



*it's* **HOBART'S** *time*  
2040 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



STATE OF THE CITY REPORT



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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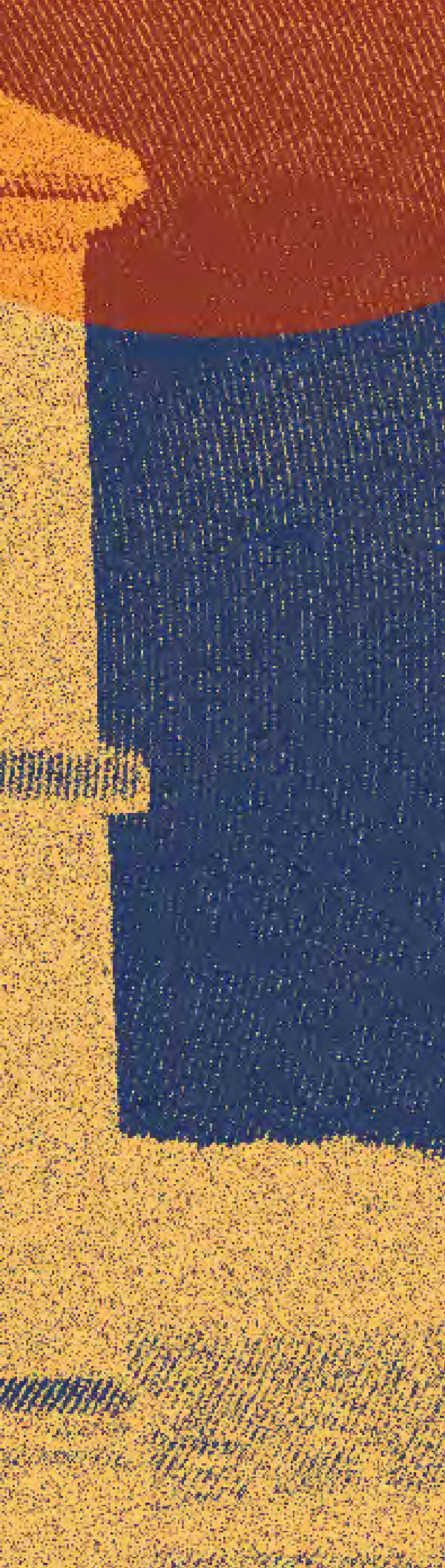
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The background is an abstract composition of textured, woven-looking shapes. On the left, a large, curved shape in shades of blue and teal dominates the foreground. To its right, a yellow and orange textured area forms a structure resembling a house with a gabled roof. A circular window with a dark, grid-like pattern is visible on the upper part of this structure, and a dark rectangular opening is on the lower part. The overall texture is dense and fibrous, similar to a woven fabric or a coarse print.

# INTRODUCTION





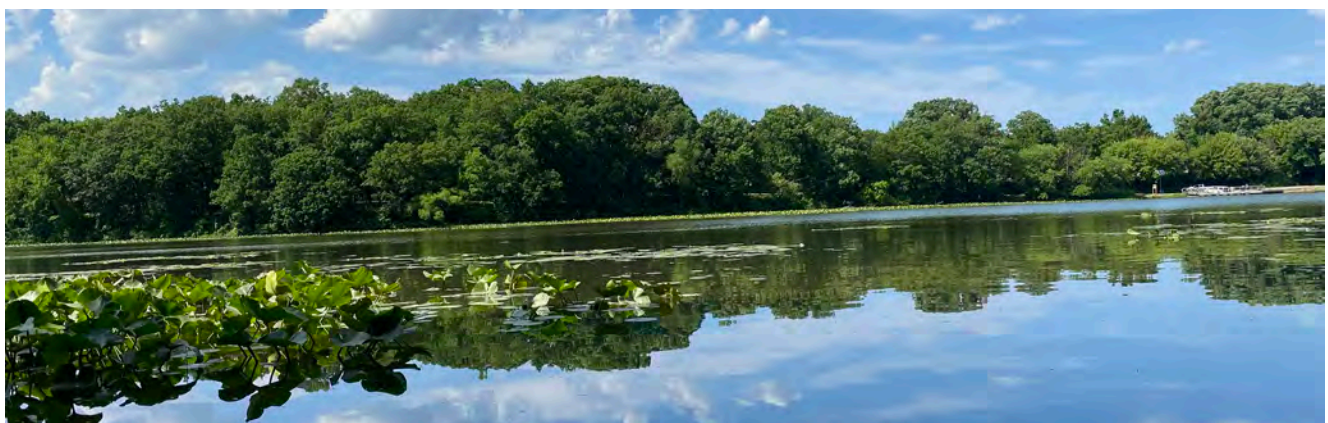
# IT'S HOBART'S TIME 2040 PLAN

Hobart is a unique city with active commercial corridors, established residential neighborhoods, a charming downtown on the shores of Lake George, and a network of parks and natural areas that sets it apart from peer communities. The City adopted a comprehensive plan in 2003 establishing its vision for growth, economic development, housing, and downtown revitalization. The plan guided decisions over the years, facilitating Hobart's development into an important part of northwest Indiana's fabric of communities. With the passage of time, however, the City's Comprehensive Plan needs to be updated to reflect current conditions and new challenges.

To chart a path to the future, the City embarked on an update to the Comprehensive Plan in 2021, labeled *It's Hobart's Time 2040 Plan*. The Plan's vision will be the result of considerable analysis and study of the community's existing conditions - its downtown business district, residential neighborhoods, economic climate, commercial corridors, open space, streets and infrastructure, and urban design and overall character - as well as extensive collaboration, participation, and input from Hobart residents and stakeholders throughout the planning process.

# PLANNING PROCESS

Updating Hobart's Comprehensive Plan is a three-phase process: **Assess** the State of the City, **Envision** goals and solutions for the community, and develop strategies to **Implement** the vision established in the Plan. The goal of the first phase is to better understand the existing community character, demographics, land use mix, physical conditions, built environment, and transportation systems.



Lake George 



# STATE OF THE CITY ASSESSMENT

An essential first step in updating Hobart's Comprehensive Plan is understanding current planning issues, constraints, and opportunities for the City's long-term growth and development. This assessment, comprised of the following reports, provides the starting point for crafting planning strategies and recommendations, guiding the community for the next twenty years:

## LAND USE, ZONING, AND DEVELOPMENT ANALYSIS

This analysis includes a detailed review of existing land uses and development patterns in Hobart to establish a baseline of information for future land use, planning and development strategies. Additionally, this report will include a review of Hobart's zoning code and regulatory environment to identify challenges and opportunities, and evaluate the City's capacity to fully support future development goals.

## PARK & RECREATION ANALYSIS AND NATURAL RESOURCES ASSESSMENT

This analysis will include an inventory of park and recreation resources in the City, including passive and active spaces. A detailed assessment of each park, including park acreage, amenities, and recreation elements, provides the basis for future improvements. This assessment will take natural resources into consideration, including Lake George, the nature preserves, and the Turkey Creek corridor.



 **Knight Coin Jewellery**  
237 Main St




 **Robinson Lake**  
Along the Oakwood Trail

## DEMOGRAPHIC, MARKET, AND HOUSING ANALYSIS

This analysis will provide demographic and economic assessment and discuss socioeconomic growth trends in the City. It will also provide an in-depth analysis of the existing housing stock by unit type, age, and current housing construction permit activity. This will build a foundation of knowledge to determine the future demand and market potential for residential, commercial, and industrial development in Hobart and identify market potentials for key uses and activities in the City.




 **Lakefront Park**  
(Source: Southshore Indiana)

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ANALYSIS

This analysis will summarize previous economic development efforts in the City and evaluate leading indicators such as new businesses by sector, local employment, and output forecasts. When finalized, this report will identify specific economic sectors with the most potential for growth. This will help build off Hobart's strengths and existing assets, while accounting for current and potential gaps.



 **Green Door**  
325 Main St.

## MOBILITY AND THOROUGHFARE PLANNING

This analysis will review the regional and local street network serving Hobart and its key community activity generators. Assessing mobility patterns in the City through traffic count data, US Census data, and other resources will aim to produce a thoroughfare and connectivity plan, Active Transportation recommendations, and access management and safety strategies.



 **Main Street**  
Downtown Hobart



# THE DEVELOPMENT OF HOBART

## HOBART YESTERDAY

The City of Hobart is located in Lake County, northwestern Indiana on lands once inhabited by the Pottawatomie Indian tribe. In 1845 George Earle, a wealthy landowner from England, came to the area and constructed a dam along Deep River in order to power lumber mills and gristmills. This dam resulted in the creation of Lake George, which is a defining feature of the Hobart landscape today. In 1849, Earle recorded the plat for the new town of Hobart.

In 1858, the construction of the Pittsburgh, Fort Wayne and Chicago Railroad allowed Hobart to become a railroad hub for shipping food products and bricks to Chicago. Brick-making quickly became the town's largest industry, and the first large brickyard was established by Joseph Nash in 1886. Kulage Brick Works and W.B. Owen Brickworks, which later became the National Fireproofing Company, were two of the largest brick and terra cotta manufacturers in town until 1920 and 1964, respectively.



Hobart was incorporated as a town in 1889 and reincorporated into a city in 1921. The City continued to grow until the 1960s when development was halted due to a sewer moratorium. Construction resumed in the 1990s and large annexations of nearby Hobart Township in 1988 and Ross Township in 1992 helped to kickstart the City's growth once more. Hobart residents continue to celebrate their City's history, and homage to Hobart's past, particularly the brick-making industry, can be found throughout the City today.



**CFE-CSX-Conrail-Pennsy-PFW&C Bridge (1858)**

(Source: [industrialscenery.blogspot.com](http://industrialscenery.blogspot.com))



**Lake George (1965)**

(Source: [flickr.com](http://flickr.com))



## HOBART TODAY

Hobart’s location approximately 40 miles southeast of Chicago and ten miles south of Gary, Indiana, puts the community in a unique position to serve both areas. The City is bordered on the north by Lake Station and New Chicago, on the east by several small communities in Porter and unincorporated Portage County, on the west by Gary, and on the south by Merrillville.

Hobart has excellent connectivity to regional transportation facilities, including Interstate Highways 65, 80, 90, and 94, U.S. Highways 30 and 6, and State Roads 51 and 130. These connections provide convenient routes to the Chicago metropolitan area, as well as smaller cities more proximate to Hobart.

Two prominent communities in northwest Indiana are within easy driving distance of Hobart: Crown Point and Valparaiso. While their populations do not differ a great deal from Hobart’s — 33,000 and 34,000 respectively — these communities differ in character. Crown Point and Valparaiso feature healthy downtowns and thriving business districts that attract visitors from the Midwest. Hobart can benefit from its proximity to these neighboring communities by offering complementary amenities and services, all while maintaining a strong sense of identity.

**“Enjoying local foods on the boardwalk while light music trickles out from the bandshell is great!”**

- STAKEHOLDER COMMENT



Downtown Hobart



Lake George



# HOBART BY THE NUMBERS

Information below provides a summary of the population and demographics in Hobart

## Population Change

Over the last decade, the City's population has held relatively steady, with a slight increase of only 498 residents since 2010, according to the U.S. Census. Currently, Hobart's population is estimated at 29,219, with a minor decrease of 0.12% projected for the next five years. Hobart is relatively middle aged, with a median age of 41, trending upward compared to the U.S. median age of 38.9 for 2022. Hobart's daytime population is estimated at 31,183, larger than the total resident population.

Fig 1: Population Size



**HOBART'S DEMOGRAPHICS ARE SHIFTING, WITH A PROJECTED INCREASE IN THE CITY'S YOUNGEST GENERATION.**

Fig 2: Median Age



Fig 3: Population by Generation

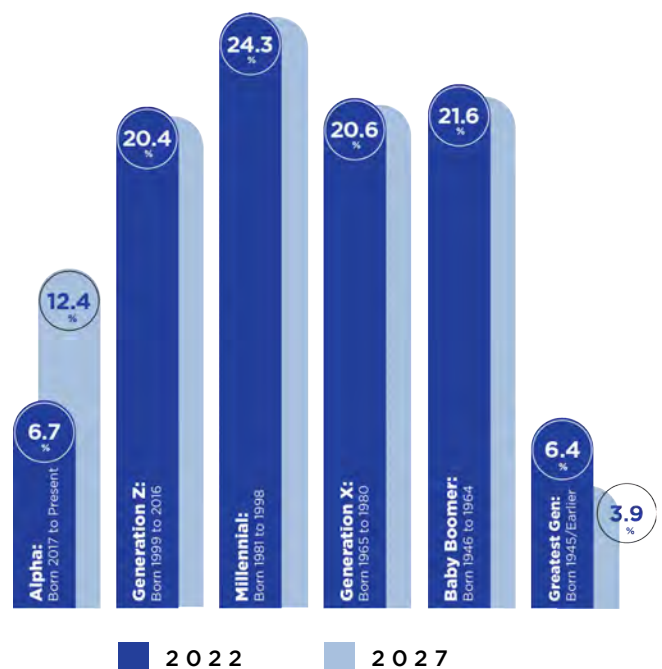
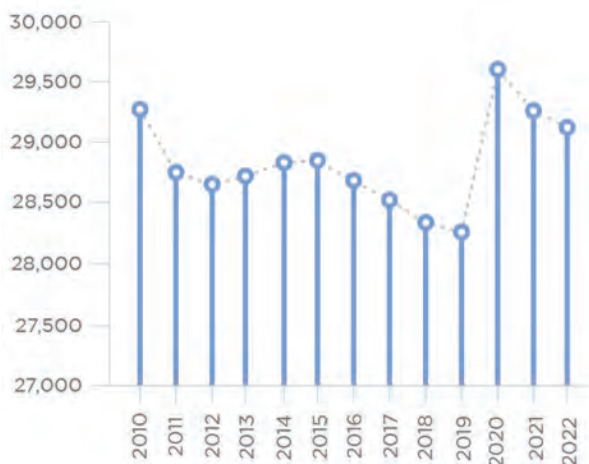


Fig 4: Population Change



## Households

According to the 2022 estimates, there are 11,894 households in Hobart, a slight decrease from 2010. The number of households is expected to increase marginally by 2027 to 11,920. When compared to the projected decrease in population, the projected increase indicates a trend toward smaller one or two person households. The average household size is 2.44 and is expected to decrease to 2.42 in 2027.

Fig 5: Population Change (2010 to 2022)



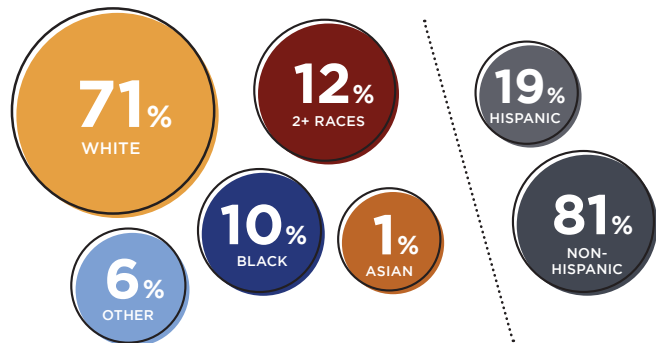
## Household Income

In 2022, the median and average household incomes are estimated to be \$67,802 and \$88,492 respectively, which is slightly less than the U.S. median and average household incomes of \$72,414 and \$105,029, respectively. In five years, Hobart’s median income is projected to be \$82,492 and the City’s average household income is projected to be \$105,266. Low-income households (<\$35,000) account for 20.6% in 2022 and are estimated to decrease to 14.6% by 2027. Mid-income households (\$35,000 to \$99,999) represent 46.1% in 2022 and are also estimated to decrease to 43.7% by in 2027. Whereas High-income households (\$100,000+) that account for 33.4% in 2022 are estimated to increase to 41.6% by 2027. Almost half of all households in Hobart (49.7%) have a disposable income of \$35,000 and \$99,999 per year. Additionally, almost 12% of households in Hobart are below the poverty level.

## Ethnicity

Hobart is gradually becoming more diverse. The Diversity Index, which measures the probability that two people from the same area will be from different race/ethnic groups, is 63.4% in Hobart. This is only slightly lower than the national diversity index of 72.6%. According to 2022 estimates, 9.9% of the population is African-American, 19.3% of the population is Hispanic, and 71.1% of the population is White.

Fig 6: Ethnicity (2022)



## Annual Growth Comparison

Hobart is projected to decrease by 2027, which is not in line with state and national projections for population growth, compared to the state of Indiana and the nation as a whole. Home owner households will be increasing at 0.30% by 2027, which is a slightly less than the state and national projections. Median household income in Hobart is projected to increase at 4%, which is more than the projected increase for the state and the nation.

Table 1: Trend Comparison, Annual Growth 2022-2027

DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE 2022 TO 2027			
INDICATOR	HOBART	INDIANA	USA
Population	-0.12%	0.20%	0.25%
Households	0.04%	0.27%	0.31%
Home Owner HHs	0.30%	0.46%	0.53%
Median Household Income	4.00%	3.72%	3.12%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2010 & 2020 Census, ESRI BIS forecasts for 2022 and 2027, VCE





“

**It would be nice to see  
some lake view multi-  
family housing.”**

- STAKEHOLDER COMMENT

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

*It's Hobart's Time 2040 Plan* will rely on feedback from the community and key stakeholders. Community thoughts and ideas will help guide the planning process and inform the Plan recommendations. During the initial phases of this process, the planning team created a project website, conducted several stakeholder focus group sessions, held a community Open House, and distributed an online survey, which resulted in extensive community input. The following pages include a summary of stakeholder input and focus group discussions. Community input is also referenced throughout the different sections of the *State of the City* report and serves to inform each section.

## STAKEHOLDER INPUT

The planning team collaborated with the City of Hobart to hold six focus group discussions with a total of 25 community stakeholders. These stakeholders represented various segments of the community, including business owners, real estate professionals, residents, local organizations, school districts, key institutions, and City employees, among others. From these initial meetings, several salient themes emerged.

### Downtown Hobart is an Asset

Hobart's charming downtown is seen by many as one of the City's greatest assets, especially when considering its proximity to the Lake George lakefront. Many believe that downtown Hobart has the potential to become a celebrated and unique community hub with the addition of more restaurants, specialty shops, mixed-use development, and community events. Stakeholders mentioned the need to enhance the looks and feel of downtown by improving facades and storefronts, filling vacancies, and redeveloping underutilized sites. Stakeholders also want to embrace Lake George, which is mere steps from many downtown businesses and restaurants. The proximity to the lake provides an opportunity for lakefront dining and more water-facing businesses, which could help foster the vibrant and revitalized downtown environment sought by many Hobart residents.

### Mobility, Connectivity, and Wayfinding

Hobart has numerous assets, including parks, vast open spaces, bike trails, a unique downtown area, and a strong retail corridor. According to stakeholders, many of these assets are difficult to reach, or in some cases even find, due to a lack of mobility options, connections, and clear wayfinding. A lack of public transportation and demand-response transit services makes it difficult for the City's most vulnerable populations – disabled, low-income, and senior residents – to access critical services and jobs, as well as enjoy the variety of recreational opportunities in Hobart. Subsidized ride-share or shuttles could help to ameliorate this issue.

While there are large segments of Hobart that are inaccessible due to a lack of infrastructure, Hobart's pedestrian and bicycle accessibility increases closer to the downtown area and denser residential neighborhoods. The City has several off-street bike paths and multiuse trails that allow for recreational use.



However, Hobart’s on-street bicycle infrastructure is lacking in some areas, which hinders everyday use. Enhanced bicycle connectivity could facilitate more visits to areas like downtown Hobart, Lake George, Hobart Nature District, Oak Savannah Prairie, and the Route 30 commercial corridor.

Hobart also has an opportunity to improve wayfinding and signage to better guide residents and visitors throughout the City. Stakeholders discussed the fact that it is difficult to locate downtown from nearby bike paths, as well as from some of the city’s main activity generators, such as Albanese and the Orchard on County Line. Wayfinding could encourage visitors to explore new parts of the City, which can make Hobart more of a destination for those coming from surrounding communities and the Chicago area.


## Unique Community Character

Hobart residents are proud of their City and what it has to offer. Stakeholders cited its small, hometown feel, unique 1800s era architecture, walkability, bikeability, natural beauty, and welcoming vibe as reasons for moving to or staying in Hobart. The City has made strides in recent years towards livability, aesthetics, and character, which stakeholders recognize and appreciate. Acknowledging the characteristics that make Hobart wonderful and striving to accentuate them will help foster a forward-looking and thriving community while still retaining Hobart’s distinct qualities.

## Growth Obstacles and Opportunities

Overall, Hobart is a safe, well serviced City primed for growth. There are large, uninhabited areas of the City, opportunities for densification, and a demand for living near numerous regional roads and highways that lead to Chicago and surrounding communities. Residential growth could spur economic development and vibrancy throughout Hobart. However, there are several obstacles that stand in the way of growth. Large swaths of land in areas annexed by Hobart are not served by sanitary and sewer systems or power lines. City service providers, such as the police and fire departments, are not yet equipped to handle an increase in population. Therefore, the cost of developing Hobart will not just be the responsibility of developers but will also be shouldered by the City.



Summer Market on the Lake  
Community Open House #1 

## OPEN HOUSE AND ONLINE SURVEY

In June of 2022, the planning team held a public, in-person Open House with a variety of interactive exercises. Participants were able to voice their opinions about opportunities and issues facing the community and provide their vision for the future of Hobart. Exercises included a “Big Map” activity where participants were able to identify public space, development, and public art opportunities; they were also able to point out pedestrian issues, parking issues, and other areas for improvement. Additional engagement opportunities included Visual Preference exercises, where participants ranked imagery and character of downtown development, housing, streetscapes, and types of programming they would like to see in parks and community gathering spaces.

The Open House was followed by an online survey that mirrored the Open House exercises and questions. This provided an opportunity for more than 300 residents to give further feedback. As part of the Open House and survey, participants were asked to complete the vision statement “In the year 2040 Hobart will be...” and the following were some of the responses provided by the community:





**“ Would like to see downtown  
allure more bikers and  
pedestrians. We would need  
to amp up our access/safety  
and bike racks.”**

- STAKEHOLDER COMMENT







# LAND USE, ZONING AND DEVELOPMENT ANALYSIS





# OVERVIEW

This chapter begins with a review of previous planning efforts in the City of Hobart. Building off existing planning efforts helps build a strong foundation of knowledge based on existing needs, and provides for a comprehensive approach to key community areas of interest. This chapter describes the current mix of land uses and existing zoning that guides current and future development in the City of Hobart. As part of the comprehensive planning effort, the existing land use distribution will be further examined in conjunction with proposed sub-area plans for key opportunity sites.



# EXISTING PLANS

## COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR FUTURE LAND USE, 2003

The Comprehensive Plan for Future Land Use, adopted in 2003, focuses on public and private development, rezoning, and subdivision applications. The City adopted the plan in response to a series of critical changes that happened in Hobart's history and over the course of the decade preceding the Plan. These included the City lifting its sewer and development moratorium, instituting an aggressive residential tax abatement program, and annexing Ross Township. During that period, Hobart experienced a wave of new residential development and a population increase that expanded its footprint significantly.

The plan's recommendations and conclusions focused on Downtown, Lake George, schools, public health, green space, and a variety of other topics. While the plan's recommendations act as a guiding vision for Hobart going forward, there are no implementation strategies to help bring this vision to fruition.

## HOBART MARSH MASTER PLAN, 2013

The City of Hobart created the Hobart Marsh Master Plan in order to better connect Hobart's conservation lands, which are owned and managed by a variety of different public agencies and non-profit organizations. The goal of the plan is to establish a consistent trail network that connects the City's natural resources to downtown Hobart, regional trails, and surrounding communities. This plan aims to create an eco-attraction that draws both residents and visitors seeking a unique hiking or biking experience. In addition to linking conservation lands and developing a land use framework to support this effort, additional recommendations support new biking and hiking trails, branding and marketing efforts, and safety guidelines.

## HOBART SUSTAINABLE NEIGHBORHOODS ENVIRONMENTAL AND ECOLOGICAL SUB-PLAN (2013)

The Hobart Sustainable Neighborhoods (HSN) Plan was created to advance sustainability in the City of Hobart, particularly in high-risk neighborhoods by providing recommendations to address sustainability issues and ensure that future development is environmentally sensitive. The benchmarks of environmental sustainability used to assess and remediate issues on the neighborhood level included environmental hazards; sanitary and stormwater lines and facilities; impervious surfaces; land cover and open spaces; managed lands, parks, trail, and recreational facilities; waterways; and tree canopies.

