



Comprehensive Plan 2023–2043





What is the Comprehensive Plan?

Planning in Porter is mandated to be a continuing process through which the local government decides land use questions. Zoning, and to a lesser degree subdivision controls, are the recognized legal mechanisms for implementing its' comprehensive plan. The Plan Commission understands that how well the Town of Porter functions fifty years from now will depend upon the foresight of Porter's planners in understanding and applying of growth management and control processes today. This Comprehensive Plan considers the period from the present through 2022 to 2042.

Table of Contents

What is the Comprehensive Plan? 2

Table of Contents..... 3

Acknowledgments 4

Strategic Goals..... 7

Chapter 1 - Intent and Purpose 12

Chapter 2 - Community Description..... 16

Chapter 3 - Physical Environment..... 33

Chapter 4 - Employment and Income 36

Chapter 5 - Population Projections 47

Chapter 6 - Existing Land Use 52

Chapter 7 - Thoroughfare Plan..... 62

Chapter 8 - Growth Trends 72

Chapter 9 - Downtown Revitalization..... 82

Chapter 10 - Community Facilities and Public Services..... 84

Chapter 11 - Educational Facilities 91

Chapter 12 - Housing..... 98

Chapter 13 - Parks and Recreation 104

Chapter 14: Summary of Conclusions / Recommendations..... 105

Appendix: Land Use and Zoning Maps 109

Appendix: Community Planning..... 109

Acknowledgments

The Porter Plan Commission wishes to thank the people of our town who participated in the public input and hearings to create this vision of our future.

The Comprehensive Plan 2022 - 2042 is the product of contributions and review from the following town officials, staff and consultants.

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OVERVIEW OF THE PLAN

Planning our future land use, Porter draws on a combination of strengths unique in our region. We are positioned at the heart of one of America's most visited recreational areas, on Lake Michigan's lakeshore, at the gateway to Indiana's best state park and only national park, with regional greenway trails and blueway water trails intersecting in town. We are served by an expanding commuter railway and the junction of an interstate and three major highways. We have excellent schools, library, park system and relatively affordable housing.

Essentially landlocked, we must make the best use of land we have. Smart development can reverse the trends that have frozen our population while the region around us grows and raised our tax rate faster than surrounding communities. It can capture jobs and tax revenue dollars from visitors who now only impose costs. We can appeal to out-migration from Chicago with new attractive and diverse housing, and the business and services that will follow. We can facilitate the community transition as the next twenty years brings new work arrangements, fuel transition, and climate change.





Here are highlights of the plan to realize this brighter future:

- Embrace the value of the recreational setting and use it to guide development.
- Signal our intention to plan for capital infrastructure improvements, support favorable development along US-20 and IN-49, and encourage mixed-use, missing middle and upscale housing in the transit district.
- Develop creative strategies for parcels with the highest potential for community good: US-20/IN-49, the lakeshore, and the Brickyard parcel.
- Prioritize development by type and location, and develop policies for the use of tax abatement and tax increment financing (including transit district development).
- Make incremental improvements to our zoning map and ordinances that implement these goals, support alternative fuel source use, and enhance fair enforceability.

Strategic Goals

GOAL 1: ENCOURAGE FAVORABLE POPULATION AND REVENUE GROWTH CONSISTENT WITH MAINTAINING ITS CHARACTER BY FACILITATING DEVELOPMENT THAT EMBRACES THE RECREATIONAL ASSETS OF THE TOWN.

- The Plan Commission should propose to rezone and phase out ill-located industrial and residential uses to enlarge the downtown and facilitate development on US-20 and IN-49. Special attention should be given to the southwest quadrant of I-94 and US-20, and the areas within the proposed Transit Development District
- The Plan Commission should review existing zoning ordinances to change permitted uses to reflect the desired businesses supporting recreational and related uses, and remove uses that are not beneficial or are archaic
- The town can increase the value of residential areas by building more 'walkable neighborhoods' with trails and walkways connected to the downtown, train station, and recreational assets. The Plan Commission should look for opportunities to include these in new developments.
- The Plan Commission should study and propose zoning ordinance changes to allow Accessory Dwelling Units where it would benefit the town.
- Where appropriate, especially in the Transit Development District, the Plan Commission should give consideration to proposals that include mixed development to meet residents' interest in services, and 'missing middle' development that creates diverse owner-occupied housing.
- The Plan Commission, Council and Park District should consider a reconfiguration and new plan for unused streets in the lakeshore area to capitalize on the town's most undeveloped assets, its shoreline and open space.



GOAL 2: DIRECT FUTURE DEVELOPMENT TOWARD THE GOALS OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN BY UPDATING THE FUTURE LAND USE MAP.

- The Future Land Use Map that accompanies this document is an important component of the Comprehensive Plan, and when adopted will guide the Plan Commission in considering proposals and petitions.
- Few opportunities present themselves to expand development areas in the town. Two stand out:
 - The Town should request that Indiana Department of Transportation rebuild the IN-49 / US-20 cloverleaf to modern standards, and in the process return acreage to the Town. The Plan Commission should propose rezoning recovered land consistent with the goals of embracing the recreational setting, providing desirable local services, and/or higher tax revenue purposes.
 - When landowners on the east border of Town are amenable to annexation, the Town should pursue these when they are in the Town’s interest.

GOAL 3: FACILITATE FAVORABLE DEVELOPMENT BY PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTING RELEVANT CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS.

- The Town should develop a Capital Improvement Program, which prioritizes community needs, assigns a source of funding, and coordinates and schedules construction.
- The Plan Commission should take into consideration implementation of the Capital Improvement Program when opportunities for new development arise.

GOAL 4: FOLLOW PRINCIPLES OF GOOD PLANNING.

The Plan Commission should apply principles of good planning to new developments when reviewing development petitions. For example:

- Subdivisions should provide internal road systems and not be permitted to utilize driveway cuts directly onto collectors and arterials.
- Commercial development should be required to have sufficient depth to avoid strip development one lot in depth. Consider 'business park' models
- Care should be taken to provide sufficient buffer zones around industrial property.
- Make sure adopted zoning ordinances are enforceable.



GOAL 5: MAKE THE MOST EFFECTIVE USE OF ALTERNATE FUNDING MECHANISMS TO PURSUE STRATEGIC GOALS WITH LIMITED TAX REVENUE.

- The Plan Commission and Council should develop guidelines, with specific goals and guideposts, for the use of tax abatement to develop parcels that meet development goals of the Comprehensive plan.
- A Transit Development District (TDD) should be specified and used to provide incremental tax funding for development goals consistent with the Comprehensive Plan close to the Dune Park train station along IN-49 and US-20. The Plan Commission should consider zoning revisions in the TDD area to support transit-oriented development (TOD) consistent with the Comprehensive Plan goals.
- The Plan Commission, Director of Development and Redevelopment Commission should look for opportunities to implement priorities of the Capital Development Plan using the existing TIF, proposed TDD, and tax abatement policy.
- New developments should be encouraged to provide an alternative direct fee to the Park District in lieu of setting aside an “open space” in their plans.
- (See also Actions under Thoroughfares and Intersections.)
- To implement trails and walkways, the Town should adopt a master trail plan, and seek funding from Transportation Enhancement, Next Level Trails, Federal Lands Access Program and other available resources.



GOAL 6: REVITALIZE THE LINCOLN STREET DOWNTOWN AREA.

Actions and Responsibilities:

- The Council and Director of Development should consider an architectural and retail study of the area with the Main Street Organizations, the Duneland Chamber, and town residents. Resolve problems of signage, housing, parking and streetscape.
- The Plan Commission and Director of Development should make appropriate updates to the branding study.
- The Plan Commission should consult the Downtown Master Plan when considering petitions and reviewing zoning in the downtown area.
- The Plan Commission should consider enlarging the downtown area by rezoning and phasing out some ill-located industrial and residential uses.

GOAL 7: IMPROVE THOROUGHFARES AND INTERSECTIONS.

Actions and Responsibilities:

- The Comprehensive Plan documents thoroughfares and intersections that require improvements (see C.7). The Town should consider these improvements in the Capital Improvement Plan.
- The Plan Commission should consider recommended improvements to thoroughfares and intersections, the goal of walkable neighborhoods, and the Capital Development Plan when major developments are reviewed.
- The Town should make use of U. S. Department of Transportation, Community Crossing and Safe Streets, PROTECT, Roads For All and other available funding to reconstruct or construct thoroughfares as identified and prioritized in this Plan.
- The Town should make use of Transportation Enhancement, Federal Lands Access Program, Indiana Next Level Trails and other funding to connect and extend the town and regional trails to achieve walkable neighborhoods and connection with the train station area parks.
- A strategy for location of EV charging stations should be developed. Parking ordinances should be updated, made more robust, and designed to complement the town’s strategy.

Chapter 1 - Intent and Purpose

Planning in Porter is mandated to be a continuing process through which the local government decides land use questions. Zoning, and to a lesser degree subdivision controls, are the recognized legal mechanisms for implementing its' comprehensive plan. The Plan Commission understands that how well the Town of Porter functions fifty years from now will depend upon the foresight of Porter's planners in the understanding, and application of the growth management and control process, today.

The process of growth management in the Town of Porter is seen as the most important component, similar to the town's zoning land use restrictions, subdivision design standards, or industrial performance standards, as a means for carrying out community goals, objectives and policies for a better quality of community life in Porter. The framework for the Town's planning process is driven by the Town of Porter Comprehensive Plan, and is implemented by the Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision Control Ordinance, and depicted on the Official Town Maps. In addition, a decade of diminishing federal and state funding participation has led community leaders to institute economic improvement programming in the form of a redevelopment authority utilizing an innovative funding device, Tax Increment Financing, to capture additional tax revenue to fund necessary public improvements.

THE PLAN

The plan once adopted: 1) informs property owners and development interests of the Town's position with respect to public and private development; 2) guides public response to specific rezoning and subdivision applications; and 3) provides insights for citizens, property owners, and others who might be contemplating investment or development activities in the future.

This comprehensive plan, and the recommendations contained therein, are intended to assist planners with the important decision-making process that guides the Town's investments in capital improvements, and promotes equal and fair application of subdivision design and land use policy. This body of information was developed through the completion of a number of studies and surveys, including the following:

- existing land use survey
- population study
- community facilities study
- housing analysis
- natural resources study
- thoroughfare study

There is widespread agreement among planners that data ought to be collected as exhaustively as possible, and that it should be presented graphically whenever feasible. Thus, the physical features of the community should be depicted on maps supplemented by graphs and charts.

The following types of maps, charts and other data are normally prepared in a comprehensive planning program:

1. Existing Land Use Map - This map should include a narrative statistical summary of existing land use relationships. Such an inventory can reveal many of the community's physical assets and potentials, and point to various deficiencies or problems resulting from incompatible land uses. This will help provide a base from which logical future development patterns can be determined. Ideas can then be formulated about areas best suited for future residential, commercial, industrial and public purposes.

2. Thoroughfares Classification Map - This map depicts the current road system by dividing it into freeways, arterials, collectors, and locals. It indicates how the road functions without regard to its suitability or capacity. When these factors are later added, it helps to identify required thoroughfare improvements on those roadways, which are over utilized, and alternate routes on those, which are underutilized.

3. Future Land Use Map - This map identifies a development guide, which describes how property should be used throughout the community. Its largest benefit is to offer the Plan Commission an opportunity to look at their community as a whole, instead of one petition at a time. This land use map is not to be confused with the zoning map, the later being a legal document, and the former being a recommendation or guide. When petitioners file rezoning and subdivision requests with the Plan Commission, the future land use map should be one of potentially several tools used to either support or deny the request.

COMMUNITY PLANNING

Local communities were granted the authority to plan and pass development controls in 1947 with the enactment of the ADVISORY PLANNING LAW. Under this statute, municipalities and counties could establish a plan commission to guide and direct development in their jurisdiction. In 1957, the AREA PLANNING LAW was passed, which provided a means for both incorporated and unincorporated areas to collectively establish a "single" unified planning and zoning department. In 1979, these two statutes (IC 18-7-5 and 18-7-4 respectively) were combined as the first step in recodifying the planning and zoning laws. In 1981, all the separate planning sections of the Indiana Code, including the METROPOLITAN PLANNING LAW statutes were consolidated under IC 36-7-4.

The main purpose of community planning currently practiced in the Town of Porter is to insure an informed decision-making process, enable elected officials the ability to manage community growth and development in the Town of Porter; and provide a continuing planning process that is in the interests of all residents, the business community, and the industrial community.

[Appendix: Community Planning](#) describes the approach that the Plan Commission adopted to involve the public at each stage of development of this Comprehensive Plan.

Community planning is the process by which the Town of Porter decides what kind of future it wants and then established the policies and management tools, such as zoning and subdivision regulations, to help reach that goal. It is the intent of the Town not to simply take action on the items that make up the monthly agendas. Instead, Porter officials should initiate and implement policies, rather than merely respond to the circumstances of a given situation.

The Plan Commission and the Town Council must anticipate changes in the local tax base and population characteristics, and be prepared to meet changing needs in physical facilities and governmental services in a rational way. The result is some degree of stability in the town government, its tax rates, and other financial considerations, all of which have an impact on the future growth of the community. Costly mistakes, such as the paving of streets that are later torn up for the installation of utilities or the design of a public building, which may soon become obsolete, should be avoided. Advanced planning of required improvements will result in substantial savings, especially in the case of utilities. A carefully crafted comprehensive plan will assist in making the right decisions.

The Comprehensive Land Use Plan should prove to be an effective working guide for public and private decision-making in Porter, since the Plan is a balance between existing conditions and the principles of sound land use planning. Since no plan can anticipate every specific future development, the Plan Commission and the Town Board will continually find a need to update the Plan. This should be done in accordance with the planning concepts presented in this study. Implementation of the Plan will have to be brought about through the control of land use by the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations.

The Comprehensive Land Use Management Plan is a portrait of future proposals reflecting a desirable inter-relationship of the following uses:

- Residential
- Commercial

- Industrial
- Recreational
- Community Facilities
- Utilities
- Transportation
- Municipal Services

As a result of this considerable study and analysis of existing physical, economic, and social characteristics, and projections of future conditions, the Town should be armed with an important tool, which will help shape its future.

Chapter 2 - Community Description

The Town of Porter is located approximately fifty (50) miles southeast of Chicago. The Town shares a common border on the south with Chesterton and unincorporated Westchester Township, on the west with Burns Harbor and Dune Acres, and on the east with unincorporated Westchester Township. About one third of Porter's population lives in Census Tract 0502, while 2/3's lives in Tract 0503. Porter is served by excellent transportation facilities including Interstate Highway Route 94, U.S. Highways 20 and 12, and State Highway 49. With the convenient location with respect to the Chicago Metropolitan area, and a stable, relatively low tax rate, the population of the Town increased from 1940 to 2000 (see Table 1). Due to the significant acquisition of most of the balance of the remaining developable property, by the federal government, the population since has remained near constant. Porter contains approximately 4095 acres, within 6.3 square miles, and maintains about 39 miles of local roads. Porter contains a mix of land uses: residential, commercial, industrial, and recreational. Approximately 14,000 acres of federal and state recreational land is adjacent to or in close proximity of the town.

Several historical occurrences have helped shape the patterns of land use in the town of Porter. Porter was first settled in 1822, with permission of a local Pottawattomie Chief, and a permit from the United States Government, by Joseph Bailly, fur trader and entrepreneur. He saw its great natural beauty and the importance of its position on the southern shore of Lake Michigan. A trading post was established as the first permanent settlement in Northwestern Indiana. This site is approximately at the center of Porter.

In 1833, an influx of settlers led Bailly to plat the first subdivision, on the north bank of the Little Calumet River, which he called Baillytown. However, few lots were sold as settlers preferred the better farming land to the south, and the town died with Bailly's death in 1835. The homestead remained in family control until 1919, when it was purchased as a retreat for the School Sisters of Notre Dame from Milwaukee. The sisters abandoned it in 1932 and it eventually passed into private hands. It is now owned by the National Park Service and is a National Historic Landmark.

In the years that followed, more than 40 subdivisions were platted by others. In 1991 the Baillytown subdivision was developed with amenities that captures that great natural beauty. Railroads arrived in 1851, and in 1872, Henry Hageman laid out a new town at the current location of downtown Porter. The Town was settled by English, Dutch, German, and Irish as an agricultural settlement in the mid-1800s. Later Polish, Italian, Slovaks, and Hungarians moved to Porter about the time of incorporation, to fill the demand for steel plant employees, (SEE TABLE 10). At the close of the century,

Porter had hopes of becoming a major industrial center. Unusually rich deposits of clay were discovered. Brickyards were established in 1872, and by 1883, three yards were in production. Many other industries located in Porter; but growth was severely crippled by the panic of 1893.

The town was incorporated in 1908. In 1925, U.S. Highway 12 was built, and in 1931, U.S. Highway 20 was completed. In 1962, the Northern Indiana Public Service Company (NIPSCO's) Baily Generating Station began operation just north of Town; the coal-fired facility closed in 2018. Bethlehem Steel's Burns Harbor plant opened in 1962. I-94 was constructed in 1969. Burns International Harbor opened in 1970.

The Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, headquartered in Porter on Mineral Springs Road, was created in 1966. The National Lakeshore caused a decline in population during the 1970's and early 80's as approximately 1,095 acres of private land in Porter were acquired and removed from the tax rolls. In 1982, approximately 603 acres of land were annexed from the county and township on Porter's northeast. The State Route 49 By-pass was completed in 1989. This same year Worthington Steel Company began construction. The Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore was designated the Indiana Dunes National Park in 2019, the 61st National Park in the United States.

During the decade from 1970-1980, the effect of the property takings related to the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, coupled with high mortgage interest rates discouraging new construction, resulted in the first population decrease in Porter's history. Since that time the economic downturn in 2008, and additional federal acquisition has had a negative impact on development in Porter. The Town's convenient location, moderate taxes, and utility capacity have not been sufficient to experience renewed population increase. During the decade from 2010-2020, population continued to remain constant.

Because Porter is located along a major transportation hub, the total pattern of past and future development is greatly influenced by nearby ISG (formerly Bethlehem Steel Corporation) and US Steel (formerly National Steel Corporation, Midwest Division). These largest employers in Porter County exert enormous influence on Porter and the region. The establishment of the Port of Indiana, Burns International Harbor has been instrumental in the growth of industry and land development in the planning area of Porter.

Interstate 94, U.S. Highway 12 (Dunes Highway), U.S. Highway 20, and State Route 49 are the major transportation routes of the Town. Several truck lines serve Porter, and commercial activities centering on the trucking industry dominate along many of these routes. Railway freight service is provided by NY Central, Michigan Central, South Shore and CSX. Passenger rail transportation is provided by the South Shore Railroad; the Dune Park Station was constructed in 1985 on the northeast side of Porter. Amtrak

trains pass through Porter from stations to the west and east. Local air service is available in Valparaiso, Griffith, and Gary. Major commercial flights are available at O'Hare International and Midway Airports in Chicago.

The State Route 49 By-pass connects U.S. 12, U.S. 20, and Interstate 94 on the east side of town, intersects the Indiana Toll Road on the south side of Chesterton, and continues south crossing U.S. 6 and continuing on to U.S. 30. The completion of the By-pass has provided the Chesterton-Porter area with an alternate to the traffic delays and congestion caused by railroad grade crossings.

Additional growth beyond the study period will be limited by the availability of land for development. Porter has a limited amount of vacant developable property with limited opportunity to annex additional land. Residential growth is expected to remain constant over the next ten years. Saturation population, based on available land, current zoning, future comprehensive plans, and maximum density requirements, is likely to occur during the 20-year study period.

