



2022 Comprehensive Plan Update

Adopted October 4, 2022





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Executive Summary



Image Source: City of Whiting



Figure 1.1: The Chicago skyline from Whiting Lakefront Park
Image Source: City of Whiting

Executive Summary



Project Summary and Planning Area

With the last comprehensive plan dating back to 2010, the City of Whiting, Indiana, solicited the services of Context, LLC to prepare a comprehensive plan update. The team at Context worked closely with the City of Whiting leadership to review progress that had been made in the past ten years, assess current community data and trends, and ultimately draft an updated vision and goals to serve the City of Whiting for the next ten years.

The planning jurisdiction for this comprehensive plan update is the incorporated boundaries of the City of Whiting. Whiting is a vibrant community in Northwest Indiana located on the southern shore of Lake Michigan. The City is known for its picturesque views of the skyline of Chicago, for being home to the largest oil refinery in the Midwest, and for its quirky culture that includes the annual Pierogi Fest that attracts visitors from all over the world.

Vision Statement

The City of Whiting is guided by the following vision statement:

“The City of Whiting is a lakeshore destination embracing traditional values that attract people to live, visit, and play in a lakeshore community that values quality, efficiency, and integrity.”

Goals, Subgoals, and Action Items

The goals identified in this comprehensive plan update are broad statements of the City of Whiting’s values and desires. The goals should be used to guide future decision-making and provide a framework for specific policies and programs.

The subgoals listed are a more refined group of goals that, when implemented, help to achieve the overarching goal.



GOAL ONE: LAND USE

Goal	Ensure land is used efficiently and appropriately so the City of Whiting can offer a vibrant and diverse community that balances the needs of residents, employers, and visitors.
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Subgoals

1.1	Strengthen the Downtown Business District as a retail trade, business, financial, administrative, governmental, and cultural center of the City.
1.2	Implement strategies that maintain the 119th Street Corridor as the City’s downtown and main business district.
1.3	Strengthen and improve the Indianapolis Boulevard Corridor as a vehicular-oriented mixed-use area.
1.4	Continue to carry out the land use vision and objectives of the 2016 Redevelopment Plan for the Whiting Revitalization Area.

GOAL TWO: GOVERNMENT & FISCAL CAPACITY

Goal	Provide a first-class local government that is progressive, responsive, and responsible to the needs of residents, businesses, and visitors.
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Subgoals

2.1	Continue to implement and update the comprehensive plan.
2.2	Maintain quality services with staff efficiencies.
2.3	Ensure the continued financial stability of the City.

GOAL THREE: TRANSPORTATION

Goal	Provide a balanced transportation system ensuring the safe and efficient movement of trains, vehicles, cyclists, and pedestrians.
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Subgoals

3.1	Maintain the overall street hierarchy within the City.
3.2	Continually work to improve the safety and traffic flow of roadways and intersections in the City’s transportation network.
3.3	Encourage safe and convenient use of transportation corridors by pedestrian, cyclists, and other alternative transportation methods.
3.4	Ensure the City’s transportation assets are maintained in a sustainable and fiscally responsible manner.
3.5	Ensure parking options are meeting the needs of residents, businesses, and visitors.

Executive Summary



GOAL FOUR: PUBLIC FACILITIES, UTILITIES, & SERVICES

Goal	Provide a balanced transportation system ensuring the safe and efficient movement of trains, vehicles, cyclists, and pedestrians.
Subgoals	
4.1	Continue to provide high-quality public facilities within the City.
4.2	Ensure the effective and efficient delivery of public utilities.
4.3	Ensure high-quality public services to all residents of the City of Whiting.

GOAL FIVE: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Goal	Achieve a compatible and market-supportable system of commercial development that is organized to provide various goods and services within the community and the greater region which Whiting serves.
Subgoals	
5.1	Improve the economic climate and wealth potential of Whiting and its residents through a comprehensive economic development program aimed at retaining and expanding local businesses and attracting new businesses.
5.2	Encourage a system of industrial, retail, and service development that maintains a diversified economic base and complements other types of local development.
5.3	Guide economic development that is integrated both functionally and aesthetically with existing land uses and developments.

GOAL SIX: HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOODS

Goal	Guide quality neighborhood improvement and development and encourage a quality housing inventory that supports the local population while maintaining the character of the City.
Subgoals	
6.1	Continue to maintain the predominantly single-family character of the City.
6.2	Work to ensure neighborhood stability in all areas of the City and continue to express the economic importance of the City's quality housing stock.
6.3	Ensure neighborhoods retain character and include strong quality of life elements.



GOAL SEVEN: PLACEMAKING

Goal	Maintain a strong and positive physical community image through public and private improvements that enhance various physical features of the community and contribute to Whiting’s sense of place.
Subgoals	
7.1	Continue to emphasize the 119th Street Corridor as the heart of the Whiting community by continuing to apply special design and improvement considerations to this area.
7.2	Develop aesthetically pleasing and functionally well-designed retail and commercial area environments.
7.3	Enhance the image and character of the industrial district.
7.4	Rehabilitate, restore, and preserve the important historic structures, sites, and historic character of Whiting.
7.5	Enhance quality of life amenities to draw families to the City.
7.6	Celebrate and clearly demarcate entrances into the community through signage, public art, aesthetic enhancements, or other appropriate means.

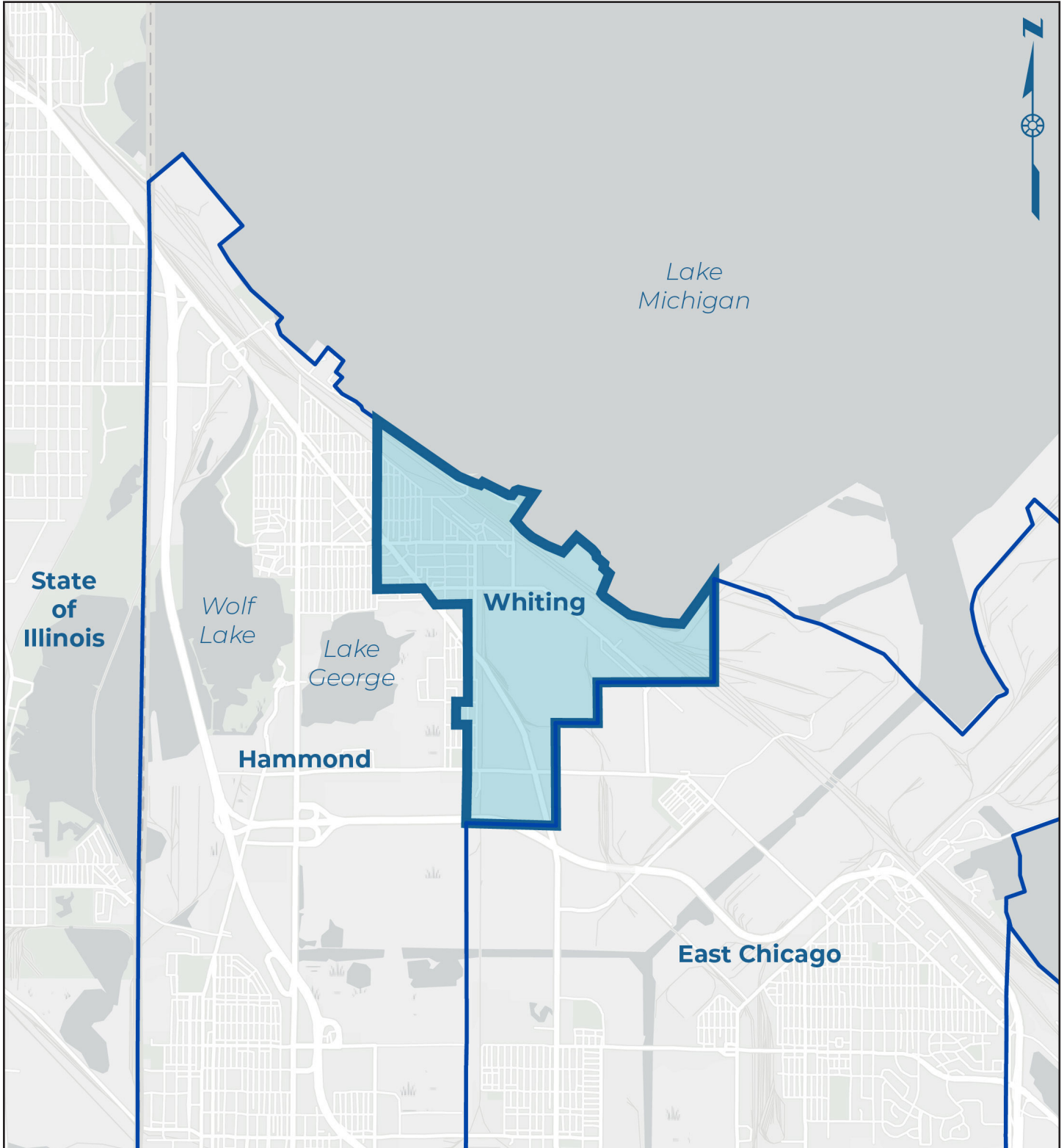
GOAL EIGHT: PARKS, RECREATION, & OPEN SPACE

Goal	Provide passive and active recreation for residents and visitors that capitalize on the unique natural and man-made resources in the City of Whiting.
Subgoals	
8.1	Maintain Whihala Beach and Whiting Lakefront Park as prominent destination points within the Northwest Indiana Region.
8.2	Develop and maintain cooperative agreements between the school district, City, and other organizations to increase the recreational opportunities available to residents.
8.3	Plan for appropriate recreational and natural habitat modifications to the lakefront as a result of the fluctuations of Lake Michigan water levels..

Purpose of Planning



Image Source: Paul Samson



Map 0.1: Whiting Incorporated Boundaries



Purpose of Planning

The City of Whiting is a community full of rich history and ethnic diversity. Located in Lake County on the south shoreline of Lake Michigan, Whiting was founded in 1889 and was named after railroad conductor Herbert Lloyd “Pop” Whiting. The City is roughly 16 miles from the Chicago Loop and two miles from Chicago’s South Side. It is home to BP’s Whiting Refinery, the largest oil refinery in the Midwest. Whiting is also home to the world famous Pierogi Fest, the Whiting Oilmen baseball team, and the Mascot Hall of Fame. Whiting’s incorporated boundaries are compact, only encompassing 1.8 square miles.