# HOBART PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN 5-YEAR UPDATE, 2017


The Hobart Parks and Recreation Master Plan, adopted in 2017, recognizes the benefits of a well-maintained park system include increased real estate values, improved physical and social development of residents, and the attraction of future community members. The goal of the plan is to promote a well-thought-out and planned park and natural resource system that adapts to the changing needs of the community and encourages an improved quality of life for all. The plan focuses on assessing park land, facilities, programs, and services. Additionally, the plan highlights park and recreation trends, encourages local and regional partnerships, provides funding mechanisms to achieve plan recommendations. Long-range plan items include more cost and labor-intensive projects as well as ongoing actions, such as addressing erosion problems along the shores of Lake George, providing a large destination playground for the community, and expansion of recreation programs and facilities. Short-range plan items are organized by year (2017-2021) and include specific, actionable recommendations.

# HOBART CONSERVATION ZONING AND SUB AREA PLAN, 2019

The Hobart Conservation Zoning + Sub Area (CZSA) Plan was adopted in 2019 with the dual purpose of creating new zoning districts to apply to existing and future managed conservation lands, and identifying potential development opportunities that enhance these environmentally sensitive areas. The plan calls out the Lake George watershed and local habitats as key natural features in need of conservation, and establishes best practices to guide development plans, minimizing environmental impacts.

The plan explores low-impact design principles and concepts, specifically focusing on residential and industrial developments. The proposed concepts seek to minimize impervious surfaces, building footprints, peak runoff rates, and infrastructural costs, while maximizing conservation area land coverage. The CZSA also provides a stormwater management toolkit, complemented by a variety of recommendations related to maintenance and the partnership process.



 Downtown Hobart  
600 E. 3rd St.

# EXISTING LAND USE SUMMARY

Fig 7: Land Use Map

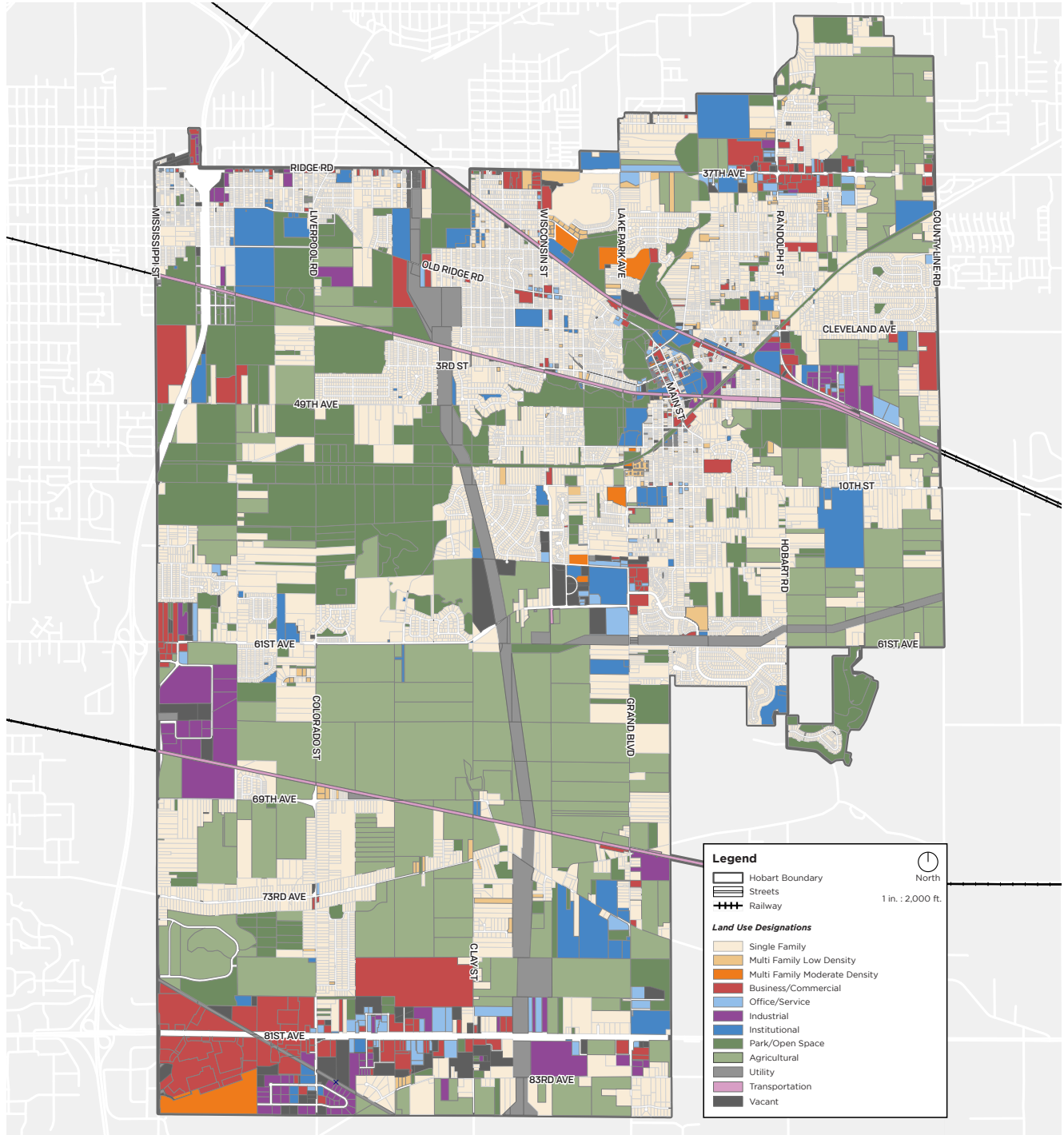
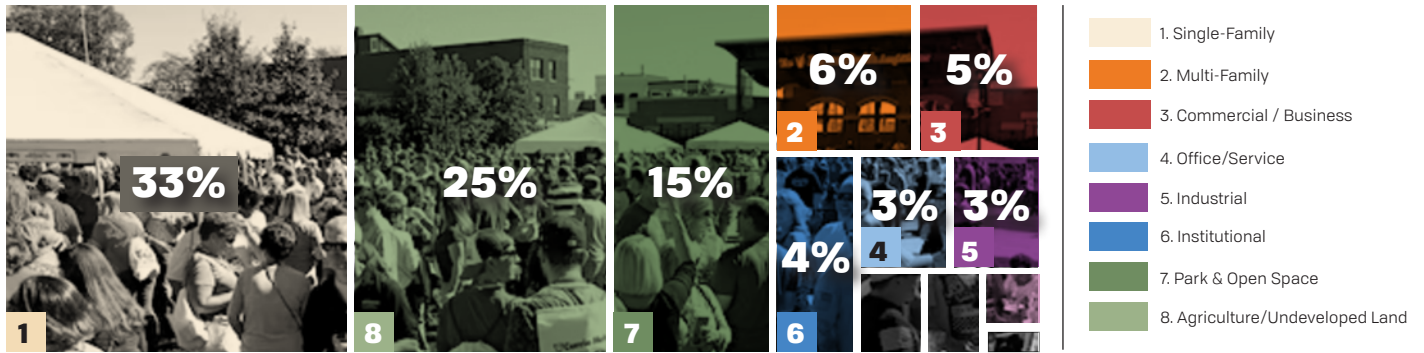




Fig 8: Land Use Breakdown



The total amount of land uses does not sum up to a hundred. Additional land uses include utilities, transportation, vacant land, and other.

## RESIDENTIAL LAND USES

Residential land uses in Hobart, including single-family and multi-family developments, represent approximately 26% of Hobart’s total land acreage. Distribution of uses in Hobart reflects the original historically-industrial pattern that developed around Lake George, which continued to grow over the years with the annexation of land to the north and south. The old industries of milling and brick-making are long gone but have laid the foundation for neighborhoods of small lot single-family development spreading outward and away from the lake. Shaped and guided by transportation routes and the availability of sewer service, small-lot single-family residential blocks occupy much of the land north, east, and south of Lake George. Single-family residential subdivisions also developed in the southern half of Hobart along key arterial roadways such as Colorado Street, 73rd Avenue, and Grand Boulevard. A mix of housing typologies, including multi-family developments, appears along the Highway 30 corridor in the southern part of Hobart with single-family properties on the eastern end and a dense multifamily / townhome development on the west.

While the City has an abundance of single-family housing, neighborhood characters differ in different parts of town. The character areas can be generalized as:

**Rural / Large Lot Housing**—There are large swaths of undeveloped land outside of Hobart’s downtown, some of which focus on active agricultural use, while others remain as open land or woodland. Residential properties sprinkled between undeveloped open lands have a distinct rural character.

**Mid-Century Suburban Housing**—A substantial proportion (42%) of single-family homes in Hobart was constructed between 1950 and 1979. This lends a specific character and feel to the neighborhoods around Lake George and throughout the northern part of the City.

**Contemporary Suburban Housing**—There have been a number of planned developments and single-family residential subdivisions developed in Hobart in the last 20 years that create a unique character that is different from the rural or mid-century areas. Reflected in the building materials and modern designs of the houses, these neighborhoods are an important part of the City’s diverse housing supply.

**Early Residential Development**—The City of Hobart is fortunate to have an inventory of older homes and commercial properties, some of which date back to the 1920s. Brick buildings and high architecture styles, including Neoclassical styles, Italianate Commercial style, and Colonial Revival style bring a unique sense of character to the Hobart community.

## HOUSING TYPES

Single-family housing comprises over 72% of the total residential units in Hobart. While there are multi-family developments in the community with notable density, the majority of multi-family buildings have fewer than ten units. The southwest corner of the City features a dense townhouse development. Overall, the multi-family land use represents approximately 6% of Hobart’s total land acreage. Manufactured housing is present in Hobart, though not in great quantities. It can represent an important stratum of housing need in a community and, as long as the properties and structures are well-maintained, can be contributive.

### KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Additional initiatives, incentives, and policies can support the maintenance and prosperity of Hobart’s character and charm, including the Mid-Century housing character.

Changing demographics in the City of Hobart and surrounding regions can drive recommendations to fill a housing gap and better cater to current and future community housing needs.

Housing affordability and attainability was a reoccurring theme during stakeholder interviews and focus group discussions.

School City of Hobart District is more desirable than other school districts, which has led to an increase in demand and subsequent increase in housing costs in north Hobart.

Planning for future housing development in Hobart is key and can be driven by a clear vision for the vast open lands and woodlands within the community. Key opportunity sites and subarea plans shall be further explored as part of the future land use framework.



## COMMERCIAL & LIGHT INDUSTRIAL LAND USES

Commercial and light industrial land uses represent 5.2% and 2.8% of Hobart’s total land acreage, respectively. Regional transportation routes, including interstate highways, state roadways, and railroad lines have guided the establishment and development of non-residential land uses in Hobart. Commercial corridors follow roadways on the periphery of the City, including Ridge Road on the north, Highway 30 on the south, and Mississippi Street on a portion of the western municipal border. Interior corridors are established along Route 51 (Grand Avenue) and State Road (Route 130).

Recognizing key corridors and their relationship to existing business districts can provide a clear understanding of how residents and visitors alike navigate through the City and access commercial areas.

The St. Mary Medical Center campus, situated in the center of the City, along Grand Avenue, represents a prominent cluster of healthcare-related land uses. Retail uses are clustered most prominently in the mall shopping area at the intersection of Highway 30 and Interstate 65, in the southwest corner of the City. Restaurants, typically a more experiential land use and not included in total retail sales, are featured on Ridge Road at Hobart Street on the north end of town, as well as in Hobart's downtown.

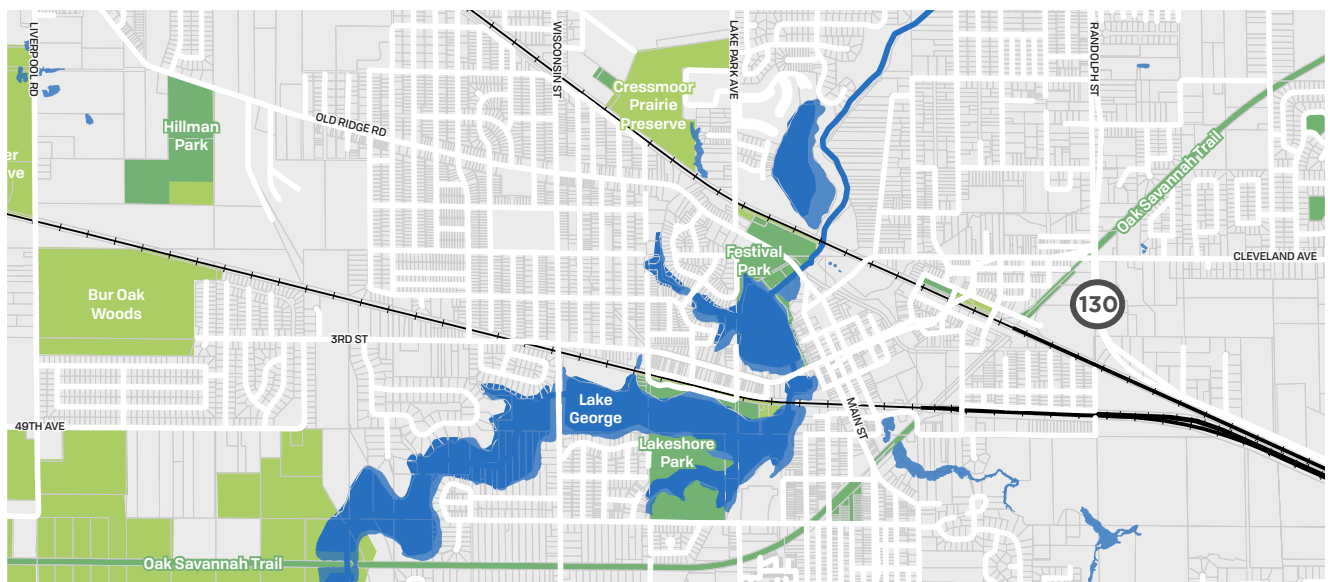
Southlake Mall anchors a significant concentration of retail and service land uses along Highway 30. There are other shopping centers nearby, as well as big box retailers, national franchises in a variety of categories, and restaurants of different scales and styles. This commercial node, accessible from Interstate 65 and Highway 30, represents a regional asset for Hobart.

## Downtown Hobart

Hobart's downtown has a variety of commercial, civic, and institutional land uses, the majority of which are situated in older buildings. The built form of downtown Hobart is defined by small-scale retail, restaurant, and service land uses. Lake George represents a rare amenity that can be capitalized upon more effectively through future land use planning.

Development is concentrated in a small area and growth opportunities for downtown will be dictated by natural barriers. Access to downtown is limited to two points of entry from the west through Third Street and Old Ridge Road. Direct access from the north is impeded by the Deep River flood plain and Duck Creek, creating a natural boundary to the east and pinches developable land south of downtown. The railway south of downtown creates a visual border and the commercial land uses dwindle along Main Street south of the tracks. Light industrial land uses have been concentrated along Highway 30 corridor and State Route 130 on the east side of the City. These include businesses in manufacturing, construction, transportation, and warehousing. Recent zoning changes to undeveloped land in west central Hobart from residential to industrial zoning indicate an interest in increasing the amount of land supporting industrial land uses in the City.

Fig 9: Downtown Hobart Map





**KEY CONSIDERATIONS**

Commercial land use is concentrated in key areas around the City. This could represent a challenge in meeting overall community needs. Additionally, it is important to assess and understand gaps in the current mix of commercial uses.

The recent industrial rezoning could result in a surplus of industrial land uses, if not managed adequately.



## INSTITUTIONAL LAND USE

The St. Mary Medical Campus has a substantial presence in the City and is likely to remain one of Hobart's strong assets for the foreseeable future. Several houses of worship, including The Rock Church and South Lake Worship Center, are also large contributors to Hobart's mix of land uses. Other churches and parochial schools are scattered throughout the community. The Hobart Fire Department has four firehouses around the city, though the primary facility is located in the downtown vicinity.

The Police Station, municipal building, public parks, and Bricky Bowl are located in downtown Hobart. The downtown has geographic constraints limiting its ability to expand, so it's notable that a large amount of the land in downtown Hobart is dedicated to institutional land uses.

Two school districts cover the majority of the city: School City of Hobart covers the north half of Hobart, and the Merrillville Community School Corporation covers the southern half, also known as Ross Township. The bulk of the City's public schools are located in the School City of Hobart district, which includes Veterans Elementary, Liberty Elementary, Joan Martin Elementary, Hobart Middle School, and Hobart High School. Wood Elementary School is the only public elementary school in the Merrillville Community School Corporation district.



**KEY CONSIDERATIONS**

Compatible and context-sensitive land uses should be considered in the vicinity of the St. Mary Medical Campus. Appropriate land uses could include residential, low-intensity commercial, and office/services.

Office and services land uses can be incorporated into future mixed-use developments.

Consolidation of institutional uses in downtown Hobart

# OPEN SPACE & UNDEVELOPED LAND

There is a large amount of undeveloped land in the City of Hobart, 4152 acres, much of which is tillable and may be in use for passive agriculture or left as open fields. Undeveloped land in the City represents approximately 25% of Hobart’s total land acreage. However, 2,590 acres (15.6%) represent active and passive public parks or managed open space. The Hobart Park District manages a variety of mini parks, neighborhood parks, and community parks throughout the City. The community’s Nature District includes over 1,000 acres of scenic parks, wetlands and floodplains, rivers and water bodies, open prairies, and other unique habitats. These ecological features are managed by affiliated organizations and local partners operating in the City Hobart.




## KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Undeveloped land continues to grow in appreciation value due to limited supply and high demand. The abundance of raw land in Hobart presents a variety of opportunities to meet community needs, including residential development or recreational use, in more sustainable and resilient urban forms.

Increasing biodiversity and adding to the ecological system can be achieved if the City takes advantage of raw land.

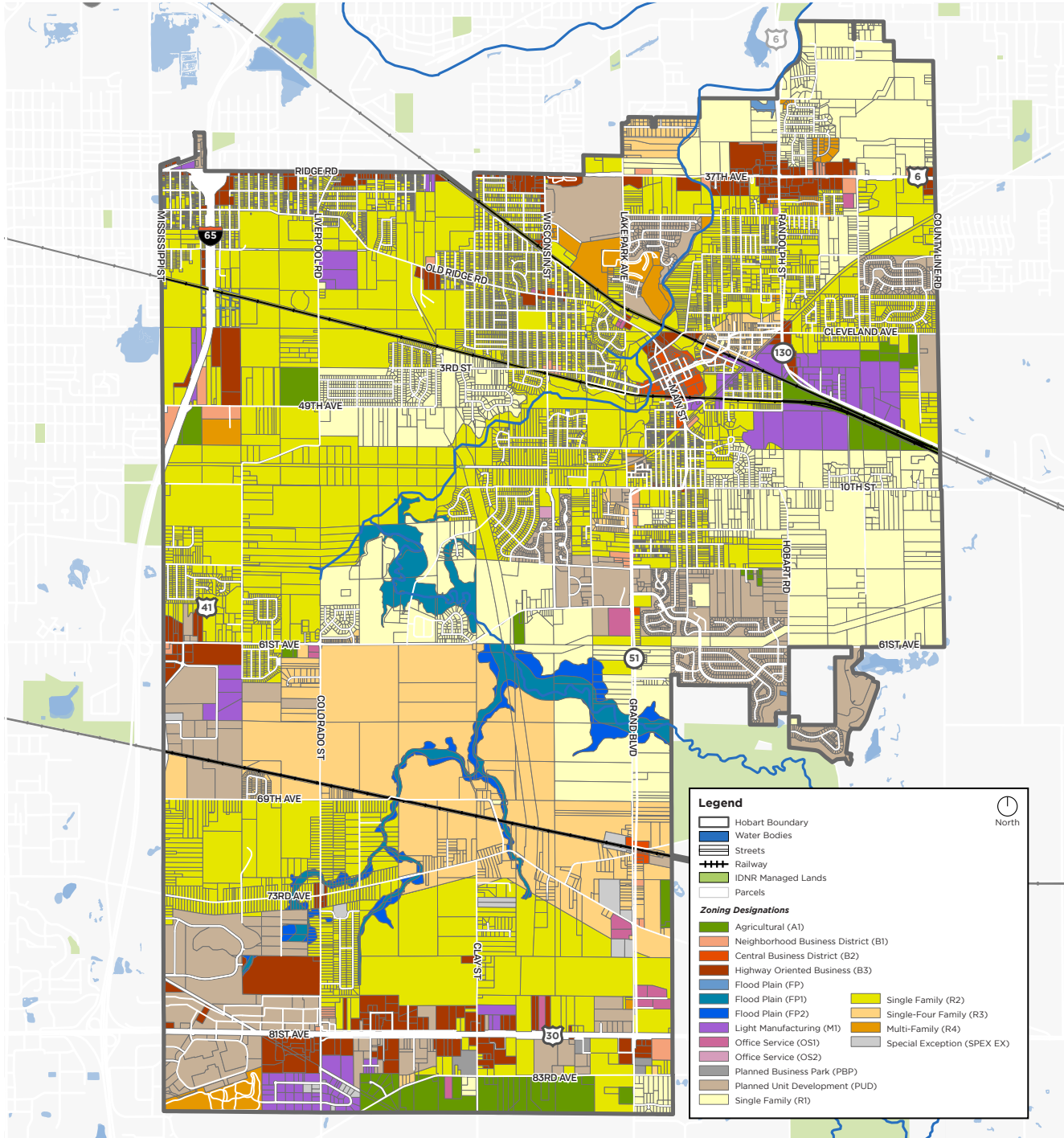


 Native Plants in Hobart’s Open Spaces



# EXISTING ZONING SUMMARY

Fig 10: Zoning Map





# ZONING REGULATIONS

The city's zoning ordinance is codified as Chapter 154 of the municipal code.

## Residential and Agricultural Districts

The city's existing residential and agricultural zoning districts are differentiated based primarily on allowed residential building types (one-unit detached, two-unit, and multi-unit buildings); allowed nonresidential uses; and lot size, setback, and other building placement and size regulations.

## Nonresidential Districts

The nonresidential zoning district regulations generally follow a similar format as the agricultural and residential districts, with allowed uses and applicable "bulk" regulations serving as the primary distinguishing feature among the districts.

## Sign Regulations

Some of the existing sign regulations, particularly those related to allowed temporary signs, appear to be based on the message of the sign, which is a practice that should be avoided in sign regulations due to First Amendment (free speech) concerns.

## Site Planning

The existing "site plan" regulations found in Secs. 154.415 through 154.424 include some of the newest and most-up-date provisions in the current zoning ordinance. The regulations include plan review considerations and site planning/design criteria addressing land use, traffic impacts, utility impacts, urban design principles, aesthetic and economic impact on neighboring properties, public safety and service impacts, environmental impacts, drainage impacts, stormwater, site design, building design, and landscaping.



 Example Signage in Hobart

## SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS

The city's subdivision regulations are codified as Chapter 153 of the municipal code.

### Subdivision Approval Procedures

The subdivision plat approval process involves four key steps:

- » Tentative plan approval
- » Preliminary plan approval
- » Final plat approval
- » Recording of approved final plat

The regulations appear to lack express provisions for expedited approval of lot line adjustments, lot splits and very minor subdivision-related activity.

### Subdivision Design Standards

The design standards article includes general and specific standards governing suitability of land, streets, alleys, easements, blocks, lots, public sites and open spaces, final approval/prerequisite, required improvements, approval of improvement plans, standards for improvements and installations.

## STREETS

The street design standards of Sec. 153.061 include fairly typical provisions governing right-of-way widths and street sections. One notable omission from the street standards is the absence of "complete street" specifications. Complete streets are streets designed and operated to enable safe use and support mobility for all users. Those include people of all ages and abilities, regardless of whether they are traveling as drivers, pedestrians, bicyclists, or public transportation riders. Also notable is the absence of express provisions requiring that subdivision streets provide for connectivity with newly developing and already



 Main St. Streetscape

developed areas. A connected street network has higher number of street connections, creates multiple route options, and shorter block lengths that support active transportation.

## **BLOCKS**

The block regulations of Sec. 153.064 “recommend” maximum block lengths of up to a quarter mile, which is generally considered an excessive length except in very rural areas.


## **LOTS**

The lot standards are typical of traditional subdivision ordinances, although they do contain minimum area and width requirements that appear to be at odds with (lower than) applicable zoning regulations governing lot area and width.

## **MAINTENANCE OF COMMON AREAS AND IMPROVEMENTS**

The existing subdivision regulations lack specific provisions governing maintenance of common areas and improvements. Maintenance of such facilities, particularly stormwater improvements, has emerged as a very important issue over the years and should be included in any modern subdivision ordinance.