The Town of Porter is a customer community of the Chesterton Sanitary District. As such, the Town is responsible for all gravity storm and sanitary sewers and lift stations within its boundaries. The Chesterton Sanitation Department is responsible for all pump stations, forced mains, and gravity sewers after the sewage leaves Porter to the treatment plant, and the plant itself. The current contractual capacity of the treatment plant, available for use by Porter, is not a factor expected to hamper growth patterns in Porter. Residents of Porter must pay a sewer user fee, which is collected by the Town on the utility bill. A portion of these funds is then paid to Chesterton for operating expenses. Chesterton has its own authority to float General Obligation Bonds, repaid based on the District's assessed valuation.

The Town's residents purchase water as direct retail customers of the Indiana American Water Company, (formerly Northwest Indiana Water and Gary-Hobart Water Corporation). This private utility currently has sufficient pumping capacity to satisfy maximum daily and peak daily demand in Porter for at least the term of the study period.

The Town of Porter maintains about 4.2 acres of municipal facilities that includes a town hall, police station, and a 3.8-acre municipal garage and fire station complex. Adjacent to the Town Hall is the Hageman Public Library. The Duneland School Corporation operates Yost Elementary School on 12.3 acres. The town also includes the Fieldstation Co-op, a cooperative preschool in the National Park, and Discovery Charter School, offering kindergarten through eighth grade. Fairhaven Academy's 11.5-acre complex in Chesterton provides parochial educational facilities. A modern community center is situated in the 38-acre Hawthorne Park. In addition, 7.4 acres of private

recreational facilities include a 5.2 acre nature preserve owned by the local chapter of the Izaak Walton League, and a 2.2 acre little league baseball park.

During the previous planning period the Town encouraged residential, commercial and industrial development through the use of tax incentives, public investment and active recruitment of prospective developers. In addition to adequate utilities, business development requires an excellent intra-Town road system. The level of redundancy for east-west thoroughfares has provided for the efficient flow of traffic through the Town. Traffic traveling to and through the community in a north-south direction finds a less than adequate transportation system.

In 1982, 603 acres were annexed in the unincorporated area northeast of the town (including the Waverly Heights and Dune Forest subdivisions). This area has since experienced residential, commercial, and industrial development, as private developers capitalized on the strength of the regional population shifts, steady growth in the steel and trucking industry, and changing technology and stricter controls of the nation's waste management policies. The area annexed in 1982 has experienced almost 14 acres of new single-family development. In addition, major commercial expansion was the driving force for other development that included Andershocks' Fruit Market on 21 acres, Canonie, Inc. on 16 acres, Trailer Transit's 25 acres facility, Splash Down Dunes recreational park on 33 acres, and a 35-acre industrial park. Since the previous Comprehensive Plan in 2003, Andershock's was closed and demolished, Splash Down Dunes was purchased by Seven Peaks, reopened in 2013, closed in 2017, then demolished in 2019, and Canonie was sold and remodeled to the Discovery Charter School. In 2019, a proposal for a high-end apartment development was approved by the town at the former waterpark property; the project has not been constructed yet and the property is for sale.

ANNEXED AREA ANALYSIS:		
	Before 1980	After 1990
Population	481	
Improved Dwellings	148	205
Residential Acreage	487 acres	434 acres
Commercial Acreage	78 acres	134 acres
Industrial Acreage	38 acres	35 acres

In addition, during this period (1980-1990), industrial and commercial activities increased dramatically north of the US 20 corridor. At the same time, large tracts of industrial and commercial land have remained vacant and underutilized to the south of the corridor. Residential development continued as large lot single-family and medium density subdivisions, such as Dune Meadows, Hunter's Glen and Baillytown, straddle the U.S. 20 commercial corridor and dominate the lake view area. Multi-family housing grew with the Lake Charles subdivision. Porter Cove, Porter Ridge and Carlson's Estates subdivisions were developed on the west and southwest adjacent to Burns Harbor and the south abutting Chesterton.

Porter's population grew rapidly from 1910 to 1970 and then again from 1990 to 2000, (SEE TABLE 1). Since that time the population has remained nearly constant or even dropped slightly. The most significant reason for this plateau is the acquisition of a significant amount of highly desirable developable property by the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore. This acquisition amounted to 8894 acres, which left the town with small, poorly located, scattered vacant property sites. In addition, state annexation laws were amended in 2017 to make it very difficult to annex property unless the owners were in favor.

The population has changed from nearly equal numbers of males and females to males outnumbering females by 478. The population has also grown older from 2000 to 2019, (SEE TABLE 2). The median age remains younger than Chesterton, Indiana, and the US, (SEE TABLE 3 and 4). The change in population of Porter and six other nearby communities, from 2010 to 2018 (estimated), indicates that only Burns Harbor

experienced a significant increase. Dune Acres, South Haven, and Porter experienced a loss of population, while Portage, Ogden Dunes and Chesterton recorded a small increase, (SEE TABLE 5). Porter has one of the highest percentages of persons who have never married, and also the lowest divorce percentages of the neighboring communities, (SEE TABLE 6, 16 AND 17).

Porter has a significantly higher percentage of home ownership compared to Chesterton, and a higher percentage of veterans when compared to both Indiana and US, (SEE TABLES 7 AND 8). The percentage of Porter residents whose birthplace was within the state increased significantly from 2010 to 2018, and was more than 17% more than Chesterton residents, (SEE TABLE 9). The predominant ancestry reported by Porter residents was German in 2000, followed by Irish, Polish, and English. By 2019 it had changed to English, followed by German, Irish, and Polish, (SEE TABLE 10 AND 13). The percentage of native-born residents were similar in Porter and Chesterton, and significantly higher than the United States, (SEE TABLE 11, 12 AND 15). Racial and ethnic diversity is significantly lower than the country as a whole, (SEE TABLE 19).

Commercial development can be further encouraged through the use of enterprise zones and tax abatement. Redevelopment Commissions, made up of members of the business community, can aggressively sell the Town of Porter to prospective business clients through publicizing available sites, and by compiling Town prospectus information about taxes, labor force, etc. The Routes 20 and 12 and Highway 49 Corridors continue to slowly advance industrially, however, desirable commercial growth will require aggressive marketing, due to stiff competition from Portage, Chesterton, and Valparaiso.

Educational opportunities are high level and abundant in Porter, which is part of the Duneland School Corporation. The primary and secondary schools remain some of the best in Northwest Indiana. For many families, it is the reason for moving to Porter. During 1998, ground was broken at the new Chesterton High School, where a state-of-the-art multi-faceted educational facility has been constructed. This facility has raised the standard of quality secondary education in Northwest Indiana. Ground was broken for a new Yost School in 2022. In addition, the town has the Field Station cooperative preschool and Discovery Charter School.

Purdue University Northwest (two campuses) and Indiana University Northwest are within a half hour drive of the Town. Valparaiso University is within ten (10) miles of the Town. Numerous vocational schools are also within a thirty (30) mile radius. Chicago, with its high level and diverse educational opportunities, is within fifty (50) miles.

The Park and Recreation facilities, which continue to improve after years of limited financial support, serves the basic recreational needs of the population. Located within the Indiana Dunes National Park on the shores of Lake Michigan and adjacent to the

Indiana Dunes State Park on the town's northeast, swimming, fishing, camping, hiking, cross-country skiing, water skiing, and canoeing in dunal and forested areas are available to area residents. State of the art interpretive and naturalist programming is provided at new state and federal facilities where such subjects as environment, ecology, geomorphology, and geology are enhanced for public viewing.

The Town's Park Department operates and maintains over 80 acres of public parks and over 6 miles of paved/unpaved trails. The 38-acre Hawthorne Park has modern recreational facilities including a baseball diamond, sand volleyball court, basketball courts, a 9-hole disc golf course, gazebo, two picnic shelters, two playground areas, and a community building/banquet hall. Picnic shelters and fishing are provided at the 21-acre Indian Springs Park, with a nature preserve and Pratt Lake off Beam Street. In addition, the 12-acre Lake Charles Park provides fishing and a nature preserve conveniently located on the west side of town, near Highway 20, and the Highway View and Lake Charles subdivisions. Smaller parks servicing the needs of subdivisions include 5 acres in Porter Cove, and 4 acres in Dune Meadows. Also, an abandoned railroad right-of-way has been converted into a bike/walking/jogging path, and a park added in the Porter Cove subdivision.

In summary, the strategic location of the Town affords excellent access to transportation facilities. The Town offers excellent public services, an outstanding educational system, and expanding recreational opportunities for its residents. The Town's utilities are more than adequate, with sufficient additional capacity for growth. The Town has had a stable form of government, and offers a very competitive tax rate. There is a significant amount of vacant residential, commercial, and industrial property available that will encourage future business development. The Town's population is anticipated to grow slowly until saturation is achieved. Limited opportunities northeast of the Town do exist for additional growth through annexation. Redevelopment of unused or underutilized parcels and structures in the older sections in and near the old Town center will provide the next challenge and opportunity for the Town of Porter.

TABLE 1 - TOTAL POPULATION

Year	Population	/ - %
1910	524	
1920	699	33
1930	805	15
1940	1,190	48
1950	1,458	18
1960	2,189	50
1970	3,058	40
1980	2,988	-2
1990	3,118	4
2000	4,972	59
2010	4,858	-2
2020	5,210	7

Source: U.S Census Bureau

TABLE 2: POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

	1990	2000	2020
SEX			
Male	1,558	2,427	2,722
Female	1,560	2,545	2,488
AGE			
<5	214	450	250
5-14	623	874	751
15-19	120	234	227
20-24	154	338	336
25-44	1,038	1,620	1,349
45-54	387	697	745
55-59	139	217	329
60-64	124	155	241
65-74	194	222	456
75-84	110	138	128
>85	15	27	23
Median		35.6	37.1
<18	837 (27%)	1,406 (28%)	1,228 (24%)
18-64	1,962 (63%)	3,179 (64%)	3,375 (65%)
>65	319 (10%)	387 (8%)	607 (11%)
Total	3,118	4,972	5,210

Source: Census of Population and Housing

TABLE 3: AGE (2010)

	PORTER	CHESTERTON	US
MEDIAN AGE	35.6	39.3	37.9
OVER 65	9.1%	16.1%	15.2%
5 AND UNDER	202 (4.2%)	793 (5.7%)	
5-9	346 (7.2%)	780 (5.6%)	
10-14	374 (7.7%)	1,094 (7.9%)	
15-19	358 (7.4%)	1,020 (8.1%)	
20-24	384 (7.9%)	628 (4.5%)	
25-29	308 (6.4%)	797 (5.7%)	
30-34	417 (8.6%)	804 (5.8%)	
35-39	211 (4.4%)	1,095 (7.9%)	
40-44	449 (9.3%)	1,049 (7.5%)	
45-49	464 (9.6%)	1,110 (8.0%)	
50-54	396 (8.2%)	730 (5.3%)	
55-59	257 (5.3%)	880 (6.3%)	
60-64	226 (4.7%)	776 (5.6%)	
65-69	163 (3.4%)	807 (5.8%)	
70-74	104 (2.2%)	524 (3.8%)	
75-79	35 (0.7%)	304 (2.2%)	
80-84	76 (1.6%)	310 (2.2%)	
85 AND OVER	63 (1.3%)	298 (2.1%)	

Source: Census of Population and Housing

TABLE 4 - AGE (2017 ESTIMATE)

	PORTER	CHESTERTON	INDIANA
MALES	2,648	6,804	
FEMALES	2,170	6,699	
MEDIAN AGE	34.7	38.5	37.7
OVER 65	9.1%	16.1%	
5 AND UNDER	202 (4.2%)	793 (5.7%)	
5-9	346 (7.2%)	780 (5.6%)	
10-14	374 (7.7%)	1,094 (7.9%)	
15-19	358 (7.4%)	1,020 (8.1%)	
20-24	384 (7.9%)	628 (4.5%)	
25-29	308 (6.4%)	797 (5.7%)	
30-34	417 (8.6%)	804 (5.8%)	
35-39	211 (4.4%)	1,095 (7.9%)	
40-44	449 (9.3%)	1,049 (7.5%)	
45-49	464 (9.6%)	1,110 (8.0%)	
50-54	396 (8.2%)	730 (5.3%)	
55-59	257 (5.3%)	880 (6.3%)	
60-64	226 (4.7%)	776 (5.6%)	
65-69	163 (3.4%)	807 (5.8%)	
70-74	104 (2.2%)	524 (3.8%)	
75-79	35 (0.7%)	304 (2.2%)	
80-84	76 (1.6%)	310 (2.2%)	
85 AND OVER	63 (1.3%)	298 (2.1%)	

Source: 2017 CITY-DATA.COM

TABLE 5: POPULATION CHANGE 2010 TO 2018

	CHANGE	TOTAL	MEDIAN AGE
DUNE ACRES	-5.5%	172	63.0
SOUTH HAVEN	-2.3%	5,159	37.1
PORTER	-0.5%	4,833	35.6
PORTAGE	0.1%	36,859	38.6
OGDEN DUNES	1.2%	1,123	56.3
CHESTERTON	6.4%	13,899	39.3
BURNS HARBOR	38.8%	1,605	35.3

SOURCE: TOWNSOURCE

TABLE 6: MARRIAGE STATUS (2018)

	MARRIED	NEVER MARRIED	DIVORCED
DUNE ACRES	71%	16%	8%
SOUTH HAVEN	52%	29%	14%
PORTER	59%	33%	7%
PORTAGE	47%	33%	14%
OGDEN DUNES	69%	14%	11%
CHESTERTON	54%	27%	12%
BURNS HARBOR	46%	35%	17%

SOURCE: TOWNSOURCE

TABLE 7: FAMILY/HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION (2010)

	PORTER	CHESTERTON	US
MARRIED FAMILIES	67.6%	52.6%	48.3%
SINGLE MALE	6.10%	4.60%	4.9%
SINGLE FEMALE	12.2%	12.8%	12.6%
NON-FAMILY	14.1%	30.0%	34.3%
HOME OWNERSHIP	84.1%	69.2%	63.8%

TABLE 8: VETERANS (2010)

PORTER	CHESTERTON	US	INDIANA
9.7%	9.1%	7.5%	7.7%

SOURCE: US CENSUS

TABLE 9: BIRTHPLACE

	2010 (PORTER)	2018 (PORTER)	2017 (CHESTERTON)
INDIANA	3,535 (57.2%)	69.8%	9,245 (52.6%)
OTHER STATE	1,330 (21.5%)	1.2%	4,162 (23.7%)
NORTHEAST	171 (2.8%)	6%	288 (1.6%)
MIDWEST	760 (12.3%)	16%	2,846 (16.2%)
SOUTH	266 (4.3%)	6%	724 (4.1%)
WEST	114 (1.8%)	1%	322 (1.8%)

SOURCE: US CENSUS, TOWNSOURCE

TABLE 10: PORTER PREDOMINANT ANCESTRY

	1980	1990	2000	2019
DUTCH	6	35	133	128
ENGLISH	210	265	596	1,790
FRENCH	7	104	201	118
GERMAN	272	911	1,280	915
IRISH	108	367	854	637
ITALIAN	14	105	311	209
SCANDINAVIAN	96	201	293	278
POLISH	90	205	593	602
SCOTTISH	6	103	246	157

Source: Census of Population and Housing

TABLE 11: NATIVE BORN (2010)

	PORTER	CHESTERTON	US
NATIVE-BORN	98.2%	94.5%	86.5%
FOREIGN-BORN	1.8%	5.5%	13.5%
NATURALIZED	29.5%	70.8%	48.5%

Source: Census of Population and Housing

TABLE 12: NATIVE BORN (2018)

	PORTER	CHESTERTON	US
NATIVE-BORN	98.0%	95.0%	87.0%
FOREIGN-BORN	2.0%	5.0%	13.0%

SOURCE: TOWNSOURCE

TABLE 13: ANCESTRY

	PORTER		CHESTERTON	
	2010	2020	2010	2020
GERMAN	915	1,055	3,744	2,893
IRISH	637	684	2,288	2,648
POLISH	602	473	1,472	1,350
ENGLISH	179	347	1,389	1,664
ITALIAN	209	245	1,305	1,247
AMERICAN	162	107	808	424
SWEDISH	278	338	465	457
FRENCH	118	111	338	256
SCOTCH-IRISH	157	36	181	72
SCOTCH	179	155	373	189

SOURCE: US CENSUS

TABLE 14: CITIZENSHIP

YEAR OF ENTRY	PORTER	CHESTERTON
1970-1979	0	81
1970-before	47	55
1975-1979	22	0
1980-1989	45	34
1990-2000	12	268
2000-2009	8	143
2010 OR LATER	0	44

TABLE 15: NATIVE BORN (PORTER)

	1980	1990	2000	2019 (est)
TOTAL PERSONS	2,959	3,118	5,062	4,834
NATIVEBORN	2,924	3,042	4,942	4,747
FOREIGNBORN	35 (1.2%)	76 (2.5%)	120 (2.4%)	87 (1.8%)

Source: Census of Population and Housing

TABLE 16 - MARITAL STATUS (2010)

	PORTER	CHESTERTON	US	INDIANA
MARRIED	57.7%	52.5%	48.1%	49.1%
DIVORCE	7.1%	11.5%	10.8%	12.5%
NEVER MARRIED	32.9%	27.2%	33.3%	

TABLE 17: MARITAL STATUS – PORTER (2017)

NEVER MARRIED	33.4%	28.5%
MARRIED	54.1%	51.9%
SEPARATED	0.0%	1.9%
WIDOWED	2.1%	5.3%
DIVORCED	10.4%	12.3%

TABLE 19: RACE AND ETHNICITY

	PORTER		CHESTERTON		US	
	2010	2020	2010	2020	2010	2020
WHITE	79.5%	86.2%	85.3%	83.0%	61.1%	59.3%
BLACK	0.0%	0.0%	1.50%	0.0%	12.3%	13.6%
AMERICAN INDIAN	0.20%	0.0%	0.20%	0.0%	0.70%	1.3%
ASIAN	1.7%	1.6%	3.6%	2.5%	5.4%	6.1%
HISPANIC	18.2%	9.9%	8.10%	8.8%	17.8%	18.9%
OTHER	0.40%	2.3%	1.30%	3.2%	2.60%	0.8%

SOURCE: US CENSUS, TOWNSOURCE

Chapter 3 - Physical Environment

SOIL AND TOPOGRAPHY

In July 1972, a detailed soil survey of Porter and its environs was conducted by the Soil Conservation Service. This is valuable when determining the use of individual parcels of land for development. For this reason, a summary of this survey has been included as a part of this report. The survey map is available in the Town Hall or at the Porter County Soil Conservation Service. It delineates the location of the various soil types within the area. The soils of this region developed over a limey, silty, clay loam glacial till which contains between thirty (30) and forty (40) percent clay. The till is generally compact in nature and has a relatively high bulk density. The till plain of the Porter area is rather irregular and narrow with numerous divides and many short deep slopes.

Approximately one-third of the area is depressed and does not have good outlets for water and is, consequently, covered with dark, poorly drained soils. That portion of town north of Roskin Road (130th. Street) is composed of a Duneland soil. The area north of U.S. 12 and south of Roskin Road is predominantly marsh soils. The land south of U.S. 12 (formerly a beach front) consists of lake-laid clays indicating a slow depression during glacial times. As one journeys southward the level of clay content increases. Outlet valleys, such as the Little Calumet, Peterson Ditch, Burns Ditch, and Dunes Creek, though underlaid with clay, are covered with wet soils. That portion of the annexation area is generally characterized by plainfied-oakville sand, urban land and blount complex, scattered morley silt loam. The western portion of Porter tends to show del rey-udorthent loams, urban land-whitaker loam complex soil characteristics.

