



# Land Use Element

## Part Two: Creating Purpose







## Introduction

Part One of this Land Use Element of the NWI 2050+ Metropolitan Transportation Plan explored important influencers of land use within the three counties of the Northwest Indiana Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). These factors included existing land use patterns; population and growth trends within the region and its 42 cities and towns, past planning efforts in individual cities, towns, and counties; and housing trends and market gaps. Based on this information and extensive community consultation and field work, Part One identified eight policy areas that grouped MSA communities and subregions together based on

on common characteristics, relationships, and periods of development. It also identified and presented a typology of major corridors, recognizing their importance as both transportation facilities and focuses of development and community character. This working paper builds on that foundation to develop a regional land use vision and policy directions for the next twenty-five years. This vision recognizes that each community has control of its own future. But regional policy has a strong role to play in a multi-county, multi-community area like NWI, where economic, development, transportation and environmental issues and interests do not stop at municipal borders or county lines.

Whereas Part One of this element was largely quantitative, presenting and analyzing facts on the ground, Part Two is largely qualitative, interpreting and evaluating those facts and using them to form regional guidance and policy. Of special importance to this plan and the regional mission of NIRPC is the close relationships of transportation, land use, economic health, and community quality.

To the end of creating a land use vision and policy for NWI, this plan component includes the following:

**A population future based on regional trends and the potential of Northwest Indiana.** While industrial uses can follow their own imperatives, residential uses constitute the largest single consumer of land by far, and population change drives the conversion of land from rural to urban use. This section projects a population target for the planning period and explains the reasons that make this target likely.

**Issues and Uncertainties.** This section will discuss outstanding problems and questions that affect both the ability of NWI to evolve for the benefit of its citizens and that frame future policy and projects.

**A Development Vision.** This presents a projected land use future for the policy areas identified in Part One, derived from the potential population future discussed in the next section.

**Land Use Principles,** macro-scale guidelines and programs that, taken together, will help move the region toward achieving its full potential.

**Focus Areas,** to be considered in detail as case studies and demonstrations of possibilities and implementation in Part Three.

## A Population Future

Part One presented a methodology based largely on observed growth rates in stable and growing communities, relative stability in cities that had been in historic decline, continuation of positive trends in several municipalities, and relative population stability in rural and exurban areas. This analysis yielded a target NWI population of about 900,000, with an approximate split of 740,000 urban and 160,000 rural/exurban. This equates to an average annual growth rate within the MSA of about 0.55%. However, NWI's overall population change during the last forty years has been flat, with increases in growing "suburban" areas cancelled by declines in the older "industrial" cities.

This discussion takes a somewhat different analytical approach, looking at the dynamics on the Illinois side of the Chicago metropolitan area and comparing the population history of Cook, Lake, and DuPage Counties to that of the three NWI counties. Taken together, the three primary Chicago area counties displayed an average annual growth rate of 0.21%, relatively similar to NWI's 0.11% annual rate. However, controlling for Chicago, the remainder of the Illinois metropolitan area displays a 0.55% average annual rate. The more distant suburban counties have rates ranging from 0.8% to 1.2%.

This pattern is analogous to Northwest Indiana. When the larger industrial cities (Gary, Hammond, and East Chicago) are separated out, the three county area has an average annual rate of 0.67%. The projected growth rate of 0.55% in Part One struck a midpoint between the slower and faster growing counties in the Chicago metropolitan area. Furthermore, it is exactly the same as the three county growth rate excluding Chicago on the Illinois side. This projection, then,

**Figure 1: Chicago Metropolitan Area Growth History, 1980-2020 for Illinois**

	1980-2020		
	1980	2020	Average Annual Growth (Loss) Rate
<b>Cook County</b>	5,253,655	5,275,541	0.01%
Chicago	3,005,072	2,746,388	-0.23%
Outside of Chicago	2,248,583	2,529,153	0.29%
<b>Lake County, IL</b>	440,372	714,342	1.22%
DuPage County, IL	658,835	932,877	0.87%
3 County IL Total	6,352,862	6,922,760	0.21%
3-County excluding Chicago	3,347,790	4,176,372	0.55%

**Figure 2: Northwest Indiana Metropolitan Area Growth History, 1980-2020**

	1980-2020		
	1980	2020	Average Annual Growth (Loss) Rate
<b>Lake County, IN</b>	521,525	498,700	-0.12%
Industrial Cities	283,739	173,342	-1.23%
Outside of Industrial Cities*	237,786	325,358	0.79%
<b>Porter County</b>	120,059	173,215	0.92%
La Porte County	108,695	112,417	0.08%
3 County IN Total	750,279	784,332	0.11%
3-County excluding Industrial Cities	466,540	602,118	0.67%

\* Industrial cities include Gary, Hammond, and East Chicago

**Figure 2: Northwest Indiana Metropolitan Area**

appears to be highly consistent with the experience of the wider Chicago metropolitan region and appears to represent a highly defensible projection for the future.

## Trends that Support a New Population Model

The model makes two overall reasonable and positive assumptions:

- “Suburban” growth centers in Northwest Indiana will grow at a relatively robust rate, at least consistent with the experience of suburban Illinois counties outside of Cook.
- The population decline of older cities will slow down and future population totals will stabilize.

A fundamental question, then, is what are the assets and opportunities that are making this long-term outcome increasingly likely; and how can regional policy capitalize on them. We think these significant emerging assets include the following.

### Commuter Transportation

Major investments on the South Shore Line will help stabilize central cities and generate manageable growth in developing areas. Double tracking will bring faster and more frequent service to Chicago, including better off-peak schedules. Speed primarily benefits potential commuters between Gary and Michigan City, increasing the ability of Duneland cities to attract Chicago-bound commuters. This attraction would be enhanced by good transit, bicycle, or park and ride access to the railroad. But frequency benefits everyone, and can support redevelopment efforts in Hammond, East Chicago, and perhaps, most significantly, Gary.



**South Shore Line improvements.** From top: Right-of-way clearance and grading for new, double track right of way in Michigan City; rendering of new Miller station

The completion of the West Lake Corridor will be at least as important a factor in influencing the development and land use future of NWI. The new line puts approximately 170,000 people within a 15-minute commuter-shed of stations. This, coupled with other assets, is likely to help stabilize built-up areas and encourage significant new development in growth centers around and south of the Dyer terminal.

### Transit-Oriented Development

Related to the continued transformation of the South Shore Line are the opportunities for higher density development around stations. NIRPC’s *Transit Oriented Development Program Funding Report (2022)* identified three different types of TODs: TOD 1 in urban core or downtown districts; TOD 2 in suburban communities; and TOD 3 in commuter communities. The report’s analysis included both rail and enhanced bus transit nodes.

From a land use planning perspective, the different settings of potential TODs creates different development and population opportunities:

- TOD 1’s, including the downtown district’s of Hammond, Gary, and Michigan City, will tend to generate high density, mixed use projects. One such project is already in progress in Michigan City as of 2023, and a new Downtown Hammond Station, added to the original West Lake Corridor, will advance efforts to develop major residential projects in that district.
- TOD 2’s, typically in urbanized transit nodes outside of city centers, actually include a variety of settings with different potential outcomes. The East Chicago station is the busiest single station on the South Shore and, given its surrounding land use context and access, should also be capable of attracting high density, “city center” scale development. Stations like South Hammond and Munster in largely built up urban neighborhoods are more likely to generate medium-density infill projects. The Dyer terminal station, with substantial adjacent vacant sites and amenities like Centennial Park, will open possibilities for medium- to high-density residential and mixed use.

In the NIRPC report, the Broadway corridor – currently served by Gary Public Transportation’s Broadway Metro Express – includes two potential TOD nodes: University Park at the Indiana University Gary Campus and Century Plaza (US 30 and I-65) in Merrillville. Both of these sites present substantial possibilities for high-density residential development – the IU site on adjacent vacant land and the Century Park area through redevelopment of unnecessary large surface parking lots and other underused land. A third bus-related TOD site in Downtown Valparaiso is currently





**Figure 3. NWI Transit-Oriented Development Sites** from the *Transit-Oriented Development Program Funding Report (NIRPC, 2022)*



**Transit oriented development outside of a city center.** Along the Expo Line light rail in Los Angeles.



**Repopulating Downtown.** The Banks development in the New-Port Landing development area in La Porte. The project's density is nearly 50 units/acre.

es. Additionally, cities that developed without traditional central districts are in the process of developing or planning them in strategic locations. The developing Founders Square district in Portage is an example of such a project. Merrillville, beginning the process of a creating a new comprehensive plan, also aspires to establishing a new central district.

under development. The nature of service for potential residents at the Valparaiso node might be most significant for Chicago commuters. The other two TOD 2 sites (Carroll Avenue in Michigan City and Gary Airport) are on the edge of single family urban neighborhoods and near industrial uses, and would be less likely to attract substantial new, higher-density development.

- The identified TOD 3's are related to commuters and follow the lakefront. The Miller site and the US 12/20 corridors, with adjacency to an attractive neighborhood business district and the National Park, presents important possibilities for infill residential. The other three sites, within the national and state parks, are very limited from the perspective of adjacent TOD's. However, the corridors that lead to them - SR 49 and Waverly Road to Dune Acres, Crisman and Willow Creek Roads to

Ogden Dunes, and North 500E to Beverly Shores—could emerge as “Transit-Oriented Corridors” with higher permitted densities encouraged by improved South Shore commuter service.

