



## LAND USE

Changes in the use of land within the City of Valparaiso must remain consistent with the Comprehensive Plan's goals and implementation strategies especially the Growth Management Chapter. This chapter cannot address each lot or development in the city, but does set out the basic goals for land use changes throughout the entire city. One of the most important policies for managing the city's development is the requirement to use city water and sanitary sewer services, and to require anyone outside the City to petition the City for annexation before these services are extended.

### RESIDENTIAL LAND USE GOALS

Ensure quality development of land to accommodate anticipated residential development.

#### 1) Residential development should include:

- use of city potable water and sanitary sewer services
- a buildable site in terms of soil, slopes, and other natural features.
- a plan to retain natural features through cluster development or PUD
- a variety of housing products in cluster or PUD developments
- public utilities in close proximity or are easily extended.
- minimum noise and circulation impacts.
- appropriate transitions between various land uses
- connections to existing development – both pedestrian and vehicular; continuous flow is a sign of good planning
- landscaping (as outlined in Article XXXI of the Zoning Ordinance)
- pedestrian sidewalks in all development; bike paths where planned for as part of the Intermodal Transportation, Chapter 6

Encourage a range of housing developments such as cluster development and PUDs.

Encourage the development of unique and well-thought-out projects.

Continue using guidelines regarding densities that respect the community's needs, natural features, and available infrastructure, and avoid ineffective use of land.

#### 2) Encourage equal housing opportunity for all segments of the City's population, including:

- Building of quality homes in a range of prices, styles and sizes
- Availability of housing for the handicapped and elderly
- Availability of housing for families of all income levels

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- Availability of housing for all household sizes
  - Equal housing opportunities for all racial and ethnic groups

**3) Maintain and improve the quality and character of the community's neighborhoods.**

- Preserve character of existing neighborhoods by educating community on the value of historic preservation
- Require edge improvements that buffer incompatible areas.
- Study the rezoning of isolated areas that are inconsistent with existing development
- Enhance the physical appearance of neighborhoods through strict enforcement of the building codes and zoning ordinance.
- Ensure that all neighborhoods have appropriate public utilities.



**4) Maintain and improve the housing stock of Valparaiso.**

- Develop and implement rehabilitation strategies in neighborhoods that need redevelopment.
- Encourage rehabilitation and preservation of residential units, particularly those that are rated outstanding and notable in the Porter County Historic Preservation Survey.
- Encourage the removal of structures that have deteriorated beyond repair and pose a safety and health hazard to the community.
- Establish a long-range program to service neighborhoods within the community that are currently lacking public utilities.

**COMMERCIAL LAND USE GOALS**

**1) Support the strong role neighborhood business districts and commercial corridors play in Valparaiso's economy and identity.**

- Use design guidelines (Growth Management Plan, Chapter 9, and Office/Professional Park Ordinance) to improve the appearance of existing commercial areas.

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- Create incentives to encourage development of higher density, mixed commercial, governmental, and residential uses on the upper floors in the downtown. Promote downtown as a specialized retail district that serves community and regional markets. Encourage a limit to building height in the downtown based on height of Courthouse.
  - Establish small scale neighborhood retail centers to serve new neighborhoods.
  - Protect vitality of downtown and recognize that it is the heart of the community.



- Promote pedestrian-friendly activities in Valparaiso's neighborhood business centers.

2) **Enhance the economic vitality of Valparaiso's downtown business district.**

- Enhance the existing retail activity in downtown to strengthen it as a diverse and specialty regional shopping center.
- Promote additional entertainment-oriented businesses and residential/commercial mixed-use development in Downtown Valparaiso in order to attract university students and people from neighboring communities.
- Promote downtown Valparaiso as a viable tourist destination by holding city wide events like farmer's markets, festivals, etc. and extending evening business hours.
- Encourage the continued collaboration between the city and stakeholders to work toward improving downtown Valparaiso by promoting a detailed plan and design of physical improvements and public-private partnership efforts to complete streetscape and physical improvements as outlined in the Downtown Master Plan.
- Encourage diversity in retail uses and mixed commercial/residential projects within the downtown. Rehabilitate existing buildings, encourage pedestrian oriented development and amenities, and establish sensitive design and sign controls.
- Preserve and enhance the historic and pedestrian friendly character of Downtown business and residential districts.

