

Planning Context

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

Background

The City of Valparaiso is a vibrant place that has emerged from its roots as an agriculture-centered community, county seat, and small college town. Much of the City's success is founded in its strong Downtown, top-rated Valparaiso University, its proximity to Chicago, and appealing natural areas within and around the City. These advantages have resulted in a well-rounded business community, a quality school system, abundant art and cultural offerings, and beautiful neighborhoods that include quaint and historic areas along with quality, sustainable developments.

Over the past decade, the City has experienced several positive changes. Downtown received a facelift through rehabilitated building facades and streetscape improvements. These changes attracted new tenants in the form of specialty retail shops and restaurants, anchored by the historic Porter County Court House. Most recently, Downtown benefitted from Central Park Plaza, a civic gathering space that hosts live concerts and performances, as well as a Farmers' Market. Commercial areas outside of Downtown received financial incentives for façade improvements, including Cumberland Crossing which was completely redeveloped from a strip-style shopping center to a beautiful, modern lifestyle center. Major road projects provided needed upgrades to infrastructure and improved connectivity. Valparaiso University continues to make facility and campus improvements as it sees through its recent Campus Master Plan. In the past few years, the City has embraced development and facilitated redevelopment, which has resulted in the vigorous place it is today.

Whether an issue is a challenge or an opportunity, the utmost importance should be placed upon this plan as a mechanism for thoughtful public discussion of the choices facing Valparaiso. As the community looks ahead to its near- and longer-term futures, the desires of its citizens are interwoven through all aspects of this plan. From parks to neighborhoods and

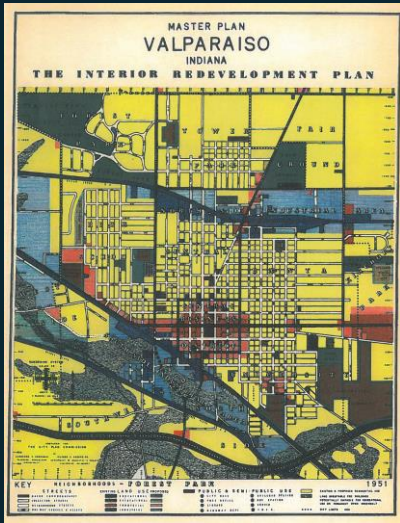


Central Park Plaza

Source: www.sehinc.com



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Valparaiso Interior Redevelopment Plan showing future land uses and development areas.

Source: Valparaiso Comprehensive Plan, 1951

Downtown, there are many community assets that this plan strives to strengthen. Local residents have demonstrated their ability to manage and improve an appealing community for more than a century. This plan seeks to continue this tradition.

Many citizens and community leaders believe that the City is on the brink of significant growth. Whether development pressures increase or not, the City will inevitably experience change. This Comprehensive Plan provides an opportunity to “Envision Valparaiso” for the next 20 years and beyond.

Planning History

Visitors of Valparaiso will notice that the City is unique and offers many interesting visual features. Many people say that the City is highly “imagable,” meaning that it is a memorable place. Valparaiso didn’t evolve into such a likeable community by happenstance - it took visioning, foresight, preparedness, and good leadership.

Valparaiso was one of the first communities in Indiana to adopt a Comprehensive Plan, termed the “Master Plan”, in 1925. In 1951, it was replaced with another master plan, which focused on an “Interior Redevelopment Plan” and a “Neighborhood Development Plan of the Two-Mile Jurisdictional Area.” This plan established the foundation for adoption of the zoning and subdivision regulations.

The City’s current plan was adopted in 1991, which was revised in 1995, 2002, and 2003. In 2000, a “Growth Management Plan” was adopted. Other master plans such as the Parks Master Plan, Pathways Master Plan, Water Master Plan, Wastewater Systems Plan, and the Downtown Comprehensive Plan were adopted separately. The Parks Master Plan recently underwent an update (see section below relating to coordination with other plans).

The current plan has served the City well. However, the City has matured beyond the plan’s vision and its current policies. It is a policy of this plan that it is to be revisited every five years, with adjustments to the vision, policies, and recommendations as warranted.

Why Planning is Important to Valparaiso

This Comprehensive Plan is designed as a framework for guiding future development, redevelopment, and community enhancement in the City and its planning area over the next 20 years. The purpose of this plan is to establish a vision, along with realistic goals and achievable strategies, that residents, business and land owners, developers, major institutions, civic groups, members of boards and commissions, and public officials can support and use in their decision-making in the years ahead.



Since change in the community is inevitable, the City has taken advantage of this opportunity to determine its destiny through the comprehensive plan process. Along the way, decision-makers, with input from their constituents, made policies decisions, to address:

- How we want our community to appear?
- What type of growth we want and where it is to occur?
- How we achieve our economic objectives?
- What improvements and enhancements are needed?
- What our priorities are for achieving our intended future?

The process of updating the plan proved equally valuable to the plan itself since the document is a snapshot in time. The planning process involved major community decisions about where development/redevelopment will occur, the nature and extent of future development, and the community's capacity to provide the necessary public services and facilities to support this development. This led to pivotal discussions about what is "best" for the community and how everything from taxes to quality of life will be affected.

This long-range planning process provided an opportunity for the City's elected and appointed officials to step back from pressing, day-to-day issues and clarify their ideas on the kind of community they are trying to create and maintain. Through the planning process, they looked broadly at programs for land use, community character, neighborhoods and housing, sustainability, economic development, and provision of public infrastructure and facilities, and how these relate to one another. The Valparaiso Comprehensive Plan represents a "big picture" view of the City, one that is related to the trends and interests of the broader region and the State of Indiana.

In summary, this process offered an opportunity for the community to celebrate its past but, more importantly, to envision its future. The City has a strong history of long-range planning. Therefore, continued success of the City will largely depend on the commitment of citizens and leaders to abide by the policies of this plan.

Legal Basis

Cities in Indiana derive their authority for comprehensive planning from the State. Indiana law requires comprehensive plans to be adopted by resolution, in order to advance the public health, safety, morals, convenience, order, and general welfare of its citizens. The State also requires that a local plan provide "efficiency and economy in the process of development."¹ This focus on fiscal responsibility reflects the values of the State.

¹ 500 Series Comprehensive Plan IC 36-7-4-501

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"Planning" is ... the process of identifying issues and needs, establishing goals and objectives, and determining the most effective means by which these ends may be achieved.

Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative



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Comprehensive Plan Elements Permitted by the State of Indiana:

- History, population, physical conditions
- Land use and bulk of structures and sites
- Densities
- Community centers
- Neighborhood units
- Areas for redevelopment and conservation
- Public ways
- Water, sewer, drainage, waste, and other utilities
- Pollution
- Flood control and irrigation
- All modes of transportation
- Parks, recreation, forest, refugees, etc.
- Public facilities
- Education
- Land Use
- Conservation of resources
- Other factors that contribute to the social, physical, or economic condition of the community

Source: 500 Series Comprehensive Plan IC 36-7-4-503

The state legislation mandates that plans, as a minimum, contain the following three elements:

- 1) Objectives for future development;
- 2) Policies regarding land use; and
- 3) Policies for development of public property.²

The authorizing legislation permits additional elements, including those listed in the margin to the left. The list is broadly permissive and reflects the State's goal that development occurs pursuant to a comprehensive plan. State law defines the purpose for planning as follows:

- 1) Highway systems are to be carefully planned;
- 2) New communities grow only with adequate public ways, utilities, health, and educational and recreational facilities;
- 3) Needs of agriculture, forestry, industry, and business are recognized in future growth;
- 4) Residential areas provide healthful surroundings for family life; and
- 5) Growth of the community is commensurate with and proportional to the efficient and economical use of public funds.³

The State regulations anticipate a coordinated and visionary approach for the connection of roadways. State legislation specifically calls for careful planning of highways.⁴ The provisions regarding local roadway planning anticipate that future roads will follow the alignment and width of roadways reflected on the Thoroughfare Plan. The characteristics of a roadway may only be changed as prescribed in the adopted comprehensive plan.⁵ This provision allows a Capital Improvements Program (CIP) to be incorporated into the comprehensive plan, which may create a stronger connection between public and private implementation of the comprehensive plan.

State law also authorizes and limits housing programs, economic development, and property maintenance. The applicable state laws are reviewed in the applicable sections of this Comprehensive Plan to ensure the City remains on firm grounds, but also to be sure that all planning tools are thoroughly understood.

