

# CREATING LIVABLE COMMUNITIES

A REPORT OF THE NORTHWESTERN INDIANA REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION 2013



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	Town of	Long Beach
	Town of	Michiana Shores
	Town of	New Chicago
	Town of	Ogden Dunes
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## ABOUT NIRPC

The Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC) serves Lake, Porter and LaPorte Counties in Northwest Indiana as a council of local governments that provides a forum for Northwest Indiana's elected officials to address regional issues relating to transportation, the environment, and community and economic development.

NIRPC also functions as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for Northwest Indiana, working with federal and state departments of transportation, local transit operators, and various stakeholders and residents to plan for, prioritize, and fund regional transportation projects.

## CREATING LIVABLE COMMUNITIES

A Report by the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission 2013

www.nirpc.org

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## LARGE COMMUNITY

**Design Principles** 

- Employment center
- Improve community identity
- Close to transit stops
- Concentration of housing, retail, office and civic destinations within walking distance and a good pedestrian network.
- Walkable, and mixed-uses development
- Achieve appropriate density based on the size of center
- Improve pedestrian mobility and safety
- Improve store front space, park and open space
- Provide diversity housing options

## SCALE RECOMMENDATIONS

- Blocks generally between 200-400 feet in length that contain a variety of uses
- Densities typically range between 8 and 15 dwelling units per acre, while nonresidential floor area ratios may range between 1.0-2.0.
- Areas of concentrated employment or major trip generators
- Low to middle-rise buildings serve with trail and local buses.
- Municipalities: Merrillville, Portage, Valparaiso, and Hobart, including eleven communities in the region.

#### **Overview**

Highland is located in Lake County, about 20 miles from downtown Chicago and eight miles from downtown Gary. According to the 2010 Census the town's population was 23,727, making it the third most populous town in Northwest Indiana.

Highland's general boundary is the Little Calumet River and Hammond on the north, Griffith to the east, Schererville to the south, and Munster to the west.

#### **Livable Centers**

Highland includes a livable center and one neighborhood centers as follows:

### **DOWNTOWN HIGHLAND (DOWNTOWN CENTER)**

The Downtown Highland livable center is defined by LaPorte Avenue on the north, Delaware and Carolina Streets on the east, Lincoln Avenue on the south, and 1st Street and Ridge Road on the west. The total acreage of the center is 220 acres.

#### **Population:**

1,417 people (6% of Highland's population). Population density is 17.5 people per acre.

#### Housing:

The total housing is 611 units (approximately 6% of Highland's total housing). Housing density is 7.6 units per acre.

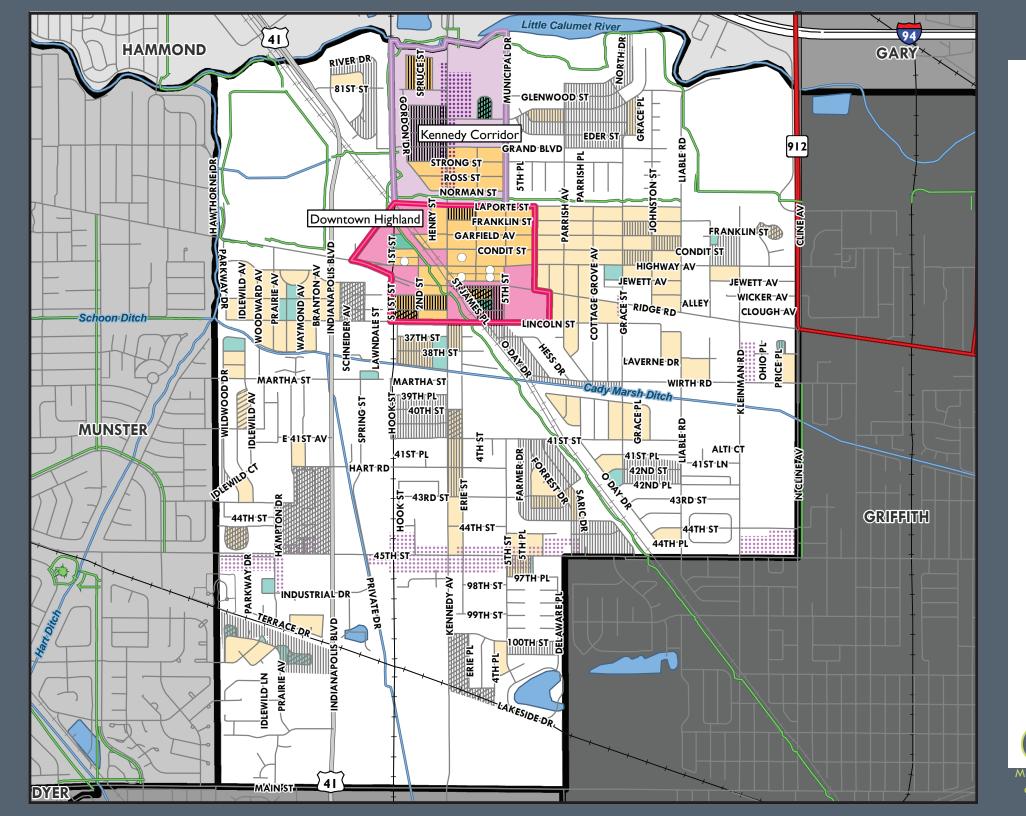
#### Jobs:

Total employment in the downtown livable center is 1,002 with a density of 15.2 jobs per acre.

This center is the traditional center of commerce for Highland, having housed town hall and Main School in Highland's early years, and still housing other civic and institutional functions such as the central fire station and the town library. Like most downtowns, day-to-day retail such as grocery and departments stores have moved to big box spaces in other parts of town, leaving small shops, dining, and nightlife as the predominant types of business.

## TOWN OF HIGHLAND





## HIGHLAND'S LIVABLE CENTERS LIVABLE CENTERS BOUNDARIES

These boundaries were drawn in consultation with planners and representatives associated with the municipalities based on NIRPC's analysis and the municipality's plans

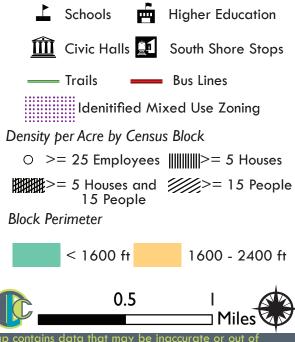


Main Livable Center

Neighborhood Center

## NIRPC ANALYSIS

NIRPC's analysis highlights areas which are dense and walkable. These areas ideally have small block sizes, population and employment density, as well as access to transit, education, and civic halls.



date. Refer to NIRPC or municipality for the most current information.



#### Mobility

The center contains two important arterials: Kennedy Avenue and Ridge Road, as well as the more minor Highway Avenue, which functions as the main street through the downtown retail district.

#### **Street Grid:**

The downtown area is generally based on a grid system, with Ridge Road being something of an exception as it curves and angles on either end of the center, culminating in a large overpass over Highway Avenue. Block lengths are generally 1600-2400 feet around.

#### **Traffic Conflict:**

Large

Community

During rush periods, Kennedy Avenue is heavily trafficked and can be difficult to cross outside of signalized and marked intersections.

#### Walkability:

The streets in this center generally all have sidewalks, except for Ridge Road west of 5th Street. Additionally, the Erie-Lackawanna Trail cuts through downtown providing alternative non-motorized access from other areas of town into the center. Development on Kennedy Avenue north of Highway Avenue is more car-oriented, resulting in a slightly higher number of curb cuts. Still, the neighborhood has a high walk score of 74 (Very Walkable).

#### **Parking:**

Parking in the downtown center is mainly on-street, with some off-street parking available both next to and behind businesses. There is also a large municipal surface lot at the corner of Kennedy and Highway Avenues. Parking is generally well marked.





Street Grid, Downtown Highland (NIRPC)

Mid-Century Modern Commercial Buildings Downtown Highland (NIRPC)

#### Land Use/Buildings

Highland has chosen to emphasize the mid-century modern character of Downtown Highland's architecture. Several buildings have the stone and metal that is typical of this style. Mixed in with those buildings are some that date from earlier in the 20th Century, as well as the 1970s and 1980s. In addition to commercial and residential uses, there is some light industrial use in the northwest corner of the downtown center, including the Pleasant View Dairy.

Buildings along Highway Avenue are generally well maintained, though some buildings suffer from underuse or lack of use and are in need of some work. The Town Theater on Kennedy Avenue has been closed for several years and shows signs of deterioration, though the town's Redevelopment Commission is taking steps to repair and stabilize the building. South of Ridge Road is a residential Planned Unit Development (PUD) on the former site of Highland Lumber. This PUD consists of town homes, which is a different and denser form from the single family homes found in the surrounding neighborhood.

#### **Open Space/Landscaping**

Benches and landscaping are placed along Highway Avenue through the downtown area. The Erie-Lackawanna Trail acts as a linear park along the old Erie-Lackawanna Railroad corridor, and a spur to that trail along the NIPSCO easement along LaPorte Avenue is also a linear park. Main Square Park at the east end of downtown is utilized for town festivals and is used as the central gathering point for many town functions and events. It contains a playground, restrooms, and a gazebo in that is often seen used as a symbol for the town.