Purpose of the Comprehensive Plan

This comprehensive plan is Whiting’s official policy guide for future growth and development. It considers not only the immediate needs and concerns of the community, but considers projects for improvement and development in the future. In the State of Indiana, comprehensive planning is permitted by the 500 Series of Title 36-7-4 of the Indiana Code. This law allows cities, towns, and counties to adopt plans, and those plans must contain the following components:

- A statement of objectives for the future development of the jurisdiction;
- A statement of policy for the land use development of the jurisdiction; and
- A statement of policy for the development of public ways, public places, public lands, public structures, and public utilities.

The comprehensive plan serves as a decision-making guide for both officials and citizens. It provides guidance by which the Plan Commission and City Council can review and evaluate private development proposals. The plans also serves as a guide for public investments and capital improvements, and can help ensure local public dollars are spent wisely. The comprehensive plan also provides a basis for refining the unified development ordinance, which is used to implement planning policies and recommendations.

The City of Whiting’s previous comprehensive plan was prepared in 2010. In the past decade, this plan has been used a tool to help guide several planning and development projects. However, being over ten years old, it is necessary to update the 2010 comprehensive plan to reflect the City’s current and revised vision, goals, and objectives to appropriately plan for the future of Whiting.

Purpose of a Vision Statement

A vision is a statement that reflects local potential and makes a commitment to future action. The vision describes what the City wants to be in the future. A vision statement is created as a clear, succinct, and purposeful statement that is easily understood and helps define the direction in which the plan should proceed.

In March 2009, the City of Whiting created a vision for the community identifying integrity, helpfulness, family, quality/efficiency, and trust as the primary community values. Based on these values the following vision was crafted:



“The City of Whiting is a lakeshore destination embracing traditional values that attract people to live, visit, and play in a lakeshore community that values quality, efficiency, and integrity.”

This vision statement was used to help guide the goals and subgoals of this comprehensive plan update.

Purpose of Goals, Subgoals, and Action Items

Once a vision for a community is established, goals, subgoals, and action items can be developed. To be effective, the comprehensive plan must respond to the expressed values and desires of the community. These values and desires can best be conveyed as goals, which are statements that describe what the community is going to do. Goals look at the big picture, but are more concrete than a vision statement. Goals hint as to how a community may fix problems or accomplish the vision.

Once goals are established, subgoals can then be created. Subgoals are more focused goals that help accomplish the overarching goal. They help identify specific and feasible methods in which to carry out a goal and can serve as a marker to show residents what has been accomplished over time.

After subgoals are created, action items can be developed for each subgoal. Action items include specific actions that can be taken to accomplish the subgoal. The action item breaks a subgoal down into meaningful, intentional steps.

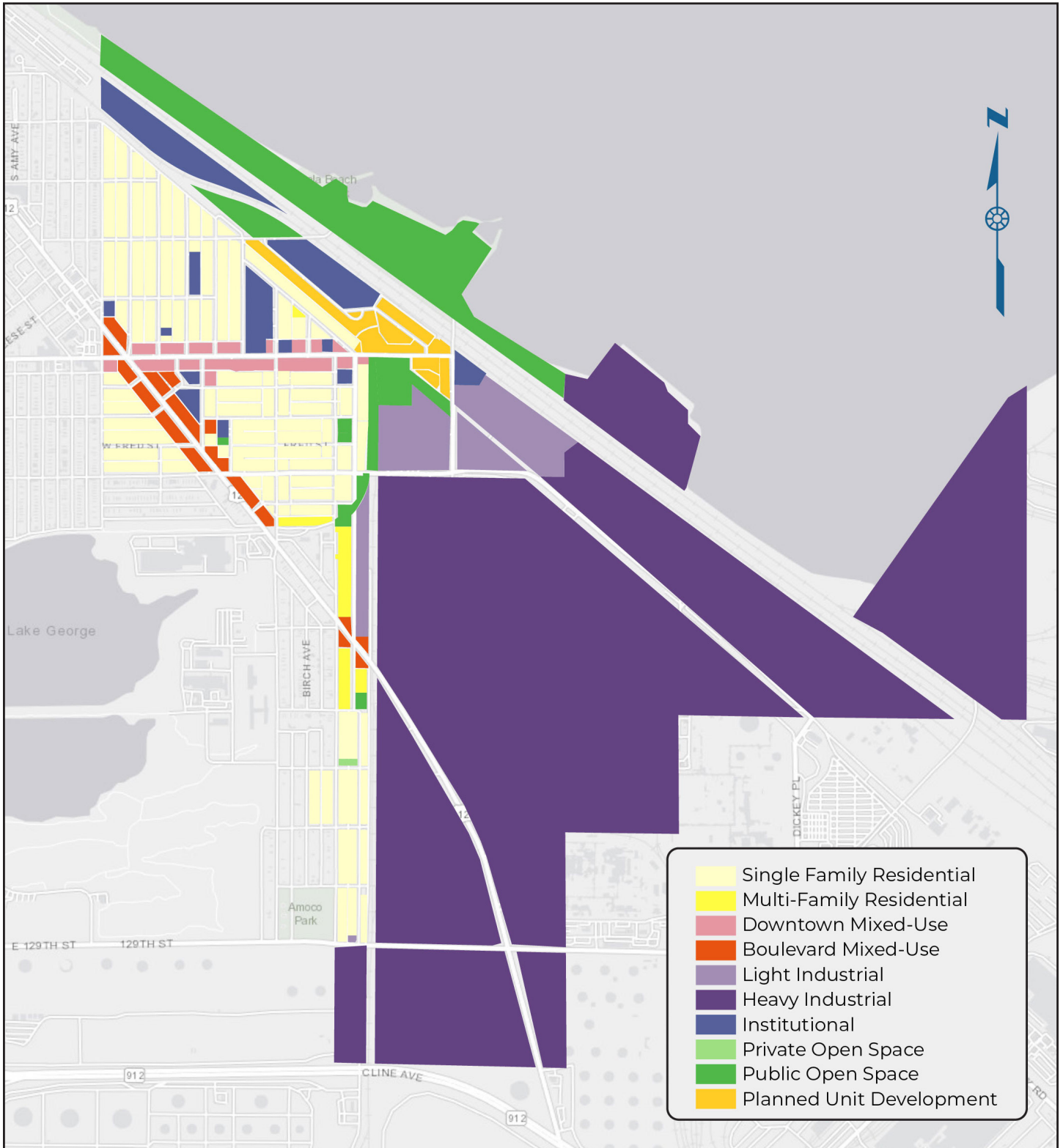
The following goals, objectives, and action plans have been developed as part of the 2022 City of Whiting Comprehensive Plan Update.

Land Use

Goal: Ensure land is used efficiently and appropriately so the City of Whiting can offer a vibrant and diverse community that balances the needs of residents, employers, and visitors.



Image Source: Paul Samuel



Map 1.1: Whiting Future Land Use Map

Land Use

Future Land Use Planning

A future land use map is a community’s visual guide to future planning. It is a map of what the community wants to happen. A future land use map is a required component of a comprehensive plan.

Often times, the future land use map is confused with a zoning district map. A zoning map shows the various zoning districts in a community. It tells us how the land can be used and what can be built on a given property today.

The zoning map is developed out of a zoning code ordinance which develops out of the comprehensive planning process. In short, a future land use map is about the future, and a zoning map is about what is allowed today.

When the Plan Commission is approached by a petitioner to make changes to the zoning district map, the Plan Commission should consider the future land use map when making a decision.

Land Use Categories

The Land Use Categories used for this Comprehensive Plan Update are the same classifications that were used in the 2010 Comprehensive Plan Update.

Residential Category



Single Family Residential

The Single Family Residential District reflects the medium to high density residential character of the City of Whiting. New developments within this District should continue to reflect existing densities of 8 to 12 units per acre to ensure neighborhood character is maintained. A grid-like street pattern, alleys, lot sizes, and setbacks should follow those of existing single-family residential units.



Multi-Family Residential

The Multi-Family Residential District is characterized by residential structures with two or more units. Development in this District includes condominiums, townhomes, apartments, and senior living facilities. Appropriate density for this District ranges from 12 to 22 units per acre. The existing character of the neighborhood should be reflected through scale, massing of structures, and architecture.

Commercial Category



Downtown Mixed-Use

The Downtown Mixed-Use District is intended to integrate a mix of land uses along the 119th Street Corridor. Development in this District is intended to have a downtown or Main Street atmosphere. Commercial uses are encouraged on the first floor and residential or office uses encouraged on upper floors. Adjacent architectural character, density, and massing should be reflected in new developments in this District.



Boulevard Mixed-Use

The Boulevard Mixed-Use District is intended to accommodate a mixture of land uses along the Indianapolis Boulevard Corridor. Development in this District should be a mixture of neighborhood and regional commercial and office uses, as well as residential above these uses. This District should accommodate both pedestrian and vehicular access.

Industrial Category



Light Industrial

The Light Industrial District is intended to accommodate manufacturing, bulk warehousing, and distribution uses. Activities associated with these uses should take place inside a building and have no outdoor storage or production to minimize negative impacts on adjacent land uses.



Heavy Industrial

The Heavy Industrial District is intended to accommodate more intense industrial uses, which may include outdoor storage and outside operations. This District is similar to light industrial, but higher impacts from noise and odor are expected. This District should have large buffers from adjacent land uses and roadways.



Institutional Category



Institutional

The Institutional District is intended for public or semi-public uses, such as facilities for government, private and public schools, religious organizations, emergency services, libraries, and civic or social organizations. New institutional facilities should be built to the architectural, massing, and site design standards that reflect the surrounding character.

Open Space Category



Public Open Space

The Public Open Space District is for use as public parks, recreation, or open space. This District is intended to be used to protect existing recreational resources and open space areas from future development and to provide for the adequate supply of recreational lands and conservation of significant natural areas.



Private Open Space

The Private Open Space District is intended to be used as a buffer between land uses, specifically to separate industrial uses from residential uses. These areas are not intended to provide recreational needs for the community, but rather maintained open space that separates incompatible land uses.