Use of this Plan

A comprehensive plan, when embraced by the City and its leadership, has great potential to aid the community in achieving its vision of livability and in making tangible improvements. However, comprehensive plans are only effective if their action recommendations are pursued and implemented.

² 500 Series Comprehensive Plan IC 36-7-4-502

³ 200 Series Commission Establishment and Membership IC 36-7-4-201

⁴ 200 Series Commission Establishment and Membership IC 36-7-4-201

⁵ 500 Series Comprehensive Plan IC 36-7-4-506



This plan is a guidance document for City officials and staff, who make decisions on a daily basis that determine the future directions, financial health, and “character” of the community. These decisions are carried out through:

- targeted programs and expenditures prioritized through the City’s annual budget process, including routine but essential functions such as code enforcement;
- major public improvements and land acquisition financed through the City’s capital improvement program and related bond initiatives;
- new and amended City ordinances and regulations closely linked to the Comprehensive Plan objectives (and associated review and approval procedures in the case of land development, subdivisions, and zoning matters);
- departmental work plans and staffing in key areas;
- support for ongoing planning and studies that will further clarify needs, costs, benefits, and strategies;
- pursuit of external grant funding to supplement local budgets and/or expedite certain projects; and,
- initiatives pursued in conjunction with other public and private partners to leverage resources and achieve successes neither could accomplish on their own.

Despite many avenues for action, a comprehensive plan should not be considered a “cure all” for every problem the community faces. This Plan focuses on the responsibilities of the City for its land use and growth planning, where it has a direct role. In other areas, such as education, social services, and arts and culture the City has an indirect but still important role. Of necessity, this plan, as a vision and policy document, is sufficiently general so as to remain relevant over time. Thus, the plan provides a framework for future decision-making: it may not touch on every challenge before the community, but it is meant to set a tone and motivate concerted efforts to move the community forward in the coming years.

It is also important to distinguish between the function of the Comprehensive Plan versus that of the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO). This plan establishes the overall policy for future land use, mobility improvements, utilities, and other aspects of community growth and economic development. The City’s UDO and official zoning map implement the plan in terms of specific land uses and their building and site development standards. The City’s subdivision regulations, which are contained in the UDO, establish minimum development requirements in conformance with the plan for the subdivision of land; the layout of new or redeveloped streets and building sites; and the design and construction of roads, water and sewer lines, storm drainage, and other infrastructure that will be dedicated to the City for long-term maintenance.

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 The logo features the word "ENOVISION" in a bold, sans-serif font, with a stylized circular graphic element between the "O" and "V". Below it, "2030" and "VALPARAISO" are written in a smaller font.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PLANNING

The success of the plan depends upon how it is integrated with the operation of local government (planning, policy development, regulation, budgeting and capital investments, and programming through City departments).

Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative



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1.2 PLANNING PRIORITIES

A Perfect Storm of Studies

The rewriting of this Comprehensive Plan occurred at the same time as other plans and studies were being conducted by the City and other entities. The Porter County Regional Airport recently completed its master plan entitled, "In Plane View: A Clear Vision for the Future." The City completed an update of its Parks Master Plan in 2011. Also, Valparaiso University and Valparaiso Community Schools developed their own master plans. The Downtown Valparaiso Parking Study was finished in 2010 with recommendations to address parking supply and management. Lastly, Porter County has a comprehensive plan that includes many of the same elements addressed in this plan. Each of these plans is referenced with their recommendations integrated as appropriate.

Recently completed plans for other planning jurisdictions were also taken into consideration. Shown by **Map 1.1, Planning Jurisdictions**, is the study area of this plan, which includes the city limits and a two mile radius that is permitted by the State for areas that may be incorporated into comprehensive plans. It shows the relationships of the planning jurisdictions of other cities near Valparaiso, as well as Porter County.

Other entities that support the City and its neighbors have recently conducted studies. These include the Salt Creek Watershed Management Plan and the Porter County Convention, Recreation, and Visitors' Commission Destination Development Study.

The comprehensive nature of this project warranted coordination with each of these and other entities to ensure consistency with their adopted plans.

Coordination with Representatives of Groups and Agencies

Other entities that support and/or impact planning processes of the City were considered as well. These included:

- Porter County;
- Porter County Regional Airport;
- Coalition of Affordable Housing;
- Valparaiso University;
- Housing Opportunities, Inc.;
- Project Neighborhoods;
- Porter Starke Services;
- Habitat for Humanity;
- Opportunity Enterprises;
- Pines Village Retirement Communities;
- Valparaiso Community Schools;

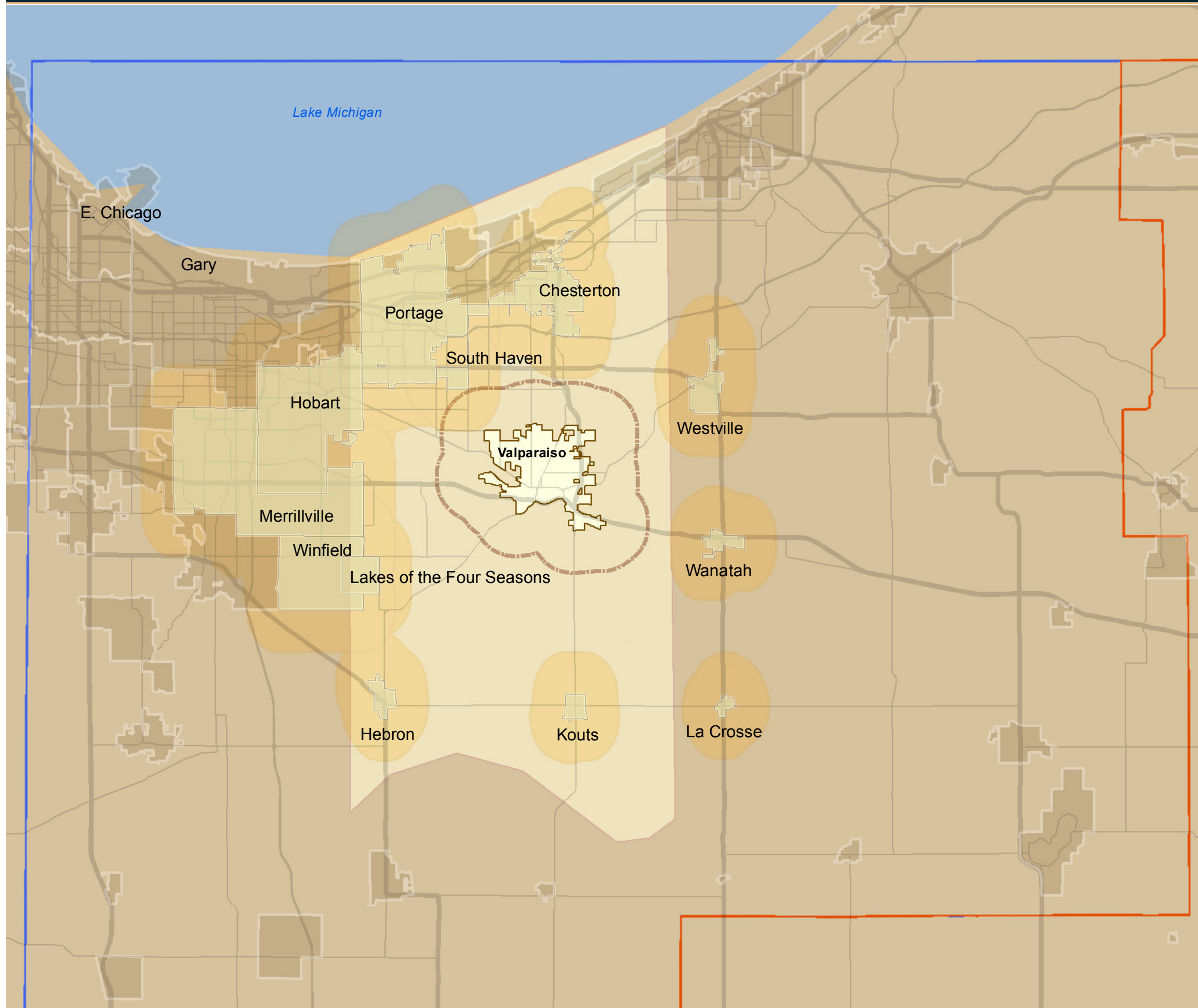


Map 1.1

Planning Jurisdictions

Legend

-  Central Time Zone
-  Eastern Time Zone
-  City Limits
-  2-Mile Boundary
-  Nearby Cities
-  Nearby Cities 2-Mile Boundary
-  Porter County



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- The City of Portage;
- Town of Chesterton;
- Washington, Center, Liberty, Union, Morgan, and Porter Townships;
- Greater Valparaiso Chamber of Commerce ;
- Purdue University North Central, Porter County Campus;
- Lake Michigan Coastal Program;
- Indiana Department of Transportation;
- Save the Dunes;
- Northwest Indiana Community Action (NWI-CA);
- Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC); and
- Northern Indiana Public Service Company (NIPSCO).