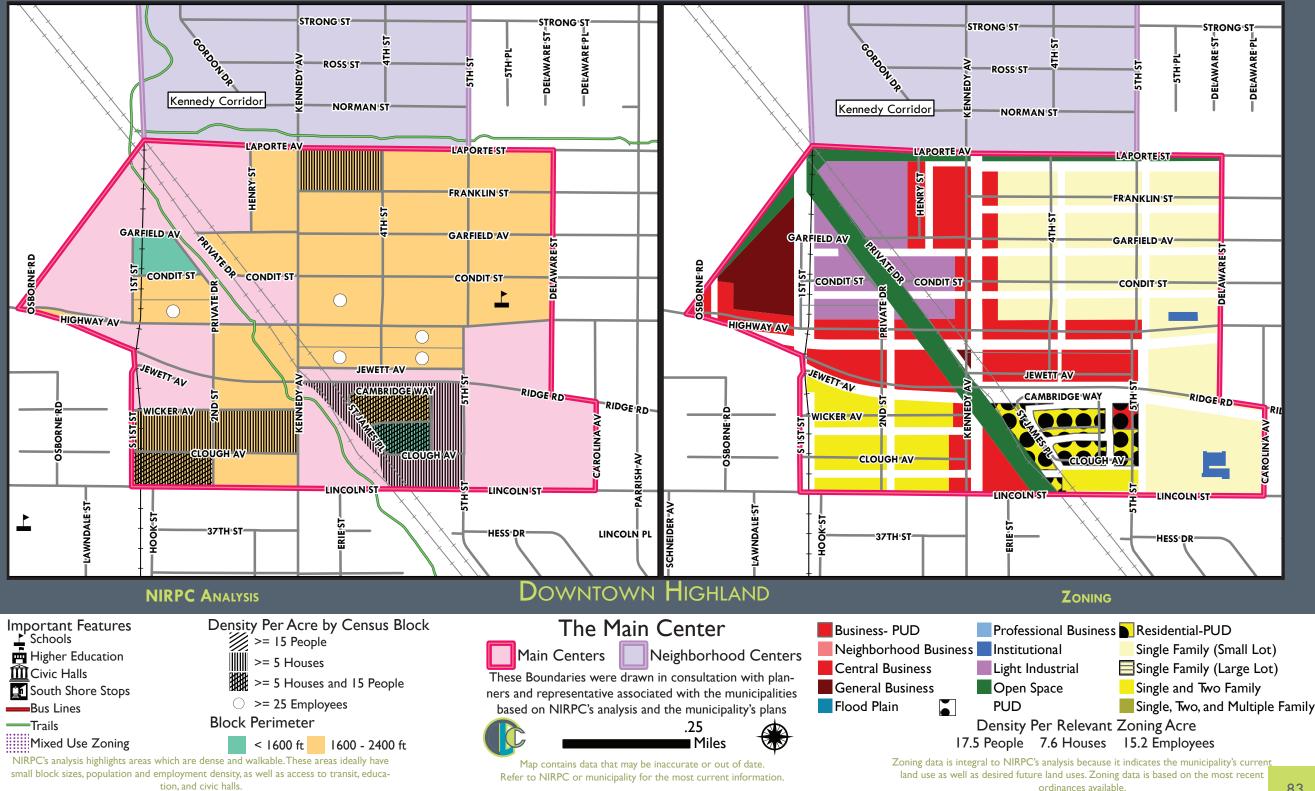
Along the commercial corridors, the buildings generally come right to the sidewalk. In residential areas, the homes have a setback allowing for a front yard. In the PUD area, the setbacks are much smaller, allowing for some landscaping but not a front yard as with the single family homes.

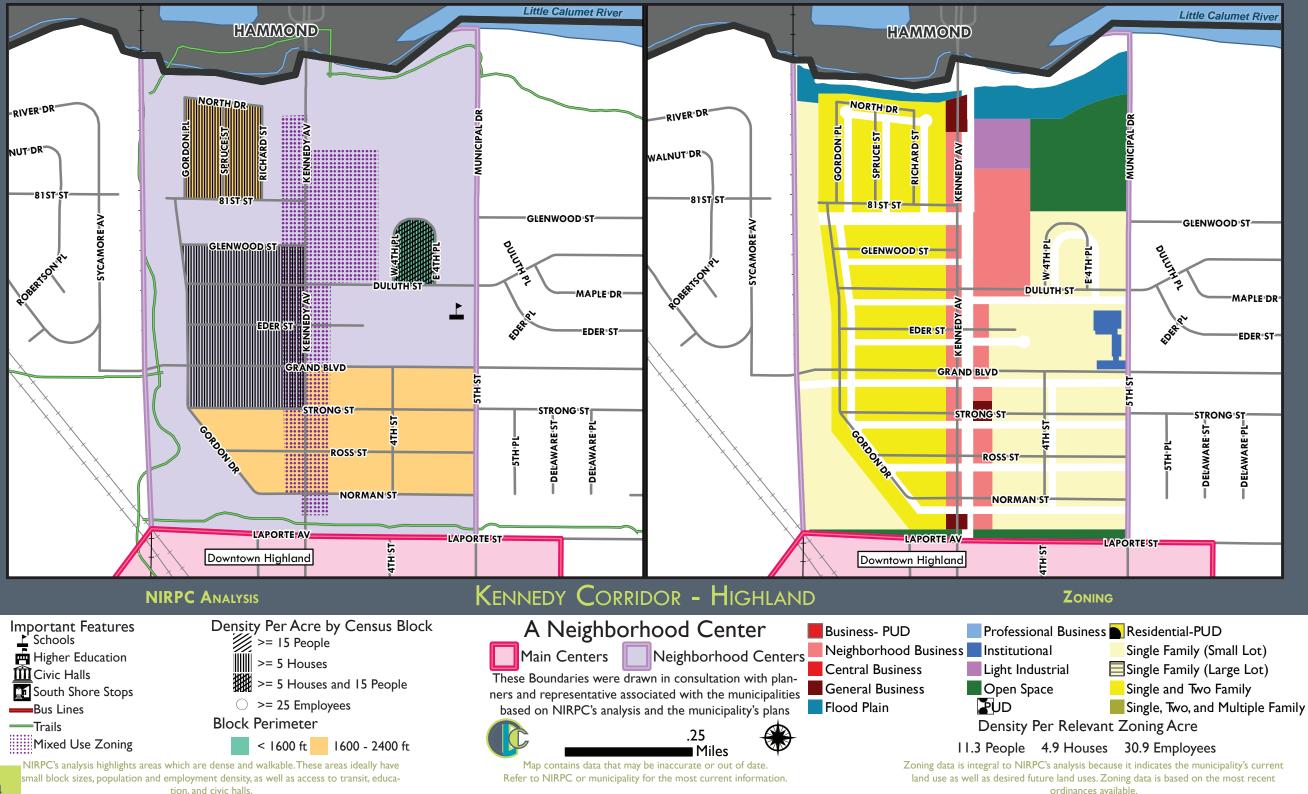


Enhanced Sidewalk Infrastructure Downtown Highland (NIRPC)



Highland Fire Station Downtown Highland (NIRPC)





### KENNEDY CORRIDOR (NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER)

The Kennedy Corridor neighborhood center is bounded on the north by the Little Calumet River and the City of Hammond, on the east by 5th Street, on the south by LaPorte Avenue, and on the west by the Norfolk Southern tracks. The total acreage of the center is 218 acres.

#### **Population:**

1,319 people (6% of Highland's population). Population density is 11.3 people per acre.

#### Housina:

The total housing is 573 units (approximately 6% of Highland's total housing). Housing density is 4.9 units per acre.

#### Jobs:

Total employment in the Kennedy Corridor is 889 with a density of 30.9 jobs per acre.

The Kennedy Avenue Corridor is based around Kennedy Avenue, a small commercial corridor with car-oriented retail development. This neighborhood center is considered the northern gateway into Highland, and the town's sub-area plan calls for solidifying this role. This center also contains Judith M. Johnston Elementary School, east of Kennedy Avenue on 5th Street.

#### **Mobility**

The center is based around Kennedy Avenue, a five-lane north-south roadway. Street Grid: Like the downtown center to the south, the Kennedy Avenue Corridor is largely based on a grid system. However, its connectivity to other areas to the west and south are interrupted by Norfolk Southern and NIPSCO rights-of-way.

#### **Traffic Conflict:**

During rush periods, Kennedy Avenue is heavily trafficked and can be difficult to cross outside of signalized and marked intersections.

#### Walkability:

The streets in this center generally all have sidewalks. The Erie-Lackawanna Trail is on the west side of the center and the Little Calumet River Trail is on the north side of the center, providing alternative non-motorized access to other areas of town. The car-oriented character of this segment of Kennedy Avenue results in a large number of curb cuts, which can have an impact on walkability. Crossing Kennedy Avenue, especially at rush periods, can be difficult away from



Kennedv Avenue Kennedy Corridor Highland (NIRPC)

Kennedy Corridor Highland (NIRPC)

marked and signalized intersections. In turn, the district has a mixed walk score of 51 (Somewhat Walkable).

#### **Parking:**

Parking for most of the commercial use is off-street, with each business generally having its own. On-street parallel parking is on the west side of Kennedy Avenue, on the blocks between 81st Street and Norman Street.

#### Land Use/Buildings

As stated earlier, the current development of the commercial corridor along Kennedy Avenue is planned as the northern gateway to Highland. The current commercial development is caroriented in nature. An athletic and municipal garage complex owned by the town currently occupies the eastern side of the gateway area. The sub-area plan calls for these facilities to be moved to make room for commercial and other activites oriented along the Little Calumet River.

The buildings along Kennedy Avenue are typical small strip malls and commercial establishments. There are also some single-family homes that have been converted to commercial uses. A largely empty shopping plaza is located at the northern end of the center. The surrounding residential areas consist of single-family homes dating roughly from Highland's most intensive growth period, from the 1950s to the 1970s.

#### **Open Space/Landscaping**

The Erie-Lackawanna Trail and the trail spur along LaPorte Avenue continue the linear parks from the downtown center. Additionally, the Sharp Athletic Complex with its ball fields and Little Calumet River Trail on the north end of the center provide open space and recreational use at the north end of town.

#### Overview

Hobart is a Northwest Indiana community in Lake County about 40 miles southeast of Downtown Chicago and 8 miles south of Gary, Indiana. According to 2010 census the City population was 29,069.

Hobart is generally bounded by County Line Road on the east, Mississippi Street on the west, and Ridge Rd/37th Ave. on the north. The southern boundary crosses land that is 1/2 mile south of US 30. Its neighbors include Lake Station and New Chicago to the north, Gary to the northwest, Merrillville to the south and west, and Portage to the northeast. Most major city facilities are located in the Downtown center.