Porter consists of two separate sections, both geographically and categorically. The Little Calumet River, which flows from east to west, divides the town into two approximately equal drainage basins. The Little Calumet River and flood plain is also fed by the Peterson Ditch flood plain. Because of the flat topography, backwater flooding from the small culverts under roads and railroads caused major flooding problems along Peterson Ditch, until it was improved in 1997. The Indiana Department of Natural Resources regulates all construction in these flood ways. Several areas in Porter show that soil surveys were not used in determining land uses. Low-lying areas of Porter are subject to periodic flooding caused by the overflow of the Little Calumet River.

AGRICULTURE AND WOODLAND

Much of the vacant land in and around town is zoned residentially but are woodlands. One property in town is farmland, as defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Every effort should be made to keep such areas in their present or similar condition. Though growth and development is inevitable, it should be timed and located so as to preserve the aesthetic benefits of rural landscapes and the important economic benefits of farming. Woodlands enhance residential and commercial development. In addition, farmland offers an important buffer to an increasingly urbanized world. As prime farmland becomes an increasingly scarce commodity, it will be important to protect it from encroachment.

NATURAL AREAS

Natural areas are the term used to describe areas of unusual ecological, geological or scientific significance. These areas are usually characterized by the presence of remnants of past natural habitats or conditions, which have survived despite urban growth. Cowles Bog located west of Mineral Springs Road along the town's western border is such an area. It is well suited for a wetland preserve.

Porter contains a number of habitats, including a beach grass community and a fore dune community which follows the beach grass. Shrubby vegetation, primarily black oak and jack pine in the canopy, is predominant. Serviceberry, basswood, and black oak saplings form an under story, with cherry, false solomon's seal, goldenrod and sunflower as ground cover. Other common species are grape vines, bittersweet and little blue stem.

The Bog and other areas around Porter support a wide variety of trees and vegetation, much of which has been purchased by the Indiana Dunes National Park. The oak forest is primarily black oak with an occasional basswood, white oak and white pine, in the canopy. Wild cherry, blueberries, sassafras, red maple and black oak saplings are the predominant under story species. Sedges, little blue stem, wild rose and bracken fern are characteristic of the herbaceous layer. Wildlife includes deer, raccoon, possum and fox, plus a wide variety of smaller animals.

The location of Lake Michigan and Grand Marsh has made the bird, reptiles and amphibian species living in the Porter area to be more diverse than the mammals. The food sources available for mammals are more limited, particularly during years of excessive deer populations. Along the Little Calumet River, a narrow bank of flood plain vegetation may be found. The vegetation is typical of second growth flood plains with silver maple, cork elm and green ash as dominants. Basswood, black ash, black willow, red elm, butternut, walnut and pin oak are also represented in the canopy. Shrubs include spicebush, elderberry, grape, poison ivy, raspberry and green briar.

The principle aquatic habitat in Porter is the East Arm of the Little Calumet River. Its stream bed is predominantly sand with very little organic deposition. Fish are also present in most of the larger watersheds and lakes. It is important that these areas be protected from development or developed in such a manner as to preserve their natural beauty. Development in these wooded areas should be kept to a minimum and at very low densities. Much of the river has been dredged and straightened, however portions of the Little Calumet contain abundant deadfalls and high banks lined with large trees. Algal populations have been discovered in the Little Calumet.

CLIMATE

Porter and the surrounding vicinity possess a continental type climate with modifications by the presence of Lake Michigan. Winds off the lake cause a cooler spring and provide some relief to warm summer days. Precipitation, totaling about 36 inches annually, is evenly distributed throughout the year. Snowfall, measurable amounts of which may occur from October through April, totals about 28 inches per year. Two 100-year floods materialized in 1989 and a 500-year flood occurred in 2018. One year a severe drought resulted in declining lake levels. The highest temperature recorded to date was 102 degrees F in July, 1999, while the lowest was minus 22 degrees F in January, 2019.

Thunderstorms, occasionally severe, occur most frequently in July, but have been observed in all months. The highest wind velocities during the warm season have all resulted from thunder squalls. Although the prevailing winds are from the south, the highest winds are those from the west and northwest.

In the immediate area of Porter, air quality is considered reasonably good and no pollution emergencies have been declared in the Porter area; however, odors from the large steel mills along the lake have been noticeable during westerly and northwesterly winds. Porter implemented and monitors nationally accepted industrial performance standards. Regionally, air quality is ranked third worst in the nation. Porter and Lake Counties have additional regulations per IDEM that outlaws open burning and requires automotive emissions testing.

Chapter 4 - Employment and Income

During the decade from 1990 to 2000, the total population experienced a rapid 59% increase. The percent of the population under 18 years of age increased slightly from 27% to 28%, while the percent over 65 decreased from 10% to 8%. The percentage of persons 18 to 65 increased from 63% to 64%. The percent of females in the labor force decreased from 64% to 62%, while the percentage of males increased from 78% to 81%. The unemployment rate was very low in 1990 at fewer than 4%, however, increased to 5.5% in 2000. The unemployment rate for females increased from almost 3% to nearly 5%. The unemployment rate for males increased from 4.7% to 6.1%.

Significant occupational changes took place from 1990 to 2000. Managerial and professional occupations more than doubled, while employees in sales more than tripled. Other occupations posting large increases include service jobs, construction, finance/insurance/real estate, and health services. Slight changes were experienced in operators/fabricators/laborers, manufacturing, and wholesale trade.

Between 1980 and 1990, the number of governmental employees decreased by 32%, while private sector jobs increased by 19%. Between 1990 and 2000, government jobs increased by 135%, while private sector jobs increased by 54%. For the second straight decade more than a 200% increase was seen in the number of people who are self-employed. From 1980 to 1990, median household income increased by 53%, from \$22,667 to \$34,665, median family income increased by 64%, from \$25,254 to \$41,395. Per capita income increased by 73%, jumping from \$8,499 to \$14,701. From 1990 to 2000, median household income increased by 46%, from \$34,665 to \$50,625, median family income also increased by 46%, from \$41,395 to \$60,254, and per capita income increased by 67%, jumping from \$14,701 to \$24,615.

In 1990, 77% of the total households received some type of wages or salary, while just 4% received public assistance. The mean annual amount received as either wages or salary was \$38,447. About 10% of households received some form of non-farm self-employment, with a mean of \$16,309. 40% of households received interest or dividend income, averaging only \$3,202. Social security and pension payments were received by 24% and 15%, respectively. The average annual amount received was \$8,566 for social security, and \$13,045 for retirement.

From 1980 to 1990, families without any workers increased 32%, while families with just one worker decreased by a sizeable 44%. Families with two and three or more workers increased by a significant amount, 45% and 33%, respectively.

Porter's unemployment rate estimated in March, 2019 was at 4.9%, which is slightly lower than Chesterton's, but a full percentage point over the state rate of 3.9%, (SEE

TABLE 21). Managerial, sales, and service jobs increased significantly from 1980 to 2000. By 2017, occupations for Porter residents were equally divided between sales, construction, production, teaching, administrative, metal/plastic workers, and mechanics/maintenance/repair, (SEE TABLE 22 AND 23).

Occupations in Chesterton were similar. Industries employing the largest number of Porter residents increased from 1980 to 2000 in construction, wholesale/retail trade, finance/insurance/real estate, and health/educational services. By 2017, metal and metal products, educational services, and construction were the leading industries. Chesterton had a similar hierarchy except health services held a high position, (SEE TABLES 22 AND 24).

Median household income increased from \$22,667 in 1980, to \$34,665 in 1990, to \$50,625 in 2000, to an estimated \$62,683 in 2017. This is well above the 2017 median household income of the state, but nearly \$11,000 under the median household income in Chesterton, (SEE TABLE 28). The 2018 estimated poverty rate in Porter is extremely low, as is the rate in Dune Acres and Ogden Dunes. The rate in Chesterton is 3 times the poverty rate in Porter. The rates in Burns Harbor, Portage, and South Haven were much higher, (SEE TABLE 29). The unemployment rate estimate in 2018 is very low in all seven communities including Porter.

The percentage of Porter persons who are self-employed is similar to the state and US percentage, but higher than four of the six neighboring communities, including Chesterton, (SEE TABLE 29). 87% of Porter residents income source comes from wages, while 13% receive either retirement or social security, (SEE TABLE 30). The estimated number of persons commuting to work by driving alone has increased significantly in 2017, compared to the previous decades. The mean commute time has remained about the same, (SEE TABLE 33). Compared to other neighboring communities commute times, Porter is similar to most, with the exception being Dune Acres and Ogden Dunes, which are significantly higher, (SEE TABLE 34 AND 35). Similar employees in both Porter and Chesterton drive to work alone, (SEE TABLE 36).

Porter is typical of a suburban community, which is part of a larger urban center. As such, most residents are employed elsewhere, however, a majority in Porter County.

TABLE 20: LABOR FORCE STATUS

CATEGORY	1980	1990	2000
Total Population over 16	2,164	2,382	3,763
Male	1,048	1,180	1,773
Female	1,116	1,202	1,990
Total Labor Force	1,411	1,683	2,671
Male	867	915	1,432
Female	544	768	1,239
% in Labor Force	65.2%	70.7%	71.0%
Male	82.7%	77.5%	80.8%
Female	48.7%	63.9%	62.3%
Employed	1,313	1,618	2,525
Male	817	872	1,345
Female	496	746	1,180
Unemployed	98	65	146
Male	50	43	87
Female	48	22	59
% Unemployed	6.9%	3.9%	5.5%
Male	5.8%	4.7%	6.1%
Female	11.9%	2.9%	4.8%
Females in Labor Force w/ Children under 6	201 36.9%	173 22.5%	
Females in Labor Force w/ Children 6 to 17	263 48.3%	236 30.7%	

Source: Census of Population and Housing

TABLE 21: UNEMPLOYMENT (MARCH, 2019)

PORTER	4.9%
CHESTERTON	5.2%
INDIANA	3.9%

TABLE 22: OCCUPATION

TYPE	1980	1990	2000
OCCUPATION			
Managerial/Professional	193	320	742
Technical	30	23	
Sales	82	194	680
Administrative Support	218	232	
Service	171	261	349
Precision Craft/Repair		254	260
Operators/Fabricators/Laborers	350	304	381
Production, transportation, material moving			373
INDUSTRY			
Construction	52	106	204
Manufacturing	490	443	518
Transportation, Communication/Public Utilities	159	178	185
Wholesale Trade/Retail Trade	168	331	309
Finance/Insurance/Real Estate	48	85	134
Business Service	156	251	
Public Administration	57	66	90
Health & Educational Services	170	139	369
Arts, entertainment, recreation, food services			222
Professional, scientific, management, administrative			234
Information			

Source: NIRPC

TABLE 23: OCUPATIONS (2017)

	PORTER	CHESTERTON
SALES	5.9%	3.9%
CONSTRUCTION/TRADES	4.4%	----
PRODUCTION	4.3%	3.9%
TEACHING	4.2%	4.1%
OFFICE/ADMINISTRATIVE	4.2%	----
METAL/PLASTIC WORKERS	3.9%	----
MECHANICS/MAINTENANCE/REPAIR	3.5%	3.7%
MANAGEMENT	----	6.8%
REGISTERED NURSES	----	3.1%
MATERIALS DISTRIBUTION	----	\$3.3%

TABLE 24: INDUSTRY (2017)

	PORTER	CHESTERTON
Metal & metal products	13.9%	15.2%
Educational services	8.5%	12.0%
Construction	8.1%	6.5%
Professional, scientific, technical services	6.3%	5.4%
Accommodation & food services	5.2%	5.2%
Health care	4.5%	8.8%
Truck transportation	4.2%	----
Finance/Insurance	----	3.3%

SOURCE: US CENSUS, TOWNSOURCE

TABLE 25: CLASS OF WORKER

TYPE	1980	1990	2000
Private For-profit	1,104	1,315	2,030
Government	181	123	289
Local Government		103	61
State Government		46	40
Federal Government		32	22
Self-employed	28	84	206

	1980-1990 (%)	1990-2000 (%)
Private For-profit	19.1	54.4
Government	-32.0	135.0
Self-employed	200.0	145.2

Source: NIRPC, 1980, 1990, 2000 Census of Population and Housing

TABLE 26: HOUSEHOLD INCOME

<u>INCOME RANGE</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>2000</u>
< \$24,000	687	380	377
\$25,000 - \$49,999	406	430	553
\$50,000 - \$74,999	46*	234	467
\$75,000 - \$99,999		70	245
\$100,000 - \$149,999		19	151
\$150,000 - over		8	95
Median Household Income	\$22,667	\$34,665	\$50,625
Median Family Income	\$25,254	\$41,395	\$60,254
Median Non- Family Income	\$11,200	\$20,313	
Per Capita Income	\$8,499	\$14,701	\$24,615

*1980 Census topped out at \$50,000-over.

Source: U. S. Census Bureau, 1979, 1989 Economic Census, 2000 Census, NIRPC

TABLE 27: INCOME (2010)

	PORTER	CHESTERTON
UNDER \$10,000	66 (4.2%)	125 (2.3%)
\$10,000-\$15,000	-	130 (2.4%)
\$15,000-\$25,000	32 (2.0%)	386 (7.1%)
\$25,000-\$35,000	84 (5.3%)	489 (9.0%)
\$35,000-\$50,000	126 (8.0%)	886 (16.3%)
\$50,000-\$75,000	180 (11.4%)	805 (14.8%)
\$75,000-\$100,000	311 (19.7%)	718 (13.2%)
\$100,000-\$150,000	525 (33.2%)	1,038 (19.1%)
\$150,000-\$200,000	133 (8.4%)	522 (9.6%)
OVER \$200,000	126 (8.0%)	343 (6.3%)

SOURCE: US CENSUS, TOWNSOURCE

TABLE 28: HOUSEHOLD INCOME (2017)

	PORTER	CHESTERTON	INDIANA
MEDIAN	\$62,683	\$73,621	\$54,181
UNDER \$10,000	24 (1.4%)	201 (3.7%)	6.6%
\$10,000-\$20,000	35 (2.0%)	356 (6.6%)	9.6%
\$20,000-\$30,000	195 (11.2%)	287 (5.3%)	10.3%
\$30,000-\$40,000	67 (3.8%)	653 (12.0%)	10.3%
\$40,000-\$50,000	97 (5.6%)	357 (6.6%)	9.1%
\$50,000-\$60,000	117 (6.7%)	397 (7.3%)	8.5%
\$60,000-\$75,000	120 (6.9%)	417 (7.7%)	10.8%
\$75,000-\$100,000	380 (21.8%)	779 (14.4%)	13.2%
\$100,000-\$125,000	299 (17.1%)	725 (13.4%)	8.4%
\$125,000-\$150,000	152 (8.7%)	442(8.1%)	4.8%
\$150,000-\$200,000	150 (8.6%)	518 (9.6%)	4.5%
OVER \$200,000	111 (6.4%)	292 (5.4%)	3.9%

SOURCE: US CENSUS, TOWNSOURCE

TABLE 29: COMPARATIVE MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD DATA (2018)

		INCOME RATE	SELF-EMPLOYED RATE	UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	POVERTY RATE
DUNE ACRES	\$207,917	18%	4%	4%	2.3%
SOUTH HAVEN	\$50,617	6%	4%	4%	22.3%
PORTER	\$99,485	10%	2%	2%	2.5%
PORTAGE	\$54,245	5%	4%	4%	16.9%
OGDEN DUNES	\$110,357	18%	2%	2%	3.2%
CHESTERTON	\$68,250	8%	4%	4%	7.8%
BURNS HARBOR	\$72,697	4%	2%	2%	10.8%
INDIANA	\$54,325	9%	4%	4%	
US	\$60,293	11%	4%	4%	

TABLE 30: PORTER INCOME SOURCE (2018)

WAGES	84%
SELF-EMPLOY	3%
RETIREMENT	9%
SOCIAL SEC	4%

SOURCE: US CENSUS, TOWNSOURCE

TABLE 31: COMMUTING TO WORK (PORTER)

CATEGORY	1980	1990	2000	2017
DROVE ALONE	964	1,327	1,961	4,303
CARPOOLED	249	173	232	80
PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION	0	35	186	0
WORKED AT HOME	16	19	38	44
WALKED	28	40	53	0
OTHER	14	0	19	24
MEAN COMMUTE TIME (MINUTES)	20	21	30	26

Source: U. S. Census Bureau

TABLE 32: COMPARATIVE COMMUTE TIME (2018)

DUNE ACRES	42
SOUTH HAVEN	25
PORTER	26
PORTAGE	27
OGDEN DUNES	39
CHESTERTON	28
BURNS HARBOR	27
INDIANA	24
US	27

SOURCE:US CENSUS, TOWNSOURCE

TABLE 33: COMMUTE TIME (2017)

	PORTER	CHESTERTON
LESS THAN 5 MIN	75	225
5-9 MIN	261	674
10-14 MIN	399	1,224
15-19 MIN	253	611
20-24 MIN	40	995
25-29 MIN	241	193
30-34 MIN	395	809
35-39 MIN	0	176
40-44 MIN	105	246
45-59 MIN	65	327
60-89 MIN	290	399
90 MIN OR MORE	69	221

TABLE 34: MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION (2017)

	PORTER	CHESTERTON
DROVE IN CAR ALONE	4,303 (96%)	5,826 (90%)
CARPOOLED	80	311
BUS	0	4
TAXI	30	24
WALKED	0	70
BICYCLE	14	0
WORK AT HOME	44	247
TOTAL	4,471	6,482

SOURCE: US CENSUS, TOWNSOURCE

Chapter 5 - Population Projections

In order to develop a meaningful comprehensive plan for future development for the Town of Porter, the population change, which will occur, must be determined, as accurately as possible. Before making projections concerning population, a study period must be decided and a detailed population projection must be developed throughout the period.

STUDY TIME FRAME

A period of twenty (20) years has been selected for the Comprehensive plan. In choosing a period, it should be realized that some recommendations will require several months to implement. Some will involve large capital outlays. The period should be long enough to fully realize the economic life of the capital investments. Benefits derived from various recommendations will be incremental; therefore, their total benefits a function of time. If a period is chosen which is too short, then alternatives, which result in a rapid return on investments, are favored. Alternatives, which may be valid for a longer duration, the total value of which may be greater, may be overlooked. The study period is a function of the continuing validity of the various assumptions made throughout this analysis. In addition, technological advances will materially alter some recommendations and create new ones. Due to such advances in the construction field, one cannot assume that assumptions will remain valid during the study period. One can assume that they may be invalidated beyond the study period. A twenty (20) year study period was selected as most appropriate.

ARITHMETIC PROGRESSION

The arithmetic projection method for projecting population assumes that growth in a future period will continue at a constant rate established by past growth. Using this method, from 2000 to 2020, resulted in a population estimate of 4,885 for year 2000 and 6,378 for year 2020, (see Table 36). The 2020 Census resulted in a population of 5,210.

GEOMETRIC PROGRESSION

This method assumes that growth in a future period will continue at a logarithmic rate established by past growth. Using this method produced population estimates for years 2010 and 2020 of 6,355 and 8,122 persons, respectively (see Table 36).

GRAPHICAL EXTENSION

This method extends a line reflecting the slope of each ten (10) year interval between censuses. An average line is then determined to reflect the population estimate of future years. This method yielded a year 2010 population of 5,675 and a year 2020 population of 6,434, (see Table 36).

