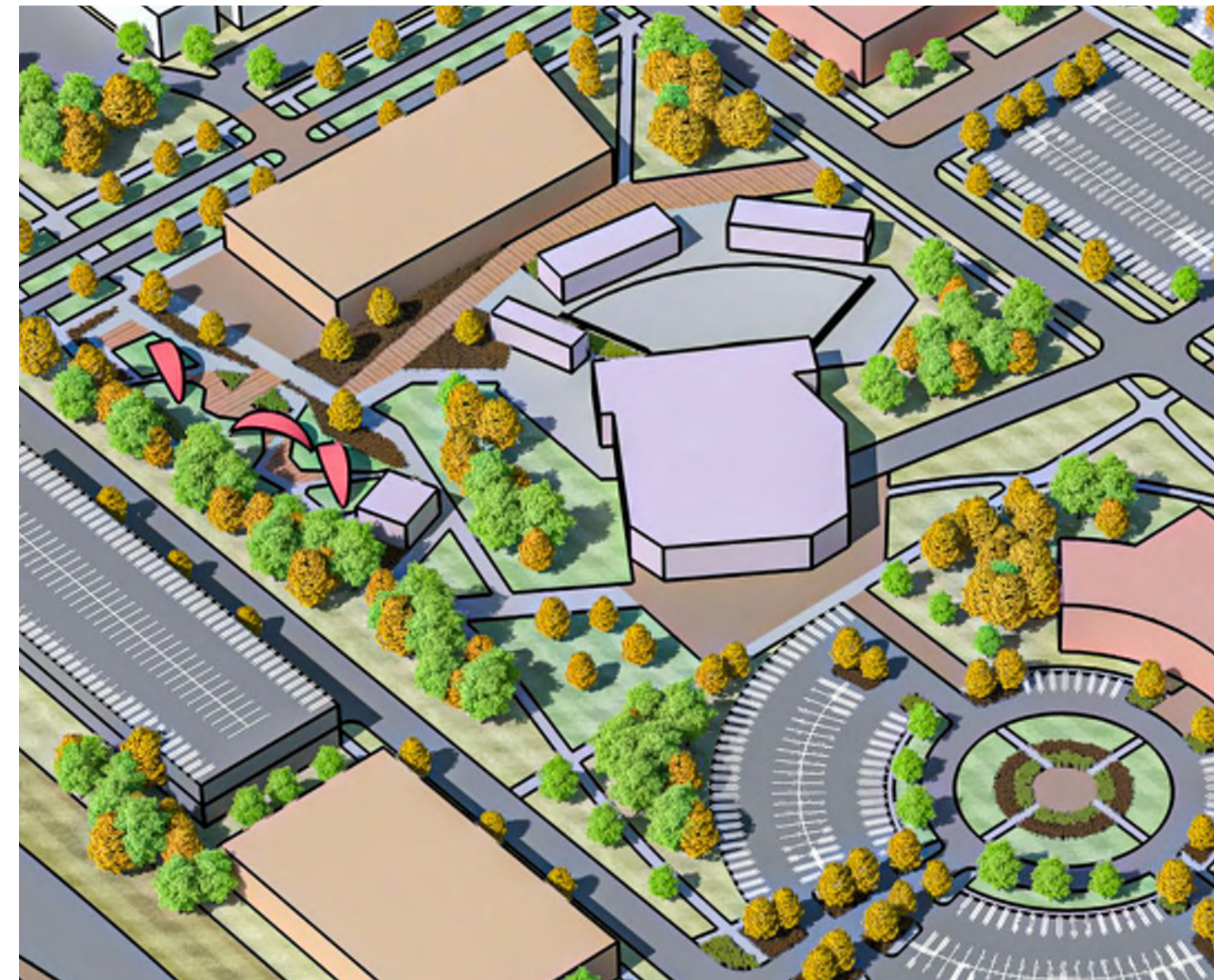


# THE PLAN AT A GLANCE



## USING LAND EFFECTIVELY

Determining future growth targets and the responsible distribution of new development within the Town.



## THE MOMENTUM 6

Six transformational project focuses that can help create a great community.



## CREATING CONNECTIONS

A program for providing both mobility and access for users of all forms of transportation, both human and motor powered.



## A TOWN OF PARKS

Directions to help Merrillville build a park system that serves all of its citizens with quality facilities.



## A LIVING PLACE

A program to conserve neighborhood quality and character, while advancing the development of housing that meets a range of needs.



## SYSTEMS THAT SERVE

Considering public facilities and services necessary to guide development and provide services in an efficient and economical way.

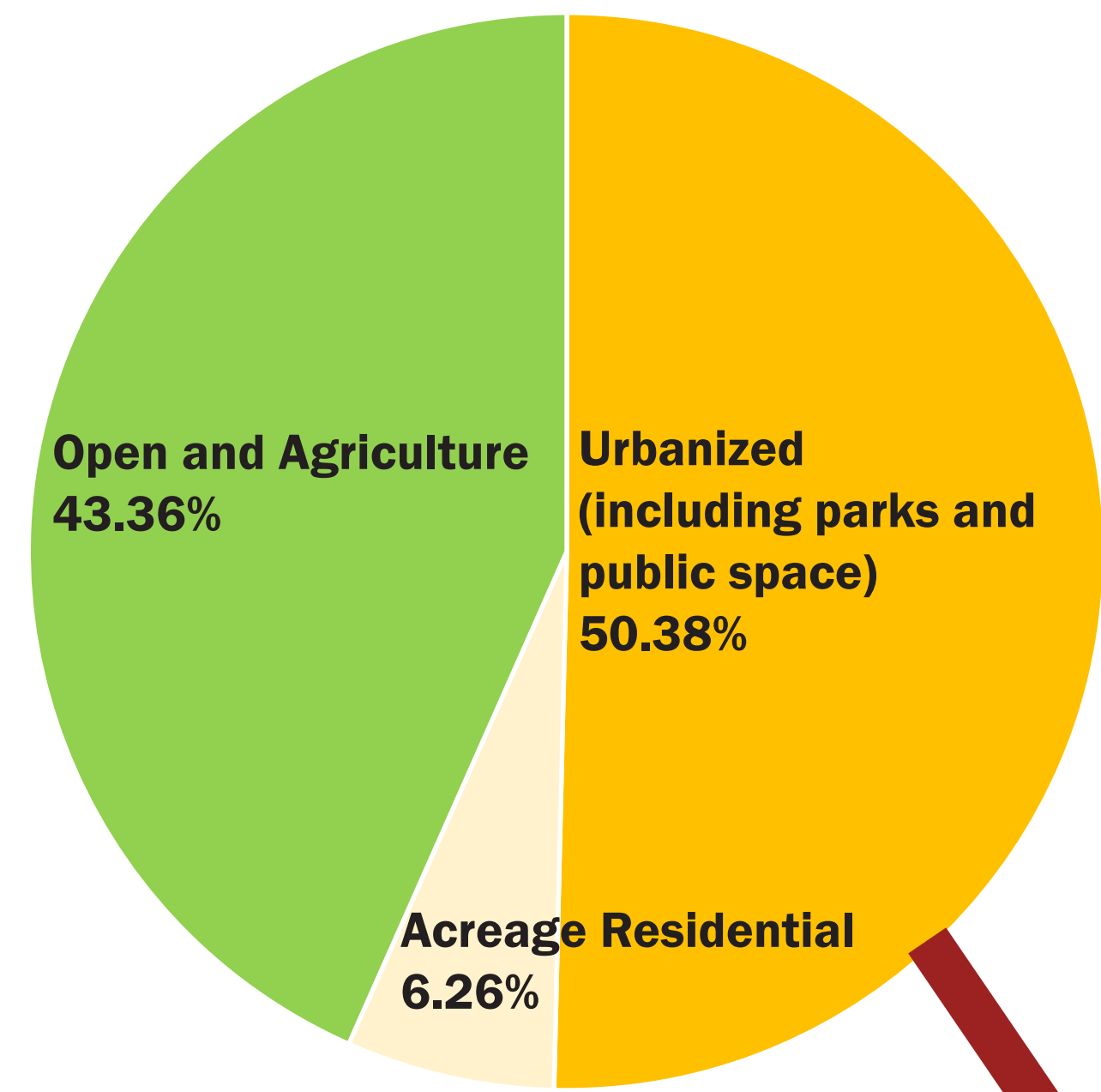


## IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN

Exploring land development ordinances and developing a guide for moving the plan forward.