#### **Livable Centers**

Hobart's livable centers include Downtown, as well as the Mundell and Lincoln Corridor neighborhoods.

## **DOWNTOWN HOBART (DOWNTOWN CENTER)**

Downtown is bordered by the Chicago, Fort Wayne & Eastern railroad to the north, Ash Street to the west, Duck Creek to the east, and the Norfolk Southern railroad to the south. The total acreage of the center is 225 acres.

#### **Population:**

1,035 people (3% of total population). Population density is about 5.5 people per acre.

#### Housing:

512 units (approximately 4% of the city's total housing). Housing density is 2.7 units per acre. Unit vacancy rate is between 1-5%.

#### Jobs:

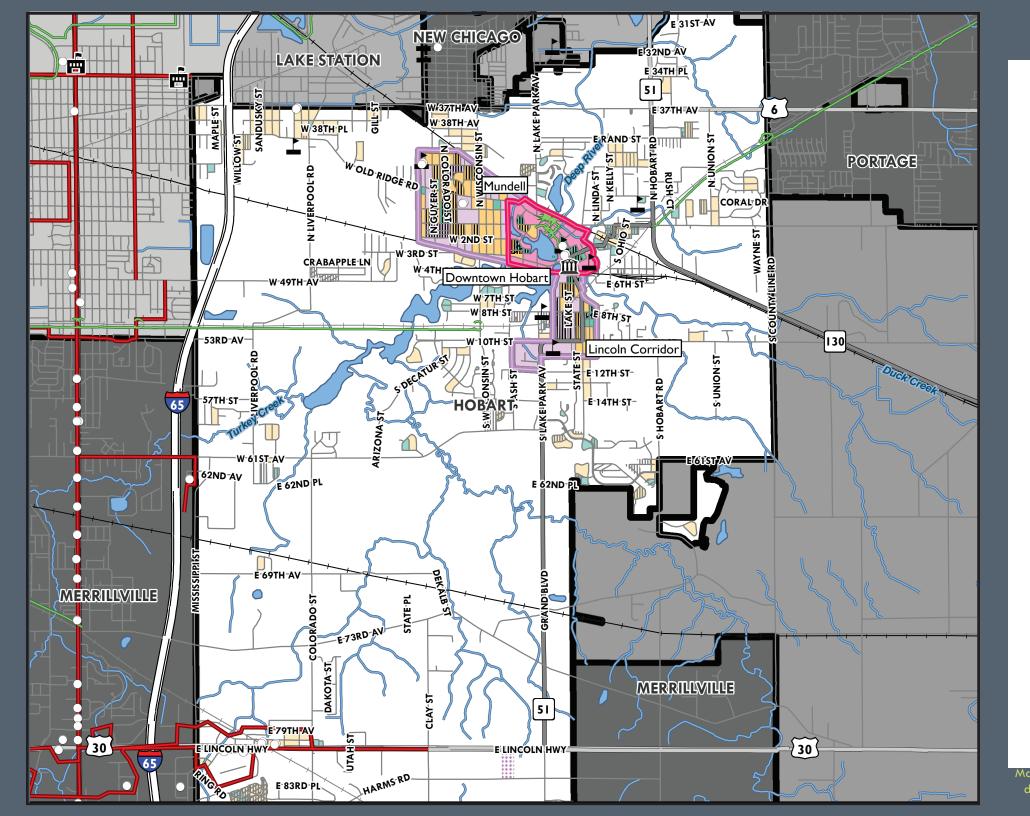
Total employment in the downtown area is 689.

Initially platted in the mid-nineteenth century, Hobart's Downtown Center developed in concert with the city's railroad switching, brick making, and grist making industries. In 1845, George Earle (the city's founding father) constructed a dam on the Deep River, helping create the mill-pond that would later be known as Lake George, Downtown Hobart's defining natural feature. This dam development not only enabled the industrial economy that followed, but also ex-

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# Lake County





## HOBART'S LIVABLE CENTERS LIVABLE CENTERS BOUNDARIES

These boundaries were drawn in consultation with planners and representatives associated with the municipalities based on NIRPC's analysis and the municipality's plans

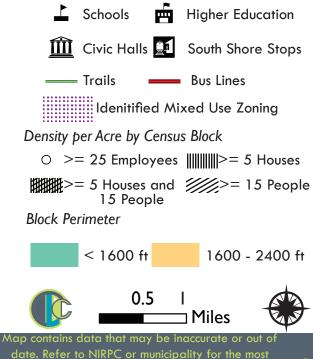


Main Livable Center

Neighborhood Center

## NIRPC ANALYSIS

NIRPC's analysis highlights areas which are dense and walkable. These areas ideally have small block sizes, population and employment density, as well as access to transit, education, and civic halls.



current information.

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panded Hobart's aquatic features, effectively increasing the density of Downtown Hobart by constraining land development to the area surrounded by Lake George, Deep River, and Duck Creek.

While many of the industries that used the dam no longer exist, Hobart's traditional downtown form has been preserved, and still holds many of the city's key institutional functions: City Hall, the Public Library, the Police Department, the Art Theater, the Post Office, Hobart Carnegie Library (Hobart Historical Society), in addition to a healthy array of professional businesses (banking, legal, insurance, medical, etc.), retail shops, and restaurants.

#### Mobility

Major roads are SR 51, Main Street, and Old Ridge Road. Freight railroads running through the district are the Chicago, Fort Wayne & Eastern and Norfolk Southern railroads.

#### Street Grid:

The eastern end of Downtown Hobart, the central business district, possesses a dense street grid, represented by the cluster of blocks ranging from Front Street to 4th Street, and New Street to Main Street. The western end of downtown is primarily residential, and has a lower density, curvilinear street network. Downtown Hobart has smaller block sizes on the east end (below 400 feet), and larger ones on the west end (above 600 feet).

#### **Traffic Conflict:**

Traffic along primary streets is moderate and navigable. Traffic on neighborhood streets is light and pedestrian friendly.



Street Grid, Downtown Hobart (NIRPC)

Main Street Commercial Area, Downtown Hobart (NIRPC)



Historic Commercial Buildings Downtown Hobart (NIRPC)



4th Street Greenway Downtown Hobart (NIRPC)

#### Walkability:

Eastern End:

Walk Score of 74 (Very Walkable); 10-12 foot sidewalks, trails, and a good density of amenities.

Western End:

Walk Score of 55 (Somewhat Walkable); smaller sidewalks, range in distance to amenities.

#### **Parking:**

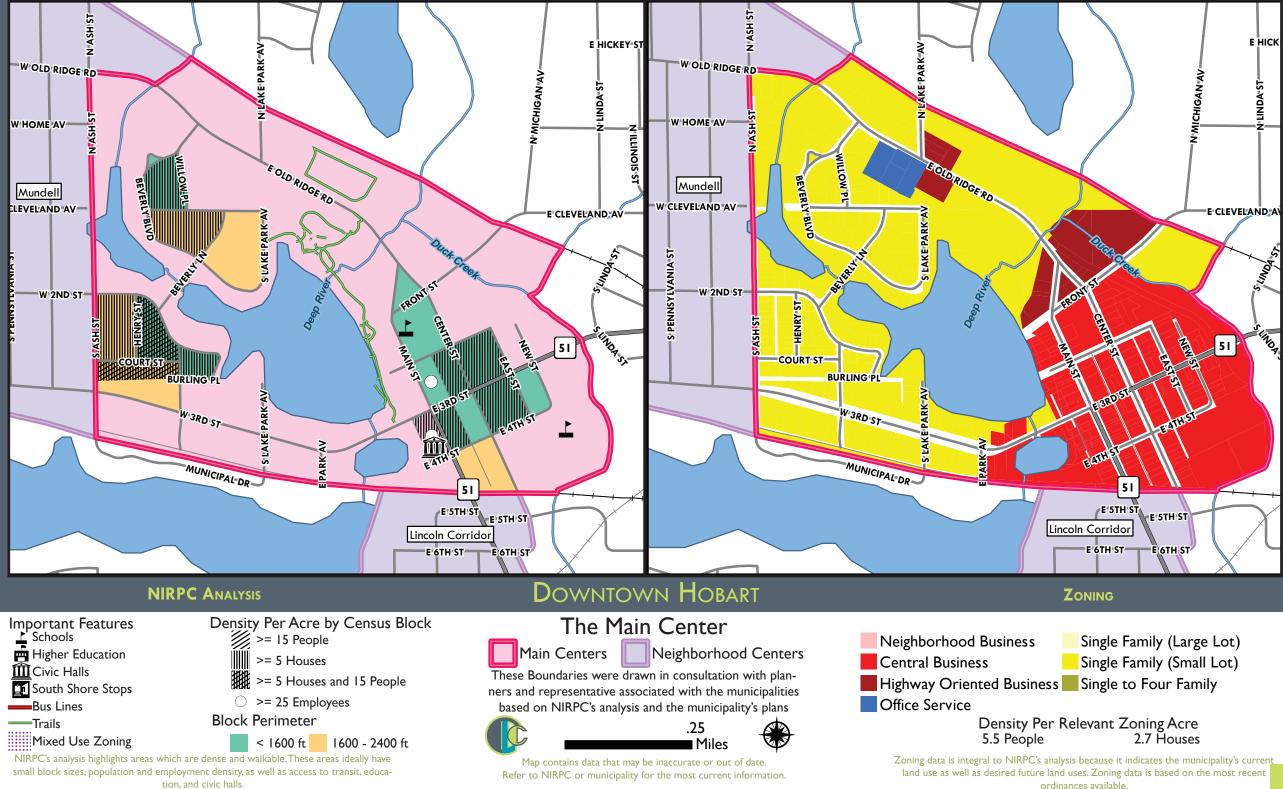
Public parking lots support large institutional uses, public street parking exists throughout downtown, and back entrance parking exists for some buildings on the east end.

#### Land Use/Buildings

Building setbacks range from 15 to 30 feet on residential streets, and predominantly 0 foot setbacks on commercial streets.

