

Town of Porter Park Department Long Range Plan

**Adopted via Resolution 2018-01
by the Porter Town Council
June 12, 2018**

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Table of Contents

Community Information	3
Purpose of Plan and Definition of Planning Area	4
Natural Features	4
Man-made, Historical and Cultural Features	4
Social and Economic Factors	4
Park Department Information and Facility Inventory	5
Other Sources of Outdoor Recreation Lands/Facilities	7
Planned Areas of Improvement, Costs, and Possible Sources of Funding	8
Public Comments	18
Appendices	23
Park Maps	24
Council Resolution Adopting Plan	36

Community Information

Name: Town of Porter
County: Porter County
Address of Municipal Building:
Porter Town Hall
303 Franklin Street
Porter, IN 46304

2018 Town Council & Clerk-Treasurer

Ward 1: Erik Wagner (President)
Ward 2: Greg Stinson
Ward 3: William Lopez
Ward 4: Ross LeBleu (Vice President)
Ward 5: Brian Finley (Park Department Liaison)

Clerk-Treasurer: Carol Pomeroy

Staff of the Park Department

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Purpose of Plan and Definition of Planning Area

The primary purpose of this plan is to guide future improvements to the six existing town-owned park properties. It should be noted that this long-term plan is meant to provide a framework for future improvements and inclusion does not guarantee each individual project or funding source.

The planning area remains within the Town of Porter's town boundaries, limited to six specific park properties: Hawthorne Park, Porter Cove Park, Indian Springs Park, Lake Charles Park, Dune Meadows Park, and Stephens Park.

Natural Features

The Town of Porter is largely a developed area, with pockets of undeveloped land to the north and west owned by the federal and state government (Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore & Indiana Dunes State Park). Natural features include the town-owned Porter Beach on the southern shore of Lake Michigan, and the East Branch of the Little Calumet River.

These features are important to the Porter Park system because they provide attractive outdoor recreation opportunities. Residents and visitors seeking recreation at these locations could also be enticed to utilize Porter Park facilities and programming.

Man-Made, Historical and Cultural Features

Due to its location at the southern edge of Lake Michigan, the Town of Porter has several man-made features within its borders including US Highway 12, US Highway 20, Interstate 94, and rail lines from CSX, Norfolk-Southern, South Shore, and Amtrak. The abundance of rail and vehicular traffic is a double-edged sword for the parks department – it provides easy routes for outside visitors to access our park system and events, but presents increased levels of noise pollution and physical barriers for pedestrian/bicycle access.

Nearby historical and cultural sites include the Joseph Bailly Homestead (1822), Chellberg Farm (1869), and the Augsburg Swedish Lutheran Cemetery (1878). The Bailly Homestead and Chellberg Farm, both Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore properties, offer year round programs within the town limits for cultural, historical and environmental education and enjoyment. The Augsburg Swedish Lutheran Cemetery is the final resting place for several of the Swedish settlers that originally settled the area.

Local cultural events and programs include the Indiana Dunes Birding Festival, Maple Syrup Time, Porter Easter Egg Hunt, Halloween Boo Bash, Porter's Perfect Pint Festival, Family Fourth Fest, and Summer Safety Fest. The large majority of these events and programs take place at Hawthorne Park.

Social and Economic Factors

Total Community population (2010 census): 4,858 (2.3% decline compared to 2000 population)

Community member's median age: 35.2

Percentage of community living at or below poverty level: 10.2%

Percentage of community under the age of 19: 28.3%

Percentage of community over the age of 65: 10.7%

Percentage of community members over the age of 5 with a disability: 14.5% (percentage of total students for Duneland school system enrolled in special education)

Breakdown of community by race:

- % White: 94.4%
- % Black or African American: 1.1%
- % Hispanic or Latino: 6.6% (not included with other percentages)
- % American Indian or Alaska Native: 0.3%
- % Asian: 0.9%
- % Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander: 0%
- % Some Other Race: 1.6%
- % Two or More Races: 1.7%

Median Household Income: \$90,590 (2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimate)

Largest Employers in Community: Worthington Steel, Signature Graphics, Transit Trailer, United States National Park Service (Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore Headquarters)

Source for the preceding statistics came from www.city-data.com and <https://factfinder.census.gov/>

In addition to a 2.3% decline in the total population of Porter, the percentage of the community living at or below the poverty level has increased over 2% since the completion of the 5-year parks plan in 2013. This dictates that any programming offered by the parks department should be low or no cost. Luckily, several of our established programs (Summer Park Program, Easter Egg Hunt, Halloween Boo Bash, Summer Safety Fest, and Family Fourth Fest) are free of charge.

Though there is a lack of data on the percentage of community members with a disability, it is known that individuals with physical and mental disabilities reside in the planning area. In order to better serve this population the parks department should focus on facility upgrades that allow for greater accessibility, elimination of barriers, universally designed new facilities, and the expansion of existing programming to encourage participation by members of the community with disabilities.

Since the Town of Porter is part of a small grouping of northern Porter County towns known as the Duneland area, and part of the larger Chicago Metropolitan Statistical Area known as Chicagoland, determining the community's largest employers is difficult. Many residents commute to places of employment outside of town limits, therefore, the largest businesses in Porter are not necessarily the largest employers of town residents. However, these businesses are pillars of the community and potential donors for larger capital projects like new rental facilities, recreational facilities, and playground improvements. Targeting these businesses for potential donations could prove very beneficial to the advancement of this plan.

Park Department Facility Inventory

Hawthorne Park

Nearest Street Intersection: Waverly Street and Franklin Street

Approximate Number of Acres: 38

Site Facilities/Amenities: Community Center, 2 Picnic Shelters, Millennium Gazebo, Art Barn, Baseball Field (dugouts, bleachers, press box/concession stand), 2 Playground Areas, 9-hole Disc Golf Course, Sand Volleyball Court, Access to local Orchard Pedestrian Trail, Limited Access to East Branch of the Little Calumet River, 2 Maintenance Barns, 2 Basketball Courts, Paved Parking Areas (60 spaces)

Narrative Description:

Featuring the most amenities of any park, and serving as the host location to almost a dozen community events and programs, Hawthorne Park is the flagship of the Porter Parks Department. The East Branch of the Little Calumet River and its wetland habitat make up its northern boundary. Waverly Road serves as the eastern boundary and Porter Avenue the western boundary. The southern border of the park is made up of a combination of Franklin and Lincoln Streets. The local Orchard Pedestrian Trail (paved), which begins at League Lane along Woodlawn Avenue and ends at the Orchard Apartments complex, traverses through the park. The park is an aesthetic blend of rolling hills, grassy open areas, and hardwood trees.

Porter Cove Park

Nearest Street Intersection: Essex Drive and Cove Trail

Approximate Number of Acres: 5

Site Facilities/Amenities: Porter Cove Shelter, Basketball Court, Baseball Field, Sand Volleyball Court, Paved Parking Lot (25 spaces), Access to regional Prairie-Duneland Trail

Narrative Description:

Porter Cove Park is located at the southwest corner of Porter's town limits, and primarily serves the Porter Cove Neighborhood. It was previously unusable land donated to the Town by the developers of Porter Cove Subdivision in 1996. Originally the park featured a large wood and tire based playground, dubbed "Kid's Cove". Kids Cove was largely constructed using volunteer labor and neighborhood support. The playground was removed in phases between 2016 and 2018 due to unsafe conditions and drainage issues. The Prairie-Duneland Trail, which traverses the neighboring municipalities of Chesterton, Portage and Hobart, forms the park's southern boundary.

Dune Meadows Park

Nearest Street Intersection: Dune Meadows Drive and Oak Hill Road

Approximate Number of Acres: 4

Site Facilities/Amenities: Tot-lot playground

Narrative Description:

Dune Meadows park serves the Dune Meadows subdivision. It is located at the intersection of Dune Meadow Drive and West Oak Hill Road just north of U.S. Highway 20. Its topography is flat. Most of the site is comprised of wetlands and marsh; however, a small grassy area received a tot-lot in the Spring of 2008.

