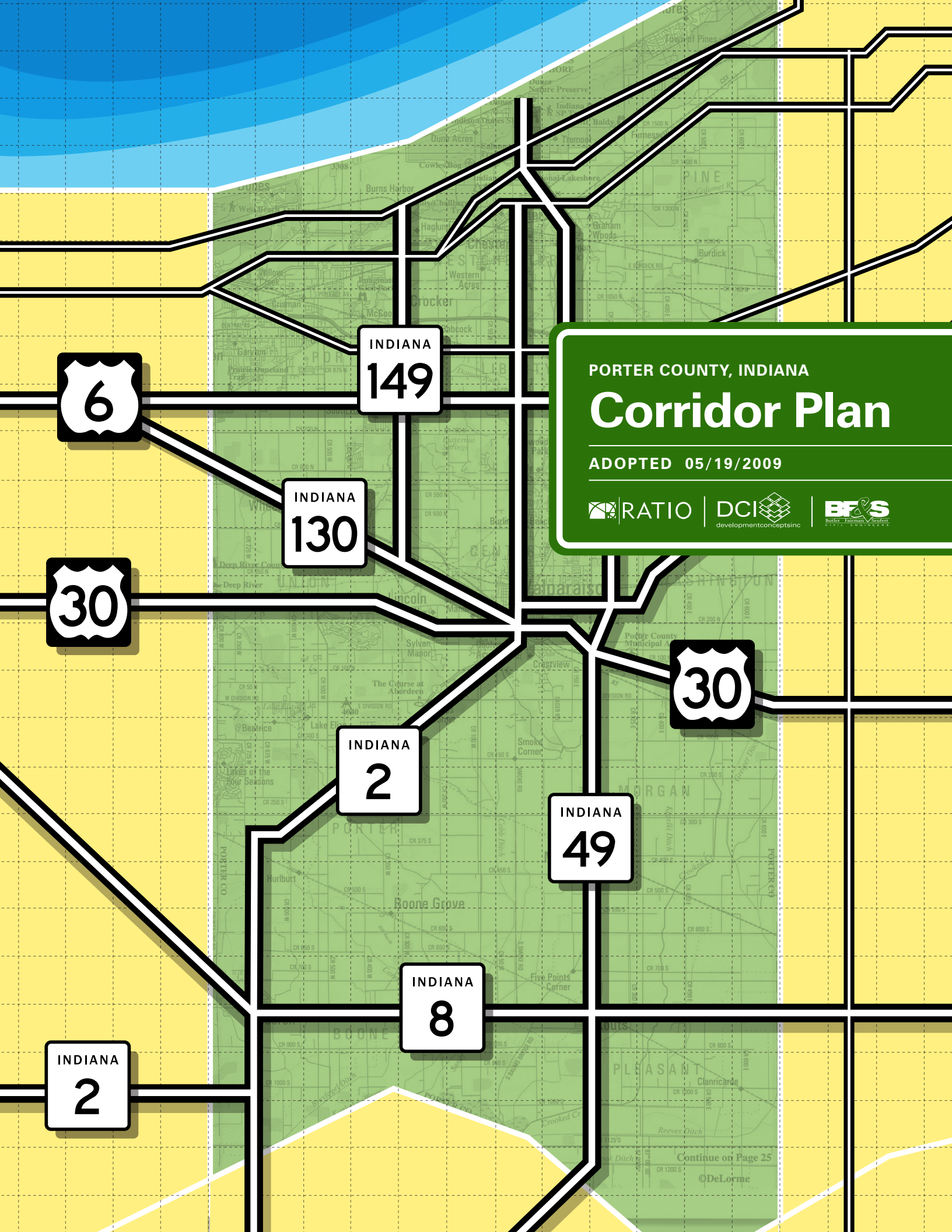

PORTER COUNTY, INDIANA

Corridor Plan

ADOPTED 05/19/2009

RATIO | DCI developmentconceptsinc | BF&S Butler Fairman Seufert

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Part 1:

Introduction

INTRODUCTION

Acknowledgements

The Porter County Corridor Plan is the result of the collective insight and effort of residents, government agencies, and consultants. A plan that does not involve those it hopes to serve cannot fully realize its potential or vision. For this reason, those with a vested interest in the future of Porter County put forth their time, effort, and ideas in this plan's development.

Advisory Committee:

The Advisory Committee members, who were an integral part of this process, include:

Craig Phillips	City of Valparaiso
Joe Csikos	City of Portage
Don Abraham	INDOT
Charles (Spike) Peller	INDOT
Steve Strains	NIRPC
Eman Ibrahim	NIRPC
Kathy Luther	NIRPC
Ray Riddell	County Engineer
Kevin Breitzke	County Surveyor
Al Hoagland	County Highway Superintendent
Rick Burns	BZA & Plan Commission member
Lorelei Weimer	Director of County Tourism
Ed Melendez	County Park Superintendent
Matt Murphy	Valparaiso Economic Director
Don Babcock	NIPSCO (Economic Development)
Kyle Kuebler	Director, Porter County Airport
Tim Cole	Plan Commission Member
Jan Dick	City of Valparaiso
Charlie Ray	Duneland Group
Christine Livingston	Save the Dunes
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Consultants:

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Economic Development
Development Concepts, Inc.

Transportation
Butler, Fairman and Seufert, Inc.

Purpose of the Corridor Plan

The Porter Corridor Plan is the result of growing concern within the County regarding the potential for undesirable patterns of residential, commercial and industrial growth and development along prominent vehicular travelways. The County desires efficient and attractive development that responds to county needs and strengthens the local economy. Often uncontrolled growth can detract from residents' and visitors' experiences, create transportation-related congestion, and has the potential to negatively affect the unique landscape of Porter County.

Porter County is part of the northwest gateway into Indiana from Illinois and the Chicago region, and therefore lies within a short commute of the third largest city in the nation. Within Indiana, Porter County also serves as a gateway to the major recreation areas of Lake Michigan and Dunes State Park.

In 2001, the County adopted the Porter County Land Use & Thoroughfare Plan, subtitled "Porter County 2020, Building the Foundation for the Future" which acts as the county's Comprehensive Plan, containing county-wide land use and transportation elements as required by I.C. Section 36-7-4-502.

Over the last seven years, development pressure along certain highways and arterials has intensified resulting in the need for specific corridor policies. The subject corridors connect communities linking interdependent economies. This Corridor Plan encourages suitable development patterns that limit uncoordinated expansion and preserves natural, historic, and cultural resources. In addition, this plan encourages coordination and cooperation between Porter County and the incorporated cities and towns to successfully implement the vision.

Relevant Plans and Documents

- The Porter County U.S. 12/20 Corridor Transportation Plan (02/2008)
- Porter County Land Use & Thoroughfare Plan (05/2001)
- NIRPC Greenways & Blueways Plan (12/2007)
- Porter County Interim Report (1991)
- NIRPC Northwest Indiana Bike Map (2008)
- NIRPC Ped & Pedal Plan (2005)
- Salt Creek Watershed Management Plan (Save the Dunes - 2008)

INTRODUCTION

Creating a Vision Statement

It is important that the Corridor Plan contains a clear vision for the County's network of corridors. During the planning process the Advisory Committee and the general public developed a ***Vision Statement*** that represents the shared values and desires of Porter County residents for land uses and development along Porter County's corridors within the next ten or twenty years. ***Goals and Recommendations*** were developed to support the vision below.

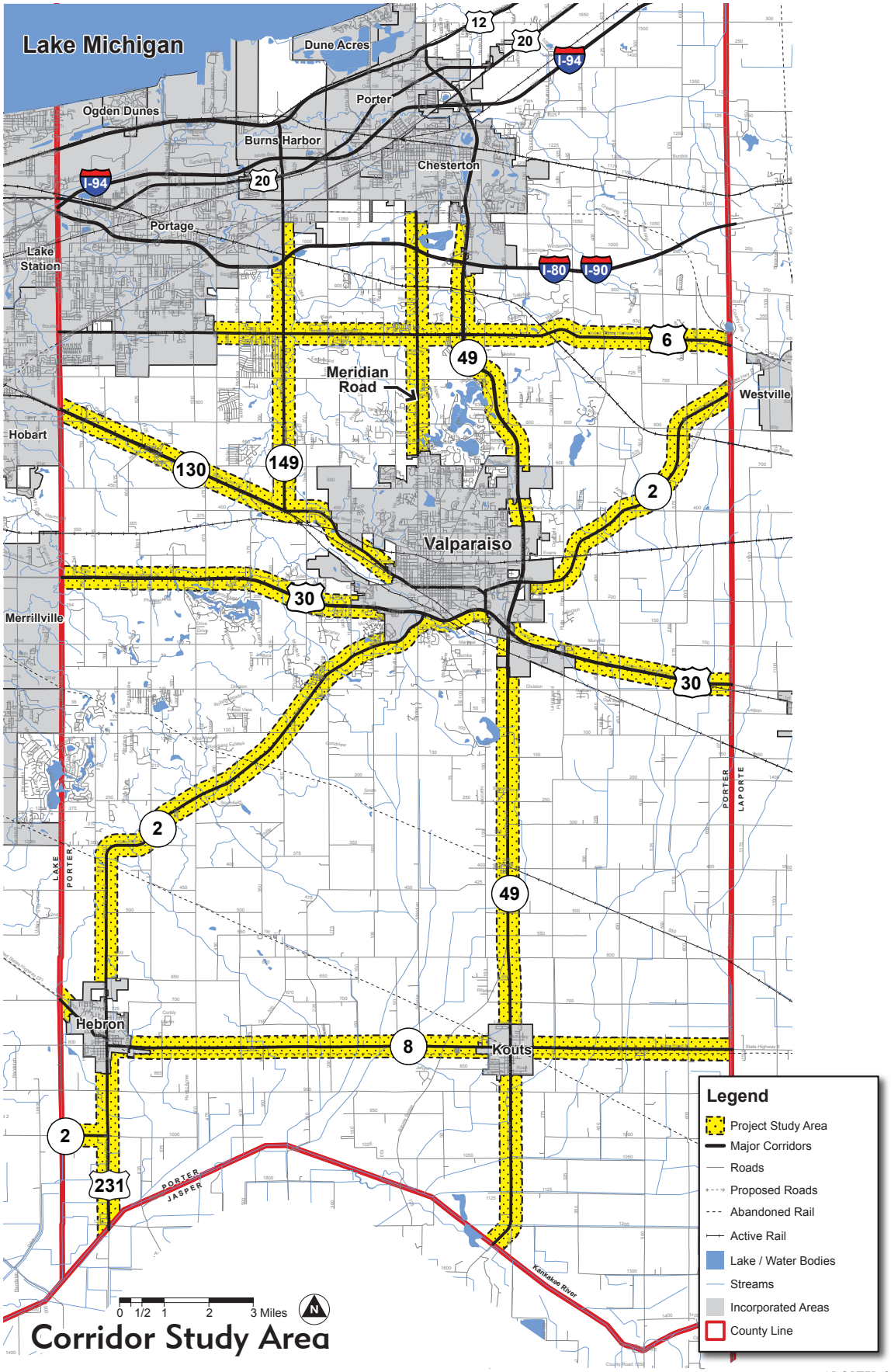
> *From the Kankakee River to the Indiana Dunes and Lake Michigan, Porter County's transportation corridors will collectively serve as gateways highlighting the unique features of the county. The protection and enhancement of natural systems, scenic vistas, and rich agricultural land will be an integral part of future growth in the county. Future development reflecting Porter County's historic and cultural influences will also create a thoughtful balance between the community's economic needs and the collective values of its residents, with a safe and efficient transportation system for all forms of mobility. Cooperative efforts between government agencies, and between the public and private sector, will result in a network of corridors revealing to residents and visitors alike the unique assets Porter County has to offer.*

Iron Truss Bridge Crossing the Kankakee River Along SR 49

How Should This Plan Be Used?

Porter County undertook preparation of the Corridor Plan to address corridor planning on state and federal roads in the unincorporated area of the County. This plan supplements and updates the 2001 Land Use & Thoroughfare Plan. The Corridor Plan is an additional planning tool in the County's arsenal to guide and encourage appropriate development throughout the unincorporated areas of the county.

It is intended to be used by staff, local appointed and elected decision makers, economic development and business groups that solicit, plan, or review development proposals for the County or adjacent municipalities. This plan will be most effective when used in conjunction with relevant planning documents including the County's Land Use & Thoroughfare Plan and the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) Arterial Roadway and Scenic Roadway Overlay Districts.



Corridor Study Area

INTRODUCTION

Background Information

Porter County is located in the northwest region of the State of Indiana along Lake Michigan. The County is located approximately 40 miles southeast of downtown Chicago, IL, 150 miles north-northwest of downtown Indianapolis, IN, and 250 miles west-southwest of downtown Detroit, MI. Major cities in Porter County include Valparaiso (the County Seat), Portage, and Chesterton. Porter County also includes other cities and towns including Pines, Beverly Shores, Dune Acres, Porter, Burns Harbor, Ogden Dunes, Kouts, and Hebron.

The 2007 population estimate for Porter County was nearly 160,600 people (US Census). According to US Census estimates, Porter County's population has increased by at least 13,000 since 2000, ranking 7th in the State of Indiana for population growth.

Additional demographic information and market analysis results can be found in ***Part 2: Analysis***.

Study Area Description

This Corridor Plan primarily focuses on designated U.S. highways and Indiana State Routes within the unincorporated areas of Porter County. Development along these routes falls within the jurisdiction of the Porter County Plan Commission. Due to high traffic volumes and development pressures, Meridian Road is also included in this study. The US 12 and US 20 corridors are not included as they were the subject of the *Porter County U.S. 12/20 Corridor Transportation Plan*, which was adopted in February 2008. The Corridor Study Area map (page 9) illustrates the Plan study corridors, which include:

- U.S. Highway 6
- U.S. Highway 30
- U.S. Highway 231
- Indiana State Route 2
- Indiana State Route 8
- Indiana State Route 49
- Indiana State Route 130
- Indiana State Route149
- Meridian Road (Valparaiso to Chesterton)

The designated area of study of each corridor is typically 1/4 mile on each side from edge of the roadway right-of-way for a total width of a little more than 1/2 mile. It was determined that this 1/2 mile-wide study area (total) best represents the adjacent area influenced by the roadways. There are also some specific locations where, due to expansive development pressures, a bulge in the corridor study area may be shown. This strategy allowed the consultants, Advisory Committee members, and the general public to focus on what role the corridors play within the larger context of Porter County.

Goals and Recommendations Summary

This plan contains ***Goals and Recommendations***, which when implemented, will realize the community's vision. The intent of the Corridor Plan's goals is:

- To understand the issues that have shaped the county over time, and inventory current conditions affecting.
- To create or reconfirm the vision of what Porter County could be in the future and to proactively plan for future development appropriate to the county.
- To develop county-wide land use and infrastructure strategies to guide decisions.
- To develop specific goals and recommendations for future growth along designated corridors

Public Input Process

An important component of the success of this plan hinges on how well it reflects the ideas of the county's residents and addresses their concerns. The planning process employed a variety of public input mechanisms to gather information from pertinent stakeholders and provided residents with an avenue to share their concerns and hopes for the future of Porter County.

Project Advisory Committee

An Advisory Committee was created in April 2008 to oversee and guide the preparation of this plan. This committee was composed of individuals representing diverse sectors of the community including business leaders, residents, and public officials. They helped develop this plan's ***Goals***, associated ***Recommendations***, and reviewed various iterations of draft plans. The group met on nine separate occasions to ensure that the planning process responded to the needs of the community, and that the Plan fulfilled the needs of Porter County.

Kick-off Advisory Committee Meeting, April 2008

Key Stakeholder Interviews

In May 2008, staff identified five Key Stakeholder groups that could provide focused input about their specific concerns and desires relative to the future of Porter County. The groups represented:

- Porter County and town government (elected) officials and staff
- Transportation, EMS and Utility providers
- Economic Development/Builders/Developers
- Natural Resources Group
- Corridor Property Owner/Citizens

Because this Corridor Plan inherently requires coordination of transportation issues with federal and state entities, the consultants met with INDOT officials in an effort to understand how proposed infrastructure and/or roadway projects in the region could affect the future of Porter County. Much of this discussion centered on proposed roadway improvements and efforts to design more multi-modal corridors throughout Porter County.

Public Workshops

On May 22nd, 2008, a public workshop was held at the Washington Middle-High School. This workshop introduced residents to the corridor planning process and provided an opportunity for participants to discuss issues and opportunities related to their community. The results of this workshop confirmed preliminary findings and helped establish a list of issues to be addressed in the Corridor Plan.

A second public workshop, held September 25th, 2008, introduced residents to suggested "development patterns" which reflected existing conditions and possible solutions to issues. Participants were asked to vote on the type of development patterns they would prefer, and where they might envision such development to be located in the future. The results of this workshop gave the consultants a clearer understanding of the public's priorities and the character of desired development.

A draft of the Corridor Plan was presented at an open house on March 5, 2009. The meeting was an opportunity to invite public comment on the plan before it was prepared for adoption. This process gave the public assurance that any concerns they had expressed early in the planning process were sufficiently addressed in the document.

Summary of Public Input

As the previous section indicated, this planning process provided a number of opportunities and forums for resident input. The input and feedback from the Steering Committee, residents, and businesses generated a valuable spectrum of issues and ideas for Porter County's collection of corridors. There was general agreement that, collectively, the county must strive to protect and highlight its unique natural and agricultural assets, while simultaneously seek innovative ways to promote economic development. Listed below are some of the issues and ideas raised by the general public during the public workshops repeatedly. For more detailed public input summaries, mapping and community survey results, refer to ***Part 5: Appendix***.

- Minimize sprawl by focusing future development within or adjacent to existing, incorporated areas of the county.
- Limit the amount of rezoning throughout the county in which agricultural land is converted into new development(s).
- Highlight the rural character and natural features of the county by preserving scenic viewsheds along the county's corridors.
- Pay particular attention to stormwater impacts from new development to protect Porter County's extensive watershed system.
- Preserve prime agricultural land especially in the southern sections of the county.
- Preserve historic resources scattered along the county's corridors.
- Encourage land use policies that focus on growth patterns contiguous to Kouts and Hebron to preserve surrounding farm land.
- Institute functional and safety improvements at a number of intersections throughout the county. A summary of the intersections with the highest number of vehicular crashes that have occurred over the past three years can be found in ***Part 2: Analysis*** ("Publicly Identified Hazardous Intersections and Recorded Crash Data", p. 27).

Part 2:
Analysis

ANALYSIS

Introduction

This chapter provides an analysis of the character and existing conditions in the corridor study areas. In addition to field work by the consultant team, the analysis draws upon a myriad of reports and studies prepared for the County or other state, regional and municipal agencies that influence development within the county. This analysis also is supplemented with information from the review of aerials and photos. The team reviewed the overall characteristics of the County, but limited the focused analysis to a 1/2 mile swath of the designated unincorporated corridors identified in ***Part 1: Introduction*** and below**.**

- U.S. Highway 6
- U.S. Highway 30
- U.S. Highway 231
- Indiana State Route 2
- Indiana State Route 8
- Indiana State Route 49
- Indiana State Route 130
- Indiana State Route149
- Meridian Road (Valparaiso to Chesterton)

Historic and Cultural Influences

Historic transportation patterns and natural resources determined the modern day settlement patterns and tourist appeal of Porter County today. The 1991 State Historic Preservation Office Interim Report states that a trading post in northern Porter County was originally established by Joseph Bailly in 1822 at the convergence of two Indian trails, near present day US 20 and the Little Calumet River (Porter, IN). The initial trails were eventually supplemented by the railroad which came through in the mid 1850's, and roadways which followed in the early 20th century. The following is an effort to see how historical and cultural resources influenced or were influenced by the transportation networks, namely US 6 and US 30 and SR 2, SR 8, and SR 49.

U.S. 6

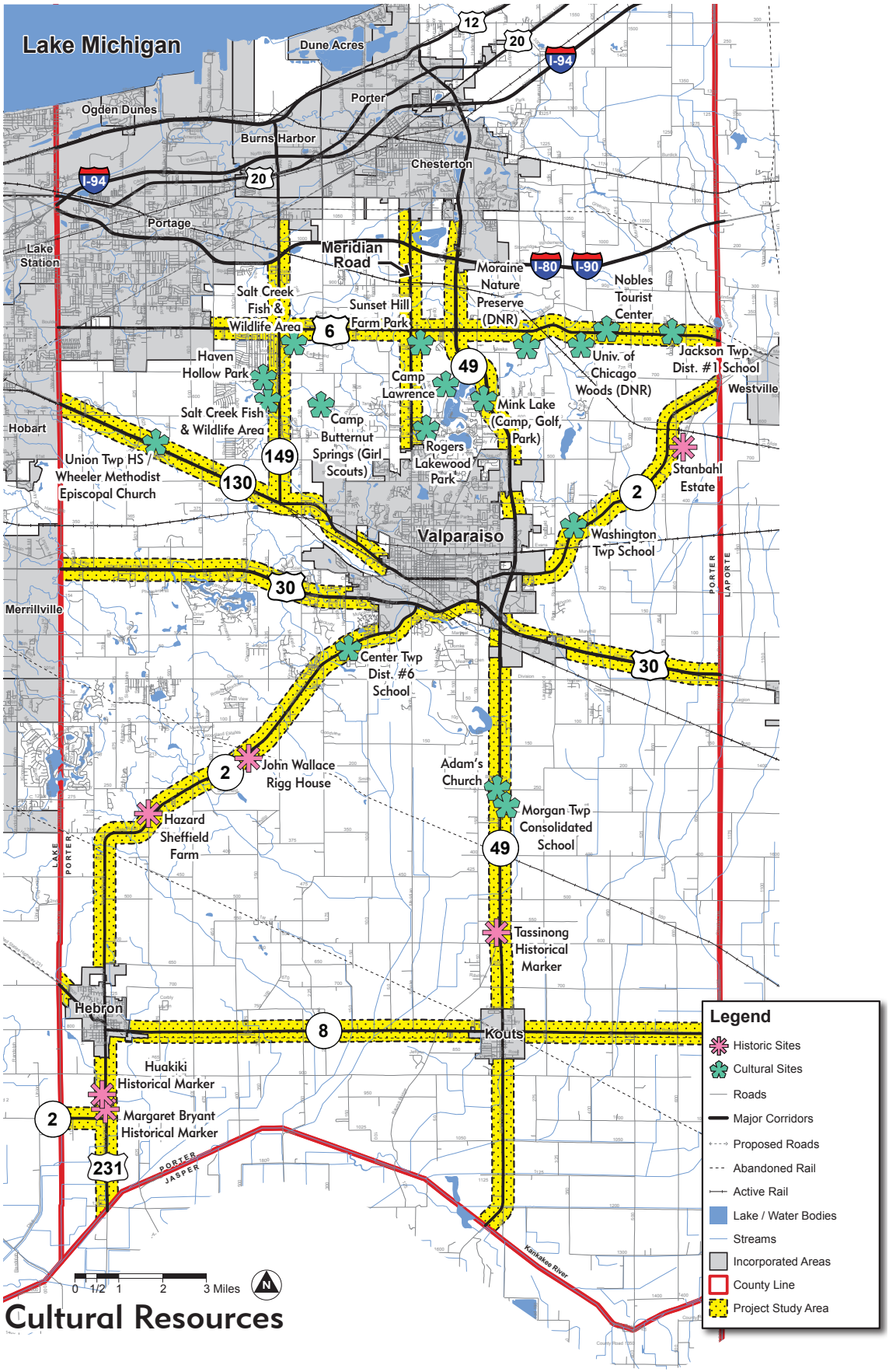
The Grand Army of the Republic (Memorial) Highway is the present official name of US 6. However, during the late 1920s and early 1930s, it was also known as the Roosevelt Highway, after President Theodore Roosevelt.

US 6 runs between Provincetown on Cape Cod, Massachusetts and Long Beach, California (a distance of 3,652 miles) making it the longest route in the United States. The Historic Highway began as an entity in November of 1926 when the American Association of State Highway Officials (AASHO) adopted the US numbering system for marking the Nation's main Interstate highways.

AASHO is also known for calling for all Departments and Posts to set aside the 30th of May as a day for remembering the sacrifices of fallen comrades, thereby beginning the celebration of Memorial Day.

State Route 49 south

There are many farmsteads with late 19th and early 20th century homes with barns and a variety of farm outbuildings, rural schools, and cemeteries which reflect an early settler's daily life. Working farms and dilapidated farmsteads are still visible from State Routes 49, 8 and 2 south of Valparaiso.



Cultural Resources

ANALYSIS

Kankakee River

The history of the Kankakee Valley is ancient, perhaps extending back 10,000 years to when much of the area was covered by the Grand Kankakee Marsh. The river area's was used by Native Americans and traders prior to its channelization for agricultural drainage.

These water resources did not present themselves as tourist attractions until railroads began to lace the county in the middle of the nineteenth century. More than one president has spent time hunting and fishing at the Collier Lodge on the Kankakee River at the turn of the century. Collier Lodge on Baum's Bridge Road at the Kankakee River represents the appeal that the southern portion of the County has for tourists and residents.

The Kankakee is the site for a multi-year archeological dig conducted by the head of the Notre Dame Anthropology Department. To date artifacts possibly 8,000 years old have been found at what may have been a primary crossing and settlement area. When the grand marsh of the Kankakee was drained and the river was straightened, the ecosystem changed, tourists stopped coming and the lodge business subsided.

The Kankakee Fish and Wildlife area provides canoe access off of SR 8 within LaPorte County to the east. The Greenways & Blueways Plan, adopted by the Northwest Indiana Regional Plan Commission (NIRPC) in 2007, suggests that current state and county highway access points to the Kankakee River be improved.

Water Resources

Porter County is one of three Indiana counties that form Lake Michigan's south shore. The lake is one of the country's premier natural resources. People escaping city life in Chicago for more than a century have taken the South Shore train to second homes along Lake Michigan. These same waterways provide recreational opportunities including fishing, canoeing, and bird watching. These opportunities are the subject of the Greenways & Blueways Plan.

The lake areas between SR 49 and Meridian Road also bring visitors to Liberty Township to enjoy the woods and rolling hills.

Agriculture

Agriculture, historically, has been the predominant industry in Indiana. Early settlers to Porter County were farmers, but farming as a significant part of the economy was greatly enhanced when the Kankakee Reclamation Company channeled the River and created drainage ditches in the early 20th century. What had previously been marsh was converted to fertile tillable soil in much of the southern half of the county. However, while the agricultural industry grew, tourism for the Kankakee River declined due to the alterations.

PROFILE: CULTURAL CORRIDORS

The ribbons of highway that traverse Porter County offer much more than a way to travel from one place to another. This profile includes suggestions to enhance the experience by tourists and locals alike.

Agritourism

"Agritourism" is a term used for agricultural practices that focus on entertainment or direct sale to a customer of locally grown food, in coordination with continued traditional agricultural business practices. Opportunities for agritourism include small nurseries, the production and on-site sale of farm-raised goods (dairy products, grass-fed beef, etc), school and educational trips, and entertainment activities such as "you pick" orchards and pumpkin patches, historically themed working farms, hay rides, or corn mazes.

Agritoursim is usually attractive to small or independent farm owners. The collections of farm buildings and surrounding farmland can "tell a story" about a particular place and its evolution over the years. Family-owned, multi-generational farms maintain connections to the community. The importance of the rural/agricultural architecture and how structures relate to the land should be maintained, and secondary land uses within the community that supported the farming community as a whole should be preserved in order to protect not only the physical structures but also the history itself.

Recreation Resources

Porter County is bordered on the north by Lake Michigan and on the south by the Kankakee River. US 231 (extending south of SR 2) and SR 49 both extend to the Kankakee River, and SR 49 provides direct access to Indiana Dunes State Park on the lakeshore.

These waterways, along with blueways such as Salt Creek, provide recreational opportunities including fishing, canoeing, and bird watching.

Identifying Cultural Resources

Currently early life in Porter County is memorialized by three historic markers designating: 1) the Tassinong Village, oldest in northern Indiana - SR 49; 2) Huakiki Village, oldest Potowatomi Village - SR 8; and 3) Margaret Bryant, first white child born in 1837 - SR 8.

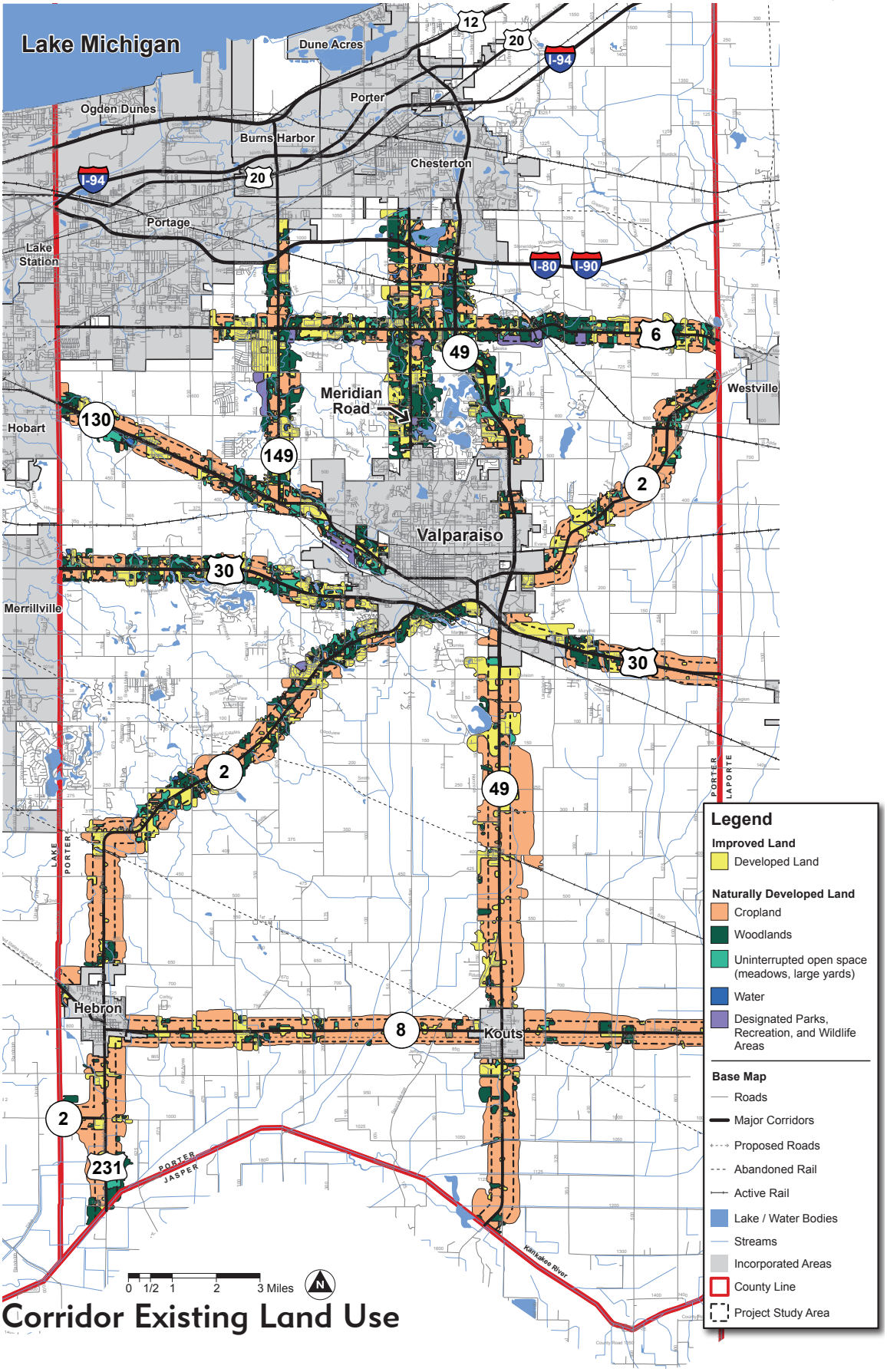
In addition to these historic sites there are several areas within Porter County that are environmentally significant, including natural wooded areas, wetlands, creeks and streams, and wildlife habitat among others. These features can also be marked or made available for public interaction through the use of roadside interpretive areas which could include rest areas, roadside parks, viewpoints, heritage markers, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and park and ride lots. These areas can be developed in a way that promotes context sensitive and sustainable design.

Corridor Existing Land Use

The Corridor Existing Land Use map reflects the current land uses on each corridor. These land uses represent improved land in contrast to naturally developed land (woodlands, cropland, recreation areas, and wildlife areas).

The majority of improved land is residential with some commercial development. Institutional and recreational uses, including schools, utility facilities, parks, wildlife areas, golf courses, and similar uses, are scattered along each corridor. The existing land use map was used to create the Corridor Characteristics map (page 23).

The existing land uses as shown in the Corridor Existing Land Use map may not be consistent with or reflect current zoning, which will not be affected by the Corridor Plan.



Corridor Existing Land Use

Corridor Character Summaries

Workshop exercises, extensive field work, and analysis of physical features allowed the team to "paint a picture" of the prevailing character of each corridor segment from the motorists' perspective. These broad "character areas" for the purpose of this Plan are defined below and are illustrated in the Corridor Characteristics map (page 23). The map illustrates how the character, and therefore the issues, transition. These character areas will serve as a framework and basis for recommendations in future chapters.

Natural Character

The County still contains relatively large tracts of natural areas comprised of woodlands, rivers, creeks, and wetlands. The most heavily wooded areas exist along Meridian Road, SR 49 north of Valparaiso, and eastern US 6. The ecology of numerous riparian or stream corridors traversing the county are not only scenic, but also serve an important function within the Lake Michigan and Salt Creek watersheds. The following list summarizes some of the unique aspects of the Natural Character Area.

- Relatively intact wooded and/or riparian areas
- Scenic short range views from the corridor
- Minimal or well-screened development fronting the corridor
- Roadway conforms to the natural contours of the terrain (hills and curves)

Rural / Agricultural

Much of Porter County, particularly in the southern section, remains rural in character including SR 2 from CR 350S to the Kankakee River, SR 8, eastern US 30, and SR 49 south of Valparaiso. Crop fields and pasture land are identified on the map. Throughout the public meetings, residents stressed the importance of the farming community and the need to preserve this rural / agricultural setting on certain corridors. Listed below are some of the common features specific to this character area.

- Large expanses of contiguous farmland
- Uninterrupted / expansive views from the corridor
- Limited numbers of homes and/or farmhouses adjacent to the corridor
- Infrequent small wooded areas or vegetated fence rows

Agricultural / Town Transition

As noted previously, much of southern Porter County is rural in nature. However, crossroad towns such as Hebron and Kouts are population centers that serve daily needs in the agricultural region. In most instances, the highways leading into and out of these towns are lined with a mix of individual residences and recent commercial development that supports the community. Although the development is important to the town's survival, there is a risk that if left unchecked, it may compromise the uniqueness of the community. This pattern of greenfield growth consumes farmland adjacent to towns. Listed below are some of the common features specific to the ***Agricultural / Town Transition*** setting.

- Low-density development along town edges
- Typically commercial and residential growth lining the corridor
- Unlimited driveway access and curbcuts
- Lack of defined edge(s) between town and country
- Varying depth of views due to inconsistency of development (setbacks)

Scattered Residential Development

Like most counties in Indiana, Porter County is trying to balance the demand for new residential growth with the need to preserve rural character. ***Scattered Residential Development*** is characterized by 2 types of single-family developments: (1) residences adjacent to county roads and highways, resulting in a strip of previously agricultural land being parceled into typically 1-10 acre lots, and (2) major subdivisions.

- Subdivisions comprised of single-family homes
- Conversion of farmland into individual parcels or minor subdivisions
- Subdivisions that often "turns its back" to the corridor
- Multiple driveways and access points that empty traffic onto county highways resulting in increased traffic and possible congestion

Scattered Non-Residential Development

Sporadic commercial development occurs on the corridors throughout the county. Concentrations occur on US 6 west of SR 49, and on Meridian Road. The non-residential development is characterized by:

- Small lot retail and service development
- Adjacency to incorporated areas
- High speed corridors with numerous curb-cuts
- No "sense of place" or identity
- Layout that typically consumes large tracts of land for parking
- Individual light industrial parcels
- Warehousing

Corridor Characteristics Map Symbology

Scenic Views

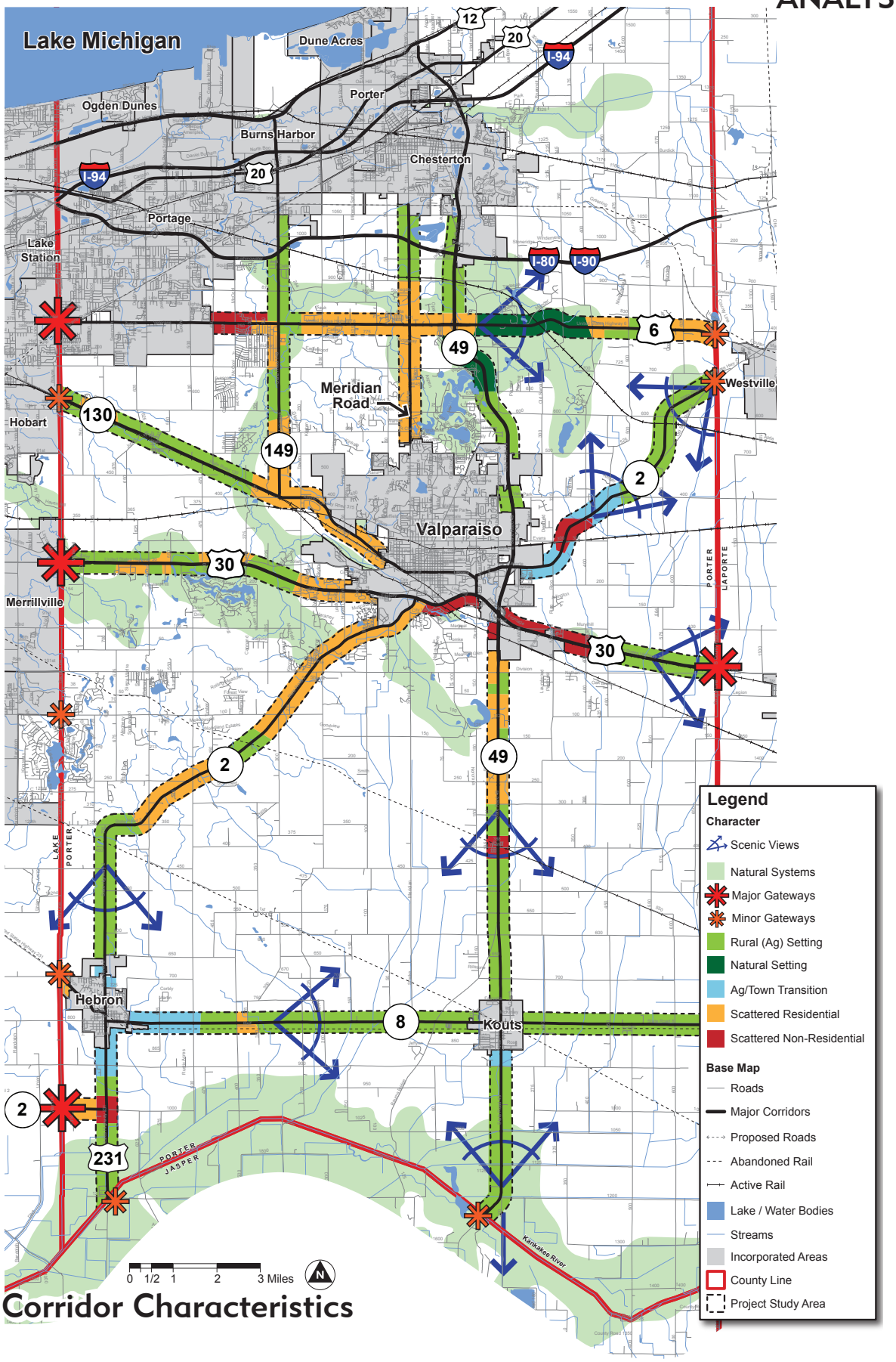
Scenic Views are often expansive and sweeping and are common where large tracts of agricultural land exist. Scenic Views also exist where significant natural features are located. According to public input, these views are very important to Porter County residents.

Major Gateways

Major gateways as identified on the Corridor Characteristics map are the points on major corridors with high traffic counts along the County border.

Minor Gateways

Minor gateways are lesser used gateways into Porter County such as along the Kankakee River. Traffic counts may be lower than those of major gateways, but the entry points are highly recognizable.



Corridor Characteristics

TRANSPORTATION

Introduction

The County's transportation network including those that are the subject of this study and those corridors that provide alternative vehicular or non-motorized transportation must be integrally planned to work safely and efficiently. The smart planning will result in smart growth and will spur economic development. Understanding the challenges and characteristics of each corridor will provide a framework for developing standards and recommendations for efficient and aesthetically pleasing spaces.

Vehicular Functional Classifications

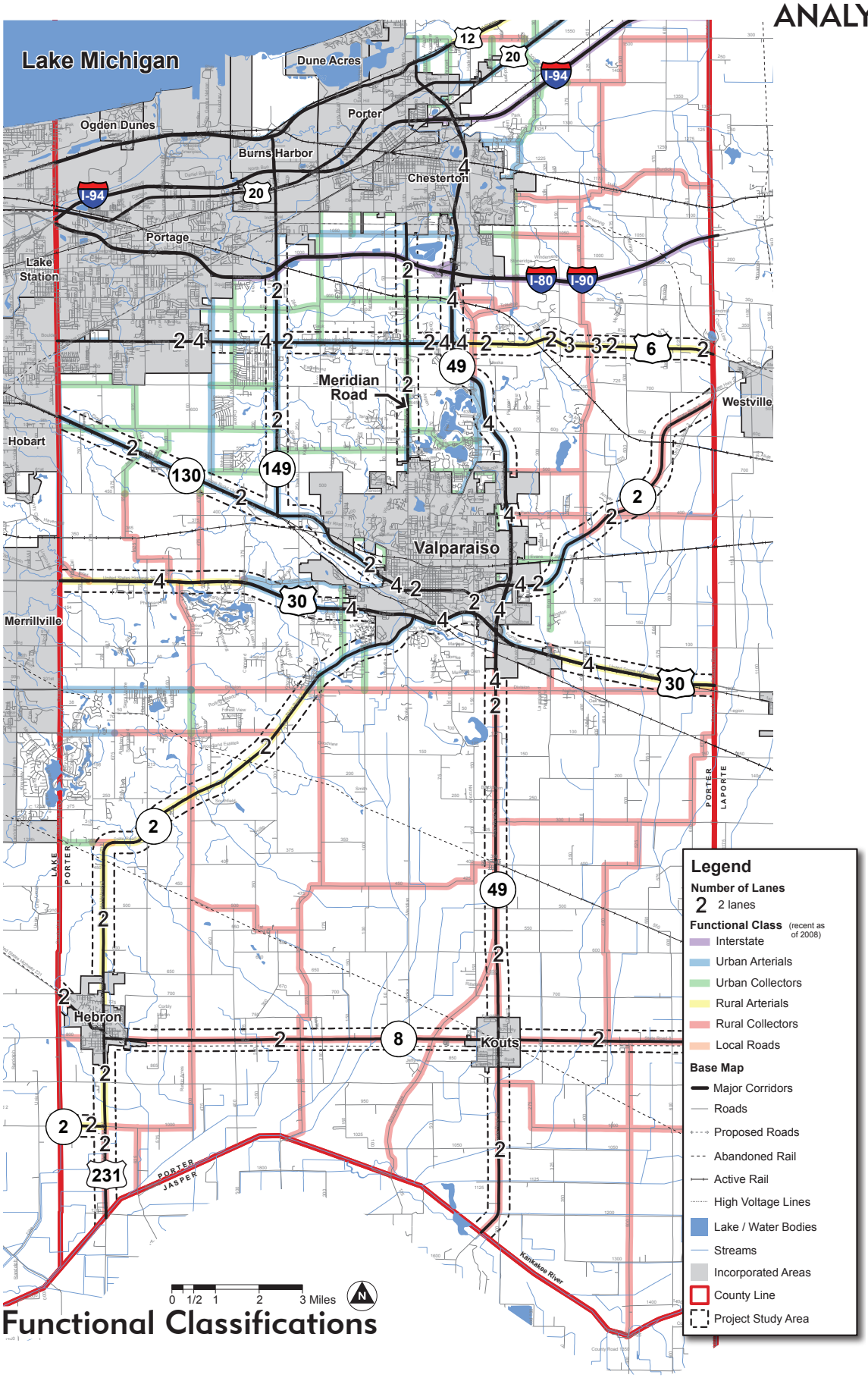
The functional classification system used by the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) divides roadways into three main types (Interstate, Arterial, and Collector) and then divides them further into rural and urban roads.

Interstates are direct routes, intended to move high volumes of traffic quickly, with no stops and very limited access in the form of merging vehicles. Arterials (such as northern SR 49) are major corridors that connect destinations, have higher posted speeds, and carry a high volume of traffic. Collectors (such as the midsection of Meridian Rd) connect local streets to arterials within an urban or rural setting. Meridian Road is designated a collector, but with an urban function.

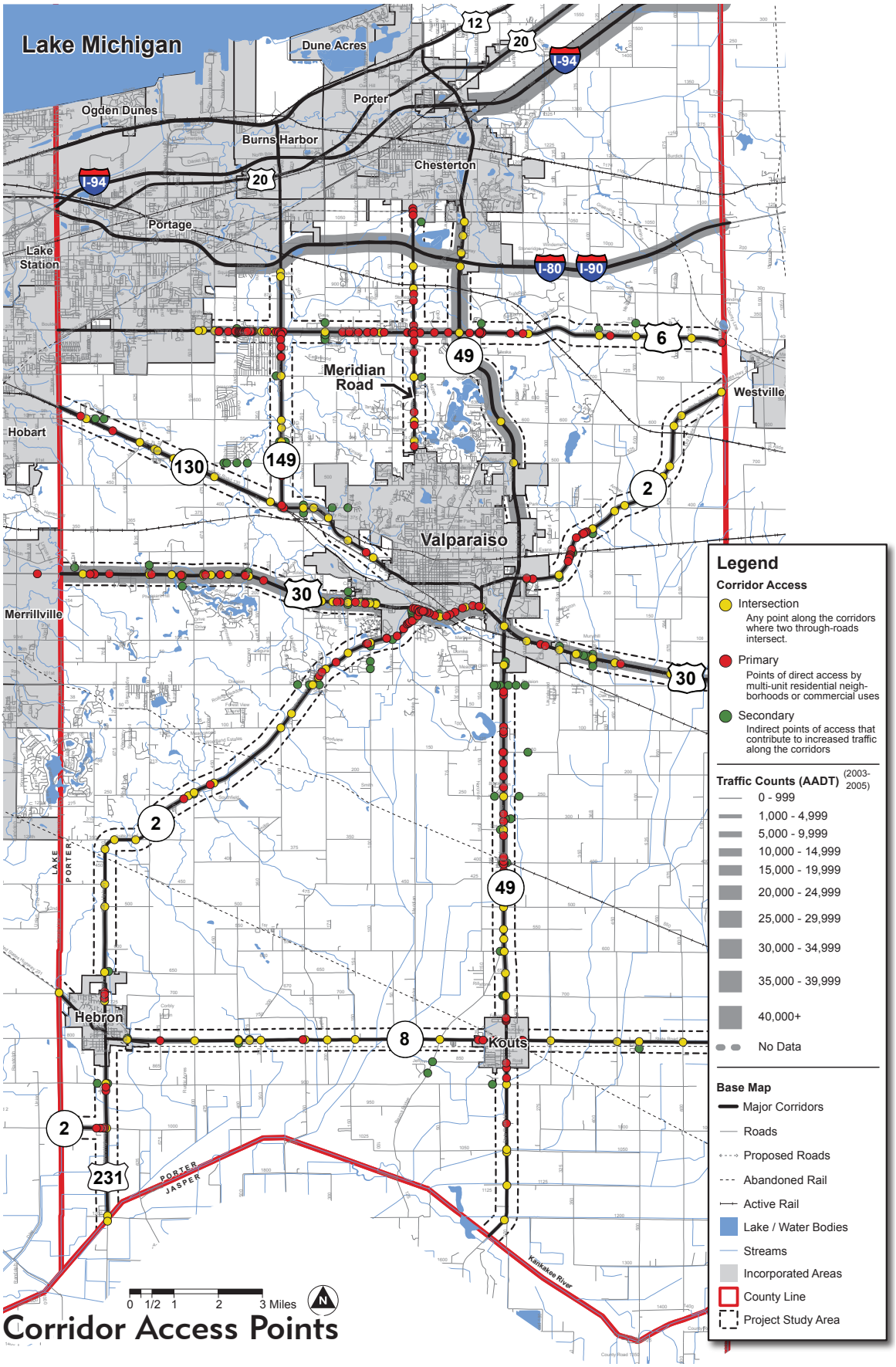
Corridors with urban functional classifications often contain elements such as sidewalks, curbs, and underground stormwater collection. Corridors with rural functional classifications often include gravel shoulders, open swales for stormwater drainage, and sidewalks are generally not included.

Many of the study corridors are classified as arterial highways. With the exception of Meridian Road, all study corridors are under state (INDOT) jurisdiction. These highways may be multi-lane or single-lane, with varying degrees of access.

* **The Functional Classifications identified in the INDOT Functional Classifications map (page 25) are current as of May 2008.**



Functional Classifications



Corridor Access Points

Traffic Counts

The two most heavily travelled of the study corridors are US 30, and SR 49 from the US 30 interchange northward. SR 49 has a consistent amount of traffic along the segment from US 30 to the north terminus of SR 49. US 30 is most heavily used within the city of Valparaiso, but in general traffic increases in a westerly direction from the Porter/LaPorte County line to the Porter/Lake County line. Traffic on SR 49 south of Valparaiso increases in volume in a northerly direction from the southern edge of Porter County toward Valparaiso. (Analysis derived from 2003-2005 INDOT data.)

Corridor Access

The Corridor Access Points map (page 26) includes three types of access points onto the subject corridors from intersecting streets or driveways from adjacent parcels:

- **Intersection** = Through-road intersections, whether located within an area of dense development or not.
- **Primary** = Direct access to the corridor roadway for commercial, business, dense residential, or similar developments that do not include through-roads or have a limited number of access points resulting in all or the majority of traffic feeding directly onto the corridor road.
- **Secondary** = Indirect access to a corridor by way of an intersecting road. May also be commercial, business, schools, dense residential, or similar development that is within close proximity to the corridor and where the majority of access for the development noted is primarily on the intersecting road.

The concentration of these points is used to inform future policy regarding roadway classification, access management decisions and design.

SR 49 (south of Valparaiso), SR 2 near and within Valparaiso, US 30, and US 6 are corridors with the highest number of primary access points.

Access Management

An excessive number of access drives within close proximity of each other can decrease the efficiency of traffic operations along a corridor due to the following:

1. Traffic progression is disrupted along the corridor because of the additional vehicle conflict points created by the extraneous access drives.
2. Inadequate spacing is provided between intersections and access drives which could lead to vehicle queues extending back into the downstream intersection/ drive.

The locations of access drives along a corridor are typically determined as uncoordinated land use decisions for small properties as development occurs. The access locations are then heavily based on serving the needs of each individual property, leaving little consideration for the affect that the access drives have on the traffic operations along the whole corridor.

However, the implementation of an Access Management Plan would provide a proactive approach to minimizing the number of access points along a study corridor while still providing for the proper access needed to serve future development. INDOT has created an Access Management Guide which provides access strategies for INDOT roadways. The guide is located at http://www.in.gov/indot/5614.htm. Although INDOT has control of access along their roadways, local decisions can still affect the locations of access points. Therefore, the strategies listed in INDOT's guide can also be used by the County to manage access decisions along each of the study corridors in coordination with INDOT. A corridor-specific access plan may be formally adopted into the County's comprehensive plan. Refer to ***Part 4: Implementation*** ("Transportation Management Tools", p. 104) for further information.

Publicly Identified Hazardous Intersections and Recorded Crash Data

The following intersections / roadway segments were noted during the public workshops due to their perception of being dangerous:

- US 6 (generally because of multiple direct access points)
- US 6 & Meridian Road (sight clearance)
- US 6 & Calumet
- US 6 & 200W

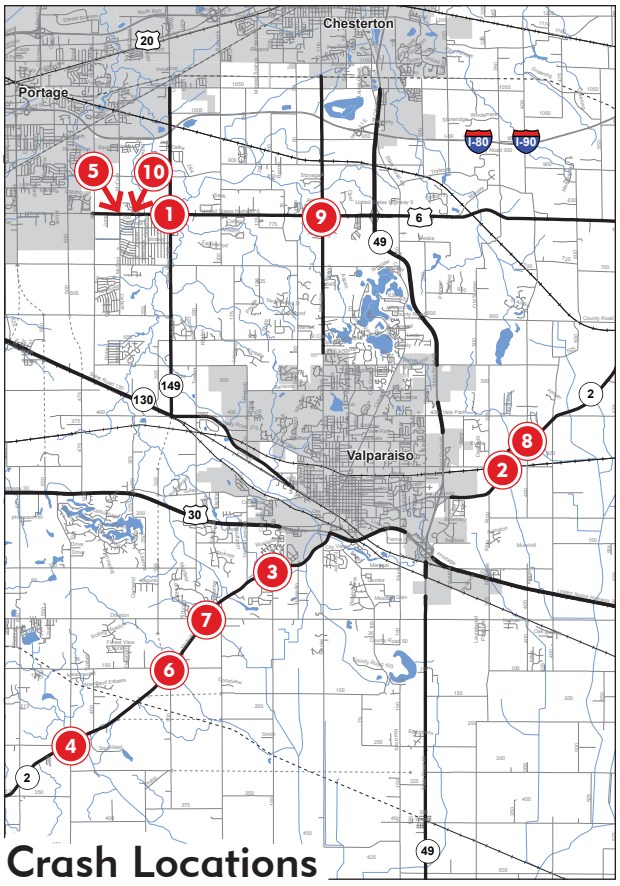
- Meridian Road & 700N
- SR 49 & 600N
- US 30 & Hayes Leonard Road
- SR 2 & 400E
- SR 2 & 100S
- SR 2 / Evans / 300N
- SR 2 & 500W

Due to the identification of the previous intersections during public workshps, the following crash data was obtained from the Porter County Sheriff's Department for vehicular crashes occurring from January 2005 through December 2007. The following list includes the top 10 intersections by highest number of crashes occurring within 200 feet of a specific intersection:

1. SR 149 & US 6 .....31 crashes
2. CR 300N (Evans Ave) & SR 2 .....25 crashes
3. CR 100W & SR 2 .....21 crashes
4. CR 500W & SR 2 .....20 crashes
5. McCool & US 6 .....18 crashes
6. CR 100S & SR 2 .....18 crashes
7. Division & SR 2 .....15 crashes
8. CR 400E & SR 2 .....12 crashes
9. Meridian Rd & US 6 .....11 crashes
10. Juniper Rd & US 6 .....10 crashes

Transportation Safety

Based on the information provided in the previous section, "Publicly Identified Hazardous Intersections and Recorded Crash Data," there may be a need for safety improvements at these intersections such as additional or clearer signage or pavement markings, addition of turn lanes, an upgrade in traffic control, roadway realignment or reconfiguration, evaluation of intersection sight triangles or the installation of traffic calming measures. The Crash Locations map (page 28) identifies these intersections. As shown on the map, SR 2 south of Valparaiso has four of the top ten intersections based on the total number of crashes over the three-year period.



Crash Locations

However, the total number of crashes is just one potential indicator of the need for safety improvements along a corridor. Other indicators should be evaluated and summarized such as the crash rate which determines the number of crashes relative to the intersection's traffic volume. Another indicator is the type of crashes such as rear-end, right angle or sideswipe crashes. The crash result should also be evaluated and summarized which includes crashes that result in an injury, a fatality or property damage only.

The implementation of a Transportation Safety Plan would provide a proactive approach to improving safety along the study corridors. Refer to ***Part 4: Implementation*** ("Transportation Management Tools", p. 104) for further information on Transportation Safety Plans.