As a part of the public participation process, the City also sought input from:

- Local business owners;
- Representatives for the museums;
- Civic groups and community organizations;
- Housing officials;
- Neighborhood leaders;
- Transit officials;
- Environmental groups;
- Land owners and developers;
- Representatives for land trusts; and
- Local non-profit agencies.

This input was sought during the Citizens' Congress and at key points during the plan development process.

Valparaiso: A City of Neighborhoods

The City's residents consider Valparaiso to be a community of neighborhoods, as opposed to a collection of subdivisions. This community value is manifested in both its physical and social attributes.

Physically, most of Valparaiso's neighborhoods stand out from one another. Cities known for their great neighborhoods are also highly picturesque. Certainly, older neighborhoods have their own unique charm because they were built during a time before the production of model homes and volume building. These established neighborhoods have a variety of lot sizes with homes differing from one another in their size and design. This variety adds interest and a richness of housing choice.

Newer neighborhoods in the City are also interesting and distinguishable. This is due to the fact that City officials have facilitated a creative approach to development. Many of these developments, while offering new structures, mimic older developments with varying lot sizes and building styles, and

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Well established neighborhoods have a unique charm by way of their variety.



Newer neighborhoods are interesting and distinguishable.

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“Freestanding City” means a city whose jurisdiction does not abut the jurisdiction of another city, and is thus, surrounded by rural countryside.

Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative

preserving green space through shared open areas. The City took an important step when it adopted the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO). The UDO further encourages creative design by removing regulatory barriers and creating incentives for quality, sustainable development.

The City stands to benefit from strong neighborhood leadership where people socialize with one another. When people know their neighbors, their social lives are enriched, safety increases when there are more “eyes on the street”, and code enforcement is enhanced as people encourage each other to maintain their properties. The most organized system of neighborhood leadership, and one with legal weight, is a homeowners’ association (HOA). However, most of the City’s neighborhoods are not organized into HOA’s. Other strategies for organizing and empowering neighborhoods are outlined in *Chapter 6, Housing & Neighborhoods*.

A Freestanding City

Valparaiso is a freestanding city, meaning that its fringes do not blend into another city. Those that come to the City drive through miles of pristine countryside to get here. Displayed by *Map 1.1, Planning Jurisdictions*, is the City and its planning area, along with other nearby jurisdictions. It reflects many square miles of rural open space around Valparaiso. Several of the other cities have overlapping jurisdictions, whereas Valparaiso is still surrounded by natural areas and farmland. This overlap means that the cities will need to come to agreement regarding their future boundaries, but it also means that as growth occurs, eventually those cities will blend with one another. The cities surrounding Chicago, which compete with cities such as Valparaiso for positive growth, industry, and jobs, are not freestanding and therefore, lack their own unique identities.

This characteristic is yet another asset that sets Valparaiso apart from other communities. It is also a local value expressed by its citizens and business owners. Therefore, this plan sets policies with a goal of preserving and protecting the rural/urban transition and entrances to the City.

Making the Old New Again

In early 2009, the City compiled a list of accomplishments from the previous five years. The Mayor’s office reported that during that period, over \$40 million in State and Federal grants had been leveraged, which allowed significant public projects and revitalization of older developments to occur. The list of those projects is provided in the inset on Page 1-9, entitled, “Public Projects, 2004 - 2009.” Many of these projects were managed by the City’s Redevelopment Commission.



A major project that is underway is University Village Promenade, a mixed use development that includes housing and retail uses. This project is part of the City's implementation of the Eastgate Plan, which is designed to strengthen the University's connection to Lincolnway, Downtown, and the surrounding neighborhoods.

Public Projects, 2004-2009

New Construction

- City's first roundabout;
- Valparaiso Street project from Evans to Glendale providing a new roadway with sidewalks and curbs and a new expansive sewer trunk line to improve drainage;
- Construction of Vale Park Way;
 - formed a new environmentally-friendly roadway between Valparaiso Street and Campbell Street;
 - included a pathway with environmental features;
- Butterfly Meadows; and
- Village Station in a public/private partnership.

Renovations, Expansion, and Redevelopment

- Comprehensive upgrade of the City's Eastgate area, including the addition of a continuous turning lane, relocating overhead utility lines, and replacing water lines, curbs, and sidewalks;
- Redevelopment of the former County Seat Plaza into a retail village that is now Cumberland Crossing;
- Construction of a new Police Station to replace the one built in 1879 (consolidation of the City's 911 system);
- Paving of more than 43 miles of city roads - more than one third of the City's entire road system;
 - Road Recovery Plan allows for the resurfacing of all roads on a 15-year rotation;
- Addition of a third fire station to further expand service; and
- Comprehensive renewal of the downtown streetscape from Morgan Boulevard on the east to Napoleon Street on the west, upgrading sidewalks, curbs, lighting, signals, electrical, sound and water systems.

Source: City of Valparaiso

Private investment has helped to implement the Eastgate Plan. The Uptown East student apartment and commercial development was recently completed, and property owners of several of the existing commercial buildings have made improvements, taking advantage of the City's matching funds in the Façade Improvement Program.

Another important project that supports and enhances activity in Downtown is the Central Park Plaza. This is an open air plaza that doubles as an outdoor venue at the intersection of Indiana Avenue and Lafayette Street. Design features include a plaza and walkways marked by pavers, landscaped sitting areas, a performance stage, and an interactive water feature. The project creates a downtown park that has the capability of accommodating special events such as concerts and movies.



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Downtown

Several years ago, the City completed the Downtown Valparaiso Focus Block #18 project, installing streetscape features, sidewalks, curbs and gutters, and making façade improvements. These improvements have attracted new tenants to Downtown, which is becoming increasingly known for its excellent restaurants. Downtown has become the pride of the City, bustling with activity on weekdays and weekends, alike. There is, however, room for improvements for entertainment, restaurants, and retail to further enhance this distinctive area. This is an area that has the capacity to attract both families and young people. Additional retail uses will encourage tenants to stay open longer in the evenings and to encourage activities at night.

Historic Residential Areas

The historic residential areas are located north of Lincolnway in the area around Glendale Boulevard, and south of Lincolnway stretching to the commercial frontage along U.S. 30. Most of these homes were built before 1950. A significant effort was made a few years ago to protect one of these neighborhoods with a historic district. However, property owners in the area made it clear that the preservation standards were too restrictive leading to the removal of the designation. Some of the historic structures are in need of repair while others have been converted to multi-unit households. This Comprehensive Plan outlines options to encourage reinvestment and to ensure that the City does not incrementally lose its historic areas (see **Chapter 6, Housing & Neighborhoods**).

VISION STATEMENTS

The **City of Valparaiso** adopted the following Vision Statement with its last update of the Comprehensive Plan:

The people of Valparaiso seek to be part of a quality community that is defined not by political or geographical boundaries, but rather by its “can do” spirit. Valparaiso will continue to be a community of cultural, ethnic, political, and economic diversity where each person has the opportunity to live, learn, work, play and excel in a safe and friendly environment. By welcoming the future and honoring the past, Valparaiso will welcome positive change, solve its local challenges and, when appropriate, actively cooperate in finding solutions to regional problems.

The **Northwest Indiana Regional Plan** includes the following Vision Statement:

“Envision Northwest Indiana: a vibrant, revitalized, accessible and united region.

Stretching from the treasured shores of Lake Michigan to the historic banks of the Kankakee River and committed to an ethic of sustainability:

A vibrant region – Our economy is thriving, our people are well educated, and our environment is clean;

A revitalized region – Growth is planned, urban areas are renewed, and natural and rural areas are valued and protected;

An accessible region – Our people are connected to each other and to equal opportunities for working, playing, living, and learning;

A united region – Celebrating our diversity, we work together as a community across racial, ethnic, political, and cultural lines for the good of the region.”



