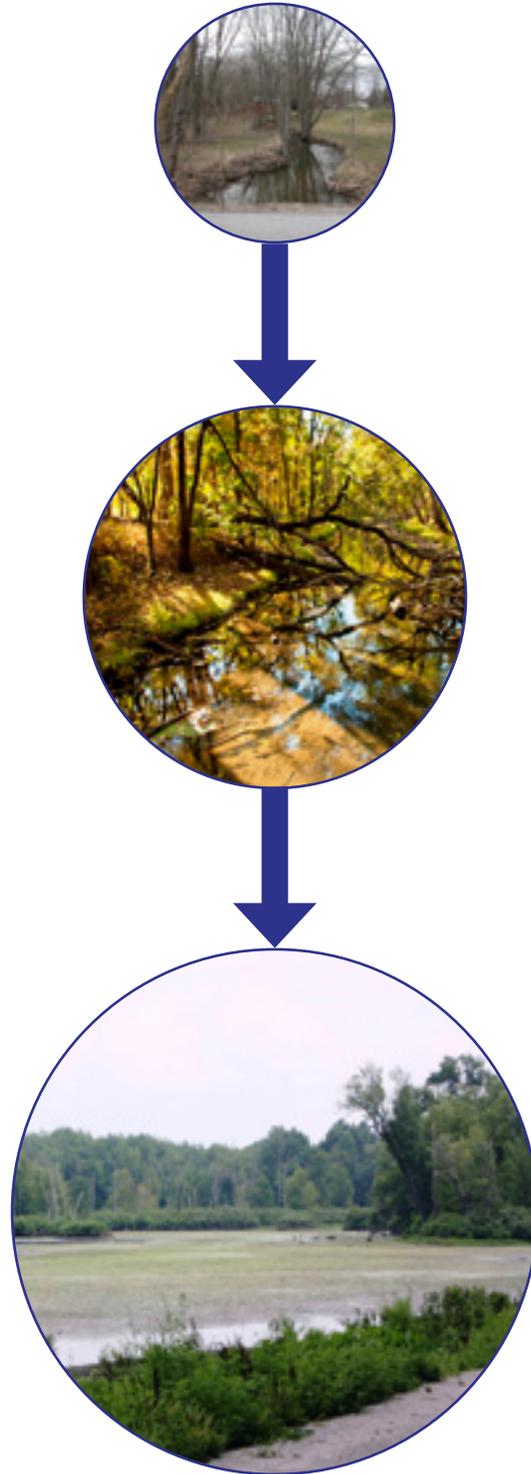
Commercial and office uses, logistic, research and development, light manufacturing, processing, supporting office, wholesale, distribution, warehousing, and other employment center activities.

8. Conservation District

The protection of natural resources and open space in the County is key to preserving the character of the region and balancing urban growth with the availability of natural resources. Natural resources in Lake County primarily consist of several land categories that include:

- ▶ River and stream corridors
- ▶ Forested land
- ▶ Natural and scenic places
- ▶ Historic and culturally sensitive sites
- ▶ Important and prime farmland

The Future Plan proposes to create an interconnected network of green space that conserves natural ecosystems and provides associated benefits to broad sectors of the population and ecosystem in Lake County and the region. The County's natural topography has created several watersheds. These watersheds lend themselves to the creation of a hierarchical ecosystem which connects upland forests to the small streams that cover most of the land in the County. Taking a watershed approach to conservation allows for natural conservation through a combination of land and water stewardship efforts ranging from local to regional levels. As such, the Future Plan supports development of a conservation framework which includes multiple components. At the highest level, new ecosystems are created by large natural and working land. These lands may consist of parks, preserves, forests, and farms in their natural and man-made state. At the lowest level, different local sites are established, consisting of parks, trail corridors, and protected green spaces. These areas may be linked by a series of green corridors along streams and rivers, connecting the highest part of the ecosystem to the lowest part. This design can bring nature to residents while preserving the agricultural lifestyle. The watershed approach to conservation will

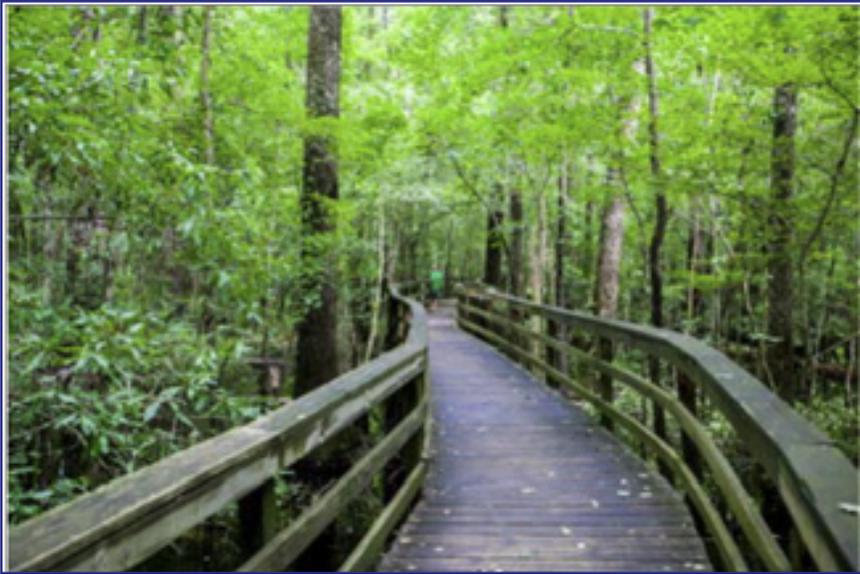


A HIERARCHICAL ECOSYSTEM FOR CONSERVATION BEGINS AT THE LOCAL STREAM LEVEL, WHICH IN TURN AFFECTS THE RIVERS, AND EVENTUALLY CONTINUES TO THE WATERSHEDS THEMSELVES.

| <i>APPROPRIATE LAND USES</i> |
|--|
| Parks, Recreation, Open Space |
| Agriculture |
| Forestry |
| <i>ZONING</i> |
| Conservation |
| Parks, Open Space |
| Agriculture |
| <i>BUILDING TYPE</i> |
| Institutional (1-2 story) |
| Single Family Residential (Ancillary to Agriculture) |

also promote plant and species preservation and maintenance of ecological processes in order to carry and filter stormwater runoff, store and clean fresh water, clean urban air, and prevent or ameliorate the effects of habitat fragmentation.

