



PLAN FOR SOUTHEAST-WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AREA

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Valparaiso Redevelopment Commission  
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## **INTRODUCTION**

This document is the Economic Development Plan ("Plan") for the Southeast-Washington Township Economic Development Area ("Southeast-Washington Area") for the City of Valparaiso, Indiana ("City"). It is intended for approval by the Common Council, the Valparaiso Plan Commission and the Valparaiso Redevelopment Commission ("Redevelopment Commission") in conformance with IC 36-7-14.

## **PURPOSE**

The purposes of the Plan are to benefit the public health, safety, morals, and welfare of the citizens of the City and Township; increase the economic well-being of the City, Township, and the State of Indiana; and serve to protect and increase property values in the City, Township, and the State of Indiana. The plan is designed to promote significant opportunities for the gainful employment of citizens of the City and Township, attract major new business enterprise to the City and Township, retain or expand existing significant business enterprises to the City and Township, provide for local public improvements in the Southeast-Washington Area, remove improvements or conditions that lower the value of the land in the Southeast-Washington Area below that of nearby land, resolve problems associated with multiple ownership of land, attract and retain permanent jobs, increase the property tax base, and improve the diversity of the economic base of the City and Township.

The Factual Report attached to this Plan contains the supporting data for the above declared purposes of the Plan.

## **DEFINITION OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Economic Development is defined as projects and/or processes and/or programs that add additional tax base and/or disposable income to the local economy over a stable period of time; and/or enhance existing tax bases and/or opportunities for citizens to improve their disposable income through new employment. Economic Development for the Redevelopment Commission includes public improvements needed to add the tax base and/or disposable income; and public improvements that add to general welfare, health and safety of all citizens of the community, and cannot be financed other than through the Redevelopment Commission process.

## **BOUNDARIES OF Southeast-Washington TIF AREA**

The Southeast Valparaiso Economic Development Area is described as that area contained in the maps and plats attached to this plan. The general description of the area includes all parcels not used as single family homes within an area generally bounded by Hotter's Lagoon on the north, Silhavy Road on the west, US 30 (Morthland Drive) on the south, and State 49 and Eastport Centre subdivision on the east (see Appendix A for legal description, and Appendix B for a list of parcels).

## **OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of the Southeast-Washington Township Economic Development Area are:

- To create and/or repair public infrastructure that is needed for the general health, safety and welfare of the citizens and cannot be financed through any other means; including new and repaired streets, curbs, sidewalks, sanitary sewers, drainage systems, traffic signals, parks, bike paths, street lights, and landscape and streetscape. (a list of specific infrastructure is included as Appendix C)
- \* To provide for the orderly growth and development of the southeast Valparaiso-Washington Township area as defined in the Growth Management Plan, Infrastructure Assessment Plan, Capital Improvement Plan, Parks Master Plan, and the regional Transportation Improvement Plan; all of which are available in the Planning Office.
- \* To adhere to the Comprehensive Plan particularly the Growth Management Plan, Land Use and Thoroughfare chapters.
- \* Encourage the economic development of southeast Valparaiso and to eliminate land uses that are obsolete or otherwise detrimental to the public welfare.
- \* Insofar as practical, leverage financial assistance from other government and/or private sources.

## **COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

Valparaiso Comprehensive Plan includes chapters on Growth Management, Land Use Thoroughfares, and a Capital Improvement Plan. The Growth Management Plan includes several recommendations for this area, and the land use chapter includes a policy of annexation before infrastructure is extended. This policy is compatible with the objectives of the Redevelopment Commission's southeast Valparaiso-Washington Township area plan. Specific guidelines for growth management of the City are found in the Comprehensive Plan.

Land use policies also include maintaining a balanced growth that add residential, commercial and industrial growth to the city. A balanced growth allows the development of a variety of opportunities for the citizens to live and work in the city. The zoning classifications in the SE area vary from single-family zoning of R-1 to the heavy industry zoning of M-2.

## **CONSTRAINTS**

Constraints to achieving this balanced growth are also delineated in the Land Use chapter. Growth is limited by infrastructure capacity more

often than by natural constraints. In the southeast area there are few natural constraints other than the airport limits on height of buildings, and lack of transportation and drainage capacity. The airport height limitations will always exist in part of the southeast area, but drainage capacity can be improved through both public improvements, and continuation of the city drainage development standards required of all development in the City. One of the most challenging economic constraints existing in the City is the frozen levy status. Because cities and counties in the State of Indiana can only increase their levies 5% annually, new tax base does not create new funds, but only more taxpayers paying into the same pot. Therefore, it is next to impossible to budget funds for new infrastructure.