1.3 COMMUNITY PROFILE: ON THE CUSP OF GROWTH

Existing Roadways

Shown in **Figure 1.1, Major Access Corridors**, is the major roads that traverse the City. The community is accessible from all directions. U.S. 30 and the combined SR130/SR2 provide good east-west connectivity. U.S. 30 acts as a bypass route, whereas the State Routes act as “business” roadways, taking traffic through the heart of Valparaiso, turning into Lincolnway through Downtown. Similarly, SR49 splits to carry bypass traffic to the east of the City, whereas the business route turns into Culumet Avenue, which contains a significant portion of the City’s commercial development.

Also revealed in *Figure 1.1, Major Access Corridors*, is a lack of east-west mobility in the northern half of the City. On the west side, there is also a need to create a north-south connection between U.S. 30 and SR130 / Lincolnway.

Displayed in **Figure 1.2, Regional Connections**, is the connections to and from the Chicago metropolitan area. Valparaiso benefits from good intrastate and interstate access, with direct connections to Chicago and other regional and Midwestern markets.

Population Comparisons and Projections

This section describes the demographics of Valparaiso, including the past population growth in the City and in comparison cities across Indiana and the upper Midwest. The selected peer communities include college towns that have fewer than 100,000 residents, with the exception of South Bend that has just over 100,000 persons, but was included due to its familiarity to Valparaiso residents. This section also includes demographic comparisons with these cities, Porter County, and Indiana in order to gauge the relative strengths or opportunities for Valparaiso. Lastly,

Figure 1.1, Major Access Corridors

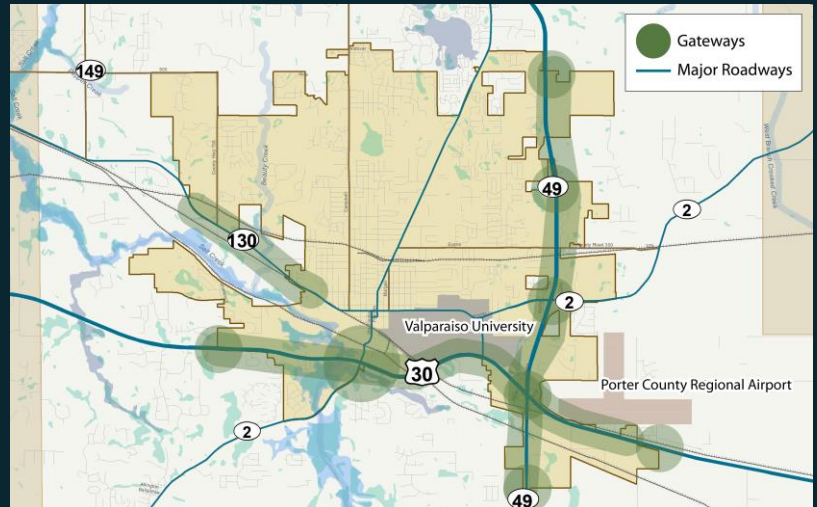


Figure 1.2, Regional Connections



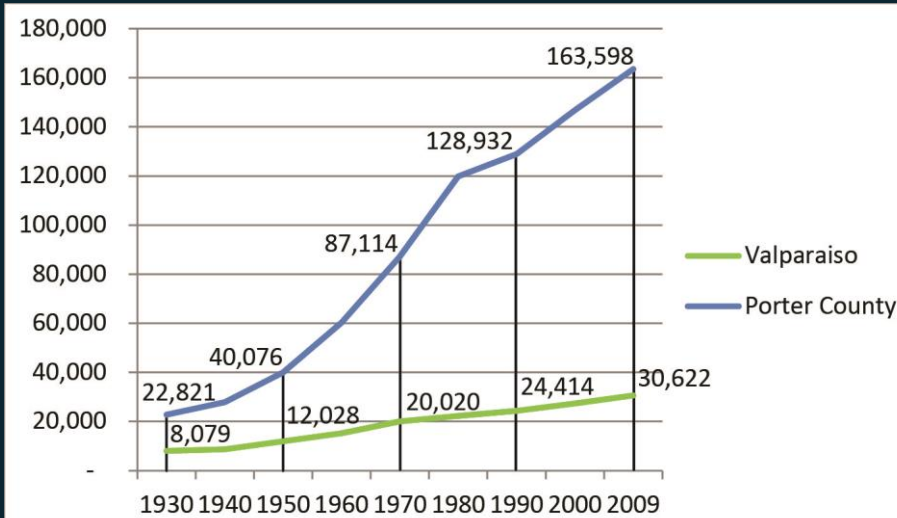
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this section addresses the City's "Readiness for Economic Development" to examine the community's position in the region and state. This chapter concludes with a discussion of three emerging themes relative to the City's population growth – job growth as a driver of population growth, a need for adequate housing, and the role of the natural environment in sustaining future growth.

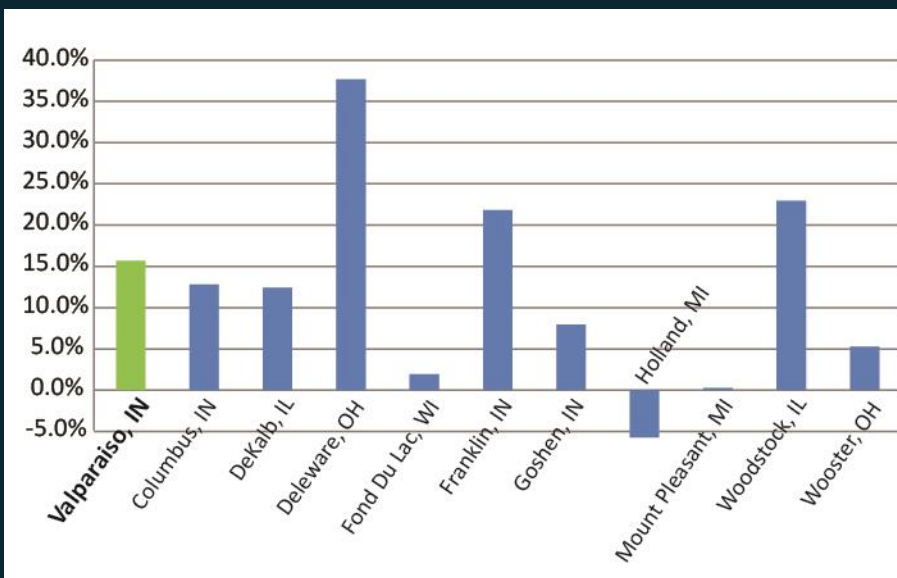
Historical and Future Population

Figure 1.3, Historic Populations of Valparaíso and Porter County



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010.

Figure 1.4, Population Change of Comparison Cities, 2000 to 2010

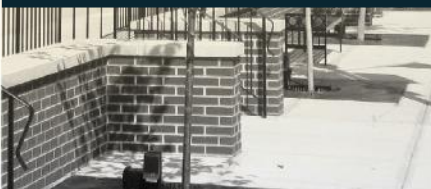


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010.

Reflected by **Figure 1.3, Historic Populations of Valparaíso and Porter County**, is the steady population growth of Valparaíso and Porter County since 1930. Relative to Porter County, Valparaíso has not seen the sharp increases that the County has experienced, particularly during the 1970's when their population jumped almost 40 percent. After 1980, the County's growth has slowed, with both the City and County experiencing roughly 10 percent growth per decade, or an annual increase of around one percent.

Shown by **Figure 1.4, Population Change of Comparison Cities, 2000 to 2010**, is the growth of Valparaíso relative to the comparison cities, which exhibits that the City's growth of the last decade is above average. Valparaíso increased its population during this time by nearly 16 percent, which is among the fastest growing of those compared in this analysis.

Exhibited in **Table 1.1, Annual Population Growth and Percent Change**, is the population and percent change between 2000 and 2010 for Valparaíso, Porter County, and Indiana. Generally, the City experienced a slower



rate of growth until 2008 at which time its growth has exceeded that of Porter County.

Shown in **Figure 1.5, Population Projections**, is the high, middle-ground, and low projections of the City's population in the year 2030 and intervening years. The projections assume that growth will continue in its historical trend over the next 20 years, even though some fluctuations will likely occur. They do not reflect a prolonged effect of the current economic downturn. While the slowdown of the past three years is likely to continue in the near-term, the projected growth in VU's student enrollment is likely to offset any decrease in the resident population.