Indian Springs Park

Nearest Street Intersection: Beam Street and the I-94 overpass

Approximate Number of Acres: 21

Site Facilities/Amenities: Manmade Lake (Lake Pratt), Paved Parking Area (19 spaces), 2 Small

Picnic Shelters, Small Swing Set

Narrative Description:

Indian Springs Park includes a portion of a man-made 6.5 acre lake, Pratt Lake, the edges of which are lined with tall grasses, young willows, and birch trees. The entry drive off of Beam Street leads to a level parking area. The lake, shelters and swing set are located east of the parking area at the base of a steep slope – access is provided by a series of railroad tie stairs.

Lake Charles Park

Nearest Street Intersection: Vine Street and Washington Street

Approximate Number of Acres: 12

Site Facilities/Amenities: Manmade Lake (Lake Charles)

Narrative Description:

Lake Charles Park is located along the north side of I-94 and south of U.S. 20, where Washington Street becomes Vine Street. The majority of this park is the 6.5 acre Lake Charles, a borrow pit constructed contemporaneously with the adjacent I-94 highway. The terrain is flat and there is little land around the north, west, and east shores of the lake to develop for active use. The southern shore of the lake provides more space to increase amenities and the park could be further developed for hiking, fishing, and other lake-oriented activities. Access to vehicular traffic, parking, and maintained paths are significant shortcomings at this time.

Stephens Park

Nearest Street Intersection: US 20 and Hokanson Street

Approximate Number of Acres: 0.2

Site Facilities/Amenities: None

Narrative Description:

This small park, acquired in 2007 through a land donation, is located on the corner of U.S. Highway 20 and Hokanson Street. Due to the size of the property, and the required zoning setbacks required for construction, the intention for this property is solely that of open space.

Other Sources of Outdoor Recreation Lands/Facilities in the Community

Porter Beach

Porter Beach is a town-owned beach property located at the terminus of Wabash Avenue on the southern shore of Lake Michigan. The beach has a small town-owned parking area, and is situated between private beaches to the west and the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore and Indiana Dunes State Park Beach to the east.

Indiana Dunes State Park and Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore

Located on the northern border of Porter, these areas offer recreational venues including hiking, swimming, cross country skiing, horseback riding, biking and camping.

Brickyard Trail

A 2.9 mile paved bicycle/pedestrian trail that begins at the intersection of Wagner Road and Lincoln Street. The trail travels northwest of town, crossing US 20 and US12 via pedestrian

bridges, before terminating just south of the Calumet Trail in the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore. The Brickyard Trail was developed by the Town of Porter Redevelopment Commission, and is owned by the Town of Porter. The Porter Parks Department provides maintenance and snow removal for the Brickyard Trail.

Orchard Pedestrian Trail

A 1.1 mile paved bicycle/pedestrian trail that begins at the intersection of League Lane and Woodlawn Avenue. The trail travels west to Waverly Road, then north to Franklin Street, before turning back north and into Hawthorne Park. The trail meanders through Hawthorne Park, and exits back to Waverly Street where it crosses two bridges (Little Calumet River & I-94). The trail, in its current state, ends just north of the Orchard Apartment Complex on Waverly Road. The Orchard Pedestrian Trail was developed by the Town of Porter Redevelopment Commission, and is owned by the Town of Porter. The Porter Park Department provides maintenance and snow removal for the Orchard Pedestrian Trail.

Dunes Kankakee Trail

A planned 23 mile paved bicycle/pedestrian trail that begins at the entrance to the Indiana Dunes State Park and traverses south through Porter County along the State Road 49 corridor. At the time of this report, the trail was in different stages of development, with the first northern 1.5 miles of the trail completed in 2016. The Dunes Kankakee Trail was developed through an inter-local cooperative agreement, and is owned by the municipalities through which it passes (Town of Porter, Porter County, Town of Chesterton, City of Valparaiso, Town of Hebron, and Town of Kouts). The Porter Park Department provides maintenance for a one-mile section of the Dunes Kankakee Trail that rests between the Indiana Dunes State Park and the Porter County Convention and Visitors Bureau.

Calumet Trail

A 9.1 mile gravel bicycle/pedestrian trail that runs between the Town of Porter and Michigan City along the US 12/South Shore Rail corridor. The Calumet Trail is owned and maintained by the Porter County Parks & Recreation Department.

Planned Areas of Improvement, Costs, and Possible Sources of Funding

The primary purpose of this plan is to guide future improvements to the six existing park properties. These planned improvements are listed below by park and shown on corresponding maps found in the appendices. Due to its size, Hawthorne Park has been divided into four sections for this plan. Each heading contains overall objectives for that park/section, and then a listing of each planned improvement organized from lowest estimated cost to highest estimated cost. Each planned improvement includes a title, description, estimated cost, and potential source of funding. It should be noted again, that this long-term plan is meant to provide a framework for future improvements and inclusion does not guarantee each individual project or funding source.

Hawthorne Park (Section 1) – Appendix Page 27

Overall Objectives: Rehabilitate existing sports facilities, increase parking, increase accessibility, and add to existing event amenities.

Planned Improvement: Remove Tire/Wood Equipment

Description: Removal of the remaining 1997 wood and tire playground equipment at the main playground area.

Estimated Cost: Minimal – can be completed with town-owned equipment and department labor.

Potential Sources of Funding: Park Operating Budget

Planned Improvement: Portable Restroom Enclosure

Description: Create a 3-sided wooden enclosure for a portable restroom near the parking to screen unit from neighbors and prevent tipping.

Estimated Cost: \$500

Potential Sources of Funding: Park Operating Budget

Planned Improvement: Clean & Repoint Masonry on Veterans Memorial

Description: The veteran's memorial located in front of the community building needs to be cleaned and the masonry repaired/repointed.

Estimated Cost: \$1,500

Potential Sources of Funding: Park Operating Budget

Planned Improvement: Install Permanent Festival PA System

Description: Install a hard-wired and permanent public address system for the festival area.

Estimated Cost: \$2,000-\$3,000

Potential Sources of Funding: Donations, Fundraising, LIT, and/or Park Operating Budget

Planned Improvement: Edge, Level, and Refill Sand Volleyball Pit

Description: The sand volleyball pit is used constantly during the summer months. All of that usage has forced the sand to the edge of the court, creating an uneven edge. The edges of the court need to be leveled and the pit needs to be replenished with sand.

Estimated Cost: \$3,000

Potential Sources of Funding: Park Operating Budget

Planned Improvement: Permanent Festival Water Line

Description: The festival area has more than enough electrical service for our needs, however, events that require water service must run several hundred feet of hose across the parking lot to the community building. The hoses pose tripping hazards, and have been damaged by vehicular traffic in the past. Installation of an underground line between the festival area and the community building would eliminate these hazards.

Estimated Cost: \$3,000

Potential Sources of Funding: Donations, Fundraising, LIT, and/or Park Operating Budget

Planned Improvement: Ball Field Fence

Description: Install a 4-foot tall, capped, outfield fence to delineate ball field from surrounding park land

Estimated Cost: \$5,000

Potential Sources of Funding: Fundraising, Donations and Park Operating Budget

Planned Improvement: Replace Northern Sidewalk

Description: The northern sidewalk along the James Butz Memorial Parkway has several cracked and heaved sections. Approximately 400 linear feet needs to be replaced.

Estimated Cost: \$15,000-\$20,000

Potential Sources of Funding: Grants, Local Income Tax (LIT) and/or Park Operating Budget

Planned Improvement: Install Playground/Basketball Court Shelter

Description: The site between the basketball courts and main playground would be a prime spot for a new shelter. This site is level and would be clear of obstacles once the tire/wood equipment was removed.

Estimated Cost: \$25,000-\$45,000

Potential Sources of Funding: Donations, Fundraising, LIT, and/or Park Operating Budget

Planned Improvement: Rehab Court/Goals

Description: The coated asphalt basketball courts and goals at Hawthorne are showing signs of decline including rust, cracking, and significant water pooling on the surface. Full replacement or rehabilitation of the existing courts is needed. The courts are the fourth most utilized asset at Hawthorne, following behind the community center, playgrounds, and disc golf course.