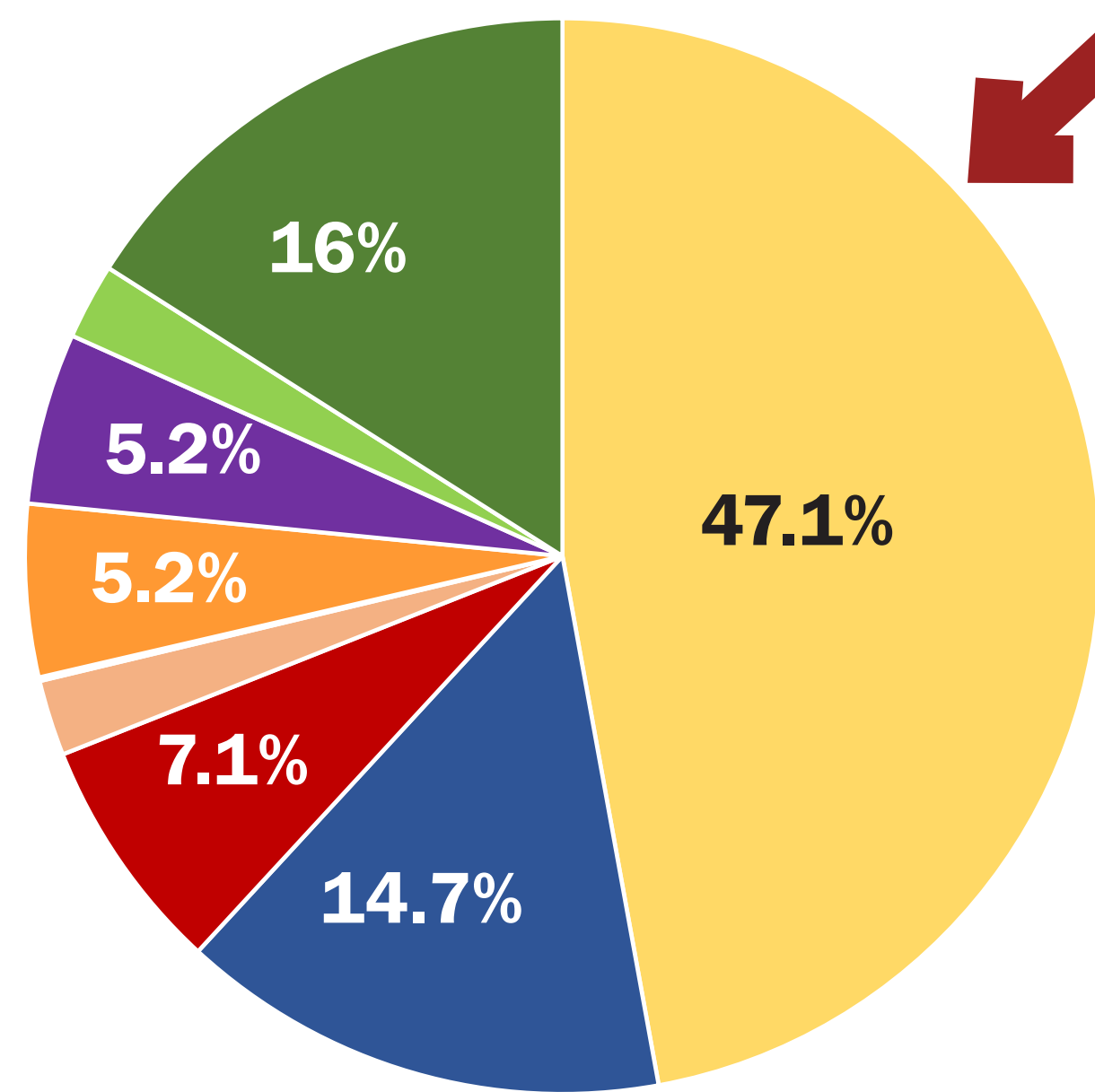
# USING LAND EFFECTIVELY: Patterns on the Land

% of Developed and Open Land in Merrillville, 2022



Only half of the Merrillville's land area is in urban use.

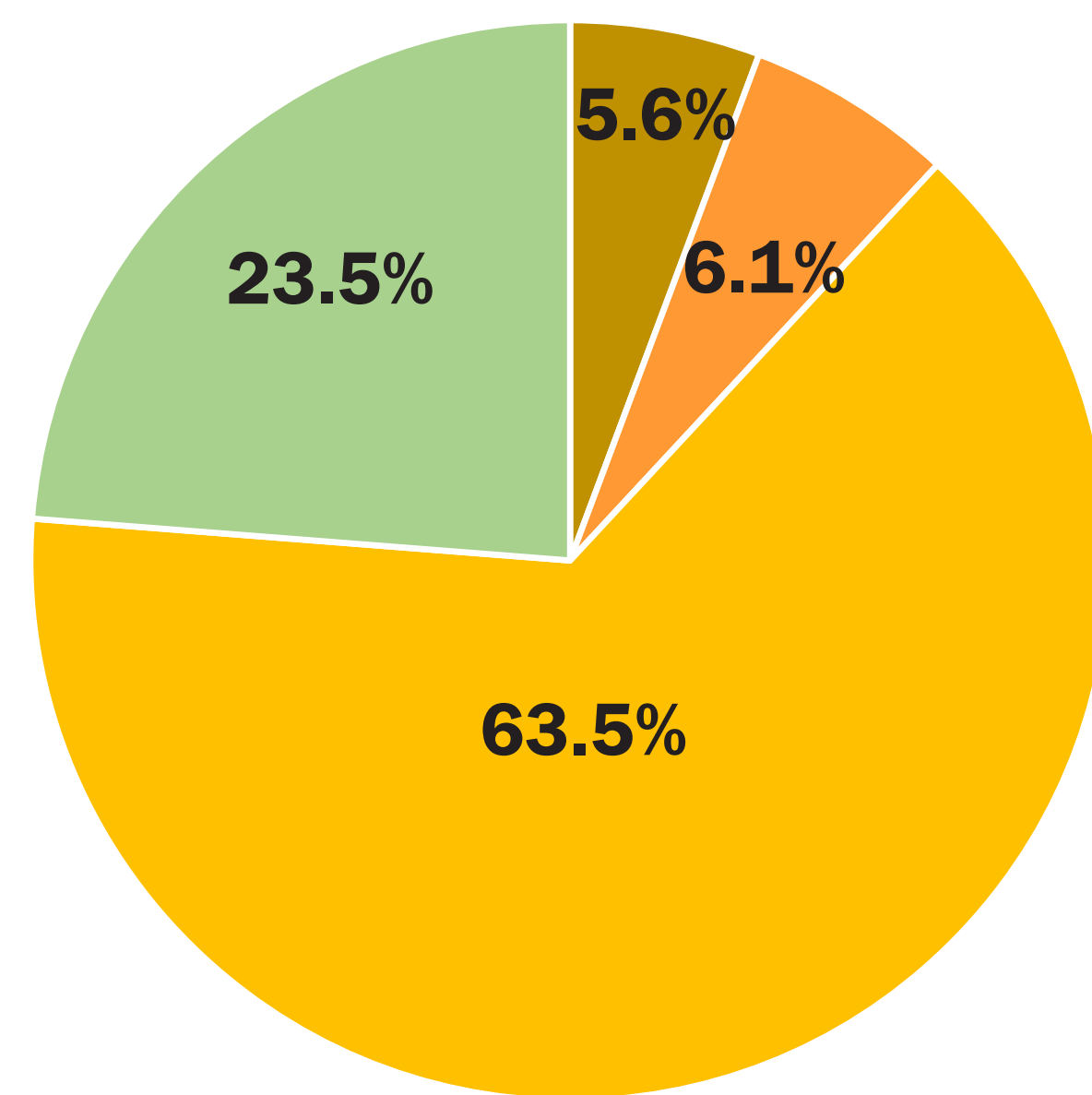
Distribution of Land Uses by Land Area for Developed Area.