Economic constraints also now exist in the City as the number of undeveloped parcels decreases rapidly. The remaining parcels are costly to purchase and develop. To continue to provide new opportunities for the citizens in an orderly manner with all needed public improvements, the Redevelopment Commission is studying TIF financing for public improvements.

The City has guidelines for developing in the City, and has developed additional guidelines with the county. These guidelines include compatibility with existing development, mixed land uses that enhance the city's quality of life, and a general goal to maintain or enhance the high quality of life already a part of the history of the City.

#### **SPECIFIC PROJECTS FOR THIS TIF DISTRICT**

These specific plans recommend industrial zoning that does not negatively impact traffic through increased traffic congestion and/or unsafe intersections. Appendix C lists several traffic and landscaping projects that will be needed as new commercial and industrial development increases traffic near the Bypass. It also lists a possible railroad station that would decrease traffic congestion by allowing residents to commute to Chicago by train.

Therefore, there is concurrence between the City Growth Management Plan, the Comprehensive Plan and the Southeast Valparaiso-Washington Township Economic Development Area Plan. The economic development plan of the Southeast-Washington Township Area will proceed in four phases, described as follows:

#### **Phase 1 -**

Design and engineering to widen, curb and gutter, sidewalks with bike paths along east side of Silhavy from LaPorte to Burlington Beach Road (500N)

Study and recommend either an extension of 18" sanitary sewer from Eastport to LaPorte/State 2 and/or extension of new sanitary sewer under State 49 in vicinity of State 2.

Study and design sanitary sewer system for Willow Heights

Phase II

Construction of Silhavy from LaPorte to 500N

Design and engineering for Comerford Road sanitary sewers

Repair Murvihill Road and construct curb and gutter and storm drainage systems from US 30 to Redbow Drive

Design and engineering Hotter's Lagoon Park trails

Reconstruct north end of Eastport Center Drive for development of property (includes relocation).

Construction of extension or new sanitary sewer from Eastport to LaPorte/State 2

Phase III

Construct Hotter's Lagoon Park trails

Landscape NE ramp area of US 30 and State 49

Construct Willow Heights sanitary sewers

Construct Comerford Road sanitary sewers

Construct South Shore railroad/bus station, if decision has been made to provide commuter service to Chicago (on south side of Evans west of 49)

Construct East US 30 Gateway

**MINOR INFRASTRUCTURE FUND**

Throughout all phases, the Redevelopment Commission will set aside a total of \$475,000 for a Minor Infrastructure Fund to be loaned or granted for small infrastructure projects in the Southeast Area, as amended, to the extent allowed by law. This fund could be used in any of the small projects mentioned above, as a local match to a grant to fund any project mentioned above, or to a project in this Area that meets the Commission's criteria. This criteria could include wellhead protection projects and malfunctioning septic, and will be determined by the speed and site development of the Area. It is anticipated that small public improvements will be needed as the Area develops. These could include adding technology such as remote control of signals to allow emergency care people signal control in emergency situations, street lights for improved safety, sidewalks, etc.

**NO USE OF EMINENT DOMAIN**

In order to accomplish the Projects, the Redevelopment Commission will acquire, without the use of eminent domain by the Redevelopment Commission, the interests in property as described in Appendix E. The

Redevelopment Commission shall follow procedures in IC 36-7-14-19 in the acquisition of property. The Redevelopment Commission may not exercise the power of eminent domain in an economic development area. (However, the City acting as the City may to acquire land for road improvements).

#### **IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN**

The Redevelopment Commission may proceed with the Projects before the acquisition of all interests in land in the Southeast-Washington Township Area. All contracts for material and labor in the accomplishment of the Projects shall be let under IC 36-1. In the planning and rezoning of real property acquired or to be used in the accomplishment of the Plan; the opening, closing, relocation and improvements of public ways; and the construction, relocation, and improvement of sewers and utility services; the Redevelopment Commission shall proceed in the same manner as private owners of the property. The Redevelopment Commission may negotiate with the proper officers and agencies of the City to secure the proper orders, approvals, and consents.