Estimated Cost: \$50,000-\$75,000

Potential Sources of Funding: Grants, LIT, Fundraising, Donations and/or Park Operating Budget

Planned Improvement: Overflow Parking Area

Description: One of the largest complaints the department receives from Community Building renters is a lack of parking when two or more events are taking place. One way to increase parking would be to incorporate a 20-space overflow lot between the newly constructed Art Barn/West Shelter and the widened circle drive on the northwest side of the Community Building.

Estimated Cost: Unknown – requires engineering.

Potential Sources of Funding: Grants, Park Operating Budget, LIT, Fundraising and/or Donations

Planned Improvement: New Art Barn/West Shelter Combo

Description: In order to widen the circle drive on the west side of the Community Building and install overflow parking, the current Art Barn/West Shelter would have to be demolished. A new Art Barn/West Shelter combination would be constructed farther north and west of the original site and could serve as part of a trail head for the planned river access trail.

Estimated Cost: Unknown – requires engineering.

Potential Sources of Funding: Grants, Park Operating Budget, LIT, Fundraising and/or Donations

Planned Improvement: Widen & Resurface Circle Drive

Description: The asphalt ramp to the west side entrance of the Community Building has not been resurfaced since its original installation over 30 years ago. The steep ramp serves as the primary access for park patrons utilizing the Back Hall of the Community Building. Enlarging the diameter of the circle drive, decreasing the incline of the ramp, and resurfacing the drive will provide a more pedestrian and vehicular friendly entrance to the building.

Estimated Cost: Unknown – requires engineering.

Potential Sources of Funding: Grants, Park Operating Budget, LIT, Fundraising and/or Donations

Planned Improvement: Rehabilitate Dumpster Ramp

Description: The asphalt ramp to the dumpster that services the Community Building has become severely rutted due to use by heavy garbage trucks. The rutting is both a tripping hazard and hazard to town equipment. Complete replacement with new asphalt or a different material with a base that will withstand the weight of the trucks is necessary.

Estimated Cost: Unknown – requires engineering

Potential Sources of Funding: Park Operating Budget or LIT

Hawthorne Park (Section 2) – Appendix Page 28

Overall Objectives: Improve event parking and increase the urban tree canopy

Planned Improvement: Install gravel and/or pave parking lanes for all weather access

Description: The majority of Section 2 is covered by a grassy field that serves as a parking lot for larger events. Almost any amount of rain turns the parking area into a rutted and muddy mess. Establishing parking lanes with permeable, yet durable material (like paving millings or gravel) would greatly reduce the amount of stuck vehicles, unsightly ruts, and lost staff time of turf repairs.

Estimated Cost: Minimal if using millings from town resurfacing projects, \$4,000-\$5,000 if purchasing gravel to install at a 3” depth

Potential Sources of Funding: Grants, LIT, and Park Operating Budget

Planned Improvement: Parking lane division with trees

Description: Parking lanes are usually divided using unsightly metal t-posts. Replacing the t-posts with trees would increase the urban canopy and save on staff time during festival setups.

Estimated Cost: \$5,000

Potential Sources of Funding: Grants and/or Park Operating Budget

Hawthorne Park (Section 3) – Appendix Page 29

Overall Objectives: Increase parking, increase accessibility, and improve existing amenities

Planned Improvement: Concrete Disc Golf Tee Pads

Description: Install concrete tee pads for the 9-hole disc golf course. Installing concrete pads that are level with the surrounding grade will decrease trimming areas and prevent tee boxes from flooding.

Estimated Cost: \$1,000 – for the cost of materials. Labor provided by department staff and volunteers.

Potential Sources of Funding: Park Operating Budget

Planned Improvement: Bollards

Description: The roadway corners in this area of the park are regularly cut through by vehicular traffic, causing rutting that is an unsightly tripping hazard and an ongoing maintenance issue.

Installing wooden bollards along the corners would help enforce that these are no-parking areas and keep traffic from cutting into the grass.

Estimated Cost: \$1,500

Potential Sources of Funding: Park Operating Budget

Planned Improvement: Extend Festival PA System to Gazebo

Description: Extend the permanent festival public address system described in Section 1 of the plan for Hawthorne to include a 360 degree speaker array located in the dome of the gazebo.

Estimated Cost: \$2,000

Potential Sources of Funding: Donations, Park Operating Budget, Fundraisers, and LIT.

Planned Improvement: New Entry Sign Installation

Description: Part of a rebranding of all park entry signage – Hawthorne’s two signs would be illuminated and possibly contain message boards due to evening events.

Estimated Cost: \$3,000

Potential Sources of Funding: Grants, Park Operating Budget, and/or Donations

Planned Improvement: Diagonal Pocket Parking for East Playground and Shelter

Description: The east end of Hawthorne Park has a lack of paved parking areas despite housing two prominent amenities; the East Shelter and East Playground. The grass area located near both of these amenities along Coslet Drive is frequently used as a pull-off area for park patrons. This causes rutting that is an unsightly tripping hazard and an ongoing maintenance issue. Installing two, 80’x 20’, asphalt parking pads would gain approximately 16 parking spots in this location.

Estimated Cost: \$30,000

Potential Sources of Funding: Park Operating Budget, LIT or Adding to Existing Roadway Project

Planned Improvement: Replace Base of Joseph Bailly Monument

Description: “Bailly Rock” is one of two amenities in the park dating back to 1936 – the original portion of the Community Center is the other. The concrete base of Bailly Rock has slowly been deteriorating over the last 80 years and is in need of replacement.

Estimated Cost: Unknown – further research and estimates needed.

Potential Sources of Funding: Grants, Donations, Fundraisers, Park Operating Budget

Hawthorne Park (Section 4) – Appendix Page 30

Overall Objectives: Secure maintenance area, increase river access, and increase accessibility

Planned Improvement: River Access Trail

Description: The northern boundary of Hawthorne Park is the East Branch of the Little Calumet River. Currently there is no established access to the river from the park. Cutting a ¾ to 1 mile bare earth or wood-chip based trail along the river would greatly increase access to this natural feature.

Estimated Cost: Minimal – clearing work can be done in-house or with volunteer labor and wood-chips could be coordinated with the Public Works Department after brush pickups.

Potential Sources of Funding: Grants, Partnerships with Organizations, Donations, Park Operating Budget

Planned Improvement: Portable Restroom Enclosure

Description: Create a 3-sided wooden enclosure for a portable restroom near the parking to screen unit from neighbors and prevent tipping.

Estimated Cost: \$500

Potential Sources of Funding: Park Operating Budget

Planned Improvement: Fence in maintenance area

Description: Currently only the southern 150 feet of the maintenance area has a fence, however, it is easily bypassed. Completing a perimeter fence would make the area more secure.

Estimated Cost: \$7,000

Potential Sources of Funding: LIT and/or Park Operating Budget

Planned Improvement: Trailhead, Canoe Launch, and Parking Area

Description: Creating a trailhead, canoe launch, and parking area would increase access to the river and make Hawthorne Park a destination for fishing, canoeing and accessing the river.

Estimated Cost: Unknown – further research and engineering necessary

Potential Sources of Funding: Grants, Partnerships with Organizations, Donations, Park Operating Budget

Porter Cove Park – Appendix Page 31

Overall Objectives: Increase access to Prairie-Duneland Trail, improve site drainage, and increase amenities (play ground equipment, benches, trash cans, etc.)

Planned Improvement: Keep trail entrances clear of brush/undergrowth and add third access point

Description: Keeping trail entrances clear and adding a third access point will potentially increase park usage and reciprocally increase trail usage.

Estimated Cost: Minimal – can be completed with existing town-owned equipment and staff

Potential Sources of Funding: Park Operating Budget

Planned Improvement: New Entry Sign Installation

Description: Part of a rebranding of all park entry signage

Estimated Cost: \$1,000

Potential Sources of Funding: Grants, Park Operating Budget, and/or Donations

Planned Improvement: Removal of baseball diamond and volley ball court.

Description: Due to its secluded location there is little use of either amenity, both are costly to maintain, and the volley ball court has suffered vandalism in the past.

Estimated Cost: \$1,000 primarily for leveling and seeding the areas.

Potential Sources of Funding: Park Operating Budget

Planned Improvement: Grade and seed former playground area

Description: The footprint of the planned new playground will be smaller than the original Kids Cove playground, leaving a sizable area of unseeded and rutted land. Grading and seeding this area will make for easier maintenance.