Traffic Volume Projections

All Traffic Volumes

According to NIRPC traffic modeling data, roadways within unincorporated areas that are projected to have the highest traffic volumes during peak hours (6-9am and 3-6pm) by 2010 include I-84, I-80/I-90, and US 30. Other roads with significant traffic volumes during these peak hours, but to a lesser extent, include SR 49, SR 2 east of Valparaiso, SR 130, SR 149, and CR 475W. The 2020 projections show an increase in traffic along the aforementioned interstates, as well as SR 49, SR 2 east of Valparaiso, and US 30. The 2030 projections show an even further increase in traffic on SR 49, US 30, SR 2 east of Valparaiso, and SR 130.

US 6 is projected to have lower traffic volumes during peak hours than that of CR 450W (north of SR 130), CR 475W (between SR 130 and US 30), CR 500W (south of US 30), CR 100S, and St. Clair Rd (CR 550N), which are all projected to see an increase in traffic over time.

It appears that SR 2 west of Valparaiso, SR 49 south of Valparaiso, SR 8, US 6 east of Portage, and Meridian Road are not projected to have significantly high traffic volumes.

Large Truck Traffic

With regards to large truck traffic, the routes with the highest projected truck traffic during peak travel hours include I-84, I-80/I-90, SR 49 from I-80/I-90 to US 30, and US 30 east of Valparaiso. During off-peak hours, large trucks are also projected to use, to a lesser extent, SR 130 and US 30 west of Valparaiso.

US 6 does not appear to have a significant amount of large truck traffic, though there are some large trucking businesses located along that road that may affect roadway safety issues due to direct, non-signalized access to US 6.

Proposed Roadway Extensions

Several road extensions were proposed in the 2001 Porter County Land Use & Thoroughfare Plan, some of which intersect the project corridors. Many of the proposed extensions are intended to either:

1. create more connections between destinations throughout the County using county roads, which will alleviate a portion of the traffic that currently uses US Highways and State Roads for the majority of their trips, or
2. create more direct access to US Highways and State Roads which can lessen the amount of traffic traveling relatively long distances on county roads.

Discussion regarding a southern extension of SR 149 has been ongoing within Porter County. There are currently no plans by INDOT for an extension, but the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) would likely require a bridge several hundred feet long to span Salt Creek due to sensitive wetland habitats that exist there. In the absence of a planned extension, Porter County remains aware of the potential for a future extension as development proposals are reviewed.

Planned Roadway Improvements

Major Improvements

1 New Interchange - 2011
SR 49 & CR 400N

2 Bridge Replacement - 2008
SR 49 over Pleasant Township Ditch

3 Drainage Ditch Correction - 2009
SR 8 from SR 49 to .5 miles west of SR 49

Preventative Improvements - paving, basic maintenance, etc.

4 Intersection Improvement - 2008
US 6 at Porter/Laporte County Line Rd.

5 Intersection Improvement - 2010
US 231 & SR 2 & CR 1000 S

6 Auxiliary Lanes, Passing Lanes - 2008
US 6 & Mander Rd.

7 Pavement Project - 2008
US 231 from SR 2 to 113th Ave

8 Pavement Project - 2008
SR 49 from .5 miles north of Division Road to US 30

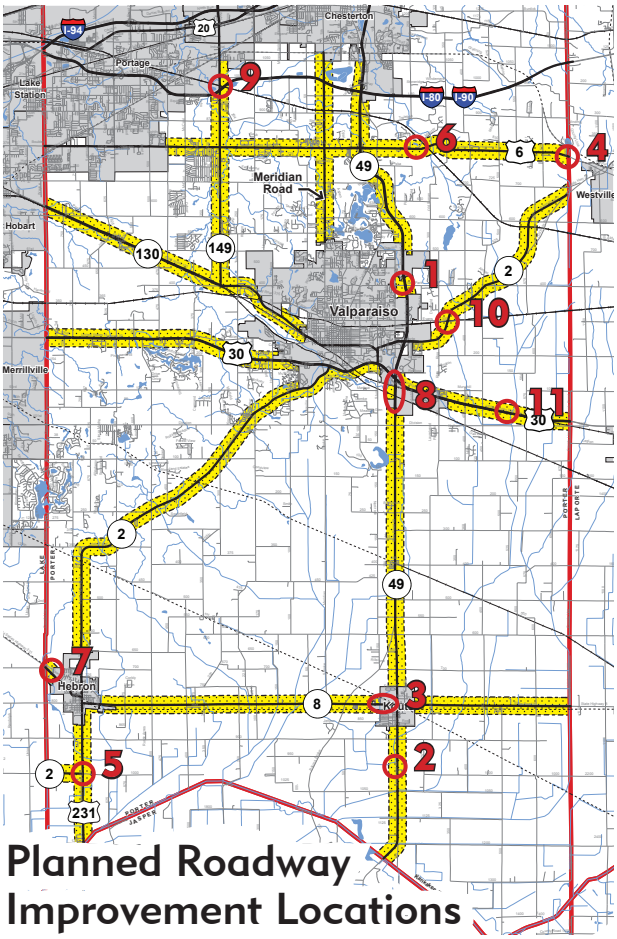
9 CSX Railroad crossing - 2008
SR 149 & CSX Railroad crossing

10 Railroad Protection - 2008
SR 2 & GTW/CN Railroad

11 Bridge Deck Overlay (Rehabilitation) - 2010
US 30 over Crooked Creek

Additional Improvements

- Bridge Replacement - 2010
  SR 49 & US 20
- Bridge Replacement - 2010
  SR 49 & US 12
- Intersection Improvement - 2008
  SR 520 at US 12 & US 20
- Intersection Improvement - 2008
  US 20 & SR 149
- Pavement Project - 2009
  SR 49 from Oak Hill Rd. to the Park entrance
- Access Control (Roadside Fencing) - 2008
  US 30 from I-65 to Lake/Porter County Line



Planned Roadway Improvement Locations

INDOT Major Moves

Three major projects are currently planned as part of INDOT Major Moves program. They include the construction of an interchange at SR 49 & CR 400N, and major preservation projects (projects that restore a roadway to "like-new" quality to ensure safety and effectiveness with the possible inclusion of bridge replacements, intersection improvements and sight distance improvements) including:

- **US 6** from 2 ½ miles west of SR 149 to just east of SR 149
- **SR 49** from Calumet Ave (south of US 6) to I-80/90
- **US 30** from CR 250W to Fletcher Dr (1.79 miles east of SR 49)

Alternative Transportation Elements

This Corridor Plan focuses on transportation routes primarily used by motorized vehicles, but these routes can be affected by other motorized and non-motorized modes of travel.

Porter County is designated as an area of severe non-attainment for O^3 and SO^2. Porter County's transportation network is composed of a multi-modal system, including thoroughfare, commuter rail, buses and trails. Encouraging the multi-modal development of the network is important in order to improve the air quality in the County. Improvement in quality of life is an added enhancement.

Freight Rail

The 2002 Indiana State Rail Plan recommends an increase in freight use and the preservation of short lines, defined as independent railroad companies that operate over a relatively short distance to either link two industries requiring rail freight together, interchange revenue traffic with other usually larger railroads, or to operate a tourist passenger train service. The Chicago South Shore Line is the only short line operating in Porter County.

CSX Transportation Inc. (CSXT)

Travels from a point north of SR 6 on the western county border in a southeastern direction, crossing SR 49 north of I-80/I-90, Meridian Road and SR 49 north of US 6, US 6 east of Mander Rd., and SR 2. CSX has two additional lines within Porter County, including:

Chesapeake & Indiana RR (CKIN)

Begins in Malden and travels southeast.

Chicago, Fort Wayne, & Eastern RR (CFER)

Travels from west to east along SR 130, through Valparaiso, and along US 30. This line intersects SR 2 and SR 49 in Valparaiso. A RailAmerica Company.

PROFILE: COMPLETE STREETS

A complete streets policy ensures that the entire right of way is routinely designed and operated to enable safe access for all users including pedestrians, motor vehicles, transit, and cyclists. A complete street is a place that enables people of all ages, interests and abilities to feel comfortable whether moving through or being within the space. The most basic components of a complete street are vehicular travel lanes, a bike facility, crosswalks, sidewalk or multi-use trails. Medians, street trees, lighting, signage and street furnishings also contribute.

In 2000, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) suggested that "bicycling and walking facilities be incorporated into all transportation projects unless exceptional circumstances exist." Boulder, Colorado was one of the first; building all arterials as multi-modal corridors for auto, pedestrian, bicycle, and transit. Since then, the cities of Seattle, Chicago, Sacramento, Charlotte, and Louisville have adopted some form of Complete Streets policies, recommendations or ordinances. The state of Massachusetts Highway Department has a new road design manual addressing complete streets that gives cities and towns more control over design decisions affecting their roads.

Norfolk Southern (NS)

Travels from west to east along SR 130, through Valparaiso, and on southeast just south of US 30. This line intersects SR 2 and SR 49 in Valparaiso.

Canadian National/Grand Trunk Railroad (CN)

Travels from west to east from a point along the western county border between US 30 and SR 130, through Valparaiso, and through a point between SR 2 and US 30 on the eastern county border. This line intersects US 30 west of Valparaiso, SR 49, and SR 2 east of Valparaiso. The CN Railroad has recently purchased an EJ&E Railroad line within Lake County with possible plans for a switchyard within Gary. As a result this line through Porter County may experience an increase in use.

Chicago South Shore South Bend Railroad Company (CSS)

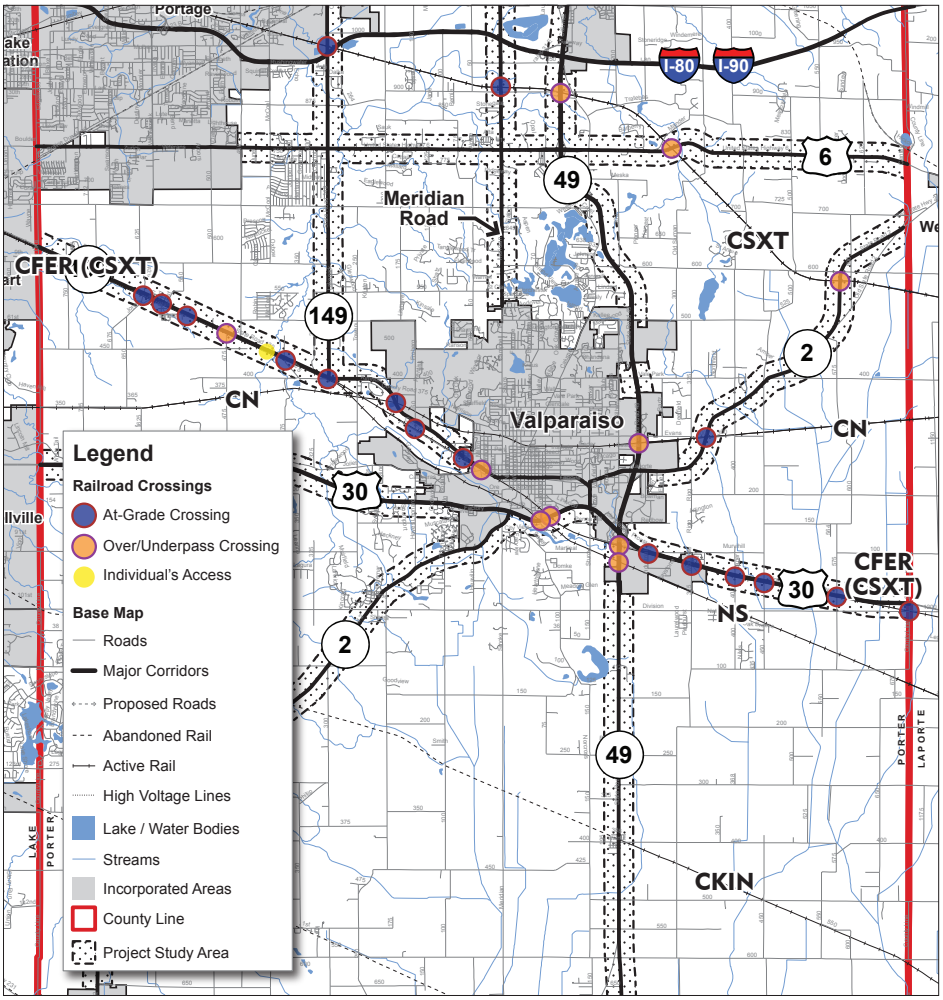
Travels along Lake Michigan within northern Porter County.

Passenger Rail

Passenger rail lines alleviate the road network from rush hour traffic pressure and help reduce potential vehicle carbon emissions. In addition to standard passenger rail service, the Amtrak and CN railroad lines that parallel US 20 have been federally designated for High Speed Rail. There are currently no plans for improvements to these tracks.

Amtrak

Amtrak has one line in northern Porter County which parallels the south shore of Lake Michigan. There are currently no stops along the Amtrak route within Porter County.



Chicago South Shore Line

The South Shore Line, an electrically powered interurban passenger rail line operated by the Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District (NICTD), travels between Millennium Station in downtown Chicago and the South Bend Regional Airport in South Bend, Indiana.

West Lake Corridor

A study by NICTD, which began in 2006, is currently underway for two proposed extensions of the line, one to Lowell and one to Valparaiso. This service would be called the West Lake Corridor. A line between Valparaiso and Chicago could help in relieving the existing congestion along corridors including I-80/94, US 30 and US 41(north of US 30).

Proposed stations along the Valparaiso line include Valparaiso, Hobart, Merrillville, Highland, Munster, and Hammond, which would connect to Chicago's Metra

and downtown Chicago. The proposal for this line is a direct result of increased demand on the South Shore Line due to overall population growth, increase in the number of commuters within the region, rising fuel costs, and environmental awareness.

NICTD intends to pursue funding for the Lowell segment first, due to higher ridership projections, followed later by the application for funding of the Valparaiso segment.

Regional Bus Service

The Northwest Indiana Regional Bus Authority operates two routes within Porter County. The first is a commuter rail connector between Valparaiso and the South Shore Line along SR 49. The second is a demand response route that connects Valparaiso to Lake County along US 6, SR 140, and SR 130. On a demand response route a passenger calls a day or two in advance to schedule a ride. This service is provided by small busses or vans through curb-to-curb service.

Objectives resulting from a needs analysis in the Northwest Indiana 2020 Vision Plan include:

- Introduce new services for Valparaiso, including a bus route along Route 49, with service to NICTD station, a downtown circulator, and a transit hub.
- Serve Portage with local shuttle and employer-based services.

The new ChicaGo Dash bus service to Chicago began its run in October 2008. This Service is supported by the city of Valparaiso, the Valparaiso Redevelopment Commission, and Northwest Indiana Regional Bus Authority with financial support from the Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority, the Federal Transit Administration, and the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission.

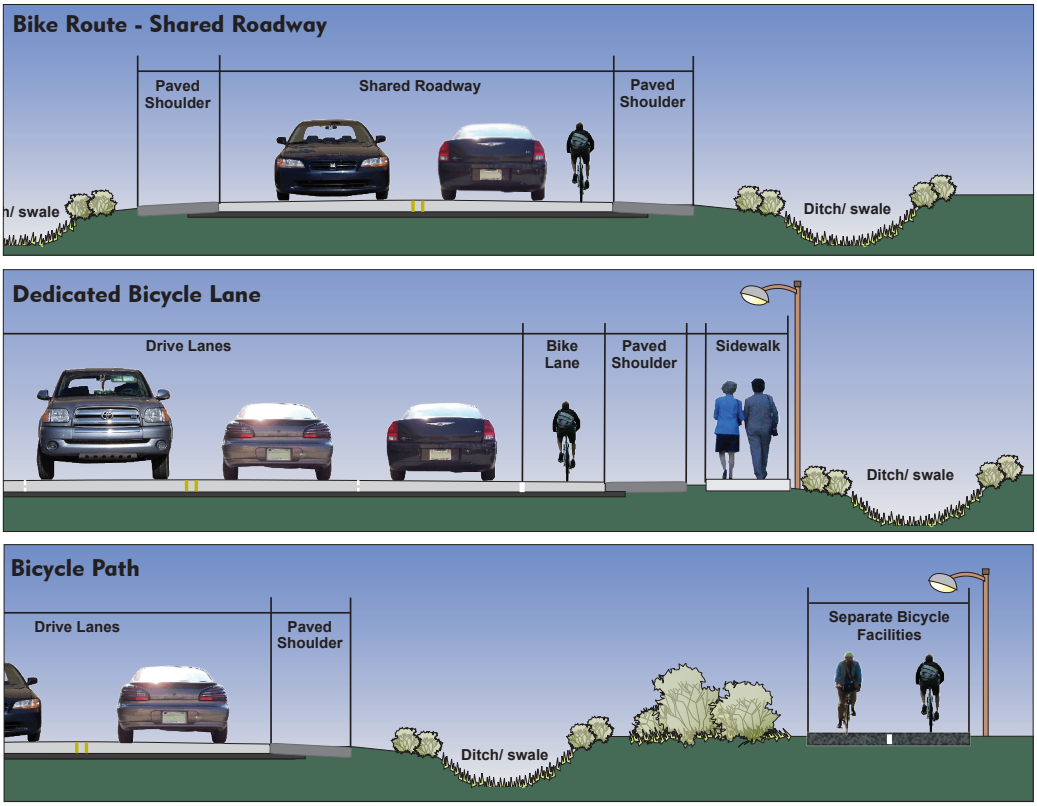
Benefits of the busses include Wi-Fi Internet service, satellite TV, and on-board electrical outlets for computer use. The travel time from Valparaiso to Chicago is just over an hour. Riders can park for free at Valparaiso's Village Station.

The busses travel an express route from Valparaiso to downtown Chicago with a cost of $7.50 per one-way trip. (http://www.chicagodash.com/index.html)

Non-Motorized Transportation

With state and national initiatives to get fit, the County is committed to providing facilities for non-motorized transportation including sidewalks, trails, bike lanes or routes, blueways, and greenways. Facilities that should be included on or along the study corridors include:

1. **Bicycle Route -** A bike facility shared with motor vehicles. Bike routes are typically identified only by a sign and is without any pavement markings. The sign serves to identify the route



and to alert motorists of the existence of cyclists along that route.

2. **Bicycle Lanes** - A designated lane on a roadway expressly for the use of cyclists. It is identified not only with signs on posts, but with stencilled signs and striping on pavement.
3. **Bike path / Multi-use path -** Off-Road facilities that can be paved or unpaved. These facilities may parallel a road but typically are separated by landscaping. These routes that are shared with pedestrians, joggers, skaters and at times equestrians offer connections between parks, neighborhoods, schools, and other destinations.

Several plans have already been created with goals related to non-motorized facility creation.

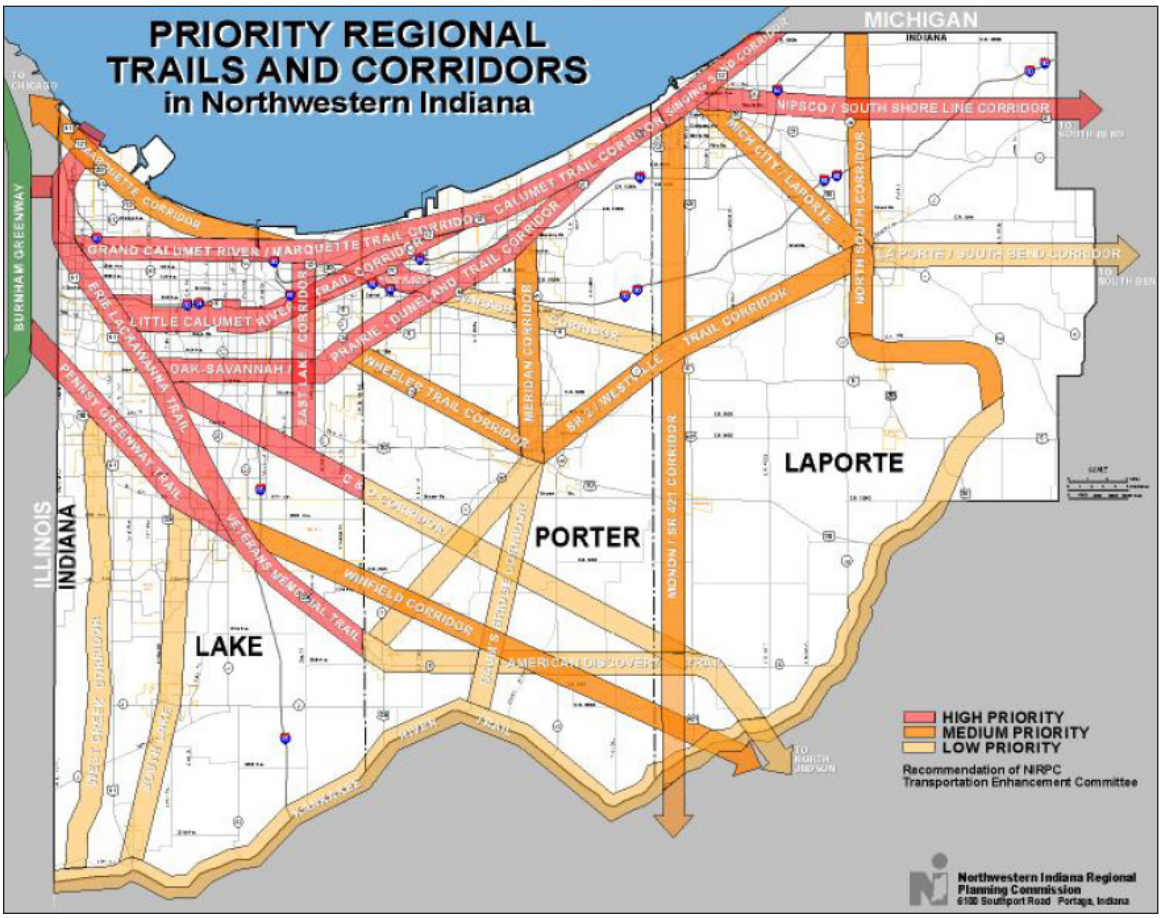
There are currently two major initiatives for new trails in Porter County: those proposed by the Indiana Greenways Foundation / Hoosier Rails-to-Trails Council and trails being planned or recommended by NIRPC.

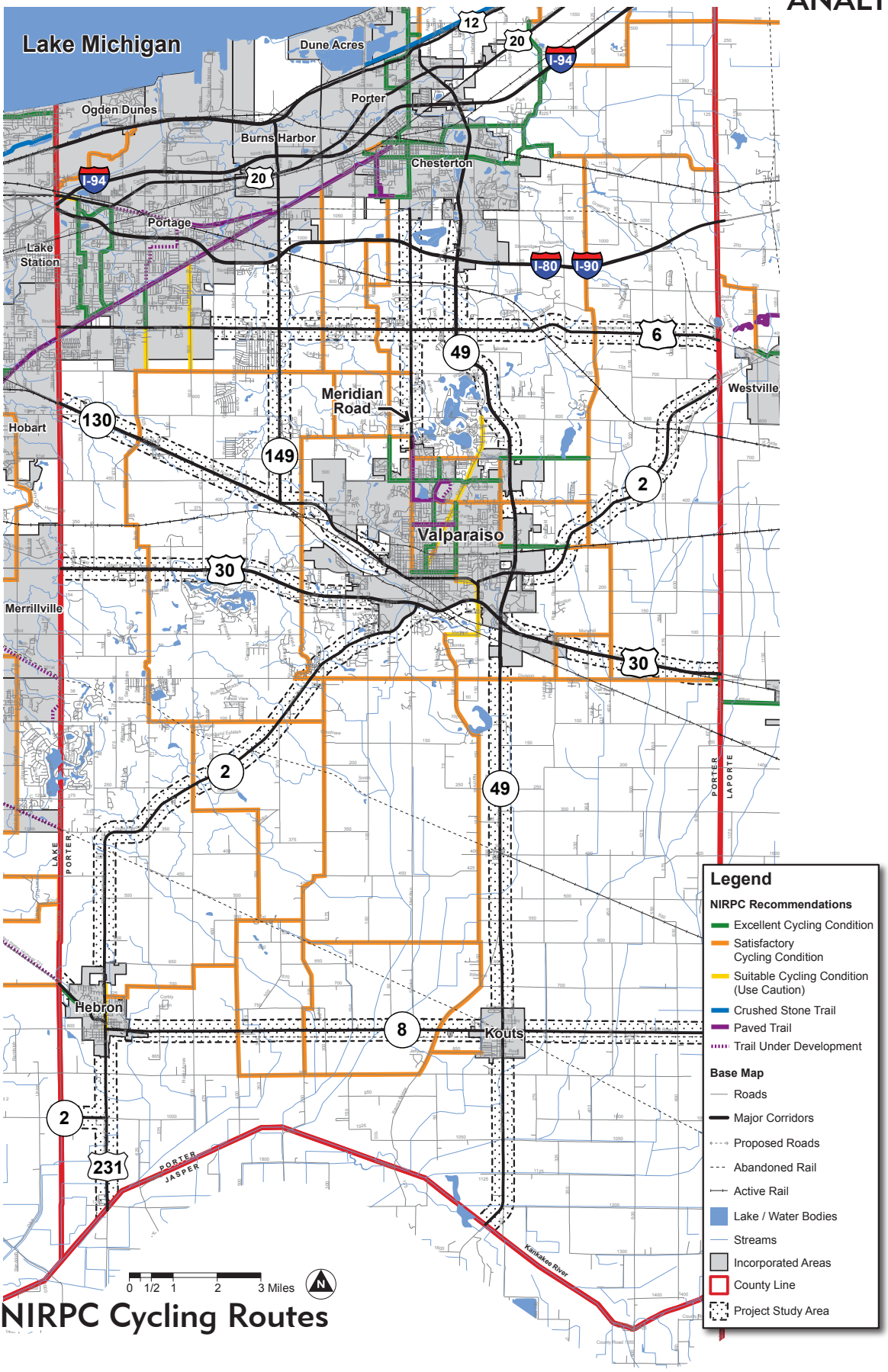
NIRPC Recommendations

NIRPC's ***Ped and Pedal Plan 2005*** recommends several routes in Porter County for pedestrians and bicycles. (See Priority Regional Trails and Corridors map.) Recommended routes that follow study corridors within this Corridor Plan include SR 130, Meridian Road, and SR 2, and SR 8. The facilities along SR 8 could either take advantage of a parallel abandoned rail line trail or SR 8 could become a shared roadway.

NIRPC also has several recommended shared roadway cycling routes designated on the ***Northwest Indiana Bike Map*** (Spring 2008). These routes do not follow any of the study corridors opting instead for corridors

NIRPC Multi-Use Trail Prioritization





NIRPC Cycling Routes

with less vehicular traffic volume. Several recommended cycling routes intersect the study corridors. Figure 1: Sample Bicycle Safety Signs includes examples of signage that may increase awareness of crossing bicyclists.

Figure 1: Sample Bicycle Safety Signs

The NIRPC ***Ped and Pedal Plan*** (2005) prioritizes trail corridors within the region. The plan includes many abandoned rail corridors, such as the American Discovery Trail between Hebron to Kouts and beyond, and the Winfield Trail which extends from the Pensy Greenway Trail southeast towards North Judson. It also includes routes along some of the study corridors including SR 2, Meridian Road, and SR 130. SR 2 east of Valparaiso, all of SR 130, and Meridian Road from Valparaiso to Chesterton are considered medium priority corridors based on population density, connections to trails outside the region, location of environmental justice populations, constructability, and employment. The plan also includes a map of utility corridor locations owned by or with easements for the Northern Indiana Public Service Company (NIPSCO). The plan recommends consideration of these utility corridors for trail development.

NIRPC is preparing a study for a trail (the Dunes-Kankakee Trail) that will roughly parallel SR 49 in Porter County, linking Dunes State Park with Chesterton, Valparaiso, and the Porter County Fairgrounds. Trailheads and access points have not yet been identified.

Currently it appears as though the American Discovery Trail which is parallel to or along the SR 8 corridor, the SR 49 trail, and the Winfield Corridor are the most likely candidates for near-future achievement. However, a trail along Meridian Road to connect neighborhoods, parks, and other destinations is desired.

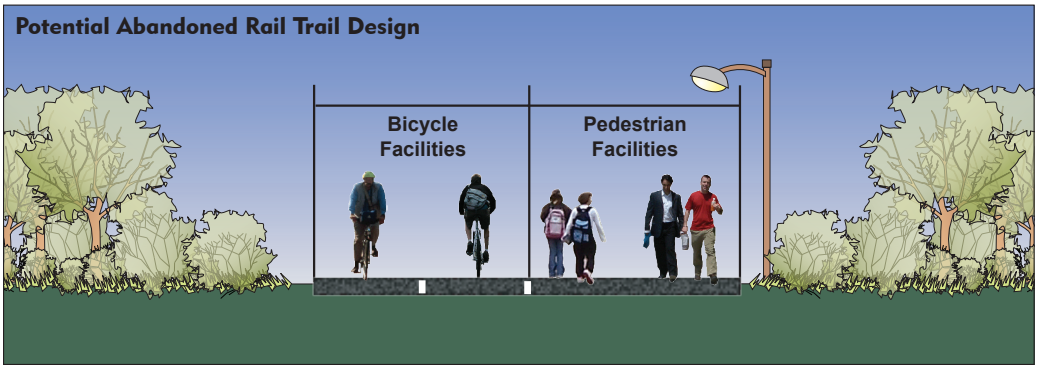
Indiana Greenways Foundation Recommendations

The term "rails-to-trails" refers to the development of trails on abandoned rail corridors where right-of-way is still in place or easements can be procured. Paved or unpaved sections provide space for walking, bicycling, roller blading, mountain-biking, or equestrian use. Segments of the Prairie Duneland Trail and the Calumet Trail are in use. Eventually these segments will link to the Erie/Lackawanna Trail (Lake County) and a wider system of trails.

A third Greenways Foundation trail, the Veterans Memorial Trail, is also planned from the Pennsy Greenway to Crown Point (Lake County) and on to Hebron. These segments will eventually become part of the nationwide American Discovery Trail. The corridor continues southeast of Hebron, through Kouts, and into Winamac. The segment between Hebron and Winamac is not currently targeted for trail development. At Winamac the corridor becomes the planned Panhandle Pathway along the former Pennsylvania Central line (United States Railway Association) into Logansport.

Blueway Corridors

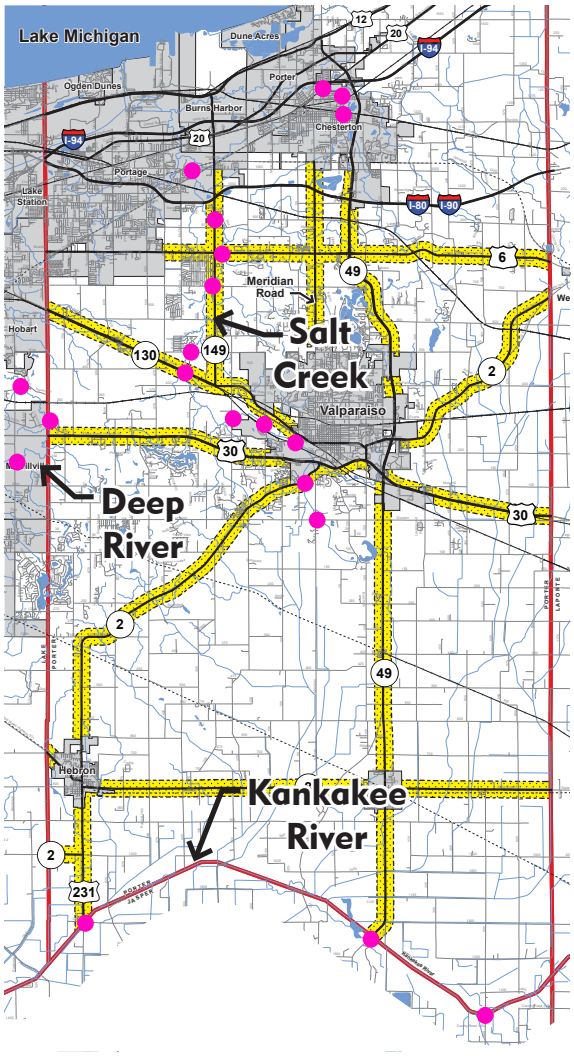
According to the NIRPC / Openlands ***Greenways and Blueways Plan***, 2007, blueways are water trails that consist of "a creek, river, or lake shore with several places where a paddler can put in or take out a canoe or kayak. These access points have interpretive signage that provides clear and accurate guidance to the paddler, so that he or she knows what to expect along the route and what level of experience is necessary to traverse the route."



Several of the identified Blueways intersect with the subject corridors. The most prominent of which are Salt Creek, the Kankakee River, and Deep River in Lake County.

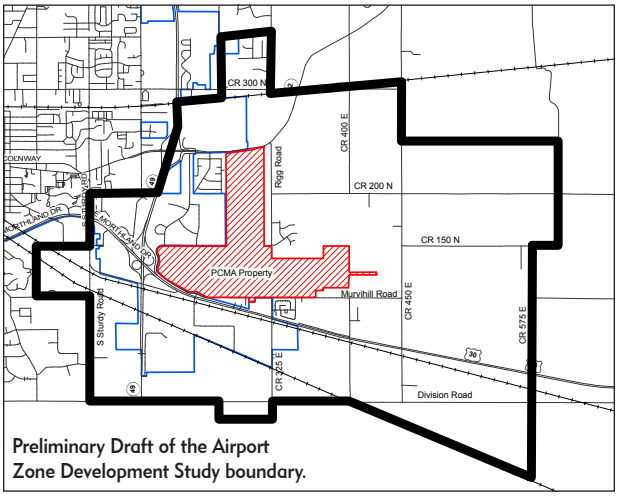
The following points would likely be at an intersection of a study corridor and waterway. They have the potential to create links to natural and recreation areas and should be incorporated as corridors develop.

- SR2 & Kankakee
- SR 49 & Kankakee
- Salt Creek & SR 2
- Salt Creek & SR 130 (3 locations)
- SR 149 & CR 700 (Salt Creek)
- SR 149 just north of CR 875 (Salt Creek)



Air Transportation

The Porter County Municipal Airport has recently begun the Area of Airport Zone Development Study for an area of 15 square miles surrounding the airport. As part of this process, the Airport Zone Development Committee has been formed and is working on defining the airport study area. The timeline has not yet been set for this project, but recommendations from this Plan and the Airport Study should be compatible.



Preliminary Draft of the Airport Zone Development Study boundary.

Utility Service Areas

Successful growth and development on Porter County corridors requires adequate roads and utilities that meet current needs and share future capacity service needs. The improvements to or extension of roads provides an opportunity for extending utilities as well, which in turn will influence future growth patterns.

Sanitary Sewer Service Inventory

Porter County has 16 sanitary service areas, 12 of which treat sewage. Currently, development within the corridor boundaries are served in the following ways.

Public or Municipal

- Chesterton (services Town of Porter; has extended service to one develop in County at 1050 N and 50 W)
- Hebron (stays within town limits)
- Kouts (stays within town limits)
- Portage (has extended to a conservancy district)
- Valparaiso (has extended beyond borders for a number of developments in the county)
    - verbal agreement between two governments to review developments jointly

Private Utilities

All private utilities below own and operate their own treatment plant.

- Shorewood Utilities (services Shorewood forest and two other developments to the south of Shorewood)
- South Haven Sewers (Services South Haven and areas NW of Valparaiso)
- Twin Lakes Utilities (Services Lakes of the Four Seasons)
- Fox Chase Farms (treatment facility is a wetlands system)

Conservancy Districts

- Damon Run (services development along US 6 and Meridian; waste treated by Portage)
- Falling Waters (services Falling Waters subdivision, owns and operates treatment plant)
- Indian Boundary (East of Chesterton and waste treated by Chesterton utilities)
- Lake Eliza (Services the Lake Eliza developments and Boone Grove High School)
- Nature Works (services Aberdeen along SR 2 south of Valparaiso and a couple of developments adjacent to Aberdeen; owns and operates treatment plant)
- Valparaiso Lakes Area (services area north of Valparaiso; waste treated by Valparaiso Utilities)
- White Oak Conservancy (services Wheeler and developments along SR 130 plus Wheeler H.S.; waste treated by Hobart Utilities)

Sanitary Sewer Service Analysis

Large-Scale Treatment

All of the Likely Growth Areas (shown in the Sanitary Sewer Service Area and the Water Service Area maps, pages 40-41) connect on at least one end with existing sanitary service areas, but only the growth shown along SR 6 follows an extension of sanitary service treated by the City of Portage, and in that case, the utility line only reaches from Portage to Meridian Road. All other growth areas would require an extension of sanitary service.

In addition to the previously identified sanitary service areas, there are also some developments within the county that have private package treatment plants that do not extend service outside of their property, and therefore have not been included in this analysis.

With regard to public and municipal sanitary service providers, all systems are capable of extending service, but it is the policy of the towns of Kouts and Hebron not to extend utility service without annexation. Other municipalities extend water in conjunction with signed agreements that prohibit remonstrance in the event of municipal annexation.

Septic Treatment

Nearly every soil within Porter County is rated as being either "very limited" or "somewhat limited" for septic system absorption. Therefore, areas intended for development should be those that have access to sanitary sewer services to avoid potential septic system failure or contamination of groundwater.

Water Service Inventory

There are currently 6 major water providers within Porter County. Those located within the Lake Michigan Watershed draw water from the lake while those outside of the watershed draw water from wells. Water providers that access wells include Valparaiso, Kouts, and Hebron. Water providers include:

- Indiana American Water Company (formerly Gary-Hobart Water Company) Private company servicing NW part of Porter County; restricted to Lake Michigan drainage area for service. Lake Michigan water is treated at plants in Gary and Portage area.
- Hebron Water (Municipal well service to Town residents only)
- Kouts Water (Municipal well service to Town residents only)
- Michigan City Water Utility (services Beverly Shores and Pine)
- Twin Lakes Utilities (services Lakes of the Four Seasons; well water)
- Valparaiso Lakes Area Conservancy District (Services area north of Valparaiso; serviced by Valparaiso Water Dept.)
- Valparaiso Water Utility (services Valparaiso area with municipal well water)

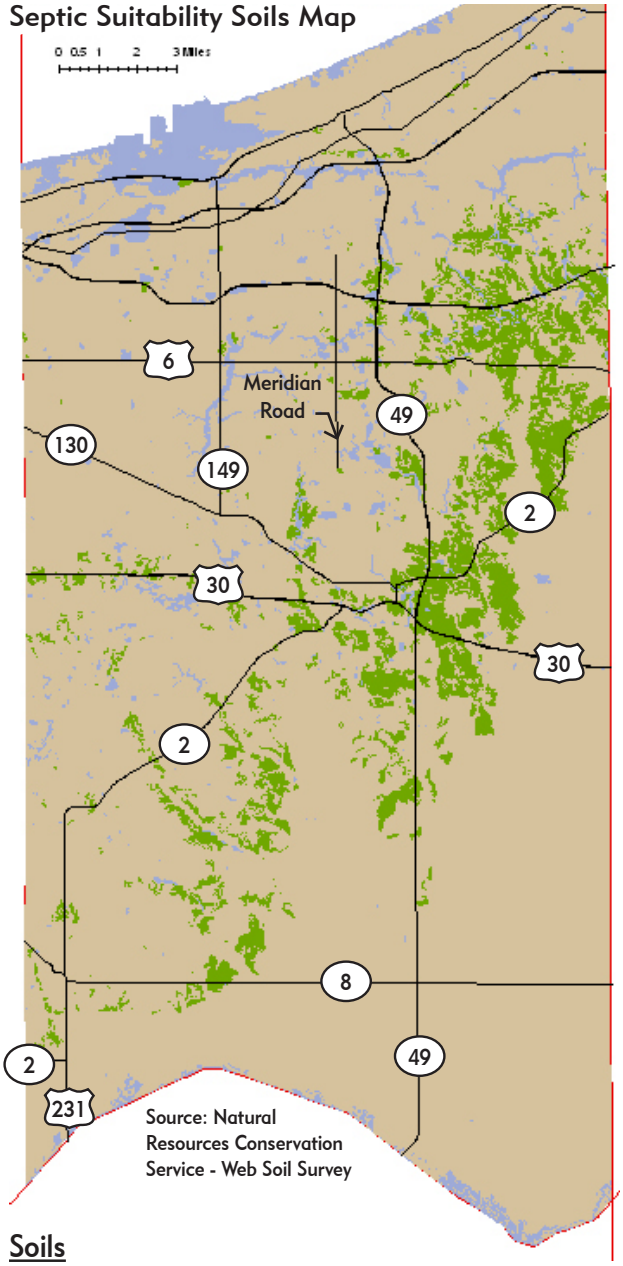
Water Service Analysis

The Likely Growth Areas are in line with existing water utilities in four main areas. Valparaiso has already extended water service southwest along SR 2 to the Aberdeen Subdivision, and northeast along SR 2 to the Washington Township Schools. Indiana American Water Company has water lines along US 6 from South Haven to Meridian Road, and provides water service to Timberland along Meridian Road.

Likely Growth Areas

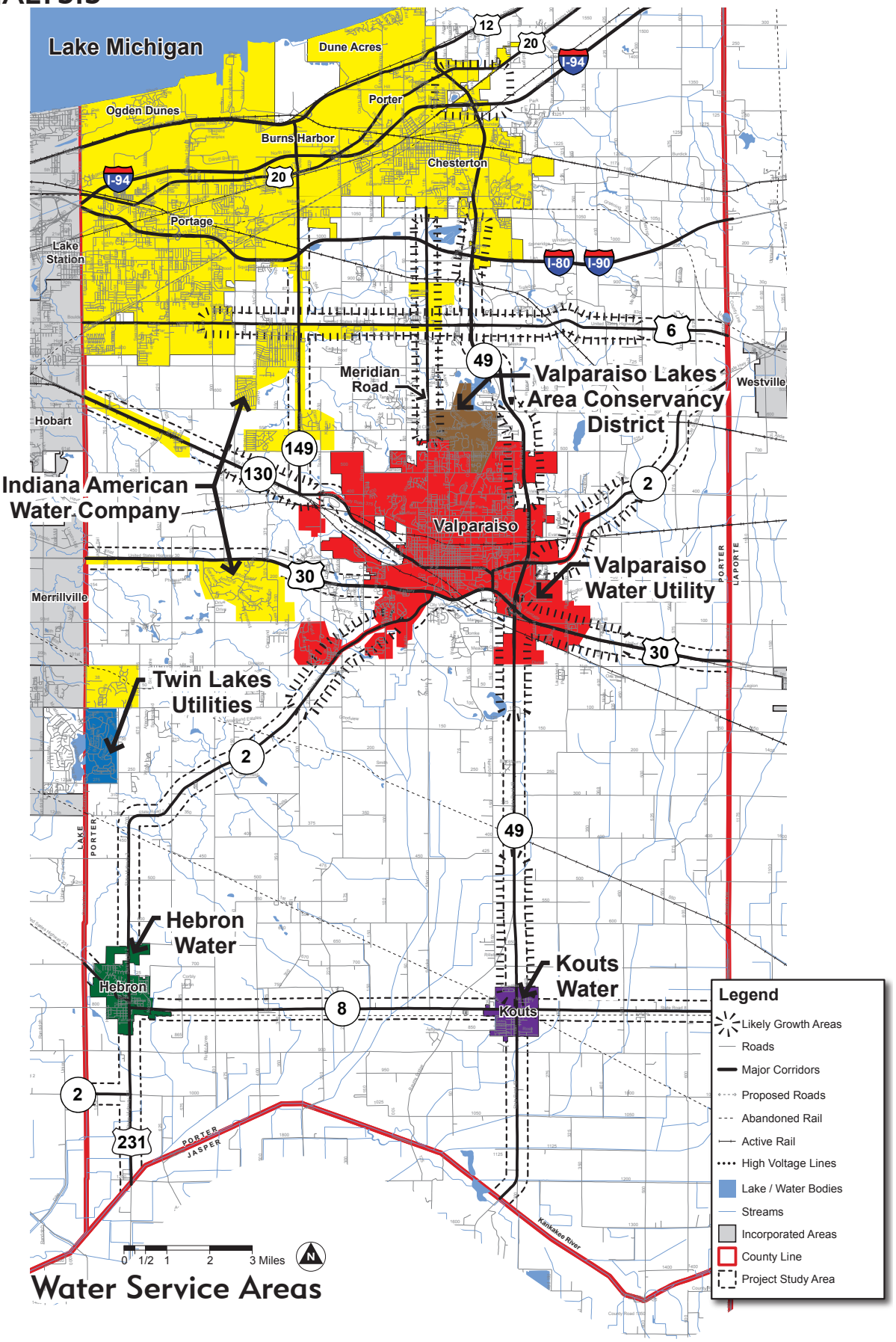
The Likely Growth Areas on the Utility Service Area maps are derived from the market analysis that indicated the most likely locations for new residential and commercial development. Refer to the "Development and Market Summary" beginning on page 42 for a more in depth analysis of how the Likely Growth Areas were determined.

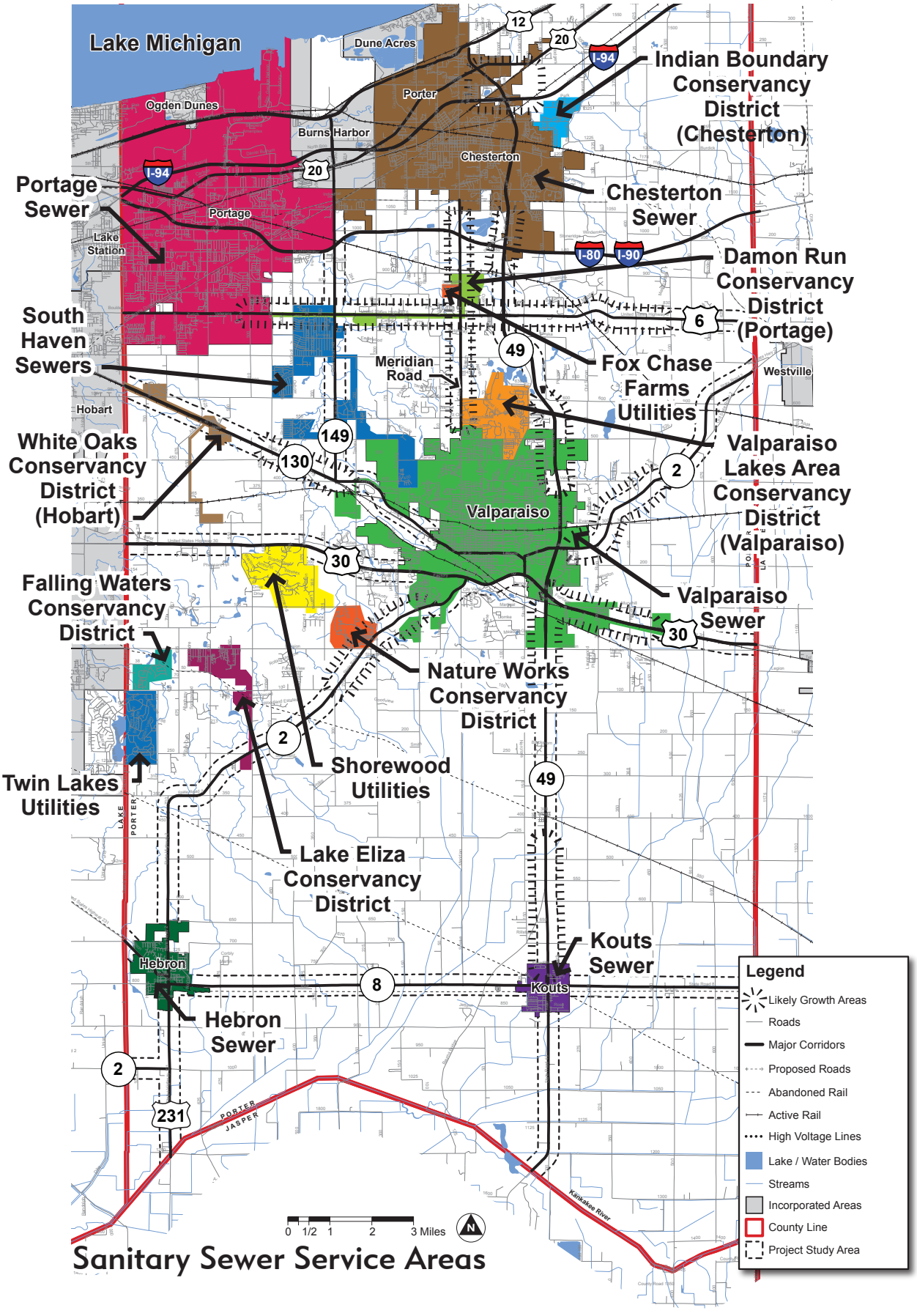
Septic Suitability Soils Map



Soils

- Somewhat limited for septic system
- Very limited for septic system
- Not rated


Lake Michigan
Dune Acres
Ogden Dunes
Porter
Burns Harbor
Chesterton
Portage
Lake Station
Hobart
Meridian Road
Valparaiso Lakes Area Conservancy District
Westville
Indiana American Water Company
Valparaiso
Valparaiso Water Utility
Merrillville
Twin Lakes Utilities
Hebron Water
Hebron
Kouts Water
Kouts
Kankakee River
I-94
I-80
I-90
12
20
6
49
149
130
2
30
8
231
LAKE
PORTER
LAPORTE
JASPER
0 1/2 1 2 3 Miles
N
Water Service Areas
Legend
Likely Growth Areas
Roads
Major Corridors
Proposed Roads
Abandoned Rail
Active Rail
High Voltage Lines
Lake / Water Bodies
Streams
Incorporated Areas
County Line
Project Study Area



Sanitary Sewer Service Areas

Development and Market Summary

Part of the analysis process of the Porter County Corridor Plan included the study of market, economic and development dynamics and trends for all of Porter County. This provided a baseline of economic information that assisted in creating tangible economic development goals and recommendations for the Corridor Plan. The analysis looked at three core markets; (1) Residential Development Trends, which tracked population growth for incorporated vs. unincorporated parts of the county, housing starts, and expected future demand for housing; (2) Retail Development Opportunities, which examined retail demand and its likely impacts on planned and future retail development on county corridors; and (3) Economic Development Opportunities, which studied employment indicators and other indicators of the local economy to determine which industry sectors would be most relevant to unincorporated Porter County, and how county corridors could play a role in fostering those industries.

The development and market summary contained in this report provides an overview of the market analysis conducted during the planning process for the corridor plan. A summary of strengths, opportunities, weaknesses and threats are provided along with the market analysis findings.

SWOT Analysis

Strengths

- Consistent population growth
- Net employment growth
- More growth than neighboring counties
- Increasing employment diversification
- High household incomes / wage growth

Weaknesses

- Historic reliance upon small number of industries
- Large employment losses in high paying industries, such as manufacturing
- Strong ties to regional economic engine located out of state (Chicago)
- Tourism not well-integrated into county
- Growth is occurring fastest in unincorporated areas

Opportunities

- Continued economic diversification
- Sustained population and economic growth
- High demand for retail goods and services
- Strategizing for ideal development patterns
- Tourism development
- Establishment of high levels of quality of life within all tiers (rural, suburban, urban)

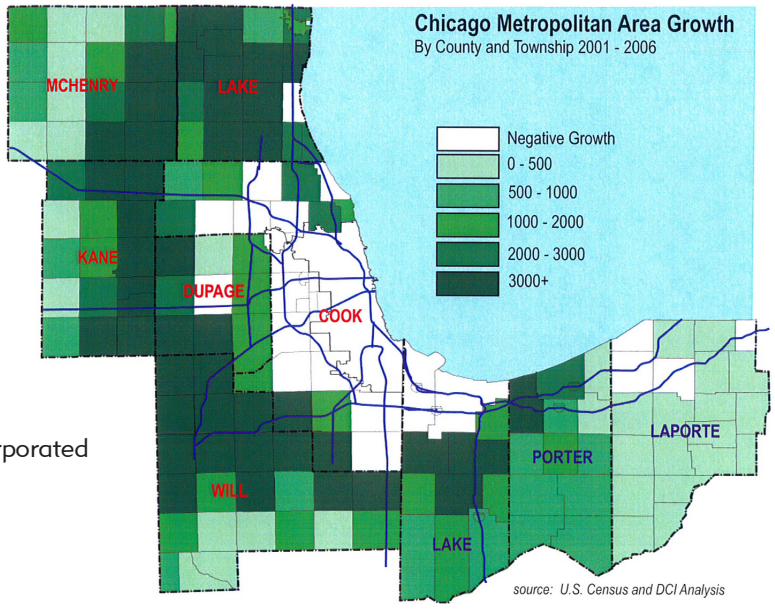
Threats

- Growing divides between resident segments (urban vs. rural, commuter vs. local)
- Increasing land consumption due to residential demand
- Decline of Chicago CSA regional economy
- Declining agricultural assets
- Loss of rural character
- Development infringement on environmentally sensitive areas
- Growing burden on local school systems
- Aesthetically unpleasing development
- Strip-center / corridor commercial development

Findings

Population Growth / Residential Development

- Porter County has grown at a fast pace over the last two decades. The County's growth rate was nearly double that of the State of Indiana between 1990 and 2006. Out of the 51,000 net population growth that Lake, Porter and LaPorte coun-



Geographic Area	Population Estimates		Estimated Change in Population	Estimated Change from 2000-2007
	2007	2000		
Indiana	**6,345,289**	**6,091,735**	**253,554**	**4.2%**
Lake County	492,104	484,511	7,593	1.6%
Porter County	160,578	147,166	13,412	9.1%
LaPorte County	109,787	110,162	-375	-0.3%
Jasper County	32,275	30,183	2,092	6.9%
Starke County	23,542	23,523	19	0.1%
Newton County	14,014	14,544	-530	-3.6%
Pulaski County	13,778	13,740	38	0.3%

2007 Population Estimate (US Census)

ties experienced since 1990, 60% was in Porter County.

- According to US Census estimates, Porter County's population has increased by at least 13,000 since 2000, nearly double the increase of Lake County's population. Porter County ranks 7th in the State of Indiana for population growth since 2000. The top five counties are all suburban Indianapolis counties.
- Most of the county's population growth has been from domestic migration, i.e. people moving into the county from other locations
- While urbanized townships of Portage (Portage), Westchester (Chesterton) and Center (Valparaiso) have added the largest numbers of population, the highest percentage growth has been in the southeastern portion of the county. Largely rural Washington, Morgan and Pleasant townships experienced growth rates of 19-23% between 2001 and 2006.
- Porter County is part of a growth "crescent" emanating from Chicago. While the City of Chicago and first-tier suburbs have saw negative to limited growth between 2001 and 2006, townships in Illinois and Indiana that were 35-45 miles from the "Loop" consistently saw population growth of 2,000 – 3,000+ people.
- 72% of housing units built in the county since 2000 were Single Family homes. In unincorporated areas of the county, this number is 94%.
- If the county matches is annual growth rate (1.16%) over the next 20 years, it will have a population between 195,000 and 202,000 people. Unincorporated Porter County could reach a population of 89,000 to 97,000, a growth rate of 1,000 people per year.
- Based on these population projections, it is estimated that by 2017 there will be demand for 10,400 more housing units within the county. For the unincorporated area of the county, there will be a demand for 4,900 units – mostly single family homes.

Economic Development

- Over the last 10 years, Porter County has gained 6,000 jobs in private employment. This is despite major losses in manufacturing employment totaling over 2,000 jobs.
- Both Lake and LaPorte counties lost jobs over the same period of time.
- The Health Care sector is one of the fastest growing areas in the county. Almost 1,000 wage and salary jobs were added to the county between 2001 and 2006. This was largely due to non-hospital related employment, such as practitioner offices, outpatient care centers, diagnostic laboratories and home health care services.
- The new county hospital, and the proposed relocation of the Valparaiso city hospital, could bring dramatic employment, activity and land use changes to the areas around their locations.
- Though the county's primary manufacturing centers are experiencing employment losses, several specialized manufacturing sectors are seeing small but consistent growth. These include Computer and Electronic Product Manufacturing, Machinery Manufacturing, Chemical Manufacturing and Food Manufacturing.
- The airport and land surrounding it represents the most likely growth center for economic development initiatives outside of incorporated county areas. Specialized Manufacturing and Logistics could both play major roles.

- Based on 2006 commuting numbers, derived from tax forms by the IRBC, of the 103,805 employable people who live in Porter County, **34,872** commute to a location outside of Porter County for work. Only 14,325 people commute into Porter County from another location, meaning that while Porter County has 103,805 employable workers, only 83,258 or 80.2% of people work within Porter County. The majority of Porter County residents who commute to other locations work in Lake County or Illinois.