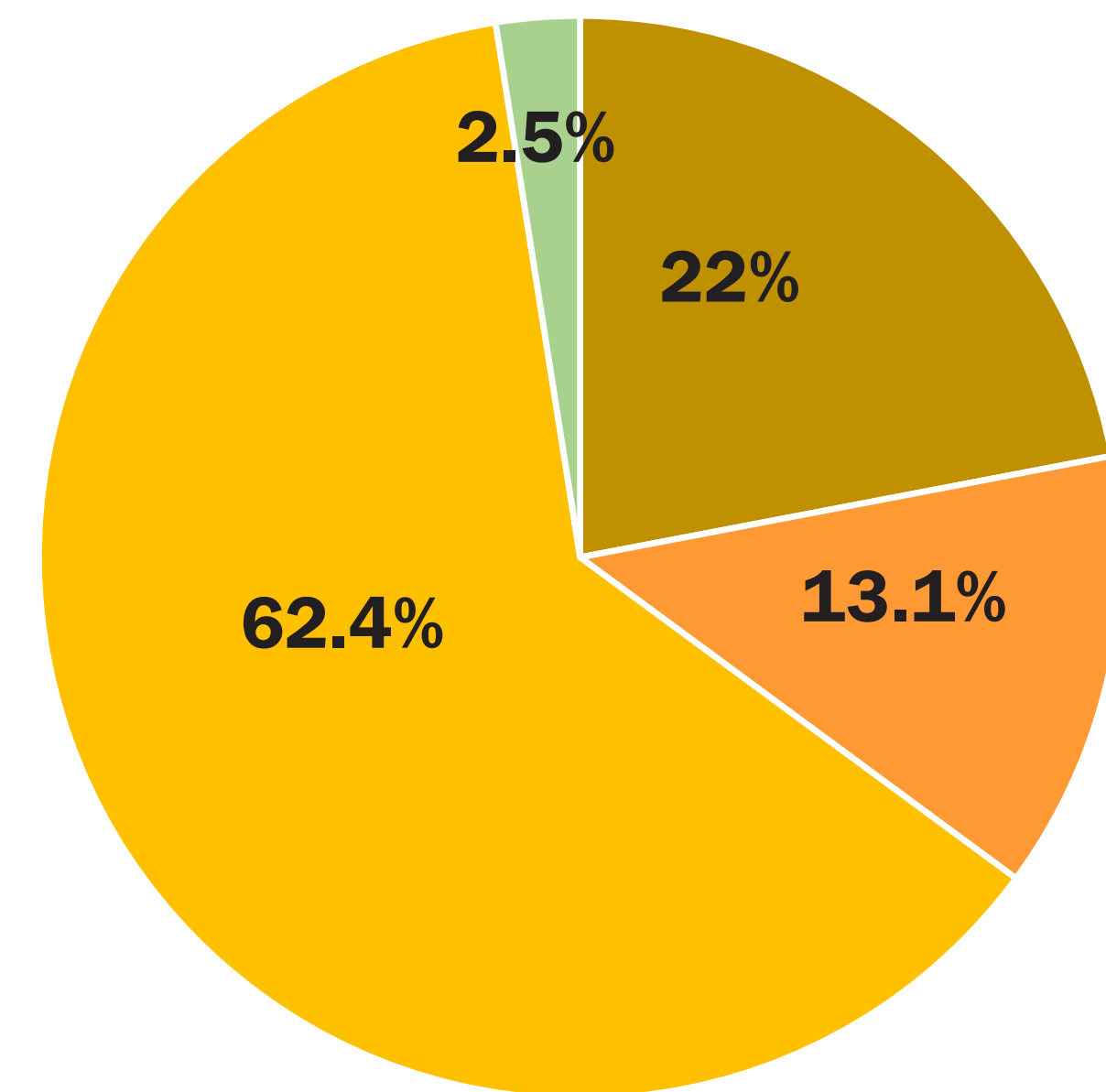
Of land in urban use, just under half is used for residential development.

- Residential
- Office
- Commercial
- Business Park
- Industrial
- Civic
- Parks, Golf, Outdoor Recreation
- Cemetery
- Open and Agricultural

% of Residential Land Used for Different Housing Types



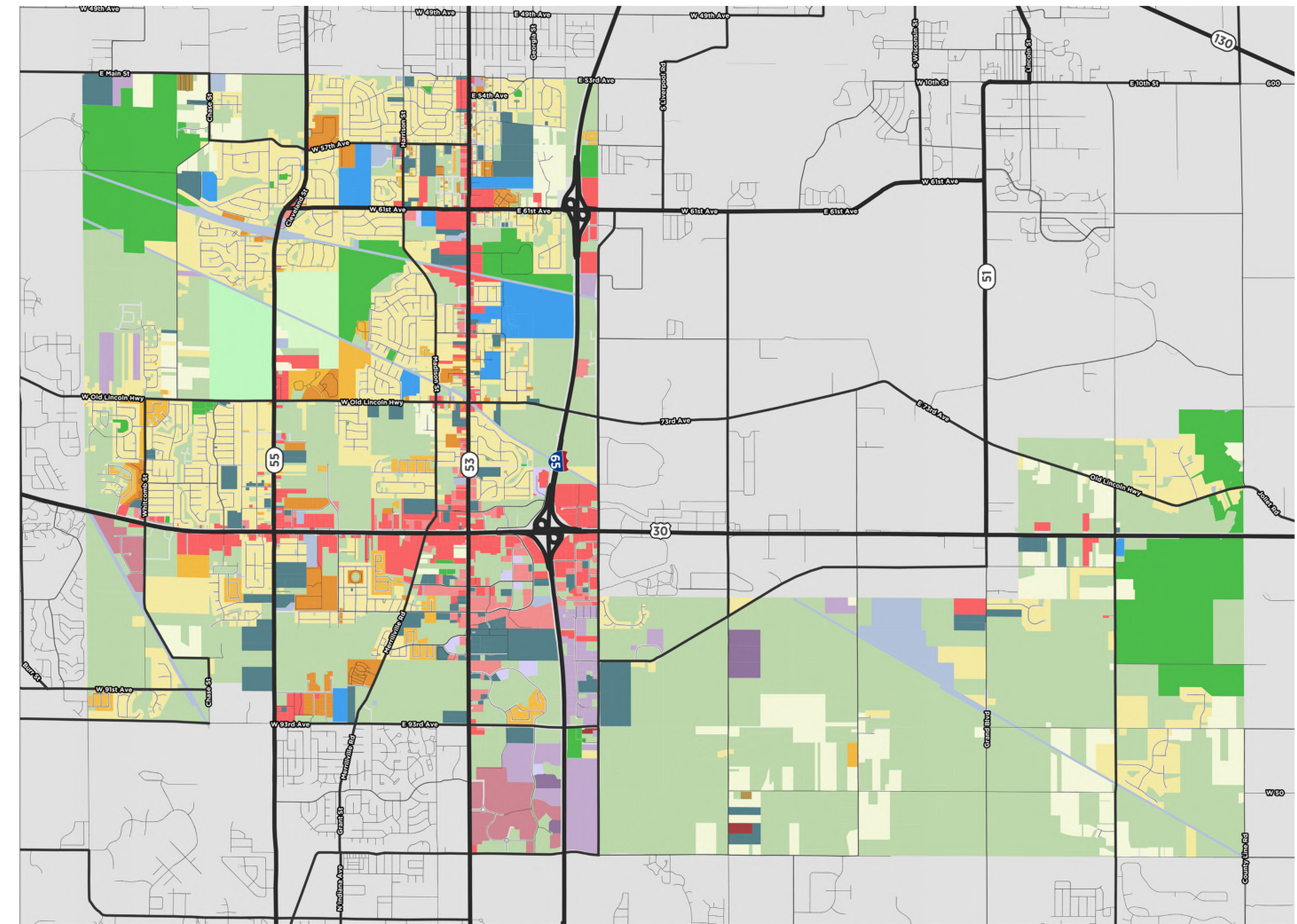
% of Merrillville's Housing in Different Housing Types



- Acreage Residential
- Low-Density Urban Residential
- Medium-Density Urban Residential
- High-Density Urban Residential

