



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



**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN DRAFT # 2 (JUNE 2023)**



---

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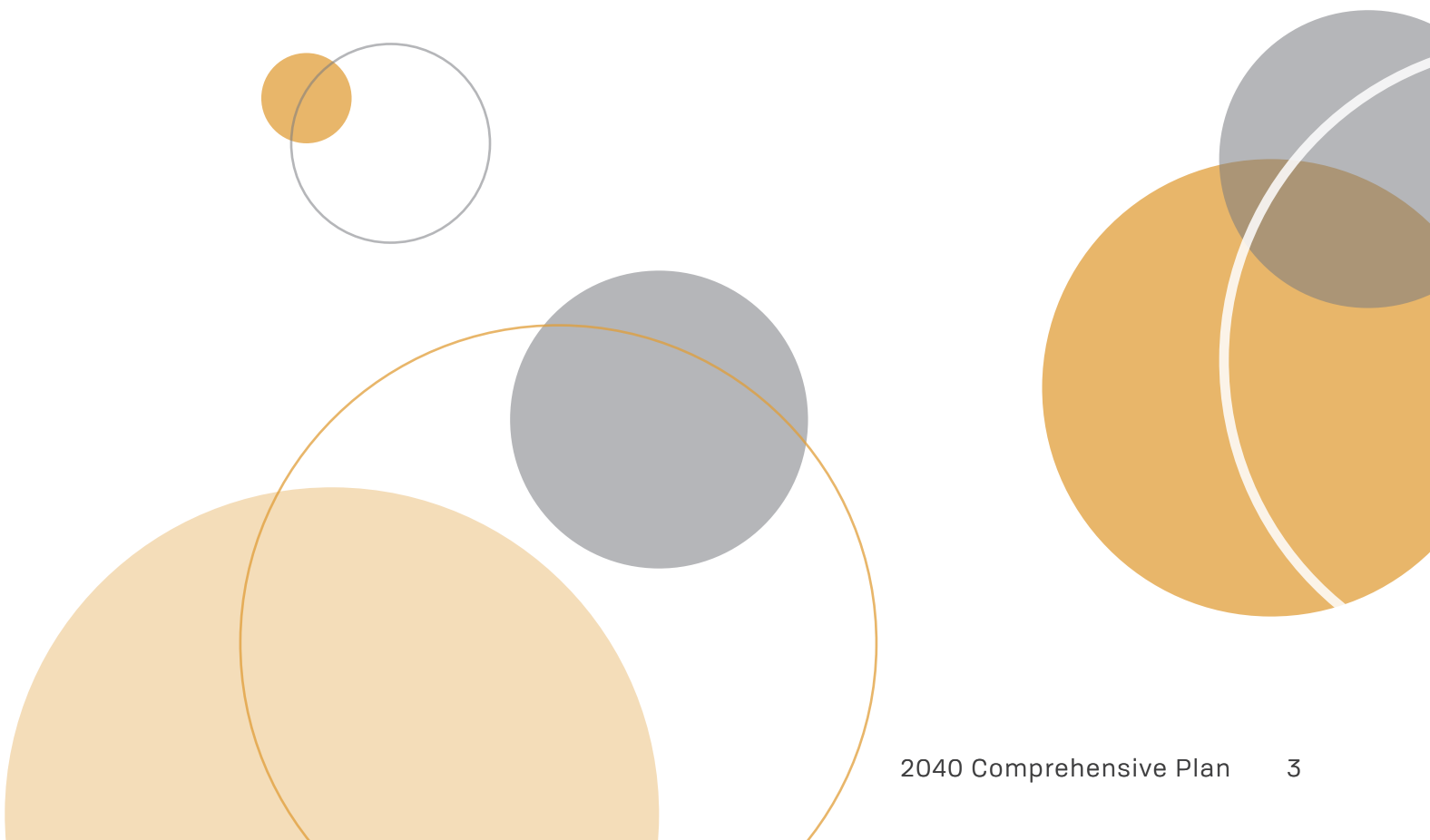
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The background is an abstract composition. On the left, a large, light blue circle with concentric, slightly irregular lines is partially visible. To its right, a dark blue, textured shape resembling a stylized globe or a large letter 'C' dominates the upper half. The right side of the image features a textured, golden-yellow area with a dark blue circular pattern and a dark blue rectangular shape below it. The overall texture is grainy and layered.

# INTRODUCTION





## OVERVIEW

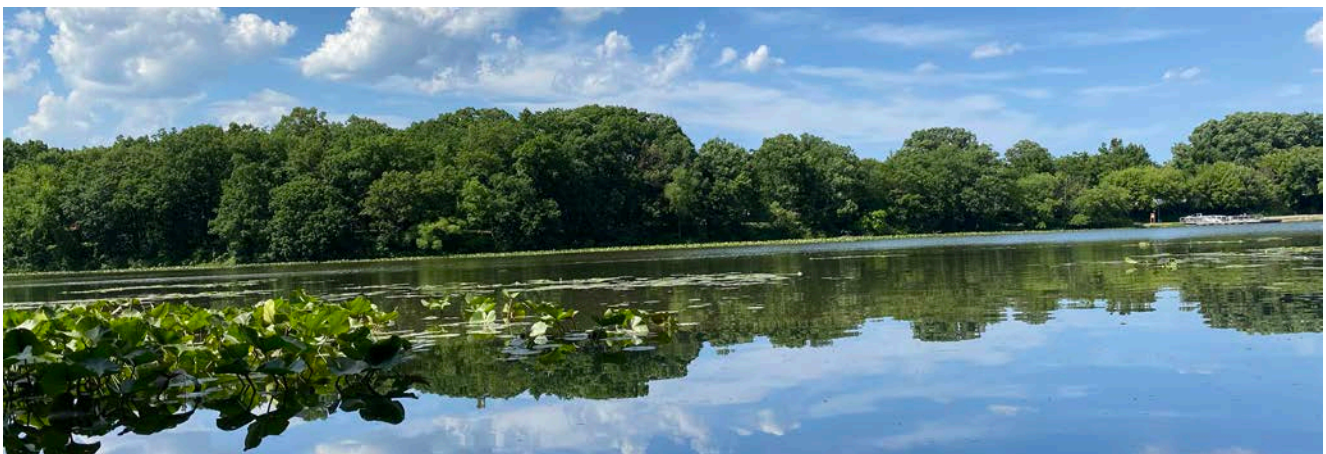
Hobart is a unique city with active commercial corridors, established residential neighborhoods, a charming downtown on the shores of Lake George, and a network of parks and natural areas that sets it apart from peer communities. The City adopted a comprehensive plan in 2003 establishing its vision for 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 is 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 2040 Comprehensive Plan.





# STATE OF THE CITY ASSESSMENT

An essential first step in updating Hobart's Comprehensive Plan was understanding current planning issues, constraints, and opportunities for the City's long-term growth and development. This assessment provided the starting point for crafting planning strategies and recommendations, guiding the community for the next twenty years. Topics that the State of the City Assessment focused on included:

## 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 Jewelry**  
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)

# 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



Downtown Hobart



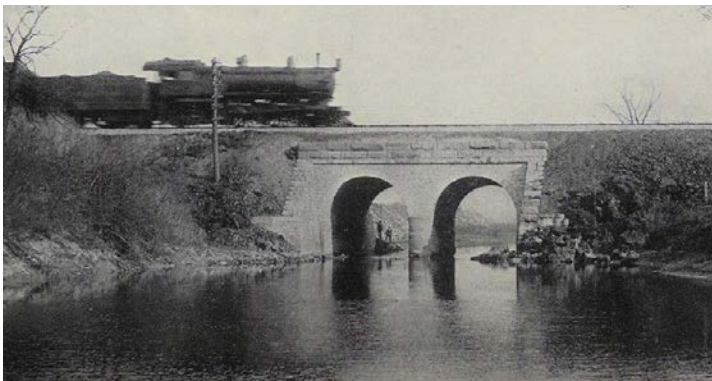


# THE DEVELOPMENT OF HOBART

## 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](https://www.flickr.com/photos/10481071@N00/10481071@N00))



# 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 to the north by Lake Station and New Chicago, to the east by several small communities in Porter and unincorporated Portage County, to the west by Gary, and to 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 — approximately 33,000 and 34,000 respectively compared to Hobart's 29,000 — 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 Lake George while light and music trickles out from the bandshell would be great!”**

- STAKEHOLDER COMMENT



Downtown Hobart



Lake George



# HOBART BY THE NUMBERS

Information below provides a summary of Hobart's demographics.

## 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

**29,219**  
POPULATION SIZE 2021

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

Fig 2: Median Age

**41**  
MEDIAN AGE 2022

Fig 3: Population by Generation

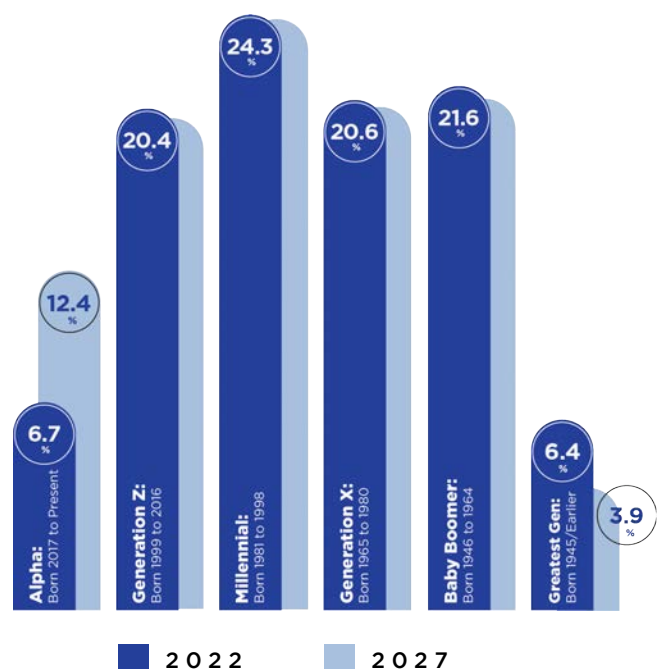


Fig 4: Population Change

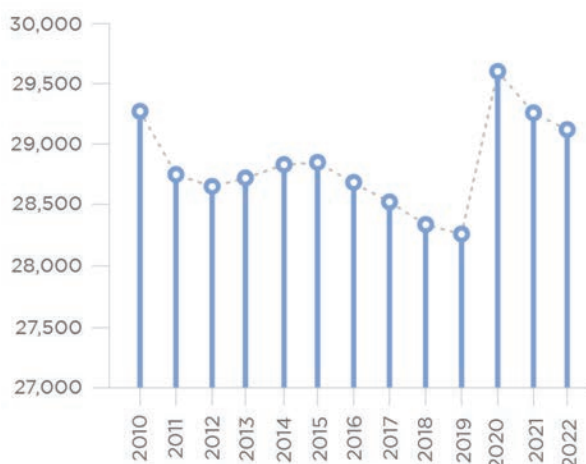
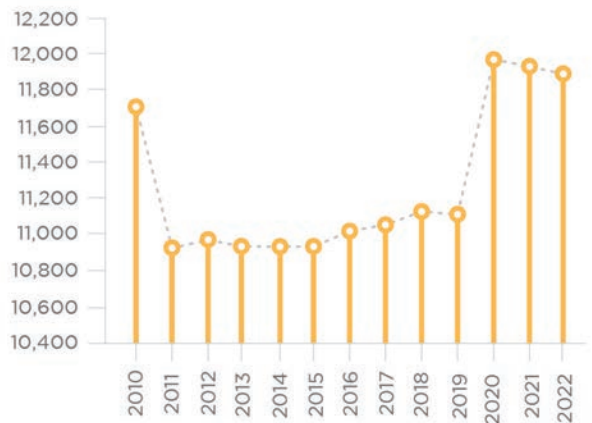


Fig 5: Population Change (2010 to 2022)

# 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.



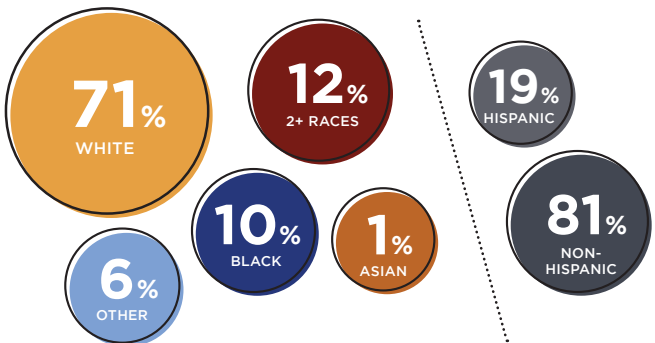
# Household Income

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 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

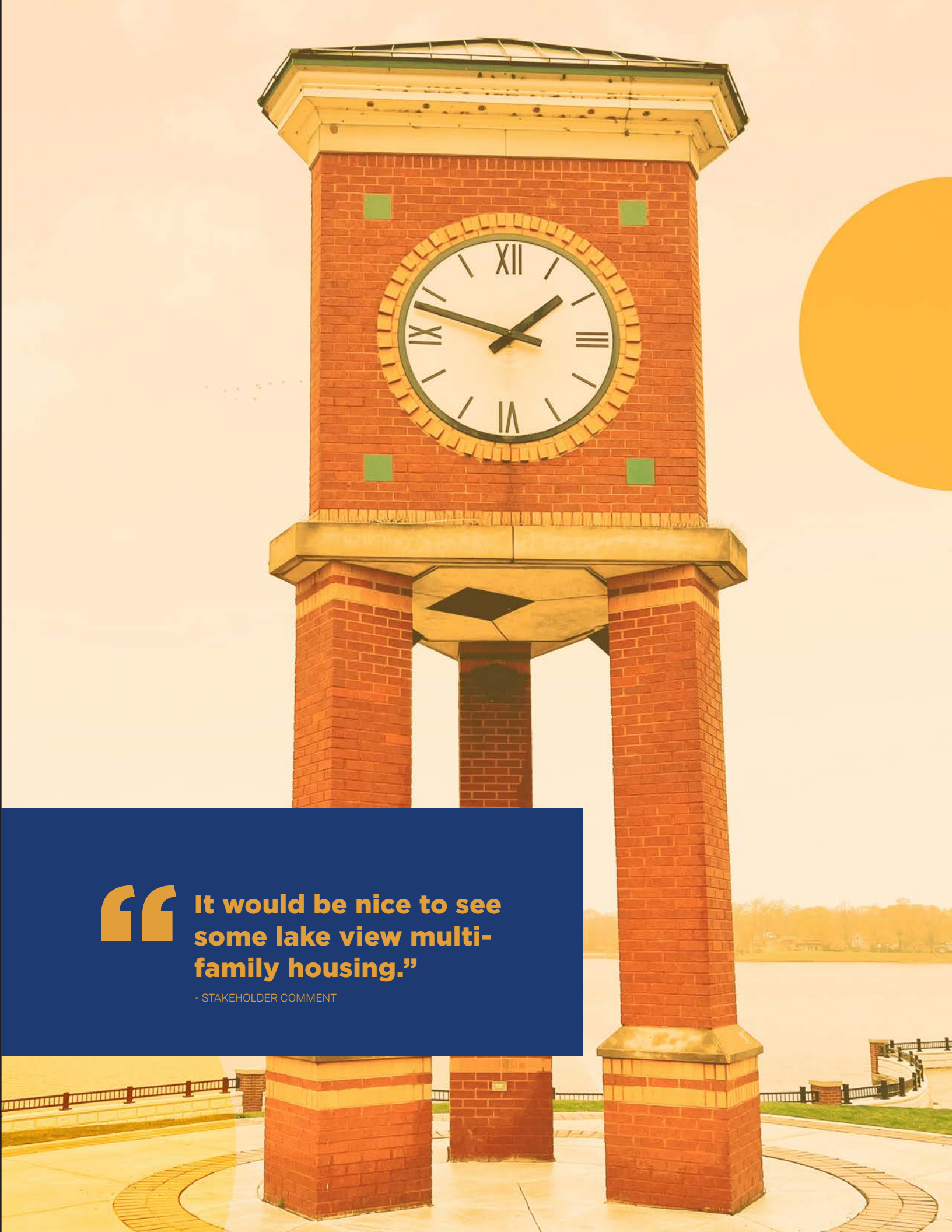
Hobart is projected to decrease by 2027, which is not in line with state and national projections for population growth, compared to the state of Indiana and the nation as a whole. Home owner households will be increasing at 0.30% by 2027, which is a slightly less than the state and national projections.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





“

**A place that continues to cultivate its small-town feel, while still being welcoming to new residents and supporting the development of small businesses.**

- STAKEHOLDER COMMENT



# 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

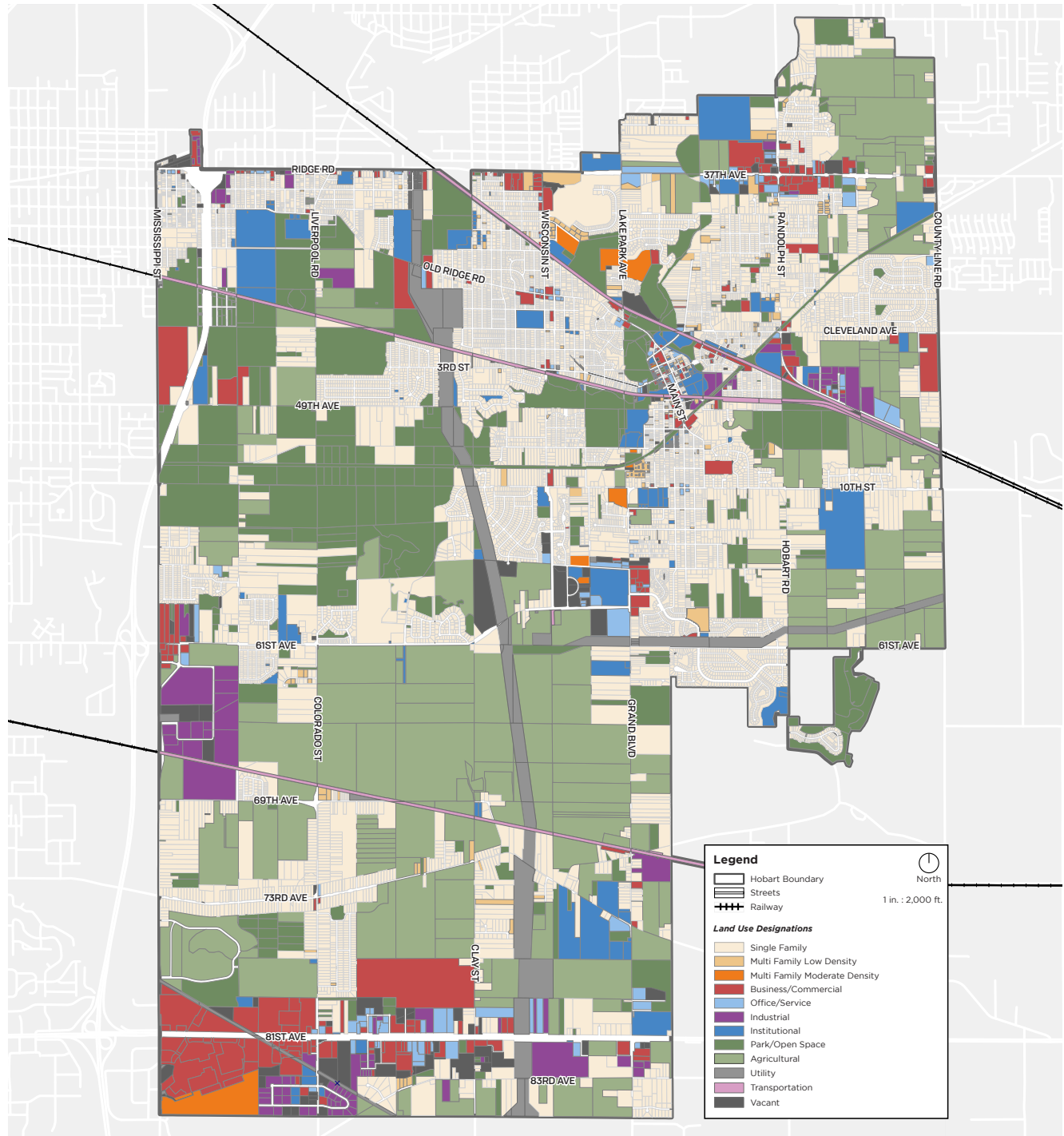
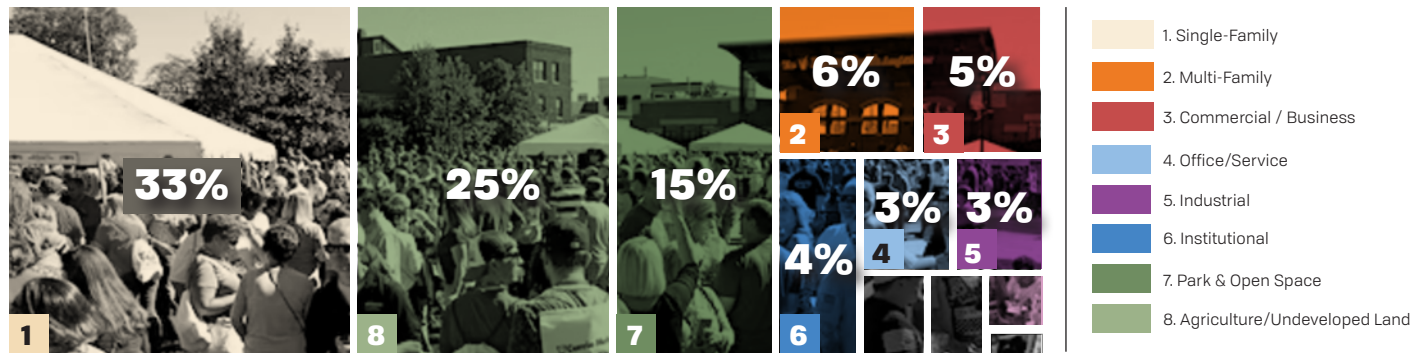




Fig 8: Land Use Breakdown



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.

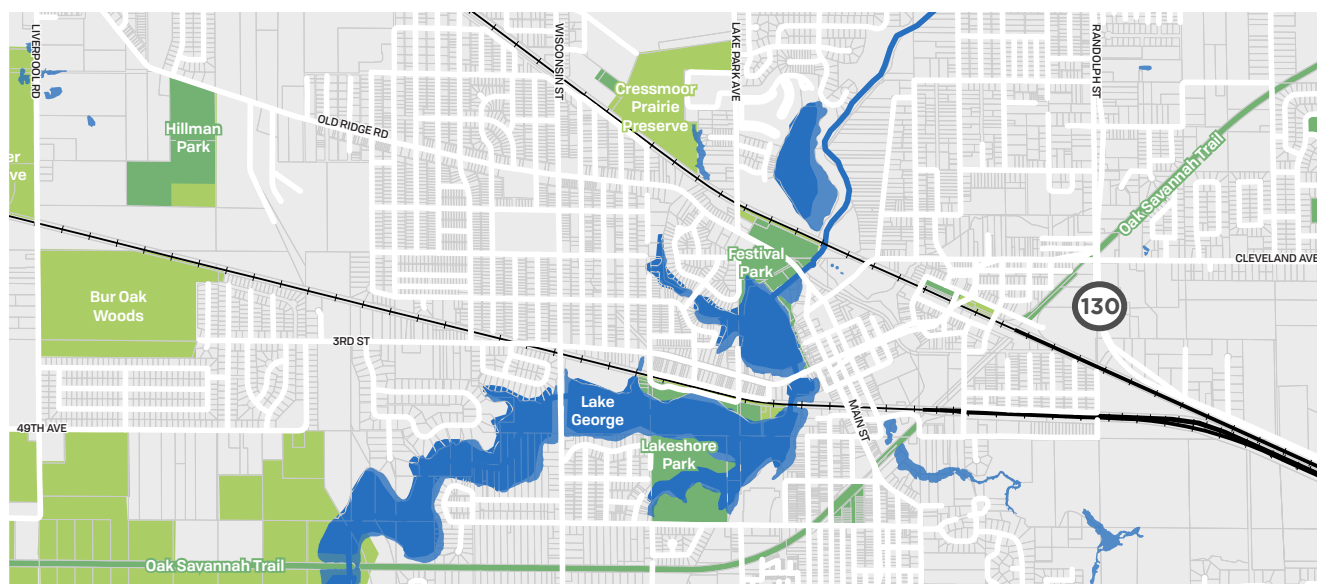
Southlake Mall anchors a significant concentration of retail and service land uses along Highway 30. There are other shopping centers nearby, as well as big box retailers, national franchises in a variety of categories, and restaurants of different scales and styles. This commercial node, accessible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

Fred Rose Eighth St. Park | Open Space Land Use

15%



### 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.

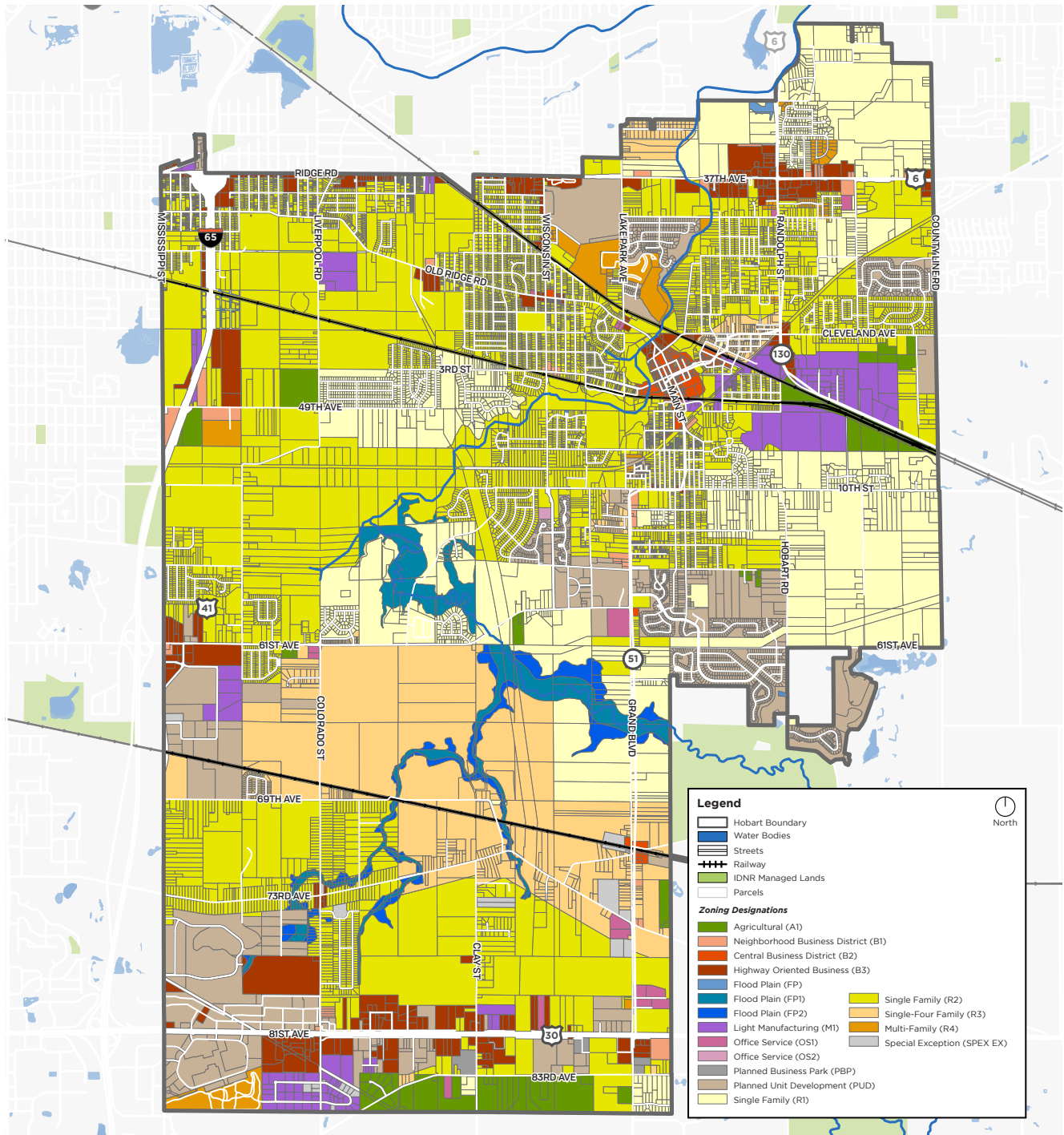


Native Plants in Hobart's Open Spaces



# 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.



## 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





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.