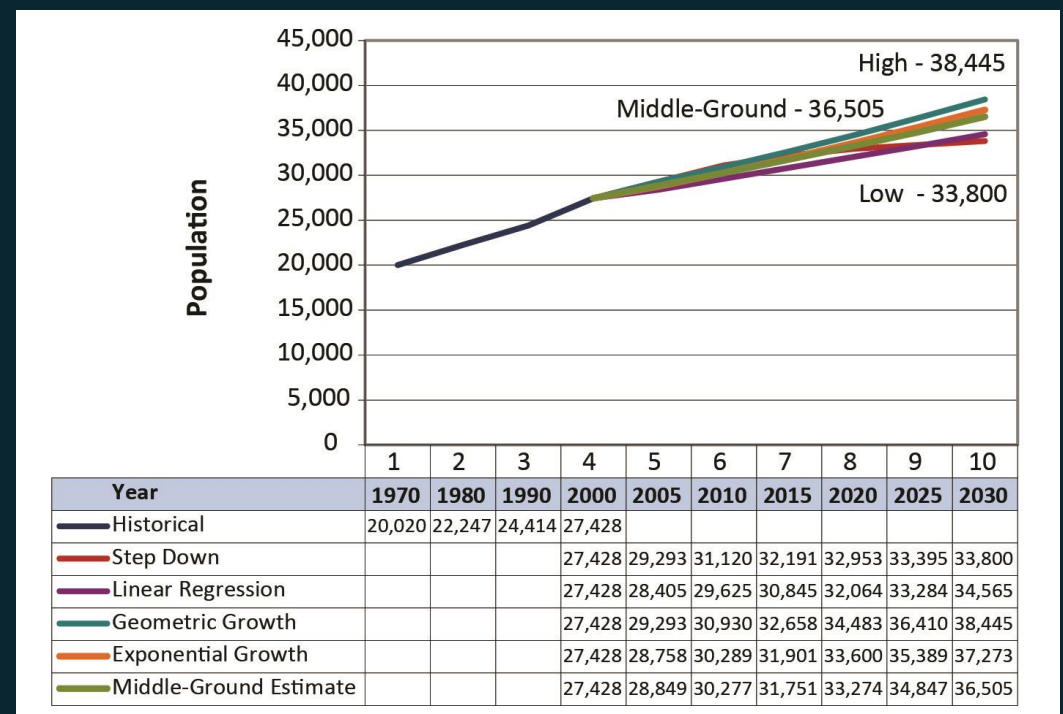
Presently the City is largely populated with Caucasian and non-Hispanic persons. Shown in **Table 1.2, Race and Ethnicity**, very little change in the distribution of race since 1990. There is however, a significant shift in the number and relative proportion of those of Hispanic origin. While still a relatively small percentage, the number of Hispanic persons has grown by more than 100 percent since 2000; from 917 persons in 2000 to 2,263 persons in 2010,

Table 1.1, Annual Population Growth and Percent Change

	Year	Valparaiso		Porter County		Indiana	
		Population	% Change	Population	% Change	Population	% Change
Census Estimates	2000	28,254		147,164		6,091,649	
	2001	28,435	0.64%	148,378	0.82%	6,124,967	0.55%
	2002	28,747	1.10%	149,950	1.06%	6,149,007	0.39%
	2003	28,889	0.49%	151,553	1.07%	6,181,789	0.53%
	2004	29,054	0.57%	153,447	1.25%	6,214,454	0.53%
	2005	29,293	0.82%	155,717	1.48%	6,253,120	0.62%
	2006	29,639	1.18%	158,242	1.62%	6,301,700	0.78%
	2007	29,985	1.17%	160,509	1.43%	6,346,113	0.70%
	2008	30,394	1.36%	162,300	1.12%	6,388,309	0.66%
	2009	30,622	0.75%	163,598	0.80%	6,423,113	0.54%
	2010	31,730	3.62%	164,343	0.46%	6,483,802	0.94%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010.

Figure 1.5, Population Projections



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Kendig Keast Collaborative, 2010.



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Data Availability

In many cases, the U.S. Census Bureau is the best source for providing data about socioeconomic conditions at the local community level. In 2010, the U.S. Census changed the way it collects certain data; instead of collecting some characteristics, such as income and employment every ten years, it will now be collecting that information annually in the American Community Survey.

increasing from 3.3 percent to 7.1 percent of the total population. This trend is expected to continue in the future.

Table 1.2, Race and Ethnicity

Year	1990	2000	2010
White	97.78%	94.19%	91.80%
Black or African American	0.58%	1.85%	4.00%
American Indian and Alaska Native	0.20%	0.68%	0.90%
Asian	1.13%	1.82%	2.80%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	N/A	0.08%	0.10%
Some other race	0.30%	1.37%	2.70%
Hispanic Origin	1.42%	3.30%	7.10%

Source: City of Valparaiso. U.S. Census Bureau. 2009.

Job Growth as a Driver of Population Growth

A key to facilitating community growth is available employment. The level of education is also a key determinant related to the capabilities of the area labor force. This, in turn, influences the types of businesses that may be retained and attracted, as well as the success businesses may have in finding the types of labor skills they require. Valparaiso compares favorably with other college towns, as well as Porter County and the State. Valparaiso University provides the City a competitive edge; the strong collaborative relationship between the University and City leadership provides opportunity for sustaining a strong local economy.

As articulated by stakeholders during the process, it is important for Valparaiso to provide proper opportunities for young adults to enable them stay in the City. As host to Valparaiso University, the City has a constant stream of younger workers who may become future residents and employees (or employers). However, currently, a majority of these students migrate elsewhere upon graduation. Most important will be an effort to diversify the economy so that there are a variety of jobs available in the community for recent graduates. This effort must be part of a larger goal of bringing more jobs to Valparaiso and the region. In order to attract these younger residents to Valparaiso, other niche amenities should be offered and promoted. These opportunities include housing choices that appeal to younger persons and which are affordable given the local employment options. Local recreation and entertainment in the form of “night life” is becoming increasingly important as well. This constituency composes the future workforce and population of Valparaiso so efforts must be made to attract and retain them.



Also, it is essential to focus on the existing core constituency, the 65+ age cohort, so they too, have the proper economic, social, recreational, and housing opportunities. The “graying” of the population is a consideration since the needs of residents are changing: more transportation options for seniors who do not drive, housing alternatives that allow residents to age gracefully in their existing neighborhoods, local health care facilities, and mature learning opportunities.

Need for Adequate Housing

A theme that was articulated during the public input sessions is that Valparaiso has a shortage of quality rental housing and affordable options. Several people commented that there is a lack of attainable housing for purchase. This is evident in a comparison of housing statistics as well as a visible inventory of neighborhood conditions. As businesses recruit talented workers, they look at the City’s housing choices and availability. The limited ability of potential residents to find a suitable home has implications for the City’s future growth. It also curtails residents from moving from their existing home into a larger home or another housing type. Creating more availability and variety of housing is essential for Valparaiso to maintain its population growth and economic competitiveness.

Currently, 57 percent of all dwelling units are owner-occupied and 43 percent are renter-occupied.⁶ A lower rate of homeownership is commonly an indicator of problems with property maintenance and neighborhood integrity. While lower owner occupancy is likely due to Valparaiso being a college town, areas with a high rate of student housing tend to present maintenance issues as well. Although the rate of renter occupancy is across the entire City, there are neighborhoods that have much higher and lower percentages of rental occupancy. An abundance of renters in a particular area can lead to neighborhood-wide issues that would not be present in other areas of the City. A lack of neighborhood integrity and reinvestment can lead to a virtuous cycle that drives away potential investors or new residents. While less likely to impact population growth, neighborhood character and community leadership are important factors when weighing options for housing.

The Role of the Natural Environment

The City has a sound history of environmental stewardship through programs and policies, which includes the work of various other entities. The City’s location on the Valparaiso Moraine provides a beautiful, rolling topography with natural wooded areas, surrounded by a pristine countryside.

In geographic terms, this Comprehensive Plan addresses the current city limits, as well as a two-mile planning area. The natural environment is an

⁶ City of Valparaiso, U.S. Census Bureau, 2010

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The Valparaiso Moraine



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important consideration both inside the City and in the lands surrounding it. Protection of these lands from substandard development practices can be implemented through a variety of means. There is a desire to ensure sensitive planning and development practices, as well as the protection of life and property from the adverse impacts of natural disasters.