GROWTH METHOD

This method examines building permit data for a twenty (20) years period, and makes estimates concerning rate of growth for the next twenty (20) years, assuming a household density. This method yielded an estimate of 5,320 for 2010 and 6,380 for 2020.

GRAPHICAL COMPARISON

This method uses other municipalities with similar characteristics whose populations have grown beyond Porter's and assumes that Porter will grow as the average of the group. This method is a crude measurement of projected population and inferior to other methods described above, and therefore will not be emphasized.

DECREASING RATE OF INCREASE

The decreasing rate of increase method uses an exponential relationship to express a period of growth characterized by the mature portion of an S-curve approaching saturation population. This method is not applicable because saturation is distant, due to available vacant property. This method therefore will not be emphasized.

RATIO METHOD

This method uses the ratio of Porter's population with respect to the county (Porter) and state (Indiana). Once a ratio is projected for future years, it is multiplied by county and state population estimates. This method is a crude measurement of projected population and inferior to other methods described above, and therefore, will not be emphasized.

LOGISTIC METHOD

This method assumes that the Town has some limiting saturation population and that the rate of growth is a function of the Town's population deficiency from saturation. This method is also not applicable because, similar to the decreasing rate of increase, saturation population will not be achieved before the end of the study period. This method, therefore, will not be emphasized.

POPULATION FORECAST

As stated earlier, the analysis of population is critical to long range planning. Trends in age groups, household size, and school age population can be determined, and thereby, the need for future facilities, residences, etc. can be determined in advance.

As explained earlier, Porter is significantly constrained by property limitations. As such, population growth rate is not a function of the Town's ability to maintain interest in development. Favorable interest rates, a stable low-taxed local government, and reinvestment by the Town, in the Town, are not enough to continue population growth. The decreasing rate of increase and logistic methods do not seem appropriate due to the assumption that saturation population will occur during the study period. The graphical comparison method is a crude measurement of projected population, because of the difficulty in obtaining accurate comparables. The ratio method fails due to the anomaly of having the National Park buy up and move out significant numbers of households and people.

CONCLUSION

Porter is one of the few areas of Porter County that had a decreasing population since the early period of the 1980's due to federal land acquisition. A subsequent increase occurred from 1980 to 1990, primarily due to annexation in 1982. 453 persons resided in annexed areas, and were added to the 1990 count. Since the overall population increase from 1980 to 1990 was only 130, without the annexation, the population would have declined by 323 persons. Even with the annexation, the population numbers for the period 1970 to 1990 depicts overall stagnate growth.

The population in Porter has remained basically constant since the 2000 census. The primary reason for this is the aggressive property acquisition policy of the federal government. Since 1966 the National Park has acquired 8,894 acres of highly desirable and extremely valuable developable property. Some of the property acquired was occupied, and made vacant, which resulted in a slight population decrease. This fact makes the various population projection methods invalid, and therefore not part of this Comprehensive Plan update. Those methods predicted a 2020 population between 6,378 and 8122, which were invalidated by the 2020 Census.

By contrast, Chesterton, Valparaiso, and Porter County continue to see modest increases, since these communities still contain several acres of undeveloped property, and the ability to annex. Burns Harbor is the only neighboring community that has seen a significant population increase since 2010, (SEE TABLE 35).

Persons per household in Porter has remained relatively constant since 1980, after seeing a big decline between 1970 and 1980, (SEE TABLE 35). Based on current residential projects currently in planning stages, it is possible that the Porter population can increase approximately 10% in the next five (5) years, then remain basically constant with minimal increases due to lack of developable land.

TABLE 35: POPULATION COMPARABLES (PERSONS)

	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020
PORTER	2,988	3,118	4,972	4,858	5,210
CHESTERTON	8,531	9,124	10,488	13,068	14,241
PORTAGE	27,409	29,060	33,496	36,828	37,926
VALPARAISO	22,247	24,414	27,428	31,730	34,151
OGDEN DUNES				1,110	1,168
BURNS HARBOR				1,156	2,055
BEVERLY SHORES				613	599
PORTER CO, IN	119,816	128,932	146,798	164,343	174,243
INDIANA	5,490,224	5,544,159	6,080,485	6,483,802	6,785,528

Source - U.S. Census Bureau, NIRPC

TABLE 36: POPULATION PROJECTION SUMMARY

METHOD	2010	2020	2020 (actual)
Arithmetic Progression	5675	6378	5,210
Geometric Progression	6355	8122	
Graphical Extension	5675	6434	
Growth Method	5320	6380	
Combination Method	5800	7200	

TABLE 37: PERSONS PER HOUSEHOLD (PORTER)

YEAR	PERSONS	HOUSEHOLDS	PERSONS PER HOUSEHOLD
1960	2,189	684	3.20
1970	3,058	918	3.33
1980	2,988	1,112	2.69
1990	3,118	1,245	2.50
2000	4,972	1,966	2.53
2010	4,858	1,907	2.55
2017	4,818	1,852	2.60

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, NIRPC, Porter Building Dept.

Chapter 6 - Existing Land Use

An analysis of existing land use is primary when preparing a recommendation for future land use. The Comprehensive plan should not be absolutely limited by existing land use; however, since a finite twenty (20) year window is used, the rate of change must be realistic, or the plan will be ignored.

Eight (8) different categories were used to classify current land use: single family residential, multi-family residential, recreational or park, institutional including schools, religious, office, commercial, and industrial. The use determination was achieved using a combination of field inspections and aerial photography interpretation. The categories were not necessarily intended to coincide with existing property lines, but rather the boundaries of property uses. In some cases, these boundaries were arbitrarily determined.

Based on the information obtained, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. Single Family is dominant as the principal land use. Much of the older single family has been developed on extremely narrow lots. Also, in some areas along county arterials and secondaries, excessively deep lots have developed, thereby sealing off a large amount of otherwise developable property by denying further access.
2. There is insufficient property remaining within the town to continue to develop single-family subdivisions throughout the plans study period. The National Park takings along with physical impediments to existing parcels zoned residentially, result in a serious lack of marketable property.
3. Sufficient moderate housing stock is available; however, upper moderate and upper stock is limited. As a result, upwardly mobile families have a tendency to move out instead of moving up. Also apparent is the lack of adequate buffers and transitional land uses in some of the older portions of the community.
4. For a community the size of Porter, land use information would indicate that the community is significantly under-retailed. That is the practice whereby many retail purchases are made outside the community due to lack of convenient opportunities. Also, some of the retail, especially along Rt. 20, is located in unattractive "strip" developments, which aggravates traffic capacity of the arterials they front.
5. Town park and recreational land is limited. Some of their locations appear to be dictated more in terms of the undesirability of the property for other uses than accessibility and size demands. There is no town park located at the Lake Michigan lakeshore.

6. Multi-family land use is insufficient, however, the amount of vacant property which is zoned for multi-family use is excessive, and should be reduced.
7. Office development has been lacking. It is apparent that the tremendous potential of attracting and sustaining an office "campus" along portions of Rt. 20 has not been fully realized. The attraction of medical, legal, and other professionals reduce the employment exodus and help with the under-retailed problem discussed earlier.
8. For a community the size of Porter, the current industrial property is insufficient, but for the most part the current industrial development is well placed. In some cases, access to and from these parcels is not sufficient without mixing industrial, commercial, and residential traffic on roadways not designed to handle such loads. Sanitary sewer capacity also limits adding industrial uses.
9. Some of the development, which has occurred along the county arterials, has virtually sealed off developable property behind. It is apparent that this community like most, during its early and intermediate life has suffered from a lack of pre-development planning.
10. As a result, from the standpoint of amount and placement of property, the hierarchy of land uses as the community developed historically was:
 - Railroads
 - Downtown Retail
 - Industrial
 - Single Family
 - Institutional
 - Office
 - Multi Family
 - Recreational

The legacy of these may require changes to achieve Porter's future plans. Also, this has left Porter with some hard constraints, such as the location of active railroads.

FINDINGS

Currently, Town of Porter contains a mixture of land activities. The dominant land uses are residential, commercial (trade and service) and light and heavy industry, and recreational. A significant amount of vacant land, particularly residential in nature, is scattered throughout the community. The more recent land use patterns reflect the strong influence of tourism and recreation, and the steel and trucking industries. Regional population shifts, the growth of the National Park, and the presence of tourists have converted large areas of agricultural land into residential development. A great variety of terrains exist in residential areas. These areas provide excellent proximity and access to major thoroughfares. They also provided good range of choice in density.

ANALYSIS OF CURRENT USES - RESIDENTIAL

Currently, Porter contains 1,221 acres that are used residentially. Of this acreage, single-family residential uses are well spread throughout the town. The balance of the land designated for residential use is specified for low density. This is to encourage needed development of this land use. A comparison of residential land use acreage is as follows:

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2020
Single-family residential	442	442	625	661	
Two-family residential	5.5	6	18	22	
Multiple-family Residential	.5	6	52	55	
Trailers and Trailer Courts	11	11	0	0	0
Total	458	465	695	738	

The Dunes Forest Subdivision was platted in 1927 and is about 3/4 developed today. 14 lots are being developed in 2022-2023. Several large parcels will remain vacant. The Highway View Acres subdivision was cut in half by the interstate system in the early 1970's and in 1981; the area was designated for a use which allows moderate-density multi-family planned unit development. In 1991 a 9.6 acre multi-family planned

unit development was platted. The Lakeshore Addition to The New Stockyard Subdivision (Porter Beach) was platted in 1893 and is only developed on a spotty basis due to split land ownerships, sand dune formations, and undeveloped streets. During the 1980's 6.75 acres of single-family up-scale lake view development has occurred.

Currently the Town has 553 vacant acres designated for residential use. Of these, 518 acres are large parcels with past agriculture or open space uses. Much of this property has serious constraints to development, such as access difficulties, terrain, or possible soil contamination. The remaining vacant space is old platted lots that appear at various locations in the Town. These lots, however, are generally located near the edges of the developed land area. In some instances, such lots in Porter have a width of 100 to 110 feet and depth of 500-1100 feet. The actual land activity on such lots is usually confined to the frontage area with the remainder of the lot normally unused.

COMMERCIAL

Commercial uses in Town can be distinguished between neighborhood, community, and general as follows:

- Neighborhood - acres occupied by retail and service facilities which accommodate day-to-day convenience shopping and service needs, including food and drug stores, personal services such as barber and beauty shops, and local services such as shoe repair, tailors, dry cleaners, laundromats, etc.
- Community - acres occupied by retail uses offering commodities which are normally purchased at infrequent intervals and for which the consumer may "shop around", including apparel stores, furniture and appliance stores, jewelry stores, general merchandise outlets, etc.
- General Commercial - acres occupied by retail and service facilities which normally include commercial lodgings, drive-in restaurants, building material sales, marinas, resort lodgings, restaurants, vehicle sales and services, etc.

	1970	1980	1990	2000
Neighborhood	13	29	5	7
Community	7	13	35	39
General Commercial	9	9	137	157

The town currently has 327 acres available for commercial use. Of these parcels, 203 acres are developed and 124 acres are vacant. Railway freight service is provided by Conrail, NICTD South Shore and CSX. Passenger rail transportation is provided by the Chicago, South Shore and South Bend Railroad. A new NICTD South Shore rail station was constructed in 1985 on the northeast side of Porter. The town encourages all types of retailing and service uses, certain wholesale and warehousing uses, and some limited industrial activities normally associated with commercial uses. Commercial uses should conform to the particular pattern of a zoning district are essential under Porter's managed growth philosophy.

Automotive service type uses and automobile associated uses are located in areas that serve through traffic. Trucking and automotive services should only be located along major thoroughfares where adequately sized parcels of land are available for large setbacks, clear vision, and safe ingress and egress. Frontage roads are recommended where possible. Food sales/services occupy 29 acres, automotive and related services 21, and 20 acres of retail in Porter. Several truck lines serve Porter, and commercial activities centering on the trucking industry dominate along many of these routes.

Local (neighborhood) shopping areas for retail or service establishments that supply convenience goods or personal services for the daily needs of the residents living in adjacent neighborhoods are provided. These areas encourage shopping centers with planned off-street parking and loading, and provide for existing individual or small groups of local stores. The greatest concentration of commercial uses appears near or along Lincoln Street and comprises 1.5 acres of retail use with an average of 7,000 square feet of space. Porter Bank maintains a branch bank on .9 acres.

Primary community shopping areas for Porter and other nearby community residences are provided to meet shopping needs. These areas encourage most all types of business and commercial uses, offices, and service establishments. They are centrally located with respect to the shopping service area and located close to intersections, or along major thoroughfares in Porter.

An example is the largely undeveloped commercial area located along the U.S. 20 corridor. Major land users consist of 36 acres for trucking and related services, and 40 acres previously used for a private recreational enterprise. In the immediate area are 14 acres dedicated to food and lodging services. Commercial areas for community shopping are designated along U.S. 20 with some general business area defined.

Because land uses along U.S. 20 are adjacent to the National Park and backed by the Little Calumet River in certain locations, land use decisions and developmental conditions will be stringent to avoid a "strip" appearance, especially in the community shopping area. Several large parcels of vacant land exist, and the town encourages the

development of a planned variety. This report recommends that all U.S. 20 commercial property be encouraged to develop aesthetically and physically along a theme compatible with the National Park.

Flexible zoning techniques of approving and constructing multiple-business/retail centers will enhance the commercial district. It also limits and coordinates such things as the number of curb cuts, provision of water, sewer and electric and parking facilities. Such development will offer the town of Porter improved local shopping conditions while avoiding much of the unsightliness and congestion evident in such places as Broadway in Merrillville or Calumet Avenue in Valparaiso. The use of internal access roads and group parking facilities will be encouraged, especially along U.S. 20.

Office and transitional uses are encouraged. Currently, professional and business services comprise 5 acres including a Hospice office situated on 2/3s acres along State Road 49 and a veterinary clinic along U.S.20. Porter contains areas characterized by large homes suitable for use as offices, and vacant parcels suitable for new office buildings. Planning concerns include limiting uses that generate low volumes of traffic, and discouraging outdoor advertising, so as to protect the abutting and surrounding residential district. Development areas for office and transitional uses should be small in size and is often located as a buffer between residential and commercial areas. Barber shops, beauty shops, health and reducing studios and all similar uses are discouraged in office and transitional use areas, unless consistent with adjoining uses.

INDUSTRIAL

Currently, Porter contains 222 available acres for industrial uses. 59 acres are occupied, with Worthington Steel Company on 48 acres, and Signature Graphics on 7 acres. 163 industrial acres are vacant and during the next twenty years, the development of other designated industrial zones will occur. While the town will not actively recruit any heavy industry, it can be expected that certain light, non-polluting industries may wish to locate in the Porter area. Generally, it is not expected that Porter will have to contend with any great industrial growth. More suitable industrial sites are located elsewhere throughout the county. The following indicates the change in industrial acreage over the past forty years.

	1970	1980	1990	2000
Light	16	16	11	11
Heavy	11	12	48	48

Limited industrial areas are set aside for development by industrial firms that have high standards of performance and that are compatible with residential and business uses. Use restrictions should permit the operations of most manufacturing, wholesaling, and warehousing activities with adequate protection to adjacent district

uses and sufficient control of external effects to protect one industry from another. Retail uses, which serve industrial uses within the industrial area, and do not depend on direct retail customers, are encouraged. It is recommended that no outdoor storage should be allowed, and all industrial operations be confined to an enclosed building.

In order to protect the larger environment of the Town, certain areas have been set aside for heavy industry. One such area is a pie shaped wedge including Worthington Steel Company and north of the TA fuel stop. Because of the presence of the Indiana Dunes National Park, any industry locating here would have a minimal negative impact upon Porter residents. In the 1970's, heavy industrial was planned for a strip along U.S. 12 and the Chicago South Bend and South Shore Railroad, in conjunction with the steel mill and power plant complex to the north and northwest. Northern Indiana Public Service Company (NIPSCO) owns 60 acres in a limited industrial zone adjacent to this site. A new NICTD South Shore rail station was constructed on .57 acres in 1985 on the northeast side of Porter. In the southeast, along the Little Calumet, an 18 acre parcel, zoned industrial, contains the 10 acre Chesterton Sewage Treatment Plant. The remainder of this 18-acre parcel is owned by the Town of Chesterton Utility Company.

Other major industrial areas designated along U.S.20 just east of I-94 include the site of Worthington Steel, along with a prime location for commercial uses. Town officials should encourage industrial or commercial growth in this area. This major industrial area is located on the west edge of Porter. It is from north of I-94 to the south side of the Penn Central Railroad. The area is traversed with I-94 and U.S. 20, and is generally flat, with sewer and municipal water available. This site is well buffered by man-made barriers of highway, railroad, municipal park, and commercial users. Another general industrial area is laid out west of the intersection of I-94 and the Penn Central Railroad. This area has quick access to U.S. 20, and is partially occupied by a light industrial user.

GUIDELINES FOR FUTURE LAND USE

Generally, living areas in Porter should be located in proximity to work routes and leisure areas, while at the same time; they should be buffered from traffic and noise. Living areas should be somewhat protected from undesirable influences, and in locations where economics and desirability to reside would offer a full range of residential densities so as to provide housing to all segments of the population.

Properly located residential uses are important to all residents. Everyone, in some way, is a consumer in the housing market. This involves purchasing or renting a house. The expense is considerable. For those who choose to own their residences, it generally represents the largest purchase of their lives. For those who rent, the cost is usually the largest item in the household budget.

Housing is the major focus of development in Porter. Residential development usually precedes other forms of development and uses more land than any other land use. The efficiency and quality of major public services, and the protection of environmental quality, depend heavily on the patterns of residential development.

Satisfying the need for housing requires a supply sufficient to meet the requirements of each household according to its income and size and its locational requirements. It means an adequate housing stock and a healthy housing market to enable a single household to find suitable shelter as it passes through various needs and preferences. It also means sufficient opportunities for those who wish to be homeowners. It involves the availability of facilities, which are not deteriorated, have a decent environment, and is provided with an adequate quality of basic municipal services.

Commercial areas in Porter consist of reasonably level land, in close proximity to heavy traffic flows and provide ease of access to major thoroughfares. Industrial areas also have reasonably level land. A major characteristic of the Town's industrial areas is that many provide direct access to railroads-and/or highways and are within easy regional commuting distance. These areas were designed to insure compatibility with adjoining areas. The availability of utilities to all industrial areas is in progress. Porter has a limited choice for industrial site locations.

During the 1980's, the Town experienced the economic diversification, which comes with tourism. Over 1.5 million people are attracted to the National and State Parks each year. The enhanced local quality of life, coupled with the lake attractions, and relatively lower cost industrial and commercial zones, were major contributing factors in the decisions of several commercial and industrial facilities to move to Porter. Development incentives for investment in the hotel and food service industry has stimulated 30 acres of development, including the Spa Restaurant, Spring House Inn and Banquet Hall complex.

CONCLUSION

The undeveloped land within Porter should be carefully planned over the years in order to prevent unsightly, incompatible, inconsistent, inappropriate and illegal uses. It is also important for Porter to apply logical land use principles to the area along the Route 20 corridor to the east of the current town boundaries, by annexing the property prior to further development. In addition, it is important to carefully manage prime agricultural land within and around the Town of Porter.

Lastly, the Town recognizes that this plan is a flexible tool, which reflects current visions of where the Town should be headed. While this plan looks to the year 2030, it must be continuously reviewed if it is to offer the guidance intended. Periodic reviews of

all town planning and related documents should be an important function of the Porter Plan Commission.