### Significant City and Town Center Development

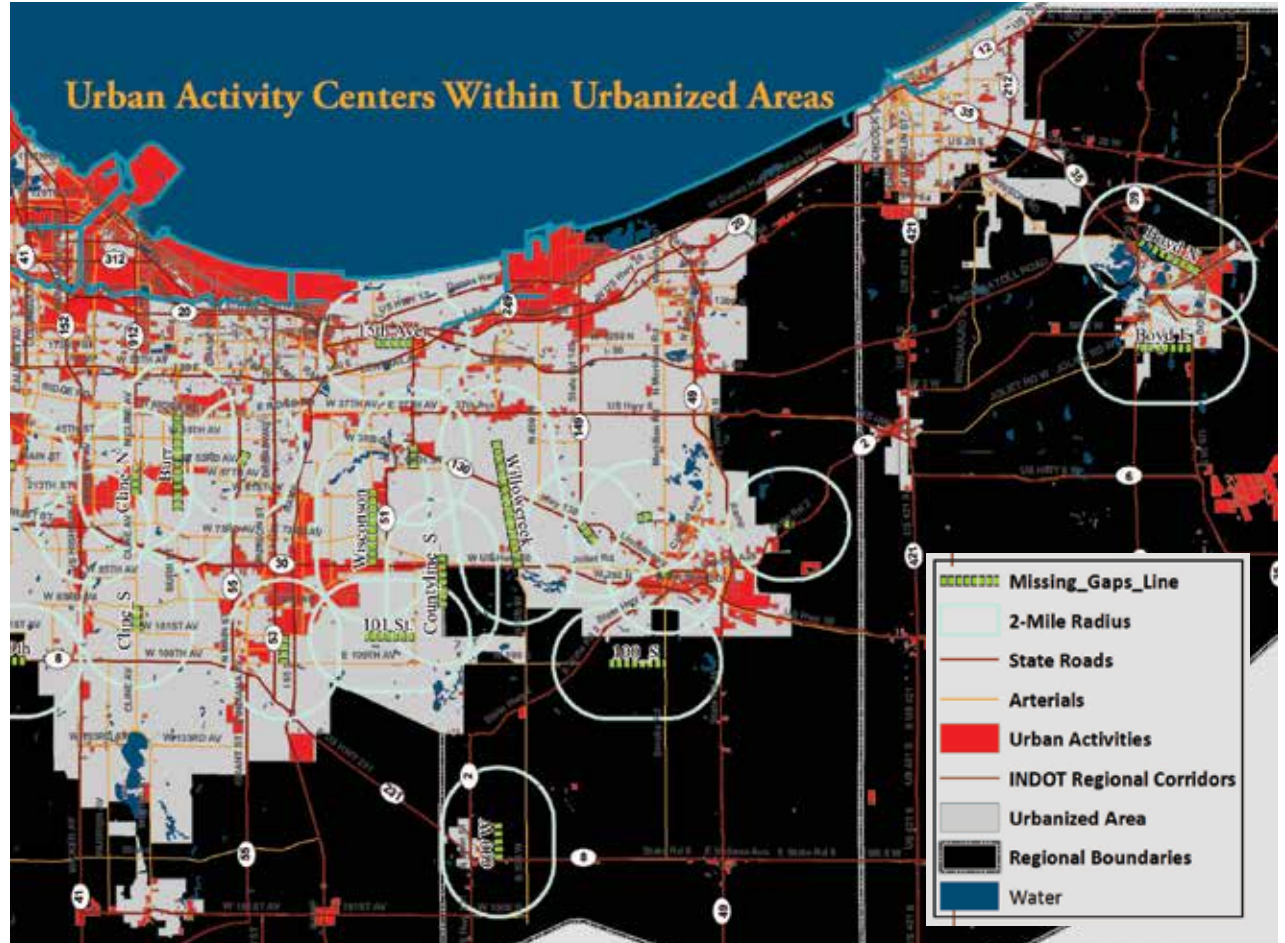
The variety and character of the region's city and town centers are distinct assets, and downtown development can have a significant impact toward stabilizing the population of older cities and adding density to newer ones. Hammond's ambitious downtown development program, which will be advanced by public realm investments and the addition of a downtown South Shore station, will add residents and enhance the image of the city. Public projects in Hobart, Portage, Crown Point, Valparaiso, and La Porte create the foundation for further urban development, including higher density residential and new business-



**Trails and Development.** From top: Trail-oriented development along the Midtown Greenway in Minneapolis; New construction underway along

### Outdoor and Environmental Assets

The Dunelands environment has attracted visitors to Northwest Indiana for many years and this unique and uniquely accessible outdoor environment is a growing asset for NWI. Continued investment at Indiana Dunes National Park is creating a major asset that will have significant land use and development implications. Similarly, the award of RAISE funding to complete the Marquette Greenway will advance implementation of the Marquette Action Plan. Because of its relationship



**Road System Gaps.** Urban activity centers and missing road links from NIRPC’s Regional Corridor Study (2016)

to the lakefront and transportation access, these projects have the potential to help stabilize population of these older, northern tier cities. As noted in Part One, this potential is showing signs of taking hold.

From a sustainable development point of view, the existing and future regional trail system also can have a significant, positive land use impact. NWI’s outstanding trail network has both recreational and transportation functions, and effectively operates in some

ways like a transit system, especially as gaps in major corridors like the C&O and Iron Horse are filled and priority links between the lakefront and Valparaiso (Dunes Kankakee) and La Porte (Chessie) are executed. Nationwide, trails have demonstrated the ability to attract urban density development in much the same way as fixed transit lines do, and “trail-oriented development” can be an important part of NWI’s land use policy.



## New Corridors

Previous plans, most notably the *Northwest Indiana Regional Corridors Plan Regional* (2016), identify significant corridors and missing links necessary to provide better connectivity in all four directions. The 2016 study takes a highly strategic approach, focusing on incremental street extensions and better north-south circulation in the more urbanized western half of the MSA. These proposed projects will open new areas to development and, combined with other assets, will attract a larger share of metropolitan growth. The most imminent of these is the extension of Willow Creek Road south to US 30. In common with other proposed road projects, much of the Willow Creek project takes place outside of municipal boundaries and will require a regional approach to use land efficiently, respect pre-existing land use patterns, and conserve environmental assets.

## Relative Housing Affordability

Part One included a detailed analysis of housing affordability in NWI. This analysis, based on 2020 Census data, concluded that typical housing values and rents in the region were very affordable relative to population. This appears to remain true, and a cursory review of average sales information done for this working paper using three sources (Zillow, Redfin, and Realtors.com), indicated that average prices in the three NWI counties was about 77% that of the three metropolitan Illinois counties (Cook, DuPage, and Lake). On the other hand, year to year comparisons for summer months in 2022 and 2021 indicate an increase in values of 11% for the NWI counties compared to 3.8% for the Illinois counties. Nevertheless, it appears that the more moderate overall prices in NWI do seem to be having an effect on the market.