1.4 PUBLIC PROCESS/STAKEHOLDER INPUT: EARLY AND OFTEN

Local planning is often the most direct and efficient way to involve residents and other stakeholders in determining the vision for their community. The process of plan preparation provides a rare opportunity for two-way communication between citizens and local government officials as to their aspirations for the community and the details of how their shared vision is to be achieved.

The ability to effectively implement the Plan is directly correlated to the amount of citizen and stakeholder participation and the sense of ownership derived from the process. The Plan contains many components and serves numerous functions, such as providing information, describing existing community conditions and characteristics, and establishing policies and strategies for overcoming challenges and capitalizing on opportunities.

Official Public Hearings

The State of Indiana outlines the formal adoption process for comprehensive plans. Once the Plan Commission has certified the plan, it must proceed to the City Council for adoption by resolution. Should the Council reject or amend the resolution, the plan must return to the Commission to prepare changes.⁷

Indiana law requires one public hearing before the Plan Commission may take action. It also lays out requirements for proper notice.⁸ This formal public hearing requirement is how the State ensures that plans are adopted with an opportunity for full knowledge of the public. However, the public had many opportunities for input because they were considered an integral part of the planning process. Their involvement is outlined below.

Citizens' Congress

The comprehensive planning process kicked off on September 20, 2010, with a Citizens Congress, where the general public was given an opportunity to provide input. After a brief overview of the Plan, the current planning context, and the process, participants provided input during two rounds of breakout sessions. Participants chose two of three general subject areas to provide input.

⁷ 500 Series Comprehensive Plan IC 36-7-4-508 and 509

⁸ 500 Series Comprehensive Plan IC 36-7-4-507



Citizens were involved in all stages of public development, through individual and group interviews, a citywide Citizen's Congress, and through meetings of the steering committee.



Focus Groups

On September 20th and 21st, 2010, eight small group interviews were held. Attendees represented the following general interest groups:

- City and County leaders, boards, and commissions;
- Historic and cultural interests;
- Neighborhoods and housing advocates;
- Developers, realtors, builders, and designers;
- Environmental interests;
- Public and private institutions;
- Chamber of Commerce, business, and economic development organizations; and
- Transportation interests.

Steering Committee

The City appointed a Steering Committee of 15 members representing a wide range of interests. This Committee provided oversight and continuous input throughout the process. The group met multiple times to review and comment on each of the eight chapters, and to recommend the Plan for adoption to the City Council.

Planning Staff Connection

The City's Planning Director, Tyler Kent, collected and provided variable input and answered questions. Throughout the plan development process, as the ultimate administrator of the plan, Tyler played an integral role in its development, defining the plan of execution.

Insights from the Public

At the kick-off meetings, many participants offered valuable, constructive comments. These comments are summarized into several themes that influenced the plan's directions and recommendations. Generally, citizens of Valparaiso understand that growth and change will occur and would like to ensure that they occur in a quality, sustainable manner. The discussion themes are outlined below.

Commercial Development and Redevelopment

An important consideration for Valparaiso is the amount, location, types, and development styles of future commercial development and redevelopment. The continued redevelopment of Downtown warrants further enhancement and protection from becoming overshadowed by other commercial development. Some of the existing commercial areas outside of Downtown have been redeveloped or rehabilitated, which should continue. New commercial development outside of Downtown should be carefully planned so strip commercial development and overbuilding is avoided.

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 The logo for ENOVISION 2030 VALPARAISO features the word "ENOVISION" in a bold, sans-serif font. The "O" is stylized with a colorful circular graphic behind it. Below "ENOVISION" are the years "2030" and the word "VALPARAISO" in a smaller, all-caps font.

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Construction of the new Porter Regional Hospital at SR-49 and U.S. 6

The fact that Porter Hospital is relocating outside the City presents both opportunities and challenges. The hospital will expand substantially and move all of its facilities to the northwest corner of U.S. 6 and SR49, outside of the City limits and just north of the Comprehensive Plan study area. Porter Hospital is one of the largest employers and utility customers in Valparaiso. While the increased distance to work is not likely to deter residents employed by the hospital to move, the City will need to focus on encouraging new tax revenue sources to locate or relocate within the City. Also, the new site will likely increase development pressures along the U.S. 6 and SR49 corridors; therefore policies must be established to guide the City's response to these pressures. There is also a good possibility that this expansion and relocation, along with the establishment of national health insurance and the continued aging of the general population, may attract additional health professionals to the area.

The U.S. 30 Corridor presents a challenge to the City in that there has been pressure to develop "strip-style" as it currently is to the west. Today, there is no reflection of the character of the City along this corridor. However, they took a significant step forward to address these issues with the U.S. 30 Corridor Plan, which is already in the initial stages of implementation. Execution of this plan will transform this corridor into a signature gateway to the community, as well as to Valparaiso University.

Walkable Community

There is a strong desire in the community for residents to be able to walk to schools and to commercial areas outside of Downtown. For the most part, the outlying commercial developments are too focused on automobile access and thus, discourage pedestrian traffic. In some of these areas, and in some neighborhoods, security needs to be enhanced through better street lighting, together with improvement of sidewalks and trails. In other areas, safety needs to be addressed through improved connectivity. In general, consideration must be given to commercial development and redevelopment to make them more of a draw for pedestrians.

The City has completed several projects to enhance pedestrian mobility. Funding has been made available to install pathways and sidewalks, to create a program for safe routes to schools, and to invest in other pedestrian system enhancements. Other opportunities exist to encourage walkability outside of the core Downtown area.

Employing Valparaiso Citizens

Valparaiso is fortunate to have a history of strong businesses, many of them family-owned and operated. Valparaiso University enhances economic opportunity as a major employer, and which helps to insulate the City from severe market swings. However, there is a need for the community to further



develop its job opportunities. There is concern that there are not enough entry-level jobs to keep students in Valparaiso once they graduate, nor to draw a younger labor pool to the area. There is also a need to provide increasing levels of employment so that there are opportunities for advancement.

The focus for creating employment opportunities should be on professional and light industrial uses, as these offer higher wages and opportunities for individual growth. Both business parks in Valparaiso, Eastport and Montdale, are nearly full. Currently there is a lack of sites that are “shovel ready”, meaning there are a relative few sites that have readily available infrastructure so an employer can initiate building on short order. Rather than a site-by-site approach, the City would like to take steps to establish a light industrial/office development with multiple sites available for near- and longer-term development.

Diversity in Home Choices

There is a fairly diverse housing market in Valparaiso in terms of the prices and types of housing. However, there must be continued efforts to expand housing choices in light of changing demographics and consumer demands. Valparaiso University recently announced that its intent to expand its enrollment by almost 50 percent, from 4,100 students to 6,000 students in the next few years. While the anticipated V.U. Master Plan will include a housing plan, it is unlikely that the University will provide dormitory-style housing for all the additional students. There is also a concern that the cost of housing in Valparaiso is becoming increasingly expensive, which may discourage those who work here from living in Valparaiso. Drawing a younger labor pool will require additional housing at affordable costs. Housing policies must be balanced to meet these demands without increasing the relative tax burden on the City.

Not too Slow, Not too Fast

The overall theme from the public and stakeholder input is that recent changes have been positive and should continue to be supported. Certainly, there is recognition that additional changes are needed. However, these changes should occur pursuant to the established policies and directions of this plan. A priority is to maintain the City’s relative compactness, with a focus on infill development and redevelopment within the existing City limits. Growth outward should occur in strict adherence with the policies of this plan, which are based on the future development needs of the community, infrastructure availability, and planning to prevent sprawl and unmanaged growth.

Central to this question is the idea of sustainability, which includes not only a discussion of the rate and pattern of growth but also the manner in which this new growth occurs. Among many other considerations, planning must

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 The logo features the word "ENOVISION" in a bold, sans-serif font, with a stylized circular graphic element between the "O" and "V". Below it, "2030" and "VALPARAISO" are written in a smaller font.

“Valparaiso University has announced that it intends to expand its enrollment by almost 50 percent.”

Source: Northwest Indiana Times



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provide for environmental protection and conservation of resources, improved storm water management, compliance with storm water pollution prevention requirements, and energy conservation. The City has made strides in each of these areas through its Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) and through partnerships with environmental planning agencies. Now, the City is poised to take the next steps to ensure its future sustainability.