- Protect and promote the downtown's historic landmarks and older residential neighborhoods adjacent to the downtown business district. Neighborhood associations should be included in plans to develop/redevelop this area.
- Provide incentives within the Zoning Ordinance for non-traditional methods of meeting parking requirements. Encourage mass transit and bicycle ridership as alternatives that reduce automobile parking demand.
- Examine parking needs of the Downtown and investigate alternative methods for providing parking.
- Conduct an analysis of additional potential parking needs generated by the future growth of the City and revise the parking system with policies for rectifying parking shortages. Pursue opportunities to expand the number of on-street and off-street parking facilities in areas where parking might be insufficient in the future.
- Consider opportunities for additional structured parking to meet the long-term parking demand, generated by additional growth, in Downtown Valparaiso and other business districts.
- Promote landscape and lighting requirements for parking areas, including public lots, that will improve aesthetics but not hinder safety.



### 3) **Ensure the availability of land to accommodate anticipated commercial development.**

- Encourage the reuse/redevelopment of underutilized properties.
- Allocate land and identify structures which can accommodate commercial growth and expansion of existing commercial areas, and identify conflicting land uses in commercial areas which may be appropriately reused for commercial purposes.
- Encourage public-private cooperation in commercial redevelopment activities.
- Study traffic patterns and access points for improvement projects.
- Study the need for land to be developed as a business/office park to accommodate a mix of small business services and goods providers. It is a type of development that has unique characteristics and is separate from types of development that rely on continuous traffic.

## **INDUSTRIAL LAND USE GOALS**

Industrial areas are provided to permit research, distribution, assembly and manufacturing uses within the community in locations near major transportation facilities and away or buffered from residential areas. Such uses are vital to the economic well-being of the community both to provide

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an adequate tax base from which to provide necessary and desirable public services and to provide stable employment opportunities for Valparaiso residents.

- 1) **Maintain and enhance the quality and diversity of the City's industry.**
  - Identify land for business/industrial parks.
  - Encourage visual improvements to industrial properties and minimize conflicts with adjacent land uses.
  - Encourage business/industry to control points of ingress and egress to their property from public streets.
- 2) **Develop partnerships with the private sector in promoting the City for existing industrial expansions and recruitment of new industries.**
- 3) **Partner with developers to create necessary infrastructure .**

## **PARK AND OPEN SPACE**

Environmental protection emerged as an important element in the overall goals for guiding development over the long-term. The Plan recognizes that the existing natural environment in Valparaiso is an important and vital element of the quality of life for its residents.



- 1) **Provide park and open space opportunities for all residents of the City.**
  - Encourage the Park Board to continue their considerations of the growing demand for recreational facilities within the community.
  - Follow the Park Master Plan when identifying park land development
  - Contribute to the distinctive character of various land uses through the use of existing open space.
  - Encourage the development of bike paths and pedestrian linkages between neighborhoods, parks, and commercial areas.
- 2) **Identify land for the Park Board that pose major or severe hazards to development, but could be used as park land.**

## **CRITERIA FOR DECISION-MAKING**

The following land use proposals are the interpretation of these goals, implications and action plans. As proposals for land development are presented the decisions should be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. The following criteria should be used for all land use decisions including, rezonings, annexations, subdivisions and PUD developments.

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1. Each request should be studied in light of the designated land uses found in other chapters of the Comprehensive Plan including the Growth Management Chapter, and current zoning map.
  2. Where questions or concerns exist, the Comprehensive Plan should be used as a basis for interpretation and decision making.

## **LAND USE CLASSIFICATIONS AND PATTERNS**

Land use in Valparaiso can be classified into nine major categories; single family, multi-family, commercial, industrial, office/professional park, public, parks, agriculture, and vacant. The general land use patterns created by these activities must be understood before recommendations aimed at improving the overall situation can be proposed. Also, the inherent qualities of each category must be understood before specific guidelines can be established for each land use.

The general land use patterns were established with the original plat of Portersville in 1836. (see LU-1) That plat included 31 blocks (96 acres). Although no zoning was attached to the land, the use included one school, six churches, a women's club, a hotel, a post office, three fraternal organizations, 12 businesses, four banks, a city building, and a county building. The other lots were residential.