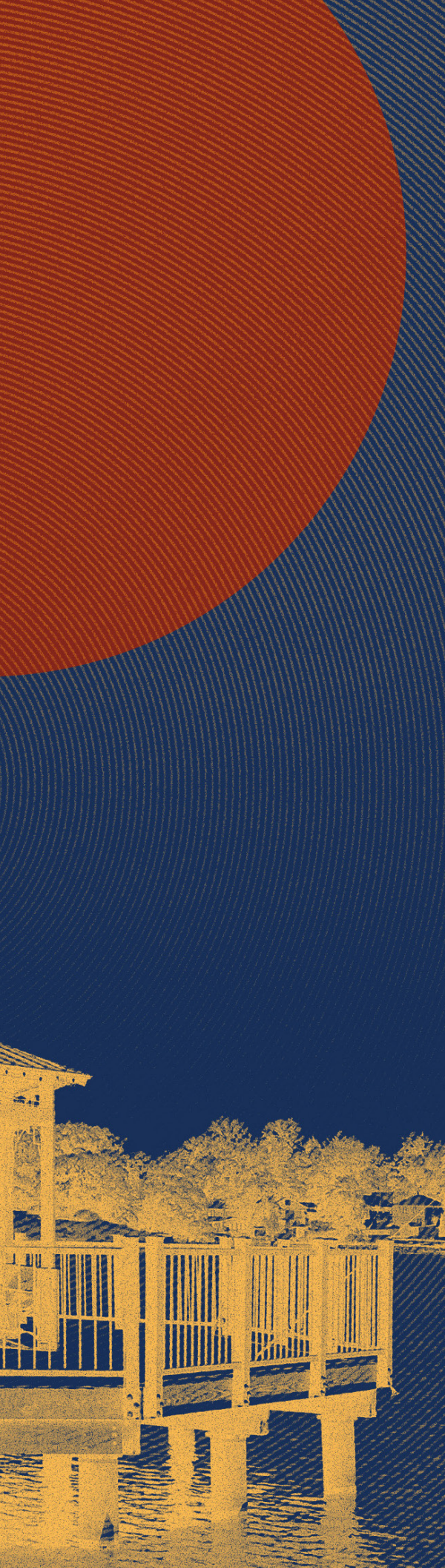
 Multi-family housing in Hobart



# HOBART'S 2040 PLAN







# **IT'S HOBART'S TIME - 2040 PLAN**

A starting point for the Hobart 2040 Plan is the development of a community-led Vision Statement. During the planning process, Hobart residents, interested stakeholders, and local leadership worked hand-in-hand to identify a unified direction for the City, supported by community aspirations and values. The vision statement provides the foundation and basis for the recommended community Themes, respective Goals, Strategies, and Actions that will guide local decision-making and the implementation of this Plan.



# VISION

*"In 2040, Hobart is a thriving and sustainable community that embraces its natural beauty and diverse cultural heritage. We envision a City that prioritizes equitable access to quality housing, education, park and recreation, and transportation for all residents. Our economy is robust, innovative, and inclusive, with thriving small businesses and clean technology. Hobart is advancing in environmental stewardship, with clean air and water, and healthy ecosystems supporting our community. We prioritize smart growth and development, preserving our heritage neighborhoods while creating vibrant, walkable, and mixed-use districts that offer a range of housing options and commercial amenities. Our community values inclusivity and fosters social cohesion, artistic expression, and civic engagement."*

## PLAN ORGANIZATION

It's Hobart's Time 2040 Plan is supported by five community Themes, a series of Goals, targeted Strategies, and associated Actions that ensure this vision can become a reality. This effort will require active and ongoing collaboration between the City of Hobart, its residents, and local and regional partners.

- **Vision Statement** - Defines the long-term vision for the Hobart community and sets the expectation that the City is striving towards.
- **Themes** - Identifies topics of interest - similarly referred to as Community Pillars.
- **Goals** - illustrates what the City is aiming to achieve over the next 20 years. Each Theme has a respective set of Goals.
- **Strategies** - Outlines the various approaches Hobart can take to achieve a Goal.
- **Actions** - Represents tactics and initiatives to help implement Strategies.

# COMMUNITY THEMES

The Hobart 2040 Comprehensive Plan focuses on five main Themes.

1



*Healthy  
Neighborhoods*

2



*Responsible  
Growth*

3



*Comprehensive  
Mobility*

4



*Wealth of  
Recreation*

5



*Quality  
Lifestyles*

*Each Community Theme was derived from extensive community engagement and planning analysis. A summary of the existing conditions analysis along with community input received over the course of the process are shared within each Theme chapter. Following the analysis section, Goals, Strategies, and Actions within each Theme will be outlined.*



Hobart, IN

# FUTURE LAND USE

Future land use is a key component of the Hobart 2040 Plan, setting up a framework that helps us manage future development and defining the character of the community over the next 20 years. The future land use strategy supports goals and strategies outlined in the five community Themes of this Plan, including defining future opportunities for housing, commercial areas, and conservation areas.

## What is the Strategy?

Similar to other suburban cities, land use changes over the years have been primarily responsive in their nature, influenced by roadway and infrastructure improvements, market demands for residential subdivisions, convenience stores, terrain changes, wetlands and natural resources, as well as open space. Hobart's current land use is limited to traditional categories, including residential, commercial, institutional, industrial, and parks, among others. This approach lacks flexibility and can often imply that such uses are mutually exclusive, which is further emphasized by zoning regulations. In reality, Hobart has a rich mix of uses near one another, resulting in the natural formation of many of Hobart's livable neighborhoods. The proposed future land use strategy aims to define future development through a variety of character-based land uses and districts that embrace a variety of already vested uses, such as residential, commercial, and institutional, among others. This approach emphasizes the City's strongest assets, such as Lake George, the downtown area, the medical campus, and key corridors including Highway 30 and Ridge Road, ensuring quality livable neighborhoods and overall quality of life.

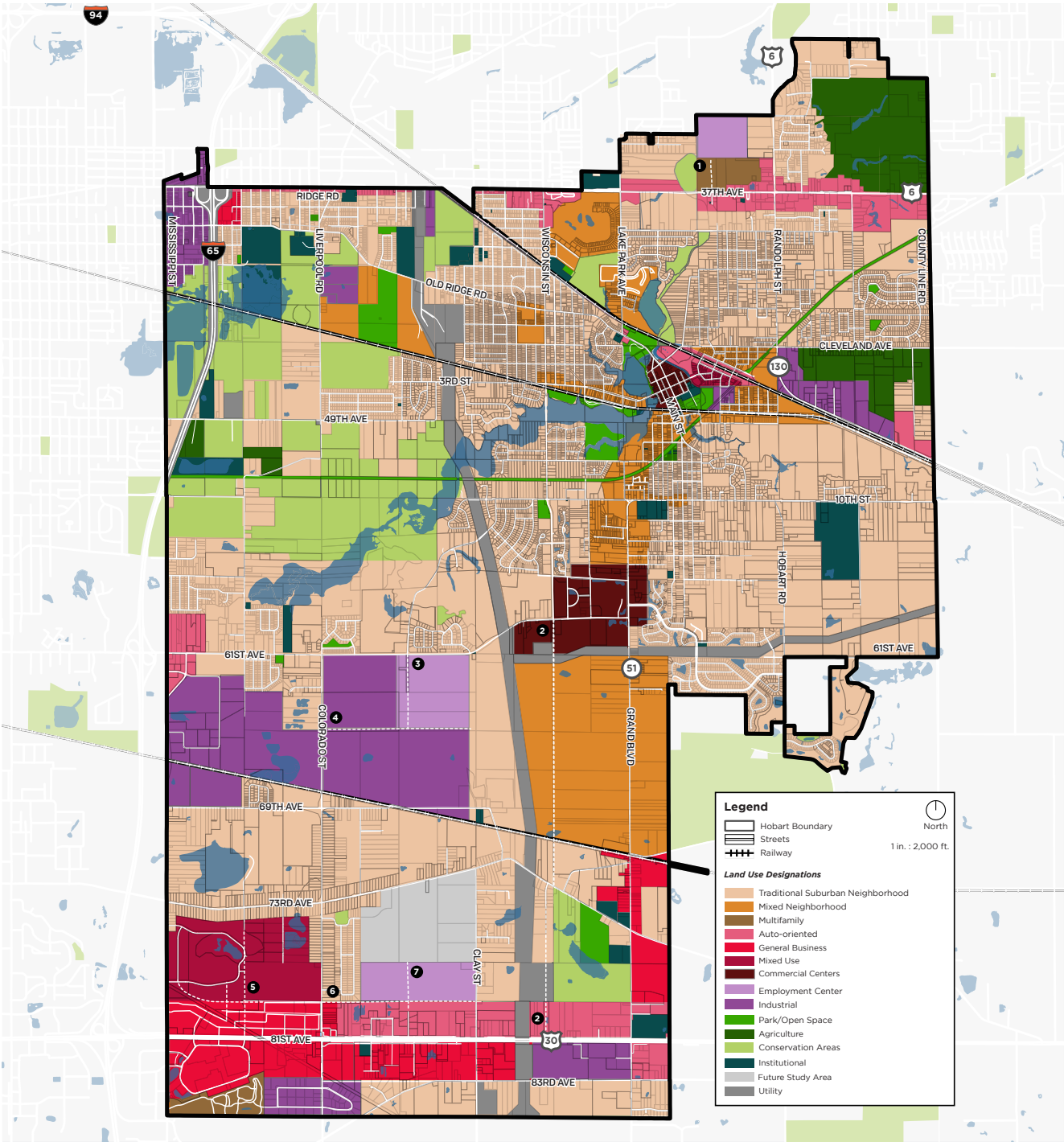
More than 25% of Hobart is currently undeveloped, a large amount of which is ripe for future investment as opportunities arise. The future land use strategy sets forth expectations for the development community, while allowing for much needed flexibility. The proposed future land use is primarily derived from the existing mix of uses in Hobart, retaining quality neighborhood characteristics and amplifying nodes of activity throughout the City. This approach focuses on integrating a variety of land uses with appropriate transitions between the different character areas. This strategy sets the stage for thriving neighborhoods that address housing needs and amplify social bonds, and provides areas for active and passive recreation. This strategy also provides the community and City leadership with tools and policies for maintaining and enhancing Hobart's best qualities.

The next few pages outline the new land use categories proposed by the future land use strategy. While the majority of land uses have been retained or expanded on, the office and vacant uses have been absorbed. Aside from recent market trends which indicate that physical office spaces are no longer a focus for major employers, relying heavily on a single use, such as office, can make Hobart vulnerable to economic downturns. Alternatively, promoting mixed-use developments with office as one of many uses is emphasized in this strategy.

Zoning regulations, which define and regulate the types of uses allowed within Hobart, will be influenced by the proposed future land use strategy. Proposed zoning changes, including amendments to the development regulations within certain zoning districts, should be further examined by City leadership.



Fig 11: Future Land Use



**Street Extensions or Additions**

- |                                     |                                 |                                    |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <b>1</b> Colonial Drive Extension   | <b>4</b> 65th Avenue (Proposed) | <b>7</b> Underwood Drive Extension |
| <b>2</b> Wisconsin Street Extension | <b>5</b> Iowa Street Extension  |                                    |
| <b>3</b> Arizona Street Extension   | <b>6</b> 78th Avenue (Proposed) |                                    |

## RESIDENTIAL USES

Planning for an inviting pedestrian-scaled City with compact development patterns supports aspirations put forth by members of the public and is reflected in the various goals of this Comprehensive Plan. Maintaining and enhancing Hobart's small-town character, while addressing current and future housing needs is essential. This can be achieved by increasing the variety of housing types in the community and revisiting the land use mix in areas typically recognized as exclusively residential or commercial. Diversifying Hobart's housing inventory to include variety of lot-sized single-family homes, townhomes, multi-family developments, and other types of dwellings near active commercial nodes can be addressed through physical land planning. Integrating housing into other land use districts will also promote livability in Hobart. The future land use strategy introduces a Mixed Neighborhood Land Use, which identifies residential uses as the primary use, yet allows for neighborhood-serving secondary uses that can foster an active sense of place.

### Traditional Suburban Residential

Hobart's single-family homes, situated to the northeast and central areas of the City, currently comprise 72% of the housing inventory. A variety of architectural styles, including Neoclassical, Ranch, and Colonial Revival, define the traditional suburban character of Hobart's single-family homes. This land use designation is a single use, characterized by medium to large detached single-family residential lots (lot maximums of 12,000 SF), yet allowing neighborhood-serving uses such as institutional and open space uses. The future land use strategy envisions single-family homes to continue defining the majority of Hobart's residential character yet supplemented by other residential uses listed below. The "Traditional Suburban Residential" land use designation emphasizes the need to preserve the character-defining housing stock in Hobart, with future infill housing needing to be compatible with the existing low-density neighborhoods.



### Mixed Neighborhood Residential




The Mixed Neighborhood Residential areas are defined by low-to medium-density neighborhoods with a mix of compatible uses. Such denser neighborhoods, characterized by smaller lot single-family homes, attached housing, and two- to three-flat multifamily buildings, are transitional areas that buffer higher intensity uses such as multifamily, commercial, and light industrial uses from the traditional suburban residential character. While primarily a residential use, these areas allow for a variety of other neighborhood serving uses promoting livability and fostering social interaction. This future land use designation was established to retain and further emphasize Hobart's naturally occurring mixed neighborhood areas, where a healthy mix of uses often suffuse predominantly traditional single-family residential areas.




# Multi-family

The Multi-family Neighborhood designation applies to areas where higher-density residential uses, such as apartments, condominiums, and multi-family buildings are suitable. The future land use strategy envisions infill multi-family residential areas to grow in the Ross Township area, as well as in the northern portion of Hobart, south of 37th street, where larger developments are more appropriate. Proximity and access to major collector streets, such as Colorado Street, would support Hobart in becoming even more pedestrian friendly. This projected increase in multi-family development supports aging in place, offers adequate housing for a variety of household compositions, and promotes sustainable growth patterns that typically attract younger families. Bulk and mass may vary within this future land use category, ranging from townhomes and rowhomes to context-sensitive multi-family buildings.



		FUTURE LAND USE	PRIMARY	SECONDARY	ZONING CORRELATION
RESIDENTIAL		TRADITIONAL SUBURBAN	Detached Single-Family	Institutional Pocket Parks	R1, R2, PUD
		MIXED NEIGHBORHOOD	Detached Single-Family Attached Single-Family Townhomes / Multi-Family	Commercial Institutional / Office Pocket Parks	R-1, R-2, R-3, PUD, O/S-1, B-1
		MULTI-FAMILY	Townhomes / Multi-Family Senior Housing / Assisted	Commercial Institutional / Office Pocket Parks	R-4, PUD



 Single Family Home in Hobart



## COMMERCIAL USES

Commercial land uses in Hobart have developed along several key corridors, such as Route 30, Ridge Road, and south Mississippi Street. While these concentrations of commercial uses can generate momentum for growth and economic activity, they can lead to a saturation in commercial areas and draw interest away from other key areas in the City, including the Downtown. Future land use planning can help reconcentrate commercial land uses in these corridors, while facilitating healthy growth and activity in other areas of the community. The future land use strategy introduces a multi-layered commercial land use approach, allowing higher concentrations of commercial uses in pedestrian-oriented areas.

Smaller areas of commercial land uses are dispersed throughout the community in the form of commercial nodes, particularly where primary transportation routes intersect, such as Old Ridge Road and Wisconsin Street. Such nodes represent opportunities to establish more commercial and multifamily land uses, increasing the economic vibrancy in various parts of Hobart. Commercial land uses around the medical campus and in the Downtown represent central nodes and should be distinguished from outer commercial nodes along Ridge Rd. and 61st St., further away from the “Heart” of Hobart. Commercial land use intensity, density, form, and character, among other factors can help physically differentiate between the various commercial nodes in Hobart.

### Auto-oriented Commercial

Situated along Route 30 to the south and 37th Avenue and Ridge Road to the north, Auto-oriented Commercial uses are intended to provide for establishments that primarily accommodate motorists and are intended to meet local and regional needs. The physical environment, characterized by large parcels, deep building setbacks, and substantial building footprints, plays a major role in defining this commercial future land use designation. National franchises, gas stations, auto repair, and strip mall areas existing in Hobart today often feature one- to two- story commercial buildings with drive-thrus. The single-use character of the areas has the potential to be retrofitted to more compact and pedestrian-serving commercial areas.



### General Business

General Business commercial uses are located along major arterial and collector streets and are characterized by medium-intensity (1- to 2-story) commercial buildings with a tight street fabric and reduced setbacks. This land use category, while still considered a single use, is typically accessed by vehicles. However, its character is more approachable at the pedestrian scale than the Auto-oriented Commercial land use designation. It caters to a variety of users including pedestrians, promoting a more urban character. Located adjacent to Auto-oriented commercial uses, the General Business commercial land use category envisions a potential for more continuous and compact street character.



## Mixed-use Development

The Mixed-use Development designation, while primarily commercial, envisions residential development on upper stories as a secondary use. Mixed-use developments encourage an increase in residential housing units that can support thriving commercial areas. South of the medical campus along Grand Boulevard, Mixed-use buildings can also be incorporated into new development, promoting smart growth areas with greater densities and activated commercial storefronts. In comparison to the Mixed Neighborhood use, this land use promotes a higher intensity of retail, service, office, and other compatible commercial uses. Large parcels (50 acres +) designated as Mixed-use can be predominantly light industrial, if they are commercial or office facing and aim to bring more pedestrian activity to the neighborhood. Overall, mixed-use developments aim to largely serve Hobart residents, increasing economic opportunities, household diversity, and overall enhancing community character.



## Commercial Core

The Commercial Core use is intended to achieve a cohesive mix of high-intensity commercial and high-density residential areas, integrated with character-defining uses, such as entertainment and other special uses. The medical district has the opportunity to expand into a commercial core, adopting a town center character with a healthy mix of uses. Commercial Core areas can be framed by architecture and landscape design appropriate to local history and ecology. Such areas can be potentially funded through Tax Increment Financing or other business-related funding tools. This catalytic land use promotes planning principles like walkability and place-making that create a destination for residents, visitors, workers, and employers, as well as foster an attractive live-work environment.



		LAND USE	PRIMARY	SECONDARY	ZONING CORRELATION
COMMERCIAL	\$\$	<b>AUTO-ORIENTED</b>	<b>Commercial</b> ex. Franchises / Auto Repair	<b>Large-scale Office</b> <b>Institutional</b> <b>Undeveloped</b>	<b>B-3, PUD</b>
	\$\$	<b>GENERAL BUSINESS</b>	<b>Commercial</b> ex. Bank / Medical / Super Market	<b>Large-scale Office</b> <b>Institutional</b> <b>Undeveloped</b>	<b>O/S-1, O/S-2, B-1, PUD</b>
	\$\$	<b>MIXED-USE</b>	<b>Commercial</b> ex. Small-scale retail / Coffee shop	<b>Multi-Family Residential</b> <b>Institutional / Office</b> <b>Pocket Parks</b>	<b>PUD (until new form-based or mixed-use district(s) are created)</b>
	\$\$	<b>COMMERCIAL CENTER</b>	<b>Commercial</b> Specialty stores / Integrated District	<b>Multi-Family Residential</b> <b>Institutional / Office</b> <b>Pocket Parks</b>	<b>B-2, PUD (until new form-based or mixed-use district(s) are created)</b>

## INDUSTRIAL USES

Industrial and light industrial land uses are an essential part of the land use mix in Hobart, representing approximately 3% of the total land acreage. Self-storage facilities, manufacturing, warehousing, and other uses are supported by a strong regional road network connected to the interstate highway system. Because of Hobart's strategic location and land available for development, current land use policies envision large parcels as being used for industrial purposes. Concentrating industrial land uses in key opportunity sites will support prosperity of such uses in specific pockets of the community that have access to the regional transportation network.

### Employment Center

Employment Center areas encourage development that is largely compatible with adjacent residential and other less intensive land uses, supporting high technology and service-based activities. Inherently compatible with residential uses, this land use does not allow manufacturing, contrary to the industrial land use. Incubator spaces, storage facilities, start-up facilities, research businesses, assembly, and communication facilities, among other uses are supported within such areas. This land use increases resiliency in the local economy by allowing Hobart the opportunity to respond to market trends and support the northwest Indiana region with flexible and affordable spaces for a variety of business enterprises. For parcels of five acres or less, mixed-use, multi-family residential, and commercial and retail uses can be permitted by City Council.



### Industrial Use

The Industrial land use has been reserved as part of the future land use strategy to retain and attract higher-intensity industrial uses where appropriate in the City. Hobart's current distribution of land uses, and various highway access points allows for manufacturing and other high industry uses to exist with appropriate distancing from neighborhoods and other active areas. Industrial uses can have a harsh impact on surrounding neighborhoods. While Hobart may regulate the types of uses that are permitted in such areas, it is more meaningful to focus on the ramifications that need to be contained and the different measures to mitigate negative impacts. Existing industrial uses in Hobart include equipment suppliers, cable manufacture and management, and Albanese Candy warehouse, among other uses.





		FUTURE LAND USE	PRIMARY	SECONDARY	ZONING CORRELATION
INDUSTRIAL		EMPLOYMENT CENTER	Warehouse, distribution, research and development, business parks, offices, and indoor, low-impact industry. Multi-unit residential may serve as transition to lower intensity neighborhood areas.		PBP, M-1, PUD
		INDUSTRIAL	Manufacturing	Light Industrial	PBP, M-1, M-2, PUD

## BUFFERING INDUSTRIAL USES

Light industrial uses are on the rise due to the growing demand for clean tech and logistics facilities. With the increasing emphasis on sustainability and renewable energy, there is a greater need for facilities that produce and distribute clean technologies. Similarly, with the rise of e-commerce and online shopping, there is a greater demand for logistics facilities such as warehouses and distribution centers. These facilities also fall under the category of light industrial uses and require specialized equipment and processes to handle and transport goods efficiently.

However, the proximity of residential areas to industrial sites can cause issues for both the residents and the industries. It is important to buffer light industrial and heavy industrial uses away from adjacent uses, particularly residential uses. Emphasizing the health and well-being of community residents, as well as being cognizant of heavy vehicle traffic impacts of proposed developments will be key moving forward.

To address these issues, Hobart leadership needs to consider the importance of buffering industrial uses from residential uses. This can be achieved through zoning regulations that require the use of clear visual and physical barriers such as green spaces or soundproofing materials. Fronting industrial uses with commercial or office spaces can be an effective way to maintain a street fabric and enhance the aesthetic appeal of industrial areas.

### DID YOU KNOW?

## AmeriPlex, Merrillville

Ameriplex in Merrillville demonstrates how to achieve a healthy mix of uses while buffering industrial areas from adjacent uses. By creating a physical barrier and carefully siting the different uses, cities can create a more sustainable and vibrant urban environment that benefits both businesses and residents. The industrial area is located at the back of the development, buffered from the other uses by a greenbelt and a drainage ditch. The commercial and office uses are situated along the front of the development, facing the main road. This creates a more inviting and pedestrian-friendly environment that helps to break up the visual monotony of the large industrial buildings. The residential areas are located nearby, but are buffered from the industrial uses



## PARK & RECREATION

Hobart offers a variety of park and recreation land including sites managed by the Park Department, natural areas, and agricultural land. The latter two categories are currently categorized under a generic land use “Agriculture / Undeveloped”. The future land use strategy aims to distinguish between these different character areas to better serve the Hobart community and ensure the proper use of land is projected for the community’s future. The end result are three park and recreation land use categories and an additional land use defined as “Future Study Areas (FSAs)” that will require additional analysis and visioning effort.

### Parks

The parks and open space land use category identifies parks that are managed by the Hobart Park Department, ranging from small-scale tot lots tucked behind residential subdivisions to large-scale community parks. Athletic fields, playgrounds, trails, sports courts, and the Hobart Community Center, among other open spaces, are included in this designation. To better distinguish between City-managed open space that provide primarily active recreation and other natural areas managed by local and regional providers, another land use category “Conservation Areas” is proposed in the future land use strategy. Below is a description of the Conservation Areas Land Use.



### Conservation Areas

Conservation areas in Hobart are owned and managed by public and quasi-public organizations that strive to preserve and restore habitats and ecosystems in the region. Such entities include the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, the Shirley Heinze Land Trust, and the US National Park Service, among other providers. Hobart’s natural areas include wetlands, waterbodies, natural habitats, nature preserves, and forested land. This land use category prohibits any use that impairs the natural environment or disturbs the natural ecosystem of such areas. Conservation areas also prohibit uses that conflict with applicable water management and wildlife protection policies of local, state, and federal agencies.






\* *The City of Hobart should revisit the recommendations of The Hobart Conservation Zoning + Sub-Area Plan. Natural Resource Conservation District (NRC) is a proposed new zoning district, which applies to existing and future managed conservation lands.*

# Agriculture


The Agricultural land use is intended to protect existing viable farmland and promote Hobart as an active farming community that encourages maintenance and improvement of its agricultural lands. Such existing uses, situated along County Line Road alongside the eastern boundary of Hobart, include County Line Orchard, Johnson’s Farm, and Remus Farm. This land use designation allows the City to continue venturing into Agritourism, a growing sustainable field that has the potential to diversify and contribute to the local economy. This unique form of commercial enterprise is in line with regional market trends that focus on responsibly programming natural areas.



FUTURE LAND USE		PRIMARY	SECONDARY	ZONING CORRELATION
OPEN SPACE	 <b>PARKS</b>	<i>Parks &amp; Recreation Sites</i> <i>Athletic Fields</i> <i>Playgrounds</i>		<i>Consistent with surrounding zoning (until new public / institutional district(s) are created)</i>
	 <b>AGRICULTURE</b>	<i>Agriculture / Farming</i>	<i>Commercial Agritourism</i>	<b>A-1</b>
	 <b>CONSERVATION AREAS</b>	<i>Natural Areas</i> ex. Wetlands, Lakes, Floodplains, etc.		<b>NRC *</b>

# Future Study Areas (FSAs)

The future land use strategy identifies certain areas as Future Study Areas (FSAs), highlighted in light grey. These sites will require in-depth research, analysis, and planning to address challenges and capitalize on opportunities. Hobart should take a leading role in planning these areas considering adjacent land uses, transportation, economic development, and environmental sustainability, among other factors. The City’s participation in planning these areas, including gathering data and input from stakeholders, as well as developing conceptual site plans, can help solidify a community-led vision and ensure desired outcomes. The City’s active role in envisioning future uses on Future Study Areas can guide investment decisions and align efforts with community needs. Such areas include large parcels west of Clay Street and south of 73rd Street, as well as areas within the northwest region of Hobart.

FSAs	 <b>FUTURE STUDY AREAS</b>	Areas requiring further research, analysis, and planning to address challenges and capitalize on opportunities.	<b>R-2, B-3, NRC *</b>
------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------



# OPPORTUNITY SITES

During the Hobart 2040 Plan process, City leadership identified three opportunity sites as having the potential for development or redevelopment. All three sites are currently vacant and some are often targeted for revitalization and potential economic development. Preliminary site plans are created for these sites to help the Hobart community visualize potential development scenarios or outcomes for the sites.

The designs help to illustrate future land use, scale, and site layout that is in-line with the overall community vision. The Opportunity Site visualizations help shape and manage community development in the future. Site 1 will require additional analysis before a design concept can be proposed.



**37th Ave and  
Colonial Dr**

*Located near Strack & Van Til and wetlands, this site has potential for light industrial, commercial, and higher density senior housing.*



**61st Ave and  
Wisconsin St**

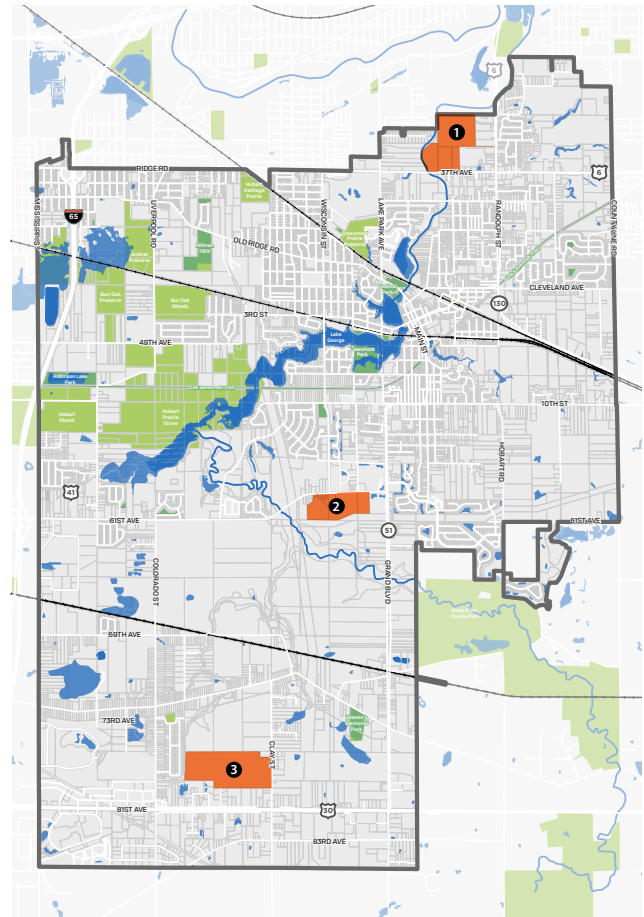
*Located near St. Mary Medical Center, this site has the potential to become a mixed-use commercial and residential hub that serves hospital visitors and staff, as well as surrounding neighborhoods.*



## Former Drag Strip

*Located near the Lincoln Highway commercial area, this site has the potential to become an Employment Center that includes light industrial, office space, and other unique uses, such as incubator space.*

Fig 12: Opportunity Sites in Hobart



## 2 61st Ave and Wisconsin St



### ABOUT THIS CONCEPT

This site is located near the St. Mary Medical Center and is the ideal location for a mixed-use hub that provides amenities for surrounding residents, hospital visitors, and hospital staff. The concept includes multiple commercial spaces and higher density housing that is well-suited for seniors, hospital workers, and other potential residents. It also includes a central gathering space, which lends to a community feel.

### MIXED USES

Commercial/entertainment spaces, residential buildings, and green space are in close proximity to one another in this concept. This helps to create an authentic neighborhood environment, while also providing amenities for the broader community.

### STREET CONSTRUCTION & EXTENSIONS

This concept includes the extension of Wisconsin Street and additional roads that connect back to the Hobart street network.