Natural resources can be preserved through a combination of public and private efforts, including the purchase of land by the County, expanded conservation easements along streams (200' width), private donations, cluster developments, transfer of development rights, and development regulations limiting development to the minimum amount necessary.



PRIMARY USE

Environmentally sensitive development that supports agricultural, horticultural, forestry, and related working land uses, educational and research practices, tourism, recreational areas, waterways, and other types of natural open spaces including national, state, or local preserves, parks, and protected habitats. Subdivision of land for commercial and residential development is discouraged within conservation designated areas.

Future Land Use Map

The proposed land use categories and the supporting Future Land Use Map reflect the current vision for the unincorporated areas. The proposed land use categories provide a framework for development of county neighborhoods, commercial and employment centers, and rural and environmental conservation. The Future Land Use Map represents an amalgamation of the proposed development typologies described above, and how they fit within the context of the existing unincorporated area. Outside of these designated areas, the existing land uses generally remain untouched, preserving most of the remaining area as agriculture-based uses.

The future land use categories and the Future Land Use Map are provided solely with the intention of offering guidance to the Plan Commission, County Council, Board of Commissioners, and other decision makers. It is important to note that the Future Plan does not make formal suggestions to rezone any properties to align with these future land use designations, but instead provides support for these future land use designations during a rezoning case evaluation, or any code amendment or revisions that the County may consider in the future.

The future land use category designated areas were developed by considering development character, utility service areas, lines of natural features, and existing parcel lines and roadways. Particularly for areas near or within the boundaries of UFAs, discretion by the Lake County Plan Commission is required. To facilitate such decisions, the following considerations should be applied:

- ▶ Existing development context of property.
- ▶ Environmental context of the property.
- ▶ Development activity or proposed activity occurring within neighboring municipalities.
- ▶ Plans to construct utility infrastructure, roadways, or other public facilities.

Each rezoning proposal needs to be evaluated using the land use category, goals, and policies outlined in this Comprehensive Land Use Plan. Because this is a comprehensive plan, and not intended to provide site-level guidance with regard to development decisions, discretion should be applied when evaluating a proposed rezoning request using the Future Land Use Map and specified land use categories and typologies. Moreover, as conditions may change over the life of the Plan, all future rezoning decisions should be mindful of changes in the surrounding communities – particularly in regards to boundary changes – before approving or rejecting those requests.

Proposed Land Use

- Agriculture
- Residential
- Clustered Neighborhoods
- Commercial/Office
- Mixed-Use Commercial
- Highway Commercial
- Business Park
- Industrial
- Government
- Institutional
- Parks/Open Space
- Other