Retail Growth / Development

- Porter County has a significant amount of retail "leakage" in that a lot of the demand for retail goods from county residents is being met in areas outside of the county.
- Retail development has finally begun to catch up with the county's fast pace of growth. There is estimated to be demand for between 650,000 and 1.2 million square feet of additional retail within the county. New development in Chesterton and Valparaiso is expected to meet much of this demand.
- Retail and other commercial uses are likely to locate along Route 6 and Route 49, arterial routes that will eventually connect the three major county hospitals.

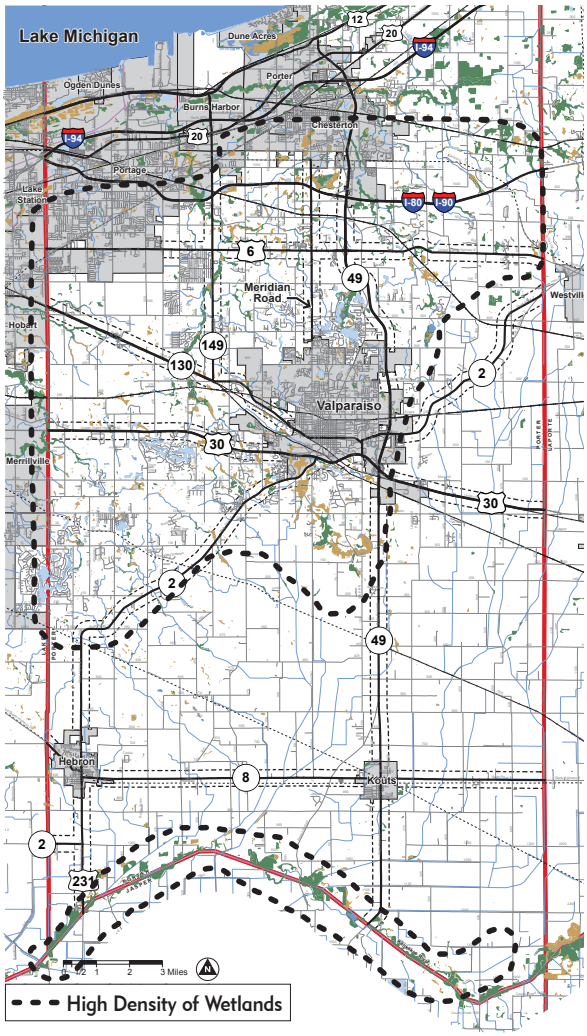
Likely Growth Areas

"Likely growth areas" were examined for each market segment as they related to county corridors. Residential Impact Areas represent areas that are expected to experience high levels of growth, and representative corridors where that residential growth could impact land uses adjacent to the corridors, as well as increased traffic flow. The retail impact areas represent the most likely corridors in unincorporated areas to experience retail development. Future residential growth, available land and county traffic patterns were all used to identify these areas. Finally, the Likely Growth Areas describe the areas most likely to generate or support future job growth or economic trade, such as the airport and new hospital on SR 6. The location of the Likely Growth Areas are illustrated on Development Suitability Map on page 57, the Water Service Areas Map on page 40 and the Sanitary Sewer Service areas on page 41.

Natural Systems Inventory

Wetlands

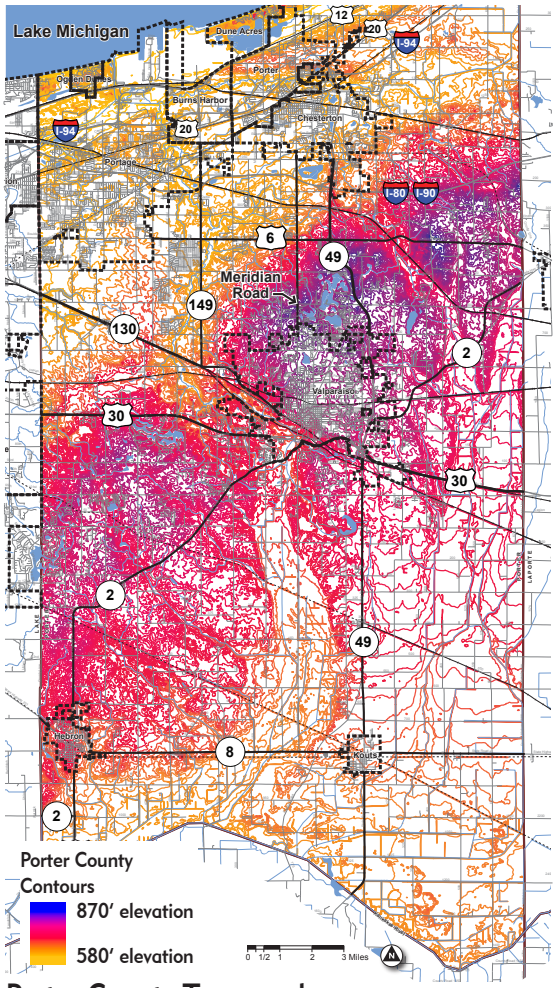
According to the National Wetlands Inventory there are two main types of wetlands in Porter County including Freshwater Forested/Shrub Wetlands, which generally follow waterways such as the river and prominent stream corridors, and Freshwater Emergent Wetland. The wetlands are scattered throughout Porter County, but when overlaid, generally follow a swath of area from the northeast corner of Porter County in a southwest direction, across Valparaiso, to a point between SR 2 and US 30 on the Porter County line.



Tree Cover / Forests

Tree cover within the study areas has been identified on the Corridor Existing Land Use map (page 19). Tree Cover/Forests include dense tree stands, and also wooded residential areas where there is minimal disturbance to established wooded areas. Homes are sporadically located within these woods and, where they can be identified, have been excluded. Tree Cover/Forests as shown on the Existing Corridor Land Use Map excludes fence rows and individually planted trees.

The most heavily wooded areas exist along Meridian Road, SR 49 north of Valparaiso, and eastern US 6. Therefore these areas could be considered as priorities for tree preservation or sustainable forestry (see Sustainable Forestry profile, page 52).



Porter County Topography

Slopes

The overall elevation differential within the county is approximately 200 feet, with the highest elevation existing in a swath across the midsection of the County as shown on the Porter County Topography map, page 45. The most varied terrain within the study area lies in the vicinity of Meridian Road and SR 49 north of Valparaiso. Slopes with grades of 15-20% or steeper and natural features such as riparian areas and lakes are included in the Natural Systems layer shown on both the Development Suitability map (page 57) and the Corridor Characteristics map (page 23). Development on these slopes may be more difficult and may require grading and the placement of cut and fill.

Viewsheds

One of the benefits of rolling topography is the view it affords. Short-range and narrow views exist along Meridian Road and near the US 231 and SR 49 Kankakee River crossings. See the Corridor Characteristics map (page 23) for the locations of some of these viewsheds.

Southern corridors, including SR 2 south of CR 350S and east of Valparaiso, SR 49 south of Valparaiso, SR 8, and eastern US 30 have expansive scenic views due to the flat terrain and low density development. The views are of cultivated land, compact tree stands or fencerows, and rural residential settings.

Air Quality

The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has designated Porter County as a non-attainment area for 8-hour Ozone and PM2.5. Non-attainment areas are regions within the country where the concentration of one or more criteria pollutants exceeds the level set as the federal air quality standards. NIRPC has produced plans that illustrate the current progress towards, and the ultimate achievement of, attainment for 1-hour Ozone by 2010. The Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) has also set goals toward attainment for the Porter County / Lake County / Chicago area within a State Implementation Plan. The U.S. Department of Transportation's Congestion Mitigation/Air Quality (CMAQ) provides grant money annually to finance, in whole or in part, projects and activities that result in improved air quality for non-attainment areas. This funding is distributed through

NIRPC who evaluates and prioritizes applications for funding.

Programs for reducing Ozone emissions in non-attainment areas include traffic signal re-timing and/or synchronization, roundabouts, carpooling, ride-sharing, public transportation and of course, bicycling and walking. In addition, basic land use planning principles could be implemented to manage the locations of trip-generating development (large residential subdivisions, schools, tourist destinations, commercial centers, etc.) in order to reduce the number of or length of vehicular trips within the County, thereby reducing the vehicle emission contribution within the non-attainment area.

Wellheads

There are several wellheads located throughout Porter County that lie within the corridor study areas. Various communities draw water from these wells including Valparaiso, Kouts, and Hebron. These wellheads should be protected in a designated area from any types of development that could potentially cause water contamination. Refer to Porter County's Wellhead Protection Overlay District Map for the locations of these wellheads.

Water Resources

More than a dozen creeks, lakes and tributaries feed into the Lake Michigan watershed providing areas of sensitive riparian and wetland habitat and recreational opportunities such as fishing, canoeing, and bird watching in much of the northern sections of the county.

UDO Watershed Overlay District

The Porter County Unified Development Ordinance has a Watershed Overlay District that applies to several creeks, tributaries, and other waterways within the county. They are prioritized to determine the size of riparian buffers and waterway setbacks. Several of these waterways intersect the study corridors and and proposed development should comply.

Salt Creek Watershed

The Salt Creek Watershed is a large watershed in northern Porter County. The watershed includes Salt Creek, as well as several smaller tributaries.

In June 2008, the ***Salt Creek Watershed Management Plan*** was adopted. The plan includes physical descriptions of the watershed, water quality analysis, goals and objectives, and implementation recommendations. The focus of the plan is the protection of the watershed. Some of the plan's activities include:

- increasing the use of and education about best management practices (BMPs) for storm-water filtration
- reducing agricultural and urban polluted runoff
- restoring wetlands
- educating the public about watershed protection
- education for septic system owners on the potential hazards of septic system leakage
- reduction of e-coli and nutrient levels
- encouraging more volunteers to take part in watershed management
- prevention of pollution within and protection of the watershed
- promoting low impact development (LID)
- improving stream banks and riparian areas
- creating alternatives to the use of road salt during winter conditions

The plan also identifies Critical, Priority, and Immediate Management Areas. They are shown on the map.

<u>Critical Management Areas</u>

Critical Management Areas (Red Outline) are those that need treatment for restoration, or to improve existing poor water quality. These areas exist:

- along US 6 between SR 149 and just east of SR 49
- several areas along US 30
- along SR 49, from south of US 6 to I-80, and near/south of Valparaiso

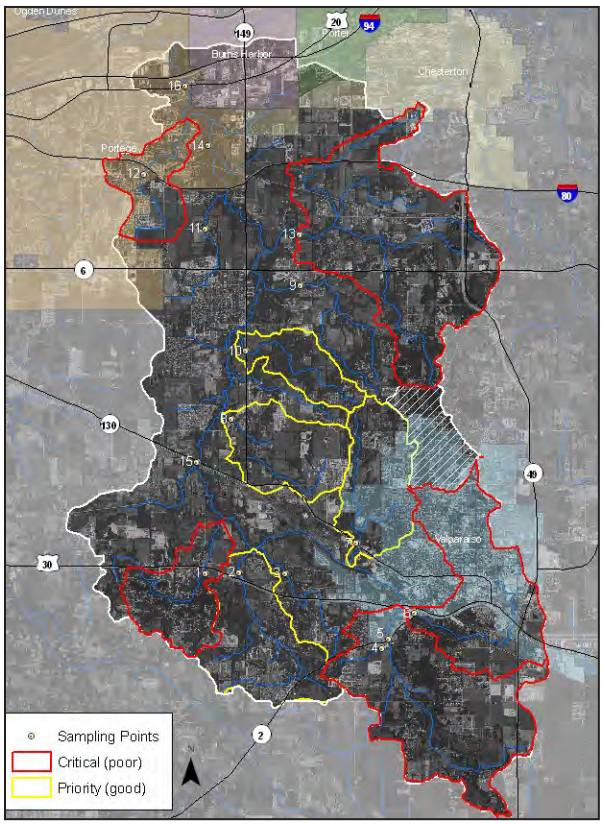
<u>Priority Management Areas</u>

Priority Management Areas (Yellow Outline) need treatment to protect relatively good water quality in light of increasing development pressures. These areas exist:

- Along SR 149 between SR 130 and US 6
- along US 30 west of Valparaiso
- along SR 130 west of Valparaiso

Immediate Management Areas

This category consists of all areas within the watershed that are not considered Critical or Priority Management Areas. This portion of the watershed will be managed with a focus on pollution prevention for stormwater runoff. This will be implemented as part of a Coastal Non-point Pollution Control Program.

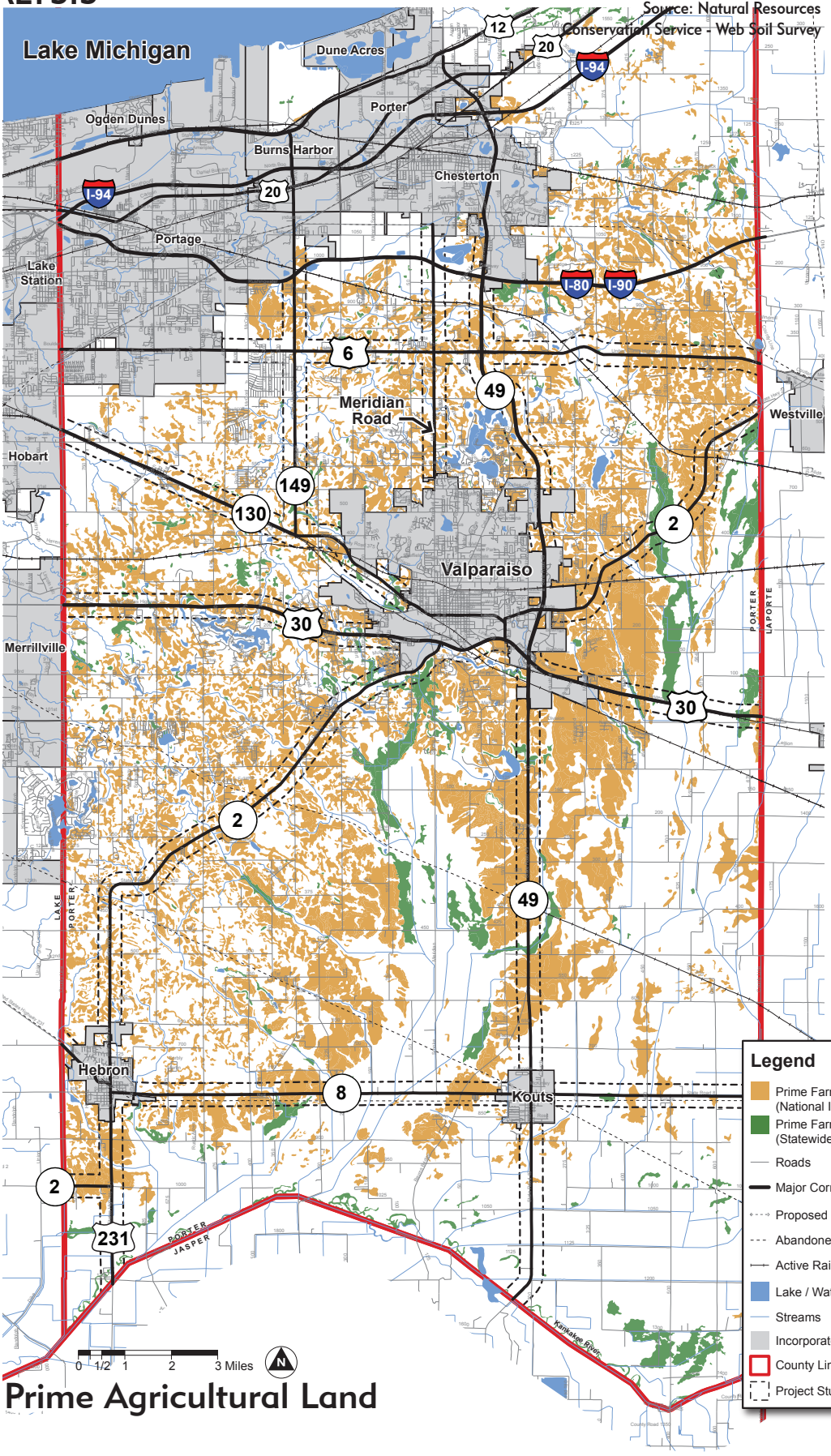


Salt Creek watershed critical and priority areas
Source: Salt Creek Watershed Management Plan

Agricultural Land

Data found in the Prime Agricultural Areas map was gathered from the Natural Resources Conservation Service's (NRCS) online database in Summer 2008. Prime agricultural land is divided into three categories: Prime Farmland (National Importance), Prime Farmland (Statewide Importance), and Farmland of Local Importance. According to the NRCS:

- Prime Farmland (National Importance) is of major importance in meeting the Nation's short- and long-range needs for food and fiber. Because the supply of high-quality farmland is limited, the U.S. Department of Agriculture recognizes that responsible levels of government, as well as individuals, should encourage and facilitate the wise use of our Nation's prime farmland, defined as land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops and is available for these uses. It could be cultivated land, pastureland, forestland, or other land, but it is not urban or built-up land or water areas. More detailed information about the criteria for prime farmland is available at the local office of the Natural Resources Conservation Service.
- In some areas, land that does not meet the criteria for prime or unique farmland is considered to be Prime Farmland (Statewide Importance) for the production of food, feed, fiber, forage, and oilseed crops. Generally, this land includes areas of soils that nearly meet the requirements for Prime Farmland (National Importance) and that economically produce high yields of crops when treated and managed according to acceptable farming methods. Some areas may produce as high a yield as Prime Farmland (National Importance) if conditions are favorable.
- Areas that are not identified as being Prime Farmland of national or statewide importance may be Farmland of Local Importance for the production of food, feed, fiber, forage, and oilseed crops. This farmland is identified by the appropriate local agencies. Farmland of Local Importance may include tracts of land that have been designated for agriculture by local ordinance. These areas are not shown on the Prime Agricultural Areas map.



Prime Agricultural Land

PROFILE: AGRICULTURAL IMPACTS

Agricultural Runoff

"In the 2000 National Water Quality Inventory, states reported that agricultural nonpoint source (NPS) pollution is the leading source of water quality impacts on surveyed rivers and lakes, the second largest source of impairments to wetlands, and a major contributor to contamination of surveyed estuaries and ground water.

NPS pollution, unlike pollution from point sources such as industrial and sewage treatment plants, comes from many diffuse sources. Polluted runoff is caused by rainfall or snowmelt moving over and through the ground. As the runoff moves, it picks up and carries away natural and human-made pollutants, finally depositing them into watersheds through lakes, rivers, wetlands, coastal waters, and even underground sources of drinking water.

Agricultural activities that cause NPS pollution include poorly located or managed animal feeding operations; overgrazing; plowing too often or at the wrong time; and improper, excessive, or poorly timed application of pesticides, irrigation water, and fertilizer.

Pollutants that result from farming and ranching include sediment, nutrients, pathogens, pesticides, metals, and salts. Impacts from agricultural activities on surface water and ground water can be minimized by using management practices that are adapted to local conditions. Many practices designed to reduce pollution [such as cost-share, technical assistance, and economic incentives to implement NPS pollution management practices] also increase productivity and save farmers and ranchers money in the long run."

-- Protecting Water Quality From Agricultural Runoff (EPA 841-F-05-001). U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Nonpoint Source Control Branch (4503T). Revised March 2005. www.epa.gov/nps

River Friendly Farmers

Indiana's River Friendly Farmer Program issues awards to farmers who, through good production management, help keep Indiana's rivers, lakes and streams clean. Ways to accomplish this include less than tolerable soil loss, field testing every three years, realistic fertilizer application and yield goals, nitrogen best management practices, fencing livestock to protect sensitive areas, and IDEM approved livestock facilities, among others.

PROFILE: WETLANDS, WOODLANDS, AND RIPARIAN CORRIDORS

What are Wetlands and Riparian Areas?

Wetlands are areas inundated or saturated by surface or ground water seasonally or throughout the year. The presence of water at or near the surface is the dominant factor that determines soil characteristics as well as plant and animal communities.

Riparian areas are the wooded corridors along rivers and streams. These areas are a complex ecosystem vital to the protection of stream and river water quality and include some of the richest varieties of plants and animals.

Why are These Resources Important?

Wetlands

Wetlands purify water by filtering and trapping sediment, chemicals, and excess nutrients before water enters other water bodies or groundwater. Wetlands provide habitat for fish, waterfowl, and other wildlife which use these areas to breed, find food, and protect their young. They also reduce flood damages by storing and slowing floodwaters. Wetlands regulate water levels within a watershed.

Riparian Corridors

Healthy riparian areas are typically composed of large trees, woody understory trees and shrubs, perennials, grasses, and groundcovers. Well-maintained and managed riparian areas are able to influence the physical, chemical, and biological characteristics of the stream. They can provide food, shelter and natural linkages for a wide variety of plant and animal communities; they can shade and cool streams to enhance aquatic habitats; they can filter sediments and pollutants, preventing them from entering the stream or waterway; they can stabilize river banks, reduce bank erosion, and provide flood control.

Woodlands

Forest lands provide environmental benefits recreation opportunities and at times, possibly sustainable timber production. Woodlands absorb more stormwater than any other vegetated surface, including grass. Farm fields and typical residential lots create three times (3x) more runoff than woodlands, and commercial and industrial developments create eight times (8x) more runoff. Woodlands provide critical habitat for many species of wildlife and studies have shown that trees provide market value to individual properties.

Identifying Wetlands and Riparian Areas

The general location of wetland areas may be determined using the U.S. Geological Service's (USGS) National Wetland Inventory (NWI) maps.

The exact boundaries of jurisdictional wetlands can be determined using all three of the following criteria:

1. Water Indicator - The area is inundated or saturated to the surface, by a single, continuous episode, for at least 5% of the growing season in most years.
2. Wetland Vegetation - The presence of plant species that are typically adapted for life in anaerobic (low or no oxygen) soil conditions.
3. Hydric Soils - The presence of soil that is saturated, flooded, or ponded long enough during the growing season to develop anaerobic conditions in the root zone.

Who Regulates These Resources?

Wetlands along waterways are protected primarily by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. The Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS), as well as state and

PROFILE: WETLANDS, WOODLANDS, AND RIPARIAN CORRIDORS

local environmental agencies may also regulate wetlands.

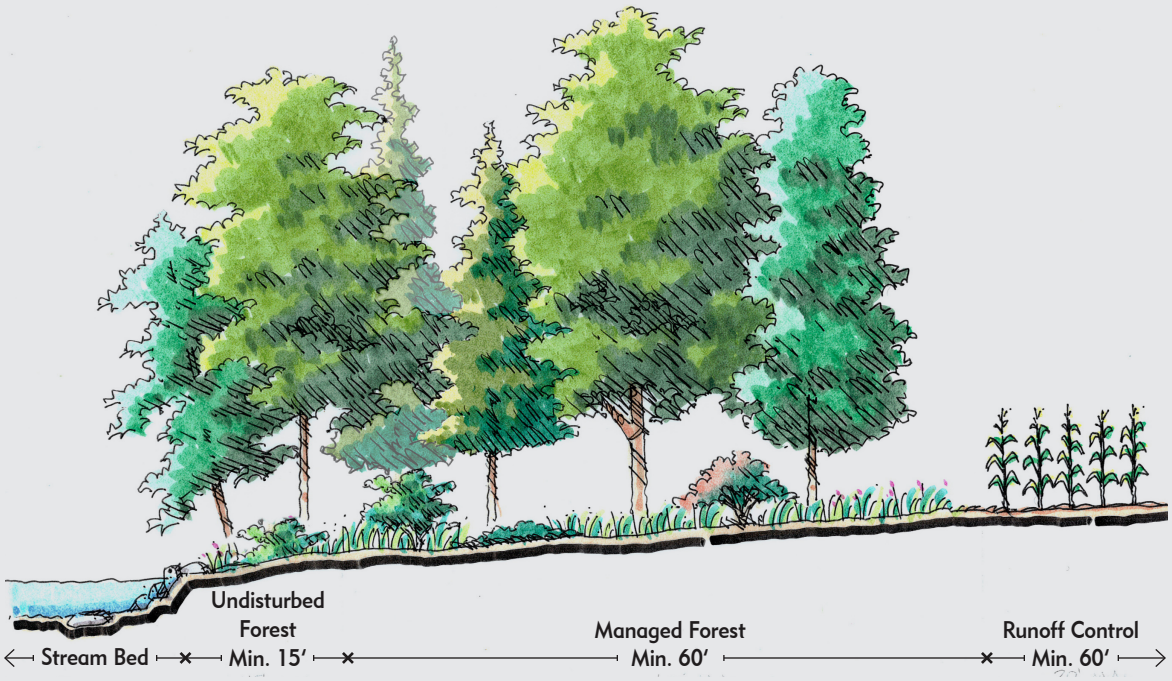
The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Corps, and USFWS have a public policy of "no net loss of wetlands" requiring acre-for-acre replacement of wetlands lost due to development either on-site or within the same watershed.

In Indiana, the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) has the authority to regulate riparian areas for water quality purposes. Often the local government represented by the County Surveyor may choose to regulate development.

The Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) of the USDA, has developed Conservation Standards for Riparian Forest Buffers (Code 391). These standards are site specific and will vary depending on the size of the waterway and floodplain. Most standards address an area ranging from 35 to 150 feet on either side of the stream. The ideal riparian area includes three zones for management in which development should be restricted. These zones, listed in sequence from the edge of the stream, are as follows:

1. Undisturbed Forest - This zone is adjacent to the stream and is ideally 15 feet in width. Removal of vegetation is not permitted.
2. Managed Forest - This zone is ideally 60 feet in width and harvesting of older vegetation is encouraged to support better filtering/removal of nutrients through younger, faster growing vegetation. Grass is not a substitute for the younger, faster growing plants. The runoff over grass is rapid, allowing no time for filtering.
3. Runoff Control - This zone is ideally 20 feet and may be pastured, farmed for hay or mowed for recreational purposes. Pesticides and other chemicals should not be used within these zones in riparian areas.

Protecting riparian corridors is key to the implementation, development, and success of Blueways in the county.



PROFILE: SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY

What is Sustainable Forestry?

Forestry is the art and science of caring for a forest to meet the needs of the owners and those of society. Sustainable forestry refers to caring for or managing forests in such a way that they continue to play the desired role and produce desired benefits as long as necessary or possibly indefinitely.

Why is Sustainable Forestry Necessary?

Wood products manufacturing has historically been important to Indiana's economy and remains so today. The economies of many Indiana communities are heavily dependent on wood manufacturing, and thus the forests supplying those industries. Outdoor recreation and nature-based tourism are growing industries in Indiana. These emerging industries most often depend on the scenic beauty and the wildlife that forests provide. Indiana forests are also important because of the hunting grounds and wildlife habitats they provide, air filtration, protection of soil, and filtration of stormwater runoff.

At the dawn of the 19th century, Indiana had over 20 million acres of forest covering about 87% of the land. The forest proved invaluable in providing home and barn building materials, fences, fuel for cooking and heating, barrels, tools, and machinery, but were nevertheless cleared due to fear of dangerous animals and enemies inhabiting them, and also to make way for cropfields, pastures, roads, businesses, and towns. By 1900 only 8% (1.8 million acres) of Indiana remained covered by remnant forests.

In 1921 the Indiana Classified Forest Act set in motion a voluntary program (still active) to conserve and protect hundreds of thousands of acres of private forestland. As a result of this and other programs, by 1950 18% of Indiana was covered in forest and by 2000 the number increase to 20% (4.5 million acres).

Valuable, Beautiful Forests--Forever

Forest Legacy is a program established by Congress as part of the 1990 Farm Bill. It helps identify and protect environmentally important forest lands that are threatened by conversion to non-forest uses.

Northwest Morainal Area

Indiana's Forest Legacy Program identifies environmentally important forests and protects them by purchasing the development rights from willing sellers. The owners retain all other rights, including the right to harvest timber and sell or bequest the remaining rights. Once purchased, the development rights are held by the state in perpetuity. Federal funding can be used for up to 75% of the purchase price for the development rights.

Six Legacy Areas in Indiana were identified by the Indiana Forest Stewardship Coordinating Committee in 1998 including a portion of LaPorte and Porter Counties. Forests of this area represent the diminishing northwest morainal forest type, and provide wildlife habitat, recreation, aesthetic values and community greenspace.

An Assessment of Need for the Legacy program was approved by the U.S. Forest Service in December, 1998. The IDNR Division of Forestry is accepting nominations for Forest Legacy parcels within the designated Legacy Areas.

http://www.in.gov/dnr/forestry/6909.htm

PROFILE: SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY

Other Alternatives

There are several programs in Indiana that can be used to preserve forests while maintaining the benefits of sustainable timber harvesting such as officially registering a forest or wildlife habitat, cost share grants, forest banking, and several others. There are also certification programs available, such as those offered by the Forest Stewardship Council or the Indiana Forest Industry Council, to allow harvesters to sell their products using a logo to identify them as a sustainably harvested product.

Sources:

1. A Landowner's Guide to Sustainable Forestry in Indiana (Parts 1-8); Purdue Extension Publication; http://www.ces.purdue.edu/extmedia/fnr.htm#3
2. Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry; http://www.in.gov/dnr/forestry/6909.htm

Transitional and Stable Corridors

Introduction

Porter County corridors and the issues associated with them vary greatly in terms of the pressure for growth and development. The two categories could be described as transitional and stable. This section explores the unique circumstances associated with each category.

Transitional Areas

The Transitional and Stable Corridors map (page 55) shows the location of transitional corridor segments characterized as those areas adjacent to urbanized areas that are continuously developed. The growth is a result of developers seeking greenfields and/or uncorporated land that is easier to permit near city utility service. Transitional areas may be situated at major intersections or other locations with available transportation options. These areas are midway between incorporated areas, allowing strategic placement within the regional market.

Issues associated with transitional areas include:

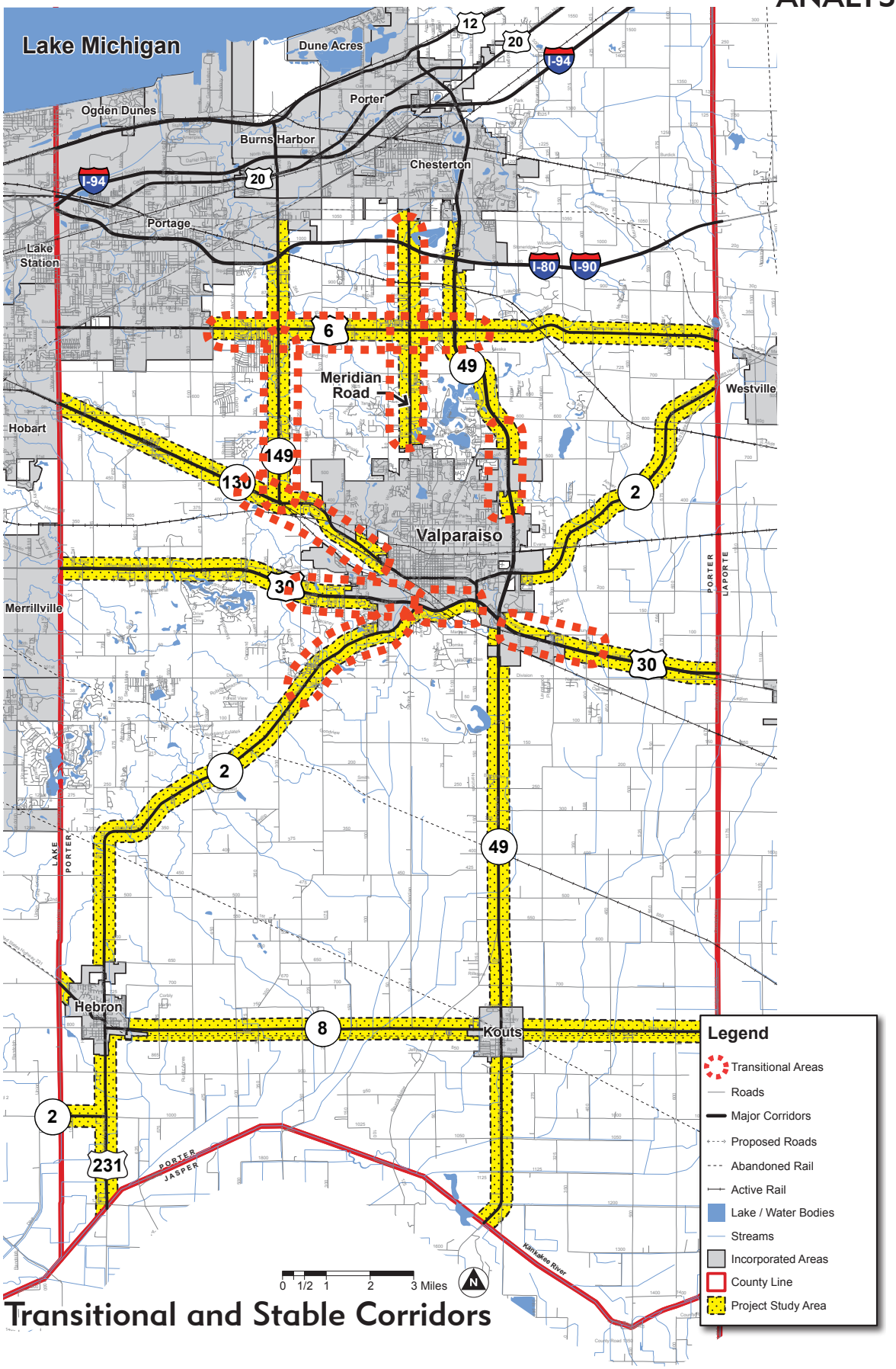
- existing development patterns that are reliant on vehicular access
- need to balance development pressure with the desire to protect sensitive natural resources
- need to retain community identity where municipal boundaries may be perceptually blurred due to sprawling development patterns
- typical residential development being overtaken by commercial development

Stable Areas

Other corridor segments are considered to be stable areas. These segments can be characterized as largely agricultural or undisturbed natural areas including woodlands, wetlands, or park and recreation areas, primarily in the southern sections of Porter County where commercial and industrial development pressure is often low and residential subdivision development pressure is high.

Issues associated with these corridor segments include:

- balancing major subdivision development with the rural character
- ensuring that farmers are allowed to continue existing agricultural practices
- driveway access points due to existing homes/farmhouses fronting roadways
- increase in stormwater runoff
- addressing additional traffic and inadequate parking due to infill development in established small towns



Transitional and Stable Corridors

Development Suitability Areas

The County desires a strong economic base and growth and development are contributing factors. In this section, existing conditions and community input have been synthesized to determine corridor areas considered most suitable for development without compromising the natural beauty and agricultural heritage appreciated by citizens and visitors. Suitable development areas evolved from overlaying likely growth and development areas and areas with constraints.

Development constraints posed by topography, watershed concerns, agricultural activity, and other historic, cultural and natural resources that have been identified as needing to conserve, preserve, or protect, coupled with opportunities presented by demographics, market analyses, utility availability and transportation access created areas of least conflict or that are considered most suitable for development.

Portions of corridors identified as most suitable for development are listed below and identified with a bold outline on the adjacent map:

1. US 6 - CR 50W to CR 150W
2. US 6 - CR 200W to 250W
3. US 6 - SR 149 to 450W
4. SR 130 - CR 300W to CR 350W
5. SR 2 - CR 50W to CR 150W
6. SR 2 - CR 100E to CR 150E
7. SR 2 - CR 500E to CR 550E
8. Meridian Road – CR 900N to CR 1050N

Development scenarios in ***Part 3b: Development Scenarios*** identify other areas not considered most suitable in this theoretical exercise, but that probably are subject to the most development pressure. Special attention should be paid to lessening the impact to these areas in order to present a cohesive image to the community. All development should be subject to the Arterial Roadway Overlay or Scenic Roadway Overlay District standards included in the Unified Development Ordinance.

Development Suitability Map Symbology

Likely Growth Areas

Areas that are identified as experiencing growth pressures given the current market, but not necessarily taking into consideration zoning or other land use regulations.

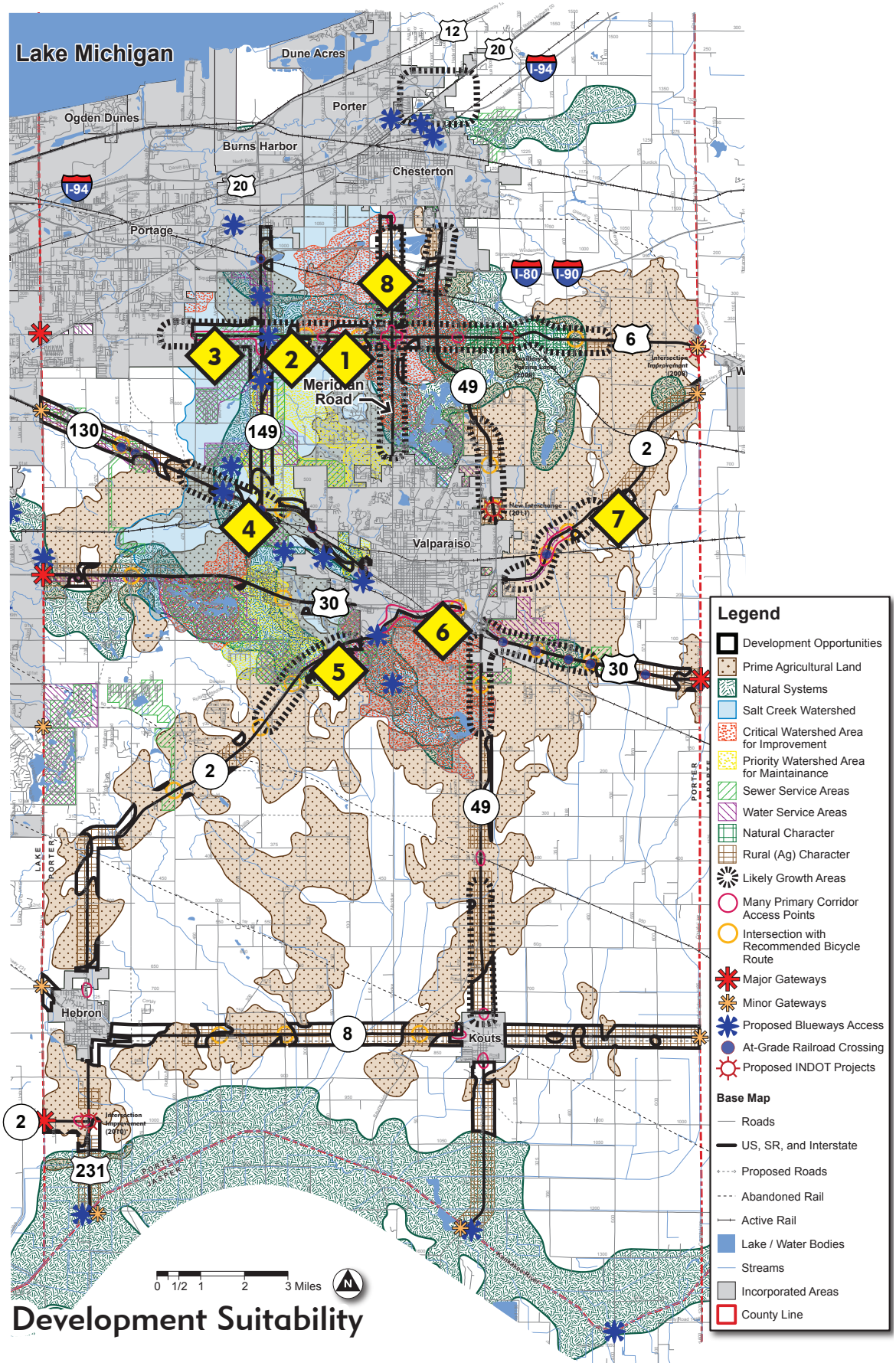
Major Gateways

Major Gateways as identified on the Development Suitability Map are the points where a major corridor with a high traffic count crosses the Porter County border. These are the most used entries into and exits from Porter County.

Minor Gateways

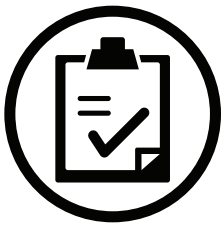
Minor Gateways are natural or lesser used gateways into Porter County. They include two points along the Kankakee River and several points of entry where traffic counts crossing the county border were lower than those of Major Gateways, but the entry roads are highly recognizable to Porter County residents.

Natural gateways, while not heavily traveled, are points of great impact on a visitors perception. The River creates a very definite boundary between Jasper County and Porter County.


Lake Michigan
Dune Acres
Ogden Dunes
Porter
Burns Harbor
Chesterton
Portage
Meridian Road
Valparaiso
Hebron
Kouts
I-94
I-80
I-90
12
20
6
49
130
149
2
7
30
5
8
231
1
3
4
Legend
Development Opportunities
Prime Agricultural Land
Natural Systems
Salt Creek Watershed
Critical Watershed Area for Improvement
Priority Watershed Area for Maintainance
Sewer Service Areas
Water Service Areas
Natural Character
Rural (Ag) Character
Likely Growth Areas
Many Primary Corridor Access Points
Intersection with Recommended Bicycle Route
Major Gateways
Minor Gateways
Proposed Blueways Access
At-Grade Railroad Crossing
Proposed INDOT Projects
Base Map
Roads
US, SR, and Interstate
Proposed Roads
Abandoned Rail
Active Rail
Lake / Water Bodies
Streams
Incorporated Areas
County Line
0 1/2 1 2 3 Miles
N
Development Suitability

ANALYSIS

Part 3:
Goals & Recommendations



Part 3a
County-Wide Goals

"If you build it they will come" - While this referred to a baseball diamond in the field of dreams, it is certainly quite applicable when it comes to roadways. This fact elevates the importance of this Plan as the corridors influence development patterns of the past, present, and future. This Plan addresses the relationship between transportation, land use, and sustainability. The success of achieving a balance of these elements greatly affects our daily lives and will influence the lives of generations to come.

These goals and objectives were generated primarily from public workshops and the advisory committee, staff and consultant input. These goals and objectives generally are not corridor specific but applicable for corridors throughout the County. They are organized around four major themes: Economic Development /Opportunity, Safety/Function, Balanced Growth, and Character/Identity. Each goal lists specific objectives which consist of focused actions necessary to achieve each goal.

EO Encourage Existing and New Economic Opportunities

Goal EO.1 - Support Region-Wide Coordination

EO.1.1 Encourage cooperation between the County, cities, and town governments to implement their economic plans and achieve desired development for their communities.

Goal EO.2 - Increase Tourism Opportunities

EO.2.1 Enable and promote the Indiana Dunes region in becoming a year round attraction.

EO.2.2 Support and further recreational opportunities along the Kankakee River recommended in the Greenways and Blueways Plan for canoeing, kayaks, and the creation of river access points.

EO.2.3 Support enhancing the economic opportunities of the Port of Indiana by including it as a tourist attraction, enhancing existing public access and fishing, and developing proposals for an observation area or interpretation center.

EO.2.4 Capture or entertain through-traffic on the corridors through the preservation of scenic views.

EO.2.5 Develop a county-wide wayfinding signage program to direct visitors and residents to prominent destinations.

Goal EO.3 - Enhance the Quality of Life for Porter County Residents

EO.3.1 Promote passive recreation as an economic draw through the development of non-motorized corridors, paths, greenways, and blueways, per the recommendations in the Ped and Pedal Plan, 2005 and the Greenways and Blueways Plan, 2007.

EO.3.2 Support agritourism in rural Porter County including organic farming, truck farming, farm stands, U-pick farms, and wineries. Use the American Countryside® Farmers Market in Elkhart, Indiana as a model.

EO.3.3 Review land use and zoning standards and revise to encourage a mix of compatible uses in key areas.

Goal EO.4 - Support Development Practices that will Encourage Economic Development and Community Investment

EO.4.1 Include sustainable development practices in the design for new development to reduce long term costs and impacts.

EO.4.2 Blend community and commerce by having people live, work, and shop in the same area (more local than transient)

EO.4.3 Investigate opportunities for health care facilities and the secondary support industries and services that accompany health care development. Identify locations that are best suited for this type of regional development.

EO.4.4 Provide transit opportunities from existing transit centers to the health services complexes, retail and employment centers.

EO.4.5 Encourage the use of fiber optics and similar technology.

EO.4.6 Utilize the County's Redevelopment Commission as a way to revitalize existing, outdated, or incompatible development along study corridors.

EO.4.7 Create or form beautification or maintenance associations to provide maintenance of landscaped elements and to ensure adherence to other development or design standards.

Examples of pedestrian and vehicular wayfinding signage

SF Enhance Corridor Safety and Function

Goal SF.1 - Improve the Safety and Efficiency for Vehicles

SF.1.1 Maintain or improve the levels of service of US 6, Meridian Road, SR 49 south of Valparaiso, and SR 2 east of Valparaiso by limiting access, widening right-of-way (ROW), creating grade separations at railroad crossings and traffic calming techniques where appropriate.

SF.1.2 Explore opportunities for a north-south connector in northwestern Porter County.

SF.1.3 Implement the standards in the UDO requiring individual tracts along the highways without clearly defined access to tie into side streets or rear access roads as new development occurs in order to preserve the aesthetic benefits provided by the greenbelt.

SF.1.4 Require shared driveway access to contiguous tracts.

SF.1.5 Work with INDOT to designate which corridor sections are better developed as rural or urban cross-section.

SF.1.6 Continue support for the County policy to improve or widen roadways based solely on the safety needs, and not primarily due to traffic congestion.

SF.1.7 Embrace innovative safety technology by encouraging the use of new technology to enhance safety such as code enforcement, photography, GPS wayfinding, TMS program, and intelligent traffic systems (movement sensors, etc.).

Goal SF.2 - Support Multi-Modal Use and Safety of Corridors

SF.2.1 Incorporate and accommodate pedestrians and cyclists by providing walking paths and bicycle trails that connect residential neighborhoods with schools and parks, especially on Meridian Road and SR 49 north of Valparaiso.

SF.2.2 Continue to support the proposed Dunes-Kankakee Trail. (Refer to the official study for more information)

SF.2.3 Develop a county-wide "Complete Streets" policy and create design standards to be adopted as part of the Porter County UDO.

SF.2.4 Look for ways to integrate and provide for future motorized multi-modal opportunities (bus or train transit, heavy rail, airport).

SF.2.5 Provide varied facilities for bike travel. A signed bike route (shared road facility) appeals to a more serious, experience rider, however a multi-use path separated by landscaping and setback a safe distance from the travelway is appropriate for other cyclists and pedestrians.

SF.2.6 Provide multi-community bus service that links the airport to residential and commercial areas, employment centers, health care facilities and recreation areas, and other inter-community modes of transportation.

SF.2.7 Work with landowners towards a common goal of providing continuous trail systems.

Illustration of cooperation with local landowners

Goal SF.3 - Support Corridor Improvements that Increase Safety for Cyclists, Pedestrians, and Wildlife

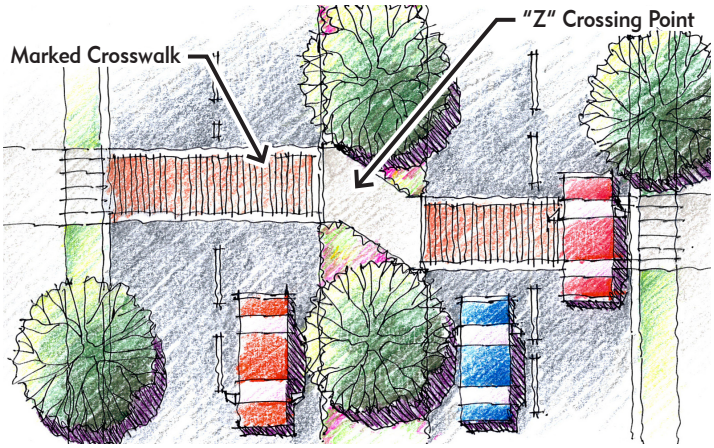
SF.3.1 Implement a Transportation Safety Plan along each of the study corridors. This will provide a proactive approach to improving the safety along the corridors through annual evaluation of reported vehicular crashes.

SF.3.2 Perform a Safety Analysis of the critical intersections/ segments as identified in the Transportation Safety Plan. The analysis

should evaluate the intersection's/ segment's configuration and crash data in order to identify the probable causes of the crashes and to recommend safety improvements.

SF.3.3 Consider the incorporation of wildlife corridor tunnels or overpasses for improvements to corridors. These land bridges allow wildlife to move freely between natural habitats without the segregation of interstates and highways.

SF.3.4 Create bold pedestrian or bicycle crossing treatments such as the "Z" crossing, that increases driver, pedestrian, and cyclist awareness.



Typical "Z" Crossing pedestrian crossing for point of interest. This type of crossing forces both drivers and pedestrians to remain aware of their surroundings.

DG Promote Balanced Development and Growth Patterns

Goal DG.1 - Promote Smart Growth Throughout the County

DG.1.1 Promote compact growth patterns by encouraging new development adjacent to existing urbanized areas where there are existing or available utilities and infrastructure.

DG.1.2 Discourage checkerboard or leapfrog development patterns; focus on forms of development nodes as opposed to strips along corridors.

DG.1.3 Coordinate monthly with incorporated jurisdictions to review development proposals.

Goal DG.2 - Achieve a Balance Between the Built and Natural Environment

DG.2.1 Encourage appropriate measures to preserve, enhance, and protect natural resources and habitats.

DG.2.2 Ensure new development supports designated greenways and blueways.

DG.2.3 Encourage stormwater best management practices (BMPs) such as alternative drainage methods, for new development in order to preserve and enhance the water quality of the County's waterways.

DG.2.4 Work with developers to provide shared stormwater facilities where applicable and beneficial.

DG.2.5 Create a county-wide stormwater management board to manage and fund BMPs.

DG.2.6 Create guidelines to develop study corridors as "Green Corridors" with BMPs for stormwater filtration, landscape buffers between the corridor and potential adjacent development, and green bridges for wildlife crossings.

DG.2.7 When recommending preservation of natural areas include detailed recommendations with regard to funding, ownership, and maintenance, such as "no-mow" policies for certain landscape types.

DG.2.8 Promote the preservation and creation of open space networks.

DG.2.9 Encourage green (environmentally conscious) building and development techniques.

DG.2.10 Promote environmental / water quality awareness by providing identification for each waterway crossing and watershed along roadways and by activities such as stenciling drainage inlets with the message "Drains to Lake Michigan" or "Drains to Kankakee River".

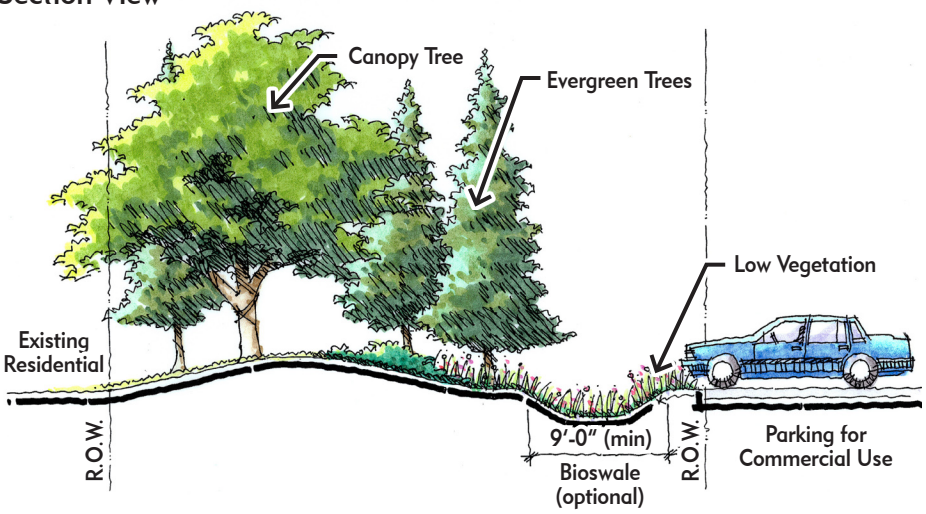
DG.2.11 Work closely and early with INDOT to ensure that all recommendations or improvements to corridors are context sensitive, especially regarding interchanges or other structural improvements to roadways.

DG.2.12 Encourage the use of native plants in landscape buffers. Amend the UDO to permit buffers of all native deciduous hardwood species if that is what is indigenous to the

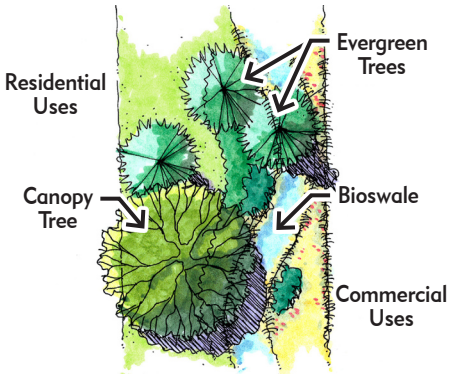
Required Buffer Yard

Required Medium-Sized Buffer Yard showing evergreen and deciduous trees and shrubs as per Porter County UDO.
(Reference Goals: DG.2.3; DG.2.7; DG.2.9)

Section View



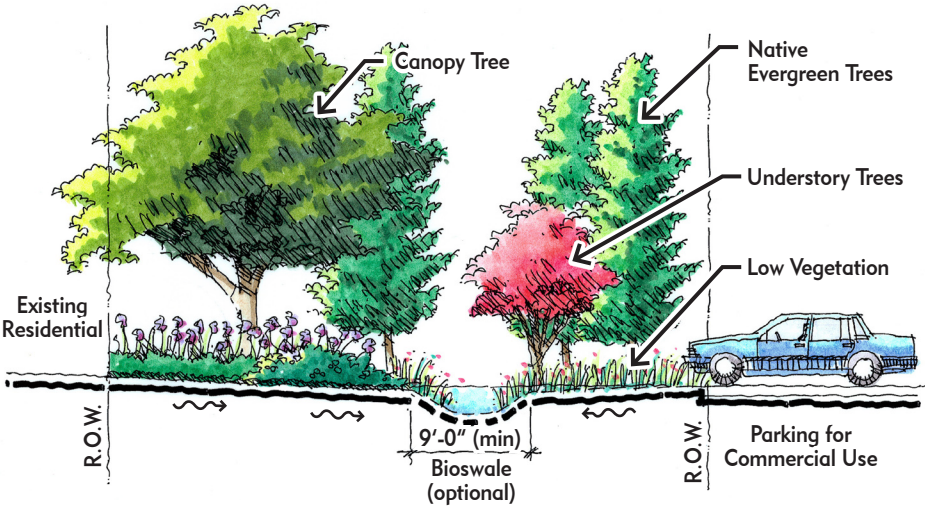
Plan View



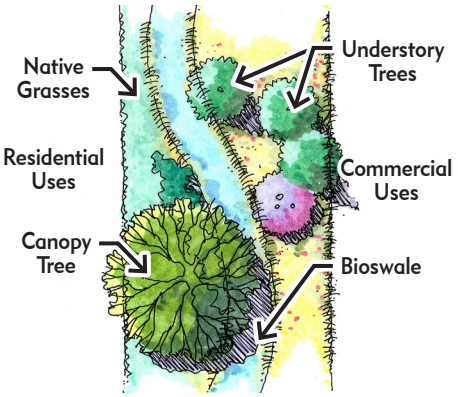
Alternative Buffer Yard (Section View)

Below and Right: Alternative Medium-Sized Buffer Yard showing native deciduous trees, native evergreens, shrubs, and grasses.
(Reference Goals: DG.2.3; DG.2.7; DG.2.9)

Section View



Plan View



area. Require denser spacing and a combination of understory and canopy species to maintain effective screening.

Goal DG.3 - Encourage Appropriate Land Use Patterns

DG.3.1 Encourage preservation of prime agricultural lands in the county.

DG.3.2 Encourage redevelopment of existing urban cores and compact nodes. Consider updating the County Future Land Use Plan to identify areas of preferred development or redevelopment and guide development to these areas.

DG.3.3 Create a strategy for the reuse of land such as greyfields and brownfields with potential for hazardous or negative impacts such as abandoned landfills, quarries, etc.

DG.3.4 Develop policies and regulations that discourage over-commercialization of corridors.

Goal DG.4 - Manage the Interface Between Transportation and Land Use

DG.4.1 Focus more intense development patterns near transportation infrastructure.

DG.4.2 Encourage transit-oriented or transit-ready development in the vicinity of transit systems.

DG.4.3 Encourage the extension and development of infrastructure at key locations and intersections, adjacent to rail lines, near the airport and port to foster economic development.