Planned Unit Development Category



Planned Unit Development (PUD)

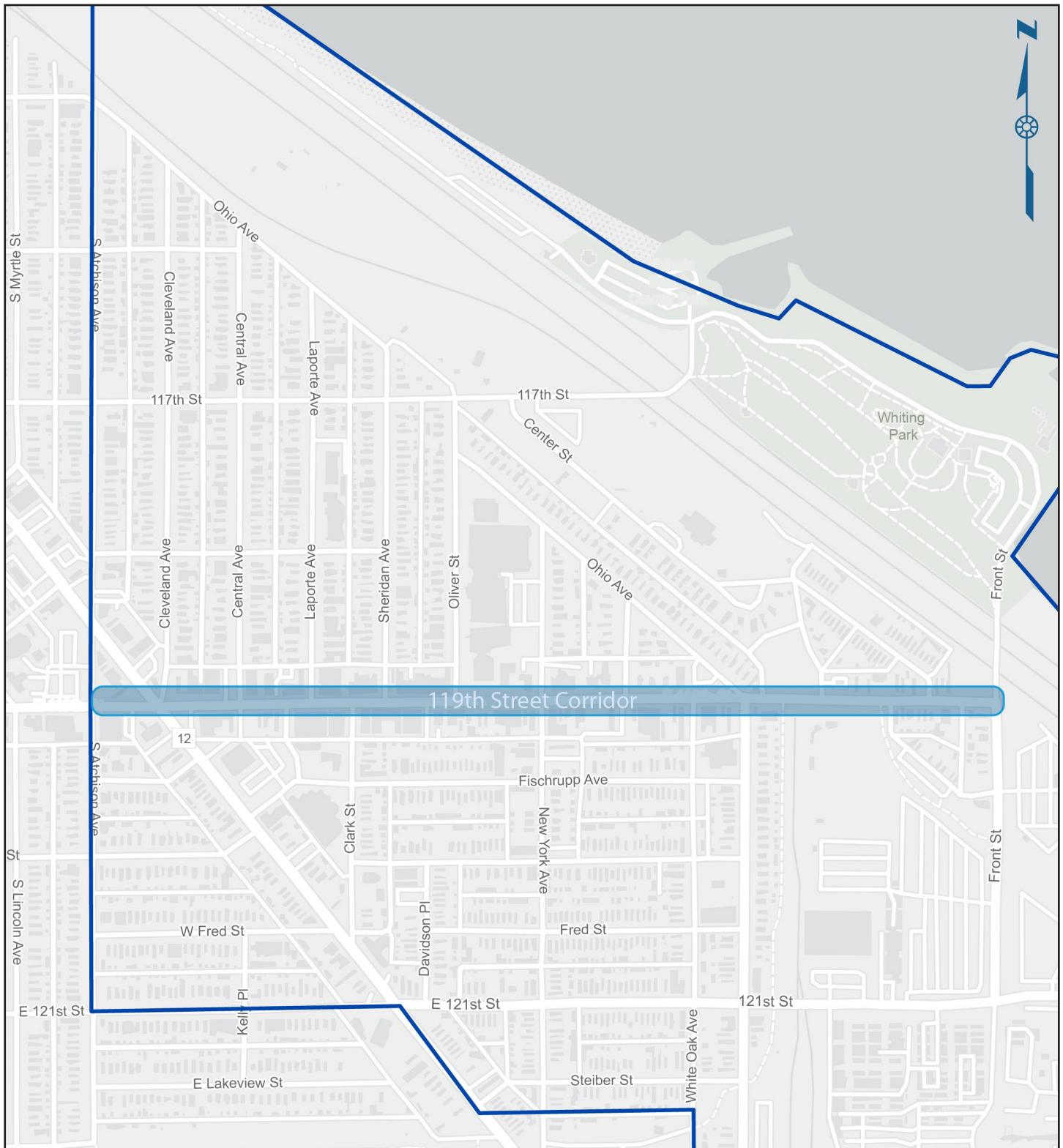
The Planned Unit Development District (PUD) is intended for creative development projects that may not fit under the standard zoning requirements. To use this land use category, a developer shall work with the City of Whiting to develop criteria that will determine common areas, private areas, building guidelines, and use guidelines.



Subgoal 1.1: Strengthen the Downtown Business District as a retail trade, business, financial, administrative, governmental, and cultural center of the City.

Action Items:

- Action Item 1: Facilitate grants to support new businesses.
- Action Item 2: Add street amenities.
- Action Item 3: Conduct special events to attract residents and visitors to the district.
- Action Item 4: Develop additional public parking lots for business patrons and employees.
- Action Item 5: Grant vacant properties PUD zoning status to encourage flexibility in development.



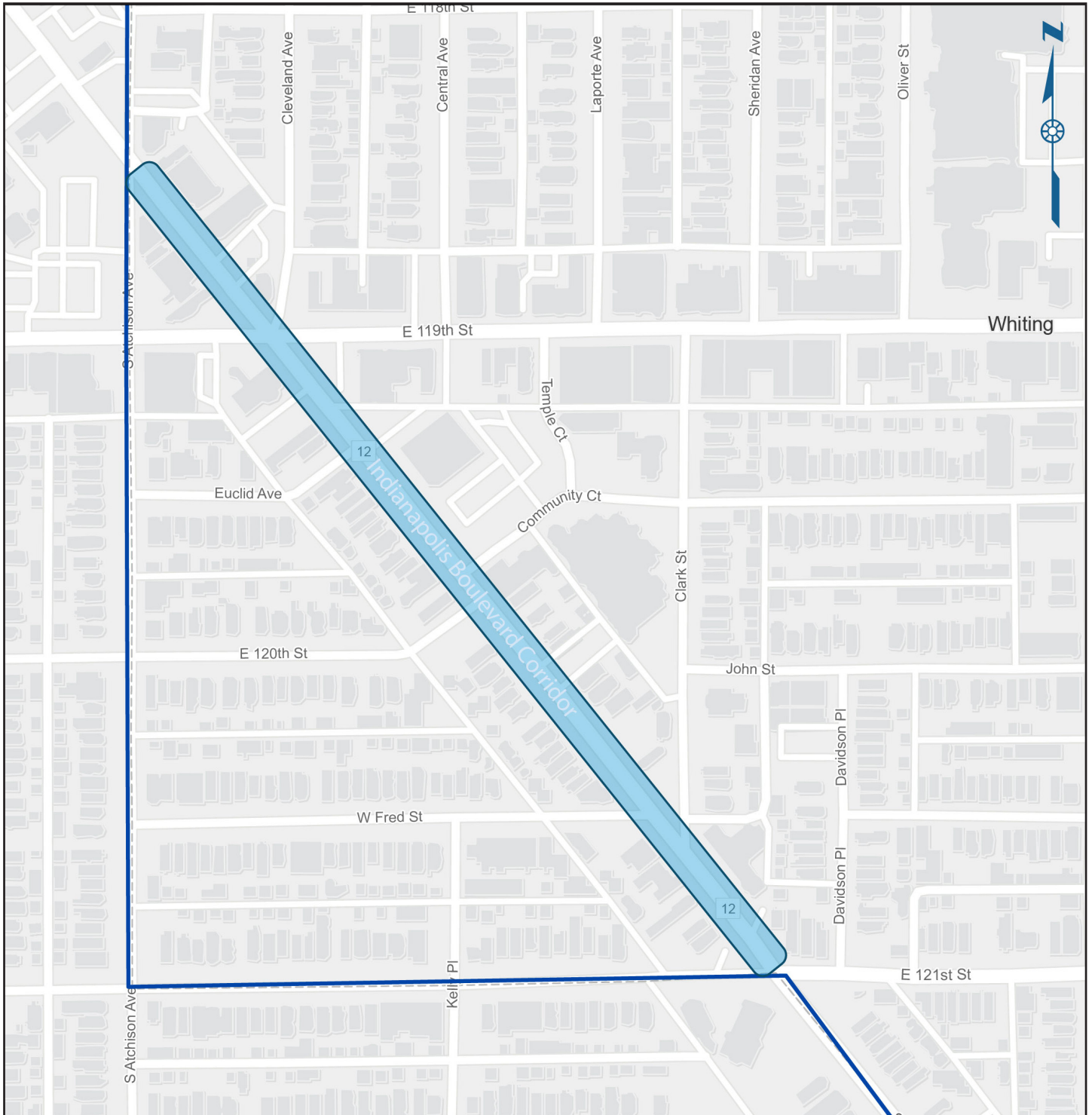
Map 1.3: 119th Street Corridor



Subgoal 1.2: Implement strategies that maintain the 119th Street Corridor as the City’s downtown and main business district.

Action Items:

- Action Item 1: Encourage pedestrian-friendly mixed-use development opportunities along the 119th Street Corridor.
- Action Item 2: Provide mixed-use development opportunities along the eastern end of the 119th Street and the Center Street area just north of 119th Street.
- Action Item 3: Redevelop the area southwest of the 119th Street and Front Street intersection for mixed-use development.
- Action Item 4: Continue to promote above-ground-floor residential use along the 119th Street Corridor.
- Action Item 5: Ensure ordinances are in place that support the development and redevelopment along the 119th Street Corridor where deteriorating building conditions, obsolete building design, and property or building vacancies exist.