Floodplains

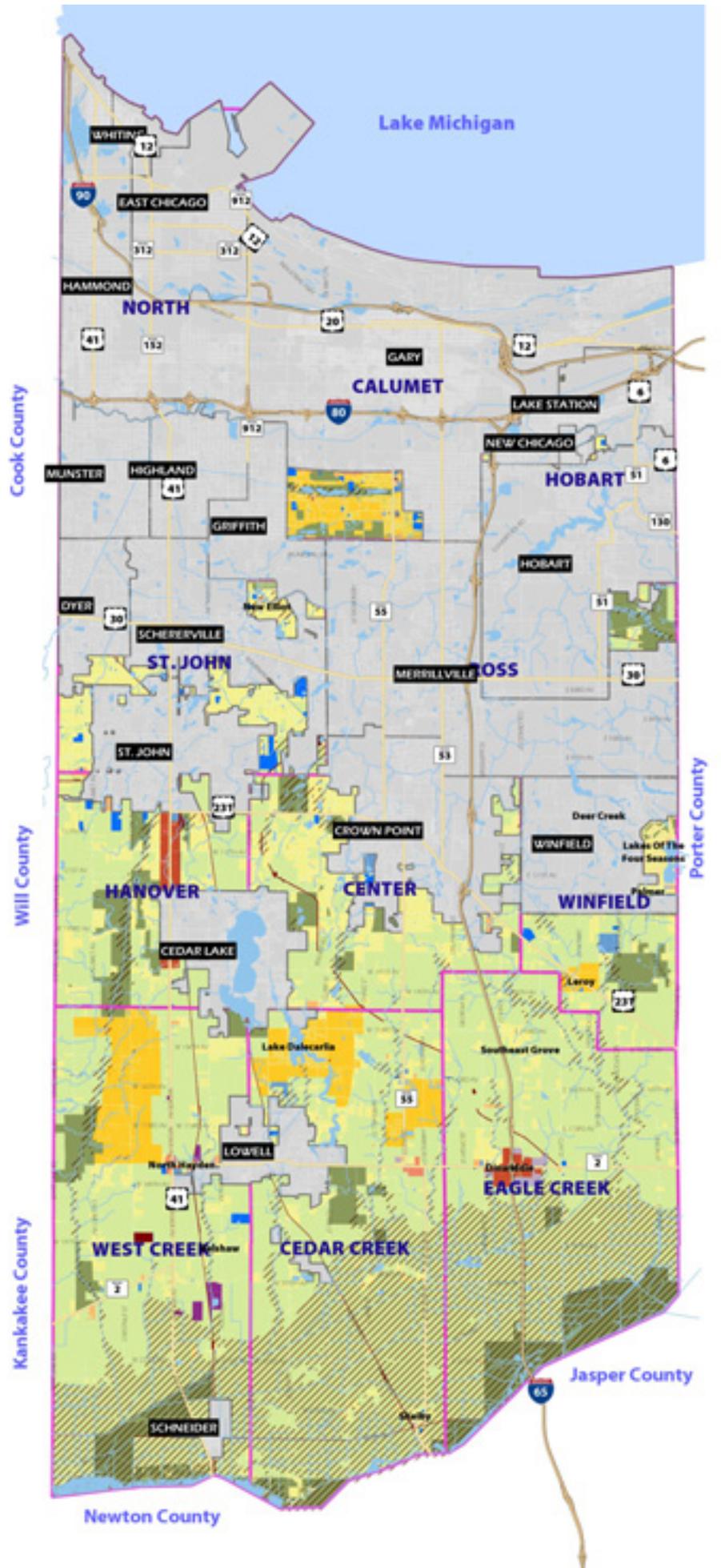


FIGURE 13 - FUTURE LAND USE MAP



Transportation Plan

7

The Transportation Plan aims to foster a transportation system that is safe, efficient, well-balanced, and supports the core principles of the land use goals and policies. The Plan also identifies the priority transportation and connectivity improvements essential to fulfilling the objectives of the Comprehensive Plan. Included in the Plan is the recognition that a well-balanced transportation system accommodates both motorized and non-motorized modes of travel, has continuity throughout the County, and is strategically connected with the regional highway and public transit systems.

The Transportation Plan addresses the County's most important transportation needs. The County currently does not have a Thoroughfare Plan. Its road improvement activities are also very constrained due to the lack of a substantial budget to commit resources beyond repaving and emergency repairs. The Plan therefore heavily relies on Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission's (NIRPC) 2040 Plan, which mostly identifies and funds projects of regional and local significance. These projects are typically needed to address near-term and anticipated long-term concerns.

The Transportation Plan is organized into three categories of improvements:

- ▶ Roadway Improvements
- ▶ Public Transit
- ▶ Trails and Pedestrian Facilities

| Road | Direction | From | To |
|------------|-----------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| Belshaw | SW/NE | State Line | US 41 |
| Ridge Road | W/E | Burr St. | Grant St. |
| Cline Ave | N/S | Schererville Town limits | St. John Town limits |
| US 41 | N/S | St. John Town limits | Cedar Lake |
| US 41 | N/S | Cedar Lake | IN 2 |
| IN 2 | W/E | Lowell Town limits | Clay St. (east of I-65) |
| US 231 | W/E | US 41 | Crown Point City limits |
| US 231 | NW/SE | Crown Point City limits | IN 2 |
| IN 55 | N/S | Ridge Road | 53rd Ave |

TABLE 26 - UNINCORPORATED ROADWAYS OF CONCERN (SOURCE: DERIVED FROM PLAN 2040 FOR NORTHWEST INDIANA, NIRPC, PAGES 25-28, APPENDIX B)

Roadway Improvements

The priority roadway improvements in Lake County address the issues related to access, capacity of arterial corridors, network continuity, new truck routes, and the incorporation of Complete Street policies.

Roadways of concern in unincorporated areas have been identified based on their potential to attract new development and their potential to create traffic congestion. Development pressures often occur along roadways prior to the traffic congestion occurring. Table 26 lists the roadways in unincorporated Lake County that currently experience, or are projected to experience, traffic congestion and development pressure.

Most of the major roadways that are listed in Table 26 are the responsibility of the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT). The need to widen or extend these roadways would be identified by NIRPC in conjunction with INDOT. Given current financial resources, Lake County does not have the financial capacity to widen or extend roadways. Lake County must work with these agencies and the affected municipalities to coordinate transportation improvements.

Traffic congestion can also occur on rural roadways prior to new development. The current subdivision approval process does not require a traffic impact analysis of new subdivisions. Such impact is important to prevent undue congestion on rural roads. Roadway congestion can be minimized through best practices prior to development occurring and the property being annexed into a municipality. Congestion can be reduced through access management and minor intersection improvements.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- ▶ For major arterials - US 41, US 231, and Ridge Road - adopt access management and other strategies to limit and control access between properties and roadways. By limiting and controlling the access, roadway congestion will be reduced. Access management standards should be adopted in coordination with the municipalities that would eventually be responsible for the roadways.
- ▶ Require traffic impact studies as a part of subdivision development. Require developers to make the necessary road improvements identified in such studies.
- ▶ Prepare a Thoroughfare Plan which addresses identified road deficiencies, as well as load capacity required for truck traffic on rural roads. This plan can also be used to establish budgets, and can plan for an orderly process for road improvement.



FRONTAGE ROADS ARE AN ACCESS MANAGEMENT STRATEGY THAT REDUCE CURB CUTS AND UNNECESSARY INTERSECTIONS ON HIGHWAYS, IMPROVING ACCESS TO SURROUNDING DEVELOPMENT.

COMPLETE STREETS

Complete Streets promote alternative modes of travel and reduce reliance on the automobile, particularly for short-distance trips. They aim to create more walkable and livable communities. As roadway improvement projects are proposed, the County can consider incorporating Complete Street elements into the design of the road. This will allow the road network to more safely accommodate all users, including motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, and public transit riders of all ages and physical abilities.

The characteristics of a Complete Street must relate to the context of the roadway and will be different in urban and rural areas. As development occurs, new streets could include the features typical for Complete Streets. Features typically include sidewalks or multi-use paths, crosswalks, accessible pedestrian signals, bike lanes or paved shoulders, curb extensions, and traffic calming elements such as roundabouts, narrow travel lanes, on-street parking, and landscaped medians. The Plan proposes three roads for Complete Street consideration: Ridge Road, Cleveland Street, and 45th Avenue. Others could be added as road improvements are considered.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- ▶ Develop a Complete Streets policy ordinance to incorporate safety and access features for non-motorized modes of travel into future roadway design projects.
- ▶ Work with the City of Gary and Town of Griffith to develop and implement a Complete Street design for Ridge Road.
- ▶ Work with INDOT to widen Cleveland Street and acquire additional right-of-way, improving the road as a Complete Street facility with a variety of amenities and alternative modes of travel.