What is known as the central business district includes the Lake George Commercial Historic District. The historic district runs along Main, Center and 3rd Street and contains what is historically the business and governmental center of Hobart. This historic district and business district is included in the larger Lakefront District in reference to Lake George.

There are a wide variety of building types in the central business district. The historic buildings date from the late 19th century, a period when Hobart saw the development of substan-





tial commercial buildings. The buildings are primarily constructed of brick, however wood, limestone and cast concrete were also popular materials and can still be seen. The prominent architectural styles found in the district include: Italianate, Neo Classical, Art Deco and Colonial Revival. Downtown Hobart maintains the same density of buildings as it does not appear that there has been much new building development in recent years. The downtown remains active commercially, though some of the buildings show age due to deferred maintenance and the application of non-sensitive facades and storefronts. The two neighborhoods west of downtown along Lincoln Street and 3rd Street are a mixture of Victorian, early 20th century bungalow, craftsman, and foursquare homes.

#### **Open Space/Landscape**

Large Community

The area includes two contiguous parks, Lakefront Park and Festival Park, a belt of green space connecting the east end with Lake George. The two parks contain a path, a gazebo, a playground, picnic tables, and open space, as well as a view of the dam. The southern boundary of downtown also borders Lakefront Park and the Oak Savannah Trail.

The downtown area in general lacks green infrastructure and tree cover, which weakens aesthetics and stormwater management on its streets. These features are stronger on the residential west end of Downtown.



Lakefront Park at Lake George, Downtown Hobart (NIRPC)



Historic Housing on 4th Street, Mundell, Hobart (NIRPC)

### **MUNDELL (NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER)**

The Mundell neighborhood center is bounded by 40th Avenue and the Chicago, Fort Wayne & Eastern railroad on the north, Wabash Street on the west, the Norfolk Southern railroad to the south, and Ash Street on the east. Total acreage in the district is 398.

Population: 3,549 people (12% of total population). Population density is 13 people per acre.

Housing: 1,496 units (approximately 12% of the city's total housing). Housing density is 5.5 units per acre. Unit vacancy rate is between 1-5%.

#### Jobs:

Total employment in the Mundell area is 436.

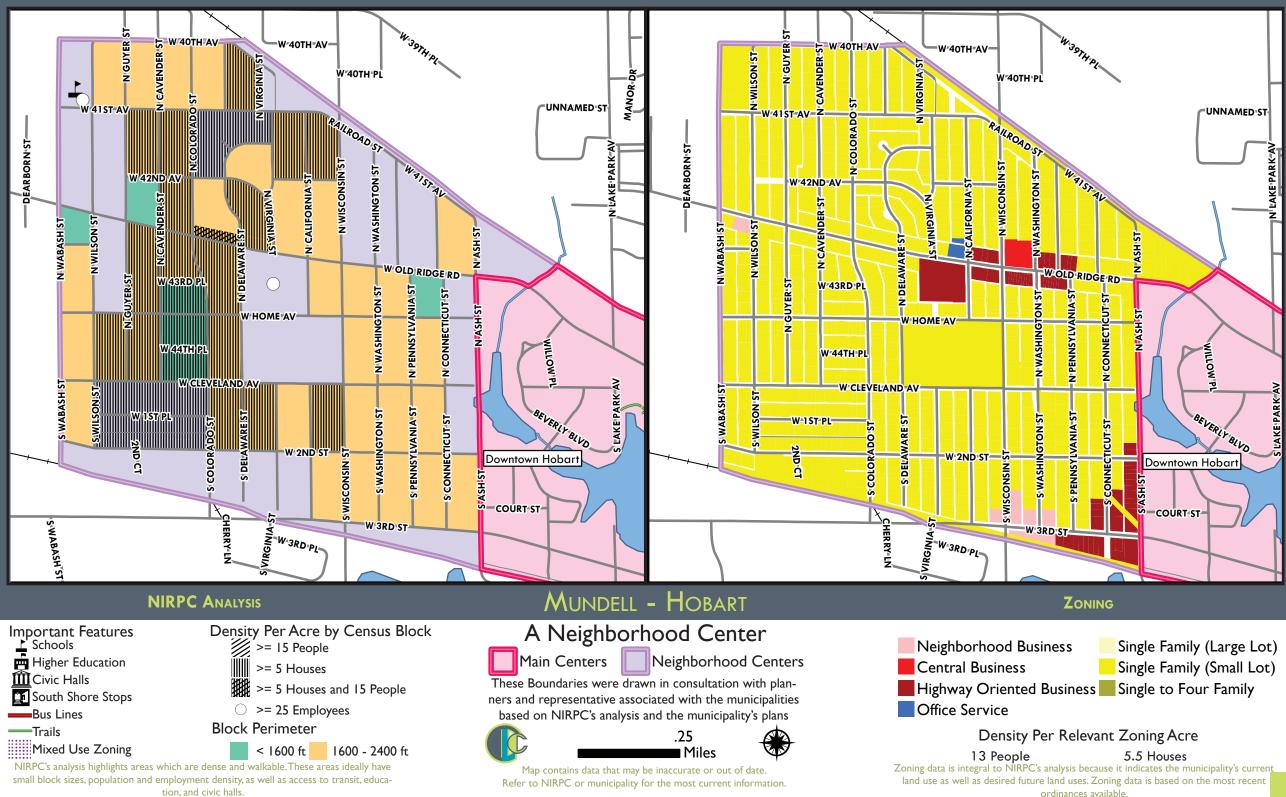
Historically served by a major grocery store, the Mundell neighborhood currently stands as another example of a historic, dense residential neighborhood in Hobart that is within walking distance of commercial businesses (which are mainly centralized at the intersection of Old Ridge Road and Wisconsin Street).

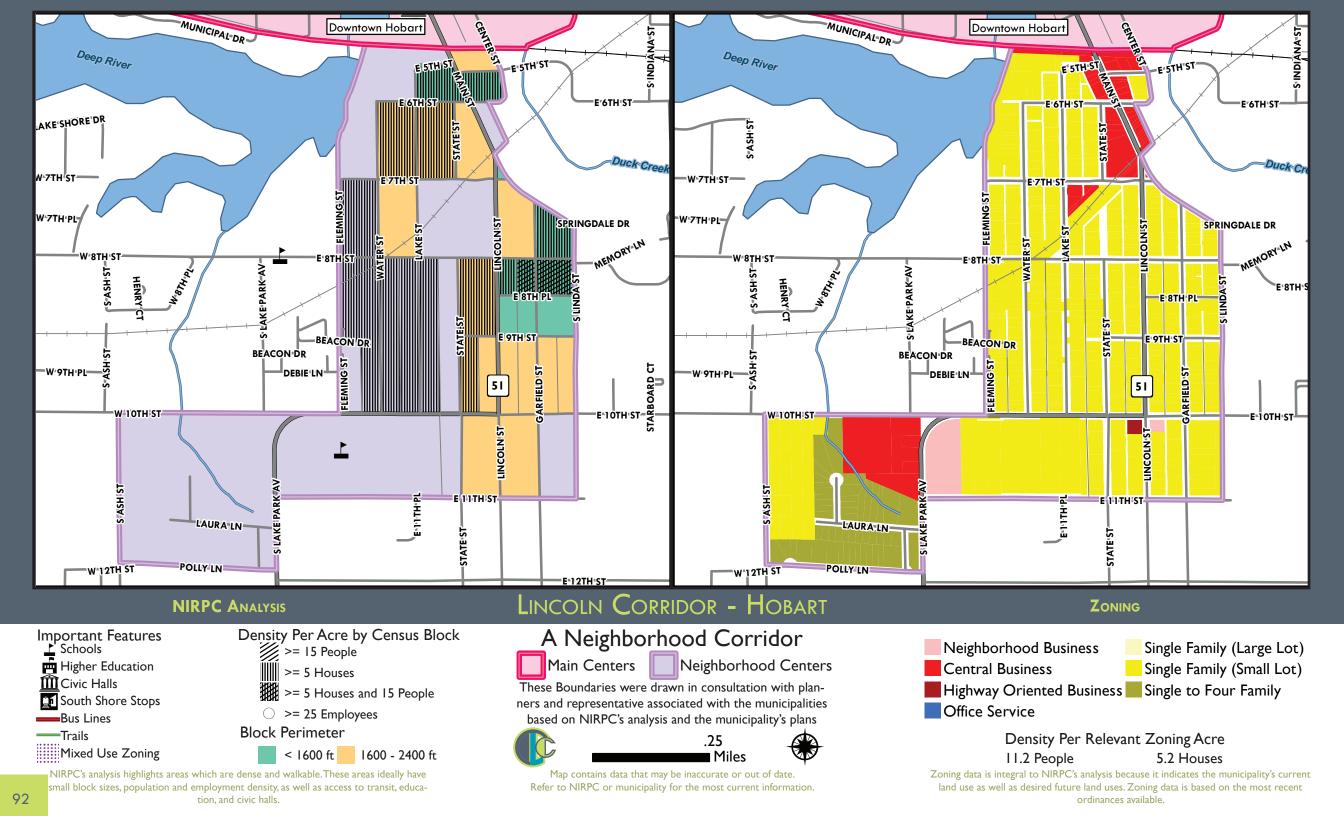
#### **Mobility**

Major roads are Wisconsin Street, Old Ridge Road, and 3rd Street. Freight railroads running through the district are the Chicago, Fort Wayne & Eastern and Norfolk Southern railroads.

#### Street Grid:

Most of the neighborhood follows a moderate density street grid, with only one cul-de-sac feature, on Delaware Street. The District mostly has block sizes between 400 and 600 feet.





#### **Traffic Conflict:**

Traffic along primary streets is moderate and navigable. Traffic on neighborhood streets is light and pedestrian friendly.

#### Walkability:

Walk Score of 32 (Car dependent); good sidewalk network, but most amenities are accessible only by car.

#### **Parking:**

Large parking lots support large commercial uses, but driveways and street parking are the dominant form.

#### Land Use/ Buildings

Small, single family residential plots with 20-25 foot setbacks are predominant throughout the neighborhood. Parking lots serve to separate the commercial buildings from the street, in the commercial center at Old Ridge Road and Wisconsin Street.