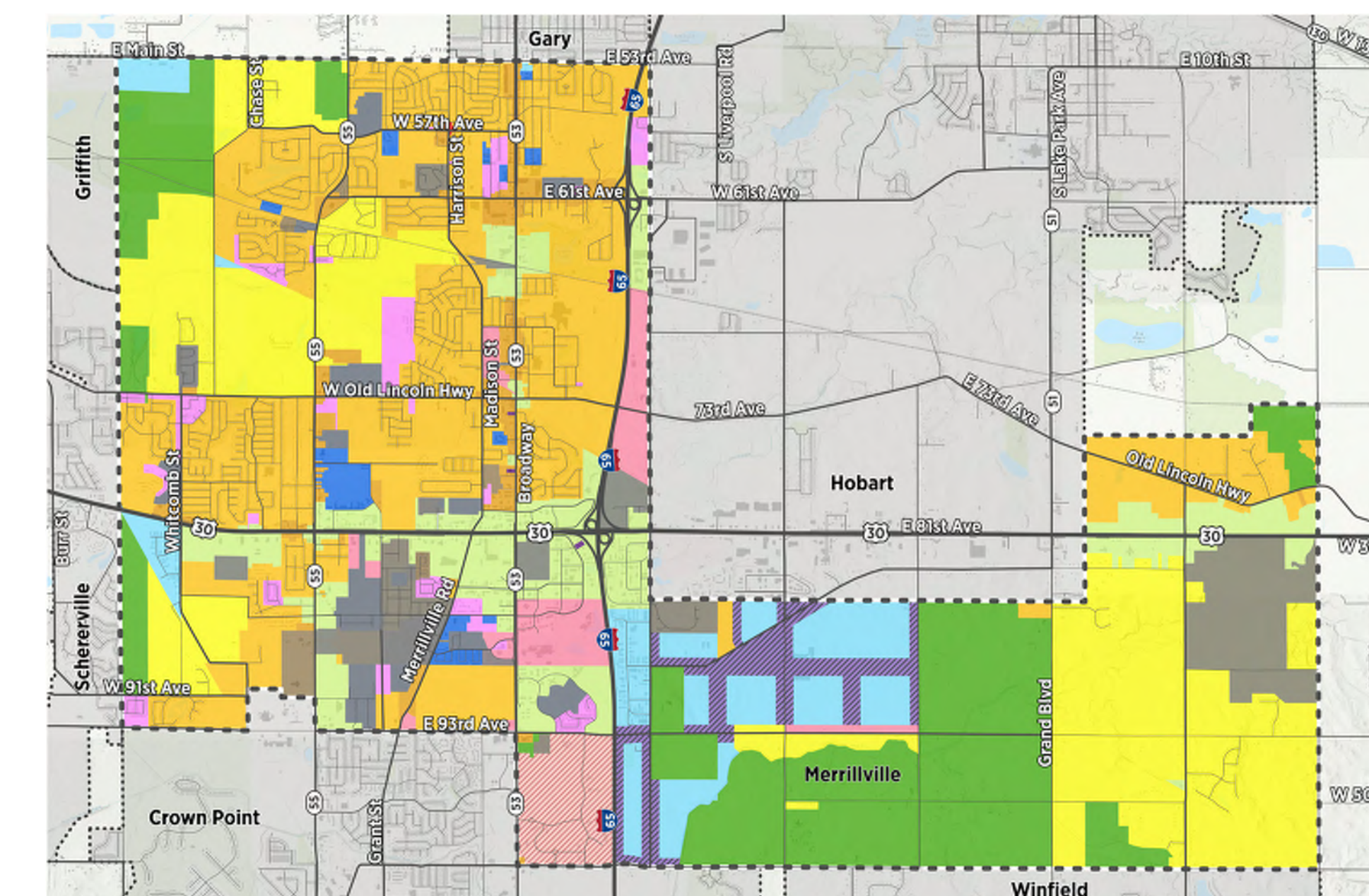
Medium and high-density housing make up about 35% of Merrillville's housing supply, but use only about 12% of residential land.

Existing Land Use



Almost all of Merrillville's urbanized land is west of Mississippi Street. But even that area has significant areas of open land

- Rural Residential
- Low Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- Mobile Home
- Assisted Living Facility
- Commercial
- Office
- Mixed Use
- Business Park
- Light Industrial
- Heavy Industrial
- Civic/Institutional - Government
- Civic/Institutional - School or Religious
- Quasi-Public
- Park/Recreation
- Golf Course
- Cemetery
- Vacant

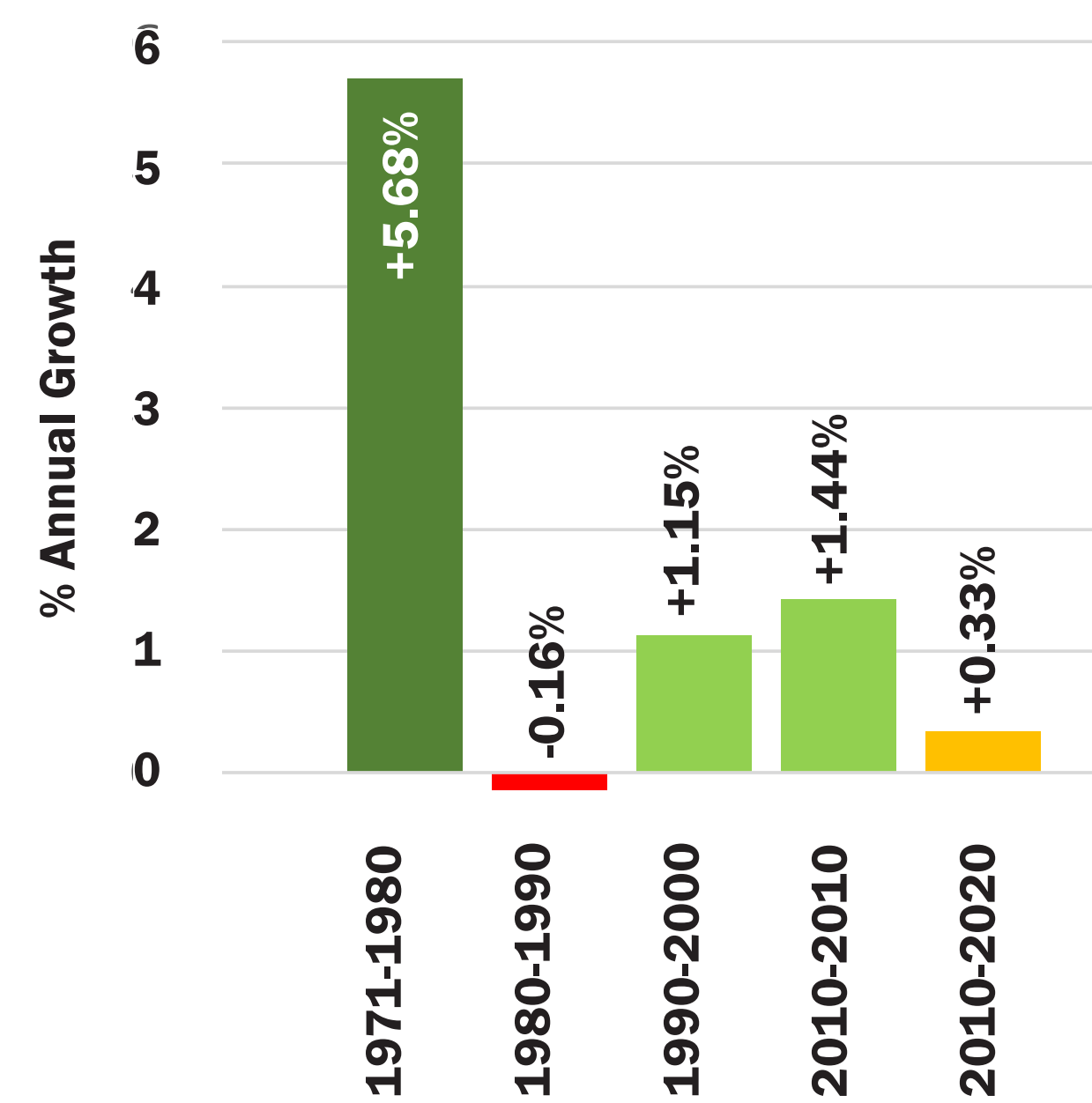


Almost all of Merrillville's land currently zoned for development is also west of Mississippi. About 2 square miles in the Panhandle is zoned but not yet developed for industrial use.