Estimated Cost: \$2,000

Potential Sources of Funding: Park Operating Budget

Planned Improvement: Creation of Raised Bed Planting Area

Description: Installation of a series of raised planting beds for use as a community garden.

Estimated Cost: \$2,000-\$4,000

Potential Sources of Funding: Donations, Fundraising, and Park Operating Budget

Planned Improvement: Addition of Potable Water Source (Well or Municipal)

Description: Installation of a potable water source for irrigation and drinking fountains.

Estimated Cost: \$3,000-\$4,000

Potential Sources of Funding: Donations, LIT, and Park Operating Budget

Planned Improvement: Renovation of existing basketball court

Description: Installation of new hoops/backboards, posts, and painted court lines.

Estimated Cost: \$5,000-\$7,000

Potential Sources of Funding: Fundraising, Donations, LIT, and Park Operating Budget

Planned Improvement: Improve former playground area site drainage

Description: The deterioration of the former Kids Cove playground was expedited due to the lack of site drainage. To prevent premature deterioration of any new playground equipment, the site should be raised/graded, and proper drainage installed.

Estimated Cost: \$5,000-\$10,000

Potential Sources of Funding: Stormwater Board, Donations, and Park Operating Budget

Planned Improvement: Extension of sidewalk from parking area to existing shelter walkway

Description: Originally a crushed limestone path, the flat area between the existing parking lot and existing shelter walkway has become washed out and overgrown. This project would establish an accessible route to access the shelter and future playground equipment. The proposed walkway would be five feet wide and a little over two-hundred feet in length.

Estimated Cost: \$9,000-\$12,000

Potential Sources of Funding: Accessibility Grants, LIT, and Park Operating Budget

Planned Improvement: Installation of new playground equipment

Description: The final vestiges of the Kids Cove playground are slated for removal in 2018. Following grading and drainage installation, the site will be ready for new, vandal-resistant playground equipment.

Estimated Cost: \$35,000-\$55,000

Potential Sources of Funding: Matching Grants, Fundraising, Donations, and Park Operating Budget

Lake Charles Park – Appendix Page 32

Overall Objectives: Increase access to the lakefront, establish a parking area, and increase amenities (benches, trash cans, etc.).

Planned Improvement: Increase southern lakefront access through clearing

Description: The southern lakefront is closest to potential parking and existing gravel road access. Opening up the lakefront could increase fishing and other waterfront activities as was the case with the clearing of the Lake Pratt shoreline at Indian Springs Park.

Estimated Cost: Minimal – clearing work can be done in-house or with volunteer labor

Potential Sources of Funding: Park Operating Budget

Planned Improvement: Perimeter walking trail

Description: Create a bare earth or wood-chip based walking trail that circles the perimeter of the lake. This project would increase lakefront access.

Estimated Cost: Minimal – clearing work can be done in-house or with volunteer labor and wood-chips could be coordinated with the Public Works Department after brush pickups.

Potential Sources of Funding: Park Operating Budget

Planned Improvement: Replenish and re-grade existing access road and establish parking area

Description: The existing access road has several holes/washouts and there is no established parking area. Smoothing out the road and providing a place to park vehicles will make it easier to access this park and lake.

Estimated Cost: Minimal – grading work can be done with existing Town-owned equipment and millings left over from paving projects

Potential Sources of Funding: Park Operating Budget

Planned Improvement: Berm along southeastern boundary

Description: Installing a berm along the southeastern property boundary would help to mitigate some of the noise pollution from I-94.

Estimated Cost: Minimal – clean spoils from other town projects could be used as well as existing town-owned equipment.

Potential Sources of Funding: Park Operating Budget

Planned Improvement: New Entry Sign Installation

Description: Part of a rebranding of all park entry signage

Estimated Cost: \$1,000

Potential Sources of Funding: Grants, Park Operating Budget, and/or Donations

Planned Improvement: Chain link fence installation on western property line

Description: Install six-foot tall chain link fence along western property line to secure the park from unwanted truck stop traffic.

Estimated Cost: \$12,000-\$15,000

Potential Sources of Funding: LIT, Park Operating Budget, and/or Donations

Stephens Park – Appendix Page 33

Overall Objectives: Level site for easier mowing and establish tree/plant nursery.

Planned Improvement: Request boundary survey, remove stumps, prune existing trees, and level site.

Description: As stated in the park description, due to the size of the property, and the required zoning setbacks required for new construction, the intention for this property is solely that of

open space. Completion of these planned improvements will make minimize maintenance of this park, and establish a tree/plant nursery for the department to utilize when other parks need replacement plants.

Estimated Cost: \$750

Potential Sources of Funding: Park Operating Budget

Dune Meadows Park – Appendix Page 34

Overall Objectives: Increase amenities and beautify pond area

Planned Improvement: Clear underbrush and prune healthy trees

Description: Clearing underbrush and pruning healthy trees will open up views of the pond area, and potential for shore fishing in the future.

Estimated Cost: Minimal – work can be done in house with existing Town-owned equipment

Potential Sources of Funding: Park Operating Budget

Planned Improvement: New Entry Sign Installation

Description: Part of a rebranding of all park entry signage

Estimated Cost: \$1,000

Potential Sources of Funding: Grants, Park Operating Budget, and/or Donations

Planned Improvement: Management of pond algae

Description: Currently there is no management plan in place for the pond that lies halfway in the park boundary. The shallow pond (3-4 feet at max depth) has frequent algae blooms. Installation of an aeration system could help to mitigate the algae problem and allow for stocking of fish in the future. Electricity access could be pulled from the Town-owned lift station at the south point of the property.

Estimated Cost: \$3,000

Potential Sources of Funding: Grants, LIT, and Park Operating Budget

Planned Improvement: Expand existing playground to include swings

Description: The current playground equipment does not include a swing set.

Estimated Cost: \$8,000-\$10,000

Potential Sources of Funding: Donations, Fundraising, and Park Operating Budget

Planned Improvement: Replace existing playground equipment prior to 2028

Description: The existing playground equipment is in good shape as of the adoption of this plan. The equipment was installed in 2008 and has an estimated lifespan of twenty years, therefore, the department should plan to remove and install a new system prior to 2028.

Estimated Cost: \$25,000-\$45,000

Potential Sources of Funding: Matching Grants, Fundraising, Donations and Park Operating Budget

Indian Springs Park – Appendix Page 35

Overall Objectives: Increase access to the lakefront, increase amenities, and improve lakefront.

Planned Improvement: Portable Restroom Enclosure

Description: Create a 3-sided wooden enclosure for a portable restroom near the parking to screen unit from neighbors and prevent tipping.

Estimated Cost: \$500

Potential Sources of Funding: Park Operating Budget

Planned Improvement: New Entry Sign Installation

Description: Part of a rebranding of all park entry signage

Estimated Cost: \$1,000

Potential Sources of Funding: Grants, Park Operating Budget, and/or Donations

Planned Improvement: Remove existing stairs, backfill, grade and seed hillside

Description: Currently the only way to access the lakefront is by descending a series of crudely made railroad tie stairs that have been backfilled with gravel. This access point has no railings, is not ADA accessible, and creates several maintenance problems each year.

Estimated Cost: \$1,000-\$1,500 – majority of work can be done by park staff using existing equipment. Cost items would include backfill, grass seed, and erosion control.

Potential Sources of Funding: Park Operating Budget

Planned Improvement: Addition of Potable Water Source (Well or Municipal)

Description: Installation of a potable water source for irrigation and drinking fountains.

Estimated Cost: \$3,000-\$4,000

Potential Sources of Funding: Donations, LIT, and Park Operating Budget

Planned Improvement: Replace/Repair Concrete Shelter Slabs

Description: Repair and/or replace existing damaged concrete picnic shelter slabs and install picnic tables in shelters.

Estimated Cost: \$3,000-\$5,000

Potential Sources of Funding: Park Operating Budget and/or Donations

Planned Improvement: Install floating accessible fishing pier

Description: The largest asset of Indian Springs Park is Lake Pratt. Therefore, increasing fishing opportunities along the shoreline, including those for mobility-limited park patrons, should be the ultimate goal for improving this park.