DG.4.4 Implement an Access Management Plan (using INDOT guidelines) along each of the study corridors in order to take a proactive approach to minimizing the number of access points while still providing for the proper access needed to serve future development. The County should also require developers to submit a Traffic Impact Study to ensure that the proposed development meets the objectives of the Access Management Plan.

DG.4.5 Create guidelines to determine when a Traffic Impact Study (using INDOT guidelines) should be submitted to the County for proposed developments along the study corridors. The required studies will ensure that the transportation objectives for the study corridors are met while providing proper access for proposed developments.

ID Celebrate the Unique Identity and Character of Each Corridor

Goal ID.1 - Support Cultural, Historic Enhancement Efforts that highlight Unique Aspects of Each Corridors

ID.1.1 Combine results and recommendations from previous studies, such as cultural, historic, and environmental studies, as a basis for county-wide transportation enhancements.

ID.1.2 Honor prominent events or persons by renaming corridors and placing historical interpretive markers at significant locations.

ID.1.3 Provide signs along corridors that designate creek or wildlife crossing signs, promote environmental awareness and agritourism.

ID.1.4 Encourage unique, corridor specific gateway treatments.

ID.1.5 Create a brand for the county by identifying a theme that portrays the County's desired image and captures the essence of the County from the lake to the river.

Goal ID.2 - Address Signage Throughout the County

ID.2.1 Create county-wide wayfinding signage that will aid residents and tourists to find significant destinations. Consider illustrating the individuality of specific corridors and localities.

ID.2.2 Consider speed, building setback, etc., as factors that influence the size of signs. This would help reduce visual clutter and keep more from proliferating.

ID.2.3 Work with all governmental entities and local businesses to determine standards for commercial signage that are appropriate to the character of each roadway and the surrounding land uses.

Goal ID.3 - Visually Enhance Corridors and Enforce the Maintenance of Corridor Enhancements

ID.3.1 Implement corridor beautification through

landscaping using native and indigenous plantings such as wildflowers, grasses, shrubs and trees adjacent to and in the medians of divided highways. Use a consistent theme of landscaping material on a specific corridor.

ID.3.2 Develop a county-wide coordinated look for street signs, light standards, and signal poles.

ID.3.3 Utilize the County's Redevelopment Commission to consider beautification or facade enhancement program for degraded areas.

ID.3.4 Designate gateways as major or minor based on traffic volume and location in order to determine the character of treatments. Designs for either gateway type would incorporate similar elements such as welcoming and wayfinding signage, landscaping, lighting and public art. The difference would be in the scale of the improvements.

ID.3.5 Initiate an "adopt-an-roadway, -interchange, or -median" program to allow gateway treatments to be created and maintained by corporate and local sponsors. Work with local business associations and investigate possible funding from businesses and/or the Chamber of Commerce.

ID.3.6 Strengthen code enforcement efforts regarding unkempt property and dilapidated structures along corridors.

ID.3.7 Visually buffer less than desirable views from roadways through the use of vegetation screening or berms.

ID.3.8 Work with INDOT to support requests that utility providers bury overhead utility lines or locate them at the rear of property in areas where a special character is desired.

ID.3.9 Create landscaped medians and swales along roadways that help control and filter stormwater runoff.

Goal ID.4 - Encourage Preservation of Rural and Natural Characteristics

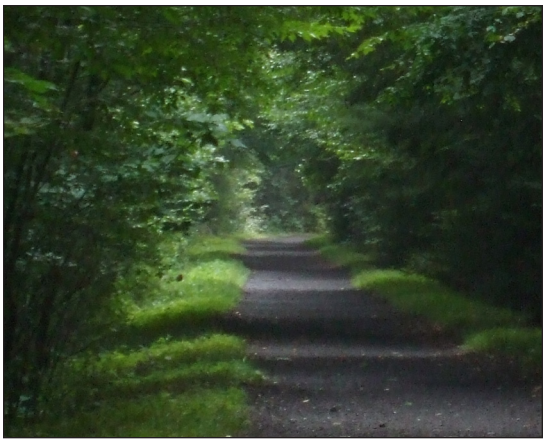
ID.4.1 Preserve the rural character by supporting agricultural land preservation and conservation of natural features and environments.

ID.4.2 Use new corridor development to strengthen park and recreational opportunities.

ID.4.3 Apply the Scenic Road Overlay District designation to Meridian Road and to portions of SR 49 and US 6 that are not currently included in that zoning designation.

ID.4.4 Encourage the use a native plants. Amend UDO to permit landscaped buffers that resemble oak-savannah or other naturally occurring landscapes. If evergreens are used, they should be native to the area. The effectiveness of screening would be based on the density of the mix of understory and canopy plantings.

ID.4.5 Adopt a "no-mow" policy for certain roadside native landscape plantings.



Trail with porous surface fits in well with natural environment

COUNTY-WIDE GOALS

Part 3b
Corridor-Specific Recommendations

The following section includes recommendations for each study corridor.

- U.S. Highway 6
- U.S. Highway 30
- U.S. Highway 231
- Indiana State Route 2
- Indiana State Route 8
- Indiana State Route 49
- Indiana State Route 130
- Indiana State Route149
- Meridian Road (Valparaiso to Chesterton)

Recommendations for land use, wayfinding, beneficial natural resources, connectivity, and safety, among others, are located in this section. These recommendations were derived from public input, sustainable land use trends, and corridor analysis and reflect the goals and objectives.

Legend Item Definitions

The items below are included on the following corridor recommendation maps.

Roadside Development
This symbol is located in areas with strong natural features or views. These areas are suggested for roadside development such as overlook decks, picnic areas, or if the area is intended to be left in its natural state with limited visitor access. A marker describing the significance of the area can be added.

Major Gateways
Major gateways are those that are most heavily used, based on traffic counts along state and federal highways. Gateway treatments denote a change in location and create the first impression of a community.

Minor Gateways
These gateways are located at points of entry into the county that are less traveled, but still important. These gateways could include signage to identify entrances into Porter County.

Trailhead
These areas would likely be suitable for trailheads because of the existence of existing or a proposed trail route that crosses a corridor.

Stream/Water Crossing
To increase public awareness of watersheds and water quality, stream, creek and river crossings are identified on corridors. Development in these areas is subject to UDO Watershed Overlay District standards requiring riparian buffers, additional setbacks, etc.

Incorporated Area
The boundary line of incorporated cities and towns within Porter County. These areas are outside of the Porter County Plan Commission jurisdiction.

County Line
The dividing line between Porter, Lake, Jasper and LaPorte counties

Active Railroad / Abandoned Railroad
Active rail lines may affect land use planning due to limited site access, convenient rail access (for industry), or delays due to train crossings. Abandoned rail lines often make suitable trail corridors and many are already targeted for trail development.

Significant Water Feature
Streams or other water corridors that may impede development, or could add natural significance to a site and provide opportunities for natural preservation.

Potential Trail
Corridors that have been targeted for trail development. Often existing within abandoned rail right-of-way or along corridors as a connector between significant sites.

Suitable Development Areas
Identified on the Development Suitability Map (**Part 2: Analysis**, page 57). These areas possess good access and are the least constrained by prime agricultural land or significant natural features.

Likely Growth Areas
Areas currently experiencing growth pressures, but not necessarily the most suitable due to land characteristics, sensitive habitats, etc.

INDIANA 149 SR 149 CORRIDOR

Introduction

State Route149 is designated as an arterial in the Land Use & Thoroughfare Plan. This corridor, intersected by Salt Creek in two separate locations, is bordered by a mix of natural /undeveloped areas, subdivisions, and remnant agricultural lands. The study area extends from Portage/Chesterton City Limits (CR 1050N) to SR 130.

Recommendations

Land Use

- Limit development on SR 149 in the vicinity of US 6 where Salt Creek closely parallels the roadway
- Limit development between CR 600N and CR 700N to preserve agricultural land and the continuation of the Salt Creek corridor
- Work with the South Haven Homeowners Association to enhance buffering and to ensure that the neighborhood matures in a positive manner
- Promote compact development at nodes, not in strips
- Identify opportunities for County Park or trail creation (e.g. along Salt Creek or connecting to DNR property on 600N where fishing and possible canoe, etc. access exists)

Infrastructure

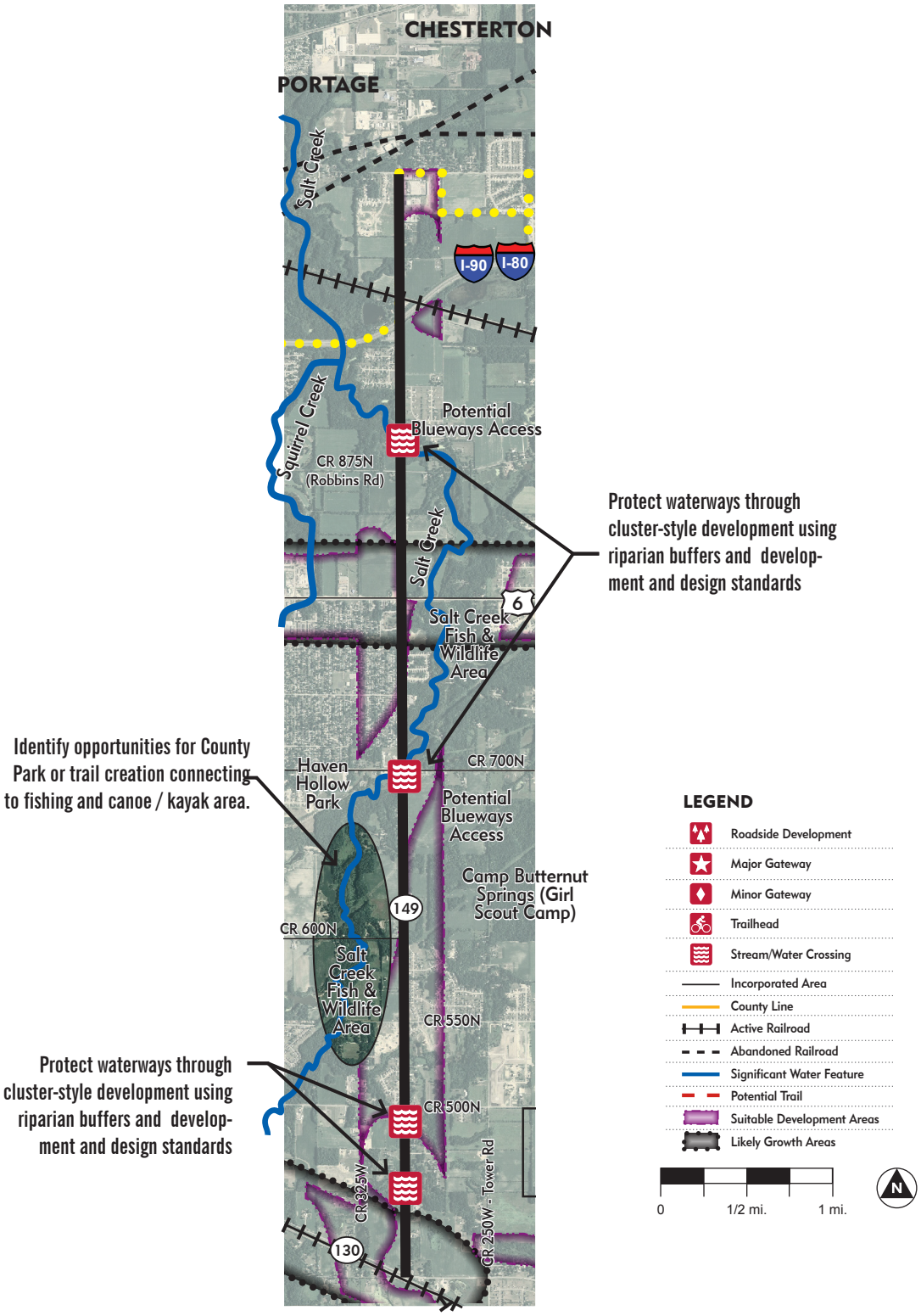
- Continue to explore options for a southern extension of SR 149
- Apply green highway techniques (see "Green Highways, p.108) for any highway construction due to creek proximity
- Encourage stormwater BMPs for all new development in order to maintain and enhance the water quality in Salt Creek and other waterways
- Consider developing greenways along the creek corridors and wetlands
- Include trailheads in any road improvement project for both designated trail and waterway access points identified in the Greenways and Blueways Plan.

Design

- Apply the existing corridor overlay standards from the UDO to new development
- Review the effectiveness of current County ordinances with regard to buffering and other visual separations
- Require protective buffers / setbacks between Salt Creek and new development through application of the standards in the UDO Watershed Overlay District.
- Use native vegetation to satisfy required landscaping
- Place signage on roadways at creek crossings to increase awareness

Drainage awareness signs in Valparaiso.

Typical of greenway that could follow Salt Creek corridor.


CHESTERTON
PORTAGE
Salt Creek
I-90
I-80
Squirrel Creek
Potential Blueways Access
CR 875N (Robbins Rd)
Salt Creek
6
Salt Creek Fish & Wildlife Area
Protect waterways through cluster-style development using riparian buffers and development and design standards
Identify opportunities for County Park or trail creation connecting to fishing and canoe / kayak area.
Haven Hollow Park
CR 700N
Potential Blueways Access
Camp Butternut Springs (Girl Scout Camp)
149
CR 600N
Salt Creek Fish & Wildlife Area
CR 550N
Protect waterways through cluster-style development using riparian buffers and development and design standards
CR 500N
CR 325W
CR 250W - Tower Rd
130
LEGEND
Roadside Development
Major Gateway
Minor Gateway
Trailhead
Stream/Water Crossing
Incorporated Area
County Line
Active Railroad
Abandoned Railroad
Significant Water Feature
Potential Trail
Suitable Development Areas
Likely Growth Areas
0
1/2 mi.
1 mi.
N

MERIDIAN ROAD CORRIDOR

Introduction

Meridian Road is a north-south arterial link in Liberty Township between Valparaiso and Chesterton. The corridor which parallels State Route 49, is wooded and appealing as it traverses the "Chain of Lakes" area. The setting and proximity to commercial areas on the north, west and south have made it a prime target for residential development. This study focuses on the portion from CR 1050N south to the corporate limits of Valparaiso.

Recommendations

Land Use

- Work with the **Parks and Recreation** Department and local land conservation groups to identify areas for preservation and conservation. A land use category for Open Space, which is more descriptive than the Conservation or Agricultural / Rural designations, should be provided in the Land Use & Thoroughfare Plan
- Apply the Scenic Roadway Overlay District to Meridian Road
- Develop an environmental checklist to use for development plan review
- Provide incentives and/or bonuses for conservation subdivision development
- Limit commercial retail and business development to a compact node at the intersection of US 6 and Meridian Road
- Establish a maximum square footage for commercial development in order to maintain neighborhood character

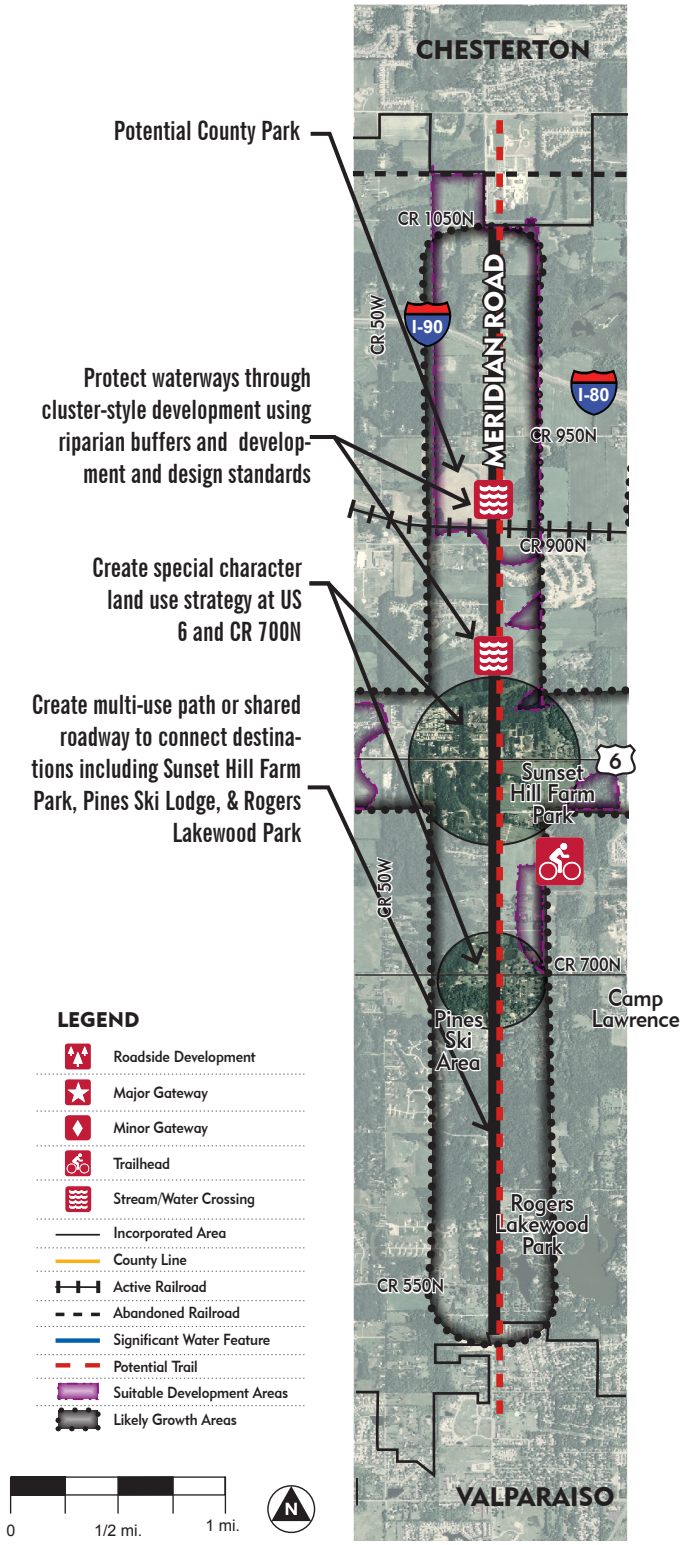
Infrastructure

- Apply access management standards included in the UDO to Meridian Road
- Provide enough right-of-way to safely accommodate vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle traffic without compromising the natural setting
- Add Meridian Road as a "shared roadway" for bikes
- Develop a trail alignment for pedestrians and cyclists to safely connect residential and commercial development, schools, parks and employment centers on Meridian Road. Provide sidewalks and visible crosswalks
- Designate specific nodes for new development near existing development where utilities are readily available
- Provide safe pedestrian crosswalks
- Provide for and make public aware of wildlife crossings
- Incorporate roundabouts into road design as alternatives to 4-way stops and signalized intersections

Design

- Preserve the distinct and unique characteristics of Meridian Road between Chesterton and Valparaiso. Require new commercial development to adopt a "Village Center" concept which reflects the character and scale of the area. The addition of a residential component is key to create a village feel and support retail uses where appropriate
- Incorporate signage that increases environmental awareness regarding the watershed, streams, creeks and woodlands
- Require the use of native planting for new landscaping
- Require the preservation of plant material within 50 feet of Meridian Road right-of-way to maintain habitat and natural look
- Consider reduced-scale signage that is more compatible with the desired character
- Provide a rural highway cross-section with wide paved shoulders (e.g. "Super Two-Lane") where appropriate

Roundabouts are an alternative to a traditional intersection



Conservation Subdivision Design

(term coined by Randall Arendt)

A Conservation Subdivision layout permits contextually sensitive, clustered residential growth that benefits residents and the community while simultaneously preserving agricultural land, natural features, and wildlife habitat.

Example of a traditional residential subdivision (left) and a conservation subdivision (right).

Conservation Easements

A conservation easement is the legal tool that ensures that conservation lands set aside as a result of this process remain undeveloped. Conservation lands may be owned by: an individual landowner or several landowners in the new conservation subdivision, a homeowner's association, the Town, or a land conservancy.

Above: Signalized crossings (right top) or highly identifiable paint (right lower) can increase the safety of bicyclists and pedestrians.

INDIANA 49

SR 49 CORRIDOR NORTH

Introduction

State Route 49 is the most significant north-south corridor in Porter County. The character and use of SR 49 varies greatly throughout the County. SR 49 runs from the Kankakee River in south Porter County to Lake Michigan in north Porter County. The northern study area boundary is CR 1050N. North of US 30, it is a 4-lane divided, limited access expressway carrying more than 20,000 cars per day. South of US 30, the 2-lane minor arterial traverses land with a distinctly rural character.

Recommendations (North of Valparaiso)

Land Use

- Promote compact development at specific nodes per the Land Use & Thoroughfare Plan to enable preservation of natural areas.
- Support the growth of SR 49 as an Economic Development Corridor. Limit the occurrence of small- or medium-scale commercial uses and instead focus on the development of regional mixed-use employment centers in corporate / campus type settings.
- Revise the Future Land Use Map and Zoning Map to identify the proposed hospital development and the extent of the supporting health care related businesses. Prioritize areas for development at the locations of the proposed hospital complexes.
- Encourage campus-type development at the locations of the proposed hospital complexes.

Infrastructure

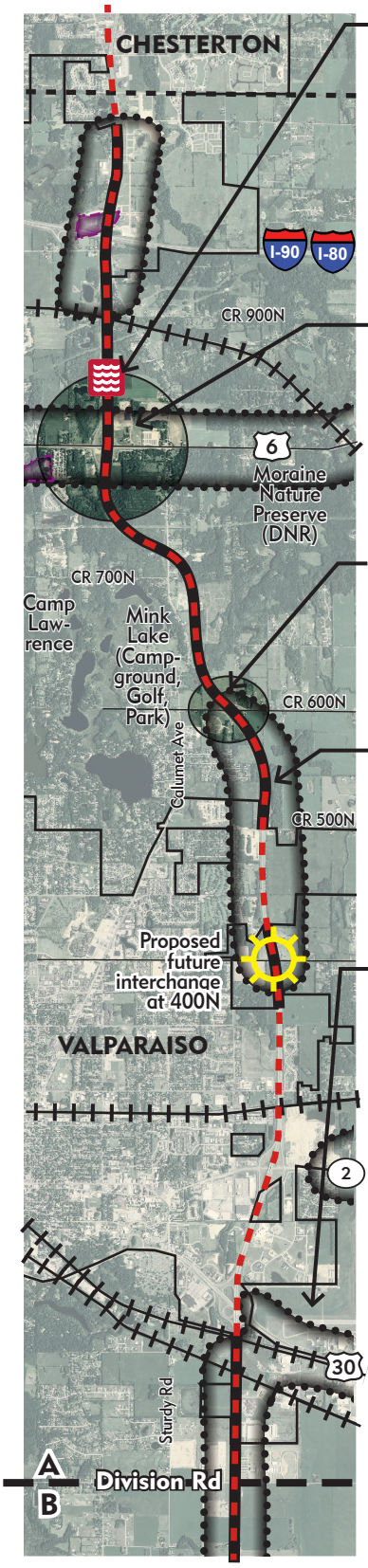
- Require that the construction of a multi-use trail on SR 49 from Dunes State Park to the Porter County Fairgrounds be included in development plan proposals for projects. (See Dunes-Kankakee Trail Plan)
- Coordinate the creation of the Dunes-Kankakee Trail from Dunes State Park to the Porter County Fairgrounds with other roadway improvements
- Require tree preservation and conservation of the existing landscape. Incorporate the existing land form into the large parcel development and minimize grading and tree removal.
- Create the SR 49 "Green Corridor" by encouraging large parcel development to share stormwater detention facilities and to incorporate best management practices which may become an amenity to the development and the community.
- Ensure that major roadway improvements are context sensitive and contribute to enhancing the county image.
- Analyze safety and existing/ future traffic operations at the intersection of SR 49 at US 6 and CR 600N to recommend improvements.

Design

- Define treatment for possible grade separated interchanges on SR 49 that includes context sensitive solutions and maintains continuous pedestrian and bicycle travel.
- Apply the Arterial Roadway Overlay District to SR 49 to ensure consistency in character and high quality development.
- Consider applying the Scenic Roadway Overlay District to portions of SR 49.
- Provide appealing gateway treatments in northern Porter County to draw visitors and tourists from the lake edge into central Porter County and a minor gateway where SR 49 crosses the Kankakee.
- Encourage campus type design for hospital and supporting health-related businesses.

Overpasses, sound walls, retaining walls and integrated multi-use pathways can be elements of decorative and functional gateway

SR 49 CORRIDOR NORTH



Protect waterways through cluster-style development using riparian buffers and development and design standards

Encourage campus type design for hospital and supporting health-related businesses

Analyze safety and existing/ future traffic operations at the intersection of US 6 and CR 600N to recommend intersections improvements

Coordinate the creation of the Dunes-Kankakee Trail from Dunes State Park to the Porter County Fairgrounds with other roadway improvements

For airport-related recommendations, refer to US 30 Corridor (page 83)

LEGEND

- Roadside Development
- Major Gateway
- Minor Gateway
- Trailhead
- Stream/Water Crossing
- Incorporated Area
- County Line
- Active Railroad
- Abandoned Railroad
- Significant Water Feature
- Potential Trail
- Suitable Development Areas
- Likely Growth Areas

N

0 1/2 mi. 1 mi.

Recommendations (South of Valparaiso)

Land Use

- Provide design standards for minor subdivisions and small commercial uses, carved from agricultural land
- Coordinate with the town of Kouts regarding their annexation goals.
- Work with the town of Kouts to update its land use policies and ordinances to reflect county-wide goals
- Consider developing and urban/town fringe overlay district with development and design standards to ensure compatibility
- Interested landowners should consider agricultural land preservation techniques such as those included in ***Appendix C: Agricultural Preservation*** (p. 145)
- Consider a conservation subdivision type layout that helps create networks of open space in the community

Infrastructure

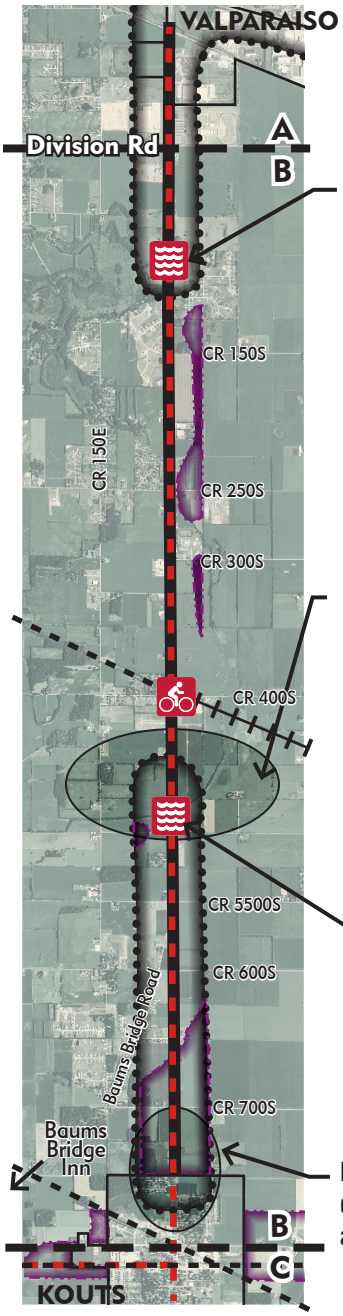
- Apply the Arterial Roadway Overlay District standards in the UDO which limits access by individual lots directly onto highways.
- Per the Greenways and Blueways Plan, provide access points to the Kankakee River
- Work with local utility districts to coordinate future infrastructure improvements as a tool to guide future development.
- Pursue the continuation of the American Discovery Trail along the abandoned rail corridor. Work with property owners to secure easements. Provide connections back to county roads where access is limited or prohibited.
- Select a preferred alignment for the American Discovery Trail and incorporate its design and construction into all new development plans

Design

- Encourage compact urban development within or adjacent to the Town of Kouts
- Promote agritourism with coordinated sign program and literature to celebrate the agricultural heritage in the southern part of Porter County.
- Develop signage that can be used for agritourism, historic and cultural interpretive opportunities (e.g. Ft. Tassanong) blue and greenway access points, etc.
- Protect expansive viewsheds by encouraging the clustering of development and conservation subdivision development that conserves farmland and prohibits view obscuring strips of development along county roads.

Types of Seasonal Activities that are part of Agritourism. Seasonal agritourism can spur economic development.

Example of multiuse trail in rural setting

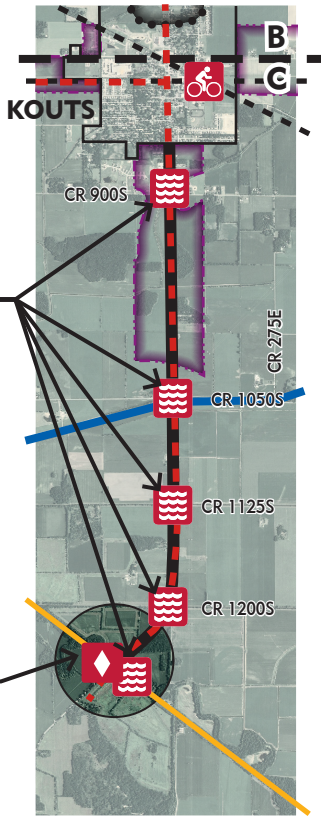


Protect waterways through cluster-style development using riparian buffers and development and design standards

Ensure the safety of views from SR 49 through the use of additional natural buffers or conservation subdivision development.

Protect waterways through cluster-style development using riparian buffers and development and design standards

Encourage compact urban development within or adjacent to the Town of Kouts.



Per the Greenways and Blueways Plan, provide access to the Kankakee River

LEGEND

- Roadside Development
- Major Gateway
- Minor Gateway
- Trailhead
- Stream/Water Crossing
- Incorporated Area
- County Line
- Active Railroad
- Abandoned Railroad
- Significant Water Feature
- Potential Trail
- Suitable Development Areas
- Likely Growth Areas

N

0 1/2 mi. 1 mi.

US 6 CORRIDOR

Introduction

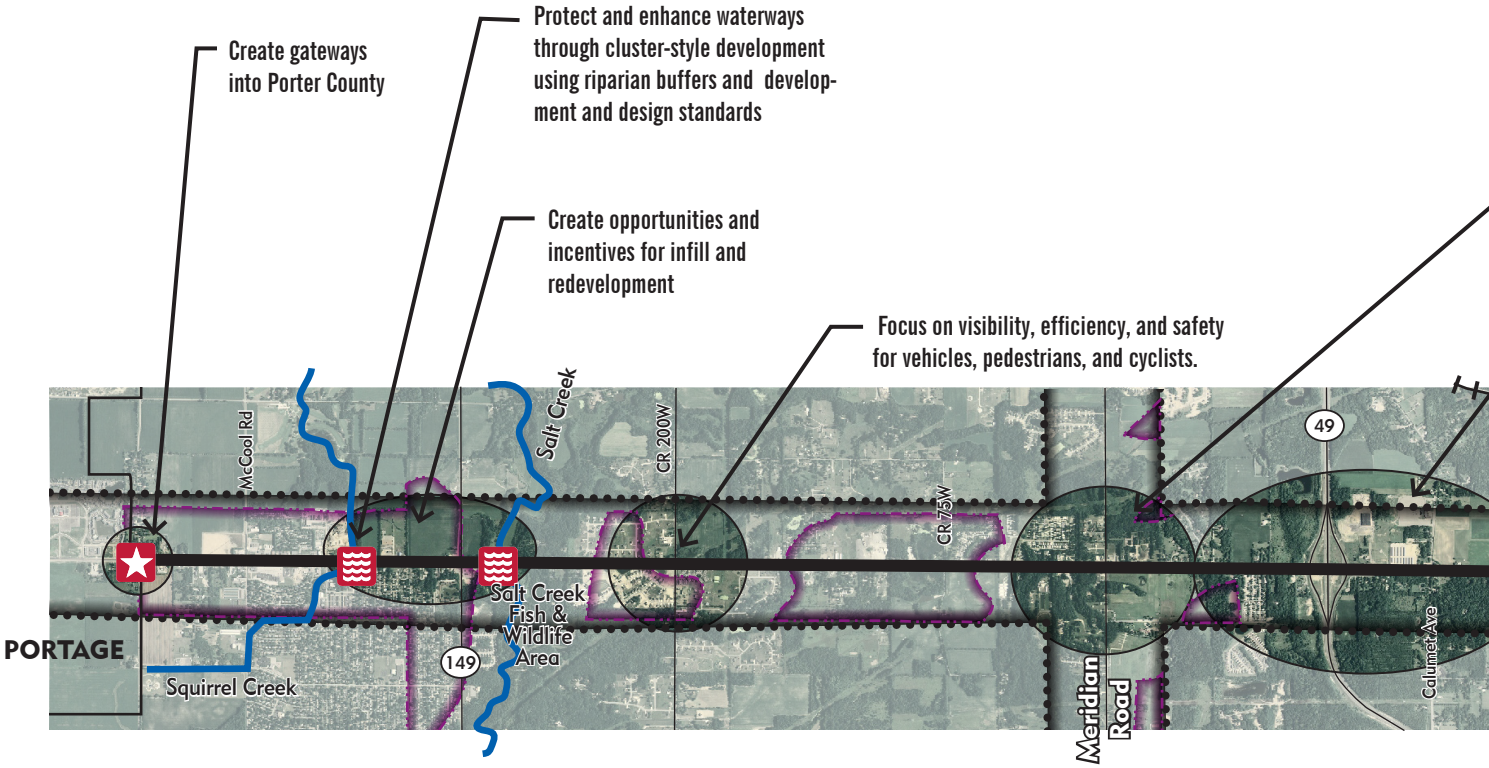
This section focuses on US 6 bounded by Portage to the west (CR 450W) and the Porter/LaPorte County Line to the east. To either side of SR 149 the corridor varies in character. West of SR 149 on the eastern edge of Portage, US 6 is a 4-lane highway with primarily commercial strip development. East of SR 149, US 6 is a scenic 2-lane road that travels through a sparsely developed, natural setting. However, growth and development pressure at the grade separated interchange with SR 49 has steadily increased.

Road with sidewalk, pedestrian buffer (landscaped strip), and bicycle lane.

Recommendations

Land Use

- Create standards which support the protection of stream corridors (Squirrel, Salt and Coffee Creeks), wetlands, and woodlands that remain.
- Focus new growth at nodes near existing development where utilities have been provided such as near South Haven at SR 149, CR 200W and SR 49 or within incorporated areas.
- Create a Neighborhood Retail / Village District with accompanying design and development standards for development that may occur at the Meridian Road intersection to maintain the rural/natural character while permitting limited economic development to serve the residential population
- Work with the Portage Planning Department regarding annexation intentions and to create a plan for the transition from city to county development.
- Create opportunities and incentives for infill and redevelopment



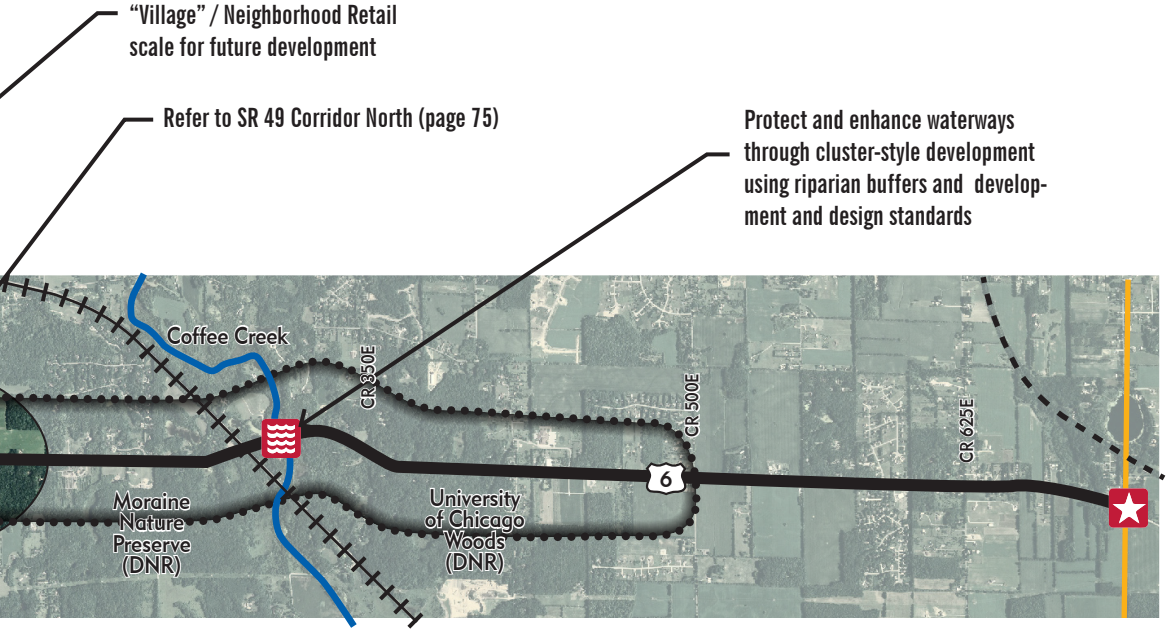
Infrastructure

- Coordinate the provision of sewer and water utilities by the local providers
- Manage access for new development. Develop agreements with existing property owners to tie into new shared access when it is developed.
- Acquire additional right-of-way for US 6 west of SR 49 that permits safe travel for vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists. Consider an off-road multi-use trail which connects major points.
- Upgrade SR 6 from SR 149 to SR 49 to a "Super Two-Lane" road. Focus on visibility, efficiency, and safety for vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists.

Design

- Provide roadside interpretive signage identifying US 6 as the **Grand Army of the Republic** highway (see ***Part 1: Introduction***, "US 6", p.14 for history). Create an interpretive exhibit which describes the history of the highway. It could be incorporated into a new development parcel.
- Apply and enforce (along the entire length of US 6) the UDO's Arterial Roadway Overlay District development and design standards which address site layout, orientation to the street, on and off-site access, landscaping and buffers, architectural design, and signage.
- Create gateways into Porter County on US 6 at the eastern border with Portage and with LaPorte County
- Focus on visibility, efficiency, and safety for vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists at the intersection of US6 and CR 200W

Example of Interpretive Signage



SR 130 CORRIDOR

Introduction

SR 130 runs diagonally through the north central portion of the County in a northwest to southeast direction from the county line to the corporate limits of central Valparaiso. The Norfolk Southern active rail line parallels the roadway. The corridor is characterized by a mixture of agricultural uses and sporadic residential punctuated by the unincorporated town of Wheeler. Duck Creek and Salt Creek are in the vicinity of the corridor and the sensitive habitats would be impacted by future development.

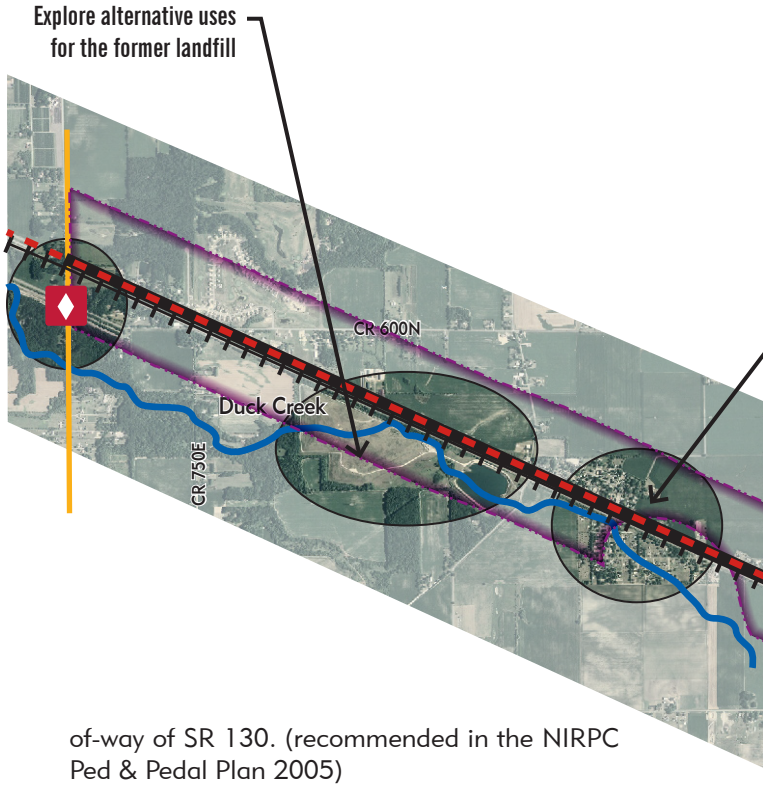
Recommendations

Land Use

- Establish guidelines for potential growth that may occur at the intersection SR 149 and SR 130
- Develop an Area Plan for Wheeler to support compact growth and development goals
- Coordinate with Valparaiso Planning Department regarding their annexation intentions and future development proposals on the urban fringe
- Explore alternative land uses for the former Waste Management Landfill site such as a park or other public use.
- Explore infill and redevelopment opportunities in the vicinity of Wheeler
- Explore alternative land uses for the old Langrebe site
- Buffer development with close proximity to Salt Creek and provide access / launch points per the Greenways and Blueways Plan

Infrastructure

- Upgrade rail crossings and approaches for enhanced safety as development occurs
- Continue to investigate opportunities for a southern extension of SR 149.
- Mitigate the impact of or to the Norfolk Southern or Canadian National Railroads
- Protect the artesian wells located between Jones Road and CR 475W, wetlands along SR 130, and the salt creek watershed
- Investigate the creation of an off-road multi-use path from Valparaiso to Hobart within the right-of-way of SR 130. (recommended in the NIRPC Ped & Pedal Plan 2005)
- Identify nodes for development where utilities are readily available along SR 130 and analyze safety and future / existing traffic operations at SR 149 & SR 130



Design

- Enhance the town center character of Wheeler
- Provide wayfinding signage for destinations such as the town of Wheeler and the Conservation Club
- Create a signage program to identify creeks, other tributaries, wetlands, and other waterways to increase public awareness.
- Apply major / minor gateway treatment at County line

On-road bike lane

SR 130 CORRIDOR

Off-road multi-use path adjacent to active rail

Redevelopment possibilities in the vicinity of Wheeler

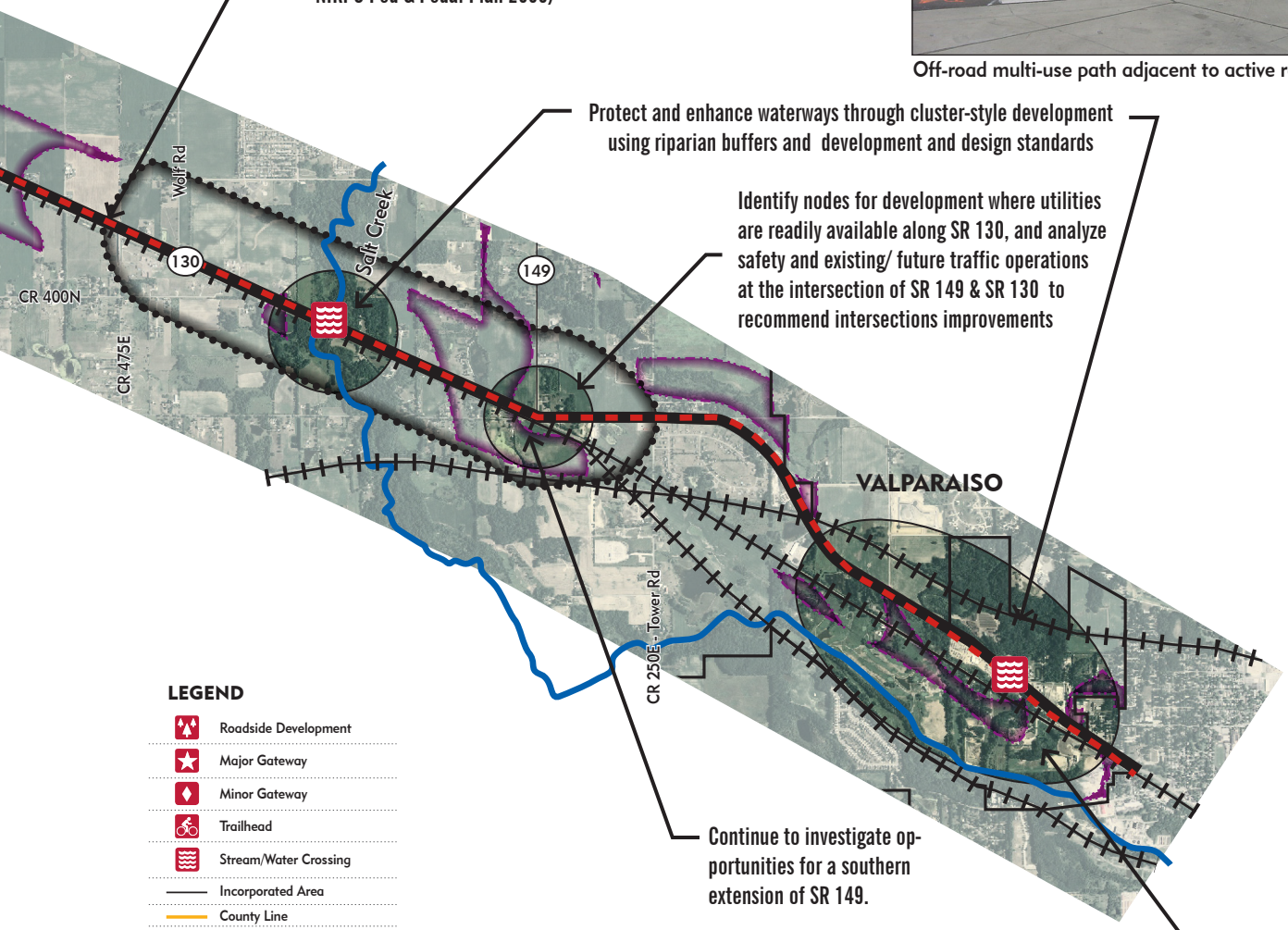
Investigate the creation of an off-road multi-use path from Valparaiso to Hobart (recommended by the NIRPC Ped & Pedal Plan 2005)

Protect and enhance waterways through cluster-style development using riparian buffers and development and design standards

Identify nodes for development where utilities are readily available along SR 130, and analyze safety and existing/ future traffic operations at the intersection of SR 149 & SR 130 to recommend intersections improvements

Continue to investigate opportunities for a southern extension of SR 149.

Explore alternative land uses for the old Langrebe site



LEGEND

- Roadside Development
- Major Gateway
- Minor Gateway
- Trailhead
- Stream/Water Crossing
- Incorporated Area
- County Line
- Active Railroad
- Abandoned Railroad
- Significant Water Feature
- Potential Trail
- Suitable Development Areas
- Likely Growth Areas

0 1/2 mi. 1 mi.

US 30 CORRIDOR

Introduction

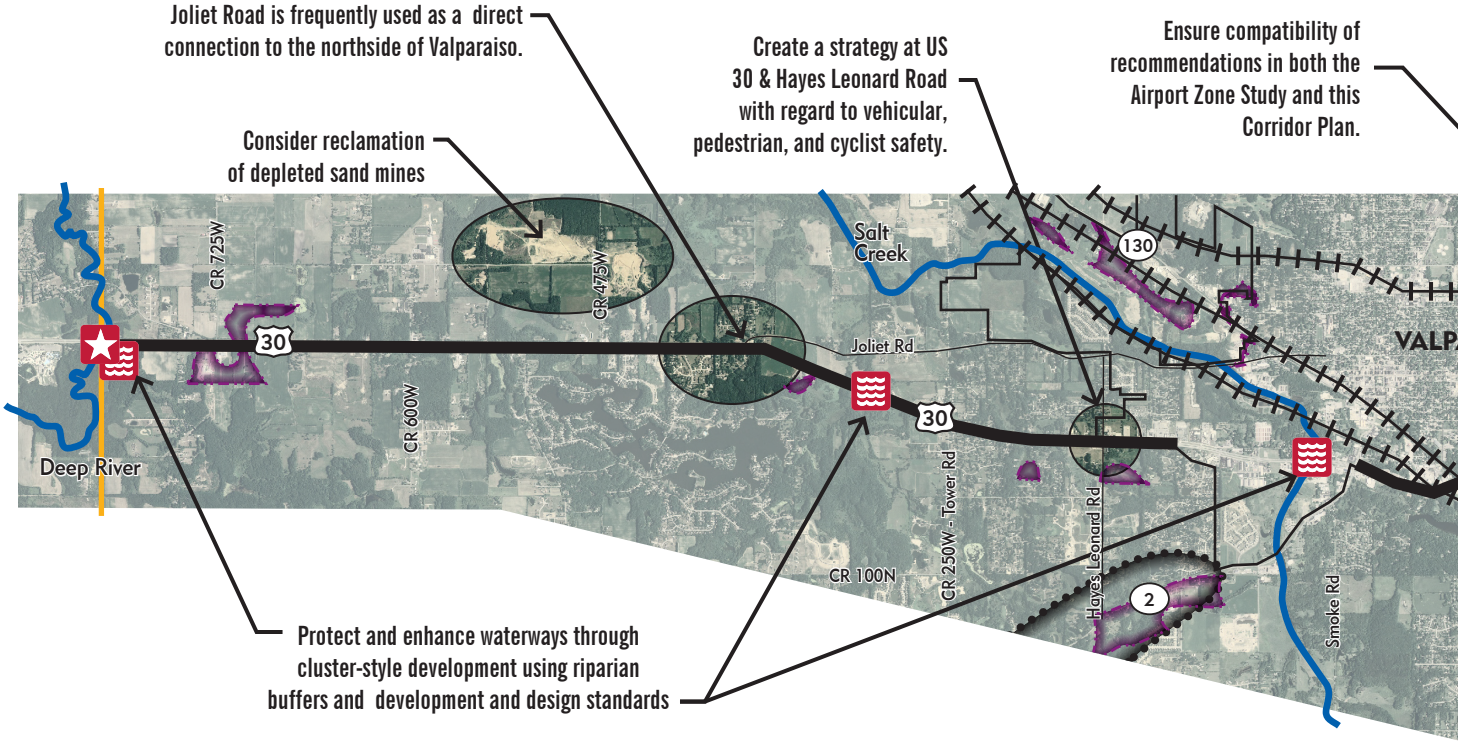
US 30 is one of the most prominent corridors in Porter County. This east-west highway is also a major link to Merrillville and other communities within Lake County and east across the state to Ft. Wayne. Other than the interstate highways, US 30 has the highest traffic counts in the County. The study area extends form county line to county line on a 4-lane divided highway with somewhat limited access.

The highway passes on the southern side of the city of Valparaiso and serves the Porter County Airport.

Recommendations

Land Use

- Continue to apply the goals of the Land Use & Thoroughfare Plan and to enforce the UDO Arterial Roadway Overlay District
- Protect and enhance wetlands and other low-lying natural areas along US 30
- Confine development to already existing nodes
- Coordinate with the Airport Zone Development Committee to ensure compatibility recommendations within the Airport Zone Study and this Corridor Plan.
- Appropriately zone land for future airport growth.
- Support efforts for "shovel-ready" sites for new industrial development near airport.
- Create a strategy for land use proposed along US 30, south of Valparaiso.
- Coordinate future land use plans with the City of Valparaiso's plans for annexation. Coordinate land use policies and design guidelines.
- Encourage developers of large parcels surrounding the airport to be models for sustainable green development
- Consider the implementation of a reclamation ordinance for depleted sand mines or other mineral extraction
- Conserve agricultural lands east of Valparaiso



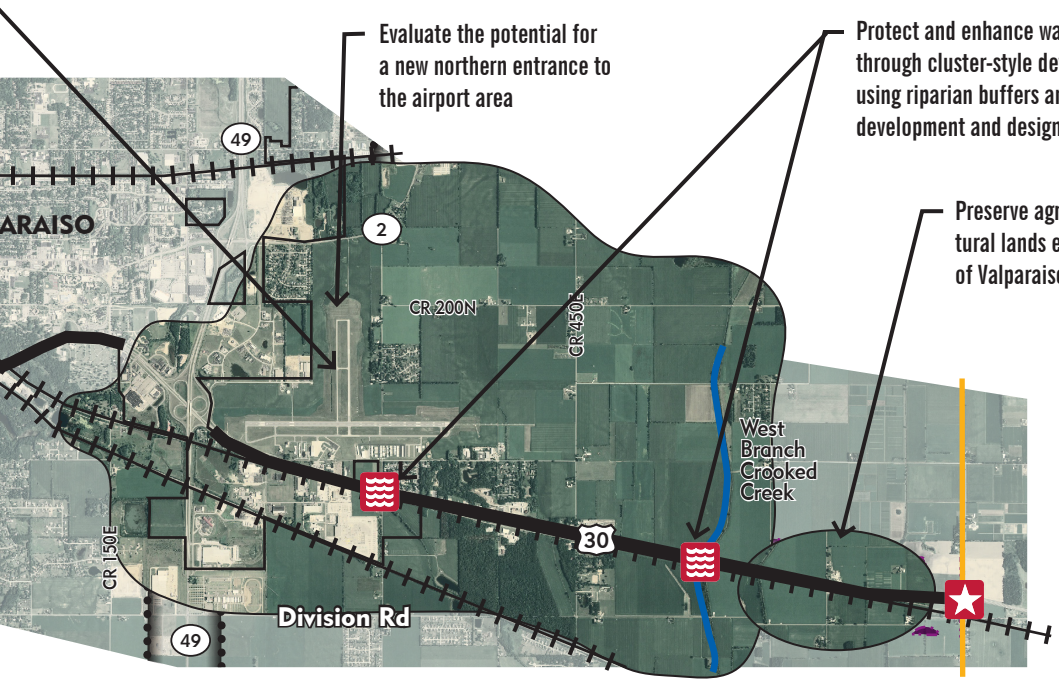
Infrastructure

- Adopt strategies in the Land Use & Thoroughfare Plan and through ordinances to minimize congestion and limit multiple, direct vehicular access to and from US 30.
- Consider a strategy for improvements to Joliet Road which is frequently used as a more direct connection from US 30 to the north side of Valparaiso.
- Use roadside signage to interpret the designation of Joliet Road as the Lincoln Memorial Highway
- Apply appropriate access management standards for new development to maintain levels of service.
- For proposed unsignalized access to major corridors, require offset "T" intersections for developments occurring on opposite sides of a major corridor to increase the safety of drivers crossing the major corridor.
- Provide safe non-motorised access on and across US 30 in designated areas
- Analyze safety and existing/ future traffic operations at the intersection of US 30 and Hayes Leonard Road to recommend improvements
- Evaluate the potential for a new northern entrance to the airport area

Design

- Provide major gateway treatments at the east and west county boundaries of US 30.
- Use design guidelines to ensure compact, well-designed, sustainable development where anticipated along the US 30 corridor.
- Encourage business campus master planning and design standards for the development of airport parcels

Master-planned business campus with shared stormwater filtration.