COMPLETE STREET CONCEPT - TWO LANES OF TRAFFIC WITH ON-STREET PARKING AND BIKE LANES

Transportation Map - Roads

-  Proposed Road Extensions
-  Complete Street Treatments

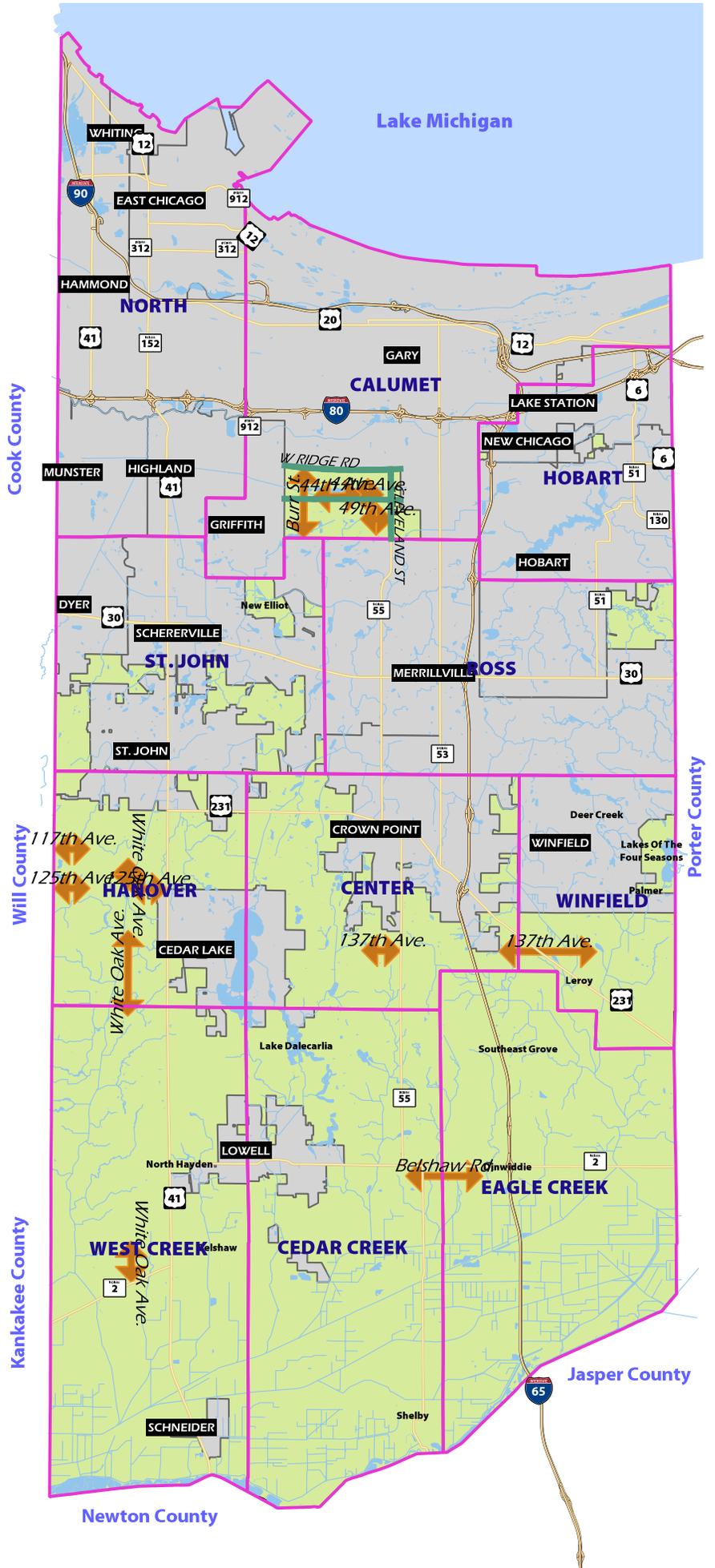


FIGURE 14 - ROAD IMPROVEMENTS MAP



TO REDUCE ROAD AND HIGHWAY CONGESTION, ALTERNATIVE TRUCK ROUTES SHOULD BE EXPLORED.

NEW TRUCK ROUTE

The designated truck routes in the County are intended to support heavier loads associated with commercial traffic. Due to several regional factors, some of the county roads are regularly used to bypass congested state and federal highways. State Route 2 is one of those roads that is a designated truck route, but is negatively impacted by the significant presence of trucks accessing Interstate 65. The noise and vibration generated by truck traffic can be disturbing to residents and business owners.

To address truck traffic issues in the southern part of the County, alternative truck routes should be explored to distribute truck traffic more evenly and potentially bypass residential and commercial areas. One such opportunity exists on Belshaw Road south of Lowell. On a short-term basis, this road can provide some relief, but will require extension to be more effective.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- ▶ Seek NIRPC's assistance in exploring alternative options for the extension of Belshaw Road to the I-65 interchange
- ▶ Work with NIRPC and INDOT to explore options for an east-west countywide truck road.
- ▶ Inventory existing truck routes to ensure adequate load capacity as a part of the Thoroughfare Plan.

Public Transit

The unincorporated area of Lake County currently does not have access to public transit except for the on-demand service that currently provides limited services to county residents. As population grows and public transit gains more acceptance, the County should be able to provide the opportunity for the extension of public transit. The Gary Public Transportation Corporation (GPTC) is currently in the planning stage of extending service to Crown Point through its Livable Broadway Program. The City also has routes that cover Ridge Road. Both of these routes can provide service in the future as the demand for ridership increases.