Residential buildings are predominantly one-story, mid-century ranch homes, built from vinyl siding and wood. They vary in terms of upkeep and quality. Standard free standing commercial strip building design typifies the commercial district. These commercial buildings vary in age and appearance from dated to modern.

#### Open Space/Landscape

Mundell Field (owned by the School City of Hobart) serves as an athletic area for the neighborhood, featuring a soccer field, running track, and large amount open space for make-shift athletic use.

The residential streets hold a plentiful amount of trees, and their sidewalks, though varying in quality, have an opportunity for green infrastructure. Trees and green infrastructure is entirely lacking on the commercial corridor sidewalks although landscaped edge treatments have been incorporated at the grocery site.



Street Grid Mundell, Hobart (NIRPC)



Single Family Housing Mundell, Hobart (NIRPC)



Single Family Housing Mundell, Hobart (NIRPC)



Main Street Commercial Area, Lincoln Corridor, Hobart (NIRPC)

## LINCOLN CORRIDOR (NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER)

The Lincoln Corridor neighborhood center is generally located south of the Norfolk Southern railroad and north of 11th Street between Fleming Street and Linda Street and also south of 10th Street and north of Polly Lane between Ash Street and South Lake Park Avenue more or less. Total acreage in the district is 195.

#### **Population:**

1,279 people (4.4% of total population).Population density is 11.2 people per acre.

#### Housing:

596 units (approximately 10.3% of the city's total housing). Housing density is 5.2 units per acre. Unit vacancy rate is between 1-5%.

#### Jobs:

Total employment in the Lincoln Corridor area is 1,523 (based primarily in institutional and commercial uses in the district).

Located south of Downtown Hobart, the Lincoln Corridor serves as a transitional neighborhood, where the northern end's commercial activity slowly transforms into small lot residential neighborhoods, and eventually, lower density institutional uses at the neighborhood's southern bound-

#### - Hobart

ary. Located on 10th Street (west of the Joan Martin Elementary School) is the former Hind Professional Center. This area could be a redeveloped site that could serve to create a new focal point in a neighborhood already possessing housing density and some commercial activity.

#### Mobility

Major roads are SR 51, Main Street, State Street, and 10th Street.

#### Street Grid:

Large Community

Most of the neighborhood follows a moderate density street grid, with large lots devoted to institutional and industrial uses on the south side of the district. The Lincoln Corridor has block sizes that vary from under 400 feet, to between 400 and 600 feet, and to the south, over 600 feet.

#### **Traffic Conflict:**

Traffic along SR 51 is heavy, requiring pedestrians to cross at designated stops. Traffic on neighborhood streets is light and pedestrian friendly.

#### Walkability:

#### Northern End:

Walk Score of 75 (Very Walkable); 10-12 foot sidewalks, trails, and a good density of amenities.

Central District:

Walk Score of 62 (Somewhat Walkable); good sidewalk network, range in access to amenities.

Southern End:

Walk Score of 37 (Car dependent); broken sidewalk network, most amenities accessible only by car.

#### **Parking:**

Mostly garage and street parking with large parking lots supporting institutional uses.



Street Grid Lincoln Corridor, Hobart (NIRPC)



Single Family Housing Lincoln Corridor, Hobart (NIRPC)



Single Family Housing Lincoln Corridor, Hobart (NIRPC)

#### Land Use/ Buildings

Residential setbacks are 5-35 feet in the northern part of the district, and 35-60 in the southern part of the district. Commercial buildings have a 0 foot setback in the northern part of the district, and in the southern part of the district, institutional setbacks range from 75-125 feet. Residential buildings are predominantly one-story, mid-century ranch homes and bungalows, built from vinyl siding and brick. They vary in terms of upkeep and quality. Free standing commercial building designs from mid and late twentieth century are situated on the north end of the district, on small lots. Large one story institutional buildings from the mid-twentieth century make up the southern end.

#### Open Space/Landscape

The most significant open space within the district is City Ball Park at 8th Street and Lincoln Street which has a ball field, shelter and playground. The Oak Savannah Trail also traverses the Lincoln Corridor, providing the neighborhood with access to one of the strongest greenways in the region. On the southern end of the district, open space also surrounds the Joan Martin Elementary School. The tree cover in the Lincoln Corridor neighborhood is significant and the substantial sidewalk network through most of the neighborhood makes it amenable to green infrastructure.



Historic Bungalows, Lincoln Corridor, Hobart (NIRPC)

## LaPorte County CITY OF LA PORTE

City Hall, Downtown La Porte (NIRPC)

#### **Overview**

La Porte is a Northwest Indiana community in LaPorte County approximately located 40 miles east of Gary, 28 miles west of South Bend and 12 miles southeast of Michigan City. According to 2010 census the City population was 22,053.

La Porte is generally bounded southeast of the Indiana Toll Road with US Hwy 35 running through the center of the City. It is located in the central portion of LaPorte County. All major city facilities are located in the Downtown center.

#### Livable Centers

La Porte includes a livable center and two neighborhood centers as follow:

## arge Communit

## **DOWNTOWN LA PORTE (DOWNTOWN CENTER)**

The Downtown Center is defined by the Norfolk Southern rail line as its northern boundary. The eastern boundary is bordered by L Street and State Route 2 and wraps around the southern boundary by the City's grid system until reaching west on Lawrence Street. The western border follows Lawrence Street and Boston Street until reaching the Norfolk Southern line. The total acreage of the center is 796 acres.

#### **Population:**

7,461 people (34% of La Porte's population). Population density is about 18 people per acre.

#### Housing:

The total housing is 3,309 units (approximately 33% of La Porte total housing). Housing density is 8 units per acre.

#### Jobs:

Total employment in the downtown area is 7,742 with a density of 31.7 employees per acre.

Located in the Downtown center is the City of La Porte's historical commercial area, civic institutions, La Porte City Hall, the LaPorte County Government building, the LaPorte County Courthouse, the LaPorte County Public Library, the La Porte Hospital, the train depot, La Porte Civic Auditorium, Boston Middle School, and Lincoln Elementary.

## LA PORTE'S LIVABLE CENTERS LIVABLE CENTERS BOUNDARIES

These boundaries were drawn in consultation with planners and representatives associated with the municipalities based on NIRPC's analysis and the municipality's plans



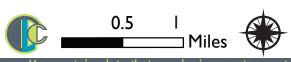
Main Livable Center

Neighborhood Center

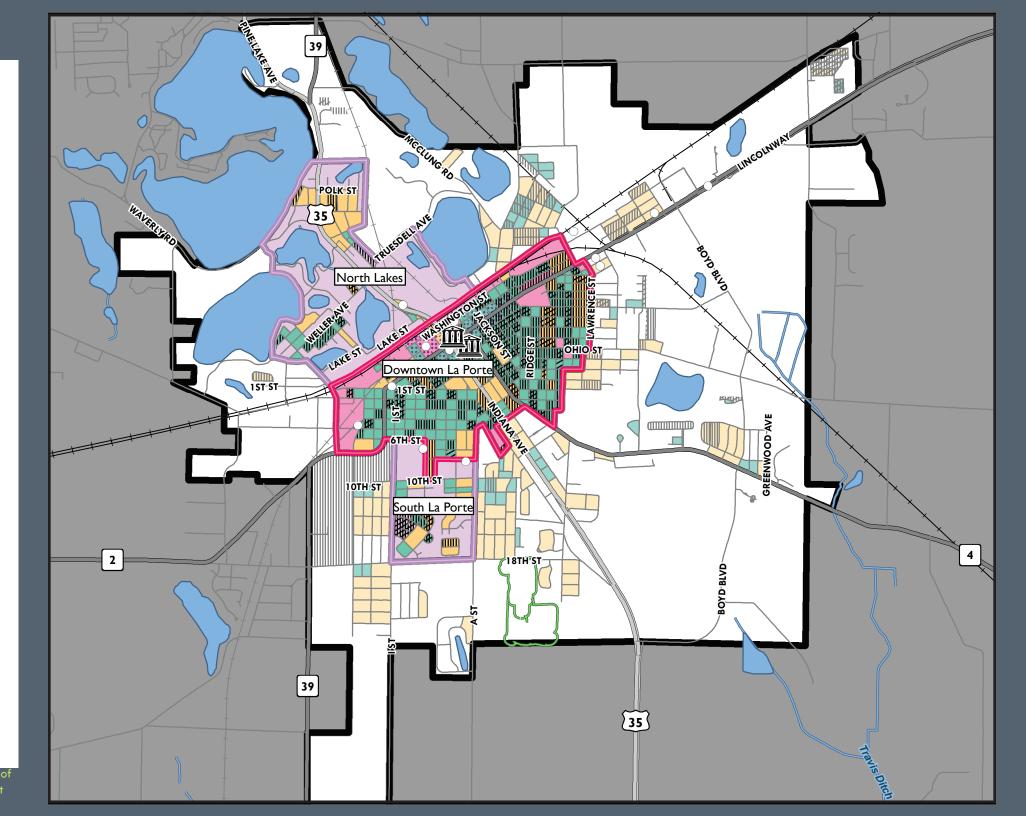
## NIRPC ANALYSIS

NIRPC's analysis highlights areas which are dense and walkable. These areas ideally have small block sizes, population and employment density, as well as access to transit, education, and civic halls.

▲ Schools
▲ Higher Education
▲ Civic Halls
▲ South Shore Stops
A Trails
▲ Bus Lines
↓ Idenitified Mixed Use Zoning
Density per Acre by Census Block
>= 25 Employees
▲ Ensiste Block
>= 5 Houses and A Stope
▲ Block Perimeter
▲ Schools



Map contains data that may be inaccurate or out of date. Refer to NIRPC or municipality for the most current information.



A portion of the downtown center is also known as the LaPorte Courthouse Square Historic District encompassing most of La Porte's commercial area, and was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1983. On the southern end, Indiana Avenue is a tree-lined historic district that contains one of the most impressive arrays of architecture and maple trees in LaPorte County.