INDIANA 2 SR 2 CORRIDOR

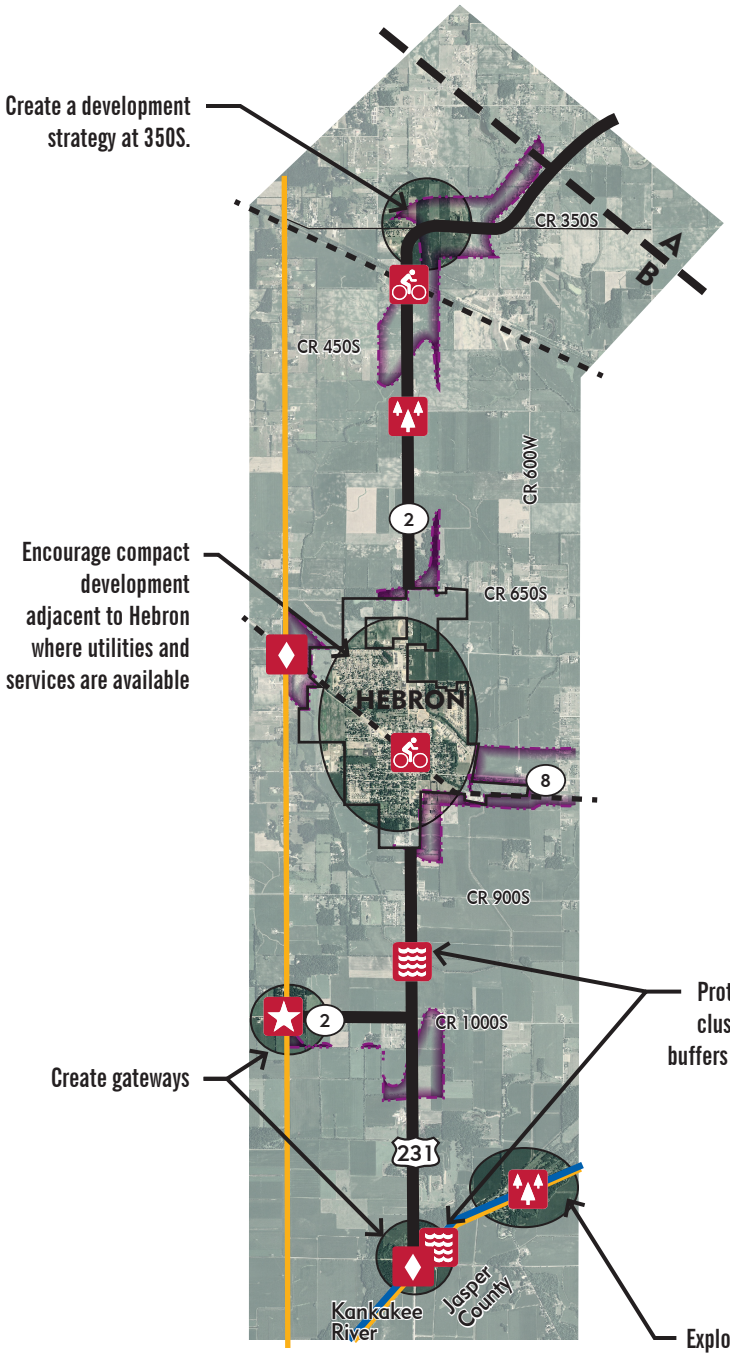
Introduction

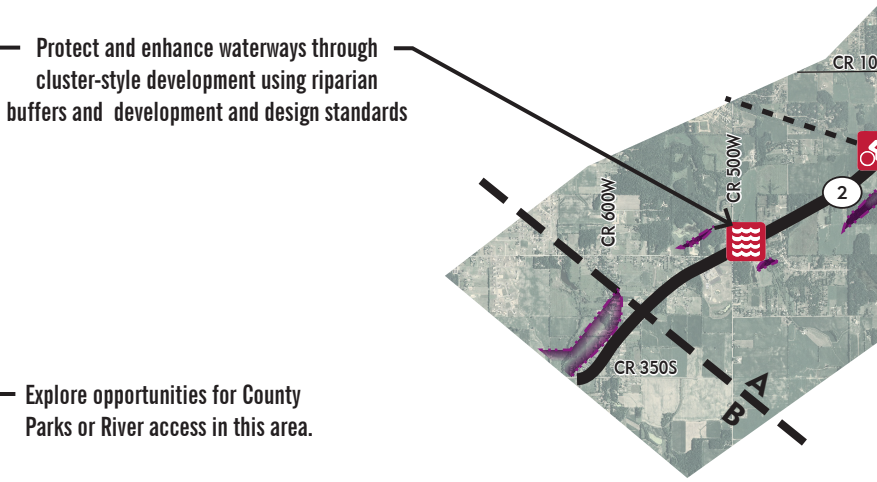
SR 2 is a scenic 2-lane corridor that runs from the northeast, through Valparaiso, and southwest to the Porter / Lake County line. The primarily rural residential corridor is a major gateway into the County from Interstate 65 . In Hebron, SR 2 is not just a regional highway, but also the main street which can be challenging trying to balance the goals of each type of travelway.

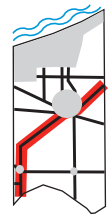
Recommendations

Land Use

- Limit development in flood prone areas and floodplains adjacent to the corridor
- Require buffers and development setbacks to protect wetlands, wildlife habitat, etc.
- Anticipate development and create a strategy for obtaining desired growth for the intersections at SR 2 & 350S, SR 2 & CR 100S, SR 2 & CR 400E and SR 2 & 300N.
- Coordinate with the town of Hebron's annexation goals.
- Work with the town of Hebron to update its land use policies and ordinances to reflect county-wide goals
- If desired by agricultural property owners, implement farmland preservation techniques contained in ***Appendix C: Agricultural Preservation*** (p. 145).
- Provide incentives such as density bonuses to encourage conservation subdivisions to create networks of open space and preserve agricultural land.
- Identify and interpret historically significant sites including but not limited to the Historic Road-Old South Trail, Historic Indian / Buffalo Trail,





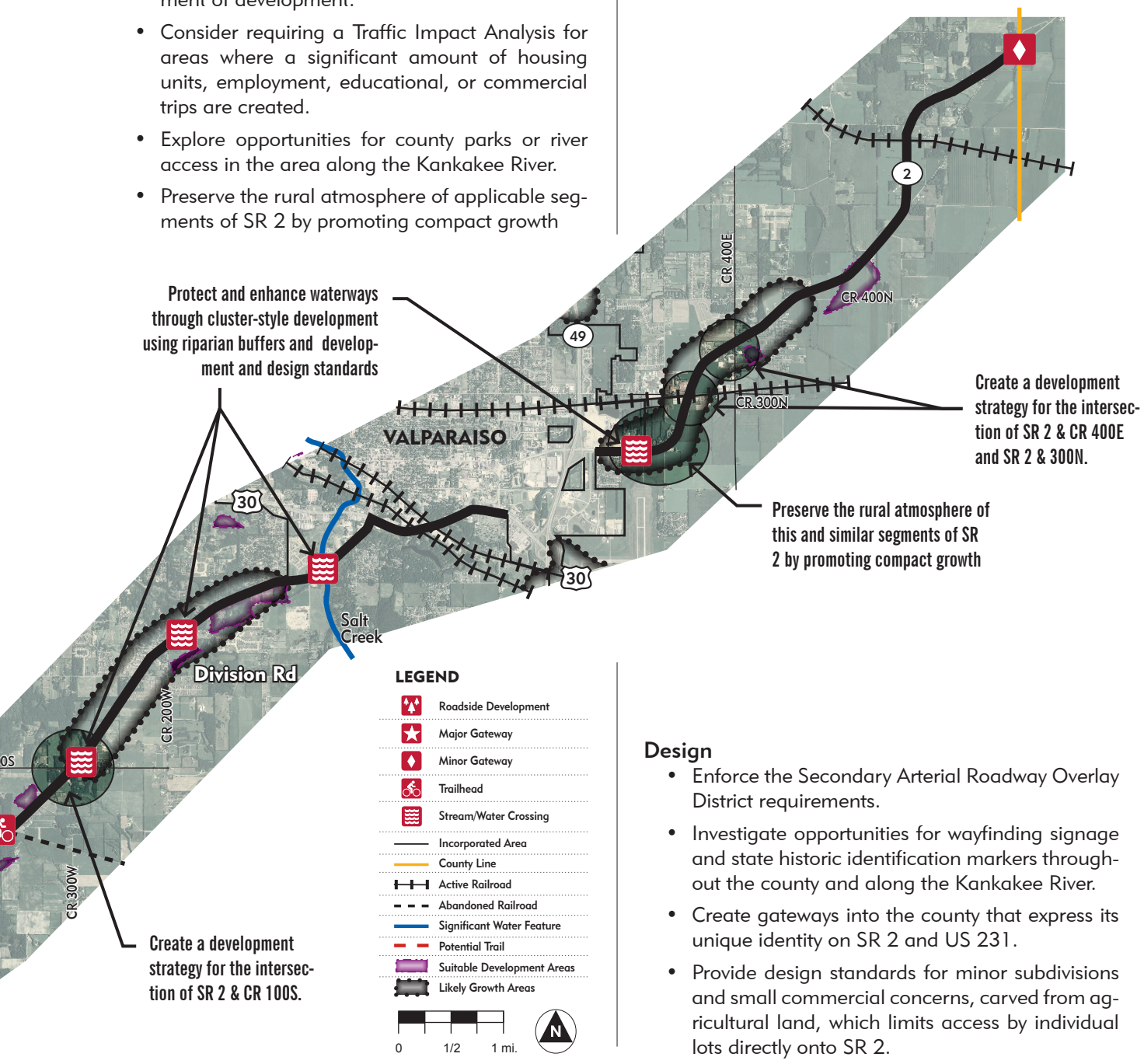


etc.). Explore opportunities to create roadside interpretive exhibits.

- Limit potential growth to those areas adjacent to existing development and where utilities are readily available such as adjacent to Hebron.
- Maintain scenic views through careful management of development.
- Consider requiring a Traffic Impact Analysis for areas where a significant amount of housing units, employment, educational, or commercial trips are created.
- Explore opportunities for county parks or river access in the area along the Kankakee River.
- Preserve the rural atmosphere of applicable segments of SR 2 by promoting compact growth

Infrastructure

- Work with INDOT to employ access management standards for new development through the development approval process
- Consider traffic calming techniques on SR 2 within the corporate limits of Hebron



Design

- Enforce the Secondary Arterial Roadway Overlay District requirements.
- Investigate opportunities for wayfinding signage and state historic identification markers throughout the county and along the Kankakee River.
- Create gateways into the county that express its unique identity on SR 2 and US 231.
- Provide design standards for minor subdivisions and small commercial concerns, carved from agricultural land, which limits access by individual lots directly onto SR 2.

INDIANA 8

SR 8 CORRIDOR

Introduction

The State Route 8 corridor extends east-west from LaPorte to Lake County Lines and links the towns of Kouts and Hebron. It is situated amidst the rich, flat, agricultural lands of southern Porter County permitting broad long range views.

Recommendations

Land Use

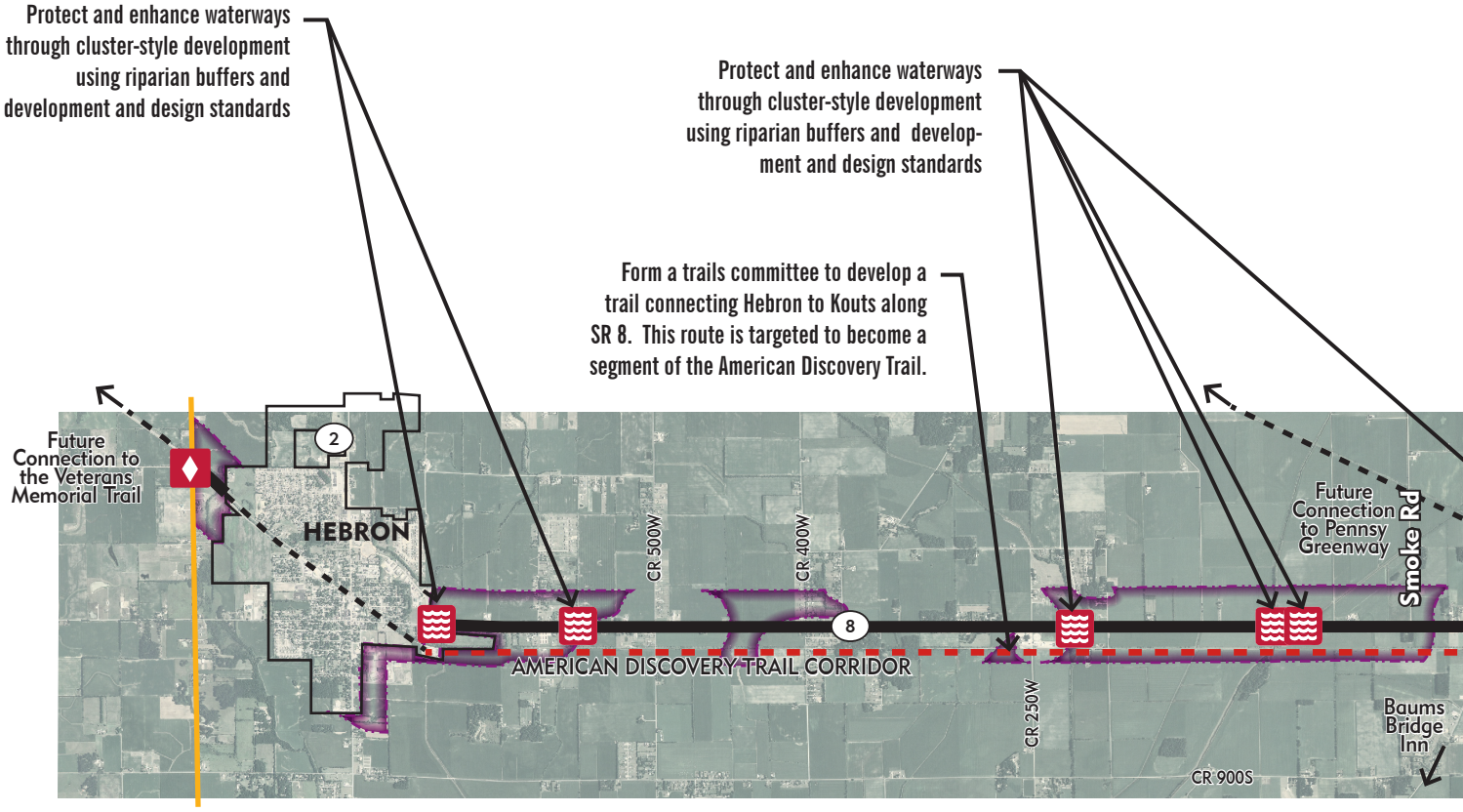
- Maintain the rural, small town atmosphere of Kouts and Hebron by promoting compact development adjacent to incorporated areas.
- The Planning and Development departments of Kouts, Hebron and Porter County should meet regularly to review and approve development proposals.
- Preserve long range expansive viewsheds by limiting strip development adjacent to SR 8.
- Preserve and interpret sites with historic significance. Possibly incorporate into a County-wide tourism strategy.
- Discourage high density residential major subdivisions with no proximity to retail, service, or employment centers.
- Develop policies to ensure compatibility between existing development and large livestock production development.

Infrastructure

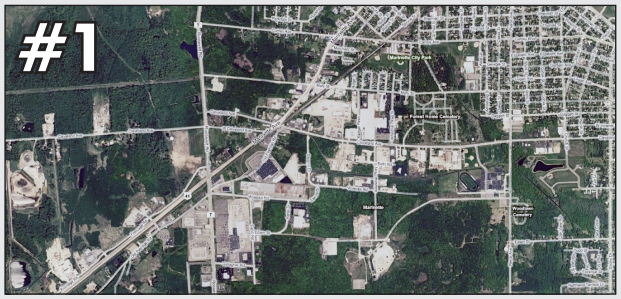
- Work with trail advocacy groups to develop abandoned railroad line parallel to SR 8 as part of the American Discovery Trail.
- Investigate opportunities for trail connections between the proposed American discovery Trail and the Kankakee River.

Design

- Create minor gateway treatments which include wayfinding signage, public art, landscaping, etc., to enhance the image at entrances to the County.



Multi-use paths in rural area



Of the three development pattern photos at left, the public preferred defined town or city boundaries (#2) and compatible growth that is incorporated into the existing town or city context (#3) over sporadic commercial, industrial, and residential growth (#1).

Protect and enhance water-ways through cluster-style development using riparian buffers and development and design standards

LEGEND

- Roadside Development
- Major Gateway
- Minor Gateway
- Trailhead
- Stream/Water Crossing
- Incorporated Area
- County Line
- Active Railroad
- Abandoned Railroad
- Significant Water Feature
- Potential Trail
- Suitable Development Areas
- Likely Growth Areas

N

0 1/2 mi. 1 mi.

Part 3c

Development Scenarios

DEVELOPMENT SCENARIOS

Introduction

This following development scenarios evolved from the County's desire for high quality development for its corridors which oftentimes are the first impression visitors and residents get of a community. This chapter includes five prototypical concept plans which act and acts as a pattern book for future development. These different types of development can occur an any location with similar and relevant land use and transportation characteristics.

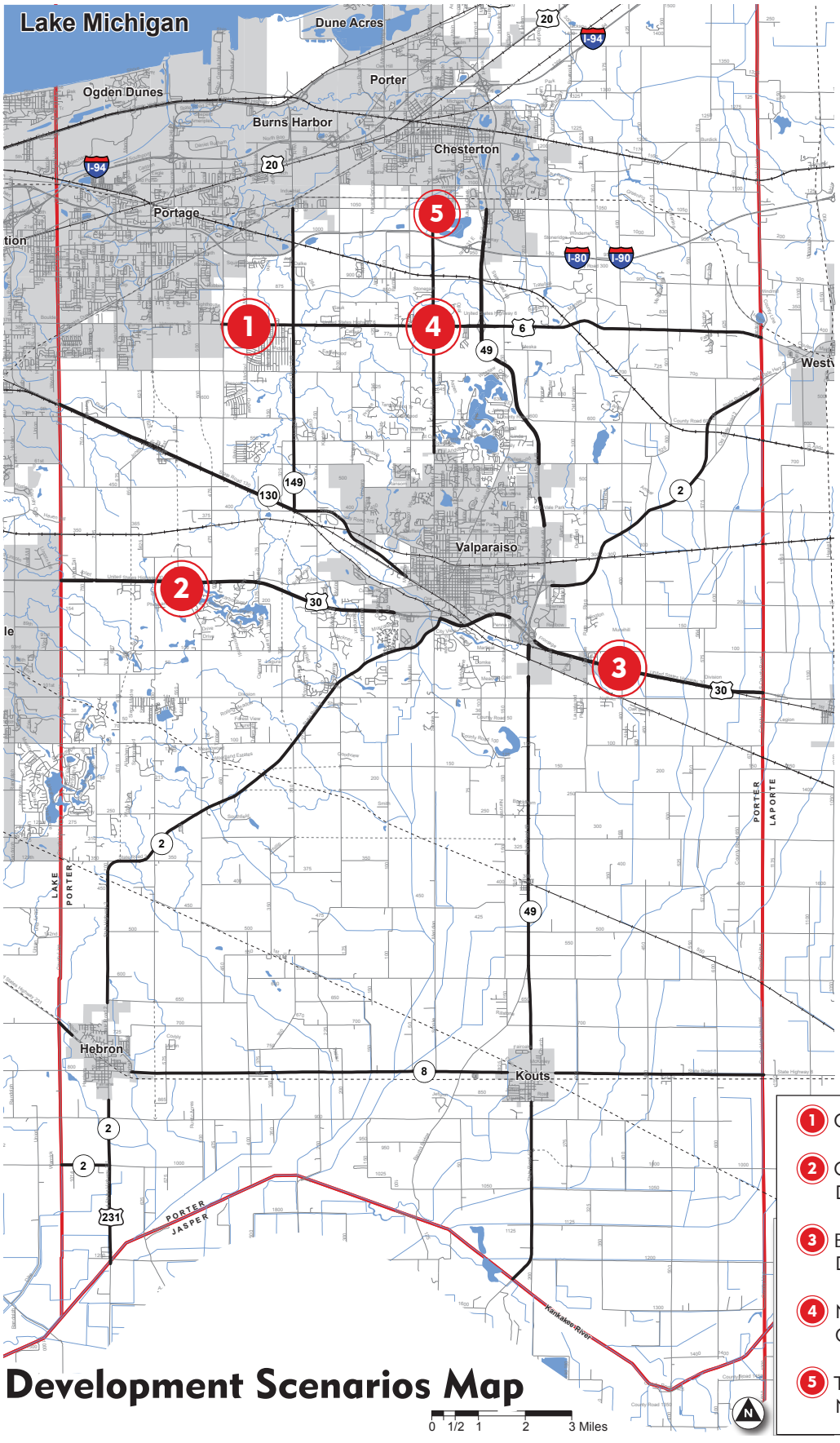
The numbers on the following map suggest locations that would be suitable for the prototype. Common to all scenarios is thoughtful site planning that preserves natural features whether, woodlands, rolling terrain, prime farmland or streams. These enhance the local character and create a sense of place that reflects Porter County. The prototypical developments include:

1. Suburban Commercial Development / Redevelopment
2. Crossroads Commercial Development
3. Business / Industrial Park Development
4. Neighborhood-Scale Commercial Development
5. Conservation Subdivision with Mixed-Use

Development Philosophy

Porter County is fortunate to have open space in the form of sandy dunes, mature woodlands and prime farmland. The population density is relatively low and is appropriately concentrated in cities and small towns, though in some areas prime land is being consumed at an increasingly fast pace. According to steering committee and public workshop input, which includes citizens and county decision makers, there is an interest in preserving much of the appealing natural landscape. To preserve the character and also meet economic development goals, it is important to use land efficiently.

The recommendations in this section promote efficient, compact development with a focus on site planning with appropriate infrastructure. Though greenfield development on inexpensive land can be financially tempting and sometimes the easiest solution, it requires an enormous expenditure of other resources for the extension of roads and utilities. Many of the development scenarios promote developing along existing roadways on vacant and/or underutilized sites which take advantage of available infrastructure.



Development Scenarios Map

1. Commercial Strip Redevelopment
2. Crossroads Commercial on Major Divided Highway
3. Business / Industrial Park Development
4. Neighborhood / Community Commercial Intersection
5. Traditional or Conservation Neighborhood

1 SUBURBAN COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT / REDEVELOPMENT

Character

The typical suburban commercial development happens at the fringe of existing urbanized areas, especially in the areas where relatively higher density residential subdivisions are located. This type of development can occur in commercial nodes at intersections or along individual small parcels along the roadway. This plan encourages new development to incorporate existing parcels into a redeveloped master planned commercial area with a cohesive concept and to, in some cases, take over underutilized business concerns that may no longer be appropriate as the urban fringe moves closer. Preserving and enhancing sensitive habitats such as creeks and woodlands not only is ecologically sound but could provide a theme that enhances commerce as well.

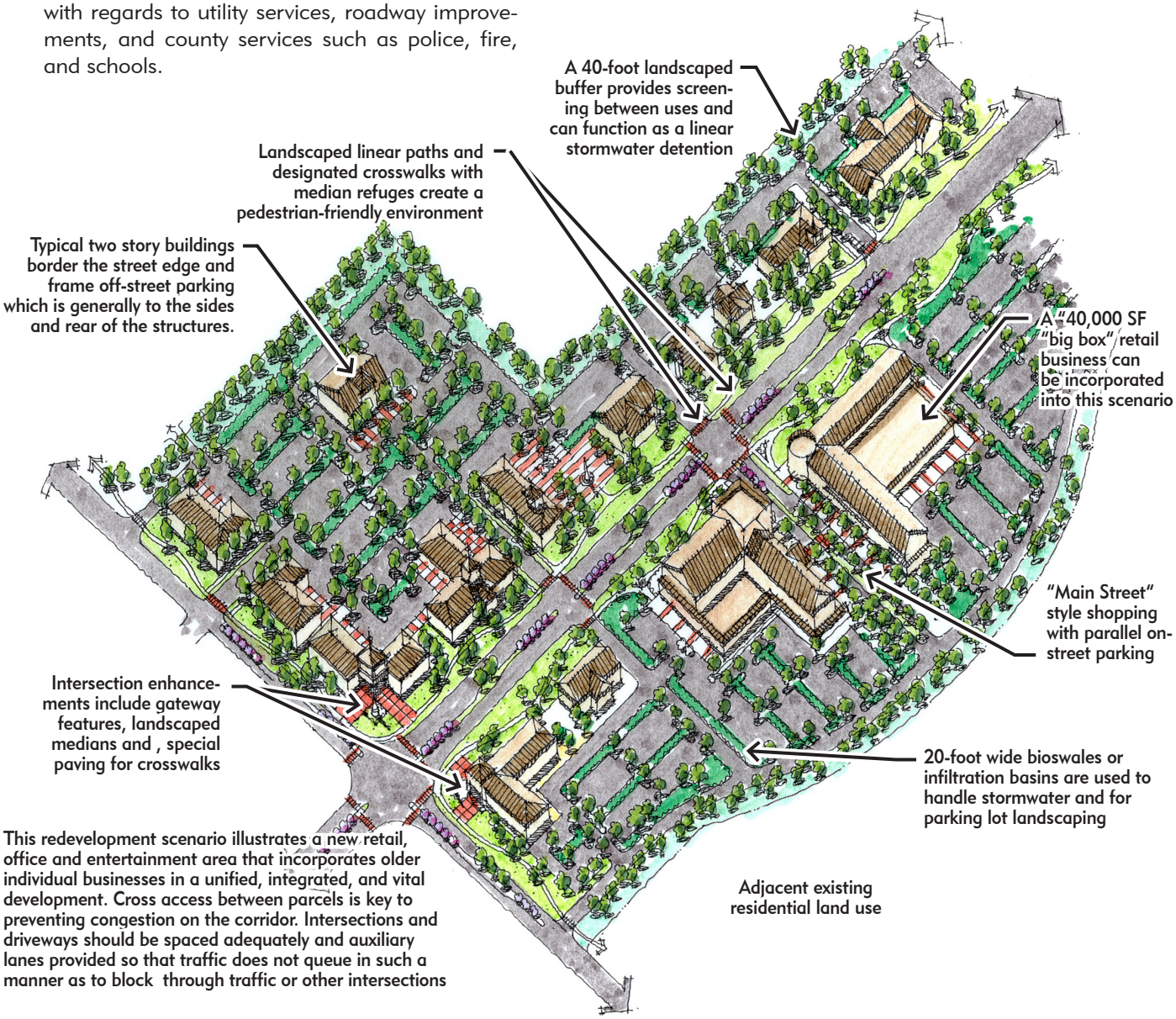
Recommendations

1. Revise the Land Use & Thoroughfare Plan to identify specific commercial nodes for future development.
2. Infill locations with traffic and density can offer better opportunities than other sites, especially in an economic downturn. Provide guidance for contextual infill redevelopment in terms of character and scale.
3. Permit mixed-use development that could allow attached homes such as townhomes or apartments or community facilities, such as a library or history museum, to be included in new development.
4. Amend the UDO to be more flexible by permitting office and / or residential uses in the second story of corridor buildings.
5. Encourage existing local businesses to combine / share their vehicular access points and perform other frontage streetscape improvements when corridor reconstruction projects are proposed.
6. Work with INDOT and existing businesses to provide dedicated turn lanes where warranted in combination with landscaped medians to control left turning traffic for the safety and benefit of the community and potential customers.
7. Implement access management techniques illustrated in ***Part 4: Implementation Toolbox*** ("Transportation Management", p. 104).
8. Require curb and gutter for a more urbanized street cross-section at major intersections instead of rip-rapped roadside swales.
9. Use coordinated new lighting and landscaping along the roadways to establish a theme.
10. Work with utility providers to bury overhead wires when road widening occurs in order to reduce visual clutter.
11. Include accessible sidewalks or multi-use paths in the urban-influenced design.
12. Install pedestrian crossings using prominent textures or colors that signal to the motorist the approach of a busy commercial area.
13. Develop a beautification program or provide incentives to existing property owners to willingly comply with the standards in the UDO such as facade improvements, trash enclosures, and parking lot perimeter and interior landscaping. Educate business owners as to how these changes benefit them and provide overall visual enhancement for the community. Similarly, encourage property owners to reevaluate current signage and the image it presents, to bring older signs into compliance with current UDO standards.

14. Encourage the development of a/multiple commercial property owners maintenance association(s) to regularly remove litter, trash, and weeds. This increases the perception that a community is safe, clean and successful.
15. Maintain levels of code enforcement for litter, trash, and weeds throughout the County.
16. Highlight the effect that existing natural features or public art have as a customer draw by incorporating the features into redevelopment.
17. Utilize the County Redevelopment Commission or similar authority that can exercise an assortment of land management tools and techniques to bring about changes in underutilized areas.

SUBURBAN COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT / REDEVELOPMENT 1

18. If a business in an area where new development is encouraged is no longer viable in its location, facilitate a move of that business to another building or property. This could potentially be done by the Redevelopment Commission.
19. Detail open space and incorporate kiosks with community activities information or interpretation of places of cultural and historical significance.
20. Require fiscal impact and traffic impact analyses that meet INDOT guidelines for development proposals on their corridors. This will determine what burdens or benefits the development may have with regards to utility services, roadway improvements, and county services such as police, fire, and schools.
21. The County's economic development leaders and decision makers should work with the commercial developers to get the highest quality design for the county. Many national chain and franchise businesses have a "good, better, best" level of design. Many owners will alter their standard site, building, and sign design to conform to the community's desires and design regulations.
22. Consider providing bonuses or incentives such as speedy development plan review for developers who are willing to provide innovations in site design, architecture, or infrastructure.



2 CROSSROADS COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Character

Typical crossroads commercial development occurs along a major arterial with high traffic counts that may be attractive to potential commercial developers, often at intersections with existing signalization.

Recommendations

1. New development should be located at major east/west and north/south crossroads with signalized intersections, not at uncontrolled minor intersections.
2. To achieve a compact development pattern, establish a radius from the center point of the intersection beyond which new development should not extend.
3. Follow the standards of the Arterial Road Overlay district in the UDO. Consider amending the text to permit additional flexibility similar to a form based code.
4. No new buildings or contiguous group of buildings shall exceed a gross square footage of 125,000 square feet or a combined contiguous building length of 300 feet.
5. Building fronts shall be oriented to face either the highway or other buildings primary entrance facades.
6. Continue to minimize parking fields by setting a maximum for parking ratios and maintaining locations to the sides and rear of the structures.

Above: Landscaped buffers between the main travel corridors and commercial development

Below and left: Outdoor seating incorporated into commercial retail development

CROSSROADS COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT 2

Prototypical rendering of potential commercial retail/office development opportunities on a high-speed highway or expressway. Access from the highway is limited and via entrances from secondary streets.

3 BUSINESS / INDUSTRIAL PARK DEVELOPMENT

Character

Areas in the proximity of the County airport are prime locations for future business / industrial park development for employment-based land uses. This type of development usually occurs in "greenfield" areas (undeveloped large parcels). It is best situated at a multi-modal hub of roads, rail, and air transportation alternatives. The success of the park can be due to location but also due to the attention to quality master planning of the site which takes into account the network of roads for cars and trucks, rail access for goods, and amenities for employees.

Recommendations

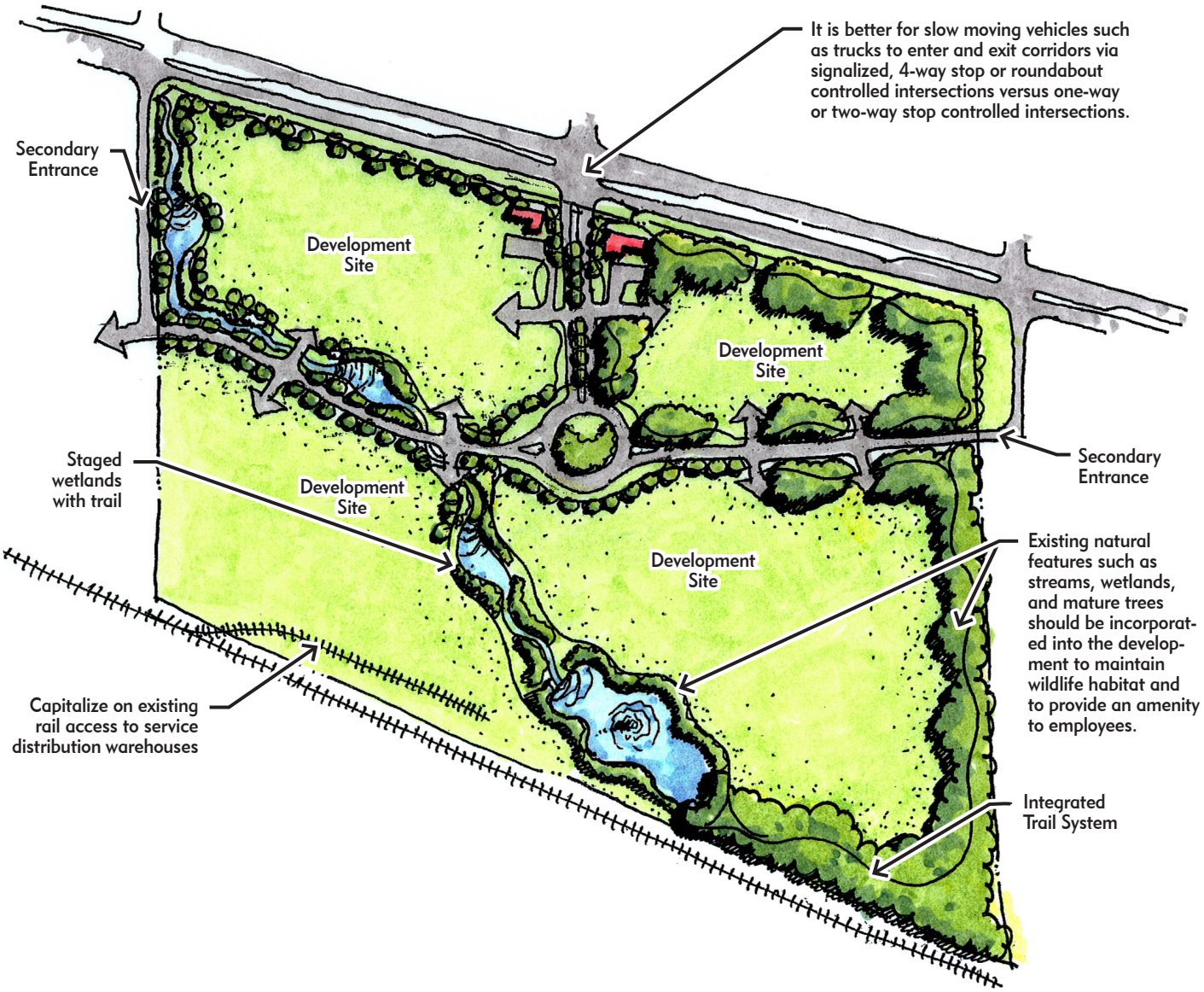
1. Utilize site planning principles to create a quality development that will enhance marketability and set a standard for future development in the area.
2. Create a master plan to accommodate and guide multiple property owners and the realistic probability that development will occur over an extended period of time. Create shared drainage facilities.
3. Respect adjacent neighborhoods by creating visually appealing entrances, setting major buildings back from the highway, and providing landscape buffers as required by ordinance.
4. Due to the sheer size of these types of parcels, use the development as an opportunity to promote sustainability and utilize green development principles such as increasing standard setbacks adjacent to sensitive habitats (creeks and wetlands), and using pervious pavement or vegetated swales to accommodate runoff for fields of parking
5. Incorporate natural elements into development, such as a path along a creek, to create a pleasing work environment and provide access to opportunities for exercise.
6. The same consideration should be given to the architectural design standards, signage and landscaping for these corporate parks that is given to residential and commercial retail development.
7. As an employment center, transit connections should be provided on site or within walking distance.

Carefully planned corporate campus development that incorporates existing natural features (left) and manages stormwater in a unified sustainable manner (right).

BUSINESS / INDUSTRIAL PARK DEVELOPMENT 3

Prototypical master-planned business park for office or industrial development providing a variety of methods of access to increase versatility This proposal illustrates how natural features can be integrated with sustainable stormwater management practices.

Major new business park development should be master planned to represent build-out potential. A conceptual design should address car and truck access, minimum parcel sizes, orientation of parcels, streetscape treatments and shared stormwater detention facilities.



4 NEIGHBORHOOD-SCALE COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Character

Neighborhood-scale commercial development occurs at local roadway crossroads within proximity of or in conjunction with rural to low density residential uses, often where high quality natural areas, featuring forests and wetlands, exist and therefore make land highly desirable for residents. May also be located in areas near major employment centers.

An environment that is attractive to prospective consumers in a setting that is pedestrian and vehicle friendly can be created by using the following implementation tools:

Recommendations

1. The County should establish standards early in the development plan review process to incorporate existing businesses on small individual parcels.
2. Create form-based standards to enhance the UDO which can provide a holistic approach to address site layout and development's relationship to the corridor.
3. Work with INDOT and existing businesses to provide dedicated turn lanes where warranted in combination with landscaped medians to control left turning traffic for the safety and benefit of the community and potential customers.
4. Establish a maximum square footage of 20,000 square feet for individual or anchor structures and a maximum parcel size of 3 acres in order to achieve the desired scale and character.
5. Since the height and illumination of signs can be some of the most intrusive visual elements on a corridor, discourage variances to signage standards; instead work with property owners to create more legible effective signs appropriate to the speed of travel and distance from the path of travel.
6. Because the structures will be viewed from all sides, elements of the architectural detail that are apparent on the front should be extended to the sides and rear.
7. Control uses; only permitting neighborhood retail and office businesses. Discourage larger community-wide uses, light industrial, storage-type, and car dealerships.
8. Incorporate sustainable stormwater Best Management Practices into engineering design and site planning to manage stormwater by using vegetated swales in parking lots to hold and filter runoff, designing retention facilities to be ecologically beneficial, etc.
9. Make request to INDOT to work directly with utility providers to consider placing existing overhead and new utilities underground or to the rear of parcels to reduce visual clutter and enhance the image.
10. Encourage shared parking for multiple uses.
11. Require a sidewalk/multi-use path system that connects the new commercial development to each neighborhood, park, school or other community facility. Local trail and bike lanes should be integrated into development.
12. Amend the UDO to allow flexibility in corridor commercial development by permitting office and residential second story uses in addition to the retail currently required.

Details such as awnings, pedestrian lighting, textured materials and pitched roofs contribute to neighborhood scale retail

NEIGHBORHOOD-SCALE COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT 4

A prototypical neighborhood scale mixed-use commercial "village" development with residential opportunities is a good candidate for busy intersections with moderate traffic in the midst of less dense residential areas. Access to goods and services by short vehicle trips and integrated foot and bicycle paths can reduce congestion and maintain the pastoral character. Landscaped medians, crosswalks and other features signal "special area" ahead.

5 CONSERVATION SUBDIVISION WITH MIXED-USE

Character

The conservation subdivision offers an alternative by permitting residential development in desirable areas while preserving or conserving the best natural resources and open space in those areas.

Areas with attractive natural features that are conveniently located near urbanized areas experience the most development pressure for new residential development from those who prefer living in rural neighborhoods. Commercial development soon follows these new rooftops. If not developed in a planned and thoughtful manner, the area that was once the subject of desire may become degraded. Implementation of the following measures can stave off low quality development that diminishes the natural setting, and at the same time, create a lively and thriving village atmosphere.

The development scenario below is adjacent to an urbanized area with nearby community facilities. The natural feature could be woodlands, wetlands, dunes or farmlands which the community would like to have remain in tact so there is minimal disturbance of the ecosystem. This type of development can be solely residential or be mixed use functioning like a village center does.

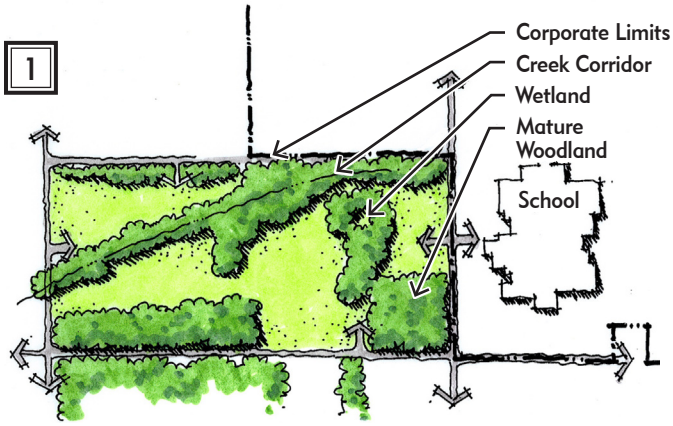
Recommendations

1. Concentrate new development near community gathering places such as towns or schools.
2. Preserve or conserve the natural features which made the area desirable by creating a "neo-traditional type" development which mimics the urban fabric of an adjacent town, or a conservation subdivision which prizes the resources contained in the undeveloped area. Both developments encourage relatively higher densities while incorporating public open space, and reduces the amount of required roads and utility extensions. Density of a certain level creates an energy and vitality in a space.
3. Provide the amenities associated with these special communities including an extensive pedestrian and bicycle network with prominent crossings, extensive landscaping to enhance aesthetics and the environment, and high quality architectural and site design standards.
4. Amend the Unified Development Ordinance to include standards that require:
   - plant protection measures for all existing trees
   - reduce the maximum lot coverage requirements to further limit the amount of impervious surface in sensitive areas
   - street tree plantings of native species in natural patterns to supplement existing plant material - place street trees between the street and the walkways to create a distinct and safer pedestrian zone
   - lighting for streets in commercial and residential areas, and along corridors should employ full cutoff fixtures so as not to leak light into the night sky, thus preserving the rural character at night while providing safety
5. Maintain the width of the existing corridor in order to preserve the visual character and scale of the residential neighborhoods and commercial centers. Use street trees, medians, light standards and other vertical elements to reduce the perceived street width.
6. Develop a unified sustainable stormwater approach for stormwater produced from new development using vegetated drainage corridors that can also serve as recreational and educational facilities.

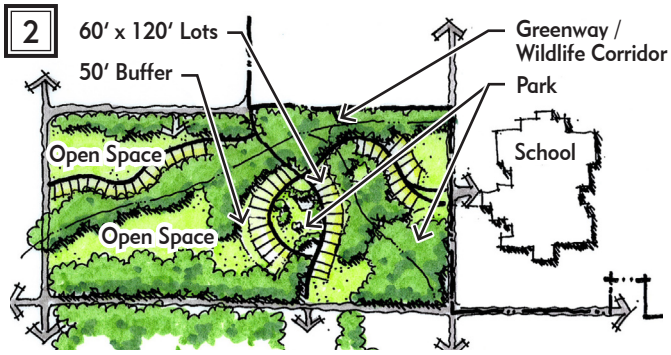
Above: Vegetated swale in parking lot that detains and filters stormwater runoff

7. Designate corridors with distinct character and significant natural features such as rolling topography as Scenic Roadways and apply SRO standards.

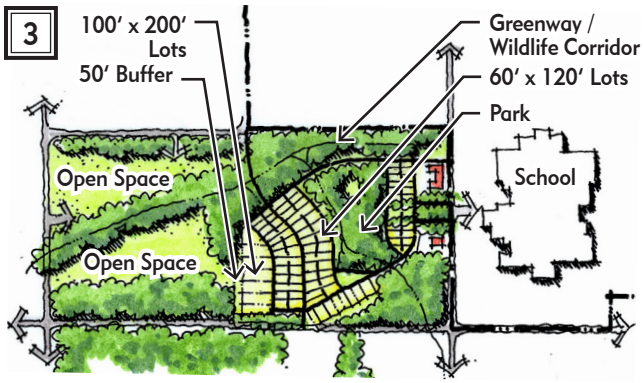
Development Pattern Alternatives



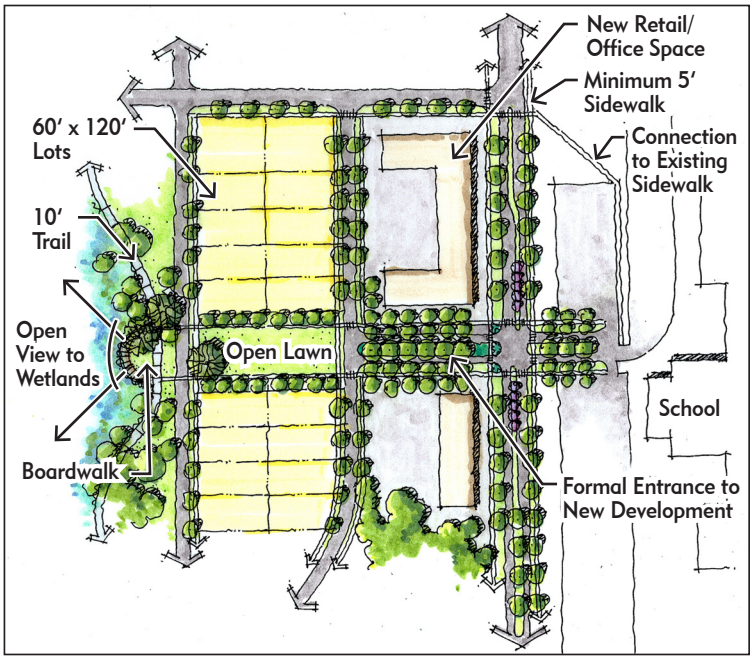
Existing Conditions: 72 wooded, undeveloped acres at the edge of an incorporated area and across the street from a school and adjacent to an expanding community presents an opportunity for non-traditional subdivision development and the preservation of open space (see below).



Conservation Subdivision: An overall density of 1 lot per 1.5 acres, but individual lot square footage is 7,200 in order to preserve natural features and provide common open space. Development is not permitted within the creek corridor and lots are laid out to fit the topography maximize views into preserved open space from the road.



Neo-traditional Subdivision: The overall density of 1 lot per .8 acres is obtained by clustering residential and commercial development on small lots adjacent to vehicular access and existing development. A limited number of larger lots provide a transition to preserved open space. Infrastructure is limited to integrated commercial and residential streets and alleys as opposed to being extended through the site. Open space is preserved intact. Strong pedestrian community connections are included in the illustration.



Above: Potential entryway with pedestrian linkages to school and public open space for neo-traditional subdivision.

Part 4:

Implementation Toolbox

IMPLEMENTATION TOOLBOX

Introduction

A plan is only as good as its effectiveness to implement the recommendations that are contained within. The intent of this section is to establish a clear path to fulfill the vision proposed in this plan. This section initially describes a number of implementation tools in detail as a basis for understanding the recommendations of the plan. Recommendations are organized by both subject and corridor location. Agencies having the capacity and the responsibility to carry out the various tasks are identified along with a time frame, and relative priority for each recommendation.

Porter County is fortunate to have many of the tools and procedures in place to implement this plan. There is a growing land use ethic in the community and region that embraces many of the smart growth and ecological concepts that the corridor plan proposes. The recommendations in this section are based largely upon public input gathered during the preparation of the plan along with guidance from a project steering committee. It is in this spirit of public discourse that this plan was prepared.

Economic Development Tools

Redevelopment Commission

The Porter County Redevelopment Commission is a separate entity that perform functions exclusively for and by authorization of the County. It operates primarily in designated redevelopment areas to enhance the economic redevelopment of the county. The Redevelopment Commission has the ability to address the conditions associated with deterioration and the under-utilization of land and/or barriers to development.

In Indiana, per IC 36-7-14-3, the 5 or 7 member Redevelopment Commission can create taxing districts, which encompass the entire municipality, for the implementation of redevelopment plans and special projects. The commission shall investigate and determine the boundaries of redevelopment areas. This is an effective mechanism to use where market-rate projects are desired but special assistance such as in the assembly of land is needed to provide maximum potential benefit to the community.

The redevelopment commission also has the ability to acquire properties from non-profit or government-funded agencies and often provide local funding for the development of affordable housing. Land acquired may be transferred to another entity for development, such as a housing authority, non-profit, or Community Development Corporation (CDC). The property may be unimproved or in some cases, the Commission may provide hazardous material or contaminated site cleanup or new infrastructure (curb and gutter, underground utilities) to enhance the property's appeal prior to redevelopment.

Tax Incentives

The Commission has the authority to use incentives as tools to induce development to locate or expand within the community. Incentives include the use of tax abatement and tax increment finance. In a global economy, tax abatement is often necessary to compete with other localities for job creation. Tax abatement is an affirmation of confidence in a business by the community. Tax abatement is expected to result in a larger community tax base by attracting new businesses and jobs. In the long run this will increase available tax funds for community infrastructure improvements and growth. Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is a widely used economic development tool throughout Indiana. Tax increment is the property tax revenues collected for a specific period of time on the increased assessed valuation of property in the area to be redeveloped or developed. Tax increment financing not only permits the acquisition of property for purposes of redevelopment or economic development, but also provides another means for communities to finance infrastructure improvements in a redevelopment area or an economic development area.

Other redevelopment strategies that may be appropriate for subject corridors include competitive or targeted industry studies if there is a clear cluster of similar and supportive businesses, and also brownfield development programs for sites that may contain contaminated materials.

Transportation Management Tools

Traffic Access Management Plan

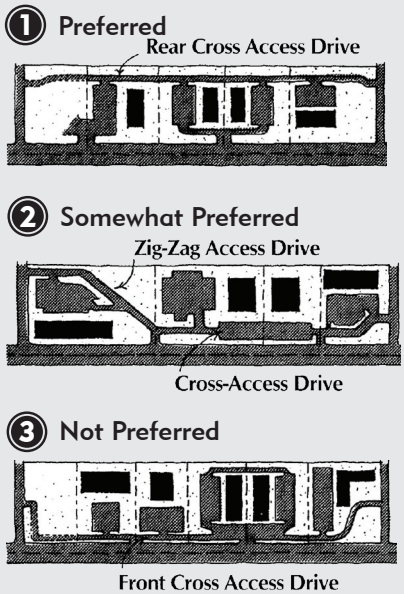
The implementation of an Access Management Plan would provide a proactive approach to minimizing the number of vehicular access points on a corridor while still providing for the proper access needed to serve

future development. INDOT has created an Access Management Guide which provides access strategies for INDOT roadways. The guide is located at http://www.in.gov/indot/5614.htm. Although INDOT has control of access along their roadways, local decisions can still affect the locations of access points. Therefore, the strategies listed in INDOT's guide can also be used by the County to manage access decisions along each of the study corridors in coordination with INDOT. An access plan may be formally adopted into the County's comprehensive plan. INDOT's access guide provides model ordinances that can be used as reference. An access plan along one of the study corridors would include the following objectives:

1. Coordinate development plans with INDOT and County road agencies.
2. Identify the locations of existing traffic signals and the preferred locations for future traffic signals.
3. Identify the existing property boundaries for the parcels of vacant land along the corridor. Indicate the anticipated land uses of each property based on existing or future zoning.
4. Locate future access drives along the corridor by following best practice guidelines such as the following:
   - In order to maximize through traffic progression along the corridor, locate traffic signals so that they are evenly spaced and no less than 1300 feet apart.
   - Minimize access drives along the corridor by providing access to the secondary roadways which already have access to the corridor. This will also minimize the number of traffic signals along the corridor. (Figure 1: Limited Access Alternatives)
   - Encourage cross-connection between developments in order to share access drives, thereby minimizing the number of drives.
   - All intersections/ drives should be spaced so that vehicle queue lengths at each intersection do not extend back into the functional area of the downstream intersection/ drive.
   - All intersections/ drives should be spaced so that vehicle queue lengths in the turn lanes do not extend into the through lanes. In addition, proper deceleration distance (the distance needed for a vehicle to slow down to a stop while in the turn lane) should be provided when needed (usually in rural areas with higher posted speed limits).
   - It is ideal to have land uses with a high volume of heavy truck traffic (slow moving vehicles) enter and exit the corridor via signalized, 4-way stop, or roundabout controlled intersections versus one-way stop or two-way stop controlled intersections. This is especially ideal along corridors with high traffic volume. In addition, the travel paths of passenger vehicles and truck traffic within the site should be separated by proper site design when possible such as the use of separate access drives for truck loading.
   - For unsignalized access drives that are not controlled with a roundabout or 4-way stop, it is ideal to have a T-intersection (one-way stop control) versus a two-way stop control. This will minimize the number of conflicting movements that a driver must negotiate while traversing through the unsignalized intersection. However, this requires that more attention be paid to the intersection spacing as more access points may be needed to serve development along both sides of the corridor.

An access plan would represent a guideline for access control and locations. However, fluctuations in market forces could change the assumptions that were made to determine the plan. Significant variance from these assumptions should then be evaluated as development plans are submitted for review to determine whether the

Figure 1: Limited Access Alternatives



Source: Center for Urban Transportation Research, Ten Ways to Manage Roadway Access in Your Community (1998).

access plan should be revised based on the changed traffic impact. The submittal of a Traffic Impact Study in conjunction with the development plan will ensure that proper accessibility is provided for new developments while maintaining the objectives of the access plan.

Traffic Impact Study

INDOT typically requires the submittal of a Traffic Impact Study for development along their roadways. This is a specialized study of the traffic impact that a proposed development has on the adjacent roadway system. INDOT has a set of guidelines titled "Applicant's Guide to Traffic Impact Studies" and "Reviewer's Guide to Traffic Impact Studies". These guidelines list the recommended steps for preparing and reviewing a traffic study including the typical development size thresholds that would warrant a study. The objectives of a Traffic Impact Study are as follows:

1. To assess the existing traffic operations of the adjacent roadway system within the vicinity of a proposed development and identify improvements that are needed to mitigate any existing deficiencies.
2. To project the future traffic operations of the adjacent roadway system for the horizon year (design year) without the proposed development and identify improvements that are needed to mitigate any deficiencies.
3. To project the traffic impact to the adjacent roadway system that is due to the proposed development and identify improvements that are needed to mitigate the proposed development traffic.
4. To determine the proper locations, spacing, traffic control and lane configuration of the access drives that are needed to serve the proposed development and maintain proper traffic flow operations along the adjacent roadway system.
5. To provide decision makers with a basis for assessing the traffic implications of approving proposed zoning changes and development applications.
6. To provide a basis for estimating the "fair share" cost of roadway system improvements that are needed to mitigate the traffic impact of the proposed development.

The County currently does not require developers to prepare a traffic study when submitting development plans. However, the requirement of a Traffic Impact Study submittal along with the implementation of an Access Management Plan will ensure that the transportation objectives of the study corridors are met while providing proper access for proposed developments. A traffic study should typically be considered in conjunction with the application for approval of any of the following:

- Zoning changes
- Subdivision platting
- Site plan
- Building permit or Improvement Location Permit
- Driveway (access) permit
- Comprehensive plan amendments requested by the developer

Transportation Safety Plan

The implementation of a Transportation Safety Plan would provide a proactive approach to improving safety along the study corridors and would include the following objectives:

1. Continuously collect and summarize crash data at the intersections and roadway segments along the study corridors.
2. Rank the intersections/ segments based on several criteria such as total number of crashes, crash rate, crash type and crash result on an annual basis.
3. Based on the ranking, identify critical intersections/ segments for an in-depth Safety Analysis.
4. Perform an in-depth Safety Analysis of the identified critical intersections/ segments. The analysis should evaluate the intersection's/ segment's configuration and crash data in order to identify the probable causes of the crashes and to recommend safety improvements. Additional input should be obtained from local law enforcement officers, emergency medical responders and other safety stakeholders.
5. Implement safety improvements based on the in-depth analysis and input from safety stakeholders. Federal funding sources such as the Highway Safety Improvement Program are available which could be used to fund applicable improvements.

6. Continuously monitor the crash data of the intersections/ segments after improvements have been made in order to evaluate the effectiveness of those improvements.

The state currently has a similar program called the Strategic Highway Safety Plan. However, the state's plan may or may not give priority to the intersections/ segments along the study corridors.

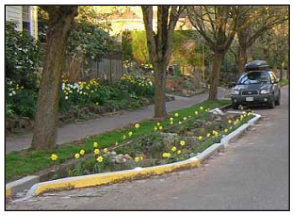
Sustainable Infrastructure Tools

Rapid and poorly managed development may provide immediate required and short term benefits, but long-term sustainability is the goal.

Lake Michigan, rolling topography, and forested areas provide scenic backdrops for northern Porter County, while agricultural land and the Kankakee River define the character of the southern county. There are many techniques, some of which are described below, that can mitigate the potential negative effects of development on these resources while protecting their economic value and enhancing the natural environment itself.

Best Management Practices

Best Management Practices (BMPs) are combination of conservation activities or measures or practices that may be used to reduce the discharge of pollutants in stormwater runoff or to mitigate the negative impacts of development on water ways or groundwater. Runoff occurs when rainwater strikes impervious surfaces such as roofs, parking lots, streets and sidewalks. The use of some type of BMP's are mandated for new development or significant land disturbance in communities over a certain population. The on-site stormwater management measures may be structural on non-structural. The first step is source control. A mature woodland or forest is readily absorbent and has a high rate of evapotranspiration when compared to turf or any impervious surfaces such as asphalt or concrete.



BMP's can range from the use of constructed wetlands, green roofs, and retention ponds to rain gardens and vegetated swales (shallow depressions that collect water and permit gradual absorption) to slow the velocity of and to filter pollutants from stormwater runoff. Native plant material should be incorporated into these natural systems and should require less maintenance effort. Other benefits to integrating (BMPs) into new development projects are that they often are:

- Less expensive to install and maintain
- Self-healing (does not require costly physical replacement of infrastructure in the event of damage to the runoff collection/filtration system)
- Add value for people wanting to live in a healthy natural environments and increases monetary property value
- May become recreational amenities
- More readily permitted by regulatory agencies
- Image enhancing for communities or companies wanting to be progressive or environmentally-friendly
- Integrated into the built and natural environments

What can a community do to promote or require Best Management Practices?