## 3 37th Ave and Colonial Dr



### ABOUT THIS CONCEPT

This site is primed for light industrial and office uses given its location near key regional routes. The Employment Center land use designation would allow for light industrial uses, such as incubator spaces, small distribution centers, and offices.

### CONSERVATION ZONING STANDARDS

In order to reduce the adverse impacts of land uses on this site, this concept includes ample buffering to protect surrounding neighborhoods and the natural environment.

### STREET CONSTRUCTION & EXTENTIONS

This concept includes the construction of 78th Avenue (E/W) and the extension of Underwood Drive (N/S).









# 1 HEALTHY NEIGHBORHOODS

## THEME 1 | GOALS

### Goal 1: Wide Range of Housing

*Our neighborhoods will be more welcoming, serving current and future residents, and intentionally filling the housing gap as opportunities arise.*

### Goal 2: Authentic & Vibrant Neighborhoods

*Our neighborhoods will reflect our community character and encourage conservation of the built form, ensuring consistency in the urban fabric.*

### Goal 3: Viable Development

*Our neighborhoods will be development-friendly, supporting successful and well-managed growth, while maintaining community character.*

### Goal 4: Housing at the Core

*Our neighborhoods will extend into the heart of the community, supporting a true sense of place, cementing a positive identity, and promoting activity and livability.*

Hobart's 2040 Plan includes five community Themes. The following section describes Hobart's vision for Theme 1: Healthy Neighborhoods. A summary of the existing conditions analysis along with community input received over the course of the process are shared in the next few pages. Following that is a list of Strategies and Actions for each of the goals listed above.

# 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 13: Housing Typologies Map

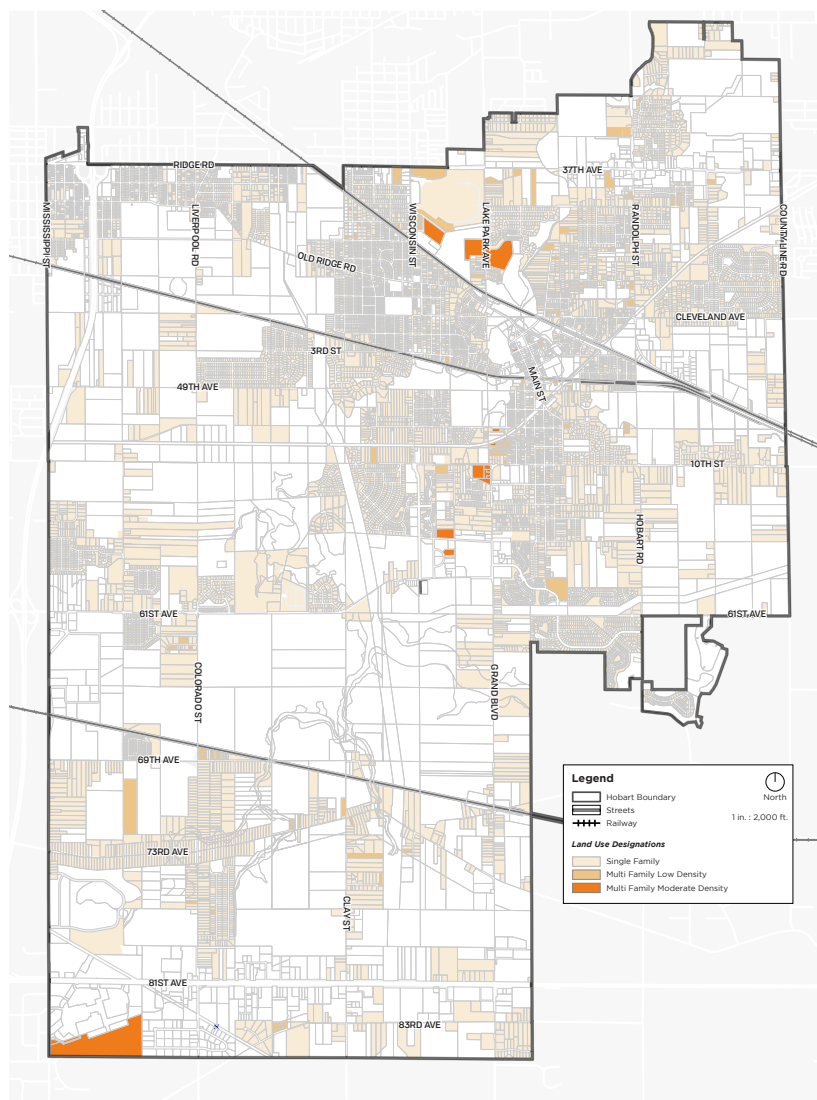


Table 3: Housing: Type and Age

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



## Theme 1: Healthy Neighborhoods

# 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 4: 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>

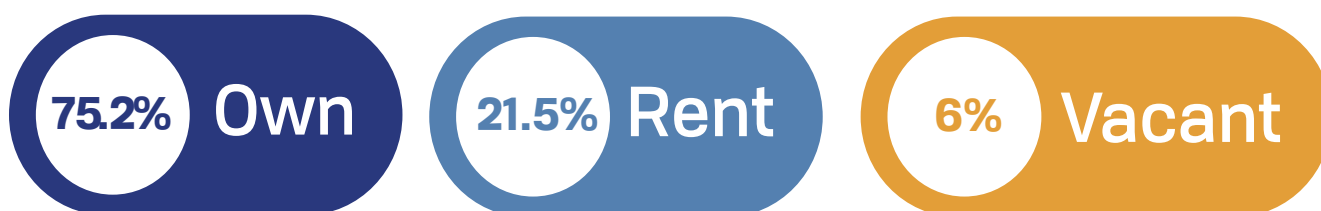
Since 2015, Hobart has experienced a moderate growth in housing units. This culminated in a spike of 745 units between 2019 and 2020. While 2021 marked a decline in available units, 2022 showed a slight positive growth. A decline in available housing units is usually due to migration, demolition (e.g. 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?

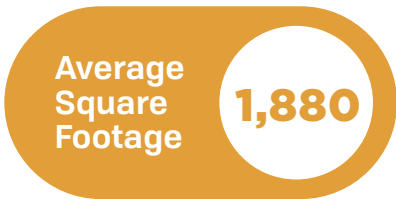
## Ongoing Supply Chain Issue

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.

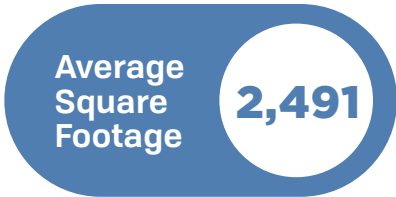
# SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL HOUSING IN HOBART

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.



# 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.





## 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.

### 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.

Lake Park Senior Apartments



### 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 of 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

## GOAL 1: WIDE RANGE OF HOUSING

Our neighborhoods will be more welcoming, serving current and future residents, and intentionally filling the housing gap as opportunities arise.

Single-family detached houses comprise nearly three-quarters of the city's existing housing stock. By accommodating and encouraging a more diverse range of housing options the city will help ensure that the housing needs of all existing and future residents are met regardless of income, age, household size, or family history.

In addition to permitting traditional "single-family" and "multi-family housing," the city will accommodate and encourage a wide variety of housing types, including two-, three- and four-unit houses, townhouses, and accessory dwelling units. These types of house-scale buildings (sometimes referred to as "missing-middle" housing types) can be seamlessly integrated into the fabric of existing residential neighborhoods and provide additional density that supports local-serving businesses and the city's walkability and transportation goals. A more varied housing palette can also promote a spectrum of affordability to help avoid a mismatch between the city's available housing stock and its changing demographic makeup.

**STRATEGY 1:** Amend the zoning ordinance to encourage a broader range of housing types.

- **Action 1.1:** Amend land use regulations in the R-1 and R-2 single-family residential zoning districts to allow small multi-unit residential buildings.
- **Action 1.2:** Amend zoning regulations to eliminate floor area requirements in the R-1 and R-2 single-family residential zoning districts.
- **Action 1.3:** Amend zoning regulations to allow small accessory dwelling units, also known as garage apartments, carriage houses, or in-law suites, on lots occupied by one principal dwelling unit.
- **Action 1.4:** Review existing density limitations, i.e., Minimum lot area per dwelling unit requirements, to ensure they address market demand and provide opportunities for healthy developments.

- **Action 1.5:** Rezone areas to allow higher intensity residential and mixed-use development, taking into consideration the existing infrastructure, established physical character of surrounding neighborhoods, as well as the future land use strategy.



Rendering of Accessory Dwelling Unit  
(ADU) by Ziggy

Ongoing  
+  
5 - 10 yr.  
●  
3 - 5 yr.  
●  
1 - 3 yr.  
●  
0 - 1 yr.  
●



**STRATEGY 2:** Foster the development of single-family homes in Hobart that respond to the needs of the community.

● **Action 2.1:** Facilitate the development of higher-end single-family dwellings in appropriate locations.

● **Action 2.2:** Foster the development of smaller homes that can fill housing gaps, including senior housing and workforce housing.

● **Action 2.3:** Continue to review the community's housing needs through future assessments. Timeline: 3-5 yr.

+ **Action 2.4:** Create opportunities to engage the community about their housing needs.

● **Action 2.5:** Collaborate with Lake County Housing Authority and Illinois Housing Development Authority, among other organizations, to align with regional housing needs and market trends.

● **Action 2.6:** Explore the need for a housing coalition that focuses efforts on assessing housing needs and defining strategies to overcome housing barriers.

**STRATEGY 3:** Preserve and maintain Hobart's current housing stock.

● **Action 3.1:** Engage owners of old houses in the periphery of the Downtown to discuss reinvestment in the aging structures.

+ **Action 3.2:** Encourage maintenance and preservation of Hobart's mid-century housing stock.

● **Action 3.2:** Explore incentivizing preservation through financial tools, including conservation easements and land trust programs.

### HOUSING RESOURCES

## Residential Historic Rehabilitation Credit INDIANA

Homes in Hobart that are listed in the Indiana Register of Historic Sites and Structures can apply for a tax credit for expenditures related to the rehabilitation of their historic home. These types of financial tools can help Hobart residents maintain historic resources in the community and support a culture of preservation and appreciation of the City's unique past.

## Historic Preservation Fund Grants INDIANA

As a Certified Local Government (CLG) in Indiana, Hobart is eligible to participate in the State's Historic Preservation Fund grant program. Providing a 60/40 grant-to-match ratio, the funding can be used for a wide variety of historic preservation initiatives: nominations to the National Register of Historic Places, education programs like workshops, publications, and brochures, and architectural resources surveys to document Hobart's historic assets.



## GOAL 2: AUTHENTIC & VIBRANT NEIGHBORHOODS

Our neighborhoods will reflect our community character and encourage conservation of the built form, ensuring consistency in the urban fabric.

Single family neighborhoods are a defining feature of Hobart. They range from the mid-century housing around Lake George, established neighborhoods near the downtown, large lots in rural areas, and newer houses built in larger subdivisions. This substantial housing supply is an asset to the community and it will be important to maintain its quality and encourage reinvestment.

A healthy, vibrant city promotes community well-being and quality of life for all residents, with neighborhoods that include safe, attractive and well-maintained properties. The city and its partners can help ensure that all residents can live in authentic, well-maintained and vibrant neighborhoods through continued code enforcement, community education, and strategic public investments.

Hobart's existing neighborhoods contribute greatly to the city's unique character. Through community engagement and financial and in-kind assistance programs, the city can preserve and protect neighborhood character while also accommodating desired change and necessary adaptation. Such strategies can help ensure that the city's significant stock of older (pre-1960) housing, makes a positive contribution to a neighborhood's fabric and provides a supply of "naturally occurring" affordable housing.

**STRATEGY 1:** Enhance the quality and livability of Hobart's single-family residential neighborhoods.

- + Action 1.1:** Ensure the City's property maintenance and code enforcement is effective in mitigating neglect and nuisances in residential neighborhoods.
- Action 1.2:** Invest in infrastructure improvements, such as road repairs, sidewalk installations, street trees, and street lighting upgrades, to enhance the safety, character, and accessibility of neighborhoods.
- Action 1.3:** Create a program to assist homeowners with essential repairs and improvements and conduct outreach to increase awareness of the program.

**STRATEGY 2:** Foster a sense of place and identity for neighborhoods in Hobart.

- Action 2.1:** Create a map that identifies Hobart's unique neighborhood character areas based on defining features such as architecture styles, building age, built environment, natural features, among others.
- Action 2.2:** Engage residents in each neighborhood to share what makes their neighborhood special and why it is an important place to them.
- + Action 2.3:** Engage neighborhood residents in volunteer efforts, such as community planting and beautification days.
- + Action 2.4:** Support events, such as neighborhood block parties, by assisting with street closures and attendance from local leaders and City Departments.

Ongoing  
+  
5 - 10 yr.  
3 - 5 yr.  
1 - 3 yr.  
0 - 1 yr.



## Home Improvement Program

### NILES, ILLINOIS

The Village of Niles has an older post-war housing stock and found the smaller housing sizes were an obstacle to attracting new residents. They initiated a “Grow Your Home” home improvement program that offers financial assistance to property owners who need to increase the living space of their property. The goal is to encourage residents to improve housing stock in the community and encourage young and/or growing families to stay or relocate in Niles. The Village offers financial assistance in the form of permit fee waivers up to \$5,000 for significant improvements. The Village approves only 20 projects each year.

## GOAL 3: VIABLE DEVELOPMENT

Our neighborhoods will be development-friendly, supporting successful and well-managed growth, while maintaining community character.

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Providing stability in existing neighborhoods means being prepared for development in the future. It is important to evaluate regulations in Hobart’s City Code to determine how they shape the built environment in residential neighborhoods. Zoning and land development regulations should be tailored to existing conditions and desired outcomes. From density and setback regulations to subdivision and infrastructure requirements, the City’s regulatory environment establishes the framework through which future development will occur. Regulatory guardrails are necessary to ensure that new development does not pose unreasonable adverse impacts on neighbors, but such regulations must fit Hobart’s on-the-ground conditions and community values and not stymie positive investments in the city.

The strategies below introduce several improvements to Hobart’s regulations that help ensure the City’s subdivisions and residential construction contribute positively to the community. Introducing new zoning districts can better define the City’s vision for land uses in residential neighborhoods, setting realistic expectations for residents, developers, and builders. Buffering requirements mitigate potential conflicts between dissimilar land uses. These approaches begin with revisiting key parts of Hobart’s City Code.



**STRATEGY 1:** Address key amendments to Hobart's Zoning Code related to development and land use regulations.

- **Action 1.1:** Amend the zoning ordinance to revise bulk and setback regulations that regularly result in variation requests.
- **Action 1.2:** Add one or more new zoning districts for civic and institutional uses, such as parks, schools, churches, and hospitals.

**STRATEGY 2:** Address key amendments to Hobart's Subdivision Regulations to improve future development and neighborhood mobility.

- **Action 2.1:** Add "complete streets" requirements and specifications to the subdivision ordinance and to Hobart's City Standards.
- **Action 2.2:** Add street connectivity requirements calling for newly developing areas to be connected to existing and future developing areas.

- **Action 2.3:** Update block length regulations to impose maximum length requirements below the quarter mile recommended in Sec. 153.064.

**STRATEGY 3:** Ensure multi-family development, including townhomes and rowhomes, is designed to reflect area context.

- + **Action 3.1:** Ensure Hobart's Design Guidelines are up to date and reflect the community's evolving needs and interests in the built environment.
- + **Action 3.2:** Ensure architecture and design review are critical components of the City's review process and Plan Commission deliberations. Encourage strong conformance and limit variations or modifications to the Guidelines.
- **Action 3.3:** Work with property owners to provide screening or buffering on developments that preceded the current Design Guidelines.

+ Ongoing  
 + 5 - 10 yr.  
 ● 3 - 5 yr.  
 ● 1 - 3 yr.  
 ● 0 - 1 yr.



Complete Streets example

## GOAL 4: HOUSING AT THE CORE




Our neighborhoods will extend into the heart of the community, supporting a true sense of place, cementing a positive identity, and promoting activity and livability.

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Hobart's charming downtown on the shores of Lake George is well-positioned for revitalization. The downtown core area has the potential to become a celebrated and unique community hub with the addition of more restaurants, specialty shops, and community events. Having housing within walking distance of downtown is vital to the area's success, especially outside of peak business hours. Increasing the number of residents within and near downtown will offer greater market support for existing and new businesses and increase around-the-clock energy and vitality.

While increasing the number (and variety) of residential units in and around the core is a priority, this objective should be balanced against the need to preserve downtown's traditional main street character and scale as well as the character of stable residential neighborhoods near downtown.

**STRATEGY 1:** Encourage mixed-use development in Hobart's downtown core.

-  **Action 1.1:** Ensure zoning regulations allow multifamily density above ground-floor commercial uses at a density that facilitates meaningful reinvestment.
-  **Action 1.2:** Identify opportunities for public private partnerships that can help finance and develop mixed-use buildings, incentivizing developers to invest in Hobart's core.
-  **Action 1.3:** Review off-street parking regulations to ensure they are consistent with best practices and do not create an obstacle to redevelopment in the Downtown.

**STRATEGY 2:** Identify opportunities for higher density and multifamily residential development that will support Hobart's downtown commercial core.

-  **Action 2.1:** Amend the zoning map to be consistent with the future land use map for multifamily development in the future.
-  **Action 2.2:** Evaluate properties in Downtown and around the periphery of Downtown to determine whether land can be assembled to facilitate new multifamily development.
-  **Action 2.3:** Engage property owners to encourage reinvestment and ongoing maintenance in existing multifamily dwelling units in and around the Downtown.
-  **Action 2.4:** Facilitate partnerships between property owners to encourage assembling properties and creating larger downtown development opportunities



**STRATEGY 3:** Revisit under-utilized residential properties close to Downtown to determine feasibility for land assembly and redevelopment.

● **Action 3.1:** Review zoning regulations to ensure that future developments are consistent with the vision set forth by the Future Land Use Strategy, are allowed.

+ **Action 3.2:** Engage property owners of these properties to clarify ownership status and educate about opportunities for preservation and redevelopment.

Mixed use residential and commercial property, Main Street



● 0 - 1 yr. ● 1 - 3 yr. ● 3 - 5 yr. ● 5 - 10 yr. + Ongoing

## THEME 1 | STRATEGIES &amp; PARTNERS

## Goal 1: Wide Range of Housing

HIGH

**STRATEGY 1:** Amend the zoning ordinance to encourage a broader range of housing types.**Partners:** City of Hobart, Plan Commission, Consultants

MEDIUM

**STRATEGY 2:** Foster the development of single-family homes in Hobart that respond to the needs of the community.**Partners:** City of Hobart, Developers / Homebuilders, Lake County Housing Authority, Indiana Housing & Community Development Authority (IHCDA)

HIGH

**STRATEGY 3:** Preserve and maintain Hobart's current housing stock.**Partners:** City of Hobart, Historic Preservation Commission, Redevelopment Commission

## Goal 2: Authentic &amp; Vibrant Neighborhoods

HIGH

**STRATEGY 1:** Enhance the quality and livability of Hobart's single-family residential neighborhoods.**Partners:** City of Hobart, Community Groups & Associations

MEDIUM

**STRATEGY 2:** Foster a sense of place and identity for neighborhoods in Hobart.**Partners:** City of Hobart, Plan Commission, Consultants

### Goal 3: Viable Development

HIGH

**STRATEGY 1:** Address key amendments to Hobart's Zoning Code related to development and land use regulations.

**Partners:** City of Hobart, Plan Commission, Consultants

HIGH

**STRATEGY 2:** Address key amendments to Hobart's Subdivision Regulations to improve future development and neighborhood mobility.

**Partners:** City of Hobart, Plan Commission, Consultants

MEDIUM

**STRATEGY 3:** Ensure multi-family development, including townhomes and rowhomes, is designed to reflect area context.

**Partners:** City of Hobart

### Goal 4: Housing at the Core

HIGH

**STRATEGY 1:** Encourage mixed-use development in Hobart's downtown core.

**Partners:** City of Hobart, Plan Commission, Redevelopment Commission, Consultants

MEDIUM

**STRATEGY 2:** Identify opportunities for higher density and multifamily residential development that will support Hobart's downtown commercial core.

**Partners:** City of Hobart, Plan Commission, Redevelopment Commission, Consultants

MEDIUM

**STRATEGY 3:** Revisit under-utilized residential properties close to Downtown to determine feasibility for land assembly and redevelopment.

**Partners:** City of Hobart, Plan Commission, Redevelopment Commission, Consultants





# 2 RESPONSIBLE GROWTH

## THEME 2 | GOALS

### Goal 1: Resilient Economy

*Hobart will encourage entrepreneurship, supporting local businesses, both small and large, and working toward establishing a sense of community among Hobart's business owners.*

### Goal 2: Vibrant Commercial Areas

*Hobart will accentuate and expand its character-defining commercial areas, committing to mixed-use business districts and the development of social centers.*

### Goal 3: Thriving Corridors

*Our commercial corridors will represent a foundational facet of Hobart's economy and will continue to grow and evolve to meet the City's changing needs.*

### Goal 4: Diverse Uses

*Hobart will embrace a healthy mix of land uses, carefully planning a future land use strategy that attracts and retains a diverse market.*

Hobart's 2040 Plan includes five community Themes. The following section describes Hobart's vision for Theme 2: Responsible Growth. A summary of the existing conditions analysis along with community input received over the course of the process are shared in the next few pages. Following that is a list of Strategies and Actions for each of the goals listed above.

# COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE

## ECONOMIC TRENDS

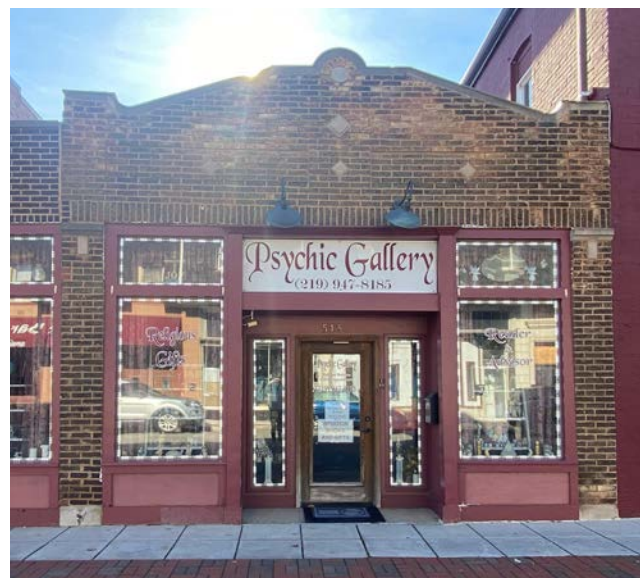
Based on economic trends in northwest Indiana, growth in Hobart's economy is likely to slow in the near future due to inflation and rising interest rates, which may lead to a mild recession in 2023. Key impediments to greater growth are a shortage of labor and certain materials such as microchips and 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



## 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.



Storefronts in Downtown Hobart

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

- STAKEHOLDER COMMENT





## 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 5: 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

Fig 14: Hobart Retail Clusters: Healthcare, Food Businesses, & Retail

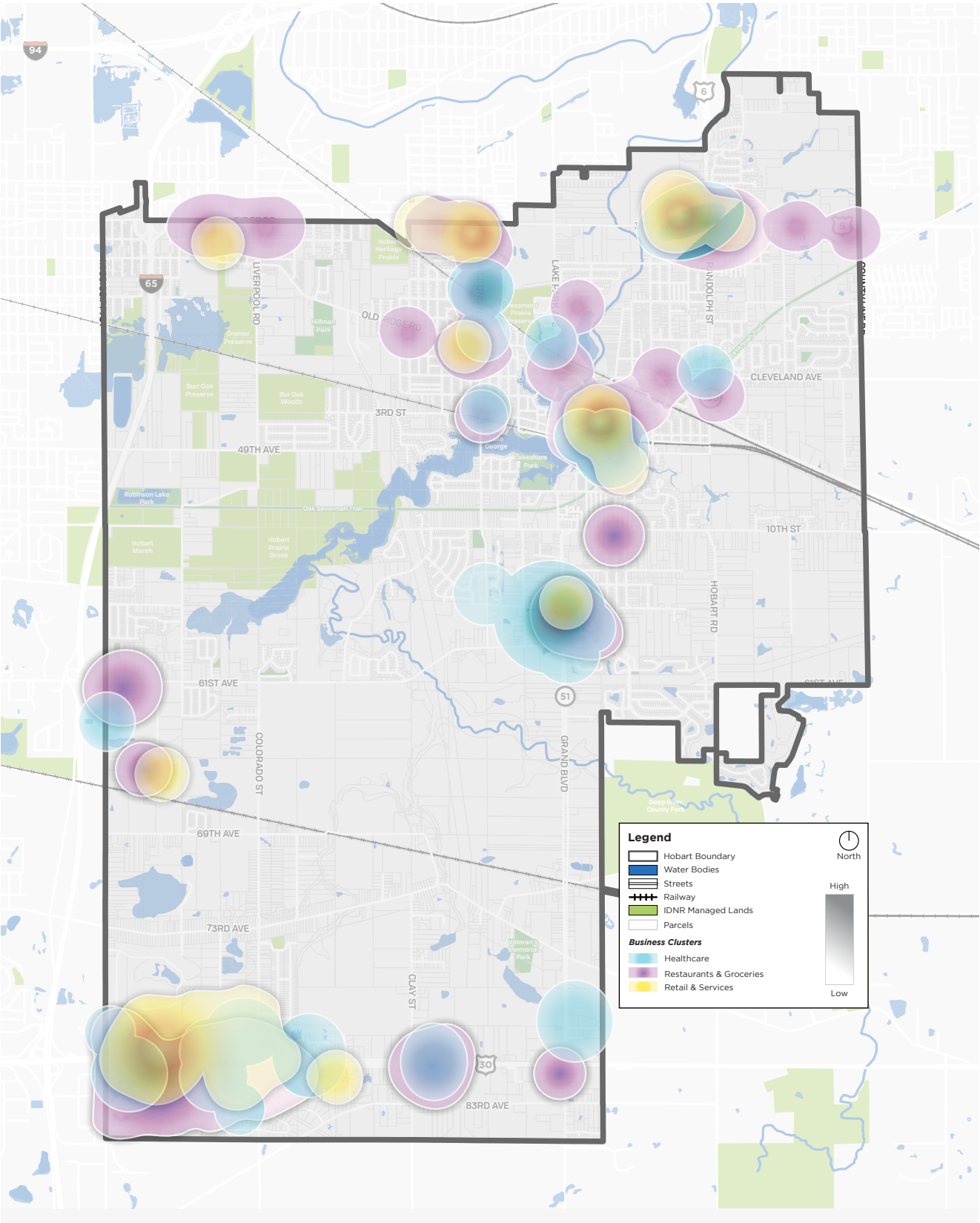
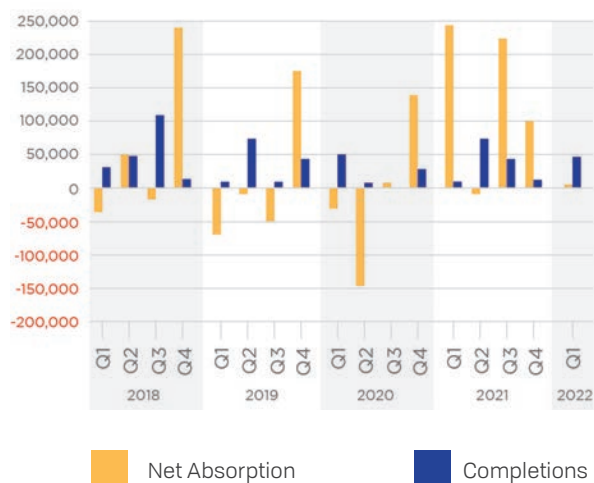




Fig 15: Retail Absorption Rates



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

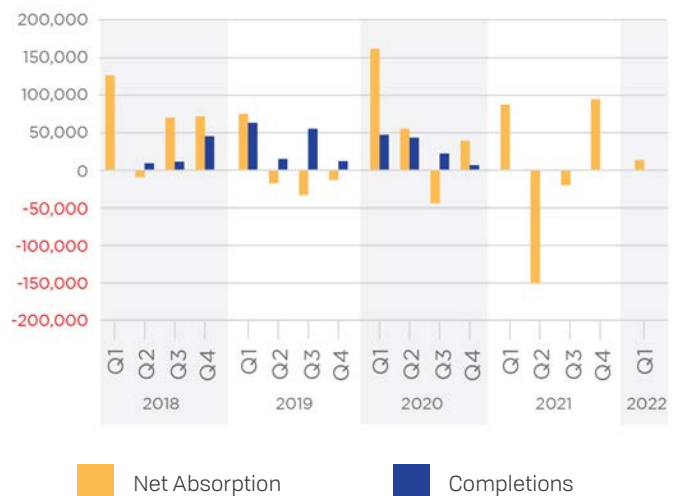
*While malls have become less desirable for tenants, outlots surrounding shopping centers and malls remain in demand due to their high visibility and access. Restaurants and other retailers that closed will likely see more demolitions to make way for new users.*

# 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 16: 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.*

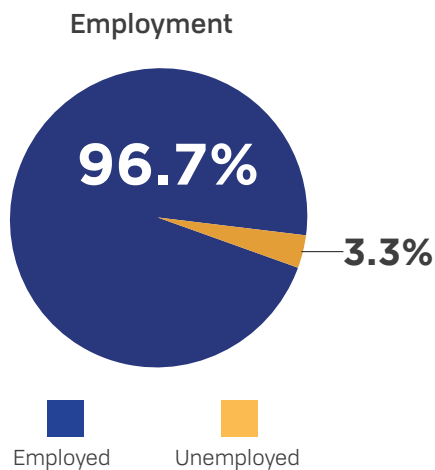


# EMPLOYMENT, PLACE OF WORK & COMMUTE

## 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 6: 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 Associated Degree, Bachelor’s Degree, or a Graduate/Professional Degree, according to the U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2022.