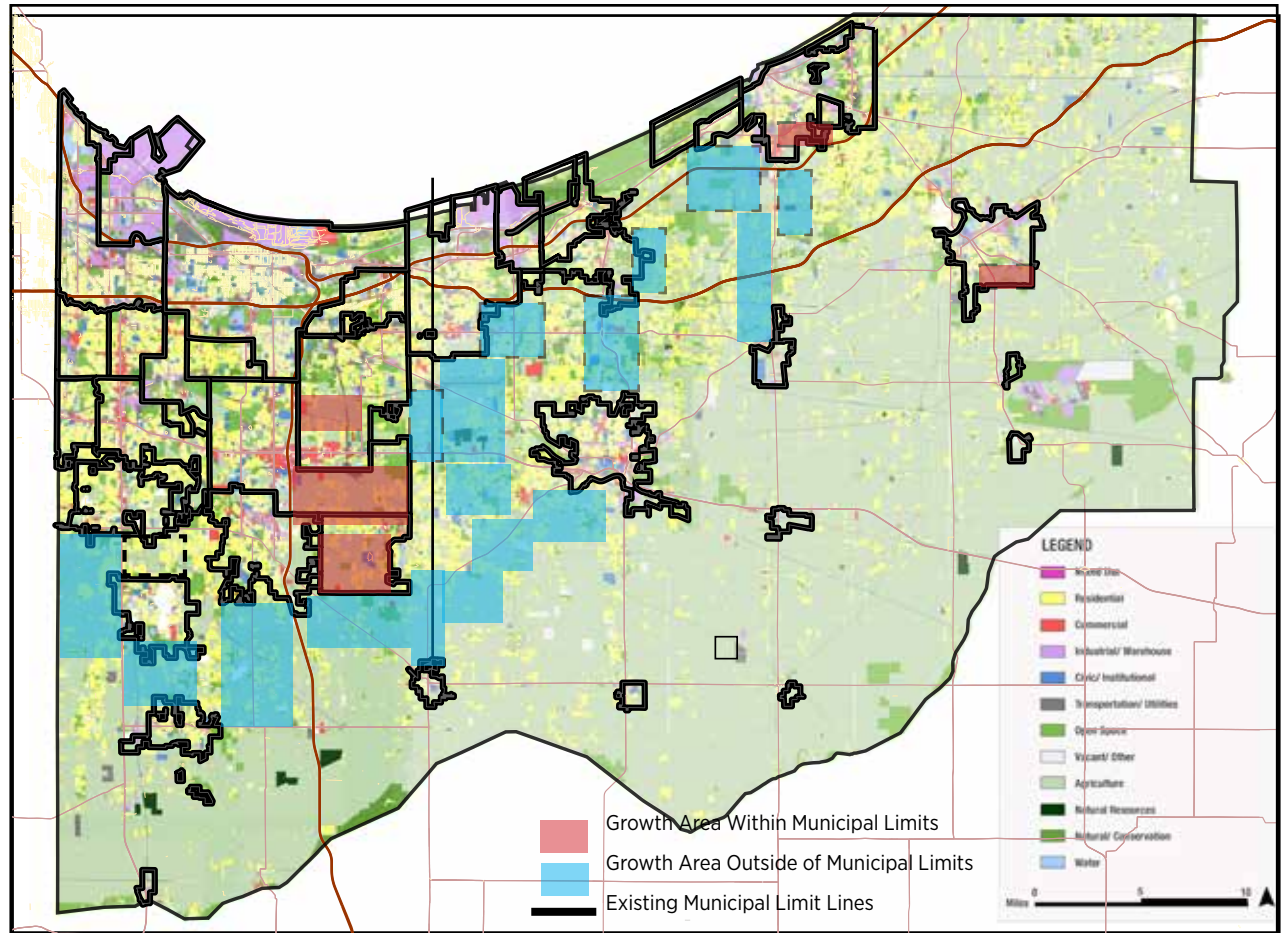


Figure 4. Potential Urban Development Areas. Potential areas for urban growth both in and out of existing municipal limits.

## Available Land

While large areas of NWI are environmentally sensitive, the region continues to have large areas for potential development that are accessible to community services. For example, some of these potential sites are very close to the regional commercial core at I-65 and US 30. With some significant exceptions such as the Merrillville “panhandle,” most of them are outside existing city limits and will require infrastructure extensions and probable annexations to provide municipal services.

## Economic Factors

NWI’s favorable tax environment compared to Illinois (lower state personal and business income taxes typically lower local property taxes) are a significant attractor of people in the metropolitan Chicago market. The region’s continued diversification from a reliance on heavy industry to other industrial sectors may ultimately provide more sources of local employment, with a consequent reduction of commuting time.

## Issues and Uncertainties

While the characteristics described above tend to move Northwest Indiana toward an attractive goal of manageable growth, the region also faces some specific issues and questions that should be addressed by regional land use and transportation policy, some of which are discussed below.

### The Future of Gary

In a very important way, the future health and economic viability of Gary is fundamental to the image and quality of Northwest Indiana. Within 57 square miles, the city has the largest municipal land area in NWI to serve in the face of a steadily declining population and revenue base, and the consequences of this challenge are highly visible. The city's dramatic population loss from its 1960 peak of about 180,000 to today's 70,000 has left large areas of vacant land and distressed and vacant buildings. And the city itself has experienced the concentrated impact of a variety of outside force – environmental pollution, the closing or shrinking of major industries, white flight and financial disinvestment, and the effects on neighborhoods of major highway corridors. This history of population decline, industrial contraction, and disinvestment must be reversed – but the question is how? Gary cannot solve these problems alone. Because of the connection of the city to the region, strategies and projects to reverse this history of decline must of necessity also be regional. While a land use element is certainly not sufficient to address these issues, it can point the way to physical development strategies that will make a difference.

### Industrial Northwest Cities and Land Use Impact

Heavy industry built NWI's older cities over a century



**Resources in Gary to build from.** From top: Broadway near the IU-Gary campus; a Marquette Greenway segment.

ago and continue to have an influence, but have been their major challenge in a still new century. More than the more suburban cities and towns of the MSA, they have had to deal with environmental impact, economic transition, and population change, and each have addressed challenges in different ways.

East Chicago and Whiting are both heavily affected and somewhat isolated by heavy industries. Whiting's relative isolation, limited interface with adjacent in-



**New residential development in industrial cities.** From top: Lakefront homes in Whiting; rental townhouses in East Chicago

dustries, strong 119th Street business district, lakefront access and recreation, and adjacency to Wolf Lake have reduced visual impact and reinforced its sense of community. This has produced both the will and resources to make significant amenity investments. It is also linked to both Chicago and the rest of NWI by US 41, US 20, and I-90 and excellent trail connections.

East Chicago, divided into three parts by industries, canals, and railroads, has more complicated physical



challenges. While this division reinforces neighborhood identity, it also complicates access from one part of the city to another and tends to create sectionalism, including two central business districts. The city is fully built up and land use changes will depend largely on redevelopment. A major potential land use focus is transit oriented development around its South Shore station, the busiest on the railroad. The city is already in the process of preparing a plan for this strategic focus. Another important priority will be improving multi-modal connections of East Chicago's separate neighborhoods.

Hammond, now the largest city in the MSA, has instituted a variety of innovative incentive and population retention programs to stabilize its population. These efforts have substantially slowed (and possibly reversed) the rate of population decline. A substantial growth focus of this largely built-up city is its downtown district, the subject of a major 2018 master plan and a subsequent Urban Land Institute Advisory Services Panel in 2021. A planned downtown station on the South Shore's West Lake line is seen as a major development catalyst for both new construction and adaptive reuse. A further challenge and opportunity



Downtown Hammond Revitalization Plan

will be the eventual reuse of the Franciscan Hospital site following the 2023 announcement that most services will be consolidated at its Munster facility. Another land use focus may be the eventual future of the industrial triangle between East 165th Street and the Hammond Yard.

### Transportation: Freight

Freight transportation policy serves conflicting goals. Freight movement should be smooth and efficient, but smooth and efficient freight movement comes at the cost of frequently creating barriers that challenge the connected, united, renewed, equitable, and safe aspects of the CURVES vision. Land use and transportation policies must be coordinated to unite communities, minimize externalities, and reduce the impact of barriers. This can sometimes entail substantial capital investments on a regional scale. It also requires cooperation among agencies and companies that are not always sympathetic with local interests.

### Transportation: Highways

Highway congestion is almost inevitable in Northwest Indiana because of its geography as conduit from Chicago and the west to the east. A confluence of four

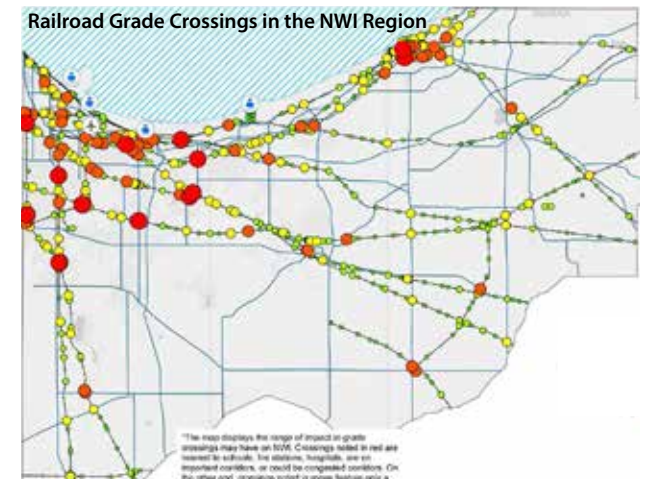


major interstate routes – Interstates 80, 90, 94, and 65, all among the busiest in the country and carrying heavy truck and automobile loads – almost inevitably causes congestion and substantial delays. Here again, land use and transportation policies must be closely coordinated to provide transportation alternatives and to separate local and regional traffic streams. This requires additional local corridors that keep unnecessary trips off the interstate system.

### Transportation: Transit

The NWI 2050+ public survey that was part of this process indicated very light use by respondents of local public transportation. The South Shore is likely to be a very important land use (and residential/commercial choice) determinant in the future. While conventional local bus service is very important from a service and equity point of view, it is almost never a determinant of major land use patterns, tending to respond to rather than create demand.

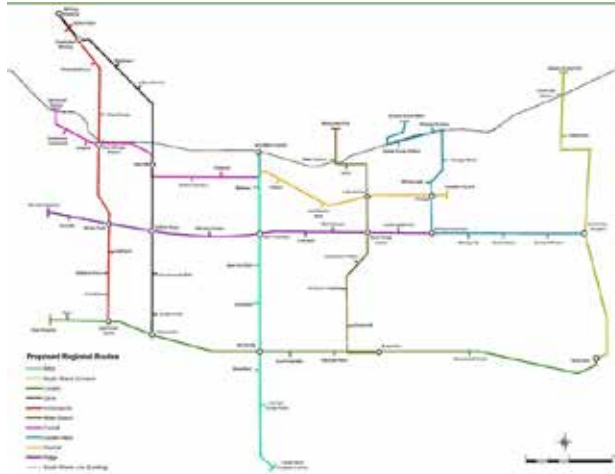
Bus rapid transit (BRT) service can have some impact on density, depending on service frequency and amenity, but is usually not enough of a factor to catalyze development alone. GPTC's BMX has some





aspects of bus rapid transit (limited stops, positive marketing, direct service, significant traffic generators, and electric buses in the future), but other characteristics, including low on-line population density and 30-minute frequency reduce its actual land use impact. Essentially, BRT service is a feature that helps market high-density development, but it usually does not create it. On the other hand, a direct rapid bus service on Broadway connecting to an enhanced South Shore Line could be beneficial to a TOD at the IU-Gary campus. Similarly, Valparaiso's V-Line, with direct commuter services to Chicago and the South Shore, reinforces development in a highly active downtown.