- Review ordinances to ensure that alternative or innovative stormwater management practices are not prohibited
- Reduce the amount of impervious pavement on streets and in parking lots through the use of landscaping
- Permit alternative permeable pavement products such as paver blocks, porous concrete and asphalt and the use of aggregate inappropriate situations
- Eliminate curbs on roads where not necessary for pedestrian safety so that runoff is filtered prior to recharging the groundwater
- Construct a median swale on roads or landscape swale in a parking lot to retain and filter runoff
- Increase setbacks between development and sensitive areas such as creeks and wetlands (see graphic on p. 51)
- Encourage clustering of residential development to protect large swaths of environmentally sensitive habitat
- Establish maximum parking requirements to reduce unnecessary paved areas

- Provide incentives such as reduce permit processing time or lower stormwater taxes due to lower discharges

Green Highways

A bridge for wildlife use

Green Highways are corridors with watershed-driven stormwater management. A roadway maybe considered green if it is planned and constructed to prevent toxins from leaching into streams and rivers, recycles construction materials to prevent landfill usage, and employs cutting-edge technologies to protect critical habitats and ecosystems from the encroachment of highway infrastructure.

An initiative called the Green Highways Partnership (GHP) is focused on ensuring that sustainability becomes the driving force behind infrastructure development. The initiative encourages:

- Partnership development that integrates public/private interests throughout federal/state transportation and regulatory/resource agencies, contractors, materials industry, trade associations, academic institutions, and non-governmental organizations;
- A recognition program that recognizes programs, projects, and activities that demonstrate excellence in pursuing Green Highways goals; and
- Pilot projects that increase the visibility of creative solutions and inspire others to pursue green choices in surface transportation infrastructure.

(More information: The Green Highway Partnership; http://www.greenhighways.org)

Agriculture Practices

Agricultural practices are not only vital for food production, they also represent the inherent preservation of open space and rural character throughout the County. Small-scale farming operations, in particular, are a productive part of the economy, but also enhance the natural landscape through the use of fence rows and other untillable areas that provide wildlife habitats and refuges for native species, serve as windbreaks, reduce soil erosion, and provide vegetated buffers that function to cleanse runoff thereby enhancing water quality before it enters creeks and rivers.

Community gardens are even smaller in size, but can benefit the community in several important ways such as providing opportunities for community involvement and development, **education for both participating gardeners and general food harvesting education, opportunities for gardeners to pool resources such as tools or fertilizers, neighborhood beautification, preservation of green space, the creation of locally grown food, and reducing city heat. Community gardens could be created within subdivision common area, within parks, or on city/county-owned property.**

Sustainable Land Development Tools

Compact Development

One of the principles of "sustainable development" (somewhat interchangeable with the concept of "Smart Growth") is to "strengthen and direct development towards existing communities." The application of this principle results in preserving open space, farmland, natural beauty, and critical habitats. Another benefit is the efficient use of taxpayer dollars by establishing policies to encourage new development within or adjacent to existing development and public services. NIRPC's Sensible Tools Handbook for Indiana, 2007, defines a compact development pattern as "the density or intensity of development."

Mixed-use communities can go one step farther to establish compact development that satisfies a growing need for a variety of lifestyle housing types. Benefits include:

- Better air quality due to the reduction automobile emissions and less traffic congestion, both resulting from shorter or no automobile trips between land uses with close proximity to each other
- Reduced income spent on personal transportation
- Better health and quality of life resulting from walkable communities and increased convenience/choice of retail/service/recreational opportunities
- Commercial stability and vitality resulting from a close, permanent customer base

- Increased personal safety due to more 24-hour activity from daytime businesses and residential units

Sustainable Building Standards

The Sustainable Sites Initiative (SSI) includes guiding principles such as designing with nature and culture or providing regenerative systems as inter-generational equity, and various goals regarding soils, hydrology, vegetation, materials and resources, and human well-being.

The SSI has set forth several guidelines and standards that will be used by the US Green Building Council (USGBC) in future LEED® (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) rating systems.

Specific to community planning, the USGBC will be releasing a LEED program for neighborhood design (ND), expected to launch in summer/fall 2009. Objectives of the LEED-ND principles and accreditation include:

- Reduced urban sprawl due to close proximity to existing town and city centers and transit access, re- and infill development
- Healthy living through walkable, vibrant, mixed-use neighborhoods with connections to nearby communities
- Compact development patterns near or adjacent to existing development to minimize wildlife habitat fragmentation and to preserve areas for recreation
- Increased transportation choice (walking, bicycling, etc.) and decreased automobile dependence
- Potentially reduced development fees or waiting periods where local incentives for LEED-ND projects exist
- Taking into account the needs of adjacent existing neighborhoods
- Higher residential and commercial tenancy rates due to rising demand for housing in highly walkable or transit-accessible areas

(More information: The Sustainable Sites Initiative; www.sustainablesites.org)

Municipal Airport Development Recommendations

The Porter County Airport is an example of a area that might be targeted for a cluster of certain types of development. Because the airport is situated between two of the study corridors (US 30 and SR 2), strategies and development scenarios are included in this Plan for future development.

1. Coordinate with the Airport Zone Development Committee and ensure compatibility of the recommendations within both the Airport Zone Master Plan and this Corridor Plan.
2. Confine development to already existing nodes. Appropriately zone land for future airport growth.
3. Support efforts for "shovel-ready" sites for new industrial development near airport.
4. Create a strategy for land use proposed along US 30, south of Valparaiso.
5. Encourage developers of large parcels surrounding the airport to be models for sustainable green development.
6. Use design guidelines to ensure compact, well-designed, sustainable development where anticipated along the US 30 corridor.
7. Encourage business campus master planning and design standards beyond the requirements of the Porter County UDO for the development of airport parcels.
8. Encourage appropriate infrastructure at key locations and intersections, adjacent to rail lines, near the Airport and the Port to foster economic development.
9. Look for ways to integrate and provide for future motorized multi-modal opportunities (bus or train transit, heavy rail, airport).

Implementation Table Introduction / Clarification

Implementation Agencies

Several different agencies have been assigned to the goals and recommendations previously listed in this Plan in order to provide more direct guidance for implementation. Agencies are broken into Lead Agencies and Supporting Agencies.

Lead Agencies:

NIRPC	Northwest Indiana Regional Plan Commission
PCPC	Porter County Plan Commission
PCPR	Porter County Parks and Recreation
PCCVB	Porter County Convention / Visitors Bureau
PCRC	Porter County Redevelopment Commission
PCHS	Porter County Historical Society
NIRBA	Northwest Indiana Regional Bus Authority
PCMA	Porter County Municipal Airport
AA	Airport Authority
ADZC	Airport Development Zone Committee
IM	Individual Municipalities
IR	Individual Residents
NPS	National Parks Service (Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore)
PCU	Porter County Utility Companies

Supporting or Coordinating Agencies:

INDOT	Indiana Dept. of Transportation
IDEM	Indiana Dept. of Environmental Management
DNR	Indiana Dept. of Natural Resources
PCHD	Porter County Highway Dept.
PCS	Porter County Surveyor
PCEDA	Porter County Economic Development Alliance
RDA	Regional Development Authority
NIF	Northwest Indiana Forum
NGO	Non-Governmental Organizations (includes several different agencies)
SDCF	Save the Dunes Conservation Fund

Time Frame

The following **goals and recommendations** have been assigned approximate time frames for the implementation of each recommendation. The time frames which may vary based on economic development influences and numerous other factors are:

- **Short-Term Opportunities** - Projects that could be undertaken immediately and/or implemented within a calendar year of the Corridor Plan's adoption.
- **Mid-Term Opportunities -** Projects that could be initiated within 1 - 3 calendar years of the Corridor Plan's adoption.
- **Long-Term Opportunities -** Projects that could be undertaken within 3 - 7+ calendar years of the Corridor Plan's adoption.
- **Ongoing Opportunities -** Projects that may require initial studies to determine their feasibility or may depend on other work prior to implementation. Such projects may also be implemented in a series of incremental steps involving numerous agencies or departments. These recommendations may go beyond the time frame of this Corridor Plan.

Priority

Recommendations made throughout this corridor plan are assigned a level of priority in the following implementation table based on public input, steering committee review, and Plan Commission staff review.

County-Wide Implementation

RECOMMENDATIONS		IMPLEMENTATION AGENCY	TIME FRAME	PRIORITY
Encourage Existing and New Economic Opportunities				
Support Region-Wide Coordination				
EO.1.1	Encourage cooperation between the County, cities, and town governments to implement their economic plans and achieve desired development for their communities.	PCPC, IM, PCEDA	Ongoing	Low Med High
Increase Tourism Opportunities				
EO.2.5	Develop a county-wide wayfinding signage program to direct visitors and residents to prominent destinations.	PCPC, PCCVB, INDOT	Mid-Term	Low Med High
EO.2.2	Support and further recreational opportunities along the Kankakee River recommended in the Greenways and Blueways Plan for canoeing, kayaks, and the creation of river access points.	PCPR, NIRPC, IDNR	Long-Term	Low Med High
EO.2.3	Support enhancing the economic opportunities of the Port of Indiana by including it as a tourist attraction, enhancing existing public access and fishing, and developing proposals for an observation area or interpretation center.	PCCVB, PCEDA	Long-Term	Low Med High
EO.2.1	Enable and promote the Indiana Dunes region in becoming a year round attraction.	PCCVB, NPS	Long-Term	Low Med High
EO.2.4	Capture or entertain through-traffic on the corridors through the preservation of scenic views.	PCPC, PCHD, PCCBV, INDOT	Mid-Term	Low Med High
Enhance the Quality of Life for Porter County Residents				
EO.3.3	Review land use and zoning standards and revise to encourage a mix of compatible uses in key areas.	PCPC	Mid-Term	Low Med High
EO.3.1	Promote passive recreation as an economic draw through the development of non-motorized corridors, paths, greenways, and blueways, per the recommendations in the Ped and Pedal Plan, 2005 and the Greenways and Blueways Plan, 2007.	PCPR, NIRPC, DNR, INDOT	Long-Term	Low Med High
EO.3.2	Support agritourism in rural Porter County including organic farming, truck farming, farm stands, U-pick farms, and wineries. Use the American Countryside® Farmers Market in Elkhart, Indiana as a model.	PCCVB, PCEDA	Mid-Term	Low Med High

IMPLEMENTATION TOOLBOX

	RECOMMENDATIONS	IMPLEMENTATION AGENCY	TIME FRAME	PRIORITY
Support Development Practices that will Encourage Economic Development and Community Investment				
EO.4.2	Blend community and commerce by having people live, work, and shop in the same area (more local than transient).	PCPC	Ongoing	Low Med High
EO.4.6	Utilize the County's Redevelopment Commission as a way to revitalize existing, outdated, or incompatible development along study corridors.	PCRC	Short-Term	Low Med High
EO.4.1	Include sustainable development practices in the design for new development to reduce long term costs and impacts.	PCPC	Mid-Term	Low Med High
EO.4.4	Provide transit opportunities from existing transit centers to the new health services complexes, retail and employment centers.	NIRPC, NIRBA	Long-Term	Low Med High
EO.4.5	Encourage the use of fiber optics and similar technology.	PCPC, PCEDA	Ongoing	Low Med High
EO.4.7	Create or form beautification or maintenance associations to provide maintenance of landscaped elements and to ensure adherence to other development or design standards.	PCEDA, PCCVB, PCPC	Short-Term	Low Med High
EO.4.3	Investigate opportunities for health care facilities and the secondary support industries and services that accompany health care development. Identify locations that are best suited for this type of regional development.	PCEDA, PCPC	Long-Term	Low Med High
Enhance Corridor Safety and Function				
Improve the Safety and Efficiency for Vehicles				
SF.1.1	Maintain or improve the levels of service of US 6, Meridian Road, SR 49 south of Valparaiso, and SR 2 east of Valparaiso by limiting access, widening right-of-way (ROW), creating grade separations at railroad crossings and traffic calming techniques where appropriate.	PCPC, PCHD	Long-Term	Low Med High
SF.1.2	Explore opportunities for a N-S connector within mid-western Porter County.	PCPC, PCHD	Mid-Term	Low Med High
SF.1.3	Implement the standards in the UDO requiring individual tracts along the highways without clearly defined access to tie into side streets or rear access roads as new development occurs in order to preserve the aesthetic benefits provided by the greenbelt.	PCPC	Mid-Term	Low Med High

RECOMMENDATIONS		IMPLEMENTATION AGENCY	TIME FRAME	PRIORITY
SF.1.4	Require shared driveway access to contiguous tracts.	PCPC	Mid-Term	Low Med High
SF.1.6	Continue support for the County policy to improve or widen roadways based solely on the safety needs, and not primarily due to traffic congestion.	PCPC	Mid-Term	Low Med High
SF.1.7	Embrace innovative safety technology by encouraging the use of new technology to enhance safety such as code enforcement, photography, GPS wayfinding, TMS program, and intelligent traffic systems (movement sensors, etc.).	PCPC	Short-Term	Low Med High
SF.1.5	Work with INDOT to designate which corridor sections are better developed as rural or urban cross-section.	PCPC, INDOT	Short-Term	Low Med High
Support Multi-Modal Use of the Study Corridors				
SF.2.1	Incorporate and accommodate pedestrians and cyclists by providing walking paths and bicycle trails that connect residential neighborhoods with schools and parks, especially on Meridian Road and SR 49 north of Valparaiso.	NIRPC, PCPR, PCPC, INDOT	Mid-Term / Ongoing	Low Med High
SF.2.2	Continue to support the proposed Dunes-Kankakee Trail. (Refer to the official study for more information)	NIRPC, PCPC, INDOT	Mid-Term / Ongoing	Low Med High
SF.2.3	Develop a county-wide "Complete Streets" policy and create design standards to be adopted as part of the Porter County UDO.	NIRPC, PCHD, PCPC	Mid-Term / Ongoing	Low Med High
SF.2.4	Look for ways to integrate and provide for future motorized multi-modal opportunities.	NIRBA, NIRPC, PCPC, PCMA	Mid-Term / Ongoing	Low Med High
SF.2.5	Provide varied facilities for bike travel. A signed bike route (shared road facility) appeals to a more serious, experience rider, however a multi-use path separated by landscaping and setback a safe distance from the travelway is appropriate for other cyclists and pedestrians.	PCCVB, PCPR, NIRPC, PCPC	Mid-Term / Ongoing	Low Med High
SF.2.6	Provide multi-community bus service that links the airport to residential and commercial areas, employment centers, health care facilities and recreation areas, and other inter-community modes of transportation.	PCMA, NIRPC, NIRBA, PCPC	Mid-Term / Ongoing	Low Med High
SF.2.7	Work with landowners towards a common goal of providing continuous trail systems.	NIRPC, PCPR, PCPC	Mid-Term / Ongoing	Low Med High

IMPLEMENTATION TOOLBOX

	RECOMMENDATIONS	IMPLEMENTATION AGENCY	TIME FRAME	PRIORITY
Support Corridor Improvements that Increase Safety for Cyclists, Pedestrians, and Wildlife				
SF.3.1	Implement a Transportation Safety Plan along each of the study corridors. This will provide a proactive approach to improving the safety along the corridors through annual evaluation of reported vehicular crashes.	PCPC	Mid-Term	Low Med High
SF.3.2	Perform a Safety Analysis of the critical intersections/ segments as identified in the Transportation Safety Plan. The analysis should evaluate the intersection's/ segment's configuration and crash data in order to identify the probable causes of the crashes and to recommend safety improvements.	PCPC	Mid-Term	Low Med High
SF.3.4	Create bold pedestrian or bicycle crossing treatments such as the "Z" crossing, that increases driver, pedestrian, and cyclist awareness.	PCPC, PCHD, INDOT	Short-Term	Low Med High
SF.3.3	Consider the incorporation of wildlife corridor tunnels or overpasses for improvements to corridors. These land bridges allow wildlife to move freely between natural habitats without the segregation of interstates and highways.	NIRPC, INDOT, PCHD, PCPC	Mid-Term	Low Med High
Promote Balanced Development and Growth Patterns				
Promote Smart Growth Throughout the County				
DG.1.1	Promote compact growth patterns by encouraging new development adjacent to existing urbanized areas where there are existing or available utilities and infrastructure.	PCEDA, PCCVB, PCPC	Ongoing	Low Med High
DG.1.2	Discourage checkerboard or leapfrog development patterns; focus on forms of development nodes as opposed to strips along corridors.	PCEDA, PCPC	Ongoing	Low Med High
DG.1.3	Coordinate monthly with incorporated jurisdictions to review development proposals.	PCPC, IM	Ongoing	Low Med High
Achieve a Balance Between the Built and Natural Environment				
DG.2.1	Encourage appropriate measures to preserve, enhance, and protect natural resources and habitats.	NIRPC, PCPC, SDCF	Mid-Term	Low Med High
DG.2.3	Encourage stormwater best management practices (BMPs) such as alternative drainage methods, for new development in order to preserve and enhance the water quality of the County's waterways.	PCPC, SDCF	Mid-Term	Low Med High

RECOMMENDATIONS		IMPLEMENTATION AGENCY	TIME FRAME	PRIORITY
DG.2.4	Work with developers to provide shared stormwater facilities where applicable and beneficial.	PCPC	Mid-Term	Low Med High
DG.2.5	Create a county-wide stormwater management board to manage and fund BMPs.	PCPC	Mid-Term	Low Med High
DG.2.6	Create guidelines to develop study corridors as "Green Corridors" with BMPs for stormwater filtration, landscape buffers between the corridor and potential adjacent development, and green bridges for wildlife crossings.	PCPC	Mid-Term	Low Med High
DG.2.9	Encourage green (environmentally conscious) building and development techniques.	PCPC, IDNR	Short-Term	Low Med High
DG.2.11	Work closely and early with INDOT to ensure that all recommendations or improvements to corridors are context sensitive, especially regarding interchanges or other structural improvements to roadways.	PCPC, INDOT	Ongoing	Low Med High
DG.2.2	Ensure new development supports designated greenways and blueways.	PCPR, NIRPC, PCPC	Ongoing	Low Med High
DG.2.7	When recommending preservation of natural areas include detailed recommendations with regard to funding, ownership, and maintenance, such as "no-mow" policies for certain landscape types.	PCPC, NIRPC	Mid-Term	Low Med High
DG.2.8	Promote the preservation and creation of open space networks.	PCPR, PCPC, NIRPC	Short-Term	Low Med High
DG.2.12	Encourage the use of native plants in landscape buffers. Amend the UDO to permit buffers of all native deciduous hardwood species if that is what is indigenous to the area. Require denser spacing and a combination of understory and canopy species to maintain effective screening.	PCPC	Ongoing	Low Med High
DG.2.10	Promote environmental / water quality awareness by providing identification for each waterway crossing and watershed along roadways and by activities such as stenciling drainage inlets with the message "Drains to Lake Michigan" or "Drains to Kankakee River".	PCU, SDCF, PCPC	Mid-Term	Low Med High

IMPLEMENTATION TOOLBOX

RECOMMENDATIONS		IMPLEMENTATION AGENCY	TIME FRAME	PRIORITY
Encourage Appropriate Land Usage Patterns				
DG.3.2	Encourage redevelopment of existing urban cores and compact nodes. Consider updating the County Future Land Use Plan to identify areas of preferred development or redevelopment and guide development to these areas	PCEDA, PCPC, PCRC	Ongoing	Low Med High
DG.3.4	Develop policies and regulations that discourage over-commercialization of the corridors.	PCPC	Mid-Term	Low Med High
DG.3.3	Create a strategy for the reuse of land such as greyfields and brownfields with potential for hazardous or negative impacts such as abandoned landfills, quarries, etc.	PCPC, PCEDA, PCRC	Mid-Term	Low Med High
DG.3.1	Encourage preservation of prime agricultural lands in the county.	PCPC	Ongoing	Low Med High
Manage the Interface Between Transportation and Land Use				
DG.4.4	Implement an Access Management Plan (using INDOT guidelines) along each of the study corridors in order to take a proactive approach to minimizing the number of access points while still providing for the proper access needed to serve future development. The County should also require developers to submit a Traffic Impact Study to ensure that the proposed development meets the objectives of the Access Management Plan.	PCPC	Mid-Term	Low Med High
DG.4.1	Focus more intense development patterns near transportation infrastructure.	PCPC, PCEDA	Ongoing	Low Med High
DG.4.2	Encourage transit-oriented or transit-ready development in the vicinity of transit systems.	PCPC, PCEDA	Ongoing	Low Med High
DG.4.3	Encourage the extension and development of infrastructure at key locations and intersections, adjacent to rail lines, near the airport and port to foster economic development.	PCPC, PCU, PCEDA	Ongoing	Low Med High
DG.4.5	Create guidelines to determine when a Traffic Impact Study (using INDOT guidelines) should be submitted to the County for proposed developments along the study corridors. The required studies will ensure that the transportation objectives for the study corridors are met while providing proper access for proposed developments.	PCPC	Short-Term	Low Med High

	RECOMMENDATIONS	IMPLEMENTATION AGENCY	TIME FRAME	PRIORITY
Celebrate the Unique Identity and Character of Each Corridor				
Support Efforts to Enhance the Pride, History, and Unique Aspects of County Corridors				
ID.1.4	Encourage unique, corridor specific gateway treatments.	PCPC, PCEDA, PCCVB	Mid-Term	Low Med High
ID.1.5	Create a brand for the county by identifying a theme that portrays the County's desired image and captures the essence of the County from the lake to the river.	PCCVB, PCPC, PCEDA	Short-Term	Low Med High
ID.1.1	Combine results and recommendations from previous studies, such as cultural, historic, and environmental studies, as a basis for county-wide transportation enhancements.	PCPC, PCHS, NIRPC, IM	Mid-Term	Low Med High
ID.1.2	Honor prominent events or persons by renaming corridors and placing historical interpretive markers at significant locations.	PCPC, PCHD	Ongoing	Low Med High
ID.1.3	Provide signs along corridors that designate creek or wildlife crossing signs, promote environmental awareness and agritourism.	PCCVB, PCPC, PCEDA	Short-Term	Low Med High
Address Signage Throughout the County				
ID.2.1	Create county-wide wayfinding signage that will aid residents and tourists to find significant destinations. Consider illustrating the individuality of specific corridors and localities.	PCCVB, PCPC, PCEDA	Mid-Term	Low Med High
ID.2.2	Consider speed, building setback, etc., as factors that influence the size of signs. This would help reduce visual clutter and keep more from proliferating.	PCPC	Mid-Term	Low Med High
ID.2.3	Work with all governmental entities and local businesses to determine standards for commercial signage that are appropriate to the character of each roadway and the surrounding land uses.	PCPC	Ongoing	Low Med High
Visually Enhance Corridors and Enforce the Maintenance of Corridor Enhancements				
ID.3.3	Utilize the County's Redevelopment Commission to consider beautification or facade enhancement program for degraded areas.	PCRC, PCPC, PCEDA	Short-Term	Low Med High
ID.3.6	Strengthen code enforcement efforts regarding unkempt property and dilapidated structures along corridors.	PCPC	Short-Term	Low Med High
ID.3.9	Create landscaped medians and swales along roadways that help control and filter stormwater runoff.	PCPC	Mid-Term	Low Med High

IMPLEMENTATION TOOLBOX

RECOMMENDATIONS		IMPLEMENTATION AGENCY	TIME FRAME	PRIORITY
ID.3.7	Visually buffer less than desirable views from roadways through the use of vegetation screening or berms.	PCPC	Mid-Term	Low Med High
ID.3.8	Work with INDOT to support requests that utility providers bury overhead utility lines or locate them at the rear of property in areas where a special character is desired.	PCPC, INDOT, PCU	Mid-Term	Low Med High
ID.3.4	Designate gateways as major or minor based on traffic volume and location in order to determine the character of treatments. Designs for either gateway type would incorporate similar elements such as welcoming and wayfinding signage, landscaping, lighting and public art. The difference would be in the scale of the improvements.	PCPC, PCCVB	Mid-Term	Low Med High
ID.3.1	Implement corridor beautification through landscaping using native and indigenous plantings such as wildflowers, grasses, shrubs and trees adjacent to and in the medians of divided highways. Use a consistent theme of landscaping material on a specific corridor.	PCPC, PCCVB	Mid-Term	Low Med High
ID.3.2	Develop a county-wide coordinated look for street signs, light standards, and signal poles.	PCPC	Short-Term	Low Med High
ID.3.5	Initiate an "adopt-a-roadway, -interchange, or -median" program to allow gateway treatments to be created and maintained by corporate and local sponsors. Work with local business associations and investigate possible funding from businesses and/or the Chamber of Commerce.	PCPC, PCCVB, PCEDA	Short-Term	Low Med High
Encourage Preservation of Rural and Natural Characteristics				
ID.4.4	Encourage the use a native plants. Amend UDO to permit landscaped buffers that resemble oak-savannah or other naturally occurring landscapes. If evergreens are used, they should be native to the area. The effectiveness of screening would be based on the density of the mix of understory and canopy plantings.	PCPC	Mid-Term	Low Med High
ID.4.5	Adopt a "no-mow" policy for certain roadside native landscape plantings.	PCPC, PCHD, INDOT	Mid-Term	Low Med High
ID.4.1	Preserve the rural character by supporting agricultural land preservation and conservation of natural features and environments.	PCPC, SDCF, NIRPC	Ongoing	Low Med High

RECOMMENDATIONS		IMPLEMENTATION AGENCY	TIME FRAME	PRIORITY
ID.4.2	Use new corridor development to strengthen park and recreational opportunities.	PCRC, PCPC, NIRPC	Mid-Term / Long-Term	Low Med High
ID.4.3	Apply the Scenic Road Overlay District designation to Meridian Road and to portions of SR 49 and US 6 that are not currently included in that zoning designation.	PCPC	Mid-Term	Low Med High

IMPLEMENTATION TOOLBOX

Corridor-Specific Implementation

RECOMMENDATIONS	IMPLEMENTATION AGENCY	TIME FRAME	PRIORITY
SR 149			
Promote compact development at nodes, not in strips	PCPC, PCEDA	Ongoing	Low Med High
Continue to explore options for a southern extension of SR 149	PCPC, INDOT	Ongoing	Low Med High
Apply the existing corridor overlay standards from the UDO to new development	PCPC	Ongoing	Low Med High
Apply green highway techniques (see "Green Highways", p. 108) for any highway construction due to creek proximity	PCPC, INDOT, PCHD	Mid-Term	Low Med High
Review the effectiveness of current County ordinances with regard to buffering and other visual separations	PCPC	Short-Term	Low Med High
Limit development on SR 149 in the vicinity of US 6 where Salt Creek closely parallels the roadway	PCPC	Mid-Term	Low Med High
Limit development between CR 600N and CR 700N to preserve agricultural land and the continuation of the Salt Creek corridor	PCPC; PCEDA	Mid-Term	Low Med High
Work with the South Haven Homeowners Association to enhance buffering and to ensure that the neighborhood matures in a positive manner	PCPC, PCRC	Mid-Term	Low Med High
Require protective buffers / setbacks between Salt Creek and new development through application of the standards in the UDO Watershed Overlay District	PCPC	Mid-Term	Low Med High
Use native vegetation to satisfy required landscaping	PCPC	Short-Term	Low Med High
Protect waterways through cluster-style development using riparian buffers and development and design standards required by the UDO Watershed Overlay District, but beyond the applicability of the UDO	PCPC	Ongoing	Low Med High
Identify opportunities for County Park or trail creation (e.g. along Salt Creek or connecting to DNR property on 600N where fishing and possible canoe, etc. access exists)	PCPC, PCPR, NIRPC	Mid-Term	Low Med High
Encourage stormwater BMPs for all new development in order to maintain and enhance the water quality in Salt Creek and other waterways	PCPC, SDCF, DNR	Ongoing	Low Med High
Consider developing greenways along the creek corridors and wetlands	PCPC, PCPR, NIRPC	Mid-Term	Low Med High
Include trailheads during any road improvement projects for the designated waterway access points identified by the Greenways & Blueways Plan	PCPC, PCPR, NIRPC	Mid-Term	Low Med High

IMPLEMENTATION TOOLBOX

RECOMMENDATIONS	IMPLEMENTATION AGENCY	TIME FRAME	PRIORITY
Place signage on roadway at creek crossing to increase awareness	PCPC, SDCF, NIRPC	Short-Term	Low Med High
Meridian Road			
Apply access management standards included in the UDO to Meridian Road	PCPC	Mid-Term	Low Med High
Designate specific nodes for new development near existing development where utilities are readily available	PCPC, PCEDA	Mid-Term	Low Med High
Develop an environmental checklist to use for development plan review	PCPC	Short-Term	Low Med High
Limit commercial retail and business development to a compact node at the intersection of US 6 and Meridian Road	PCPC, PCEDA	Mid-Term	Low Med High
Develop a trail alignment for pedestrians and cyclists to safely connect residential and commercial development, schools, parks and employment centers on Meridian Road. Provide sidewalks and visible crosswalks	PCPC, PCHD, PCPR	Mid-Term	Low Med High
Consider reduced scale signage that is more compatible with desired character	PCPC	Mid-Term	Low Med High
Apply the Scenic Roadway Overlay District to Meridian Road	PCPC	Mid-Term	Low Med High
Provide incentives and bonuses for conservation subdivision development	PCPC	Mid-Term	Low Med High
Establish a maximum square footage for commercial development in order to maintain neighborhood character	PCPC	Mid-Term	Low Med High
Provide enough right-of-way to safely accommodate vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle traffic without compromising the natural setting	PCPC, PCHD	Mid-Term	Low Med High
Preserve the distinct and unique characteristics of Meridian Road between Chesterton and Valparaiso. Require new commercial development to adopt a "Village Center" concept which reflects the character and scale of the area. The addition of a residential component is key to create a village feel and support retail uses where appropriate	PCPC	Mid-Term	Low Med High
Require the use of native planting for new landscaping	PCPC	Mid-Term	Low Med High

RECOMMENDATIONS	IMPLEMENTATION AGENCY	TIME FRAME	PRIORITY
Require the preservation of plant material within 50 feet of Meridian Road right-of-way to maintain habitat and natural look	PCPC, PCHD	Mid-Term	Low Med High
Provide a rural cross-section with wide paved shoulders (e.g. "Super Two-Lane") where appropriate	PCPC, PCHD	Mid-Term	Low Med High
Add Meridian Road as a "shared roadway" for bikes	PCPC, PCCVB	Mid-Term	Low Med High
Provide safe pedestrian crosswalks	PCPC, PCHD	Mid-Term	Low Med High
Incorporate roundabouts into road design as alternatives to 4-way stops and signalized intersections	PCPC, PCPR, NIRPC, PCHD	Mid-Term	Low Med High
Work with the Parks and Recreation Department and local land conservation groups to identify areas for preservation and conservation. A land use category for Open Space, which is more descriptive than the Conservation or Agricultural /Rural designations, should be provided in the **Land Use & Thoroughfare Plan**	PCPC, PCPR; SDCF	Mid-Term	Low Med High
Provide for and make public aware of wildlife crossings	PCPC, NGO (wildlife focus)	Mid-Term	Low Med High
Potential County Park at CR 9000N & Meridian Road	PCPC, PCPR, NIRPC	Mid-Term / Long-Term	Low Med High
Incorporate signage that increases environmental awareness regarding the watershed, streams, creeks and woodlands	PCPC, PCCVB, SDCF	Short-Term	Low Med High
SR 49 (North)			
Promote compact development at specific nodes per the **Land Use & Thoroughfare Plan** to enable preservation of natural areas	PCPC, PCEDA	Ongoing	Low Med High
Revise the Future Land Use Map and Zoning Map to identify the proposed hospital development and the extent of the supporting health care related businesses. Prioritize areas for development at the locations of the proposed hospital complexes	PCPC, PCEDA	Mid-Term	Low Med High
Encourage campus type design and development for hospital and supporting health-related businesses	PCPC, PCEDA	Short-Term	Low Med High
Require tree preservation and conservation of the existing landscape. Incorporate the existing land form into the large parcel development and minimize grading and tree removal	PCPC, INDOT	Mid-Term	Low Med High

IMPLEMENTATION TOOLBOX

RECOMMENDATIONS	IMPLEMENTATION AGENCY	TIME FRAME	PRIORITY
Coordinate the creation of the Dunes-Kankakee Trail from Dunes State Park to the Porter County Fairgrounds with other roadway improvements	PCPC, PCPR, NIRPC, INDOT	Mid-Term	Low Med High
Apply the Arterial Roadway Overlay District to SR 49 to ensure consistency in character and high quality development	PCPC	Short-Term	Low Med High
Consider applying the Scenic Roadway Overlay District to portions of SR 49	PCPC	Short-Term	Low Med High
Support the growth of SR 49 as an Economic Development Corridor. Limit the occurrence of small- or medium-scale commercial uses and instead focus on the development of regional mixed-use employment centers in corporate/campus type settings	PCPC, PCEDA	Mid-Term	Low Med High
Require that the construction of a multi-use trail on SR 49 from Dunes State Park to the Porter County Fairgrounds be included in development plan proposals for projects. (See Dunes-Kankakee Trail Plan)	PCPC, PCPR, NIRPC, INDOT	Mid-Term	Low Med High
Create the SR 49 "Green Corridor" by encouraging large parcel development to share stormwater detention facilities and to incorporate best management practices which may become an amenity to the development and the community.	PCPC, DNR, SDCF	Mid-Term	Low Med High
Ensure that major roadway improvements are context sensitive and contribute to enhancing the county image	PCPC, NIRPC, INDOT	Mid-Term	Low Med High
Define treatment for possible grade separated interchanges on SR 49 that includes context sensitive solutions and maintains continuous pedestrian and bicycle travel	PCPC, INDOT, NIRPC	Mid-Term	Low Med High
Provide appealing gateway treatments in northern Porter County to draw visitors and tourists from the lake edge into central Porter County and a minor gateway where SR 49 crosses the Kankakee	PCPC, PCCVB, PCEDA	Mid-Term	Low Med High
Analyze safety and existing/ future traffic operations at the intersection of SR 49 at US 6 and CR 600N to recommend improvements.	PCPC, INDOT	Mid-Term	Low Med High
SR 49 (South)			
Apply the Arterial Roadway Overlay District standards in the UDO which limits vehicular access from individual lots directly onto highways	PCPC	Mid-Term	Low Med High

RECOMMENDATIONS	IMPLEMENTATION AGENCY	TIME FRAME	PRIORITY
Provide design standards for minor subdivisions and small commercial uses, carved from agricultural land	PCPC	Mid-Term	Low Med High
Coordinate with the town of Kouts regarding their annexation goals	PCPC, IM	Short-Term	Low Med High
Work with local utility districts to coordinate future infrastructure improvements as a tool to guide future development	PCPC, PCU	Short-Term	Low Med High
Work with the town of Kouts to update its land use policies and ordinances to reflect county-wide goals	PCPC, IM	Mid-Term	Low Med High
Consider a conservation subdivision type layout that helps create networks of open space in the community	PCPC, PCPR	Mid-Term	Low Med High
Protect expansive viewsheds by encouraging the clustering of development and conservation subdivision development that conserves farmland and prohibits view obscuring strips of development along county roads.	PCPC, INDOT	Mid-Term	Low Med High
Encourage compact urban development within or adjacent to the Town of Kouts	PCPC, PCEDA	Ongoing	Low Med High
Consider developing an urban/town fringe overlay district with development and design standards to ensure compatibility	PCPC, IM	Mid-Term	Low Med High
Select a preferred alignment for the American Discovery Trail and incorporate its design and construction into all new development plans	PCPC, PCPR, NIRPC	Mid-Term	Low Med High
Per the Greenways and Blueways Plan, provide access points to the Kankakee River	PCPC, PCPR	Mid-Term	Low Med High
Interested landowners should consider agricultural land preservation techniques such as those included in ***Appendix C: Agricultural Preservation*** (p. 145)	IR, PCPC	Ongoing	Low Med High
Pursue the continuation of the American Discovery Trail along the abandoned rail corridor. Work with property owners to secure easements. Provide connections back to county roads where access is limited or prohibited	PCPC, PCPR, NIRPC, PCHD	Mid-Term	Low Med High
Promote agritourism with coordinated sign program and literature to celebrate the agricultural heritage in the southern part of Porter County	PCPC, PCCVB	Short-Term	Low Med High

IMPLEMENTATION TOOLBOX

RECOMMENDATIONS	IMPLEMENTATION AGENCY	TIME FRAME	PRIORITY
Develop signage that can be used for agritourism, historic and cultural interpretive opportunities (e.g. Ft. Tassanong) blue and greenway access points, etc.	PCPC, PCCVB, PCHS	Short-Term	Low Med High
US 6			
Upgrade SR 6 from SR 149 to SR 49 to a "Super Two-Lane" road. Focus on visibility, efficiency, and safety for vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists.	PCPC, INDOT	Mid-Term	Low Med High
Apply and enforce (along the entire length of US 6) the UDO's Arterial Roadway Overlay District development and design standards which address site layout, orientation to the street, on and off-site access, landscaping and buffers, architectural design, and signage	PCPC	Mid-Term	Low Med High
Focus on visibility, efficiency, and safety for vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists at the intersection of US 6 & CR 200W	PCPC, INDOT	Short-Term	Low Med High
Focus new growth at nodes near existing development, where utilities have been provided such as near South Haven at SR 149, CR 200W and SR 49 or within incorporated areas.	PCPC, PCEDA	Ongoing	Low Med High
Coordinate the provision of sewer and water utilities by the local providers	PCPC, PCU	Short-Term	Low Med High
Manage access for new development. Develop agreements with existing property owners to tie into new shared access when it is developed	PCPC, INDOT	Ongoing	Low Med High
Acquire additional right-of-way for US 6 west of SR 49 that permits safe travel for vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists. Consider an off-road multi-use trail which connects major points	PCPC, INDOT, NIRPC	Mid-Term	Low Med High
Create standards which support the protection of stream corridors (Squirrel, Salt and Coffee Creeks), wetlands, and woodlands that remain	PCPC, SDCF, DNR	Mid-Term	Low Med High
Create a Neighborhood Retail / Village District with accompanying design and development standards for development that may occur at the Meridian Road intersection to maintain the rural/natural character while permitting limited economic development to serve the residential population	PCPC, PCRC	Mid-Term	Low Med High
Work with the Portage Planning Department regarding annexation intentions and to create a plan for the transition from city to county development	PCPC, IM	Short-Term	Low Med High

RECOMMENDATIONS	IMPLEMENTATION AGENCY	TIME FRAME	PRIORITY
Provide roadside interpretive signage identifying US 6 as the **Grand Army of the Republic** highway (see ***Part 1: Introduction***, "US 6", p.14 for history). Create an interpretive exhibit which describes the history of the highway. It could be incorporated into a new development parcel.	PCPC, PCCVB, PCHS	Short-Term	Low Med High
Create gateways into Porter County on US 6 at the eastern border with Portage and with LaPorte County	PCPC, PCCVB, PCEDA	Mid-Term	Low Med High
Create opportunities and incentives for infill and redevelopment	PCPC, PCRC	Short-Term	Low Med High
SR 130			
Establish guidelines for potential growth that may occur at the intersection SR 149 & SR 130	PCPC	Mid-Term	Low Med High
Develop an Area Plan for Wheeler to support compact growth and development goals	PCPC, PCRC	Ongoing	Low Med High
Coordinate with Valparaiso Planning Department regarding their annexation intentions and future development proposals on the urban fringe	PCPC, IM	Short-Term	Low Med High
Explore infill and redevelopment opportunities in the vicinity of Wheeler	PCPC, PCRC	Mid-Term	Low Med High
Continue to investigate opportunities for a southern extension of SR 149	PCPC, INDOT	Ongoing	Low Med High
Protect the artesian wells located between Jones Road and CR 475W, wetlands along SR 130, and the salt creek watershed	PCPC, SDCF, DNR	Ongoing	Low Med High
Enhance the town center character for Wheeler	PCPC, PCRC	Mid-Term	Low Med High
Provide wayfinding signage for destinations such as the Town of Wheeler and the Conservation Club	PCPC, PCCVB	Short-Term	Low Med High
Explore alternative land uses for the former Waste Management Landfill site such as a park or other public use	PCPC, PCRC, PCPR	Mid-Term	Low Med High
Identify nodes for development where utilities are readily available along SR 130, and analyze safety and future / existing traffic operations at SR 149 & SR 130	PCPC, PCEDA, INDOT	Mid-Term	Low Med High
Upgrade rail crossings and approaches for enhanced safety as development occurs	PCPC, INDOT	Mid-Term	Low Med High

IMPLEMENTATION TOOLBOX

RECOMMENDATIONS	IMPLEMENTATION AGENCY	TIME FRAME	PRIORITY
Mitigate the impact of or to the Norfolk Southern or Canadian National Railroads	PCPC, INDOT	Mid-Term	Low Med High
Create a signage program to identify creeks, other tributaries, wetlands, and other waterways to increase public awareness	PCPC, PCCVB, SDCF	Short-Term	Low Med High
Apply major / minor gateway treatment at County line	PCPC, PCCVB, PCEDA	Mid-Term	Low Med High
Investigate the creation of an off-road multi-use path from Valparaiso to Hobart within the right-of-way of SR 130. (recommended in the NIRPC Ped & Pedal Plan 2005)	PCPC, NIRPC, INDOT, PCPR, IM (Valparaiso)	Mid-Term	Low Med High
Buffer development with close proximity to Salt Creek and provide access / launch points per the Greenways and Blueways Plan	PCPC, PCPR, NIRPC	Mid-Term	Low Med High
Explore alternative land uses for the old Langrebe site	PCPC, PCRC	Mid-Term	Low Med High
US 30			
Continue to apply the goals of the **Land Use & Thoroughfare Plan** and to enforce the UDO Arterial Roadway Overlay District	PCPC	Ongoing	Low Med High
Confine development to already existing nodes	PCPC, PCEDA	Ongoing	Low Med High
Use design guidelines to ensure compact, well-designed, sustainable development where anticipated along the US 30 corridor	PCPC	Mid-Term	Low Med High
Appropriately zone land for future airport growth	PCPC, ADZC	Short-Term	Low Med High
Create a strategy for land use proposed along US 30, south of Valparaiso	PCPC	Mid-Term	Low Med High
Coordinate future land use plans with the City of Valparaiso's plans for annexation. Coordinate land use policies and design guidelines	PCPC, IM	Ongoing	Low Med High
Apply appropriate access management standards for new development to maintain levels of service	PCPC, INDOT	Mid-Term	Low Med High
Coordinate with the Airport Zone Development Committee and ensure compatibility of the recommendations within thin both the Airport Zone Study and this Corridor Plan	PCPC, ADZC	Short-Term	Low Med High
Evaluate the potential for a new northern entrance to the airport area	PCPC, ADZC	Short-Term	Low Med High

RECOMMENDATIONS	IMPLEMENTATION AGENCY	TIME FRAME	PRIORITY
Protect and enhance wetlands and other low-lying natural areas along US 30	PCPC, SDCF, DNR	Ongoing	Low Med High
Support efforts for "shovel-ready" sites for new industrial development near airport	PCPC, PCEDA, ADZC	Ongoing	Low Med High
Provide major gateway treatments at the east and west county boundaries of US 30.	PCPC, PCCVB, INDOT, PCEDA	Mid-Term	Low Med High
Encourage business campus master planning and design standards for the development of airport parcels	PCPC, ADZC	Ongoing	Low Med High
Consider the implementation of a reclamation ordinance for depleted sand mines or other mineral extraction.	PCPC, PCRC	Short-Term	Low Med High
Encourage developers of large parcels surrounding the airport to be models for sustainable green development	PCPC, ADZC	Ongoing	Low Med High
Adopt strategies in the **Land Use & Thoroughfare Plan** and through ordinances to minimize congestion and limit multiple, direct vehicular access to and from US 30	PCPC, INDOT	Mid-Term	Low Med High
For proposed unsignalized access to major corridors, require offset "T" intersections for developments occurring on opposite sides of a major corridor to increase the safety of drivers crossing the major corridor.	PCPC, INDOT	Short-Term	Low Med High
Provide safe non-motorised access on and across US 30 in designated areas	PCPC, NIRPC, INDOT	Mid-Term	Low Med High
Consider a strategy for improvements to Joliet Road which is frequently used as a more direct connection from US 30 to the north side of Valparaiso.	PCPC	Short-Term	Low Med High
Analyze safety and existing/ future traffic operations at the intersection of US 30 and Hayes Leonard Road to recommend improvements	PCPC, INDOT	Mid-Term	Low Med High
Conserve agricultural lands east of Valparaiso	PCPC, IR	Ongoing	Low Med High
Use roadside signage to interpret the designation of Joliet Road as the Lincoln Memorial Highway	PCPC, PCCVB	Short-Term	Low Med High
SR 2			
Consider requiring a Traffic Impact Analysis for areas where a significant amount of housing units, employment, educational, or commercial trips are created	PCPC	Short-Term	Low Med High

IMPLEMENTATION TOOLBOX

RECOMMENDATIONS	IMPLEMENTATION AGENCY	TIME FRAME	PRIORITY
Enforce the Secondary Arterial Roadway Overlay District requirements	PCPC	Short-Term	Low Med High
Encourage Compact development adjacent to Hebron where utilities and services are available	PCPC, PCEDA, IM	Ongoing	Low Med High
Coordinate with the town of Hebron's annexation goals	PCPC, IM	Ongoing	Low Med High
Work with the town of Hebron to update its land use policies and ordinances to reflect county-wide goals	PCPC, IM	Mid-Term	Low Med High
Limit potential growth to those areas adjacent to existing development and where utilities are readily available such as adjacent to Hebron	PCPC, PCEDA	Ongoing	Low Med High
Work with INDOT to employ access management standards for new development through the development approval process	PCPC, INDOT	Mid-Term	Low Med High
Use traffic calming techniques on SR 2 within the corporate limits of Hebron	PCPC, INDOT, IM	Mid-Term	Low Med High
Limit development in flood prone areas and floodplains adjacent to the corridor	PCPC, DNR	Ongoing	Low Med High
Require generous buffers and development setbacks to protect wetlands, wildlife habitat, etc.	PCPC, DNR	Mid-Term	Low Med High
Provide design standards for minor subdivisions and small commercial concerns, carved from agricultural land, which limits access by individual lots directly onto SR 2	PCPC, INDOT	Mid-Term	Low Med High
Maintain scenic views through careful management of development	PCPC	Ongoing	Low Med High
If desired by agricultural property owners, implement land preservation techniques contained in ***Appendix C: Agricultural Preservation*** (p. 145)	PCPC, IR	Ongoing	Low Med High
Provide incentives such as density bonuses to encourage conservation subdivision layout to create networks of open space and preserve agricultural land	PCPC	Mid-Term	Low Med High
Create gateways into the county that express its unique identity on SR 2 and US 231	PCPC, PCCVB, INDOT, PCEDA	Mid-Term	Low Med High
Explore opportunities for county parks or river access in the area along the Kankakee River	PCPC, PCPR	Mid-Term	Low Med High
Anticipate development and create a strategy for obtaining desired growth for the intersections at SR 2 & 350S, SR 2 & CR 100S, SR 2 & CR 400E and SR 2 & 300N.	PCPC, INDOT	Mid-Term	Low Med High

RECOMMENDATIONS	IMPLEMENTATION AGENCY	TIME FRAME	PRIORITY
Preserve the rural atmosphere of applicable segments of SR 2 by promoting compact growth	PCPC, PCEDA,	Ongoing	Low Med High
Investigate opportunities for wayfinding signage and state historic identification markers throughout the county and along the Kankakee River	PCPC, PCCVB, PCHS	Short-Term	Low Med High
Identify and interpret historically significant sites including but not limited to the Historic Road-Old South Trail, Historic Indian / Buffalo Trail, etc.). Explore opportunities to create roadside interpretive exhibits	PCPC, PCHS, PCCVB	Short-Term	Low Med High
SR 8			
Preserve long range expansive viewsheds by limiting strip development adjacent to SR 8	PCPC, PCEDA	Ongoing	Low Med High
Discourage high density residential major subdivisions with no proximity to retail, service, or employment centers	PCPC, PCEDA	Ongoing	Low Med High
Maintain the rural, small town atmosphere of Kouts and Hebron by promoting compact development adjacent to incorporated areas	PCPC, PCEDA, IM	Ongoing	Low Med High
The Planning and Development departments of Kouts, Hebron and Porter County should meet regularly to review and approve development proposals	PCPC, IM	Ongoing	Low Med High
Develop policies to ensure compatibility between existing development and large livestock production development	PCPC	Mid-Term	Low Med High
Investigate opportunities for trail connections between the proposed American Discovery Trail and the Kankakee River.	PCPC, NIRPC, PCPR	Ongoing	Low Med High
Work with trail advocacy groups to develop abandoned railroad line parallel to SR 8 as part of the American Discover Trail	PCPC, NIRPC, PCPR, IM	Ongoing	Low Med High
Create minor gateway treatments which include wayfinding signage, public art, landscaping, etc., to enhance the image at entrances to the County	PCPC, PCCVB, INDOT, PCEDA	Mid-Term	Low Med High
Preserve and interpret sites with historic significance. Possibly incorporate into a County-wide tourism strategy	PCPC, PCCVB, PCHS	Short-Term	Low Med High

IMPLEMENTATION TOOLBOX

Part 5:
Appendix

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A: VISIONING WORKSHOP COMMENTS

Visioning Workshop Comments

SR 149 Corridor

- Need river corridor protections at crossings (near Chesterton)
- Good farm ground must be preserved (north of US 6)
- Need a County park along Salt Creek (1 mile long linear park)
- Beginning of City-created sprawl (near intersection with SR 130)
- Good views along the corridor were mentioned
- It was mentioned that Willow Creek Rd. is an alternative route to extend SR 149 south to US 30.

Meridian Road Corridor

- Deer crossings along this road are not conducive to increased traffic.
- No more rezoning, keep it Rural Residential
- This area was recently rezoned (north of US 6) and a new subdivision is getting put in, this road does not need more traffic and it is now a good road that people bike on
- The northwest corner of US 6 and Meridian Road is a hazard to roadway safety; buildings should be demolished and visibility opened up
- The intersection of US 6 and Meridian Street is difficult and would be the only change I would make to Meridian Road
- Keep Meridian Road rural
- Want No more traffic
- The location of the County Park was noted
- Natural water flow is not conducive to development, land/area already floods (southwest of US 6 and Meridian Road)
- CR 700 N and CR 50 W intersection is very busy already
- The location of the 49er Drive in Theater was noted
- CR 700 N intersection with Meridian Road needs some kind of stop light or stop sign, very dangerous
- Very Scenic, need TLC (North of CR 550 N)
- City sewer and water is available, zoning should be R1 (southwest of Meridian Road and US 6 intersection)
- Rezone to R-1, sewer and water available (southwest of Meridian Road and US 6 intersection)
- Some stated that they didn't agree with sewer/water comment availability comment

SR 49 Corridor

- No Wal-Mart
- Old SR 49 is now Calumet Avenue (change on base map)
- Keep farmland; preservation
- Planned future private recreation center expansion
- Boo hospital location
- Heavy drainage through here (northeast quadrant of SR 49 and US 6 intersection)
- Community health Hospital site (zoning approved)
- Porter Hospital in wrong place-not a good entrance or exit and down in a hole for drainage
- No fast foods, etc., new proposed hospital?
- Save all watersheds
- Old abandoned landfill (south of US 6)
- Will there be environmental impact statements done (NEPA)?
- It was stated that all development downstream of the moraine needs to have drainage studies done
- Dangerous intersection (CR 600 N & SR 49 – poorly designed)
- Disappearing wildlife due to development
- Wetlands migrating waterfowl (pileated woodpeckers)
- Wetlands interspersed here
- Old Growth forest-pileated woodpeckers
- Disappearing wildlife due to development
- Original Bartz Farmhouse and barn built 1895
- Disappearing wildlife due to development
- Potholes
- Save our land, save our water
- Agriculture, keep it
- Keep southern Porter County rural-no new illiana expressway
- Fort Tassinong Site

APPENDIX A: VISIONING WORKSHOP COMMENTS

- Agriculture, keep it, no new developments
- Should include a public access site, a boat launch site (Kankakee River)
- Kankakee River basin historical findings

US 6 Corridor

- Despite good planners, this commercial district is poorly planned and contributes to congestion (at the edge of Portage City Limits)
- Any future commercial development should stay in Portage
- This community is why the Plan Commission was formed (Southaven)
- Preserve rural areas
- Dangerous intersections; hard to get out on highway, numerous accidents
- Construction of high density subdivisions need to be disallowed
- Sewer and water is only available north of US 6 and people south of US 6 do not want the land over developed (near CR 75 W)
- This area floods (US 6 and CR 75 W)
- This area zoned RR, needs to stay as such because of drainage issues and the character of the area
- Rezone to R-1, sewer and water available (southeast of US 6 and CR 75 W)
- Natural water flow is not conducive to development (southeast of US and Meridian Road intersection
- Great vista (US 6 between Meridian Road and SR 49)
- Some agriculture (good ground) exists (east of Calumet Ave)
- Getting too much commercial at this bad intersection (Calumet and US 6)
- US 6 and Calumet Avenue-INDOT said that this is 1 of 100 most dangerous intersections in the state
- Very scenic from CR 400 E to Calumet Ave (old SR 49)
- Save all wetlands
- Old Sunman Road-very scenic wetlands
- US 6 is designated as the "Grand Army of the Republic Highway"
- Old Sunman Road Art Barn Sunflower Festival
- US 6 has major freight on it besides car traffic
- Old sprawl, needs containment and revision (near US 6 and CR 625 E)
- Independent Cat Society-no kill animal shelter

(near County line)

- CR 200 W & Highway 6 – dangerous intersection
- Keep railroad zoned
- Verify conflicts regarding city sewer and water availability
- Meridian and Highway 6 – building obstructing view, makes dangerous intersection
- High traffic on US 6 - should have access roads if businesses happen; not multiple stop lights
- CR 700 N between Meridian Road and SR149 not only should be preserved but cannot be widened due to natural waterways
  - comment: "I agree, we like in the country for a reason!"