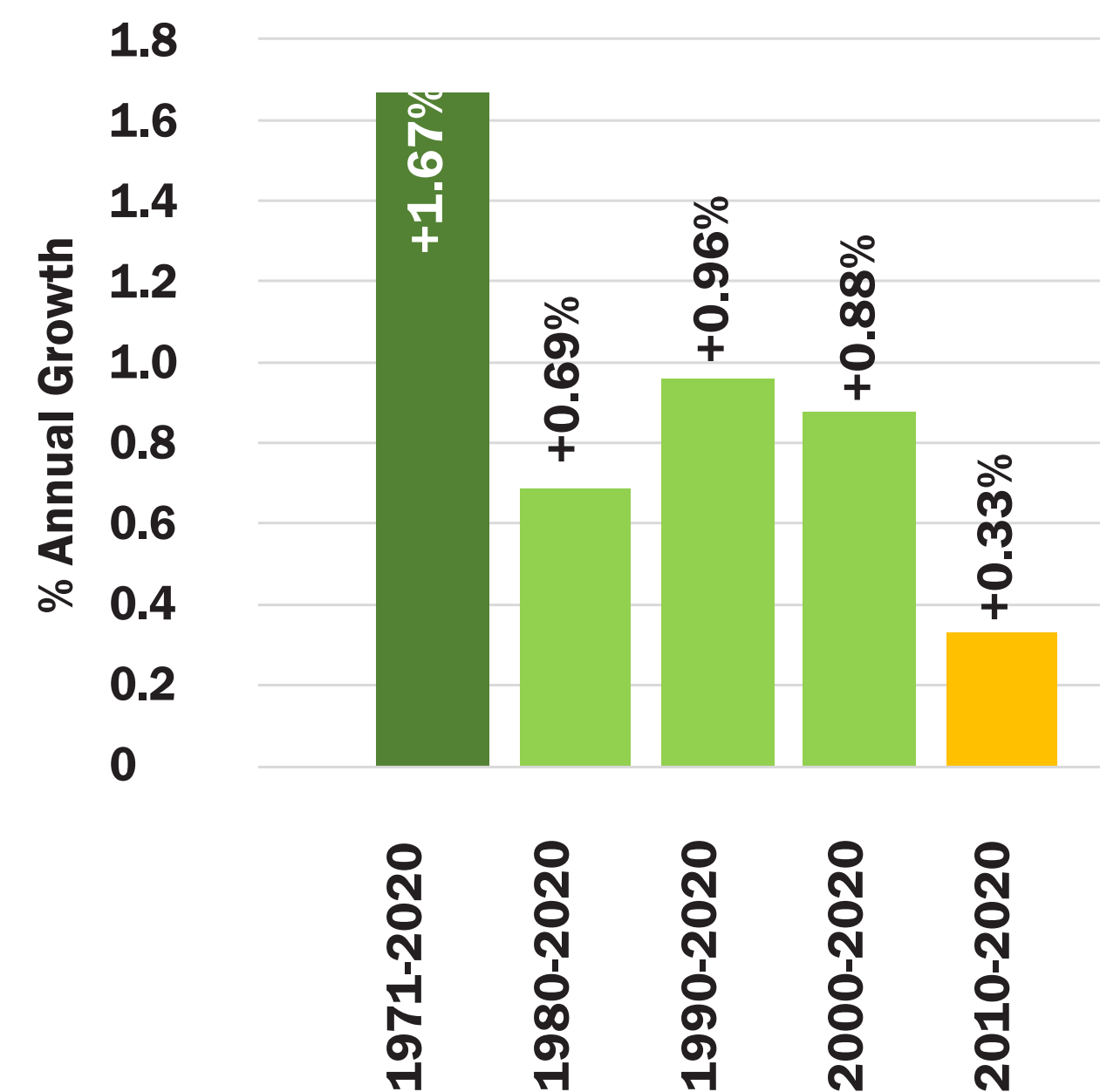
# USING LAND EFFECTIVELY: How Big? How Much?

The Town's most dramatic growth took place in its first decade of existence. It's more mature growth occurred between 1990 and 2010, and represents a good model for the next 20 years.

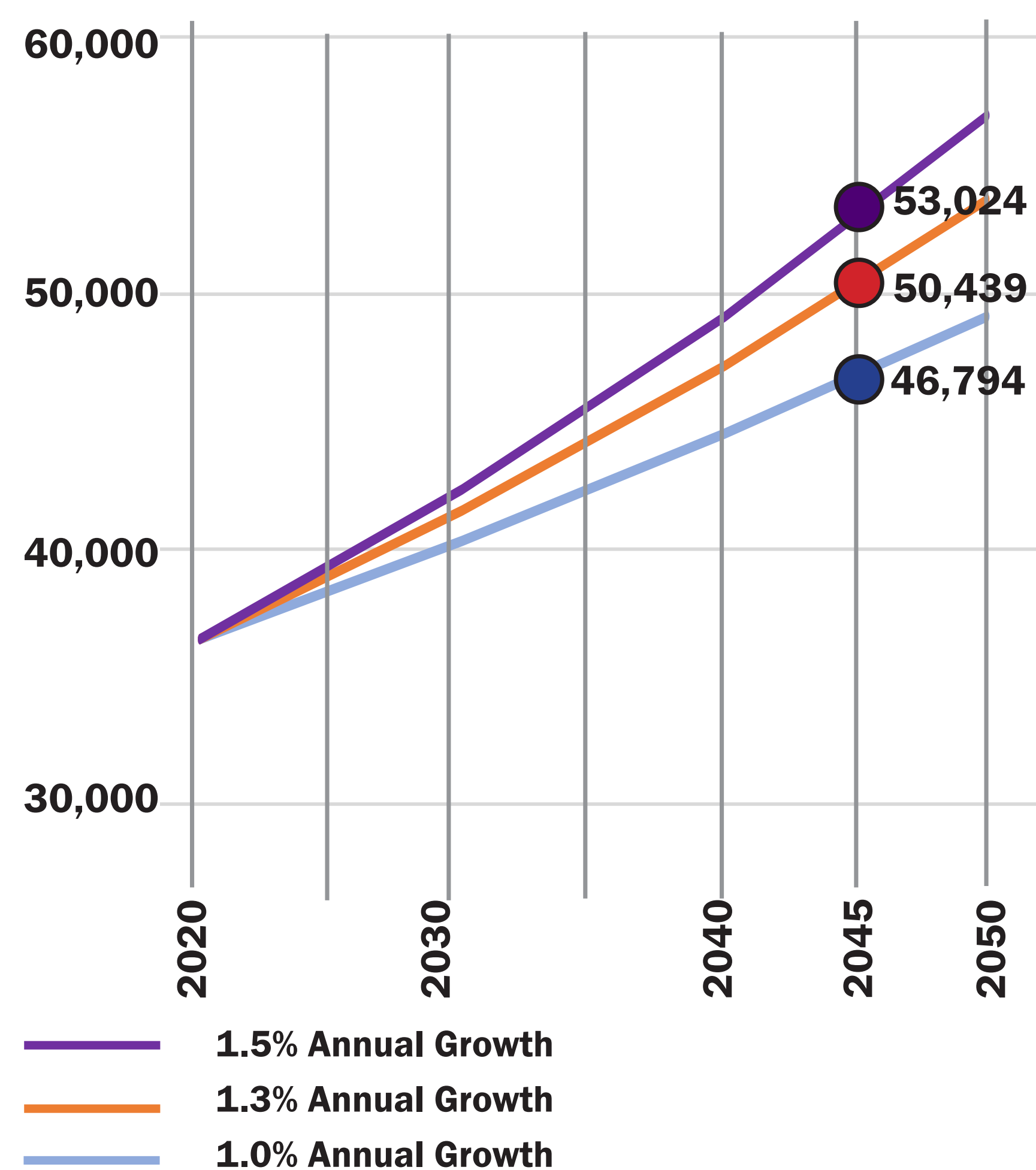
Average Annual Growth Rate by Decade, 1971-2020