TABLE 38: EXISTING LAND USE ACREAGE (2003)

USE	ACREAGE	% OF TOTAL	% DEVELOPED
Single Family	661	16%	22%
Multifamily	77	2%	3%
Commercial	203	5%	7%
Recreational	1153	28%	39%
Schools	13	0%	0%
Religious	38	1%	1%
Industrial	59	1%	2%
Roads	330	8%	11%
Railways	195	5%	7%
Utilities	209	5%	7%
Developed Land	2938	72%	
Undeveloped Land	1075	26%	
Water	82	2%	
Total	4095		

TABLE 39: EXISTING LAND USE ACREAGE (2020)

USE	ACREAGE	% OF TOTAL	% DEVELOPED
Single Family	685	17%	21%
Multifamily	84	2%	3%
Commercial	243	6%	8%
Recreational	1341	33%	42%
Schools	13	0.3%	0.4%
Religious	38	1%	1%
Industrial	73	2%	2%
Roads	330	8%	11%
Railways	195	5%	7%
Utilities	209	5%	7%
Developed Land	3211	78%	
Undeveloped Land	884	22%	
Water	82	2%	
Total	4095		

Chapter 7 - Thoroughfare Plan

The ability to move both goods and people quickly and efficiently both through and within a community has positive planning benefits, which resound in every land use classification.

THOROUGHFARE CLASSIFICATION

Thoroughfares are typically subdivided into the following classifications:

1. Interstate - Designed to move high volumes of traffic at high speed, usually among multiple communities and/or states; no standard intersections, but rather acceleration/deceleration ramps, no direct curb cuts, no traffic signals.
2. Arterial - Designed to move large volumes of traffic at moderate speeds to connect neighboring communities or different neighborhoods of the same community; curb cuts for intersecting streets only, signal or stop only when intersecting street is also an arterial.
3. Collector - Designed to collect a modest amount of local neighborhood traffic at low speed and effectively transport it to the nearest arterial, or another local street.
4. Local - Designed to move small amounts of traffic at low speed through individual neighborhoods, either to a collector or to another part of the same neighborhood.

The following roadways are classified as listed:

Interstate	Interstate 94	E. corp. limits to W. corp. limits
Principal Arterial	US Route 20 US Route 12 State Road 49 Beam St. Old Porter Rd./Wood St. Carlson Corners/Pearson Rd.	E. corp. limits to W. corp. limits E. corp. limits to W. corp. limits S. corp. limits to US Route 12 US Route 20 to Wagner Rd. E. corp. limits to W. corp. Limits Wood St. to S. corp. limits
Minor Arterial	Waverly Rd. Woodlawn Ave. Wagner Rd. Lincoln St. Francis Ave.	US Route 12 to Woodlawn Ave. Waverly Rd. to E. corp. limits US Route 20 to Lincoln St. Wagner Rd. to Waverly Rd. Lincoln St. to Woodlawn Ave.

Major Collector	Wabash Ave. Roskin Rd. Waverly Rd. State Park Rd. Wagner Rd. Oak Hill Rd. State Road 49 Mineral Springs Rd. Mineral Springs Rd. Tremont Rd. W. Beam St. Wood St. Broadway Old Porter Rd. Babcock Rd. Carlson Corners Pearson Rd. S. 23 rd St.	Johnson Beach Rd. To Roskin Rd. Wabash Ave. to Waverly Rd. Roskin Rd. to US Route 12 Waverly Rd. to SR 49 US Route 12 to US Route 20 Waverly Rd. to SR 49 US Route 12 to State Park US Route 12 to N. corp. limits Old Porter Rd. to Carlson Corners SR 49 to US Route 20 US Route 20 to Wagner Rd. Mineral Spgs. Rd. to N. 19 th St. Wood St. to N. 19 th St. Babcock Rd. to Mineral Spgs. Rd. Verplank Rd. to S. corp. limits Pearson Rd. to Mineral Spgs. Rd. S. corp. limits to Carlson Corners Wood St. to S. corp. limits
Minor Collector	Oak Hill Rd. Mineral Springs Rd. Babcock Rd. Indiana St. Francis Ave. Franklin St. 19 th St. Marquardt St.	W. corp. limits to Waverly Rd. US Route 12 to Beam St. US Route 20 to W. corp. limits Wagner Rd. to Francis Ave. Indiana St. to Lincoln St. Wagner Rd. to Waverly Rd. Wood St. to S. corp. limits Waverly Rd. to E. corp. limits

Roadways not listed are classified as Local Streets.

PURPOSE

The previous Thoroughfare Plan was written and adopted in 1978, and again in 2003. Since then, there has been no update or review. The Thoroughfare Plan proposes an inter-related system of highways, roads, and streets serving the area, which will meet the increased demands both within the town and the adjacent unincorporated area. The streets, which comprise this network, are classified according to the functions they perform within the overall system. The proposed thoroughfare system is depicted on the accompanying map.

The thoroughfare system performs three basic functions: it moves traffic within the community, between points within the community and points in the surrounding areas, and between the community and other more distant locations. These include other communities and important land use concentrations such as the industries located to the northwest of Porter. Ideally, the system should provide rapid and efficient movement for all three categories of traffic.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

When the Porter area was rural in character, the first two traffic circulation functions were more important to the community. These provided for the movement of people between residential neighborhoods and other neighborhoods, store, churches, schools and public buildings. The second gave farmers in surrounding rural areas access to the community's market place and its rail lines. As the residential character of the community increased, however, and the economy became more dependent on residents who commuted to work outside the town, the third function becomes increasingly important.

Transportation facilities were a primary reason for the original location of the Town of Porter. Specifically, the town grew around the intersection of the Michigan Central Railroad and the Michigan Southern Railroad. Over the years, with the steady decrease in rail passenger travel, the railroads have been replaced by the street system as the most essential means of transportation to the community. Although they still provide important freight and passenger service, the railroad lines, originally so important to the community, present hazards and barriers to traffic circulation. Since there are few grade separations, traffic is stopped many times each day by passing trains. As a result, vehicles are frequently backed up on the busy streets which cross the business section.

A natural barrier also affects the traffic circulation system. The number of passable streets to the north is limited by the necessity of bridging the Little Calumet River, and tributaries thereto. Interstate 94 is a manmade barrier, which helps bring visitors to the Town, but at the same time hinders travel from one part of town to another.

The Thoroughfare Plan delineates a realistic road, street, and highway system to serve Porter. As streets are permanent features of the community, and very costly to relocate, this plan recognizes the limitations of correcting the existing system. This is made further apparent by the fact that Porter has many small, scattered undeveloped areas, which have serious access challenges. A designation of right-of-ways through undeveloped areas without knowledge of actual development plans requires some flexibility in location, but not in purpose.

As development is proposed in these undeveloped areas, the Porter Plan Commission, through the implementation of the community's Comprehensive Plan, is

obligated to make sure that all proposed designs are suitable in location, width, and improvement to accommodate increased traffic, and allow suitable access for police, firefighting, snow removal, sanitation, and road-maintenance equipment. In this way, new roadways become part of the overall coordinated circulation system, in order to avoid undue hardships to adjoining neighborhoods and or the creation of traffic safety hazards. Furthermore, the Thoroughfare Plan, because of its direct effect on land use, must be consistent with the Town's land use goals and objectives.

OVERALL PRINCIPLES

Collector streets in the town are lined with residences and, thus, perform local access functions due to the existing pattern of streets in the town. As a result of this pattern, residential streets are straight and long, except where interrupted by railroad tracks or topography breaks, such as those along the Little Calumet River and tributaries, thereto.

In some cases, especially in residential neighborhoods, these interruptions and jogs are beneficial to the thoroughfare system, since they discourage the use of residential streets for through traffic movements. The awkward jogs and intersections along the town's more heavily traveled streets, however, result in inconvenience, delay, and safety hazards.

An appropriate level of connectivity should be provided throughout the Porter road system to provide for effective delivery of emergency and special services. The traffic circulation pattern within and between subdivisions should be integrated to permit internal circulation, but discourages through movements. Where feasible, and especially in commercial areas, access roads should be provided. These roads, whenever possible, should be located along the rear lot lines, and should access into existing intersections, rather than individual private curb cuts.

A neighborhood collector street system should be designed to include a 60 ft. minimum right-of-way, usually two travel lanes, with no parking. Collector streets serve to channel traffic to arterials, are intermediate to local streets and collect traffic from residential and business areas bringing it to arterials.

FREEWAYS AND HIGHWAYS

Freeways and highways vary in size from the two-lane state routes, which carry traffic between neighboring communities at moderate speeds to high speed, limited access, grade-separated interstate highways such as Interstate 94. Porter is bisected by

three of the nation's major east-west highways. Interstate 94 and US Route 20 run through the middle of town. US Route 12 parallels Route 20 further north.

The State Road 49 bypass connects US Route 12, US Route 20, Interstate 94, the Indiana Toll Road, US Route 6, and US Route 30. The completion of the bypass has provided Porter with an alternate to the traffic delays and congestion caused by railroad grade crossings. State Road 49 is a four-lane limited access highway.

These regional routes are all Federal or State Highways, and all are constructed and maintained to the high standards. Their primary purpose is to move large volumes of traffic, without the need for signalization, at speeds between 45 to 65 MPH. Even though the town is not responsible for constructing or maintaining the highways in this classification, certain minimum design standards for these routes inside town limits should be followed. The right-of-way should be 100 to 160 feet and should not permit parking. Acceleration and de-acceleration lanes are to be determined by the State but should be a minimum of 350 feet long. Distance between driveways is to be determined by the State but a minimum of 500 feet is strongly recommended.

ARTERIALS

Arterial streets are those which pass through most of the community carrying large volumes of traffic. They connect major traffic generators such as industrial sites, business districts, and residential areas to the regional highways. To properly perform their intended functions, arterials should meet certain design standards governing such factors as alignments, intersection intervals, sight distances, gradients, surface types, right-of-way widths, pavement widths, and traffic controls. Engineering standards for the Town of Porter should be established which contain detailed specifications for all new or improved thoroughfares in the community. The following paragraphs summarize these design standards and relate them to the proposed transportation network established by the Thoroughfare Plan.

Arterial streets should be designed to have the greatest possible distance of uninterrupted traffic flow. Stop signs should, under no circumstances, be utilized for speed control. Traffic control signal design standards, for arterial streets, are found in the Indiana Department of Transportation's Manual for Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). The right-of-way reserved for arterial streets should have a minimum width of 80 feet. Local arterial streets should be required to have designated left turn lanes, where they intersect other arterials. No parking should be allowed. Whenever possible, curb cuts and driveways should be eliminated, but, where they cannot be avoided, a 200-foot minimum spacing should be maintained. Posted speed limits of 30 to 45 MPH in undeveloped areas should be capable of being maintained.

COLLECTORS AND LOCALS

Collector streets carry traffic from local streets in residential neighborhoods to the arterial streets or major land uses, such as the central business district, the US Route 20 business district or industrial districts. Collector streets should be designed to accommodate an efficient flow of traffic at moderate speeds; 25 to 35 MPH. Traffic control signal design should follow State DOT standards. The minimum right-of-way for collector streets should be 60 feet. Parking should be prohibited. Curb cuts and driveways should be kept to a minimum, but where they are unavoidable, a 100 feet minimum space between cuts should be maintained.

Local streets should be designed to discourage through traffic. Posted speed limits on local streets should be 20 to 30 MPH. A right-of-way of 60 feet in width should be reserved along normal local streets. Parking should be discouraged, but permitted when off-street capacity is exceeded. Alleys should be avoided in residential neighborhoods, but should be encouraged in commercial and industrial districts where they serve to provide off-street loading access. Cross streets should be spaced so that the length of each block under normal circumstances is between 450 and 600 feet.

GREENWAYS, BIKEWAYS, AND PEDESTRIAN WAYS

A greenway is a corridor of protected open space managed for conservation, recreation, and non-motorized transportation. Two major greenways, the Calumet Trail/Marquette Greenway and the Prairie-Duneland Trail, border Porter on the north and south, respectively. The Porter Brickyard Trail runs north-south and connects the Calumet Trail/Marquette Greenway to Chesterton. The Dunes-Kankakee Trail runs from the Visitor Center north to the Indiana Dunes State Park and also connects to the NICTD South Shore Dunes Park train station. The Orchard Pedestrian Way trail connects the Little League fields on Woodlawn Avenue to Hawthorne Park and Orchard Apartments. Upcoming trail projects will provide connectivity from Porter Beach to the south as well as connecting major regional trails. County bike trails incorporated on existing roadways also surround Porter. Pedestrian ways are also available in portions of the community. All future projects, regardless of private or public funding, should consider the development and implementation of bicycle and pedestrian facilities as part of overall planning process. Whenever possible these greenways, bikeways, and pedestrian ways should provide connectivity with each other and with existing intercommunity facilities.

THOROUGHFARES AND LAND USE

New thoroughfares should be located so that they avoid disruption of existing land uses. Minor modifications in the existing land use pattern may be permitted, however,

only in cases where the installation of new thoroughfares will result in a significant improvement to the overall traffic flow. Generally, all future thoroughfares should be located to encourage planned future residential, industrial, and commercial development, which is compatible with Porter's Comprehensive Plan.

OFF-STREET PARKING

Areas for off-street parking should be provided in sufficient quantity to adequately serve any future building or land use. The off-street parking provisions of the Porter Zoning Ordinance, if enforced, will accomplish this. Whenever possible, on-street parking along local streets in residential subdivisions should be discouraged, through requiring sufficient off-street capacity on each parcel.

COSTS FOR LOCAL STREETS

The cost of building local streets in future subdivisions should be the responsibility of the developer. The Porter Subdivision Control Ordinance should require that all streets, curbs, shoulders, drainage structures and cul-de-sacs platted for each subdivision be constructed by the developer. The town should accept responsibility for maintaining streets once they are properly installed, inspected, and approved.

The financial burden of street construction in residential subdivisions will thus be shared by those benefiting most from these streets, rather than by all of the town's taxpayers. In addition, the assurance that adequate streets will be constructed in all new subdivisions will improve the environment of the subdivision. The Town should not have to pay for premature maintenance of inadequately designed or constructed streets.

CONCLUSION

As development occurs, the function of each thoroughfare must be considered and preserved. A practice, which has occurred in the past, which has placed limitations on the carrying capacity of arterials, has been the placement of residential and commercial development along the frontage of arterials. This practice attempts to use the arterial as a local, which robs the arterial of capacity. It allows a developer to front lots on a roadway in which he has not invested, and by which he is deriving benefit. Direct curb cuts should only be permitted on Locals and Collectors.

When examining the deficiencies in the current system, it is apparent that the high number of railroad tracks and the positions they occupy, along with federal park holdings, present considerable transportation challenges. Many vacant residentially zoned parcels have serious transportation limitations. Due to the several dangerous and

disruptive multiple at-grade rail crossings, and the prohibitive economic impact of grade-separated crossings, it is difficult to maintain a cohesive and consistent development pattern south of the NY Central tracks. This coupled with interstate highway access limitations, results in certain parts of Town effectively isolated from others. It is ironic that the highways which make it fast and convenient to get to Town, and the railway which had much to do with the reason for the town, also makes it difficult to get from one section to another. Access to, and the visibility of, the downtown retail center is difficult at best. Improvements to roadways such as Beam Street and Wagner Road, as well as signage directing traffic to the downtown business district, is necessary to improve the awareness and vitality of this retail area.

Numerous drainage tributaries also serve as transportation barriers, resulting in a system with many deficiencies and little ability to correct them. It would be unrealistic to recommend several major rail and tributary bridges, or highway underpasses in order to correct transportation deficiencies. Rather, the attempt should be made to concentrate in areas where development has not substantially occurred, or where redevelopment might occur. If identified in advance, the roadway extensions and improvements could be made an integral part of development, thereby relieving the municipality of this financial burden.

RESURFACING THOROUGHFARES

The Town has initiated an aggressive program of resurfacing and reconstruction funded primarily the Community Crossings Matching Grant (CCMG) program administered by INDOT. CCMG is a 75/25 matching fund program, enabling Porter to resurface many miles of town roads since 2016.

INTERSECTIONS

The following 16 intersections, in order of priority, were identified by residents in the Internet survey phase of public input as needing attention. Intersections with the same number of citations of concern are shown as 'ties' in the table below.

Rank (1 = most concerning)	Intersection
1	Waverly & US-12
2	Wagner & US-20
3	Beam & US-20 Waverly & US-20
4	Oak Hill & US-20 Wagner & US-12
5	Wabash & Bote
6	Beam & Wagner Mineral Springs & US-12
7	IN-49 & US-12 Johnson Beach & Wabash Oak Hill & Wagner State Park Road & IN-49 Waverly & State Park Road
8	Lincoln & Waverly Oak Hill & IN-49

Additionally, the town planning consultant has identified the following intersections as needing improvement in no order of priority. (Note: there is overlap in the two lists.)

1. Beam/US20 - W/S turn lane too narrow (INDOT issue)
2. Wood/Mineral Springs* - off-set intersection
3. Old Porter/Mineral Springs* - off-set intersection
4. Wood/Jackson* - T-intersection near tracks
5. Lincoln/Wagner* - 3-way Stop near tracks
6. Lincoln/Francis* - 3-way stop near tracks
7. Lincoln/Waverly* - 3-way stop near tracks
8. Waverly/US12 - needs flashing signal or realignment (INDOT issue)

(*all due to location of existing railroad tracks and crossings)

The following intersections were improved since the prior Thoroughfare Plan:

1. Wagner/US 20 – flashing signal installed
2. Waverly/US 20 – dedicated left turn lanes and new traffic signals installed
3. Oak Hill/SR 49 – new signals installed
4. Tremont/US 20 – new signals installed

ONE-WAY STREETS

During the planning period, the thoroughfare plan, which is recommended, should include an analysis of the feasibility of converting some existing streets, and designing some new streets as one-way.

Chapter 8 - Growth Trends

Since 1989, the Town has a long period of inactivity which resulted from a combination of the following: the federal taking of large tracts of land, relatively high interest rates, recessionary economic conditions, and an increase in attractiveness and competitive-ness of neighboring communities. The act forming the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore was passed November 5, 1966. The total size of the take was 8894 acres including 950 improved properties. The acquisition included 590 permanent residences, 240 summer homes and 63 commercial properties, including 100 residences were built after 1961. One fourth of the original property was owned by the State of Indiana.

Both residential and commercial growth has slowed significantly from the mid-1990s as compared to 2008 and beyond. As stated earlier, the federal acquisition is a major reason, along with the financial crisis, which occurred in 2008. Between 2008 and 2016 only 44 new residential building permits were issued, for an average annual number of less than 5, (SEE TABLE 41). Between 2008 and 2017, Chesterton has added 373 new houses, while in Porter that number is 45, (SEE TABLE 43). 96% of all housing units in Porter were built before 2010, (SEE TABLE 46).

When comparing the number of housing units between 2010 and 2018, Dune Acres, South Haven, Ogden Dunes, and Porter have experienced reductions. Portage, Chesterton, and Burns Harbor experienced an increase. All the communities experienced an increase in rental units. Median home prices vary from \$116,000 in South Haven to \$726,900 in Dune Acres, with Porter at \$186,500.

Median rent varies from \$896/month in Portage to \$2,625/month in Dune Acres, with Porter at \$1,278/month. The average family size in rental units varies from 2.4 in Dune Acres to 3.5 in Burns Harbor, with Porter at 3.4. Median year built for rental units varies from 1966 in Dune Acres to 2001 in Burns Harbor, with Porter at 1990. South Haven, Portage, Chesterton, and Burns Harbor all have vacancy rates below 5%. Porter's rate stands at 8%, (SEE TABLE 47).