The 2050+ transit component considers two new network components: a corridor-oriented grid and a hub system. Both concepts substantially clarify and unify the region's local transportation systems. However, to the degree that local transit influences land use patterns, the alternatives have different impacts. The grid system encourages a more linear pattern

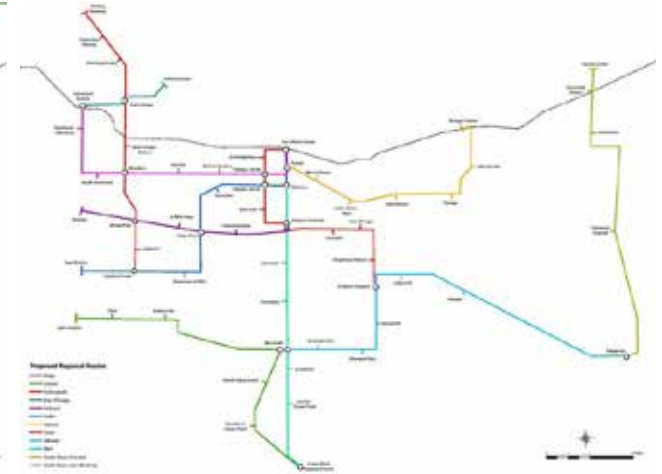


**Transit Service Alternatives.** From left: Grid (or corridor) based network and hub (or node)- based system

and generates more frequency on each line, favoring point-to-point riders headed for a one destination. The hub (or time-transfer) system may encourage development around the hub by providing more choices to people whose trip originates there. But with limits on funding, it increases headways and trip time for people traveling to other destinations.

### Commercial Development

Changes in the commercial environment have significant impacts on land use and present both challenges and opportunities with older, automobile-intensive centers. On-line retailing, the decline and bankruptcy of some big box and mall retailers, the COVID pandemic, reduced demand and higher operating costs in regional malls and changing preferences are nationwide trends that have affected commercial land use. On the other hand, some retailers have successfully weathered the storm and some information suggest some resurgence for the experience of brick-and-mortar retailing. It seems clear though, that two types of land-intensive developments are suffering: older large strip centers and regional malls.



**Obsolete Centers.** Many older strip centers in the region present significant problems but occupy real estate that with significant reuse opportunities. Many of these centers have high vacancy or marginal occupancy, excessively large parking lots, few pedestrian and user amenities, and poor relationships to surrounding streets or sidewalks. These older projects do not compete successfully with more contemporary development and do not generate the capital necessary for major upgrades.

**Southlake and Century Plaza District.** Southlake Mall and surrounding retailers around the US 30 and I-65 interchange have been and still are Northwest Indiana's retail center. However, vacancy in the mall and closure of anchor stores and the vast amount of parking in relation to even peak demand suggests a redesign to use this important site more productively. The entire district, covering over two square miles, has poor connectivity and virtually no safe pedestrian access. The evolution of this district to create a more appealing and productive mixed use environment should be viewed as a technique to keep this area both economically vital and more attractive to its customer base.





**Southlake.** While the mall remains an important retail center, vacant big box stores and parking lots designed for another era are exceedingly difficult to fill.

**Commercial Corridors.** Older commercial corridors, including sections of such streets as Calumet Avenue, Kennedy Avenue, Indianapolis Boulevard, Central Avenue, and Main Street (Crown Point) have many of the same problems as the strip centers that often occur along them or at major intersections with other arterials. Issues with older corridors include inefficient use, poor connectivity to the street or sidewalk, access management and conflicts, marginal uses and some vacancy, outdoor storage, and other problems



**Two Commercial Corridors:** From top: Main Street in Crown Point, Broadway in Gary.

that affect the city environment.

These issues also pertain to new or emerging corridors as well, although the scale of buildings is typically larger. In addition, newer corridors (like Indianapolis Boulevard in Highland and St John) developed when access controls were in place. But again, these corridors do create inefficiencies in land use, exhibit poor pedestrian both within and to the development, and relate poorly to surrounding neighborhoods.

## Housing Deficits

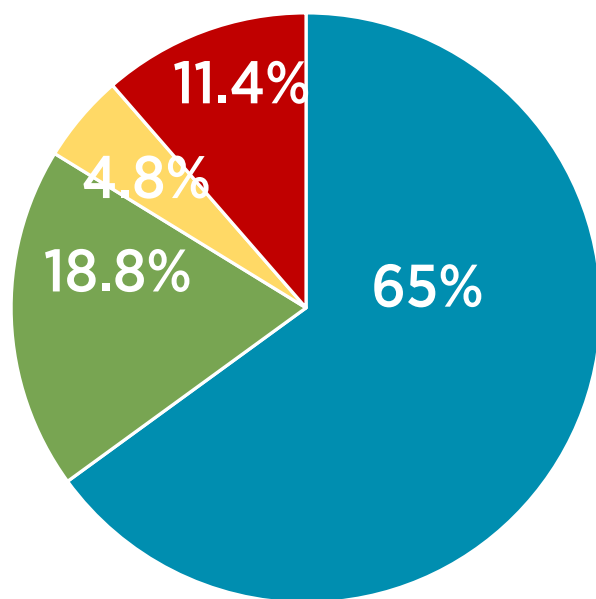
Part One included an extensive analysis of housing issues, with a particular emphasis on both supply and affordability. Both these areas identified significant issues that affect regional land use policy.

**Multifamily Development.** Nationally, the ratio of single-family to multi-family housing starts in the United States has been approximately 60% to 40%. This fluctuates with specific conditions. In late 2022, for example, increasing mortgage interest rates have affected single-family starts more severely than multi-family, and the ratio is now more in the 50/50 range. But in any case, single-family housing dominates NWI, despite changing preferences and continued demand for multi-family development.

As of 2020, the housing stock of the NWI region was about 84% single-family detached. Multifamily units made up only about 11% of the total inventory. This reflects a significant number of housing units in semi-rural settings, but also a prevalence of single-family housing within communities. Given post-2008 shifts in attitudes about homeownership and current housing development cost, a substantial demand is likely to exist for multifamily, especially in areas with convenient services.

A particular area of shortage is “high-end” multi-family units with monthly rents over \$1,500. This is a problem because our experience finds a typical required rent for feasibility is in the range of \$1.80 to \$2.00/ square foot for monthly rent. The lack of comparable residential rents discourages developers from moving into the market because of a perception of increased risk. It also concentrates higher income households with the ability to support market rate rents in lower cost, more affordable housing units.

**Figure 3: Housing Unit Distribution in Northwest Indiana, 2020**



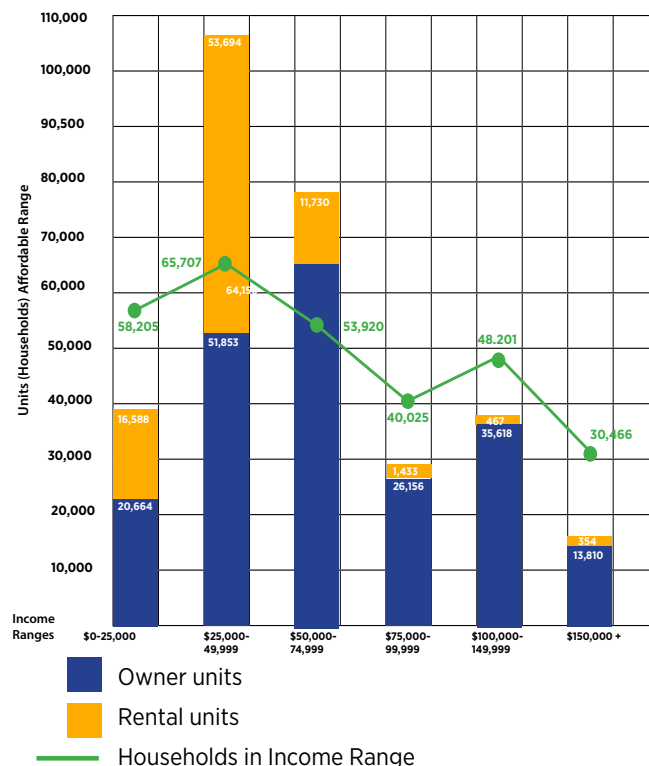
- Large Lot 1-Family Detached
- Small Lot 1-Family Detached
- 1-Family Attached
- Multi-Family

Source: Urban Footprint, 2022

**Ownership Development.** The affordability analysis in Part One indicates that more affluent households are occupying relatively affordable units. Therefore, these units are not available to new or more moderate income households. At current construction and development costs, it is very difficult to build new units affordable to moderate income households. There are several potential solutions to this problem including:

- Development of move-up housing for higher-income residents.

**Figure 4: Northwest Indiana Affordability Analysis**



This analysis compares the number of households requiring housing with costs in a specific range supply of units available in that range.

Source: US Bureau of the Census American Community Survey 2022, RDG Planning & Design

- Incentives that reduce the cost of new housing development.
- Nonprofit or limited profit development entities, focused on moderate cost housing.
- Increased emphasis on new forms of owner-occupied construction, including small-lot single family, owner-occupied duplexes and other attached forms, townhomes and rowhouses, and condominiums.



**Innovative Urban Development Forms.** From top: Townhomes in East Chicago, Street-oriented apartments in the Village at Burns Harbor.