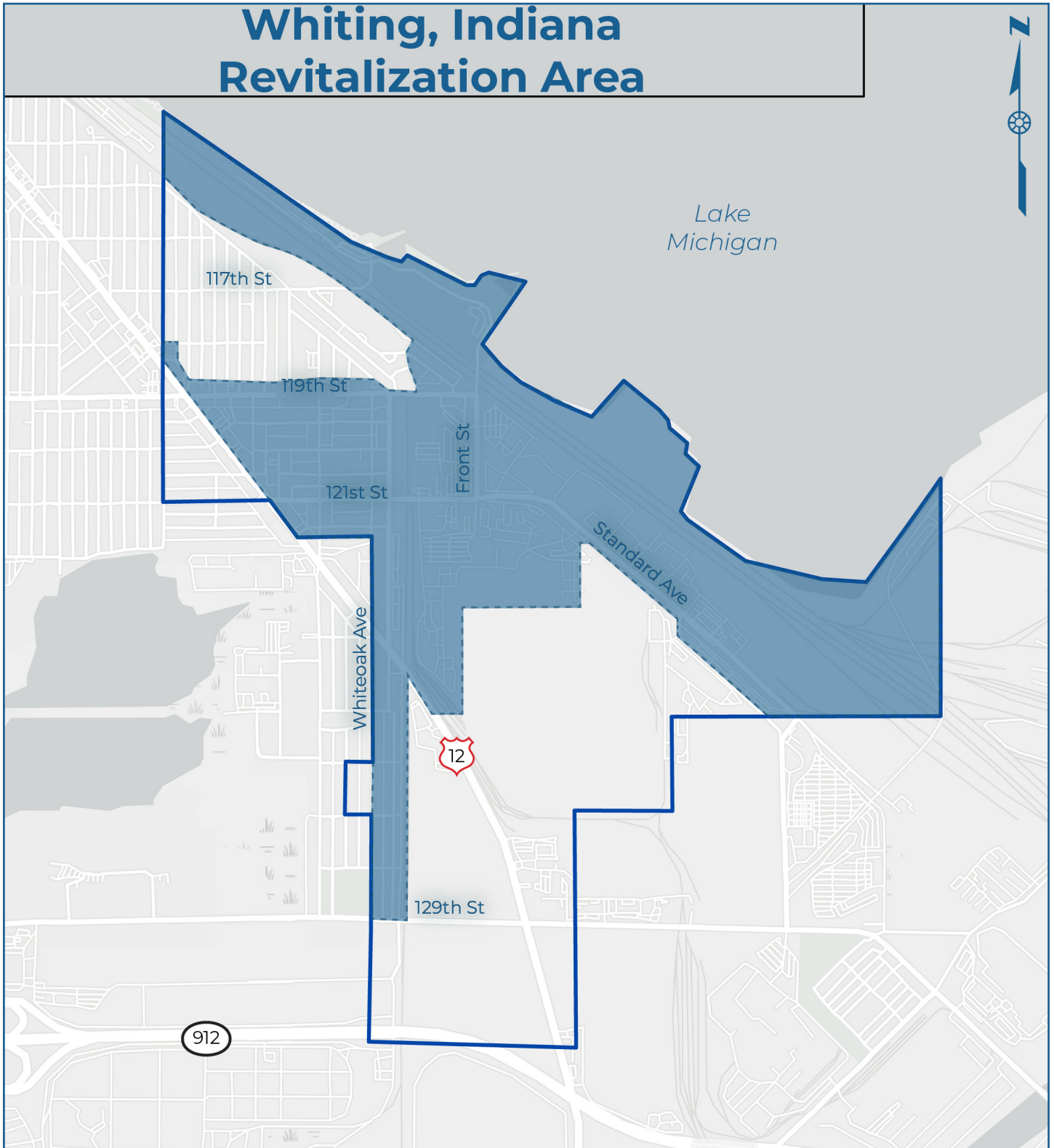
Map 1.4: Indianapolis Boulevard Corridor



Subgoal 1.3: Strengthen and improve the Indianapolis Boulevard Corridor as a vehicular-oriented mixed-use area.

Action Items:

- Action Item 1: Maintain marketable commercial space along Indianapolis Boulevard by working with the business community to ensure commercial uses are competitive and viable within the local market.
- Action Item 2: Provide sufficient off-street parking with lot access minimizing disruption and maximizing safety along Indianapolis Boulevard.
- Action Item 3: Create general corridor design principles geared toward development along Indianapolis Boulevard.



Map 1.5: Revitalization Area



Subgoal 1.4: Continue to carry out the land use vision and objectives of the 2016 Redevelopment Plan for the Whiting Revitalization Area.

Action Items:

- Action Item 1: Ensure the Redevelopment Plan is considered in all land use decisions.
- Action Item 2: Regularly update the Redevelopment Plan to ensure the vision aligns with the community's needs.
- Action Item 3: Complete the redevelopment of areas surrounding New York Avenue and Fischrupp Avenue as residential development.
- Action Item 4: Create opportunities for lakefront residential and commercial developments south of Whiting Park along Front Street.
- Action Item 5: Limit industrial uses to the area east of Schrage Avenue.
- Action Item 6: Encourage private open space on the east side of Schrage Avenue, between 125th Street and 129th Street, to create a buffer between the BP facility and the residential area and develop a mutually agreeable land use.



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Government and Fiscal Capacity

Goal: Provide a first-class local government that is progressive, responsive, and responsible to the needs of residents, businesses, and visitors.



Image Source: Paul Samuel



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Subgoal 2.1: Continue to implement and update the comprehensive plan.

Action Items:

- Action Item 1: Maintain a list of current possible amendments, issues, or needs that may be a subject of change, addition, or deletion from the comprehensive plan.
- Action Item 2: Establish a biannual review of the comprehensive plan conducted by City Administration to gauge progress on goals and objectives and recommend minor modifications to the plan.
- Action Item 3: Conduct a thorough review and update of the comprehensive plan every 10 years to ensure the plan remains relevant to the needs of the community.
- Action Item 4: Continue to review and revise the City's zoning ordinance to help carry out the vision of the comprehensive plan.
- Action Item 5: Make the comprehensive plan readily accessible to the public and city officials through the City's website and make copies of the plan document available for public purchase.

Subgoal 2.2: Maintain quality services with staff efficiencies.

Action Item:

- Action Item 1: continually review workforce in light of changing technologies.

Subgoal 2.3: Ensure the continued financial stability of the City.

Action Items:

- Action Item 1: Continue fiscal policy that maintains adequate reserves.
- Action Item 2: Continue to look for development that adds to the tax base.
- Action Item 3: Continue to find new sources of revenue.



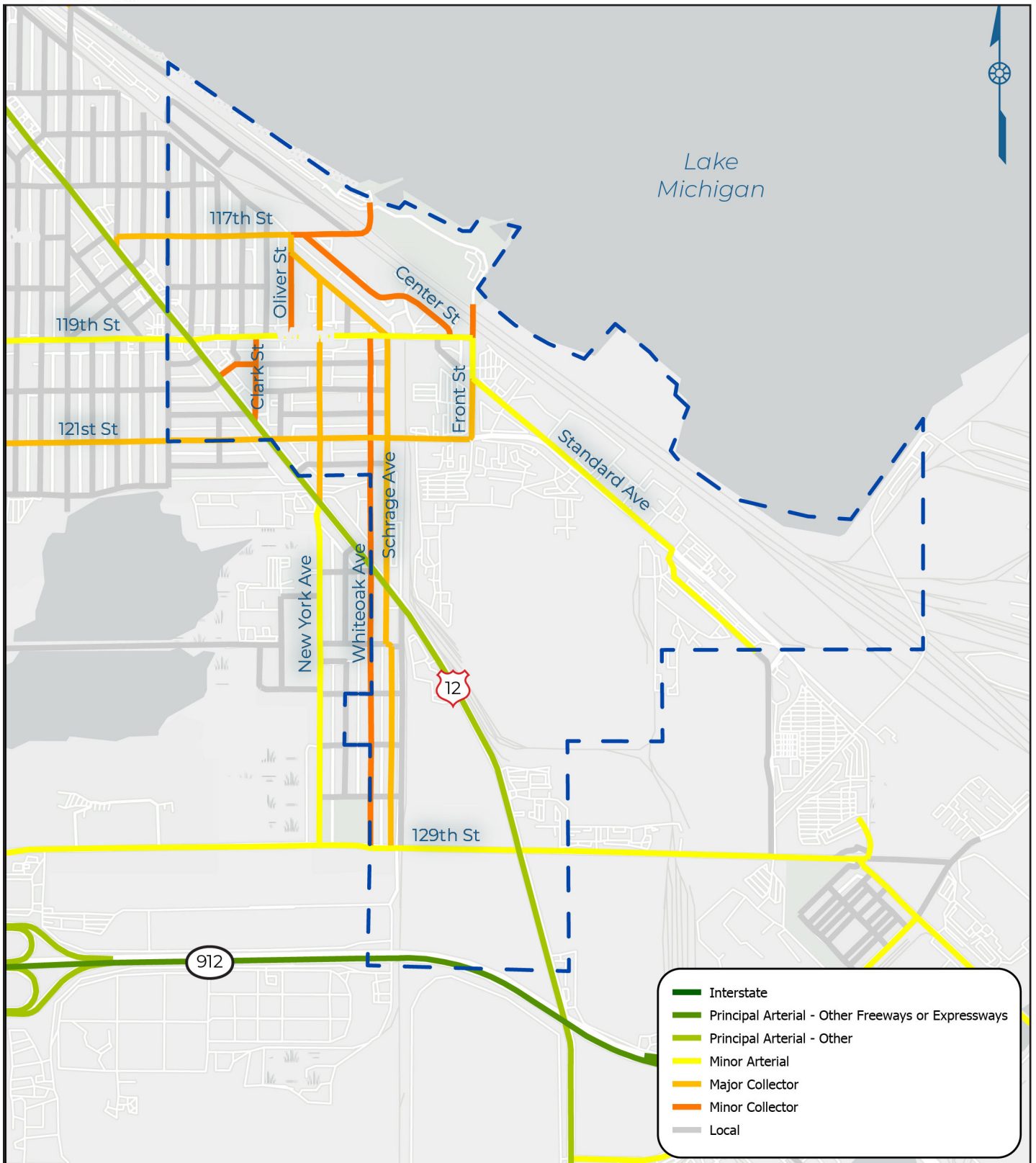
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Transportation

GOAL: Provide a balanced transportation system ensuring the safe and efficient movement of trains, vehicles, cyclists, and pedestrians.



Image Source: City of Whiting



Map 3.1: Road Functional Classifications



Subgoal 3.1: Maintain the overall street hierarchy within the City.

Action Items:

- Action Item 1: Review the functional classification of local roads and update if necessary.
- Action Item 2: Continue to enforce the access control policies and standards to reduce the number of individual curb cuts along major streets in favor of shared or common access ways.
- Action Item 3: Review Street Standards to ensure roadway design features are in line with the City's vision for the future.

Subgoal 3.2: Continually work to improve the safety and traffic flow of roadways and intersections in the City's transportation network.

Action Items:

- Action Item 1: Complete a City-wide transportation analysis that identifies transportation issues and develop an implementation plan to rectify these issues.
- Action Item 2: Complete a review of current Street Standards to ensure regulations are up-to-date and include all facets of roadway design, such as intersections, lighting, surface conditions, bicycle and pedestrian elements, and roundabouts.
- Action Item 3: Identify areas in need of traffic calming and investigate appropriate options to help slow traffic.
- Action Item 4: Ensure proper signage and ordinances are in place to discourage non-local traffic in residential neighborhoods.
- Action Item 5: Identify and implement traffic-management strategies that will minimize the impact of peak traffic flows in the City.
- Action Item 6: Develop a strategy with the railroads to minimize blockages which hamper access to and use of Whihala Beach, Whiting Lakefront Park, and BP's Whiting Refinery.
- Action Item 7: Take all actions necessary to maintain the Quiet Zone railroad designation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), including, but not limited to, maintenance, repair and replacement of equipment, and compliance with all regulatory requirements.



Subgoal 3.3: Encourage safe and convenient use of transportation corridors by pedestrian, cyclists, and other alternative transportation methods.