SR 2 Corridor

- Historic Road-Old South Trail (the real one), near LaPorte County Line
- Dangerous Intersection (CR 400 E and SR 2)
- Porter County Animal Shelter, near Haevilin Road (looking at building new, larger shelter)
- Developers are basically interested in making a bunch of money and don't care about the quality of life in Porter County (near CR 100 W)
- Aberdeen, award-winning subdivision
- Aberdeen, used to be beautiful stable, now has many cars contributing to local congestion and pollution
- Keep us rural, no more sprawl, no new expressways (near CR 100 S)
- SR 2 and CR 100 S, Very dangerous intersection currently (5 points)
- Development creates runoff, keep our well water clean
- Numerous woods and wetlands that are crucial to quality of life; preserve them
- Wonderful wooded and farm parcels and deer
- Development has caused too much north-south traffic on 500W, traffic during Boone

APPENDIX A: VISIONING WORKSHOP COMMENTS

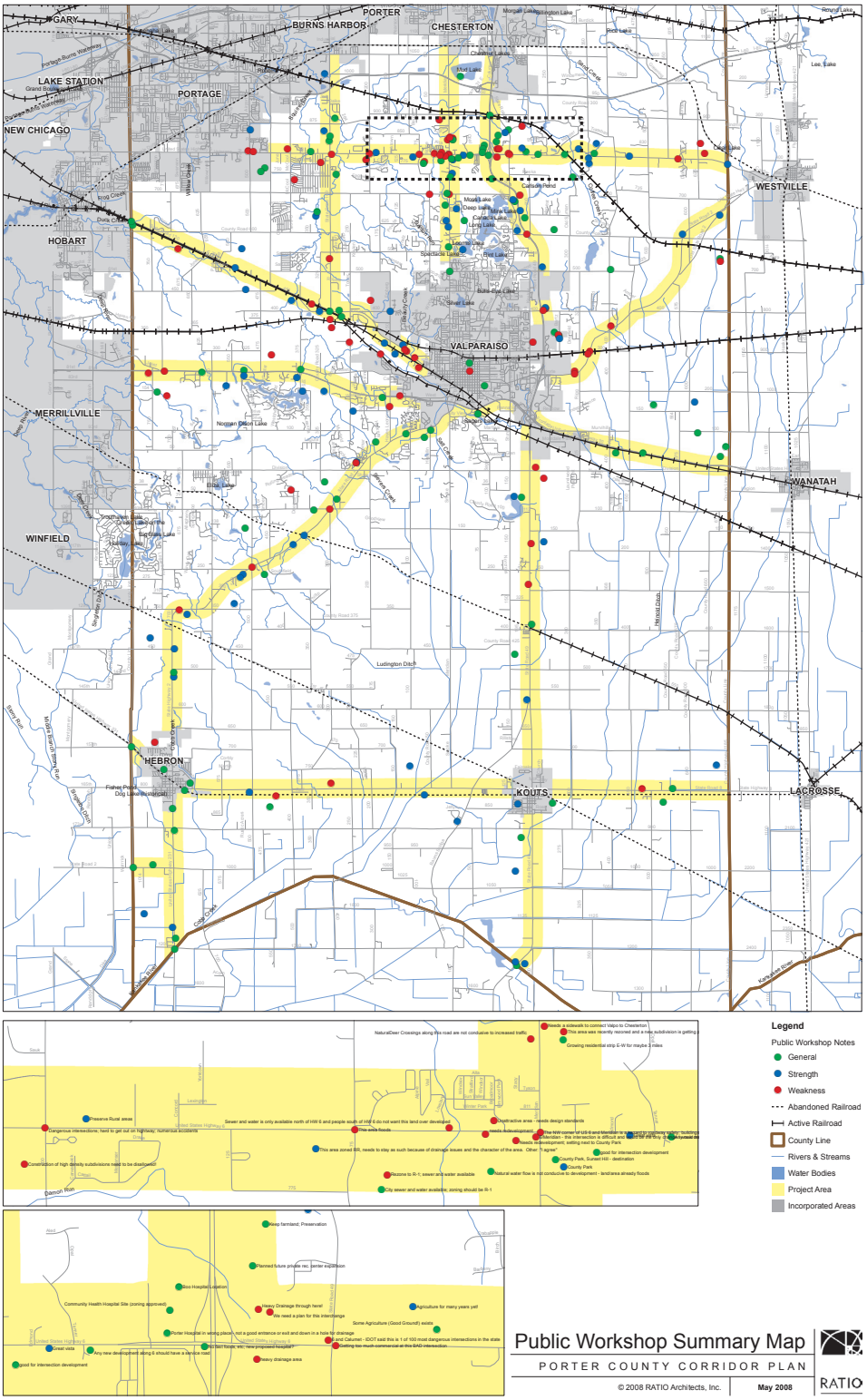
Grove HS dismissal times creates dangerous congestion
- Runoff into Luddington ditch affects area wetlands
- Boone Grove High School (is located off CR 500 W)
- Designated wetland (near CR 250 S)
- Keep agricultural land throughout corridor
- Great agriculture along entire corridor-preserve it
- Preservation of large farm parcels (near CR 450 S and CR 500 S)
- Has some historic resources along it
- Hebron is becoming a young couple community
- Gateway to County Near Hebron
- Stagecoach Inn at Hebron is a point of interest
- LaSalle made 4 trips up and down Kankakee River
- New Township High School at CR 900 S
- Preservation of large farm parcels (south of Hebron)
- Flooding and wetland preservation near Kankakee River (US 231 near bridge)
- Kankakee River historical facts (US 231 bridge)

SR 130 Corridor
- Need new laws to prevent city sprawl (near Lake County line)
- Farms and farm ground must be preserved (near CR 600 N and CR 500 W)
- Some special designation, artesian wells (between Jones Road and CR 475 W)
- This road is a nice entryway that is surrounded by farmland and is a pleasure to drive, don't ruin that
- Beginning of City-created sprawl (near CR 375 W)
- Natural wetlands, if you disturb it the area around will flood (Salt Creek bridge area)
- Scenic area-many well lands (near Salt Creek)
- Should not extend SR 149 (across SR 130 to US 30), instead develop Willow Creek Road corridor
- Conservation Club and golf Course
- Scenic farmhouses
- Need signage for streams, creeks and rivers to help increase awareness to public
- Valpo Compost facilities (recycle facility)
- Bad land usage (near Howe Street)
- Concerned about billboards

US 30 Corridor
- Commercial is needed with R-3 buffer, then R-1 (near CR 750 W)
- Zoned RR, sewer and water available (near CR 750 W)
- Scenic (near CR 600 W)
- Preserve and protect land and water resources, more pavement and development threaten these resources
- Scenic (near CR 375 W)
- Scenic (near CR 250 W)
- Traffic nightmare lights need to be times better (near Valparaiso City limit)
- Dangerous intersection, need left turn arrow (Hayes Leonard Road)
- Lincoln Memorial Highway
- Penn Perdue Farm, asset for agriculture
- Save farmland (east of Valparaiso)
- Preserve farmland growth from town outward (east of Valparaiso)
- Farmland is a strength (east of Valparaiso)
- Do not want US 30 to look like Merrillville

SR 8 Corridor
- Historic Stage Coach Inn (Hebron)
- Historic Purple House (Hebron)
- Preserve the farmland (near CR 500 W)
- Keep the farmland (near CR 150 W)
- Collier Lodge Archaeology Dig-Notre Dame (near Baums Bridge Road)
- Growth from town out as needed is OK (Kouts)
- Preserve the farmland (CR 500 E)

APPENDIX A: VISIONING WORKSHOP COMMENTS



APPENDIX B: PRIORITIZATION WORKSHOP COMMENTS

Development Preference Survey Results

Public Workshop Sept. 25, 2008

Natural Features Development Patterns

- Often occurs as low density development (residential and/or commercial)
- Located along intact wooded areas and/or stream and river corridors (riparian areas)

GREEN

Minimal Stream/Riparian Area Preservation/Buffering

Median Score: -5

Approve

-5 -4 -3 -2 -1 1 2 3 4 5

Disapprove

Comments:

- With increased growth, we'll need more stormwater retention. The best way to do this is with wetland preservation and buffer areas along natural waterways
- Very unnatural, may be flooding problem, too close to corridor, lack of entrance onto corridor
- Shouldn't mess with mother nature. Water will find its way
- Ripe for flooding
- Rapid run-off causing erosion and downstream flooding
- There will be water problems down stream
- Bleak-no wildlife habitat; flooding possible; no visual interests
- Poor water quality and problems with flooding, inherent with this choice

Moderate Stream/Riparian Area Preservation

Median Score: 1

Approve

-5 -4 -3 -2 -1 1 2 3 4 5

Disapprove

Comments:

- 2-5 acre lots or larger
- I like the stream in the normal so it doesn't wash and normal flow
- Is water/tree corridor protected
- Through roads to stream edge (no!)
- Smaller lots leave more open space for all to enjoy - i.e. with trails for walking and biking
- Too many access roads to secondary corridor
- Still potential for flooding
- A better sell to builders who profit by available acreage
- Too many roads leading to major road. Road going in subdivision need to be connected at back, no dead ends
- Floods will dissipate into floodplain - lots of habitat

Expanded Stream/Riparian Area Preservation

Median Score: 3

Approve

-5 -4 -3 -2 -1 1 2 3 4 5

Disapprove

Comments:

- Houses jammed too close, need 2-5 acre lots
- Wood too close for good fire protection
- Opposed to significant development in natural areas
- Road still too close to lake/pond. Is open space protected?
- Very protective, problem for fire service, proximity to woods of home for wildfire
- Easier access points when off of highways
- A lot of preservation to take care of
- Usually larger lots - as in gated communities
- Cost to preserve the areas; would the developer be interested
- Development none the less; lots of roofs and pavement to cause water problems
- Least offensive - a lot of sprawl
- Promotes cluster building which may be a tough sell to neighboring development
- Land use is more for housing; roads need to connect together
- Lots of habitat, floodplain, visual interest
- Need fire road
- Stream preservation especially important for water quality in lake Michigan drainage. Very high priority.

1

APPENDIX B: PRIORITIZATION WORKSHOP COMMENTS

Development Preference Survey Results

Public Workshop Sept. 25, 2008

Rural Development Patterns

BLUE

- Often occurs as low density, large lot development
- Setting includes unbuilt upon agricultural areas - possibly including or adjacent to wooded areas
- Could also be located at major rural intersections (i.e. SR 2 and US 231)

Minor Subdivision along County Road within Rural/Agricultural Area

Median Score: -1

Approve

-5 -4 -3 -2 * 1 2 3 4 5

Disapprove

Comments:

- This development was the result of low crop prices - farmers needed $
- While this development isn't considered "smart growth", I don't have a problem with interspersing homes with farms, as long as there are some controls aimed at preserving a rural character
- Looks like one-acre set-aside carved out of a farm
- Should never be allowed - code zoning problem with streetcuts, all well/septic
- Best for maximizing agricultural acreage
- Not attractive but allows farmers to sell off minimal amounts during bad times
- Urban sprawl at its best, promotes decreasing values as adjacent property develops
- This creates so many problems; do not let people sell off frontage!
- Interferes with traffic: dangerous for delivery (mail, school bus)
- Keep the largest amount of land in agriculture - many driveways onto a state highway would be a traffic problem

Major Subdivision within Rural/Agricultural Area

Median Score: -3

Approve

-5 -4 * -2 -1 1 2 3 4 5

Disapprove

Comments:

- Developers buy and sell quick - not long term ; current developers are not maintaining subdivision roads
- Restrict lot size
- There is a huge fiscal cost to having high-density developments out in rural areas. Major subdivisions should be located close to cities / towns
- All on septics?
- Awful!
- Not sustainable, depends on SVC (utilities) very limited access to site
- Lots of danger from water runoff
- Ugly!
- Cookie-cutter subdivision, we have way too many of these
- Roads could not handle this amount of traffic
- Too dense, but some open space; easier traffic course
- Takes a lot of land out of agriculture with no significant open space

Subdivision with Small Yards and Expansive Common Area with Trails within Rural/Agricultural Area

Median Score: 3

Approve

-5 -4 -3 -2 -1 1 2 * 4 5

Disapprove

Comments:

- Larger yards, less common area
- Displaces existing productive agricultural ground
- Same comment as above. The plan is nice and all, but locating subdivisions out in rural areas often promotes more sprawl, congestion, etc.
- Too many roads, too much development near water
- Thoughtful, more in keeping with original use, sensitive/smart (utilities)
- I feel this is the trend
- If have to be outside town, than this is preferable to #4 and #5
- Better, but will chew up very large chunks of farmland
- At least there is some green space
- Small cluster lots (especially for us seniors) with great walkable green spaces, a great idea
- You need to redevelop in the city limits first!
- Still too dense, but lots of open space; opportunity for community gardens or small produce farming; room for livestock
- OK if green space is allowed for crops or grazing
- Excellent choice for this region for open space preservation

2

APPENDIX B: PRIORITIZATION WORKSHOP COMMENTS

Development Preference Survey Results

Public Workshop Sept. 25, 2008

Rural Town Edge Development Patterns

- Often occurs as medium density mixed-use development
- Located adjacent to small incorporated towns (Hebron, Kouts) or small clusters of existing development (Wheeler, Malden)

YELLOW

Commercial and Residential Linear Expansion

Median Score: -4

Approve

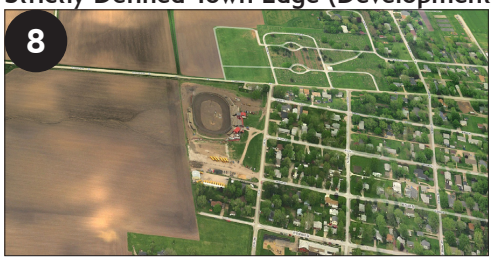
-5 -4 -3 -2 -1 1 2 3 4 5

Disapprove

Comments:

- Property owners exercising their right to use their land
- Interspersing low density homes along farm ground isn't necessarily an "evil" thing in my mind
- More one-acre set asides
- Need more thought and limits
- Creeping suburbia
- Definite corridor congestion problems
- Poorly planned prohibits or severely limits pedestrian friendly development
- Farmers can not afford to farm when this happens. Land becomes too expensive!
- Too dense - conflicts with agricultural and slow vehicles
- Hodgepodge look mixed commercial/residential uses is not preferred
- Very bad, leads to everyone driving everywhere, can't walk to business

Strictly Defined Town Edge (Development Occurs within Town Boundaries)



Median Score: 1.5

Approve

-5 -4 -3 -2 -1 1 2 3 4 5

Disapprove

Comments:

- Don't like strict defined
- Too restricted
- Better - soft buffer to abrupt end of rural - new development should follow, good zoning regulations to soften edge
- But what happens when farm owner wants to sell property?? This would be a decision to really limit growth. As in "this is as big as we want to get"
- Some streets just dead end; nice there are some green belt areas
- Maintains differing lifestyles without treading upon one another
- Valparaiso (my town) has none of this, development extends in every direction, this would be ideal for planning
- Keep the land you have and improve!
- School buffer helps control traffic crossings; do not meet on main road
- Nice look, preserve greatest amount of agriculture, can penalize landowner with $ reduction value of land - limits growth of community
- Like this but doesn't seem to accommodate new housing. Not realistic for this area

New Development, Compatible with Existing Grid Pattern

Median Score: 1.5

Approve

-5 -4 -3 -2 -1 1 2 3 4 5

Disapprove

Comments:

- Dislike grid patterns
- Only even mildly acceptable if part of county plan
- In general, I think the best approach - from a fiscal and planning approach - is to place high-density developments adjacent to existing cities/towns
- Grid pattern in new area not compatible with old - no trees. Existing town development more attractive
- Ugh!
- Access for fire service very poor, does take advantage of utilities, very poor access
- I prefer the grid or modified grid
- Good compromise between #7 and #8
- Water runoff problems, but there are good zones of natural setting to help with environmental concerns
- "Let's take town to the country!"
- Very little differentiation among developments, too monotonous, needs some more green space
- Redevelop existing developments
- Still too much encroachment - should reduce density - travelers see too many back yards
- OK - allows for development with planning, while maintaining rural character
- Good for connecting into existing utilities and pathways in city

3

APPENDIX B: PRIORITIZATION WORKSHOP COMMENTS

Development Preference Survey Results

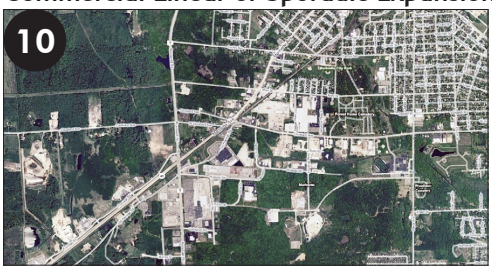
Public Workshop Sept. 25, 2008

City Edge Development Patterns

- Typically occurs as medium or higher-density mixed-use development (often commercial and industrial uses)
- Located along the edge of larger towns such as Chesterton, Portage, and Valparaiso

ORANGE

Commercial Linear or Sporadic Expansion



Median Score: -5

Approve

-5 -4 -3 -2 -1 1 2 3 4 5

Disapprove

Comments:

- Spaced out - not built on top of one another. Better semi truck access
- Business is going where needed
- Lack of controlled growth and planning access roads lacking
- Sprawl nightmare; destroy city center businesses
- Hope they have public transportation
- Uncontrolled development outside city zoning area, usually city after annexation has to improve infrastructure
- No way - get rich quick
- Terrible use of land with commercial uses that will probably fail - future redevelopment will now be more expensive
- This leads to too much driving and idling vehicles as they wait for congested traffic

Strictly Defined Urban Edge (Development Occurs within City Boundaries)

Median Score: 2

Approve

-5 -4 -3 -2 -1 1 2 3 4 5

Disapprove

Comments:

- Difficult to locate businesses v. residential
- Too restrictive for employment
- Planned and controlled but poorly laid out and accessible commercial area
- This would probably be harder to achieve than in #8. Still a really good idea if possible
- Looks like it might have more vertical development
- At least surrounded by greenspace
- Easier to annex and provide proper planning
- Keep existing business alive
- Less dense with more open space/development balance
- While desirable, can result in economic harm to landowner in areas prevented from development
- Need to have new water facilities rather than depend on old city system: they are breaking down due to too much pressure.

New Development, Compatible with Existing Grid Pattern

Median Score: 1.5

Approve

-5 -4 -3 -2 -1 1 2 3 4 5

Disapprove

Comments:

- Dislike grid pattern, takes out natural land; rolls; impossible for large truck delivery
- This type of development is initiated by private developers not necessarily in accordance with a master plan
- Looks like commercial/industrial uses are right up to residential
- Planned but much too dense
- Better idea - controlled growth
- Dense development but not vertical
- Easier to annex and provide proper planning, but with a grid housing nightmare
- This land will be over-run
- Too compact - too dense - and who said commercial has to be at town edge
- While desirable, can result in economic harm to landowner in areas prevented from development
- Need to have new water facilities rather than depend on old city system: they are breaking down due to too much pressure.

APPENDIX B: PRIORITIZATION WORKSHOP COMMENTS

Development Preference Survey Results

Public Workshop Sept. 25, 2008

Major Intersection Development Patterns

RED

- Typically occurs as medium or higher-density mixed-use commercial and industrial development intended to reduce residents' travel time for goods and services (shopping / employment destination)
- Located at major, more urban intersections such as at SR 49 and SR 6, or SR 130 and SR 149
- Intended to create a secondary focal point or "destination" along heavily traveled corridors

Outward Facing Development (Parking out front, buildings set far back from the road)

Median Score: -4

Approve

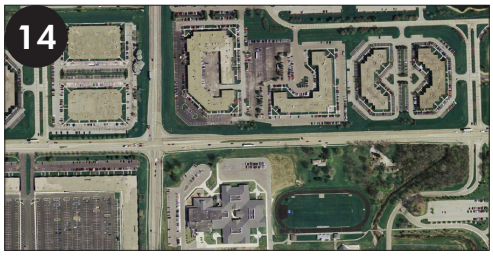
-5 -4 -3 -2 -1 1 2 3 4 5

Disapprove

Comments:

- Better access for delivery and fire safety
- Good sales access without confusion
- Waste of space too much pavement / roof
- "They paved paradise and put up a parking lot"
- Terrible! Roofs & pavement; don't try to walk or bike here
- For drivers only
- I hate this type. There's no green, the only advantage is that you can find a store quickly (next to Target, etc.)
- In 20 years another development will be built within 10 miles! It is a mess!
- Poor commercial development - too much wasted land for parking

Inward Facing Development (Buildings up front, parking behind, limited access along corridor)



Median Score: 2

Approve

-5 -4 -3 -2 -1 1 2 3 4 5

Disapprove

Comments:

- Are inward roads truck route approved; difficult large truck access; truck and bus turn around?
- More confusing for customer
- Where are the bus/train stations? Also, all commercial development should have bike/pedestrian lanes
- Limited access, good zoning, landscape controls
- This works well, in Florida limited access with allowable u-turns. Some buffering would help, not as much as #15
- Too much congestion possible at intersections
- Cars; no mass transportation
- A little more green, but will you ever find my store even with directions
- Keep access to a minimum
- Driving past you don't see acres of parking lots
- None of these has (it seems) provision for pedestrian/bicycle travel from place to place - Hard to tell if this is true due to small scale of photo - perhaps they are included
- Can't see how walking/biking access is possible for this one. Forces driving for every errand?

Inward Facing with Corridor Buffers (Hidden development with very limited access along corridors)

Median Score: 2.5

Approve

-5 -4 -3 -2 -1 1 2 3 4 5

Disapprove

Comments:

- Can you deliver with a 80' truck trailer; limited truck delivery - limited fire access
- Hard to find - too complex for seniors
- This is what Valparaiso did successfully along SR 49
- Corridor buffers are nice, but should have bike/pedestrian lanes and bus/train stops
- Reasonable access, controlled roads, fire service access limited, good soft landscape design, wise land use (?)
- It is very confusing to find certain commercial developments, it does look great
- This would be good for SR 49 north from Valpo to Chesterton. Would keep the feeling of being "out in the country" on the way to the driver.
- How would this handle rush hour?
- Still too sprawling; need to develop vertically; still too dependant upon autos
- Cars; no mass transportation
- I like the green, but I'd never find the store I'm looking for in this maze
- Would be hard to do in south porter county
- Nice open space
- Looks like more greenspace. If walking possible, I like it.

APPENDIX B: PRIORITIZATION WORKSHOP COMMENTS

Development Preference Survey Results

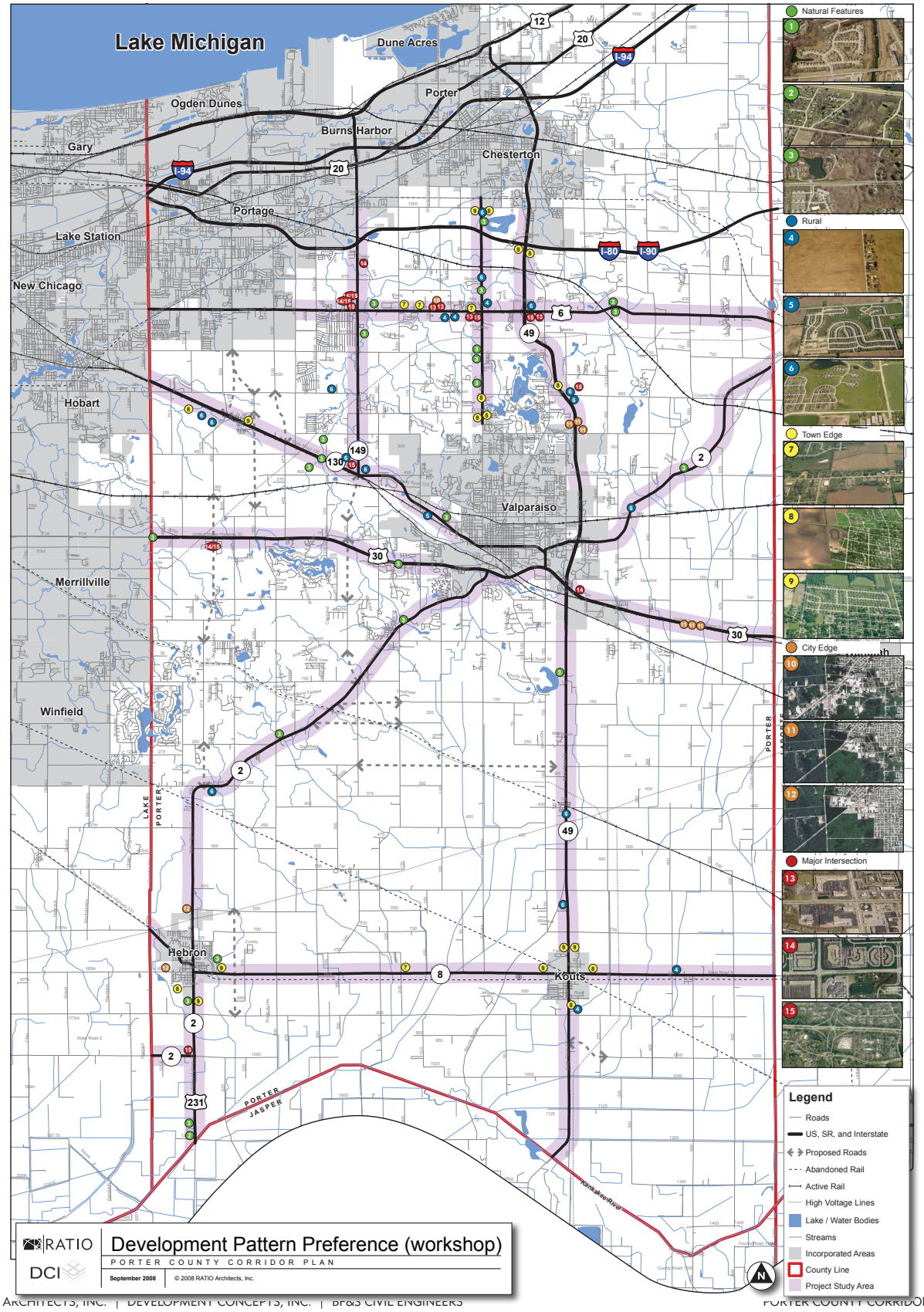
Public Workshop Sept. 25, 2008

Additional Comments:

- The only location in Porter County that we could possibly put dots on is the old Wheeler Dump. Every other location is Porter County is being used for something. I wouldn't wish any of these developments on any location in Porter County.

- Regarding the projected growth map: We should not let the corridors be clogged up with commercial. Growth should be adjacent to cities and towns. Better yet, redevelop failed areas inside cities & towns.

APPENDIX B: PRIORITIZATION WORKSHOP COMMENTS



APPENDIX C: AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION

The following are techniques that can be used to encourage the preservation of farmland. Some tools may require additional funding or management by the local government or a not-for-profit organization.

Transfer of Development Rights (TDR)

Description – TDRs are voluntary agreements between senders and receivers, usually as a payment to the sender (farmer) and density bonus for the receiver (developer). In other words, a farmer will relinquish the right to develop his farmland to the County in exchange for a cash payment from the developer, and in return for this payment the county will allow the developer to develop at a higher density than the target zoning district permits. The density bonus would be determined by the County and the development would still need to be reviewed and approved at the higher density.

Requirements – This program requires an administrator and detailed record keeping, but does not need funding to pay for the development rights.

The administrator(s) only facilitate the transfer. The county holds the easement to the purchased development rights.

Purchase of Development Rights (PDR)

Description – A program where the rights to develop agricultural property are purchased from farmers by either local government, local land trust organizations, or similar organizations. The purchaser would need to

1) create guidelines to judge which properties to purchase,
2) determine future termination guidelines,
3) assess the land's value,
4) create maintenance enforcement guidelines, and
5) procure funding for the purchase of development rights through taxes, donations, or other means.

Requirements – Both administration and funding are needed for PDRs.

Density Exchange Option (DEO)

Description – Similar to TDR. An agreement between two parties for the exchange of permitted density.

Example: If a landowner (farmer) has farmland in a district that allows the development of 1 unit per 5 acres, the landowner can exchange the development rights for the number of units developable to the developer for market price. The development rights transfer to the local government, and the developer is able to develop the number of units purchased on their target site in addition to the number of units that are already permitted. The development would still need to be reviewed and approved at the higher density.

Requirements – This program requires an administrator, but does not need funding to pay for the development rights. The administrator(s) only facilitate the transfer.

Right-to-farm (RTF) Ordinance

A RTF Ordinance is intended to relieve operating farmers from nuisance claims from new neighbors and developers, thereby insuring that farming operations are able to continue operation as long as the land/market permits. This ordinance can include:

1) grandfathering – establishing farming practices as pre-existing uses within zoning ordinances to aid in the relief of nuisance claims against them, should they arise (from new developments or homeowners),
2) requirements for realtors, developers, etc. to inform potential buyers of the neighboring farming operations and RTF Ordinance,
3) the establishment of a "grievance committee" to mediate disputes between neighboring uses, and
4) levying of fines or damages resulting from vandalism, loss of livestock to domestic animals, etc.

APPENDIX C: AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION

Development Donation

This technique requires developers to donate a specific percentage of their developable land to agricultural uses/open space and cluster development to encourage grouping of units and preservation of natural areas. In many cases this can prevent scattered and extremely large lot development.

Area Based Allocation Zoning: Sliding Scale

The amount of development allowed on a lot decreases as the land area increases. For example:

1-5 acres = 1 home, 5-15 = 2, 15-35 = 3, 35-65 = 4, 65-105 = 5, 105-145 = 6, 145-185 = 7, etc. Therefore a 125-acre area of land is allowed 6 homes on 6 acres (1 acre each) and in addition may be required to develop only on the land most unsuitable for agricultural practice. This conserves large tracts of agricultural land while allowing small-scale development.

Agricultural Districts

While there is not yet an official state program to support this in Indiana, it should be a consideration for future preservation options. Agricultural districts are areas in which farming is the preferred land use. They are legally recognized geographic areas voluntarily formed by one or more landowners and approved by one or more government agencies, designed to keep land in agriculture for a certain number of years. Landowners can receive a variety of benefits such as exemption from sewer and water assessments, greater protection from eminent domain, possible use-value taxation, and eligibility to sell developmental rights.

Agricultural Zoning District

A zoning ordinance can be formed to include an agricultural zoning district that would cover all existing agricultural land on an official zoning map. Creating this agricultural district for all farmland results in the necessity of going through the process for acquiring approval for the rezoning of a desired parcel for any non-agricultural development. This rezoning process can include application procedures, the production of site plans or intentions, a public hearing, and formal rezoning review based on decision criteria, such as the Land Use & Thoroughfare Plan and anticipated growth. Zoning can be a very advantageous method of preserving farmland, while letting managed growth and development occur.

Agricultural Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Districts

A TIF district is a financing mechanism that can be used to generate economic development in a specific area. A TIF district is a district in which the amount of taxes collected by local taxing districts (such as schools, townships, county, etc.) are frozen for a specific area where a new development project is occurring. The additional tax revenue generated due o the development, and any other development within the district that is facilitated by this, would then go back into the TIF district to pay off debts and bonds, or to pay for additional necessary infrastructure, all within the TIF district's predetermined duration limit. This technique can be beneficial for agricultural preservation by applying it to areas that are incurring agricultural business development. Some examples of development projects that could be considered for an agricultural TIF district would include large biofuel operations, grain processing and storage, or other businesses that are beneficial to the agricultural community. Through the use of agricultural TIF districts and reinvesting excess tax revenue in these areas, the County can increase the viability of continued farming, support the industry of agriculture, and support farmland preservation.

APPENDIX D: TRAFFIC VOLUME PROJECTIONS

Automobile Traffic

Images on this page include projected traffic volumes of automobile traffic. Each time period below is projected for the years 2010, 2020, and 2030.

AM Peak Traffic Projections:

Images to the right show total projected traffic volumes during the three-hour period of 6am-9am. Moving outward from 2010, increases in traffic volumes are projected along:

- SR 49
- US 30
- SR 2 east of Valparaiso

PM Peak Traffic Projections:

Images to the right show total projected traffic volumes during the three-hour period of 3pm-6pm. Moving outward from 2010, increases in traffic volumes are projected along:

- SR 49
- US 30
- SR 130
- SR 2 east of Valparaiso

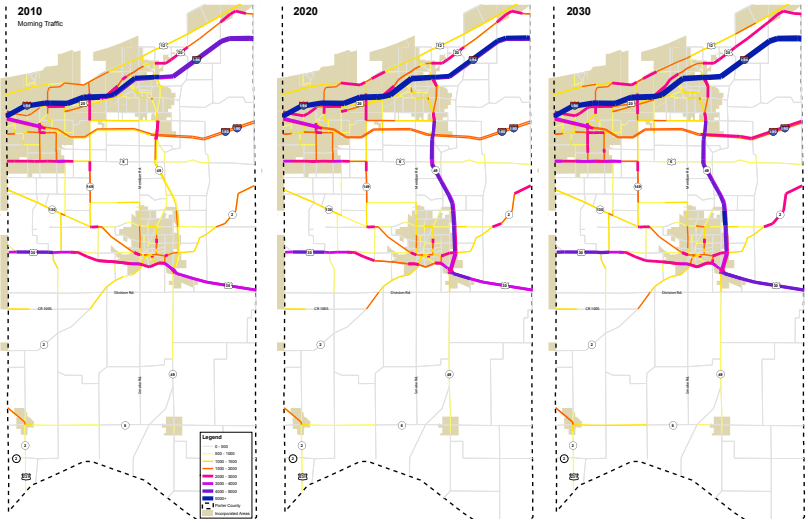
To a lesser extent, increases in traffic volumes are projected along:

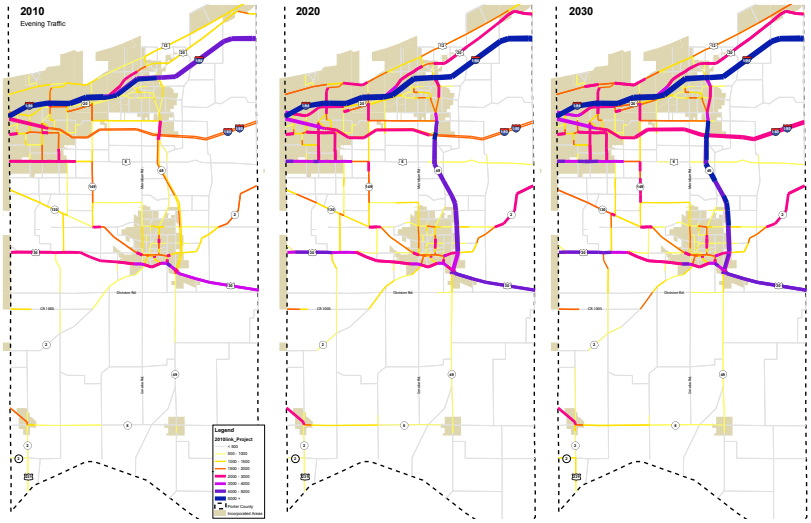
- CR 450W (north of SR 130)
- CR 475W (between SR 130 and US 30)
- CR 500W (south of US 30)
- CR 100S
- St. Clair Rd (CR 550N)

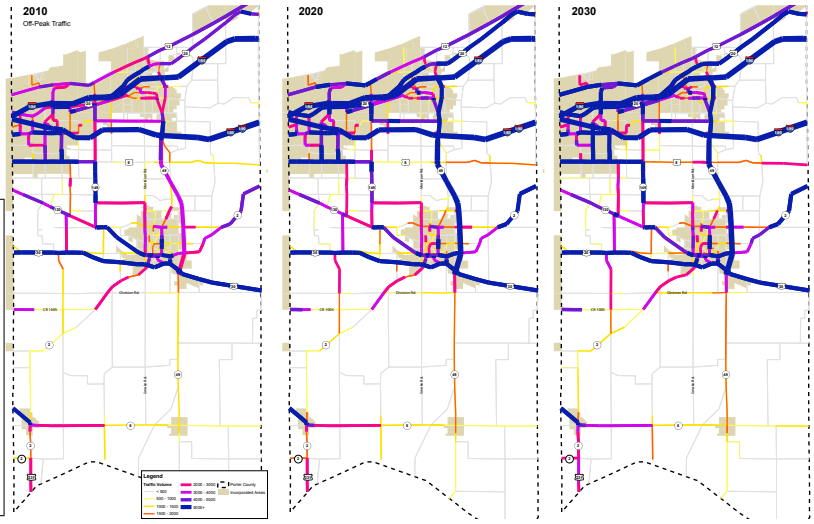
Off-Peak Traffic Projections:

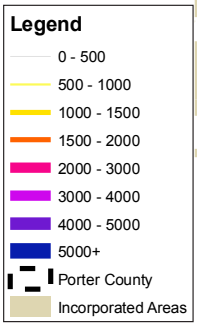
Images to the right show total projected traffic volumes during all non-peak hours. Moving outward from 2010, increases in traffic volumes are projected along:

- SR 49
- US 6
- CR 500W (south of US 30)
- SR 2 east of Valparaiso
- CR 450W (north of SR 130)
- CR 475W (between SR 130 and US 30)









APPENDIX D: TRAFFIC VOLUME PROJECTIONS

Heavy Truck Traffic

Images on this page include total projected traffic volumes of heavy truck traffic, which includes semi trucks used for shipping purposes, and does not include commercial trucks such as UPS, small U-Haul, or similar, typically with two axels. Each time period below is projected for the years 2010, 2020, and 2030.

AM & PM Peak and Off-Peak Traffic Projections:

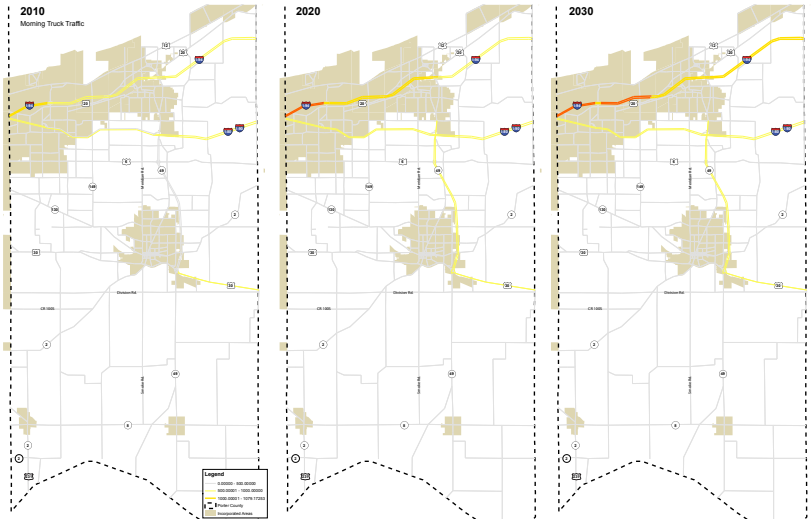
Images to the right show projected traffic volumes during the three-hour period of 6am-9am and the the three-hour period 3pm-6pm. It appears that heavy trucks utilize project corridors more during PM peak traffic hours. Roads with the highest projected volumes include:

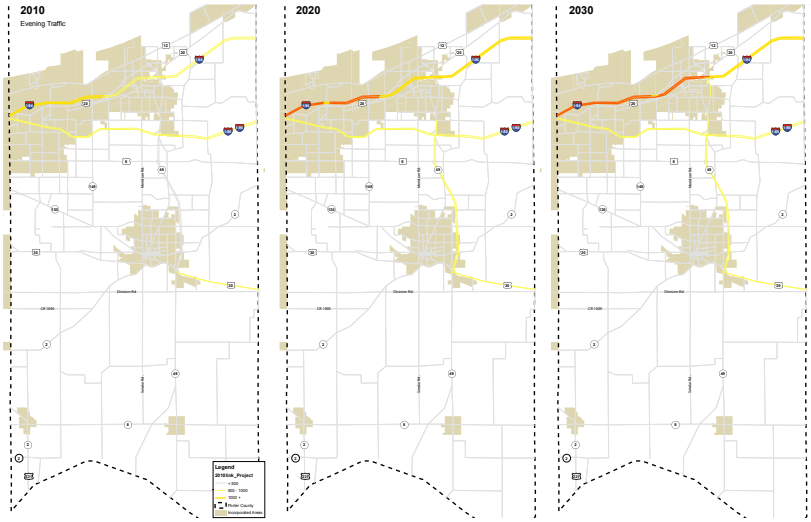
- SR 49 from I-80/I-90 to US 30
- US 30 east of Valparaiso

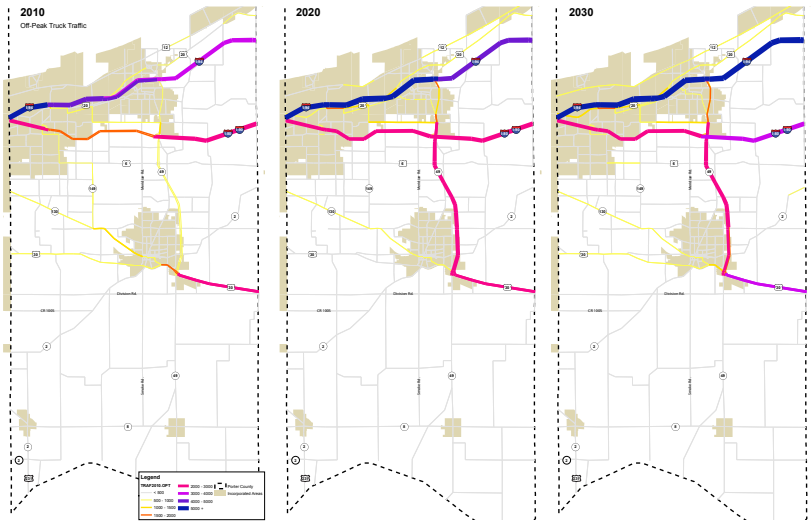
During Off-Peak traffic hours, projected large truck traffic volume is projected to be much higher than during peak hours. In addition to roads listed above, during Off-Peak hours large trucks are also projected to use, to a lesser extent:

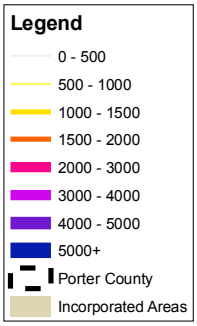
- SR 130
- US 30 west of Valparaiso

US 6 does not appear to be considered a significant large truck travelway, though there are some large trucking businesses located along that road that may affect roadway safety issues due to direct, non-signalized access to US 6.









DEVELOPMENT & MARKET ASSESSMENT

Unincorporated Porter County, Indiana

Presented as a Component of the Porter County Corridor Plan

FEBRUARY, 2009

Prepared by:

DCI
developmentconceptsinc

1236 E. 16th Street
Indianapolis, IN 46202

Table of Contents

Summary - SWOT

Porter County

STRENGTHS

- Consistent population growth
- Net employment increases
- Growth vs. neighboring counties
- Growing employment diversification
- Strong income levels / wage growth

WEAKNESSES

- Historic reliance upon small number of industries
- Large employment losses in high paying industries, such as manufacturing
- Srong ties to regional economic engine located out-of-state
- Tourism not well-integrated into county
- Growth occuring fastest in unincorproated areas

OPPORTUNITIES

- Continued economic diversification to overcome manufacturing in decline.
- Sustained population and economic growth
- High demand for retail goods and services
- Strategizing for ideal development patterns
- Tourism development
- Establishment of high levels of quality of life within all tiers (rural, suburban, urban)
- Cluster development

THREATS

- Growing divide between resident segments (urban vs. rural, commuter vs. local)
- Increasing land consumption due to residential demand.
- Decline of Chicago CSA regional economy
- Declining agricultural assets
- Loss of rural character
- Development infringement on environmentally sensitive areas
- Loss of tax base / increase in services with peripheral development in unincorporated county areas
- Burden on local school systems
- Aesthetically unpleasing development
- Strip-center / corridor commercial development

1 | Residential Development Trends

1.1 OVERVIEW

Porter County has experienced steady population growth for at least the last 20 years. The county's compounded annual growth rate (CAGR) since 1990 is 1.15%. This is six times the total CAGR for neighboring Lake and La Porte counties, and nearly double that of the state of Indiana's annual growth over the same period. Between 1990 and 2006, the three northwestern counties of Indiana (Lake, Porter and La Porte) added a net population of 51,700. 60% of this was in Porter County.

Porter County is not only the fastest growing county in northern Indiana, but it is also one of the fastest growing in the state. Porter County ranks 7th in the State of Indiana for population growth since 2000 and is one of only two northern Indiana counties to be in the top 10 (Elkhart County being the other). The top five counties are all suburban Indianapolis counties.

The county is part of an outer "belt" around Chicago that is experiencing significant growth. As the Chicago Metropolitan area grows, most of the new population is locating in suburban and exurban counties 30-45 minutes from The Loop. North and northwestern Porter County is most heavily impacted by this trend, as new migration from Chicago and Lake County has moved eastwards into the county. While most of the total population has occured north of Route 2, the southern rural areas of Porter County are also experiecing notable population growth, at rates much higher than more urbanized areas of the county.

If current population growth trends remain the same (which they have since 1990), the county could reach a population of nearly 200,000 people by 2027. This translates into potential demand for as many as 10,000 new housing units.

1.2 EXISTING CONDITIONS

1.2.1 General County Growth Trends

Porter County had a net population increase of between 13,000 and 14,000 people between 2001 and 2007. This represents a 9% growth rate and a compounded annual growth rate of 1.15%. In comparison, neighboring Lake and La Porte Counties grew by a net total of 6,500 people combined, at a growth rate of only 0.16%.

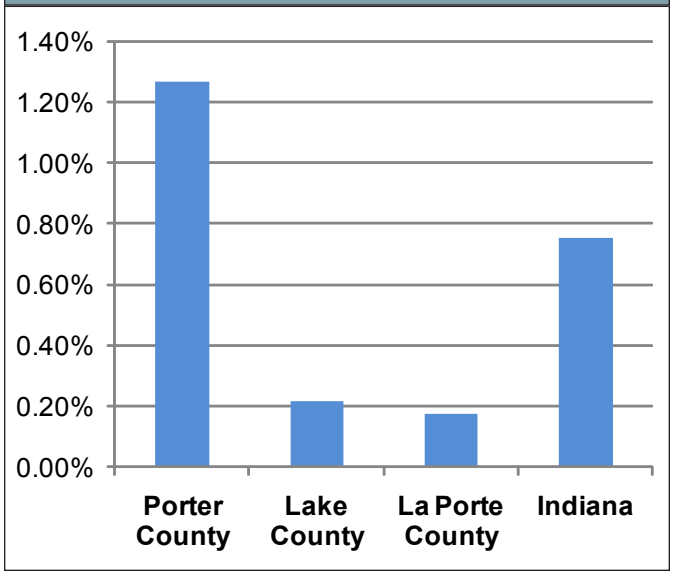
65% of Porter County's growth is based on net domestic and international migration, meaning that most of the population growth is due to people moving into the county vs. natural increases. Based on Census 2000 data, the bulk of this migration (34%) came from Lake County. 45% came from Northern Indiana, while 18% came from Northeastern Illinois.

1.2.2 Unincorporated County Growth Trends

In 2007, Census estimates put the population of unincorporated areas of Porter County at approximately 67,000 people, or 42% of total county population. Since 2000, Unincorporated Areas of Porter County have added a net population of approximately 6,100 people.

Unincorporated areas of Porter County are estimated to have grown slightly faster than Incorporated Areas; 10% vs. 8%. Annually, unincorporated areas are growing significantly faster, than incorporated areas, with CAGR of 1.33% vs. 0.72% since

Figure 1-1: Population Growth by Compounded Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) 1990 - 2007



source: U.S. Census and DCI Analysis

2000. Therefore, while the cities and towns in Porter County added more population in terms of raw numbers, unincorporated areas are nevertheless growing at a much faster rate.

1.2.3 Population Growth by Township

The growth of rural areas can be seen through the estimated growth rates of Porter County townships. Largely rural Pleasant, Morgan and Washington townships are estimated to have grown between 19-23% each since 2000. Furthermore, much of this growth is not anticipated to have taken place in incorporated areas or unincorporated towns. In Pleasant township, for example, 87% of population growth is estimated to have taken place outside of the town of Kouts.

Impacts: Population Growth of this rate is liable to have significant impact in several different ways; 1) Rural areas are beyond urban service areas and accessed by road systems meant to serve smaller populations; and 2) population moving away from urbanized areas, who are themselves experiencing significant growth. Liberty and Washington townships are two particular areas whose growth is likely heavily influenced by growth in Center, Westchester and Portage townships.

The heavy population growth rate in rural areas - particularly in the four southern townships - is of note. This perhaps signifies a growing desire to live at a distance from the growing urbanized areas of the county. Existing data does not allow this study to determine whether population growth in these areas is due to internal county movement or in-migration.

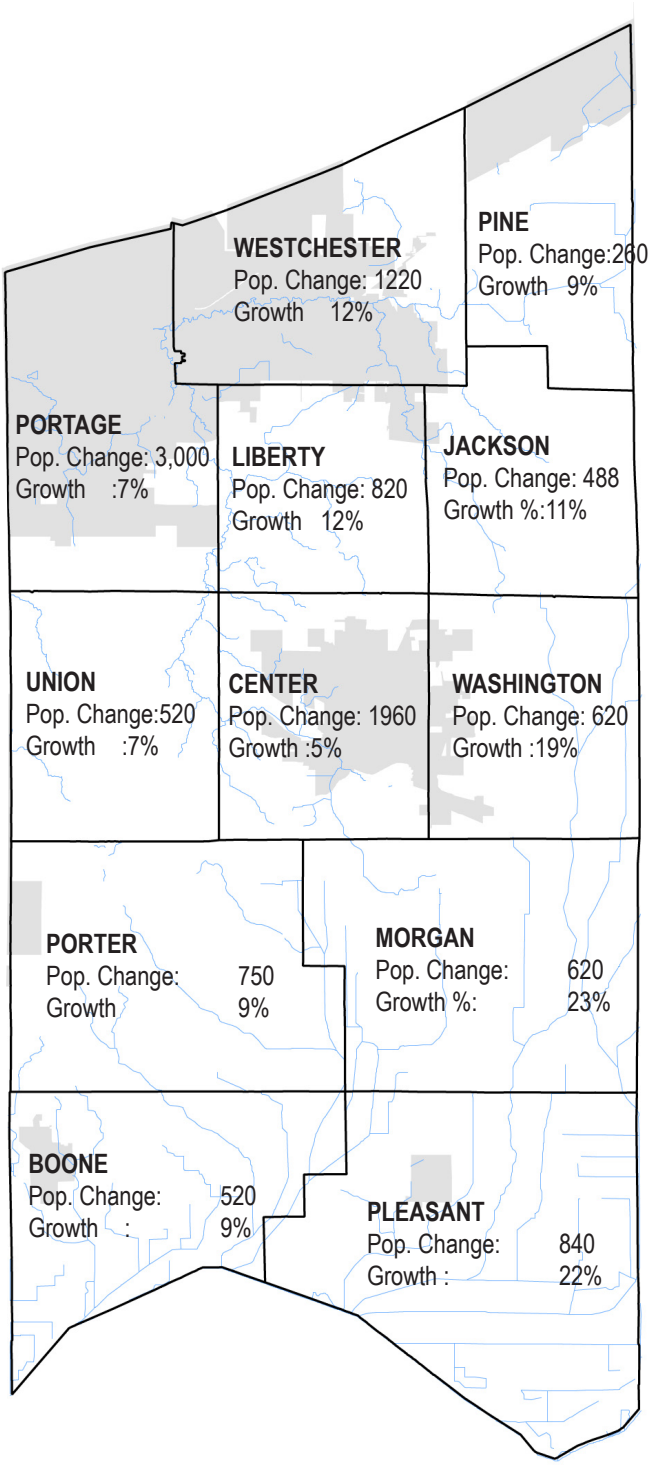
1.2.4 Regional Growth Trends

In terms of economy and residential patterns, there are essentially two Porter Counties. One is the rural part of the county, mostly in the southerna half, which in many ways is more more connected to its rural Jasper and La Porte county neighbors. The other is the northern part of the county, which has seen its existing cities merge with significant residential growth, and which now function as suburban areas within the greater Chicago MSA.

Between 2000 and 2007, Chicago grew at a respectable rate of 4.5% (higher than Los Angeles, San Francisco, New York City, Detroit and Philadelphia MSAs). What the figure below shows, is that the growth patterns arond the Chicago MSA are not equal. Generally, people are abandoning older urban areas, and even first ring suburban areas, for areas that are located between 35-45 miles from The Loop. This includes the northwestern and western areas of Porter County. These areas are largly suburban or exurban locations. In examining Lake County, one can see that the areas of "avoidance" for population include the industrial suburbs of Hammond, East Chicago and Gary.

Porter County Population Growth

By Township 2001 - 2006



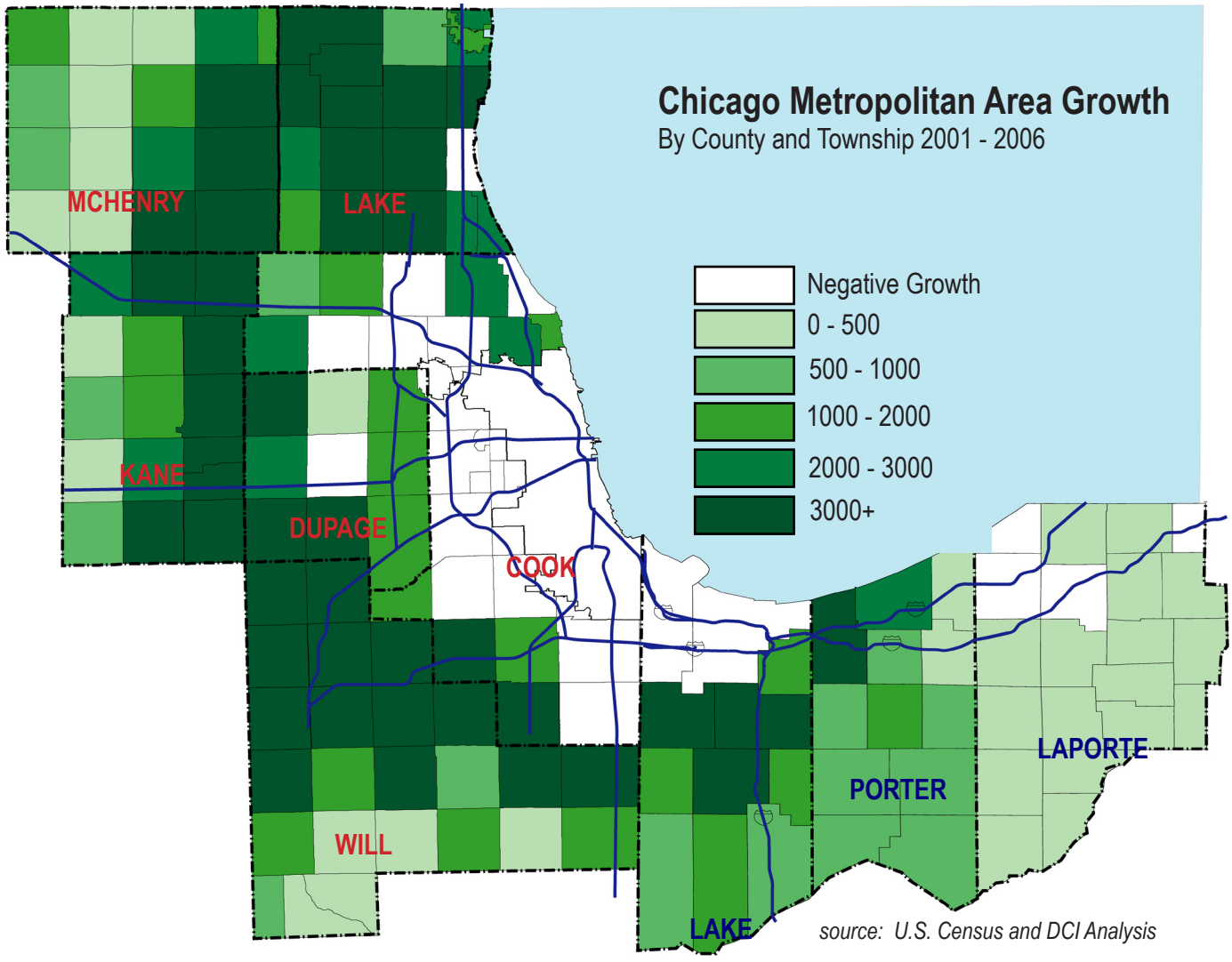
source: U.S. Census and DCI Analysis

Impacts: If the dispersion of Chicago MSA growth continues into second and third ring suburban areas, Porter County should expect sustained population growth. The rising cost of commuting via automobile may have some impact on this, but the South Shore line and future mass transit projects might mitigate the rising costs of living in Porter County and commuting to Chicago. Furthermore, there is enough job growth locally within Porter County (see next chapter) to suggest that population growth within the county is sustainable as long as the county adds jobs.

1.2.5 Residential Construction Trends

Porter County had a total of appoximately 58,500 housing units in 2000. Of these, 72% were Single Family Detached units. Another 2.6% were Single Family Attached units, and 7.2% were Single Family - Mobile Home units. This leaves about 18% - or 10,500 units in multl-family housing units.

Chicago Metropolitan Area growth is driving a large portion of growth in Northwestern Indiana. Recent trends show that population is moving futher and further away from the city. In the case of Lake County, this means avaiding established urban areas like Gary and East Chicago altogether for the suburban communities of Munster, Schererville, Merrillville and Hobart.

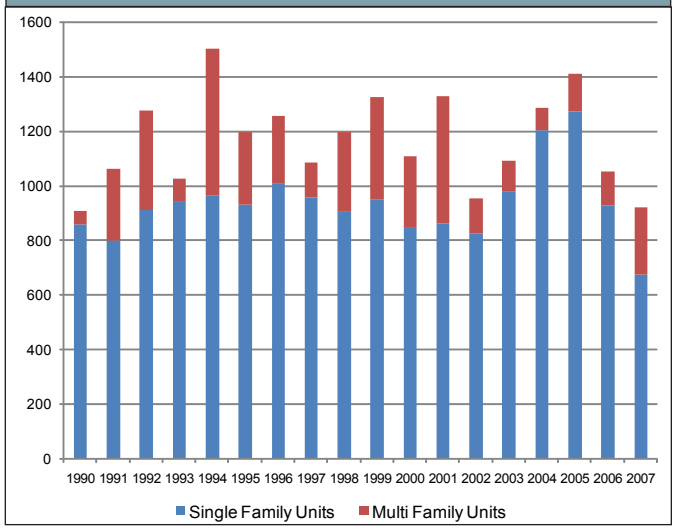


source: U.S. Census and DCI Analysis

Sixty-percent of these units were located in Incorporated areas of Porter County, leaving just over 22,300 units in unincorporated areas. It is difficult to say what the Single Family vs. Multi-Family split is in unincorporated county areas. However, based upon recent residential construction statistics, it is easy to conclude that the number of multi-family units are likely to be extremely low. Single Family Detached units represented an average of 94% of all construction in unincorporated areas between 2000 and 2007.