The current population and employment levels in the unincorporated areas of the County may not be sufficient to support regularly-scheduled, fixed-route bus service at this point. As development occurs and new employment centers are established, opportunities may be created to provide service for those areas.

RECOMMENDATIONS

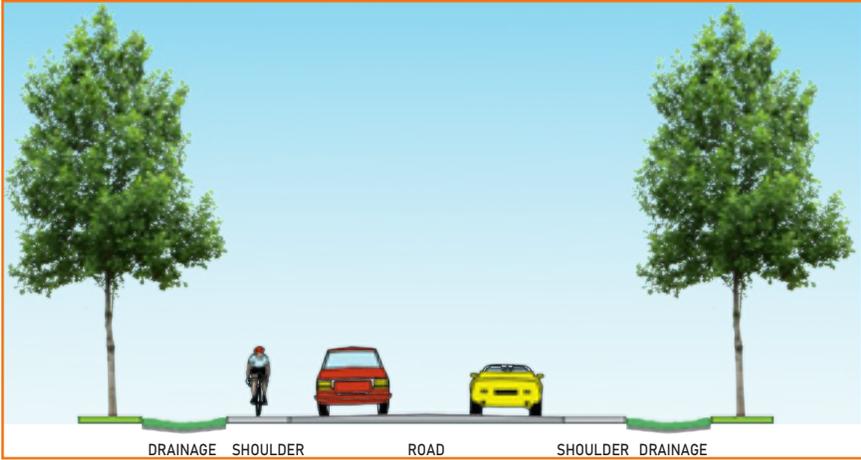
- ▶ Explore, with NIRPC, GPTC, and others, options for the extension of service on major corridors as funding becomes available.
- ▶ Explore options available through a hybrid approach that includes both demand-response and fixed-route service for unincorporated areas.



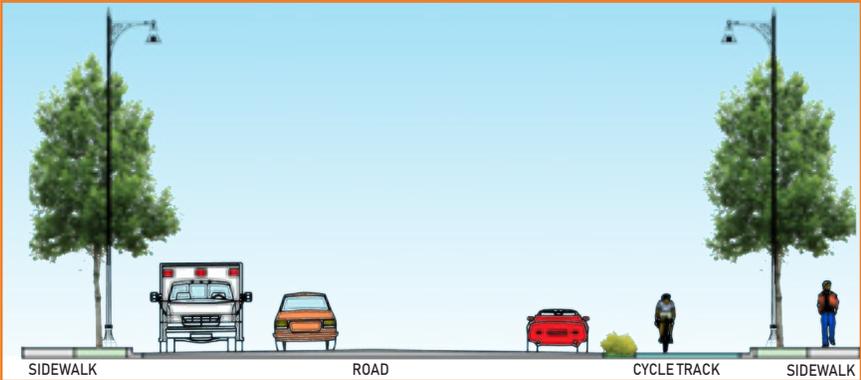
EXPLORE A HYBRID TRANSIT APPROACH THAT INCLUDES BOTH DEMAND-RESPONSE AND FIXED-ROUTE SERVICE

Trails and Pedestrian Facilities

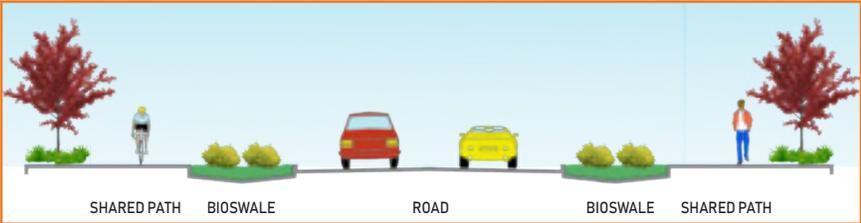
The Future Plan recognizes that the primary purpose of a countywide trail system would be recreational, given the expansive and rural nature of the unincorporated areas. But the need for developing alternative means of travel is important in light of population and employment growth, as well as environmental concerns. An expanded bicycle network will not only encourage travel to the natural areas of the County for recreational purposes, but will also facilitate bicycling and walking to employment centers, civic institutions, facilities, or neighborhood centers. It is also important that a complete system of trails, walks, greenways, and blueways is established with the goal of full connections among different uses. Such a connectivity plan will include not only major activity centers, but also neighborhood centers, public and institutional facilities, local and regional parks, as well as regular neighborhoods.



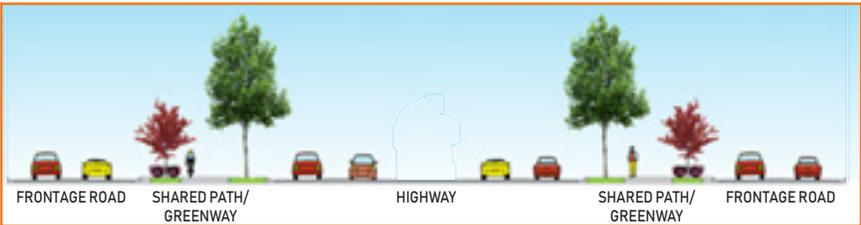
RURAL ROAD TRAIL CONCEPT, UTILIZING THE ROAD SHOULDER FOR A BIKE PATH



COMPLETE STREET CONCEPT, WITH A CYCLE TRACK (BIKE LANE SEPARATED FROM THE ROAD WITH A LANDSCAPE BUFFER AND DEDICATED SIDEWALK)



URBAN FRINGE AND CLUSTER NEIGHBORHOOD TRAIL CONCEPT, WITH A BIOSWALE SEPARATING THE ROAD AND A SHARED BICYCLE/PEDESTRIAN PATH



HIGHWAY CORRIDOR CONCEPT, WITH FRONTAGE ROADS AND A SHARED BICYCLE/PEDESTRIAN PATH AS PART OF A GREENWAY

RECOMMENDATIONS

- ▶ Establish new trail corridors along the Winfield Trail and Michigan Central easements.
- ▶ Promote the development of the American Discovery Trail and Lemon Lake Connector Trail.
- ▶ Establish additional easements along West Creek, Cedar Creek, and Singleton Ditch for preservation and future trail development.