Action Items:

- Action Item 1: Inventory current bicycle and pedestrian routes, identify gaps in the bicycle and pedestrian network, and develop an action plan to complete the network.
- Action Item 2: Review street standards to ensure up-to-date standards are in place for bicycle and pedestrian facilities, including sidewalk width, pavement markings, and street signage specific to bicycle and pedestrians.
- Action Item 3: Identify potential connections with regional greenways, bikeways and trails, and develop an action plan for implementation.
- Action Item 4: Continue to incorporate the goals of the Greenways and Blueways plan into development decisions.

Subgoal 3.4: Ensure the City's transportation assets are maintained in a sustainable and fiscally responsible manner.

Action Items:

- Action Item 1: Maintain a transportation asset management plan that identifies and prioritizes maintenance and repairs of transportation infrastructure.
- Action Item 2: Pursue local, state, and federal transportation funding sources to maximize the City's transportation budget.
- Action Item 3: Continue to secure available funds for the development of the City's bicycle system and pedestrian system improvements, including special funds.
- Action Item 4: Ensure streetscape improvements are maintained along important commercial and gateway corridors and this maintenance is factored into the City budget.



Subgoal 3.5: Ensure parking options are meeting the needs of residents, businesses, and visitors.

Action Items:

- Action Item 1: Review the Unified Development Ordinance to ensure residential and commercial parking regulations are supporting the City's vision.
- Action Item 2: Complete an inventory of public parking lots and on-street parking and determine if these lots are meeting the intended needs.



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Public Facilities, Utilities, & Services

Goal: The City of Whiting will provide public facilities, utilities, and services that meet the needs of residents and industry.



Image Source: City of Whiting



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Subgoal 4.1: Continue to provide high-quality public facilities within the City.

Action Items:

- Action Item 1: Improve the existing space within City Hall for more efficient administrative use.
- Action Item 2: Maintain functional, quality sites for animal control and the Street and Sanitation Department.
- Action Item 3: Ensure adequate municipal facilities can be provided in new development areas within the community.
- Action Item 4: Create and/or expand specialized facilities for senior citizens and youths.

Subgoal 4.2: Ensure the effective and efficient delivery of public utilities.

Action Items:

- Action Item 1: Continue to study and correct any deficiencies in the drinking water distribution system in an orderly and timely manner.
- Action Item 2: Continue to provide sanitary wastewater collection and disposal services to all areas of the City.
- Action Item 3: Develop a Capital Improvements Plan for the drinking water and sanitary utility to responsibly plan for upgrades and repairs.
- Action Item 4: Make technical upgrades to equipment when feasible to improve efficiency and quality of service with a goal of automation.
- Action Item 5: Maintain and improve contractual provisions and relationships with entities providing utility services to the City.



Subgoal 4.3: Ensure high-quality public services to all residents of the City of Whiting.

Action Items:

- Action Item 1: Ensure an adequate level of fire and police protection throughout the City.
- Action Item 2: Create and/or expand specialized services for senior citizens and youths.
- Action Item 3: Continue cooperation and interaction among the various agencies and organizations that provide facilities and services to the community, including the school district, the library, and others.
- Action Item 4: Continue to communicate the value of the public school system in the City and support the high-quality educational services they provide.

Economic Development

GOAL: Achieve a compatible and market-supportable system of commercial development that is organized to provide various goods and services within the community and the greater region which Whiting serves.



Image Source: Paul Samuel



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Subgoal 5.1: Improve the economic climate and wealth potential of Whiting and its residents through a comprehensive economic development program aimed at retaining and expanding local businesses and attracting new businesses.

Action Items:

- Action Item 1: Participate in economic development programs aimed at attracting attention to business and development opportunities within Whiting.
- Action Item 2: Establish and work with business organizations that work closely with the city on implementing economic development objectives of the plan.
- Action Item 3: Create appropriate development and developer incentive programs to initiate a high level of investment in the community.
- Action Item 4: Continue to solicit private-sector interest in the improvement, enhancement, or redevelopment of the City's commercial areas.
- Action Item 5: Further develop a coordinated marketing program to market the City's quality of life and business opportunities to attract new residents, businesses, and workers.
- Action Item 6: Encourage diversification of employment opportunities within the community.
- Action Item 7: Maintain and enhance efforts for employment retention and facilitate the expansion and development plans of the local commercial and industrial businesses in compliance with the Official Comprehensive Plan for the City of Whiting, the Redevelopment Plan for the Revitalization Area, and other official plans for the City of Whiting.
- Action Item 8: Continue to partner with the Whiting-Robertsdale Chamber of Commerce to address promotion and marketing of special events to foster the business district.



Subgoal 5.2: Encourage a system of industrial, retail, and service development that maintains a diversified economic base and complements other types of local development.

Action Items:

- Action Item 1: Maintain a range of retail and service commercial activities within the City.
- Action Item 2: Continue to explore opportunities to develop “commercial niche strategies” to enhance existing commercial areas through targeted recruitment of specific commercial uses.
- Action Item 3: Continue to promote new commercial development and redevelopment within select locations.
- Action Item 4: Maintain programs that encourage the improvement of older commercial buildings and areas that are, or are becoming, functionally obsolete.
- Action Item 5: Continue to identify and prioritize economic strategies in conjunction with commercial property owners and managers to ensure economic vitality and stability in all commercial shopping areas of the City.
- Action Item 6: Continue to identify specific actions and strategies to be undertaken that will enhance the economic health of the City’s commercial areas.
- Action Item 7: Encourage the development of new “clean” industry that maximizes use of the local labor force.
- Action Item 8: Encourage new industrial development to meet performance standards for noise, air, odor, and other forms of environmental pollution.
- Action Item 9: Minimize the negative impact of industrial activities on neighboring land uses.



Subgoal 5.3: Guide economic development that is integrated both functionally and aesthetically with existing land uses and developments.

Action Items:

- Action Item 1: Continue to implement an active property maintenance and code enforcement program on industrial and commercial areas of the City.
- Action Item 2: Ensure new industrial and commercial developments complement the overall character of the City.
- Action Item 3: Maintain marketable commercial space along the 119th Street Corridor by working with the business community to ensure commercial uses are competitive and viable within the local market.
- Action Item 4: Assist and encourage development of new retail businesses and full-service restaurants in the Historic Downtown Business District through grants and assistance programs.
- Action Item 5: Continue to implement a Parking Plan that addresses on-street parking for all areas along 119th Street and Indianapolis Boulevard.



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Housing and Neighborhoods

GOAL: Guide quality neighborhood improvement and development and encourage a quality housing inventory that supports the local population while maintaining the character of the City.



Image Source: Paul Samuel



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Subgoal 6.1: Continue to maintain the predominantly single-family character of the City.

Action Items:

- Action Item 1: Review ordinances to ensure regulations support the housing developments, design, and character that attract families to the community.
- Action Item 2: Clearly define which areas of the City are appropriate for multifamily housing, including townhouses, apartments, and condominiums.
- Action Item 3: Provide an incentives package to property owners and developers to provide needed types of housing in the City, such as senior housing.
- Action Item 4: As opportunities arise, eliminate non-conforming residential uses and lots in areas zoned Residential Single Family.

Subgoal 6.2: Work to ensure neighborhood stability in all areas of the City and continue to express the economic importance of the City's quality housing stock.

Action Items:

- Action Item 1: Continue to preserve sound housing through active code enforcement.
- Action Item 2: Evaluate current strategies used to support the improvement and rehabilitation of deteriorating residential properties and update appropriately.
- Action Item 3: Seek funding sources and implement programs that assist in the maintenance and improvement of housing conditions.



Subgoal 6.3: Ensure neighborhoods retain character and include strong quality of life elements.

Action Items:

- Action Item 1: Review ordinances to ensure regulations require new and infill development to be complementary to the scale and character of surrounding residential uses.
- Action Item 2: Identify distinguishing neighborhood characteristics, such as historic homes and tree-lined streets, and ensure appropriate ordinances and regulations are in place to protect these assets.
- Action Item 3: Identify gaps in the neighborhood park and playground network and develop a strategy to infill neighborhood park sites where appropriate.
- Action Item 4: Ensure neighborhoods have pedestrian access to larger park facilities by inventorying the trail and sidewalk network, identifying gaps in the network, and creating an action plan to complete the network.
- Action Item 5: Implement community programs that increase awareness of public safety.
- Action Item 6: Continue to look for programs to provide funding for homeowners for property rehabilitation and facade improvements in the Revitalization Area.

Placemaking

GOAL: Maintain a strong and positive physical community image through public and private improvements that enhance various physical features of the community and contribute to Whiting's sense of place.



Image Source: City of Whiting



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Subgoal 7.1: Continue to emphasize the 119th Street Corridor as the heart of the Whiting community by continuing to apply special design and improvement considerations to this area.

Action Items:

- Action Item 1: Continue the Commercial Façade Improvement Program.
- Action Item 2: Review existing parking regulations and consider updating parking time limit restrictions.
- Action Item 3: Continue to implement the historic preservation standards that currently exist for the Historic Preservation District along 119th Street.
- Action Item 4: Develop public plazas for use in the Downtown Business District.
- Action Item 5: Encourage use of outdoor cafes in the Downtown Business District.
- Action Item 6: Maintain a program that reasonably and uniformly regulates commercial signage within special character districts.

Subgoal 7.2: Develop aesthetically pleasing and functionally well-designed retail and commercial area environments.

Action Items:

- Action Item 1: Establish special design and improvement standards for commercial areas that encourage high-quality site development and amenities.
- Action Item 2: Continue to enforce general commercial area design principles.
- Action Item 3: Continue the Streetscape Improvement Program.
- Action Item 4: Identify potential locations where private, off-street parking and loading improvements may be appropriate and desirable along commercial corridors.
- Action Item 5: Continue to improve the image and appearance of public rights-of-way along Indianapolis Boulevard.
- Action Item 6: Encourage use and implementation of green technology.



Subgoal 7.3: Enhance the image and character of the industrial district.

Action Items:

- Action Item 1: Support attractive gateway features at the entrances to the industrial area east of Schrage Avenue and the BP Whiting Refinery.
- Action Item 2: Update the Unified Development Ordinance to require extensive landscape and landscape buffering in the industrial areas, particularly where borders are shared with residential properties.
- Action Item 3: Modify the Unified Development Ordinance to prohibit, in light industrial areas, outdoor storage, unsightly industrial processes, and loading and service areas from being visible from public rights-of-ways or adjacent properties.

Subgoal 7.4: Rehabilitate, restore, and preserve the important historic structures, sites, and historic character of Whiting.