Average Annual Growth Rate by Interval, 1971-2020



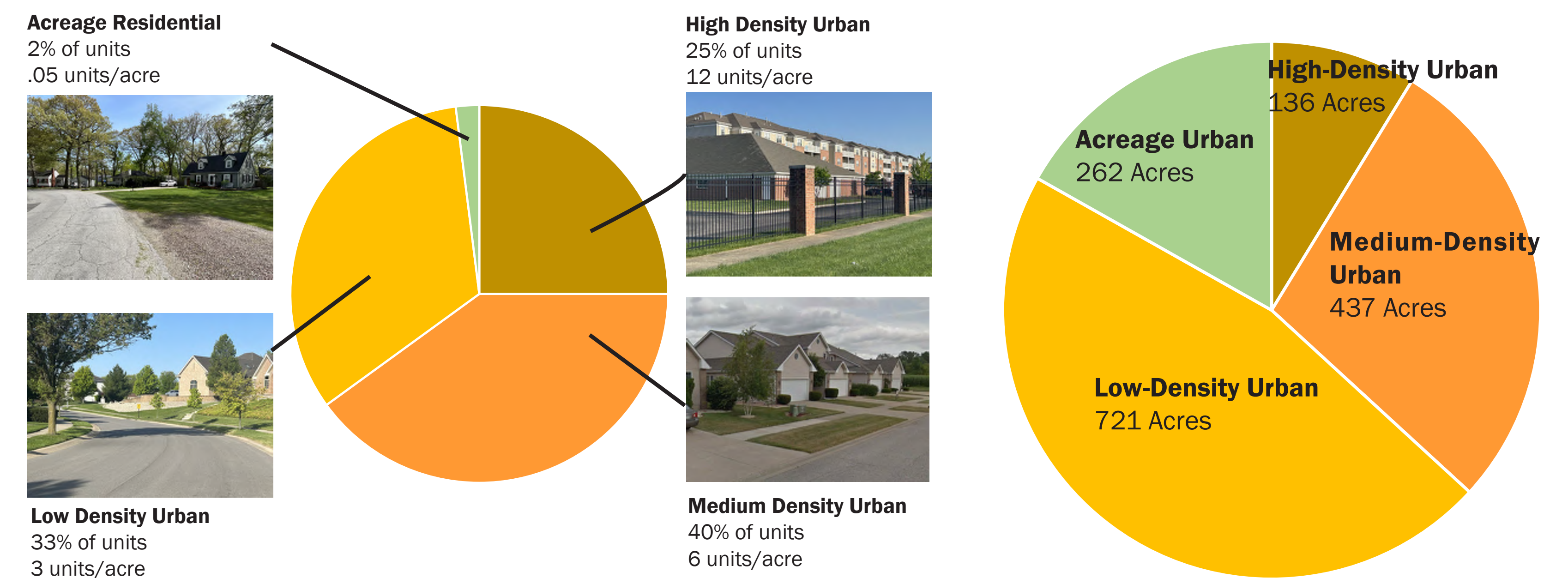
Growth Scenarios for Merrillville, 2020-2050



Merrillville has the land and Northwest Indiana has the growth potential that suggests a moderate rate of growth will return after a slow growth period after 2010. Probable growth will produce an expected potential population of between 47,000 and 53,000 by 2045. The most likely of these suggests an annual growth rate of about 1.3%, similar to the rate between 1990 and 2010.

Projected Residential Development, 2020-2045			
	2020 Base	2020- 2045 Projection	Extended to 2050
Population	36,444	50,439	53,692
Population in Households	34,789	48,149	51,254
Average People Per Household	2.39	2.39	2.39
Vacancy Rate	6.1%	6.0%	6.0%
Total Unit Needs	15,502	21,432	22,814
2020 Base	15,502	15,502	15,502
Cumulative Household Need		5,930	7,312
Replacement Unit Need		625	750
Total Need with Replacement		6,555	8,062
Annual Average New Units		262	269

To reach this growth potential, Merrillville should produce about 260 new housing units annually, and designate adequate development area to accommodate this population. But at current density, the difficulty of doing standard urban development in the Panhandle, and the actual availability of land, this could be difficult to reach.



Consistent with the NIRPC 2050+ Plan, housing affordability, and changing market preferences, a greater emphasis will be placed on medium density housing – small lot single-family, attached units, duplexes, and townhomes. In the future, these forms may account for up to 65% of the Town's new housing units, while using up only about 37% of residential land.

# USING LAND EFFECTIVELY: Goals and Strategies

## GOAL 1

Plan for and achieve an average annual growth rate of 1.3% between 2024 and 2045, resulting in a population of about 50,000 at the end of the planning period.

### Strategy 1.1

Establish a planning period population target, based on the long-term growth trajectory of the Town, producing a projected population of 50,000 by 2045.

### Strategy 1.2

Identify a financially sustainable and environmentally responsible residential mix that is consistent with past experience but places a larger emphasis on medium density housing types. Establish a goal to increase the gross residential density of the Town by about 15%.

### Strategy 1.3

Within the land use plan, establish a priority for infill and contiguous development that makes maximum use of existing infrastructure. Define geographic growth areas that distribute new development in different parts of the Town.

### Strategy 1.4

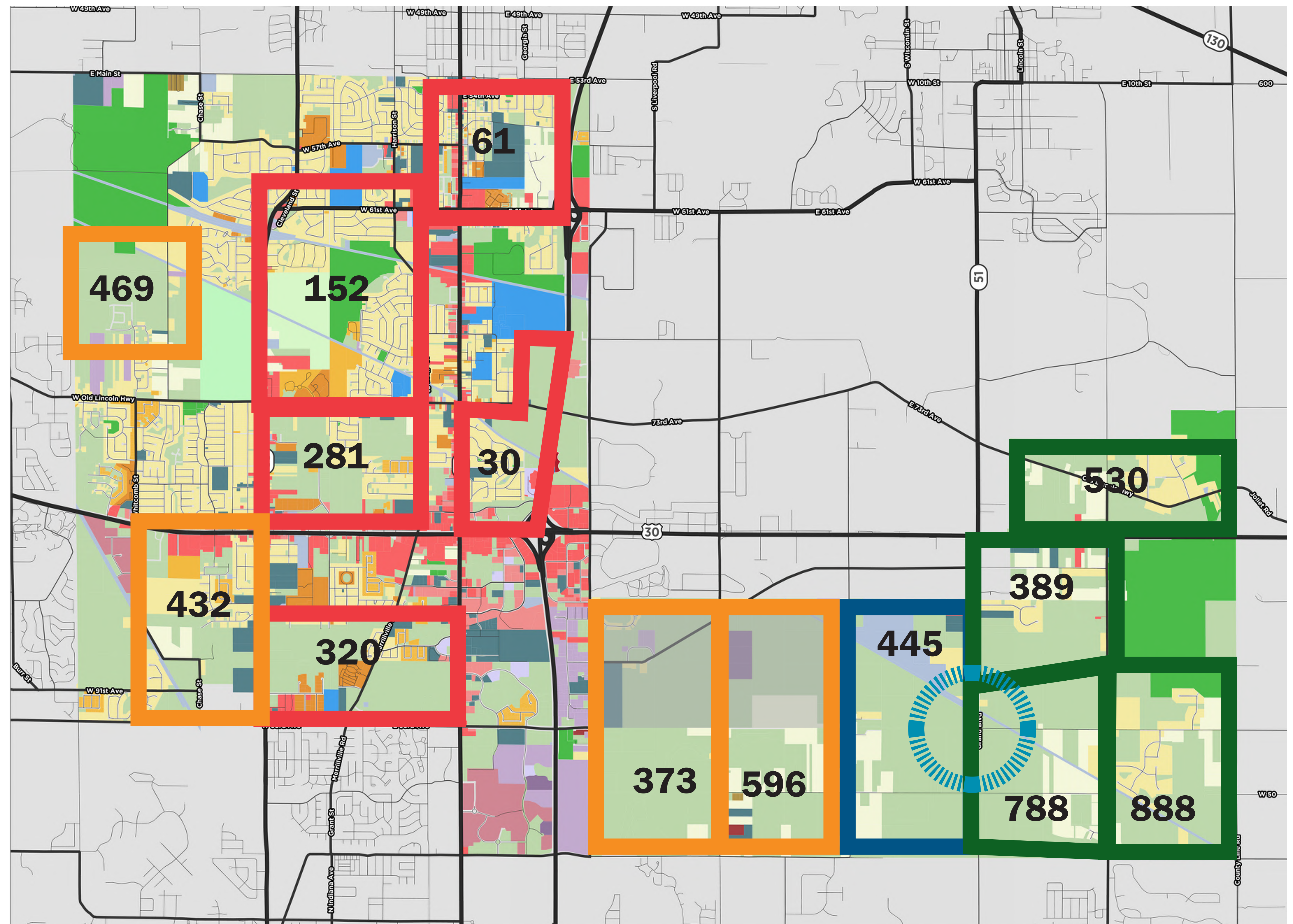
Designate an adequate supply of land for future development, recognizing that not all developable land will be available during the next 25 years.

### Strategy 1.5

Recognize the rural and very low density character of portions of the “Panhandle” in the eastern part of the Town, and contain urbanization of that area in distinct development centers and clusters.