 Multi-family housing in Hobart



The background is a vibrant blue with a textured, halftone-like pattern. A large, solid red circle is positioned in the upper left quadrant. A yellow horizontal line with rectangular markers runs across the middle. Below this, there are various yellow and blue patterns, including a grid of small squares and a larger, more complex pattern of curved lines. The overall aesthetic is modern and graphic.

# MOBILITY & CONNECTIVITY



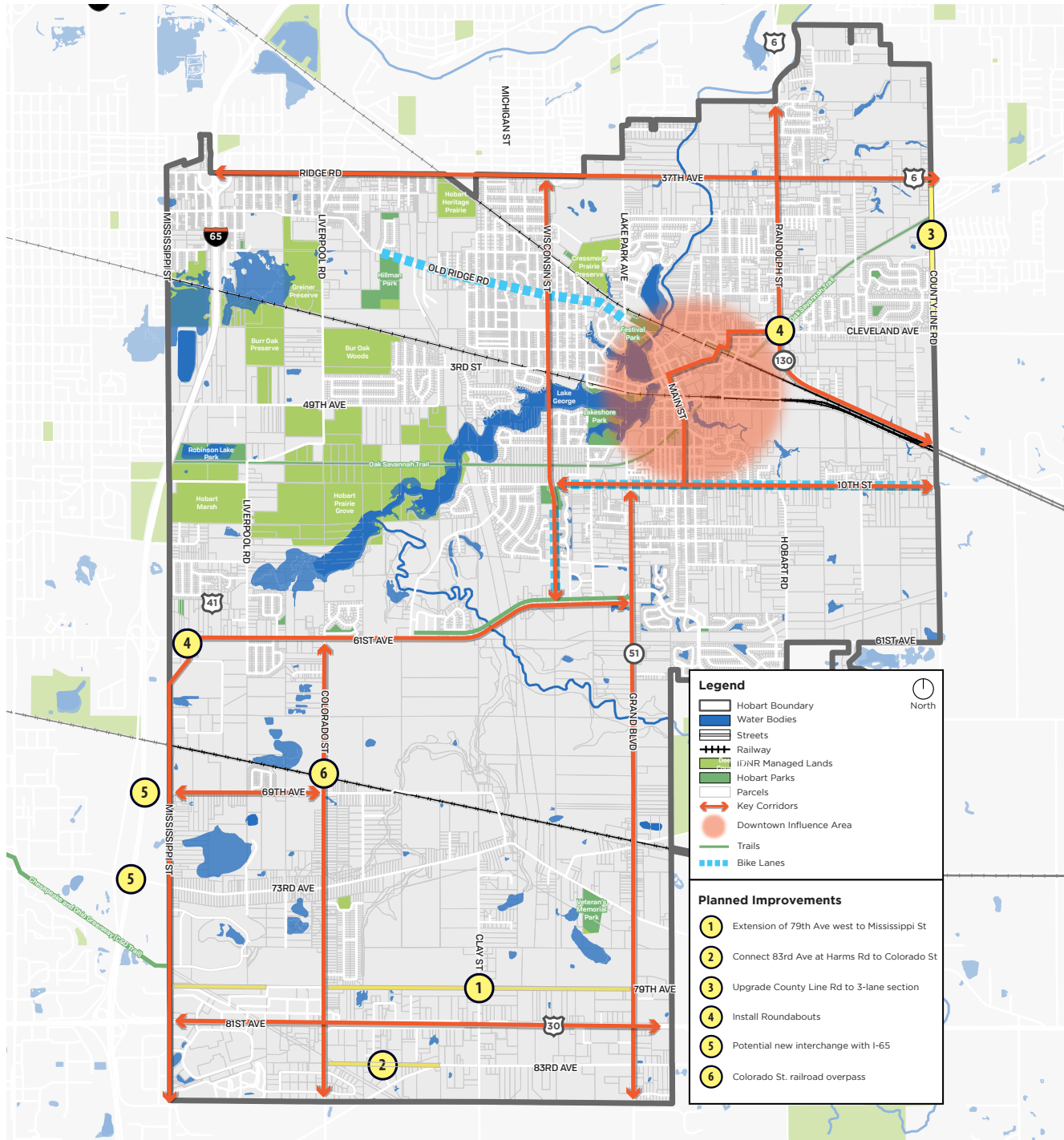


# OVERVIEW

The Mobility and Connectivity Assessment for the City of Hobart examines current transportation conditions and all its modes and forms, whether walking, bicycling, driving, or moving goods via truck. Hobart is well connected to neighboring communities and the broader region through multiple modes of transportation. The City has great regional accessibility with Interstate-65 (I-65) to the west, Interstate-80/94 (I-80/94) to the north, and US Route 30 to the south. Hobart also provides great connectivity for bicycles and pedestrians through the Oak Savannah Trail system and sidewalks along most City streets. This chapter examines key existing transportation networks in Hobart, as well as challenges and opportunities that will act as building blocks to inform the overall comprehensive plan.

# MOBILITY & CONNECTIVITY

Fig 11: Mobility & Connectivity Map





# ROADWAY NETWORK

Hobart's roadway network provides adequate routing throughout the community and to Northwest Indiana, as well as nearby major regional transportation hubs such as Chicago and Indianapolis. US Route 30 runs east-west along the southern portion of the community and provides access to I-65, Schererville, Dyer, and IL-394 to the west of Hobart. East of the City, US Route 30 is a primary route connecting to Valparaiso and eventually Fort Wayne while continuing east into Ohio. In addition to US Route 30, Hobart also maintains two interchange access points along I-65 at 61st Avenue and US Route 6 (37th Avenue-Ridge Road). I-65 provides excellent regional mobility and connects to I-80/94 and I-90 to the north, as well as continuing south to Indianapolis, Louisville, Nashville, and beyond. I-80/94 and I-90 connect with the Chicagoland area to the west, as well as Detroit and Cleveland to the east. Quick and easy access to these regional routes are desirable to businesses allowing them to ship and receive goods, which can help to attract and positively contribute to economic development within Hobart.

The City recently updated its Thoroughfare Plan in 2019, which provides a framework for the design of new roadways and intersections, as well as an inventory and modification of existing roadways. The key elements of the Thoroughfare Plan, listed below, will be further expanded upon during the planning process:

1. Categorization and definitions of the types of roadways within the City – Freeways/Highways, Arterials, Collectors, and Locals – and the transportation form and function with which they are intended to provide.
2. Greenways, bikeways, and pedestrian accommodations should generally be provided with all future developments, with a focus on connecting to existing amenities such as the Oak Savannah Trail and coordinating with the most recently approved City Park and Recreation and Trail System Plan.
3. The Southwest Area of Development Traffic Study completed in 2016 and the recognition that future growth may be focused in this area and the accompanying transportation improvements, such as upgrades along 61st Avenue, 69th Avenue (completed), as well as a potential new interchange along I-65 at 73rd Avenue or 69th Avenue, that may be needed to accommodate that future growth.
4. The Canadian National (CN), Chicago District, and the Canadian North/Grand Trunk & Western (CN/GTW) Railroads, which bisect the community from northwest to southeast, present vehicular transportation and circulation challenges as most north-south roadways maintain at-grade crossings with these railroads.
5. Intersections at arterials and collector roadways within the City shall include roundabouts unless deemed infeasible, impractical, or unbuildable.
6. The traffic circulation pattern within and between subdivisions should be integrated to permit circulation but discourage through movements on local streets.
7. Direct curb cuts should only be permitted on Local and Collector roadways.

## Mobility & Connectivity

# MOBILITY IN HOBART

Traffic issues are top of mind for Hobart residents, including traffic patterns, access, and congestion. Safety was also one of the top concerns expressed by many, followed by bicycle and pedestrian access. Almost all community members who provided feedback drive to and from their destinations. Approximately half of the participants occasionally walk to their destinations, while 30 percent occasionally bike as a means of commuting. Survey results showed that many community members would like to use alternative modes of transportation more frequently, including walking (45%), using public transit (40%), and biking (38%). The information, ideas, and visions provided by the community indicate that mobility improvements aimed at enhancing safety and increasing accessibility will have the greatest community benefit.

## Pedestrian Conditions

Community members appreciate the walkability of downtown Hobart and hope to increase accessibility and connectivity throughout the entire City with an enhanced sidewalk network that incorporates safer pedestrian crossings and conditions. Community members responded favorably to safety improvements such as enhanced or painted crosswalks, mid-block crossings, pedestrian refuge islands, bollard lights, and roundabouts with prominent pedestrian crossings. Community feedback revealed that the Hobart Road (IN 130) and Cleveland Avenue intersection is perceived as dangerous for both pedestrians and cyclists. Several community members support the planned roundabout at this intersection and suggested implementing additional roundabouts at other high-traffic intersections, to improve conditions for non-vehicular travelers. Community members recognize the importance of protecting pedestrians while also reducing traffic congestion. Many suggested the implementation of pedestrian bridges over high-traffic intersections, such as Cleveland Avenue and County Line Road. Overall, community members would like to see a continuous, well-maintained sidewalk network that allows pedestrians to traverse the City with less barriers.

## FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION

The roadways within the City are classified by the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) according to the character of the service they are intended to provide. This functional classification process recognizes a hierarchy of roadways and the fact that they do not operate independently, but instead collectively as a system-wide supportive network. The following provides a list of major routes within Hobart and their classifications:

**Interstate/Freeways** - Designed to move high volumes of traffic at higher speeds amongst communities with no/few curb cuts or traffic signals. Interstates/Freeways in Hobart include I-65.

**Principal Arterial** - Designed to move large volumes of traffic at moderate speeds to provide community mobility or connect neighboring communities. Intersections generally support traffic signals or roundabouts. Principal Arterials in Hobart include US Route 30, US Route 6 (Ridge Road-37th Ave., S.R. 51, 61st Ave., and S.R. 130.



**Minor Arterial** - Designed to carry moderate volumes of traffic and provide community mobility through connection to principal arterials and major and minor collectors. Minor Arterials in Hobart include 3rd St. (West of Main St.), 10th St. (East of S.R. 51), Colorado St., 73rd Ave., and Mississippi St.

**Major and Minor Collector** - Designed to collect a moderate amount of traffic from neighborhoods or commercial areas and distribute it to arterials or other collectors. Major and Minor Collectors in Hobart include Main St., Old Ridge Rd., and County Line Rd.

**Local Streets** - Designed to move small amounts of traffic at low speeds through neighborhoods or commercial developments, often to distribute to a collector, while providing a high level of access to adjacent properties. Most neighborhood streets are considered local streets in Hobart.

## ROADWAY JURISDICTION

A roadway jurisdiction is an important factor in roadway maintenance and overall functionality. A few of the major roads serving the City are under the jurisdiction of INDOT, such as I-65, S.R. 51, S.R. 130, US Route 30, and US Route 6 east of Hobart Rd. Several bridges are under the jurisdiction of Lake County. All other roadways within Hobart are under local City jurisdiction. With a sizable number of roads under the City's jurisdiction, the City has flexibility to control access and make improvements to align with the community's interests. However, Lake County and INDOT's involvement in the comprehensive planning process is crucial to ensure that plan recommendations are implementable along roadways where Lake County or INDOT maintain jurisdiction, and adequately balance the needs of the City, the County, and INDOT.

## TRUCK ROUTES

Hobart has well-defined truck routes that tend to direct heavy vehicles along the interstates, (I-65 or I-90/94) in and around the City. Generally, State routes are designed to standards that support heavy freight truck traffic. Routes that support local or regional truck traffic and increase connectivity to local business, such as US Route 30, S.R. 51, S.R. 130, and US Route 6 north and east of S.R. 130 provide adequate markings and signage that indicate changes to speed and weight limits on various roads.

Looking at the  
intersection of  
Center St. and  
3rd St.







Traffic volume is one factor that can help define roadway operations. These volume measurements are measured in several ways, one standard being Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT). INDOT published AADT data referencing streets throughout the City of Hobart. As expected, the highest AADT volumes were found along US Route 30, with the vehicles per day (vpd) count ranging from 63,300 near I-65 to 32,300 around S.R. 51. The AADT on US Route 6 ranged from 21,200 vpd near Hobart Road to 20,900 vpd closer to I-65. The major streets throughout downtown Hobart consist of Main Street, which serves 7,900 vpd, and 3rd Street which serves approximately 4,000 vpd. Traffic volumes are appropriate along these corridors, based on the number of lanes available on each roadway. These volumes are generally moderate with the exception of US Route 30, which is on the higher end of vpd. However, this roadway provides a six-lane pavement section (three lanes in each direction) with dedicated left- and right- turn lanes at most intersections to accommodate the higher AADT. As the planning process moves forward, Hobart’s roadway network should be seen as an advantage to leverage in supporting future growth.

Looking at US Route 6 / Mississippi St



Looking at Main St / 4th St in Downtown Hobart



## COMMUNITY TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUTING CHARACTERISTICS

Characteristics on vehicular commuting patterns for Hobart residents were obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau and are summarized below:

These characteristics are typical for the Northwest Indiana region, as the manufacturing industries provide a sizable number of jobs and are generally located in Gary, East Chicago, and Whiting. Additionally, the proximity to Illinois and Chicagoland draws some residents across the border for work. Residents traveling outside the community for work increases the number of vehicles miles traveled (vmt), which leads to greater wear and tear on roadways, more traffic, and increased emissions. As such, it has been beneficial for the local economy and the environment that just over 70 percent of residents work in Lake County, encompassing 25% of total residents working in Hobart.





Table 3: Residents Work Locations

Worked in County of Residence	71%
Worked outside County of Residence	16%
Worked outside State of Residence	13%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>

Additional community transportation characteristics were referenced from the Center for Neighborhood Technology (CNT) data and compared with four neighboring communities: Merrillville, Valparaiso, Crown Point, and Schererville. Based on this data, it is notable that Hobart has higher greenhouse gas emissions per household, higher transportation costs per household, and more vehicles per household than its peer communities:

Providing increased opportunities for safe and convenient non-motorized active transportation options, as well as establishing future land use and development frameworks that promote walking and biking can reduce dependency on vehicles for everyday transportation needs.

Table 4: Transportation Metrics in Peer Communities

City/Town/Village	AVG. Greenhouse Gas Emissions Per Household	AVG. Number of Vehicles Per Household	Transportation costs per household
<b>Hobart</b>	<b>9.57 Tons</b>	<b>1.93 Tons</b>	<b>\$14,390/yr</b>
Merrillville	9.03 Tons	1.82 Tons	\$13,597/yr
Valparaiso	8.39 Tons	1.77 Tons	\$13,252/yr
Crown Point	9.07 Tons	1.86 Tons	\$13,913/yr
Schererville	9.30 Tons	1.85Tons	\$13,793/yr

## PARKING

Off-street parking is generally provided via parking lots for the commercial areas and businesses throughout the community, including the stretches along US Route 6, US Route 30, and within Downtown. Maintenance of on-street parking spaces for commercial businesses is largely focused on Downtown and cater to employees, patrons, and visitors. The minimum off-street parking provisions within Hobart’s Zoning Ordinance ensure adequate parking is provided when future development occurs. Often, if minimum parking requirements are set too high, then the viability of the City’s land uses can decrease as more space is dedicated to parking than is necessary. As a practical matter, some businesses along US Route 6 and most businesses along US Route 30 can be considered “over-parked”, meaning the parking lots are providing more capacity than necessary, given the current demand. The excess parking capacity detracts from a desirable character and presents an opportunity for infill development and other uses that achieve a higher and better use of visible and valuable properties.



Looking at Hobart Plaza parking lot  
along US Route 6



Looking at Downtown Public  
Parking at Center St / 2nd St

## Traffic Pattern, Access, and Congestion

Traffic patterns, access, and congestion were among the top concerns for many. The majority of Hobart is only easily accessible by car and almost 100 percent of community survey respondents drive to and from destinations. Community members explained that congestion often hinders mobility throughout the community, particularly on Main Street, County Line Road, US 51, US 61, IN 130, Route 6, and Route 30. In downtown Hobart, community members explained that the main causes of congestion are the railroad tracks on Main Street, popular businesses, such as Dairy Queen, that lead to lines of left-turning cars, and narrow downtown streets that leave little room for parking. Many community members would like to see the introduction of one-way streets and right-turn-in and out across downtown to avoid congestion. Community members expressed the need for more signalized intersections, traffic light optimization, and increased visibility outside of the downtown area. While some are against the addition of more roundabouts in the City, many think that such an improvement would be beneficial at key intersections.





## PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS

The following is a list of major planned or proposed improvements that will impact transportation circulation within the City. These projects and plans will be reviewed and incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan.

- » **78th / 79th Avenue (proposed)**  
Extension of 79th Avenue west from S.R. 51 to Mississippi Street
- » **83rd Avenue (proposed)**  
Connect 83rd Avenue at Harms Road to Colorado Street
- » **County Line Road (approved)**  
Upgrade to a 3-lane section (one travel lane in each direction with a center left-turn lane and sidewalks between US Route 6 and Cleveland Avenue
- » **S.R. 51 / S.R. 130 (approved)**  
Reconstruction converting the intersection into a roundabout by INDOT in 2023
- » **61st Avenue / Marcella Blvd (planned/approved)**  
Reconstruction converting the intersection into a roundabout by the City in 2023
- » **I-65 Interchange at 69th Avenue or 73rd Avenue (proposed)**  
Previous plans have indicated the desire to install a new interchange along I-65 at 69th Avenue or 73rd Avenue. INDOT has indicated a catalyst development increasing traffic would be required to achieve this.
- » **Mississippi Street at 69th and 79th Avenues – (planned/approved)**  
Both intersections are located in Merrillville and proposed to be converted into roundabouts.
- » **Colorado Street Railroad Overpass (planned/approved)**  
Construction of a CN/GTW railroad overpass spanning Colorado Street in late 2022.
- » **Colorado Street / US 30 – (planned/approved)**  
Reconstruction of the intersection to improve sight lines, reconfigure drive access points, and add dual left-turn lanes onto US 30.
- » **69th Avenue (recently completed)**  
Reconstruction and widening of 69th Avenue and conversion of 69th Avenue / Colorado Street into a roundabout.



Recently reconstructed 69th Avenue near Meadowview Ln



Oak Savannah Trail Crossing at Main Street

## NON-MOTORIZED TRANSPORTATION MODES

In general, Hobart can be considered a car-dependent city with limited to no public transportation options. However, non-motorized transportation is still possible throughout the City via an adequate network of sidewalks and trails. There are a few off-street, paved or gravel trails within the City. The Oak Savannah Trail traverses nine miles east-west through the community starting near I-65 at Liverpool Road and continuing into Downtown to eventually bend northeast and transition to the Prairie Duneland Trail once it reaches County Line Road and continues on to Chesterton. West of I-65, the trail continues through Merrillville and ends near Colfax St. in Griffith. In addition to the Oak Savannah Trail, the Chesapeake and Ohio Greenway (C&O Trail) runs through Merrillville from northwest to southeast, terminating at Mississippi Street just north of US Route 30. The Hobart Parks and Recreation Master Plan states the City's intention to continue this trail southeast along the abandoned C&O railroad corridor. A key challenge with this extension is traversing around the Southlake Mall and its adjacent developments. The planned extension of 79th Avenue west may offer a good opportunity to extend this trail. The Comprehensive Plan will seek to examine future off-street trail connections and locations with the goal of increasing recreational and mobility opportunities throughout the community and expanding the existing system.

In addition to its limited number of trails, the City has one side path along 61st Avenue. Side paths are shared multi-use paths that support bicycling and walking and follow within the right-of-way of collector or arterial roadways. There is great opportunity within Hobart to provide a network of side paths along most collector or arterial roadways, such as S.R. 51, US Route 6, Wisconsin Street, Cleveland Avenue, and US Route 30. Generally, these accommodations could be installed in tandem with reconstruction or resurfacing maintenance.



## Bicycle Conditions

Several community members enjoy biking throughout Hobart and the surrounding area, through numerous off-road paths that connect to a system of parks and natural areas. Cyclists are able to explore the region through this network of paths and trails. However, community members and key stakeholders explained that Hobart's on-road biking conditions can be unsafe or inconvenient due to an incomplete bicycle infrastructure network, lack of visibility for bikers and drivers, and lack of wayfinding. Community members would like to see enhanced bike infrastructure, such as protected bike parking and additional off-road trails. Additionally, participants expressed the need for downtown streets to be converted to one-ways in order to make room for bike lanes, allowing for an extended network throughout the City. Many explained that roundabouts tend to be safer for cyclists and want to see more of them introduced at high-traffic intersections. Wayfinding is also important to community members, and many suggested that the introduction of signage at trail access points could help cyclists traverse the City and find key points of interest, such as downtown Hobart and business districts.

Hobart also maintains on-street bike lanes along 10th Street between S.R. 51 and County Line Road, as well as along Old Ridge Road between Hansen Blvd and Lake Park Avenue. The bike lanes along 10th Street provide connectivity to Hobart High School from the residential areas to the west, while the bike lanes along Old Ridge Road provide connectivity between Hillman Park in the northwest and Festival Park just before reaching Downtown. Both bike lanes are of typical size, 5 feet wide, and the striping that comprises the bike lanes is in adequate shape. There is no buffer protection between the bicycle lanes and vehicle travel lanes, which can greatly increase the comfortability and usability for cyclists. Exploring the feasibility of adding buffer protection, as well as restriping with colored striping, can help to increase the effectiveness of the existing facilities.

Expansion of the City's on-street bicycle facilities through additional bike lanes or shared bicycle markings (commonly referred to as "sharrows") can increase Hobart's bicycle mobility options in a way that is often inexpensive compared to trails or side paths. There is opportunity near Downtown and its adjacent neighborhoods to explore these expansions. Good examples could be Center St., 3rd St., Main St./Lincoln St./Cleveland Ave. (SR. 51), and Liverpool Rd.



**Oak Savannah Trailhead at  
Robinson Lake Park**





## PUBLIC TRANSIT

The City of Hobart does not have its own public transportation/bus service. This is likely due to the nature of Hobart's geographic location and land use framework, which makes the feasibility of a fixed-route public transit fairly low. This can make it difficult for residents who do not own a vehicle or bicycle, such as senior citizens, to get around town. However, beginning in February 2018, the City of Gary Public Transportation Corp (GPTC) began operation of a public bus route – The Broadway Metro Express (BMX) – that provides service between downtown Gary and Merrillville along SR. 53. There is a feeder route, the US30 Shuttle (Route R2), that provides access to the BMX route through connecting service every 60 minutes at Century Plaza and operates along US 30 including a few stops at Meijer, Southlake Mall, Sam's Club, and Walmart. Additionally, the Merrillville Shuttle (Route R5), is another feeder route for the BMX route and operates within Hobart near Marcella Blvd and 69th Avenue with a stop on Northwind Pkwy.

In addition to fixed-route transit, GPTC also provides Access219 Paratransit service to all of Gary and within three quarters of a mile within their fixed routes. This means that portions of the far west side of Hobart have access to this service. Rides on this service cost \$4 when outside Gary city limits and they offer discounts for multiple ride passes. Riders of this service need to apply to become eligible. There may be opportunity for the City of Hobart to partner with GPTC to bring fixed-route service or further expand the reach of Paratransit service into Hobart. The population density near Downtown Hobart or St. Mary Medical Center may support the economics needed behind route/ service expansion.

## Public Transit

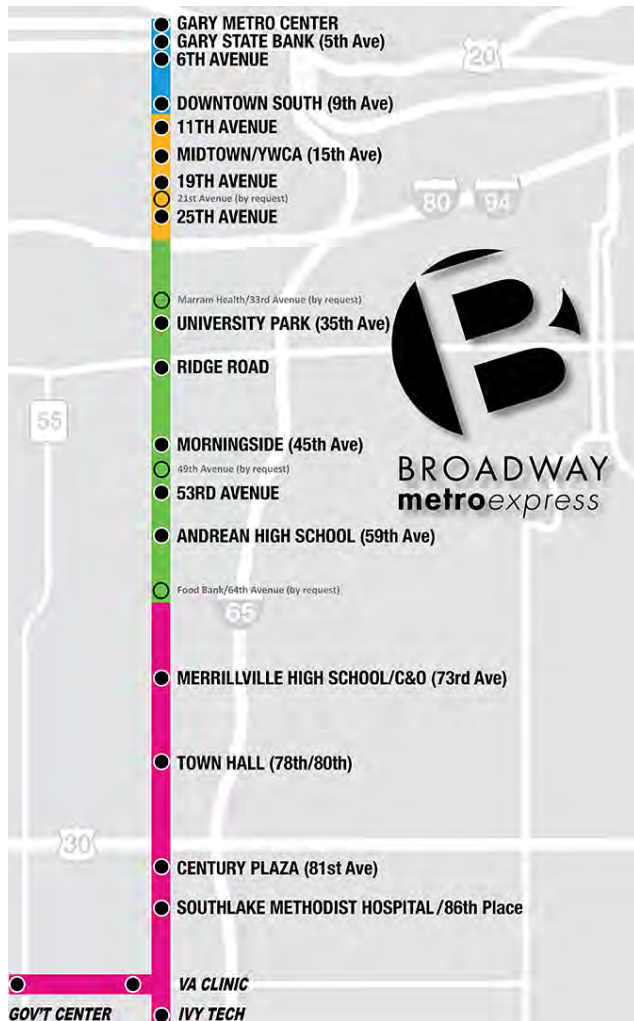
A number of Hobart residents expressed the need for some form of public transportation. Participants explained that vulnerable populations, such as seniors, people with disabilities, or residents with medical conditions must rely on the Hobart Fire Department to transport them to appointments and other critical services. Some recommended the introduction of a demand-response (dial-a-ride) shuttle, to help these populations reach destinations throughout the City. Many would also like to have a shuttle or trolley available for the general public in order to alleviate congestion, support lower-income community members, and draw more people into downtown Hobart. Many community members also suggested implementing e-bike or scooter share stations throughout the City, which could supplement other public transportation services.