#### Mobility

According to the LaPorte Countywide Development Plan, the Downtown's major north-south arteries (US 35/Indiana Avenue and Pine Lake Avenue) and east-west arteries (SR 2/Lincoln Way) are severely impaired, since they function in a dual capacity as the City's main streets and major throughways. Downtown is served by the La Porte TransPorte Bus.

#### Street Grid:

As shown on the map, streets are laid out in a traditional grid system with a short block length that allows for density, creating strong connectivity and easy walkability.

#### **Traffic Conflict:**

There is traffic conflict at the intersection of Lincolnway and Indiana Avenue. Traffic along Lincolnway can be heavy at times, as well as issues with truck traffic through downtown.

#### Walkability:

The short and compact block lengths with maintained sidewalks allows for good connectivity. According to Walk Score, the center scores a 68 (somewhat walkable) with some errands can be accomplished by foot.

#### **Parking:**

Parking in Downtown appears to be sufficient with on street parking and lots available.



LaPorte County Courthouse Downtown La Porte (NIRPC)



Street Grid Downtown La Porte (NIRPC)



Sidewalk Infrastructure Downtown La Porte (NIRPC)



#### Land Use/Buildings

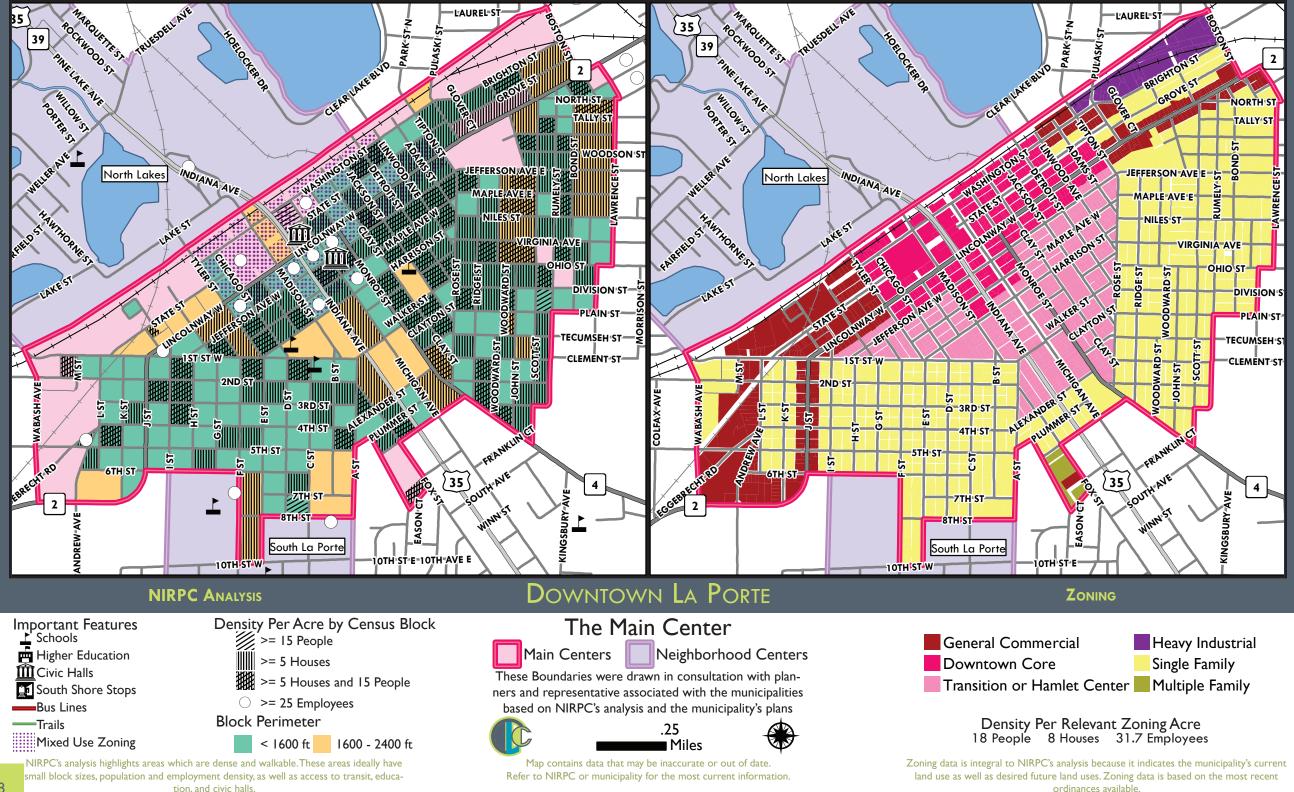
The downtown core district is intended to help preserve the architectural integrity and character of the downtown area. It also ensures the streetscape is organized, maintained, and is attractive to visitors, and a pedestrian-friendly area; and to sustain a downtown area that is a desirable place to live, shop, work and enjoy. The downtown is comprised of small businesses, shops, and restaurants. This area also allows for mixed use zoning.

South of the downtown core is primarily neighborhood commercial that eventually transitions into single family residential. The residential is mostly comprised of single family residential with low-rise multi-family residential located in the southern section of the center.

The west and east ends of downtown are largely car-oriented commercial development, with an area of heavy industry in the northeast corner, along the Norfolk Southern rail line.

#### Open Space/ Landscape

This area includes Ben Rees Park, which is 1.5 acres with a playground and gazebo and located near the Civic Auditorium.



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ordinances available.

## NORTH LAKES (NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER)

The North Laes Neighborhood Center is located directly north of the Downtown Center, with the Norfolk Southern rail line as its southern boundary. On the east, it is bordered by Clear Lake, Truesdell Avenue, Marquette Street, and Larkin Street until Maple Drive. The western border primarily follows Pine Lake and Stone Lake with the southwest corner bordered by Central Avenue till the Norfolk Southern rail line. The total acreage of the center is 594 acres.

#### **Population:**

1,747 people (8% of La Porte's population). Population density is 8 people per acre.

#### Housing:

The total housing is 856 units (approximately 8.6% of La Porte's total housing). Housing density is 4 units per acre.

#### Jobs:

Total employment in the North Side area is 1,356 with a density of 7 employees per acre.

#### Mobility

North Lakes is served by the La Porte TransPorte Bus

#### **Street Grid:**

As shown in the street network map, due to the layout of the lakes, the streets are somewhat dense in two clusters located in the north area and the southwest area but only connected by Pine Lake Avenue Pine Lake Avenue is the only north/south connection leading into Downtown.

#### **Traffic Conflict:**

Pine Lake Avenue can contain high traffic volumes at peak-hours of congestion due to the main north/south connection.



Street Grid North Lakes La Porte (NIRPC)



Open space surrounding Pine Lake, La Porte (NIRPC)

#### Walkability:

Most of the area is connected by sidewalks but many streets lack sidewalks. According to Walk Score, the center scores a 40 (car dependent) with most errands requiring a car.

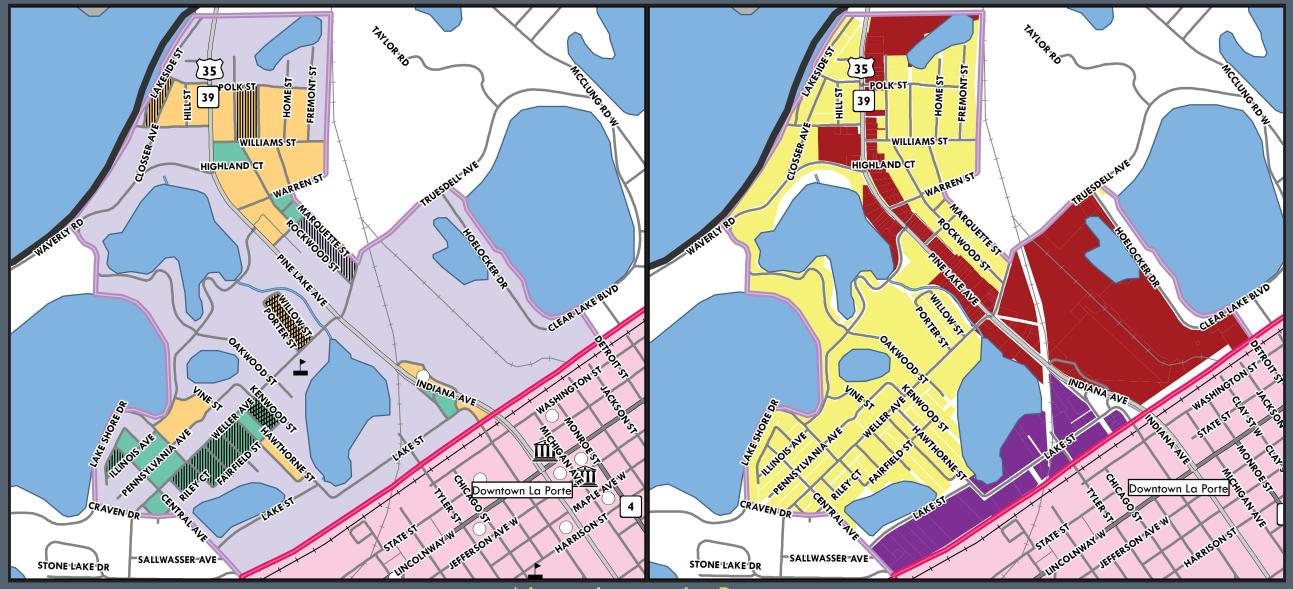
#### Land Use/ Buildings

The area is comprised of mostly single-family residential with a greater number of people and housing along Weller Ave and in front of Riley Elementary School. Homes are generally in good physical condition.

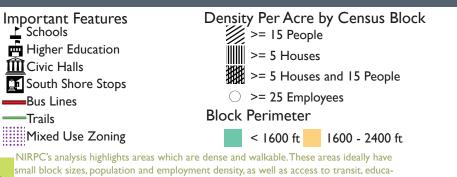
The commercial area is generally located along Pine Lake Avenue, with a mixture of small businesses, shops, restaurants, and lodging facilities. The commercial area on the southeast portion is currently a shopping district with a supermarket. The area is also known as the NewPorte Landing Overlay District, with future plans for redevelopment.