### Exurban Development-Beyond Municipal Limits

Anecdotal information, gained through discussions with individuals involved in development, suggests that open land in Northwest Indiana is being acquired on either a speculative basis, anticipating future development demand, or for more immediate development. In a way, this tends to confirm the conclusions discussed earlier – that the region is becoming increasingly attractive to people in the greater Chicago metropolitan area and that environment, housing and



land cost, environment, and transit improvements are reinforcing this emerging trend. A significant amount of this development may occur outside existing limits and may involve people looking for large lot or semi-rural settings. The relative availability and affordability of large parcels of land without urban services might encourage short-term, large lot residential development for people seeking to “live in the country.”

This creates additional challenges for municipalities and the region as a whole. Large lot development on individual wastewater systems can constrain logical city growth and extension of municipal services. Residents of these areas, coming from cities, bring the expectation of city services with them. Providing these basic services is very expensive because of the low density and consequent low value per acre of semi-rural subdivisions. Finally, low density development, if unmanaged, converts more land to development, increases the interface with natural resources and environments, and reduces the efficacy of transportation alternatives to the car.

There will always be a market for low density residential uses in areas of Northwest Indiana, and a policy framework that accommodates and manages this demand is required. Some potential development areas are unlikely to receive urban services and well-designed large-lot and acreage development will not impede urban growth. In areas where public service extension is feasible but premature, concepts that both allow some limited amount of “rural” development in the short term but maintain the local prerogative to extend services economically in the future can be a useful solution.

### Toward a Development Vision: Constructing Development Scenarios

Despite NWI’s national reputation as being largely occupied by heavy industry – create largely by visibility from interstate highways – agriculture and residential are the region’s dominant land uses. Agriculture accounts for 851 square miles, or 59% of the total land area, while about 268 square miles, or about 18.6%,

are in residential use. Residential is the dominant use of developed or otherwise assigned land, representing 58.3% of the total. Therefore, residential use will largely determine how much agricultural or open land will be converted to urban development between 2023 and 2050.

Because of the dominance of residential use, the variables for developing regional growth scenarios will largely involve housing, and will include density

Figure 5: Land Use Distribution in NWI: All Uses

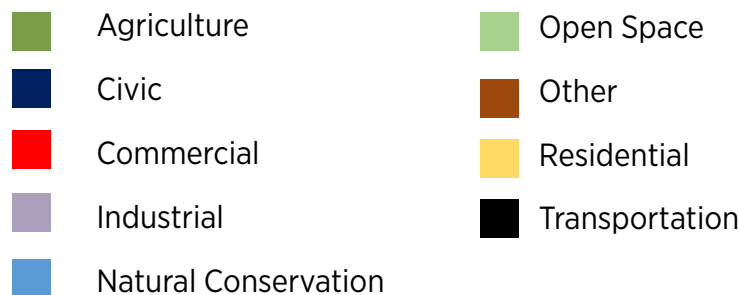
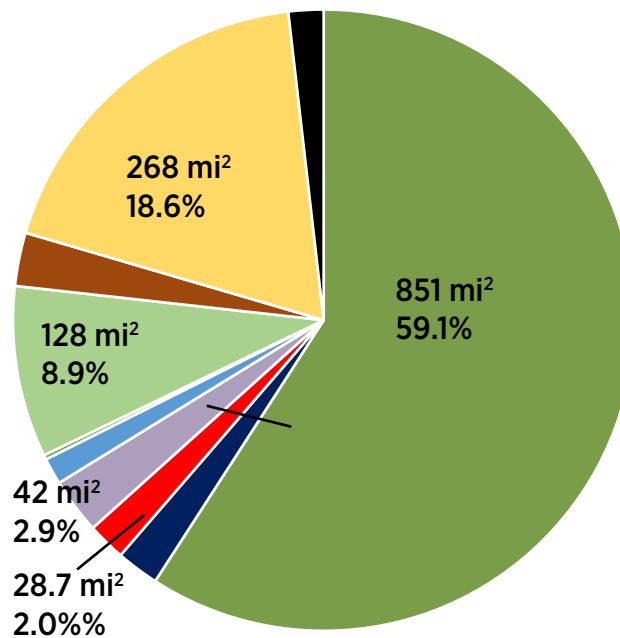
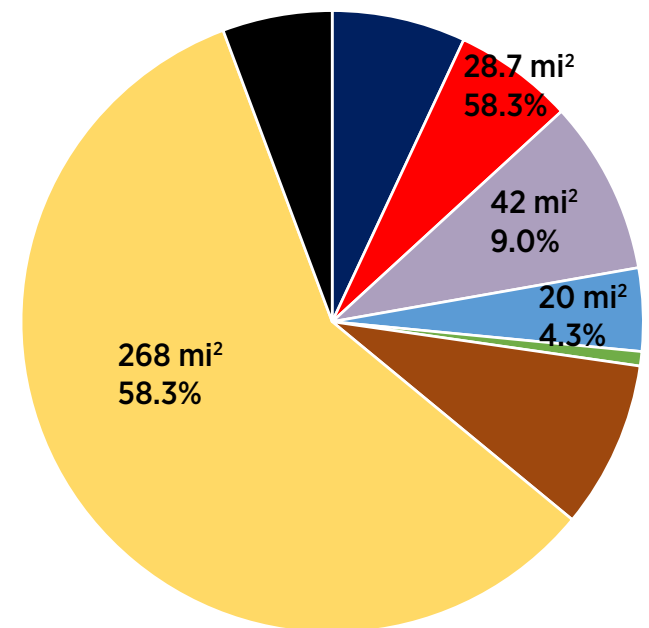


Figure 6: Land Use Distribution in NWI: Developed Uses



and building configuration. The base scenario will be a continuation of the current condition. As of 2020, the region included 335,647 housing units on 268.26 square miles or 171,686 acres. This indicates a net residential density of 1.96 units/acre, or a gross density (including street and internal open space) of about 1.63 units/acre. This reflects several factors, notably:

- The preponderance of large lot single family development throughout the region, including a large amount of acreage in low-density residential use.
- The very low density of Gary, by far the largest municipality in the region which would normally be expected to generate high population density.

Figure 7 displays a model that describes a distribution of unit densities and types that are relatively consistent with available data for numbers of units in each category and overall density for NWI. This model provides a baseline for alternative scenarios that display different housing mixes and land conversion requirements. The scenarios illustrated here include:

- Continuation of the current housing mix, yielding a new density of 1.96 units per acre for 30 year growth.
- New development at a net overall density of 3 units/acre. This net density is similar to conventional residential development in American suburbs, but a significant increase over current housing density.
- New development at a net overall density of 4 units/acre. This housing mix reflects the mix of single-family to multifamily development prevalent in the United States today.
- New development at a net density of 5 units/acre, a significant density increase and an average

**Figure 7: Base Model for Existing Density and Housing Types: 2020**

Unit Type	Area/Unit (SF)	Area/Unit (Acres)	Net du/A	% of Units in Category	Total # of Units	Total Area (A)	Net total du/A
<b>Large Lot 1-Family</b>							
Acreage	87,120	2.00	0.67	20%	43,627.	87,254.80	
Large Lot	21,780	0.75	2	20%	43627.	32,720.55	
Standard Lot	12,000	0.30	4.35	60%	130,882.	39,264.66	
<b>Total for Category</b>					<b>218,137</b>	<b>159,240.01</b>	<b>1.370</b>
<b>Small Lot 1-Family</b>							
Small Lot 1	7,500	0.172	5.8	50%	31502.	5418.43	
Small Lot 2	5,000	0.114	8.7	50%	31502.	3591.29	
<b>Total for Category</b>					<b>63,005</b>	<b>9,009.72</b>	<b>6.993</b>
<b>1-Family Attached</b>							
Duplex	4,000	0.092	12.44	80%	13,008	1,194.4	
3-4 units TH	2,500	0.057	17.42	20%	3,252	185.36	
<b>Total for Category</b>					<b>16,260</b>	<b>1,239.01</b>	<b>12.123</b>
<b>Multifamily</b>							
Low Density	1,500	0.034	29.04	75%	28,683.	987.73	
Medium	1,000	0.023	43.56	20%	7,649	175.60	
High	500	0.011	87.12	5%	1,912.	21.95	
<b>Total for Category</b>					<b>38,245</b>	<b>1,185.28</b>	<b>32.267</b>
<b>Total</b>					<b>335,647</b>	<b>170,815</b>	<b>1.96</b>



**Figure 8: 30-Year Housing and Land Conversion Scenario for Status Quo Density Mix**

Unit Type	Area/Unit (SF)	Area/Unit (Acres)	Net du/A	% of Units in Category	Total # of Units	Total Area (A)	Net total du/A
<b>Large Lot 1-Family</b>							
Acreage	87,120	2	0.67	20%	6,500	13000.00	
Large Lot	21,780	0.75	2	20%	6,500	4875.00	
Standard Lot	12,000	0.3	4.35	60%	19,500	5850.00	
<b>Total for Category</b>					<b>32,500</b>	<b>23,725</b>	<b>1.370</b>
<b>Small Lot 1-Family</b>							
Small Lot 1	7,500	0.172	5.8	50%	4,700	808.40	
Small Lot 2	5,000	0.114	8.7	50%	4,700	535.80	
<b>Total for Category</b>					<b>9,400</b>	<b>1344.20</b>	<b>6.993</b>
<b>1-Family Attached</b>							
Duplex	4,000	0.092	12.44	80%	1,920	176.31	
3-4 units TH	2,500	0.057	17.424	20%	480	27.36	
<b>Total for Category</b>					<b>2,400</b>	<b>203.67</b>	<b>11.783</b>
<b>Multifamily</b>							
Low Density	1,500	0.034	29.04	75%	4,275	147.21	
Medium	1,000	0.023	43.56	20%	1,140	26.17	
High	500	0.011	87.12	5%	285	3.27	
<b>Total for Category</b>					<b>5700</b>	<b>176.65</b>	<b>32.267</b>
<b>Total</b>					<b>50,000</b>	<b>25,449.52</b>	<b>1.965</b>
<b>Urban Conversion Area in Square Mile</b>							<b>39.76</b>

density that some cities are targeting as a more sustainable average residential density. This scenario places a major emphasis on medium density development – the so-called “missing middle” that includes small lot single-family, single-family attached, and townhome/rowhouse environments.