Transportation Map - Trails

- Existing
- - - Under Development
- Bike Lane
- ● ● Planned Trail
- - - Planned Expansion
- Blueways

- - - Proposed Expansions
- ▭ Creek Corridors
- ▭ Existing County Parks (unincorporated)

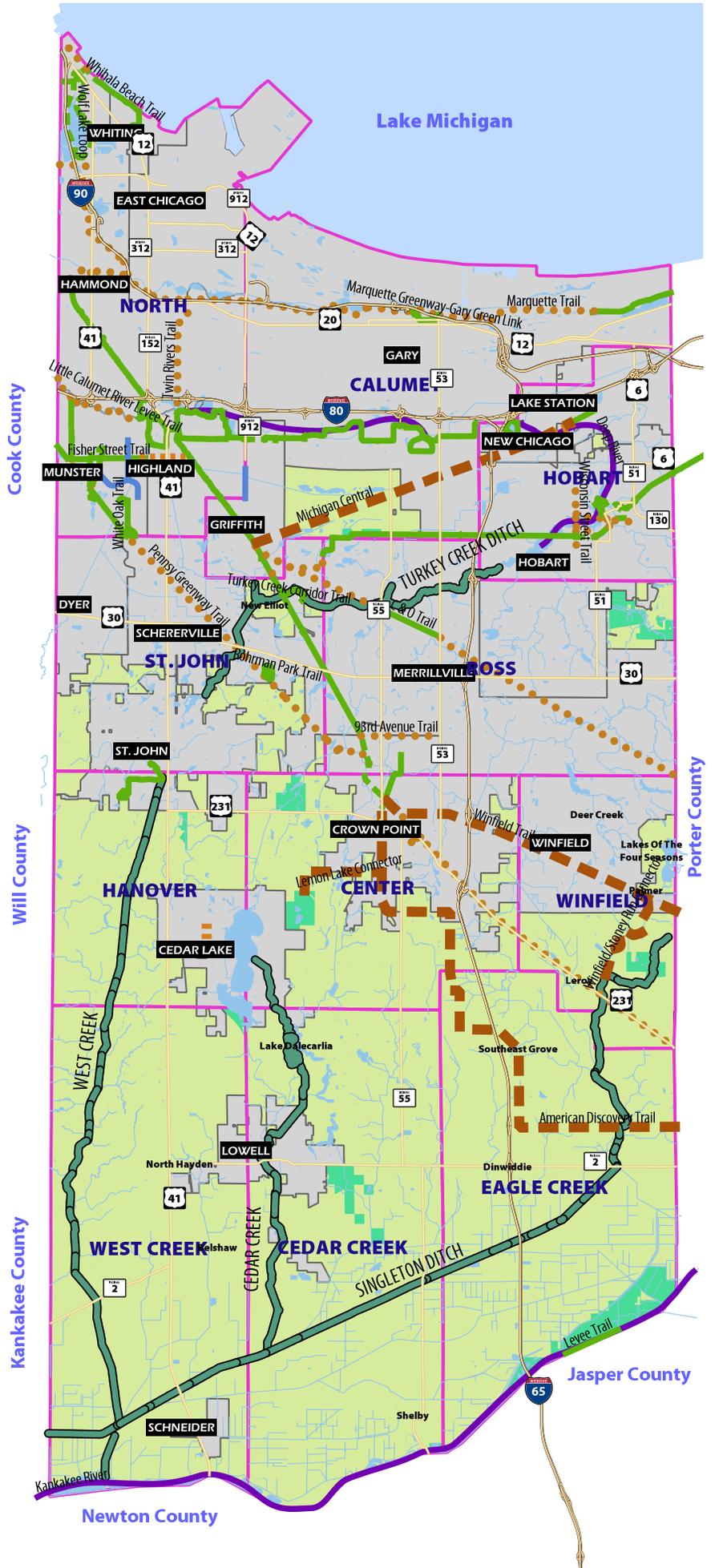


FIGURE 15 - PROPOSED TRAILS MAP



Implementation

8

The execution of a Comprehensive Plan is carried out through various tools including policies which can be employed by the County to guide implementation of the Plan. The efforts for implementation can range from minor internal policy changes to major county code updates and capital expenditures for much needed infrastructure or facilities. And yet, a major element of the implementation consists of coordination and collaboration with a variety of stakeholders as well as municipalities bordering the unincorporated areas.

The implementation strategy for the Plan sets out a flexible and evolving program in a tiered system, consisting of primary and secondary action items to achieve the goals of the Plan. The Plan's implementation processes will begin once the Plan is adopted. The process will continue over the next several years as the Plan's recommendations are brought to fruition. Below is a list of possible implementation items that can be carried out over the next five years. The proposed items are general, as they are intended to be carried out as a policy rather than a specific action step. As such, the implementation strategy should be viewed more as a set of flexible and evolving activities required to achieve the goals of the Plan. It is highly recommended that the implementation action items be evaluated and updated periodically. As a part of this update, as primary items are implemented, secondary items will be identified and move up, replacing the former primary items, and a new set of goals for implementation can be established. This process will allow the County to review its goals and maintain freshness for the Plan and to adjust the direction as needed.

Primary Action Items

The following action items are identified as critical implementation actions to achieve the Plan's goals. These action items should be initiated after the adoption of the Plan and continue for the next five years. The primary action items are as follows.