Table 7: 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

## GOAL 1: RESILIENT ECONOMY



Hobart will encourage entrepreneurship, supporting local businesses, both small and large, and working toward establishing a sense of community among Hobart's business owners.

Business and business districts in Hobart are vital to a healthy and resilient local economy. Businesses create jobs, contribute to the tax base, provide goods and services for residents and visitors, contribute to community events, and add activity and energy to the city. Supporting these businesses helps support a healthy and balanced economy. The strategies below provide a framework for strengthening lines of communication, providing support for the business community, and building relationships with organizations with shared goals and interests.


**STRATEGY 1:** Establish and maintain lines of communication with local businesses.


-  **Action 1.1:** Facilitate annual or bi-annual listening sessions to stay current on issues, challenges, and concerns facing the local business community.
-  **Action 1.2:** Update the Business Resource Guide information on the City's website regularly to reflect available grants, funding resources, and potential partnerships.


**STRATEGY 2:** Be proactive in sharing City regulations, tools, and resources with the business community.

-  **Action 2.1:** Arrange for City Staff to speak at local business gatherings to share information and resources available.
-  **Action 2.2:** Ensure the Chamber of Commerce has a clear understanding of City resources and readily shares up-to-date information with members.


**STRATEGY 3:** Establish partnerships with local and regional organizations, creating synergies and developing innovative solutions.


-  **Action 3.1:** Continue to engage with Hobart's Chamber of Commerce, Crossroads Regional Chamber of Commerce, and similar organizations, to share knowledge and resources.


-  **Action 3.2:** Engage the School City of Hobart school district and other regional educational institutions to discuss entrepreneurship programs.


-  **Action 3.3:** Explore partnerships that focus on financial literacy and networking opportunities for small businesses.

**STRATEGY 4:** Establish a partnership with the commercial real estate community in the region.

-  **Action 4.1:** Create helpful documents summarizing Hobart's regulations regarding signs, land uses in non-residential zoning districts, and future land use plans.

-  **Action 4.2:** Provide this information to key representatives of the commercial real estate community working around Hobart.

-  **Action 4.3:** Present summary information at a regular gathering of commercial real estate professionals in the region. Timeline: 1-3 yr.

-  **Action 4.4:** Explore partnerships that focus on small businesses and a sense of social responsibility.

 **5 - 10 yr.**  **3 - 5 yr.**  **1 - 3 yr.**  **0 - 1 yr.**  **+ Ongoing**



### GOAL 2: VIBRANT COMMERCIAL AREAS

Hobart will accentuate and expand its character-defining commercial areas, committing to mixed-use business districts and the development of social centers.

---

The nature of retail commerce has evolved, as have the shopping habits and interests of consumers. When so much can be purchased online in the comfort of home, automobile-oriented strip shopping centers often don't respond to the interests and needs of shoppers. In-person commerce needs to be associated with a positive experience, a meaningful atmosphere, and something that makes a trip away from home worth taking.

Downtown Hobart has the opportunity to create an environment that invites shoppers and business owners alike. The pedestrian-scale shopping environment allows residents to walk, talk, and enjoy the energy of the downtown while dining and shopping. Proactive efforts to build this energy will generate interest, support, and investment in the downtown.

Auto-oriented commercial corridors can also generate interest and energy by creating a positive place for shoppers. Branding and wayfinding signs welcome visitors and guide them to their destination. Well-designed buildings and site treatments let visitors know property owners care about Hobart and invest in their developments. Efforts to update the City's design guidelines and create branding along the corridors can help achieve this.

Advancement of this goal will require continued community engagement, small business support, infrastructure investment, and updated planning and zoning policies.

#### Downtown Hobart



**STRATEGY 1:** Build appreciation for Hobart’s downtown commercial area, attracting more residents and visitors to the City’s core.

- **Action 1.1:** Develop a series of street fair events that celebrate the downtown commercial core and its history.
- **Action 1.2:** Create a webpage on the City’s website that provides a map and a list of downtown businesses; ensure this is updated frequently.
- **Action 1.3:** Create a downtown brand and engage local businesses to participate in the shared location-based identity.

## GO DOWNTOWN KENOSHA

### KENOSHA, WI

The City of Kenosha, Wisconsin has a charming downtown with a long history and tremendous potential. Go Downtown Kenosha is an initiative of the Business Improvement District (BID) with a goal to engage local residents and visitors to the community in a welcoming and thriving environment. The website provides a list of local businesses and seeks to establish Downtown Kenosha “as a place where businesses prosper; where the community gathers; and where all people come to live, work, play, and invest.”

**STRATEGY 2:** Improve storefronts to create a consistent and walkable stretch of commercial frontage.

- **Action 2.1:** Encourage filling empty storefronts temporarily with experience-oriented and non-traditional or pop-up retail businesses.
- **Action 2.2:** Create a program to activate vacant storefronts with window art or other coverings.
- + **Action 2.3:** Work with the Hobart Chamber of Commerce and the local business community to identify and assist potential tenants for vacant commercial spaces.

**STRATEGY 3:** Develop more awareness of Hobart’s auto-oriented commercial corridors by highlighting a distinct identity or brand.

- **Action 3.1:** Create impactful gateway signs identifying Hobart along Highway 30.
- **Action 3.2:** Create gateway signs that identify Hobart along Ridge Road.
- + **Action 3.3:** Continue working to improve the character and aesthetics of the commercial corridors, including streetscape, lighting, and landscape enhancements to create attractive places within the City.

**STRATEGY 4:** Update Hobart’s Design Guidelines to elevate the context and impact of new development in the City.

- **Action 4.1:** Introduce a hierarchy of commercial development contexts within the Design Guidelines that acknowledge the same type and scale of development may not be appropriate in all commercial contexts.
- **Action 4.2:** Establish firm design standards that require more intense, multistory, and/or mixed-use development patterns at key nodes and commercial districts.

0 - 1 yr. 1 - 3 yr. 3 - 5 yr. 5 - 10 yr. + Ongoing

**STRATEGY 5:** Consider key zoning amendments to improve the development environment in Hobart.

🕒 **Action 5.1:** Update or replace B-2 (Central Business) zoning district regulations with regulations that reflect the desired physical character of downtown. Such regulations should work in tandem with the Lake George Historic district guidelines to help maintain and promote traditional main street design and walkability within the downtown area.

🕒 **Action 5.2:** Reduce reliance on PUD-style zoning through the incorporation of regulations that better fit modern development practices and provide greater certainty for property owners and residents, such as form-based code regulations.

🕒 **Action 5.3:** Ensure that the zoning ordinance's sign regulations are content-neutral.

**STRATEGY 6:** Revisit the structure of land use regulation in Hobart's Zoning Code to simplify administration and increase efficiency.

🕒 **Action 6.1:** Replace the zoning ordinance's "cascading" approach to use regulation by including one or more use tables in the ordinance showing which uses are allowed in which zoning districts. This type of table or matrix format would be easier to use and administer than the narrative list approach used in the current ordinance.

🕒 **Action 6.2:** Replace the zoning ordinance's method of classifying use types in favor of a logical, well-defined use classification system that includes a relatively small number of generalized land use categories.









## GOAL 3: THRIVING CORRIDORS

Our commercial corridors will represent a foundational facet of Hobart's economy and will continue to grow and evolve to meet the City's changing needs.




Commercial development along Hobart's key highways is an essential part of the City's economic fabric. Individuals shopping along these corridors and motorists who are traveling through the city experience and view these high-profile corridor areas on a regular basis. Their experiences form lasting impressions--both positive and negative--for the entire city. One of the key goals of this plan is to continue and enhance the city's efforts to maintain and enhance the economic viability, appearance, and function of Hobart's main commercial corridors, including Highway 30 and Ridge Road.

Focused planning efforts can transform the traditional single-story strip mall paradigm into a more meaningful commercial environment. A study of specific land uses (vehicle sales, general retail, restaurants, etc.) can identify segments of a corridor where branding and infrastructure improvements can create meaningful nodes. Rigorous application of design standards, landscaping, and buffering requirements can soften the visual impact of auto-oriented development. The following strategies provide steps to analyze Hobart's key corridors and help them evolve into resilient shopping destinations.

**STRATEGY 1:** Facilitate the transformation of the Ridge Road Commercial Corridor from sprawling single-use and single-story form to a denser, more continuous/uniform commercial corridor.

-  **Action 1.1:** Map the individual land uses by parcel along the corridor to identify clusters of similar uses.
-  **Action 1.2:** Review lot arrangements to identify opportunities for land assemblage to support larger developments.
-  **Action 1.3:** Where appropriate, allow residential development in segments of the corridor that experience the most commercial disinvestment.
-  **Action 1.4:** Examine the public right-of-way to determine where non-motorized mobility improvements are feasible

**STRATEGY 2:** Guide future development and improvements along the auto-oriented Highway 30 commercial corridor.

-  **Action 2.1:** Map the individual land uses by parcel to identify clusters of similar land uses, identifying uses that are not consistent with the commercial character of the corridor.
-  **Action 2.2:** Review lot arrangements to identify opportunities for land assemblage.
-  **Action 2.3:** Review proposed future land uses to ensure consistency with the City's Future Land Use Map.
-  **Action 2.4:** Encourage multistory development to increase capacity for commercial growth and concentration of non-residential land uses in the corridor.
-  **Action 2.5:** Enforce design guidelines to ensure a high level of design quality in new construction along the corridor.

 5 - 10 yr.  3 - 5 yr.  1 - 3 yr.  0 - 1 yr.  Ongoing

## GOAL 4: DIVERSE USES

Hobart will embrace a healthy mix of land uses, carefully planning a future land use strategy that attracts and retains a diverse market.

Economic development strategies are tools that enable the city to be in control of economic development fostering responsible growth. They allow the city to act upon - not react to demand, guide economic development to areas that need redevelopment, create synergies with existing economic sectors, avoid conflicting uses and sprawl, creating an attractive environment for growth and opportunity, while maintaining Hobart's unique character and identity.

A successful economic development strategy must take into account the opportunities and challenges of these objectives and act in the best interest of the community. This includes striving to create the following outcomes which are necessary to sustain a vibrant, prosperous, and fiscally sound community:

- » Long-term financial stability for Hobart through revenue growth and economic resiliency
- » Access to high quality jobs available to a broad cross section of the workforce
- » New business creation across a variety of sectors

Fostering a business environment with a rich diversity of land uses helps achieve this. When entrepreneurs with new ideas have opportunities to start businesses in Hobart, the local economy is strengthened with new energy, employment drivers, and investment. Zoning regulations must keep pace and provide a framework that is flexible and adapts to new ideas and conventions in land use. The strategies below will help Hobart create an environment where diverse land uses can grow and add vibrancy and energy to the local economy.

**STRATEGY 1:** Create a business culture that cultivates new ideas and small businesses.

- Action 1.1:** Develop a policy for temporary "pop-up" land uses in Hobart's commercial districts.
- Action 1.2:** Improve existing permitting mechanism for temporary businesses like guest retail and food trucks.
- Action 1.2:** Maintain a catalog of commercial and light industrial spaces that can serve as effective business incubators.

### Activating Vacant Storefronts



# Vacant to Vibrant

## SAN FRANCISCO, CA

Recognizing that creativity and entrepreneurship often start with great ideas and small budgets, the City of San Francisco created the “Vacant to Vibrant” program. With the goal of transforming vacant commercial spaces into vibrant communities, the program identifies locations, accepts ideas and pitches, and handles logistics to help small businesses establish engaging pop-up experiences and community spaces in downtown San Francisco. The program is scalable and provides a meaningful framework for communities of any size.



**STRATEGY 2:** Evaluate whether form-based regulations in key commercial districts is appropriate.

- Action 2.1:** Monitor whether Zoning Amendments related to land use are facilitating a desired variety of land uses in commercial districts.
- Action 2.2:** Consider creating form-based regulations in an overlay zone over key districts that define a desired built form but do not prescribe allowable land uses.

332 Main St.





## THEME 2 | STRATEGIES &amp; PARTNERS

## Goal 1: Resilient Economy

HIGH

**STRATEGY 1:** Establish and maintain lines of communication with local businesses.**Partners:** City of Hobart, Business Owners, Hobart Chamber of Commerce, Regional Chambers of Commerce, Real Estate Community

HIGH

**STRATEGY 2:** Be proactive in sharing City regulations, tools, and resources with the business community.**Partners:** City of Hobart, Hobart Chamber of Commerce, Regional Chambers of Commerce, Real Estate Community

MEDIUM

**STRATEGY 3:** Establish partnerships with local and regional organizations, creating synergies and developing innovative solutions.**Partners:** City of Hobart, Hobart Chamber of Commerce, Regional Chambers of Commerce, Real Estate Community, School City of Hobart

MEDIUM

**STRATEGY 4:** Establish a partnership with the commercial real estate community in the region.**Partners:** City of Hobart, Real Estate Community

## Goal 2: Vibrant Commercial Areas

HIGH

**STRATEGY 1:** Build appreciation for Hobart's downtown commercial area, attracting more residents and visitors to the City's core.**Partners:** City of Hobart, Business Owners, Hobart Chamber of Commerce, Regional Chambers of Commerce

HIGH

**STRATEGY 2:** Improve storefronts to create a consistent and walkable stretch of commercial frontage.**Partners:** City of Hobart, Property Owners, Business Owners, Hobart Chamber of Commerce, Regional Chambers of Commerce

LOW

**STRATEGY 3:** Develop more awareness of Hobart's auto-oriented commercial corridors by highlighting a distinct identity or brand.**Partners:** City of Hobart

MEDIUM

**STRATEGY 4:** Update Hobart's Design Guidelines to elevate the context and impact of new development in the City.**Partners:** City of Hobart, Plan Commission, Consultants

HIGH	<b>STRATEGY 5:</b> Consider key zoning amendments to improve the development environment in Hobart.	<b>Partners:</b> City of Hobart, Plan Commission, Consultants
HIGH	<b>STRATEGY 6:</b> Revisit the structure of land use regulation in Hobart's Zoning Code to simplify administration and increase efficiency.	<b>Partners:</b> City of Hobart
<b>Goal 3: Thriving Corridors</b>		
MEDIUM	<b>STRATEGY 1:</b> Facilitate the transformation of the Ridge Road Commercial Corridor from sprawling single-use and single-story form to a denser, more continuous/uniform commercial corridor.	<b>Partners:</b> City of Hobart, Plan Commission, Consultants
LOW	<b>STRATEGY 2:</b> Guide future development and improvements along the auto-oriented Highway 30 commercial corridor.	<b>Partners:</b> City of Hobart
<b>Goal 4: Diverse uses</b>		
MEDIUM	<b>STRATEGY 1:</b> Create a business culture that cultivates new ideas and small businesses.	<b>Partners:</b> City of Hobart, Business Owners, Hobart Chamber of Commerce, Regional Chambers of Commerce
LOW	<b>STRATEGY 2:</b> Evaluate whether form-based regulations in key commercial districts is appropriate.	<b>Partners:</b> City of Hobart, Plan Commission, Redevelopment Commission, Consultants



# 3 COMPREHENSIVE MOBILITY

## THEME 3 | GOALS

### Goal 1: Expanded Network

*Our mobility network will support existing and future development, providing necessary access, locally and regionally, and aligning with future community goals.*

### Goal 2: Streets for All

*Our mobility network will connect people and places, sustaining a safer and more efficient network that promotes walkability and biking and provides access to key destinations within the community.*

### Goal 3: Route to Success

*Our mobility will be a main contributor to the success of our vibrant districts, corridors, and Downtown area, supporting economic development, wellness, and safety.*

### Goal 4: Alternative Transportation

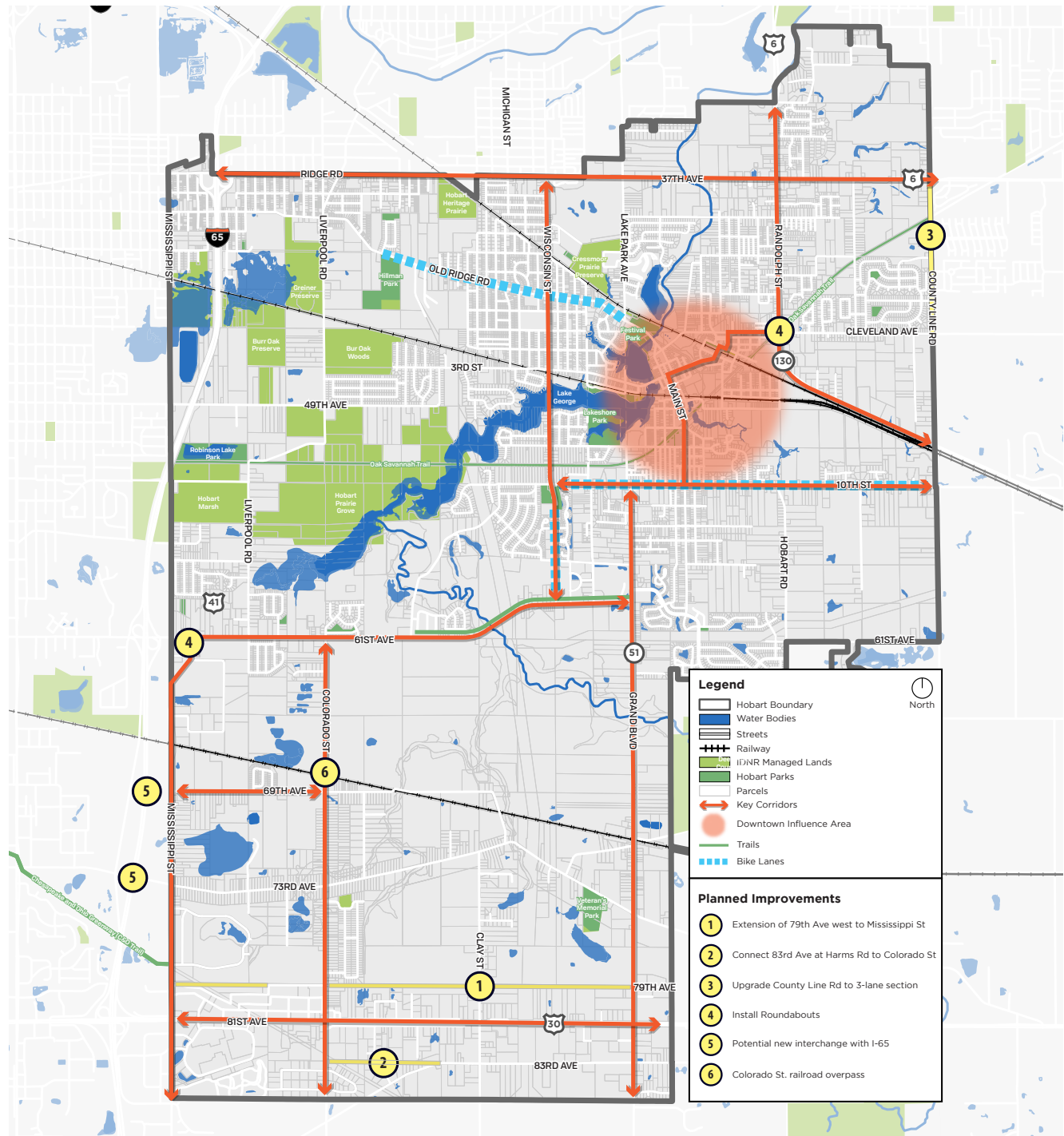
*Our mobility will be responsive to the growing and changing needs of the community, supporting a forward-looking and sustainable transportation system.*

Hobart's 2040 Plan includes five community Themes. The following section describes Hobart's vision for Theme 3: Comprehensive Mobility. A summary of the existing conditions analysis along with community input received over the course of the process are shared in the next few pages. Following that is a list of Strategies and Actions for each of the goals listed above.



# MOBILITY & CONNECTIVITY

Fig 17: 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 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

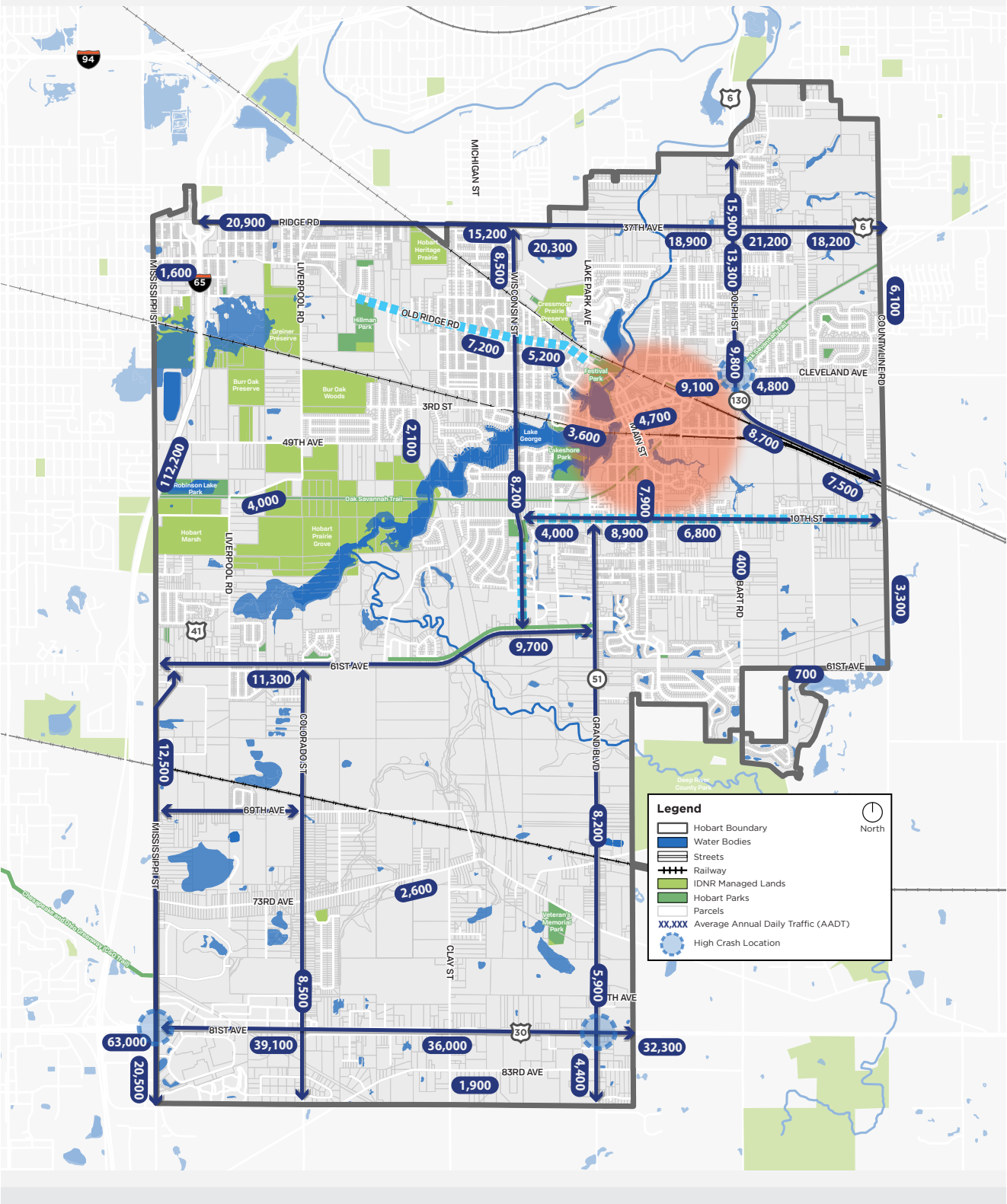
Hobart has well-defined truck routes that tend to direct heavy vehicles along the interstates, (I-65 or I-90/94) in and around the City. Generally, State routes are designed to standards that support heavy freight truck traffic. Routes that support local or regional truck traffic and increase connectivity 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

Fig 18: Traffic Volumes Map



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.



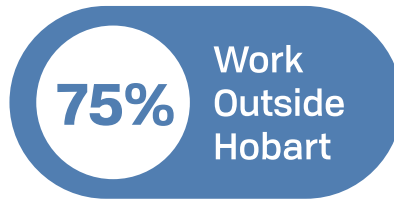
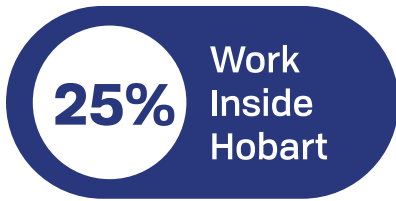


Table 8: Residents Work Locations

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 9: 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.

## 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.



Looking at Hobart Plaza parking lot along US Route 6



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



# 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.



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**

## 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.





## 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.

## PUBLIC TRANSIT

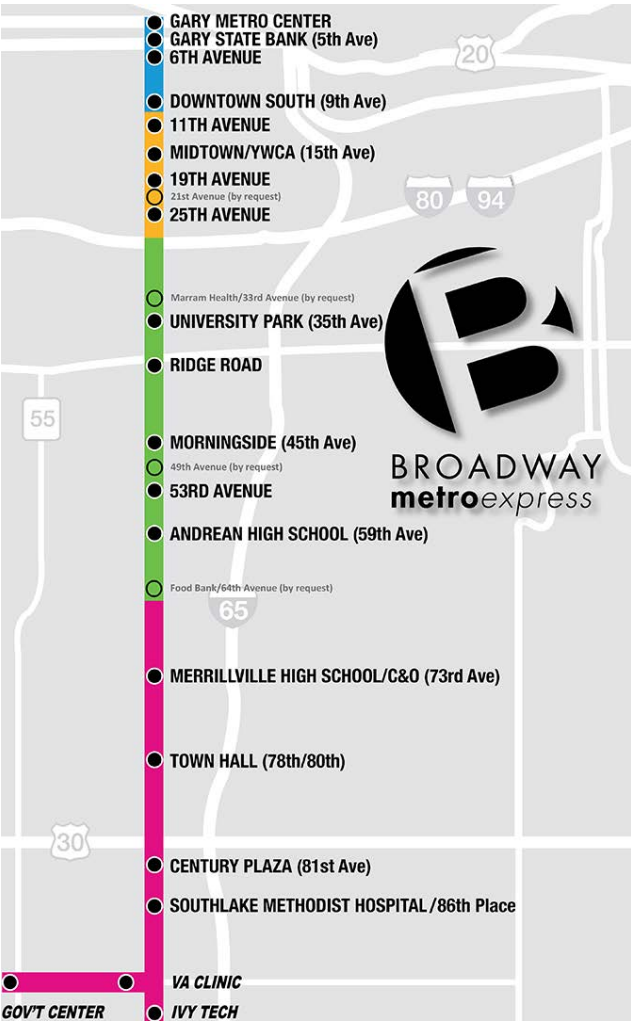
The City of Hobart does not have its own public transportation/bus service. This is likely due to the nature of Hobart's geographic location and land use framework, which makes the feasibility of a fixed-route public transit fairly low. This can make it difficult for residents who do not own a vehicle 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.





Fig 19: GPTC Broadway Metro Express Route Map



↑  
Bicyclist traversing unmarked County Line Road near Camelot Estates



↑  
Bicyclist traversing unmarked 3rd Street near Main St

### GOAL 1: EXPANDED NETWORK

Our mobility network will support existing and future development, providing necessary access, locally and regionally, and aligning with future community goals.


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Since the late nineteenth century, Hobart's street network has connected residents, visitors, and patrons to the economic, social, recreational, and cultural opportunities that comprise the City many know and love today. The current network has been well-planned and provides quick and easy access to key regional routes, such as US Route 30 and Interstate-65. This access can help attract business and investment, as well as positively contribute to all forms of development within the City. However, there are still gaps within the network, as well as infrastructural and environmental challenges to roadway expansion and connection, such as railroads, Lake George, Sprout Ditch, and Deep River. These barriers can limit network growth and progress.

The most recent 2019 Thoroughfare Plan for Hobart has laid the groundwork for the continued expansion of the roadway network to facilitate growth and development within the City for the next 10-20 years and to address gaps in the network. Goal 1, 'Expanded Network' represents Hobart's commitment to expanding the roadway network. It also underscores the importance of growth potential in Hobart and signals to public agencies, private investors, and outside parties that the City is a willing partner in future investment.


Some of the strategies and action steps outlined below can be found in relevant City plans and documents. Outlining these steps in one document can be valuable while applying for grant opportunities from State or Federal Agencies, such as the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and when communicating with potential investors. These strategies and action steps will lead to a well-balanced roadway network that increases economic opportunity by providing access to new development potential, recreational opportunities, social and cultural opportunities, and helps to alleviate congestion experienced on existing corridors such as US Route 30.


**STRATEGY 1:** Ensure key routes and corridors are properly supporting the transportation network that expands the network through improvements where necessary.

 **Action 1.1:** Talk to key stakeholders, including key businesses, to understand their transportation needs for corridors such as US 30, S.R. 51, and Ridge Road. Focus conversations on vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian access to businesses, safety, and ease of travel.




 **Action 1.2:** Update and modernize the 2019 Thoroughfare Plan and its guiding principles to reflect best practices and community objectives. The updated plan should provide


planning level cost estimates, establish grant opportunities to aid in funding for design, and take into account future land use established in the Comprehensive Plan.