In 1924, a consultant proposed to complete the City's first Comprehensive Plan for \$8,000. The population was 7,000, and the consultants predicted a city population of 37,000 by 1984. They also presented the idea of a three-mile land use jurisdiction around the city. The proposal included residential, business and industrial zones. But it was not until 1930 that the zoning classifications were adopted. The requirements for each district were based on density.

The Comprehensive Plan was revised in 1951 at which time the population had grown to 12,028, and the city's size was 1642.61 acres. Of that, 34% was vacant, 26% was residential, 2.3% was commercial and 6% was industrial. The remainder was considered non-buildable.

Currently the City is approximately 8% public land, 15% industrial, 15% commercial, 50% residential, and 12% vacant or park land. The City includes 12 square miles, or 7680 acres. Opportunities still exist for new developments, but are very limited without future annexations.

In 1981, the city included 5340 acres and had a population of 22,247. At that time 48% of the land was residential, 12% commercial, 8.8% industrial, 7.5% public, and the remainder in parks, agriculture or undeveloped. As the city grew, the basic land uses remained. In 1990, 51% was residential, 10%, commercial, and 13% industrial. Vacant land accounts for 16%.

The existing residential land includes single family and multi-family structures. Most of the single family growth over the last 50 years has been north of the Canadian National Railway. Older residential neighborhoods are found north of Brown Street and south of the Canadian National. Multi-family structures are concentrated in the university area, Sturdy Road, and Campbell Street.

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Commercial uses area found basically along Calumet Ave., US 30 and the central downtown district. The downtown district, designated as a National Historic District, has changed from a regional shopping center to a mixture of specialty shops, service and professional businesses, and a governmental center. The County Administration Building adds significantly to the governmental position downtown.



Commercial development on Calumet Ave. has decreased in recent years, and concern has developed for its redevelopment potential. Most of the square footage has been in smaller stores, and strip malls. The largest new commercial development has been at LaPorte and Silhavy, and continues to lead the area with additional new developments. Development on US 30 has remained mixed, and caters to the regional marketplace.

The larger industrial developments are on both sides of US 30, east of the 49 Bypass. Other industrial areas are concentrated between the major east-west railroad tracks.

Public and park lands are scattered throughout the city. Public land is dedicated mostly to schools. Valparaiso University is the largest educational use, and the Sewage Treatment Plant the largest public facility use.

Over 650 acres of land are now dedicated to park use with the largest located on north Campbell Street right outside the city limits. Others include Creekside, and Forest Park golf courses. Existing parks and proposed plans for each will be part of the 2002 Park Master Plan.

## **MAJOR VACANT PARCELS**

Most of the vacant land is located on the north and east sides of the city. There are 8 major vacant areas within the city. These areas are:

V-1 - Open space located on the north side of Joliet Road directly east of railroad tracks, and land directly east of Shamrock Subdivision. Terrain limits use to park or recreation use.

V-2 – Open space owned by the Special Education Facility and located directly north of the facility on Campbell St. north of Bullseye Lake Road is the site of a new Valparaiso Community School Administration Building, but still leaves vacant space for future development. It is surrounded by single family, multi-family developments, and a senior village.

V-3 - Located on the east side of Valparaiso Street and south of Bullseye Lake Road, this parcel is zoned R-1A. It is surrounded by a variety of uses including residential, a nursing home, commercial developments, and an apartment complex. Mixed use development is the most compatible use.

V-4 - These sites are located on the south side of Vale Park Road between Calumet and Silhavy Road and zoned R-1, and R-4. They are surrounded by residential development, but very close to

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commercial development on Calumet. Drainage and traffic concerns could restrict the use of this parcel. Some wetlands exist.

V-5 - This parcel is located at the northeast corner of Glendale and Roosevelt roads behind the outpatient clinic. It has R-3 and C-1 zones. It is surrounded by a variety of uses including a church, park and school. A mixed use development is encouraged for this site due to the commercial development on the west side of Roosevelt Road. There is a small wetland on the east side of this property.

V-6 – Commercial land directly north of Strongbows that could be developed now that Silhavy has been extended to US 30. A commercial park could be considered for this parcel.

V-7 - Located directly south of the Wal-Mart, this parcel could be developed for commerce, or residential, particularly for employees of Strongbow Centre. It is now zoned industrial with access on Comeford Road.