### Strategy 1.6

Protect major environmental resources including streamways, wetlands, and prairies. Require lot clustering and conservation development in environmentally sensitive areas



Numbers display approximate acreage possible for residential development in each area, including area for very low-density development.



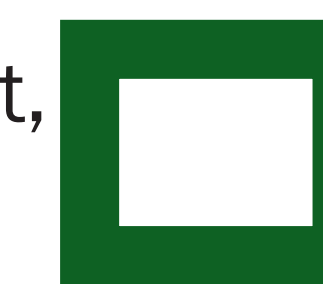
Infill development, urban dominant



Contiguous development, urban dominant



Transitional development with urban/rural balance



Rural dominant



Village Core

Figure 2.10  
Projected Residential Development, 2020-2045/2050

	% of Total Housing Forecast	Forecast Units to 2045	Typical Gross Density du/A	Base Land Requirement (Acres)	With Land Availability Adjustment *
Acreage Residential	2%	131	.05	262.20	524.40
Low-Density Urban	33%	2,163	3.0	721.05	1442.10
Medium-Density Urban	40%	2,622	6.0	437.00	874.00
High-Density Urban	25%	1,638	12.0	136.56	272.13
Total				1,556.81	3,113.63

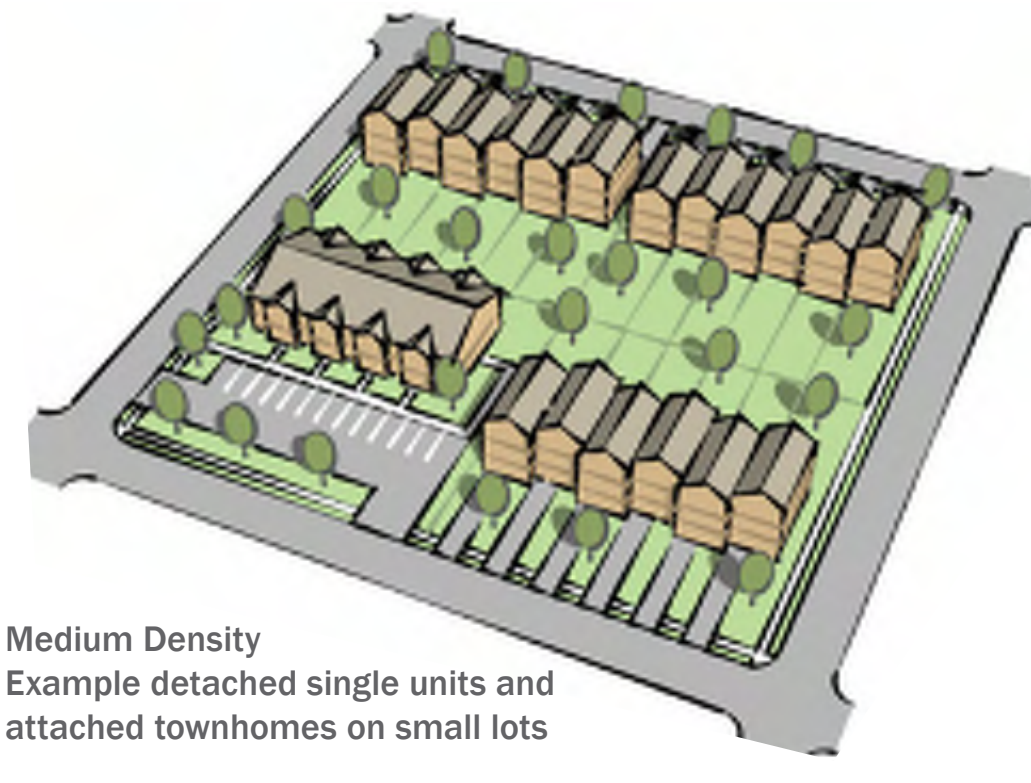
# USING LAND EFFECTIVELY: Goals and Strategies

## GOAL 2

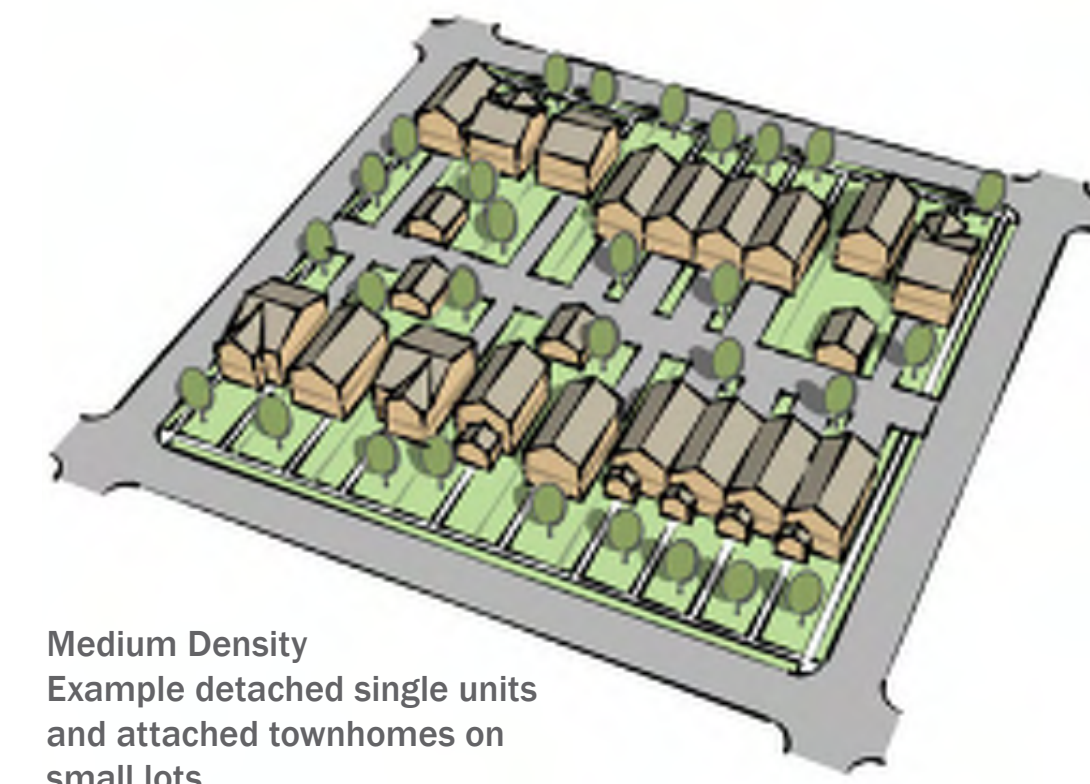
Provide a range of residential development, with a variety of housing designs, innovative land plans, ownership and rental opportunities, and price ranges.



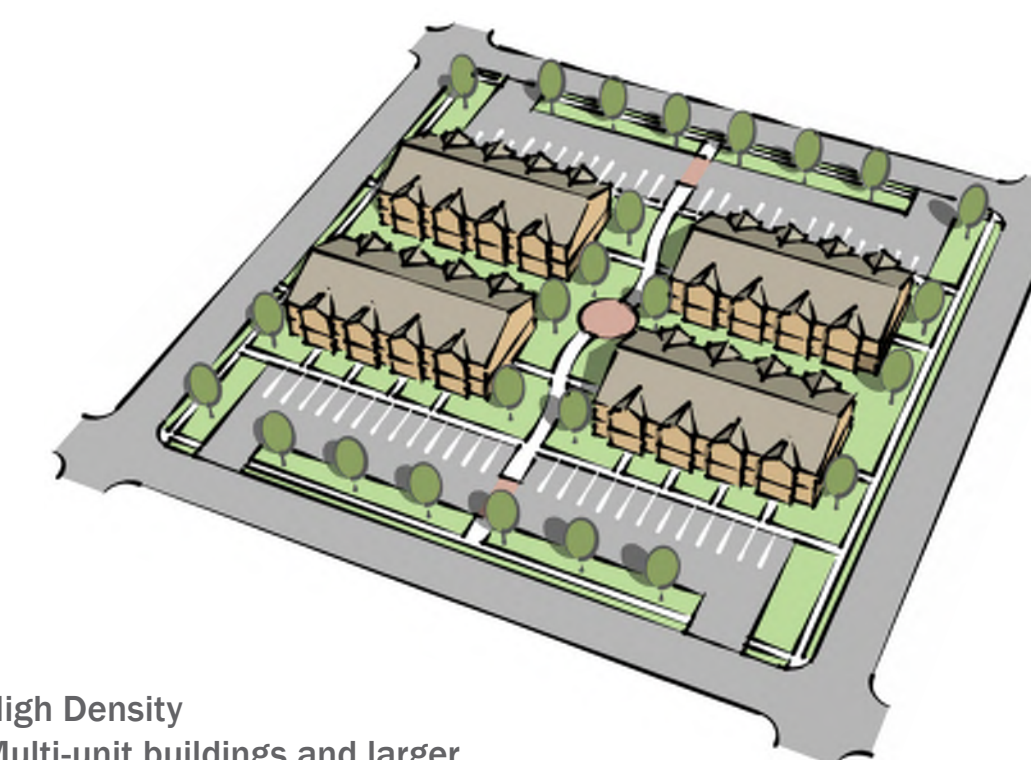
Low Density  
Example: detached single units