Porter County's population growth is matched by the growth of its residential development. The county's housing stock has grown by 14% in just the past seven years. The county is on pace to match its 18% growth rate in units during the 1990s. Housing construction has been fastest in unincorporated county areas, which added 3,680 units since 2000 - or 16%.
Since 1990, 80% of the housing units constructed in Porter County have been Single Family Detached units. By far, the amount of Multi-Family units being contructed in the county have been in incorporated areas. The largest concentration of Multi-Family units has been in Valparaiso. Between 1996 and 2007, 48% of all new residential units in the county seat were Multi-Family units, vs. only 29% in Chesterton, and 16% in Portage. Valparaiso also accounted for 42% all Multi Family units being constructed in the county during the same period.

Figure 1-2: Housing Starts - Porter County 1990 - 2007



source: U.S. Census and DCI Analysis

1.3 PROJECTIONS

1.3.1 Population Projections

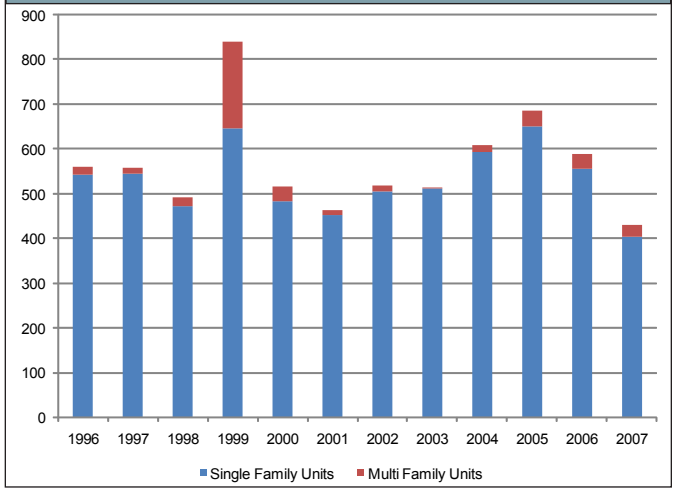
Porter County grew 13% between 1990 and 2000, and is on pace to grow another 13% between 2000 and 2010. This represents quick, sustained growth over a long period of time.

Utilizing a straight line projection that assumes future growth rates based on past growth rates, it is estimated that Porter County could grow to around 195,000 to 202,000 people in 20 years. This represents an average growth rate of 1.16%, or 1,700 people, annually.

Based on these existing growth rates, Unincorporated Porter County could reach a population of 89,000 to 96,700 in 20 years. This rate would add an average of 1,000 people a year.

Truly accurate unincorporated county population projections are uniquely difficult to determine because of the possibility of areas becoming incorporated and therefore transferred into a different system of governance. The numbers represented on the figures to the right therefore represent projections of population within areas that are unincorporated as of 2008.

Figure 1-3: Housing Starts Unincorporated Porter County 1996 - 2007



source: U.S. Census and DCI Analysis

1.3.2 Housing Demand

Based upon population projections for Porter County, one can estimate the future housing demand from new residents based upon existing growth trends. It is important to note that this projection of housing demand is long-term. It is based upon recent trends in growth, and therefore does not take into consideration the current (2008) housing market downturn - it is based on the assumption that over the long term (10 - 20 years), this market will normalize, as will demand for certain housing types over others. It is also based on the assumption of population projections based upon recent growth trends, as well as employment growth trends.

This report estimates that by 2017, there will be a demand for over 10,400 new housing units within Porter County. This is based, in part, on an estimated 14% change in households between 2007 and 2017, which is in turn based upon trends of the last decade. This is an average of anticipated demand for housing of 1,000 units annually. Split between housing types, it is estimated that 7,500 of these units in demand will be single family homes. The other 2,900 will be for multi-family units.

The expected housing demand for Unincorporated Porter County is estimated at about 4,900 units. By 2027, this number could be as much as 10,000 units. Based on current housing demand, the percentage of single family units is much higher in unincorporated areas - 9,400 units to 500 for multi-family units.

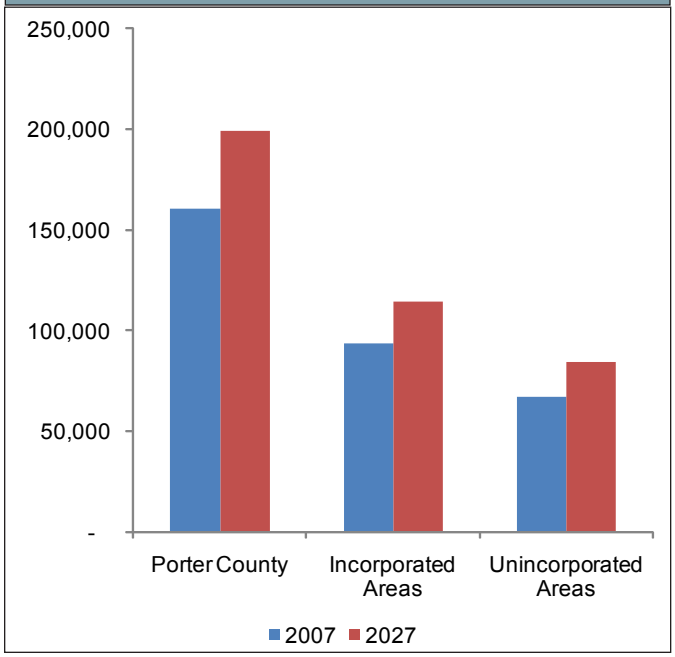
Impacts: Existing growth trends have unincorporated county areas growing by 25% in the next 20 years (17,000+ people). Sustained market demand for single family housing is going to have a significant land use impact upon unincorporated county areas. This includes both growth that could continue to occur in unincorporated areas, as well as the sprawl of existing urban areas into unincorporated areas. If the estimated demand for housing is met in the next 10 years, it has the potential to use up as much as 3,200 acres of land given current housing preferences and sizes.

1.3.3 Potential Market Shifts

Other than significant changes in the local or regional economy, there are three projects that pose potential changes to the current growth patterns of Porter County. These include; 1) The proposed South Shore Commuter Train Line extension; 2) The proposed Illiana Expressway; and 3) the new interchange of County Road 109 and I-65 in Lake County.

If the South Shore extension line is brought to Valparaiso, as proposed, it could drive faster population growth around the

Figure 1-4: Population Projections
Porter County
2007 - 2027



source: U.S. Census and DCI Analysis

Figure 1-5: Growth of NW Indiana Cities
2000 - 2007

City / Town	County	2000	2006
Gary	Lake	102,520	97,715
Hammond	Lake	82,056	78,292
Portage	Porter	33,893	36,300
Michigan City	La Porte	32,734	32,116
Merrillville	Lake	30,572	31,896
East Chicago	Lake	32,045	31,594
Valparaiso	Porter	28,085	29,516
Schererville	Lake	25,175	28,881
Munster	Lake	21,516	22,346
La Porte	La Porte	21,475	21,231

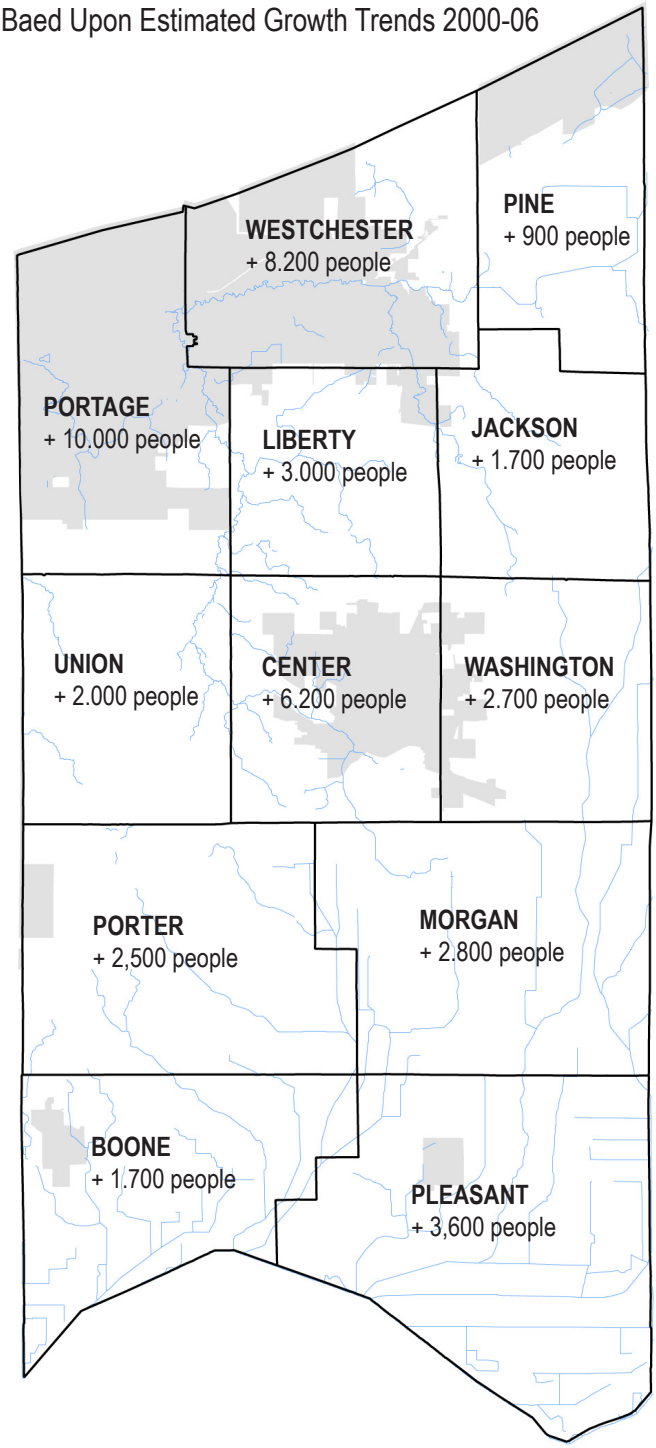
county seat. Already a significant percentage of county residents commute to Chicago. Many commute up to the existing South Shore line station in Westchester township. Commuting to the Chicago area from Porter County is currently accessible to residents down to around Valparaiso due to driving times and existing transit links. In adddition, such a commuter train station in Valporaso might increased population growth south of the city, as the train would then be much more accessible to residents of Morgan, Porter, Pleasant and Boone townships.

Much of the population dispersion from Chicago has taken place along lines of transportation. The fact that Porter County is accessible to the rest of the Chicago MSA via both commuter rail and freeway is an important driver of growth in the county. Proposals have a new expressway connector between I-57 in Will County, Illinois and I-65 in Lake County, Indiana. An extension of this line has also been proposed through Porter and into La Porte County. This would take a new freeway through Boone and Morgan townships and undoubedly bring major land use impacts in terms of residential, commercial, retail and industrial growth.

The third project is one that is already in the planning stages. It is a new interchange at County Road 109 and I-65 in Lake County. This new interchange would open up access to parts of Porter township previously more difficult to reach - directly opposite of the some of the fastest growth areas in Lake County. Focused population growth in this area, more than estimated, is likely to imapct Route 2 in many ways.

Projected Population

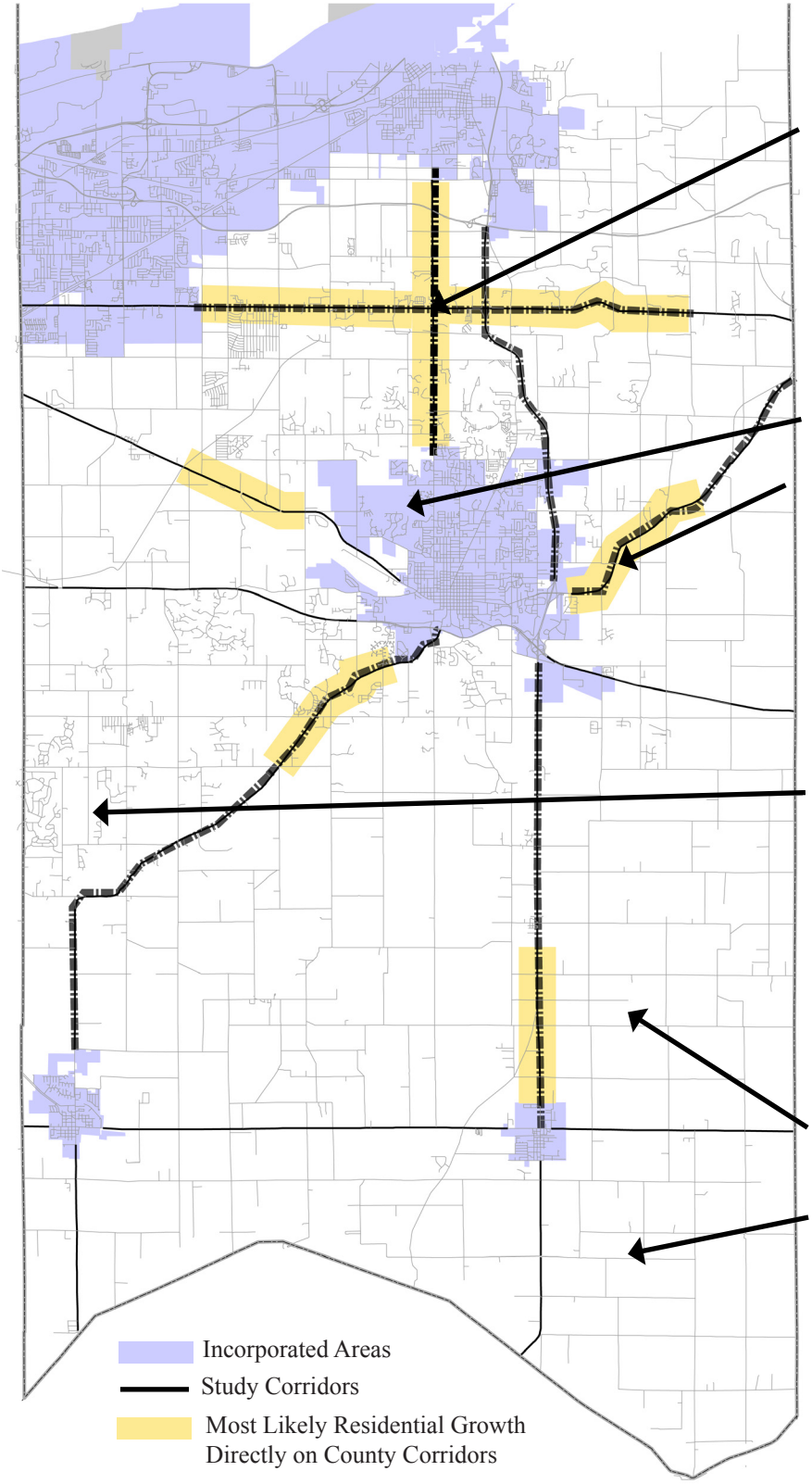
By Porter County Township: 2027
Baed Upon Estimated Growth Trends 2000-06



source: U.S. Census and DCI Analysis

Residential Development Impact Areas

Unincorporated Porter County Corridors



Liberty Township

Liberty Township sits in between the three urban areas of Porter County, and it is liable to experience a significant amount of residential development pressure as Portage, Valparaiso and Chesterton continue to grow. This is particularly true from north to south.

Valparaiso

Many factors, including existing growth and planned economic development initiatives suggest that how Valparaiso grows in the future will has significant impact on areas outside of the city.

Pressure From the West

Much of Porter County's growth is spurred by similar growth in suburban areas of Lake County to the West. Continued population growth in those areas may put pressure on the southwestern parts of the county, which currently are growing at the same rate as the county on the whole.

Rural Growth

If the southeastern portion of the county continues to grow at current rates, it is liable to stress the infrastructure put in place to serve these areas. This includes transportation and utility networks.

2 | Economic Development Opportunities

2.1 OVERVIEW - PORTER COUNTY ECONOMY

Porter County has proven to be resilient in the face of a nationwide downturn in manfacturing employment, which has hit neighboring counties hard. The county has seen steady job growth since the recession of 2001-02, with growth in multiple employment sectors outweighing losses in the manufacturing sector. Between 1997 and 2006, Porter County added net jobs in private sector employment, while neighboring Lake and La Porte counties netted negative employment growth.

Recent national and local downturns have not impacted the population growth of the county. For instance, while net employment dropped during the recessions of 2001-02 throughout the region, county population growth stayed constantly above 1%.

Generally speaking, the Porter County economy is shifting from that of a goods-producing base (manufacturing, etc.) to a services oriented one (retail, health care, etc.). This follows nation-wide trends. However, while some geographies have seen overall wages impacted by the switch from higher paying good producing jobs to lower paying retail / service jobs, Porter County has seen stable growth in overall wages produced through its employment. One example is the county's leading industry - Primary Metal Manufacturing. This sector has seen losses in employment over the past decade, but its increases in total compensation to employees have risen at a much faster rate.

Porter County's wage growth has equalled or exceeded the wage growth of nearby geographies, particularly Lake and La Porte Counties (Figure 2-2). The county has five "core" employment sectors that, despite positive and negative fluctuations in total jobs, has nevertheless provided a stable base for Wage growth throughout the county.

2.2 ECONOMIC ROLES OF CORRIDORS

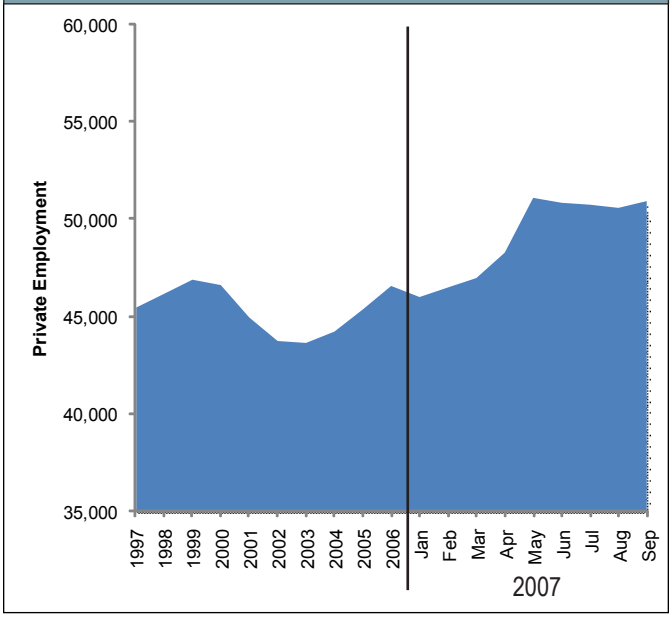
The corridors that are part of the Porter County Corridor Study could play many different roles in the general economic develpoment of Porter County. This study examined what economic develpoment opportunities are available for county corridors based upon existing growth opportunities, upcoming development initiatives, and uses that are most appropriate for the land along the corridors. This included what development related opportunities exist, as well as how the corridors can support economic development initiatives in other parts of the county.

This study identified the following economic development areas as ones where Porter county corridors could contribute to. Areas with the highest potential impact include (1) Retail; (2) Health Care Related Uses; (3) Logistics / Transportation; and (4) Specialized Manufacturing. Lower impact areas include Agricultural Preservation and Tourism. These areas are discussed in more depth in this section.

2.2.1 Retail

As Figure 2-1 illustrates, many of the growth sectors within Porter County are retail oriented employment sectors. In 2006, Retail Trade was the second largest employment sector in Porter County - representing 12% of non-farm employment

Figure 2-1: Private Employment - Porter County 1997-2007



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS)

(BEA). Since 2001, Retail Trade has netted 325 jobs in the county.

A further discussion of the development trends for retail is found in the next chapter.

2.2.2 Health Care Related Uses

The Health Care sector is one of the fastest growing areas in Porter County. Between 2001 and 2006 the Health Care and Social Assistance sector added almost 1,000 wage and salary jobs. This was driven largely by growth in the Ambulatory Health Care Services sub-sector, which added over 600 jobs. This sub-sector consists of physician, dentists and other health care practitioner offices, outpatient care centers, diagnostic laboratories and home health care services. Nursing and Residential Care Facilities added another net of 270 jobs during the same period.

This sector is also contributing largely to wage increases in the county. The total compensation received by all employees in Porter County grew by 25% between 2001 and 2006. Compensation in the Health Care and Social Assistance sector grew by 40%

Health Care and Health Care related industries are set to be a huge growth sector within the county with the planned construction of two new private hospitals. It will also have significant land use imapcts on unincorporated county land. Porter Memorial - the county hospital - currently located in Valparaiso, will be re-built on land at the intersection of Route 49 and Route 6. Over 2,000 jobs will re-locate to this site. This may cause many health care businesses that would be associated with the Ambulatory Health Care subsector to move to be in proximity to the new facility.

In addition to the new "county" hospital, which will in fact be run by a private company, another new private hospital facility is planned just 5 miles to the south along Route 49 in the city of Valparaiso. Estimates of the employment at this facility range up to 1,800 after several phases. These will be entirely new jobs within the county, not relocated ones.

Not only will nearly 4,000 new or relocated jobs within 5 miles of each other have drastic land use impacts along the Route 49 corridor, but other areas, particularly along Route 6 could also see Health Care related development because of the new county facility's proximity to the existing Porter / Portage Hospital to the west. Northward movement along Route 49 could also occur with connections to the existing Bone and Joint center in Chesterton.

Figure 2-2: Growth Sectors - Porter County 2001-2006

NAICS	Sector	SpR	%G
237	Civil Engineering Construction	1.03	52%
334	Computer and Electronic Product Manufacturing	0.37	381%
443	Electronics and Appliance Stores	1.51	138%
448	Clothing and Clothing Acessories Stores	0.35	50%
453	Miscellaneous Store Retailers	0.91	24%
484	Truck Transportation	1.19	38%
551	Management of Companies and Enterprises	0.26	58%
623	Nursing and Residential Care Facilities	1.07	26%

SpR = Specialization Ratio (aka Location Quotient)
%G = Percentage of Job Growth

source: Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS)

The Health Care Industry is a growing across the county. Since 2000, Health Care related jobs grew more than 3% higher than the national average of job growth. In Indiana, they grew by nearly 4 times the state job growth average.

Statewide in Indiana, jobs in both government / nonprofit and private hospitals have generated a multiplier of 0.81 for ambulatory health care jobs. This means that for every 5 jobs in hospitals, 4 jobs are created via physician's offices, special care centers, outpatient services, etc.

The general employment multipler, which includes all jobs that would potentially be generated by hospital employment, ranges from 1.4 to 1.8. This means that for every 5 hospital jobs, approximately 7-9 other jobs are created. 3-5 of these jobs would come from employment sectors not directly related to health care. This means that with the construction of the proposed hospital in Valparaiso, the county could see growth in health care related fields of up to 1,000 - 1,500 new jobs just in private health care facilities. Overall, job growth from the new hospital could yield as many as 2,500 - 3,240 total jobs based in health care businesses, social assistance, retail, and other sectors.

Impacts: Though there are several clusters of health care related businesses in incorporated cities, there will likely be demand for health care related busienesses and offices to be located in proximity to one or both of the new hospitals. This means development along Route 49 and Route 6. It should be noted that this will also likely include demand for retail. The proposed Valparaiso Memorial Hospital will be located near the retail centers of the city, but the Community Health County hospital will likely support several retail businesses in close proximity to the facility.

The average annual pay for a worker in Porter County was $36,736 in 2007. For the Ambulatory Health Care sector, which grew by 31% between 2001 and 2006, the averag annual wage for the same year was $48,990.

2.2.3 Specialized Manufacturing

Manufacturing has long been the cornerstone of Porter County's economy. More specifically - Steel manufacturing. This industry has experienced a long downturn, however, negatively impacting many communities around the country, including several in neighboring Lake County.

Though the Manufacturing sector lost net jobs between 2001 and 2006, this was almost primarily due to losses in the Primary Metal and Fabricated Metal subsectors. Many other manufacturing subsectors have shown small, but steady growth. While they are nowhere near the size of the major subsectors, it does show the trend of diversification in goods producing industries. The leading manufacturing subsector for growth is Computer and Electronic Product Manufacturing, which grew from approximately 30 employees to 150 employees in five years. Other growth subsectors include Chemical Manufacturing, Nonmetallic Mineral Manufacturing, Food Manufacturing, and Machinery Manufacturing. Together, these account for a modest growth of 250 jobs since 2001. Yet treated as targeted industries through economic development

The movement of the Porter County hospital into private hands follows nationwide trends for health care. Private hospitals account for 75% of all hospital employment in Indiana, and 78% of all hospital employment in the United States.

policy, they could yield yet more growth.

Most of the significantly industrial activity takes place with county corporate limits, but land available for new industrial ventures is becoming limited, and presently greenfield sites in unincorporated county areas are likely to be more cost-effective than redevelopment sites within existing communities.

Impacts: The most likely area for growth in this sector in unincorporated county areas is near the airport, just east of Valparaiso. There is a significant drive to utilize the airport as a catalyst for business and economic development by utilizing multiple modes of transportation around the airport (air, rail, roads) and ample developable land. The airport sits at a major county crossroads of Route 30 and Route 49. It is easily accessible to the retail and commercial growth that is occuring along Laporte Avenue and Route 30.

2.2.4 Logistics / Transportation

Truck Transportation and *Support Activites for Transportation* is another growth industry that relates directly to corridors such as those in this study. Truck Transportation, which includes general and specialized frieght trucking, added over 300 jobs between 2001 and 2006. During that period, the subsector became a specialized industry within Porter County, moving from a 0.92 Specialization Quotient to 1.19. *Support Activities for Transportation* - already a specialized subsector in the county, experienced a fluctuation that eventually ended with a modest net growth.

Truck Transportation activities concentrate around major regional arterials. The bulk of these activities are most likely located within proximity of I-80/90 and I-94, highways outside of the study area for this report. However, Route 6 and Route 30 are important east-west regional corridors that are used to access Lake and La Porte Counties. This includes Starke, Pulaski and White counties, accessible off of Route 30, which connects to the major north-south state highway Route 421.

Impacts: Similar to Specialized Manufacturing, if Truck Transportation operations were to grow within unincorporated areas, they would most likely sit at a nexus of transportation routes. The best location is near the Valparaiso Airport and the confluence of Routes 30, 131, 2, and 49. This location has good proximity to I-80/90, 10 minutes to the north, as well as perhaps a 20 minute trip to the Port of Indiana in Portage.

2.2.5 Agricultural Preservation

Porter County, like most Indiana counties, has a strong agricultural sector. It is also a dominant land use. In 2002, there were 606 farms that utilized nearly 146,000 acres within Porter

Steel related manufacturing (categorized as Primary Metal Manufacturing by NAICS) has historically been the economic driver in Porter County. However, despite declines in the steel industry - and the manufacturing sector in general - there appears to be some growth in specialty manufacturing fields , indicating diversification and potential stabilization of goods producing jobs - a cornerstone of the local county economy.

Figure 2-3: Growth Sectors in Manufacturing Porter County

NAICS	Sector	Emp	%G
311	Food Manufacturing	85	29%
325	Chemical Manufacturing	279	28%
327	Nonmetallic Mineral Product Manufacturing	161	29%
333	Machinery Manufacturing	370	9%
334	Computer and Electronic Product Manufacturing	149	381%

Emp = Total Employment in 2006
%G = Percentage of Job Growth

source: Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS)

County. This is 54% of all land within the county. Market Value of all production was over $37 million.

The arguments for agricultural preservation at the local level are different from other industrial sectors because they do not dwell upon job creation or wage growth. Farming by nature does not yield nearly as many jobs or wages as other industries, but there are many economic reasons why significant areas of farmland should be preserved.

These reasons typically fall into three primary arguments. The first is the support or growth of industires that rely upon agricultural products, such as food manufacturing. For Indiana, manufacturing is a highly sought after industry because of the large amounts of skilled labor available, the generally high concentration of jobs created by one development and relatively high wages.

Examples of local Indiana food manufacutring include dairy product manufacturing, starch manufacturing, grain manufacturing, and animal slaughtering and processing manufacturing. Overall, food manufacturing is not one of Porter County's industry strengths (only 85 jobs in 2006). While the county's agricultural specialities do not necessary lend themselves to supplying food manufacturing facilities, (specialities include vegetables, fruts, sheep, goats, horses and ponies) the county still produces enough corn and grain related agriculture to potentialy be used in a manufacturing related process.

It is not beyond reason why Porter County could not yet support a future food manufacturing / processing facility. The county used to be a center for the popcorn industry, which has since moved facilities away from Porter County. With rising fuel costs and initiatives to support cities through more locally based agricultural products, there may be future opportunities related to this industrial sector. Preserving the farmland that would support such an initiative is paramount, as the cost-effectiveness of the venture lowers the futher a plant is located from its based of supply (agriculture).

The second argument for the preservation of agricultural land is that it costs less to serve in public infrastructure than replacement development would, thus keeping overall property taxes low. In other words, the net property tax gain of farmland is higher than that of residential development typically built over farmland becaues of the large amounts of infrastructure and utilities needed to serve the new development. Whether this is true of Porter County or not relies upon a subsequent fiscal analysis not part of this study. This is especially true due to the

Typical agricultural landscapes in Porter County.

Figure 2-4: Porter County - Most Valuable Agricultural Commodities

Commodity	Sales	State Rank
Corn for Grain	$60.3m	44
Grains, Oilseeds, Dry Beans and Dry Peas	$25.7m	50
Hogs and Pigs	$10.7m	63
Forage	$4.6m	55
Cattle and Calves	$4.5m	70

source: U.S. Census of Agriculture, 2002

new Indiana State property tax laws planned to go into effect in late 2008.

The third argument is one of quality of life - agricultural lands protect open space, viewsheds, and generally act as an amenity that appeals to both residents and tourists. The growth of population and housing units in the southern areas of Porter County certainly speaks to the appeal of these largely rural, agricultural areas. The population growth analysis of the previous chapter showed increased in-migration due much to the growth trends of the Chicago Metropolitan area. Based on this and the preferred housing type (single-family home), it is clear that many new residents are choosing Porter County because of its rural appeal, which is due in most part to the large areas of agricultural land and open space.

Impacts: There is a good chance that any future food manufacturing / processing plant would be located outside of major populations centers, along a county corridor. This depends upon exactly what type of plant it is, local zoning ordinances, and what impact it is likely to have on nearby residential neighborhoods in urban or suburban areas. Farmland itself is found throughout the county, though the bulk of it is located in the southern and eastern parts of the county, in Porter, Boone, Morgan, Pleasant and Washington townships. However, where farmland is currently the most "threatened" is in the more northwestern townships of Union, Center, Liberty and Portage counties. Clearly, a balance of growth vs. agricultural preservation will be needed if this is to be a future economic development initiative for the county.

2.2.6 Tourism

Tourism, along with Retail, Health Services and Education, is one of the major service oriented sectors that many geographies are targeting for economic development. Porter County has a major tourism draw with the Indiana Dunes National Seashore, and Indiana Dunes State park. Based on Department of Natural Resources estimates, 2 million people enter through the gates of the National Seashore every year.

Despite this high touism traffic, the tourism industry is largely underdeveloped within Porter County. Tourism related employment sectors represented only 2% of all private jobs within the county in 2006. This is a drop from 3.3% in 2001. Between 2001 and 2002, the accomodation subsector saw a large loss of employment - over 500 jobs. This could be related to the general downturn of tourism nationally during the recession of 2001-02. However, the accomodation subsector never recovered those jobs, and still stands at less than half of its employment in 2001. Recent accomodation growth near Valparaiso may prove to stimulate this subsector (unknown

Figure 2-5: Porter County - Most Specialized Agricultural Commodities

Commodity	Sales	State Rank
Vegetables, Melons, Potatoes and Sweet Potatoes	$3.2m	4
Sheep, Goats and their Products	$79k	17
Horses, Ponies, Mules, Burrows and Donkeys	$289k	13

source: U.S. Census of Agriculture, 2002

An argument made by the American Farmland Trust (www.farmland.org) is that a significant stock of agricultural land helps keep property taxes down for local residents. This is because they utilize very limited amounts of utilities, while the tax gains from new commercial, residential and industrial development on top of farmland are often mitigated by the costs of providing utilities.

until the Bureau of Labor Statistics releases more current data) but much of this development is related to business travelers rather than tourism.

NAICS 713 Amusements, Gambling and Recretaion has seen modest job growth - but it is unclear whether this is tourism related. The growth area within this subsector was Fitness and Recreational Sports Centers, which is typically oriented more towards existing residents than the tourism industry.

Despite these indicators, most of the future economic development initiatives related to tourism are likely to be focused in the northern areas of the county away from the county corridors within this study. Currently, there are very few reasons why a tourist would venture south of I-80. This is primarily due to a lack of tourism related destinations.

There are two opportunities that could help draw tourists to other parts of Porter County. Both would have an impact upon county corridors. The first is a planned "Eco-Trail" which would incorporate a multi-use trail along Route 49. This trail, whose primary purposes are to incorporate an environmentally friendly planting scheme along a major county corridor, also would connect to several multi-use trails in the northern that already exist in the northern third of the county. The Eco Trail would at least connect Chesterton to Valpariaso, and perhaps further south to the Kankakee River. It is worth noting that this initiave may be worth more as a quality of life amenity to existing residents rather than a driver of tourism.

Considering natural features within Porter County, the Kankakee River offers potential recreation options. One current problem is a lack of access by the public. If such access is provided, there is a possibility that the River could be utilized for expanded tourism / recreation traffic.

Impacts: Any short-term tourism related opportunities are likely to be concentrated along Route 49. This mostly includes the areas, if any, impacted by the Eco-Trail. It is unlikely that the Kankakee will serve as a short-term destination to bolster tourism. Other tourism / visitor traffic that may utilize specific heritage or historic sites within the county, or destinations like Valparaiso University, are unlikely to provide significant impact worth studying at this time.

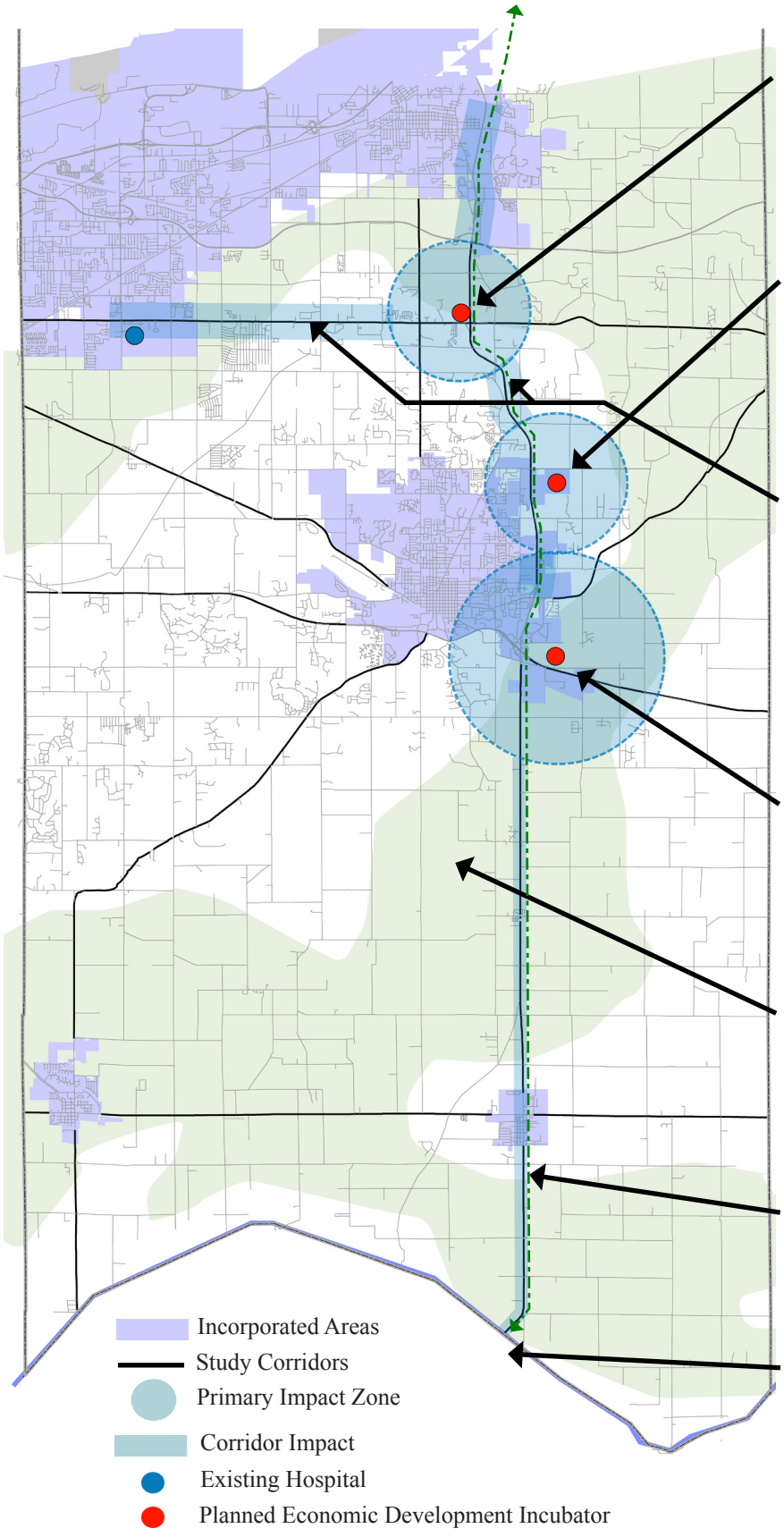
Porter County's rural character is likely a major appeal to new residents who are looking for differing choices than urban or suburban Chicago, as well as existing residents who may be moving further away from urban areas to flee growth in the northern part of the county.

Porter County's major tourism destination - the Indiana Dunes National Seashore and State park - draws in over 2 million visitors a year, but presently has little to no impact on county corridors within unincorporated county, as there are few destinations to draw people off of the "beaten path".

The Kankakee River might open up recreation opportunities on at the southern end of the County, if access is improved.

Economic Development Impact Areas

Unincorporated Porter County Corridors



New Community Health (County) Hospital

The new hospital facility run by Community Health will employ approximately 2,000 people. As it is moving to Valparaiso, other health care related businesses may move with the facility. This could impact a significant portion of currently open land in all directions from the planned site.

Proposed Memorial Hospital

Another new private hospital is proposed along Route 49 within the City of Valparaiso. If built, it could add another 2,000 hospital related jobs to the county.

Future "Healthcare" Corridors

The concentration of nearly 4,000 jobs within 5 miles of each other along Route 49 will have major land use impacts in terms of business growth. This will likely include both office and retail. Route 6 is likely to experience some growth as well, as the new Community Health hospital will be only 6 miles to the east of the existing Porter / Portage hospital. Route 49 north of Route 6 towards Chesterton is also likely.

Airport

The airport and land surrounding is appropriate for various types of growth, mainly due to its multi-modal transportation connections. Potential growth in specialized manufacturing and logistics would benefit by locating in this area - especially considering the entire airport area will be planned and targeted for employment growth.

Farmland

Green areas generally designate "Prime" and "Good" farmland within the county. They represent the base for the county's agricultural economy. Route 49, Route 8 and Route 2, and Route 6 are high impact areas in regards to agricultural preservation.

Proposed Route 49 Trail

The proposed multi-use trail will connect to existing trails in the northern part of the county, but its impact on tourism development will likely be limited in the short-term.

Kanakakee River

The Kankakee may be an opportunity for expanded recreation opportunities, though access to the river is currently limited.

3 | Retail Development Opportunities

3.1 OVERVIEW

Porter County's growth has led to an increase in demand for retail goods and services. Though more retailers have moved into the county to better serve customers - who have higher incomes on average than in neighboring counties - a great deal of shopping is still done in shopping areas outside of the county. In particular, this includes the Southlake Mall / US30 corridor in Merrillville / Hobart to the west, and the Marquette Mall area in Michigan City to the east. Analysis shows that a great deal of retail dollars still "leaks" to these areas - and others - outside of the county, rather than being spent within the county.

This follows historic growth patterns - only until recently has Porter County grown to be of a size large enough to draw more retail business, which in this part of Indiana has always been concentrated in more populous Lake County. However, retailers are beginning to expand within Porter county, following the general cycle of growth within a suburban county where retail is begining to follow residential growth - or, as the adage goes - "retail following rooftops".

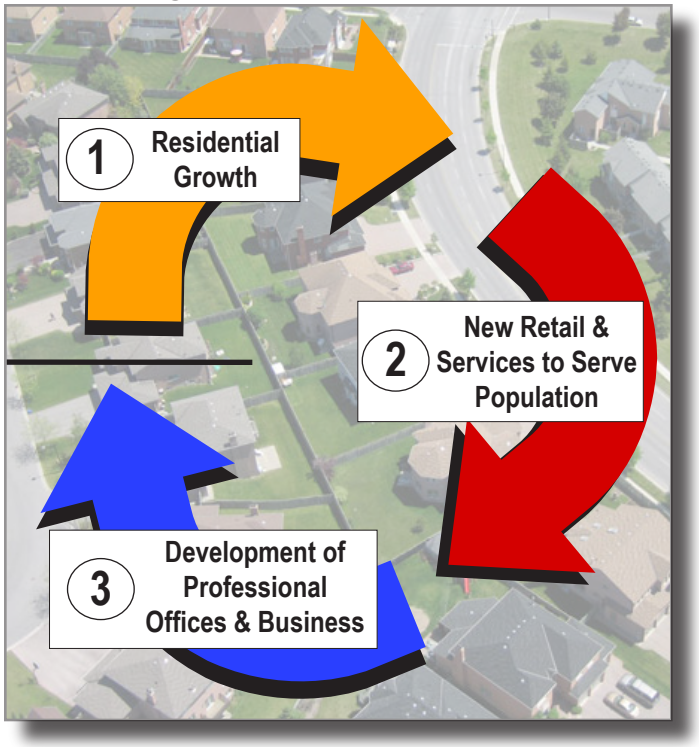
There is enough demand for retail goods within Porter County to drive a notable amount of retail development for the next several years, growth which might continue if the county maintains its current population growth rates. New retail is most likely to show up in the form of national "big-box" and restaurant forms that often sprawl out along high-trafficked corridors. This has particular concern for unincorporated county corridors as retail development begins to push away from incorporated areas into cheaper, open land in areas such as Route 2, Route 49 and Route 6.

3.2 METHODOLOGY

The retail analysis for the Porter County Corridor Plan examined the gap between retail demand and retail supply within the county. It also utilized a "competing centers" assessment which mapped mid to large scale retail areas in Northwest Indiana to better understand spending trends within the region. Understanding where recent retail development / investment has occured, combined with an analysis of how much additional retail could be supported in the county and likely employment trends is used to assess where likely future retail development is likely to *want* to occur based on current market factors.

Porter County's recent retail growth suggests that it is moving into the 2nd phase of suburban growth outlined by Joel Garreu in "Edge Cities". After an area experiences a certain "critical mass" of residents, it begins to attract retail that moves outward from the central city. Later, professional oriented jobs and commercial development follows retail development and continued residential growth.

Three Stages of Suburban Growth



3.3 RETAIL DEMAND

Demand for retail can be determined, in part, through a retail leakage analysis. The methodology for the analysis can be found on the right. Generally speaking, there appears to be a significant amount of retail leakage within Porter County - meaning that many residents are using outside areas to shop for the everyday goods or leisure items they desire. The population growth that Porter County has experienced has created addtional demand for retail goods that retailers have just started to begin to meet. Anecdotally, Porter County has already seen recent interest from retail oriented deveopers, particularly in Valparaiso and Portage. Given this assessment, Porter County should be prepared to experience more interest from retail developers, paticularly along major corridors in peripheral areas where large scale "big box" developer is most suitable.

Figure 3-1: Potential Retail Growth in Porter County based on Existing Expenditure Leakage (Capture Rate = 50%)

NAICS		Retail Gap
44-45, 722	Total Retail Trade & Food & Drink	$493,646,998
44-45	Total Retail Trade	$416,552,156
722	Total Food & Drink	$77,094,842

A Retail Surplus/ Leakage Analysis determines the demand for various types of retail within a given geography. Sales of existing retail establishments within a certain geography are estimated (supply) in relation to the expected retail expenditures of households living within the same geography (demand). The difference between these two numbers is the "Retail Gap." A negative number (red) indicates a "surplus," meaning that a geography's retail establishments have higher sales than residents are demanding, and therefore that area is "importing" retail. A positive number (green) indicates that there is "leakage" of retail dollars outside of the geography. These dollars typically "leak" to retail establishments found outside of the core geography, but if an analysis of a wider area still shows leakage, then this represents "pent-up" or "latent" demand that is not currently served in the marketplace.

source: ESRI Business Analyst

3.4 REGIONAL RETAIL COMPETITION

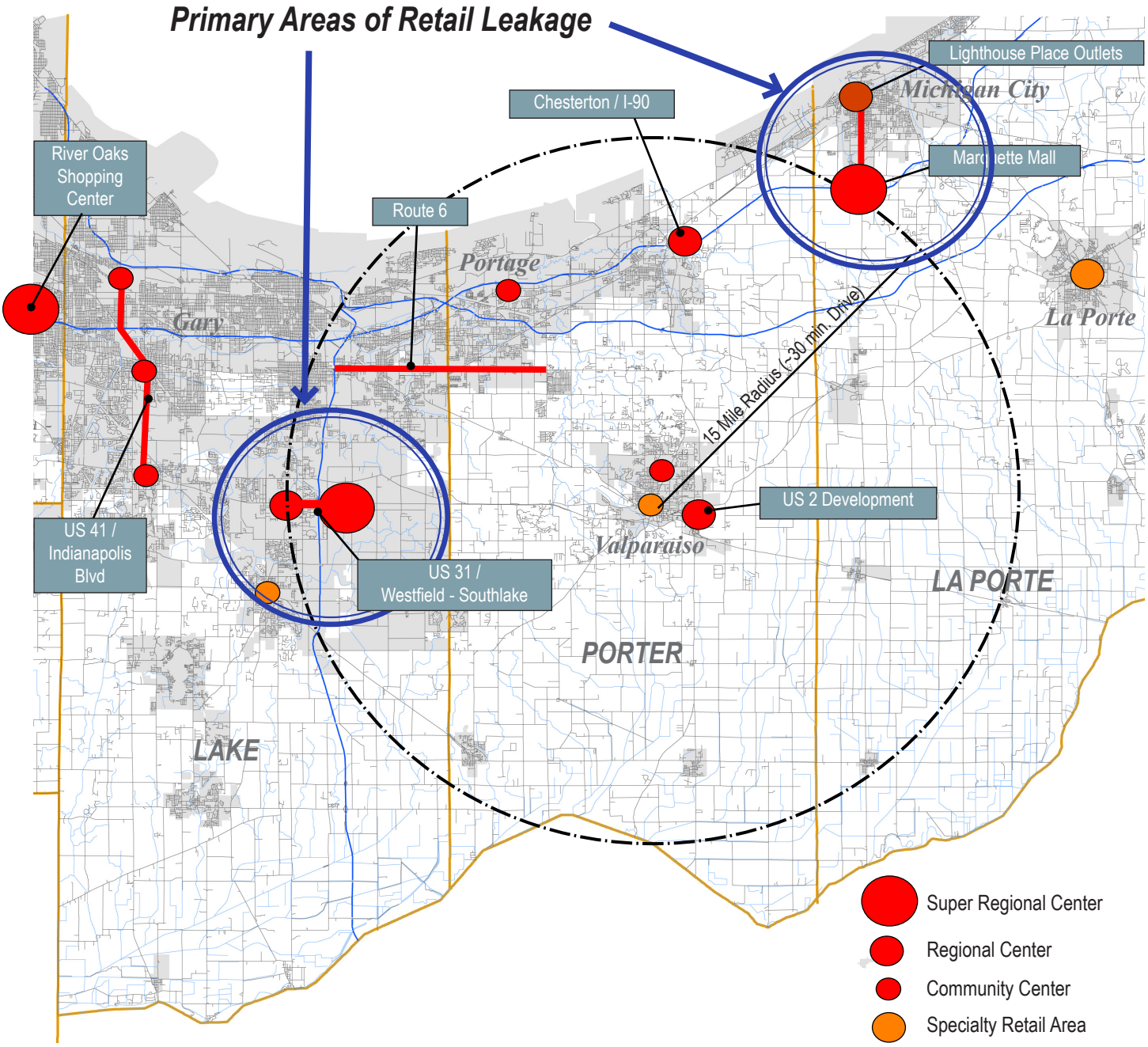
By examining regional competitive centers, an understanding of where retail dollars in Porter County are leaking to can be achieved. Porter County does not yet have a shopping area that qualifies as a Super Regional Center. Two Super Regional Centers are located just outside the county in both Lake County and La Porte County. It is in these areas that most of the leakage - nearly $500 million in retail expendictures - occurs.

See map on next page

Despite close proximity, neither of the two super regional shopping centers in Northwest Indiana are located in Porter County.

Regional Retail Competition

Porter County and Environs



source: DCI Research and Analysis

3.5 SUPPORTABLE RETAIL SPACE

Based upon the Retail leakage analysis, this report determines that if Porter County captured 50% of the retail dollars that are leaking outside of the county, it would support over 600,000 square feet of new retail, dining and grocery businesses (see Figure 3-2). For reference, if one compared this number to a supercenter sized retailer, it would equate to approximately 4 new Wal-Marts. 100% capture of retail dollars is unlikely because Porter County is not yet a retail destination, and super regional centers in Michigan City and Merrillville are likely to sustain their roles in the near future, offering various luxury items (though probably not everyday items required by Porter residents) not offered locally.

It should be noted that the numbers in Figure 3-1 only represent ***existing*** demand for retail goods within Porter County. They do not address the increase in demand that will occur with steady population increase, nor the retail demand from new employees who work but do not live in the county.

Based on leakage data, the following is a list of the most likely retailers to want loctate in Porter County;

- Supercenter type retailers such as Wal-Mart, Target, Meijer or Costco.
- Moderately priced department stores such as JCpenny, Kohl's, etc.
- National or regional furniture or home furnishings businesses like Pier 1, etc.
- Both Limited and Full Service Restaurants
- Grocery Stores

To underscore this analysis, some of the retail business types identified above have recently moved into Porter County. Kohl's for instance, has built a new store on Route 6 in Portage, while JCPenney is part of a large (670,000 sf) retail development on Route 2 in Valparaiso.

Figure 3-2: Potential Retail Growth in Porter County based on Existing Expenditure Leakage (Capture Rate = 50%)

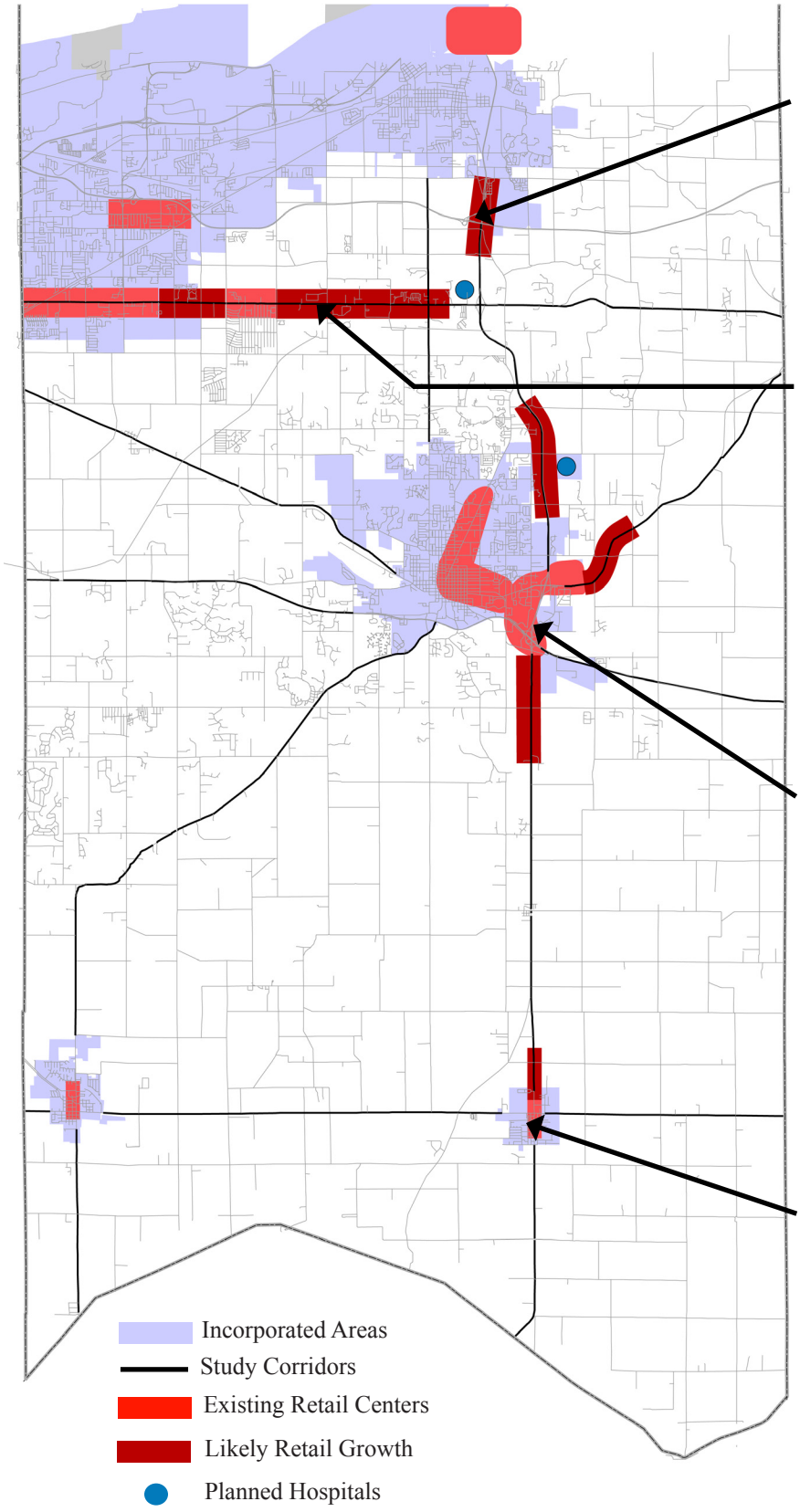
Retail Type	Potential Supported Square Footage		
Capture Rate	**50%**		**100%**
Grocery / Convenience	28,000	-	55,700
General Retail (Dept. Stores, Clothing, Supercenters, Shoes, Furniture, etc.)	490,000	-	985,000
Dining & Entertainment	93,000	-	187,000

source: ESRI Business Analyst and DCI Analysis

Retail development has been increasing in Porter County to serve the growing population base. Much of the new retail is on the periphery of the two major cities. Valparaiso has been experiencing faster retail development - this is likely due to the higher household incomes found in that part of the county.

Retail Development Impact Areas

Unincorporated Porter County Corridors



Northern Route 49

This section of Route 49 links the two interstates and Indiana Dunes Park with points south in the county. It is also one of the geographic "centers" of the county in terms of population. Retail may move southward along the 49 corridor towards the new Community Health Hospital.

Route 6

This corridor is liable to have a significant amount of pressure applied for retail development. Retail is migrating east from Hobart to growing areas in Porter County, much of the land on this corridor represents the largest, easiest parcels of land for large-scale development in Portage, and the future Community Health Hospital will create a second major employer to "bookend" the corridor.

Valparaiso

This area has seen the highest velocity of retail growth, partly due to residential growth, as well as the fact that Valparaiso has the highest median household incomes within the county. Significant development along Route 2 has already pushed to the eastern side of Route 49,and may continue east along Route 2 and south along Route 49, combined with other likely commercial and industrial development.

Kouts

With the high percentage of growth occuring in the southern part of the county, there may be an increased demand for locally serving goods (conveniance stores, grocery, restaurants) in Kouts despite proximity to Valpariaso.

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