Action Items:

- Action Item 1: Review, update, and create design guidelines for Whiting Historic District, 119th Street, and Indianapolis Boulevard.
- Action Item 2: Assist in the construction of the Whiting-Robertsdale Historical Museum.
- Action Item 3: Continue to redevelop the former Schrage Family Home into a historic attraction.



Subgoal 7.5: Enhance quality of life amenities to draw families to the City.

Action Items:

- Action Item 1: Meet recreational social, and leisure time needs related to lakefront development and the City’s recreational needs.
- Action Item 2: Continue to schedule a variety of free community events such as concerts, parades, festivals, and holiday events.
- Action Item 3: Continue to support the urban forestry program to promote tree maintenance, planting, and maintaining of public trees within the community.
- Action Item 4: Continue to improve communication to residents in an effort to increase awareness of, and participation in, programs, services, and events within the City.
- Action Item 5: Maintain and enhance the residential neighborhoods, utilizing strict and equitable enforcement of all building and zoning codes and ordinances.

Subgoal 7.6: Celebrate and clearly demarcate entrances into the community through signage, public art, aesthetic enhancements, or other appropriate means.

Action Items:

- Action Item 1: Develop cohesive wayfinding signage system.
- Action Item 2: Further develop and continue to implement a landscaping program and maintenance programs that beautify special character areas.



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Parks, Recreation, and Open Space

GOAL: Provide passive and active recreation for residents and visitors that capitalize on the unique natural and man-made resources in the City of Whiting.



Image Source: City of Whiting



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Subgoal 8.1: Maintain Whihala Beach and Whiting Lakefront Park as prominent destination points within the Northwest Indiana Region.

Action Items:

- Action Item 1: Develop a signage system, in conjunction with improvements to Whiting Lakefront Park, to promote park traffic along 119th Street.
- Action Item 2: Develop a marketing plan for these facilities.
- Action Item 3: Work with the Visitors Bureau and other regional marketing entities to market the parks to a larger audience.

Subgoal 8.2: Develop and maintain cooperative agreements between the school district, City, and other organizations to increase the recreational opportunities available to residents.

Action Items:

- Action Item 1: Continue to take advantage of the shared services agreement between the City, School, and Library.
- Action Item 2: Continue to provide educational grants to school and library when financially feasible.



Subgoal 8.3: Plan for appropriate recreational and natural habitat modifications to the lakefront as a result of fluctuating levels of Lake Michigan water.

Action Items:

- Action Item 1: Develop an action plan based on changes predicted for the lakefront that outlines specific tasks, time-frames, implementation plan, and costs associated with needed modifications.
- Action Item 2: Continue to strengthen lakefront revetment to protect public access.

Community Profile



Image Source: City of Whiting



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Community Profile



Background History

In 1850, the federal government ceded the area known as Whiting to the State of Indiana. At that time, Whiting consisted primarily of swamps and woodlands with sand ridges along Lake Michigan. The Michigan Southern Railroad, the first of three rail lines to pass through Whiting, established their first line in 1851. Initial settlers were German and were lured by employment opportunities within the rail industry. The first post office was established in 1871.

In 1889, Standard Oil Company began purchasing property along the lakefront. The company was seeking a site for the refinement of crude oil with access to rail and water transportation. Whiting was chosen as the refinery site and became an integral part of the Whiting community. In 1880, the census bureau counted 115 people in Whiting. The population increased by approximately 2,000 people once the refinery was constructed.



Figure 9.1: Refinery operations in Whiting date back to 1889.
Image Source: Whiting-Robertsdale Historical Society.

Whiting incorporated as a town in 1895 and received city status in 1903. With the incorporation came amenities such as the lakefront park and public library. Standard Oil provided land and funding for the Memorial Community Center in 1923. The Community Center served as the nub for social and athletic activities in Whiting. By the early 1920's, the refinery employed over 4,000 people, and the city's population grew to approximately 10,000 residents.

By the mid-1960's, Whiting began to experience a population decline. Expansion was limited by Chicago to the west, East Chicago to the east, Hammond to the south, and Lake Michigan to the north. Whiting did not have a significant new housing supply for young adults. Consequently, that population began to relocate out of the immediate area. A project to construct "Camelot on the Lake," a new apartment complex, was proposed but did not move ahead.

Today, Whiting is a dynamic city that cherishes its history and historic buildings. It is home to the sixth largest oil refinery in the United States, the BP Whiting Refinery. Whiting's streets are named after city founders and lined with beautiful homes. The commercial districts are populated by family-owned businesses and specialty shops. A rich ethnic heritage is complemented by a welcoming, friendly atmosphere. Whiting is home to a range of ancestries, including Slovak, Polish, Irish, German, English, and Italian households. Whiting celebrates its traditions and hosts festivals, summer concerts, and parades. The breathtaking skyline of Chicago can be seen across Lake Michigan from Whiting's shoreline and is only 20 minutes away from the downtown Loop.



Population and Age Distribution

The population of Whiting has been significantly decreasing since 1930 but that decline has slowed since the 1980's (see Figure 9.2). The 2020 Census shows the City continues to lose population and has decreasing by approximately 6% since 2010. This is unlike Lake County, which gained approximately 1% in population since 2010, and the State of Indiana, which grew by 5%. The age distribution of Whiting has remained similar to the 2010 distribution and is similar to peer communities. There is an even distribution between males and females, and there is a slight population decline between the ages of 20 - 29, which is often when young adults leave home to attend college, start work, or begin their own families and relocation is common (See Figure 9.3).

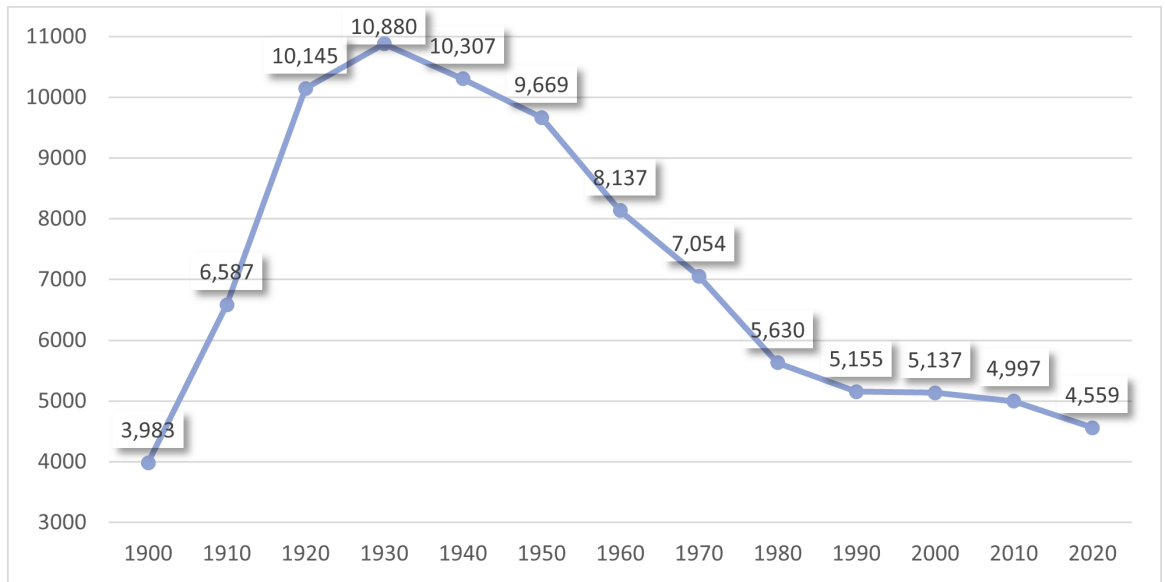


Figure 9.2: Whiting's population peaked in the 1930's.
 Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1900 - 2020

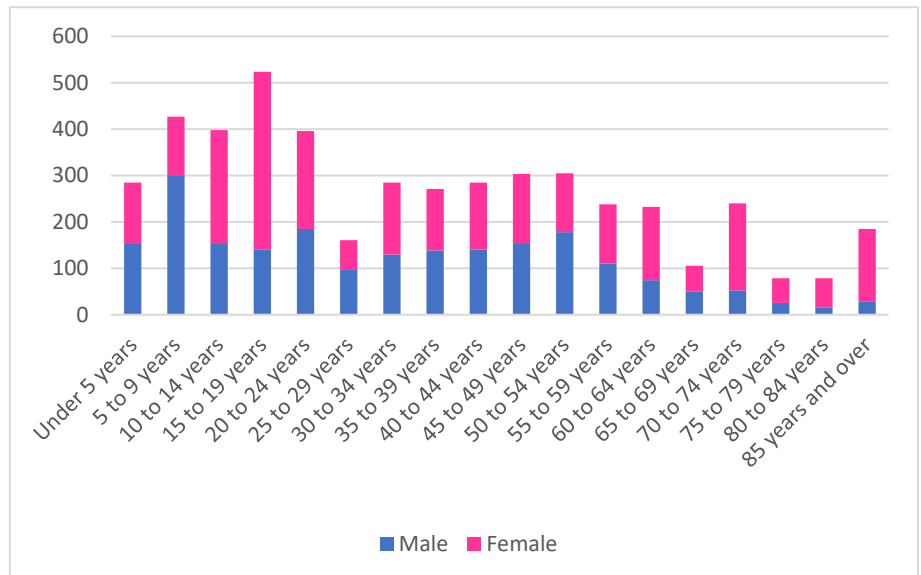


Figure 9.3: Comparison of Age Distribution in Whiting
 Data Source: 2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Community Profile



Race

Whiting diversity is growing. Approximately 42 percent of the population is of a race other than white. It closely resembles the diversity of Lake County and the Chicago Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) (See Figure 9.5). The percentage of persons with Hispanic origin in Whiting (49 percent) is significantly higher than that of the other comparison areas (see Figure 9.4).

Education

The level of educational attainment for Whiting closely parallels that of Lake County, with a high rate of high school graduates but significantly less higher education levels beyond high school. While the figures are close, compared to the other areas, Whiting has the highest level of persons without a high school diploma. The Chicago MSA has the highest level of persons with college degrees. Only 25 percent of the population in Whiting has a college degree, compared to 32 percent in Lake County, 46 percent in the Chicago MSA, 36 percent in Indiana, and 42 percent for the nation (see Figure 9.6).

Housing and Building Permits

The number of housing units in Whiting is declining. In 2010, there were 2,197 housing units, and in 2020, there were 2,094 housing units. This decline in the number of housing units may be because of the City's efforts in transitioning two-family housing into single-family housing. This is unlike the rest of Lake County which shows an increase in housing units between 2010 and 2020 (See Figure 9.7).