# Mobility & Connectivity

Fig 13: GPTC Broadway Metro Express Route Map



Bicyclist traversing unmarked County Line Road near Camelot Estates



Bicyclist traversing unmarked 3rd Street near Main St





**There are a couple of small alleys which could use beautification that would be an attraction and improve walkability of these spaces.**

- STAKEHOLDER COMMENT





INVESTMENTS

# MARKET & HOUSING ASSESSMENT

Edward Jones  
INVESTMENTS

Mark R. Price  
219-942-5656

Edward Jones  
INVESTMENTS

Open





# OVERVIEW

The Market and Housing Analysis provides a comprehensive look at Hobart’s housing stock, its commercial, and office real estate markets, and an overview of employment and commuting in the City. Hobart exhibits a number of strengths, such as a high level of home ownership and a high absorption rate for new retail space, which are both assets that can be utilized to shape future growth. Several gaps are exposed by the analysis, such as the moderate level of dense multifamily and attached single-family development in the community. Acknowledging these gaps is an essential step toward addressing them. This may be through progressive policy changes at the regulatory level, communication and community engagement, or direct intervention by community partners and other governmental agencies.



# HOUSING

## HOUSING UNIT INVENTORY

Single family detached houses are the dominant type of housing in Hobart. This is not atypical for the community's suburban environment and current zoning paradigm. Multifamily buildings with more than three units represent less than 18% of the overall housing stock in the City. This limited supply increases the demand for housing, pushing the average rent to approximately \$850 per month. This represents more than 50% of the average household income for a quarter of renters in Hobart, putting them at a financial disadvantage on a day-to-day basis. Increasing the supply of multifamily housing and providing more attainable units may increase affordability for many renters in the community.

Fig 14: Housing Typologies Map

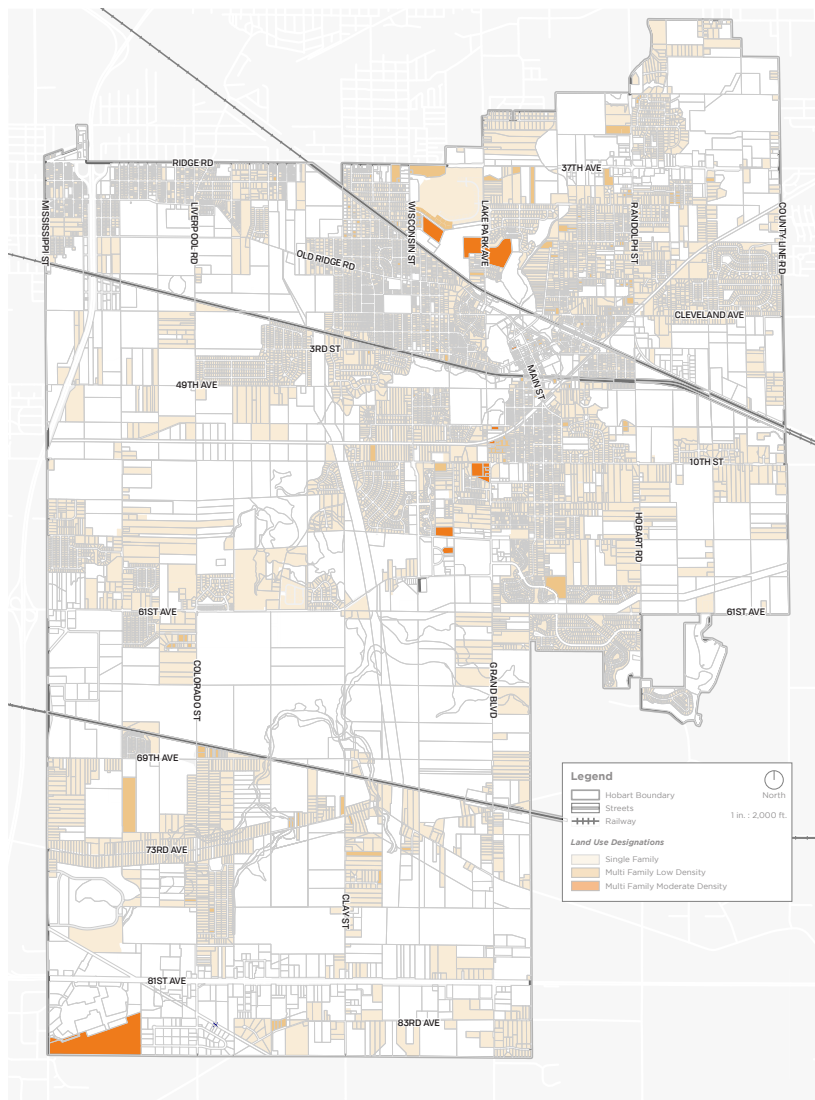


Table 5: Housing: Type and Age

TYPE OF HOUSING UNITS	
<b>Total Housing Units</b>	12,630
<b>1 Detached Unit in Structure</b>	<b>75.8%</b>
1 Attached Unit in Structure	2.2%
2 Units in Structure	1.2%
3 or 4 Units in Structure	1.5%
5 to 9 Units in Structure	11.2%
10 to 19 Units in Structure	1.8%
20 to 49 Units in Structure	3.5%
50 or More Units in Structure	1.6%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2010 & 2020 Census, ESRI BIS forecasts for 2022 and 2027, VCE



# HOUSING IN HOBART

Based on community feedback, Hobart residents recognize and appreciate the city’s unique housing and architecture. Residents speak fondly of the lower density, charming single-family homes that characterize Hobart’s downtown area. Some residents would like to see more condos, apartments, and townhomes, particularly near downtown, to serve younger generations, as well as older generations who are downsizing. Others are opposed to the construction of multifamily housing and would rather see more upscale single-family homes or modest, ranch-style homes. Many residents agree that instead of “cookie-cutter” homes and sub-divisions, they prefer visually unique, street-facing housing that interfaces with the rest of the community. They also agree that the existing housing should be maintained and improved in order to uplift the appearance of the surrounding neighborhoods.

## Housing Demand

According to a community survey, 65 percent of Hobart residents plan to remain in their housing over the next 5-10 years. Approximately 12 percent of participants expect to acquire a larger home, or “trade up”, 6 percent expect to acquire a smaller home, or “downsize”, and 16 percent of Hobart residents expect to move somewhere else entirely. Community feedback indicates that detached single-family housing is the most in-demand. However, many are also in favor of townhomes, mixed-use buildings, and apartments. Below are some of the community’s preferred housing styles.



60%  
LIKE



56%  
LIKE



43%  
LIKE



36%  
LIKE



## Median Sale Price by Housing Type

- » Single Family Homes Median Sale Price \$251,000 +25.5% Year over Year (June)
- » Townhouses Median Sale Price \$256,500 +35.0% Year over Year (June)
- » Condos/Co-ops Median Sale Price \$164,000 +13.1% Year over Year (June)

Table 6: General Trends 2010-2022

Year	Population	Households	Housing Units	Housing Units Change
2010	29,254	11,687	12,445	0
2011	28,773	10,940	11,687	-758
2012	28,685	10,966	11,723	36
2013	28,756	10,949	11,714	-9
2014	28,849	10,941	11,713	-1
2015	28,882	10,948	11,731	18
2016	28,709	11,036	11,830	99
2017	28,549	11,086	11,894	64
2018	28,359	11,144	11,963	69
2019	28,280	11,136	11,964	1
2020	29,752	11,992	12,709	745
2021	29,362	11,903	12,621	-88
<b>2022</b>	<b>29,219</b>	<b>11,894</b>	<b>12,630</b>	<b>12,630</b>

Since 2015, Hobart has experienced a moderate growth in housing units. This culminated in a spike of 745 units between 2019 and 2020. While 2021 marked a decline in available units, 2022 showed a slight positive growth. A decline in available housing units is usually due to migration, demolition (e.g. age, decay), loss by disaster (e.g. fire) or of transformation into other non-residential uses.

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2010 & 2020 Census, ESRI BIS forecasts for 2022 and 2027, VCE

## HOUSING TENURE

Hobart has a higher home ownership rate (72.5%) than the national average (58.2%). While this lends stability to the single-family housing market, it also reflects the homogeneity of the City’s housing supply. The ratio of ownership versus rental would likely change if the supply of multifamily housing in the community were to increase.

### OWNER VS RENT



# RESIDENTIAL REAL ESTATE MARKET AUGUST 2022 SNAPSHOT

The pandemic lock downs and ongoing supply chain issues led to delays in new home construction, creating a lack of supply. At same time, a strong job market and high household savings led to an increasing demand, resulting in drastically limited housing inventory and a rise in prices. These factors allowed homeowners to sell existing homes and purchase newer residences, which in turn increased the demand for new construction.

Furthermore, large urban counties experienced a net loss of residents in 2021, resulting in unprecedented negative growth compared to the past 50 years. Affordability, sprawl, a desire for recreational amenities and the changing work environment are driving population shifts. Some of the effects of the pandemic that drove this outmigration are likely temporary, such as young people moving back in with their parents and the more affluent households retreating to vacation homes. However, it seems less likely that those who purchased homes in the suburbs and exurbs during the pandemic, motivated in part by remote work options, will be selling and moving back to cities.

While mortgage rates were historically low at the beginning of 2022, they have been rising somewhat steadily since. The Federal Reserve recently raised interest rates by another 0.75 percent in an attempt to curb record-high inflation. While interest rates have risen a total of four times in 2022, inflation remains high. With the Federal Reserve bound to further raise rates to combat the high inflation, mortgage rates will likely continue to rise further during the remainder of the year.

## DID YOU KNOW?

### Ongoing Supply Chain Issue

The monthly mortgage payment on a \$400,000 home with a 20% down payment went from \$1,399 at the start of January to \$1,976 in August of 2022, a difference of \$577, which excludes homeowners insurance and property taxes.

Due to the increase in interest rates paired with factors such as the war in Ukraine and the ongoing supply chain issues, there is a possibility of a light recession in 2023. This will consolidate the housing market and slow down demand, price and value gains. The gap between the increase in housing prices (approximately 20% over the last year) and the slight increase in income (5%) is an indication that the housing market is overheating and may result in a housing bubble. Thus, a consolidation of the market would protect value and not break the demand. While demand will slow down, given higher prices and interest rates, the underlying economic base is still positive, households have higher savings rates, and employment is still growing, albeit slower.



## SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL HOUSING IN HOBART

The majority (63%) of Hobart's current housing stock was built before 1980, with roughly 36% constructed prior to 1960. Approximately 27% was constructed recently, between 1990 and 2010. On average, single family houses have 3 to 4 bedrooms and 1 to 2 bathrooms with an average square footage of 1,880 square feet. The average price is \$253,320 and the average price per square foot is \$143. Single family homes typically stay on the market for an average of 55 days.



Average Number of Bedrooms

**3.4**

Average Price

**\$253K**

Average Square Footage

**1,880**



## MULTI FAMILY RESIDENTIAL HOUSING IN HOBART

The majority of multi family housing stock in Hobart was built between 1891 and 1946. Many of these multi family homes are duplexes, rather than larger apartment buildings. On average, multi family buildings have 4 to 5 bedrooms and 2 to 3 bathrooms with an average square footage of 2,491 square feet. The average price is \$206,133 and the average price per square foot is \$88. Multi family buildings typically stay on the market for an average of 140 days.

Average Number of Bedrooms

**4.3**

Average Price

**\$206K**

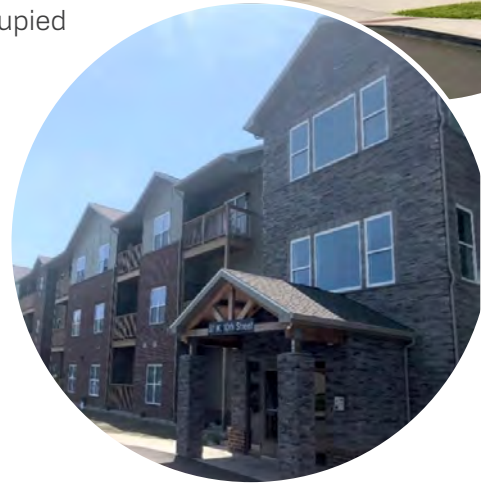
Average Square Footage

**2,491**

# SENIOR LIVING AND RETIREMENT HOMES IN HOBART

Senior housing communities offer affordable accommodations to seniors with limited or fixed incomes. Affordable senior housing communities include 55+ Communities, Independent Living, and Assisted Living communities. These facilities often offer government assistance programs, which typically have income restrictions and other eligibility criteria. Currently there are no owner-occupied independent or assisted senior living facilities in Hobart.

Lake Park Senior Apartments



## SENIOR LIVING AMENITIES

- » Free Transportation Services
- » Housekeeping Services
- » Available In-house Laundry and Drycleaning
- » Community Dining
- » Available Medication Administration
- » VA Benefits Assistance
- » Laundry Services for Linens
- » Off-site Activities
- » Available On-site haircuts/barber services
- » Outdoor Patios and Gardens
- » Private and Semiprivate Suites/ Apartments/Rooms options.

## SENIOR SERVICES

- » Specialized therapy services, physical, occupational, speech and respiratory therapies
- » Short-term rehab to long-term nursing,
- » Memory care,
- » Hospice and respite.
- » On-site dialysis,
- » Psychiatric care,
- » Wound care and restorative nursing.

## SENIOR LIVING FACILITIES

### Lake Park Senior Apartments

51 W. 10th Street

Care Types: Independent Living, Assisted Living

### Brentwood at Hobart

1420 Saint Mary's Circle

Care Types: Assisted Living, Alzheimer's Care

### Casa of Hobart

4410 W 49th Avenue

Care Types: Nursing Care

### Miller's Merry Manor

2901 West 37th Avenue

Care Types: Nursing Care

### Linden House

360 W 61st Avenue

Care Types: Low Income-Affordable



### Hobart Real Estate Market

- » Hobart is still a sellers' market although demand is slowing, especially from first time home buyers.
- » The median listing home price in Hobart was \$236,000 in June 2022, trending up 5.5% year-over-year. The recorded median listing home price per square foot is \$137.
- » As of June 2022, there are 109 homes for sale in Hobart, 10 of which were newly listed within a week of the data access date. Additionally, there are 10 rental units on the market, ranging from \$835 to \$1,600 per month.
- » On average, homes in Hobart sell after 15 days of being on the market compared to the average of 48 days in 2021. There were 47 homes sold in June of 2022, 45 homes more than the previous year.

### Key Observations - Housing

- » Currently, 72.5% of the 12,630 housing units in Hobart are owner occupied; 21.7%, renter occupied; and 5.8% are vacant. Nationally, 58.2% of the housing units are owner occupied, 31.8% are renter occupied, and 10.0% are vacant. In Hobart, the estimated annual rate of change in housing units since 2020 is a decline of 0.28%. Median home value in Hobart is \$189,188, compared to a median home value of \$283,272 nationally. Over the next five years, median home value is projected to change by 3.31% annually to \$222,663.
- » In Hobart, detached single-family residential units are the dominant housing typology, comprising 76% of all housing units. Attached single-family residential units (e.g., rowhouse) account for 2.2% of all residential units.
- » The most common multi-family residential structures in Hobart feature five to nine units, accounting for about 11% of all units. This indicates that Hobart, while dominantly a single-family community, includes some higher-density residential developments in the medium-sized range, something that could foster future population growth.
- » Most housing units in Hobart were built during three construction "boom" periods. The 1970s saw a construction boom that resulted in a 17% increase in the housing stock, the 1990s added 14.5% and the 2000s added 12.5% of all existing housing units to the stock. Since 2010 the housing stock changed only marginally, accounting for a little less than 3% of all existing housing units in Hobart. Overall, 36% of all housing units were built before 1960.
- » In general, housing costs consume the largest part of a household's budget. There are two main factors that influence the percentage of household income allocated for rent and mortgage. First the market demand, supply, and interest rates influence cost, and second overall household income. The lower the household income is, the higher the percentage dedicated for housing, especially when housing options are limited to lower income groups. Other factors that influence costs include the type and size of housing available for rent or sale.



# Housing Cost Burden

Housing is considered affordable if a household pays 30% or less of its income on rent or mortgage payments. Housing research for Hobart indicates that 44% of renter households pay 30% or less of their household income for rent payments while 56% of owner-occupied households contribute 30% or less of their household income toward mortgage payments. In both cases there are households that use more than 50% of their income towards those payments – 25% of renter households and 4% of owner-occupied households in Hobart. This is a relatively small percentage of owner-occupied households that fall in that bracket, indicating that most households in Hobart are financially stable. However, the fact that nearly 25% of renter households spend more than 50% of their income toward housing indicates that a group of residents may struggle with housing affordability.

**“I’d like to see more affordable, unique single family homes that are attractive to families.”**

- STAKEHOLDER COMMENT



Craftsman-style housing in Hobart



Housing near Downtown Hobart



# COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE

## ECONOMIC TRENDS

Based on economic trends in northwest Indiana, growth in Hobart's economy is likely to slow in the near future due to inflation and rising interest rates, which may lead to a mild recession in 2023. Key impediments to greater growth are a shortage of labor and certain materials such as microchips and raw materials, which can lead to higher prices and inflation. The housing market is a perfect example of these obstacles as increased sales during 2020 caused prices to rise and inventories to shrink, but a limited supply of labor and materials is preventing homebuilders from fully responding to demand and increased prices.

With the further containment of the pandemic, restaurant and travel demand is growing again, but due to greatly reduced capacities and staff, establishments cannot match the demand. This makes the labor shortage even more prevalent. As a result, the average hourly earnings for leisure and hospitality workers surged 8% from late 2020, compared to about 2% for the broader workforce, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Sales growth for restaurants increased 55% year-over-year, implying that consumers are venturing out for more dine-out experiences and have been shopping both online and in stores, pushing inflation fears aside and satisfying pent up demand that accumulated during the lock down and slow reopening of retail and restaurants.

Wage and price increases are causing inflationary fears. The Consumer Price Index (CPI) increased 9.1 percent for the 12-month period ending June 2022, the largest 12-month increase since 1981. While the inflation will likely remain far above the Federal 2% target rate throughout 2022, it will likely come down from its current level once the interest rate increase takes full effect and shortages in key components, such as goods and materials, have eased.

Households that fared well before the pandemic came through it financially largely unscathed. Low-income households have been affected more negatively and have dropped out of consumption for durable goods and short-term purchases of goods and services beyond necessities. The pressure on mid-income households continues to rise due to price increases and household incomes that have not increased to keep pace. This will slow consumption in the near future.



Commercial space in Downtown Hobart





Storefronts in Downtown Hobart

**“ Street festivals, local distinctive shops, art galleries, healthy fresh eateries - all of these could draw people downtown.”**

- STAKEHOLDER COMMENT

## Downtown and the Local Economy

Hobart residents are ready to embrace Downtown Hobart as a commercial hub. Many recognize that the downtown area requires physical improvements and that it struggles with empty storefronts that can sometimes deter potential business owners. However, residents see this area as an asset which provides connections to the lakefront and that serves as a central gathering space for community events and commercial activity. In order to improve Downtown, residents suggested promoting the existing façade improvement program, redeveloping underutilized sites, and encouraging the development of more lake-facing businesses. They believe that these revitalizing improvements will set the stage for future growth, helping to create a more vibrant local economy.





## REGIONAL COMPARISON (NORTHWEST INDIANA)

The Northwest Indiana region consists of Lake, Porter, and LaPorte Counties. As a \$35 billion economy, it is recognized as Indiana’s second largest and is made up of urban, suburban and rural communities. Aside from steel and manufacturing, other notable industries in the area include healthcare, retail, casinos and entertainment.

The region has long been known as a hub for manufacturing. However, as technology transforms and automates tasks, the region has been working to diversify its economy and transition former industrial sites to new uses. One example is the Digital Crossroads of America Data Center on the site of the former State Line Generating Plant in Hammond that includes a 105,000 square-foot data center, tech incubator, renewable energy generation, and a greenhouse.

Northwest Indiana continues to benefit from its proximity to the Chicago metropolitan area and is often referred to as a “bedroom community” for nearby Chicago, offering a lower cost of living and slower suburban pace of life that is still within a reasonable distance to the city to commute to work and recreate. As new residents continue relocating to the area, the region continues to see growth at a moderate pace in both residential and economic sectors. To address and support further growth in Northwest Indiana, transportation developments are underway. The South Shore’s \$933 million West Lake Corridor project is expected to create a faster, less expensive, and more reliable form of transportation to the Chicago market and surrounding areas.



Rendering of Digital Crossroads site in Hammond, IN

# RETAIL REAL ESTATE

## RETAIL INVENTORY

In 2022 Hobart has an estimated 1,215 businesses. The three sectors with the most businesses were “Retail Trade” with 316, followed by “Other Services” with 153, and “Health Care & Social Assistance” with 129 businesses. Combined, these sectors represent 47% of all businesses.