V-8 – Parcel of land that runs between Campbell St. and Valparaiso St. and would include connecting these two streets with a missing link of Vale Park Road.

V-9 - This designation includes all vacant parcels along the south side of US 30 between State Route 2 and Graceland Cemetery. These parcels are all zoned commercial in the county. Wetlands are designated directly west of the cemetery.

## **FACTORS IMPACTING GROWTH**

### **RESIDENTIAL**

The development of land will depend on several economic and social factors. Residential development will continue due to the excellent quality of life in Valparaiso. The future population growth will affect the need for annexations as the city has a limited number of suitable development sites. Land has been annexed as the demand for residential development has been identified, and is developed with city water and sanitary sewers as a matter of policy. This policy has met the current demand, and additions to both the water and waste water plants will assure capacity for many years. This policy also includes the stipulation that if a developer wants city water and/or sanitary sewer capacity, an annexation petition must be filed.

### **BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT**

New businesses and industries are also contributing to the residential growth. As people find jobs, they may want to live in the same community. In turn, the new residential growth, will affect the commercial growth as more people demand more shops, medical care, and professional and business services and products. Most of the new commercial development has been in the southeast section of the City, which has impacted other commercial areas. Most industrial/manufacturing development has also been in the southeast section of the City. The city's policy for the extension of water and sanitary sewers includes filing an annexation petition.

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## **CITY SERVICES**

Growth can have immediate impact on city services. To accommodate growth, Service/Fiscal Plans have been developed for each annexed area, commencing services with payment of city taxes.

Growth also impacts traffic congestion. All development is reviewed for traffic impact, and developers are encouraged to minimize this impact as part of each development. The City is studying the possibility of impact fees as one method to solve traffic impacts, and build non-motorized alternatives.

## **TAXES**

The economy of Valparaiso is tied to development. The frozen levy status results in little new funds from development, but does decrease the tax rate for existing residents. To continue to develop and maintain a high quality of life, many other revenue sources will have to be developed to provide services, and build and maintain infrastructure. Residential land use is the highest user of services, therefore commercial and industrial development are very important to maintain our quality of life.

The expected impact of continued growth on services is specified in the Capital Improvement Plan. The Valparaiso Community Schools and other public entities continually plan for the impact of growth.

## **UTILITIES**

Utilities in the City have the capacity to absorb growth, and additional capacity is being built at the Waste Water Treatment Plant. Capacity of the sewer lines is reported in the Growth Management Chapter, and includes both sanitary sewage and storm sewage. Both dry weather and wet weather situations have to be considered due to the old combination lines existing in the older sections of the city. Some of these lines are in the process of being separated. Other important utilities include gas, electric, cable, and sufficient bandwidth for future technology business development.

## **FLOOD PLAINS AND DRAINAGE**

Specific Constraints include flood plain management, which is developed under the Federal Emergency Management Administration. A new flood plain is being planned for the Beauty Creek area on the northwest side of the City. Wetlands are a preservation issue and those over one acre in size are under the control of the City's Ordinance, the Soil Conservation Office, and the Army Corp of Engineers. Drainage continues to be studied by the City, and will also quickly be limited by the new Phase II water quality regulations by IDEM. New ideas are being tested in the City including increased use of natural long-rooted plants to absorb more rain water on site, and lessen the impacts on the local streams. On-site detention continues to be a requirement for development in the City.

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## WATER AND SANITARY SEWERS

Other constraints include the extension of water and sewer services and cost of those extensions. It is the policy of the City not to allow any extension of sewer and/or water lines outside the city limits unless a petition for annexation has been filed and acted upon. Major sewer lines will be needed on the west and east sides of the City for future developments. Capacity is not a problem now.

## SOILS

Soil constraints are usually found with the flood plains or wetlands. (LU-8). These constraints will require special development techniques and careful site review before building is permitted. Most of these sites will also require extensive drainage plans.

The legend on LU-8 refers to soil conditions. They are defined as 1) severe, which are poorly-drained and often are under water; septic facilities are not possible, nor can commercial or industrial uses be established in these areas; generally these areas cannot be developed economically for residential purpose either. 2) major, also characterized by poorly-drained soils which make development questionable; site development costs required to make buildable are usually very high, but not necessarily prohibitive as often is the case with the severe areas. 3) moderate, characterized by one or more limitations (inability to use septic tank or basements), but certain uses are not severely constrained in these areas, particularly residential. 4) normal, areas well-suited for development of most types given the provision of basic amenities, like sanitary sewer. Based on these constraints approximately 400 acres are probably not developable.