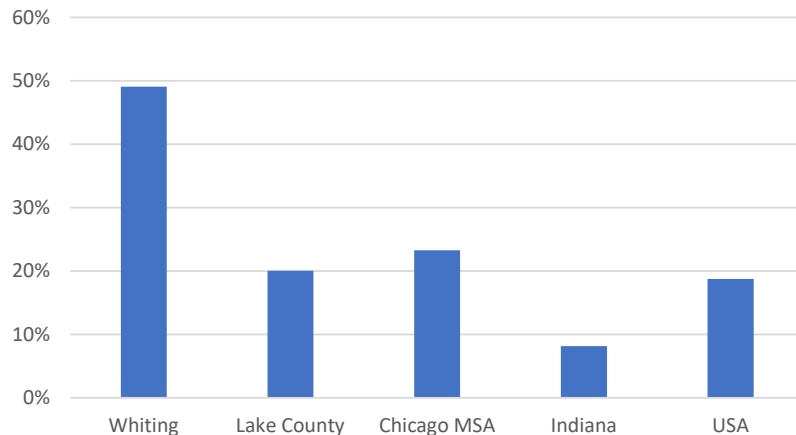


Figure 9.4: Percentage of Hispanic Population Comparison
Data Source: 2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates

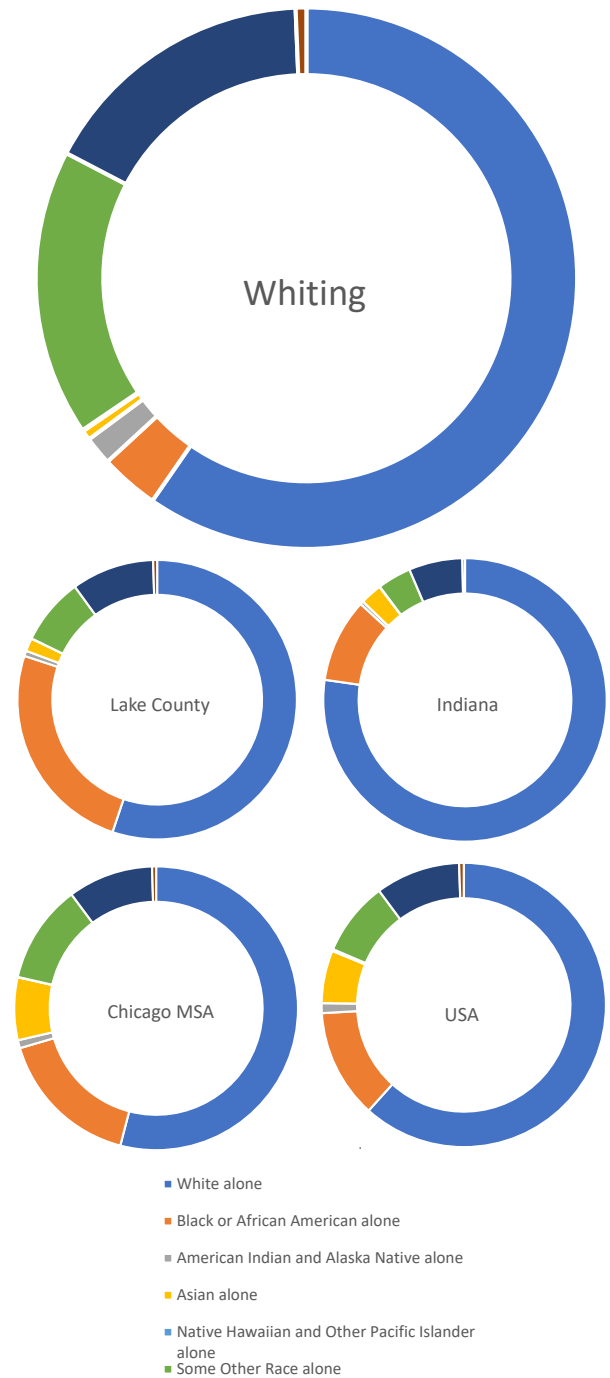


Figure 9.5: Comparison of Race Trends
Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 Census



Whiting does not have the opportunity to annex since the city’s corporate boundaries are bordered by the City of Hammond, the City of East Chicago, and Lake Michigan, forcing the city to rely on infill development. The unavailability of open land within or surrounding Whiting prevents a large number of new residential building permits to be issued. Since 2003, Whiting has experienced some growth in new residential structures due to infill development.

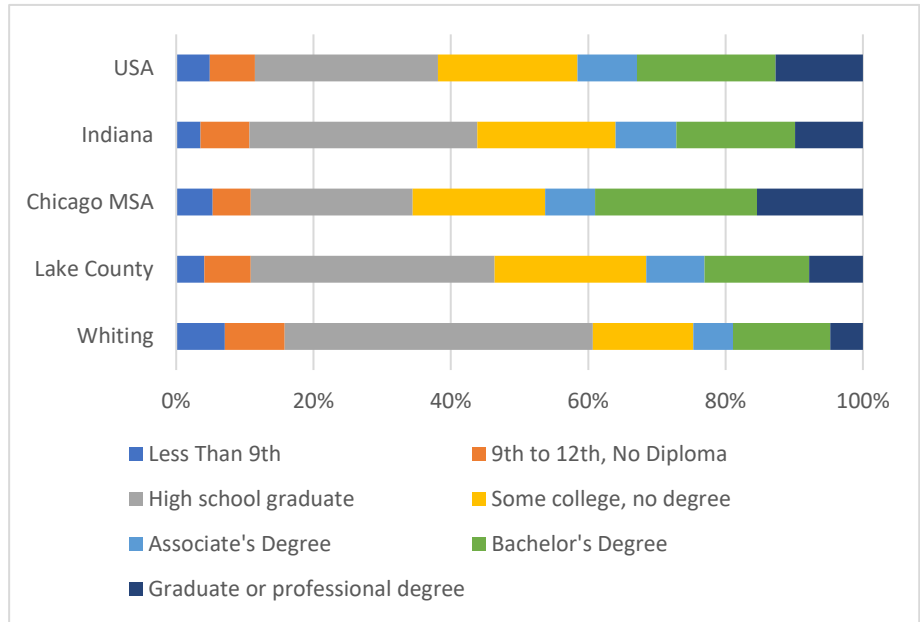


Figure 9.6: Comparison of Educational Trends
Data Source: 2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates

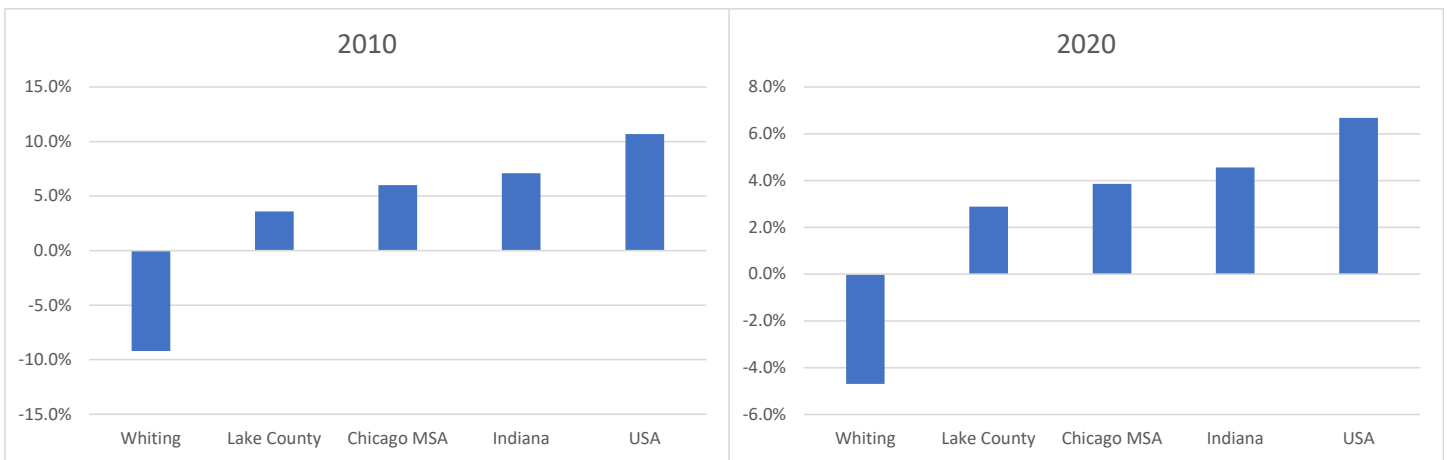


Figure 9.7: Comparison of Number of Housing Units
Data Source: 2020 US Census and 2010 US Census

Community Profile



Income

The 2020 estimated per capita income of Whiting (\$24,222) is 32 percent lower than the per capita income of the nation, while the per capita income of the entire Chicago MSA is 12 percent higher than that of the nation (see Figure 9.8).

This same disparity is seen in median household incomes, where Whiting’s household income (\$46,960) is also 28 percent lower than that of the nation, and is 18 percent lower than the median household income of Lake County. See Figure 9.9 to see the comparison of income levels.

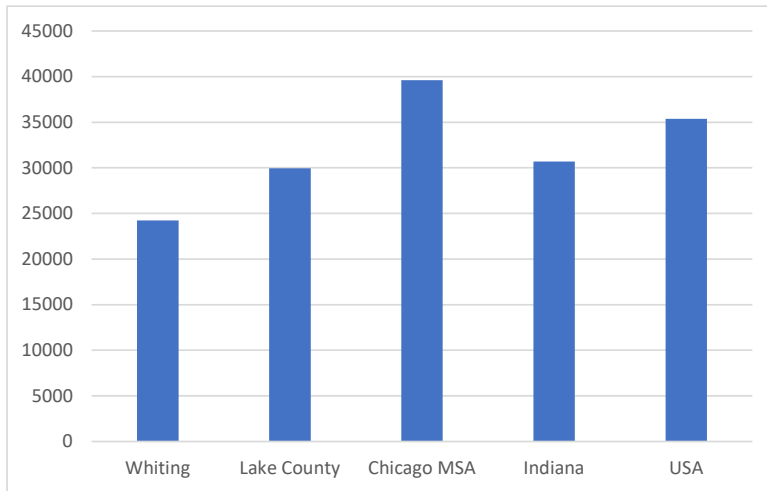


Figure 9.8: Comparison of Per Capita Income
Data Source: 2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates

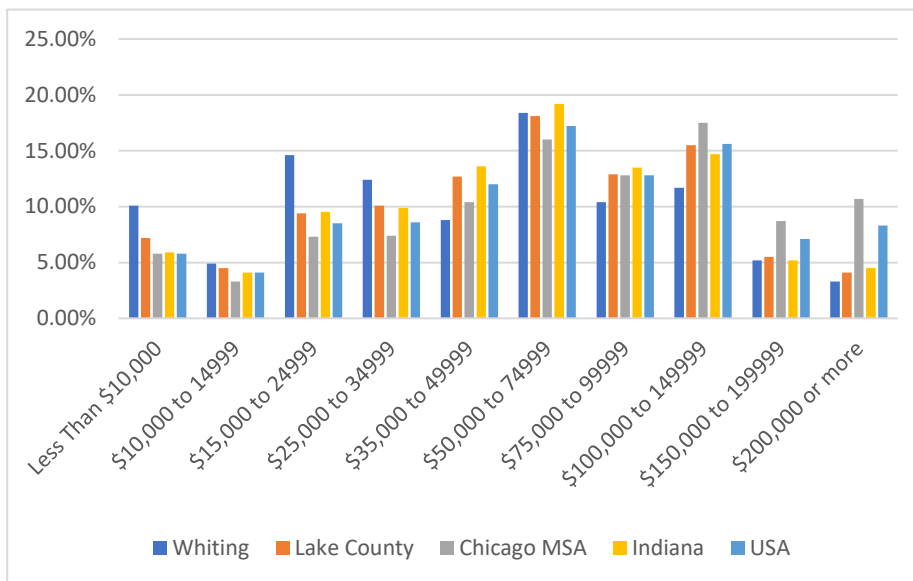


Figure 9.9: Comparison of Median Household Income
Data Source: 2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates



Employed Population

The employment rate in Whiting is 52.6 percent. Most of those employed in Whiting are in occupations that focus on arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, and food services (21 percent), educational services, health care, and social assistance (20 percent), and manufacturing (16 percent). This is somewhat comparable to Lake County that has a similar employment base (manufacturing at 15 percent and educational services, health care, and social assistance at 24 percent) (see Figure 9.10). The diverse employment base is a good indicator of a stable employment in Whiting.

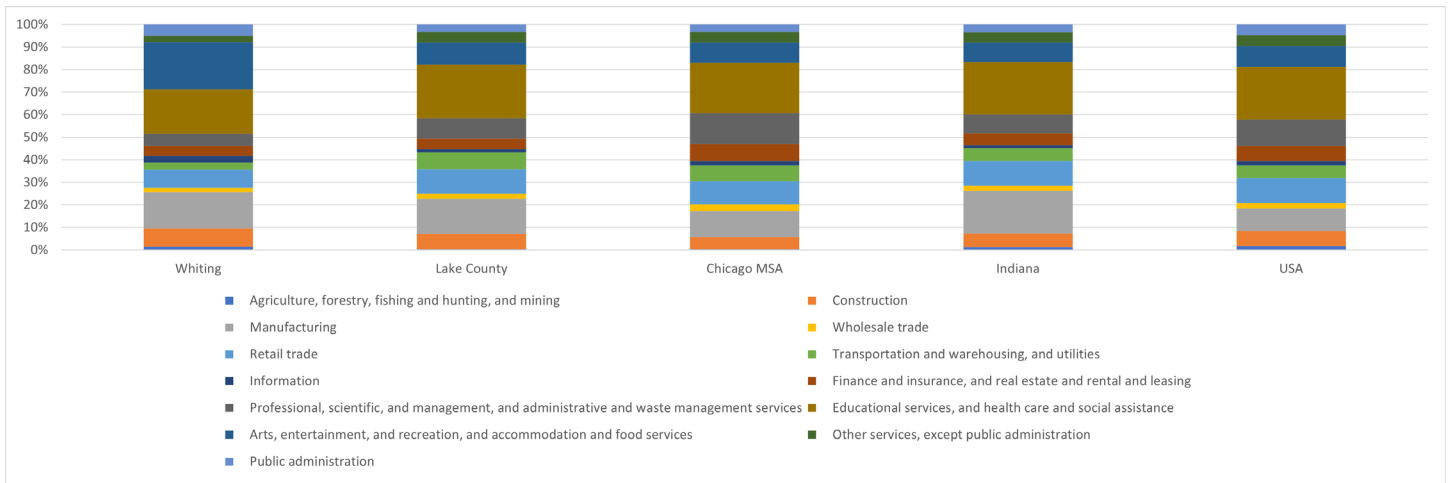


Figure 9.10: Occupation Comparison
 Data Source: 2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates

RESOLUTION NO. CC-2022-07

**COMMON COUNCIL
OF THE
CITY OF WHITING, INDIANA**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WHITING, INDIANA,
APPROVING AND ADOPTING THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR THE CITY OF WHITING AS
AN OFFICIAL DOCUMENT TO GUIDE LAND USE DEVELOPMENT**

WHEREAS the Whiting Plan Commission (“Commission”) did on September 27, 2022, hold a legally advertised public hearing to consider the adoption of the herein attached Exhibit A “2022 Comprehensive Plan Update”; and

WHEREAS at said public hearing the public was provided an opportunity to make comments on said plan until all comments, objections and remonstrances were heard; and

WHEREAS the Commission found that the process to prepare said plan for the Whiting Common Council (“Council”) provided opportunity for public input and that it meets the statutory requirements of IC 36-7-4-500 SERIES – COMPREHENSIVE PLAN for the promotion of public health, safety, morals, convenience, order or the general welfare and for the sake of efficiency and economy in the process of development; and

WHEREAS the Commission certified, by and through Resolution WPC-2022-01, a favorable recommendation for approval of the plan to the Whiting Common Council as the legislative body in accordance with IC 36-7-4-508(b); and

WHEREAS the Commission made available the requisite copies of the approved said comprehensive plan to the Common Council, the Mayor, and the Clerk-Treasurer; and

WHEREAS the Commission requested by and through Resolution WPC-2022-01 that the Whiting Common Council adopt in accordance with IC36-7-4-509 and by resolution the approved and certified plan as the official document to guide land use development in the City of Whiting; and

WHEREAS the Council finds that it is in the best interest of the City of Whiting to adopt said plan.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Common Council of the City of Whiting, Lake County, Indiana that the Whiting Common Council as the legislative body hereby approves and adopts the attached as the Comprehensive Plan of the City of Whiting.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Whiting Common Council requests that the Whiting Clerk-Treasurer file and record in accordance with IC 36-7-4-509(b) one copy of the approved and adopted Comprehensive Plan as an official document of the City of Whiting with the Office of the Lake County Recorder.

4th DULY PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Common Council of the City of Whiting, Indiana on this
day of October, 2022.

Steve Spebar
STEVE SPEBAR, Mayor

Chris Sarvanidis
CHRIS SARVANIDIS, Councilman

Rebecca Unate Michko
REBECA UNATE, Councilwoman

Tom Michniewicz
TOM MICHNIEWICZ, Councilman

Nick Suarez
NICK SUAREZ, Councilman

Shawn M. Turpin
SHAWN M. TURPIN, Councilman

ATTEST:

John Haynes
JOHN HAYNES, Clerk-Treasurer



September 28, 2022

Whiting Common Council
City of Whiting
1443 – 119th Street
Whiting, Indiana 46394

IN RE: TRANSMITTAL LETTER FOR THE WHITING PLAN
COMMISSION APPROVED AND CERTIFIED
2022 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

Dear Council Members:

Please be advised that on September 27, 2022, the Whiting Plan Commission adopted Resolution No. WPC-2201-01, a copy of which is attached hereto, which certifies the 2022 Comprehensive Plan Update and provides a favorable recommendation to the Council to approve said plan as an official document guiding land use development in the City of Whiting.

On behalf of the Commission, I thank you in advance for your consideration, review, and cooperation in this final step of the plan's approval process. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me. A copy of the plan as certified has been provided to all Council Members.

Sincerely,

Rebeca Michko
President
Whiting Plan Commission

cc: Mayor Steve Spebar
Clerk-Treasurer John Haynes
Members of the Whiting Plan Commission
City Attorney Denise L. Sejna
Zoning Administrator Harry Peterson

WPC RESOLUTION NO. 2022-01

PLAN COMMISSION

CITY OF WHITING, INDIANA

A RESOLUTION APPROVING AND CERTIFYING A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN TO THE WHITING COMMON COUNCIL FOR ITS REVIEW, CONSIDERATION AND APPROVAL AS AN OFFICIAL DOCUMENT GUIDING LAND USE DEVELOPMENT IN THE CITY OF WHITING

WHEREAS the City of Whiting Comprehensive Plan was previously adopted in April 2010; and

WHEREAS after ten (10) years, the plan needs to be reviewed and revised and then presented to the Commission and the Common Council; and

WHEREAS the City administration has proposed revisions to the current Comprehensive Plan to the Plan Commission for review and possible adoption; and

WHEREAS copies of the Comprehensive Plan were made available for public inspection and comment in the Office of the Whiting Clerk –Treasurer and at the Whiting Public Library; and

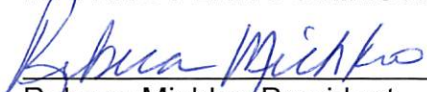
WHEREAS a public hearing was held in accordance with IC 36-7-4-507 on the Comprehensive Plan on the 27th day of September 2022 for the purpose of hearing public comments on the final draft of the Comprehensive Plan prior to Commission approval and certification to the Whiting Common Council; and

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Plan Commission of the City of Whiting, County of Lake, Indiana, that:


1. The final draft of the Comprehensive Plan, dated September 27, 2022, is hereby approved.
2. The Commission hereby certifies with a favorable recommendation the approved final draft of the Comprehensive Plan to the Whiting Common Council in accordance with IC 36-7-4-508(b).
3. The Commission shall make available copies of the approved final draft of the Comprehensive Plan as certified for the members of the Common Council, the Mayor, and the Clerk-Treasurer;
4. The Commission asks the Whiting Common Council to adopt in accordance with IC 36-7-4-509 and by resolution the final draft of the Comprehensive Plan as the official document to guide land use development in the City of Whiting.

ALL OF WHICH IS RECOMMENDED AND APPROVED FOR PASSAGE TO
THE COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WHITING, INDIANA THIS 27th
DAY OF September, 2022.


WHITING PLAN COMMISSION:




Rebeca Michko, President




Bryan Ciers



Michael Mantich



Shawn Turpin



Thomas Carter



Kathleen Kazmierski



Nancy Stolman

ATTEST: 

Kathleen Kazmierski, Secretary