Table 7: Economy, Businesses by NAICS Sector

Sector	Businesses	% of Total	Employment	% of Total
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	3	0.2%	20	0.1%
Construction	65	5.1%	665	4.4%
Manufacturing	29	2.3%	456	3.0%
Wholesale Trade	36	2.8%	567	3.8%
Retail Trade	316	25.0%	4,970	33.2%
Transportation & Warehousing	21	1.7%	184	1.2%
Information	22	1.7%	203	1.4%
Finance & Insurance	60	4.7%	309	2.1%
Real Estate, Rental & Leasing	52	4.1%	368	2.5%
Professional, Scientific & Tech Services	94	7.4%	675	4.5%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	3	0.2%	7	0.0%
Administrative & Support & Waste Management & Remediation Services	41	3.2%	342	2.3%
Educational Services	27	2.1%	553	3.7%
Health Care & Social Assistance	129	10.2%	1,686	11.3%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	18	1.4%	404	2.7%
Accommodation & Food Services	116	9.2%	2,003	13.4%
Other Services (except Public Administration)	153	12.1%	943	6.3%
Public Administration	30	2.4%	589	3.9%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, County Business Pattern, Data Axle, Inc., VCE



# Demographic, Market, and Housing Summary

Fig 15: Hobart Retail Clusters: Healthcare, Food Businesses, & Retail

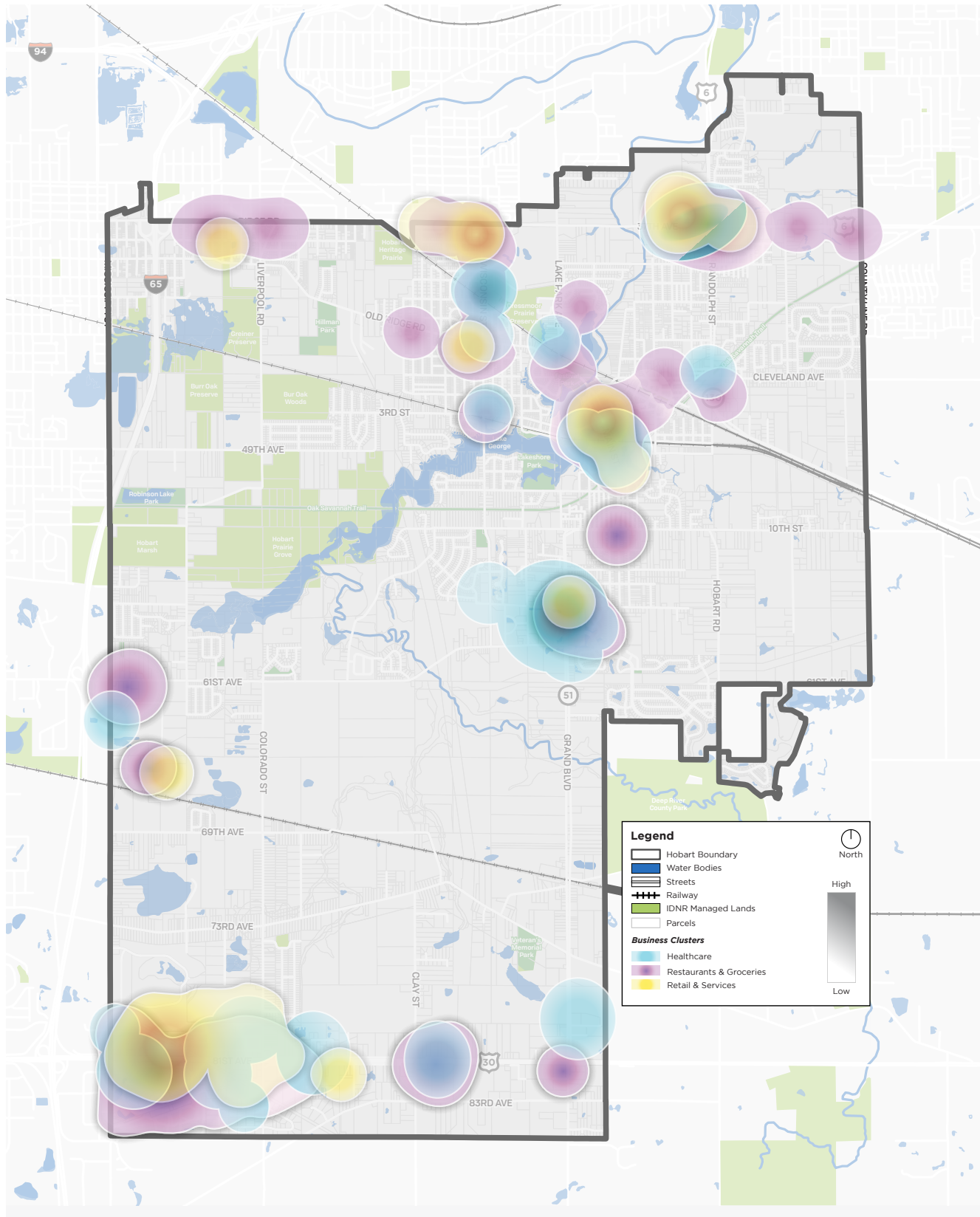
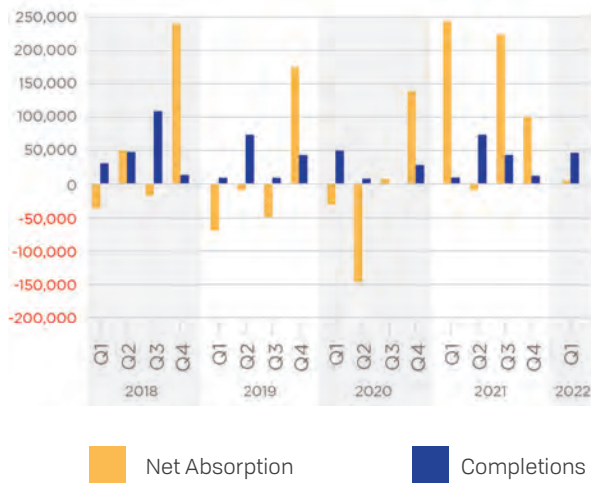


Fig 16: Retail Absorption Rates



Class A buildings are the newest and highest quality. Their locations are highly visible and have high vehicle and pedestrian traffic counts. The vacancy rate in Class A retail space in Hobart was 3.5% at the end of 2021 and is expected to stay at this level through 2022. Absorption was positive with 12,000 square feet in 2021. Market rents have been steadily increasing since mid-2020 and were last recorded at \$15.55/SF at the end of 2021.

Class B buildings are well-maintained, but typically between 10 and 20 years old. They are usually located in good areas, but have lower leases than Class A. Class B retail space had a positive net absorption since mid-2020, which continued with only a slight dip in early 2021. By the end of 2021, over 83,000 square feet of Class B retail space had been absorbed by the market.

## Key Observations - Commercial and Retail

The Retail Clusters map on the previous page is a heat map of commercial, retail, and service activities in Hobart. The colorful clusters represent high concentrations of Healthcare, Restaurants & Groceries, or Retail & Services. Often, these uses are grouped together. According to the map, there are high-activity nodes near Route 30, 61st and Mississippi, St. Mary’s Medical Center, Downtown Hobart, and Ridge Road. Future land use planning efforts will seek to strengthen these nodes. Additional observations are listed below.



### Vacancy

*Vacancy is likely to continue to decline through 2022 even as demand for retail space may slow next year.*



### Retail Spaces

*Smaller retail spaces have become scarce in the area, which could lead to more future development.*



### A Mix of Uses

*There is a trend for high visibility mixed-use projects including office, retail, and medical users.*



### Outlots

*While malls have become less desirable for tenants, outlots surrounding shopping centers and malls remain in demand due to their high visibility and access. Restaurants and other retailers that closed will likely see more demolitions to make way for new users.*

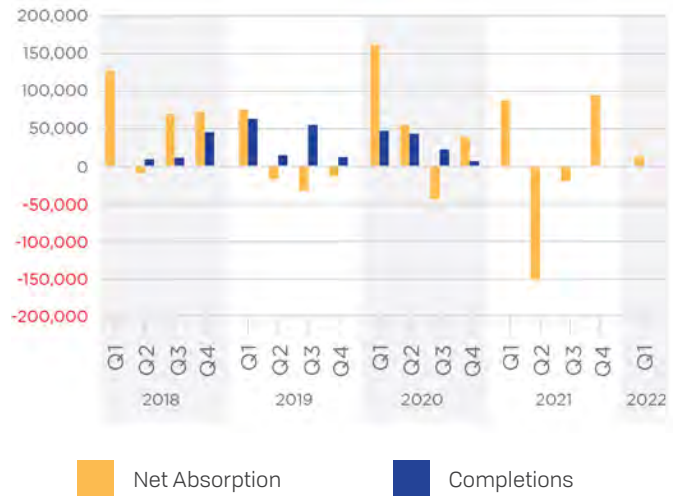


# OFFICE REAL ESTATE

The market for Class A office space is performing well in Northwest Indiana. Vacancy rates were at their lowest in ten years during the third quarter of 2021, reaching 2.6%. Towards the end of 2021, vacancy rates increased to 3.7%. Vacancies are projected to fall slightly again and remain flat through 2022.

Market rents were steady in 2021 hovering around \$27 per square-foot. Net absorption was negative 14,000 square feet but is projected to turn positive in 2022. The vacancy rate for all other classes combined was 6.3% by the end of 2021, down from 7% during the third quarter of the year.

Fig 17: Office Absorption Rates



## Key Observations - Office



### Future of Office Space

The office sector seems to have finally started to stabilize after nearly two years of pandemic-related challenges. However, return-to-office versus remote work will continue to factor into companies' decisions on office space.



### Medical Services

Medical investment continues in the region with new projects announced, underway or opened during 2021, including the University of Chicago Medical, Northwest Health, and Methodist Hospital.



### Class B Office

Class B office properties are likely to struggle. Buyers are more interested in properties greater than 20 years old (Class C), which they can renovate to increase rents or sale prices for a higher profit margin.

# LIGHT INDUSTRIAL REAL ESTATE

Demand for industrial real estate continues unabated in the Northwest Indiana region, especially for warehouse and distribution centers. The vacancy rate for Class A industrial was as little as 1.7% towards the end of 2021. Vacancy rates in Class A have been falling since 2019 and reached their lowest in 10 years in 2020 at 0.9%. There may be a slight uptick in vacancy in 2022 with spaces under construction, however and due to current demand, the spaces will likely fill quickly.

Market rents have steadily increased to \$6.81 per square-foot towards the end of 2021. All other classes combined had slightly higher vacancy rates at 7.3% with market rents at \$6.44 per square-foot. Net absorption was positive with 970,963 square feet, the highest net absorption in ten years.

A number of new projects were announced at the end of 2019, which is projected to bring much-needed space to the market. All classes are finding users and buyers in the market. Class A industrial space is attracting large companies that are well-funded, while the smaller and older industrial sites are attracting established businesses into the region from outstate and newly formed companies needing space.

## Key Observations - Light Industrial



### Increased Demand

*There is high demand for all classes and sizes of industrial in the region. Supply will continue to lag demand.*



### Areas of Interest

*Developers are buying up land, particularly near I-65, U.S. Highway 30, and 61st Avenue.*



### Class A

*Class A vacancy will remain low, despite deliveries of new spec buildings throughout 2022. Property will continue to lease up quickly.*



### Older Industrial

*While sizable acres for development get harder to come by, older industrial properties present an option for redevelopment.*



# EMPLOYMENT, PLACE OF WORK & COMMUTE

## EMPLOYMENT

Hobart has an employment rate of 96.7%. In 2022 Hobart’s unemployment rate was slightly below the US rate of 3.5% and slightly above the rate for the State of Indiana of 3.1%. The service industry sector employs the largest share of Hobart’s population at 49%, followed by manufacturing at 15%, and retail at 9%. White-collar occupations account for the highest number of employments at 54% and blue-collar occupations account for 28% of Hobart’s employed residents. Compared to adjacent communities, Hobart’s population shows the same pattern of employment that is present throughout the region.

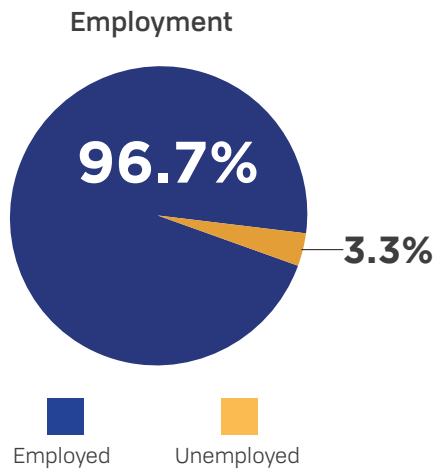


Table 8: Employment by Industry

2022 EMPLOYED BY INDUSTRY			
	Hobart	Merrillville	Valparaiso
Agriculture/Mining	0.3%	0.1%	0.3%
Construction	7.3%	4.1%	5.6%
Manufacturing	15.3%	17.5%	13.2%
Wholesale Trade	2.3%	1.3%	1.8%
Retail Trade	9.1%	10.8%	10.4%
Transportation/Utilities	8.3%	8.8%	3.7%
Information	1.6%	2.2%	1.3%
Finance/Insurance/Real Estate	2.5%	4.2%	5.7%
Services	48.6%	44.9%	54.6%
Public Administration	4.8%	6.1%	3.5%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2010 & 2020 Census, ESRI BIS forecasts for 2022 and 2027, VCE

## WORKING & COMMUTING

About 24% of the total number of employees in Hobart remain in City for work, 63% work within Indiana, and 13% work out of state. The percentage of population that works outside of the State of Residence increases the further west toward the Illinois/Indiana Stateline the community is located. Nearby communities of Portage and Valparaiso have higher percentages of employees remaining within City limits, while Merrillville and Lake Station have similar percentages remaining in municipality limits. The

DAIFUKU Manufacturing



majority of commuters (85%) drive alone to work and the majority of those have a commute of 45 minutes or less. This is consistent with surrounding communities. However, communities with more local workers, such as Valparaiso, tend to have shorter commute times, on average.

## EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

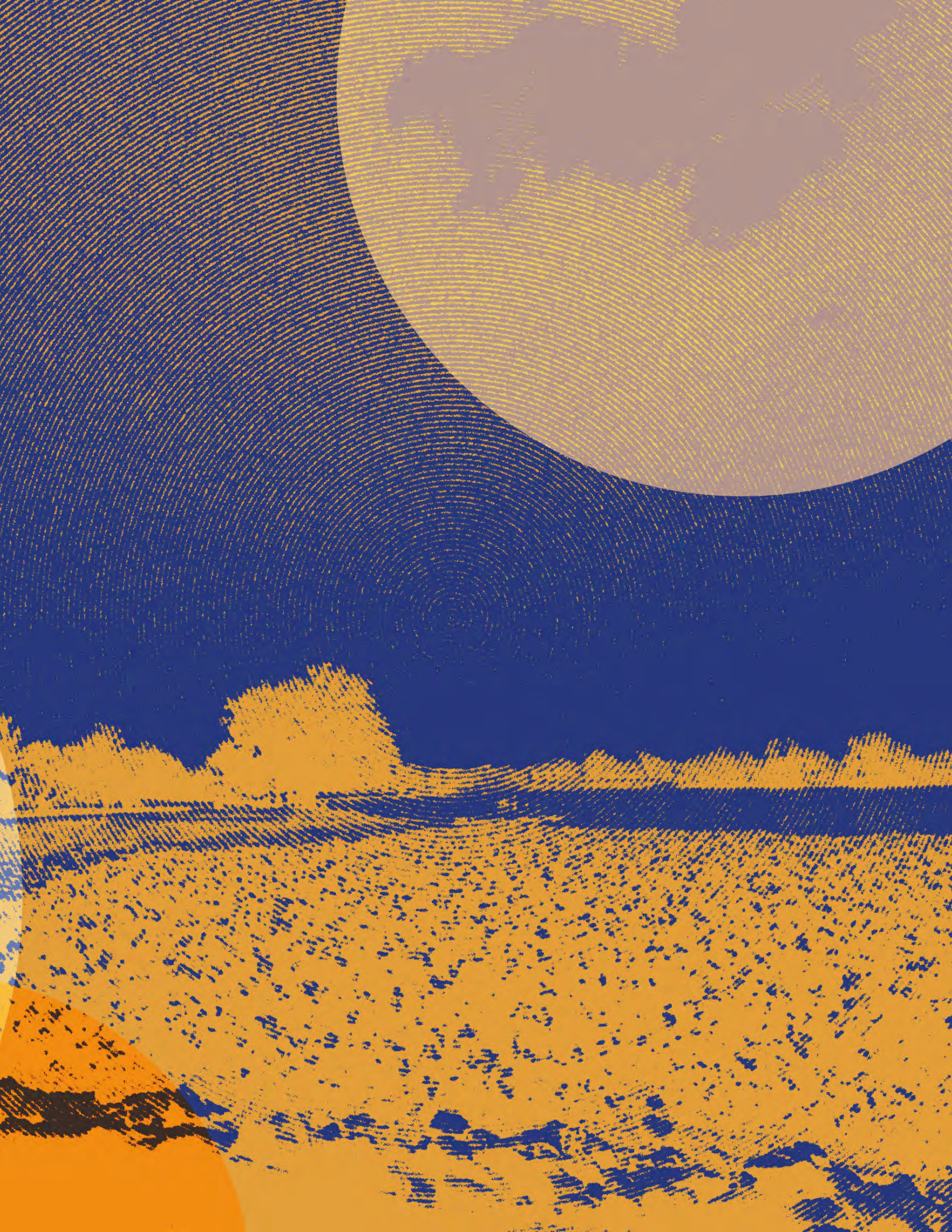
Regarding educational attainment, less than 10% of Hobart residents have not attained a High School diploma or an alternative credential. More than 30% of Hobart residents have an Associate Degree, Bachelor’s Degree, or a Graduate/Professional Degree, according to the U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2022.

Table 9: Educational Attainment

POPULATION AGE 25+ BY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT			
	Hobart	Merrillville	Valparaiso
Less than 9th Grade	2.5%	2.8%	4.5%
9th - 12th Grade, No Diploma	5.9%	5.4%	2.5%
High School Graduate	33.2%	32.5%	25.2%
GED/Alternative Credential	4.2%	3.2%	2.4%
Some College, No Degree	18.8%	21.0%	17.4%
Associate Degree	10.8%	9.7%	9.5%
Bachelor’s Degree	17.6%	16.2%	26.2%
Graduate/Professional Degree	7.0%	9.1%	15.3%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2010 & 2020 Census, ESRI BIS forecasts for 2022 and 2027, VCE









# 4

## PARK & RECREATION

Hobart has always been a community that values its parks and open space resources. Natural elements including green spaces and water bodies define the core of this City. Lake George, one of Hobart’s most prized assets, is strategically located in Downtown Hobart, surrounded by local businesses, residential areas, and two major parks. Hobart offers more than 190 acres of parks and open space throughout the community, which comprises approximately 15% of the City’s total land use area. An additional 25% of Hobart’s land use is dedicated to agricultural and undeveloped land, which includes vast areas of forested land.



# A HEALTHY CITY IN THE MAKING

Parks, recreation, and the urban forest are vital infrastructure that support Hobart's health. Ensuring a healthy and engaging lifestyle for Hobart residents is inherent in all that the City does. It is important to increase opportunities for physical activity, combating obesity and other chronic health conditions through fitness. In addition to physical health, parks also enhance the quality of life and improve mental health by providing access to and connections with nature, particularly coming out of the Covid-19 pandemic. In terms of sustainability, scientific studies have made it clear that an environmental crisis is changing climate patterns around the world. This phenomenon could potentially limit access to the natural environment in Hobart. As we plan for the future, it is key to keep sustainability front and center and consider guiding principles and policies that minimize Hobart's contribution to climate change.

## WHY PLAN NOW?

Hobart's system of parks and open spaces is incredibly diverse and, in many ways, complementary. However, similar to other communities, the park system is facing challenges environmentally and economically, and is unable to serve the current and future needs of Hobart residents. The natural environment goes beyond parks and a comprehensive approach must be taken to ensure adequate distribution of open space and resources as well as the preservation of the natural environment in Hobart. Some of the issues that comparable communities are facing include drought and flooding, increased deferred maintenance, decaying urban forest and tree canopy, a continued rise in obesity, and limited access to nature.

This plan establishes the City's short- and long-term goals for the years to come. The outcome is designed to be flexible and responsive to the inevitable changes that will occur over the years. Board members and staff should look to revisit the action plan on an annual basis to evaluate proposed initiatives and priorities, and develop context sensitive implementation strategies to effectively complete their goals.

## INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES (DNR)

The Indiana Department of Natural Resources manages the resident wildlife resources of Indiana and administers state parks, state fish and wildlife areas, and state nature preserves. Guiding local communities to effectively plan for the future of parks, recreation, and natural area, as well as continue to serve current and future residents, Indiana DNR sets forth a set of guidelines for developing master plans. As identified by the organization, developing a master plan every five years, or ensuring current plans stay current could allow the Hobart Park and Recreation Department "**the Department**" to submit for grant programs administered by the Division of State Parks, Community Grants and Trails. The Hobart Park & Recreation Master Plan was developed as part of the City-wide comprehensive planning effort, and is meant to be encompassing of all critical planning components that define the Department's 5-year plan.

# PLANNING FOR YOUR TOMORROW

Hobart's population is changing over time. Projections below indicate that the Alpha Population (born 2017 or later) are projected to double by the year 2027. The majority of other cohorts are holding stable, with the exception of a drop in the Greatest Population (born 1945 or earlier). Overall, Hobart is also becoming more diverse. In 2022 the youngest population based on ethnicity is Hispanic with a median age of 30, followed by African American with 36.6, Asian with 40.6 and Caucasian/White with 45.6.

**Planning for and accommodating the changes in population would position the Department to stay relevant and responsive to the projected makeup of Hobart residents.**



Brickie Bowl Concert



**We should create more events that are truly ours**

- STAKEHOLDER COMMENT



Arbor Lane Park (Mini Park)



## TIMELINE HISTORY

Below is a timeline that outlines the various ordinances that led to the creation of the Hobart Park Board and Hobart Park Department, starting in 1923.

**1923**  
APR.

**#30**  
ORDINANCE

Creation of a Board of Trustees to control and manage the public parks of the City of Hobart,

Allows for the acquisition of real property for playgrounds and recreation centers. This ordinance also provided for a tax levy to be deposited in a recreation fund.

**#620**  
ORDINANCE

**1960**  
AUG.

**1963**  
APR.

**#687**  
ORDINANCE

Empowered the Mayor to appoint a four member park board to administer all funds in the recreation fund and created the Parks and Recreation Department.

Revised the laws under Indiana Code 36-10-3. Dictated that the Park Board be appointed by the Mayor. The Superintendent of Parks and Recreation Department was established.

**#704**  
ORDINANCE

**1963**  
AUG.

**1996**  
FEB.

**#687**  
ORDINANCE

Creation of a Board of Park Commissioners under Indiana Code 36-10-4 thereby creating a **Department of Public Parks.**

# HOBART PARK BOARD

The Hobart Park Board, consisted of four commissioners and two officio members, is responsible for approving decisions regarding all park events including the Hobart Pool, rentals of park properties, and park programs. The list of Park Board members and City representatives includes:

- » **ANGELA GRABCZAK**, Commissioner
- » **MARK KARA**, Commissioner
- » **MARIA GALKA**, Commissioner
- » **JOSEPH SUCH**, Commissioner
- » **JOSH HUDDLESTUN**, Council Representative
- » **SANDY HILLAN**, School Board Representative

# DEPARTMENT STAFF

The Hobart Parks Department consists of twenty full time employees, including recreation programming staff. The Department includes one Recreation Coordinator, one foreman, two maintenance staff members, and one secretary. The chart below illustrates the Parks Department staffing structure.





# PARK SCORECARDS

Park scorecards is intended to help guide capital improvement plans, master plans, and maintenance standards. This chapter of the Park, Recreation, and natural assessment chapter can provide the City of Hobart a better understanding of how well each park site is performing and what improvements each amenity can benefit from.

In summary, the park scorecards will guide the City of Hobart to:

- » Understand the present state of Hobart’s public open spaces and facilities.
- » Determine priorities for improvements and provide direction for allocation of funds, staff, and other resources,
- » Communicate priorities internally among employees and externally to governing boards, citizen committees, and the public.
- » Measure the impact of open space infrastructure and facility investments, as well as open space and facility maintenance efforts.
- » Help Hobart residents understand how their local parks and facilities are performing in comparison to other parks in the District.



GRADING LEGEND	
<b>A = 4.0</b>	<b>C = 2.0 - 2.29</b>
<b>A - = 3.8 - 3.99</b>	<b>C - = 1.8 - 1.99</b>
<b>B + = 3.3 - 3.79</b>	<b>D + = 1.3 - 1.79</b>
<b>B = 3.0 - 3.29</b>	<b>D = 1.0 - 1.29</b>
<b>B - = 2.8 - 2.99</b>	<b>D - &lt; 1.0</b>
<b>C + = 2.3 - 2.79</b>	



Lakefront Park

**SAMPLE PARK SCORECARD**

Park Details

**HILLMAN HEIGHTS PARK**

**Location:** 2500 N. Hansen Blvd.  
**Size:** 3.41 acres

**Features and Amenities**

Basketball Court  
 Picnic Shelter  
 Playground / Swings

NEIGHBORHOOD PARK

Park Category

**B**

Score = 3/4

Score

Background & Description

**Site Description**

Located in the Hillman Heights subdivision, Hillman Heights Park offers recreational amenities including two play structures, a swing set, a basketball court, and a picnic shelter with picnic tables. The playground to the east is older and has been recently renovated with painted metal posts. The picnic shelter overall is in poor condition and requires maintenance. Adjacent, yet spatially separated from the old play structure, is a swing set that is showing wear and is rusting. The playground to the west is brand new and features new safety features such as wood chip surfacing and defined edging. A basketball court separates the two play structures and is in fair condition. Features of the park are not well connected and do not cohesively integrate within the context as a whole are not well connected and are positioned against one another in an uncoordinated manner. Overall, Hillman Heights Park has a welcoming feel with mature trees and could potentially promote additional active and passive recreational features and amenities.

**Hillman Heights park received a score of 3/4.**

Recommendations

**Recommendations**

- » Repair/replace dated and rusted play equipment, including the swing set
- » Consider multi-generational passive recreation features
- » Consider basketball court resurfacing and re-stripping
- » Consider adding seating pockets, including benches
- » Consider better aligning future site amenities
- » Provide additional wayfinding and signage



**Picnic Shelter**  
Fair condition



**New Play Equipment**  
Excellent condition

Photos



Aerial

Scorecards for all parks can be found in the appendix.