ZONING CODE UPDATE

The County will assess ways to amend its current land use and subdivision control codes to align with the policy guidance included in the Comprehensive Land Use Plan:

- ▶ Remove barriers and create incentives to encourage development within the Urban Fringe Areas (UFA) and other target areas.
- ▶ Remove barriers and create incentives that will support mixed-use residential developments in existing and future neighborhoods (Medium-Density).
- ▶ Encourage development of mixed-residential uses in the corridors.
- ▶ Remove barriers and create incentives for redevelopment of aging commercial corridors (i.e. Ridge Road.)
- ▶ Protect rural lands through the establishment of new "truly rural" zoning districts, with agriculture being the primary concern.
- ▶ Protect impaired watersheds and floodplains through enhanced development standards.
- ▶ Work with local agencies and utility providers to develop and adopt an Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance.

PRIORITY TARGET AREAS

The Plan identifies several opportunities for redevelopment of aging commercial centers/corridors and declining or blighted neighborhoods. There are also several areas that are under significant growth pressures. All of these areas require diligent planning attention. The County should look for opportunities to target and improve these areas for additional investment. The focus on the target areas must be established early in the planning process, and in partnership with the private sector or neighboring jurisdictions. The County must also establish these areas as it assesses capital improvement priorities.

PROTECTION OF LANDS IN FLOODPLAINS AND IMPACTED WATERSHEDS

The County should consider increasing its capacity for conservation through all available policy or code tools. One such tool is to work with landowners to establish conservation easements or to purchase development rights in environmentally-sensitive areas, such as floodplains and creek banks. These efforts should be voluntary, with incentive-based tools that allow landowners to maintain their land and receive financial benefit from the sale of development rights.

COORDINATION WITH UTILITY PROVIDERS

Going forward, the County must develop and strengthen coordination among County departments as well as between the County and outside agencies and jurisdictions. One of the Plan's goals is ensuring availability of public services and resources for all areas. Many of the strategies for achieving this goal involve strengthening intergovernmental coordination among partnering agencies and jurisdictions. The County must work with utility providers in the area to steer infrastructure investments that will generate development pressures away from rural areas and into UFAs. The development of public water, sanitary sewer, and stormwater management facilities should be discouraged in rural areas.

For existing neighborhood clusters, where access to local utilities is not practical, the development should be targeted for non-centralized utility services to limit the environmental impact on the land and create a more sustainable environment. Where feasible for these neighborhoods, priority should be placed for connection to an existing service provider.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLANNING

The County must prepare a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for infrastructure planning. Such a plan should consider the development of a long-term schedule and funding for capital projects. Such projects must include transportation improvements, water, sewer, and other utilities needed to support development of the target areas identified within the Plan.

- ▶ Once the County has prepared a Ten-Year CIP, direct capital improvements in accordance with the CIP.
- ▶ Prioritize County public facility expenditures in target areas identified in the County's Future Land Use Map, as well as transportation-related improvements to ensure adequate capacity.
- ▶ Designate a cross-departmental team for reviewing and prioritizing proposed capital projects, ensuring accurate cost estimates and overall consistency with County goals and objectives.
- ▶ Review and update the CIP annually.

PRESERVE FARMING AS AN INDUSTRY IN THE COUNTY

The County should work with partners, such as the Soil and Water Conservation District, the Farm Bureau, and others, to develop a program to link aging farmers with budding farmers in need of training on a full-fledged farm. The intent of this effort will be to create opportunities to maintain farming operations that will not continue as a family business, but that could be sold/leased to other interested or younger farmers.

RECREATIONAL INVESTMENTS

When updating plans for future recreational and open space uses, the County should assess opportunities to increase public access along the County's waterways through greenways and trails, boat ramps, parks, and similar recreational assets to ensure all townships and residents have access to recreational facilities and open space. Building off the development of the future West Creek Greenway, opportunities to create a fully-connected system of trails, greenways, and blueways should be encouraged.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

The Plan requires a substantial amount of coordination and collaboration with a diverse group of residents and jurisdictions. To achieve maximum efficiency, the County should embark on a series of coordination efforts to ensure successful implementation. These activities will include:

- ▶ Provide a copy of the Comprehensive Plan to all partner agencies, departments, and jurisdictions neighboring the unincorporated areas.
- ▶ Develop a formal memorandum of understanding with neighboring jurisdictions to share information on development proposals that occur within areas of common interest (such as the UFA) along jurisdictional lines. This could also include a formal opportunity for the County or these jurisdictions to provide comments during the public review process. It could also include the application of the other jurisdiction's development standards where appropriate.
- ▶ Seek opportunities for infrastructure sharing and collaboration.

Secondary Action Items

The primary action items represent the most critical items that should receive the highest consideration. There are many other opportunities that also need consideration. These opportunities or recommendations are included in different elements of this Plan. These should be considered as secondary action items. As the County undertakes future updates to the Comprehensive Plan, completed primary action items should be removed from the implementation plan, and a new set of primary action items should be added using the secondary action item list, as well as any new action items that may need to be considered.

RESOLUTION NO. 18-48

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE
LAKE COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
APPROVED BY THE LAKE COUNTY PLAN COMMISSION AND
CERTIFIED TO THE LAKE COUNTY COUNCIL ON AUGUST 15, 2018

WHEREAS, pursuant to I.C. 36-7-4-500, et. seq., the Lake County Plan Commission has approved and certified to the Lake County Council, the Lake County Comprehensive Plan certified on August 15, 2018; and

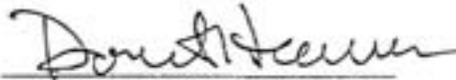
WHEREAS, pursuant to I.C. 36-7-4-509, the Lake County Council may approve the Lake County Comprehensive Plan by Resolution approving, rejecting, or amending the Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Lake County Council now desires to approve the Plan.

NOW, THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED AS FOLLOWS:

That the Lake County Council pursuant to I.C. 36-7-4-509, adopts the Lake County Comprehensive Plan, approved by the Lake County Plan Commission and certified to the Lake County Council on August 15, 2018 (Exhibit "A" & "B").