Assessed valuation in Porter has remained nearly constant since 2010, with only a 6.7% increase. Chesterton's AV has only increased 6.6%. Burns Harbor in contrast has increased by the assessed valuation by over 16% from 2010 to 2020. The tax rate in Porter has increased by about 32% during that same time frame. That represents the second highest increase compared to the other neighboring communities. Chesterton's tax rate increased about half of Porter's increase. The tax rate has increased on 46.5% in Ogden Dunes, while in Burns Harbor it increased only 4.1%, (SEE TABLE 49 AND 50).

The 5½ mile stretch of US Route 20, which bisects the town, offers both a unique opportunity for and difficult challenge to the future growth of the town. The existing land uses along this frontage vary from truck stops, tire repair, and seasonal fireworks, to bar, liquor store, retail sales, office, computer training, steel company, motel, and specialty sales. Due to the proximity of major recreational and tourist sites, the redevelopment of the US20 corridor offers the town the ability to convert from truck-dependent and limited product sales to more retail, entertainment, and service uses.

Over the next few years the community should embark on a mission to define the relative importance of various quality of life issues, including new schools, downtown revitalization, community appearance, thoroughfare development, multifamily vs. single family development, and park improvements. Each of these areas will be examined in greater detail in subsequent sections of the document. Armed with the information contained in this comprehensive plan, a coalition of community leaders, including representation from the school town, civil town, business, industry, medical community, and others, should be formed to help implement the recommendations in this report. Such a coalition of leaders working in harmony (not necessarily unanimity), with a popular supported plan of action, represents a formidable and unfortunately rare source of energy, which is at the heart of each successful community.

TABLE 40: SUMMARY OF RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL GROWTH

YEAR	COMMERCIAL	RESIDENTIAL	TOTAL*	EST.MARKET VALUE
1993	9	38	131	\$7,967,350
1994	17	128	216	\$15,139,078
1995	11	104	219	\$15,300,784
1996	9	136	214	\$14,097,440
1997	4	103	216	\$12,643,829
1998	6	55	168	\$8,662,948
1999	3	43	328	\$10,808,040
2000	4	42	261	\$10,221,063
2001	8	32	161	\$8,084,767
2002	1	17	115	\$8,093,124
2003		21	145	\$5,127,530
2004		29	170	\$7,546,258
2005		41	161	\$12,756,216
2006		25	121	\$5,329,940
2007		13	151	\$5,658,752
2008		4	235	\$3,151,546
2009		8	321	\$3,729,908
2010		6	344	\$4,535,482
2011		4	285	\$4,972,657
2012		2	237	\$5,739,910
2013		4	232	\$5,811,405
2014		4	238	\$3,525,534
2015		2	272	\$3,496,121
2016		7	272	\$5,363,299
2017		10	289	\$4,577,151
2018		16	300	\$4,446,536
2019		16	297	\$4,867,850
2020	9	16	313	\$11,597,201
2021		9	303	\$6,954,052

*Includes additions, garages, repairs, etc., numbers of permits not available

Source: Town Building Department

TABLE 41: SINGLE FAMILY HOMES 1993 THROUGH 2020

YEAR	UNITS	ESTIMATED VALUE	VALUE/HOUSE
1993	34	\$ 4,487,647	\$131,990
1994	82	\$ 8,813,843	\$107,486
1995	86	\$10,234,658	\$119,008
1996	52	\$10,644,525	\$204,702
1997	76	\$ 9,009,976	\$118,552
1998	48	\$ 5,690,824	\$118,559
1999	38	\$ 5,245,401	\$138,037
2000	42	\$ 5,914,204	\$140,814
2001	28	\$ 3,561,601	\$127,200
2002	15	\$ 2,104,178	\$140,279
2003	21	\$ 3,275,367	\$155,970
2004	29	\$ 5,396,290	\$186,079
2005	37	\$ 5,721,550	\$154,636
2006	21	\$ 3,846,515	\$183,167
2007	13	\$ 2,396,000	\$184,308
2008	4	\$ 675,000	\$168,750
2009	8	\$ 1,515,000	\$189,375
2010	6	\$ 1,152,700	\$192,117
2011	4	\$ 554,089	\$138,522
2012	2	\$ 500,000	\$250,000
2013	4	\$ 928,450	\$232,113
2014	4	\$ 668,500	\$167,125
2015	2	\$ 410,000	\$205,000
2016	7	\$ 1,015,550	\$145,079
2017	10	\$ 1,422,500	\$142,250
2018	12	\$ 1,764,785	\$147,065
2019	13	\$ 1,935,000	\$148,846
2020	16	\$ 2,400,000	\$150,000
2021	9	\$2,144,000	\$238,222

Source: Porter Building Department

TABLE 42: COMPARATIVE SINGLE FAMILY PERMITS

YEAR	PORTER		CHESTERTON	
	NUMBER	AVE. COST	NUMBER	AVE. COST
1997	87	\$122,500	50	\$287,900
1998	45	\$123,100	48	\$179,900
1999	45	\$127,300	59	\$257,600
2000	33	\$157,400	84	\$179,900
2001	31	\$157,300	81	\$164,800
2002	17	\$152,100	57	\$221,300
2003	18	\$163,700	141	\$145,400
2004	22	\$211,200	180	\$191,600
2005	27	\$185,500	150	\$220,400
2006	22	\$179,800	80	\$325,100
2007	11	\$172,400	45	\$228,700
2008	5	\$165,000	24	\$310,300
2009	8	\$189,400	14	\$272,800
2010	3	\$182,600	28	\$308,100
2011	3	\$113,700	18	\$153,000
2012	2	\$250,000	29	\$174,900
2013	5	\$217,700	54	\$262,700
2014	4	\$167,100	25	\$270,500
2015	2	\$205,000	28	\$326,000
2016	5	\$164,100	59	\$313,000
2017	8	\$153,400	94	\$274,700

Source: Bureau of the Census, prepared by NIRPC

TABLE 43 - COMPARISON OF RESIDENTIAL HOUSING UNITS 1990-2003

(Porter, Chesterton, Valparaiso, Portage, Hobart, Porter County)

YR	PORTER	CHES.	VALP.	PORTAGE	HOBART	PORTERCO.
1990	15	105	143	107	8	467
1991	83	88	176	239	15	417
1992	---	68	308	211	28	539
1993	38	112	113	184	58	487
1994	128	95	441	297	180	487
1995	104	68	204	358	179	419
1996	136	98	152	205	184	531
1997	103	99	138	170	125	527
1998	67	107	313	194	121	457
1999	69	97	212	262	339	648
2000	44	106	256	188	317	485
2001	37	147	289	372	263	454
2002	27	107	124	173	329	507
2003*	12	103	55	120	193	287

Source: Bureau of the Census, prepared by NIRPC

TABLE 44: MULTI- FAMILY UNIT PERMITS

YEAR	PERMITS	UNITS	ESTIMATED VALUE	VALUE/UNIT
1993	3	7	\$341,236	\$48,748
1994	9	32	\$2,318,480	\$72,452
1995	1	2	\$197,392	\$98,696
1996	4	22	\$1,190,112	\$54,096
1997	7	22	\$2,012,644	\$91,483
1998	8	24	\$1,683,912	\$70,163
1999	5	32	\$2,629,692	\$82,178
2001	2	4	\$370,650	\$92,663
2002	1	2	\$192,400	\$96,200
2005	1	4	\$225,000	\$56,250
2006	2	4	\$200,000	\$50,000
2018	2	4	\$310,000	\$77,500
2019	1	2	\$20,000	\$10,000

Note: All years not shown had zero values.

Source: Porter Building Department

TABLE 45: PORTER HOUSING AGE/OCCUPANCY

	YEAR BUILT	YEAR MOVED IN
2014 OR LATER	1%	4%
2010-2013	3%	18%
2000-2009	20%	36%
1990-1999	27%	26%
1980-1989	6%	17%
1970-1979	6%	
1960-1969	10%	
1950-1959	11%	
1949-BEFORE	16%	

Source: US Census data and estimate

TABLE 46: COMPARATIVE HOUSING DATA (2010 TO 2018)

	UNITS	CHANGE	RENTALS	MEDIAN HOME \$
DUNE ACRES	147	-10%	10%	\$726,900
SOUTH HAVEN	1,937	-2%	32%	\$116,000
PORTER	1,724	-13%	16%	\$186,500
PORTAGE	15,394	4%	32%	\$144,900
OGDEN DUNES	608	-2%	5%	\$356,900
CHESTERTON	5,674	6%	31%	\$184,400
BURNS HARBOR	663	34%	26%	\$165,100
INDIANA		3%	31%	\$135,400
US		5%	36%	\$204,900

SOURCE: TOWNCHARTS

	MEDIAN RENT	AVERAGE FAMILY SIZE	MEDIAN YEAR BUILT	VACANCY RATE
DUNE ACRES	\$2,625	2.4	1966	44%
SOUTH HAVEN	\$983	3.3	1968	3%
PORTER	\$1,278	3.4	1990	8%
PORTAGE	\$896	3.2	1979	5%
OGDEN DUNES	\$1,625	2.6	1957	18%
CHESTERTON	\$929	3.1	1980	4%
BURNS HARBOR	\$1,092	3.5	2001	5%
INDIANA	\$807	3.2	1973	11%
US	\$1,023	3.3	1977	12%

SOURCE: TOWNCHARTS

TABLE 47: PORTER TAX RATES AND ASSESSED VALUATION

YEAR ASSESSED	VALUATION	TAX RATE
2020	\$230,103,402	1.2277
2019	\$225,819,560	1.2135
2018	\$227,414,753	1.1260
2017	\$228,479,467	1.0875
2016	\$220,507,981	1.1099
2015	\$210,543,472	1.1394
2014	\$205,880,678	1.1367
2013	\$232,442,093	0.9718
2012	\$215,740,313	1.0377
2011	\$228,103,241	0.9560
2010	\$222,829,473	0.9291

NOTE: Taxes payable in one year are based on the assessed valuation the previous year.

Sources: Town of Porter, Porter County Auditor

TABLE 48: COMPARATIVE TAX RATES

	PAYABLE 2010	PAYABLE 2020	% CHANGE
PORTER	0.9291	1.2277	32.1
CHESTERTON	0.8293	0.9576	15.5
VALPARAISO	0.9866	1.0168	3.1
PORTAGE	0.9854	1.2179	23.6
OGDEN DUNES	0.3975	0.5825	46.5
DUNE ACRES	0.3190	0.4019	26.0
BURNS HARBOR	0.3641	0.3789	4.1

Source: Porter County Auditor, Indiana Gateway

TABLE 49: COMPARATIVE ASSESSED VALUATIONS

	PAYABLE 2012	PAYABLE 2020	% CHANGE
PORTER	\$215,740,313	\$230,103,402	6.7
CHESTERTON	\$639,745,212	\$722,408,961	6.6
VALPARAISO	\$1,517,039,450	\$1,538,118,366	1.4
PORTAGE	\$1,385,663,832	\$1,532,719,752	11.4
BURNS HARBOR	\$505,165,813	\$588,414,764	16.4

Source: Porter County Auditor, Indiana Gateway

Chapter 9 - Downtown Revitalization

The continued economic viability of any downtown area depends on the ability to find niches for both service and retail needs, coupled with a sense of community and convenience not found in large malls or major retail chains. Another important advantage for downtowns is their ability to integrate several needs, (i.e., retail, service, entertainment, official), into one visit, with a minimum of traffic congestion-related delay. Thirdly, the personal relationship developed between customer and merchant is unique to downtowns. In most cases, customers are dealing with people who have more than just an employment stake in the business. In this way, a customer would visit the jeweler rather than the jewelry store, the hairdresser rather than the salon, or the baker rather than the bakery.

Downtown Porter has enjoyed remarkable customer loyalty. However, if it is to grow from a retail standpoint with the demands of an expanding population, and continue to withstand increasing pressures from the Rt. 20 and Rt. 49 corridor, it must make major changes. A detailed market analysis or architectural study is far beyond the scope of this intended coverage; however, both should follow this document. In this analysis, a series of observations will be made and their impact on future land use decisions will be assessed.

ACCESSIBILITY

From a transportation standpoint, railroads present numerous problems. Due to the proximity of existing rail crossings, the only unimpeded access to the downtown area is from the north and east. Access from the west is also limited by the Interstate. These constraints effectively delineate the downtown and prevent its expansion and additional diversity, without converting some of the intermixed residential uses. Due to the confining nature of this area, other problems such as parking are more challenging.

Access from the north and east is much less problematic, however, the main population centers are south and west. Downtowns must encourage convenience and the ability to accomplish multiple tasks in one trip. As such, pedestrian access between buildings, and between residential neighborhoods and downtown, must be improved. In 2001, 1,324 linear feet of sidewalk was installed along Woodlawn Avenue from League Lane to Ottawa Trail. This sidewalk was extended west along Woodlawn, and north along Waverly Road to Hawthorne Park. Some existing downtown sidewalks are in poor condition and should be replaced. The Porter Brickyard Trail was built in 2012, which connects downtown Porter north to the Calumet/Marquette Greenway Trail.

Even in light of the accessibility problems identified above, the downtown is conveniently located close to the bulk of the residential population. The downtown is also conveniently located adjacent to several public facilities (i.e., Town Hall, Police Station, Hageman Library). In 2002, the Town Council invested \$736,517 in the downtown area by replacing the old Town Hall. The decision to build the new Town Hall on the same site was an attempt to contribute to the future economic and social health of the downtown area.

COMMERCIAL SIGNAGE

Commercial signage in the downtown area is probably one of the more serious liabilities. It is confusing, unorganized, and follows no pattern. Several signs project over the public right-of-way and tend to block one another. The safety and appearance of several signs are in question. Downtown areas, because of their nature, require different sign regulations; however, they also lend themselves to planning and coordination. A theme or similar treatment is strongly recommended. The Town should offer a financial incentive to encourage participation. Signage on major highways and arterials is also necessary to direct potential customers to the downtown area. Some of these items were addressed in the 2012 Downtown Master Plan, although the plan has not yet been implemented.

PARKING

When the number of parking spaces currently available is summed, it is apparent that there is enough land dedicated for that purpose; however, this does not mean that a parking problem does not exist. The Town has installed convenient on-street parking along Lincoln and near the Police Station and Town Hall, which helps the situation in the south downtown area. Poor signage and directions to the private parking promotes overuse of on-street spaces. Existing private parking facilities are not accessible one to the other, which wastes space. Most are also devoid of landscaping. There is no coordination concerning when lots are used for their primary purpose and when they may be made available for secondary uses. The Town should consider acquiring additional lot access, improve the appearance and condition of the lots, coordinate their use, improve signage and directions to access parking, and discourage the use of on-street parking.

HOUSING

It appears that the number of the second floor housing units is rather limited, however, the condition of these units are in most cases poor. The same can be said concerning the residential buildings scattered in between the commercial uses. These

latter non-conforming structures should be converted or removed so that more commercially used property is available in the land-starved downtown area. A concerted effort should be made to promote tax incentives for reinvestment in the downtown area for both commercial and residential second floor units, which are conforming and compatible to the downtown.

STREETSCAPE/GENERAL APPEARANCE

The array of architectural diversity is an asset in the downtown area. There have been a few buildings where re-investment has occurred which has been sensitive to architectural integrity. The reinvestment necessary to the continued public safety and functionality of other buildings, however, has been lacking altogether. One way the Town can encourage reinvestment in a coordinated way is to help fund a theme-based streetscape plan, provide economic incentives if the plan is followed, and continue to fund the portion of the streetscape improvements on public property. In addition, building histories should be developed to determine significance. Some buildings could be placed on the National Register for Historic Places. As a result of placement, tax advantages could be enjoyed; however, the nature of building improvements would be regulated to maintain historic significance.

FUTURE STUDY

The 2012 Downtown Master Plan should be revisited and updated to guide implementations of the recommendations above. This update could include a historical background of the downtown. It should include an analysis of current retail growth trends, a survey of downtown merchants, a streetscape design and plan, and a downtown revitalization plan. This plan should include problem identification, establishment and prioritization of goals and objectives, the development of a retail and parking plan along with an implementation and funding schedule. This plan should also investigate the potential for federal and state funding, along with tax incentives for historic preservation efforts. The Police Station and Town Hall investments are an excellent start to re-investing in the downtown area, and making it convenient and appealing for customers to visit. Lastly, a public survey to gauge the opinions of local residents should be developed and distributed.

Chapter 10 - Community Facilities and Public Services

Community facilities play a very important part in determining the quality of the community's environment. As Porter grows, the need for certain facilities changes. The residents of Porter are well serviced by existing public services, and by community facilities. The community facilities, as evaluated in this element of this report, consist of those facilities and functions located within the incorporated area of Porter.

INTRODUCTION

Community facilities and services include such public and quasi-public areas as public buildings, schools, parks, playgrounds, police and fire protection, street and sanitation departments. An inventory of existing facilities and services has been made to determine their condition and adequacy. This data is used to formulate recommendations. Such information is vital not only to evaluate current public needs, but is of particular value for determining in long-range needs. Overall recommendations include: the development of a five year capital improvements program, including detailed cost projections and funding alternatives; an update of the park and recreation plan, in light of the increased importance of the Indiana Dunes National Park and the Indiana Dunes State Park; and an update of the current Thoroughfare Plan, in light of additional traffic demand. The Thoroughfare Plan should include the study of pedestrian and bicycle trails, as well as the feasibility of public transportation in the tri-town area.

UTILITIES

Northern Indiana Public Service Company (NIPSCO) supplies the area with natural gas and electricity. General Telephone Company of Indiana provides telephone service. A major fiber optics line was completed in 1991 replacing many of the deteriorating lines in the town. Cellular phone coverage in the past was limited, but the construction of a relay tower on the southeast section of Porter has improved service for area business and residents. Cable television service is 100% available in the community.

Sanitary sewage treatment is provided by Chesterton Utilities. The Northwest Water Co. provides water to most of the developed area of Porter. Where individual wells are used, they utilize aquifers ranging in depth from 20 to 130 feet in depth. Moderately hard to very hard water is found in these aquifers. Large areas of the community, for example, portions of Porter Beach, the new annexed area, the northwest and southwest portion of the town use private wells. These areas should be upgraded through an on-going water extension program. Indiana American Water Company should be actively involved in the water portion of the 6-year capital improvements program mentioned above.

SURFACE DRAINAGE AND WASTEWATER COLLECTION

In general, the land in Porter forms a trough around the Little Calumet River, which slopes gradually westward. This slope continues as far as Burns Ditch and then goes northward to Lake Michigan. There is some drainage from the southern part of town generally north to the Little Calumet River by way of the Peterson Ditch. There is drainage toward the lake on the north side of the river in Dunes Creek, which eventually flows into the Dunes State Park. These ditches are either man-made or heavily dredged. The Little Calumet River has been dredged in portions also. Water, which falls north of the moraine ridge, which runs east to west along Oak Hill Rd, flows to Dunes Creek. Water falling south of Oak Hill Rd flows to the Little Calumet River.

In April of 1980, before annexation of the northeast section, 90% of the Town of Porter was without sanitary sewers. In light of the facility growth of the national lakeshore and the large tract of annexed property, modern sewer service extension projects were completed during the 1980's and 1990's, replacing or updating the outdated system. Sanitary sewers now service 85% of the developed area of Porter. Where such improvements are lacking, sewage is handled by private septic systems. The environmentally sensitive area of Porter Beach is not on sanitary sewers. The high dune-like topography makes sanitary sewerage very difficult. The excessive percolation in this sandy area may require special filter beds for septic systems. Septic permits are issued for 100' x 100' sites.

The Town of Porter wastewater collection system consists of 4", 6", and 8" gravity sewer lines, clean out, manholes, force main and lift stations. The collection system consists of various types and sizes of sewer pipes, and 2" PVC force main. Where flow by gravity is not possible, the pump stations transport the sewage to a point where it can continue by gravity. All wastewater discharged from the Porter system to the Chesterton Wastewater Treatment Plant passes through metering stations located at Hawthorne Park, and at Morgan Street and 23rd St. Separation of storm water and sewer has been and continues to be a major problem for the town to pursue during the study period.

Stormwater management, sanitary sewer and street improvements for future growth should be funded by requiring a percentage of the costs for off-premise improvements be paid by those proposing new development. As a condition of final subdivision or site plan approval, the Plan Commission should require the developer to install or bond for all necessary public improvements.

In cases where off-premise improvements are necessitated by the proposed development, and where no other property owners receives a special benefit, the developer should be required at his sole expense and as a condition of approval, to provide and install such improvements. Where it is determined that properties outside

the development will also benefit from the off-premise improvement, the appropriate share of the cost of such improvements should be charged to the developer.

GOVERNMENT FACILITIES

The Town of Porter maintains 4 acres of municipal facilities that includes a town hall, police station, and a municipal garage and fire station complex. The 1913 Town Hall building housed most of the administrative offices of the town. The Town constructed a new Town Hall in 2003, on the site of the former building. This construction resulted in a much-improved Town Hall facilities where citizens can receive services, and the employees are given the working environment they deserve.

Future growth policy adopted in 1978 called for the construction of a new street department building. The old town garage was a dirt floor pole barn. Only the crew room was heated. This building was leased. Storage space and lighting was insufficient. In 1990, the town adopted an economic development plan that has included the construction of a new 3.7-acre public works facility. The new public works service center is located on Beam St., near U.S. Highway 20.

Police protection in Porter is provided by the Porter Police Department, which currently employs 11 full-time and 13 part-time officers including the Police Chief. The officers each have their own police car and are responsible for the specialized equipment they carry. The police clerk is responsible for all the record keeping including an in-house computer system. Administrative staff consists of a police secretary, and 3 full-time and 13 part-time radio dispatchers who are fully trained in both police and fire communications. Two other part-time persons are also employed. Cooperative agreements with surrounding communities provide for additional back up for emergencies. The police department maintains one officer on duty continuously with additional coverage at certain times. Various officers also specialize in areas such as juvenile, photography, and crime and accident investigation.

Since 1992, the Porter Fire Department has been housed in the public works service center on Beam Street. The station location is on the western edge of the central business district and abuts Yost Elementary School. In 1978, planners recommended the construction of a new fire station, which should be located on vacant land next to Yost School. The site provides coverage within 3/4 of a mile of the business district; near main population centers of the town. The Fire Department has one full-time firefighter staffed by 20 volunteer firefighters. The Town provides a 24-hour radio dispatcher, and monitors for fire calls in each volunteer's home. The fire department also conducts fire inspections and arson investigations. The Town has mutual service protection with other communities throughout Porter County. Based on growth

projections it appears that a volunteer department will still be able to handle needs during the study period.

In the established areas of Porter, fire hydrants are often located too close to the street or too low to the ground. Where a public water main is accessible future land development should be required to install fire hydrants at each street intersection and at intermediate points between intersections as recommended by the Insurance Services Office and the Town Engineer. The goal is to insure that fire hydrants are located no more than 1,000 feet apart and within 500 feet of any structure. Site designs of proposed subdivision should take access and safety into consideration when developing circulation patterns.

Also housed in the public works service center is the Porter Public Works Department, consisting of the street and sewer divisions. Effective January 2021, public works moved into a new facility dedicated entirely to their department. The facility cost \$1,580,000. The Public Works Department employs 7 workers to maintain lift stations, streets and alleys, sweep streets, trim trees, mow grass and weeds, and maintain storm and sanitary sewers. The department is equipped with dump trucks, pickup trucks, mowing tractors, a pay loader, rubber tire backhoe and road grader. This report encourages the plan commission to consider the impact of future development on the department particularly in the areas of street maintenance and snow removal. Access and safety concerns should be measured along with holding down municipal costs.

CIVIC AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

The Hageman Library, the Porter branch of the Westchester Public Library is situated on one acre along Francis Street, diagonally across the intersection from the Town Hall. It has adequate parking, and serves as the main library's only branch. The 4,800 square foot building currently holds over 28,000 books and periodicals. The facility offers a wide range of services and has private meeting rooms. The present library is more than adequate for needs during the study period. The library system is supported by the entire tax base of the township. Library collections include children's, young adult, adult, fiction, non-fiction, paperbacks and hard covers. Reference materials, periodicals, newspapers and vertical files are readily available. Library services include circulation of materials, reference, material reserves, interlibrary loan, copy machine and free meeting room. Library programs include story hours, summer reading, craft club and selected adult informational programming.

A modern multi-purpose community center is situated on 35-acre Hawthorne Park. The community building and two shelters in the park are available for weddings, showers, reunions, meetings, etc. Additionally, about 7 acres of private recreational

facilities include a 5 acre nature preserve, owned by the local chapter of the Izaak Walton League and 2 acre little league baseball park.

The Town of Porter Park Department is responsible for parks in Porter. The Department operates and maintains over 80 acres of public park property. Hawthorne Park (38 acres) has modern recreational facilities including a baseball diamond, sand volleyball court, basketball courts, a 9-hole disc golf course, gazebo, two picnic shelters, two playground areas, and a community building/banquet hall. Picnic shelters and fishing are provided at the 21-acre Indian Springs Park, with a nature preserve and Pratt Lake off Beam Street. In addition, the 12-acre Lake Charles Park provides fishing and a nature preserve conveniently located on the west side of town, near Highway 20, and the Highway View and Lake Charles subdivisions. Smaller parks servicing the needs of subdivisions include 5 acres in Porter Cove, and 4 acres in Dune Meadows. Porter has a supervised summer recreation program, which is operated, at Hawthorn Park.

The current Long-Range Park Plan that was created in June 2018, outlines a broad spectrum of recreational facilities, ranging from small neighborhood playgrounds to large community parks. Existing parks could provide opportunities for passive recreation such as picnicking, nature study and day camping. It is recommended that the town remain aware of the Land and Water Conservation Program, which is available to assist in financing improvements to existing facilities. One of the major duties of the Plan Commission is to review designs for new developments and subdivisions. This report encourages the Commission to require developers to provide recreational open space areas at no expense to the community, which will serve as neighborhood facilities for the residents of their subdivisions. In addition, the town should carefully review proposed site designs for any local private recreation facilities. Plans which meet gaps in the town's programs and meets a broad interest should be encouraged.

HEALTH CARE FACILITIES

Northwest Health - Porter Hospital, on US Hwy 6, is a major acute health care facility. This hospital is only 5.6 miles (12 minutes) from Porter. This facility was opened on August, 2012. Porter citizen's use of Porter Memorial Hospital appears to continue with regularity due to the generally regarded high level of care, and new state of the art facilities. The hospital also operates facilities in Starke and LaPorte Counties. An ambulance station is located one mile from downtown Porter. All personnel operating these ambulances are EMT qualified.

Most doctors and dentists near Porter maintain offices in Chesterton. These offices are within 2 miles of Porter. The development of a medical/dentist clinic is recommended in Porter, possibly near the I-94/U.S. 20 interchange, or on U.S. 20 on the east side of town. Additionally, a small medical center is needed near the downtown to

service the older residents, and apartment dwellers who may wish to walk to medical offices.

Chapter 11 - Educational Facilities

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

A progressive and effective public school system is an important element to attracting and sustaining residential, commercial, and industrial development and redevelopment in a community. The degree of investment, which the community supports for their school system, says volumes about the quality of life in that community.

Public schools are administered by the Duneland School Corporation, which was formed on January 1, 1969 from the former Westchester Township School Corp. Jackson School Township, and Liberty School Township. The Corporation provides public school education from kindergarten through grade 12 to a 91 square mile area, which includes the towns of Chesterton, Porter, Burns Harbor, and Dunes Acres. The Duneland School Corporation and the community as a whole have continually provided state of the art programming and facilities for students.

The Duneland School Corporation operates and maintains nine (9) school buildings on eight (8) different sites. Five (5) elementary schools, Bailly, Brummitt, Jackson, Liberty, and Yost include grades K-4. Two (2) intermediate schools, Liberty and Westchester include grades 5 and 6, while Chesterton Middle School (the old high school) contain grades 7 and 8. Chesterton High School includes grades 9-12. Children residing in Porter attend Yost Elementary, which is located in Porter, Westchester Intermediate School, in southwest Chesterton, Chesterton Middle School, in central Chesterton, and Chesterton High School, which is located in south central Chesterton.

Yost Elementary was constructed in 1954, and experienced extensive renovation in 1995. Yost was operating at 87% of capacity in 1998, but after reorganizing the grades to K-4, that was reduced to 77% in 2003. Westchester Intermediate School was constructed in 1966 and expanded in 1979. When it was operating as a middle school in 1998 with grades 6 through 8, it was at 95% of capacity, but by 2003 it is at 74% capacity with grades 5 and 6. In 1998, the high school was operating at 99% of capacity. The new high school opened in fall, 2001, and is currently operating at 70% of capacity.

Educational attainment percentages have not significantly changed between 2000 and 2020, except a modest increase in the percentage of residents with graduate or professional degrees, 3.2%. In 2010, the percentages for educational attainment for Chesterton was significantly higher at the lower attainment levels and associate degree levels. Percentages for four year degrees and graduate/professional are nearly identical (SEE TABLES 51,52, AND 53).

SCHOOL DEMOGRAPHICS

In the area of school planning, demographics control. Population trends are cyclical over lengthy periods. Projections must be based on at least twenty (20) years of trend data, and to remain useful should project at least five (5) into the future. When considering the use and need for any type of capital facility, including schools, a minimum of twenty (20) years must be considered. It may take as long as three to five years to open a new school, once the decision is made to build. On occasion, the decision to build may take one to three years. School buildings may have a productive life of between 30 to 50 years, and should be located and designed to both expand and contract.

School officials in the Duneland School Corporation have historically been proactive in their reaction to projections of both increases in student enrollment, necessitating new capacity, and declines, requiring downsizing. Based on enrollment data from 1990 to 1998, increasing trends were apparent at grades K-2, and 9 through 12. Grades 6 through 8 experienced slightly declining enrollment, while grades 3 through 5 remained stable. When the various grades are joined together by school type, the elementary student population experienced an increasing trend, especially at the earlier grades. The middle schools experienced a modest decreasing trend and the high student population experienced an increasing trend. Since 1998, grades K-4 have seen declines, while grades 5-11 have seen significant increases.

FUTURE NEEDS

The most challenging aspect of conducting school enrollment projections is the phenomenon of move-ins; that is, school age children who are being added to the school population by virtue of their family moving to the school district. Up until 1998, the number of move-ins has been modest, however, this changed after the new high school broke ground in 1999. This new state-of-the-art facilities, as in other school districts, acted as a strong attraction to young families with school age children, resulting in their moving into the school district. This significant attraction of new students was anticipated and planned for by the Duneland School Corporation.

If the gradual population growth data is merged with current trends showing peaks and troughs in enrollment data throughout the study period, it becomes apparent that the elementary enrollment is expected to increase, intermediate school enrollment is expected to remain stable and then increase, and middle and high school enrollment is expected to increase significantly. The administration of the Duneland School Corporation has anticipated added enrollment, and have developed a capital improvement program, which looked at several options in order to increase capacity at the elementary and middle school levels. One of the more interesting concepts, which

was chosen and implemented, was the conversion of the old high school into added classrooms, available for grades 7-8. The middle schools were converted to intermediate grades 5-6, resulting in additional capacity being made available at the elementary and middle school level as a result.

Based on the enrollment projections enumerated in Tables 26 and 27, the projected capacity excess as a result of the new high school, and conversion of the old high school, it is not anticipated that additional new school construction nor additional school land will be necessary during the study period of twenty (20) years.

OTHER SCHOOLS

Within the boundaries of Porter, there is a cooperative preschool (Field Station) and a K-8 charter school (Discovery). Both of these offer programs that take advantage of their location in or adjacent to the National Park. There is one major private school near Porter, Fairhaven Academy, an 11.5 acres parochial educational facility. This institution is supported by tuition and the church. Fairhaven Academy has expanded past high school into the college ranks. In addition, to this parochial school, Chesterton also has a parochial school, attended by Porter residents. Saint Patrick Roman Catholic Elementary School is located on North Calumet Road. It is a well- equipped facility on a large site, and it is operating well within its enrollment capacity. Until 1967, grades 1 through 8 were taught at St. Patrick. In 1968, grades 7 and 8 were dropped and the school now teaches classes from 1 through 6. Enrollments have demonstrated no significant increases in recent years, and decreases have occurred in other years.

Other sources of higher education within commuting distance include Valparaiso University; Purdue University-Calumet Campus in Hammond and Purdue University-North Central Campus in Westville; Indiana University-Northwest Campus in Gary; Indiana Vocational Technical College in Gary and Valparaiso, and Notre Dame University in South Bend.

TABLE 50: PORTER EDUCATIONAL DATA

ENROLLMENT 2000	2010	2020
Total Enrolled	1,355	
Pre-school	117	
Elementary/High School	923	
College	315	

ATTAINMENT	2000	2010	2020
<9th Grade	49 (1.6%)	13 (0.4%)	49 (1.6%)
9th - 12th	234 (7.5%)	142 (4.5%)	234 (7.4%)
High School Graduate	1,233 (39.4%)	1,182 (37.3%)	1,233 (39.4%)
Some College	606 (19.3%)	578 (18.2%)	606 (19.3%)
Associate Degree	236 (7.5%)	224 (7.1%)	236 (7.5%)
Bachelor's Degree	520 (16.6%)	652 (20.6%)	1,748 (19.8%)
Graduate/Prof. Degree	255 (8.1%)	378 (11.9%)	1,335 (15.1%)
Total Population >25	3,133	3,169	

Source: Census of Population and Housing

TABLE 51: COMPARATIVE 2010 EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

	PORTER	CHESTERTON	US	IN
LESS THAN 9 TH GRADE	13 (0.4%)	276 (2.9%)	5.3%	3.7%
9 TH -12 TH NO DIPLOMA	142 (4.5%)	296 (3.1%)	7.7%	7.1%
HS DIPLOMA	1,182 (37.3%)	2,732 (28.8%)	27.1%	33.5%
SOME COLLEGE	578 (18.2%)	2,137 (22.5%)	20.6%	20.4%
ASSOCIATE DEGREE	224 (7.1%)	1,002 (10.6%)	8.4%	8.7%
BACHELORS DEGREE	652 (20.6%)	1,907 (20.1%)	19.4%	16.5%
GRADUATE/ PROFESSIONAL	378 (11.9%)	1,134 (12.0%)	12.1%	9.4%

TABLE 52: COMPARATIVE 2017 EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

	PORTER	CHESTERTON
LESS THAN 9 TH GRADE	49 (1.6%)	311 (3.5%)
9 TH -12 TH NO DIPLOMA	234 (7.5%)	380 (4.3%)
HS DIPLOMA	1,233 (39.4%)	3,180 (36.0%)
SOME COLLEGE	606 (19.3%)	1,145 (12.9%)
ASSOCIATE DEGREE	236 (7.5%)	743 (8.4%)
BACHELORS DEGRE	520 (16.6%)	1,748 (19.8%)
GRADUATE/PROFESSIONAL	255 (8.1%)	1,335 (15.1%)

Source: Census of Population and Housing, TownCharts

TABLE 53: SCHOOL ENROLLMENT CAPACITY

School	Grades	2003		Capacity	Enrollment
		Constructed	Additions		
Chesterton High School	9-12	2001	-----	2500	1742
Chesterton Middle School	7-8	1954	1971, 1979	1200	891
Westchester Intermediate	5-6	1966	1979	750	517
Yost Elementary	K-4	1950	1979,1995	530	408
2020					
Chesterton High School	9-12	2001	-----	2500	2,075
Chesterton Middle School	7-8	1954	1971, 1979	1200	933
Westchester Intermediate	5-6	1966	1979	750	516
Yost Elementary	K-4	1950	1979,1995	530	388

Source: Duneland School Corporation

TABLE 54: ENROLLMENT OF SCHOOL FACILITIES

YEAR	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1990-91	307	363	367	332	376	382	337	375	390	332	361	330	315
1991-92	312	340	367	389	359	385	400	381	384	382	321	357	323
1992-93	290	350	342	391	407	374	415	425	393	386	382	325	351
1993-94	327	310	351	345	388	411	395	450	421	379	399	372	324
1994-95	314	361	318	355	356	393	410	419	464	408	378	390	372
1995-96	334	356	355	323	371	367	417	462	410	447	404	381	381
1996-97	367	370	355	344	341	386	382	429	463	380	434	400	368
1997-98	344	403	376	361	371	364	406	395	423	437	391	430	390
1998-99	386	377	406	368	394	384	379	409	405	396	441	393	423
1999-00	349	373	387	395	388	394	380	387	415	378	390	408	355
2000-01	317	358	386	390	408	400	402	399	410	444	431	460	458
2001-02	389	357	353	410	397	426	421	398	389	446	437	430	435
2002-03	363	413	383	351	414	405	458	442	446	449	442	441	396
2003-04	324	395	428	395	361	433	420	470	452	480	435	441	409
2020-21							451	482	536	513	540	486	
YOST2020-21	87	81	80	67	73								
INTERMEDIATE							242	274					

Source: Duneland School Corporation

TABLE 55: NET ASSESSED VALUATION PER STUDENT COMPARISON

YEAR	NET ASSESSED VALUE	ENROLLMENT	AV/STUDENT
1998	\$553,869,711	5,513	\$100,466
1999	\$593,578,011	5,426	\$109,395
2000	\$617,940,791	5,418	\$114,053
2001	\$642,503,147	5,444	\$118,020
2002*	\$669,302,047	5,402	\$123,899

*Converted

Source: Duneland School Corporation

Chapter 12 - Housing

Encouraging residential development in the best possible locations improves the quality and desirability of individual housing units, increases access to necessary public services, and avoids natural resource problems, such as flooding. Residential development generally precedes other forms of development. Evidence indicates that, except for major industrial and commercial uses, residential development occurs first and creates the markets for other uses. Major facilities such as sewers and highways have stimulated initial residential development. However, this growth can overburden these facilities in a relatively short period, if inadequate planning takes place.

PAST TRENDS

A close examination of the housing stock in the Town of Porter, based on the 2000 census, reveals the community's level of stability and attractiveness for further growth and re-development. Seventy-six percent of the total persons lived in owner-occupied units. The average persons per household dropped from 2.72 in 1990 to 2.62 in 2000, revealing an aging population, during that decade. In 1970, the 7 percent vacancy rate indicated an adequate housing supply. In 1990, an average vacancy rate of 3.5 percent for rentals and a very low rate of .7 percent for homeowners reflects a stable, high demand status of existing housing stock. In 2000, those rates increased to 5.8% and 1.4% respectively, but still remained low.

In 1967, the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore initiated its land acquisition program in the area. Nearly all of the federal property taken was intended to be used as low density, single-family subdivisions. This acquisition continues to be a factor limiting growth, and remains a major factor skewing the balance of residentially zoned parcels from single-family towards multi-family.

What should not get lost in this discussion, however, is the need to encourage the rehabilitation and maintenance of the existing housing stock. Approximately 50% of the existing housing in Porter was built before 1980. In other words, 5 out of 10 of Porter's housing stock is more than 40 years old. The age of the housing stock also reveals the dramatic impact of the recession. Between 2000 and 2007, an average of over 26 residential units were built. Since then the average has dropped to about 7.5.