 **Action 1.3:** Ensure the design and construction of new corridors, as well as the improvements of existing corridors and intersections are in-line with the updated Thoroughfare Plan.

 **Action 1.4:** Continue to establish budget allowances for infrastructure improvements the City will fund in the CIP, and pursue grant opportunities established in the Thoroughfare Plan while communicating with INDOT and other agencies to aid in funding improvements.

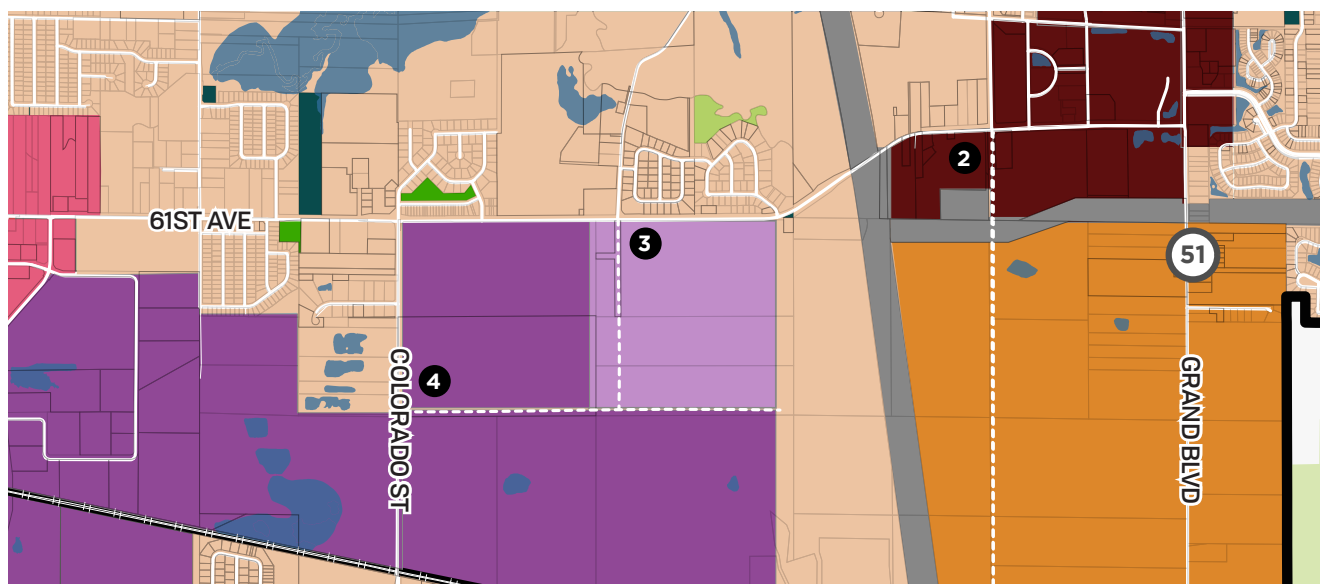
**STRATEGY 2:** Align transportation improvements with future development projects.

- 
**Action 2.1:** Cross reference review of development proposals with the updated Thoroughfare Plan to ensure access to future development is aligned with future street network improvements.
- 
**Action 2.2:** Maintain conversations with INDOT to explore a potential I-65 interchange at 69th Avenue. explore a potential I-65 interchange at 69th Avenue. As development proposals come in near this area, ensure INDOT is kept up to date.
- 
**Action 2.3:** As development and redevelopment occurs throughout Hobart (particularly the southwestern region of the city), apply to the INDOT Rail Office for Railroad Grade Crossing Fund (RRGCF) to improve safety and visibility of at-grade crossings at S.R. 51 (Grand Blvd and 3rd Street), Front Street, Lake Park Avenue, 69th Avenue, and County Line Road).

- 
**Action 2.4:** Construct or extend the following streets in order to accommodate future development on key sites. Leverage the investment that private development brings to help fund construction or expansion of the below corridors where appropriate.

- » 78th Avenue between Mississippi Street and Clay Street
- » Iowa Street between 73rd Avenue and Merrillville Cross
- » Arizona Street from 61st Avenue to (undeveloped 65th Avenue)
- » 65th Avenue from Arizona Street to Colorado Street
- » Wisconsin Street from 61st avenue to 69th Avenue
- » Colonial Drive north of Ridge Road

-  Ongoing
-  5 - 10 yr.
-  3 - 5 yr.
-  1 - 3 yr.
-  0 - 1 yr.



Proposed street extensions displayed in the Future Land Use Map  
(2. Wisconsin St; 3. Arizona St; 4. 65th Ave)



### GOAL 2: STREETS FOR ALL




Our mobility network will connect people and places, sustaining a safer and more efficient network that promotes walkability and biking and provides access to key destinations within the community.

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Hobart's street network was largely developed with the automobile as the primary mode of transportation. In general, the City can be considered car-dependent with metrics such as average greenhouse gas emission per household, average number of vehicles per household, and transportation cost per household all ranking higher than peer communities such as Merrillville, Valparaiso, Crown Point, and Schererville. More pollution tends to lead to an unhealthier population, while higher transportation cost can mean people have less money to spend on the many other goods and services offered in Hobart.

Along with these challenges comes great opportunity. Designing streets for all travel modes, including pedestrians, bicycles, cars, and trucks, all ages, and all abilities can start to move the previously mentioned metrics in a better direction, while also maintaining increasing economic prosperity. The policies and actions listed below are largely low- or medium-cost items that can help the City bring more people together and decrease barriers to mobility for all. access to new development potential, recreational opportunities, social and cultural opportunities, and helps to alleviate congestion experienced on existing corridors such as US Route 30.

#### **STRATEGY 1:** Guide visitors and residents to key destinations.

-  **Action 1.1:** Establish a community Wayfinding Plan or Policy Statement that outlines desired form of physical infrastructure to communicate wayfinding (signage), placement within the community, and framework to implement and install.
-  **Action 1.2:** Establish a budget allowance for public works to implement wayfinding to communicate access routes to key destinations throughout the community.
-  **Action 1.3:** Provide an updated bicycle map in key locations throughout the City, such as City Hall, trailheads, parks, the Southlake Mall, and Downtown to educate residents and visitors on the existing and planned bicycle routes throughout Hobart.

#### **STRATEGY 2:** Enhance bicycle and pedestrian connectivity between key destinations for recreational and everyday transportation.

-  **Action 2.1:** Explore the feasibility of and potential funding for dedicated or shared-use bicycle facilities along key corridors: US Route 6, US Route 30, S.R. 51, 61st Street, 69th Street, Wisconsin Street (north of 10th Street), and Liverpool Road.
-  **Action 2.2:** Proceed with design tasks and seek pertinent grant funding based on the results of feasibility analysis.
-  **Action 2.3:** Draft and adopt a complete streets policy which incorporates a new approach for the City to integrate the needs of all ages, abilities, and travel modes in street design. The policy should include, but not be limited to these items: purpose, definition, vision and intent, policy, applicability, exceptions, performance measures, and implementation.

**Action 2.4:** Establish a budget allowance for public works to install low-cost tactical mobility enhancements, such as curb bump-outs with plastic bollards and striping, shared bicycle pavement markings, speed humps, and general crosswalk striping. These should be installed in areas of most need, such as near schools, institutions, parks and trails, and along commercial corridors.

**Action 2.5:** Create an ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) transition plan establishing a framework for ensuring all access to buildings, public parks, and institutions are all ADA compliant.



Downtown Naperville Wayfinding  
Master Plan Signage Concepts

**STRATEGY 3:** Create multi-modal connections in and around the heart of the community, while also focusing on linking development on the periphery to amenities and destinations within the Downtown and surrounding area.

**Action 3.1:** Identify and develop a plan to address sidewalk gaps and the quality of pedestrian pathways providing access to Downtown and eventually work this into the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) with an annual budget allowance.

**Action 3.2:** Review linkages to the Oak Savannah Trail throughout Hobart to identify key routes and wayfinding opportunities to provide access to destinations like commercial centers, Downtown, and open spaces.

**Action 3.3:** Conduct a pedestrian safety and accessibility audit to ensure the development of safe and accessible pedestrian infrastructure, including crosswalks at key intersections. This will identify areas of most need to focus resources for improvements.

**Action 3.4:** As development proposals are reviewed, ensure they have ample and comfortable space dedicated to pedestrians in addition to just sidewalks, including pedestrian plazas, streetscape amenities, outdoor dining areas, gathering spaces, as well parks and recreational areas that are connected to each other and adjacent land uses.

0 - 1 yr. 1 - 3 yr. 3 - 5 yr. 5 - 10 yr. + Ongoing

## GOAL 3: ROUTE TO SUCCESS

Our mobility will be a main contributor to the success of our vibrant districts, corridors, and Downtown area, supporting economic development, wellness, and safety.

US Route 30, Downtown, and Ridge Avenue are all successful districts that contribute to the many economic, social, and recreational opportunities that Hobart provides, many of which are underpinned by transportation infrastructure. This transportation infrastructure has largely been designed in a way that conforms with previous design paradigms, such as the thought that roadways should be constructed to move the highest amount of traffic in the most efficient way possible, or that excess parking should be provided for maximum convenience. This approach has not led to the highest and best use possible for land and real estate viability and value throughout Hobart.

Streets, sidewalks, and trails all serve to connect the people of Hobart not only to the community, but to the broader region and State. Transportation infrastructure should not be viewed in a vacuum, but in a connected ecosystem that comprises Hobart's economy. Good design and investment in infrastructure can lead to tangible benefits for the City and its residents. The strategies and actions below shift the transportation infrastructure design paradigm toward one that is more focused on right-sizing infrastructure to increase economic opportunities, wellness, and safety.

**STRATEGY 1:** Leverage transportation infrastructure to boost sales, property values, and investment, as well as broad community objectives related to mobility and quality of life.

**Action 1.1:** Consider a festival street or other similar transportation design elements that promote a welcoming environment to pedestrians and bicyclists, improve foot traffic, and increase economic development in the Downtown area to create a vibrant and unique character ideal for events and gatherings.

**Action 1.2:** Enhance biking/walking accommodations to/from and within Downtown to provide an active transportation environment that supports businesses, institutions, and residents.

**Action 1.3:** Seek opportunities to think about pedestrian spaces beyond just sidewalk, but more comprehensively including streetscape amenities, outdoor dining areas, gathering spaces, as well parks and recreational areas that are connected to adjacent land uses.

**Action 1.4:** Maintain a balance of parking to support Downtown uses, while exploring the use of underutilized lots for economic development opportunities. Reference the parking study recommended in Strategy 2, Action 2.5 to determine if adequate parking is currently provided.

**STRATEGY 2:** Manage parking assets and establish new parking policy and design guidelines to support the success of businesses while right-sizing supply as a means to achieving more efficient use of land as its highest and best use.

**Action 2.1:** Evaluate the parking requirements and update rates to reflect modern characteristics, desired site design standards, and to allow real estate to achieve its highest and best use. Consider incorporating parking maximums to avoid wasteful use of available land.





- **Action 2.2:** Establish a shared-parking ordinance for complementary land uses to maximize efficiency of land and parking resources.
- **Action 2.3:** Update parking lot design standards to enhance character, incorporate best practices in green infrastructure, and create additional landscape opportunities. Updated standards should also incorporate proper screening from adjacent land uses and the public right-of-way to reduce the negative visual impact of parking lots.
- **Action 2.4:** Add bicycle parking into City ordinance.
- **Action 2.5:** Conduct a parking study throughout the Downtown and other commercial districts area once every five to ten (5-10) years to determine if current supply is adequate or as otherwise warranted based upon perceived changes to parking demand, market characteristics, and changing land uses.

**STRATEGY 3:** Support the evolution of the U.S. 30 Corridor in a way that balances regional and local transportation needs with a successful commercial corridor.

- **Action 3.1:** Right-size parking supply to unlock development potential for highest and best use of available land and identify additional development opportunities.
- ✚ **Action 3.2:** Construct proposed 79th Avenue and 83rd Avenue extensions to alleviate congestion along US 30 and provide alternatives for more local traffic.
- ✚ **Action 3.3:** Explore adding more stop lights, crosswalks, and other pedestrian safety improvements to promote walkability and the use of other non-motorized transportation options along this traditionally auto-oriented corridor.

## Downtown Action Plan

### LEBANON, INDIANA

The City of Lebanon outlined a plan to identify vital public investments, augment Main Street events, bring the Big 4 Urban Trail to Courthouse Square, and provide incentives to prompt an immediate private real estate investment response. The City engaged a multidisciplinary team of preservation architects, civil engineers, landscape architects, and market analysts to prepare the August 2017 Action Plan. This plan has spurred a number of projects including schematic design concepts for a Meridian Street event space, a downtown urban trail, a conceptual redevelopment land use plan for approximately 40 acres, and additional pedestrian realm improvements and streetscape renovations around the Boone County courthouse square.



## GOAL 4: EVOLVING TRANSPORTATION NEEDS

Our mobility will be responsive to the growing and changing needs of the community, supporting a forward-looking and sustainable transportation system.

Since the first streets were paved in Hobart, the primary mode of transportation has been, and continues to be, gasoline-powered vehicles. Additionally, public transit, whether on-demand or fixed route, is largely unavailable throughout most of Hobart, with the exception of service provided by Gary Public Transportation Corporation (GPTC). The trend toward a more sustainable transportation network across the Country has begun, with electric vehicles (EVs) becoming more prevalent on our roadways and a greater awareness of the lack of transit options available to those who need it most.

The trend toward EVs is only anticipated to accelerate given increased Federal and State funding. In addition to EVs, autonomous vehicles (AVs) and mobility as a service (MaaS) such as bikeshare, are transportation technologies that can impact Hobart's transportation network and the ways in which residents, visitors, and patrons move about the city. Staying on top of these trends and maintaining forward-looking policy that allows adequate preparation and adoption of these technologies where the City and its residents see fit is important to maintaining an efficient and equitable transportation network that provides mobility options for all.

The strategies and actions listed below not only provide the City with a playbook to evolve with the ever-changing landscape of transportation technologies, but also outline existing transportation options, such as on-demand transit, that can be explored to provide mobility options to disadvantaged populations.

### STRATEGY 1: Prepare for future mobility options.

**Action 1.1:** Development an Electric Vehicle (EV) readiness plan that establishes an infrastructure framework incorporating both public right-of-way and private property. As EV's become more prevalent, it is important for Hobart to accommodate EV charging in longer-stay parking areas, such as schools, shopping centers, hotels, public institutions, and workplaces.

**Action 1.2:** Establish a committee or task force that meets regularly to identify and evaluate the evolving landscape around new technologies and mobility trends affecting infrastructure and transportation strategies within Hobart. Committee members should include City staff, residents, pertinent interest groups or clubs, and business representatives.

**Action 1.3:** Coordinate with the industrial and business community to support the transition to autonomous trucking and distribution. The established committee or task force mentioned in Action 1.2 above could check-in with the industrial/business community on a bi-annual basis to determine the pace of adoption for autonomous trucking and distribution.

0 - 1 yr. 1 - 3 yr. 3 - 5 yr. 5 - 10 yr. + Ongoing



**STRATEGY 2:** Explore alternative transportation options that could benefit the community, particularly low-income residents, essential workers, seniors, and people with disabilities.

● **Action 2.1:** Explore on-demand services for carless individuals with low incomes, seniors, and those with disabilities. Reach out to the Gary Public Transportation Corporation (GPTC) to establish the feasibility of partnering to expand the reach of their paratransit service into Hobart.

● **Action 2.2:** Explore a partnership with St. Mary Medical Center to subsidize transportation for carless individuals with low incomes, seniors, those with disabilities, and essential workers.

● **Action 2.3:** Explore the potential of using shuttles for community events, such as sports games, community festivals, concerts, and other major attractions. This service would need to be economically feasible for the City and could be tested on concerts held at the Brickie Bowl. Action 2.4: Add bicycle parking into City ordinance.

● **Action 2.4:** Explore creating dedicated rideshare pickup spaces throughout the community, particularly in denser, higher-activity nodes. This can be beneficial near Downtown or the Southlake Mall for restaurants as the prevalence of rideshare delivery services increases. Strategy 3: Support the evolution of the U.S. 30 Corridor in a way that balances regional and local transportation needs with a successful commercial corridor.

+ ● **Action 2.5:** Explore bikeshare opportunities, such as a City-sponsored bikeshare program or partnership with an external Transportation as a Service (TaaS) company. This service would need to be economically feasible for the City and may become more so into the future as development and density, along with increased bicycle accommodations (trails, on-street facilities) continues.

● **Action 2.6:** Continue and Monitor Use of Golf Cart Mobility Network. Title VII (Traffic Codes), Chapter 70 (General Provisions) of the City's Municipal Code outlines the law around "Operation of Golf Cart and Recreational Off-Road Vehicles" in Hobart. While operation of such vehicles is allowed and evident throughout the community, several parameters are defined in the code regarding driver requirements (valid driver's license), allowable locations (streets under the City's jurisdiction with a speed limit of up to 30 mph), permit requirements (annual permit issuance), and more. Golf carts and similar vehicles provide a convenient mobility option for many residents. However, regulation and behavior operating such vehicles should be monitored and enforced to maintain expectations and safety for all roadway users.

## On-Demand Transit Partnership

### FREEPORT, ILLINOIS

In communities like Hobart that do not have existing public transit service or dense concentrations of population, the economics of providing on-demand service can be unfeasible. To overcome these limitations, a municipality or smaller transit provider will partner with other agencies or businesses to pool resources to make this vital service a reality.

Pretzel City Area Transit (PCAT) is an on-demand transit service operating in Freeport, IL and Stephenson County. This service is funded through a partnership between the City of Freeport and the Senior Resource Center, a senior center in town. PCAT operates 14 vehicles with 25 drivers and provides over 83,000 rides per year. In general, the service cost \$3 each way, and due to high demand, rides often need to be scheduled in advance.



## THEME 3 | STRATEGIES &amp; PARTNERS

## Goal 1: Expanded Network

MEDIUM

**STRATEGY 1:** Ensure key routes and corridors are properly supporting the transportation network that expands the network through improvements where necessary.

**Partners:** City of Hobart, INDOT, Engineering Consultant

HIGH

**STRATEGY 2:** Align transportation improvements with future development projects.

**Partners:** City of Hobart, Real Estate Community, INDOT, Engineering Consultant, Large private landowners

## Goal 2: Streets for All

LOW

**STRATEGY 1:** Guide visitors and residents to key destinations.

**Partners:** City of Hobart, Hobart Park Department, NIRPC, Lake County Parks & Recreation Department

MEDIUM

**STRATEGY 2:** Enhance bicycle and pedestrian connectivity between key destinations for recreational and everyday transportation.

**Partners:** City of Hobart, NDOT, INDOT Complete Streets Coalition, NIRPC, Consultants

HIGH

**STRATEGY 3:** Create multi-modal connections in and around the heart of the community, while also focusing on linking development on the periphery to amenities and destinations within the Downtown and surrounding area.

**Partners:** City of Hobart, INDOT, NIRPC, Consultants, Real Estate Community, Hobart Park Department, Lake County Parks & Recreation Department

### Goal 3: Routes to Success

HIGH

**STRATEGY 1:** Leverage transportation infrastructure to boost sales, property values, and investment, as well as broad community objectives related to mobility and quality of life.

**Partners:** City of Hobart, INDOT, NIRPC, Consultants

MEDIUM

**STRATEGY 2:** Manage parking assets and establish new parking policy and design guidelines to support the success of businesses while right-sizing supply as a means to achieving more efficient use of land as its highest and best use.

**Partners:** City of Hobart, Consultants

HIGH

**STRATEGY 3:** Support the evolution of the U.S. 30 Corridor in a way that balances regional and local transportation needs with a successful commercial corridor.

**Partners:** City of Hobart, INDOT, NIRPC, Property Owners, Business Owners, Consultants

### Goal 4: Alternative Transportation

LOW

**STRATEGY 1:** Prepare for future mobility options.

**Partners:** City of Hobart, NIRPC, Consultants, Industrial Developers, Indiana Motor Truck Association (IMTA)

MEDIUM

**STRATEGY 2:** Explore alternative transportation options that could benefit the community, particularly low-income residents, essential workers, seniors, and people with disabilities.

**Partners:** City of Hobart, Gary Public Transportation Corporation (GPTC), St. Mary Medical Center, Network of Local Senior Living Community, NIRPC



# 4 A WEALTH OF RECREATION

## THEME 4 | GOALS

### **Goal 1: Access & Equity**

*Our parks and natural resources will be accessible, and serve residents citywide equitably, regardless of location, age, ability, or socioeconomics.*

### **Goal 2: Thriving Environment**

*Our protected parks and natural resources will be memorable, providing a sense of wonder and discovery supported by meaningful experiences with the natural environment.*

### **Goal 3: Active Community**

*Our parks and natural resources will be integral to our active hubs, bringing convenience and enjoyment, as well as tangible benefits to the overall quality of life.*

### **Goal 4: Expanding Capacity**

*Our parks and natural resources will benefit from operational and financial capacity building, achieving improved effectiveness and securing more financial resources.*

Hobart's 2040 Plan includes five community Themes. The following section describes Hobart's vision for Theme 4: A Wealth of Recreation. A summary of the existing conditions analysis along with community input received over the course of the process are shared in the next few pages. Following that is a list of Strategies and Actions for each of the goals listed above.



# 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.



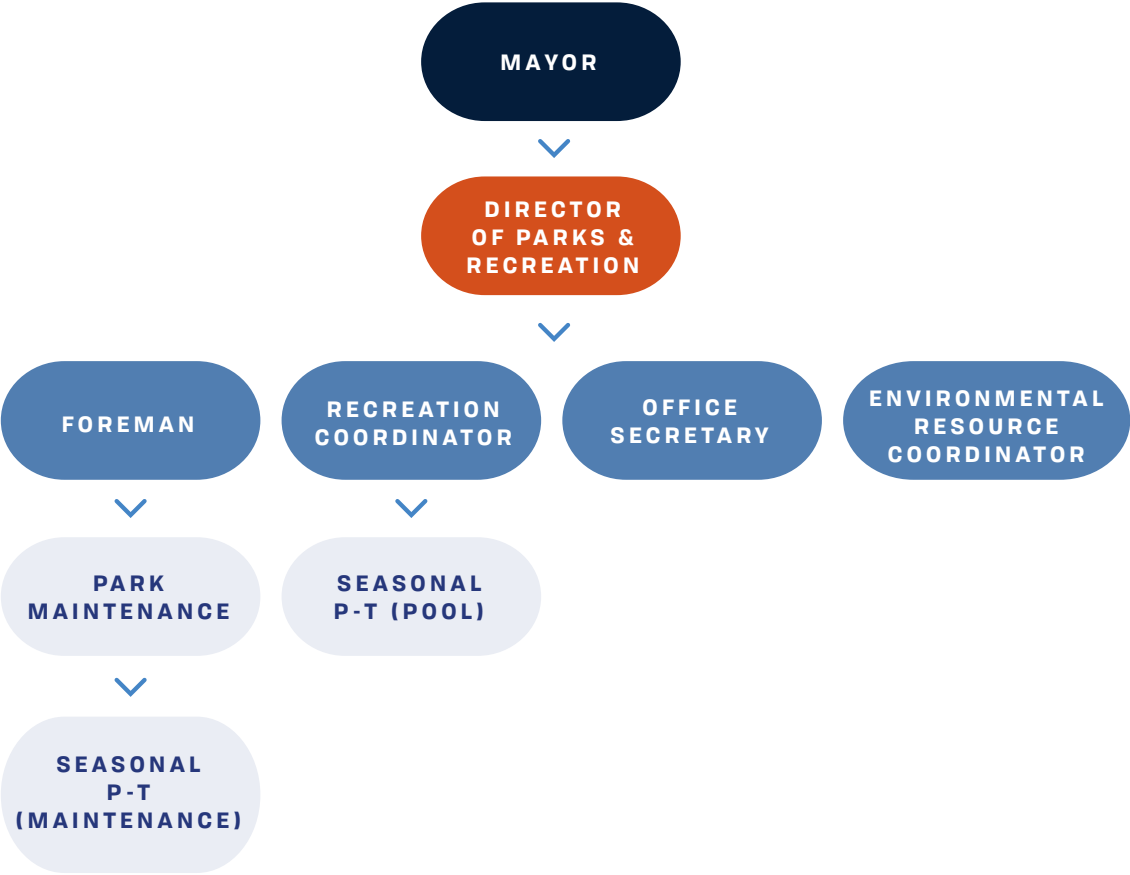
# HOBART PARK BOARD

The Hobart Park Board, consists 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 five full time employees. The Department includes one Recreation Coordinator, one foreman, two maintenance staff members, and one secretary. The Department also employs part time seasonal summer staff. 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 performing in comparison to other parks in the District.



are

## 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		NEIGHBORHOOD PARK	Park Category	Score
	Location: 2500 N. Hansen Blvd. Size: 3.41 acres				
Background & Description	Features and Amenities		B Score = 3/4		
	Basketball Court Picnic Shelter Playground / Swings				
	Site Description				
Recommendations	Hillman Heights park received a score of 3/4.		Picnic Shelter Fair condition		
	Recommendations		New Play Equipment Excellent condition		
	» Repair/replace dated and rusted play equipment, including the swing set » Consider multi-generational passive recreation features » Consider basketball court resurfacing and re-striping » Consider adding seating pockets, including benches » Consider better aligning future site amenities » Provide additional wayfinding and signage				

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.**

**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 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.**

**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 color and concept themes in Neighborhood Parks**

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

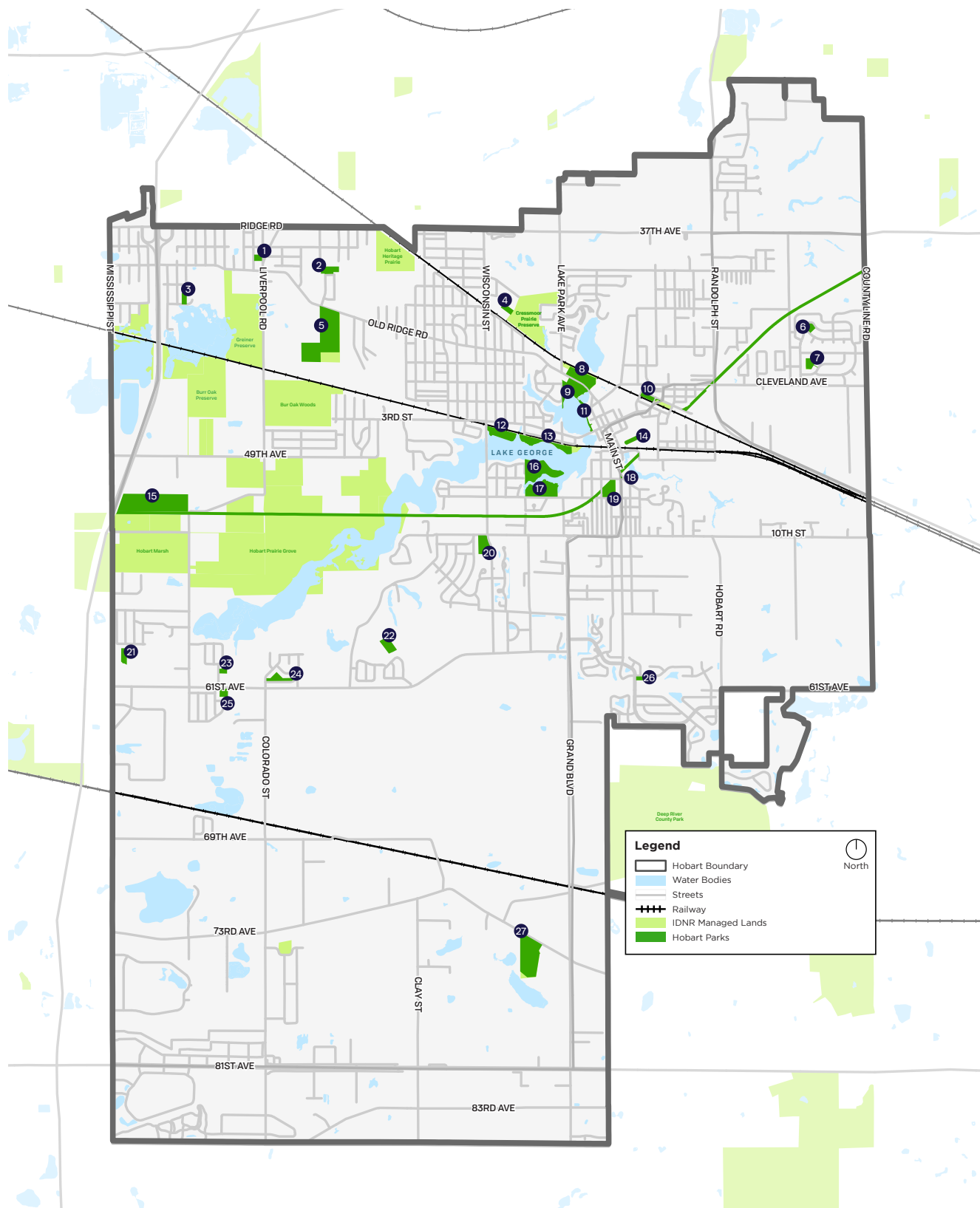


**Our natural resources are definitely what makes us stand out. We should absolutely focus on making those more accessible and think about experiential programming.**

- STAKEHOLDER COMMENT



Fig 20: 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. Deep River Parkway **(NP)**
23. Brookview Park **(NP)**
24. Amber Creek Park **(MP)**
25. Merrillville Heights Park **(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	-17.75
Neighborhood Parks	68.82	58.4	2.0	10.42
Community Parks	120.71	219	7.5	-98.29
<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.