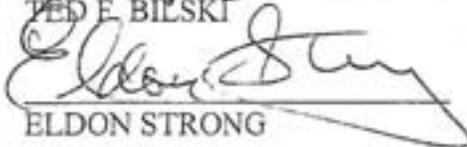
SO RESOLVED THIS 11th DAY OF September, 2018.



DAVID HAMM, President



TED E. BILSKI



ELDON STRONG



DANIEL E. DERNULC

PRESENTED TO
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
BY LAKE COUNTY AUDITOR

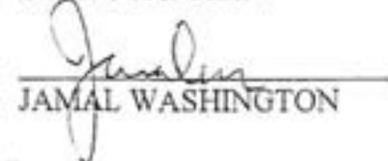
SEP 12 2018



CHRISTINE CID



ELSIE FRANKLIN



JAMAL WASHINGTON

Members of the Lake County Council

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE COUNTY OF LAKE

APPROVED THIS 11th DAY OF September, 2018



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
CERTIFICATION

TO: LAKE COUNTY COUNCIL
CROWN POINT, LAKE COUNTY, INDIANA

I, Ned Kovachevich, Executive Secretary of the Lake County Advisory Plan Commission do hereby certify to the Lake County Council, that the Comprehensive Land Use Plan of Lake County, a true copy of which is attached, was considered and approved by the Lake County Advisory Plan Commission at its public meeting held on August 15, 2018 by a vote of 7 in favor, 0 against, 0 abstaining, and 2 absent and do herewith forward the same to you for your consideration and approval.



Ned Kovachevich, Executive Secretary
Lake County Advisory Plan Commission

08/15/2018

Date

Ex. A



RESOLUTION NO. 2018 - 001
RESOLUTION OF THE LAKE COUNTY ADVISORY PLAN COMMISSION
ADOPTING THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

A RESOLUTION RECOMMENDING THAT THE LAKE COUNTY COUNCIL ADOPT THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR THE UNINCORPORATED AREA OF LAKE COUNTY, CONSISTENT WITH INDIANA LAW REQUIREMENTS, WHICH STATE THAT A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN MUST CONTAIN THE FOLLOWING ELEMENTS:

1. A statement of objectives for the future development of the jurisdiction.
2. A statement of policy for the land use development of the jurisdiction.
3. A statement of policy for the development of public ways, public places, public lands, public structures, and public utilities.

WHEREAS, pursuant to IC 36-7-4-501, the Plan Commission is responsible for preparing comprehensive plans and amendments thereto and forwarding them to the Lake County Council; and

WHEREAS, over the past year, the Advisory Lake County Plan Commission solicited public input from County residents, businesses, local leaders, and various civic groups relative to the foregoing Comprehensive Plan elements;

WHEREAS, in keeping with the public input received by the Plan Commission, the Proposed Plan was designed in part to:

Promote health and safety, and reduce the cost of infrastructure construction and maintenance to the public by encouraging development in areas where sufficient infrastructure may exist;

Promote a range of land uses and options by encouraging more intensive development in urbanizing areas while preserving rural character in outlying areas; and,

Support establishment of practices which promote sustainability, economic development, preservation of agricultural heritage, protection of natural resources, and maintenance of open space;

WHEREAS, the Advisory Plan Commission prepared a proposed comprehensive land use plan ("Proposed Plan") dated as of July 18, 2018, that contained the statutory required elements with respect to land use within the unincorporated area of Lake County, Indiana, planning and zoning jurisdictional area ("County Jurisdictional Area");

WHEREAS, the Advisory Plan Commission of Lake County, Indiana, did on July 18, 2018 hold a legally advertised public hearing on the proposed Comprehensive Land Use Plan for the Unincorporated Area of Lake County, Indiana until all comments and objections were heard;

Ex. B

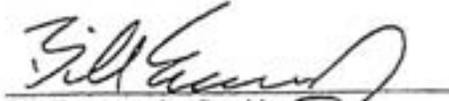
WHEREAS, the Plan Commission found that the proposed Comprehensive Plan meets the requirements of the Indiana Code 36-7-4-500 and the adoption of this plan is found to be in the best interest of the citizens of Lake County, Indiana; and

WHEREAS, on August 15, 2018, the Plan Commission recommended approval of the proposed new Comprehensive Land Use Plan which, on August 15, 2018 was certified to the Lake County Council.

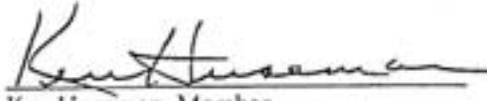
NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Advisory Plan Commission of Lake County, Indiana, recommends to the Lake County Council the adoption of said Comprehensive Plan for the Unincorporated Area of Lake County attached hereto named Comprehensive Plan, Unincorporated Area Land Use Plan, Lake County, Indiana, dated July 2018.

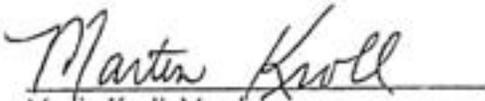
By:

LAKE COUNTY ADVISORY PLAN COMMISSION


Bill Emerson Jr., President

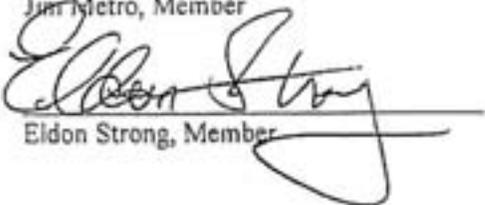

Jerry Tigpy, Vice President


Ken Huseman, Member

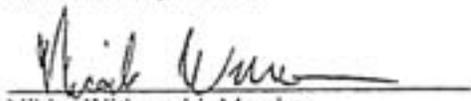

Martin Kroll, Member


Frank Kalvaitis, Member

Jim Metro, Member


Eldon Strong, Member

Shad Whisler, Member


Nikky Witkowski, Member