All scenarios use a 0.55% annual average growth rate, generating a 30-year total of 50,000 new units.

To consider these alternatives more fully, the model breaks projections into four residential development types:

- Large-lot single family, here considered to be detached units in three subcategories: small acreages averaging one unit per two acres; large lots, averaging about 1/2 acre per unit; and standard subdivision lots, averaging about 12,000 square feet per unit.
- Small lot single family, detached units in urban subdivisions, existing neighborhoods, and urban development and cluster configurations. Typical small lot residential is in the range of 5,000 to 7,000 square feet per unit.
- Single-family attached. This category includes attached units, duplexes, and mall townhome and rowhouse developments and can be built to relatively high densities. Typical site area per unit ranges from 2,500 to 4,000 square feet with net densities between 8 and 16 units per acre.
- Multifamily. Multifamily residential types can vary significantly, from small buildings to very large apartment blocks. the model uses three density steps, ranging from 20 to over 80 units per acre, with a typical average net density of about 30 units per acre,



**Village at Burns Harbor (small lot single-family):** Net density – 9 du/acre; gross density – 7.6 du/A



**Bungalows at Prairie Queen (multifamily):** Gross density – 23 du/A



**Townhouses at Gray's Station (single-family attached):** Net density – 15.5 du/A

**Figure 9: 30-Year Housing and Land Conversion Scenario for 3 du/acre**

Unit Type	Area/Unit (SF)	Area/Unit (Acres)	Net du/A	% of Units in Category	Total # of Units	Total Area (A)	Net total du/A
<b>Large Lot 1-Family</b>							
Acreage	87,120	2.000	0.67	20%	3,750	7,500.00	
Large Lot	21,780	0.750	2	20%	3,750	2,812.50	
Standard Lot	12,000	0.300	4.35	60%	11,250	3,375.00	
<b>Total for Category</b>					<b>18,750</b>	<b>13,687.50</b>	<b>1.370</b>
<b>Small Lot 1-Family</b>							
Small Lot 1	7,500	0.172	5.8	50%	8,125	1,397.50	
Small Lot 2	5,000	0.114	8.7	50%	8,125	926.25	
<b>Total for Category</b>					<b>16,250</b>	<b>2,323.75</b>	<b>6.993</b>
<b>1-Family Attached</b>							
Duplex	4,000	0.092	12.44	80%	4,000	367.31	
3-4 units TH	2,500	0.057	17.424	20%	1,000	57.00	
<b>Total for Category</b>					<b>5,000</b>	<b>424.31</b>	<b>11.784</b>
<b>Multifamily</b>							
Low Density	1,500	0.034	29.04	75%	7,500	258.26	
Medium	1,000	0.023	43.56	20%	2,000	45.91	
High	500	0.011	87.12	5%	500	5.74	
<b>Total for Category</b>					<b>10,000</b>	<b>309.92</b>	<b>32.267</b>
<b>Total</b>					<b>50,000</b>	<b>16,745.48</b>	<b>2.986</b>
<b>Urban Conversion Area in Square Mile</b>							<b>26.16</b>



**Figure 10: 30-Year Housing and Land Conversion Scenario for 4 du/acre (High MF)**

Unit Type	Area/Unit (SF)	Area/Unit (Acres)	Net du/A	% of Units in Category	Total # of Units	Total Area (A)	Net total du/A
<b>Large Lot 1-Family</b>							
Acreage	87,120	2.00	0.67	0.2	2,500	5,000.00	
Large Lot	21,780	0.75	2	0.2	2,500	1,875.00	
Standard Lot	12,000	0.30	4.35	0.6	7,500	2,250.00	
<b>Total for Category</b>					<b>12,500</b>	<b>9,125.00</b>	<b>1.370</b>
<b>Small Lot 1-Family</b>							
Small Lot 1	7,500	0.17	5.8	0.8	10,000	1,720.00	
Small Lot 2	5,000	0.11	8.7	0.2	2,500	285.00	
<b>Total for Category</b>					<b>12,500</b>	<b>2,005.00</b>	<b>6.234</b>
<b>1-Family Attached</b>							
Duplex	4,000	0.09	12.44	0.8	6,000	550.96	
3-4 units TH	2,500	0.06	17.424	0.2	1,500	85.50	
<b>Total for Category</b>					<b>7,500</b>	<b>636.46</b>	<b>11.784</b>
<b>Multifamily</b>							
Low Density	1,500	0.03	29.04	0.75	13,125	451.96	
Medium	1,000	0.02	43.56	0.2	3,500	80.35	
High	500	0.01	87.12	0.05	875	10.04	
<b>Total for Category</b>					<b>17,500</b>	<b>542.36</b>	<b>32.267</b>
<b>Total</b>					<b>50,000</b>	<b>12,308.82</b>	<b>4.062</b>
<b>Urban Conversion Area in Square Mile</b>							<b>19.23</b>

## Comparing Scenarios

Figures 8 through 11 display the four alternative development scenarios in detail, with common assumptions about overall housing development and population growth. Table 8 distributes the projected 50,000 unit program continuing the unit distribution of the status quo. In this scenario, about 40 square miles of currently open land (either greenfield or redevelopment) will be needed to accommodate growth. At the other end of the scale, the 5 unit/acre scenario, placing a significant emphasis on “missing middle” housing types requires just under 16 square miles to meet these growth assumptions. Figure 12 compares the four scenarios and Figure 13 uses transect drawings to show a spacial comparison of the alternatives. Figure 14 illustrates the incremental land needs for the various scenarios, as land requirements increase as overall density decreases.

The more land intensive alternatives raise a number of issues for the region and its communities:

- Higher land demands locate new development farther away from municipal boundaries and public services. This requires utility extensions that are either accommodated by existing infrastructure or can be managed by incremental extensions. This adds substantial capital cost to development. The alternative is that more prospective residents find homes in dispersed locations without community services – for many people, not a desirable option.
- Lower density development is in many cases more expensive to build and to maintain. Therefore, it tends to reduce economic diversity and limits the potential market for the region.
- The areas of interface between established agricultural uses and urban development, raising potential land use and operational conflicts and

encroachment issues on farmland.

- Lower density development uses land less efficiently than higher density forms. In the status quo scenario, 93% of the land development area is used for 65% of the housing units required. The disparity grows with the higher density options. In the 5 du/acre, “Missing Middle” scenario, low density single family would use 63% of the land for 20% of the housing units.
- More dispersed urban development increases the possibility of impact on the region’s plentiful and important conservation areas.

On the other hand, a substantial market will continue to exist for low-density residential and well-designed, low-impact developments can minimize impervious surface coverage, buffer environmental resources, minimize impact on habitat, and increase the range of regional housing offerings. As with many things, balance is important, and housing policy in Northwest Indiana should provide a range of options.

**Figure 11: 30-Year Housing and Land Conversion Scenario for 5 du/acre**

Unit Type	Area/Unit (SF)	Area/Unit (Acres)	Net du/A	% of Units in Category	Total # of Units	Total Area (A)	Net total du/A
<b>Large Lot 1-Family</b>							
Acreage	87,120	2.00	0.67	15%	1,500	3,000.00	
Large Lot	21,780	0.75	2	18%	1,800	1,350.00	
Standard Lot	12,000	0.30	4.35	67%	6,700	2,010.00	
<b>Total for Category</b>					<b>10,000</b>	<b>6,360.00</b>	<b>1.572</b>
<b>Small Lot 1-Family</b>							
Small Lot 1	7,500	0.17	5.8	40%	7,000	1,204.00	
Small Lot 2	5,000	0.11	8.7	60%	10,500	1,197.00	
<b>Total for Category</b>					<b>17,500</b>	<b>2,401.00</b>	<b>7.289</b>
<b>1-Family Attached</b>							
Duplex	4,000	0.09	12.44	80%	8,000	734.62	
3-4 units TH	2,500	0.06	17.424	20%	2,000	114.00	
<b>Total for Category</b>					<b>10,000</b>	<b>848.62</b>	<b>11.784</b>
<b>Multifamily</b>							
Low Density	1,500	0.03	29.04	70%	8,750	301.31	
Medium	1,000	0.02	43.56	20%	2,500	57.39	
High	500	0.01	87.12	10%	1,250	14.35	
<b>Total for Category</b>					<b>12500</b>	<b>373.05</b>	<b>33.508</b>
<b>Total</b>					<b>50,000.00</b>	<b>9,982.67</b>	<b>5.009</b>
<b>Urban Conversion Area in Square Mile</b>							<b>15.60</b>