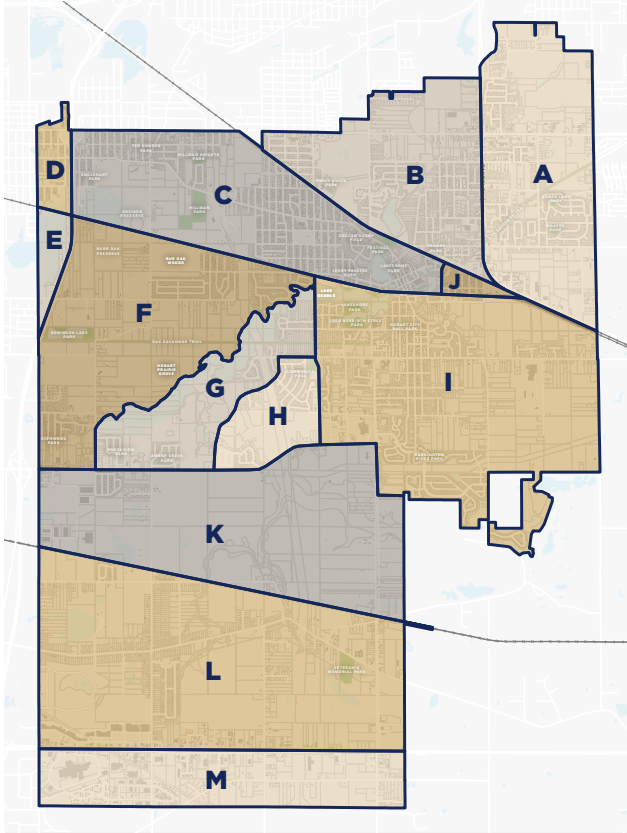
Table 13: Planning Area Populations

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 21: Planning Areas in Hobart



Pennsy Park Bike Trail



## 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.**





## 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 22. 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 22. 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>

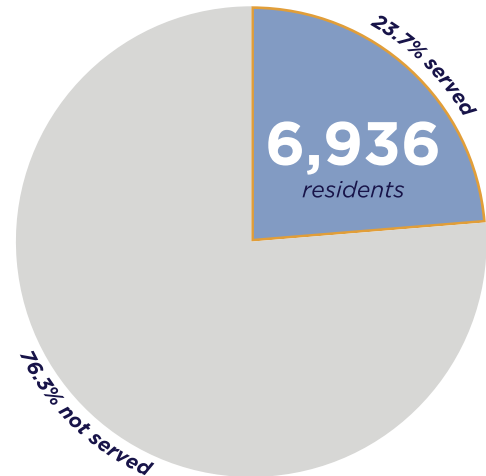
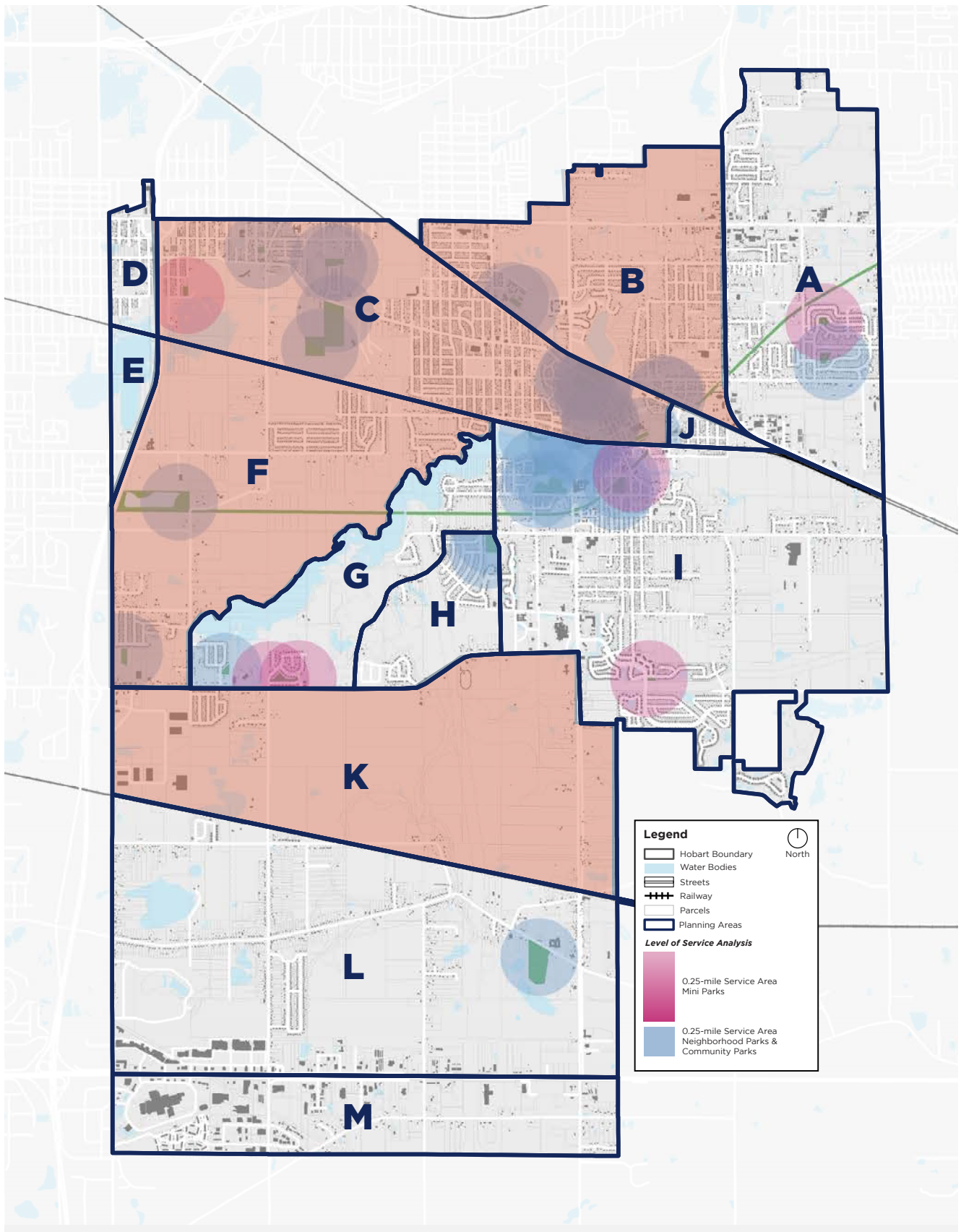




Fig 22: Mini Park Distribution Level of Service Map



## 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 23. 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 23. 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>

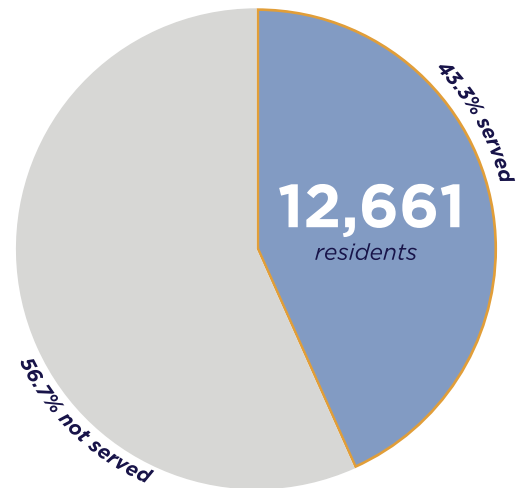
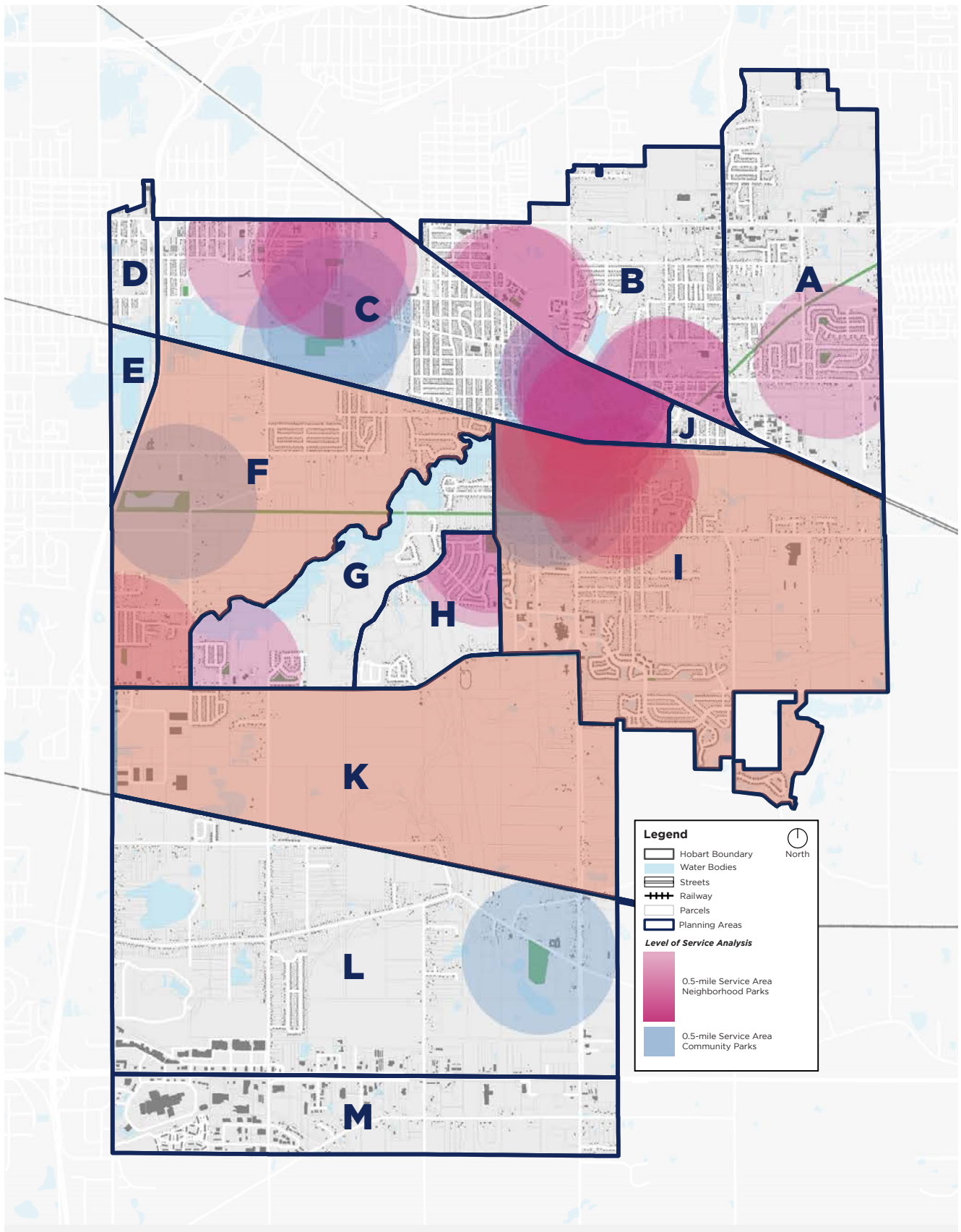


Fig 23: Neighborhood Park Distribution Level of Service Map





## 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 24. 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>

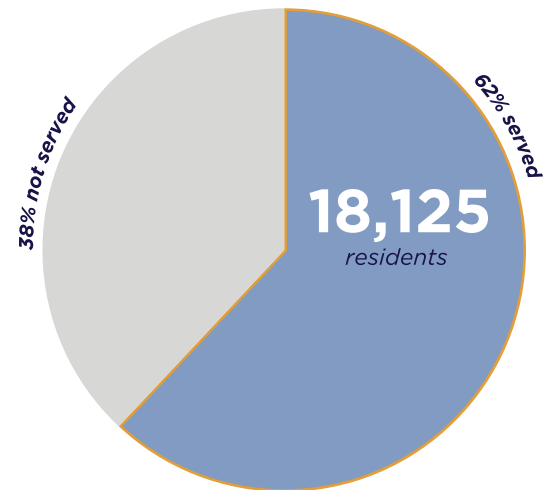
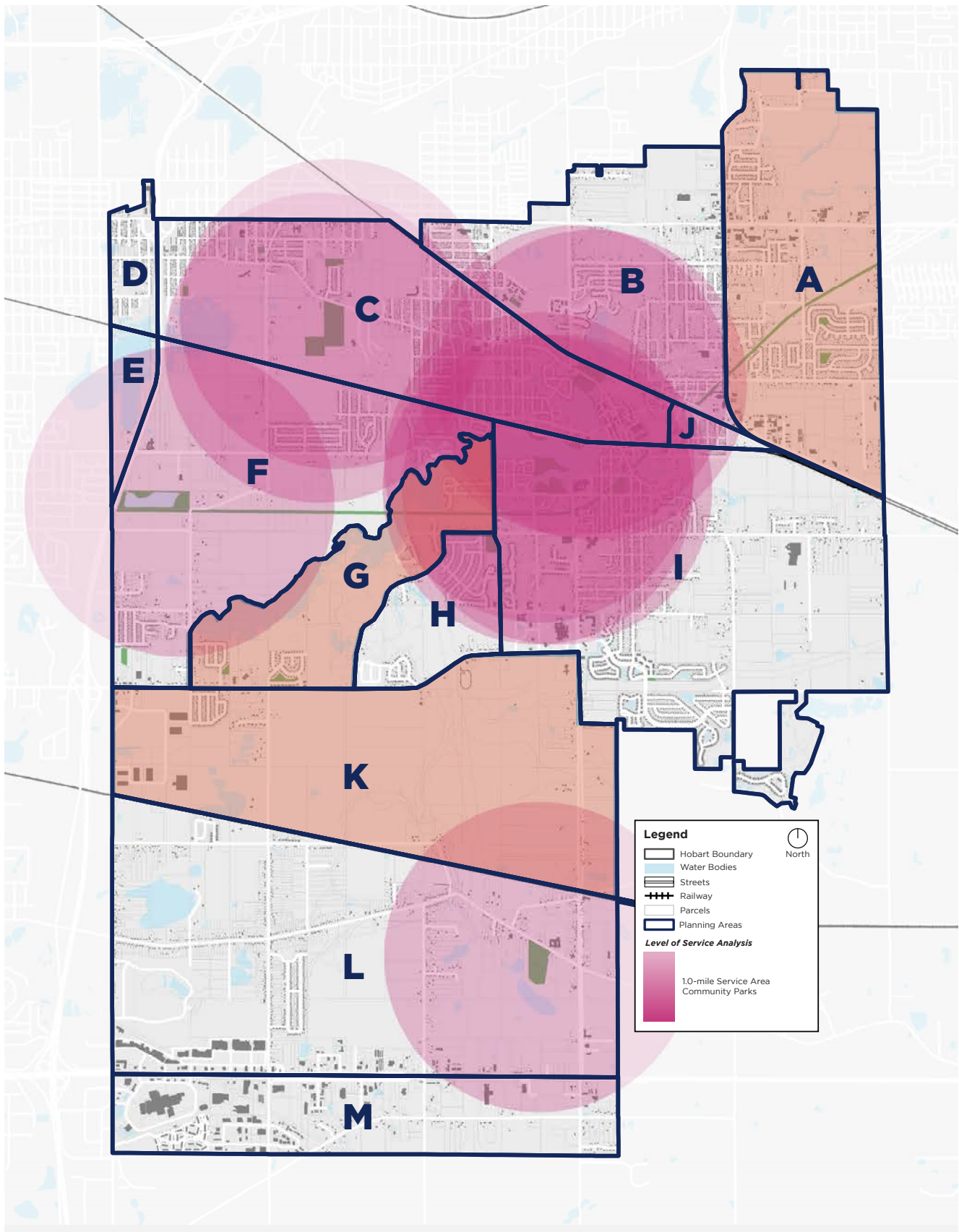


Fig 24: Community Park Distribution Level of Service Map



## 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 25. 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>

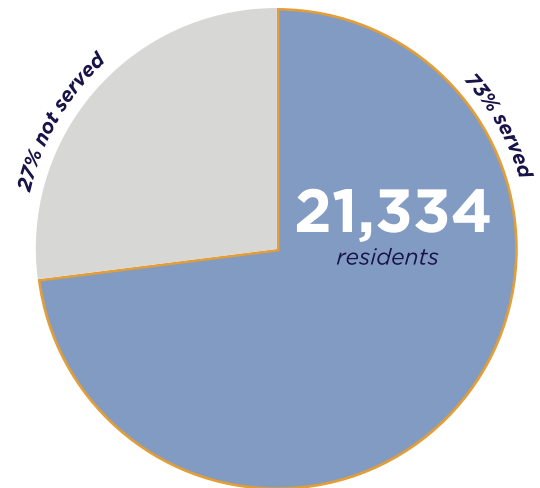
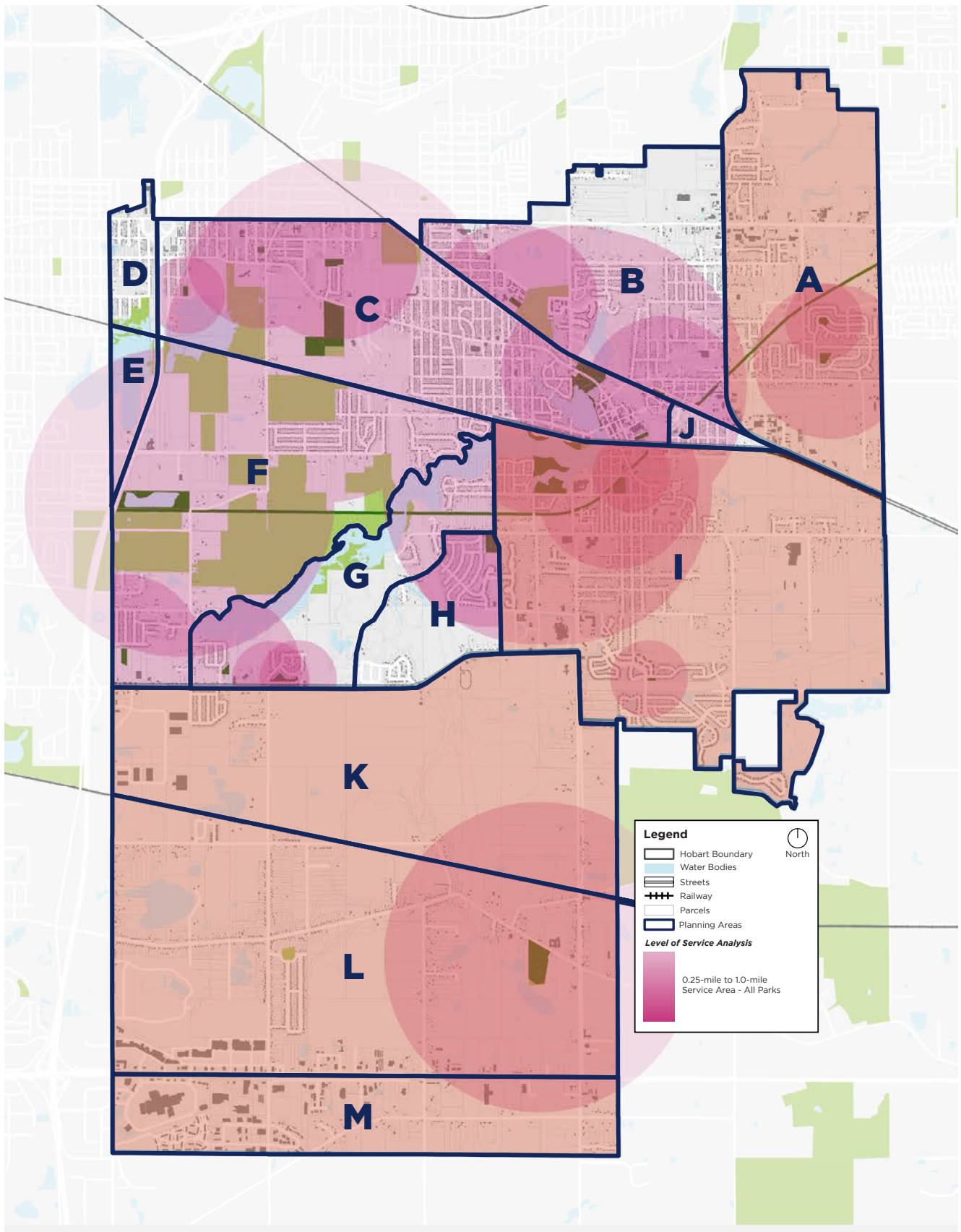




Fig 25: Overall Park Distribution Level of Service Map



## 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**



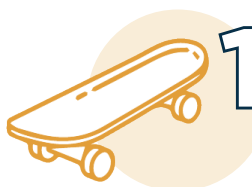
**Playground**



**Pool**



**Rugby Field**



**Skate Park**



**Soccer Field**



**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 (Amenities / Hobart's pop.)	NRPA Average Recommended # of Amenities (Amenities / 1,000 pop.)	Amenities Deficiency or Surplus (Amenities)
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>
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>

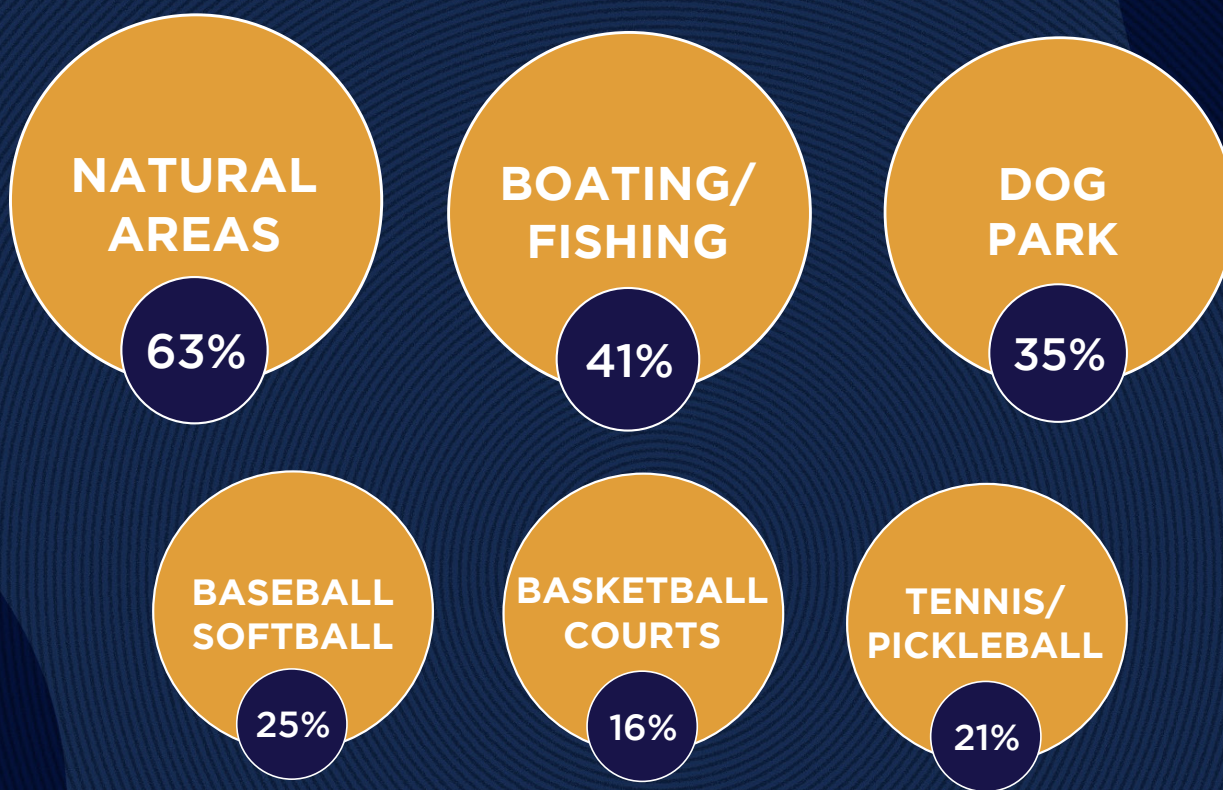


Events in Hobart



## 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**

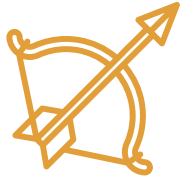
- STAKEHOLDER COMMENT



Annual Dam Duck Race



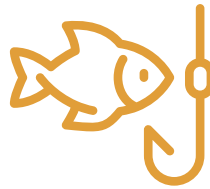
## SPORTS PARTICIPATION (HIGH MPI)



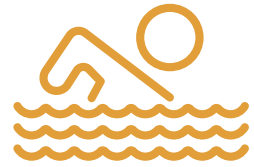
ARCHERY



CANOEING  
KAYAKING



FISHING



SWIMMING



WALKING FOR  
EXERCISE



VOLLEYBALL



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

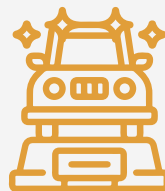
## LEISURE & SOCIAL ACTIVITIES (HIGH MPI)



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



Lakefront Festival



Tape and Cardboard Regatta





## 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:

Community Center Activities



Art in the Park



Summer Festivals



**25%**

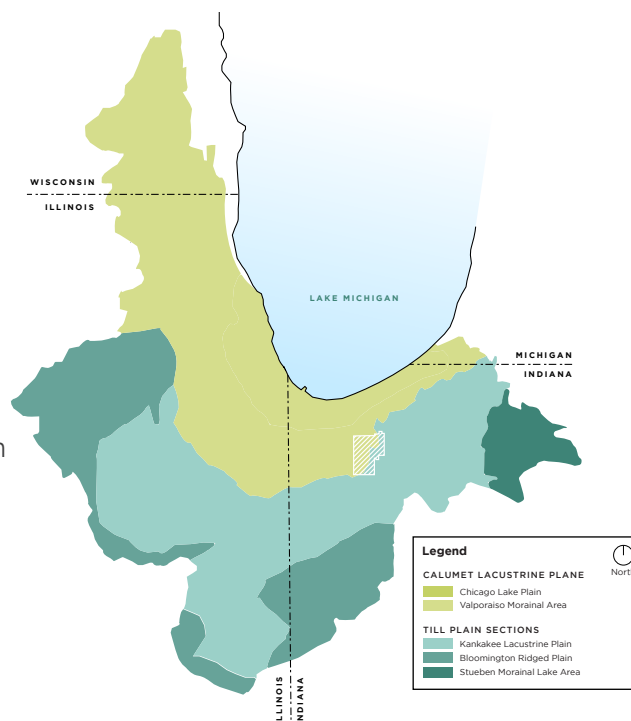
**Satisfaction**  
WITH  
**Programs**



# 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

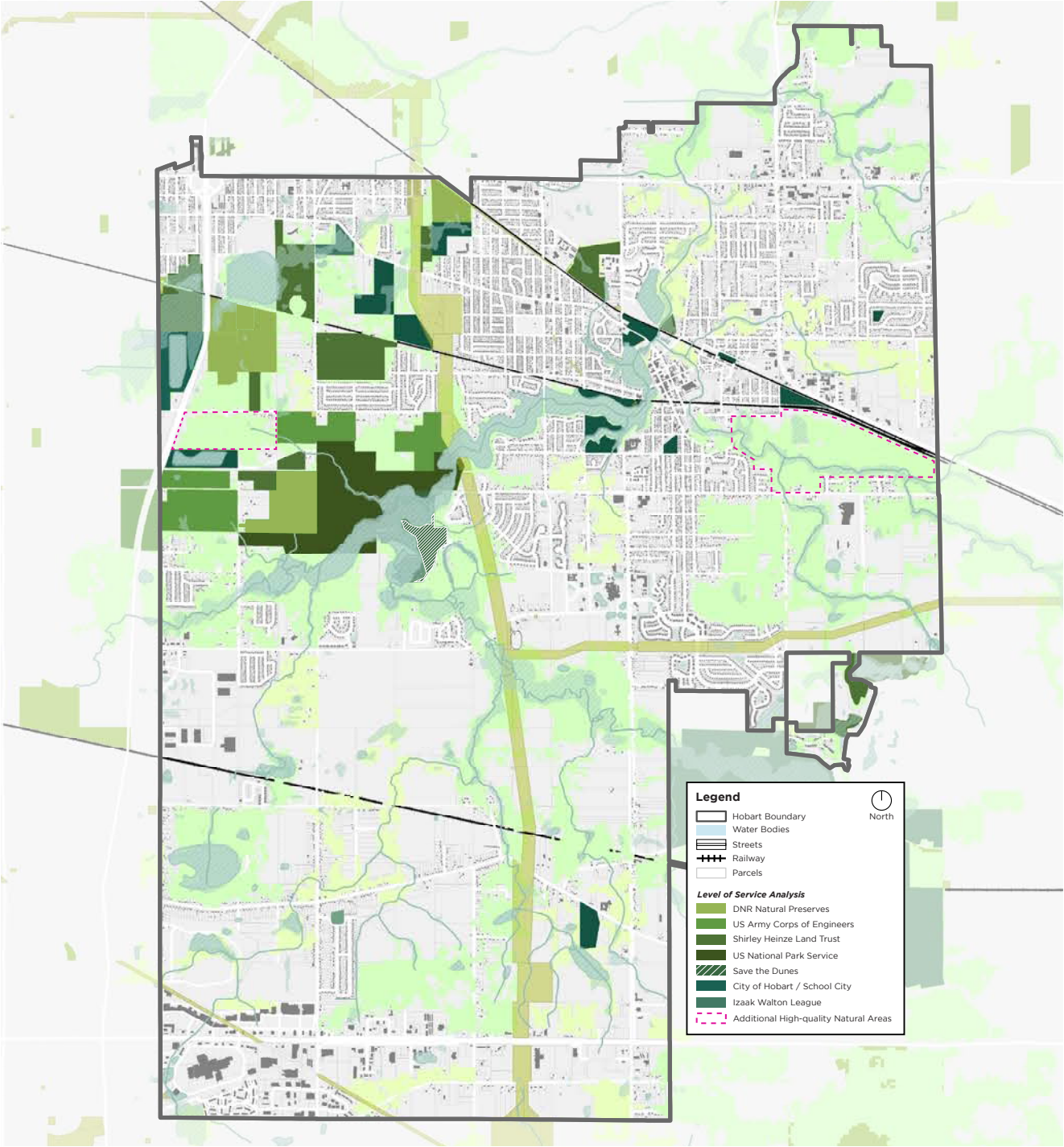
Hobart displays the occurrence of two major soil association types, according to the Soil Conservation Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The first soil type, Plainfield Watseka Association, is not considered to be a very suitable soil for typical construction. When considered as a prospective 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 26: 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.
- » **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 27: Hobart Nature District Map



## WHY ARE NATURAL AREAS IMPORTANT?

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, and increases carbon sequestration, as well as reduces the impacts of natural disasters.