#### Open Space/ Landscape

The area is surrounded by Pine Lake, Stone Lake, Clear Lake and Lily Lake. These areas are well maintained and provide many recreational opportunities.

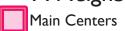


#### **NIRPC ANALYSIS**



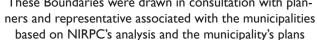
tion, and civic halls.

## NORTH LAKES - LA PORTE

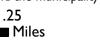


A Neighborhood Center Neighborhood Centers

These Boundaries were drawn in consultation with plan-







Map contains data that may be inaccurate or out of date. Refer to NIRPC or municipality for the most current information.

#### ZONING



#### Density Per Relevant Zoning Acre 8 People 8.6 Houses 7 Employees

Zoning data is integral to NIRPC's analysis because it indicates the municipality's current land use as well as desired future land uses. Zoning data is based on the most recent ordinances available.

### SOUTH LA PORTE (NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER)

The South La Porte neighborhood center is located directly southwest of Downtown Center. The northern boundary follows 6th Street and 8th Street. The east is bordered by A Street. The south is bordered by W 18th Street. The western boundary follows I Street. The total acreage of the center is 211 acres.

#### **Population:**

1,319 people (6% of La Porte's population). Population density is 7.9 people per acre.

#### Housing:

The total housing is 588 units (5.9% of La Porte's total housing). Housing density is considerably low with 3.5 units per acre.

#### Jobs:

Total employment within the area is 348 with a density of 58 employees per acre. La Porte High School is located in the center and has approximately 251 employees. It is considered a major activity generator.

#### Mobility

The La Porte TransPorte Bus serves the South neighborhood.



Residential development, South La Porte (NIRPC)

#### Street Grid:

As shown in the street network map, streets have a reasonable connectivity to major roads. The street network is less dense than the other two centers, which is also reflected in the density of buildings and people.

#### Walkability:

Most of the area is connected by sidewalks and can easily access La Porte High School. Though, some of the smaller streets lack sidewalks and connectivity. According to Walk Score, the center scores a 69 (somewhat walkable) with some errands can be accomplished by foot.

#### Land Use/Buildings

The majority of the center is single family residential with low-rise multi-family residential found in a cluster along southeast along 18th Street. The neighborhood and streets follow a typical neighborhood subdivision format. A small area of car-oriented commercial development is found on the corner of 18th Street and A Street.

#### Open Space/ Landscape

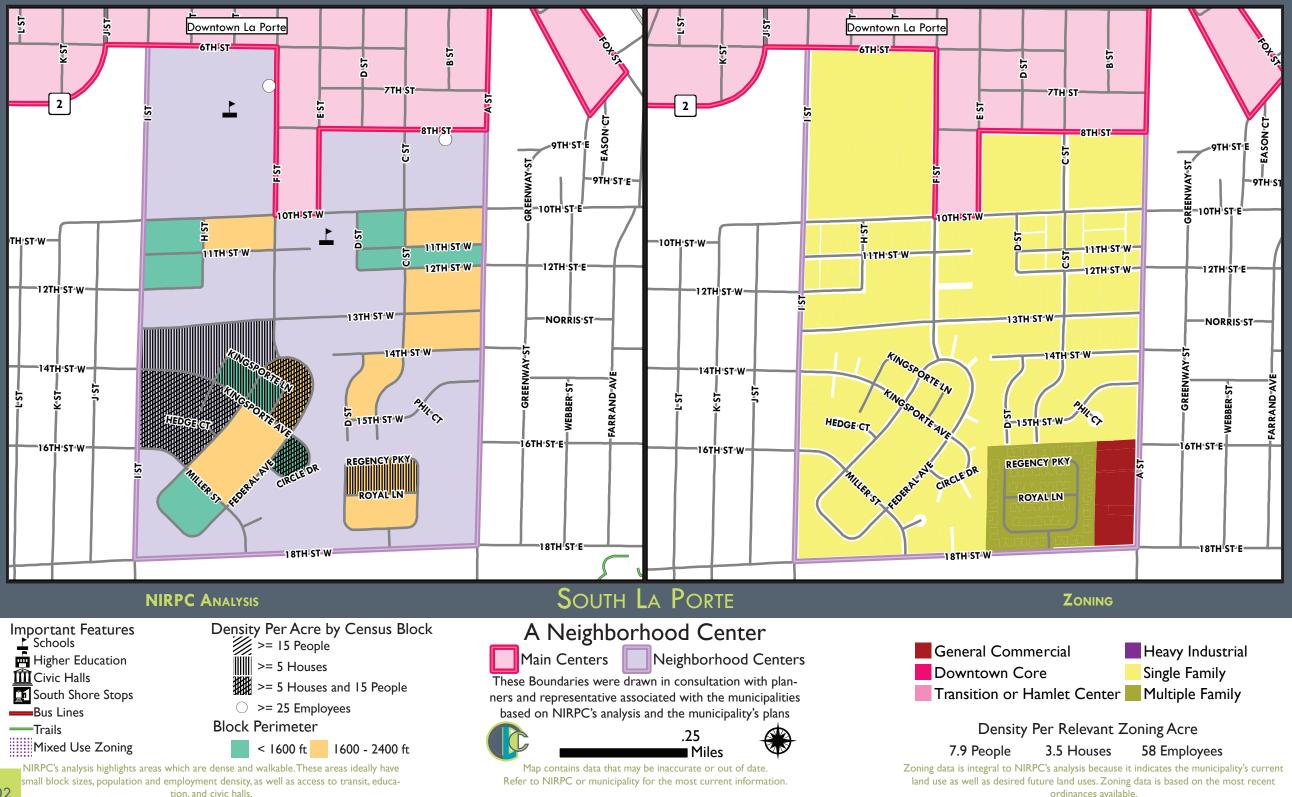
The area is served by a five acre neighborhood park called Kaiser Park. The park contains tennis courts, picnic areas, playground, portable toilet, open space, and a swing set.



Street Grid South La Porte (NIRPC)



Residential development, South La Porte (NIRPC)



## TOWN OF MERRILLVILLE



#### Overview

Merrillville is a Northwest Indiana community in Lake County about 30 miles southeast of Downtown Chicago, 6 miles south of Gary and 16 miles west of Valparaiso. According to 2010 census, the Town population was 35,246.

Merrillville is located in the east-central portion of Lake County and is generally bounded by 53rd Avenue to the north, Mississippi Street and County Road 800 W to the east, 101st Avenue and 93rd Avenue to the south, and Clark Road to the west. The town is anchored by the intersection of US 30 and Interstate 65. The asymmetric shape of the town limits results in numerous municipal boundaries. Merrillville is bordered by Gary to the north; Hobart to the northeast; Union Township and Porter County to the east; Winfield and Crown Point to the south; Schererville to the west; and Griffith to the northwest. Most of the major town facilities are located in the Downtown Center.

#### Livable Centers

Merrillville includes a livable center and a neighborhood center as follows:

## US 30 & BROADWAY (DOWNTOWN CENTER)

The Downtown Center is defined by 73rd Avenue (on the north), Interstate 65 (on the east), 84th Drive (on the south) and Merrillville Road/Madison Street (on the west). The total acreage of the center is 758 acres.

#### Population:

1,464 people (4.2% of Merrillville's population). Population density is 5.7 people per acre.

#### Housing:

The total housing is 632 units (approximately 4.3% of Merrillville's total housing). Housing density is 2.5 units per acre.

#### Jobs:

Total employment in the downtown area is 6,463 with a density of 10.9 employees per acre.

## MERRILLVILLE'S LIVABLE CENTERS LIVABLE CENTERS BOUNDARIES

These boundaries were drawn in consultation with planners and representatives associated with the municipalities based on NIRPC's analysis and the municipality's plans

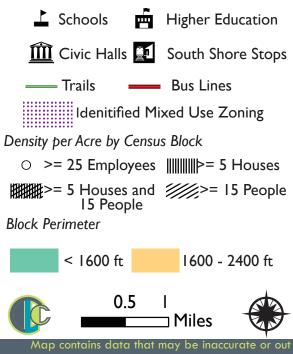


Main Livable Center

Neighborhood Center

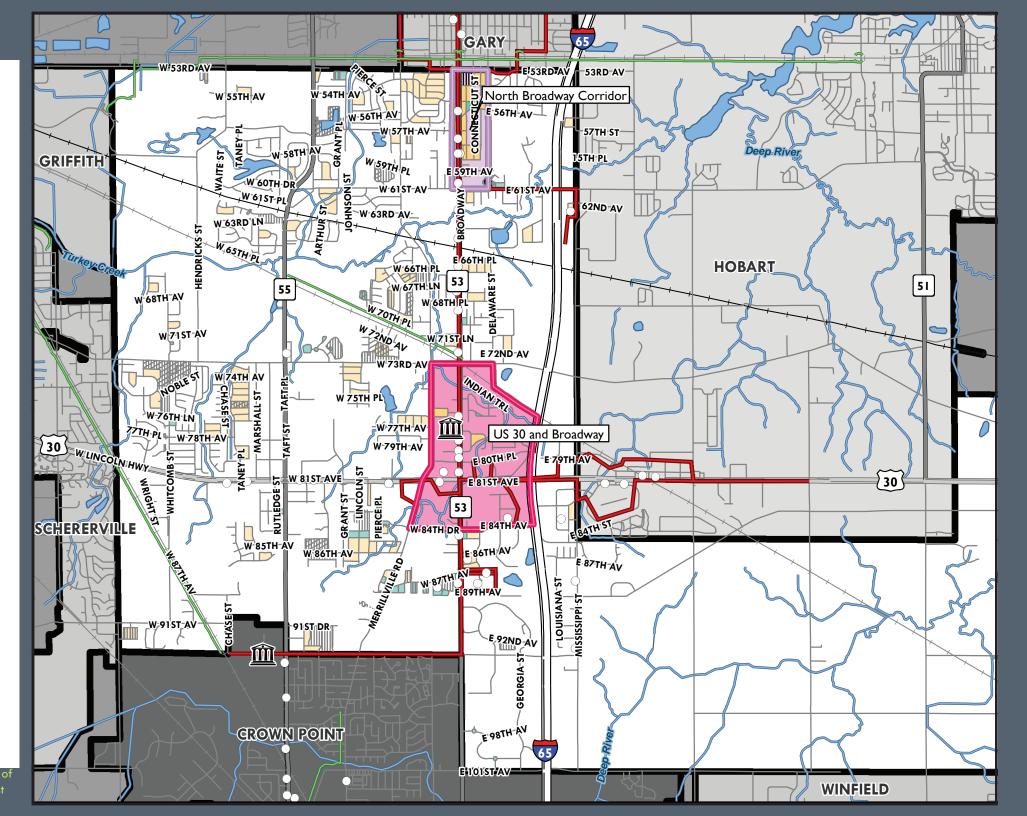
## NIRPC ANALYSIS

NIRPC's analysis highlights areas which are dense and walkable. These areas ideally have small block sizes, population and employment density, as well as access to transit, education, and civic halls.



date. Refer to NIRPC or municipality for the most current information.