Estimated Cost: \$10,000-\$20,000

Potential Sources of Funding: Accessibility Grants, Fishing Grants, LIT, Donations

Planned Improvement: Accessible path from parking lot to lakefront

Description: Once the railroad tie stairs are removed, there will be no way to access the lakefront. Installing an accessible path creates a safe way for all park patrons to access the lakefront.

Estimated Cost: Unknown – requires engineering

Potential Sources of Funding: Accessibility Grants, Fishing Grants, LIT, Donations

Additional Improvement – Location To Be Determined

Planned Improvement: Community Dog Park

Description: Initial installation would include a two to three-acre fenced in area with a double entry gate and dog waste stations. Additional phases would include benches, small shelters, separate areas for large and small dogs, training obstacles, trees and landscaping. The ideal location for such an improvement is yet to be determined.

Estimated Cost: \$14,000 - Initial install, \$6,000 for additional phases, \$20,000 total

Potential Sources of Funding: Fundraising, Donations, Community Grants, LIT, and Park Operating Budget

Public Comments

The Porter Park Department placed a copy of the draft plan on the Town of Porter website and made hard copies available at the Town Hall for a period of 30 days. The following comments were collected via phone, email, and US Postal Service between 3/28/18 and 4/27/18:

Name: Carrie and Matt Ailes

Address: 1075 Dune Meadows Drive, Porter, IN 46304

Method of Collection: Email – 4/22/18

Comment:

This email is in regards to the Porter Park long range plan. We reside in the Dune Meadows Park area. We support the 5 planned improvements listed for Dune Meadows. The pond improvements and aeration concept has been discussed since we have been here 15 years, and we have not seen any action on this yet. At the very least, we would like the pond aeration to be a top priority. We have voiced our concerns many times over the appearance, odor, mosquito problems, and general pond area being unattractive. Thank you and please reach out if you have any questions for us.

Name: Jennifer Little

Address: 696 Commodore Lane, Porter, IN 46304

Method of Collection: Email – 4/24/18

Comment:

It with all due respect that I ask you and the Town of Porter to please remove a dog park from your long range plans for the park in Porter Cove. Our park has seriously been neglected for years and a dog park will not improve it. All existing and potential funding should be focused on improvements for children to enjoy. The park should be a place for them to meet new friends and for families to form relationships that will strengthen our neighborhood and community.

I have many concerns about a dog park. The first being the additional traffic in our neighborhood. I'm sure the town is well aware of the speeding issue we have on Essex Drive and that will only get worse when people not familiar with our neighborhood go speeding down the road to the park. Another concern I have is that people will have to walk their dogs past the area where children will be playing and running. I see this a serious safety concern. Also of concern is the lack of a sufficient barrier between the playground and the dog park as well as the neighboring houses and the dog park. Not everyone enjoys being around dogs and likewise, dogs don't always enjoy the company of a lot of people. They'd likely bark and potentially get aggressive. The barking would disturb the peace of the park and the peace of neighbors who live near the park. I'm also very concerned about the smell that could come from a dog park. Even if

dog owners perfectly obey rules and clean up after their dogs, the waste bin would smell as it bakes in the sun and a light breeze would send the stench wafting into the park, into neighbor's backyards or onto the bike trail. Given the town's track record with park maintenance in our neighborhood, I'm also worried about upkeep of a dog park. Lastly, has consideration been given to the water runoff from the proposed dog park? Dog waste contains bacteria and parasites that can be harmful to other pets, humans and our waterways.

Mixed use of park space in Porter Cove for dogs and children is not something I support. In addition, an informal survey of the idea was conducted on our neighborhood's Facebook page with responses as follows: NO/50, YES/17 and MAYBE/1. Children of Porter Cove and the community deserve a park with nice equipment to play on and open space to run and play games with friends and family. A dog park would be best suited on space that is dedicated solely to dogs and the field in Porter Cove is not the space.
Thank you for your time and consideration

Name: Diane Bozovich

Address: 1039 Cove Trail, Porter, IN 46304

Method of Collection: Email – 4/24/18

Comment:

I live in Porter Cove, and I am concerned about the plan to install a dog park because so many people are irresponsible dog owners who do not pick up after their dogs! They don't bother to pick up along the sides of the bike trail and sometimes on the trail itself. A dog park would be no different. I do think that leveling the land and putting in drainage should be tops on the list. During most summers there is too much water in the field for it to be used for sports. Standing water also adds to the mosquito problem.

Name: Crystal South

Address: 705 Commodore Lane, Porter, IN 46304

Method of Collection: Email – 4/24/18

Comment:

I am concerned about having a dog park in Porter Cove's Park. This is for the kids not dogs. The people who will use that dog park certainly are not going to clean up after themselves. It is too secluded back there for anyone to notice. It will end up being smelly and just be a hazard to our children playing back there. You need to make it a place that is more family orientated. Who is going to want to use the pavilion with it smelling like dog poo back there? This to me is a waste of money. Maybe a skate park or something like that or splash pad?? Make it worth families wanting to spend time there. The more people there, the less problem kids will hang out. Just my thoughts. Thanks!

Name: Sarah Brown

Address: 739 Essex Drive, Porter, IN 46304

Method of Collection: Email – 4/25/18

Comment:

I would like to express my opinion on the plan for the Porter Cove Kids Cove park plan. Let me start off by saying I am very happy to see hope for this park. It is such a shame that this space

has been deserted for this long, and not only is it an eye sore for the community, I don't feel that it is safe in the condition that it was left in.

As far as the dog park plan, I cannot think of a better plan for this space! There is nothing like it in our town. The closest dog park to our community is at Woodland Park in Portage. I think that this brings something new to the Porter area! I think that it will attract many people, and it will get great use in this space!

The rest of the park looks great as well, but the dog park is what I am most enthusiastic about! I want to thank you for your time to hear our opinions.

Name: Ronald Trigg

Address: 218 Summertree Drive, Porter, IN 46304

Method of Collection: Email – 4/25/18

Comment:

Overall, a nice job done on the Long Range Plan. Immediately below are some substantive comments and further down are a few suggestions/corrections for information in the first sections of the plan.

I'm not quite sure if the planned improvements for each section/park are listed in priority order.

If not, should they be?

Hawthorne Park Section 4

Since the river flood plain is sensitive natural land, you should seek the advice of Shirley Heinze Land Trust (which owns the land north of the river and some of the property west of the park) and/or other knowledgeable organizations, e.g. DNR Coastal Program and Dunes National Lakeshore, before blazing a river access trail.

Also work with the partner organizations involved in the preservation of the East Branch of the Little Cal (Shirley Heinze, National Lakeshore, DNR, NWI Paddling Association) for advice and cooperation on any canoe/kayak launch sites.

Lake Charles Park

Given its inaccessibility and cramped conditions, will improvements at this park increase its use by the public? Lake Charles should be the lowest priority. Perhaps even consider closing it to the public?

Page 4

Man-Made Features

Para 2 – Bailly and Chellberg are misspelled twice each in this paragraph.

Other cultural sites are the 1870 Burstrom Cemetery (also Swedish immigrants) and the adjacent 1880 Svenska Skola (Burstrom Chapel), an old Swedish church and school. Both are on Oak Hill Rd.

Para 3 – Indiana Dunes Birding Festival

Page 5

The first sentence is misleading. It makes it sound like 14.5% of the town's population is disabled. It would be better just to leave out the Duneland Schools special education numbers.

Median household income seems much too high. U.S. median household income is much lower. Check sources.

Shouldn't the list of largest employers also include the National Park Service?

Name: Christine Blake

Address: 1501 Cove Trail, Porter, IN 46304

Method of Collection: Telephone (transcribed by B. Bugajski) – 4/26/18

Comment:

“Hi, my name is Chris Blake. I called earlier. I just wanted to leave a comment about the planned dog park in Porter Cove. I just don’t think it is a good idea to have a dog park right next to a kid park. It is a subdivision; I’ve never seen a dog park in a subdivision. There is so much traffic already on Essex, and it would create more traffic I’m sure when word got out that there was a dog park over here. My other concern would be who would keep it clean? You can’t rely on owners to pick up after their dogs, because a lot of them, as we all know, just don’t do that. Right now you see waste all over the bike trail, and usually all over the park over there, and en route to the park. And then I think there could be... what about runoff? And what about the noise of barking dogs? So, anyway, I just wanted to comment on that and just really don’t think it is a good idea to have a dog park over there. Thank you. Bye.”