## OVERALL PARK IMPROVEMENTS

**Increase the number of benches and provide additional shade in park sites and around playgrounds.**

**Reduce turf area and add complementary amenities, where feasible, to reduce overall amenity deficiency and increase the variety of recreational offerings in Mini Parks and Neighborhood Parks.**

**Consider better integrating playgrounds within the parks, including locating equipment in better relationships, providing fewer barriers surrounding the play areas, using topography to create interest and play challenges.**

**Consider color and concept themes in Neighborhood Parks**

**Consider more comprehensive open space designs that integrate a variety of landscape planting, pathways and circulation, gateways, seating and gathering spaces, and buffers to adjacent uses.**

**Consider signage and wayfinding as guidance / educational information where feasible.**

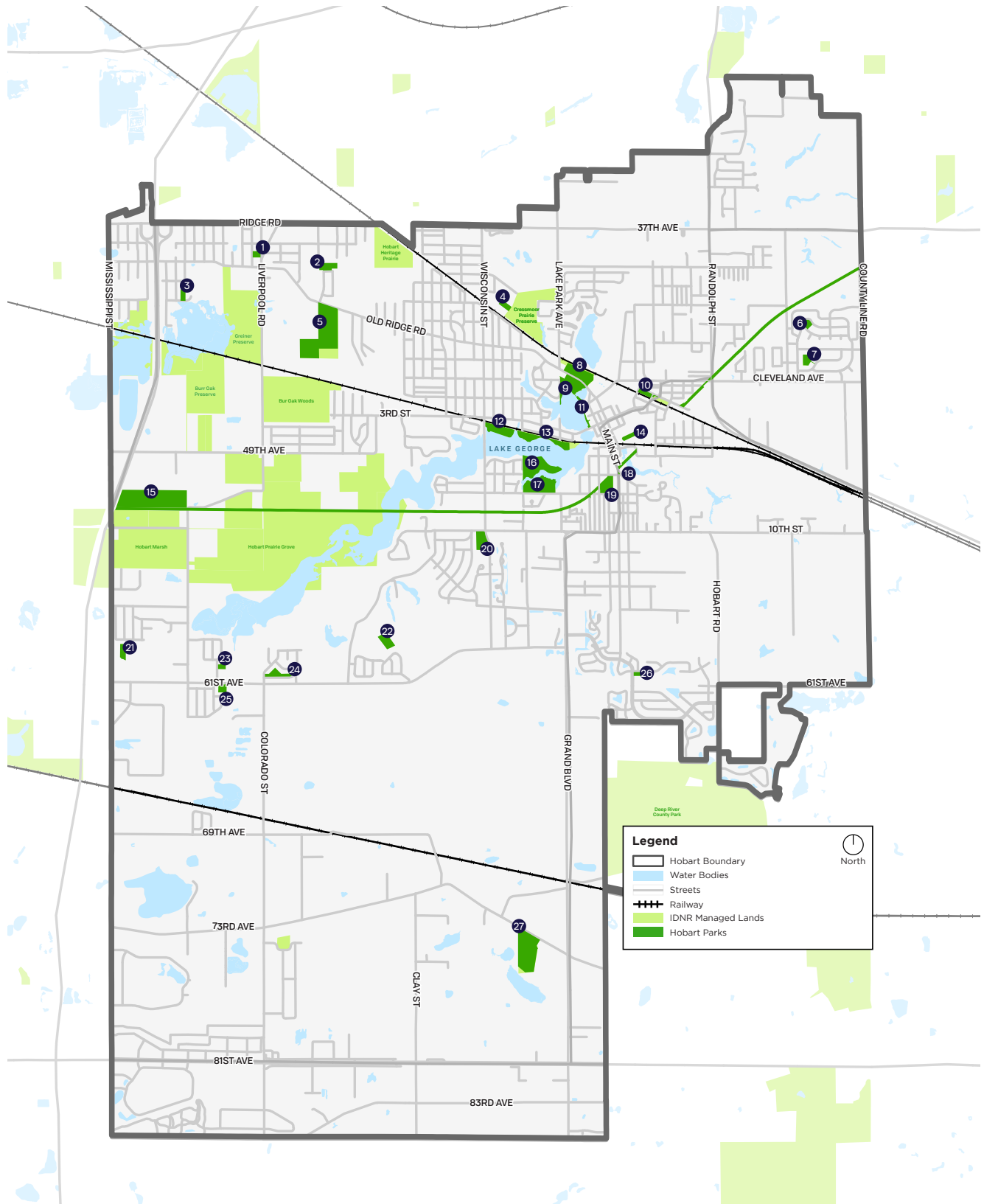


**Our natural resources are definitely what makes us stand out. We should absolutely focus on making those more accessible and think about experiential programming.**

- STAKEHOLDER COMMENT



Fig 18: Hobart Retail Clusters: Healthcare, Food Businesses, & Retail



# COMMUNITY OPEN SPACE

Public parks and open space are provided by several agencies in the City of Hobart, including the School City of Hobart. While all agencies provide open space and recreation opportunities, they do so in varying capacities. The City of Hobart has a total of 27 parks and open space sites that equal a total of 198 acres. Additional undeveloped natural areas can be found within the City limits equaling a total of 1,092 acres. The City of Hobart has limited control over the natural areas, however community residents have access to trails and other amenities within those sites. Natural Areas are the largest park category in the City at 86% of the total open space acreage. Excluding Natural Areas, out of the 198 acres of managed park and open spaces, 95% or 189 acres are considered “Active Recreation Areas” which includes Neighborhood Parks and Community Parks. A breakdown of park acreage by classification is provided in the appendix.

## HOBART’S PARK SYSTEM

1. Ted Hansen Park **(NP)**
2. Hillman Heights Park **(NP)**
3. Englehart Park **(MP)**
4. Emily Silich Park **(MP)**
5. Hillman Park **(CP)**
6. Arbor Lane Park **(MP)**
7. McAfee Park **(NP)**
8. Soccer Rugby Field **(NP)**
9. Festival Park **(CP)**
10. Pennsy Park **(NP)**
11. Lakefront Park **(NP)**
12. Pleak Park **(NP)**
13. Jerry Pavese Park **(NP)**
14. Brickie Bowl **(NP)**
15. Robinson Lake Park **(CP)**
16. Fred Rose Lakeshore **(CP)**
17. Fred Rose 8th St. Park **(CP)**
18. Doughboy Monument **(MP)**
19. Hobart City Ball Park **(NP)**
20. Hobart Community Pool **(NP)**
21. Glenwood Park **(NP)**
22. Merrillville Heights Park **(NP)**
23. Brookview Park **(NP)**
24. Amber Creek Park **(MP)**
25. Deep River Parkway **(NP)**
26. Barrington Ridge Park **(MP)**
27. Veteran’s Memorial Park **(CP)**

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**(MP) = Mini Park**

**(NP) = Neighborhood Park**

**(CP) = Community Park**





Table 10: Park Classification

Classification	General Description	Service Area	Size Criteria
<b>Mini Parks</b>	Mini Parks meet the need for a walkable, drop-in recreation experience. Appropriate elements in these parks include playgrounds, picnic areas, and seating. These parks usually do not include parking. Used to address limited, isolated, or unique recreational needs.	Less than 0.25-mile radius distance.	0 to 1 acres in size is typical
<b>Neighborhood Parks</b>	Neighborhood Parks remain the basic unit of the park system and are generally designed for informal active and passive recreation and community gathering spaces. Elements in these parks often include playgrounds, picnic areas, sports fields, and trail systems. Neighborhood Parks serve as the recreational and social focus of the neighborhood.	0.5 to 1.0-mile radius distance.	1 to 5 acres in size is typical.
<b>Community Parks</b>	Community Parks focus on meeting regional and community-wide recreation needs. These parks preserve unique landscapes and often serve the community as gathering places. Community Parks also host athletic teams and affiliate programs. Elements in these parks include playgrounds, pavilions, trails and path systems, multiple sport courts, and fields.	Usually serves two or more neighborhoods and 0.5 to 3-mile radius distance.	As needed to accommodate desired uses. Usually a minimum of 10 acres.

Source: NRPA's Park, Recreation, Open Space & Greenway Guidelines

# LEVEL OF SERVICE ANALYSIS

The Level of Service (LOS) analysis evaluates how well the City's parks and outdoor amenities compare to local, regional, and industry benchmarks and attempts to gauge how well the offerings serve the Hobart community.

Level of Service standards and recommendations provide City staff and officials with the information they need to respond to growing communities and their ever-changing needs. Its basic utility is evaluating whether community assets meet the legal and economic requirement of equity. Benchmarks for park and recreation agencies and departments were first developed in the 1980s by the National Parks and Recreation Association (NRPA) to measure the total acreage needs of communities. According to the NRPA, a Level of Service benchmark should be practical and achievable; equitable; and context-sensitive.

As much as this analysis is integral in estimating how well residents of the City are being served, it is only one of many tools that can help in determining future goals and needs.

## ACREAGE LEVEL OF SERVICE

**NRPA Recommended** - Acreage Level of Service analyses aim to measure the minimum acres of land required to provide recreational opportunities and the amenities required to support them. Acreage of park land per 1,000 residents remains the most common technique of expressing equal opportunity, even though conditions and needs vary greatly between areas. [2022 NRPA Agency Performance Review](#) recommends that the typical park and recreation agency (populations 20,000 to 49,999) offers 10.4 acres of parkland for every 1,000 residents in the jurisdiction.

With a population of 29,219, the City of Hobart is recommended to have 303 acres of Active Recreation areas. With 197.78 acres of Mini Parks, Neighborhood Parks, and Community Parks combined, the City is deficient by 105.2 acres, when compared to the 10.4 acres / 1000 population benchmark.

While Natural Areas in Hobart exceed 1,000 acres and would position the City well beyond the NRPA benchmark, this amount of undeveloped land was not included in this analysis, given that these sites are not owned or managed by Hobart.

## MINI PARK ACREAGE

The City of Hobart is deficient in Mini Parks, offering less than half the recommended acreage at close to 1 acre / 1000 population. The City is deficient in almost 18 acres, and this deficiency contributes to almost 20% of the total shortage in active recreation open space.

## NEIGHBORHOOD PARK ACREAGE

The City of Hobart has a surplus in Neighborhood Parks, offering close to 10 acres more than the recommended acreage at 2 acres / 1000 population.



## COMMUNITY PARK ACREAGE

Hobart is most deficient in Community Parks, with a deficiency of over 95 acres according to the recommended acreage at 7.5 acres / 1000 population. This deficiency contributes to approximately 80% of the total shortage in active recreation open space.

Table 11: Acreage Level of Service Analysis NRPA

Classification	Hobart's Acreage	NRPA Recommended Acreage (Hobart population)	NRPA Recommended Acreage (acres/1000 population)	Acreage Deficiency or Surplus (acres)
Mini Parks	8.25	26	0.9	<b>-17.75</b>
Neighborhood Parks	68.82	58.4	2.0	<b>10.42</b>
Community Parks	120.71	219	7.5	<b>-98.29</b>
<b>Total Acreage</b>	<b>197.78</b>	<b>303.4</b>	<b>10.4</b>	<b>-105.62</b>

**SCORP Recommended** - While NRPA's recommended acreage level of service indicates the need for 10.4 acres per 1000 residents, the SCORP Indiana benchmark almost doubles that benchmark to 20 acres. According to the Indiana benchmark, Hobart is more than 350 acres deficient in overall park acreage.

Table 12: Acreage Level of Service Analysis SCORP

Classification	Hobart's Acreage	SCORP IN Recommended Acreage (Hobart population)	SCORP IN Recommended Acreage (acres/1000 population)	Acreage Deficiency or Surplus (acres)
<b>Total Acreage</b>	<b>197.78</b>	<b>584</b>	<b>20.0</b>	<b>-386.22</b>

McAfee Park Sign (Neighborhood Park)



Hobart City Ball Park (Neighborhood Park)





# HOBERT PARKS

## Park Acreage

When asked about outdoor community spaces, residents indicated that there is a need for additional large community parks, natural areas, and boating and fishing areas, as well as a nature center. While some residents expressed a need for outdoor sports and recreation facilities, the majority were more interested in increased natural green spaces. Many residents want to build upon Hobart's natural assets, especially Lake George and Deep River, by adding boat launches, water sports rentals, and multi-use trails. Participants also mentioned a desire for spaces dedicated to family gatherings, such as pavilions, gazebos, picnic areas, and splash pads. Despite some reservations around the maintenance and safety of a dog park, many community members would like to see at least one built within Hobart. In order to improve Hobart's parks and open spaces, residents would like to see more public restrooms in parks, better-maintained play areas, pocket parks within neighborhoods, and more public amenities.

Some of the best ideas for the future of the parks in Hobart came from community members themselves. When Hobart residents were asked to share their big ideas for Hobart's parks, they mentioned:

**We have a need for a more livable city that has more parks and natural areas scattered all over Hobart.**

**We need large community parks like Valpo or Portage.**

Top three parks include:

Hobart City Ball Park



Lakefront Park



Festival Park



**LARGE  
COMMUNITY  
PARKS**

**60%**

**50%**

**Satisfaction  
WITH  
Parks**



## PARK DISTRIBUTION LEVEL OF SERVICE

Distribution Level of Service evaluates the equitability of offerings. Parks are categorized by NRPA classification standards which are based on size, function, and use of sites. The City of Hobart has Mini Parks, Neighborhood Parks, Community Parks, and Natural Areas. For this assessment, only Mini, Neighborhood, and Community Parks are used to evaluate distribution Level of Service, as natural areas are not owned or managed by the City of Hobart. The individual park classifications determine the service area for each park. Service areas for the park sites evaluated are as follows:

- » Mini Parks: 0.25 mile, or a 5-10-minute walk
- » Neighborhood Parks: 0.5 mile, or a 10-15-minute walk
- » Community Parks: 1.0 mile

The end result of this analysis will focus on how many people are served by certain Neighborhood or Community Parks. This may reveal that some of the planning areas are underserved or that the City is serving its residents and should shift its efforts towards maintaining and updating existing sites.

### Planning Areas

To accurately evaluate the Level of Service for the walk-to destinations, or Mini and Neighborhood Parks, the City is divided into planning areas, or smaller “neighborhood-like” clusters, that are distinguished by barriers such as roads, railroads, stream corridors, water bodies, or other features that obstruct walkability. Service areas for Mini and Neighborhood Parks are clipped to these planning area boundaries. Community Park service areas do not take planning area boundaries into account as they are drive-to destinations. The Level of Service for each park classification is identified by the total number or percentage of residents that fall within the service areas for each park classification.

In Hobart, major barriers include the railroad tracks, Lake George, Interstate 65, Highway 130, and 61st Avenue, among others. These planning barriers resulted in 13 Planning Areas in the City of Hobart, which are outlined on the map to the right. Planning Area (I) has the largest population at 6,588 residents while Planning Areas (E) and (J) have the smallest populations at 0 and 292 residents, respectively. In general, the Planning Areas on the north and east have the highest population densities. Demographics for each Planning Area can be found in the chart to the right.

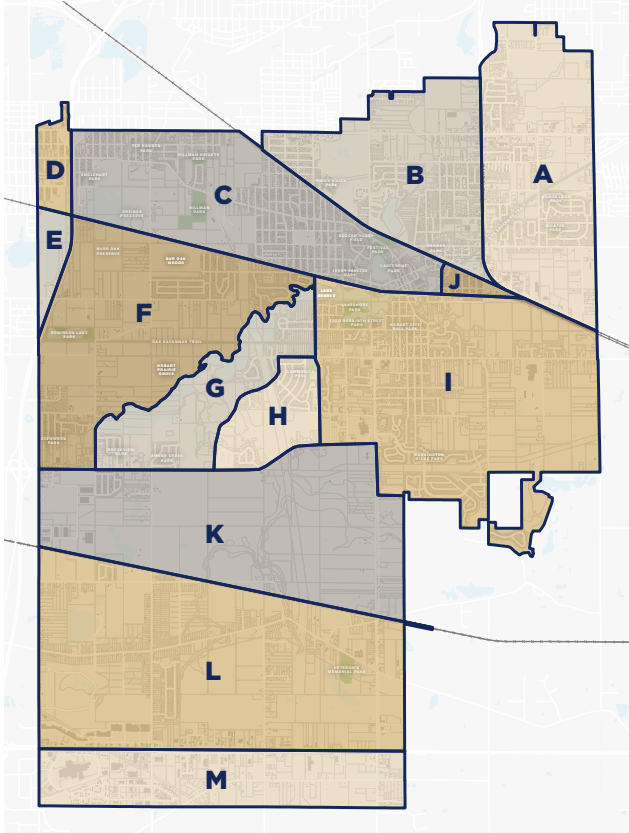
Table 13: Planning Area Populations

PLANNING AREA	POPULATION
Planning Area <b>A</b>	3,127
Planning Area <b>B</b>	4,568
Planning Area <b>C</b>	6,100
Planning Area <b>D</b>	525
Planning Area <b>E</b>	0
Planning Area <b>F</b>	2,594
Planning Area <b>G</b>	1,192
Planning Area <b>H</b>	1,107
Planning Area <b>I</b>	6,588
Planning Area <b>J</b>	292
Planning Area <b>K</b>	1,602
Planning Area <b>L</b>	1,332
Planning Area <b>M</b>	192
<b>Total Population</b>	<b>29,219</b>

### Service Areas

To analyze the geographic distribution of the parks and open spaces in the City, service areas were created in the form of discs. These areas are illustrated with a pink disc on the Level of Service maps. The size of the service area is dependent on the park classification and ranges from a quarter-mile to one mile. Based on the overall distribution analysis, the Planning Areas with the lowest level of service, or highest need, are Planning Areas (A), (D), (I), (K), (L), and (M). These areas, and particularly (A) and (I) have the largest number of residents without access to park assets.

Fig 19: Planning Areas in Hobart



## Park Distribution

Hobart residents expressed the need to increase access to park types of all categories to ensure both active and passive recreation opportunities are offered for as many residents as possible.

“ **Ted Hansen and Englehart Parks are in the poorest sections of Hobart and those need to be better maintained.** ”

“ **Increase access. Many parts of Hobart feel fragmented and there is a need to connect the parks and paths, especially to downtown.** ”

“ **More pocket parks and large scale parks.** ”

Penny Park Bike Trail





## MINI PARKS DISTRIBUTION LOS

The Mini Park service area map shows a 0.25-mile service area radius around the existing Mini Parks. Community Parks and Neighborhood Parks can serve the function of a Mini Park for residents living within a 0.25-mile radius. The 0.25-mile radius service areas generated by Community Parks and Neighborhood Parks are illustrated in light blue on the map in Fig 20. Based on NRPA standards, Mini Parks are walk-to destinations, and for that reason, their service areas are clipped to the major planning areas in which they are located.

The Mini Park Distribution Level of Service Analysis map is illustrated in Fig 20. Planning Area (H) has the largest number of residents served 562 (51% of the Planning Area population) by Mini Parks. Planning Areas (A), (G), (H), and (I) have at least 30% or more of residents served by Mini Parks. Planning Areas (B), (C), (D), (F), (J), (K), (L) and (M) have the least number of residents served, with Areas (D), (J), (L), and (M) completely unserved by Mini Parks. Overall, all Planning Areas are underserved with large gaps of more than 3,000 unserved residents in certain areas.

**Overall, 23.7% of Hobart’s residents live within a 0.25-mile walking distance to a park. This percentage of the population is lower than the 34.2% average identified by the planning team.**

Table 14: Population Served by Planning Area (Mini Park)

PLANNING AREA	POPULATION	POPULATION SERVED
Planning Area <b>A</b>	3,127	1,055 (34%)
Planning Area <b>B</b>	4,568	1,175 (26%)
Planning Area <b>C</b>	6,100	1,284 (21%)
Planning Area <b>D</b>	525	0 (0%)
Planning Area <b>E</b>	0	0 (0%)
Planning Area <b>F</b>	2,594	508 (20%)
Planning Area <b>G</b>	1,192	378 (32%)
Planning Area <b>H</b>	1,107	562 (51%)
Planning Area <b>I</b>	6,588	1,948 (30%)
Planning Area <b>J</b>	292	0 (0%)
Planning Area <b>K</b>	1,602	26 (2%)
Planning Area <b>L</b>	1,332	0 (0%)
Planning Area <b>M</b>	192	0 (0%)
<b>Total Population</b>	<b>29,219</b>	<b>6,936 (23.7%)</b>

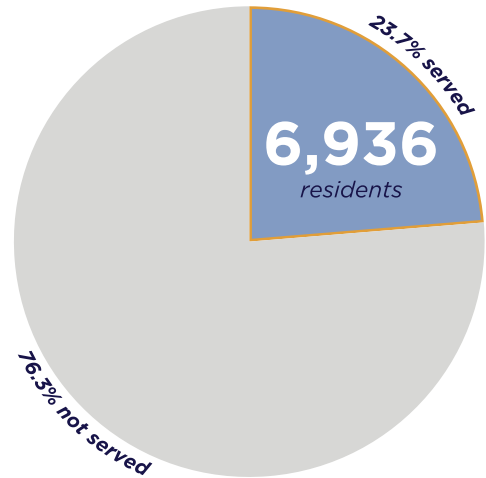
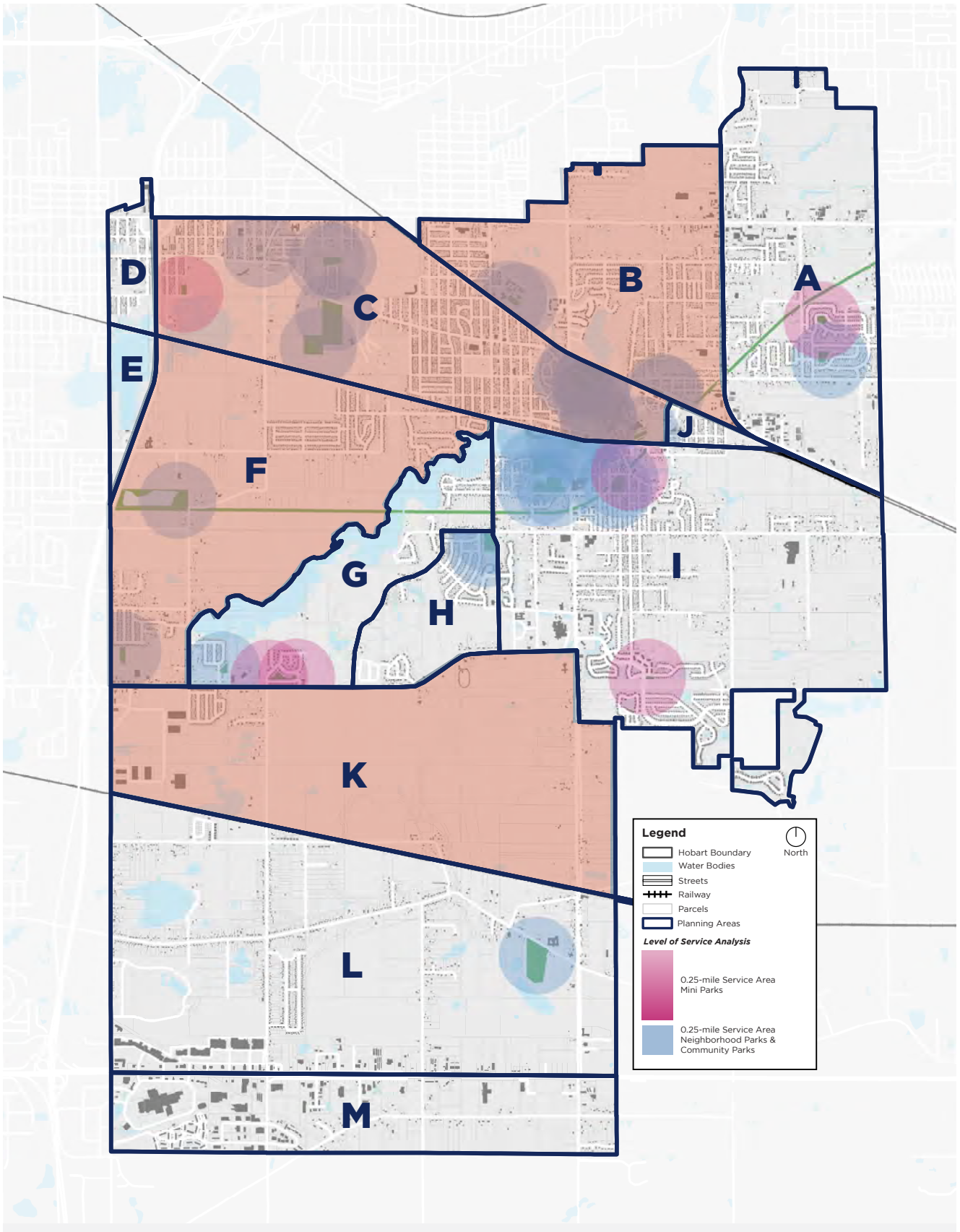


Fig 20: Mini Park Distribution Level of Service Map





## NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS DISTRIBUTION LOS

The Neighborhood Park service area map shows a 0.5-mile service area radius around the existing Neighborhood Parks. Community Parks can serve the function of a Neighborhood Park for residents living within a 0.5-mile radius. The 0.5-mile radius service areas generated by Community Parks are illustrated in light blue on the map in Fig 21. Based on NRPA standards, Neighborhood Parks are walk-to destinations, and for that reason, their service areas are clipped to the major planning areas in which they are located.