Mobility

Regarding mobility, this Comprehensive Plan is designed to promote orderly development of the transportation system, considering not only facilities for automobiles and trucks but other modes of transportation as well. In focus group meetings and during the Citizens' Congress, residents expressed strong desires for preserving and improving walkability and bicycling opportunities, maintaining a viable public transit system, providing better options for commuting to Chicago, and seizing the economic benefits of Porter County Regional Airport..

This Plan provides recommendations to incorporate context-sensitive design principles for mobility improvements while considering safety, neighborhood integrity, urban design and community appearance, and historical and environmental considerations—all of which are essential to maintaining community character.

1.5 PLANNING APPROACH

Following is a summary of the remaining chapters of this Comprehensive Plan.

Chapter 2, Land Use and Community Character

The purpose of this chapter is to assess the community's long-range development outlook and establish the necessary policy guidance that will be used in making decisions about the compatibility and appropriateness of individual developments within the context of the larger community. The Future Land Use Plan serves as the City's policy for directing ongoing development and managing future growth, preserving valued areas and lands, and protecting the integrity of neighborhoods, while also safeguarding and enhancing community aesthetics. This chapter also includes an assessment of conditions in the City's planning area (outside of the current City Limits) and recommends appropriate land uses based on natural and topographical features, City and County Thoroughfare Plans, and the existing patterns of land use.

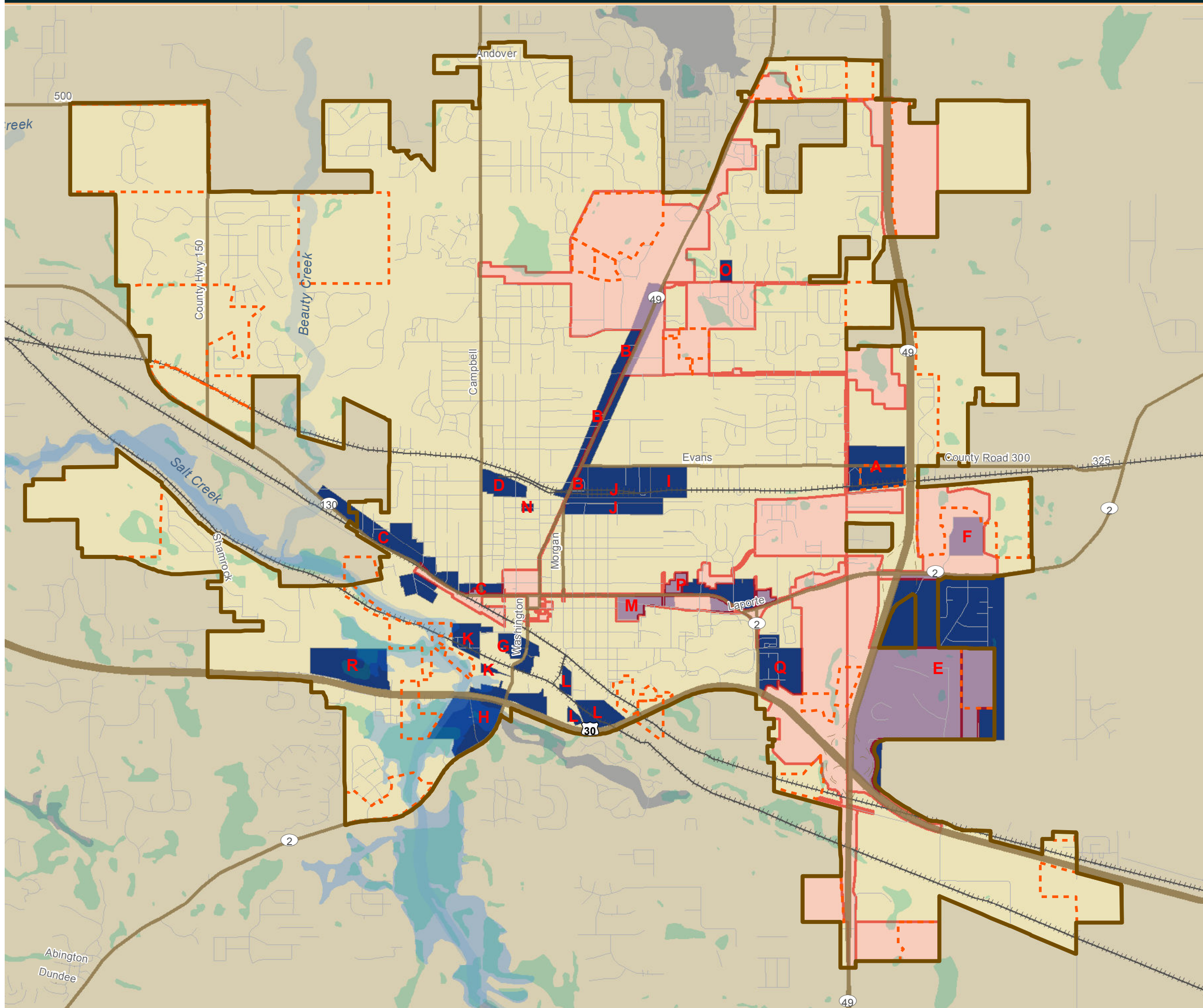
Map 1.2

Infill and Redevelopment Opportunities

Legend

- Land Use Recommendations
- TIF
- Redevelopment Target Sites
- City Limits
- Porter County
- Wetlands, Ponds, and Lakes
- Flood Zone (A)
- Flood Zone (AE)
- Streams and Rivers
- Railroad

- A: Evans Street between Silhavy and Route 2
- B: Calumet from the RR North to five points
- C: West Lincolnway west of Napoleon
- D: Campbell at the McGill site to Lafayette
- E: Commercial Area east of SR-49
- F: Porter's Vale development
- G: Washington Street south of Downtown
- H: SR-2 south of U.S. 30
- I: Roosevelt north of the RR tracks
- J: Elm Street between Calumet and Roosevelt
- K: South Campbell (Brown St. and West St.)
- L: South Morgan from Axe to U.S. 30
- M: Porter Hospital site
- N: Pine at Washington
- O: Keen Property
- P: Eastgate
- Q: Sturdy Road
- R: West Street and Morthland



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Focus Areas: The University Fringe, Downtown, and Central Place

This section of Chapter 2 discusses strategies and options for three areas (shown in **Figure 1.6, Focus Areas: The University Fringe, Downtown, and Central Place**), including strategies for appropriate transitions between them. The University Fringe includes the recent Eastgate Master Plan area. Policies for this area warrant further development, particularly in light of future improvements to Valparaíso University. Downtown is a distinguishable place, thus, policies address its continued development, particularly on its fringes. Central Place warrants further development, including its relationship to Downtown.

Focus Area: Infill/Redevelopment Opportunities

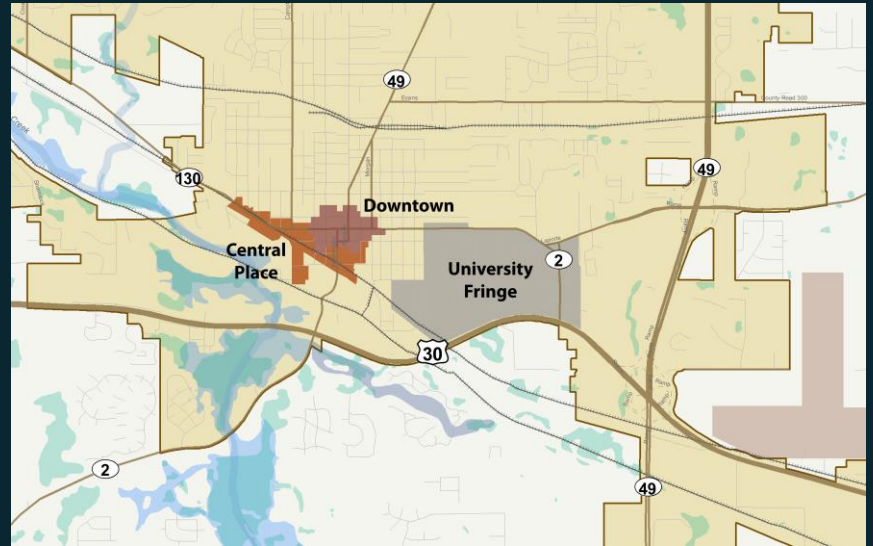
Identified in **Map 1.2, Infill and Redevelopment Opportunities**, is areas of opportunity for infill and redevelopment. As discussed later in this plan, the City should continue to prioritize development within its existing City limits. The infill and redevelopment areas are currently surrounded by existing commercial or residential development. Therefore, adequate protection and transition strategies are set out in this section (see **Figure 1.7, Eastgate**, which exhibits the redevelopment plan for this special area).