Hobart features high quality and potentially high quality natural areas at Fred Rose Park, Robinson Lake Park, Pavese and Pleak Parks, and the Duck Creek woods on 6 St. High quality natural areas are quite rare in the landscape, comprising less than 0.5% of the land in the Chicago Region according to the regional plant taxonomy tome *"Plants of the Chicago Region"*. Hobart's quality natural areas have a very diverse population of native wildflowers, grasses, sedges, shrubs, vines, and trees. They are open, walkable and have enough sun that allow the more conservative native plants to thrive. To survive, the Northwest Indiana natural areas must be managed through controlled burns and managing invasive species. The complexity of natural areas makes them irreplaceable once destroyed.



**“ 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



Earleaf Foxglove



Mesic Prairie



Prairie Violet





## GOAL 1: ACCESS & EQUITY

Our parks and natural resources will be accessible, and serve residents citywide equitably, regardless of location, age, ability, or socioeconomics.

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Hobart is a community that values the well-being of its people and understands the importance of parks and natural resources. To many residents, Hobart is well known for its open spaces and commitment to protecting the natural environment. Intentionally planning for an improved network that is well-distributed throughout the community would further emphasize the City's commitment to providing open spaces. Providing access to high-need areas is a fundamental approach to ensuring equitable services and meeting current and future needs of community residents. One of the most significant barriers to accessing parks and natural resources is proximity. People who live in areas without parks or green spaces may have to travel significant distances to reach them, which can be a challenge for individuals with limited mobility or transportation options.

The Level of Service analysis outlined underserved areas and highlighted the percentage of unmet needs by planning area population. Following the recommendations of this analysis, the City can address proximity issues prioritizing the development of new parks and green spaces in underserved areas and ensure that existing parks and natural resources are well-maintained and accessible to all. The importance of park access and equity is top of mind for community leaders, recognizing potential health disparities that may result from inadequate distribution of resources, especially in low-income communities and communities of color. Planning Areas B, D, J, and L, have been identified as high-need areas given their higher concentrations of communities of color.

Planning for improved accessibility for people with disabilities, physical and non-physical alike, can provide equal opportunities for recreation and wellness. By promoting equity in park access, Hobart can promote equity and create a more inclusive and connected network.

**STRATEGY 1:** Identify areas in the community that lack walkable park access and prioritize high-need neighborhoods for improvements.

● **Action 1.1:** Prioritize reducing deficiencies and gaps for community parks over mini parks, referring to the distribution level of service analysis.

● **Action 1.2:** Develop joint use agreements with the Hobart City Schools District to increase access to school open spaces, including the Stewart Mattix Prairie.

+ **Action 1.3:** Quantify future needs based on potential growth within each planning area, focusing on areas with high levels of distribution deficiencies.

+ **Action 1.4:** Address open space deficits through integrating planning processes with relevant ongoing plans, as feasible.

● **Action 1.5:** Develop an acquisition policy that establishes evaluation criteria and a process for identifying and prioritizing land acquisition for future parks and open spaces.

+ **Action 1.6:** Identify land areas with significant natural value for future acquisition, such as heavily forested areas, environmentally sensitive areas, and lots with close proximity to water bodies, including wetlands, and more importantly Lake George.

**STRATEGY 2:** Aspire to develop green connections between parks and natural resources.

- **Action 2.1:** Leverage the Department's resources toward the creation of more tree-lined streets and parkways.
- **Action 2.2:** Promote urban greening programs, such as planting trees, creating community gardens, and developing green corridors to create more open spaces throughout Hobart.
- **Action 2.3:** Develop and share a knowledgebase about the role and value of green streets, including improving air quality and providing shade in successful parks and recreation systems.

**STRATEGY 3:** Develop citywide proximity standards for specialized amenities, services, and conservation areas to better promote equity across the City.

- + ● **Action 3.1:** Quantify citywide demand per planning area and cross reference with the amenities level of service analysis.
- **Action 3.2:** Identify appropriate minimum number of amenity thresholds per amenity type.
- **Action 3.3:** Explore evolving trends and themes, such as climate change, healthy equity, and virtual programming, to identify specialized amenities, and develop knowledgebase about emerging recreational trends yearly.
- **Action 3.4:** Close amenity gaps in high-need communities and areas with underserved populations.



Educational Wayfinding

**STRATEGY 4:** Develop a wayfinding system to guide users to citywide open spaces and amenities, including the variety of natural resources in Hobart.

- **Action 4.1:** Develop a user-friendly system that can be applied consistently, ensuring flexibility of design elements and an elevated user experience.
- **Action 4.2:** Visually distinguish between the various types within parks and open spaces, including natural resources, trails, large community parks, greenways, and small pocket parks.
- **Action 4.3:** Develop new park gateways to gradually replace existing park signs.
- **Action 4.4:** Plan to integrate site improvements and landscape enhancements when installing new gateway signage.
- **Action 4.5:** Aspire to incorporate bilingual information to ensure cultural accessibility to the overall system.
- **Action 4.6:** Integrate the wayfinding system into Downtown Hobart and other pedestrian-oriented neighborhoods within the City.
- **Action 4.7:** Collaborate with other recreational entities, such as the Lake County Parks and Greenways to ensure consistent messaging and cohesive design elements.



● + Ongoing  
● 5 - 10 yr.  
● 3 - 5 yr.  
● 1 - 3 yr.  
● 0 - 1 yr.

**STRATEGY 5:** Aspire to increase ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) conformity in parks and open spaces, as well as programming opportunities citywide.

+ **Action 5.1:** Continue to conform to the accessibility and universal design guidelines, updating parks and open spaces, amenities, and other facilities as provisions further expand.

+ **Action 5.2:** Conduct an ADA self-inspection annually and identify areas with extreme terrains that merit exceptions to compliance.

● **Action 5.3:** Explore opportunities to increase recreational access to individuals with developmental disabilities, as well as other non-mobility-related disabilities, such as visual and hearing loss.

● **Action 5.4:** Explore therapeutic recreation and inclusive programming, potentially designing programming exclusively for people with disabilities.

**STRATEGY 6:** Partner with local and regional organizations to promote health and wellness and reduce access barriers, closing the distribution gap citywide.

● **Action 6.1:** Identify transportation barriers or safety issues in high-need neighborhoods and prioritize improving multi-modal transportation networks and pathways linking these areas to recreational opportunities.

● **Action 6.2:** Coordinate with bike sharing programs in the northwest Indiana region to potentially integrate shared transportation services in community parks and near the Hobart Community Center.

● **Action 6.3:** Work with other City agencies to secure participation from new development to improve park and recreational opportunities for new residents.

● **Action 6.4:** Partner with local health organizations such as the St. Mary's Medical Center to continue advancing community wellness.

## Let's All Play Place

### SALEM, OREGON

In 2017, the City of Salem's Park and Recreation Department, in collaboration with Let's All Play Place Foundation, initiated a project to build an adaptive playground following universal design guidelines. This successful playground, featuring ramps, transfer stations, wheelchair accessible swings, and sensory-rich play areas, is a model for inclusive and accessible play. Input from children with disabilities and their families was at the core of this design process. Let's All Play Place intentionally serves children with physical or cognitive disabilities and has become a famous destination for school trips and community events. Funded through a combination of public and private funds, including grants, donations, and community fundraising efforts, this playground demonstrates the importance of collaboration between various entities in creating inclusive and accessible recreational spaces for all.



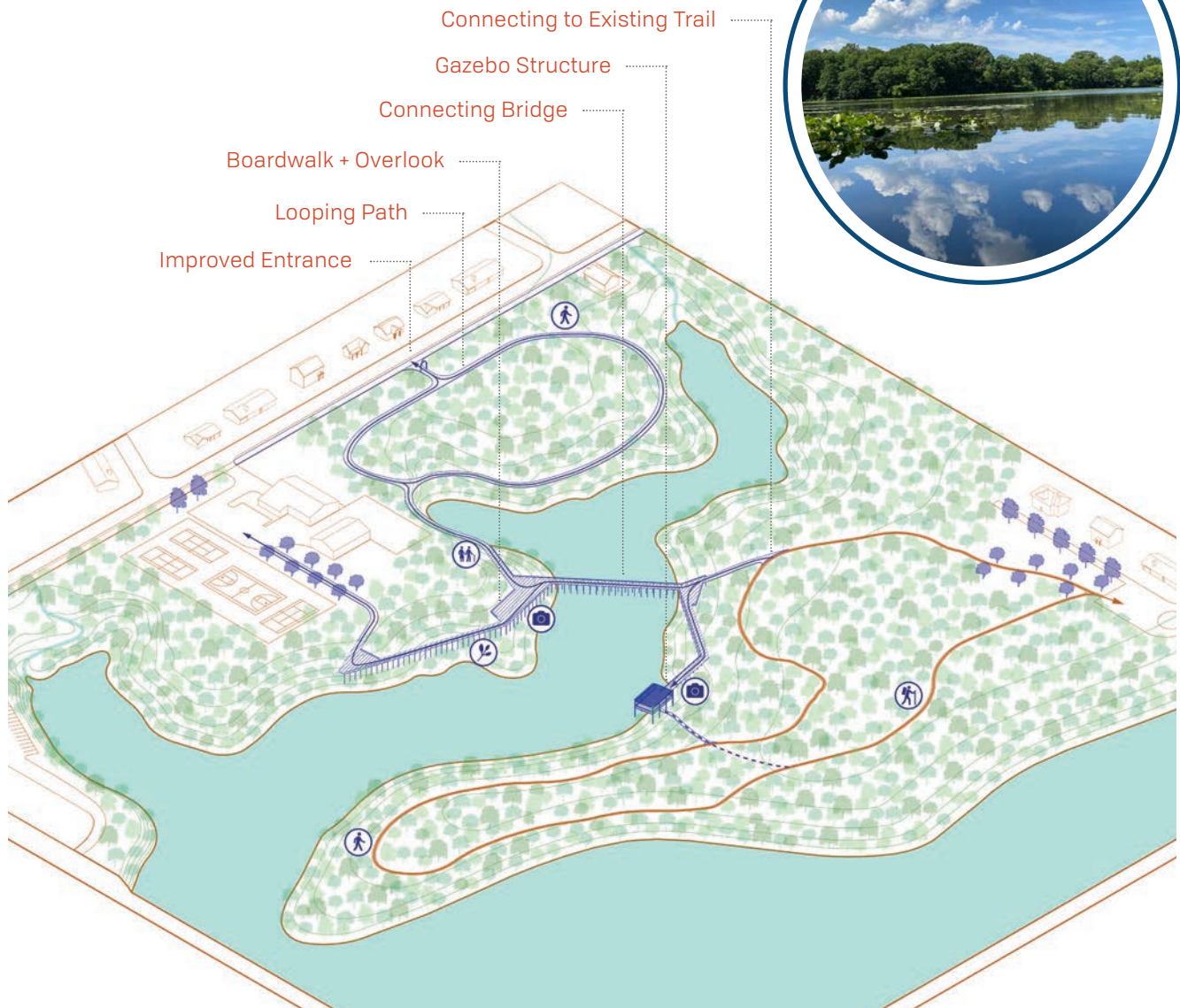


# PARK IMPROVEMENTS

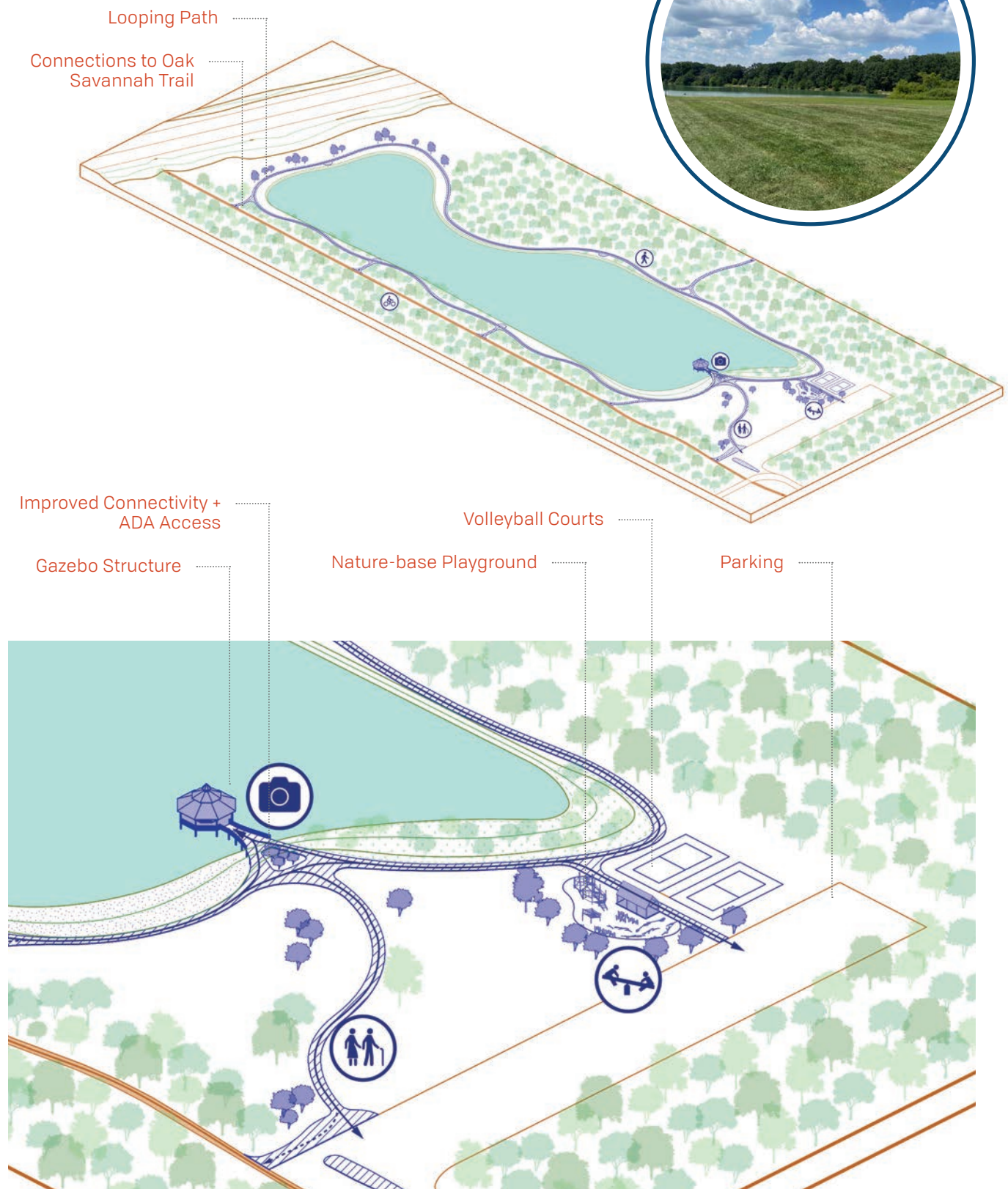
During the Hobart 2040 Plan process, the Park Department identified four park sites, including Fred Rose 8th St. & Fred Rose Lakeshore Parks, Festival Park, Robinson Lake, and Brickie Bowl to focus improvements on.

The designs help to illustrate potential improvements and lay the framework for future site planning and design efforts.

## 1. FRED ROSE 8TH ST. & LAKESHORE

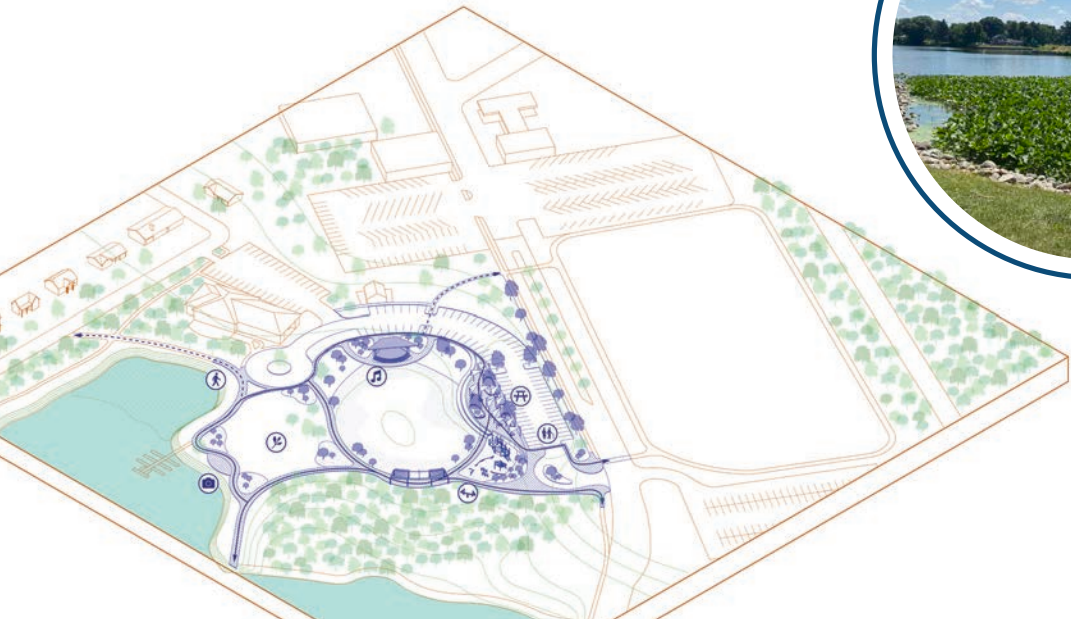


## 2. ROBINSON LAKE



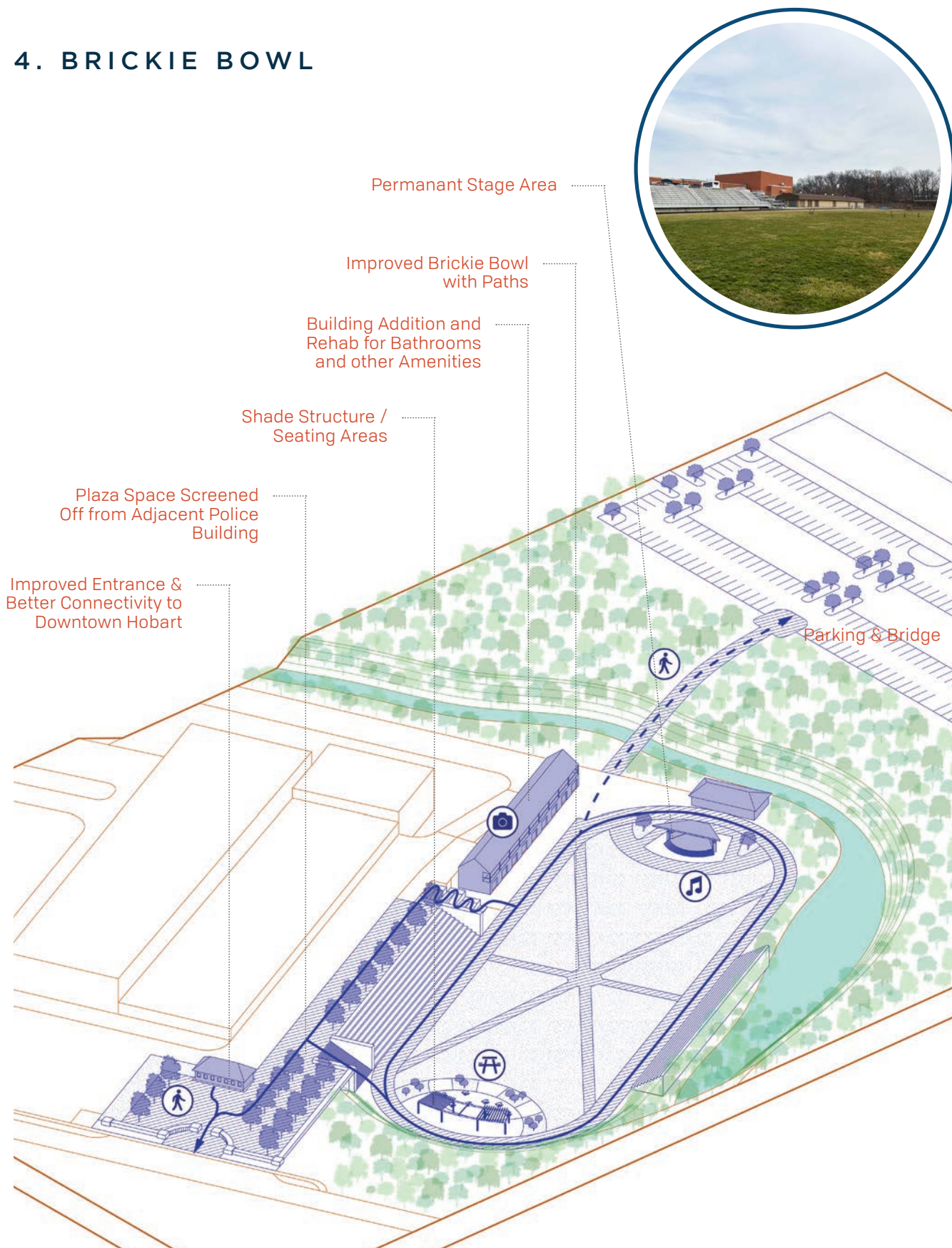


3. FESTIVAL PARK





## 4. BRICKIE BOWL









## GOAL 2: THRIVING ENVIRONMENT

Our protected parks and natural resources will be memorable, providing a sense of wonder and discovery supported by meaningful experiences with the natural environment.


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Hobart is home to natural areas that are unique to the northwest Indiana region. One of the largest natural areas is Deep River County Park, which features wetlands, forests, and prairies, supporting a diverse array of plants and animal species. Hobart Marsh Wetlands, home to waterfowl and shorebird bird species, features 500 acres of wetlands and forests. Native Prairies and Savanna Habitats, protecting rare and endangered species in the region can be found in the Hobart Prairie Grove. While these natural areas are not owned by the City of Hobart's Park Department, they encompass over 15% of the community's land area. Hobart's continued collaborative efforts with sister conservation and recreation agencies can further preserve such natural resources and allow the City to take an active role in maintaining environmentally sensitive areas. This can result in numerous benefits for generations to come, addressing rising climate concerns and ensuring improved air and water quality, carbon sequestration, and biodiversity conservation. These areas also provide important ecosystem services that can benefit Hobart residents, reducing impacts of floods and regulating rising temperatures, among others.


Natural and conservation areas in Hobart can also offer residents and visitors a chance to connect with nature and learn about the local ecology and history of the region. Partnerships can lead to improved access to natural areas and potential programming, including nature-based experiences, promoting physical activity, and increased social interaction. Younger generations have a growing interest in connecting with nature through immersive experiences and educational opportunities. Hobart's unique natural resources has the potential to create programming of regional significance.


**STRATEGY 1:** Preserve natural areas in Hobart, promoting a culture of conservation, in collaboration with other recreational agencies.


**+ Action 1.1:** Continue to implement the Hobart Conservation Zoning and Sub Area Plan (adopted in 2019) to create zoning districts that aim to enhance environmentally sensitive areas.


 **Action 1.2:** Engage with allied agencies and private landowners to understand future plans for natural areas within City boundaries.

 **Action 1.3:** Collaborate with conservation organizations to conduct an urban forestry plan that addresses climate concerns, preserves neighborhood character, and balances equity across neighborhoods.

 **Action 1.4:** Encourage conservation easements to restrict the development of land and protect natural resources and consider providing tax incentives to willing private landowners.

 **Action 1.5:** Assist in monitoring and evaluating natural areas to identify changes in the ecosystem, detect threats, and understand the health and condition of the environment.

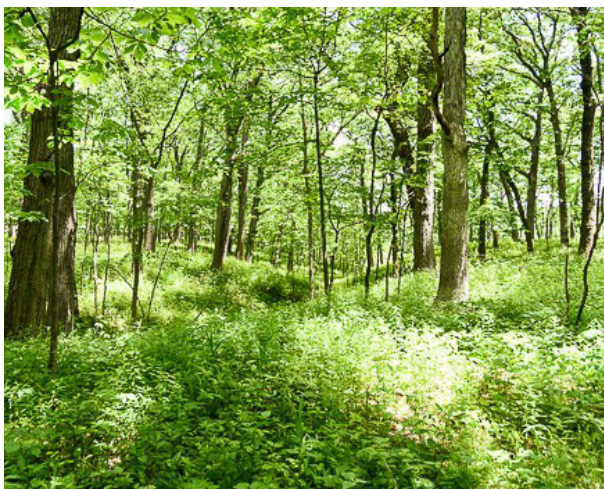
 **Action 1.6:** Collaborate with other agencies to develop visions and action plans for conservation areas to expand access while balancing sensitive environmental areas.

 **Action 1.7:** Assist in developing regulations and guidelines that protect fragile natural environments and reduce disturbance to wildlife.



**STRATEGY 2:** Expand access to improve the experience of natural areas, encouraging more use by Hobart residents.

- **Action 2.1:** Assist in building accessible trails and infrastructure, such as boardwalks, modest bridges, and other structures, while preserving the integrity of the high-quality natural area.
- **Action 2.2:** Facilitate opportunities for shuttle buses and other mobility options to expand access to conservation areas.
- **Action 2.3:** Develop multiple access points to natural areas, and potentially offer drop-off areas to enhance access for users with disabilities.
- **Action 2.4:** Update the Hobart Marsh Master Plan (adopted in 2013), continuing to establish a consistent trail network that connects the City's natural resources to Downtown Hobart, regional trails, and surrounding communities.
- + ● **Action 2.5:** Assess the feasibility of connecting existing parks and open spaces to natural areas, through expanded trails and pathways. Directional signage in the northwest area of Hobart can help guide visitors to the Nature District.



Hobart Prairie Grove

**STRATEGY 3:** In partnership with conservation organizations and entities, explore nature-based programming that aims to celebrate and further preserve Hobart's unique ecosystem.

- **Action 3.1:** Explore ecotourism to highlight Hobart's unique ecosystem, encouraging hiking, birdwatching, and wildlife photography, among other activities.
- **Action 3.2:** Explore the feasibility of high-quality educational wayfinding that describes the flora and fauna in various natural areas for passive recreation opportunities.
- **Action 3.3:** Develop a citizens science program, in collaboration with School City of Hobart and other educational entities, to promote research efforts such as collecting data on wildlife populations and tracking biodiversity patterns, among other initiatives.
- **Action 3.4:** Explore native plant restoration programming, including removal of invasive species, planting native species, and conducting ongoing clearings and maintenance efforts to ensure plants thrive.
- **Action 3.5:** Develop a volunteer-based trail program, encouraging stewardship of greenways and caring for pathways connecting the Nature District.



Nature Programming - Character Image

0 - 1 yr. 1 - 3 yr. 3 - 5 yr. 5 - 10 yr. + Ongoing

### STRATEGY 4: Promote natural areas in Hobart.

- **Action 4.1:** Invest in education and outreach, including workshops, public events, and other public education campaigns that highlight the importance of preserving natural areas and can help build support for conservation efforts.
- **Action 4.2:** Develop and implement a conservation areas media outreach campaign to improve outreach efforts and highlight the natural and recreational opportunities in the park system.
- **Action 4.3:** In collaboration with other managing agencies, explore the feasibility of a Nature District mobile app that serves as a guide to outdoor activities, such as birdwatching, and allows users to contribute to the information and report sightings of wildlife and plant species.
- **Action 4.4:** Grow a volunteer base that focuses on preserving and promoting the various natural resources in the City, engaging the growing Gen Z and Senior populations in Hobart.

## Friends of The Robinson Lake & Friends of Fred Rose | HOBART, INDIANA

These non-profit organizations are focused on education and outreach efforts to protect and promote a unique wetland ecosystem that supports rare and endangered plant and animal species. Some of their programs include organized guided hikes, nature clubs, and other organizations. They have also hosted public lectures and workshops on topics such as wetland ecology, bird identification, and invasive species management. Their success demonstrates the importance of engaging the public in conservation efforts and building broad-based support for environmental stewardship.



Shirley Heinze Land Trust Volunteers



## GOAL 3: ACTIVE COMMUNITY

Our parks and natural resources will be integral to our active hubs, bringing convenience and enjoyment, as well as tangible benefits to the overall quality of life.