Name: Corinne Peffers

Address: 1527 Commodore Lane, Porter, IN 46304

Method of Collection: Email – 4/27/18

Comment:

While the overall plan has great ideas and some much needed improvements, updating playground equipment should be a priority, especially at Porter Cove Park. I like the idea of a dog park at Porter Cove Park, which would be a benefit to the entire Duneland community and not just members of Porter Cove, however, the baseball diamond should be kept at the park. I would suggest the dog park stretch along the northern section the of the park property and perhaps extend a bit south over the volleyball court that will be removed.

A River Access Trail, a canoe launch and parking area in Section 4 of Hawthorne Park would be a great addition. Perhaps it would increase usage of the nearby Orchard Pedestrian Trail. I rarely spot anyone using the trail.

Adding an aerator to Dune Meadows Park pond should also be a priority. This pond in an eyesore and stagnant ponds are ideal for mosquito breeding grounds. Mosquitoes are a serious public health threat.

Please confirm receipt. It is clear your plan was given a lot of time, thought and effort. Keep up the great work and have a great weekend!

Name: Amanda Dech

Address: Not Provided

Method of Collection: Email – 4/27/18

Comment:

I am writing in with my comments and concerns regarding the plans for the Porter Cove park. As a new resident to this neighborhood I would like to stress that the renovation of the park (which is what was relayed to us when we showed interest in our home) is one of the things that caught our attention about the neighborhood. In reviewing the plans that have been prepared for the renovation, I am disappointed. I would like to see the open field be utilized for an area for the children of the neighborhood to play, perhaps a soccer field. I want to be clear that I am a dog owner and lover, yet I do NOT want a dog park in my neighborhood and especially not in the

same park that my daughter will be playing in. I am curious as to who will be responsible for ensuring that the wastes from the dogs is picked up on a daily basis and removed on a daily basis, as I am sure that this will be a heavy traffic park with large amounts of waste to be handled? I would also like to know who will take on the responsibility of ensuring that the dogs using the suggested park are current on all vaccines and free of any communicable diseases? As a healthcare provider, I am concerned that there has been a lack of research completed regarding the number of illnesses that can easily be spread from a dog to a human, especially a child. In the event that a child playing on the playground were to come into contact with MRSA, leptospirosis, giardia, or countless other infections that can be spread, who is responsible for the cost of the medical care for this child? I am also concerned at the increased amount of traffic that this will bring to both the bike trail, which is directly behind our home and the streets of the neighborhood, which people seem to already use as a drag strip. I do not like that the park sits out of the site of the roadway, and this opens the door for mischief, drug abuse and drug use to take place in the park, and by any of the mischievous people simply bringing a dog with them to the park, this will allow them an excuse to be near our homes, children, and community. It is not right. I am asking for you to reconsider putting a dog park in our neighborhood for many reasons, these are the ones that I am able to think of now. I apologize for the multiple typos as I am exhausted. Thank you for taking the time to read this.

Name: Blake Lange

Address: 1603 Essex Drive

Method of Collection: E-mail – 4/27/18

Comment:

I'm glad to see progress in planning for the Park's Department in Porter. This outline helps to put realistic goals together for the future.

Not noted on the long term plan is a raised bed garden area for Kid's Cove. This could provide clean, fresh, pesticide free produce to the community. Gardening has also shown to be therapeutic in recent studies. I'd like to start a fundraiser to start funding for this by selling soft fruits from Chesterton Feed and Garden and working with Four Square Construction to start the planning for the project. This fundraiser would also be for the dog park.

There will be a challenge bridging the gap between the proposed expenditures and current sources of cash. Can we get an idea on the timeline of expenditures by the Park's operating budget as it relates to upcoming projects? I'd like to propose a focus on short term financial efforts to Kid's Cove Park.

APPENDICIES

Park Maps

Plan Adoption Resolution

PARK MAPS

Community Map Showing Location of Parks



--- Porter Town Limits

■ Park Property

1. Stephen's Park

2. Dune Meadows Park

3. Hawthorne Park

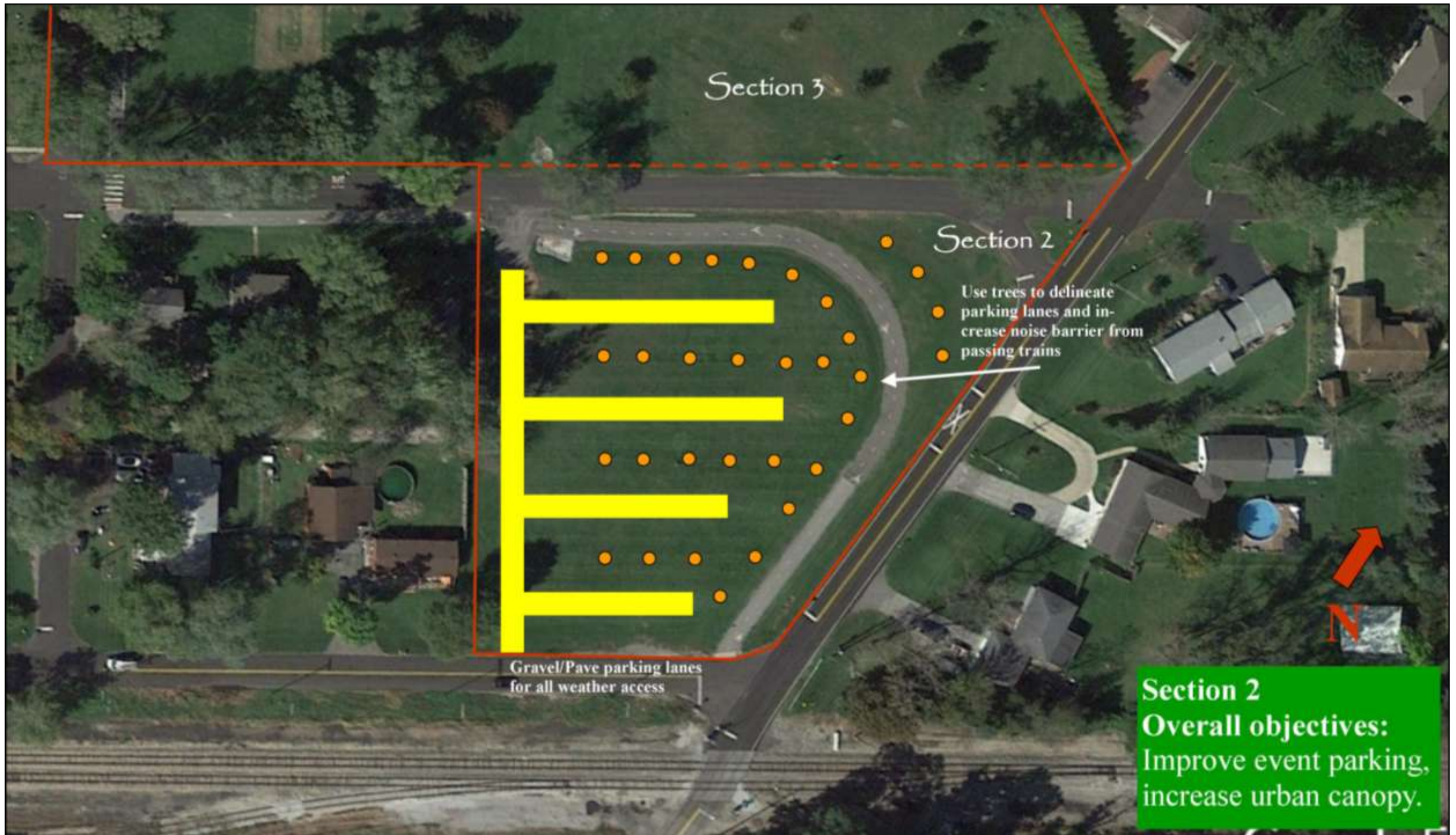
4. Indian Springs Park

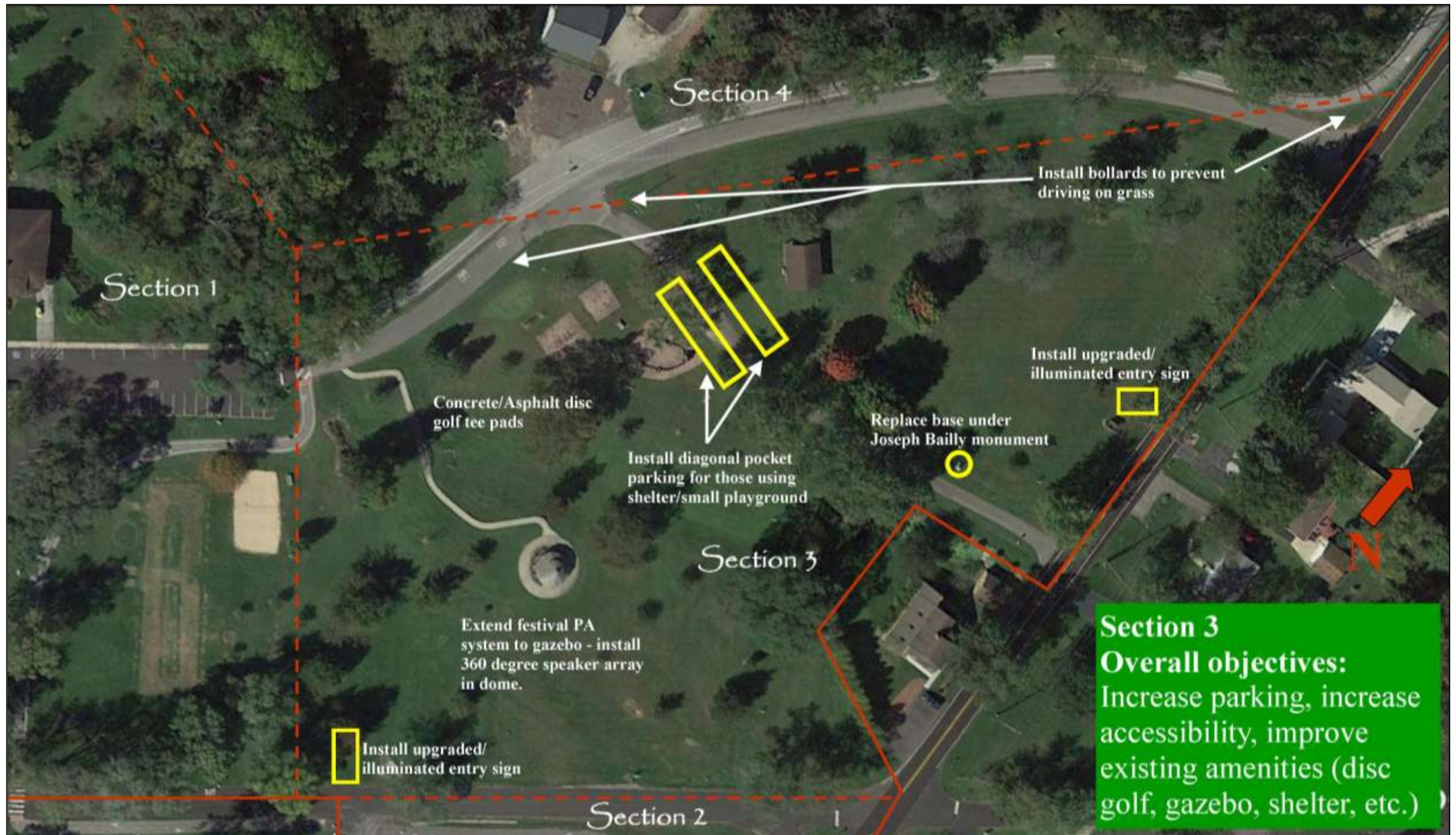
5. Lake Charles Park

6. Porter Cove Park

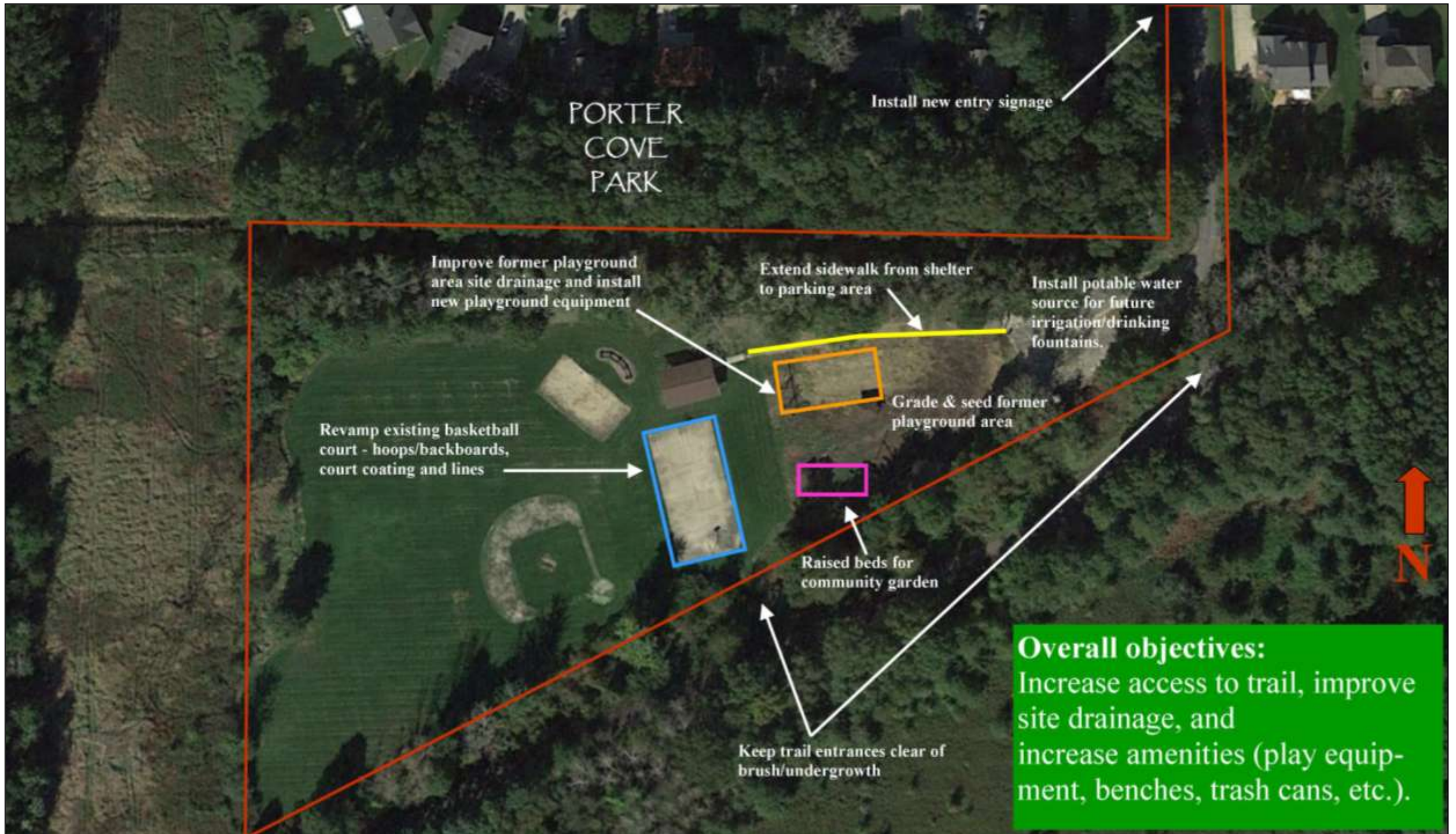


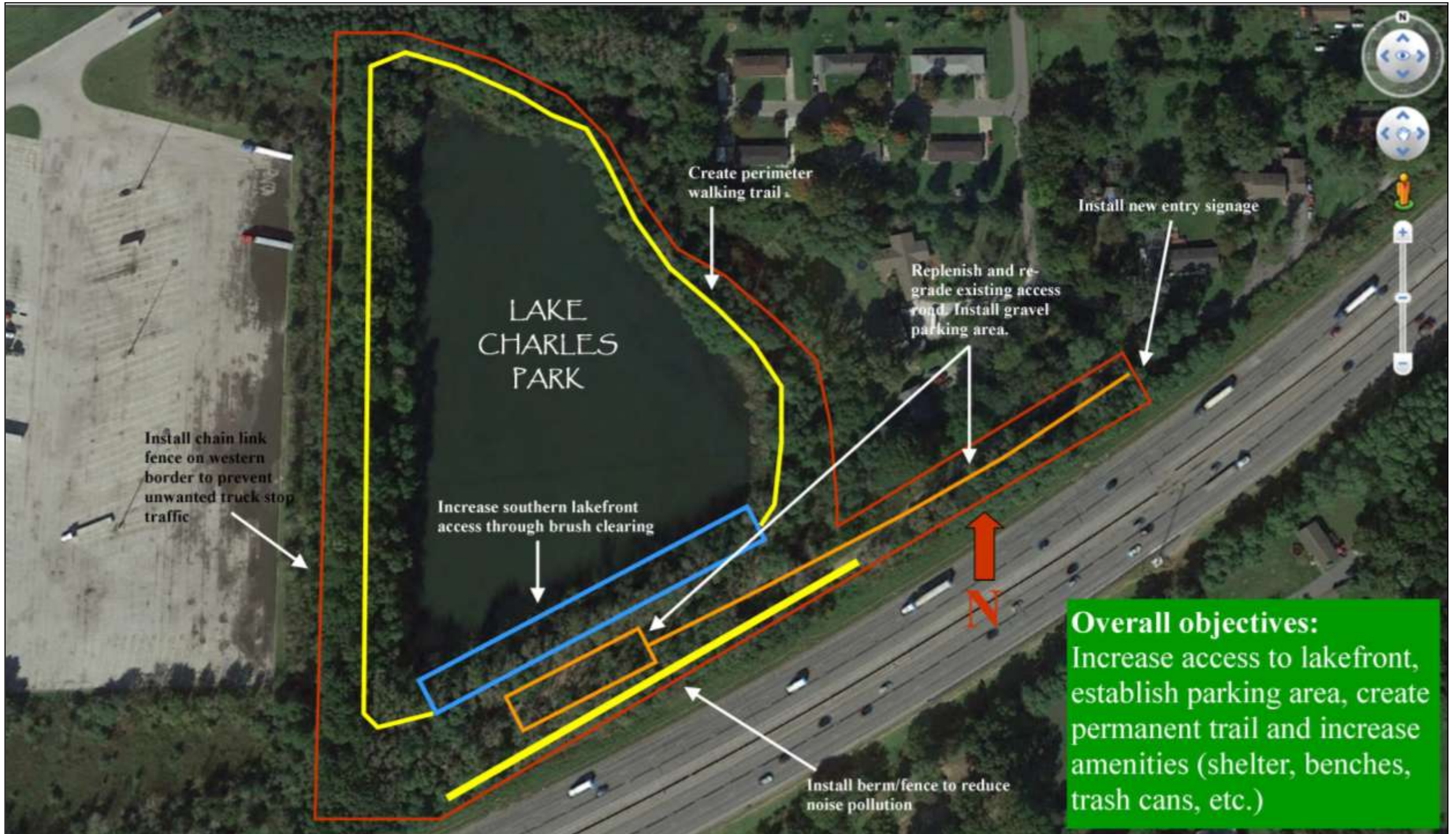








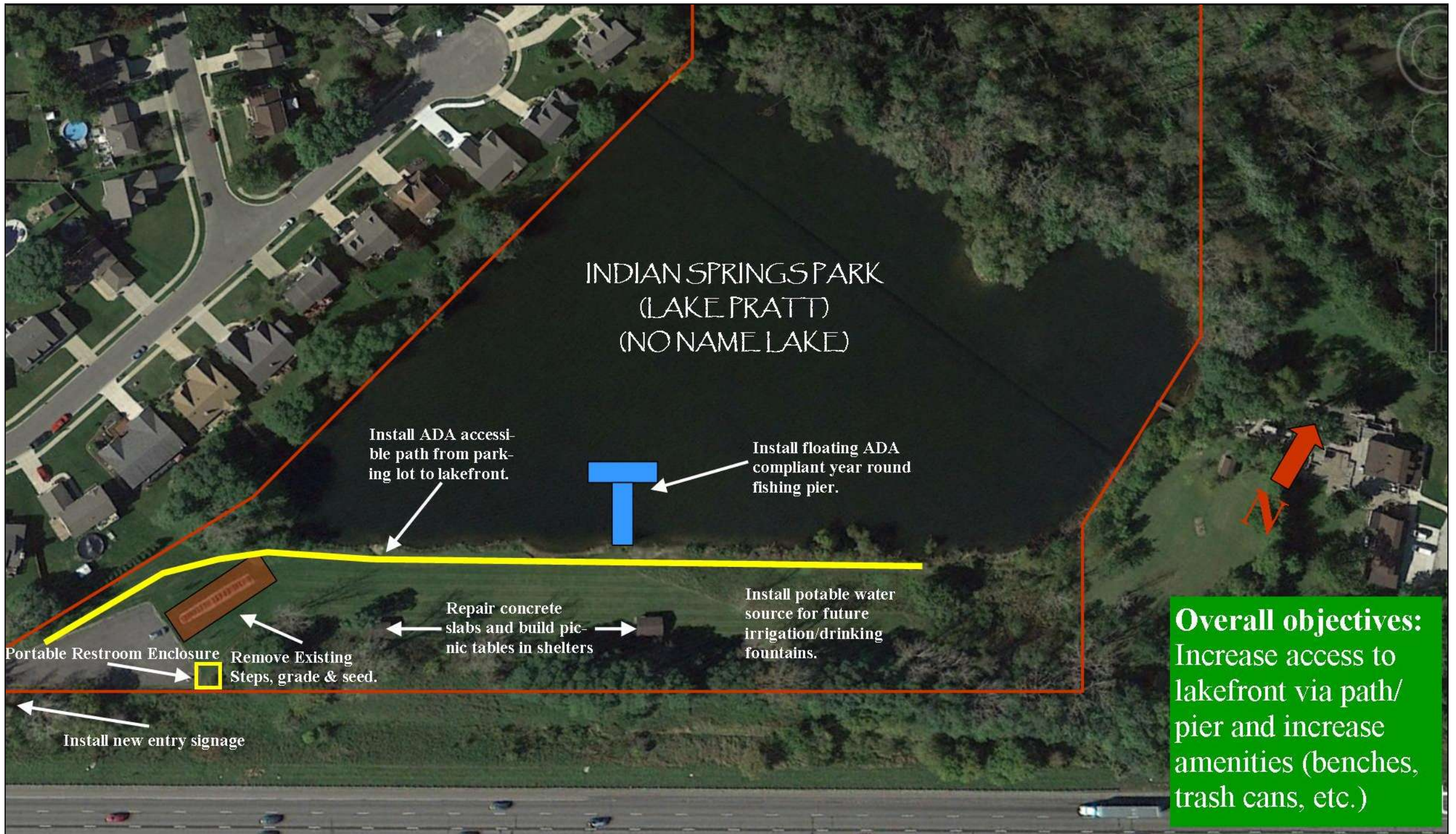






Overall objectives:
Level site for easier mowing.
Establish plant/tree nursery for
transplants to other parks.





RESOLUTION 2018-01

A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN OF PORTER, INDIANA FOR THE
ADOPTION OF THE PARK DEPARTMENT LONG RANGE PLAN


WHEREAS, the Town Council realizes the importance of sound planning in order to meet the needs of its citizens,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED; that this body does adopt the 2018 Town of Porter Park Department Long Range Plan, for the growth and development of parks and recreational opportunities in Porter.

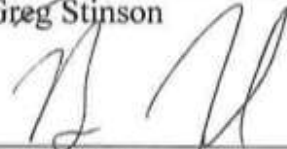
Dated this 12th day of June, 2018.




Erik Wagner, President




Greg Stinson




Brian Finley



Ross LeBleu, Vice President



William Lopez

ATTEST: 

Carol Pomeroy, Clerk Treasurer