The Neighborhood Park Distribution Level of Service Analysis map is illustrated in Fig 21. Planning Area (C) has the largest number of residents served at 3,248 (53% of the Planning Area population) by Neighborhood Parks. Planning Areas (A), (B), (C), (G), and (H) have at least 50% or more of residents served by Neighborhood Parks. Planning Areas (D), (F), (I), (K), (L), and (M) have the least number of residents served, with Areas (D), (J), (L), and (M) completely unserved by Neighborhood Parks. Overall, Planning Areas with larger percentages of population are fairly served by Neighborhood Parks, with the exception of Planning Area (I), which is the largest of all areas.

**Overall, 43.3% of Hobart’s residents live within a 0.5-mile walking distance to a park. This percentage of the population is significantly lower than the 61.3% average identified by the planning team.**

Table 15: Population Served by Planning Area (Neighborhood Park)

PLANNING AREA	POPULATION	POPULATION SERVED
Planning Area <b>A</b>	3,127	1,894(61%)
Planning Area <b>B</b>	4,568	2,637 (58%)
Planning Area <b>C</b>	6,100	3,248 (53%)
Planning Area <b>D</b>	525	0 (0%)
Planning Area <b>E</b>	0	0 (0%)
Planning Area <b>F</b>	2,594	705 (27%)
Planning Area <b>G</b>	1,192	608 (51%)
Planning Area <b>H</b>	1,107	784 (71%)
Planning Area <b>I</b>	6,588	2,478 (38%)
Planning Area <b>J</b>	292	0 (0%)
Planning Area <b>K</b>	1,602	307 (18%)
Planning Area <b>L</b>	1,332	0 (0%)
Planning Area <b>M</b>	192	0 (0%)
<b>Total Population</b>	<b>29,219</b>	<b>12,661 (43.3%)</b>

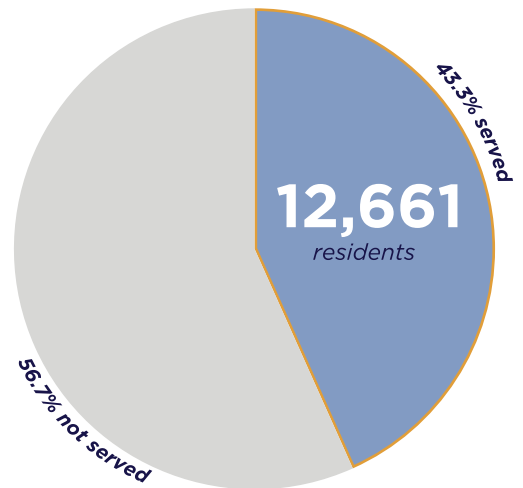
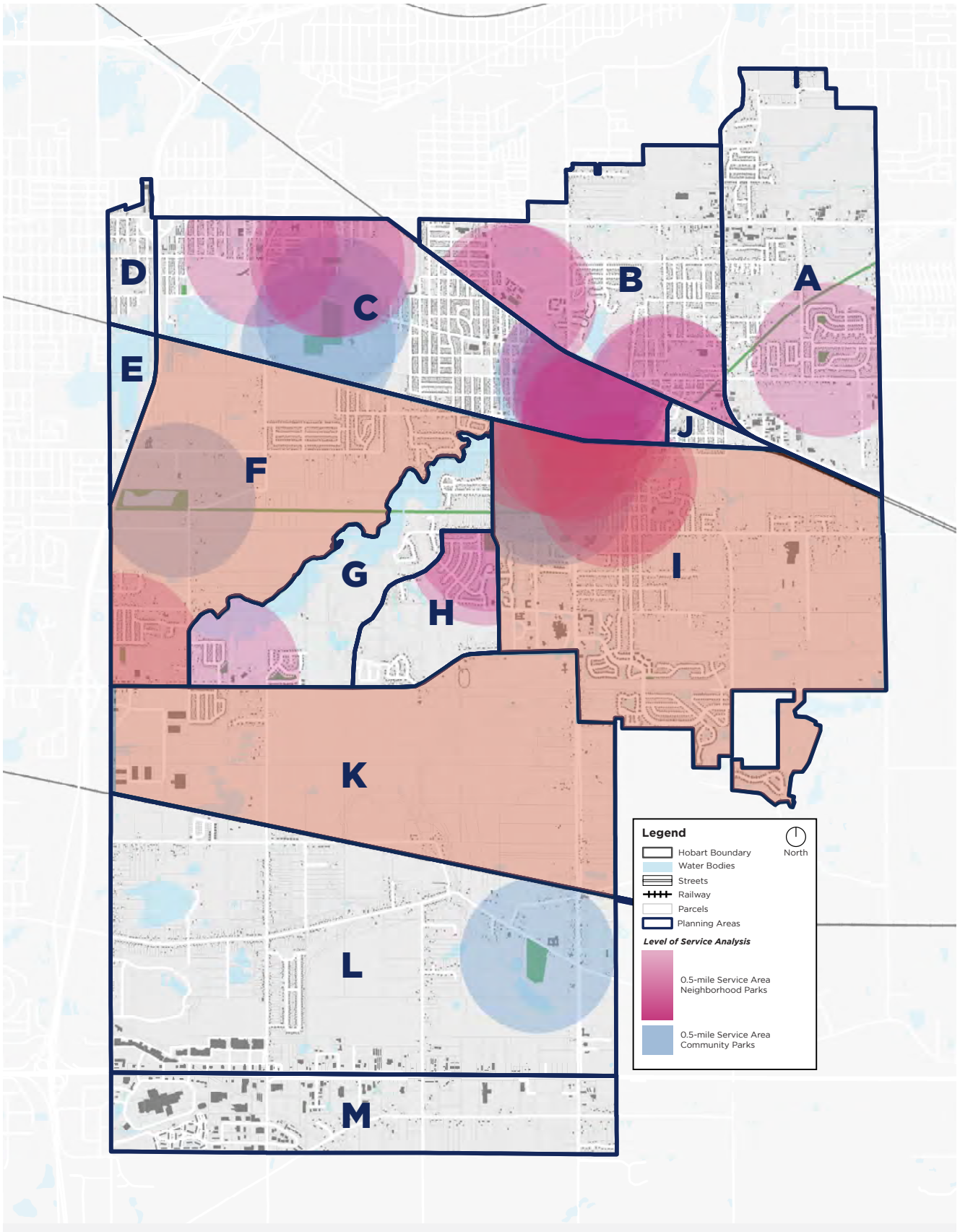


Fig 21: Neighborhood Park Distribution Level of Service Map





## COMMUNITY PARKS DISTRIBUTION LOS

The Community Park service area map shows a 1.0-mile service area radius around the existing Community Parks. Based on NRPA standards, Community Parks are typically drive-to destinations, and for that reason, their service areas are not clipped to the major planning areas in which they are located.

The Community Park Distribution Level of Service Analysis map is illustrated in Fig 22. Planning areas (C) has the largest number of residents served at 5,804 (94% and of the Planning Area population) by Community Parks. Aside from Planning Area (C), Planning Areas (B), (F), and (J) have the highest percentage (80% or more) of residents served by Community Parks in Hobart. Planning Areas (A), (D), (G), and (K) have the least number of residents served, with Areas (A) and (D) completely unserved by Community Parks. Overall, Planning Areas with larger percentages of population are fairly served by Neighborhood Parks, with the exception of Planning Area (A).

**Overall, 62% of Hobart’s residents live within a 1.0-mile driving distance to a park. This percentage of the population is lower than the 75.5% average identified by the planning team.**

Table 16: Population Served by Planning Area (Community Park)

PLANNING AREA	POPULATION	POPULATION SERVED
Planning Area <b>A</b>	3,127	0 (0%)
Planning Area <b>B</b>	4,568	4,005 (88%)
Planning Area <b>C</b>	6,100	5,804 (95%)
Planning Area <b>D</b>	525	0 (0%)
Planning Area <b>E</b>	0	0 (0%)
Planning Area <b>F</b>	2,594	2,568 (99%)
Planning Area <b>G</b>	1,192	292 (24%)
Planning Area <b>H</b>	1,107	784 (71%)
Planning Area <b>I</b>	6,588	3,997 (61%)
Planning Area <b>J</b>	292	292 (100%)
Planning Area <b>K</b>	1,602	36 (2%)
Planning Area <b>L</b>	1,332	317 (24%)
Planning Area <b>M</b>	192	30 (16%)
<b>Total Population</b>	<b>29,219</b>	<b>18,125 (62%)</b>

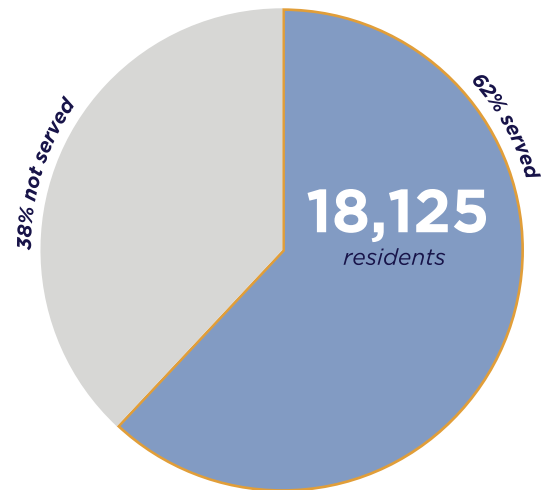
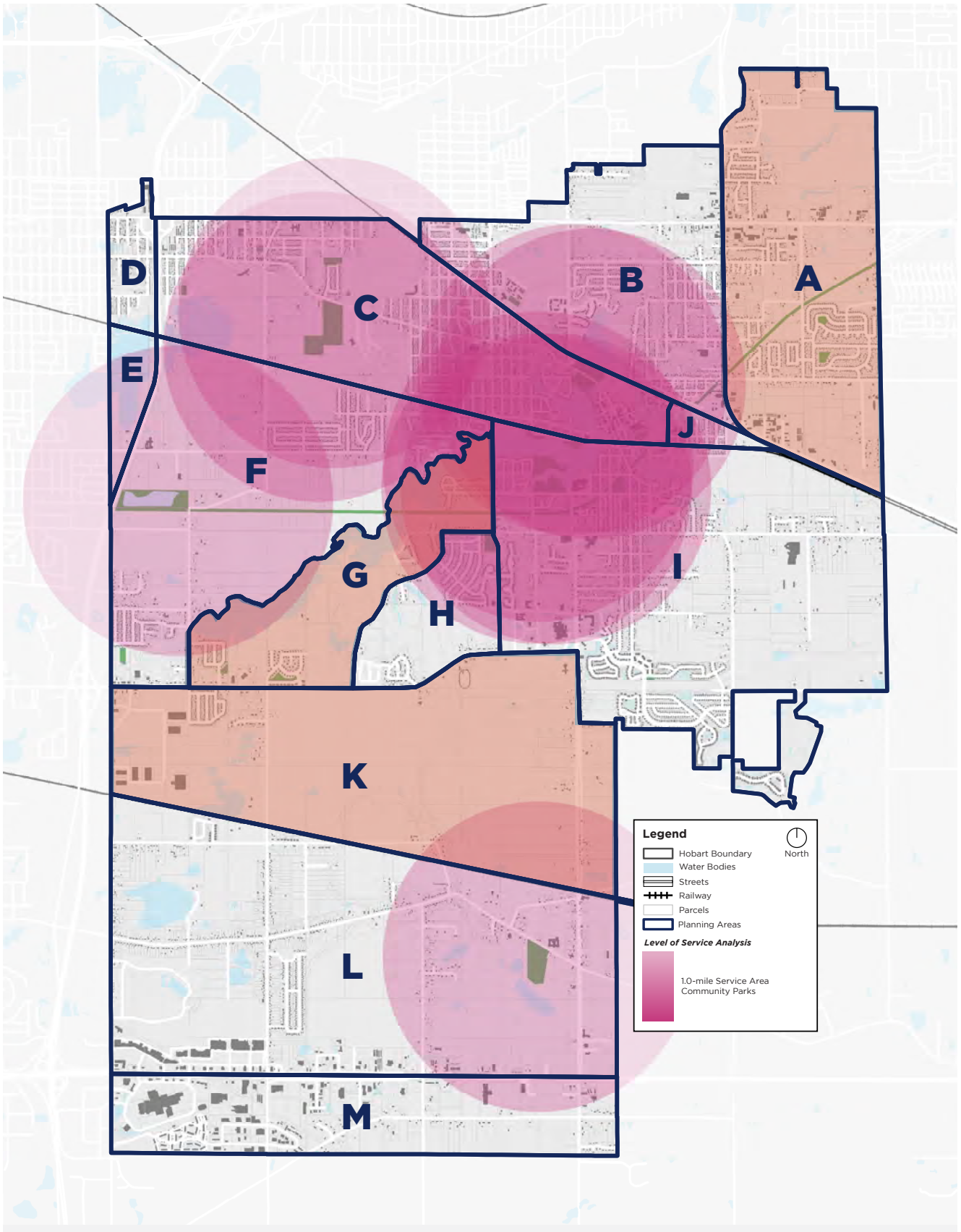


Fig 22: Community Park Distribution Level of Service Map





## OVERALL PARKS DISTRIBUTION LOS

The Overall Park service area map shows a 0.25-mile, 0.5-mile, and a 1.0-mile service area radius around the existing Mini Parks, Neighborhood Parks, and Community Parks, respectively. Mini Parks and Neighborhood Parks service areas are clipped to the major planning areas, whereas Community Parks are not clipped.

The Overall Park Distribution Level of Service Analysis map is illustrated in Fig 23. Residents living in all Planning Areas, with the exception of areas (D), (K), (L), and (M), are at least 60% served. Planning Area (B) has the highest number of residents served (6,053) and the highest intensity of overlaying service areas (dark pink), followed by Planning Areas (I), (B), and (F). Planning Area (I) stands out in this analysis as it encompasses Downtown Hobart and only serves 66% of residents within that zone, with all park categories taken into consideration.

**Overall, 73% of Hobart’s residents have access to a Mini, Neighborhood, or Community Park within zero to one mile of where they live. This percentage of the population is lower than the 84% average identified by the planning team.**

Table 17: Population Served by Planning Area (Overall Park)

PLANNING AREA	POPULATION	POPULATION SERVED
Planning Area <b>A</b>	3,127	1,894 (61%)
Planning Area <b>B</b>	4,568	4,083 (89%)
Planning Area <b>C</b>	6,100	6,053 (100%)
Planning Area <b>D</b>	525	0 (0%)
Planning Area <b>E</b>	0	0 (0%)
Planning Area <b>F</b>	2,594	2,594 (100%)
Planning Area <b>G</b>	1,192	900 (76%)
Planning Area <b>H</b>	1,107	784 (71%)
Planning Area <b>I</b>	6,588	4,351 (66%)
Planning Area <b>J</b>	292	292 (100%)
Planning Area <b>K</b>	1,602	36 (2%)
Planning Area <b>L</b>	1,332	317 (24%)
Planning Area <b>M</b>	192	30 (16%)
<b>Total Population</b>	<b>29,219</b>	<b>21,334 (73%)</b>

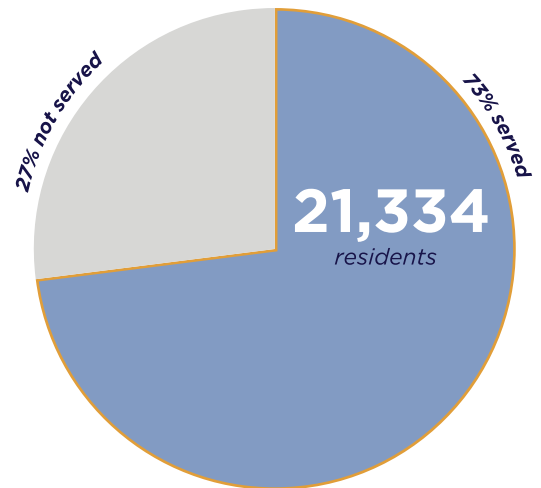
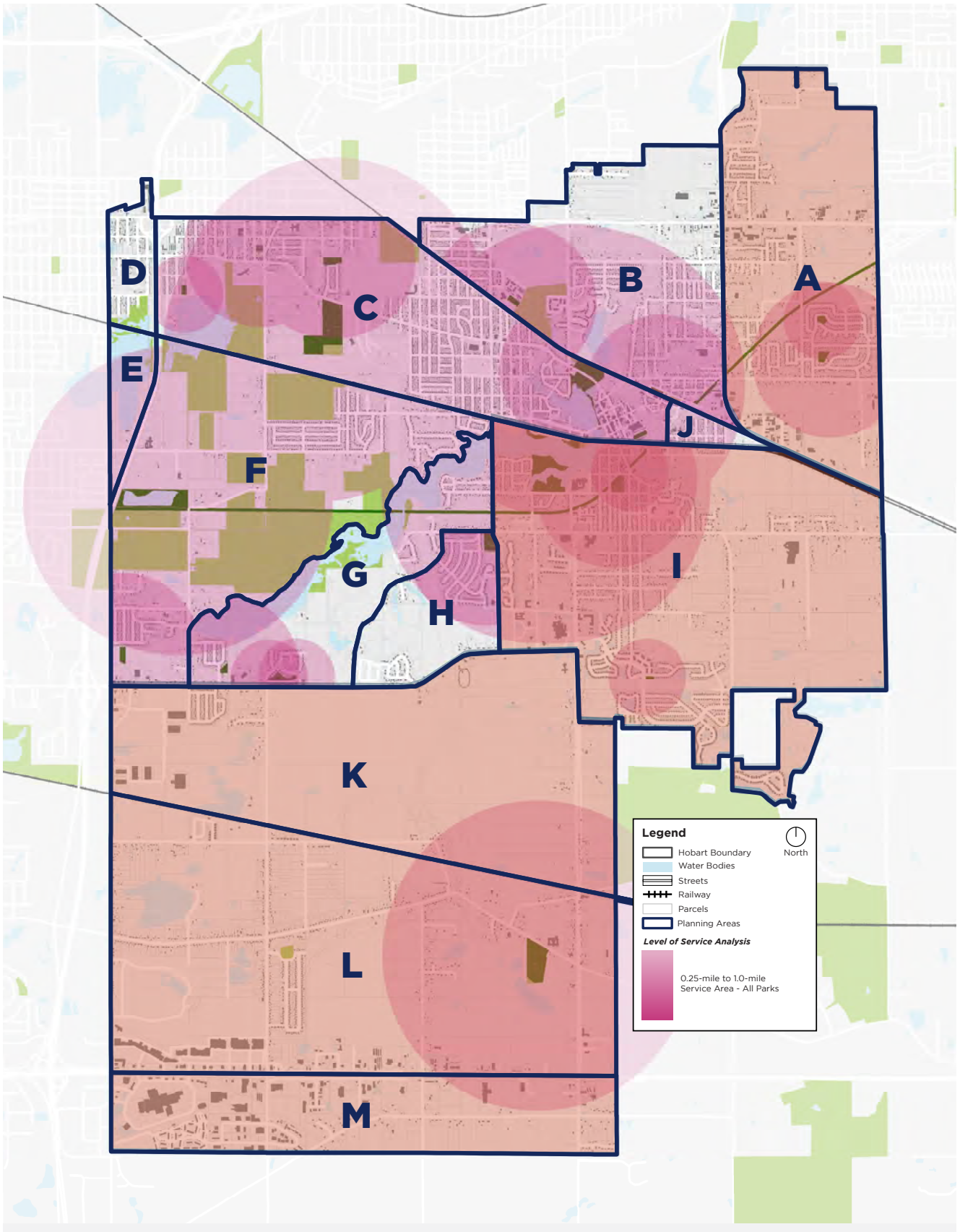


Fig 23: Overall Park Distribution Level of Service Map





# HOBART'S AMENITIES

The Department manages parks that feature a variety of amenities, including:



**Bandshell Pavilion**



**Baseball/Softball  
Diamond Fields**



**Basketball Court**



**Canoe Kayak Launch**



**Fishing Area**



**Futsal Court**



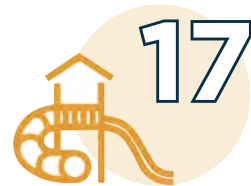
**Football Field**



**Pickleball / Tennis  
Court**



**Picnic Shelter**



**Playground**



**Pool**



**Rugby Field**



**Skate Park**



**Soccer Field**



**Splash Pad**



**Volleyball Court**

*In Addition to*

**Beach**  
**Biking Trails**  
**Boat Launches & Docks**  
**Community Center**  
**Open Play Areas**  
**Track & Walking Trails**

## AMENITIES LEVEL OF SERVICE

Amenity Level of Service is measured by the quantity, quality, and distribution of individual recreational offerings. Quantity benchmarks for individual amenities are derived from NRPA's average recommended number of amenities. These benchmarks provide guidelines for the total number of amenities per population figures (e.g.; 1 court per 1000 population). The quality of amenities, which was identified via site visits and physical analysis, is summarized in the park scorecard assessments.

Based on the NRPA average, the City meets or exceeds the recommended number of amenities for eight out of the 14 amenities. Amenities that meet or exceed the recommended number are identified in green in the "Amenities Level of Service Analysis Table."

Amenities identified in red indicate deficiencies. While the City of Hobart is deficient in seven amenities, only five of those are well below average. Those amenities include:

- » Fishing Pier / Docks **-7.0**
- » Pickleball / Tennis Courts **-11.3**
- » Baseball / Softball Fields **-4.2**
- » Volleyball Courts **-3.9**
- » Fitness Station **-6.4**

The City is most deficient in pickleball / tennis courts. As fitness continues to be a trend nationwide, the City should consider adding outdoor fitness stations to fill that gap. Currently, Hobart offers three baseball diamond fields that support both baseball and softball activities. That is well below the recommended number of amenities for a population size of 29,219.