Focus Area: U.S. 30

A study that was completed concurrently with this Comprehensive Plan is the U.S. 30 Corridor Master Plan. U.S. 30 has great potential to further the image of the City, enhance the City's healthy balance of businesses, and act as a gateway into the City and to the University. The Master Plan includes sections addressing the following:

- Existing context, function, and character;
- Functional plan;
- Future land use, character, and design;
- Urban design recommendations; and
- Preferred development scenario, incentives, and implementation.

Figure 1.6, Focus Areas: The University Fringe, Downtown, & Central Place



Source: City of Valparaíso, Kendig Keast Collaborative



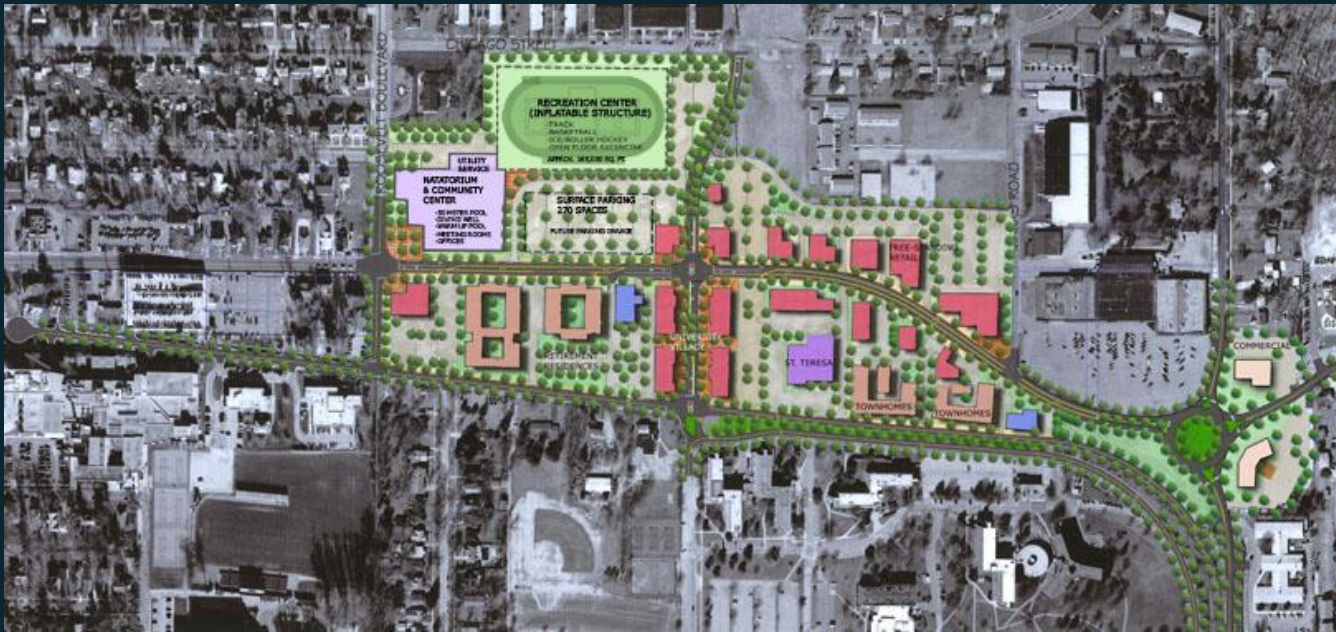
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Focus Area: Airport Influence Area

The Porter County Regional Airport serves a variety of businesses and general aviation customers. It is important to the economic sustainability of the City. It is protected from incompatible development through the City's Unified Development Ordinance (UDO), which restricts heights in the SR49 and U.S. 30 corridors. This section outlines strategies to protect the airport operations and its environs. The protected area around the airport is displayed in **Figure 1.8, Airport Protection Zone**.

Figure 1.7, Eastgate



Source: City of Valparaiso

Chapter 3, Sustainability

The purpose of this chapter is to evaluate and recommend enhancements to the community's quality of life amenities that are consistent with the City's growth expectations and other physical planning elements in this Comprehensive Plan. These amenities include park and recreation facilities, open space areas, historic and cultural facilities and resources, and leisure opportunities. The Parks and Recreation Areas and Facilities Master Plan Update is summarized, along with key elements of the Pathways and Greenways Master Plan. The chapter also discusses the area's environmental quality and biodiversity and the opportunities to preserve natural features and open space, particularly along corridors, adjacent to natural and man-made water features, at community gateways, and in other key areas.



Chapter 4, Opportunity

This chapter addresses the approach for strengthening the City's economic development. It discusses the City's roles in the region and describes its current assets, including employment centers, as well as its communications, health, education, and training resources. The chapter lays out recommended policies and action steps to attract economic development in a way that will preserve community character. These include economic development strategies to support and retain existing businesses, attract and grow new job-creating businesses, and train the community's workforce.

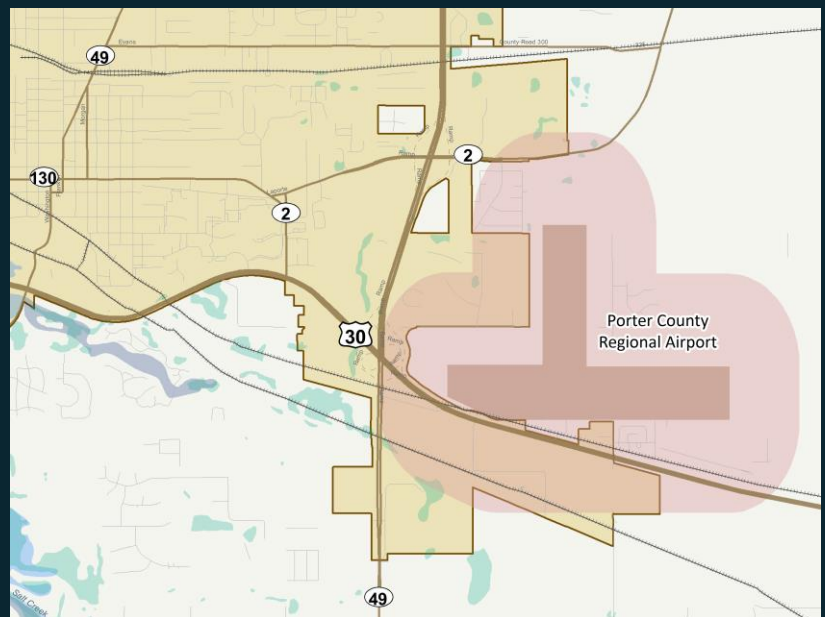
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Chapter 5, Mobility

The purpose of this chapter is to ensure orderly development of the transportation system, considering facilities for automobiles as well as other modes of transportation, such as pedestrian and bicycle circulation (and safety), freight movement, public transportation, air transportation, and their associated needs. Recommendations incorporate context-sensitive design principles that address mobility improvements while accounting for safety, neighborhood integrity, community design, and historical and environmental considerations, all of which are essential for preserving Valparaiso's character and quality of place.

Figure 1.8, Airport Protection Zone



Source: City of Valparaiso, Kendig Keast Collaborative

Chapter 6, Housing and Neighborhoods

The underlying premise of this chapter is to ensure that there is an adequate supply of housing within varying price ranges and of suitable dwelling types to accommodate those desiring to relocate within or to the community. A focus of this chapter is to create and maintain livable neighborhood environments, which includes considerations of infill development in older, revitalizing neighborhoods, and how to ensure quality, sustainable outcomes in new residential development.

Chapter 7, Growth Capacity

The City has relatively few for its future pattern of development. Yet, the City must be forward-thinking and proactive in its short and longer-term planning to grow in a smart and fiscally sustainable manner. Prime among the considerations is efficient use of land, along with a well-coordinated plan for its investments in transportation and utility infrastructure. This chapter sets out the City's policies as to the locations, timing, and sequencing of



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growth, including strategies for reinvesting in established areas and facilitating infill and redevelopment.

Chapter 8, Implementation

The Implementation chapter utilizes the recommendations of the preceding chapters to consolidate an overall strategy for executing the Comprehensive Plan, particularly for the highest-priority initiatives that will be first on the community's action agenda following plan adoption.