These constraints and the resulting restrictions should allow development that is not overly costly, results in fewer drainage problems, prevents ground water contamination, and the expenditure of less funds to correct problems caused by indiscriminate development.

## DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunities for development and growth need to be planned and controlled. Plans include population projections and accommodating data showing the projected acreage needed. If the 2000 official census data is used, the City should plan on about 300 new people annually. The growth of households has historically been twice that of the population, but economic downturns could affect that market.

The average density of residential land is 5.69 households per acre. Using these guidelines, about 35 acres would be needed annually for new residential development. If commercial and industrial development maintain the same rate as in the past, about 10 acres of new commercial and 7 acres of new industrial will be needed annually.



These needs will not always be met on existing undeveloped land in the City due to the previously-

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discussed constraints. Annexation petitions will continue to be presented to the Plan Commission and City Council. If growth continues at the same rate between now and 2025, about 700 additional acres would have to be annexed. This assumes the development of ALL parcels of land with severe constraints. Costs will prohibit some of that development.

The need will be greatest for commercial and industrial land. The City will be short both commercial and industrial land. The need for additional park land will be addressed in the latest Park Master Plan. The need for additional schools will be addressed by the Valparaiso Community Schools.

The need for other social and community facilities such as churches and medical facilities will develop naturally. These needs should be considered in the overall Year 2025 projections.

## **TIMING OF DEVELOPMENT**

The timing of development of the vacant land depends on many factors, not the least of which is the availability of financing. These projections are based on need and number of constraints. There is no way to project the impact of development of land currently outside the city limits other than the cost of new water and sewer lines.

This need for new infrastructure and available funding of it will determine the timing of development along the 49 Bypass, and parcels of land west of the City, as well as redevelopment of areas in the northwest sections of the City.

## **GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPMENT**

The development of Valparaiso through 2025 should be guided by this Comprehensive Plan. The plan should be amended and updated when deemed necessary. The guidelines include:

1. Sprawl has been limited primarily because utilities have not been over extended. It is recommended that development still be based on the ability of all infrastructure to absorb that development.
2. Development that occurs in established areas should be compatible with the character of the area. Architectural styling and intensity should be respected
3. New construction in certain areas should pursue creative development strategies such as clusters and mixed uses. A sensitivity to the scaling and architectural styling of existing development should be part of the planning.
4. The image of Valparaiso is very important. Residents and business are proud of their community. Elements that contribute to the City's image like the Courthouse and downtown, and Valparaiso University, must be respected and improvements made wherever possible.



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5. The recommendations in this Comprehensive Plan are intended to be realistic in terms of their economics. Development and redevelopment should be accomplished within existing city regulations. Community concerns should be solved within Valparaiso's land use patterns, and change should be encouraged that is achievable.

## **ACTION PLAN**

- 1) The Site Review process needs to continue to monitor all new and rehabilitation projects for compliance with existing ordinances, city codes, and downtown design guidelines, dated 2/1996.
- 2) As the City continues to grow, infrastructure capacity needs to be monitored.
- 3) The City should continue its growth with controls that result in a high quality of life.
- 4) Infill projects need to take into consideration the existing uses and zonings.
- 5) Ordinances and building codes need to continually be enforced.
- 6) Recruitment of new commercial and industrial businesses is needed to create a "balance of growth."
- 7) Plans to minimize extraneous water in the sanitary sewer lines need to be developed and implemented.
- 8) Options to finance the westside and eastside major sanitary sewer lines need to be studied and an option selected for implementation.
- 9) A study of development costs to the City per services provided, and revenues realized from development, needs to be completed as part of the impact fee study.



## **CROSS REFERENCES**

<b>Zoning Ordinance</b>	
Article V	Non-conforming Building and Uses
Article VII	Off-street Parking
Article X	Streets and Thoroughfares
Article XIV-26	Zoning Classifications
Article XXXII	Office Park Zoning
Article VIII	Planned Unit Development
Article XXIX	Signature Street Ordinance