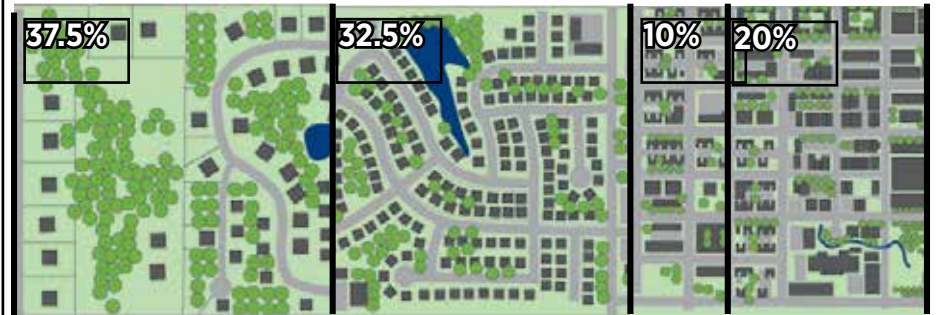


**Figure 12: Scenario Comparison for Land Consumption**

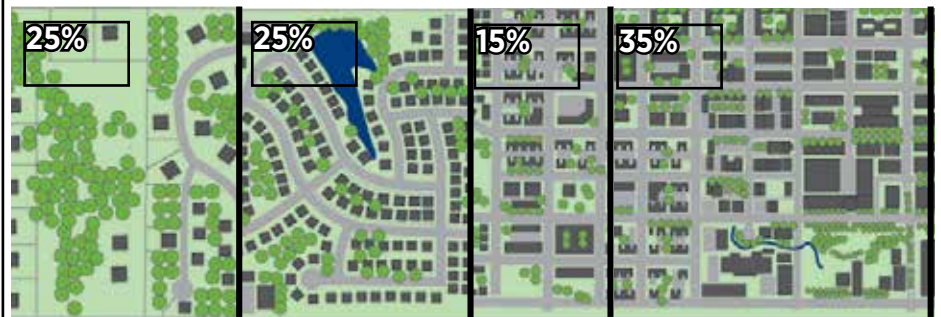
Unit Type	Average Site Area/Unit (SF)	% of Total Unit Growth	Net du/A	Land Area (Sq Mi)
<b>Scenario 1: Status Quo Trend</b>				
Large Lot 1-Family	28,980	65%	1.37	37.07
Small Lot 1-Family	6,250	18.8%	6.99	2.10
1-Family Attached	3,700	4.8%	11.78	0.31
Multifamily	1,350	11.4%	32.27	0.28
<b>Total</b>	<b>22,171</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>1.965</b>	<b>39.76</b>
<b>Scenario 2: 3du/A Trend: Suburban Single-Family</b>				
Large Lot 1-Family	28,980	37.5%	1.37	21.39
Small Lot 1-Family	6,250	32.5%	6.99	3.63
1-Family Attached	3,700	10%	11.78	0.66
Multifamily	1,350	20%	32.27	0.48
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,538</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>2.99</b>	<b>26.16</b>
<b>Scenario 3: 4 du/A Trend: National Trend</b>				
Large Lot 1-Family	28,980	25%	1.37	14.26
Small Lot 1-Family	7,000	25%	6.23	3.13
1-Family Attached	3,700	15%	11.78	0.99
Multifamily	1,350	35%	32.27	0.85
<b>Total</b>		<b>100.0%</b>	<b>4.06</b>	<b>19.23</b>
<b>Scenario 4: 5du/A Trend: High Small Lot and Attached Single-Family</b>				
Large Lot 1-Family	25,028	20%	1.57	9.93
Small Lot 1-Family	6,000	35%	7.29	3.75
1-Family Attached	3,700	20%	11.78	1.33
Multifamily	1,300	25%	33.51	0.58
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,607</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>5.01</b>	<b>15.60</b>



Current Trend Scenario: 1.96 du/A



Suburban Trend Scenario: 3 du/A



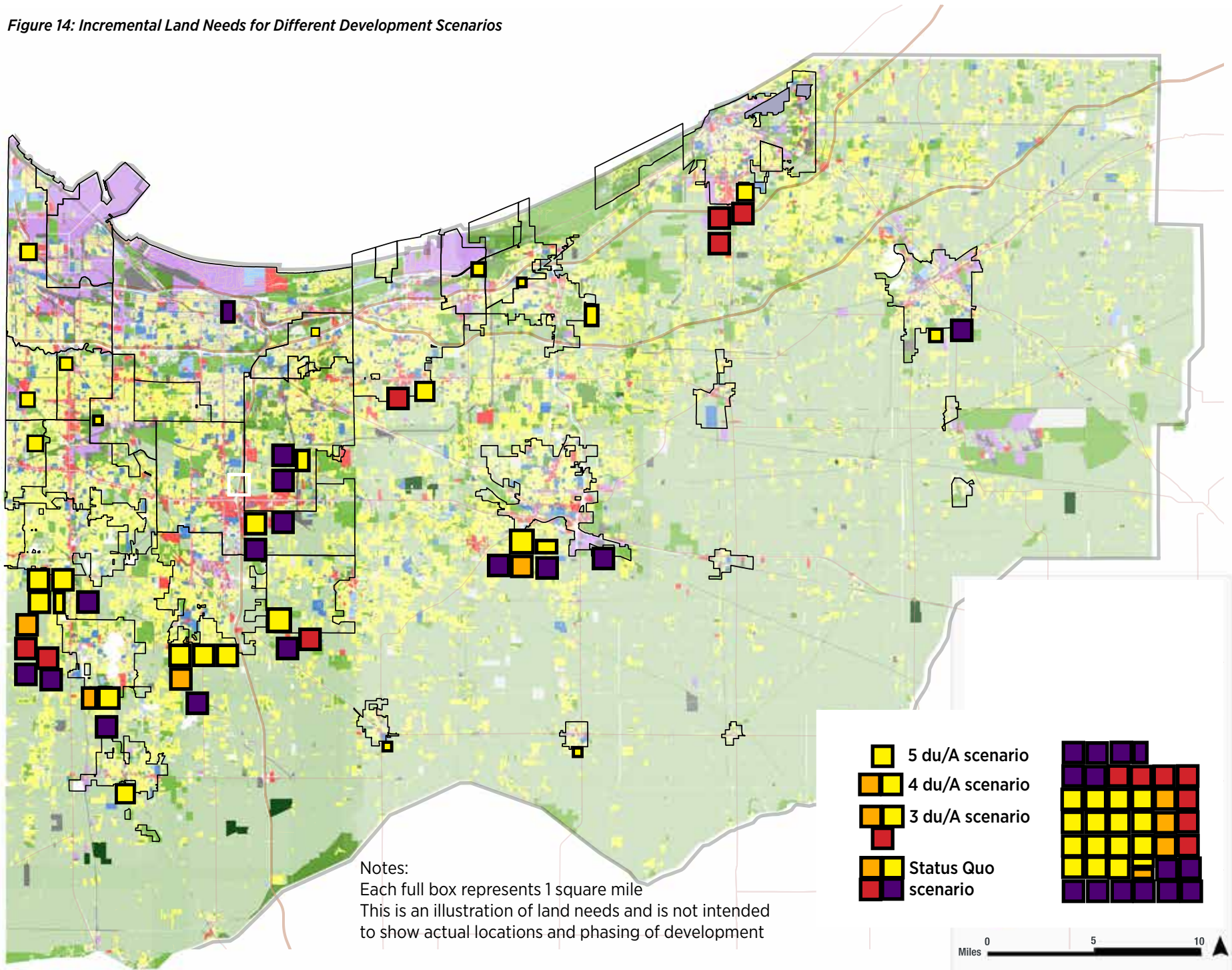
National Multifamily Trend Scenario: 4 du/A



Missing Middle Scenario: 5 du/A



Figure 14: Incremental Land Needs for Different Development Scenarios





## A Land Use Future

Based on the analysis contained in this section and the previous Part One, a desirable and attainable land use future for the Northwest Indiana region include the following:

- A long-term average annual growth rate of 0.55%, achieving a regional population of about 900,000 by 2050.
- A requirement for about 50,000 new residential units over the 30 year planning period.
- An increase in the density of urban development, with new construction achieving a net density in the range of four to five units per acre. This will require between 15 and 20 square miles of additional residential land specifically for housing purposes. Street, parks, common areas, and other features add between 25 and 30 percent to that total, increasing land need to between 19 and 25 square miles.
- Using current ratio of industrial and commercial lands to residential lands (6.38:1 and 9.33:1 respectively), the region should plan for about 3.9 square miles of industrial land and 2.6 square miles of commercial land. Some of this demand can be met through redevelopment or repurposing vacant property.

This section outlines land use assumptions and strategies to help achieve this land use future, followed by basic principles to be developed further in Part Three. They are categorized by individual policy areas and geographies identified in Part One.

## Northwest Industrial Cities

**Continued stabilization and strategic infill in “post-industrial” cities, specifically Hammond, East Chicago, and Whiting.** Each of these cities has made significant progress toward reversing a long period of population decline with the contraction of the heavy industries that built their employment base. Effective strategies will involve:

**Development and population of city centers and transit nodes in Hammond and East Chicago.** Both cities have major opportunities for TOD development related to the two major projects on the South Shore Line. The probable closing of Franciscan Hospital’s Downtown Hammond site is a real challenge, but the redevelopment of this large parcel also presents a major opportunity for populating downtown Hammond.

**The revitalization of Gary.** The rate of population decline in Gary is also stabilizing and the city has major opportunity areas that will require regional focus and assistance. The city cannot do everything at once, but its significant assets provide a solid foundation. Important projects that can lead to a rebirth of Metro Center include the improvement of speed and frequency of the South Shore in both directions, the visionary Gary Elevated trail project and its connection to the Marquette Greenway.