The Hobart Park Department is committed to providing a diverse range of year-round programming and events that cater to the growing interests of the community. Hobart residents overwhelmingly show support for community events, including the Summer Concert Series which features a variety of musical genres, as well as Movies in the Park, showing family-friendly movies. Other special events that stakeholders emphasized include the annual Easter Egg Hunt and the Halloween Haunted Hayride.

Park and recreation trends, including programs and events, are constantly evolving, heavily influenced by changing demographics, shifting cultural values, and more recently new technologies. Such factors influence the way people engage with outdoor spaces and provide opportunities for creative programming and use of parks. This was made clear during the pandemic, where the majority of programming shifted to virtual, and the community found new ways to celebrate togetherness, often represented in simple gatherings.

Aside from planned events, the Park Department should continue to leverage existing facilities and natural resources for future programming opportunities. Lake George, one of Hobart's strongest assets, was a recurring topic in community conversations. Residents see immense value in accessing, and more importantly, activating this natural asset. Attracting visitors and new businesses to Downtown Hobart, Lake George can influence the growth of the City economically. Expanding on the existing infrastructure to allow more access to Lake George would also foster a sense of community in Hobart.

**STRATEGY 1:** Maximize the flexibility of the Hobart Community Center to encourage the use of the space as a community hub and a facility for pilot recreation offerings.

**Action 1.1:** Reach out to local organizations, such as local churches, the School City of Hobart, non-profits, and community groups, to collaborate on events and activities that can be hosted at the Center.

**Action 1.2:** Create a more welcoming atmosphere that builds flexibility and comfort for users, including a community bulletin board and display of artwork created by Hobart residents.

**Action 1.3:** In collaboration with local health organizations and providers, provide wellness amenities and services, such as counseling services that can make the Center more valuable to Hobart residents.

**Action 1.4:** Host additional regular low-key events such as potluck dinners, game nights, and other activities that bring residents together and foster a sense of community and ownership of the space.



Wedding at the Hobart Community House

Ongoing  
+  
5 - 10 yr.  
3 - 5 yr.  
1 - 3 yr.  
0 - 1 yr.



**STRATEGY 2:** Continue to build a knowledgebase of emerging trends and innovative park and recreation amenities to encourage active lifestyles and respond to growing community needs.

**+ Action 2.1:** Actively research, test, and implement new park facilities and programs to respond to emerging trends.

**Action 2.2:** Review opportunities to expand low- or no-cost programming in areas that may be lacking based on local community need, interest, grant opportunities, and funding availability.

**Action 2.3:** Explore an urban agriculture program that provides resources and support to Hobart residents interested in gardening, emphasizing the importance of local food systems and community gardening.

**Action 2.4:** Explore technology integration, providing virtual programming opportunities, including online fitness classes, arts and crafts, and other activities.

**+ Action 2.5:** Continue to explore pop-up programming, such as playstreets, green alleys, pop-up gardens, and temporary art installations, among other forms of tactical urbanism strategies that activate underutilized spaces.



Pickleball Character Image

**STRATEGY 3:** Ensure Lake George remains accessible by the Hobart community through a variety of safe and unique programming.

**Action 3.1:** Evaluate the feasibility of easements along Lake George, particularly the southern end, to increase access points and preserve and activate the lake shore.

**+ Action 3.2:** Continue hosting the cardboard regatta every year and explore ways to grow and improve this activity.

» *Incorporating a fun theme, such as pirates, superheroes, or a specific time period.*

» *Displaying the regattas designed by residents, ahead of the event.*

» *Incorporating obstacles or challenges into the racecourse, such as floating platforms or objects*

» *Offering workshops or classes in the weeks leading up to the event to teach participants how to build their own regattas. This can be led by community residents.*

**Action 3.3:** Support City-managed kayak rental stations at key locations around Lake George.

**Action 3.4:** Explore pilot programming to further activate Lake George, including floating movie night, nighttime paddle tour, yoga on the water, paddleboat racing, and more.

**“Summer Blast”  
Floating Movie Night**  
GRAPEVINE, TX

**“Paddleboard Bliss”  
Yoga on the Water**  
SARASOTA, FL

**“Mobile Art Gallery”  
Floating Art Show**  
TORONTO, CANADA

**STRATEGY 4:** Offer thoughtful and unique programming opportunities that appeal to the demographic makeup of Hobart and provide opportunities for socialization and engagement.

- + Action 4.1:** Revitalize youth programming such as the youth summer camp program.
- Action 4.2:** Encourage multi-cultural programming and attract underserved audiences, particularly Hobart's African American and Hispanic populations.
- Action 4.3:** Explore storytelling and oral history projects as means to preserve Hobart's heritage through administered programs.
- Action 4.4:** Encourage community service programs, such as planting a community garden, cleaning up a park, and other activities tailored to bringing people together towards a common goal.
- Action 4.5:** Encourage multi-generational programming, including cross-generational mentorship programs, where older and younger generations share knowledge.

**STRATEGY 5:** Aspire to provide events and programming of regional significance.

- Action 5.1:** Collaborate with private and non-profit partners, as well as neighboring park departments, to promote destination activities in Hobart and the Northwest Indiana region, such as outdoor adventure opportunities, nature-based programming, and access to water.
- Action 5.2:** Leverage partnerships with local and regional organizations to offer targeted programming.
- + Action 5.3:** Continually explore innovative programming that can generate buzz and attract regional visitors.



## GOAL 4: EXPANDING CAPACITY

Our parks and natural resources will benefit from operational and financial capacity building, achieving improved effectiveness and securing more financial resources.

Operational and financial capacity building ensures effectively managing parks and natural resources. Hobart's parks are managed by a dedicated team of City staff, and continuing to develop the skills, knowledge, and resources necessary will maximize the overall system's potential. The park scorecard system identified a list of recommendations for each park or natural resource area which can be better addressed through a maintenance and management plan.

Financial capacity building also involves managing budgets, identifying funding sources, and prioritizing investments in the overall system. Financial capacity building can also involve developing new revenue streams, with a focus on achieving financial stability over the years. Hobart's commitment to parks and recreation has not gone unnoticed. In 2021, the city was awarded a \$10,000 grant from the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs to fund improvements to Festival Park. The city was also recognized in 2020 as a Tree City USA community for its commitment to urban forestry. Continuing to secure funding and gain recognition will open more doors for the Park Department and expand capacity.

**STRATEGY 1:** Aspire to foster a culture of continuous improvement citywide, and particularly for the Parks Department.

- Action 1.1:** Increase cultural competencies and diversity of Hobart's staff.
- Action 1.2:** Recruit community residents to lead programs.
- Action 1.3:** Invest in succession planning for program staffing to ensure seamless transitions between older and newer staff.
- Action 1.4:** Convene Department leadership and staff to proactively evaluate strengths, weaknesses, aspirations, and results, at key open spaces and facilities.

**STRATEGY 2:** Advance maintenance practices and operate according to a formalized plan to continue providing high quality of life for residents and visitors.

- Action 2.1:** Establish a Parks Maintenance Manual that clarifies standards, work schedules, field condition assessments, and renovation recommendations, among other improvements.
- Action 2.2:** Consider adopting the 2015 Fred Rose Park Management Plan to guide management of natural areas.
- Action 2.3:** Continue to address deferred maintenance across the system, working with the community to make improvements that enhance the overall quality of parks, facilities, and amenities.
- Action 2.4:** Incorporate each park's ecological conditions into design and maintenance through water management, plant species, soil management, and erosion control.
- Action 2.5:** Implement an Adopt-A-Park program to facilitate citizen-based maintenance and care for parks.

0 - 1 yr. 1 - 3 yr. 3 - 5 yr. 5 - 10 yr. + Ongoing

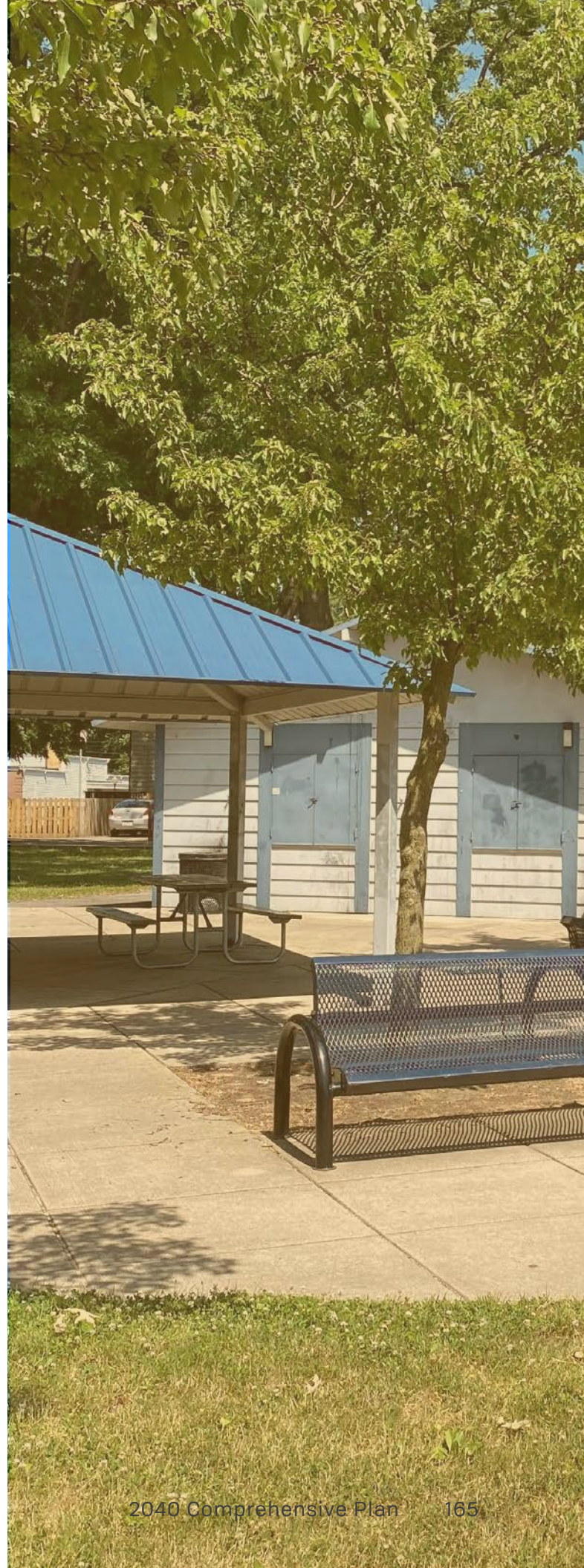


**STRATEGY 3:** Continue engaging, informing, and soliciting valuable insights that can inform decision-making and help ensure that park facilities and programs are meeting the needs of residents.

- **Action 3.1:** Employ engagement strategies to deepen community and employee outreach and engagement to better understand perspectives and needs.
- **Action 3.2:** Develop a digital and hard copy recreation guide highlighting Park Department programs and planned events to community residents at a low cost.

**STRATEGY 4:** Aspire to increase financial sustainability and diversify funding sources.

- **Action 4.1:** Pass a percent-for-parks ordinance to secure additional funds dedicated to community open spaces.
- **Action 4.2:** Support the development of a comprehensive nonprofit, such as a Park Foundation, to help promote and fund park and recreation improvements and awareness.
- **Action 4.3:** Develop additional revenue-generating event spaces, overlooking natural areas and water features such as Robinson Lake.
- **Action 4.4:** Consider employing concession stands at community parks to improve visitor experience and increase revenue sales.
- **Action 4.5:** Offer rental of recreational equipment, including kayak rentals and other water-based programming equipment, increasing the potential of revenue generation.
- ✚ **Action 4.6:** Continue to explore alternative funding strategies, including grants, to address unmet needs and expand and enhance Department services.



## THEME 4 | STRATEGIES &amp; PARTNERS

## Goal 1: Access &amp; Equity

MEDIUM

**STRATEGY 1:** Identify areas in the community that lack walkable park access and prioritize high-need neighborhoods for improvements.

**Partners:** Hobart Park Department

HIGH

**STRATEGY 2:** Aspire to develop green connections between parks and natural resources.

**Partners:** Hobart Park Department, City of Hobart, Northwest Indiana Greenways and Trails, Southshore Trails

LOW

**STRATEGY 3:** Develop citywide proximity standards for specialized amenities, services, and conservation areas to better promote equity across the City.

**Partners:** Hobart Park Department

MEDIUM

**STRATEGY 4:** Develop a wayfinding system to guide users to citywide open spaces and amenities, including the variety of natural resources in Hobart.

**Partners:** Hobart Park Department, City of Hobart

MEDIUM

**STRATEGY 5:** Aspire to increase ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) conformity in parks and open spaces, as well as programming opportunities citywide.

**Partners:** Hobart Park Department, City of Hobart, Access Board, Northwest Indiana Special Recreation Association, Lake County Parks and Recreation Department

HIGH

**STRATEGY 6:** Partner with local and regional organizations to promote health and wellness and reduce access barriers, closing the distribution gap citywide.

**Partners:** Hobart Park Department, School City of Hobart, Lake County Parks & Recreation, IPRA, Indiana Department of Natural Resources

## Goal 2: Thriving Environment

HIGH

**STRATEGY 1:** Preserve natural areas in Hobart, promoting a culture of conservation, in collaboration with other recreational agencies.

**Partners:** Hobart Park Department, IDNR, IPRA, Indiana Wildlife Federation, Shirley Heinze Land Trust

MEDIUM

**STRATEGY 2:** Expand access to improve the experience of natural areas, encouraging more use by Hobart residents.

**Partners:** Hobart Park Department, IDNR, IPRA, Indiana Wildlife Federation, Shirley Heinze Land Trust

LOW

**STRATEGY 3:** In partnership with conservation organizations and entities, explore nature-based programming that aims to celebrate and further preserve Hobart's unique ecosystem.

**Partners:** Hobart Park Department, IDNR, IPRA, Indiana Wildlife Federation, Shirley Heinze Land Trust, Northwest Indiana Audubon Trust



	<b>STRATEGY 4:</b> Promote natural areas in Hobart.	<b>Partners:</b> Hobart Park Department, City of Hobart, IDNR, Northwest Indiana Clean Air Council
	<b>Goal 3: Active Community</b>	
LOW	<b>STRATEGY 1:</b> Maximize the flexibility of the Hobart Community Center to encourage the use of the space as a community hub and a facility for pilot recreation offerings.	<b>Partners:</b> Hobart Park Department, City of Hobart, St. Mary's Medical Center, Northwest Indiana Senior Services, Boys & Girls Club of Northwest Indiana, YMCA of Northwest Indiana
MEDIUM	<b>STRATEGY 2:</b> Continue to build a knowledgebase of emerging trends and innovative park and recreation amenities to encourage active lifestyles and respond to growing community needs.	<b>Partners:</b> Hobart Park Department, City of Hobart, School City of Hobart, Lake County Parks & Recreation, IPRA, Southshore Arts
HIGH	<b>STRATEGY 3:</b> Ensure Lake George remains accessible by the Hobart community through a variety of safe and unique programming.	<b>Partners:</b> Hobart Park Department, City of Hobart, Lake County Park and Recreation, Northwest Indiana Paddling Association
HIGH	<b>STRATEGY 4:</b> Offer thoughtful and unique programming opportunities that appeal to the demographic makeup of Hobart and provide opportunities for socialization and engagement.	<b>Partners:</b> Hobart Park Department, City of Hobart, Hobart Human National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)
LOW	<b>STRATEGY 5:</b> Aspire to provide events and programming of regional significance.	<b>Partners:</b> Hobart Park Department, City of Hobart, Local Artists, Indiana Arts Commission
	<b>Goal 4: Expanding Capacity</b>	
MEDIUM	<b>STRATEGY 1:</b> Aspire to foster a culture of continuous improvement citywide, and particularly for the Parks Department.	<b>Partners:</b> Hobart Park Department, City of Hobart
HIGH	<b>STRATEGY 2:</b> Advance maintenance practices and operate according to a formalized plan to continue providing high quality of life for residents and visitors.	
MEDIUM	<b>STRATEGY 3:</b> Continue engaging, informing, and soliciting valuable insights that can inform decision-making and help ensure that park facilities and programs are meeting the needs of residents.	
LOW	<b>STRATEGY 4:</b> Aspire to increase financial sustainability and diversify funding sources.	





# 5 QUALITY LIFESTYLES

## THEME 5 | GOALS

### **Goal 1: Quality Arts & Culture**

*Hobart will expand arts and culture efforts that emphasize the City's sense of community while providing educational and entertainment opportunities for residents and visitors.*

### **Goal 2: Climate-conscious Community**

*Our community will remain committed to conservation and sustainable practices, adapting to the changing climate and ensuring a more resilient future.*

Hobart's 2040 Plan includes five community Themes. The following section describes Hobart's vision for Theme 5: Quality Lifestyles. Information about Quality Lifestyles is embedded into all of the other four sections of the Comprehensive Plan. The next few pages are a list of Strategies and Actions for each of the goals listed above.

## GOAL 1: QUALITY ARTS & CULTURE

Hobart will expand arts and culture efforts that emphasize the City's sense of community while providing educational and entertainment opportunities for residents and visitors.

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Hobart's arts and culture resources play a significant role in creating a sense of community pride, as well as exposing residents and visitors to art, performance, and local history. One of Hobart's most notable public artworks is the mural depicting Hobart's key historical events on the wall of Off-Road Rim Financing. The mural was recently painted by local artist Pete Cortese who has painted historically significant murals throughout the Hobart community. Another noteworthy work of art is the mural painted in 1938 by William Dolwick in the Hobart Post Office, Early Hobart, which depicts Hobart in 1870. Works like these bring vibrancy to Hobart's public spaces, while also imbuing them with a sense of history and community togetherness. Public art can also create a sense of place, helping to beautify areas where people gather, encouraging them to linger, and creating landmarks that help to orient pedestrians and bikers. The Hobart Clock Tower, for example, is a sculptural feature that serves as a community identifier and landmark. There are dozens of additional opportunities for public art around Hobart, and the City can work with local artists to bring the community to life through art.

There is also an opportunity to support Hobart's arts community and increase capacity of arts organizations and independent creatives throughout the city. Cultural spaces like the Art Theater in downtown Hobart bring music and performance to the Hobart community and help to support performing artists. Arts programs, such as Arts in the Park, help to inspire burgeoning young artists. There is room for more of these spaces and programming in Hobart. Regional Arts organizations, such as the Indiana Arts Commission and South Shore Arts, can link Hobart's creatives to opportunities, as well as serve as inspiration for additional Hobart-led initiatives that are focused on supporting the creative community.

### South Shore Arts NORTHWEST INDIANA

South Shore Arts is a nonprofit organization that advances the arts in Northwest Indiana by providing programming and events, such as workshops, classes, performances, and exhibitions. Its programs are aimed at supporting artists, as well as exposing the public to the arts. Funded by the Indiana Arts Commission, South Shore Arts operates The Center for Visual and Performing Arts in Munster and the South Shore Arts Substation No. 9 in Hammond. South Shore Arts also provides resources to artists through their website and alerts them to grants and other opportunities. Overall, South Shore Arts demonstrates the ways in which an organization can transform lives and strengthen communities through the arts.



**STRATEGY 1:** Promote the creation and upkeep of public art near key activity nodes to create a welcoming and vibrant environment that draws in both residents and visitors.

- **Action 1.1:** Identify specific locations that can be enlivened by public art interventions (*e.g. community open spaces, alleyways, blank external walls Downtown, walkable streets*).
- **Action 1.2:** Identify the type of art preferred for specific locations (*e.g. sculpture, mural, installation, monument*).
- **Action 1.3:** Create a Request for Proposals for major public art projects, allowing artists to pitch their ideas. Consider allowing the community to participate in the selection of artists based on their proposals.
- **Action 1.4:** Emphasize the diversity of Hobart by encouraging participation among diverse artists that represent all segments of the community.
- **Action 1.5:** Support pop-up and pilot projects in parks and public spaces to test new types of public art interventions, prioritizing temporary and low-cost tactics.
- **Action 1.6:** Use public art to create a richer downtown experience by considering creative ways to incorporate art into vacant storefronts or empty lots.



Public Art - Mural

**STRATEGY 2:** Build the local arts and culture capacity of Hobart and its creative residents and organizations.

- **Action 2.1:** Create an arts and culture commission or governing board that advocates for and oversees the implementation of arts and culture plans.
- **Action 2.2:** Create an arts and culture plan and/or a community placemaking plan.
- **Action 2.3:** Create an arts and culture webpage linking to organizations, events, artist opportunities, and other arts and culture news.
- **Action 2.4:** Partner with existing regional arts organizations, such as South Shore Arts, to continue bringing impactful programming to Hobart.
- **Action 2.5:** Support the ability of creative sector workers, organizations, and businesses to thrive by actively working to create affordable rental spaces/incubator spaces and allowing the use of public buildings for workshops or other creative activities.
- + **Action 2.6:** Partner with regional arts organizations to help connect artists with grants and funding.
- + **Action 2.7:** Work with Hobart's schools to promote arts programming and classes.



Makers Space



GOAL 2: CLIMATE-CONSCIOUS COMMUNITY



Our community will remain committed to conservation and sustainable practices, adapting to the changing climate and ensuring a more resilient future.




Hobart has a wealth of natural resources, including Lake George, numerous conservation areas, and the Oak Savannah Trail, among others. The City also contains a significant amount of undeveloped land that encompasses wetlands and other natural features. It is the proximity to these natural places that serves to highlight the need to protect them for generations to come. It also calls attention to the fact that surrounding land must be developed responsibly in order to preserve ecosystems and habitats. It is critical that the City takes an active role in promoting climate consciousness, ecologically-sensitive measures, and Smart Growth development standards throughout the City and among its residents and businesses.

Hobart has already made strides toward promoting an eco-friendly community. The City has a recycling program that operates weekly, and residents and businesses are also able to recycle their electronic waste by paying an extra fee or bringing it to the recycling facility. Hobart has also adopted a proactive stormwater management program that underscores its commitment to improving the quality of stormwater runoff beyond the basic level of regulatory compliance and protecting nearby lakes, rivers, and streams. The City is also a part of the Northwest Indiana Regional Planning Commission's (NIRPC) Greenways and Blueways initiative, which seeks to promote sustainability by creating a network of waterways and trails. Finally, in 2019, the City of Hobart and NIRPC partnered to create a new conservation zoning district designation and low-impact design standards to guide the development of sites adjacent to local conservation areas. This Conservation Zoning and Sub Area Plan, once fully adopted, will reduce the adverse impacts of adjacent land uses and will improve local access to natural areas and wildlife.


In order to promote sustainability and climate consciousness throughout the City, Hobart can continue to play an active, leading role in the adoption and advocacy of responsible practices. The Strategies and Actions below provide guidelines for promoting climate consciousness and environmental sustainability in a meaningful and impactful manner.


STRATEGY 1: Support and encourage community-wide sustainable practices and initiatives for residents and businesses.


-  **Action 1.1:** Work with businesses and homeowners to incorporate resilient landscaping features throughout the City that minimize water usage while contributing to overall beautification.
-  **Action 1.2:** Create a toolkit and set of guidelines that businesses or homeowners can reference if they choose to incorporate sustainable and resilient landscape features.


-  **Action 1.3:** Consider implementing a city-wide composting initiative that includes the regular curbside collection of food waste, yard waste, and other organic materials.
-  **Action 1.4:** Consider the development of a City composting facility that processes waste and turns it into nutrient-rich soil for use in the City's agricultural facilities.
-  **Action 1.5:** Consider creating incentives for the implementation of sustainable and resilient landscape features and practices, such as recognizing local businesses that are leaders in green building and sustainability practices in the community through an awards program or annual recognition program by the City Council.

 Ongoing

 5 - 10 yr.

 3 - 5 yr.

 1 - 3 yr.

 0 - 1 yr.

**STRATEGY 2:** Educate the community about the importance of sustainable practices.

- **Action 2.1:** Partner with organizations such as Hobart Parks Department, the School City of Hobart, and Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Committee (NIRPC) to educate residents about sustainability and conservation.
- **Action 2.2:** Promote workshops or community pop-up events focused on teaching the community about ecosystem and biodiversity restoration and preservation, energy efficiency, and urban forest preservation.

**STRATEGY 3:** Ensure that the City is prepared for a changing climate and has a plan set forth to protect natural resources for generations to come.

- **Action 3.1:** Pursue the creation and adoption of a Climate Adaptation Plan that responds to the projected impacts of climate change in Hobart and identifies strategies to meet adaptation goals.
- **Action 3.2:** Create a Green Mission Statement that helps to guide City-wide sustainability activities.
- ⊕ **Action 3.3:** Evaluate the appropriate staffing, including dedicated staff, on-call consultants, or other resources, to implement sustainability initiatives.

## Citywide Sustainability Organization, Sustainable Cleveland

### CLEVELAND, OHIO






Sustainable Cleveland began in 2009 with the simultaneous launch of a ten-year initiative to transform Cleveland into “a Green City on a Blue Lake”. Sustainable Cleveland is run by a community of Cleveland residents and provides resources that offer information and actionable tools that are aimed at helping Clevelanders make smart, sustainable choices at home, at work, and in the community. Their mission is to “engage people from all walks of life, working together to design and develop a thriving and resilient Cleveland region that leverages its wealth of assets to build economic, social, and environmental well-being for all.

Sustainable Cleveland offers several resources and programs, including a community choice electricity purchasing program, a circular economy community grant program (Circular Cleveland), a rain barrel program, and an opt-in recycling program. Finally, Sustainable Cleveland works hand-in-hand with the Mayor’s Office of Sustainability to inform and update the Cleveland Climate Action Plan every five years. The Climate Action Plan sets goals and tracks progress related to energy efficiency, green building, clean energy, sustainable transportation, clean water, vibrant green space, and reducing waste.









**STRATEGY 4:** Continually promote Smart Growth policies that will help Hobart develop and grow in a sustainable and responsible manner.

-  **Action 4.1:** Encourage infill development in active areas of the community to reduce sprawl and preserve green spaces.
-  **Action 4.2:** Promote design for density, supporting walkability, bikeability, and alternative modes of transportation, and encouraging a healthy mix of uses and housing typologies.
-  **Action 4.3:** Encourage energy-efficient buildings to reduce energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions.
-  **Action 4.4:** Advocate for mixed-income housing to promote economic diversity and reduce risks of displacement.
-  **Action 4.5:** Consider renewable energy sources including solar, wind, and other green power alternatives.

**STRATEGY 5:** Protect conservation areas and encourage responsible development of properties adjacent to conservation areas.

-  **Action 5.1:** Adopt the Conservation Zoning and Sub Area Plan.
-  **Action 5.2:** Promote conservation and development partnerships between property owners and local conservation groups by assisting in forging relationships between parties.
-  **Action 5.3:** Incentivize the implementation of low-impact design principles that are in-line with the Conservation Zoning and Sub-Area Plan.
-  **Action 5.4:** Establish the Natural Resource Conservation District (NRC) zoning designation.

## About the Hobart Conservation Zoning + Sub-Area Plan, 2019

The Hobart Conservation Zoning + Sub-Area Plan proposes the creation of a new zoning district, the Natural Resource Conservation District (NRC), which applies to existing and future managed conservation lands. It also defines opportunities where development can take place in a manner that respects and enhances conservation areas by reducing the adverse impacts of adjacent land uses and by improving access to wildlife and nature. The plan has three main aims:

- » Identifying areas where conservation is needed to protect the Lake George watershed and protect local habitats.
- » Determining parcels where conservation and new development partnerships could occur.
- » Establishing best practices for how development plans can work with local conservation groups to achieve stormwater management and conservation goals.

The plan includes a roadmap to the partnership process and provides guidelines for identifying shared goals and mutually beneficial development solutions. It also provides several examples of low-impact design concepts which illustrate the benefits of low-impact design, as well as a conservation toolkit. The adoption of this plan will help guide responsible development and ensure that Hobart's natural areas are protected well into the future.



## THEME 5 | STRATEGIES &amp; PARTNERS

## Goal 1: Quality Arts &amp; Culture

HIGH

**STRATEGY 1:** Promote the creation and upkeep of public art near key activity nodes to create a welcoming and vibrant environment that draws in both residents and visitors.

**Partners:** City of Hobart, South Shore Arts, Local Artists

MEDIUM

**STRATEGY 2:** Build the local arts and culture capacity of Hobart and its creative residents and organizations.

**Partners:** City of Hobart, South Shore Arts, Indiana Arts Commission

## Goal 2: Climate-conscious Community

HIGH

**STRATEGY 1:** Support and encourage community-wide sustainable practices and initiatives for residents and businesses.

**Partners:** City of Hobart, City of Hobart Parks Department, Hobart Chamber of Commerce, Regional Chambers of Commerce

MEDIUM

**STRATEGY 2:** Educate the community about the importance of sustainable practices.

**Partners:** City of Hobart, School City of Hobart, Conservation Organizations

HIGH

**STRATEGY 3:** Ensure that the City is prepared for a changing climate and has a plan set forth to protect natural resources for generations to come.

**Partners:** City of Hobart

MEDIUM

**STRATEGY 4:** Continually promote Smart Growth policies that will help Hobart develop and grow in a sustainable and responsible manner.

**Partners:** City of Hobart

HIGH

**STRATEGY 5:** Protect conservation areas and encourage responsible development of properties adjacent to conservation areas.

**Partners:** City of Hobart, IDNR, Shirley Heinze Land Trust, Lake County Parks, NIPSCO, NIRPC





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