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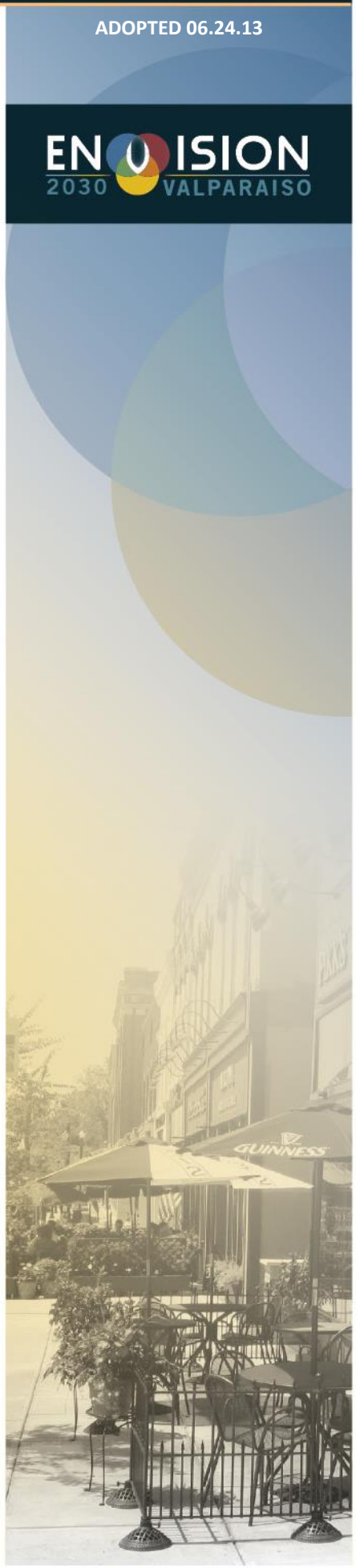
Growth Capacity

7.1 INTRODUCTION

When a community is poised for ongoing growth, as is Valparaiso, a long-range planning process provides an opportunity to assess the City's readiness to accommodate this new population and economic development and to do so in a way that is fiscally responsible and will maintain the continuity of and enhance community character. This requires assertive efforts by municipal government to plan the timely extension of adequate infrastructure, provide quality public services, logically sequence future development, and form an annexation strategy that is in line with the City's capacity to serve anticipated growth.

The purpose of this chapter is to clarify and establish City policy regarding how growth and new development will be accommodated in an orderly and beneficial manner that is consistent with other fiscal and community considerations. Chief among these are utility infrastructure and public service capacities as well as efficient land and roadway network utilization to maintain and achieve a desired urban form and character. With regard to critical public safety services, the paramount concern is the City's ability to serve its current geographic area and residents while also preparing for the service demands that will come with the absorption of currently vacant lots, population growth, and the eventual resumption in the rate of land development that occurred prior to the recession.

This chapter also assesses the growth opportunities and challenges facing the community in coming decades, and considers where Valparaiso may need to improve its tools or the mechanisms in place to effectively respond and ensure beneficial physical and financial outcomes from ongoing growth.



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The U.S. 30 Corridor continues to be an attraction for commercial development due to its volume of traffic and visibility.

7.2 PLANNING CONTEXT

Attractors of Development

Key attractors for Valparaiso's growth planning are exhibited in **Map 7.1, Development Attractors and Impediments**, which include:

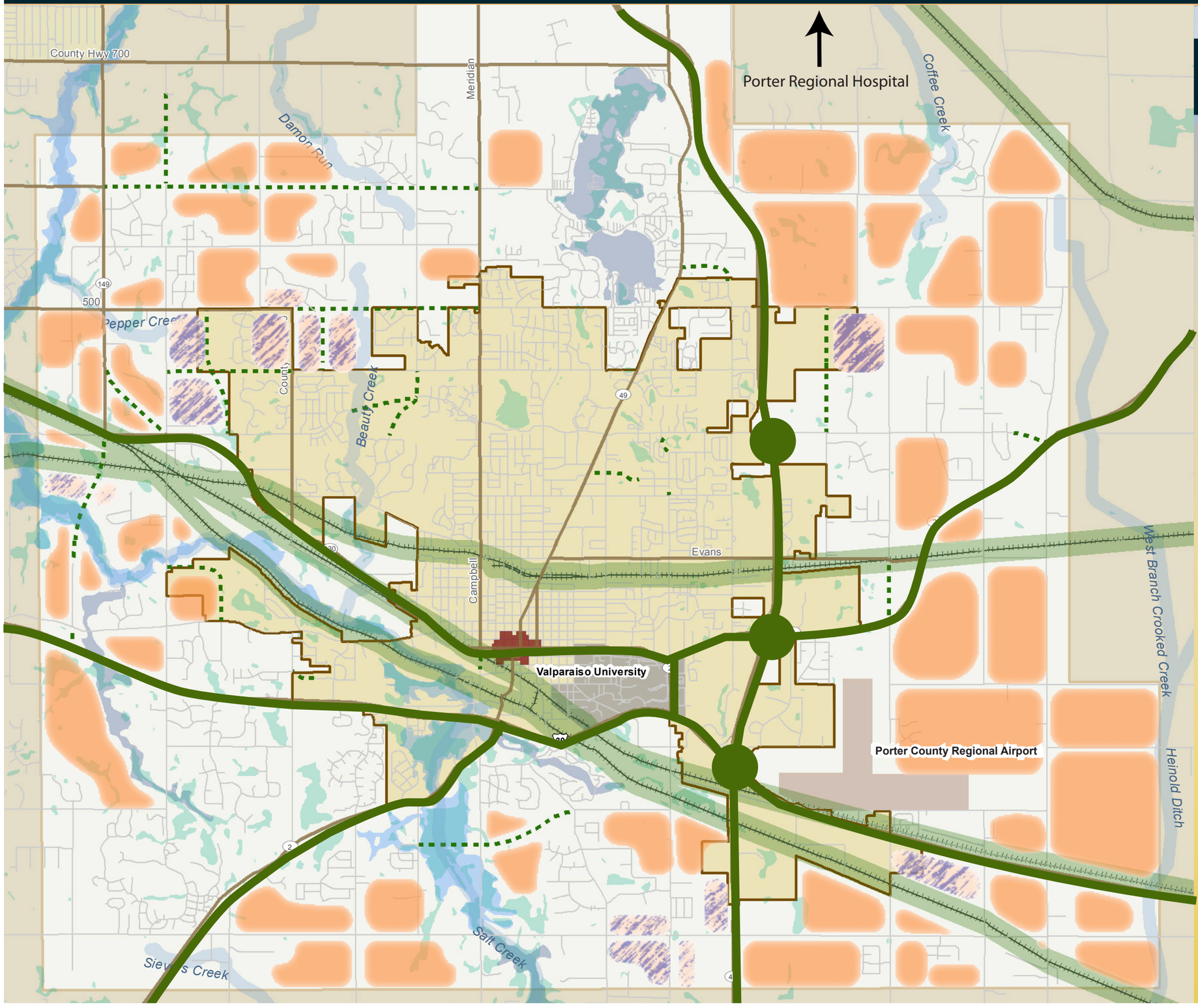
- *Many Choices in Direction:* Like many freestanding communities in Indiana, Valparaiso is literally surrounded by farmland in nearly all directions. This has afforded many opportunities for developers to purchase raw land for new subdivisions and commercial areas at competitive prices. This abundance of potentially developable land has also provided the City many challenges in establishing adequate thoroughfares and utility services in an efficient manner as development extends out into formerly rural areas.

- *Recent Northward Trend:* In more recent years, most (but not all) of Valparaiso's growth has occurred northward in an incremental fashion. Undeveloped areas north of the City have proven to be more desirable due to its more variable and rolling terrain, presence of woodlands, and better proximity to existing schools, parks, and the roadway system. On the other hand, southward residential growth, while still occurring, has been impeded by the lack of direct street connections between the Route 30 corridor and the original City development, the presence of railroad tracks, and the greater distance to community parks and schools.

- *Route 30 Bypass Corridor:* The principal highway serving Valparaiso was U.S. 30, "Lincoln Highway," which ran east-west through Downtown until the 1960s when it was replaced by the four-lane bypass at the south edge of the City. The new corridor immediately attracted significant amounts of highway-oriented commercial development, which continues to this day.

- *Indiana Route 49 Corridor:* This north-south corridor located at the eastern edge of the City has taken on greater significance in recent years, serving as Valparaiso's main gateway from the Indiana East-West Toll Road (I-80). It has attracted many of the City's newer office parks, traditional shopping centers, and "big box" retail occupancies. The recent relocation of Porter Regional Hospital to SR 49 and U.S. 6, four miles north of the City will strengthen the attractiveness of the SR 49 corridor for establishment of new medical service and health related facilities.

- *Southeast Industrial Expansion:* Valparaiso's traditional industrial "cores" were situated along the three railroad lines that traverse the City from east to west. With the passage of time and new transportation trends, industrial development was supplanted by the establishment of industrial parks with better highway access, near the U.S. 30 and SR-49



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Map 7.1

Development Attractors and Impediments

Legend

- Developable Land
- Areas with/or in close proximity to sewer and water
- Interchanges
- Planned Street Connections
- Railroad Corridor
- City Limits
- Study Area
- Downtown
- Airport
- Valparaiso University
- Wetlands, Ponds, and Lakes
- Flood Zone (A)
- Flood Zone (AE)
- Streams and Rivers
- Railroad

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corridors, particularly at the intersection of the two highways. These include the Eastport and Montdale Industrial Parks, Pratt Industries, the Aldi Distribution Center, and Northcoast Distributors. The abundance of land, well suited for "shovel ready" industrial development projects, near the Porter County Regional Airport enhances the attractiveness of this area. [1]

General Impediments to Development

Some natural and human-built features have created barriers that impede the direction of growth or restrict the ability for a developer to realize the land's full potential. Examples of growth impediments include:

- *Flood Prone Areas:* The flood prone areas along Salt Creek are shown in *Map 7.1, Development Attractors and Impediments*. Much of non-flooding areas in the vicinity of Salt Creek are hindered by steep topography, poor access, older industrial uses, and the presence of the City's wastewater treatment plant.

- *Kettle ("Pothole") Lakes:* When the final Wisconsin Glacier receded, it left behind many natural kettle lakes and ponds of varying sizes. These include the significant cluster of Flint Lake, Loomis Lake, Long Lake, and several smaller spring-fed kettles immediately north of the City limits. Over the past 60 years, this unincorporated area has attracted many cottages and second homes that are served by a water and sewer conservancy district along with and other Porter County services. There are also many smaller kettle lakes and ponds scattered throughout the City' incorporated area, many of which followed natural succession and are now bogs and marshes, while others are being maintained by their property owners as small lagoons, ponds, subdivision "water features," and even golf course water hazards. Development and infrastructure planning efforts must take these natural water bodies into consideration, as they often affect the continuity of streets and utilities. They are nevertheless worthy of protection, as they can be made aesthetically attractive and often provide valuable assistance to stormwater management efforts.

Highlighted above are the small kettle lakes and ponds in various natural states.

- *Railroad Corridors:* The two northeast-to-southwest active rail lines that span the City along Salt Creek have acted as barriers to southward development. These include the Chicago, Ft. Wayne & Eastern Rail Road (Rail America) that roughly parallels Route 30 and the Norfolk Southern

[1] Porter County Regional Airport Study (Draft) City of Valparaiso, 2012.

Railroad, which is 1,000 to 2,000 feet south of the Rail America line.

- *Moraine Ridge:* The originally settled portions of Valparaiso were situated on top "high ground" of a moraine from the Wisconsin Glacier. The hilltop positioning of the Valparaiso University campus and the moderately steep ridge to the south around Graceland Cemetery was sufficient to deter southward growth - at least until establishment of the U.S. 30 Bypass.

- *Porter County Regional Airport:* While listed as an attractor to industrial development, it is also important to maintain certain restrictions that protect the runway approach zones from encroachment by inappropriate land uses - mainly residential and institutional development. Approach zones for the airport have been delineated as a part of the 2012 Porter County Regional Airport Master Plan.

7.3 QUANTITY AND DYNAMICS OF GROWTH

The major factor determining future physical development in Valparaiso is the demand for growth borne by its population and economic projections. Plans for future growth in terms of land area, commercial square-footage, and number of housing units should be consistent with accepted population and economic projections for the same period.

Population Increase and Future Land Development Demand

The population analysis and projections contained in Chapter 1, Planning Context, include several future alternatives for Year 2030 population based on different demographic techniques. The "Middle Ground Estimate" of the 2030 population is 37,831 persons, representing an increase of approximately 6,250 persons from the 2010 level.

This projected population change can be transformed into a land development/redevelopment demand forecast by multiplying the increase by the generalized intensity of existing residential and nonresidential development. Estimates of future development are presented in **Table 7.1, Land Development Demand, 2030**.

Table 7.1, Land Development Demand, 2030

Land Use Category	Population		Development Intensity	Developed Land (Acres)		
	2010	2030	2010	2010	2030	Change
Residential	31,730	37,831	10.5 ac. per person	3,018	3,598	580
Nonresidential			16.6 ac. per person	1,908	2,275	367
Total				*4,925*	*5,872*	*947*

The calculations in *Table 7.1, Land Development Demand, 2030* provide estimates of base future development demands of 580 acres and 367 acres of commercial and noncommercial uses, respectively. Some of this development will occur in already established areas of the City in the form of redevelopment, rather than in undeveloped or agricultural areas at the edges of the City.

Available Vacant Parcels

Several major subdivisions, mostly at the northern and northwestern edges of the City, had been approved and were under development when the 2009-10 housing collapse occurred. The collapse and accompanying period of economic recession led to a five year "pause" in housing development, leaving approximately 1,109 vacant subdivision lots or newly constructed speculative homes available for purchase. This represents a backlog that could accommodate approximately 3,000 new residents, nearly one-half of the City's projected 2012 to 2030 population growth. The availability of these already developed lots and empty homes is likely to defer a significant amount of new residential development activity for years to come. The available lots and houses by subdivision are listed in **Table 7.2, Vacant Lots and Homes, 2012**.

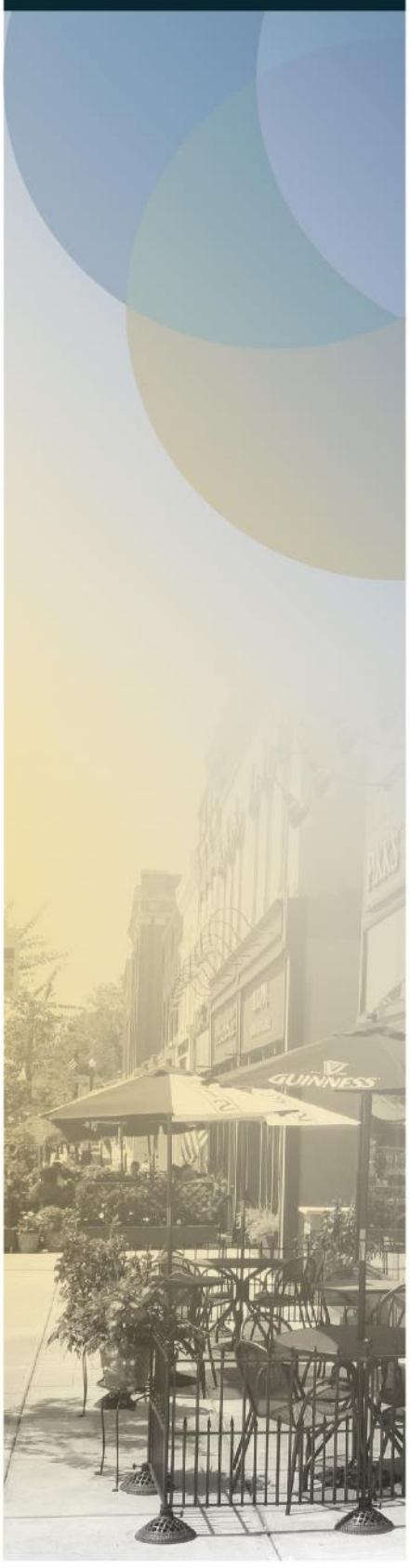

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Table 7.2, Vacant Lots and Homes, 2012	
Approved and Available for Building (* = estimated)	
Arbordale	4
Audubon Estates	16
Autumn Trail Condominiums	5
Beauty Creek Estates at Windsor Park North	62
Beauty Creek Villa Homes	184
Bridgewater Estates	42
Brigata Hills	70
Campbell Meadows	8
Essex Park	19
Executive Park PUD	30
Fairfield Greens	31
Harmel Park	6
Harrison West	14
Hawthorne, Phase 1	15
Keystone Commons	1
Manchester Meadows	7
Meridian Woods *	20
Mystwood, Phase 1	38
Naillieux's Addition (Cook Corners-Hemlock)	5
North Hampstead *	92
Pepper Creek	25
Pepper Creek Villa Homes *	44
Villas of Vale Park	34
Windsor Park	7
Woodside Valley, Unit B (Oak Grove Circle)	1
Subtotal	*780*
Final Plat Pending	
Brigadoon	291
Flat Rock	38
Subtotal	*329*
Total	**1,109**
Source: City of Valparaiso, Planning Department	

7.4 GENERAL PLANNING PRINCIPLES

Working with the Land

Given the clear direction of growth, and the progression of recent residential growth into more varied and interesting terrain to the north and northwest, Valparaiso has an opportunity to establish a "green" framework for future development. This would involve such strategies as protecting natural drainage ways and their associated riparian areas, and identifying unique natural landmarks and asset areas that are worthy of early public acquisition (and/or private conservation methods).

Such steps would reap both environmental and practical benefits over the long-term. This includes preservation of ecological services that reduce the need for costly infrastructure while protecting public water supplies and other health and safety factors (e.g., storm water absorption and flooding attenuation, aquifer recharge, water quality protection, erosion control, reduced "heat island" effect of urbanization, etc.). These areas can also provide strategic park sites and valuable open space for passive recreation, ensuring that natural relief will be available amid the more intensive urban environment likely to emerge over time. Additionally, preserved open space is a prime amenity for nearby residential and nonresidential development, reinforcing suburban or rural character and boosting community aesthetics and image.

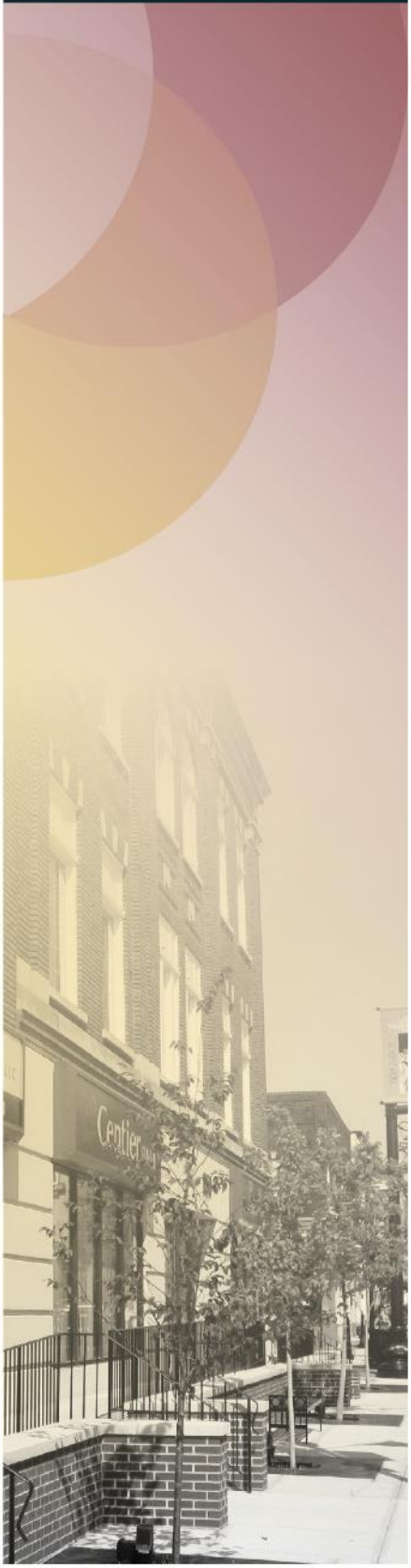
The Vale Park "Spine" Greenway is exemplary of the City's investment in "green" infrastructure.

Just as these green framework principles can be applied to newly developing areas, the City has made substantial investments to re-apply them to the public infrastructure of established areas. These include the creation of the Vale Park Road "Spine" Greenway, the stormwater detention facility on East Chicago Street, and the proposed Pathway System improvements, which are part of the Park and Recreation Department's plans for future improvements.[2]

Coordinated Growth

A new future land use plan for growth at the edges of the City limits and into the unincorporated areas of Porter County will provide a basis for coordinating a range of other community-building investments by the City (and others), particularly through the City's multi-year capital improvements planning and programming. This will help to ensure that the thoroughfare network and other infrastructure and public facilities are extended and

[2] City of Valparaiso Pathways and Greenways Master Plan Update, December 2010, Dept. of Parks and Recreation. This is an update to the original plan, which was prepared in 2005.



located consistent with anticipated directions, types, and intensities of new development. Additionally, coordination with Valparaiso Community Schools and Valparaiso University on future facility siting is essential. This can provide opportunities for joint City parkland acquisition and development in conjunction with new public facilities, as well as advance planning for area trail linkages as residential and nonresidential development plans take shape.

It is ironic, and ultimately unfortunate, that people who move to more remote locations just outside cities intending to get away from denser, in-city living can end up as being part of a trend that gradually erodes rural character through piecemeal, less regulated development. This dispersed development activity can begin to impact daily quality of life as traffic increases and raises safety issues on minimally improved county roads and at intersections. Eventually, the City—and its existing taxpayers—may have to bear the burden of bringing substandard infrastructure and public facilities up to municipal standards when previously developed land is annexed and such standards were not met originally.

Fiscally Responsible Growth

Orderly growth within the current corporate limits and ultimately into strategic unincorporated areas, is critical to the City's long-term viability. The City has a responsibility to its residents and taxpayers to ensure a growth pattern that makes good fiscal sense, particularly in terms of the infrastructure investments needed to keep pace with growth. The integrity of public safety services must also be maintained as the service areas for police, fire, and emergency medical response are stretched by geographic expansion.

Most of Valparaiso's recent development activity has been contiguous to existing developed areas of the community. Going forward, it will be essential to apply appropriate zoning in fringe areas and to use the City's annexation capabilities to ensure that Valparaiso continues to avoid a more scattered and "leapfrog" development pattern that can outstrip the City's ability to finance and provide necessary infrastructure, parks and recreation, and other public facilities and services. Besides straining local government resources, a trend toward sprawl can also undermine community character and the overall quality of life. Undesirable traffic congestion, particularly on the narrow rural roadways, often arises when new developments depend on the original County roadway system as their primary means of access. Also, it is important that the provision of parks and other public facilities remains commensurate with new growth.

The challenge—and opportunity—for Valparaiso is how best to absorb and sustain ongoing economic development and quality new residential development while ensuring a sound financial footing for municipal services,

among other community values (housing affordability, natural resource protection, downtown vitality, aesthetics and image).

Environmentally Sensible Growth

Based on the expressed desires of many residents, retirees, University and business leaders, and major employers, there is a clear and growing market opportunity for more creative design of both residential and non-residential projects in the community's new growth areas. This should include conservation design approaches that preserve significant amounts of permanent open space, capitalize on scenic vistas, and incorporate environmental features on sites as development amenities, which is happening to some extent in some newer northern edge projects. This is very much in line with the current green building movement across the Midwest and nationwide, especially through the leadership of the National Association of Home Builders and its state and regional affiliates.

7.5 Municipal Infrastructure

Utility Services

The City's sewer and water utility services, operated by Valparaiso City Utilities (VCU), serve approximately 35,000 persons and are considered to be adequate to provide services through the Year 2030. Storm sewers, however, are in need of continued upgrading. The City is continuing to invest in stormwater system improvement and enhancements to best management practices. Following are descriptions of the water, sanitary sewer, and storm water management systems.

Water Distribution - The VCU Department of Water Works maintains over 200 miles of water lines by means of two integrated water systems operating in different pressure zones, one serving the northern half of the City and the other serving the southern half. These systems are interconnected at the VCU Water Department's Evans Avenue administrative offices and garage complex. The area within which water utilities are extended is displayed in **Map 7.2, Water Service Area**.

Valparaiso City Utilities provides water, sanitary, and stormwater management services to the City.

The northern system receives its ground water supply from well fields located near Flint Lake and the Valparaiso Country Club, and water is treated at a plant situated east of Flint Lake at Wesley Road and Calumet Avenue The northern system's service area covers the City's incorporated area north of the Canadian National (formerly Grand Trunk) railroad tracks and also reaches westward to an unincorporated subdivision at Tower Road and Apple Grove Lane. The northern system also supplies water under contract to supply the Valparaiso Lakes Conservancy District distribution system, which

Flint Lake (North) Water Treatment Plant and Storage

provides water to homes and businesses in the unincorporated lakes area immediately north of the City.

The southern water system is supplied by a well field on the premises of Porter County Regional Airport. Its treatment plant and pumping facility are immediately north of the airport on Redbow Drive. The existing water treatment plant was initially built in 1963. VCU is presently engaged in an engineering study to consider replacement alternatives. The southern distribution system serves all incorporated areas south of the Canadian National Railroad. It's services have also been extended westward to the unincorporated Aberdeen neighborhood and golf course (developed on the former Porter County Farm premises), eastward along SR 2 to the Jet Corr manufacturing plant and Washington Township School at N. 400 E. Road, and to the Porter County Jail and Fairgrounds/Exposition Center immediately south of the City limits on SR 49.

The average water demand for the service areas is approximately four million gallons per day, with dry summer peaks that double this amount. The systems together include three, two million gallon elevated storage tanks, with an additional two million gallon ground-level tank situated at each of the water treatment plants. These storage facilities are considered to be sufficient, with no current plans to add or replace water storage.

Valparaiso enjoys an Insurance Service Organization (ISO) rating of 3; only one other Indiana community has an equal score. Forty percent of this rating is based on water supply capabilities and hydrant locations.

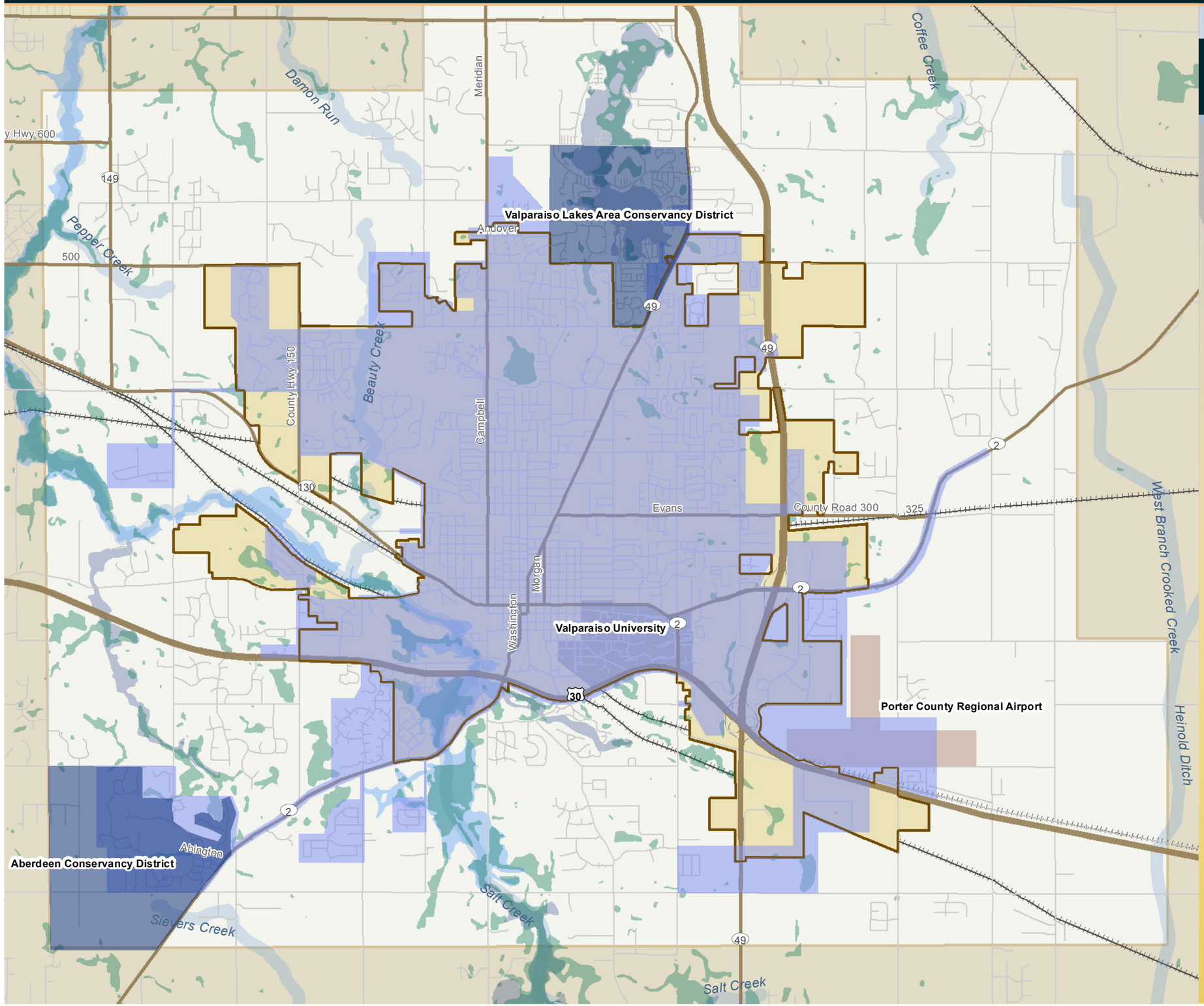
Although the systems are adequate in meeting these demands, VCU is considering improvements and investments:

- Many of the water mains are 40 to 70 years old and made of cast iron. The Department spends approximately $500,000 each year to replace these deteriorated or aging distribution lines.

- Water supplies from Airport well field have been reported to be high in hardness, requiring higher-cost treatment water softening operations. VCU is investigating softening equipment options along with alternatives to replace or supplement wells in the airport well field with groundwater supplies from a new area southeast of the city.

- Additional wells will be needed to expand the "firm" capacity of the system, which can be provided within the City's existing well fields. VCU estimates that the fields themselves will have sufficient capacity for the next 50 years.

- VCU is investigating the implementation of automated water line flushing devices that will improve drinking water quality and reduce the



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Map 7.2

Water Service Area

Legend

- Effective Water Service Area
- Aberdeen Conservancy District
- Valparaiso Lakes Area Conservancy District
- City Limits
- Study Area
- Valparaiso University
- Airport
- Wetlands, Ponds, and Lakes
- Flood Zone (A)
- Flood Zone (AE)
- Streams and Rivers
- Railroad

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labor requirements for manual flushing. The utility is also considering water treatment plant filter backwash reclamation equipment to improve water use efficiency and conserve supplies. [3]

- The City's wells range in depth between 130 and 150 feet in depth, and the well fields rely on aquifer recharge from the immediate local area to maintain their capacities. It is important to prevent drinking water supplies from becoming polluted by managing potential sources of contamination in the areas in the vicinity of the City's three well fields. Much can be done to prevent pollution, such as the wise use of land and restriction of chemical spills.

Sanitary Sewer System - The VCU Water Reclamations Department operates 228 miles of sanitary, storm, and combined sewers. The sanitary sewer system's service area, which serves all incorporated areas, is shown in **Map 7.3, Sewer Service Area**. It also receives and treats sanitary sewage under contract from the Valparaiso Lakes Conservancy District north of the City and the Nature Works Conservancy District, which provides sewer service to the Aberdeen neighborhood.

Sanitary flows are transported by gravity within two principal sewer sheds, which generally follow the City's topography. These gravity flows are aided by 28 lift stations, 5 of which accommodate flows greater than one million gallons per day. Flows from the originally developed parts of the City and areas to the north, west, and south move directly to the Elden Kuehl Pollution Control Facility (EKPCF) on Joliet Rd. near Salt Creek. The southeastern quadrant of the City drains to Koselki Ditch, which is a tributary to the Kankakee River and terminates at the Sturdy Road Lift Station. From there, the flows are pumped by force main to the EKPCF.

Elden Kuehl Pollution Control Facility

The EKPCF treats an average wastewater flow of 5.5 million gallons per day and has a current designed capacity to treat peak flows of 18 million gallons per day. The conventional activated sludge plant includes tertiary mixed-media filters and ultraviolet post-treatment to the outfall flows before finally entering Salt Creek.

Residential customers generate 90 percent of all sanitary wastes, and the remaining 10 percent is from commercial and industrial accounts. There are five businesses or industries that are required to provide significant amounts of pretreatment to comply with regulations.

Because Salt Creek eventually drains into Lake Michigan and is part of the Great Lakes watershed, the EKPCF is subject to highly stringent National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit requirement. Although 12 to 14 percent of the City's wastewater collection system is

[3] Strategic Plan 2010-2015, Valparaiso City Utilities, December 2010.

composed of combined sanitary/storm sewer lines, the plant maintains 100 percent compliance with the State of Indiana issued NPDES Permit and the Site Specific Biosolids (sludge) Land Application Permit.

Although the collection and treatment facilities are well positioned to accommodate Valparaiso's projected growth and development, VCU is continuing to make adjustments and improvements to the wastewater collection and water reclamation systems, as follows:

- VCU is conducting an aggressive program to televise and record the internal condition of sewers as a means to identify and correct infiltration and inflow issues with its older sewers.

- The utility is investigating future nutrient removal requirements and composting of biosolids.

- Investment in sanitary/storm sewer separation is continuing, as there are currently five major separation projects that have begun or about to begin.

- Over the past 10 years, VCU has conducted several engineering studies of the capacity and efficiency of the Sturdy Road lift station, which drains a sewer shed area of 8,400 acres of land that is expected to accommodate most of the City's future industrial development. While past studies have considered enlargement of the facility, and even the establishment of a new waste treatment facility to supplement the EKPCF, current recommendations are to improve the metering and control systems of the existing facility.

Stormwater Management - Valparaiso is located along the continental divide between the Great Lakes and the Mississippi River watersheds. The majority of the City's drainage enters the Salt Creek watershed, which terminates at Lake Michigan. The southeastern quadrant is drained by the Koselki Ditch and Stimson Drain, which are in the Kankakee River watershed that eventually drains to the Mississippi River. Although the topography of Valparaiso is not particularly dramatic, it is complex and presents a number of challenges from a storm drainage standpoint. For instance:

- Because the City is situated at the headwaters of a continental divide, natural drainage patterns are complex; and the area's creeks, streams, and 19th Century agricultural ditches have relatively low capacities.

- The lack of pronounced ravines and the low stream grades causes water to drain slowly (or, "stay around longer") when there is a major precipitation.

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Map 7.3

Sewer Service Area

Legend

- Sewer Service Area
- Aberdeen Conservancy District
- Valparaiso Lakes Area Conservancy District
- City Limits
- Study Area
- Valparaiso University
- Airport
- Wetlands, Ponds, and Lakes
- Flood Zone (A)
- Flood Zone (AE)
- Streams and Rivers
- Railroad

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Valparaiso Lakes Area Conservancy District

Aberdeen Conservancy District

Valparaiso University

Porter County Regional Airport

Andover

Evans

Abington

Damon Run

Pepper Creek

Beauty Creek

Coffee Creek

West Branch Crooked Creek

Heinold Ditch

Salt Creek

Sievers Creek

Meridian

Campbell

Morgan

Washington

County Hwy 150

County Road 300

y Hwy 600

149

500

130

49

2

30

325

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- Alterations of drainage patterns in the Great Lakes watershed are regulated by a U.S./Canada treaty; diversions of surface runoff away from Salt Creek or its tributaries are subject to regulations of the International Joint Commission.

Adding to these challenges, parts of the storm water drainage system are a combined sanitary/storm system, collecting both sanitary sewage and storm water runoff in a single pipe to deliver it to the treatment plant to be treated. Combined sewers can cause serious water pollution problems and thus, are no longer used in new development. While requiring all new land developments to separate the two utilities, the City is also utilizing a Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) program to maintain and benefit the community's water quality. The MS4 program was established as a result of the 1987 Amendments to the Clean Water Act; it requires designated entities, such as Valparaiso, to develop a stormwater quality management program consisting of a variety of construction requirements, regulatory measures, public education strategies, and management practices to reduce pollutants in stormwater and runoff.[4]

As described in the sanitary sewers and treatment section of this chapter, the City has been continuously engaged in storm/ sanitary sewer separation construction projects.

The City has also adopted a stormwater master plan in 2009, which was prepared in response to the significant local flooding that occurred in September 2008, when the remnants of Hurricane Ike passed through Northwestern Indiana leaving a record intensity of rainfall. The plan identified 17 priority stormwater management improvement projects with a total cost of $15 million. The City is well into the implementation of this plan.

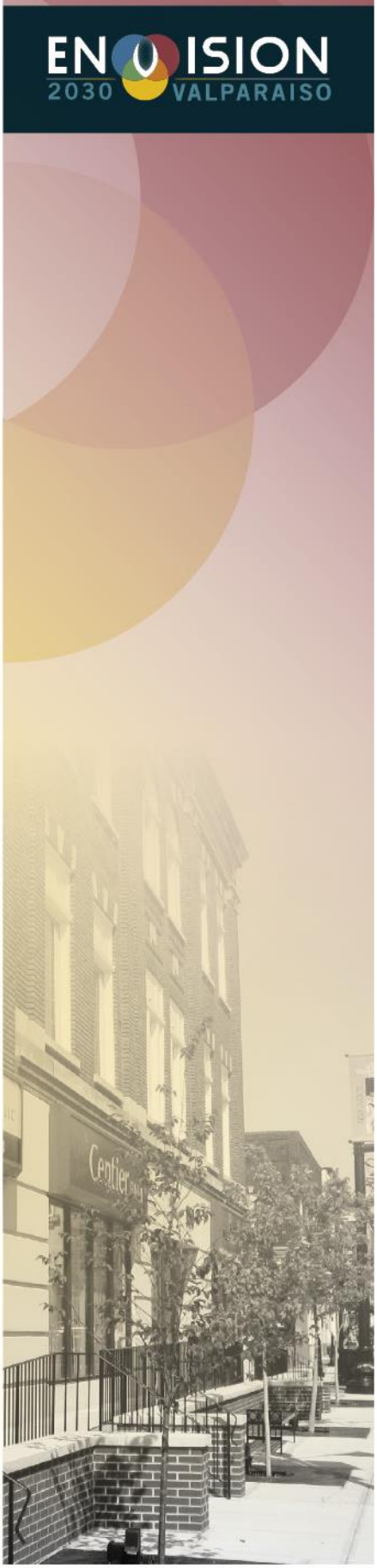
The City continues to invest in stormwater system improvements.

Transportation Infrastructure

The street system, public transit, and other mobility infrastructure elements are fundamental elements required to support City growth. These improvements are described in *Chapter 5, Mobility*. The extensions of arterial and major collector streets are important growth inducing elements, as they open new undeveloped areas for subsequent commercial and residential growth. The most significant of these street extension projects include the following:

- Construction of a new east-west connector between Sturdy Road and SR-49 about halfway between Laporte Avenue and U.S. 30;

[4] A Citizens Guide to the MS4 Program, Northwest Indiana MS4 Community Partnership.



- Establishment of a new arterial or collector street paralleling SR-49 to the east, in general alignment with Porter's Vale Boulevard northward to East 500 North.
- Completion of West 500 North Road by constructing the missing link between Froberg Rd. and N. Campbell St. (Meridian Rd.), connecting into Burlington Beach Road;
- Extension of SR 149 from SR 130 southward to U.S. 30.

7.6 ALTERNATIVE FORMS OF GROWTH

Haphazard growth is highly inefficient. Costs associated with the provision of both capital and social infrastructure are much higher than they are for more contiguous patterns of development. This is particularly relevant when the community is confronted by limited resources and increasing demands for public services. In addition to its fiscal consequences, unplanned growth often degrades environmental resources by prematurely committing rural areas to the impacts of urban development. Phased and orderly growth mitigates this situation by comprehensively addressing the impacts of development on the natural systems. Piecemeal and sporadic development is detrimental to any type of comprehensive framework.

There are six fundamental forms of urban growth, five of which are considered acceptable:

- Scattered Development
- Corridor Development
- Infill
- Contiguous Development
- Cluster Development
- Redevelopment

Scattered Development

Often referred to as "leapfrog" development, this form represents the unacceptable pattern of random development, in which development skips over empty land to build in a remote location. It is a major cause of another common term, "urban sprawl." Leapfrogging often occurs in areas where there are few land use regulations or development standards that properly assign infrastructure costs to the developer. In other cases, developers attempt to move beyond city boundaries to avoid their land use and development regulations. Leapfrogging has also been inadvertently encouraged in many localities by obsolete tax policies that favor greenfield development.

Corridor Development

This common form of development occurs along major highways, taking advantage of the access afforded by an existing highway and its accompanying utility services. Corridor development, particularly auto-oriented commercial development, is usually considered desirable and is often encouraged for infrastructure cost savings and to allow unified design. Care must be taken, however, to manage the intensity of development and avoid overbuilding, which can place undue stress on the roadways and infrastructure and result in clutter.

Corridor development, over time, results in the establishment of peninsulas of development, which sets the stage for later infill.

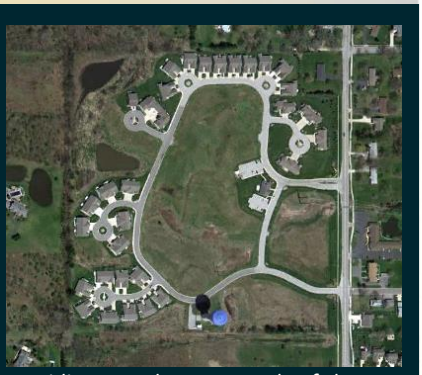
Contiguous Development

This form of new development provides for gradual outward growth adjacent or in very close proximity, to existing development. When carefully planned, this development form is highly efficient and least obtrusive to existing neighborhoods or businesses. Under real-world circumstances, perfectly staged contiguous development rarely occurs; land ownership patterns or natural features usually result in small amounts of short-distance skipping, occasional leapfrogging, or checkerboard patterns of development. This form of development has been occurring in Valparaiso for many years.

Cluster Development

Clustering is a form of contiguous development that results in better land utilization by preserving natural assets while still allowing some degree of development on smaller, constrained building sites. Cluster development provides return on investment to property owners and addresses area housing needs (including incorporation of townhomes, patio homes, and other housing options in a well-planned setting). In the best designs, natural features are preserved and incorporated as development focal points and amenities, thereby adding value for both the developer and home owners over time, especially when homes and/or other uses are arranged and oriented to take advantage of open space views. By setting aside natural areas, ponds, and open space, cluster designs are also effective at reducing both storm water runoff and water quality impairment. Better drainage practices can reduce site infrastructure costs, and more compact development generally requires less linear feet of street, water and sewer lines, sidewalks, other utilities, and other infrastructure components.

There are varying degrees of cluster developments, ranging from the basic provision of grouped cul-de-sacs and a small amount of common open space, to extreme "preservation" clusters with as much as 80 percent of the area left natural and relatively high net densities within the areas that accommodate the building pads.



Meridian Woods, an example of cluster development in Valparaiso.

Valparaiso's geography and abundance of natural areas provide many opportunities for cluster development, and a few developments that approach the cluster form have already been built. The City's new Unified Development Ordinance, adopted in 2010, includes provisions that permit cluster and establish appropriate standards for design inclusion of common areas as a part of development. The 40-acre Meridian Woods Subdivision is an example of a cluster development that has been developed and marketed for senior independent living. Another, larger scale example of cluster development is the award winning Aberdeen golf course neighborhood immediately southwest of the City.

Infill

Infill development is a highly desirable form of development, which occurs when leftover land plots get developed--often years after development has passed by. The advantages of infill development are that significant investments in additional infrastructure are rarely needed to support infill development. Also, public services such as transit or neighborhood schools are already in place and immediately available. Potential infill locations for Valparaiso are described in *Chapter 2, Land Use and Community Character* and shown on *Map 2.3, Infill Development Opportunities*.

Redevelopment

Redevelopment in Valparaiso has already taken place in locations such as the East Lincolnway corridor (Eastgate) and other smaller sites near downtown. Future redevelopment opportunities have arisen from the presence aged or obsolete industrial buildings, older shopping centers and large stand-alone commercial buildings, and underutilized institutional structures. Potential redevelopment opportunities in Valparaiso are described in greater detail in *Chapter 2, Land Use & Community Character* and shown on *Map 2.2, Redevelopment*.

7.7 GROWTH AREAS

The recommended pattern of future development is intended to contribute substantially to the adequacy of the transportation and utility infrastructure and to the provision of other public services. In accordance with this intent, a future land use and community character plan is presented as *Map 2.1.1, Future Land Use Plan* in *Chapter 2, Land Use and Community Character*. The bulk of growth associated with this plan is shown in **Map 7.4, Future Growth Areas**.

These areas include a combination of infill and contiguous (or nearly contiguous) development that add up to about 800 acres of residential development and 600 acres of nonresidential development, including:

- Three residential infill sites west of the current City limits, which are virtually surrounded by existing development.

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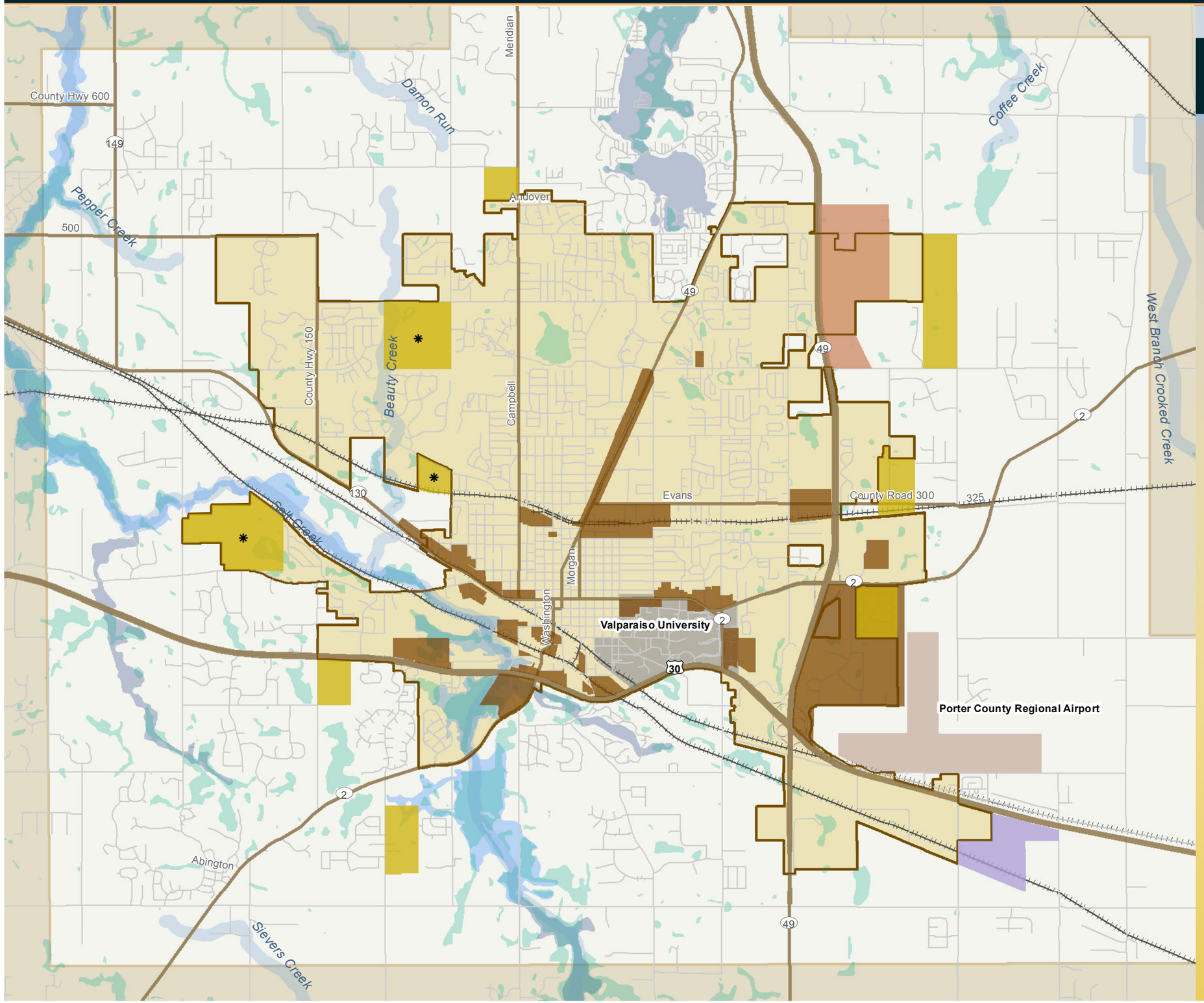
Map 7.4

Future Growth Areas



Legend

- Infill Development
- Commercial/Medical
- Industrial
- Residential
- Redevelopment Target Sites
- City Limits
- Study Area
- Valparaiso University
- Airport
- Wetlands, Ponds, and Lakes
- Flood Zone (A)
- Flood Zone (AE)
- Streams and Rivers
- Railroad

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- Similar infill or contiguous development sites at the east edge of the City.
- Industrial park expansion to the southeast.
- New commercial or medical-related development east of Route 49, taking advantage of the diamond interchange currently being built at the highway's intersection with Vale Park Rd. (400 N.)

As a guide for land development decisions and public improvements, the plan depicted in *Map 2.1.1, Future Land Use Plan* captures and incorporates into the City's vision and values where it will grow over the course of the next two decades. Provided in *Map 7.4, Future Growth Areas* is further direction and prioritization on the sequence of this growth. These maps are significant since the findings and recommendations contained in this plan provide the basis for the City's Unified Development Ordinance, Capital Improvements Plan, and annexation policies as the primary tools for implementation.

7.8 ANNEXATION

Annexation is the legal process by which a municipality adds land to its boundaries to increase its total incorporated area. It is used to allow the municipality to provide services, manage land use and growth, maintain development standards, collect revenues, and enhance its overall well-being.

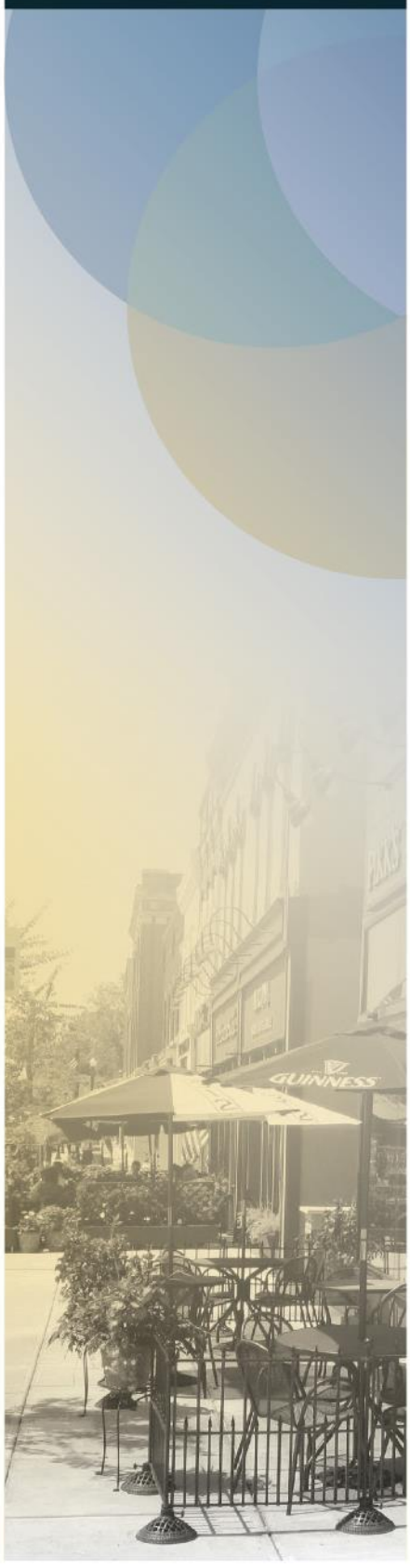
Background

Indiana law allows cities to annex property regardless of the preferences of property owners ("involuntary annexation"), as long as they follow specific procedures and meet certain conditions related to providing adequate public notice, conducting fiscal analysis, adopting an annexation ordinance, and filing the adopted annexation ordinance with the State.
During this process, property owners and residents of the areas to be annexed can oppose the intended annexation--but generally only on the basis of procedural grounds—they cannot oppose an annexation proposal simply because they wish to stay outside of the municipality or even because they believe that annexation will affect them adversely. Similarly, county and township governments can contest annexation only on procedural matters.

Annexation Requirements

Essentially, Indiana municipalities have the freedom to annex land unilaterally so long as statutory procedures have been satisfied. Additionally, they must ensure that the land is urban in character, or intended to be urban in the future. In determining this, at least one of the following criteria must be met:

1. The area is at least 12.5 percent contiguous, the density of the territory is at least three persons/acre; 60 percent of the territory is subdivided; or the



territory is zoned commercial, industrial, or business;

OR

2. The territory is contiguous, except that at least 25 percent rather than 12.5 percent of the boundary must coincide with municipal boundaries; and the land is needed and can be used by the municipality for its development in the reasonably near future. [5]

These provisions limit municipalities from involuntarily annexing large chunks of rural or undeveloped land; prevent the establishment of artificial barriers that block the growth of neighboring municipalities; and prohibit the practice of extended "reaching out," often for miles along a public highway to involuntarily annex an industrial site or similarly valuable property.

Indiana annexation provisions also require the annexing municipality to prepare fiscal plans prior to annexation. It must document that the municipality will be able to deliver all services within the time frame specified by statute (capital improvements within three years and non-capital within one year). The annexation statute does not provide detailed criteria for the contents or analyses in a fiscal plan, only the demonstration that future municipal residents affected by the annexation are treated fairly.

The Need for Annexation

Valparaiso's borders are highly irregular; they have largely been defined by incremental expansions outward by developers and businesses that chose to enter the corporate limits through voluntary annexation. Also, with the notable exceptions of the north edge Lakes Area, Aberdeen, and some Porter County-owned properties; the City has established voluntary annexation as a condition of extending municipal sewer and water services.

In some areas, the City's outward expansion through annexation has been physically blocked by the presence of long-established rural subdivisions, which were originally built with minimal County development standards. City officials have resisted annexing these areas because of the unacceptably high costs with limited financial returns associated in:

Maintaining their deteriorated public facilities,

- Providing public services to areas that are isolated or have indirect access to the City's street system.
- Connecting residences into City sewer and water systems, or
- Upgrading the streets, runoff control, and utilities to comparable City

[5] Annexation in Indiana: Issues and Options, 1998, Center for Urban Policy and the Environment, School of Environmental Affairs.

standards.

Because Indiana Law does not provide extraterritorial land use authority (zoning and subdivision standards), it is important that areas intended for future City development be brought within the City limits in order that this future development, when it occurs, conform with this plan and with City zoning and development standards. It will provide improved continuity in implementing the Thoroughfare Plan, extending sewer and water services, and completing water main "loops" that make the system more efficient and reliable.

Areas to be Annexed

The recommended annexation plan is illustrated in **Map 7.5, Annexation Areas**. The following areas are recommended for eventual expansion through the Year 2030:

- Undeveloped areas west of the present City limits out to the recommended extension of SR 149 to the west and 500 N. Road to the north. This will enclose significant natural areas, floodplain, and developable land reaching out to the future Brigadoon Subdivision.
- Extension one-half mile northward on SR 49 beyond 600 N. Road to establish appropriate land use restrictions and development requirements for future corridor development reaching out to the new Porter Regional Medical Center.
- Extension to the east, squaring off the borders and accommodating future residential and commercial development that is proposed in this area.
- Expansion eastward on U.S. 30 to accommodate future industrial park expansion. Additional annexations should be considered in accordance with the Airport Study's industrial expansion recommendations, as these plans materialize. Because utility extensions will be involved in the further development of this area, annexations would expect to be entirely voluntary.

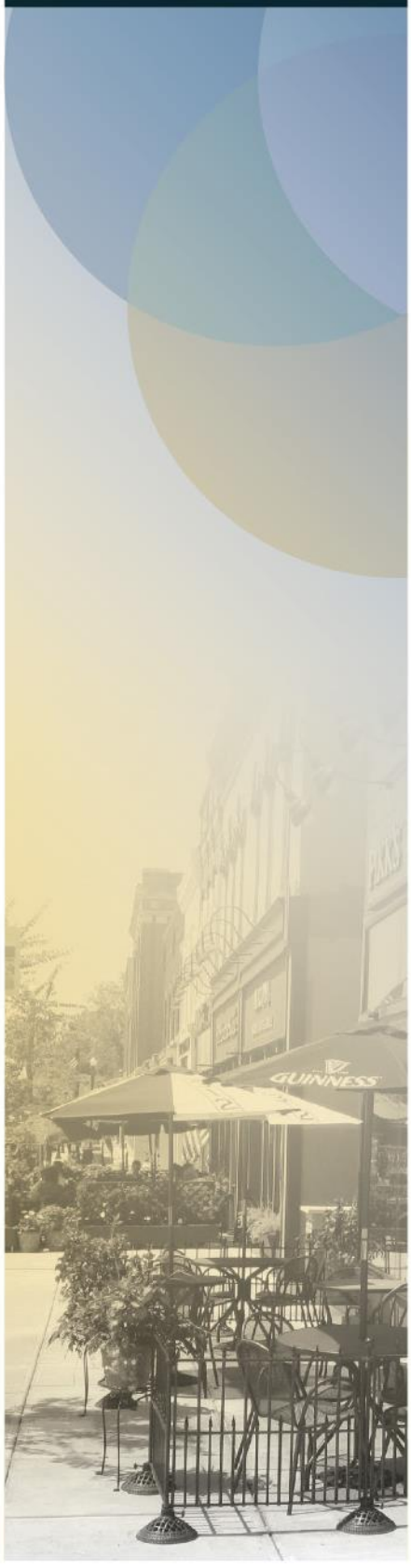
7.9 POLICIES AND ACTIONS

General Planning

Policies

7.a. Effectively manage future growth to achieve a compact and fiscally responsible pattern of development.

7.b. Preserve the community's rich and valued open spaces and environmental resources while forging more sustainable development practices.



7.c. Strengthen the integrity and livability of existing neighborhoods through appropriate infill development, redevelopment, and continued reinvestment in streets and infrastructure.

7.d. Maintain the status of Downtown as a local and regional destination of culture, entertainment, and community gathering.

7.e. Preserve community heritage through historic restoration and neighborhood integrity improvements.

7.f. Enhance the character and aesthetic attractiveness of the community and its neighborhoods, districts, and corridor.

7.g. Strengthen the correlation of incremental zoning decisions and development approvals with the policies, recommendations, and maps contained in the Comprehensive Plan.

Actions

7.1. Approve only those development proposals that are consistent with the growth management principles brought forward in this plan.

7.2. Preserve the natural appearance of frontage along the SR-49 by maintaining current land use, setback, and buffering restrictions.

7.3. Refrain from granting zoning use variances that adversely affect densities, increase traffic, or strain existing utility services.

7.4. Coordinate with Porter County to achieve uniform development standards for future growth in the peripheral unincorporated areas.

7.5. Establish an educational imitative with the Planning Commission, Zoning Board of Adjustment, and other public bodies stressing the importance of the Comprehensive Plan's role in guiding decisions on development approvals, zoning map amendments, use variances, capital budgeting, and similar planning decisions.

Infrastructure

Policies

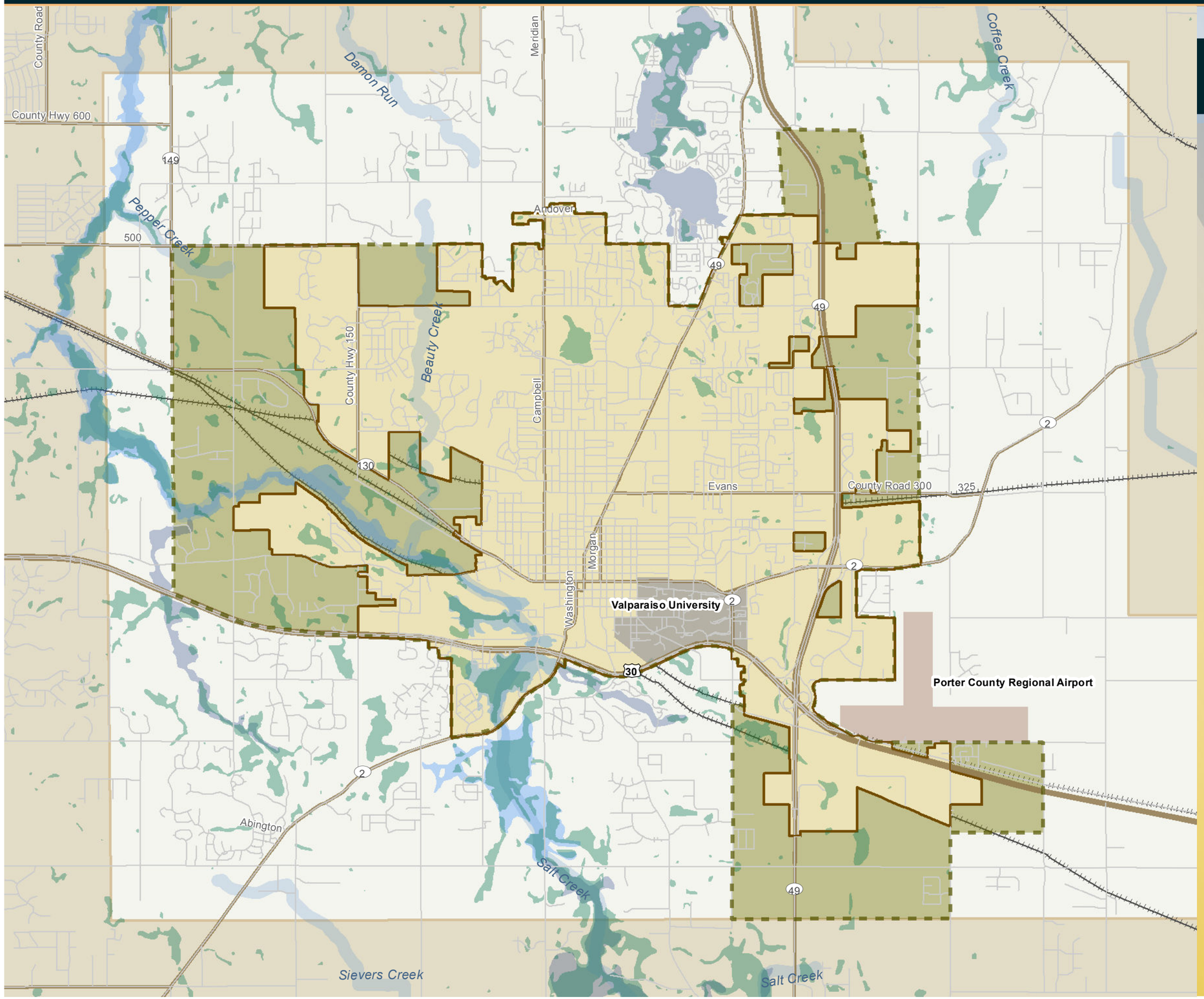
7.h. Maintain current investment practices for improving the City's water, sanitary sewer, and storm sewer utilities.

7.i. Coordinate future land development with the availability of or ease in expanding utility and street services.

7.j. Except under rare circumstances, require a municipal annexation agreement as a condition to extending utility services.

Actions

7.6. Maintain existing programs, policies, and instructional activities that promote wellhead protection.



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Map 7.5

Annexation Areas

Legend

- Future City Limits Expansion
- Annexation Area
- City Limits
- Study Area
- Valparaiso University
- Airport
- Wetlands, Ponds, and Lakes
- Flood Zone (A)
- Flood Zone (AE)
- Streams and Rivers
- Railroad

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7.7. Implement proposed improvements to the south (airport) water supply. Expand the water supply capacity as needed.

7.8. Implement recommended improvements to the sanitary sewer system, including replacement/rehabilitation of older sewers, separation of the remaining combined sewer/storm lines, and improvements to the Sturdy Ave. lift station.

7.9. Continue to implement the 2010 Stormwater Management Plan to alleviate localized flooding.

7.10. Implement the street system extensions recommendations presented in *Chapter 5, Mobility*.

7.11 Develop a municipal service plan to establish the timing and means of infrastructure provision to the preferred future growth areas.

7.12. Consider the possibility of annexation, special assessments, and other measures to upgrade the services of the Lakes Conservancy District.

Growth Areas and Development Forms

Policies

7.k. Continue to promote infill development, redevelopment opportunities, and reinvestment in the established neighborhoods.

7.l. Promote cluster and conservation development for new residential areas.

7.m. Establish municipal investment priorities in the future growth areas designated in *Map 7.4, Future Growth Area*.

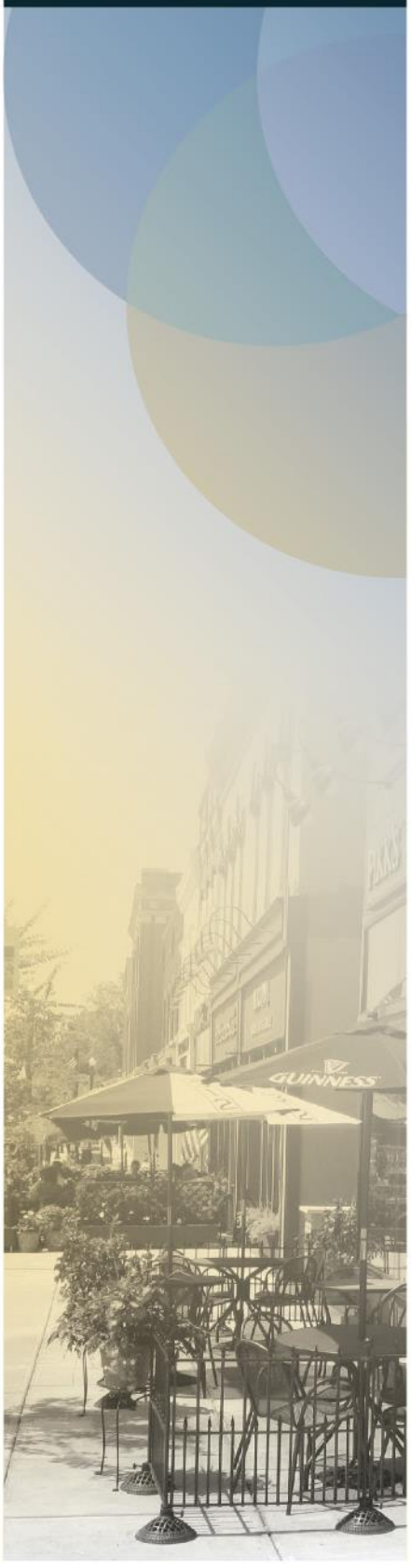
Actions

7.13. Determine the appropriate zoning of the infill development tracts and initiate rezoning as appropriate. Care must be taken to ensure that the neighborhood character is preserved and compatibility with existing uses is observed.

7.14. Study the infrastructure needs of the infill opportunity sites and prepare a schedule of capital improvements, including the timing and methods of funding the improvements.

7.15. Incorporate bonuses into the zoning provisions whereby increased height and/or floor area may be achieved for meeting certain prescribed development standards. This may help to make future infill development more feasible.

7.16. In accordance with *Chapter 2, Land Use and Community Character,* define areas that warrant redevelopment and designate appropriate ones as redevelopment districts. Subsequently, prepare necessary redevelopment plans to determine the type and general form of development to serve as a basis for design and implementation.



7.17 Pre-zone the preferred future growth areas to be consistent with the future land use plan. Such zoning should allow flexibility as to the development type, provided the development character is compatible with the surrounding area.

7.18. Initiate annexation of the properties within the preferred future growth areas. (see *Map 7.4, Future Growth Areas*)

Annexation

Policies

7.n. Adopt and adhere to a policy of growth and utility expansion only through annexation.

7.o. Avoid piecemeal peninsular annexations unless requests are accompanied by long-term development plans that include contiguous infill growth outward to the area of initial development.

7.p. Undertake fiscal impact studies for major annexation measures to ensure positive net paybacks on long-term investments in infrastructure expansion, new parks, and other municipal services.

Actions

7.19. Conduct the required technical and financial studies, then adopt a future annexation plan that represents the longer-term City borders.

7.20. Continue existing requirements of pre-annexation agreements as a part of the subdivision approval process.