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This center encompasses the Town Hall, Police Department, Brown Mackie College, the Star Plaza Theatre and many small businesses, retail, restaurants, lodging, and offices that provide residents and visitors with a variety of convenience shopping, services and entertainment opportunities. Merrillville is a hub for retail trade in Northwest Indiana. The US 30 corridor harbors a large concentration of big-box retailers, hotels, restaurants, and automobile dealerships.

#### **Mobility**

State Road 53/Broadway is the primary north-south corridor and US Highway 30 is the major east-west corridor. Gary Public Transportation Corporation (GPTC) bus routes17 & 18 provide service along Broadway Avenue corridor, and within the US 30 retail/office corridor. GPTC will be conducting a feasability study of transit expansion in the Broadway Corridor.

#### Street Grid:

As shown on the map, streets are laid out in a typical suburban subdivision and nonlinear system.

#### **Traffic Conflict:**

Heaviest traffic flow is found along the US 30 corridor and along the Broadway corridor, both north and south of US 30. Heavy traffic congestion occurs at the intersection of US 30 and Broadway as well as from incoming traffic from Interstate 65. Both of these corridors contain multiple curb cuts that disrupt traffic flow and affect safety. Peak traffic congestion times occur at lunch hour, before and after work hours, and during the holiday season.

#### Walkability:

Due to a lack of sidewalks, it is very difficult and dangerous for pedestrians to cross, and pedestrian-vehicle conflicts have been reported. According to Walk Score, the center has a score of 48 (car dependent) with most errands requiring a car.

Parking: There is no on street parking. Parking is only available within the strip malls and in large parking lots.



Merrillville Municipal Complex (NIRPC)





Commercial development on 80th Place in Merrillville (NIRPC)

#### Land Use/Buildings

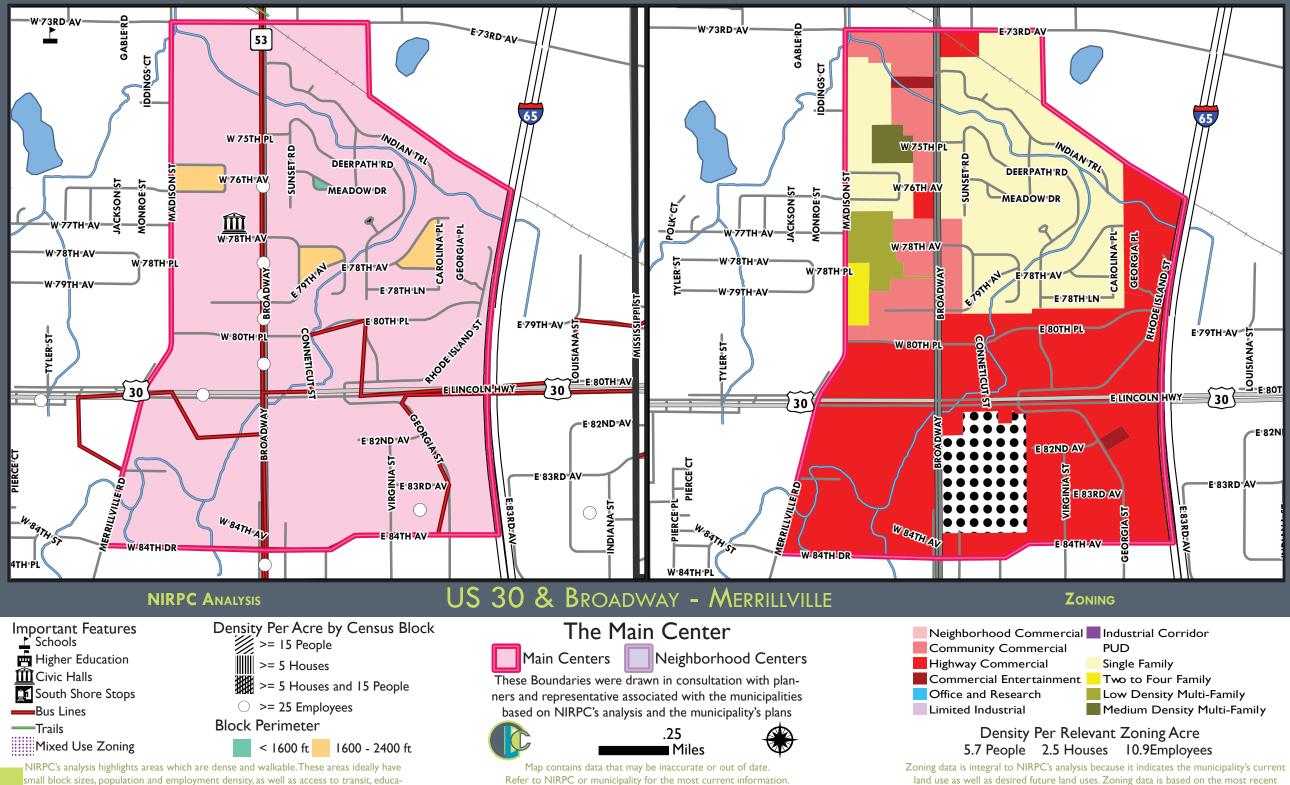
Building setbacks are away from the street and are inconsistent, limiting the visibility of commercial businesses along with a wide variety of signage designs, colors, and heights, creating visual clutter. The center is characterized by large parcels, predominantly strip malls, subdivisions, little to no sidewalks, and no mixed use.

The majority of the car-oriented commercial uses are found along US 30 and the strip mallstyle commercial areas. The commercial development is significant, with almost no easy access or connectivity to each other, other than through major arterials. The car-oriented commercial development south of US 30 includes a mixture of office buildings, restaurant chains, big box stores as well as the Centier Bank Headquarters, Chase Bank, and the former Century Mall site, which remains largely vacant. The commercial development north of US 30 consists of the Star Plaza Theatre, Radisson Hotel, a variety of chain restaurants, offices, and retail businesses, all surrounded by large parking lots.

Most of the residential development is single family, with certain areas having multi-family residential units. They are typical subdivisions with little or no connectivity to nearby commercial service areas without the use of a car.

#### Open Space/Landscape

The area includes one park, Forest Hill Park. In general, the center lacks open space and green landscape features. The area needs a more attractive streetscapes and pedestrian friendly improvements. An extension of the C&O trail greenway is under construction in the northeast portion of the center. The Town is in the process of creating a historical district in the area around 73rd Ave and Broadway.



ordinances available.

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tion, and civic halls.

## NORTH BROADWAY (NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER)

The North Broadway Neighborhood Center is bounded by 53rd Avenue on the north, Delaware Street to the east, 60th Avenue to the south, and Washington Street to the west. The total acreage of the center is 204 acres.

The center is situated at Merrillville's northern most boundary, near the City of Gary. It includes Andrean High School and a variety of service and convenience businesses.

#### **Population:**

1,514 people (4.3% of Merrillville's population). Population density is 12.3 people per acre.

#### Housing:

The total housing is 689 units (4.6% of Merrillville's total housing). Housing density is 5.6 units per acre.

#### Jobs:

Total employment in the North Broadway area is 1,212, with a density of 15.5 employees per acre.

#### **Mobility**

Gary Public Transportation Corporation (GPTC) bus routes 17 & 18 provides service along Broadway Avenue corridor and within the US 30 retail/office corridor. GPTC will be conducting a study of the Broadway Corridor.

#### Street Grid:

As shown in the street network map, streets run more linear in a semi-grid system with longer lots. Broadway is the major north/south corridor to and from neighboring Gary and the Town of Merrillville. Most west/east streets connect to Broadway.

#### Walkability:

Due to the large parcel and lot sizes, the area lacks sidewalks and overall good connectivity. Although, according to Walk Score, the center has a score of 54 (somewhat walkable) with most errands can be accomplished by foot.

#### **Traffic Conflict:**

Traffic is heaviest along Broadway.

Land Use / Buildinas

The residential development in the North Broadway area is predominantly a mixed-product single-family subdivision that is comprised of single-family homes and clusters of apartment complexes. Most residential is located behind the commercial strip along Broadway.

The commercial area is located largely along Broadway, and is zoned as community commercial. It contains a variety of commercial uses including office, service, retail and big box retail shopping. The overall character of the buildings is a typical suburban strip mall development, with large parcels and surface parking surrounding the buildings.

#### **Open Space/Landscape**

North Broadway

Merrillville

(NIRPC)

The area includes one park, Forest Hill Park. In general, the center lacks open space and green landscape features. The area needs a more attractive streetscapes and pedestrian friendly improvements. An extension of the C&O trail greenway is under construction in the northeast portion of the center. The Town is in the process of creating a historical district in the area around 73rd Ave and Broadway.



Broadway & 61st Avenue, Merrillville (NIRPC)