A neighborhood development program begins with the identifying focused “villages” - strong neighborhood cores that can be stabilized and built out from for the advantage of both existing and prospective residents. In addition, the combination of available land, an airport, and unique rail and highway access make Gary a major prospective location for contemporary industry.

## TOD’s

**Medium to high-density at urban SSL stations and transit hubs.** These include Hammond, Munster, Dyer, East Chicago, Michigan City, and Valparaiso. Michigan City will be a pioneer in the process of developing a major TOD. NIRPC’s TOD report provides an important guide to taking advantage of the possibilities inherent in the area’s transit improvement.

In addition to Metro Center, the IU Gary campus and vacant land around it provide an important TOD opportunity, with the emergence of BRT service along Broadway and its direct, rapid link to the South Shore at Metro Center.

**Medium to high-density development corridors from adjacent cities to stations in the National Park.** These cities include Portage, Chesterton, Valparaiso, and La Porte. The Duneland stations east of Miller are either in the national or state parks or are in or near significant conservation areas that would be threatened by intensive development. However the corridors leading to them could become more significant development centers and multi-modal transportation corridors. An example of such a corridor is Crisman Road in Portage and the linkage of Founders Square to the Ogden Dunes station. Road development and enhancement and regional transit policy can be catalysts for transit-oriented corridor development.

**Trail-oriented development with higher densities adjacent to or within ½ mile of regional trails.** NWI’s superb and growing regional trail system can create the same impetus for investment as transit projects. Trails should be evaluated and extended for their development and transportation importance as well as their recreational roles. Land use policies should encourage family-oriented urban development along these corridors.

## Town Centers

**Higher density residential development in and around city centers, with density scaled to the character of individual districts.** In addition to the traditional downtowns of the larger cities in NWI, the region has an enviable collection of smaller town centers. Many of these have experienced major quality of community investment projects that make these centers excellent, walkable living environments.

The areas outside of but linked to these Downtown districts also present major growth opportunities. An important example is the Newport Landing district in La Porte. Projects like paths and barrier removal developments can contribute to the synergy between these areas and the traditional city center.

**Emergence of mixed use centers in cities and towns without an historic core.** Founders Square in Portage is an example of a city building a new center at Founders Square. Developing a city center is also high on Merrillville's agenda as it begins the process of developing its first comprehensive plan in 25 years. Other important possibilities include the Willow Creek corridor and the Old Plank Road node on the south edge of Dyer.

## Growth Areas

**Moderate growth in mature suburbs.** Municipalities that experienced rapid growth before 2000 have continued to grow but at a more moderate rate. These cities and towns are located along the Westlake and Central regions identified as policy districts in Part One. They include Merrillville, Schererville, Chesterton, Hobart, and Dyer. Their growth rate inevitably goes down because their population base increases and the amount of open land within their corporate limits decreases. Our projections suggest annual population growth in the range of 0.25% to 0.75%. Other communities in

the same region, including Munster, Highland, Griffith, and others, are essentially built out and will continue to have stable populations.

**Substantial development in areas with urban services or logical expansions to them.** These opportunity areas include the Merrillville Panhandle, St. John, and the Crown Point-Cedar Lake-Lowell triangle. The region around Valparaiso is also likely to experience substantial growth because of the city's assets and its relatively direct access to the lakefront. Michigan City and La Porte have also successfully slowed and even reversed histories of population loss, and both will benefit from the South Shore's double tracking project.

## Commercial Repurposing

**Medium/high density residential in underused commercial corridors and obsolete commercial sites.** Older corridors with marginal or vacant commercial occupancy can be brought back to life as mixed use districts. Most of these corridors still retain important convenience, retail, services, and restaurants, making them potentially attractive and convenient living environments for a sector of the market.

We have developed the concept of Corridor Urbanism to help revitalize these corridors. This concept has a set of principles that fall under five categories:

- *Reality and Respect*, providing an environment that understands and supports the needs of existing businesses.
- *Resident Population*, increasing the number of people living along or near the corridor.
- *Opportunity and Orientation*, taking advantage of vacant sites, oversized and unused paved areas and parking lots, and other overlooked but available sites.
- *Transportation Function and Choice*, fixing func-

tional problems and establishing a corridor that works well and encourages access for all modes of travel

- *Quality Urban Environment*, with scale and features that creates a positive experience for users at all speeds and for all purposes.

**Southlake as a mixed use district.** The 1 1/2 square mile district around the I-65 and US 30 interchange remains the commercial core of Northwest Indiana, but it is a core with gaps and a large amount of underused land. This creates a major opportunity for the evolution of a true regional center that is something more than the disconnected aggregation of major retailing that exists today. A plan for active transportation in this highly auto-dominant area has been completed and the C&O Trail will eventually serve the area. But incorporating housing, reusing and adding scale to vast parking lots, and re-imagining opportunity sites in a comprehensive way can restore the Southlake district as a major attraction.

## Very Low Density Development and Rural Conservation

**Conservation rural density development in areas where urban service extensions are unfeasible.**

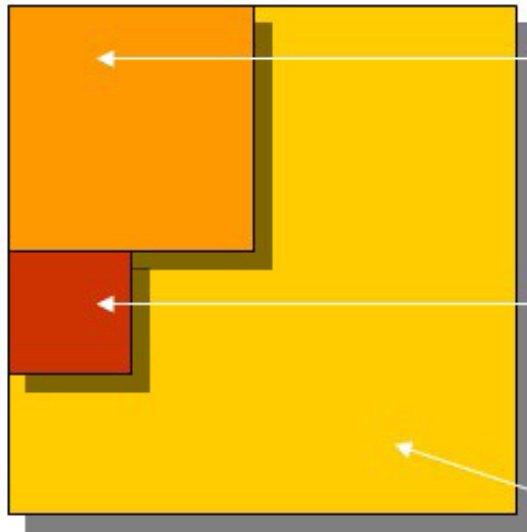
People seeking acreages and large lot settings will continue to seek homes in Northwest Indiana and regional land use policy should both recognize and manage this market. Ideal sites for this kind of development are areas that 1) cannot feasibly expect to receive urban services; 2) are outside of areas where agriculture is the dominant land use; 3) are outside of natural growth or annexation areas of municipalities; and 4) do not adversely affect protected conservation areas. Wherever possible, end-point low density development should employ conservation design techniques – clustering lots in relatively buildable



areas and maintaining common open space in more sensitive areas, including slopes, wooded areas, watercourses, wet areas, and other similar features.

**Transitional development (Build through acreage concept) within feasible urban service areas where extensions are feasible but premature.** In areas where infrastructure extension is feasible but premature, property owners may want to develop in a way that makes future extensions impossible or unfeasible. Transitional development techniques allow partial development of the parcel in a way that gives owners a reasonable return on their property without blocking sound community growth. Figure 15 illustrates a concept for “Build-Through Acreages,” that can successfully address this issue.

*Figure 15: Build-Through Acreage concept*



20% of the parcel area may be used for acreage development.

An additional 5% of the site area may be used for acreage development if a significant environmental or open space resource is preserved in the CUP.

The rest of the site is platted as an outlot, reserved for future urban development with the extension of municipal services.



## Summary of Concluding Principles (in progress)

### Overall Development

- Maintain integrity of critical conservation areas as identified in the Calumet Regional Action Plan.
- Provide contiguous urban growth around existing cities and towns.
- Mix housing types in new residential developments with urban services: traditional single family, small lot single family, attached configurations, small footprint multifamily
- Establish a gross average density goal of 4 units/acre (net density of 5 units/acre) for new development throughout the region

### Exurban Development

- Transitional development in areas within future urban service areas but without existing infrastructure (Build Through Acreage concept)
- Conservation development in end-stage rural development areas
- Agricultural preservation in south of the divide, contiguous urban development around existing towns

### Commercial Development

- Employ Corridor Urbanism principles along existing and emerging corridors.
- Retrofit obsolete/land intensive commercial development
  - Right-sized parking/redevelopment of surplus paved areas
  - Alternative uses
  - Internal connectivity and green space
  - Demolish or reconfigure surplus commercial space
  - Provide resources
- Develop and provide implementation funding for a Great Streets program. (NIRPC initiative on the East West Gateway Council(Saint Louis MPO) and Mid-America Regional Council (Kansas City MPO) model)
- **Development in Built Up Areas**
  - Identify priority infill development strategies and sites with infrastructure in place. Establish projected densities and residential diversity
  - Plan and execute Gary special development strategy
  - Transportation infrastructure funding and policies to support land use directions (example: local circulation in land use redirection areas)

## Case Studies

An important element of Part Three will be illustrative case studies that apply some of these land use concepts and principles to actual contexts and corridor types in Northwest Indiana. Candidate case studies include:

- The Southlake commercial district, including the mall and the surrounding area at the US 30 and I-65 interchange.
- The Willow Creek corridor, establishing a general land use concept for this emerging transportation link to US 30.
- Broadway Avenue in Chesterton, a mixed use corridor linking a major trail terminus to a town center district.
- US 41 in St. John, a developing suburban corridor in a rapid growth area.
- Main Street in Crown Point, a mature commercial corridor.
- Segments of Broadway in Gary, with a particular focus on a potential development node around the IU campus.
- A study is already underway for the area around the South Shore station in East Chicago.