Any construction work required in connection with the Projects may be carried out by the appropriate municipal or county department or agency. The Redevelopment Commission may carry out the construction work if all plans, specifications, and drawings are approved by the appropriate department or agency and the statutory procedures for the letting of the contracts by the appropriate department or agency are followed by the Redevelopment commission.

The Redevelopment Commission may pay any charges or assessments made on account of orders, approval, consents, and construction work with respect to the Projects or may agree to pay these assessments in installments as provided by statute in the case of private owners.

None of the real property acquired for the Projects may be set aside and dedicated for public ways, parking facilities, sewers, levees, parks or other public purposes until the Redevelopment Commission has obtained the consent and approval of the department or agency under whose jurisdiction the property will be placed.

The Southeast-Washington Township Economic Development Area Plan, as amended, will begin when the final documents are recorded with the Porter County officials.

#### **AMENDMENTS TO PLAN**

The Southeast Washington Township Economic Development Area Plan, as amended, can be amended any time in accordance with IC 36-7-14-17.5. However, any enlargement of the boundaries of the Southeast-Washington Township Area must be approved by the Common Council.

## FINANCING PROJECTS

It is the intention of the Redevelopment Commission to finance projects by pay-as-you-go or issuing debt, both payable from incremental ad valorem property taxes allocated under IC 36-7-14-39 in order to raise money for property acquisition and completion of the Projects in the Southeast Area, as amended. If the issuance of debt is determined necessary, the Redevelopment Commission will comply with IC 36-7-14-25.1. The amount collected may not exceed the total, as estimated by the Redevelopment Commission of all expenses reasonably incurred in connection with the Projects including:

- (1) The total cost of all land, rights-of-way and other property to be acquired and developed;
- (2) All reasonable and necessary planning, architectural, engineering, legal, financing, accounting, advertising, bond discount and supervisory expenses related to the acquisition and development of the projects; and
- (3) A debt service and contingencies reserve for the projects to the extent the Redevelopment Commission determines that a reserve is reasonably required.

In the alternative, the Redevelopment Commission may enter into a lease of any property that could be financed with the proceeds of bonds under IC 36-7-14. The lease is subject to the provisions of IC 36-7-14-25.2 and IC 36-7-14-25.3.

The Valparaiso Redevelopment Commission may determine that a geographical area is an Economic Development area if it finds:

1. That the plan for an Economic Development Area:
  - \* Promotes opportunities for gainful employment
  - \* Attracts new business to the area
  - \* Retains or expands existing business OR
  - \* Meets other purposes of economic development
2. That the plan for the economic development area cannot be achieved by regulatory processes or by ordinary operation of private enterprise because of:
  - \* lack of local public improvements
  - \* existence of improvements or conditions that lower the value of nearby land
  - \* multiple ownership of land or other similar conditions
3. The public health and welfare will be benefited by the accomplishment of the plan for the economic development area
4. The accomplishment of the plan for an economic development area will be of public utility and benefit as measured by:



- \* the attraction of permanent employment opportunities
- \* an increase in the property tax base OR
- \* improved diversity in the economic base or other similar benefits

5. The plan for the economic development area conforms to other development and redevelopment plans of the City

Appendix A

Appendix B

## Appendix D

General Community goals for the growth and development of Valparaiso are:

1. To preserve the community's heritage and small city character while accommodating change that meets the needs of residents.
2. To create a better living environment for the residents.
3. To ensure the community's resources are beneficially used to satisfy the current and future need of residents.
4. To promote the economic role of Valparaiso through the use of growth management strategies aimed at establishing a favorable base of business and industry.
5. To develop and promote guidelines for development directly outside the city limits.
6. To continue to develop the financial resources necessary to continue the Valparaiso quality of life.

Strategies are necessary to prescribe how these goals become realities. Because the true value of any plan is never realized unless it is implemented. And, although the following strategies are recommended, limitations need to be realized. These limitations include the numerous interest groups, public agencies, and private concerns that constantly make decisions that have impact on the way Valparaiso changes.

Strategies include:

Coordinating and directing public and private policies that are used in decision-making processes.

Pursuing, with energy and dedication, the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan including the Growth Management recommendations.

Prioritizing by need and expense. Those plans that require extensive resources may need additional phases. The Plan Commission should establish these priorities.

Reviewing the entire planning structure for cross references, and compatible goals. All city policies, and specific district and infrastructure plans, need to include the overall goal of the Comprehensive Plan, and state how the specific plan meets these goals.

Coordinating the City's Comprehensive Plan with the Porter County Comprehensive Plan.