The value of housing can be used as a partial indication of its quality. Generally, lower values are found in old, inadequately maintained, or poorly constructed housing units; while higher cost housing is usually newer and well maintained. The median value of an owner-occupied home in 1990 was \$59,000. By 2000, this had increased to \$123,700. By 2017 the median value had increased to \$193,658.

Owner-occupied units accounted for 67 percent in 2000, down from 74 percent in 1990. Single-family housing accounted for 83 percent of the total housing stock in 1990. In 2000, single-family accounted for 1557 units out of a total 1,966, or 79%. During the same period, the number of 2-9 unit structures increased by over 190%, while the number of apartments increased slowly.

The number of persons per owner occupied unit decreased from 3.16 in 1980 to 2.88 in 1990, and then increased to 2.97 in 2000. In 1990 seventy-sixty percent of the housing units in Porter contained five or more rooms. In 2000, this number increased to 80 percent.

The percentage of single-family housing units in Porter exceeds 80%, while it is only 64% in Chesterton. Household size is nearly identical, (SEE TABLES 57 AND 58). Porter has a significantly higher percentage of houses valued at \$125,000-\$149,999 and \$200,000-\$249,999, while Chesterton is higher with values from \$150,000-174,999, (SEE TABLE 59). The median house/condo value in Porter has increased between 2000 and 2017 from \$125,500 to \$193,658. The same median in Chesterton was \$204,922 in 2017. Both significantly exceed the state median of \$141,100. Houses in Porter had an occupancy rate of 95%, with 76% owner occupied. The median year built for houses and condos in 1984, while for apartments the median year was 1963, (SEE TABLES 57, 58, 59, AND 60).

CURRENT CONDITIONS

Environmental conditions such as sewer and water facilities, good roads, adequate parks, etc., are as important as structural conditions in assessing the quality of housing. Although the town has been upgrading some of these facilities, no long-range plan or schedule appears to be available.

Few areas remain available for low-density residential development in Porter. The "Iron Triangle", located between the New York Central Railroad and the Michigan Central Railroad, east of Mineral Springs is an example of the remaining sites, with many constraints to mid and high end residential development.

There are sections of town designated for moderate mixed density planned unit development, which meet characteristics lending to these densities. One such area is known as the "Brickyard" area across from Yost Elementary School. This area is within walking distance of the Central Business District and can receive water and sewer service immediately. There are potential pollution issues which must be addressed prior to development.

The area north of I-94 and south of U.S. 20 between Wagner and Waverly Roads is designated as high-density multi-family. Approximately 300 units were approved as a

planned unit development in the 1970's. Orchard Apartments Phases I and II was initially completed with water and sewer service on its eastern edge. Two additional phases were constructed since the 2003 Comprehensive Plan. Vacant land to the west of Wagner Road, which is currently zoned for multi-family, should be changed to single-family.

The area near Lake Michigan, is presently occupied by single-family full-time resident and summer homes. Newer homes in the area have been of higher quality and this report recommends a site-specific growth policy that supports and continues this pattern. This is a unique area because of the high dunes. Much of this area should be left open; yet the location is highly desirable. The upper scale, low-density single-family usage, with open space requirements, protects existing residents from encroachments, affords and insures environmental conservation and natural aesthetic preservation.

The piecemeal ownership pattern of much of the land in this lakeshore area has caused some problems in assembling land for development. The technique of vacation has been effective and encouraged after site-specific analysis. The change to the Zoning Ordinance in 2009, to incorporate a Lakeshore Preservation District in Porter Beach has addressed many of the physical constraints to consolidation of lots and uniqueness of the development pattern.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Since the federal lands taken for the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore has caused an imbalance in the locally established single family/multi-family equilibrium, this report recommends an adjustment in vacant residentially zoned property from multi-family to single family. It is also recommended that financial incentives be employed to encourage redevelopment and maintenance of marginal structures, especially in the downtown area.

As in other communities, residential tax abatement may work well in Porter; however, a written policy should be established that prioritizes development by location, size and type. Preference should be given to individual "fill-in" lots, since they add no additional load to municipal services, to development, which removes a blighting influence as a consequence of development, and to planned unit developments, because they are more malleable and demand a higher standard.

By using the housing valuation, age, and income data, a housing redevelopment designation should be assigned to low value areas. Tax abatement regulations should give these areas a higher priority. In addition, Community Block Grant Funds should be used primarily in these areas. Strict building code enforcement should also be initiated to reduce blighting influences on these marginal areas.

This report recommends vacating unused easements for streets to private owners. The Stockyard Subdivision at Lake Michigan, commonly known as the Porter Beach community, should be re-platted. This subdivision laid out on the dunes offers great potential if the special environment is treated properly.

TABLE 56 - HOUSING UNITS (2017)

	PORTER	CHESTERTON
ONE, DETACHED	1,506 (81%)	3,780 (64%)
ONE, ATTACHED	250 (13%)	919 (16%)
TWO	13 (0.7%)	237 (4%)
3 TO 4	22 (1.2)	169 (2.9%)
5 TO 9	0	303 (5.2%)
10 TO 19	34 (1.8%)	340 (5.8%)
20 TO 49	0	29 (0.5%)
50 OR MORE	0	76 (1.3%)
MOBILE HOMES	27 (1.5%)	15 (0.3%)
TOTAL	1,852	5,868

TABLE 57 - HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

HOUSEHOLD SIZE (2017)

PORTER	2.6
INDIANA	2.5

FAMILY HOUSEHOLDS (2017)

PORTER	71.5%
CHESTERTON	86.3%
INDIANA	66.9%

NON-FAMILY HOUSEHOLDS (2017)

PORTER	7.9%
CHESTERTON	14.1%
INDIANA	6.9%

Source: Census of Population and Housing, TownCharts

TABLE 58 - DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSE VALUES (2017)

	PORTER	CHESTERTON
LESS THAN \$10,000	31	66
\$10,000-\$39,999	0	33
\$40,000-\$49,999	8	0
\$60,000-\$69,999	6	8
\$70,000-\$79,999	10	48
\$80,000-\$89,999	16	12
\$90,000-\$99,999	23	117
\$100,000-\$124,999	86	189
\$125,000-\$149,999	282 (21.4%)	479 (12.9%)
\$150,000-\$174,999	105 (8.0%)	584 (15.7%)
\$175,000-\$199,999	144 (10.9%)	334 (9.0%)
\$200,000-\$249,999	315 (23.9%)	565 (15.2%)
\$250,000-\$299,999	118 (9.0%)	352 (9.5%)
\$300,000-\$399,999	122 (9.3%)	335 (9.0%)
\$400,000-\$499,999	13	171
\$500,000-\$749,999	22	214
\$750,000-\$999,000	0	37
\$1,000,000 OR MORE	15	176
TOTAL NUMBER	1,316	3,720

MEDIAN REAL ESTATE TAXES – PORTER (2017)

WITH MORTGAGE \$2,257

WITHOUT MORTGAGE \$1,492

Source: Census of Population and Housing, TownCharts

TABLE 59: MISCELLANEOUS HOUSING DATA

MEDIAN HOUSE/CONDO VALUE	PORTER	CHESTERTON	INDIANA
2000	\$125,500		
2017	\$193,658	\$204,922	\$141,100
MEAN PRICE			
ALL HOUSING UNITS	\$229,037		
SINGLE FAMILY	\$237,826		
TOWNHOUSE/ATTACHED	\$268,600		
2-UNIT	\$61,867		
3-4 UNIT	\$352,746		
5-MORE	\$174,699		
MOBILE HOMES	\$70,538		
MEDIAN RENT	\$674	\$860	
MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME 2017	\$91,809		
CHANGE 2000-2017		84.4%	
HOUSES	1,830		
OCCUPIED	1,738 (95%)		
OWNER OCCUPIED	1,320 (76%) ⁵		
RENTER OCCUPIED	374		
MEDIAN YEAR BUILT			
HOUSE/CONDO	1984		
APARTMENT	1963		

Source: Census of Population and Housing, TownChart

Chapter 13 - Parks and Recreation

The Town of Porter Park Department is responsible for operating and maintaining over 80 acres of public parks and over six miles of paved and unpaved trails. The 38-acre Hawthorne Park has modern recreational facilities including a baseball diamond, sand volleyball court, basketball courts, a 9-hole disc golf course, gazebo, two picnic shelters, two playground areas, and a community building/banquet hall. Picnic shelters and fishing are provided at the 21-acre Indian Springs Park, with a nature preserve and Pratt Lake off Beam Street. In addition, the 12-acre Lake Charles Park provides fishing and a nature preserve conveniently located on the west side of town, near Highway 20, and the Highway View and Lake Charles subdivisions. Smaller parks servicing the needs of subdivisions include 5 acres in Porter Cove, and 4 acres in Dune Meadows.

A modern, multi-purpose community center is located at Hawthorne Park. The community building, two shelters, and gazebo are available for weddings, showers, reunions, meetings, etc. In addition, 7.4 acres of private recreational facilities include a 5-acre nature preserve owned by the local chapter of the Izaak Walton League and a 2-acre little league baseball park.

The current Long-Range Park Plan that was created in June 2018, outlines a broad spectrum of recreational facilities, ranging from small neighborhood playgrounds to large community parks. Existing parks could provide opportunities for passive recreation such as picnicking, nature study and day camping. It is recommended that the Town remain aware of the Land and Water Conservation Program, which is available to assist in financing improvements to existing facilities.

One of the major duties of the Plan Commission is to review designs for new developments and subdivisions, and require developers to provide adequate usable open space, which will serve as neighborhood facilities for the residents of their subdivisions. However, with respect to a particular subdivision, the reservation of land required may not be consistent with the recommendations of the Park Department. It may be determined that the overall need for public use would be better served by requiring money, or off-premises improvements to existing parks that are located near the subdivision, so that the adjacent neighborhood benefits. In addition, the town should carefully review proposed site designs for any local private recreation facilities. Plans which meet gaps in the town's programs should be encouraged.

Chapter 14:

Summary of Conclusions / Recommendations

FUTURE LAND USE RECOMMENDATIONS

After comparing the 2003 recommended future land use map with the recently completed existing land use map, there are nine (9) locations which require reconsideration with respect to what was recommended at that time. Each is listed individually below:

1. This property is located along Oak Hill Road beginning at the intersection with US12 and ending at Howe Road. The recommended land use in 2003 was single family. The existing land use map shows about 40% vacant, 50% NIPSCO (also essentially vacant), a few single-family residences, a multifamily property and a small cemetery. The property is adjacent to National Lakeshore property on the north, east, and south. Even though there is a high likelihood that it too will be acquired, the property is best suited for single family development. Therefore, there is no change from the 2003 recommendation.
2. The next property is located west of Porter Cove, east of Babcock Road, and south of the Michigan Central Railroad tracks. The 2003 Future Land Use Map identified this as single family, since it was surrounded on 3 sides by single family. The property has been developed into a large personal storage facility. As such, the recommended future land use for this property is industrial.
3. The property located along US20 and the Little Calumet River was recommended to be used in the Future Land Use Plan as a business PUD. It was recently developed into a multi-building commercial/light storage site. This use is consistent with the 2003 land use recommendation, so no change is recommended.
4. The site along the west side of Wagner Road, from US20 to the Little Calumet River was recommended to be developed into a multi-family PUD. Since that time, this property has been developed into large lot single family. Since additional property suited for single-family has been acquired by the National Lakeshore, and property further east along US20 is being converted into a large multi-family PUD, the use of this property as single family seems appropriate. It should be changed on the Future Land Use Map.

5. This property includes Pratt Lake and the property between Pratt Lake and the Little Calumet River. The 2003 Future Land Use Map only identified the property south of the lake as Park/Recreation property. The expansion of this site should take place in the updated Future Land Use Map.

6. In the 2003 Future Land Use Map the site of the Spa, Hotel, and vacant property to the south, was identified as Commercial – Convenience/Tourist. A few years ago a change was approved which permitted paired patio homes and cottage single family uses on the southern third of the site. This change is well suited for this property, and as a result, the Future Land Use Map should be amended.

7. The property outlined by Wood St, S. Mineral Springs Rd, Marquette Road, and S 23rd Street was identified in the 2003 Future Land Use Map for multi-family development. The existing uses on this property are all single family. Much of the property is vacant. In the 2003 Plan a shortage of multi-family property was identified. However, since that time additional property elsewhere has been proposed and approved for multi-family. Therefore, the change from multi-family to single family on this property seems appropriate and is recommended.

8. The former water park property east of Waverly, north of US20, was identified in the 2003 Plan as a Commercial PUD. Since that time, the Water Park closed, and the property was approved as a high-end multi-family development. The change to multi-family compensates for other properties which have been recommended to be changed to another use. In many instances, this property is better located to fulfill the need for multi-family.

9. The properties near the Tremont/US20 intersection were recommended to be developed into an industrial PUD in the 2003 Comprehensive Plan. The town has a shortage of property dedicated for this land use. Since the drafting of the 2003 Comprehensive Plan, the National Lakeshore has acquired a significant portion of the property. The southwest corner is now vacant, and the northeast corner was developed into an office building. The southeast corner of Tremont/US20 has an approved PUD for recreational commercial use. The Future Land Use Map should be amended to reflect these uses.

10. The former brickyard property located on the southwest corner of West Beam St and Sexton Ave is currently owned by the Town of Porter and is vacant. The most developable part of this property is the northeast section and should be subdivided for development. The best use for this property is a mixed-use PUD that should include low density condos, zero lot line single family, and convenience commercial and the Future Land Use Map should be amended to reflect this.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

1. Porter is strategically located near major employment centers, along major retail and highway corridors, on the expanding South Shore commuter railway, and in the midst of unique natural resources and parks.

2. The Town should develop a Capital Improvement Program, which prioritizes community needs, assigns a source of funding, and coordinates and schedules construction.

3. Due to the downturn in the local economy and the difficulty in developing several of the remaining residentially zoned parcels, tax abatement (including residential) should be considered under guidelines, which outline specific goals to be achieved, and guideposts against which to measure tangible results.

4. The Town's population will remain constant over the study period unless actions are taken to enable new housing.

5. The Town should make use of any available state and federal funding to reconstruct or construct thoroughfares as identified and prioritized in this Plan.

6. The Town should support efforts to revitalize the Downtown area by working to solve problems of signage, housing, parking, and streetscape.

7. The downtown should be enlarged by rezoning and phasing out some ill-located industrial and residential uses.

8. An architectural and retail study of the Downtown area should be conducted in conjunction with the Main Street organization, the Duneland Chamber, and Town residents.

9. Future subdivisions should be required to provide lot frontage oriented on an internal road system, and should not be permitted to utilize driveway curb cuts directly onto collectors and arterials.

10. Since the federal lands taken for the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore has caused an imbalance in the locally established single family/multi-family equilibrium, an adjustment should be made in vacant residentially zoned property from multi-family to single family.

11. Most of the remaining sizable parcels within the town which are dedicated to residential development have access, grade, utility, or environmental impediments. Such property includes the "iron triangle" cut off by railroads, and property across from the public works building on Beam Street with significant grade problems.

12. The Rt. 20 corridor, both within and outside the town limits, is a mixture of ill-located residential and industrial uses, along with much undeveloped property. It is important to the future of the town that the Rt. 20 corridor be developed with principles of good planning in place. In addition, the developed portion of this property is in need of appropriate code enforcement.

13. Commercial development should be required to have sufficient lot depth to avoid strip development one lot in depth. Rather, a planned business park approach has significant advantages.

14. The Town should make use of Transportation Enhancement and other funding to connect the Prairie-Duneland Trail and the Calumet Trail. The Town should support the development of similar trails.

15. In accordance with the principles identified in the thoroughfare chapter, vehicular access to the commercial and industrial property along the U. S. Highway 20 corridor should be limited to a series of shared curb cuts and access roadways, rather than direct individual curb cuts.

16. Care should be taken to provide sufficient buffer zones surrounding industrial property, especially where located in close proximity to office or residential uses.

17. The property located in the southeast quadrant of US20 and I94 is glaringly underutilized, but potentially is well-suited for office park or integrated retail such as an outlet mall.

Appendix: Land Use Maps

The following maps are included by reference:

1. Existing Land Use
2. Future Land Use
3. Thoroughfare Map

Appendix: Community Planning

The Porter Plan Commission chose an ambitious and wide-ranging program of outreach to fulfill our responsibilities for community planning. The project plan, as decided in 2021, included these elements:

- All actions regarding the development of a new Comprehensive Plan would take place in regular Plan Commission meetings.
- Three types of forums were created to receive public input prior to deliberations of the issues to be addressed in the new plan. These forums were:
 - An Internet Survey
 - A series of Stakeholder Interviews with key business and government leaders,
 - Four Public Workshops on key topics. Each of these forums is described below.
- As mandated by Indiana law and Plan Commission procedures, the proposed Comprehensive Plan will be the subject of a public hearing.

While the execution of the plan was drawn out due to the arrival of the COVID epidemic, we were able to adjust our schedule and in the end complete all the planned activities. The response of the community exceeded our expectations and provided compelling ideas.

INTERNET SURVEY

Between June 1 and August 9 of 2021, over 400 people answered an extensive Internet survey about Porter. Participants were asked about community values, infrastructure, development, housing types, land use in key areas, and concerns about congestion on road ways.

Certain themes evoked very broad and deep support. People valued most highly our proximity to the national, state and lakeshore parks and being part of the Duneland school district. Improving coverage of sanitary sewers and cellular service topped utility concerns. Other infrastructure projects getting support were a complete system of trails and addressing dangerous intersections. Taxpayers want new business growth to shore up our tax base, albeit businesses that support the recreational economy especially in the US-20/IN-49 corridor, but no more gas stations and truck stops.

Meanwhile, everyone recognized the importance of housing though with a wider range of preferences. Single residential has broad support, followed by mixed-used neighborhoods. High-density housing generated widely varying opinions.

The summary report of all surveys can be found [here](#).

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

In July and August of 2021, Plan Commission members interviewed 45 stakeholders, including business owners, town officials, and regional organizations. We asked them to articulate the priorities and challenges Porter needs to address to thrive for the next 20 years.

PRIORITIES

- Find revenue within our borders.
- Embrace the recreation economy and connect the entire community with walkable/bikeable pathways.
- Capture our share of population growth including out-migration from the city.
- Encourage development supporting these goals in the US-20 / IN-49 corridor.

CHALLENGES

- Develop understanding and support for the advantages of a spectrum of entry-, mid- and high-level housing developments, especially accessible to the Dune Park station.
- Understand why the previous Downtown Master Plan was not implemented to enhance Lincoln Street.
- Develop strategies to mitigate our landlocked position, limited resources, and resistance to change.

The full summary of Stakeholder Interviews can be found [here](#).

PUBLIC WORKSHOPS

The Plan Commission hosted four public workshops during May of 2022 to gather public input directly from attendees on four areas of concern that emerged from the Internet Survey and Stakeholder Interviews. Between 12 and 20 participants attended each of these. The table below shows the title and date of each workshop, and a link to the minutes taken at each one.

MINUTES OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN PUBLIC WORKSHOPS

#1: Review of Internet Survey and Stakeholder Interview Issues

May 16, 2022

[Link to the minutes](#)

#2: Future Land Use and Zoning Map

May 19, 2022

[Link to the minutes](#)

#3: Environmental Sustainability

May 25, 2022

[Link to the minutes](#)

#4: Historic Preservation, Parks & Trails, and Recreation/Government Facilities

May 26, 2022

[Link to the minutes](#)