Additional deficiencies in amenity quantity include:

- » Boat / Canoe Launch **-0.5**
- » Dog Park **-0.29**



Programming on Lake George



## Theme 4 | Park & Recreation

Table 18: Amenity Level of Service Analysis

Amenity	Hobart Existing # of Amenities	NRPA Average Recommended # of Amenities <i>(Amenities / Hobart's pop.)</i>	NRPA Average Recommended # of Amenities <i>(Amenities / 1,000 pop.)</i>	Amenities Deficiency or Surplus <i>(Amenities)</i>
Fishing Pier/Docks	5.0	12.0	0.41	<b>-7.0</b>
Boat/Canoe/Kayak Launch	3.0	3.5	0.12	<b>-0.5</b>
Swimming Pools	2.0	0.87	0.03	<b>+1.13</b>
Splash Pads	1.0	0.87	0.03	<b>+0.13</b>
Fitness Stations	0.0	6.4	0.22	<b>-6.4</b>
Picnic Shelter	21.0	6.13	0.21	<b>+14.87</b>
Playgrounds	17.0	11.6	0.40	<b>+5.4</b>
Pickleball / Tennis Courts	3.0	14.3	0.49	<b>-11.3</b>
Basketball Courts	8.0	7.3	0.25	<b>+0.7</b>
Volleyball Courts	1.0	4.9	0.17	<b>-3.9</b>
Baseball / Softball Fields	3.0	7.6	0.26	<b>-4.2</b>
Football Fields	2.0	1.5	0.5	<b>+0.5</b>
Soccer Fields	6.0	5.3	0.18	<b>+0.7</b>
Dog Parks	0.0	0.29	0.01	<b>-0.29</b>
Skate Parks	1.0	0.6	0.02	<b>+0.4</b>

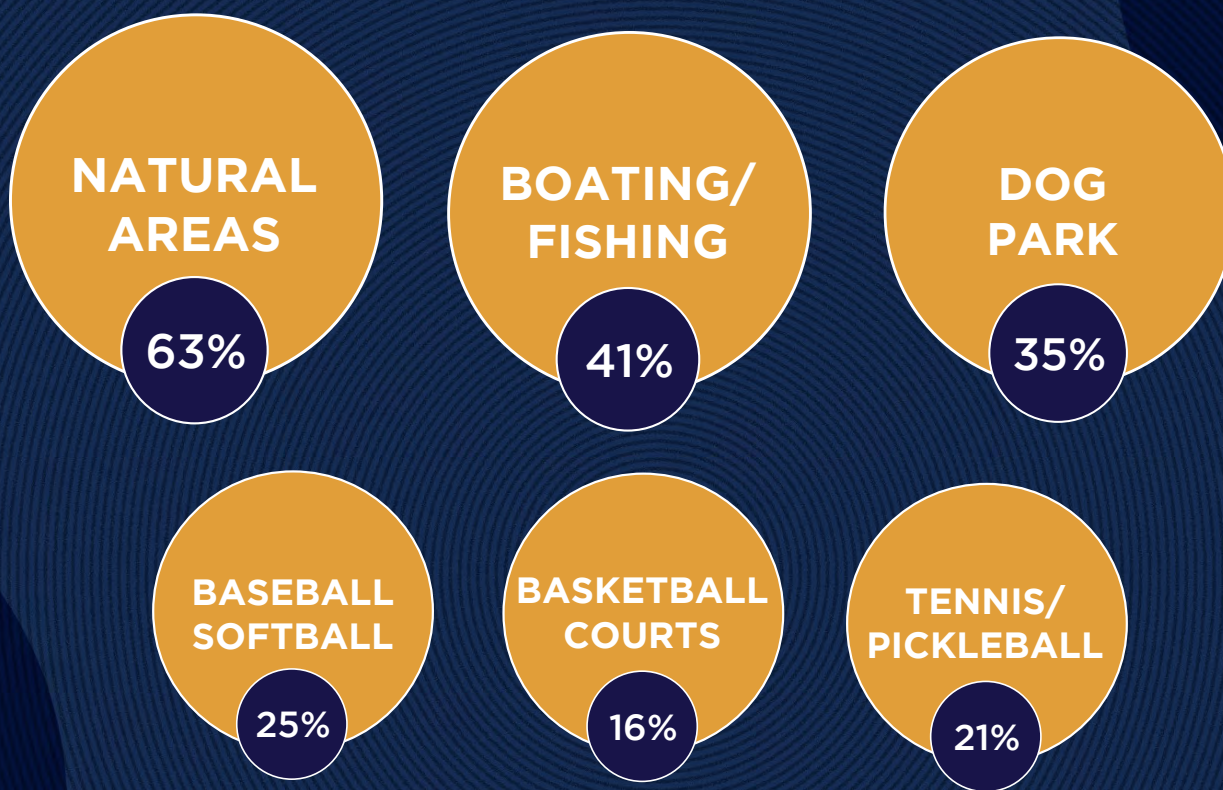


Events in Hobart



## Amenities

The community echoed the results of the level of service analysis which shows a need for outdoor amenities including pickleball courts, a dog park, and volleyball courts. The bubbles below show how much of a need survey participants have for different amenities.



“ More things for children and teens of Hobart to do in the downtown area. Perhaps a new splash pad and more sand volleyball courts.

“ There is a need for a dog park next to a large and exciting kid park area, similar to what Hammond, IN has with Dowling Park.

“ Can we have Pickleball courts with lights?



# SPORTS & ACTIVITY PARTICIPATION

The *Demand Potential by Propensity to Participate* is based on the socio-economic characteristics of households in the market area and their tendencies to use various products and services. While this approach estimates sports and activity participation, it also estimates potential event (e.g., culture, concert) attendance. However, this demand potential covers adults only – age 18 and above. The following page highlights sports participation and leisure experiences that are above the national averages. Overall, sports and activities in Hobart are mostly close to or above the national averages. The complete chart showing MPIs for sports and leisure activities can be found in the appendix.

*MPI (Market Potential Index) measures the relative likelihood of the adults or households in the specified trade area to exhibit certain consumer behavior or purchasing patterns compared to the U.S. An MPI of 100 represents the U.S. average, and any number below 100 is considered below average, while any number above 100 is above the national average.*

## Hobart Park Department Events



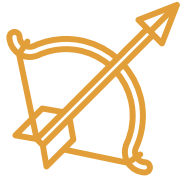
**“ We love how peaceful Hobart is and the fact that we can go canoeing, kayaking, and enjoy the water**

- STAKEHOLDER COMMENT



Annual Dam Duck Race

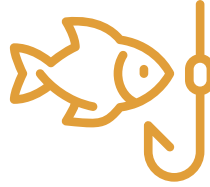
## SPORTS PARTICIPATION (HIGH MPI)



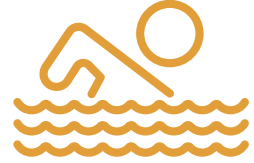
ARCHERY



CANOEING  
KAYAKING



FISHING



SWIMMING



WALKING FOR  
EXERCISE



VOLLEYBALL



**Exposing Youth to more nature-based programs that have learning opportunities and development goals.**

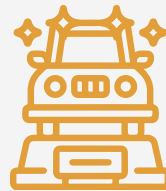
## LEISURE & SOCIAL ACTIVITIES (HIGH MPI)



ATTENDED SPORT  
EVENTS



ATTENDED HIGH  
SCHOOL SPORTS



ATTENDED AUTO  
SHOW



BIRD WATCHING



DINED OUT



ATTENDED STATE /  
COUNTY FAIR



WENT TO MOVIES



WENT TO ZOO



## Key Observations



### Sports

Sports with the highest likelihood of participation compared to the national average are fishing, canoeing/kayaking, and archery. Sports with the highest number of participating households are walking for exercise, swimming, and fishing. The convenient access to parks and recreation areas within Hobart may hold the opportunity to attract more participants from outside of Hobart, generating activity-based businesses.



### Activities

Leisure activities with the highest likelihood of participation compared to the national average are birdwatching, attending high school sport events, and going to a country music concert. Leisure activities with the highest number of households participating are catching a movie, dining out, and attending a sport event.



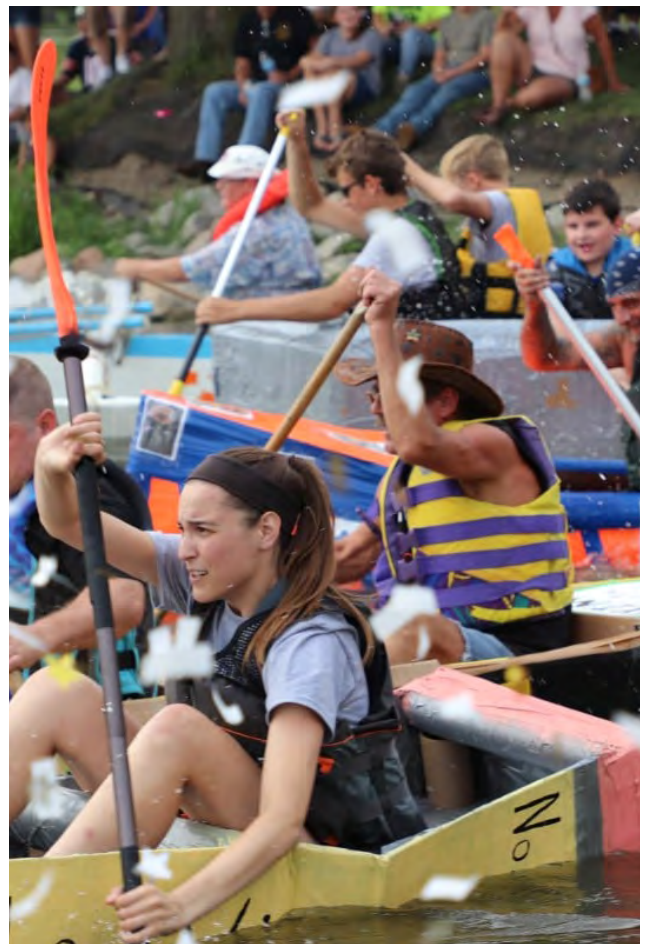
Lakefront Festival



Tape and Cardboard Regatta



Lakefront Festival





## Hobart Programs

According to community feedback, only 25 percent of Hobart's residents are satisfied or very satisfied with programming and there are many opportunities to fill programming gaps with offerings for all ages. When asked to select the programs that they have the highest need for, Hobart residents distributed their answers fairly evenly. The highest-ranking needs included Theater, Aquatics/Splash Pad, Adult Programming, Special Events, and Youth Programming. This indicates that the community has a need for a range of program offerings, from recreational to instructional to cultural.

Some of the community's big ideas for programs include Makers Spaces, community gardening opportunities, arts programs, and clubs formed around shared interests. Overall, Hobart residents want to get more involved with their community and have the chance to learn and gather with like-minded neighbors.

**I think there is a need for more arts and STEM programs in Hobart.**

**Community vegetable gardens and gardening programs would be great here!**

**Hobart should have public gardens, summer camps, after school care, and more community volunteering opportunities.**

Top three program areas include:



Art in the Park



Summer Festivals



**25%**

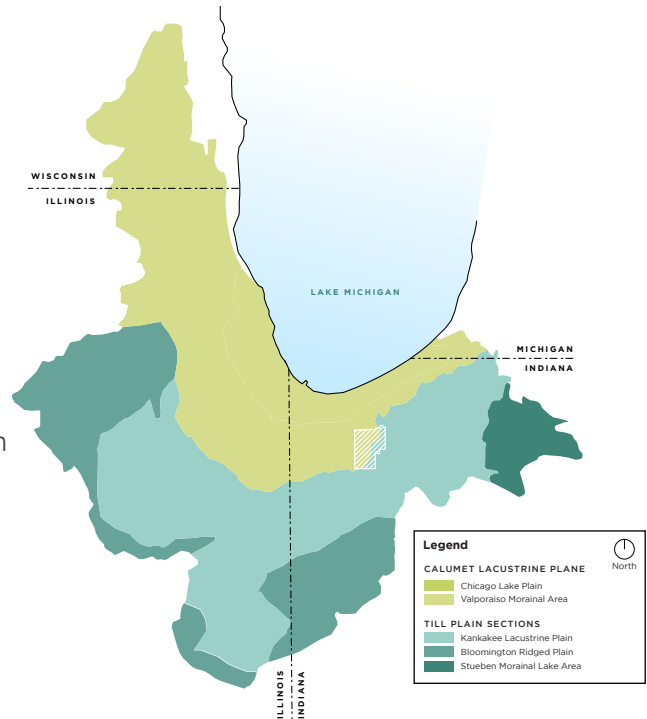
Satisfaction  
WITH  
Programs



# ENVIRONMENTAL CONTEXT

## HOBART'S GEOLOGY

Hobart's vicinity is contained, for the most part, within the Calumet Lacustrine Plain. This formation is a sandy region surrounding the southern end of Lake Michigan, marking the former site of Lake Chicago. The plain of this former lake is subdivided into distinct topographic steps by three ancient beach lines. Of the three terraces, Hobart is partially located on the last two. The middle terrace, known as Calumet Beach, forms a belt more than 2 miles wide. The average elevation along this formation is about 48 feet higher than Lake Michigan. Calumet Beach is traversed by Ridge Road. This terrace is the highest and oldest of the ancient beaches, and it marks the northern edge of the soils underlain by glacial till.



## SOIL CONSERVATION

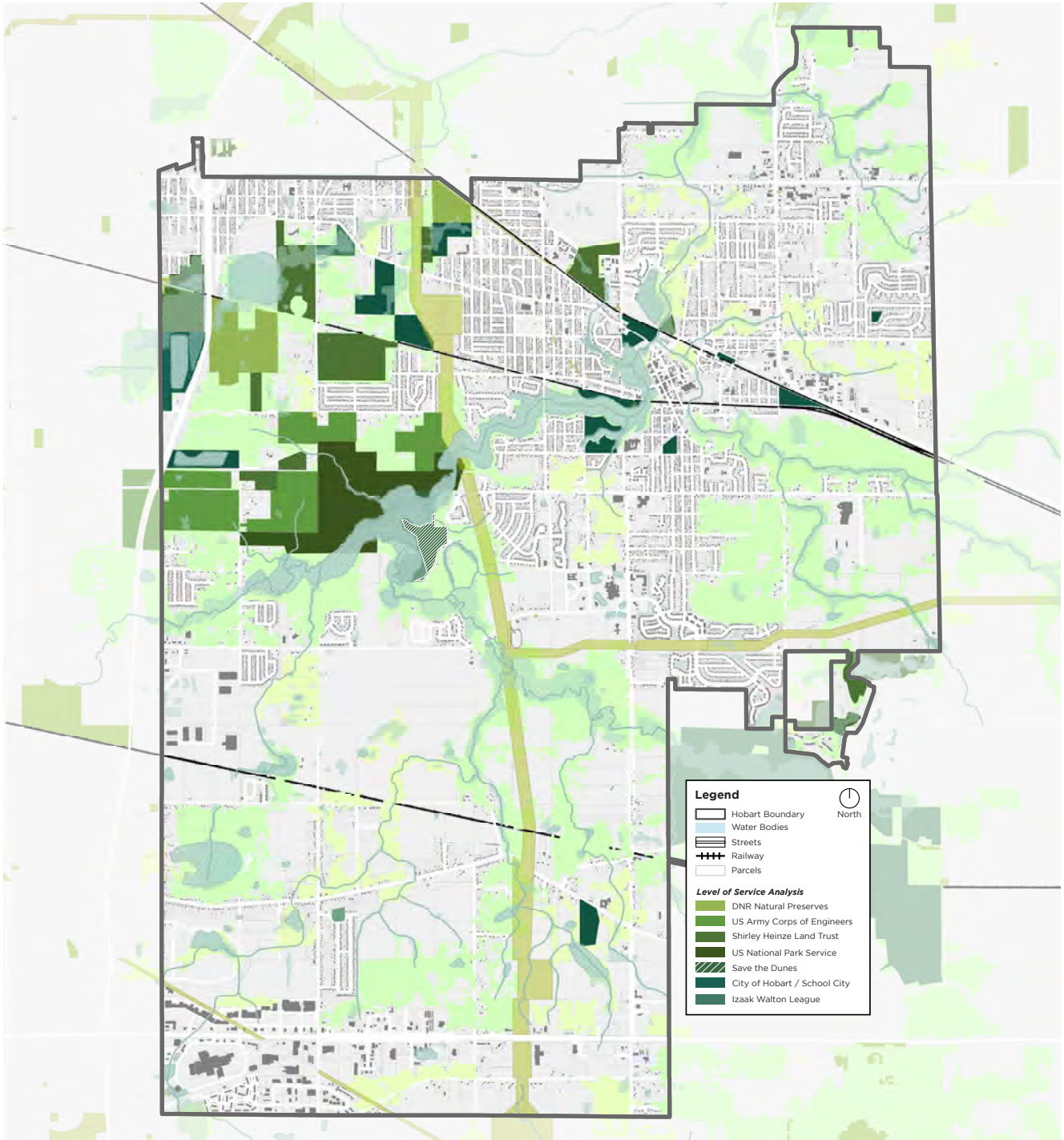
Hobart displays the occurrence of two major soil association types, according to the Soil Conservation Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The first soil type, Plainfield Watseka Association, is not considered to be a very suitable soil for typical construction. When considered as a prospective topsoil source, suitability is poor, although it would make for an adequate fill. For most types of recreational facilities, including campsites, playgrounds, and intensive play areas, the soil limitations range from moderate to severe.

The second and by far the most common soil type found in Hobart is known as the Alida-Del Ray. For the most part, the surroundings are generally nearly level and somewhat poorly drained. The texture varies from medium to moderately coarse on a base of stratified glacial outwash and lake sediments. This soil association is considered of good quality when used for intensive cropping and as a topsoil. However, because of the fine texture of the soil, water will percolate rather slowly through it, impairing drainage and making it vulnerable to periodic flooding depending on the height of the water table. Moderate limitations are found with respect to recreations sites. When planning for such areas, it would be advised that special provisions be made for adequate drainage from the site.

In Hobart, the Federal Insurance Administration has defined a special flood hazard area which covers the flood plain of the Deep River beginning at the north end of Lake George and extending north to the corporate limit of Hobart. The flood plain extends between 500 and 1,200 feet along either side of the river along this distance. During the flood of September 2008, (estimated by the Army Corps of Engineers as a 140-year storm event) significant damage occurred to several of the park facilities located adjacent to Lake George, Deep River, and other tributaries.

# NATURAL AREA ASSESSMENT

Fig 24: Environmental Areas & Managed Lands Map





## CONSERVATION ORGANIZATIONS IN HOBART

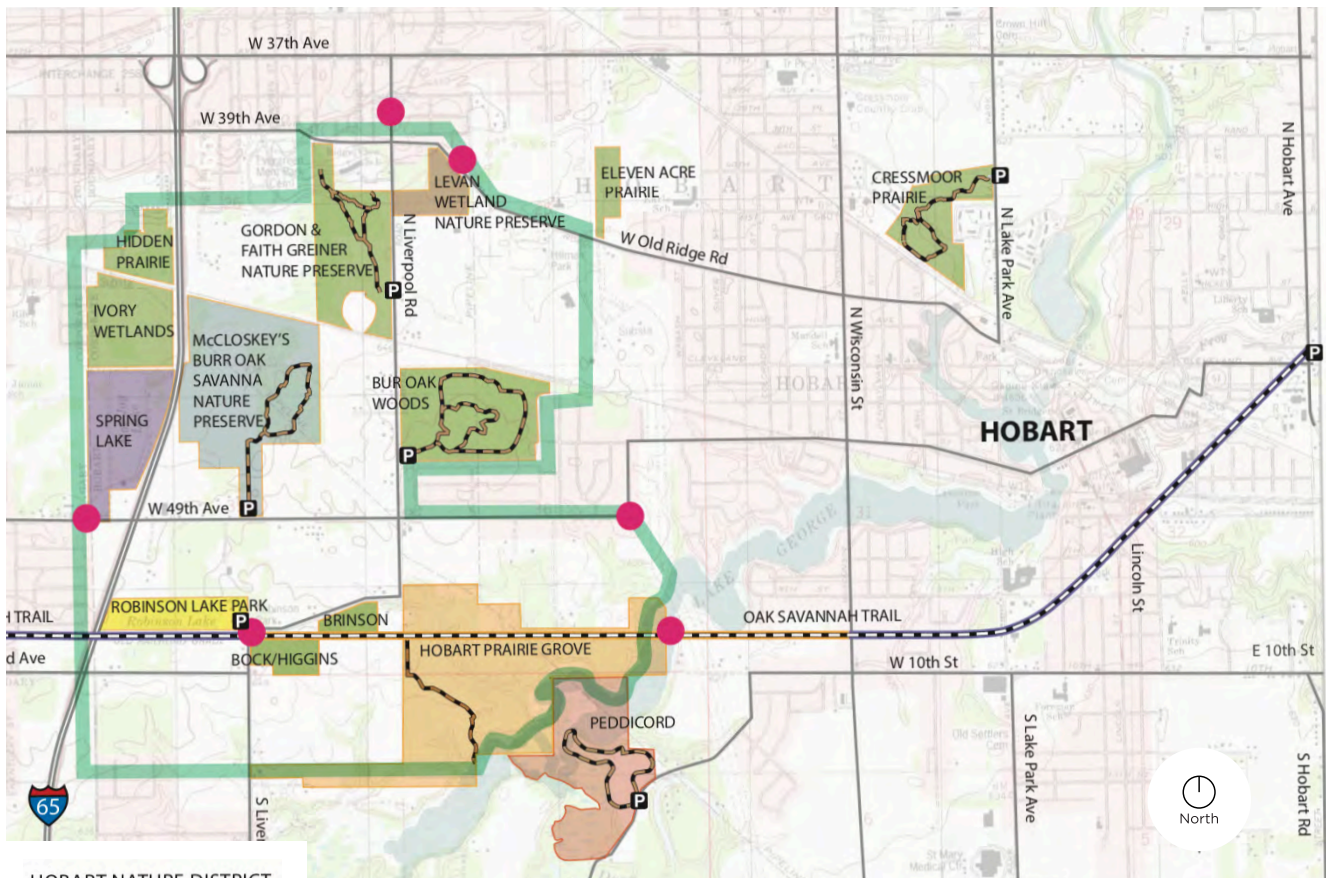
Hobart is home to over 1,000 acres of natural areas that are not owned or managed by the City. However, there are many organizations and entities working to preserve, protect, and restore Hobart's managed lands, as identified in the Natural Areas map. Hobart's natural areas include wetlands, waterbodies, natural habitats, nature preserves, forested land, among other natural and cultural resources. Below is a list of conservation organizations and a short description of their respective missions to advance natural areas in Hobart:

- » **NIPSCO** - Providing safe, reliable, and affordable energy to its more than 464,000 residential and business customers. NIPSCO regularly partners with municipalities and conservation groups to achieve conservation goals on utility right-of-ways.
- » **Indiana DNR** - To identify, protect and manage an array of nature preserves and natural areas in sufficient numbers and sufficient sizes to maintain viable examples of all of Indiana's natural communities. Nature Preserves will also manage and maintain viable populations of endangered, threatened, and rare species.
- » **US Army Corps of Engineers Mitigation** - To provide vital public engineering services in peace and war to strengthen our Nation's security, energize the economy, and reduce risks from disasters. Working with Applied Ecological Services to accomplish mitigation goals in the Hobart Marsh.
- » **Shirley Heinze Land Trust** - To protect habitats and ecosystems of northwestern Indiana through acquiring, restoring, and protecting environmentally significant landscapes for present and future generations, and to inspire and educate people of all ages about the value of land conservation to protect our natural world and enrich our lives.
- » **US National Park Service** - To preserve the unimpaired natural and cultural resources and the values of the national park system for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations. Indiana Dunes National Park is planning to manage its land at Hobart Prairie Grove to promote biodiversity and allow access to the public.
- » **Save The Dunes** - To preserve, protect and restore the Indiana dunes and all natural resources in Northwest Indiana's Lake Michigan Watershed for an enhanced quality of life.
- » **City of Hobart / School City of Hobart** - To preserve, maintain, protect & improve our parkland to provide a safe environment and enhance the quality of life for current and future generations.
- » **Izaak Walton League** - To conserve, restore, and promote the sustainable use and enjoyment of our natural resources, including soil, air, woods, waters, and wildlife.
- » **Woodland Savannah Land Conservancy** - Dedicated to the long-term preservation of open land in Northwest Indiana. We accept donations of land or easements on Savanna Habitat, forested land, current or former wetland, farms for open space, historic Indian lands, and any land that can be restored to its natural state.
- » **Lake County Parks** - To create and responsibly manage a county-wide system of parks and open space resources, and to provide recreational, cultural, and educational programs based on these resources for the use and enjoyment of Lake County residents and visitors.

# HOBART NATURE DISTRICT

Over 1,000 acres of picturesque parks, wetlands, and floodplains, winding rivers, winding lakes, open prairies, oak savannas, old growth forests, and undulating ravines make up the Hobart Nature District in Northwest Indiana. All of these distinctive habitats offer refuge to local wildlife, including endangered and threatened species. The map below shows the various natural features and highlights the entities responsible for managing the different resources. The City of Hobart owns Robinson Lake Park, a 32-acre site with a 17-acre lake.

Fig 25: Hobart Nature District Map



- HOBART NATURE DISTRICT**
- District Boundary █
  - Gateway ●
  - Parking P
  - Paved Trail
  - Unpaved Trail
  - Natural Area Owners:
  - Shirley Heinze Land Trust
  - National Park Service
  - Indiana Dept of Natural Resources
  - Izaak Walton League
  - Woodland Savanna Land Conservancy
  - City of Hobart
  - Save the Dunes
  - Lake County Parks



Robinson Lake Park





## WHY ARE NATURAL AREAS IMPORTANT?

The earth is comprised of fundamental natural resources including air, water, soil, minerals, plants, and animals. Conservation is the practice of nurturing these resources to ensure that all living things can benefit from them, now and in the future. Hobart residents, similar to the rest of the world, rely on natural resources for sustenance. Engaging in conservation not only establishes a connection to the natural world, but it also encourages healthier lifestyles for current and future generations. Aside from offering potential recreational opportunities, preserving and managing the natural environment improves air quality and reduces toxins, regulates climate change and increases carbon sequestration, as well as reduces the impacts of natural disasters. Natural areas can also significantly improve physical and mental health for communities, as well as provide opportunities for improved biodiversity for native plants and animals.



**“ Natural Areas establish a connection to the natural world and encourages healthier lifestyles for current and future generations**





## PLANTS UNIQUE TO HOBART

Natural areas in Hobart have helped preserve rare plants and animals, a lot of which are unique to Hobart. Plant species with an asterisk are considered state threatened.

Smooth Viny Pea



Dry-mesic Upland Forest



Mesic Savanna



Mesic Prairie



Earleaf Foxglove



Prairie Violet







*it's* **HOBART'S** *time*  
2040 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN