

LMGIS

LAKE MICHIGAN GATEWAY

Implementation Strategy

August 2014



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CONTENTS

5	Executive Summary
11	A Special Opportunity Introduction Strengths & Opportunities Weaknesses & Threats Goal & Objectives
19	Strategy Brand Attractions Connections Appearance
53	Implementation Action Plan Capital Improvements Land Improvements and Development Operational Improvements Public Policy Improvements Priority Actions and Improvements
	Appendix: Opportunity Analysis Comparable Destinations Street Cross Sections/Supplemental Graphics



Study Area

Executive Summary

Dear Community Leaders,

For many years, you have understood the value of your location and the unique potential of having not only a great beach, but actually a trio of assets that also includes Lighthouse Place Premium Outlets and Blue Chip Casino. You and other stakeholders have launched many important initiatives to strengthen your assets and infrastructure, and you have made significant investments in downtown that legitimately position it as a fourth asset in your lakefront package. In addition, since 2001, you have initiated or participated in at least eight master plans for portions of the study area that includes the lakefront, outlets, casino and downtown. Now, in order to fully capitalize on the potential of the area, you recognized the need to integrate and coordinate the recommendations of each of the plans in one compelling, sustainable and market-supported strategy.

This Lake Michigan Gateway Implementation Strategy (LMGIS) provides specific recommendations for a series of coordinated and incremental public and private sector improvements, operational improvements and public policies that when systematically completed will help unlock the tremendous potential of the study area.

A Special Opportunity

What makes this initiative so important?

The Lake Michigan Gateway Implementation Strategy is based on a powerful alignment of your abundant study area resources, an enormous and improving regional marketplace, and the passionate interests of key community stakeholders.

Your most important asset, your extensive lakefront, including Washington Park, is the biggest and best positioned lakefront in the region, serving the Chicago and Indianapolis metropolitan areas and everyone in between. In addition to your seasonal gem, you have three other year-round magnets, the outlets, the casino and downtown, within one mile of the lakefront and each other, and right in the middle of it all, is about 36 acres of largely underdeveloped property which, with carefully considered improvements, can be readily accessed by car, train and even by boat! In addition to your natural, structural and

cultural resources, you have uncommon financial resources through the North TIF District that are intended to be invested in study area infrastructure and redevelopment.

The economy is improving and the marketplace is vast, nearby and attracted to destinations like yours. For instance, about a third of the 7.7 million households within a one and one-half hour drive have incomes over \$75,000 and 25% have visited a beach within the last year. While other regional beach, shopping and gaming destinations exist, Michigan City offers a package of attractions that is unrivaled and can be improved and expanded. Importantly, on a national level, even communities with major natural attractions that have been major tourist destinations for generations are expanding their offerings to include four-season activities such as indoor sports and water parks in order to stretch the seasonality of existing attractions.

Clearly, you and other community stakeholders deeply appreciate the value of your considerable resources and the potential of your



Gateway to Harbor Country

extensive marketplace. In fact, support for this LMGIS initiative has been overwhelmingly positive. The overriding challenge, it seems, has been to align the interests of at least nine jurisdictional entities and dozens of key property and business owners. Fortunately, you and other study area stakeholders have demonstrated a commitment to overcome the organizational and economic challenges of the past and focus on the LMGIS goal: to make Michigan City:

Indiana's Great Lakefront Destination Community

In fact, you may find no better time, starting now and pushing over the next five years, to: support a cluster of year-round activities and destinations for the whole family; easily access and navigate the area; experience an extraordinarily attractive environment; and increase private sector investment to produce more jobs and more tax revenue.

Indiana's Great Lakefront Destination Community

We recommend that you and other key stakeholders adopt and systematically execute the Lake Michigan Gateway Implementation Strategy, which is to:

Refine and consistently communicate the **brand**;

Develop more year-round and secondary **attractions**;

Simplify all the **connections**;

Create and maintain a memorable **appearance**;

Act quickly and sustainably to gain and maintain **momentum**.

Michigan City already has a unique (and potentially awesome) experience to sell. Unfortunately, the current brand strategy, tools and communications are diluted and weak. Therefore, we recommend that you create an integrated **brand** strategy across all markets along with exciting imagery, messaging and other unique tools that communicate your story in a variety of applications. New and refurbished attractions, better connections and a more attractive



Community stakeholders attending a LMGIS public meeting held on April 16, 2014.



Washington Park Beach on a busy summer day

Credit: Rich Murphy

image will deliver the experience that reinforces the consumer's brand expectation.

Your existing magnet attractions are good and you should make them even better by improving each with highly engaging, up-to-date, high-capacity activities for all ages, starting with Washington Park; the anchor of the Lake Michigan Gateway. Through rehabilitation of existing features and construction of new magnet and secondary **attractions**, such as an aerial adventure course on Bismarck Hill, you can reposition Washington Park as a world-class eco-recreation attraction that will drive complementary private sector investment in the new Entertainment District; the centerpiece of the Lake Michigan Gateway. Located right in the middle of the existing attractions, the Entertainment District is big enough to accommodate another four-season attraction, plus many other secondary, dining and hospitality destinations and residential options, all in an amenity-rich, walkable environment.

We also recommend that you work closely with the owners and managers of the Lighthouse Place Premium Outlets and the Blue Chip Casino to strengthen their unique offerings. Both magnets can be improved to be less insular and more engaging to your target market. You should also continue to improve the Uptown Arts District, consistent with the Michigan City Downtown Action Agenda 2013, and you should support appropriate residential and commercial in-fill development throughout the study area as the economy continues to improve. Because it is a principal route to all of the magnets, you should also work closely with property owners along Route 12 to enforce existing codes, in the near-term, and redevelop their properties into more visitor oriented, secondary attractions and supporting land uses.

Your physical **connections** to and between magnet attractions are compromised by expanses of unattractive, one-way streets that disengage and disorient visitors arriving by car. New wayfinding signs help, but aren't enough, by themselves, to create the high level of comfort and hospitality that first time visitors demand. In addition, bicyclist and pedestrian accommodations throughout most of the



Entertainment District along Route 12



Improved connections on Route 12

study area are weak. Instead, we recommend that you restore the street grid north of Route 12, restore two-way traffic on the one-way streets south of Route 12, create more on-street parking, dedicate bicycle lanes (when possible), and develop a handsome street environment that visitors expect in a vacation destination. As a central feature of the LMGIS, we strongly recommend that you create a whole new level of motorist, bicyclist and pedestrian connectivity and comfort along Route 12 by reconfiguring the roadway as a traditional, downtown street complete with on-street parking, off-street bicycle facilities, spacious and handsome walkways, and a new three-way intersection with a new segment of a similarly configured Franklin Street that extends from Route 12, north to Washington Park.

You should also improve pedestrian (and boater) connectivity along and across Trail Creek by creating a riverwalk with pedestrian bridges at key locations such as the end of 2nd Street and at 6th Street.

The picturesque shoreline and dunes are breathtaking, but the corridors leading to them from nearly every direction are dull, by comparison. While creating new attractions and improved connections, you also need to establish and enforce resort-quality standards for private development and public improvements within the study area and along its major approach corridors in order to create and manage a consistently distinctive and memorable **appearance**. In order to further reinforce the brand message, we have recommended a series of playful “follies” in the form of well-scaled public art that should become a permanent part of every major corridor and public space in the study area.

Gain and Maintain Momentum

Even though you are blessed with significant natural, physical and financial resources, you must keep many, often competing, interests in mind as you consider “what to do, next.” The LMGIS describes a series of correlated public policy, capital improvement, land development and operational actions, which when systematically executed will generate and maintain **momentum**. We have choreographed, as best as possible, slightly more than \$22 million (including initiatives-



North Franklin Street looking south towards library

in-progress) of Priority Actions and Investments through 2016. Despite our best collective efforts, you will need to remain flexible in order to respond to unanticipated opportunities that align with the LMGIS. However, we strongly urge you to resist the temptation to start any project, just because it has a short timeline. You should only advance projects – public and private – that advance your goal and support your strategy!

First, the Redevelopment Commission and City (including its Parks Department) need to approve and adopt this LMGIS. Next, the mayor should create a Project Management Team to pick up where the Project Steering Committee will leave off and provide the critically important, multi-dimensional perspective for virtually every implementation action. Then the Project Management Team needs to help you align the policies, resources and actions of the city, parks department, Redevelopment Commission and other jurisdictional stakeholders and systematically execute the plan with day-to-day management provided by city staff. In particular, the Redevelopment Commission needs to estimate its bonding capacity in order to determine the total

investment that it can make in public improvements and assistance to qualified land developers.

During the fall of 2014, you should advance existing projects and initiate new projects totaling approximately \$4.0 million, as further described in the 2014 Priority Actions and Investments section of the LMGIS. You should immediately complete a new brand strategy and related promotional materials in order to get the word out to all of the current stakeholders and also to potential investors. At the same time, in collaboration with the parks department, you should complete a master plan for Washington Park and advance the preliminary design and engineering of the aerial adventure park at Bismarck Hill. Also, this fall, you should start the preliminary design and engineering of selected street improvements.

Among the most important and least predictable initiatives, you will need to partner with key property owners in order to package and promote redevelopment opportunities to qualified developers. While we anticipate a great deal of interest from potential investors and developers, we simply cannot predict the timing or specifics of any given development. What we can predict, however, is that developers will expect to see a major commitment from the city to executing the LMGIS public improvements and a significant and coordinated commitment from both property owners and jurisdictional officials to provide assembled, accessible, clean land that is attractively priced (often free) and appropriately entitled (or nearly so).

We strongly recommend that the Redevelopment Commission always reserve sufficient funding in order to support the expansion of existing magnets and the construction of new magnets and secondary attractions and their related infrastructure. In return, we think that new, private sector investment worth three to four times your public investment could be in progress over the next few years.

Michigan City Now!

The high-energy Michigan City Now! initiative clearly demonstrates the wide-spread understanding and support for the concepts behind LMGIS, as well as the community's impatience with more studies of the area. As you will see when you review the balance of this document, this Lake Michigan Gateway Implementation Strategy is not just another master plan or merely an ambitious list of public works projects. Rather, it is a market supported vision, a flexible development framework, and a series of incremental actions and investments that must be initiated by both public and private sector leaders in order to reach your goal.

Together, you can make Michigan City:

Indiana's Great Lakefront Destination Community

Thank you for asking the Hitchcock Design Group team to help you craft this exciting strategy.

Sincerely,

Hitchcock Design Group, along with
Market and Feasibility Advisors,
Selbert Perkins Design Collaborative,
Nelson Nygaard,
DLZ

A SPECIAL OPPORTUNITY

Introduction

On behalf of, and in cooperation with city leaders, the Michigan City Redevelopment Commission engaged a team of consultants led by Hitchcock Design Group to prepare this Lake Michigan Gateway Implementation Strategy (LMGIS). For years, community leaders have understood that the city enjoys an extraordinary lakefront location; only one hour from Chicago, which should give it a distinct competitive advantage compared to Michigan's "harbor country" communities located farther to the east and north. However, despite several recent planning and construction initiatives, they also recognize that the 760 acre study area still hasn't fully capitalized on its apparent geographic advantage.

The LMGIS is not the first in-depth look at the study area. Since 2001, the city has sponsored or participated in eight plans for portions of the study area that include the lakefront, the casino, the Uptown Arts District and the outlet center, collectively known as the "North End." While each plan had a specific focus, each was built on the premise that the city, and particularly the study area, has special assets that must be cultivated for the long-term benefit of the community. Building on previous initiatives and public outreach, the Hitchcock Design Group team worked closely with the city's Director of Planning and Redevelopment and the Project Steering Committee to craft the LMGIS Opportunity Analysis, summarized here and included in the Appendix, along with the Preliminary and Final Strategies.

The Lake Michigan Gateway Implementation Strategy provides specific recommendations for a series of coordinated public and private sector investments, operational improvements and public policies that when systematically implemented will help unlock the widely recognized potential of the study area.

Strengths & Opportunities

The Lake Michigan Gateway Implementation Strategy is based on the powerful alignment of abundant study area *resources*, a compelling regional *marketplace*, and the interests of key community *stakeholders*.



Resources

Michigan City's combination of proximate natural and commercial attractions, all within a couple of hours of 3 major population centers is unique among destination communities in the United States.

Located 60 miles from downtown Chicago, 170 miles from downtown Indianapolis and 225 miles from downtown Detroit, the study area includes not only the biggest and best positioned lakefront in Northwest Indiana, but the biggest and best positioned lakefront to serve 20 million people within 150 miles. The study area is also immediately adjacent to the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, and more conveniently accessed than Michigan's well-developed harbor country along with all of Wisconsin's destination communities. In addition, the study area includes a significant scale and variety of natural, cultural, physical, financial and human resources that simply can't be found or duplicated in competing lakefront communities.

Michigan City boasts a nearly two mile beach, undulating dunes, a breathtaking view from Bismarck Hill, and the opportunity to dock your boat along a one mile portion of Trail Creek, a wonderful and navigable river that cuts through a third of the study area. This combination of pristine and developed features at one destination is rare.

Washington Park, a seasonal, 137 acre lakefront destination with an additional undeveloped 26 acres at Bismarck Hill, anchors an impressive group of year-round, magnet attractions that includes Lighthouse Place Premium Outlets and the Blue Chip Casino, each

approximately one-half mile from the lakefront and from each other. The Uptown Arts District, Trail Creek, the Washington Park Zoo, and the marina provide important, nearby, secondary attractions where visitors can extend their stay beyond their initial destination. The public library, designed by architect Helmut Jahn, is centrally located, south of Route 12, at the northern terminus of the Uptown Arts District on Franklin Street.

Right in the middle of the study area, between Route 12 and Trail Creek, is approximately 36 acres of largely underdeveloped property. The city controls three acres including the former News Dispatch building and aging police and municipal center facilities. The 12 acre, former lumber yard is privately owned, with the balance of the properties in this district owned by several private investors. On the west side of Michigan Boulevard, south of Route 12, the city owns six and one-half acres of vacant property, formerly the site of a hospital. The hospital site is part of a 50 acre area of underutilized parcels, along Trail Creek previously studied in the 2007 Trail Creek Plan prepared by Lohan Anderson.

Overall, the study area is easily accessed by car, train and boat. The circulation experience within the study area is compromised of an inhospitable one-way street system that creates confusion for unknowing visitors. However, the recent installation of new directional sign graphics significantly improves wayfinding. The casino and the outlets have excellent exposure and are accessed from the existing street grid and high capacity roadways. The lakefront and Washington Park are accessed from a one-way street pair that merges back into two-way Franklin Street before it crosses the railroad tracks. Amtrak stops at a small station near Trail Creek and the track runs parallel to and crosses Trail Creek in the northern third of the study area. The South Shore commuter rail line, which runs in the middle of 11th Street, is the book-end at the southern boundary of the study. The city and Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District (NICTD) plan to keep the current alignment and improve the ROW and station per a recently completed study.

Nearly all of the study area falls within the North TIF District which funds most public improvements and developer assistance. The district



Washington Park Zoo



Lake Michigan and Washington Park from Bismarck Hill



Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore



Trail Creek



Blue Chip Casino



East Pierhead Lighthouse



Lighthouse Place Premium Outlets



Uptown Arts District

has a net assessed value of approximately \$190 million, generates approximately \$4.8 million in property tax revenue per year, and has approximately \$16 million in cash. With the 1997 TIF expansion, which includes the casino, set to expire in 2027, and the recent, adverse state legislation, the Redevelopment Commission is considering its options for funding future public and private investments. In addition to TIF funding, capital improvements in the area can be funded by the city (including riverboat gaming funds), private development and private donations for projects with special community significance.

In addition to its other assets, Michigan City has a large, educated work force unlike other small coastal cities.

Marketplace

To many outsiders, Michigan City is known as a summer lakefront destination, close enough to the Chicago region to be convenient, yet far enough away to feel like an escape. Once known as the Atlantic City of the West, it was a destination for Chicago-area tourists who came, often by ferry, to enjoy the beach and amusements at Washington Park. Today, Michigan City features four magnets, three in the study area, plus nearby Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, each of which draw millions of visitors every year for mostly single purpose visits. In the future, as the national economy slowly improves, the relatively weak local demographics, the robust regional demographics, the current visitation patterns and the well documented national trends challenge Michigan City to sell its entire package and position itself as a premier lakefront destination.

The study area already relies on and will continue to require a regional market for support. The local, 20 minute market is only 76,000 people with 30,000 households earning an average annual income of \$58,000. By comparison, consider that 20 million people in 7.7 million households live within 150 miles of Michigan City. Of those households, 2.5 million have annual incomes over \$75,000, and 25% have visited a beach within the last year. Of course, they can and will continue to visit Wisconsin and Michigan destinations, but except for the Wisconsin Dells (which only has indoor beaches), no other regional destination offers the package of attractions that Michigan



Visitor Market Area

Outdoor Magnet Attractions	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
National Lakeshore												
Washington Park Improvements												
Festivals and Major Events												
Canada Park Improvements												
Outdoor Linger Longer Attractions	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Marina												
Tour Boats												
Mini golf, paintball, go-carts												
Trail Creek Improvements												
Indoor Magnet Attractions	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Lighthouse Place Outlets												
Blue Chip Casino												
Tournament Sports Indoor Venue												
Indoor Water Park												
Indoor Linger Longer Attractions	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Downtown Arts and Dining												
Indoor Children's Attraction												
Large Destination Restaurant												
Destination Spa												
Retail Entertainment Dining												
Large Destination Retail Store												
Movie Theater												

Building a Year Round Visitor Economy

City offers or can offer with the right strategy and investments, and no other similar destination is as close to Chicago and Indianapolis as Michigan City.

Clearly, the beach is a powerful magnet. In fact, some northeast U.S. beach communities have been major tourist destinations for generations. Today, on a national level, major attraction destinations offer a combination of stunning natural assets and a package of significant leisure, entertainment, sports and recreation activities. Many of these work day and night in all four seasons. Indoor facilities for soccer, volleyball, basketball and other sports draw visitors for regular events and fill hotels and restaurants for tournaments. Indoor recreation facilities, such as water parks, offer year-round getaways for families and stretch the seasonality of the existing attractions.

Stakeholders

Based on previous and recent community outreach, confidential interviews with key community and study area stakeholders, and on-going collaboration with the Project Steering Committee, the community has demonstrated a deep appreciation of its assets and regional market position, and is eager to improve its visitor hospitality and to strengthen its economy. What is also abundantly clear is that the community is tired of talking and is ready to support a coherent, prioritized framework that will be based on timely returns of investment. Michigan City Now! is another initiative that represents this passion and commitment of the community.

Jurisdictionally, the city is responsible for public improvements and operations (specifically maintenance and economic development) in most of the study area. The Redevelopment Commission manages the TIF funds, a primary source of study area capital funding. Other sources of study area funding include the City and riverboat gaming funds as well as a variety of grants. Washington Park is managed by the city's Parks Department and relies on multiple funding sources for capital improvements. The Michigan City Public Library controls its own tax-supported facility. The Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) controls Route 12 and the Indiana Port Authority, Army Corp of Engineers and United States Coast Guard all exert some control



Taste of Michigan City 2012

Credit Ryan Bolger



Community stakeholders attending a LMGIS public meeting held on April 16, 2014.

over the marina and Trail Creek. The Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District (NICTD) and Amtrak operate the commuter and regional rail services, respectively.

The city (including parks), casino and outlet center have all been well represented on the Project Steering Committee. During the process, the Project Steering Committee and consultant also engaged other private property and business owners along with community and organizational leaders in order to understand their interests.

Weaknesses & Threats

Despite the considerable strength of its resources, the size of its regional marketplace, and the determination of its stakeholders, the study area is compromised by some challenges that must be mitigated in order to advance the community's interests.

With limited entertainment, hotels or lodging right at the beach, Michigan City simply isn't well known as an extended stay beach destination community in the region. And, the local marketplace is too modest and the traffic counts are too weak to sustain the existing or future attractions. Consequently, the Michigan City brand is weak in comparison to other well known destinations and, generally, undistinguished from the La Porte County initiatives. Moreover, the multitude of existing attractions is not cross marketed. The beach, of course, is a seasonal attraction, which limits the potential of many wonderful secondary Washington Park attractions. In addition, the casino and outlets, which once enjoyed significant regional distinction, are now older destinations in a mature and ultra-competitive marketplace with competing facilities across Chicagoland.

Once they have arrived in the study area, visitor impressions and hospitality are simply inadequate. The study area is 5 miles from the nearest I-94 interchange, and the long approaches can be undistinguished, tedious and confusing for visitors. Interestingly, the outlet and casino websites direct visitors to their facilities along Routes 20 and 12, bypassing Franklin Street, altogether. The major attractions are separated, one from the other, by about 1/2 mile, which is a relatively long way for average visitors to comfortably walk. The

one-way streets have very low traffic counts (ranging from 1,400 to 5,700 ADT), far below typical retail thresholds, and except for Franklin Street, are too spacious and look vacant and uninviting. Even Route 12, a major arterial bisecting the study area only yields traffic counts averaging 17,000 vehicles per day, and the approaches to the lakefront are dulled by many obsolete and unattractive land uses. Despite the addition of new signs, even when visitors are on Route 12 in the heart of the study area, the development pattern and road alignments make navigation to and from the beach far more challenging than necessary.

Many major destinations are poorly identified, further compromising visitor arrival. Love it or hate it, the massive and easily identified power plant cooling tower often sends the wrong message to visitors about their proximity to a fun experience. Once at Washington Park, the visitor experience is further complicated by confusing circulation and tired assets, and there are no lodging and few dining options north of Trail Creek.

Bicyclist and pedestrians are not accommodated well, but the planned Singing Sands Trail and Trail Creek Improvements will help.

The size and nature of this study area naturally includes many public and private property owners, so aligning business, personal and financial interests of private land owners and investors is daunting. In addition, there are at least nine different jurisdictional agencies that influence the heart of the study area. Unfortunately, even though they control a great deal of land, operations, policies and money in the study area, the city, park and Redevelopment Commission leaders' goals, strategies and actions are not synchronized.

Goal and Objectives

Given the alignment of Michigan City's special resources, exceptional regional market, and energetic stakeholders, the goal of the community is to have Michigan City widely recognized as **Indiana's Great Lakefront Destination Community**. Michigan City can be a premier Lake Michigan destination offering major attractions that draw visitors in, with secondary activities and experiences that encourage them to linger-longer. Linger-longer is simply extending visitor experience beyond the initial destination. More than simply a set of attractions, the study area will be a destination in its own right, and the qualities that make it a great place to visit will also make it a great place to live and work.

Indiana's Great Lakefront Destination Community

Objectives

For the study area, by **2020**, local residents and visitors will:

- Support a **cluster of year-round activities and destinations** for the whole family
- Easily **access and navigate** the area
- Experience an **extraordinarily attractive** environment
- See increased **private sector investment**; produce more jobs and more tax revenue.

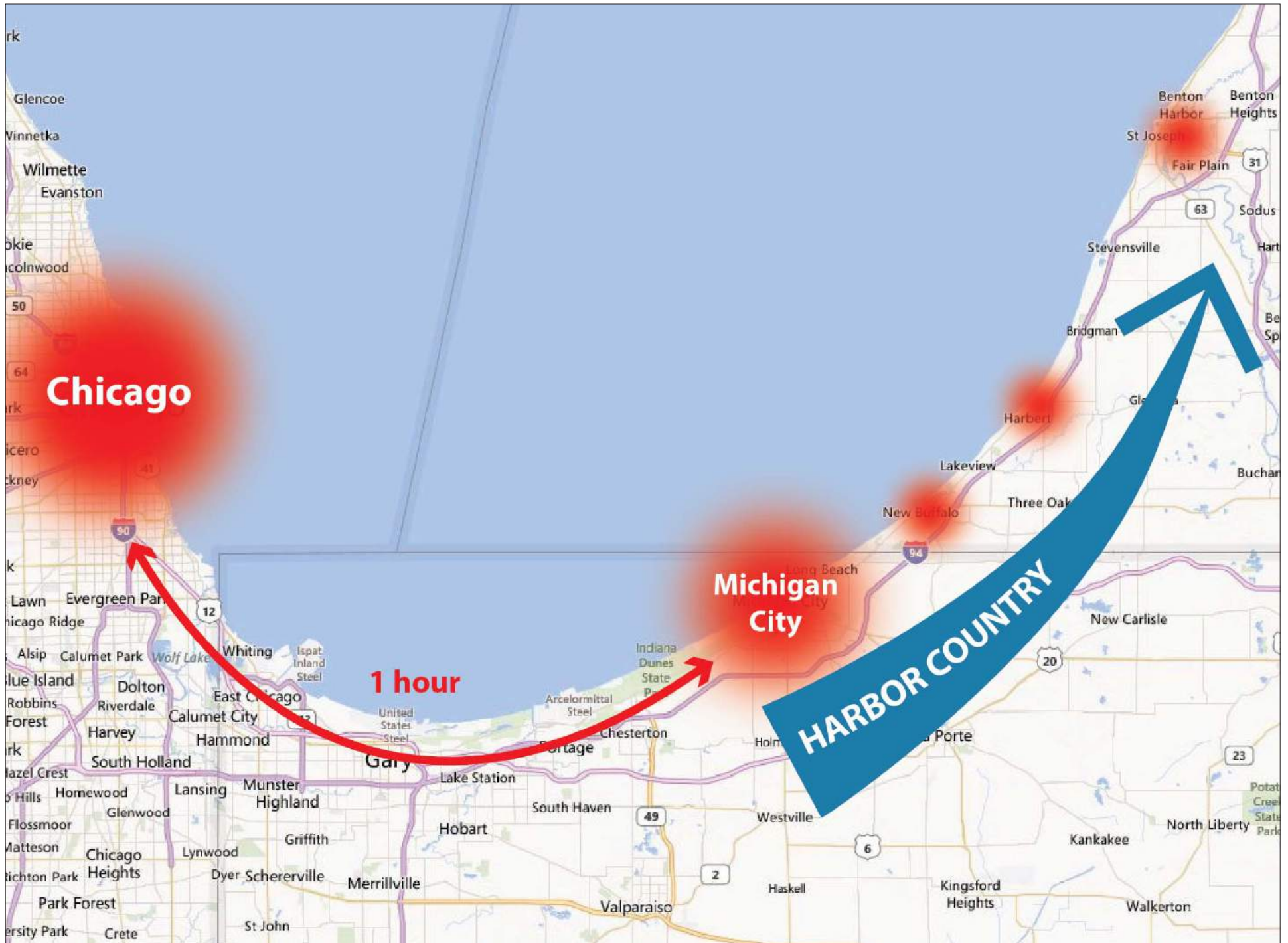
The Strategy describes how the alignment of market, brand and place will position Michigan City to achieve its ambitious goal.



Credit: George Jones

Chicago Skyline and East Lighthouse Pier from Washington Park

STRATEGY



STRATEGY

In order to become widely recognized as **Indiana's Great Lakefront Destination Community**, community leaders should embrace a durable strategy that capitalizes on visitor market behaviors, brand expectations and place-based experiences. Visitors who crave what Michigan City can and already has to offer should always have Michigan City and the study area front of mind – an expectation that will be reinforced by their exceptional experience as they approach, locate and enjoy the primary and secondary attractions, stunning environment and warm Michigan City hospitality.



With resources, market forces and stakeholder interests more closely aligned than ever, it's time to increase and maintain a steady pace of coordinated actions and investments!

Simply stated, the

Lake Michigan Gateway Implementation Strategy is to:

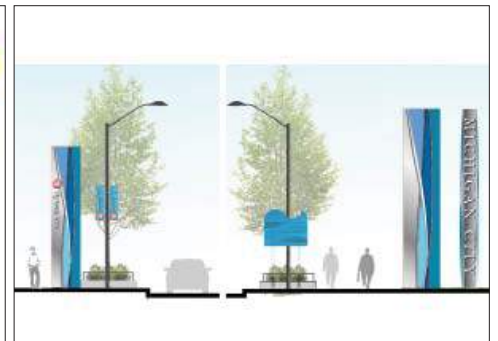
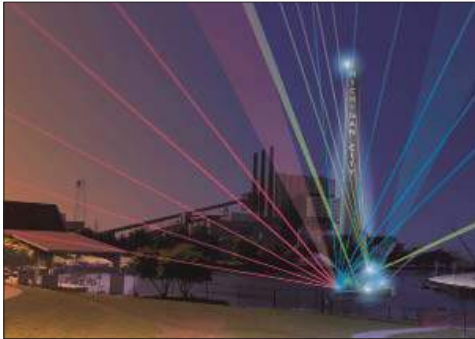
Refine and consistently communicate the **brand**;

Develop more year-round and secondary **attractions**;

Simplify all the **connections**;

Create and maintain a memorable **appearance**;

Act quickly and sustainably to gain and maintain **momentum**.



Refine and consistently communicate the **brand**

Brand

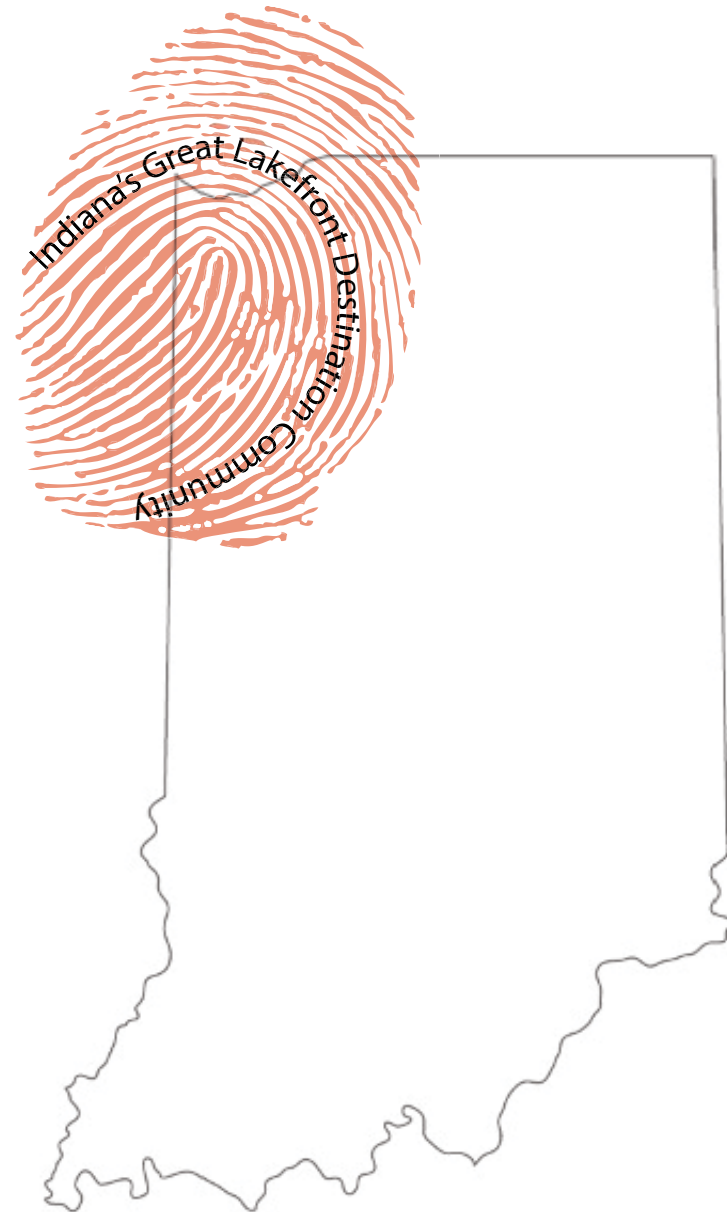
MICHIGAN CITY: **Indiana's Great Lakefront Destination Community**

The brand should position Michigan City as a unique, premier entertainment destination in the United States. Michigan City's current and future reputation – its brand – is what people expect to experience when they visit. The study area brand, in particular, is created and perpetuated through a combination of communications and experiences.

While not as good as it can be, Michigan City already has a great – and improving – experience to sell. Therefore, it should complete a Branding Master Plan that builds upon the strong foundation and strategy established on the LMGIS, as soon as possible in order to create an authentic and powerful brand platform, define compelling brand messaging, and outline the applications, standards and tools that should be used to clearly and consistently communicate the messages with targeted audiences.

Recommendations

- Create an integrated strategy across all markets.
- Create a visual language including logo/mark, slogan, imagery and pattern language.
- Develop consistent message nomenclature and typography unique to Michigan City.
- Identify applications of the brand.
- Name the Study Area and the Entertainment District.



Develop more magnet and secondary attractions

Attractions

In order to maximize their individual and collective appeal, and deter market erosion, each of the existing magnets – Washington Park, the Blue Chip Casino, and the Lighthouse Place Premium Outlets – needs to strengthen and augment their existing offerings with highly engaging, up-to-date, high-capacity activities for all ages. The Uptown Arts District needs to continue its well-conceived improvement strategy to qualify as a legitimate attraction, too. The strong regional market and comparisons with other nationally recognized beach and family destinations on the coast and on the Great Lakes suggest many additional visitor development ideas. In particular, one or more, year-round magnet attractions, along with additional secondary (linger-longer) attractions, clustered in a newly developed Entertainment District in the study area core and along the Route 12 approaches, will make Michigan City a one-of-a-kind, year-round **package of destinations**.

The same circumstances that make new magnets and secondary attractions desirable in the Entertainment District suggest that two of the existing magnets, the casino and the outlets, can be improved with targeted offerings that support the LMGIS – particularly if they are designed in a much more engaging manner that physically integrates them into the study area street life. In particular, the outlet owners should take full advantage of the proximity of the Uptown Arts District at 6th Street and the proposed Entertainment District at Wabash Street and Route 12. Similarly, the casino owners should take full advantage of proximity of the proposed Entertainment District, north of Route 12, Trail Creek, and the nearby Uptown Arts District.

In addition to the enhanced and new attractions, the study area will support residential development along with complementary commercial land uses throughout the study area, which in turn will support the LMGIS and existing Uptown Arts District initiatives. Previous studies identify support for both rental and owner-occupied product, which will increase both seasonal and permanent home options in the area. The plan illustrates opportunities for carefully sited, mixed-use structures (and perhaps a tower or two), which will provide breathtaking views of the lakefront. Beyond the 2020 time

horizon of this study, market demand may very well cause certain properties within the study area, like the office condominiums within the proposed Entertainment District, to be redeveloped as higher profile hospitality, entertainment or retail uses.

Naturally, each owner, developer and investor will have to complete its own, detailed due diligence, and satisfy the appropriate jurisdictional authorities before construction. The city, park department and Redevelopment Commission will also be subject to similar approval processes and jurisdictional reviews for public improvements.

- 1 Showcase Washington Park
- 2 Create a year-round Entertainment District
- 3 Enhance Blue Chip Casino and Lighthouse Place Premium Outlets
- 4 Enhance the Uptown Arts District



Bird's-eye perspective looking north



1

Showcase Washington Park

Washington Park is the center piece of the Lake Michigan Gateway. Leaders should create more attractions, improve existing facilities and beautify the landscape to re-establish the park as a world class, eco-recreation destination, increase visitation and act as a development catalyst in the study area. In particular, Bismarck Hill has 26 undeveloped acres ripe for eco-attractions that will expand attraction opportunities and increase visitation and park revenue.

Recommendations

- Develop a Master Plan for Washington Park, including the zoo. This document will guide consistent design and prioritize capital improvements.
- Create, adopt and enforce planning and design guidelines for park improvements.
- Develop Bismarck Hill attractions. Build an Adventure Park with zip line, ropes course, alpine slide and camping cabins and/or tree houses.
- Build a central promenade connecting the zoo to the rest of the park. Include secondary attractions such as a carousel, signature fountain, sculpture garden, themed playground, updated spray pool and beach follies.
- Improve the visitor navigation with better vehicular, bicycle and pedestrian circulation, infrastructure, facilities and parking.
- Protect, preserve, restore and enhance the zoo.
- Develop a restaurant in the park for visitor convenience that also allows for spectacular views within the park.
- Install trails and boardwalks through natural areas to facilitate circulation, protect the existing dunes and provide opportunities for activities.
- Investigate opportunities for new year-round magnet destinations and secondary attraction redevelopment north of the Lighthouse Museum.



Zip line



Ropes course

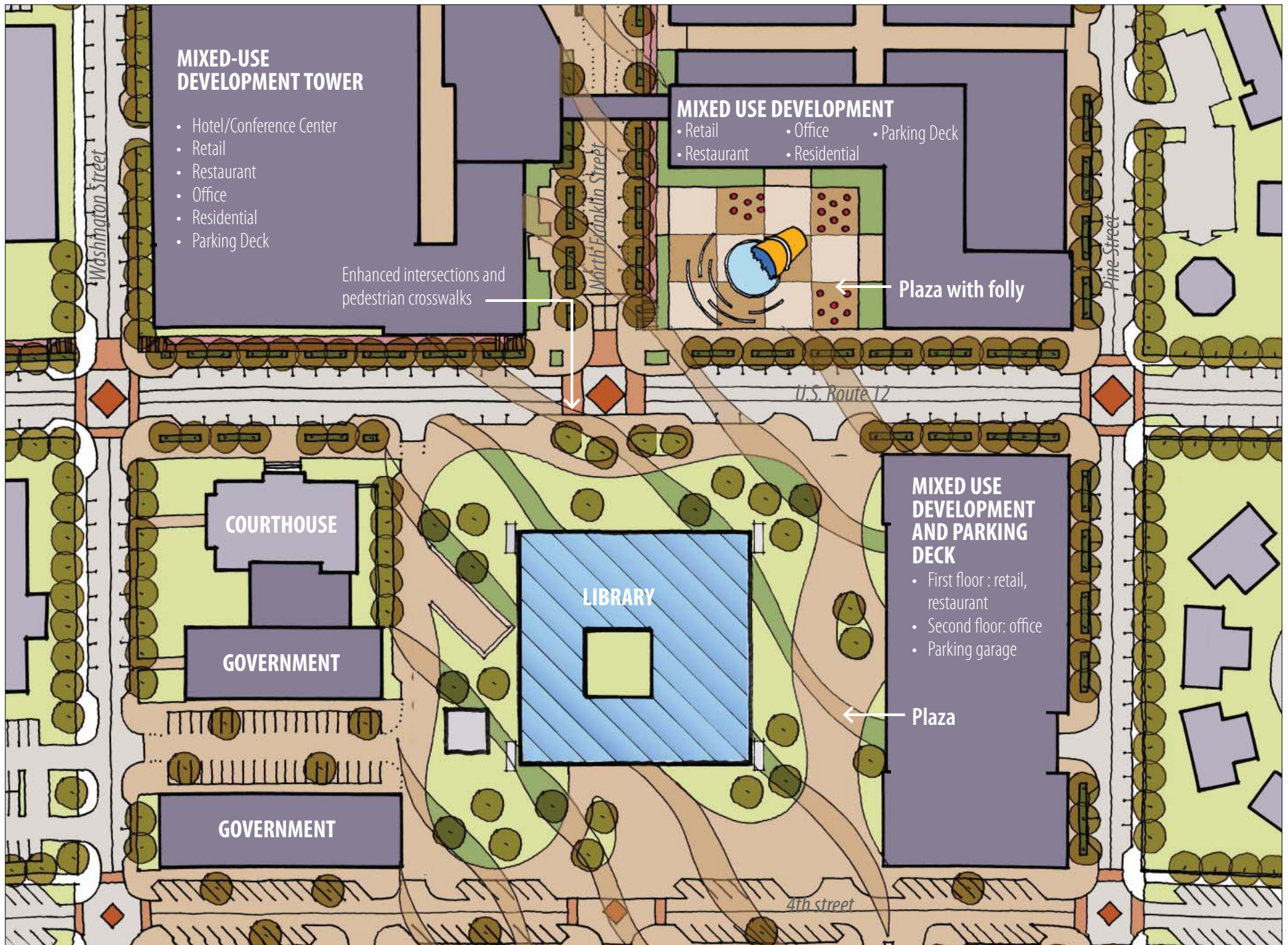
Washington Park Attractions: additional revenue and increased visitation.



Character images and proposed activities



Promenade looking south



Gateway plaza, located in the heart of the Entertainment District

2 Create a year-round Entertainment District

Michigan City is well positioned, with 36 acres of development potential in the core area between Washington Park and the Uptown Arts District to create an entertainment district that can extend along Route 12 corridor. The area is well suited to host another year-round magnet attraction, and a cluster of secondary attractions is crucial to the vitality of existing magnet attractions. By increasing the diversity of services and amenities for visitors the community can expect an improved overall quality of life that will further identify Michigan City as a desirable visitor destination and one of the best places to live.

Recommendations

- Locate and cluster new year-round magnet destinations and secondary attractions between Uptown Arts District and Washington Park and along Route 12 to support and enhance the connectivity between the two.
- Recruit a new select-service hotel.
- Create an iconic public plaza around the Library to attract and safely connect people to and from Washington Park and Uptown Arts District.
- Enhance the visitor experiences by inserting follies and public art to reinforce identity and make visits more memorable.
- Encourage compact development with a mix of land uses within walking distance.
- Create a highly walkable, human scaled environment (*complete street*) along 2nd Street.
- Cluster visitor destinations such as hotels, water parks, restaurants, sports complexes, retail and offices.
- Program activities, events and festivals in the district.
- Revise zoning code to support the goal, objectives and strategies in the LMGIS and prohibit undesirable uses in this area.

36 acres of development potential



Entertainment district looking north



2nd Street looking west



6th Street looking west

3 Enhance Blue Chip Casino and Lighthouse Place Premium Outlets

Blue Chip Casino and Lighthouse Place Premium Outlets are two of Michigan City's anchor destinations that draw millions of visitors each year. While they have excellent exposure and are easily accessed, they would benefit from diversifying their offerings with complimentary secondary attractions. They should be designed to integrate into the study area street life. Better, more attractive connections to other study area destinations will help differentiate them from competition.

Blue Chip Casino

Recommendations

- Collaborate with the casino owner to develop a master plan to guide future redevelopment and connectivity to the Entertainment District.
- Create complimentary destinations, on the property along Route 12 for improved exposure.
- Activate the riverfront by creating complimentary destinations, such as hospitality, dining and night life venues, adjacent to the Trail Creek.
- Consider partnering in development of a river side attraction.
- Treat the facade on casino boat to create a strong visual connection between the outlets, casino and Uptown Arts District.
- Create extraordinarily easy and resort quality visitor entry and approach routes.

Lighthouse Place Premium Outlets

Recommendations

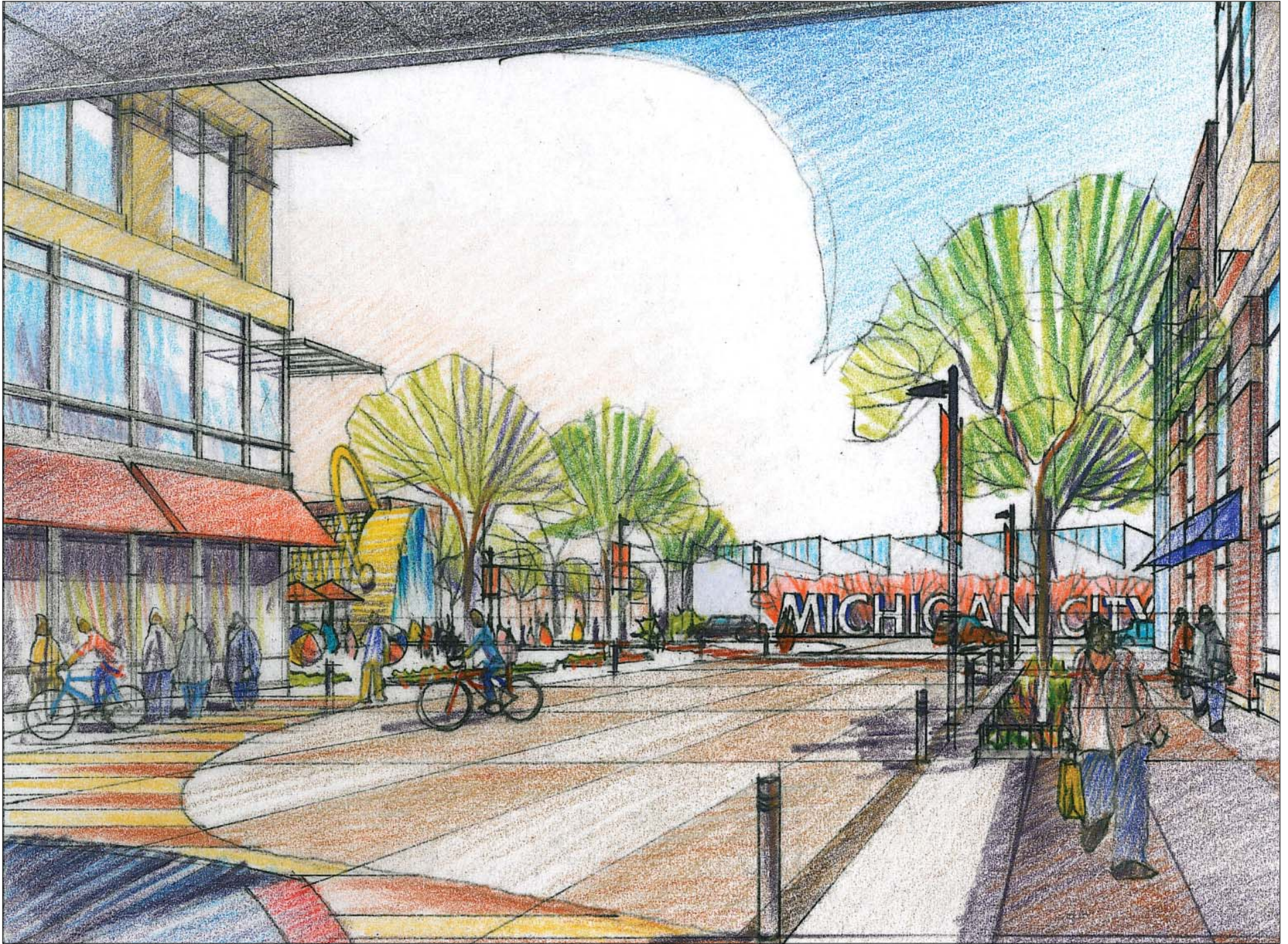
- Collaborate with the outlet owner to develop a master plan to guide future redevelopment and connectivity to the Entertainment District.
- Buildings should engage the street to increase visibility and appeal for pedestrians, especially along Wabash Street.
- Enhance pedestrian connections to Uptown Arts District.
- Create extraordinarily easy and resort quality visitor entry and internal circulation routes.
- Renovate outdated buildings and stores.
- Recruit more retail, restaurants and consider residential units.
- As redevelopment occurs and demand for parking increases, build a parking deck.
- Consider inclusion of a food court.
- Develop a short term plan for further development of the north parking lot.



Lighthouse Place Premium Outlets



Blue Chip Casino along Trail Creek



North Franklin Street looking south towards library

4 Enhance the Uptown Arts District

The Uptown Arts District is well on its way to becoming a significant secondary attraction. By improving programming and connectivity with surrounding magnet destinations, and the District will begin to reach its full potential as a linger-longer destination.

Recommendations

- Continue to update Franklin Street.
- Enhance connections to from other magnet attractions to the Uptown Arts District.
- Develop a cultural district designation for the Uptown Arts District, lakefront and the surrounding neighborhood.
- Continue façade improvement program.
- Continue with second story residential conversion program.
- Continue public art program.
- Continue to reinforce existing district brand.
- Continue to support uses, such as the Uptown Artist Lofts.
- Recruit hospitality, dining and night life venues.
- Continue to follow recommendations in Hyett Palma's Downtown Action Agenda 2013 Plan.
- Convert Elston School into a community learning and cultural center.












Uptown Arts District



Uptown Arts District Brand

get around. easy. fun. scenic.

-  Enhanced streetscape
-  Route 12: 2-way, 2 lanes, 1 shared turning lane
-  Wabash and East Michigan Avenue: 2-way, 2 lanes with boulevards
-  Franklin: enhance existing, convert to 2-way
-  Convert Washington to 2-way, with one shared turning lane and parallel parking on both sides. Convert Pine to 2-way with bicycle lanes in either direction and 2 sides parking.
-  2nd and Spring Ct.: 2-way, 2 sided parking; 6th: 2-way, 2 sides angled parking
-  9th street: convert 1-way to 2-way, street parking both sides
-  11th Street: 2 Rail lines, 1 way east bound (NICTD Plans)
-  Project boundary



Route 12



2nd Street

Simplify the **connections**

Streets

In addition to a full package of attractions, the study area must provide an extremely high level of hospitality, particularly to first time visitors. Once a visitor has decided to come to Michigan City, every aspect of their approach and arrival – from engaging land uses, intuitive routing, multi-modal options, attractive appearance and branded messaging – must reinforce the visitor's good decision to come. Once they have successfully navigated to their initial destination, visitors need to be further encouraged, through design, all-weather operations, and cross-marketed messaging, to use many mobility options – walking, bicycling, driving and trolley riding – to extend their reach to other nearby magnets and to experience the serendipity of many secondary attractions along the way. Since the primary magnet – the lake – is scarcely visible from the major approaches, connectivity to the lakefront demands special attention.

Recommendations

- Implement a trolley system connecting major attractions. Routes between magnet attractions should have a central stop in Uptown Arts District: 11th Street Station to Washington Park, Lighthouse Premium Outlet Mall to Blue Chip Casino and Uptown Arts District to Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore.
- Enhance visibility, access and hospitality at the existing train stations; Michigan City Amtrak and the 11th Street South Shore Station.
- Restore two-way traffic on one way streets.
- Re-establish the grid network north of Route 12.
- Incorporate complete street principles throughout the study area.

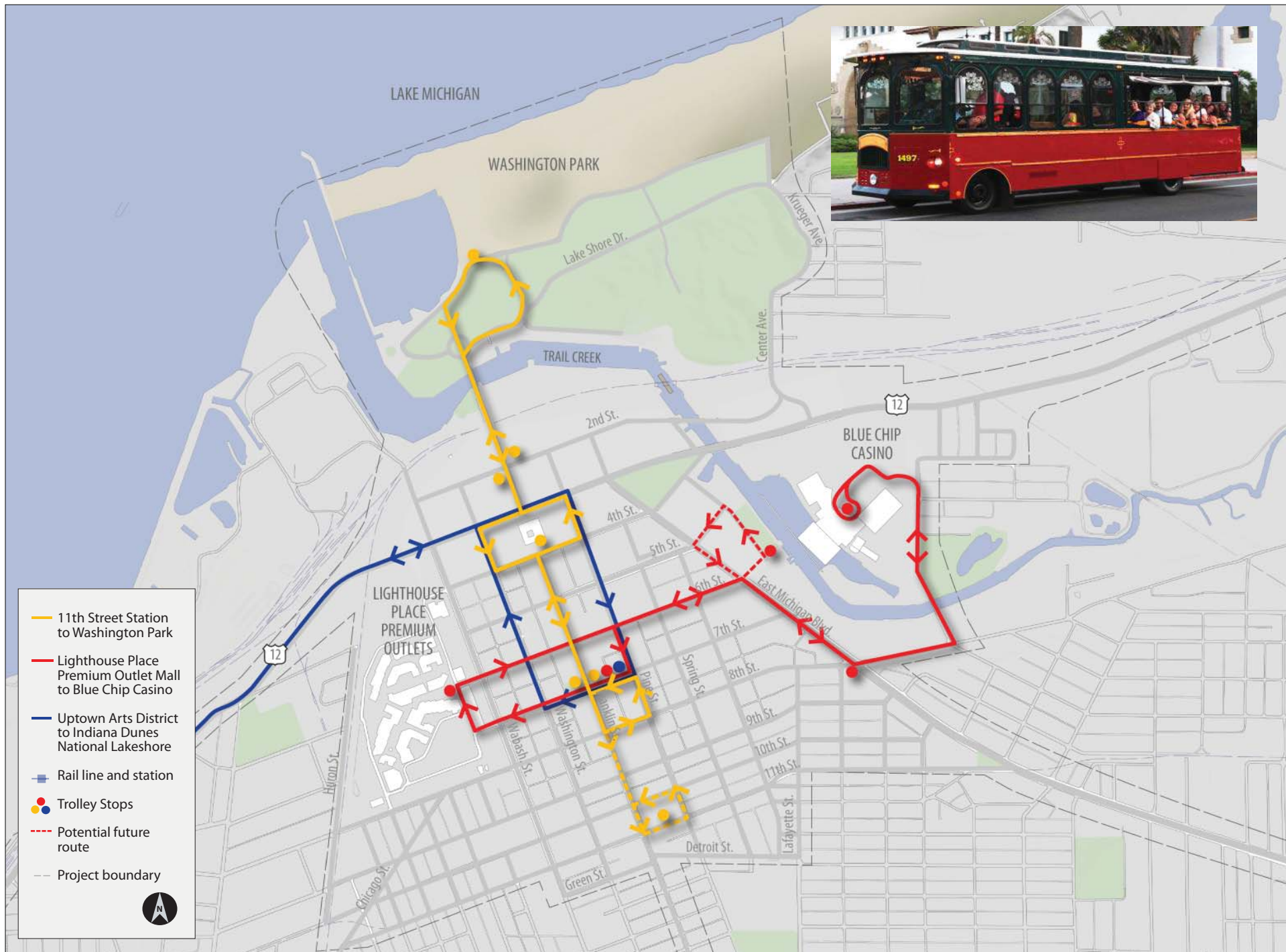
A **complete street** has no singular design prescription. Complete streets are unique responses to each community. Complete streets may include sidewalks, bicycle lanes, special bus lanes, comfortable and accessible public transportation stops, frequent and safe street crossing opportunities, median islands, accessible pedestrian signals, curb extensions, narrow travel lanes, landscape areas etc.



6th Street



Pine Street 1-way to 2-way conversion with bicycle lanes



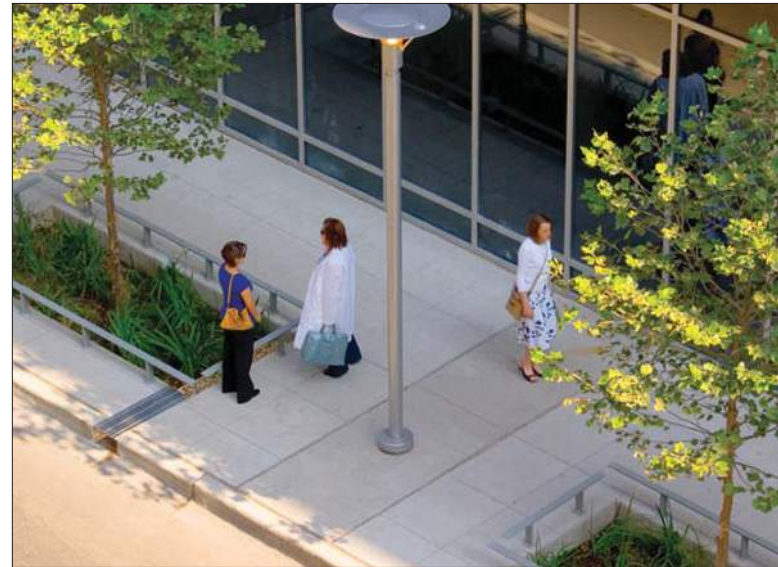
Proposed trolley routes

Recommendations, continued:

- Conduct a parking study.
- Add parking and improve existing parking.
- As development occurs and roads are reconstructed, construct exceptional streetscape environments in the Entertainment District.
- Create a woonerf on 2nd Street, accessible by vehicles but designed primarily with the interest of pedestrians and bicyclists in mind.
- Add traffic calming and safe crossing opportunities with landscape medians, curb bump outs, traffic calming tables, decorative crosswalks and decorative paving throughout the study area, with particular emphasis on the Route 12 and Franklin Street intersection.
- Improve public spaces, programming, and maintenance and improve connections to key attractions including Washington Park, Lighthouse Place Premium Outlets, Blue Chip Casino and Uptown Arts District.
- Improve pedestrian experience by adding decorative paving, street trees and landscaping on 6th street from East Michigan Boulevard to Wabash Street and entry to Premium Outlets.
- Incorporate green infrastructure by adding trees, planters, and other landscaping features. Storm drainage, permeable paving and infiltration planters will provide valuable stormwater management and create unique features.

A **woonerf** is a living street accessible by vehicles but designed primarily with the interest of pedestrians and bicyclists in mind. The woonerf acts as a social space where people meet and play.

Typical street section recommendations with roadway and/or streetscape improvements for specific streets are located in the appendix of this document.



Green Infrastructure (Chicago, Illinois)



Woonerf in Copenhagen, Denmark



U.S. Route 12 Bridge looking west

Bridges

Enhance the physical gateways into the district to create a strong sense of arrival and reinforce the brand strategy.

Recommendations

- Preserve and renovate Franklin Street Bridge.
- Remove jersey barrier on Route 12 and replace with a decorative and visually unobstructed barrier to access views to Trail Creek below.
- Renovate Interstate 421 bridge to help visitors traveling along Interstate 94 identify Michigan City.

Multi-purpose Trails

Safe and inviting multi-purpose trails further diversify and improve travel to key destinations in Michigan City and expand recreational opportunities to all bicyclists, skaters and pedestrians.

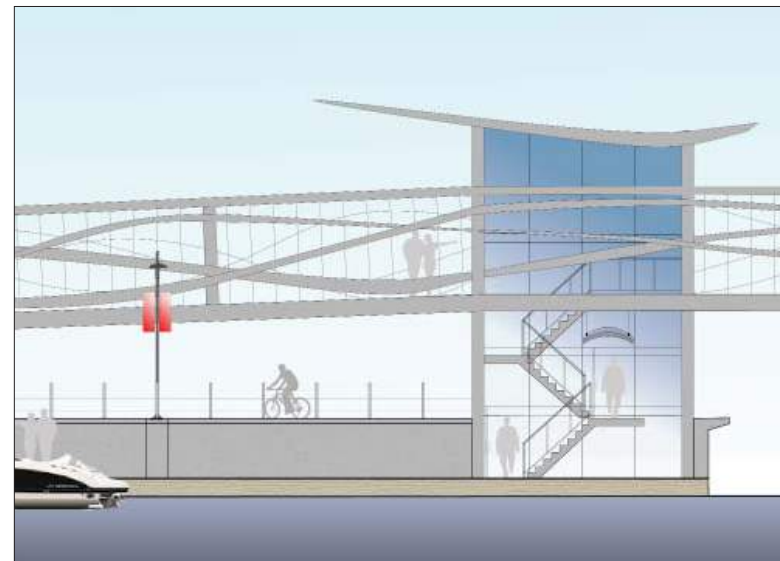
Recommendations

- Dedicate on and off-street bike trails to create a comprehensive network.
- Construct the Singing Sands regional bike trail.
- Connect the trail via pedestrian bridge at the intersection of 2nd Street and Trail Creek.
- Create specialized cultural trail for the segment of Singing Sands that runs through study area.
- Identify all trails with signage.
- Continue to support trail users with support amenities such as repair stations, rest stops and parking.



Credit: Global Engineering

Interstate 421 Bridge Improvements



Trail Creek pedestrian bridge and Singing Sands Trail connection



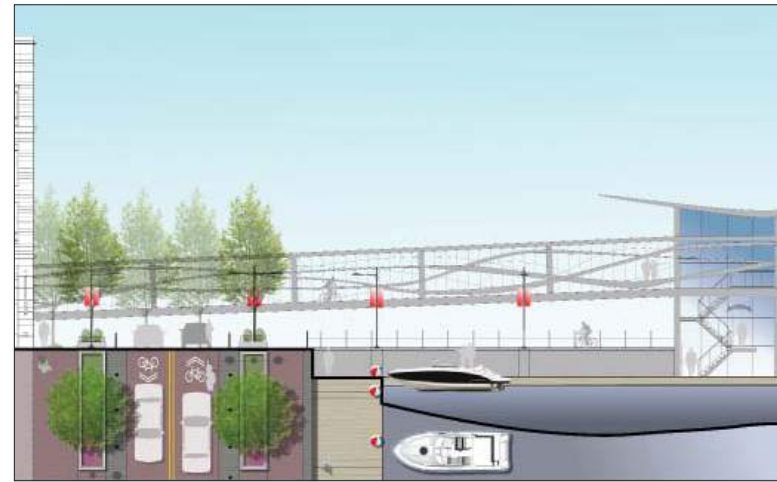
Riverwalk redevelopment along Trail Creek looking northwest from U.S. Route 12 bridge

Riverwalk

Trail Creek is an exceptional asset that can be leveraged for recreation, connectivity and extraordinary commercial and residential development as described in the 2007 Trail Creek and 2011 Trail Creek Corridor Open Space Master Plans. Trail Creek boasts 1 mile of navigable water way with a series of docking opportunities. Connect Washington Park to the Entertainment District along the south bank of Trail Creek and across towards Blue Chip Casino. Activate the riverfront, provide opportunities for riverfront establishments, strengthen the connections between attractions.

Recommendations

- Create public access to Trail Creek, add multi-modal pathways, including a multi-level and multi-modal riverwalk.
- Connect the Singing Sands Trail with a pedestrian bridge across Trail Creek to connect to regional bike trails and assets.
- Recruit hospitality, dining and night life venues.
- Create more boat slips.
- Use eclectic, creative and high quality streetscape materials and furnishings to communicate a contemporary image of the district.
- Incorporate green infrastructure by adding trees, planters, and other landscaping features. Storm drainage, permeable paving and infiltration planters will provide valuable stormwater management and create unique features.



Riverwalk along Trail Creek at Singing Sands Trail pedestrian bridge



Active waterfront



Scenic amenities and passive recreation



Entertainment and night life



Cultural trail (Indianapolis, Indiana)



Skyline Park looking south from Franklin Street Bridge

Skyline Park

Located between Washington Park and the entertainment district this small creek side park acts as a gateway that encourages visitors to and from destinations. The park allows for views of Washington Park, Trail Creek, Lake Michigan and under the right conditions, the park provides spectacular views of the Chicago Skyline.

Recommendations

- Create an extraordinarily attractive pedestrian environment.
- Connect the park to the Entertainment District and Washington Park via Singing Sands Trail.
- Use eclectic, creative and high quality streetscape materials and furnishings to communicate a contemporary image of the district.
- Incorporate green infrastructure by adding trees, planters, and other landscaping features. Storm drainage, permeable paving and infiltration planters will provide valuable stormwater management and create unique features.



Credit: Rich Murphy

Chicago Skyline



Recent improvements to Skyline Park

scenic. attractive.
playful. iconic.
recognizable.
identifiable. branded.
memorable...



Appearance character images

Create and maintain a memorable appearance

A consistently attractive image is the glue that binds the attractions and connections for a memorable (think “well-branded”) visitor experience. Great visitor experiences combine compelling activities in stunning environments that frequently include impressive, nearby natural features. With 2 miles of breathtaking public shoreline and picturesque dunes, the study area has plenty of natural beauty. However, like many treasured national destinations, Michigan City’s featured attraction, Lake Michigan, is not readily seen from most approaches. Consequently, the appearance of the community that most visitors will experience well before they arrive at the lakefront matters – a lot. Carefully crafted design standards for both public improvements, like streetscapes, and private development, including architecture, site and landscape improvements, plus the introduction of well-scaled, brand-sensitive public art (follies) will help make both the visitor and resident experiences much more enjoyable. In addition, as already discussed in Hyett Palma’s Downtown Action Agenda 2013, community leaders must demand high standards for public and private property maintenance.

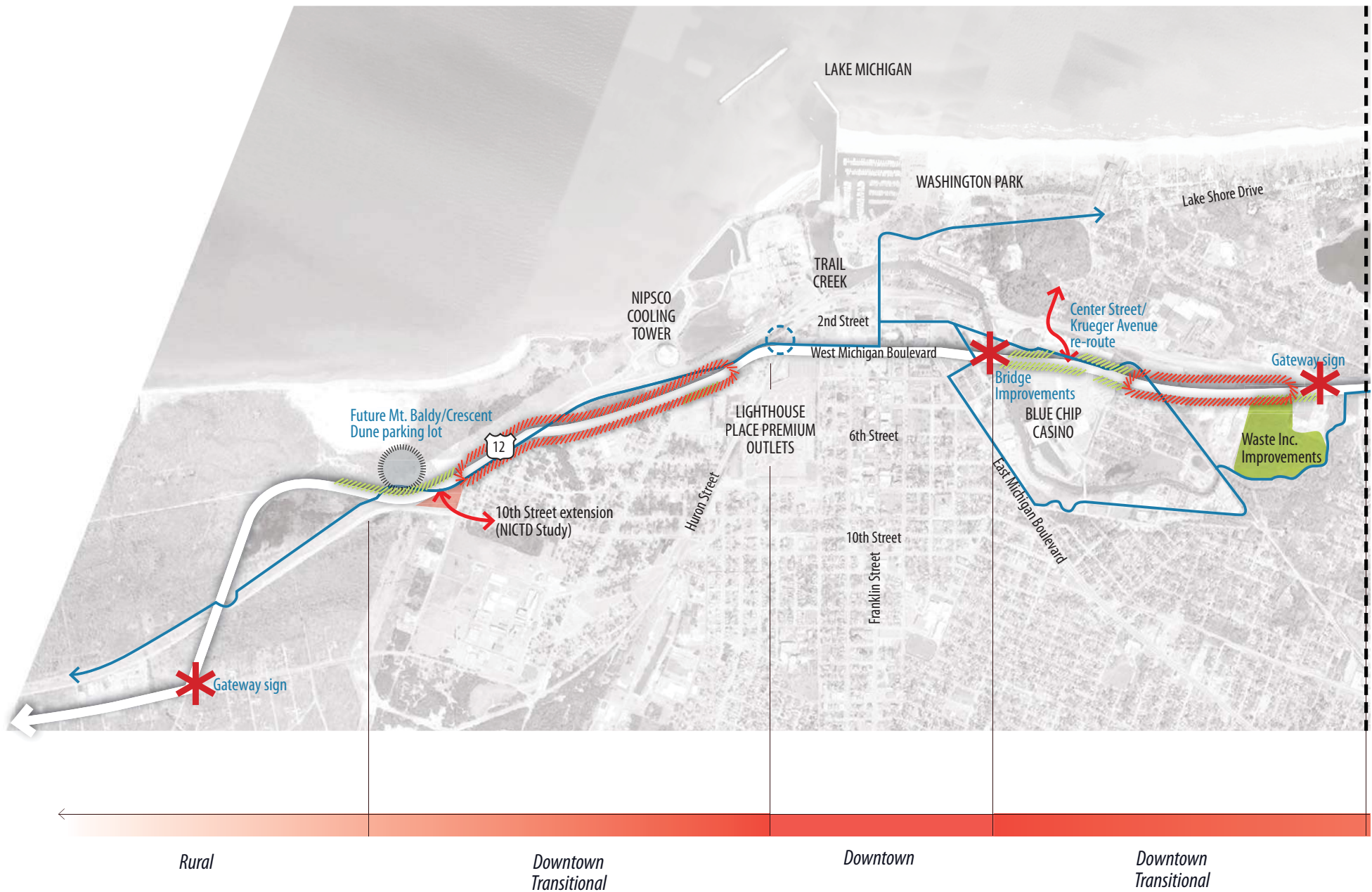


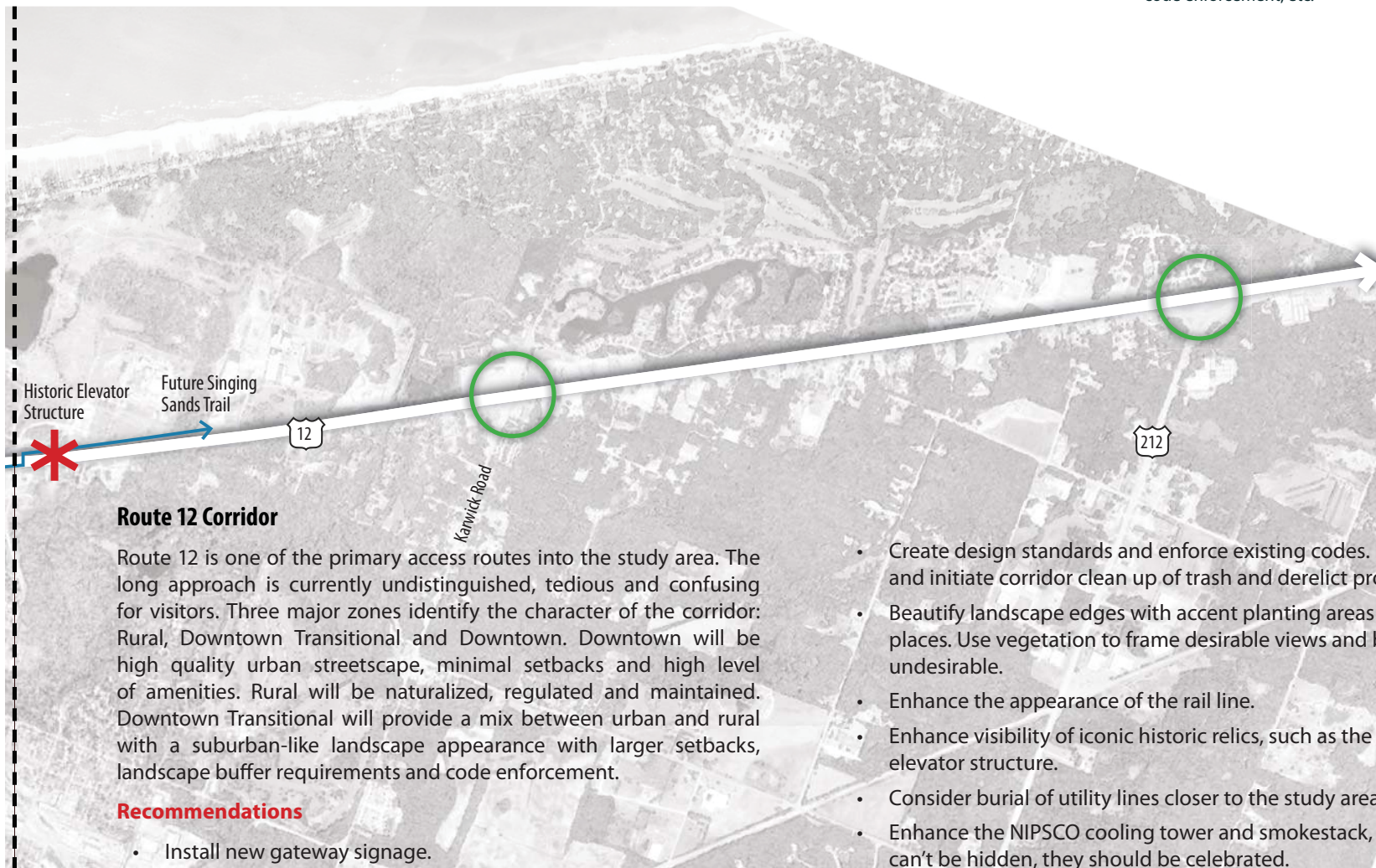
Extraordinarily attractive environment + people having a great time = a positive and memorable experience

Recommendations

- Develop design standards for the study area and Entertainment District that addresses: mass, scale, setbacks, architectural style, materials, etc.
- Implement portals, landmarks and monuments to help residents and visitors get a sense that they have arrived. Elements will reinforce themes, identify significant and special areas creating meaning while providing a memorable appearance.
- Guide visitors by placing monument signs along Route 12.
- Integrate landmarks and public art by installing brand reinforcing follies. Install follies at gateways and other key locations. Follies become landmark elements that greater enhance wayfinding in and around Michigan City.
- Enhance history of Michigan City by placing a historically inspired Michigan City arch at the intersection of South Franklin and 8th Street signifying entry into the Uptown Arts District.
- Install banners and trail makers on Route 12, East Michigan Boulevard and Franklin from 11th Street to Park Entry.
- Create and enforce design standards and code requirements for private property fronting Route 12, east and west of the study area.
- Enhance the appearance of public right of way on Route 12 corridor primarily in the Uptown Arts District and in transitional areas. Make landscape enhancement improvements in key areas, as identified in the plan on the following page.
- Highlight existing landmarks and proposed features with architectural lighting and other memorable imagery. Landmarks include the historic elevator structure, the NIPSCO smoke stacks, the cooling tower, War Memorial, etc.

appearance on Route 12





*Beautification is one or more of the following: Curb and curb cut improvements, signage, lighting, street trees, landscaping, design standards, code enforcement, etc.

Route 12 Corridor

Route 12 is one of the primary access routes into the study area. The long approach is currently undistinguished, tedious and confusing for visitors. Three major zones identify the character of the corridor: Rural, Downtown Transitional and Downtown. Downtown will be high quality urban streetscape, minimal setbacks and high level of amenities. Rural will be naturalized, regulated and maintained. Downtown Transitional will provide a mix between urban and rural with a suburban-like landscape appearance with larger setbacks, landscape buffer requirements and code enforcement.

Recommendations

- Install new gateway signage.
- Continue to develop and implement wayfinding and sense of arrival along the corridor.

- Create design standards and enforce existing codes. Require and initiate corridor clean up of trash and derelict properties.
- Beautify landscape edges with accent planting areas in key places. Use vegetation to frame desirable views and block the undesirable.
- Enhance the appearance of the rail line.
- Enhance visibility of iconic historic relics, such as the historic elevator structure.
- Consider burial of utility lines closer to the study area.
- Enhance the NIPSCO cooling tower and smokestack, since they can't be hidden, they should be celebrated.

Rural

M

OMENTUM

Act quickly and sustainably to gain and maintain **momentum**.

The most successful community improvement projects aren't the result of some high-stakes gamble on the construction of any one major asset. Instead they are the result of a compelling vision, a sustainable strategy and incremental investments that together, gain and maintain momentum. The vision articulated in the LMGIS is both clear and compelling. The resource, market and stakeholder-supported strategy, once initiated, is sustainable. And, like the time-tested wisdom of dollar cost averaging in the stock market, Michigan City is poised to reap significant returns through a series of coordinated, incremental and systematic investments.

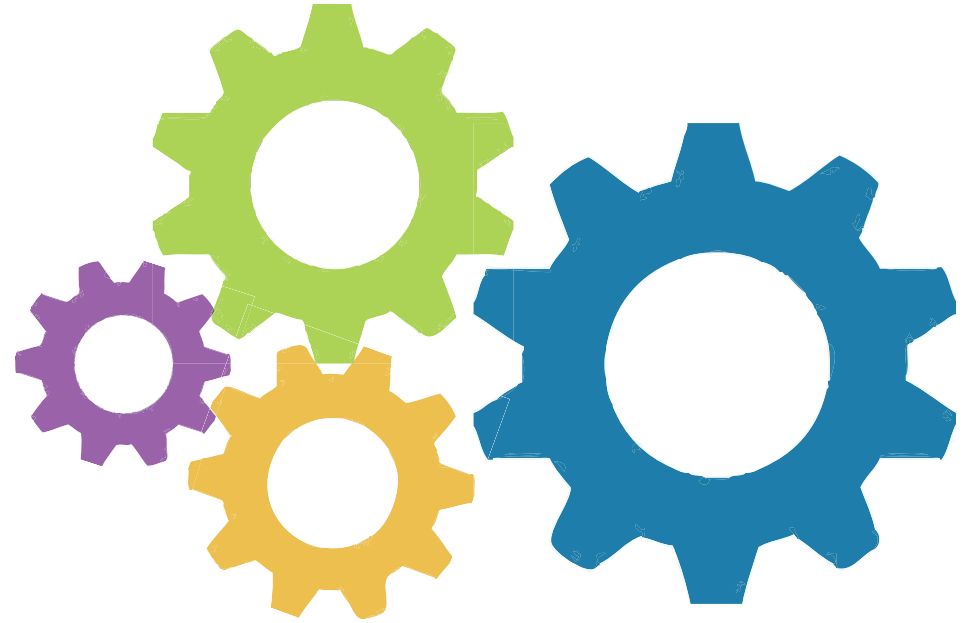
The community has already started several projects in the study area, and with the economy steadily improving, the case is clear for additional, timely, thoughtful investments that support the LMGIS goal and strategy. The recommendations summarized below, and outlined in much greater detail in the Implementation Action Plan provide a manageable framework that can and should be regularly updated in order to capitalize on current opportunities and adapt to unanticipated changes.

Recommendations

- Adopt and communicate LMGIS.
- Align city, park, county and regional planning commission policies, resources and actions.
- Reach out to property and business owners.
- Incrementally and systematically complete the actions outlined.
- Update the Implementation Action Plan, annually.



LMGIS



- ☒ capital
- ☒ land and development
- ☒ operational
- ☒ public policy

IMPLEMENTATION ACTION PLAN

IMPLEMENTATION ACTION PLAN

Introduction

While simple in concept, the Lake Michigan Gateway Implementation Strategy (LMGIS) includes dozens of important recommendations for positioning the study area, by 2020, as Indiana's Great Lakefront Destination Community. Fortunately, as detailed in the Opportunity Analysis, Michigan City is blessed with critical natural, cultural, physical and financial resources that enable community leaders to execute this strategy with confidence. In particular, the North TIF District, managed by the Redevelopment Commission, has a cash balance of approximately \$16 million and generates approximately \$4.8 million in new property tax revenue each year. The city can also consider riverboat gaming funds for exceptional projects.

Nonetheless, the sheer size of the 760 acre study area, the number of improvement recommendations, and the multi-jurisdictional influences make rapid implementation a daunting task. In addition, the expiring TIF expansion district and recent, adverse legislative changes put additional pressure on leaders to leverage and deploy the TIF funds prudently.

In this section, the LMGIS recommendations are translated into specific, prioritized projects and actions that are organized as Capital Improvements, Land Improvements and Development, Operational Improvements, and Public Policy projects. Each project describes the type, potential cost, potential funding source, and the leaders and partners who are responsible for completing the project. In addition to the projects currently in progress, projects are prioritized based on their catalytic potential and expected return on investment.

Even when the LMGIS is heavily promoted, the pace of private sector investment will simply be impossible to predict. And, some projects, such as the 2nd Street reconstruction, are related directly to private sector investment in the Entertainment District and should only be completed in coordination with a significant private sector development project. However, that doesn't suggest that available

funds should, instead, be invested in lower priority or non-strategic capital improvements. Only projects that advance the LMGIS should receive financial assistance. And, since private investment is crucial to the success of the LMGIS, the Redevelopment Commission should always keep enough TIF funds available to participate in the most desirable public-private development scenarios.

Capital Improvements

This group of important public projects targets Washington Park, public rights-of-way, public facilities, Trail Creek and other public spaces where major improvements will advance all aspects of the strategy. Current projects are included and proposed projects are listed in priority order, starting with Washington Park, based on expected impact of the investment. Some projects may be accelerated if they are directly related to a significant private sector investment or if new development creates new incremental tax revenue. Other projects, particularly those projects that are estimated for completion in 2016 and beyond may be delayed if TIF funding is directed for developer assistance on significant private investments.

Most of these projects will follow a 3 phased process that starts with preliminary design/engineering (Phase I), advances to final design/engineering (Phase II), and concludes with construction (Phase III). Customarily, the cost of Phases I and II are approximately 10% of the total project value. With more complex projects, project leaders should initiate Phase I consulting services well in advance of the targeted construction date to accommodate sometimes lengthy outreach, design, engineering and permitting timelines.

Land Improvements and Development

Land improvements and development, along with tenant recruitment and management are the responsibility of property owners and developers. Carefully considered public sector investments will help develop new magnet and secondary attractions, as well as other complementary commercial, residential and institutional land uses in the study area. The list includes current and recommended initiatives,

but is not prioritized given the unpredictability of private sector owners, investors and developers. What is predictable is that the larger, more complex magnet and secondary attractions will require a higher level of public participation – the classic public/private development partnership, and that developers will be most interested in opportunities that include large, clean, assembled, accessible, and attractively priced (often free) land that is entitled or positioned to be readily entitled through a clearly defined process. The public sector assistance costs that are related to private investment in the following list are not intended to be prescriptive, and instead, are extremely speculative intending to draw attention to the probability of assistance. As described under Public Policy, every deal has to stand on its own, and all developer assistance needs to be thoroughly considered for potential study area and community impacts and returns on investment.

Even though the LMGIS recommends additional development by the casino and outlets, because they are privately held and actively managed existing magnets, specific expansion or improvement projects are not listed.

Operational Improvements

In addition to physical improvements, city, park department and Redevelopment Commission leaders should collaborate to refine and improve important organizational, marketing and financial operations that will directly support every dimension of the LMGIS. At the same time, community leaders should continue to execute the operational recommendations of Hyatt Palma's Downtown Action Agenda 2013, which is fully supported as an integral part of the LMGIS. The recommended actions are prioritized, beginning with the Branding Master Plan, based on expected study area impacts, and must be carefully coordinated with the other public and private implementation projects.

Public Policy

Good public policy is the foundation for executing every aspect of the LMGIS. Beginning with the adoption of the LMGIS by the city, parks department, and the Redevelopment Commission, leaders of each of the major jurisdictional interests, along with stakeholders and LMGIS advocates must collaborate closely in order to complete the actions that support the LMGIS goal and strategy. Failure to act in concert will certainly dampen momentum and may severely compromise the outcomes and incredible potential of the study area.

Capital Improvements

Washington Park

Develop more magnet and secondary attractions in Washington Park. Improvements should begin immediately.

Cost: \$17.5M

Funding: TIF, City funds, private sponsorship and donations, grants

Leadership/partnerships: Michigan City, Parks Department, private recreation specialists

- 2014 • Continue pursuing improvements in Washington Park: ticket booths, pavilion, gateway feature, lighthouse museum enhancements and purchasing the green house.
- 2014-2015 • Implement Bismarck Hill Attractions.
- 2016+ • Continue to make improvements to the park on a yearly basis, including the promenade and zoo enhancements.



Transit, Street and Streetscapes

Re-establish a grid of complete streets, provide comfortable bicycling conditions, adequate parking and an attractive pedestrian environment.

Cost: \$30.5M

Funding: TIF, City funds, private sponsorship and donations, grants

Leadership/partnerships: Michigan City, INDOT

- 2014-2015 • Continue to make improvements to Franklin Street Downtown.
- 2014-2015 • Construct green alley design adjacent to Warren Building.
- 2014-2015 • Construct permeable paving parking lot on Franklin and 7th.
- 2014-2015 • Construct improvements to Wabash Street.
- 2014-2015 • Right-of-way acquisitions (street re-alignments).
- 2014-2015 • Reconstruct and connect North Franklin from Washington Park to Route 12.
- 2014-2016 • Restore two-way traffic flow on Pine, Washington and 9th streets.
- 2014-2016 • Reconstruct Downtown Franklin to two-way traffic.
- 2014-2019 • Improve streetscapes on 5th, 6th, Spring and Cedar (development contingent).
- 2015 • Implement trolley route system connecting major attractions.
- 2014-2019 • Identify Center Street/Krueger Avenue as alternate access across Trail Creek (signage).
- 2015+ • Reconnect 2nd Street, create a pedestrian scaled-complete street (development contingent).
- 2015-2016 • Conduct engineering feasibility studies.
- 2015-2017 • Reconstruct N/S streets north of Route 12 (development contingent).
- 2015-2017 • Reconstruct Route 12 from the train tracks to the Casino.
- 2017-2018 • As streets are reconstructed add identifiers and wayfinding signage.
- 2020+ • Construct improvements to Route 12 Corridor outside of core area.
- 2020+ • Construct realignment of Krueger Avenue (development contingent).



Capital Improvements

Gateway Identifiers and Follies

Install gateway signs and identifiers.

Cost: \$1M

Funding: TIF, City funds, private sponsorship and donations, grants

Leadership/partnerships: Michigan City

- 2014-2015 • Construct improvements to Route 421 bridge over Interstate 94.
- 2014-2015 • Site and install gateway signs at municipal boundaries along Route 12.
- 2016-2017 • Illuminate existing landmarks.
- 2017-2018 • Site and install umbrella folly.



U.S. Route 12 and Franklin Street bridges

Improve appearance of Route 12 Bridge over Trail Creek and visibility to Trail Creek.

Cost: \$1.3M

Funding: TIF, City funds, private sponsorship and donations, grants

Leadership/partnerships: Michigan City, INDOT

- 2014-2016 • Construct improvements to Route 12 Bridge.
- 2015 • Implement Franklin Street Bridge Improvements.



Singing Sands Trail

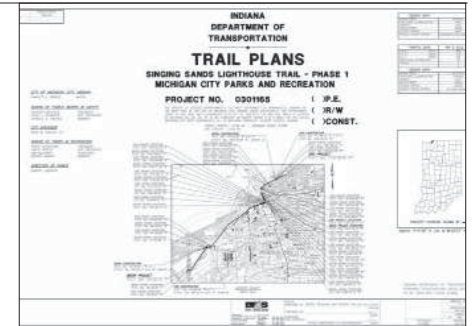
Implement all phases of the trail.

Cost: Phase 1: \$1M, Phase 2: \$1.8M

Funding: TIF, City funds, private sponsorship and donations, grants

Leadership/partnerships: Michigan City, INDOT, NIRPC

- 2014-2015 • Implement Phase I of the Singing Sands Trail.
- 2015+ • Construct Phase II of Singing Sands Trail.



Pedestrian Bridge across Trail Creek

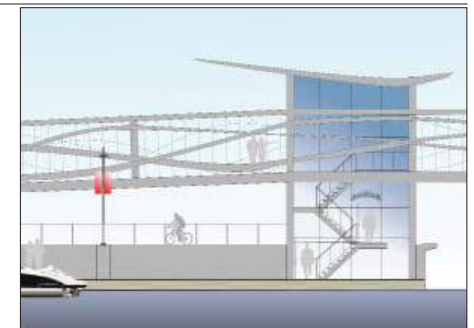
Build a pedestrian bridge across Trail Creek

Cost: \$2.9M

Funding: TIF, City funds, private sponsorship and donations, grants

Leadership/partnerships: Michigan City, INDOT, NIRPC

- 2014-2017 • Construct pedestrian connection across Trail Creek.



Capital Improvements

Riverwalk

Develop a riverwalk along both sides of Trail Creek in the Entertainment District.

- 2018-2019 • Plan and design the riverwalk.
- 2020+ • Engineer and construct the riverwalk.

Cost: \$7M

Funding: TIF, City funds, private sponsorship and donations, grants

Leadership/partnerships: Michigan City, DNR, Port Authority



Gateway Plaza

Create a public plaza around the library that crosses Route 12 and encompasses the north east corner of Route 12 and North Franklin.

- 2016-2017 • Plan and design Gateway Plaza.
- 2018 • Engineer and construct Phase 1 of Gateway Plaza.
- 2020+ • Construct remaining Phase(s) of Gateway Plaza.

Cost: \$6.3M

Funding: TIF, City funds, private sponsorship and donations, grants

Leadership/partnerships: Michigan City, INDOT



Skyline Park

Improve park located west of the Franklin Street Bridge adjacent to Trail Creek.

- 2018-2019 • Plan and design Skyline Park.
- 2020+ • Engineer and construct Skyline Park.

Cost: \$750,000

Funding: TIF, City funds, private sponsorship and donations, grants

Leadership/partnerships: Michigan City, DNR, Port Authority



Land Improvements and Development

News Dispatch Building	<p>The City is demolishing the News Dispatch building to prepare the site for future development.</p> <p>Cost: \$150,000</p> <p>Funding: TIF, City funds</p> <p>Leadership/partnerships: Michigan City, Redevelopment Commission</p>	<p>2014-2015 • Market site to potential developers.</p> <p>2015-2016 • Demolish and dispose of existing building.</p>
Police Station Study	<p>The City is investigating alternative sites and land acquisition for new police station. Design and engineering of a new building is underway. The old building will be torn down and the site will be prepared for private development.</p> <p>Cost: \$1M</p> <p>Funding: TIF, City funds</p> <p>Leadership/partnerships: Michigan City, Redevelopment Commission</p>	<p>2014 • Study relocation of police station.</p> <p>2014 • Plan, design and engineer a new police station.</p>
Uptown Arts District	<p>The City should continue to support existing improvement programs.</p> <p>Cost: \$400,000 per year (residential program) \$300,000 per year (façade program)</p> <p>Funding: TIF, City funds</p> <p>Leadership/partnerships: Michigan City, Redevelopment Commission</p>	<p>2014+ • Continue to fund upper story residential conversion assistance.</p> <p>2014+ • Continue to fund Downtown façade improvement assistance.</p>
Current Initiatives	<p>The City is currently investing in several programs and should continue to provide incentive funding.</p> <p>Cost: \$200,000 (Lofts), TBD (Brewery)</p> <p>Funding: TIF, City funds, grants</p> <p>Leadership/partnerships: Michigan City, Redevelopment Commission</p>	<p>2015 • Contribute funding for Artist Lofts.</p> <p>2015 • Provide developer assistance (land) for residential development on former hospital site.</p> <p>2015 • Provide developer assistance for brewery site.</p> <p>2015 • Small Business Incentive Program.</p>
Developer Assistance	<p>The City should carefully evaluate developer proposals and provide gap funding opportunities; assistance for property acquisition and clean up.</p> <p>Cost: TBD</p> <p>Funding: TIF, City funds</p> <p>Leadership/partnerships: Michigan City, Redevelopment Commission, Developer</p>	<p>2015-2020+ • Provide developer assistance for appropriate developments.</p>

Operational Improvements

Marketing	Engage in branding, collateral, public relations, business development and outreach.	2014	• Create a new brand strategy and communication system.
	Cost: \$60,000 (brand), \$100,000 (promotion), \$5,000 (district) Funding: TIF, City funds Leadership/partnerships: Michigan City, Redevelopment Commission, Developer	2014 2014-2015 2015	• Establish an Economic Improvement District for maintenance and marketing. • Develop promotional material. • Develop a cultural district designation.
Project Management	The City should recruit and hire a full time project manager to manage LMGIS projects.	2014 2015-2019	• Create a project management team. • Hire a project manager or augment existing staff responsibilities.
	Cost: \$150,000 per year Funding: TIF, City funds Leadership/partnerships: Michigan City, Redevelopment Commission		
Public/Private Partnerships	Reach out to potential developers and operators.	2014 2014-2015 2014-2015 2014-2015	• Create developer and business recruitment list. • Contact a water park/hotel developer. • Contact an adventure park developer. • Contact an indoor sports operator.
	Cost: \$100,000 Funding: TIF, City funds, private sponsorship and donations, grants Leadership/partnerships: Michigan City, Redevelopment Commission, Developers		
Park and Public Space	Prepare for maintenance of future capital improvement projects.	2014 2014 2015 2015	• Develop maintenance performance standards, determine costs, train staff. • Develop plan for revenue generation and enhancement through fees, events, sponsorships, etc. • Develop and implement comprehensive landscape management program. • Develop a Historic Review Board for oversight on protection and restoration of historic sites and structures.
	Cost: \$100,000 Funding: TIF, City funds, private sponsorship and donations, grants Leadership/partnerships: Michigan City, Parks Department Redevelopment Commission		

Public Policy Improvements

LMGIS	Adoption and Maintenance.	2014	• Adopt LMGIS Study.
	<p>Cost: \$5,000 per year</p> <p>Funding: TIF, City funds</p> <p>Leadership/partnerships: Michigan City, Redevelopment Commission, Consultants</p>	2014	• Review existing codes and processes, modify these documents to align with LMGIS goal, objectives and strategy. Evaluate impediments to implementing LMGIS. (e.g. explore liquor license expansion)
		2015+	• Annually review and update the LMGIS framework and action plan.
Conduct additional studies	Continue investigating key areas.	2014	• Complete Hotel Feasibility Study.
	<p>Cost: \$690,000</p> <p>Funding: TIF, City funds</p> <p>Leadership/partnerships: Michigan City, Redevelopment Commission, Consultants</p>	2014	• Complete Entertainment/Retail/Restaurant Study.
		2014	• Complete US Highway 421/South Franklin “South Gateway” Corridor Plan.
		2014	• Conduct a parking analysis and create a parking management strategy.
		2015	• Complete a master plan for Washington Park.
		2015	• Create and adopt planning and design guidelines for improvements in Washington Park.
		2015	• Create and adopt Lake Michigan Gateway Framework (Entertainment District) Design Guidelines.
Property owner outreach	Reach out to property owners regarding project specific capital improvements.	2014	• Contact property owners to discuss LMGIS (determine support, future plans and business objectives, potential development, etc.). Align policies and actions.
	<p>Cost: \$0</p> <p>Funding: TIF, City funds</p> <p>Leadership/partnerships: Michigan City, Redevelopment Commission, Property Owners</p>		
Developer toolkit	Determine approach, available resources to provide developer assistance.	2014	• Confirm developer assistance criteria and toolkit.
	<p>Cost: \$0</p> <p>Funding: TIF, City funds</p> <p>Leadership/partnerships: Michigan City, Redevelopment Commission</p>		
Funding	Identify funding opportunities.	2014	• Establish special event cost and funding strategy.
	<p>Cost: \$0</p> <p>Funding: TIF, City funds, private sponsorship and donations, grants</p> <p>Leadership/partnerships: Michigan City, Parks Department Redevelopment Commission</p>	2014	• Establish corporate and individual donation program.
		2015+	• Prepare an annual Capital Improvement Project plan that aligns with partners and all sources of revenue.

PRIORITY ACTIONS AND INVESTMENTS

Even with their considerable TIF funding capability, community leaders simply don't have enough funding to complete all of the projects contemplated in the LMGIS by 2020 for the 760 acre study area. Instead, they have placed the highest priority on completing the following projects over the next 3 years, understanding that this list should be updated at least once per year in order to account for new opportunities and evolving circumstances. Nonetheless, leaders should remain committed to a systematic and incremental approach.

capital. land
improvements.
development.
operational.
public policy.



Note: Projects listed have been prioritized by category and by importance within each category excluding Land Improvements and Development. \$0 Does not always assume zero cost, it assumes these costs would be covered under the City staff budget.

2014 Priority Actions and Investments

Capital Improvements

\$1,500,000	Continue pursuing improvements in Washington Park: ticket booths, pavilion, gateway feature, lighthouse museum and purchasing the green house.
\$200,000	Plan and design Bismarck Hill Attractions.
\$750,000	Continue to make improvements to Franklin Street Downtown.
\$250,000	Construct green alley design adjacent to Warren Building.
\$650,000	Construct permeable paving parking lot on Franklin and 7th.
\$100,000	Plan and design improvements to Wabash Street.
\$20,000	Acquire right-of-way on 2nd to reestablish grid.
\$50,000	Plan and design North Franklin Street connection from Route 12 to Park.
\$130,000	Plan and design streetscapes on 5th, 6th and Spring Streets (development contingent).
\$39,000	Plan and design Pine, Washington and 9th street two-way conversions.
\$10,000	Plan and design U.S. Route 12 Bridge Improvements.
\$18,000	Plan and design gateway signs at municipal boundaries on Route 12.
\$100,000	Plan and design improvements to Route 421 bridge over Interstate 94.
\$345,000	Plan and design pedestrian bridge connection across Trail Creek.

\$4,162,000 2014 Capital Improvement Total

Land Improvements and Development

\$1,000,000	Study relocation of police station. Plan, design and engineer a new police station.
\$0	Continue to fund upper story residential conversion assistance.
\$100,000	Continue to fund Downtown facade improvement assistance.

\$1,100,000 2014 Land Improvement Total

Operational Improvements

\$60,000	Create a new brand strategy and communication system.
\$20,000	Establish an Economic Improvement District for maintenance and marketing.
\$50,000	Develop promotional material.
\$0	Create a project management team.
\$TBD	Recruit a project manager.
\$25,000	Create developer and business recruitment list.
\$0	Contact a water park/hotel developer.
\$0	Contact an adventure park developer.
\$0	Contact an indoor sports operator.
\$0	Develop maintenance performance standards, determine costs, train staff, etc.
\$0	Develop plan for revenue generation and enhancement through fees, events, sponsorships, etc.

\$155,000 2014 Operational Improvement Total

Public Policy

\$0	Adopt LMGIS Study.
\$0	Review existing codes and processes. Align with LMGIS goal, objectives and strategy. Evaluate impediments to implementing LMGIS.
\$30,000	Complete Hotel Feasibility Study.
\$30,000	Complete Entertainment/Retail/Restaurant Study.
\$200,000	Complete US Highway 421 South Franklin "South Gateway" Corridor Plan.
\$130,000	Conduct parking analysis and create a parking management strategy.
\$0	Contact property owners to discuss LMGIS. Determine support, future plans and business objectives, potential development, etc. Align policies and actions.
\$0	Confirm developer assistance criteria and toolkit.
\$0	Establish special event cost and funding strategy.
\$0	Establish corporate and individual donation program.

\$390,000 2014 Public Policy Total

2015 Priority Actions and Investments

Capital Improvements

\$2,500,000	Engineer and construct Bismarck Hill Attractions.
\$900,000	Construct improvements to Wabash Street.
\$200,000	Engineer and construct North Franklin Street.
\$1,990,000	Engineer and construct Plan and 5th, 6th and Spring Streets (development contingent).
\$250,000	Implement Franklin Street Bridge Improvements.
\$2,145,000	Engineer and Construct Pine, Washington and 9th street two-way conversions.
\$118,000	Plan and design Route 12 improvements and begin permitting process.
\$190,000	Engineer and construct gateway signs for Route 12 municipal identifiers.
\$134,000	Plan and design 2nd Street improvements.
\$49,000	Plan and design N/S Streets north of Route 12 improvements.
\$TBD	Implement trolley route system connecting major attractions.
\$25,000	Identify Center Street/Krueger Avenue as alternate route across Trail Creek (signage).
\$900,000	Engineer and construct Route 421 bridge over Interstate 94.
\$90,000	Engineer and construct Route 12 Bridge Improvements.
\$1,000,000	Construct Phase I of Singing Sands Trail.
\$480,000	Design and Engineer Phase II of Singing Sands Trail.
\$128,000	Engineer pedestrian bridge across Trail Creek.
\$100,000	Conduct engineering feasibility studies.

\$11,199,000 2015 Capital Improvement Total

Land Improvements and Development

\$150,000	Demolish Dispatch building and prepare for potential development.
\$300,000	Continue to fund upper story residential conversion assistance.
\$200,000	Continue to fund Downtown facade improvement assistance.
\$200,000	Contribute funding for Artist Lofts.
\$TBD	Provide developer assistance (land) for residential development on former hospital site.
\$100,000	Provide developer assistance for brewery site.
\$TBD	Provide Small Business Incentive Program.
\$650,000	Provide developer assistance for destination restaurant.

\$1,600,000 2015 Land Improvements Total

Operational Improvements

\$25,000	Develop promotional material.
\$150,000	Hire a project manager or augment existing staff responsibilities.
\$0	Contact a water park/hotel developer.
\$0	Contact an adventure park developer.
\$0	Contact an indoor sports operator.
\$10,000	Develop and implement comprehensive landscape management program.
\$0	Develop a Historic Review Board for oversight on protection and restoration of historic sites and structures.
\$5,000	Develop a cultural district designation

\$190,000 2015 Operational Improvement Total

Public Policy

\$5,000	Review and update the LMGIS framework and action plan.
\$200,000	Complete a master plan for Washington Park.
\$50,000	Create and adopt planning and design guidelines for improvements in Washington Park.
\$50,000	Create and adopt Lake Michigan Gateway Framework (Entertainment District) Design Guidelines.
\$0	Prepare a Capital Improvement Project plan that aligns with partners and all sources of revenue.

\$305,000 2015 Public Policy Total

2016 Priority Actions and Investments

Projects listed have been prioritized by category and by importance within each category.

Capital Improvements

\$1,000,000	Continue to make improvements to Washington Park.
\$471,000	Continue engineering and permitting process for Route 12 improvements.
\$535,000	Engineer 2nd Street improvements.
\$194,000	Engineer N/S Streets north of Route 12 improvements.
\$290,000	Continue engineering and permitting Phase II of Singing Sands Trail.
\$90,000	Engineer pedestrian bridge across Trail Creek.
\$100,000	Plan and design Gateway Plaza.
\$50,000	Plan and design illumination of existing landmarks.
\$100,000	Conduct engineering feasibility studies.

\$2,830,000 2016 Capital Improvement Total

Land Improvements and Development

\$300,000	Continue to fund upper story residential conversion assistance.
\$200,000	Continue to fund Downtown facade improvement assistance.
\$TBD	Continue to provide developer assistance for appropriate projects that meet the goal, objectives and strategy of the LMGIS including the appropriate return on investment.

\$500,000 2016 Land Improvements Total

Operational Improvements

\$25,000	Develop promotional material.
\$150,000	Maintain a project manager.
\$0	Continue to review and update operational improvements needs.

\$175,000 2016 Operational Improvement Total

Public Policy

\$5,000	Review and update the LMGIS framework and action plan.
\$0	Prepare a Capital Improvement Project plan that aligns with partners and all sources of revenue.
\$0	Review public policies to align with evolving city needs.

\$5,000 2016 Public Policy Total

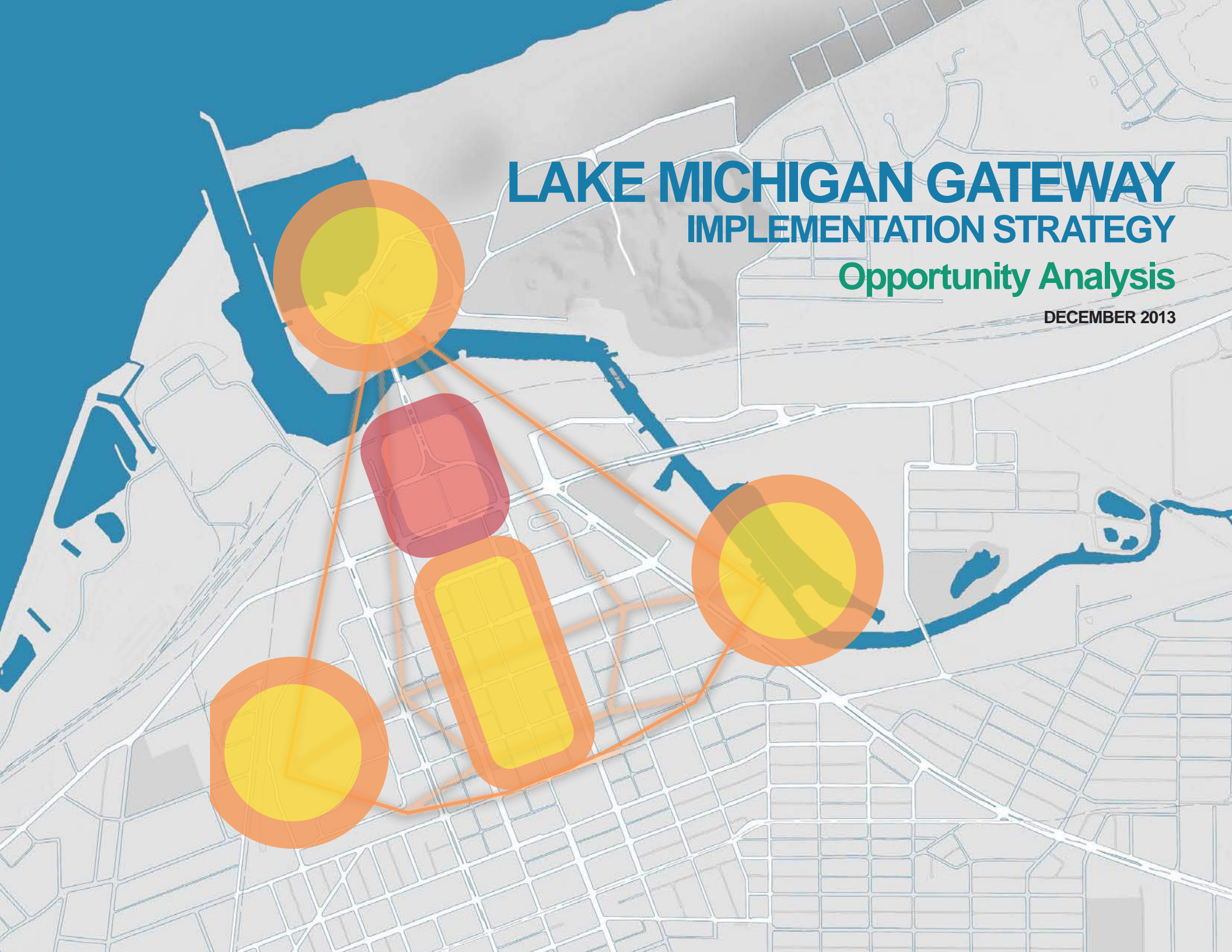
APPENDIX A: Opportunity Analysis

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LAKE MICHIGAN GATEWAY IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

Opportunity Analysis

DECEMBER 2013



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Market & Feasibility Advisors



On the Cover

The Golden Diamond

All images © Hitchcock Design Group, unless otherwise noted

CONTENTS

5	Executive Summary
7	Introduction
11	Why Come, Why Stay? There's More to Do
21	Getting Here and Getting Around is Easier than Ever
23	Why Come Back and Stay Longer
27	Previous Plans
31	The Most Promising Opportunities



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The upturn in the economy brings increased demand for visitor attractions and amenities. Building on the momentum of recent investments, Michigan City can, if timely, position itself to attract new venues before competing destination communities can respond. This strategic effort will identify the most promising opportunities to transform the areas that are underutilized parts of the study area, to strengthen connections between destinations and to make the area as a whole become a stronger destination. With a clear strategy, available resources, and the political will, the time is right for Michigan City to begin implementing the key projects that will set this transformation in motion.

The City of Michigan City commissioned Hitchcock Design Group (HDG) to develop the Lake Michigan Gateway Implementation Strategy (LMGIS). This Opportunity Analysis concludes the first phase of the three phase process. It summarizes the project background, the goals and objectives, stakeholder input, relevant past plans, and a variety of issues and opportunities organized around three themes: market and program (Why Come, Why Stay? There's More to Do), identity and arrival (Getting Here and Getting Around is Easier than Ever), and environment (Why Come Back and Stay Longer). It concludes with our assessment of the most promising focus areas, which will be further developed in the next phase of the project.

Who is the LMGIS for? Clearly there is an emphasis on the visitor, but there are direct and indirect benefits for local residents and businesses as well. Making the study area a stronger place benefits both groups, since the amenities that draw visitors also enrich the offerings for local residents, and increased visits bolster local tax revenue, provide jobs, and support local businesses. The manufacturing sector also benefits since quality of life improvements help to distinguish Michigan City in attracting industrial development over other competing communities.

Why Come, Why Stay? There's More to Do

Our assessment of comparable destination communities indicates that Michigan City has the potential to take a much larger share of the regional visitor market by drawing on the study area's existing strengths. These strengths include: the three major regional destinations in close

proximity, the untapped potential of the downtown and Washington Park, and the potential for creating new complimentary destinations. The attractiveness of the study area is further enhanced by its heritage and culture and the fact that it is a real working community, which contributes to its authenticity and richness of experience. Using these strengths and characteristics to focus investment and redevelopment to get visitors to linger longer can reactivate Michigan City's role as a major Midwest destination.

Getting Here and Getting Around is Easier than Ever

Thanks to the recently completed wayfinding signage program, it is much easier for visitors to navigate through the City to the various destinations. What's lacking is a strong identity for Michigan City as a destination lakefront community. Strengthening the City's message, from print and online media through physical improvements such as streetscape, gateway monuments, and sculpture will help to reassure visitors that they are on the right track, and create a sense of anticipation and arrival.

The two most obvious challenges to getting around the district, especially for visitors, are the one-way streets and the lack of an obvious connection to the lake. Based on the relatively low traffic volumes, all of the one-way streets are good candidates for conversion to two-way. Franklin Street, in particular, would function much better for retailers if it were a two-way street.

Why Come Back and Stay Longer

Creating an obvious connection to the lake is really a two part challenge. North of Route 12, the missing Franklin Street segment to the bridge can be re-established as a magnificent gateway to the lake once the area is redeveloped and the historic street grid is re-established. South of Route 12, the connection from downtown to the lake (and back) requires a more nuanced approach, due to the presence of the library building, which will remain in place for the foreseeable future. The most promising strategy is to transform the context around the building to make it more inviting to move around and to improve the connections across Route 12.



Credit Ryan Bolger

Taste of Michigan City 2012

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The purpose of the Lake Michigan Gateway Implementation Strategy (LMGIS) is to capitalize on the extraordinary potential of Michigan City and to transform the study area into an impressive gateway to the downtown and lakefront. It is designed to activate the best ideas of previous study area plans by performing sufficient due diligence on goals and/or perceived deficiencies and producing design detail that will achieve implementation. The final implementation strategy will propose recommendations for infrastructure improvements, pedestrian and vehicular circulation improvements, and land use in order to stimulate the maximum amount and the highest quality of private investment in the project area over time.

Study Area

The general geographic boundary of the project runs from 11th Street north to Lake Michigan and from Michigan Boulevard on the east to the Amtrak railroad tracks on the west. Altogether it covers approximately 700 acres and includes Washington Park, the Uptown Arts District (downtown), Lighthouse Place Premium Outlets, and Blue Chip Casino. In addition, the study area includes the entire length of the Route 12 corridor within the City limits, and the entry points to Franklin Street and Washington Boulevard.

Financial Resources

Virtually the entire study area falls within the North TIF District, which serves as a substantial funding source for public improvements within the district. Established in 1986, the original North TIF District boundary covered the entire study area south of Trail Creek, and was expanded in 1997 to include the Blue Chip Casino and adjacent properties. As a TIF, it provides dedicated tax revenue for the district based on the portion of increased property values that exceed the original pre-TIF values.

The total assessed value for the North TIF District is approximately \$190 million, generating approximately \$4.8 million in property tax revenue per year and approximately \$16 million in cash. The 1997 expanded TIF district, which includes the casino, is set to expire in 2027.

The recent, adverse state legislation has pushed the Redevelopment Commission to consider other options for funding public and private investments.

This and future returns are a potential funding source for public improvements within the study area either as direct investments or to repay a bond. In addition to TIF funding, capital improvements in the area can be funded by the city (including riverboat gaming funds). Additional sources of funding may include donors, nonprofit organizations, State and Federally funded grants and the city's capital improvement funds.



Study Area

Project Steering Committee

A Project Steering Committee (PSC), composed of many individuals and organizations who have demonstrated a commitment to Michigan City will help identify potential issues, and establish goals and objectives for the study area to identify the most promising opportunities.

Stakeholders

Approximately fifty project stakeholders participated in a series of confidential interviews during the planning study. The participants represented a broad cross section, including elected and appointed city officials, city staff, business and property owners, organization leaders, local residents, commercial real estate brokers, real estate developers, financial leaders, and other special interest groups.

Stakeholders were asked to share their thoughts, concerns and ideas regarding the current state of the area: strengths and weaknesses, access and circulation, identify what is missing and the biggest challenges facing the area. Participants were also asked to imagine what the area would like in the future by identifying and prioritizing improvements. The following themes emerged from the interviews:

- Create a realistic and long term sustainable plan for revitalization.
- Create a year-round destination for visitors and increase attraction for new residents.
- Increase visibility and connectivity, in particular between existing destinations, the downtown, and lakefront.
- Celebrate the lake.
- Need for quality investments and improved environment.
- Need to show progress. Get something done.
- Conflicted sense of identity and city pride.

The goal is for Michigan City to be widely recognized in the market area as Indiana's Great Lakefront Destination.

Vision, Goal and Objectives

The vision for Michigan City is to become a premier destination community on Lake Michigan, offering major attractions that draw visitors in, and secondary activities that encourage them to linger longer. Linger longer is simply extending their visit beyond the initial destination. More than a set of attractions, Michigan City will be an attraction in and of itself, and the qualities that will make it a great place to visit, will also make it a great place to live and work, which by turn, will add to the richness and authenticity of the visitor experience.

Objectives

For the study area, by 2020, local residents and visitors will:

- Support a cluster of year-round activities and destinations for the whole family;
- Easily access and navigate the area;
- Experience an extraordinarily attractive environment;
- Strive to increase private sector investment, produce more jobs and more tax revenue.

OPPORTUNITY ANALYSIS



Regional Entry and Approach Map

WHY COME? WHY STAY? THERE'S MORE TO DO

MARKET ANALYSIS

Michigan City has historically been known as a summer resort conveniently located just one hour from Chicago, close enough to be convenient but far enough to feel like an escape. Once known as the Atlantic City of the West, it was a primary destination for Chicago beach oriented tourists who came, often by ferry, to enjoy the beach and amusements at Washington Park. Today the City features four magnet attractions, three of which are within the study area: Washington Park, the Lighthouse Place Premium Outlets, the Blue Chip Casino, and the nearby Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore. But though each of these destinations draws millions each year, they are typically single purpose visits and as a result they miss the local shops and restaurants.

With the passing of the recession, there is unmet demand for visitor attractions and little competition in the surrounding region. Michigan City can, if timely, take advantage of the current market to bolster its offerings in order grow its visitor economy. Growing the visitor economy increases the diversity of services and amenities which improves the community's overall quality of life. The increased quality of life makes Michigan City more attractive to the manufacturing and service sectors, which helps to attract new industries and provides a stronger overall economy.

Market Opportunities include:

- Washington Park is an underperforming when compared with peer beachfront communities on the Great Lakes and East Coast. With new attractions and more consistent design Michigan City has the potential to become a major regional beachfront community.
- The Downtown is an underperforming “linger longer” district that can benefit from improved programming and connectivity with surrounding magnet destinations.
- New magnet destinations and “linger longer” activities should be clustered and located between Downtown and Washington Park to support and enhance the connectivity between the two.

- The Lighthouse Place Premium Outlets and Blue Chip Casino face increasing regional competition and may not be as significant in the future. Improving the overall package of complimentary “linger longer” activities and providing attractive connections to other destinations can help to differentiate them from their competition.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology employed included:

- Regional economic analysis,
- Detailed profiling and analysis of other Lake Michigan beach communities,
- Similar profiling and analysis of long-standing east coast beach communities close to metro areas,
- Community investigations to establish current conditions,
- Historical review of the Michigan City economy, and
- Other research and analysis.

FINDINGS

Michigan City is well positioned to become both a day trip and overnight visitor destination – even more than it is currently for a number of reasons. Michigan City:

- Has direct Interstate highway, and Indiana Toll Road access (Interstates 94, 90) as well as overlapping train (Amtrak and the South Shore line) access to a one hour to ninety minute drive time population of well over eight-million residents.
- Is physically faster and more convenient to get to than its southwestern Michigan competitors, all of the Wisconsin destination communities, and Illinois destination communities such as Galena.
- Is better positioned for lakefront destination development than other Northwestern Indiana lakefront communities as it has considerable beachfront unrestrained by environmental

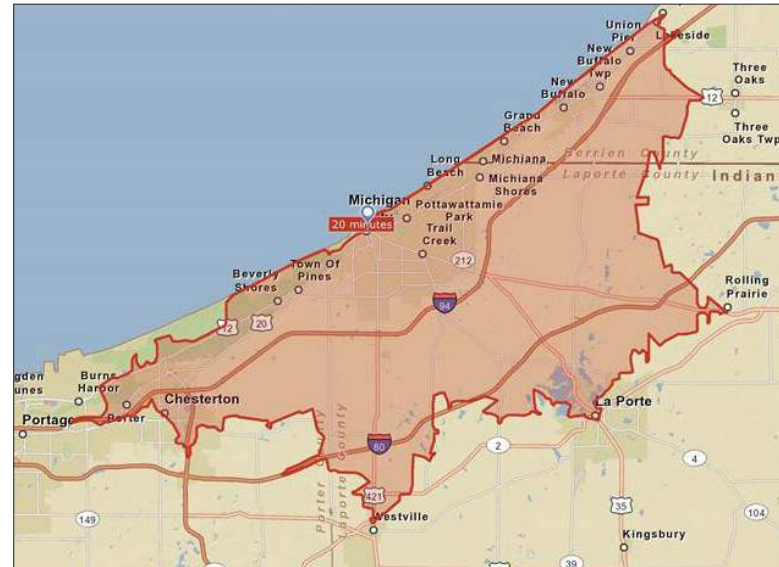
development restrictions (such as the National Lakeshore) and has a lakefront marred by only one (though large) industrial structure.

- Already has visitor magnets in the lakefront and Washington Park, Lighthouse Place Premium Outlets, Blue Chip Casino and the National Lakeshore.
- Has nascent linger-longers in the zoo, marina (opportunities for boat rental, lakefront tours, and a commuter boat), and potential development sites in Washington Park for resident and visitor support facilities.
- Has a potential linger-longer development opportunity with: Trail Creek, a wonderfully intact downtown (multiple development opportunities), a redevelopment area north of Route 12, Canada Park, a rural tourism destination in the balance of LaPorte County, sites east of downtown and the casino along Route 12 noted in the Trail Creek Plan.
- Has a large and potentially ready labor force, unlike most small city destinations.
- Is just “far enough away” from Chicago to feel away for the weekend. Evidence for this is that there are many second homes along Lake Shore Drive – and note that west of Michigan City there are relatively few second homes.

Visitor oriented developments – magnet and linger-longer – are, generally, in the entertainment and recreation sectors thereby contributing not only to the positive reputation of the community but its quality of life as well. Improvements to the quality of life in the community will advance efforts to draw employers in other industrial and service sectors too.

Issues connected to destination development include no fatal flaws and can all potentially be addressed. They include:

- Unattractive entry paths.
- A core magnet, Washington Park, in need of a resident/visitor makeover.



20 Minute Drive Time for year-round users of Central Michigan City and its assets



Visitor Market Area

- Traffic management issues for getting to the beach and the second-home areas east of the park.
- Lack of any hospitality and dining on or near the lake.
- Insufficient evening retail, dining, entertainment, and other activities – notwithstanding that offered at the casino.
- Summer oriented core attraction – the beach, although the outlet and casino are active year-round.
- An eroding market position for the outlet. The outlet, once one of few in the Midwest, now has shopper-intercepting competition in every direction. It will increasingly rely on visitors coming to Michigan City for other reasons.
- An eroding market position for the casino. Like the outlet, it is increasingly cut off from its markets and, like the outlet, will soon depend on visitors coming to Michigan City for other magnets. Ultimately this will place its financial support of the community in jeopardy.
- Unresolved issues about the crossing of Trail Creek.
- Financial support for magnet and linger-longer development and redevelopment.

COMPETITION

Michigan City has many regional competitors for its magnets, principally the aforementioned Michigan beach cities, Wisconsin destinations, a few destinations in Illinois, and the other lakefront communities in Indiana.

In addition to the points mentioned, the Michigan market is very fragmented, further from the vast Chicago metro population and the communities have either already developed much of their key waterfront asset or have chosen not to. The potential combination of activities, offered by Michigan City, in close proximity to one another does not exist in the Michigan beach cities and therefore does not seem to be the drive to create a visitor industry to drive local employment in those communities that may be present in Michigan City. This is partially due to the lower population levels in many of



Lighthouse Place Premium Outlets



Blue Chip Casino



Washington Park Beach on a busy summer day

these communities and the continued success of the agricultural economy that begins just a few miles inland.

The Wisconsin destinations are and will continue to be competitive to Michigan City if it is to become a visitor destination community. The Dells area has gone year-round and now offers everything Michigan City does except for a beach, but has now built those indoors. Lake Geneva has many attractive characteristics and offers much of what Michigan City does. Door County and a myriad of other small Wisconsin destination communities as well as Galena all offer attractive experiences but not as broad-based as Michigan City.

The long-term advantage for Michigan City is that it is closer to the Chicago market than all of these communities.

The one long-term catch may be that the Borman Expressway can be legendary for summer weekend traffic. The roads to Wisconsin can have the same traffic issues but do not seem to have this same reputation.

COMPARABLE DESTINATIONS

The northeastern US beach destinations we have profiled offer a number of important lessons including:

- The beach is a powerful magnet. Some of these destinations have been destinations for generations, before America even had a discernible leisure culture. Michigan City was itself a Midwestern version of these eastern communities for decades.
- Many of these destinations serve overlapping metro areas – for example three destinations in Delaware and Maryland serve both the DC and Baltimore metro areas. Similarly Philadelphia and New York City both share numerous destinations along the New Jersey shore while New York City also supports destinations on the eastern end of Long Island and others as far away as Cape Cod in Massachusetts.
- The demand for beach destinations is tremendous in the urban east coast swath from Boston to Washington, and continues down the coast to the Virginia and Carolina beach destinations supported by many smaller cities and inland states like Ohio.

- Michigan City can be the beach destination for Chicago. Chicago supports a number of small beach committees in Michigan but there are no major destinations there. Michigan City, if fully developed, may better serve the in-state metro area of Indianapolis as well. Many people from Indiana come to Michigan City but they also head south for beach experiences. Michigan City can emerge as the premium beach destination for two major metro areas.
- There are many ways to deal with impediments that are also opportunities like Trail Creek.
- Nearly all of the successful development is on, or just a short walk from the beach.
- Evening and nighttime dining and entertainment are important – as are commercial entertainments from mini-golf to go-karts, zip lines, and amusement rides.
- Every community has a different image and set of offerings with regards to what makes it entertaining and who it is entertaining to – the target market(s).
- You can get by with a seasonal attraction but you should try to keep the party going into the shoulder seasons of spring and fall.
- Adults can be the key as they are free to travel anytime and see the beauty of a beach all year-round more than children – but the Wisconsin Dells and communities with tournament facilities (indoor ones) have kept visitors coming through the winter.
- Cooperation between the public and private sectors are critical to future development but work only if they are working with the same plan.
- Eastern beach destinations are under the threat of global warming. Michigan City is not.
- Visitors like their beach destinations to have a distinct character. Michigan City does not have that, yet.



DESTINATIONS

Michigan City draws millions of visitors each year to its primary attractions, the lakefront and Washington Park, Lighthouse Place Premium Outlets, and Blue Chip Casino. Visits are typically isolated, with little spill over to the places in between, including the downtown. Unfortunately the places in between these attractions have not benefited from these visitors, and as a result the downtown is not as vibrant as it could be. The market study, through peer comparison, indicates that Michigan City has the potential to draw more visitors by creating secondary attractions, uses, and activities that encourage visitors to linger longer.

Washington Park has the potential to become more of a destination and amenity for visitors and local residents. The park suffers from aging facilities, a mismatch of design styles and elements diminishing the attractiveness and park image. To make matters worse, circulation and parking is inefficient. With an improved layout, the park can provide for new recreational activities, more robust programming for events and activities, and new amenities such as a boardwalk, playground, expanded zoo, and eco-based activities, all of which would greatly expand the drawing power of the park.

From Golden Triangle to Golden Diamond

- The primary visitor attractions of Washington Park, Blue Chip Casino, and Lighthouse Place Premium Outlets, are no longer as competitive individually, but could be if the downtown and other study area attractions provided more complimentary activities.
- Consequently, the Golden Triangle, which emphasizes the three anchor destinations, is no longer an adequate description and should be replaced with the Golden Diamond, which adds the downtown and a new visitor-oriented district north of Route 12 to enrich the mix in order to make the study area more of an attraction as a whole.



Golden Triangle



Golden Diamond



Opportunity Sites Map

HISTORY AND CULTURE

Michigan City was founded in 1830 by Isaac Elston and became known for their industry, sand mining, lumber and grain markets. By 1852, a major railroad freight car manufacturer, Haskell & Barker located in Michigan City. Michigan City was also home to Indiana's largest and most famous landmark the Hoosier Slide, a huge sand dune. While Haskell & Barker and the Hoosier Slide are long gone, replaced by Lighthouse Place Premium Outlets and NIPSCO, traces of the City's rich history remain. The National Register of Historic Places has listed many significant structures such as the Barker Mansion, First Congressional Church of Michigan City, the Old Lighthouse, Michigan City East Pierhead Light Tower and Elevated Walk, Post Office and Washington Park. Additionally, there are three locally recognized historical districts: Washington, Elston Grove and Franklin Street Commercial. Elston Grove and Franklin Street Commercial Districts are on the National Register of Historic Places. A decision on Washington is pending.

NATURAL ASSETS

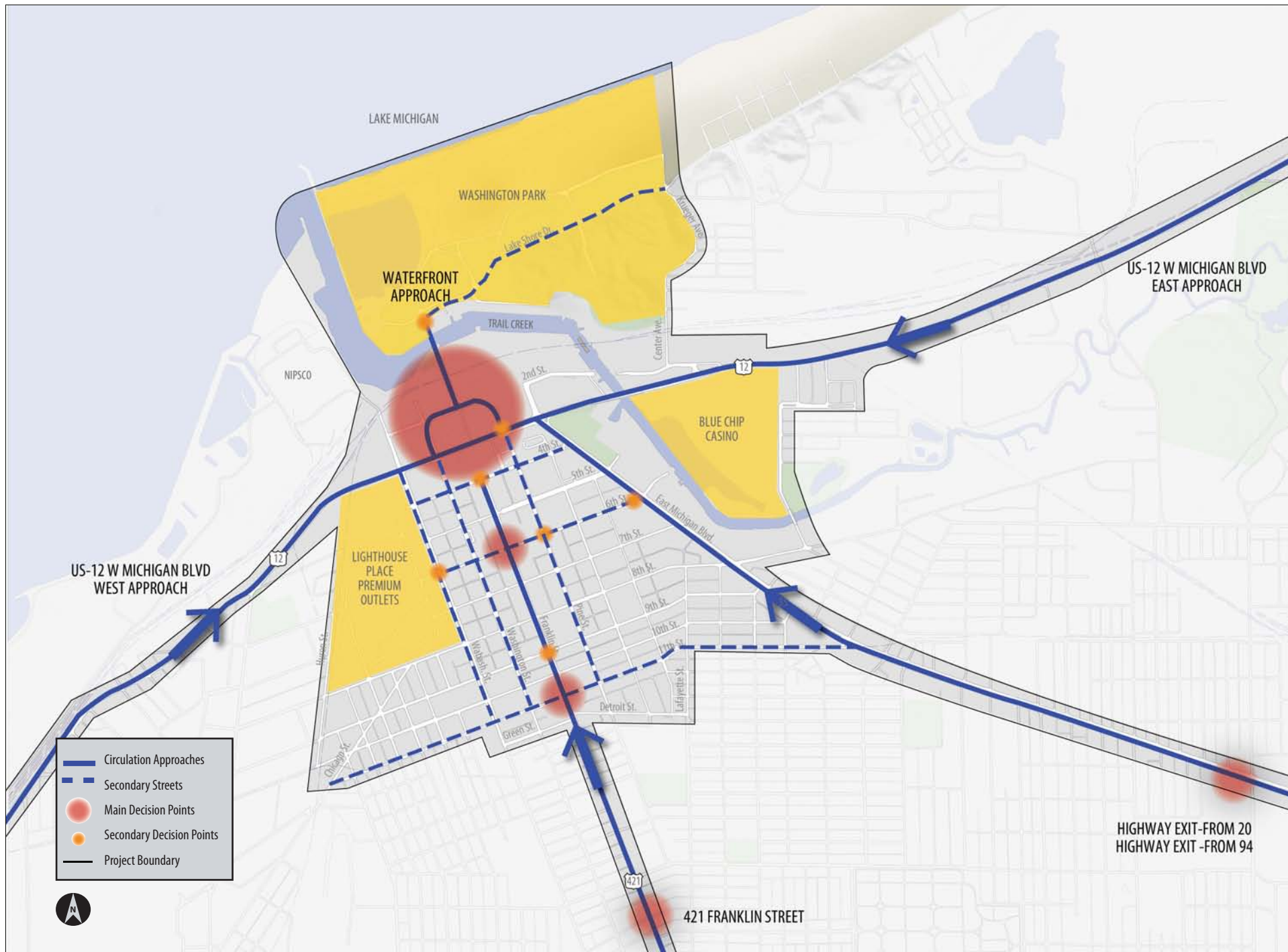
Michigan City's location on the coastline of Lake Michigan and connection to Trail Creek, make it an undeniable asset. The sand dunes and beachfront provide scenic beauty and recreational opportunities. Twin peaked dune hills, Bismarck and Krueger bring awe-inspiring views of the lake, city and on a clear day, downtown Chicago. Despite the issues facing Washington Park, it provides opportunities for recreation, education and entertainment. The park and marina house a public zoo, museum, restaurants, amphitheater, historic structures, an observation tower, and gardens to name a few. Trail Creek is an under-utilized asset that crosses through a third of the study area, creating a significant amount of potential riverfront, ready for redevelopment. Not only does Michigan City have natural assets within its borders, it is adjacent to Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, which will soon be connected with the regional, multi-purpose Singing Sands Trail along Route 12.

OPPORTUNITY SITES

A number opportunity sites were identified by City staff during the project kickoff meeting (see map, left). These sites are strategically located in what should be high value areas, such as the area along Trail Creek or the area between downtown and the Washington Park. The readiness of these sites vary, with some being open, and some requiring the relocation of an existing use, site clearance, and/or potential site remediation. Altogether these sites cover approximately 75 acres, a third of which are publicly owned.



Natural Assets Map



Circulation and Approach Map

GETTING HERE AND GETTING AROUND IS EASIER THAN EVER

IDENTITY

Getting here begins before the visitor even leaves their home by word of mouth, or surfing the web for an interesting place to visit. In order for Michigan City to be perceived as a destination community it must have a clear identity that sets it apart from other places. Presently, the identity of the district is confusing due to competing messages (LaPorte County vs. Michigan City; Arts District vs. North End; individual attractions vs. the district itself as an attraction, etc.). To effectively compete with other destination beachfront communities, Michigan City needs to convey a consistent and recognizable message through the internet, print, and environmental graphics. Additionally, Michigan City needs a prominent identity located and visible to the thousands of Interstate 94 motorists that pass by every day.

Gateways, landmarks, signage and wayfinding play a critical role in reinforcing Michigan City's image and effectively directing visitors to the study area and lakefront. While the recently implemented directional signage has significantly improved the situation, this program can be even stronger by incorporating the study area's message into highway signage, and providing additional signage along the route to the various destinations, particularly given the opportunities related to the potential conversion of one-way streets and new street extensions.

CORRIDORS

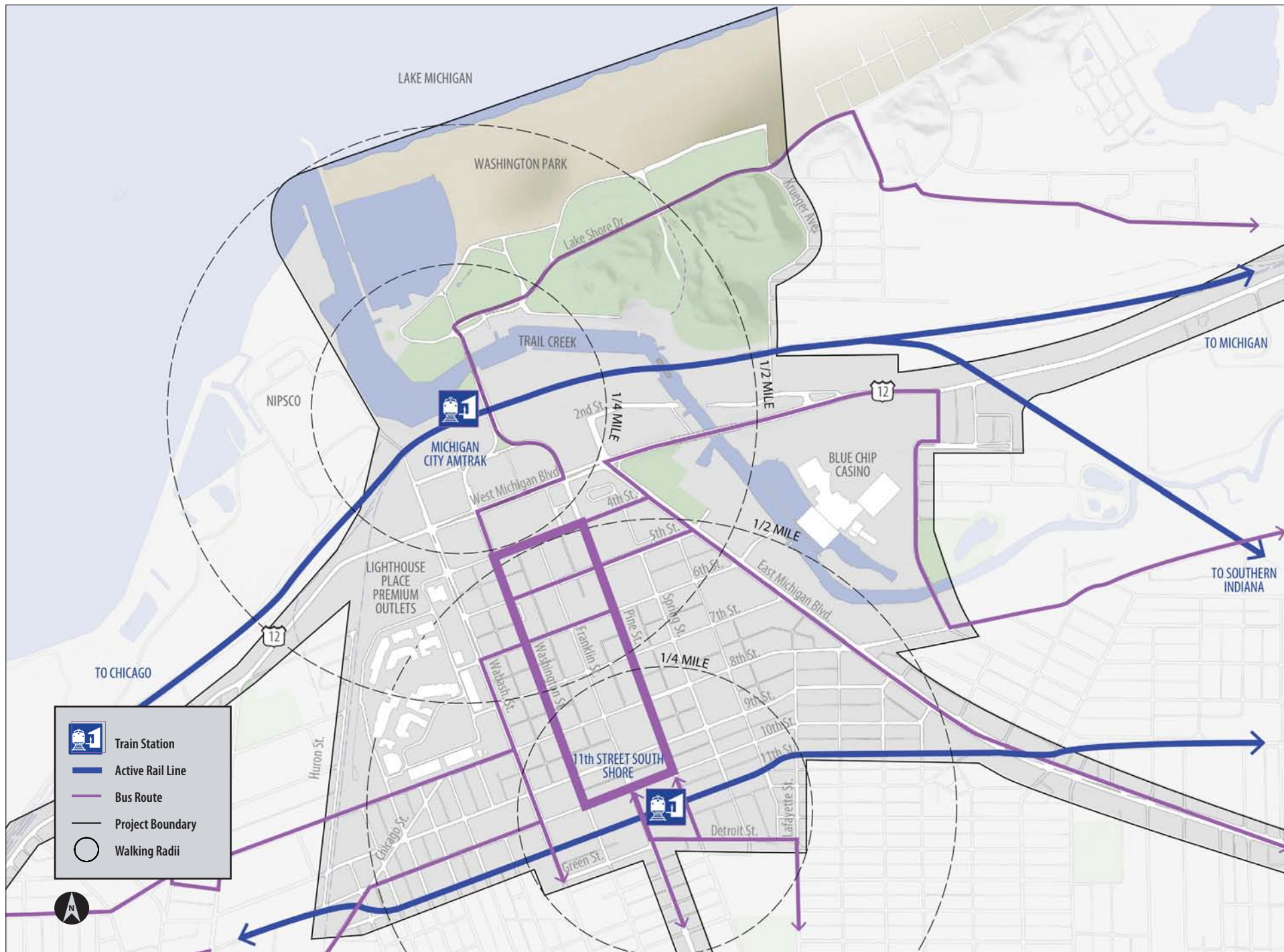
The appearance of the approach corridors affects how visitors perceive Michigan City and the study area as a place. Each of the corridors has a distinct character that is fundamentally shaped by their context (Route 12 in the National Park, a serene parkway vs. Franklin Street as a commercial corridor). Rather than trying to significantly improve the appearance of these corridors—which given their length, would be a significant capital expense—we recommend focusing efforts where the corridors approach the core of the study area, so that they contribute an impacting sense of arrival.

NAVIGATION

Major roads leading to Michigan City include Route 12, Interstate 94, US Highway 421 (Franklin Street), US Highway 20 and East Michigan Boulevard. While Interstate signs identify Michigan City, there are no significant gateways, landmarks or signage indicating the proximity to the downtown and the lakefront. Route 12 runs through the core of the study area but lacks identifiable City limits. The existing gateway signs fail to reinforce the approach or provide a distinct sense of arrival. Approaching from the south along Franklin Street leaves subtle hints in the form of brick columns and planters but their size, number and placement do not make a significant impact in tying together the commercial portion of Franklin to the downtown. The streetscape along Michigan Boulevard emerges as a positive example for creating a unique sense of place. The recently constructed streetscape improvements provide a pleasing experience for pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists. There are opportunities to mimic and utilize existing assets and introduce trailblazers creating sequence and excitement as you arrive.

GATEWAYS

New and existing monuments and landmarks also help to orient visitors and to reinforce the identity of the study area. Numerous iconic landmarks including the lighthouse, the pavilion at Lighthouse Place Premium Outlets and the Blue Chip Casino Spa hotel tower contribute to the distinctiveness of the district and help visitors understand where they are. Uncelebrated landmarks such as the NIPSCO cooling tower and stack, and the side of the Blue Chip Casino barge, can be transformed into positive landmarks through painting, lighting or decorative features. New landmarks in the form of light towers, arches or other environmental art, can amplify the sense of arrival by framing intersections and creating markers on important view corridors.



WHY COME BACK AND STAY LONGER

BY CAR

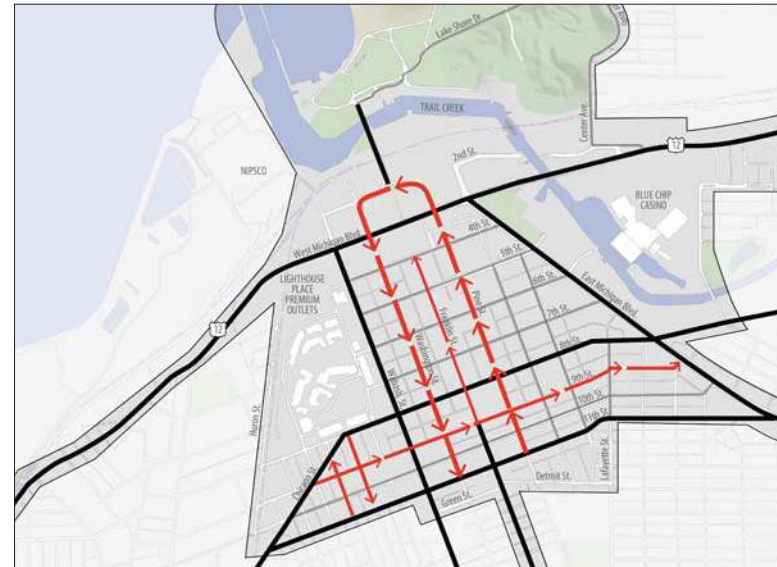
Existing traffic patterns in the study area make getting around by car overly complex and confusing. Washington Street and Pine Street are oversized, one-way streets that direct traffic around the downtown core. This ensures that first time visitors have no idea where it is or that it exists. Franklin Street serves as the north bound, one-way artery into downtown and the Uptown Arts District. While Franklin Street provides direct access from the south, it terminates at 4th Street and reappears as a two-way 2 blocks to the north. This disruption in the grid eliminates any obvious connection between downtown and the lakefront.

Converting one-ways to two-way streets and extending Franklin Street from the park to Highway 12 will make navigation easier for visitors and will facilitate improved access for retail and restaurants located along them. Placing Washington, Pine and Highway 12 on road diets will decrease the speed of drivers, making walking and cycling more comfortable. Decreasing road width will allow more space for multi-modal transportation and provide additional space to enhance pedestrian experiences with either landscaped medians, terraces or other streetscape improvements. All of these prescriptions will lead to an improved and undeniable sense of arrival for those traveling by vehicle.

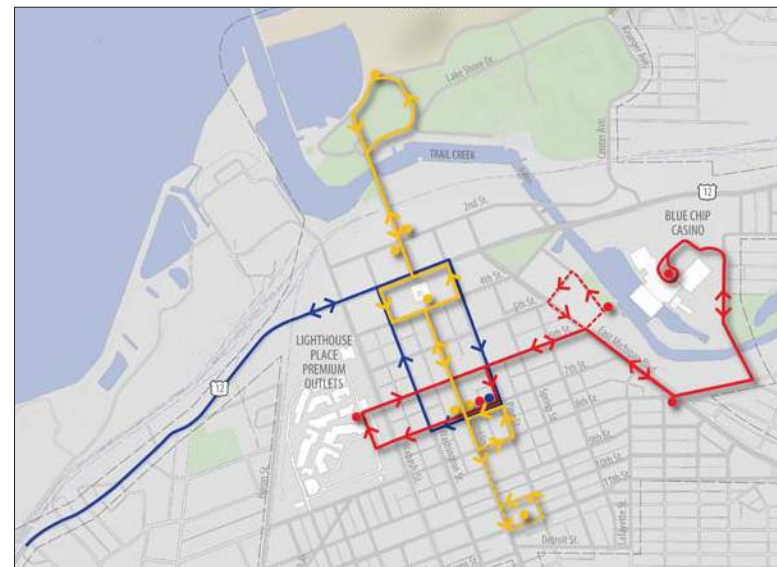
BY BUS OR TRAIN

Amtrak and South Shore Passenger rail lines provide regional connections to Michigan City. Each rail service has a stop within one half mile of downtown, an easy 10 minute walk for visitors. The bus system provides four fixed routes for use by the general public, with all routes looping around downtown and converging near the library. The commuter rail and bus systems meet the basic needs of informed residents; however, they are not particularly intuitive or easy enough for visitors seeking direct connections from transit stops to key destinations.

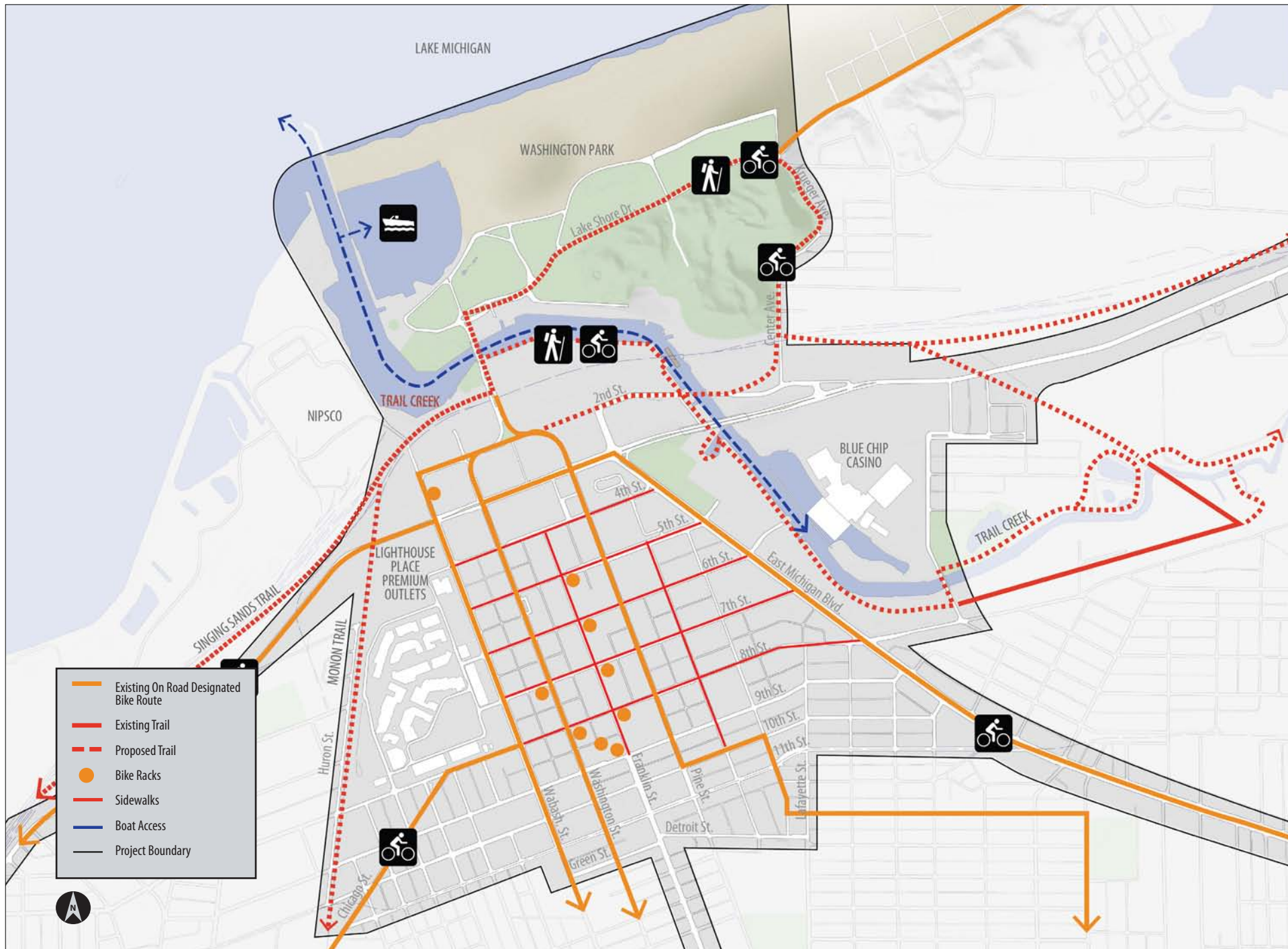
An alternative transit option could be a shuttle system. A two route shuttle bus system could connect key destinations to one another, making travel between attractions easy. Shuttles provide increased frequency and more direct routes than a traditional bus system.



Vehicular Circulation Map



Proposed Shuttle Bus Routes Map



The routes would not only connect the lakefront and Washington Park, Lighthouse Place Premium Outlets and Blue Chip Casino but purposefully bring people into downtown and the Uptown Arts District by shuttle.

BY BIKE

The vast network of bicycle and multi-purpose trails planned will provide local and regional connections between destinations. Many of these routes have yet to be implemented and others are in need of improvement. A comprehensive on-street bicycle network has been identified, however, East Michigan Boulevard is the only on-street route to have designated and painted bike lanes. Few off-road trails have been completed.

Safe and inviting multi-purpose trails further diversify the modes and ease of travel to key destinations in Michigan City and expand recreational opportunities to all cyclists.

ON FOOT

The pedestrian connectivity and experience in Michigan City is variable. Walkability on Franklin Street north of 11th street is high, creating a friendly environment for people living in, working in or visiting the area. The experience is enjoyable because travel lanes are narrower, there are frequent and safe crossing opportunities, buildings front the sidewalk, amenities such as bike racks and benches are present. Street lights, sculpture and streetscaping along the corridor contribute to a sense of enclosure, human scale and improved aesthetic. Washington Street, Pine Street and West Michigan Boulevard do not provide the same pleasant experience. Streets are too wide for the amount of traffic, buildings are set too far back, and there is a lack of vertical enclosure and pedestrian scale.

Narrowing Washington, Pine and Route 12 by enlarging the medians or increasing the terrace sizes will enable safer pedestrian crossings and create opportunities to enhance streetscape appearance. The addition of street trees, landscaping, amenities, and bike lanes will improve the image of the area and create a sense of arrival for visitors on foot.

Adding a pedestrian wayfinding system will further improve visitor orientation and enhance the existing vehicle direction sign system.



Bicyclists near Franklin Street Bridge



Pleasant Pedestrian Environment on Franklin Street



PREVIOUS PLANS

One purpose of this Implementation Strategy is to activate the best ideas of past and current plans. From a historical perspective, the two most influential are the original town plan of 1832, and the Beachway Plan of 1970.

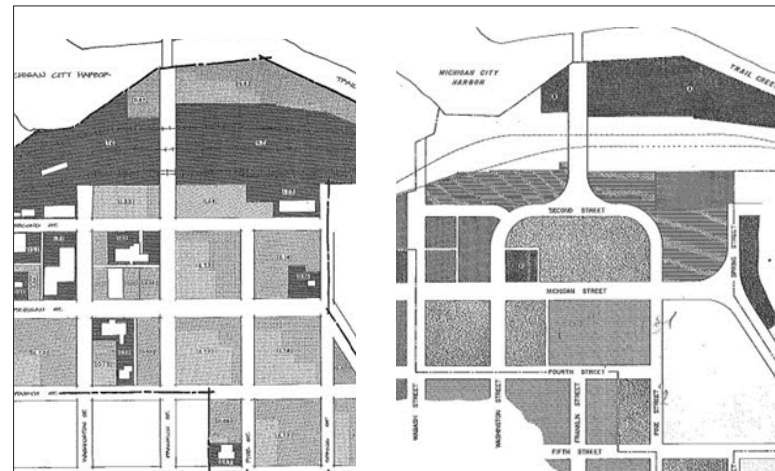
The original plan, laid out by the City's founder, Isaac Elston, guided the growth and development of Michigan City through the heyday of its manufacturing and transportation era. Based on the original plan, the crossroads of Franklin Street and East Michigan Street (Route 12) was the 100% corner, and by 1870 it was the most intensely developed part of the downtown. In 1900, the plan was extended to include Washington Park which soon after became the primary anchor of the City's tourism economy.

The Beachway Plan was designed to reposition a downtown that was in decline due to the eroding manufacturing economy and the migration of downtown businesses to southern parts of the City, near the interstate. The plan followed the principles of urban renewal which was the prevailing planning strategy of the time. (This was one year after Franklin Street had been converted into the Franklin Square pedestrian mall, which was converted back to a street in 1990). It proposed the removal of the Franklin Street/Route 12 intersection, and the creation of a civic/cultural district in its place, which eventually developed into of a loose collection of unrelated one and-two-story buildings. The result was that the downtown was visually cut off from the lakefront and a one-way circulation system was installed, which is confusing.

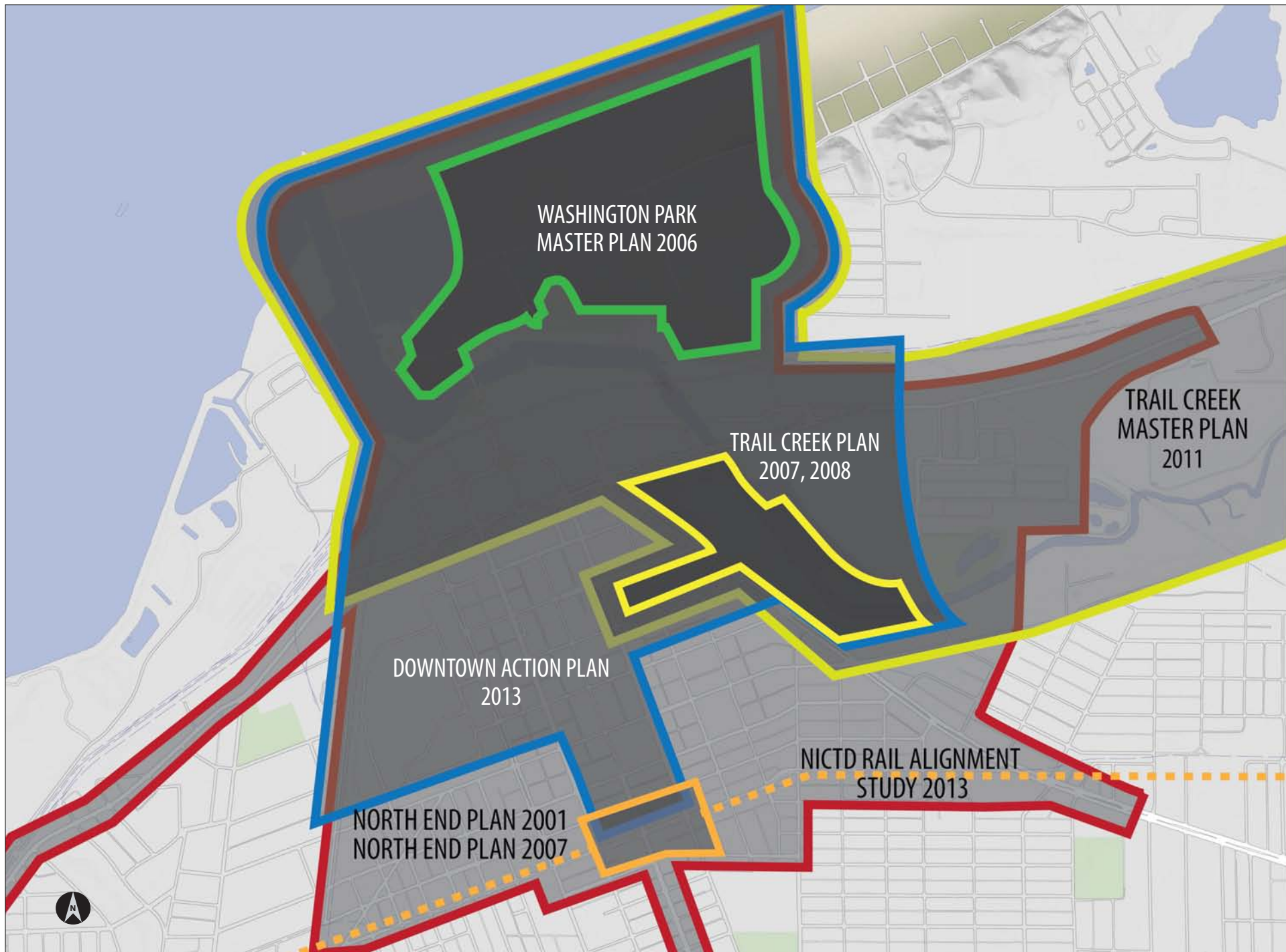
Thorough the 80's and 90's, the City made a significant investment in growing its tourism economy, which resulted in the opening of the Lighthouse Place Premium Outlets in 1987 and the Blue Chip Casino in 1997. Combined with Washington Park, these attractions, soon to be known as the Golden Triangle, drew millions of visitors each year and were independently very successful, though the study area as a whole and the downtown in particular were under performing. It is within this context that all the plans after 2000 were created.



Historic Image of Street Grid



Beachway Project Maps



Past Planning Study Boundaries

SUMMARY OF RECENT STUDY AREA PLANS

North End Redevelopment Strategy by Arthur Anderson and Camiros, 2001

The 2001 Plan addressed the entire North End district including the downtown, Washington Park, Blue Chip Casino, and Lighthouse Place Premium Outlets. The goal was to make the North End a stronger destination by introducing new family friendly attractions that compliment the primary destinations. It also recommended improving the appearance of the surrounding neighborhoods which were, at the time, perceived as unsafe. Suggested projects included “Friendship Park,” a rail museum, Franklin Street façade renovation and infill, Trail Creek entertainment/retail, Barker Village retail, and Elston Grove renovations.

The Washington Park Master Plan by the Master Plan Committee, 2006

The goal of the 2006 Washington Park Master Plan was to attract more visitors and residents to the park by increasing recreational activities, beautifying the park, updating facilities, and adding restaurants and concessions. Suggested projects include a splash pad, concession and landscape improvements.

The North End Plan by Andrews University, 2007

The 2007 North End Plan, like the 2001 Plan addressed the entire North End. The goal was to make the district a more livable community by replacing suburban-style development with denser traditional urban development, and to increase the downtown residential population. Unlike the 2001 Plan, there was much less emphasis on direct investment in tourist attractions or the downtown, and emphasis on improving the context around them. Suggested projects include Trail Creek mixed use development, 11th Street station area development, re-linking Franklin Street to the Bridge, and redeveloping the library site and surroundings.

The Trail Creek Plan by Lohan Anderson, 2007

The 2007 Trail Creek Plan was initiated by the City in order to attract a master developer to redevelop the 50 acre Trail Creek development site. The plan proposed urban style mixed use housing and entertainment with high rise residential towers offering views to the lake. The development was organized around a network of streets

and parks and included a pedestrian bridge to Blue Chip Casino, and an elevated cable car connection to the beach. Wescott Park was a direct result of the plan, though most of the rest of the project was stalled due to the recession.

Market Analysis for Trail Creek Plan by Tracy Cross, 2008

The 2008 Trail Creek Market Analysis was also commissioned by the City to understand the market demand for the 2007 Trail Creek Plan in order to develop detailed development guidelines. As a result of the study, the scale of the project was reduced to mid-rise housing and a single destination restaurant.

The Trail Creek Corridor Open Space Plan by Weaver Boos and Hitchcock Design Group, 2011

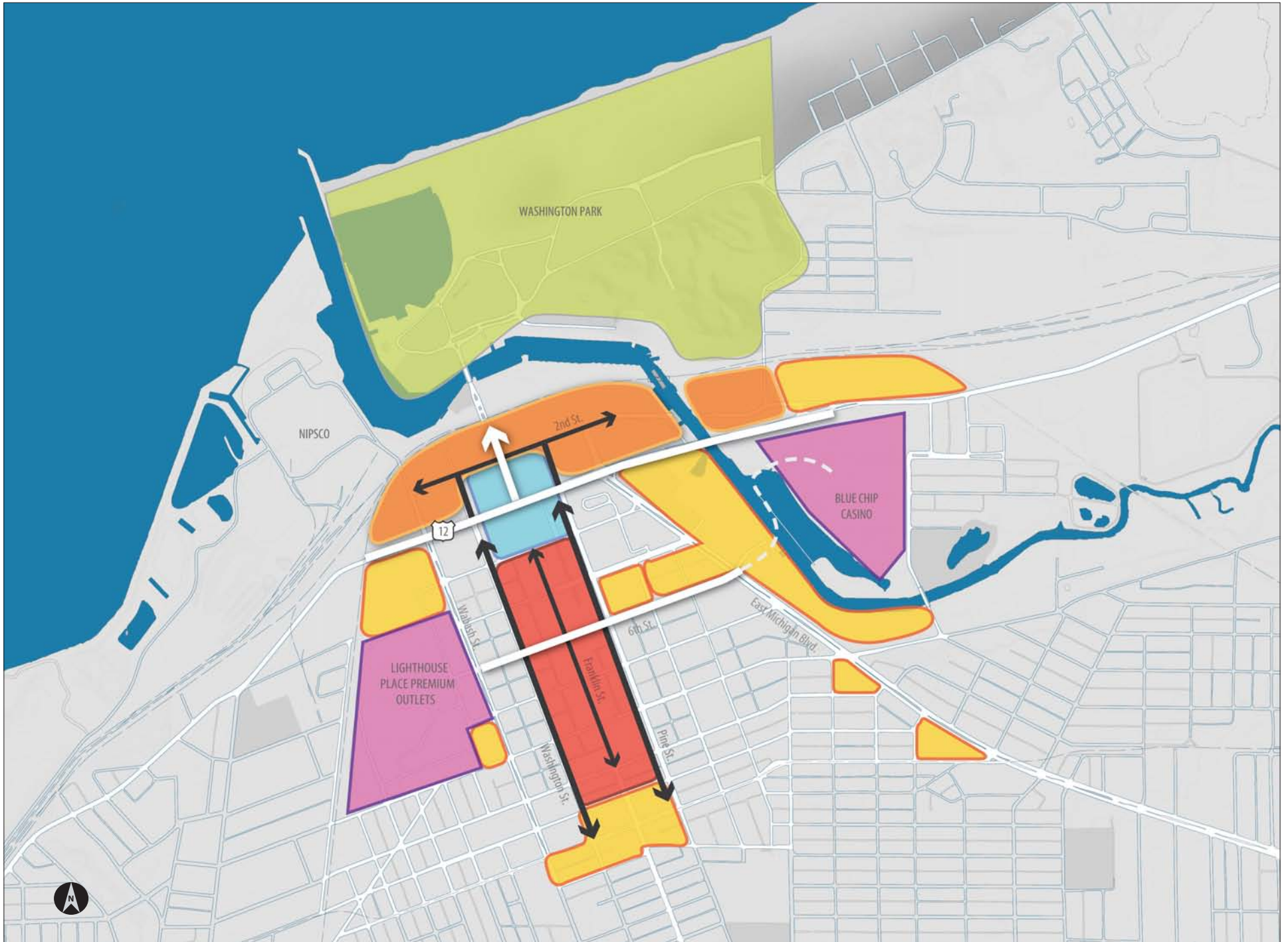
The 2011 Trail Creek Corridor Plan covered 2,400 acres of land along the Trail Creek, from Karwick Nature Park to Washington Park. The goal was to develop a cohesive, public recreational amenity that is a local asset and regional destination. It recommended an extensive trail network that would connect the study area to the regional park system, and recommendations for improving Canada Park by offering camping, trails and interpretive signage.

The Michigan City Downtown Action Agenda by HyettPalma, 2013

The goal of the 2013 Downtown Action Agenda was to attract more customers to the downtown. It focused on short term initiatives and enhancements that would demonstrate progress and help build momentum. Key recommendations include streetscape enhancements, public art, façade enhancement programs, retail recruitment, and marketing and management programs. The recommendations were supported by a detailed retail market study.

Michigan City/NICTD Rail Realignment Study by TransSystems, 2013

The 2013 NICTD study evaluated three potential routes for the upgraded interurban rail line. The goal was to balance ridership and create an impetus for economic development. In the end, the central alignment running down 10th and 11th Street was selected as the preferred option. This option includes a new station platform on 11th Street and 150,000 sf of potential station area commercial development.



THE MOST PROMISING OPPORTUNITIES

Based on the results of the November workshop, including input and feedback from the stakeholders and Project Steering Committee (PSC), we have developed this preliminary list of the most promising opportunities. These are among the many ideas that have been proposed for the study area in past and current plans. What sets them apart is their likelihood of being most effective in advancing the study area goals and objectives over the next 3-5 years and are therefore most worthy of priority public investment. These opportunities create a starting point for the Implementation Strategy that will be explored and developed in the next stage of the project.

Implementation Opportunities

(Each needs to be vetted to determine costs, funding, timing, and potential for positive, catalytic and sustainable impacts).

- A. Create an integrated brand strategy (discuss boundaries, assets, market position, message, and communication systems);
- B. Create new year-round nature and recreation oriented attractions at Washington Park that appeal to visitor and locals (discuss types, sizes, locations, character and revenue potential);
- C. Vacate and demolish City Hall, Police Station and News Dispatch (discuss logistics and replacement facilities);
- D. Extend Franklin Street from lakefront south to Route 12 (discuss type, size, location, character and permitting);
- E. Create a stunning lakefront/downtown gateway that includes the library (discuss type, size location and character);
- F. Reestablish a two way grid north of Route 12 (discuss type, sizes, character and location);
- G. Facilitate (active municipal engagement) new magnet attraction investments (discuss the types, sizes, locations and character of a fifth destination such as an entertainment complex that may include a hotel, water park, theater, restaurants, etc);
- H. Convert Franklin Street, Pine Street and Washington Street to two-way (discuss type, sizes, character, location, and permitting);
- I. Create stunning connections from downtown to outlets and casino (discuss type, location and character),
- J. Facilitate (active municipal engagement) reinvestment and redevelopment in downtown consistent with HyettPalma,
- K. Support (reactive municipal engagement) additional outlet and casino investments (discuss types, locations, character and revenue potential),
- L. Support (reactive municipal engagement) complimentary private investment in all types of commercial, residential and selected institutional enterprises (quantify prototypical examples, locations, sizes, character, revenues).

APPENDIX B: Comparable Destinations

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Market Assets

Table 1A: Regional Family Destination Assets (2012)

Destination Community	State	Waterpark Hotel	Outlet Center	Amusement, Theme Park or Major FEC	Distinctive Lodging	Beach or Waterfront	Waterfront Lodging	Large Destination Restaurants	Nearby Casino	Natural Asset
Michigan City	IN	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Traverse City	MI	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Frankenmuth	MI	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes
Sandusky	OH	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
Wisconsin Dells	WI	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Lake Geneva	WI	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Branson	MO	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Gatlinburg	TN	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes
Poconos	PA	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Niagara Falls	NY	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Williamsburg	VA	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No

Sources : MFA and Esri

Table 1B: Comparable Eastern Beach Community Assets (2012)

Destination Community	State	Waterpark Hotel	Outlet Center	Amusement, Theme Park or Major FEC	Distinctive Lodging	Beach or Waterfront	Waterfront Lodging	Large Destination Restaurants	Nearby Casino	Natural Asset
Michigan City	IN	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Old Orchard	ME	No	Nearby	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
York Beach	ME	No	Nearby	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Hyannis	MA	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Seaside Heights	NJ	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ocean City	NJ	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ocean City	MD	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Rehobeth Beach	DE	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Virginia Beach	VA	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Myrtle Beach	SC	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes

Sources : MFA and Esri

Market Assets

Table 1C: Potential Lake Michigan Competitors and their Assets (2012)

Destination Community	State	Waterpark Hotel	Outlet Center	Amusement, Theme Park or Major FEC	Distinctive Lodging	Beach or Waterfront	Waterfront Lodging	Large Destination Restaurants	Nearby Casino	Natural Asset
Michigan City	IN	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
New Buffalo	MI	No	Nearby	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Saugatuck	MI	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
St. Joseph	MI	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
Grand Haven	MI	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
Petoskey	MI	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
Holland	MI	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
Racine	MI	No	Nearby	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
Kenosha	MI	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes

Sources : MFA and Esri

Regional Demographics

Table 1A: 150-mile Demographics for Regional Family Destinations (2012)

Destination Communities	State	General Population	Number of Households	Median Household Income	Median Age	Number of Households w/income over \$75,000		Average Household Net Worth		Participation Rates			
						Number	Percent	Average	Median	Power Boating	Canoeing/ Kayaking	Fresh Water Fishing	Went to beach in last 12 months
Michigan City	IN	20,359,175	7,680,421	\$51,213	36.5	2,465,316	32.0%	\$460,577	\$76,613	6.2%	5.0%	13.2%	24.7%
Traverse City	MI	4,012,587	1,574,244	\$43,451	39.8	373,457	23.7%	\$363,267	\$74,451	6.9%	5.0%	16.4%	21.7%
Frankenmuth	MI	10,262,845	4,002,873	\$45,267	38.8	1,081,946	27.0%	\$413,208	\$71,511	6.5%	5.0%	14.9%	22.4%
Sandusky	OH	17,562,097	6,944,691	\$45,394	39.2	1,878,473	27.0%	\$410,495	\$68,105	6.3%	4.9%	14.6%	22.1%
Wisconsin Dells	WI	9,938,051	3,819,091	\$54,240	38.3	1,322,786	34.6%	\$513,231	\$98,281	6.6%	5.3%	14.3%	25.4%
Lake Geneva	WI	18,090,045	6,857,079	\$52,346	36.8	2,285,014	33.4%	\$474,506	\$79,532	6.2%	5.0%	12.9%	25.4%
Branson	MO	4,398,191	1,729,404	\$38,573	38.1	347,631	20.1%	\$306,606	\$49,708	6.2%	4.3%	16.3%	19.4%
Gatlinburg	TN	12,691,353	4,930,271	\$42,485	38.2	1,256,563	25.5%	\$357,884	\$52,613	6.4%	4.4%	15.6%	21.7%
Poconos	PA	39,486,422	14,822,296	\$57,176	38.6	5,775,950	39.1%	\$550,967	\$79,975	5.5%	4.8%	10.1%	27.6%
Niagara Falls	NY	4,660,245	1,862,278	\$45,287	40.5	493,807	26.5%	\$405,099	\$70,287	6.4%	4.9%	15.0%	21.8%
Williamsburg	VA	14,589,001	5,550,704	\$60,753	37.2	2,294,408	41.4%	\$591,534	\$92,351	6.5%	5.1%	12.4%	27.4%

Sources : MFA and Esri

Table 1B: 150-mile Demographics for Comparable Eastern Beaches (2012)

Destination Communities	State	General Population	Number of Households	Median Household Income	Median Age	Number of Households w/income over \$75,000		Average Household Net Worth		Participation Rates			
						Number	Percent	Average	Median	Power Boating	Canoeing/ Kayaking	Fresh Water Fishing	Went to beach in last 12 months
Michigan City	IN	20,359,175	7,680,421	\$51,213	36.5	2,465,316	32.0%	\$460,577	\$76,613	6.2%	5.0%	13.2%	24.7%
Old Orchard	ME	10,412,570	4,093,984	\$57,738	40.2	1,595,323	38.9%	\$545,967	\$89,220	6.4%	5.4%	11.8%	29.0%
York Beach	ME	11,823,503	4,641,275	\$58,204	40.2	1,824,886	39.3%	\$559,035	\$93,198	6.4%	5.4%	11.8%	28.9%
Hyannis	MA	11,985,813	4,659,752	\$61,020	39.8	1,938,689	41.5%	\$593,426	\$100,574	6.2%	5.4%	11.1%	29.7%
Seaside Heights	NJ	36,187,851	13,514,784	\$58,541	38.5	5,424,326	40.2%	\$566,080	\$81,250	5.4%	4.8%	9.6%	28.1%
Ocean City	NJ	37,220,769	13,896,354	\$60,846	38.1	5,815,602	41.8%	\$584,575	\$83,547	5.4%	4.8%	9.4%	28.6%
Ocean City	MD	21,910,356	8,074,885	\$63,025	37.8	3,468,404	42.9%	\$632,924	\$110,928	6.4%	5.2%	11.5%	28.5%
Rehobeth Beach	DE	28,130,303	10,547,467	\$60,896	37.7	4,388,397	41.5%	\$592,196	\$92,375	5.9%	5.0%	10.6%	28.0%
Virginia Beach	VA	6,414,977	2,425,318	\$52,827	38.0	817,964	33.8%	\$496,559	\$77,452	6.8%	5.1%	14.4%	24.6%
Myrtle Beach	SC	6,676,385	2,575,054	\$43,011	36.6	660,435	25.6%	\$357,000	\$50,397	6.5%	4.5%	14.8%	22.2%

Sources : MFA and Esri

Regional Demographics

Table 1C: 150-mile Demographics for Potential Lake Michigan Competitors (2012)

Destination Communities	State	General Population	Number of Households	Median Household Income	Median Age	Number of Households w/income over \$75,000		Average Household Net Worth		Participation Rates			
						Number	Percent	Average	Median	Power Boating	Canoeing/ Kayaking	Fresh Water Fishing	Went to beach in last 12 months
Michigan City	IN	20,359,175	7,680,421	\$51,213	36.5	2,465,316	32.0%	\$460,577	\$76,613	6.2%	5.0%	13.2%	24.7%
New Buffalo	MI	20,315,202	7,661,820	\$51,155	36.5	2,455,737	32.0%	\$460,057	\$76,422	6.2%	5.0%	13.2%	24.7%
Saugatuck	MI	20,800,693	7,867,339	\$51,428	37.1	2,549,713	32.4%	\$471,643	\$80,002	6.3%	5.0%	13.2%	25.0%
St. Joseph	MI	19,640,675	7,390,014	\$51,497	36.7	2,397,599	32.4%	\$468,293	\$79,023	6.2%	5.0%	13.3%	25.0%
Grand Haven	MI	19,712,103	7,448,003	\$51,697	37.1	2,434,805	32.7%	\$473,921	\$80,232	6.3%	5.0%	13.2%	25.2%
Petoskey	MI	1,594,609	645,614	\$38,849	43.1	124,832	19.3%	\$330,963	\$71,013	7.2%	4.8%	17.3%	20.4%
Holland	MI	21,044,102	7,964,778	\$51,435	37.2	2,585,054	32.4%	\$473,925	\$80,070	6.3%	5.0%	13.2%	25.0%
Racine	WI	17,932,248	6,770,819	\$52,202	36.9	2,239,392	33.0%	\$471,795	\$79,457	6.2%	5.0%	13.0%	25.3%
Kenosha	WI	18,002,651	6,795,744	\$52,205	36.9	2,247,438	33.0%	\$471,961	\$79,614	6.2%	5.0%	13.0%	25.3%

Sources : MFA and Esri

APPENDIX C: Street Cross Sections/Supplemental Graphics

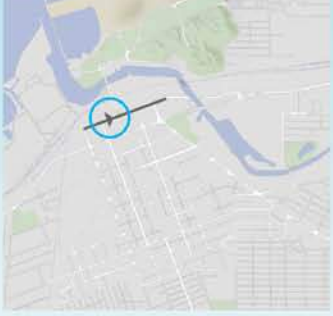
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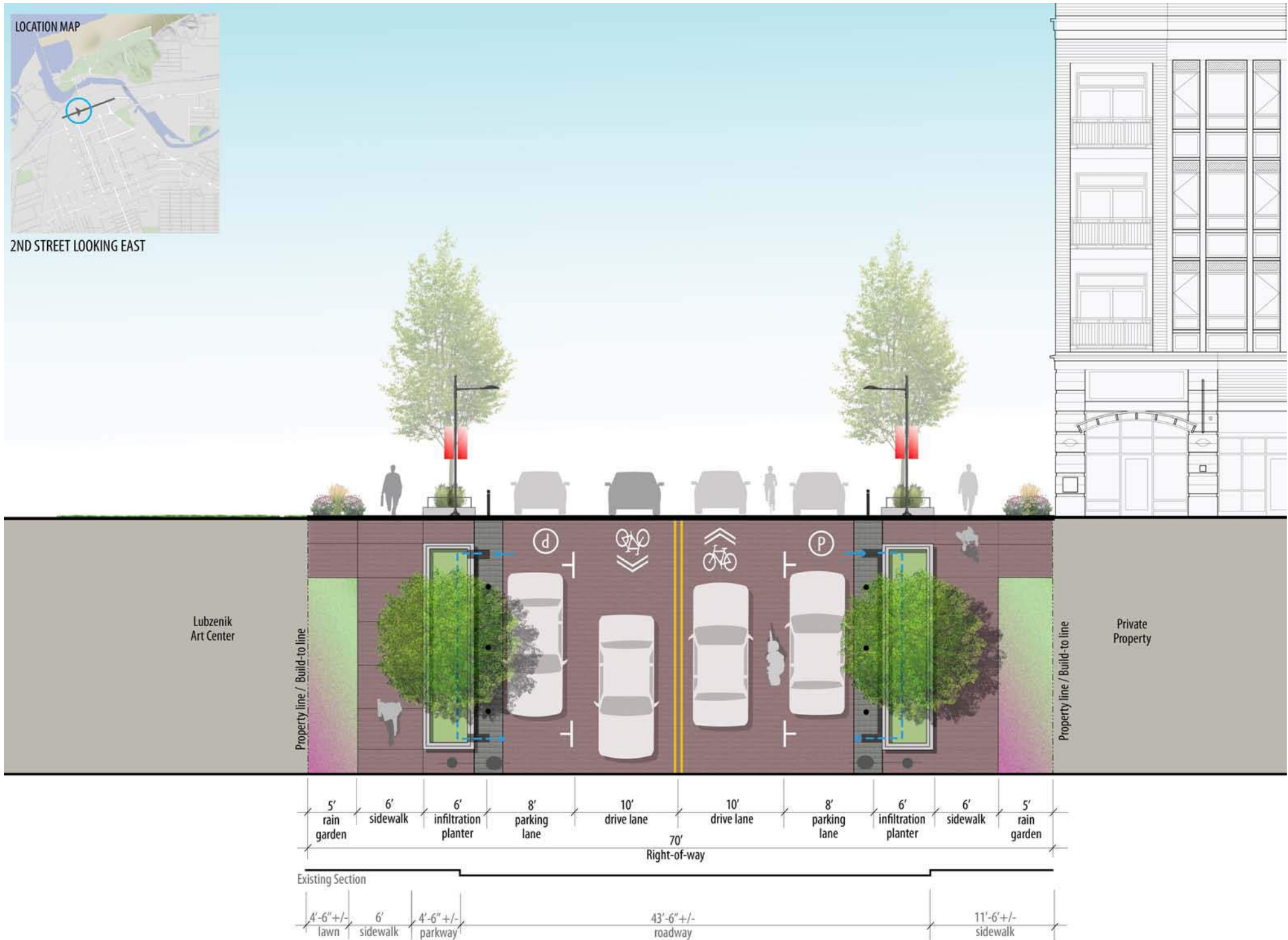
ROUTE 12 LOOKING EAST



LOCATION MAP

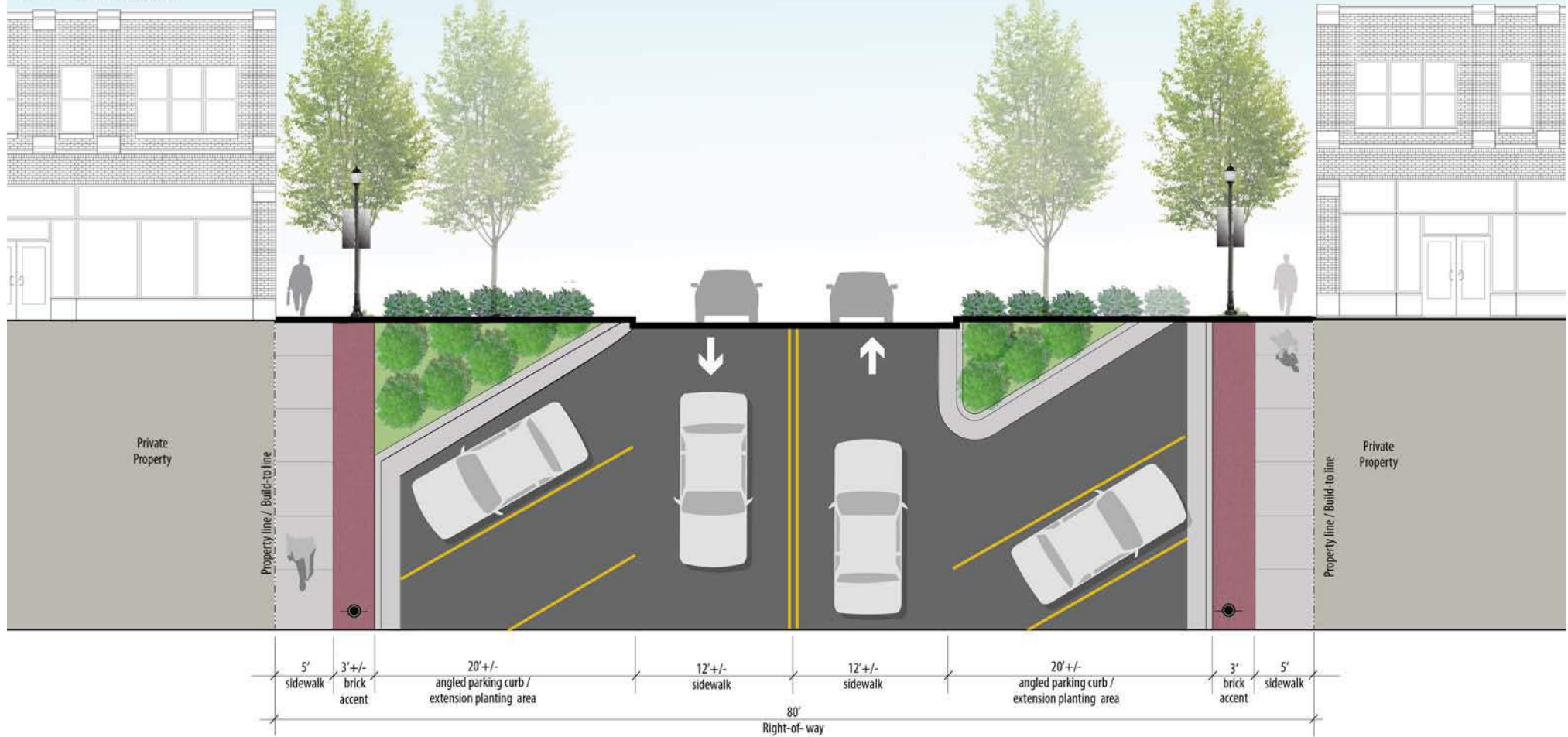


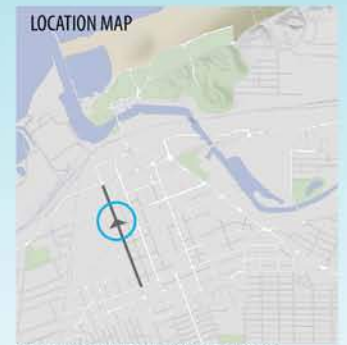
2ND STREET LOOKING EAST



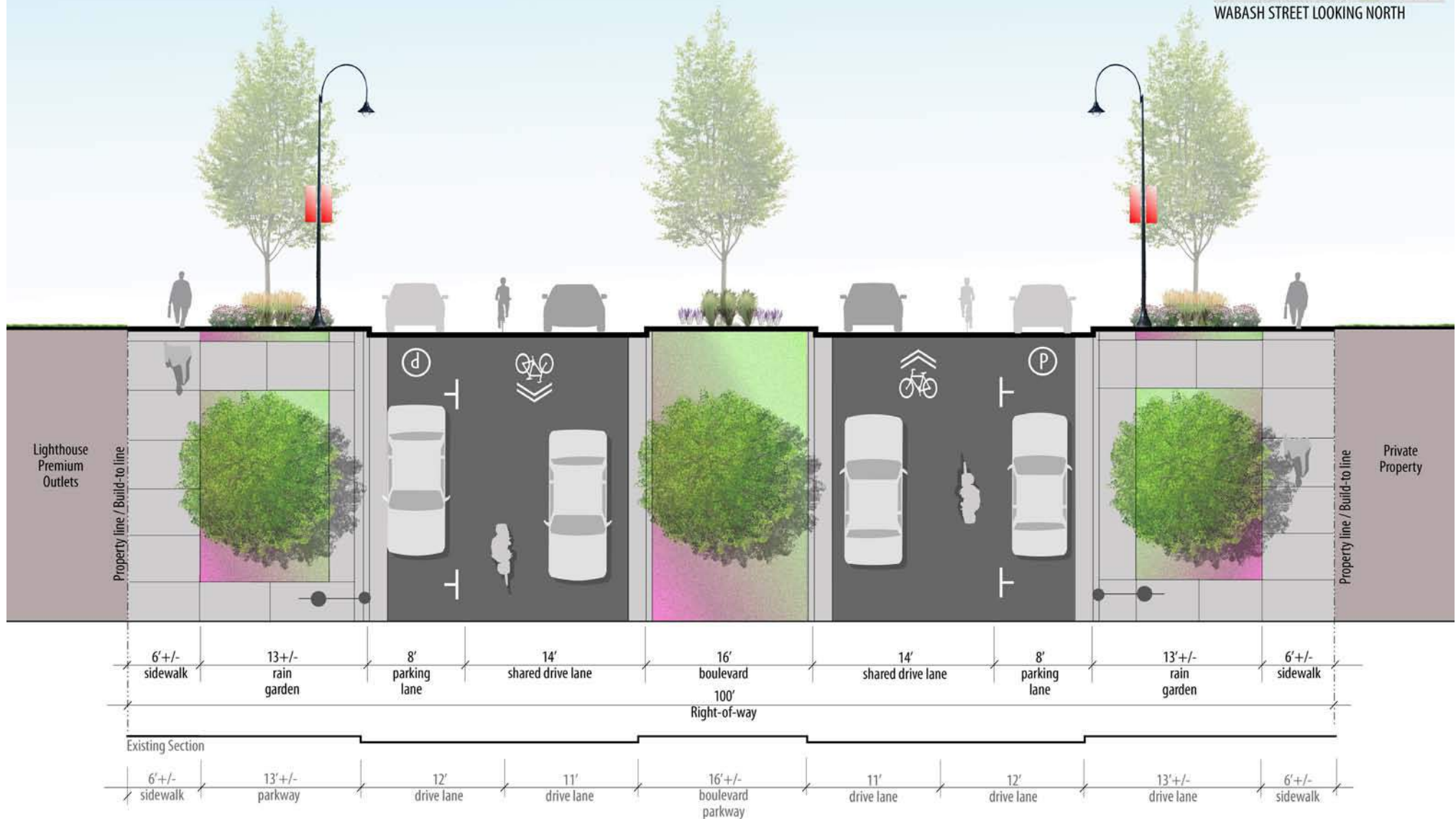


6TH STREET LOOKING EAST

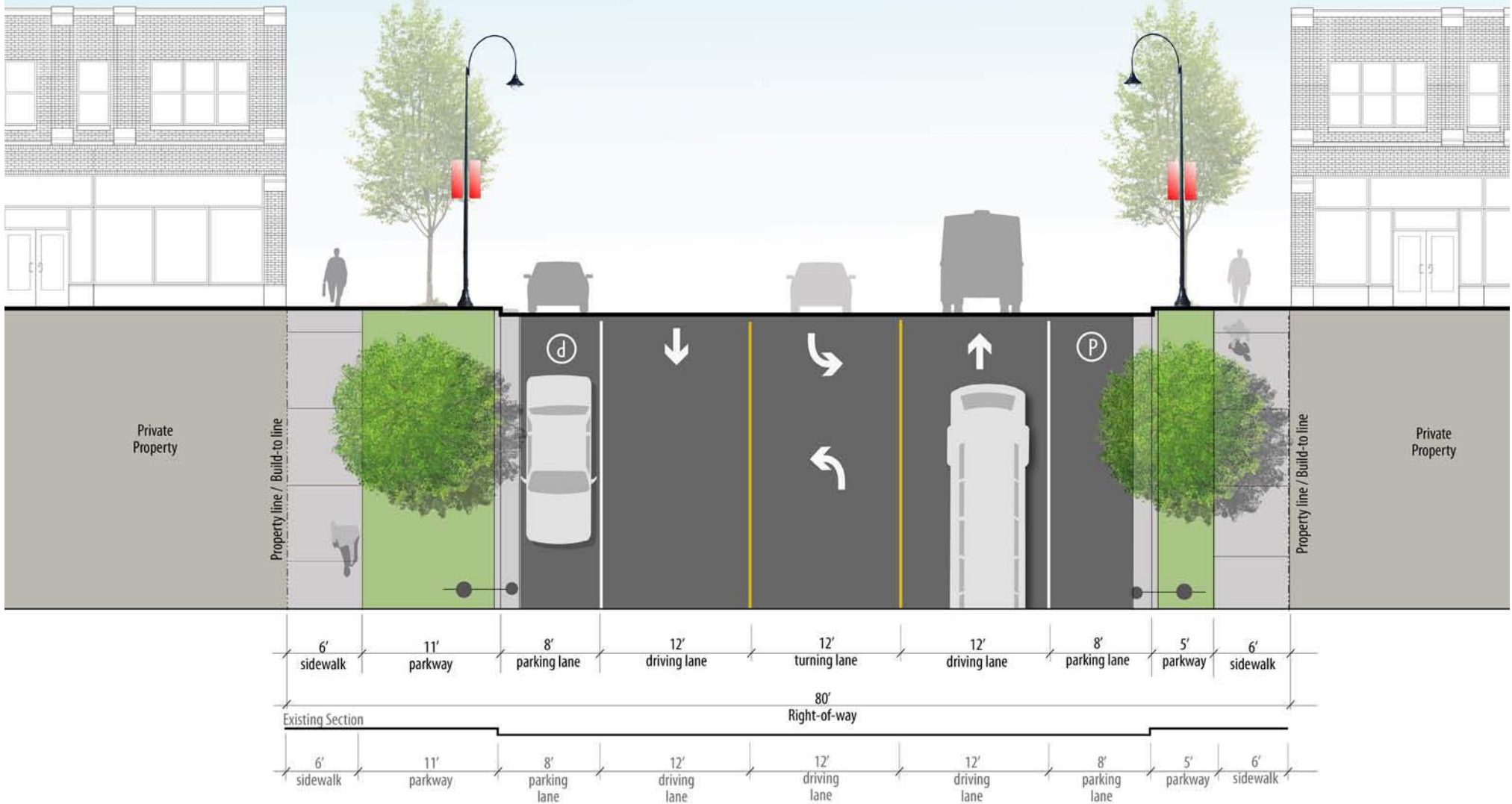
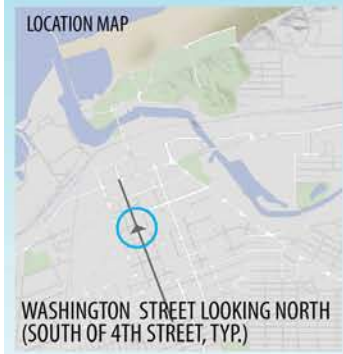


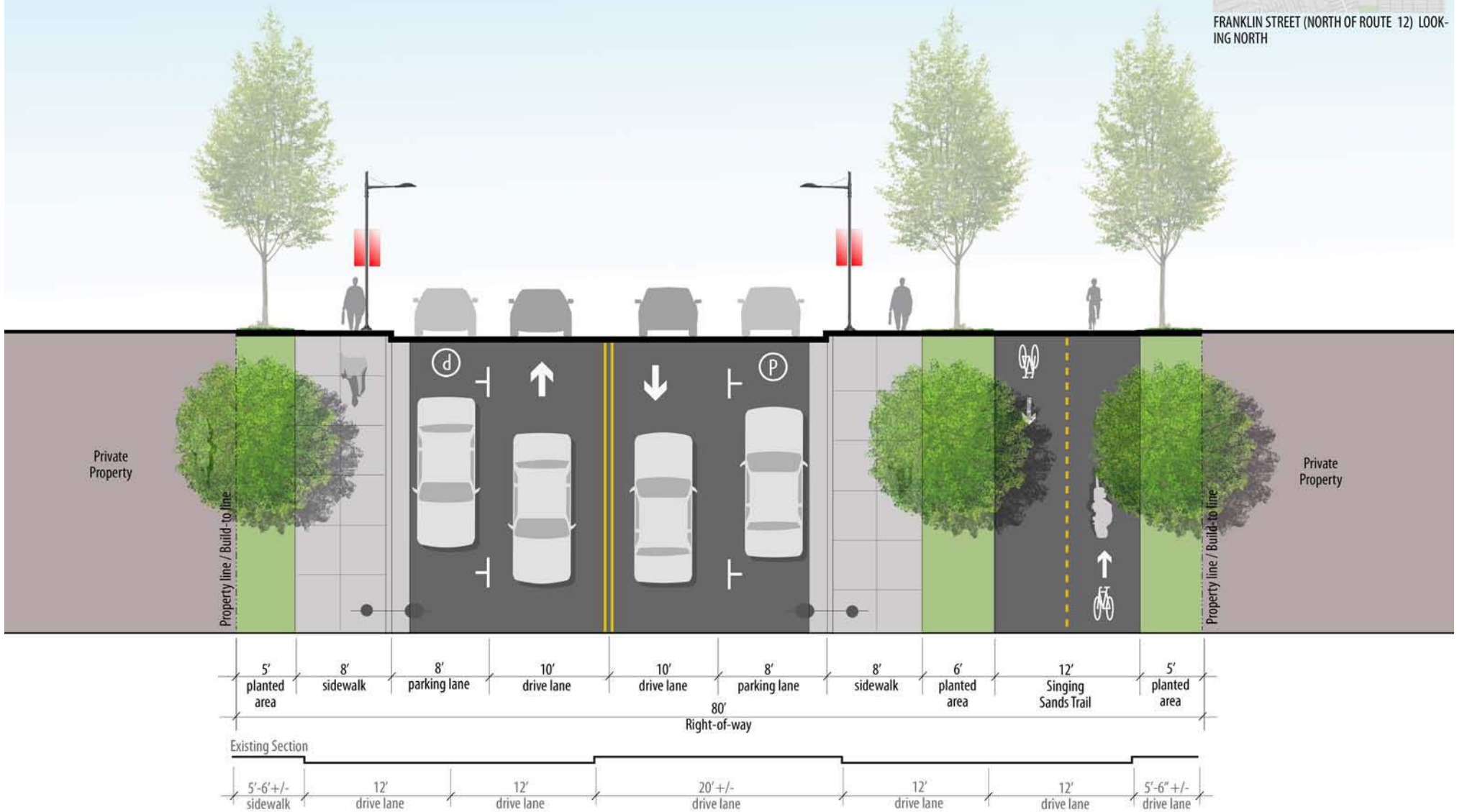
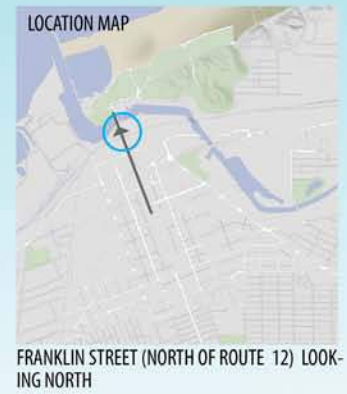


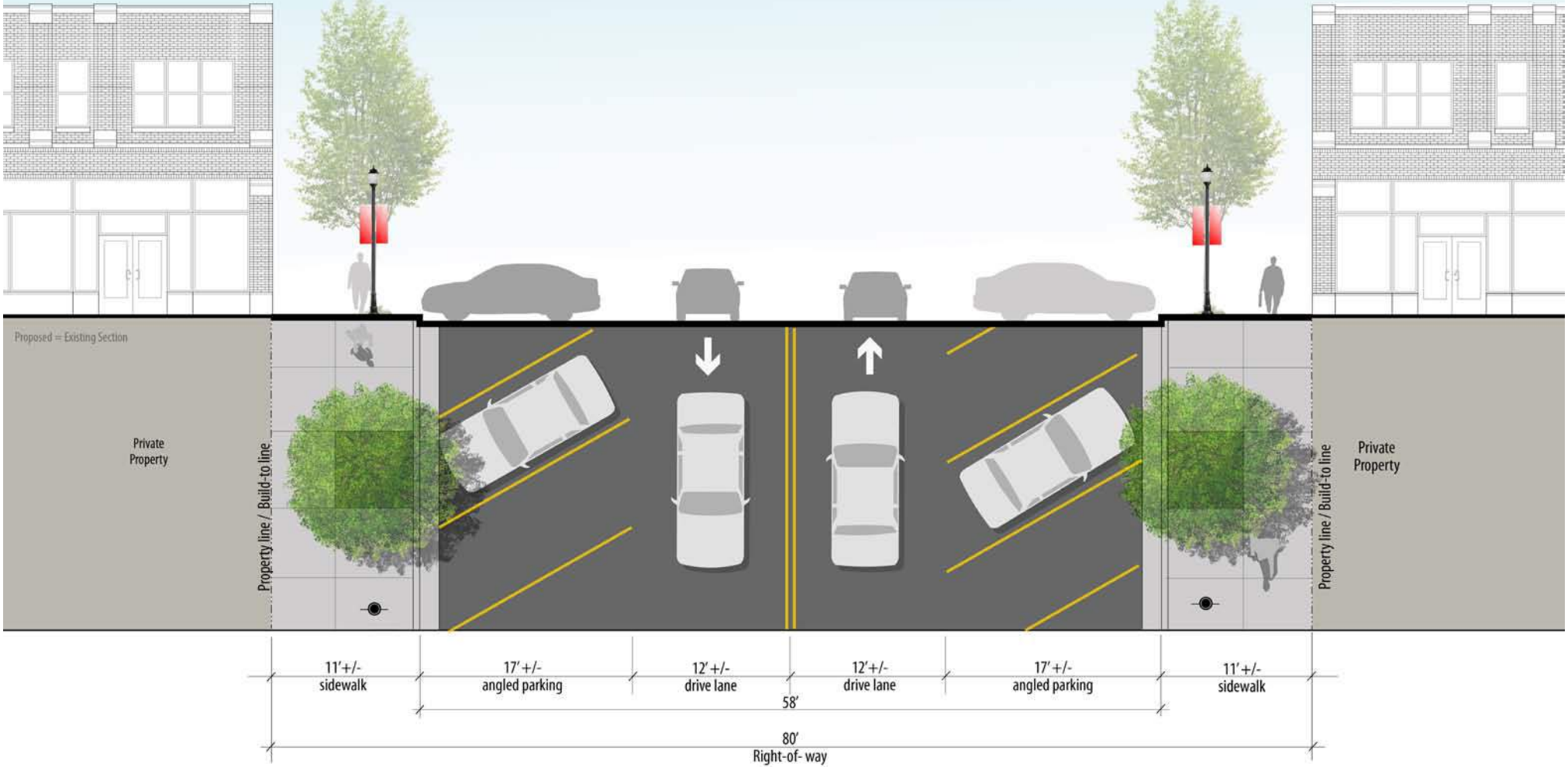
WABASH STREET LOOKING NORTH



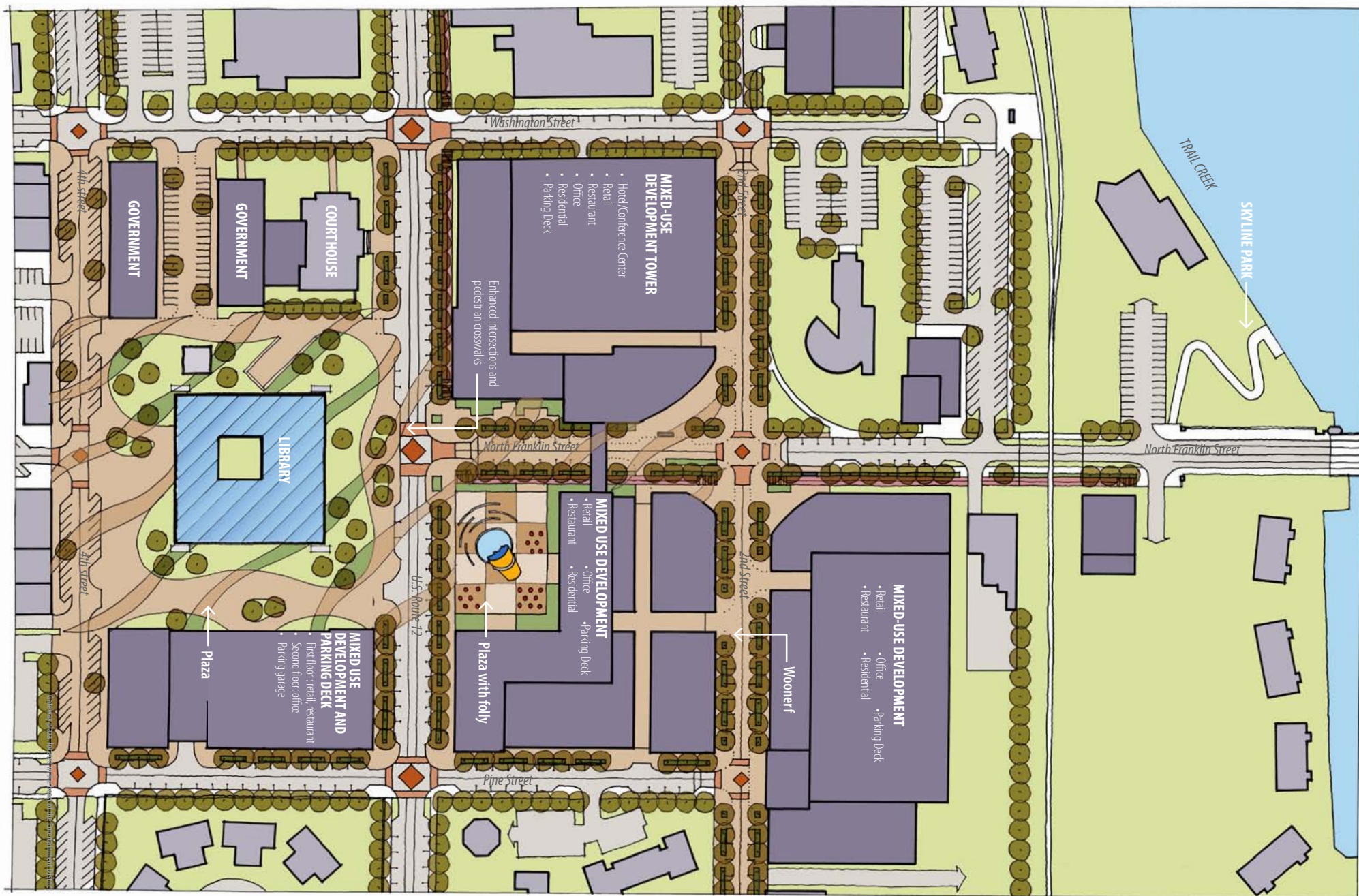












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