Medium Density  
Example detached single units and attached townhomes on small lots



Medium Density  
Example detached single units and attached townhomes on small lots



High Density  
Multi-unit buildings and larger townhome structures



RURAL      ACREAGE      LOW-DENSITY URBAN      MEDIUM-DENSITY URBAN      HIGH-DENSITY URBAN



### Strategy 2.1.

Establish residential use districts in the land use plan and ultimately the zoning ordinance that permit ranges of densities, maintaining a unified neighborhood character while promoting variety and choice.

### Strategy 2.2.

Encourage innovative housing forms, including small lot single-family, attached units, patio homes, rowhouses, and small footprint multifamily buildings that increase density while maintaining residential scale.

### Strategy 2.3.

Create and implement specific design and development standards and patterns that, if complied with, will go through a streamlined and predictable approval process.

### Strategy 2.4.

Recognize the rural and very low density character of portions of the “Panhandle” in the eastern part of the Town, and contain urbanization of that area in distinct development centers and clusters.

## GOAL 3

Create a new town center for Merrillville, focused on combining community use with private development and serving as a civic nucleus for all of the Town’s citizens.

### Strategy 3.1.

Define facility programs for a new center (or centers), tailored to Merrillville and its citizens needs and hopes, but also with regional attractions. This Town Center will fill the civic functions of a traditional downtown, but may have a very different character.

### Strategy 3.1.

Define a facility program for a new center, tailored to Merrillville and its citizens needs and hopes, but also with regional attractions. This Town Center will fill the civic functions of a traditional downtown, but may have a very different character.

### Strategy 3.2.

Identify and select a site of high visibility and identity as the location for this district. Likely candidates are the existing Municipal Complex along with additional property acquired for a new facility and the Star Plaza property.

### Strategy 3.3.

Use quality public investment to catalyze a positive response by the private sector.

### Strategy 3.4.

Provide infrastructure with street and pedestrian/bicycle access to connect to and reinforce the quality of surrounding neighborhoods. Ensure through design that the impact on adjacent neighborhoods is highly positive.



EXAMPLE: LA VISTA CITY CENTER, La Vista, NE

# USING LAND EFFECTIVELY: Goals and Strategies

## GOAL 4

**Build on Merrillville's major commercial foundation and strategic crossroads location to sustain this economic base as markets and preferences evolve.**

### Strategy 4.1.

Upgrade the customer experience, convenience, transportation function, and appearance of the US 30 corridor, Merrillville's primary commercial core. With other US 30 communities and NIRPC, develop and implement a regional corridor plan.

### Strategy 3.2.

Establish and reinforce existing commercial clusters outside of the main highway corridor, including 73rd and Taft, 73rd from Broadway to Madison, 61st and Broadway, 93rd and Broadway, and Whitcomb at US 30.

### Strategy 3.3.

Encourage new residential subdivisions to include mixed uses, including neighborhood-based retail and service enterprises.

### Strategy 3.4.

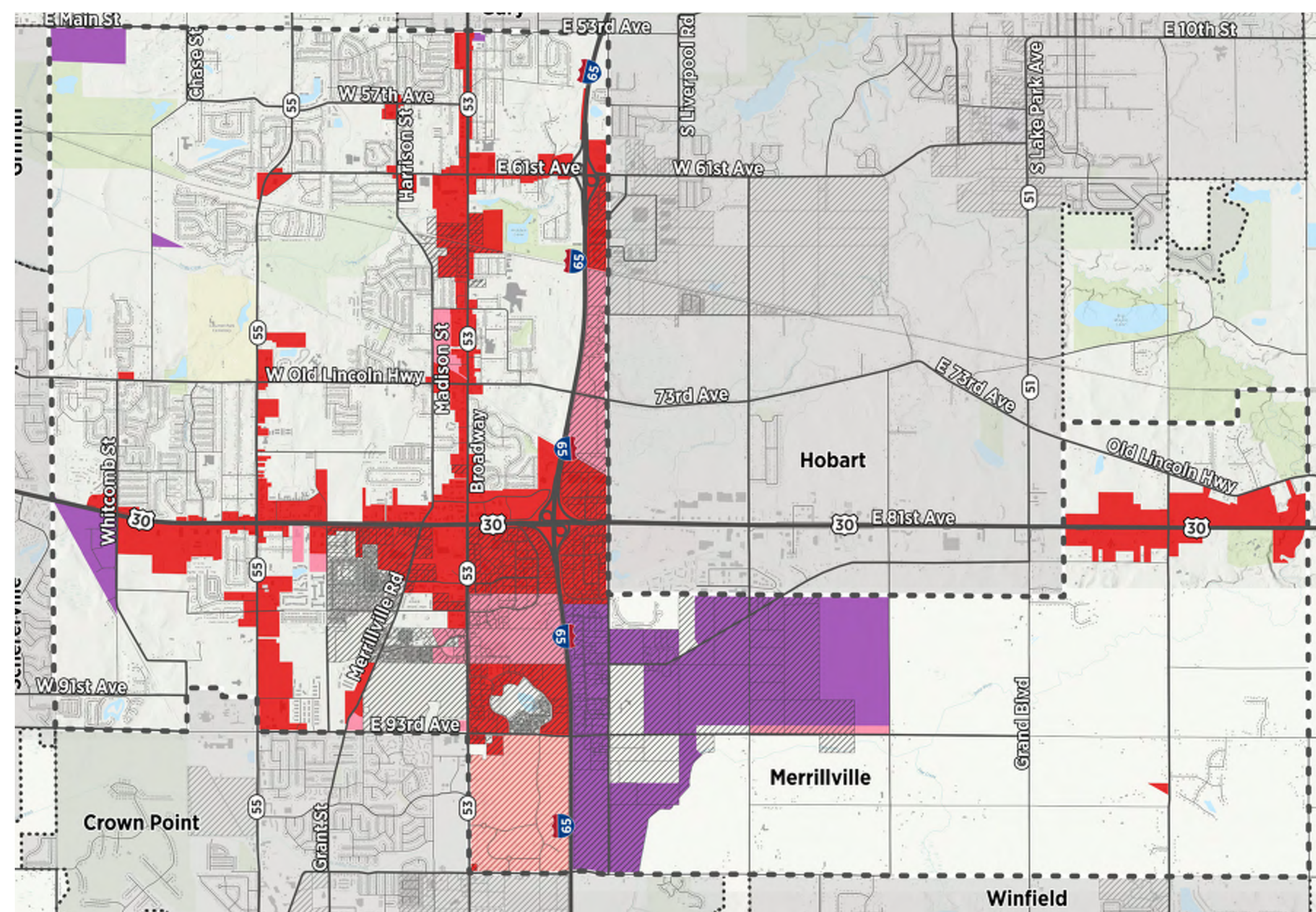
Implement the Momentum 5 program, including the enhancement or redevelopment of major commercial centers in the North Broadway corridor, specifically Broadway Plaza and Crossroads Plaza.

### Strategy 3.5.

For long-term development, identify a community commercial center as part of a Panhandle Urban District in the 93rd Avenue and Grand Boulevard area, the crossing of the Deep River Greenway and the C&O Greenway Trail.

### Strategy 3.6.

Identify Merrillville as a location for unique businesses and international food. Develop a commercial marketing campaign marketing these businesses.



## GOAL 5

**Advance Merrillville's potential as an employment center by providing an adequate supply of industrial/business park land with a location that takes advantage of the Town's road transportation assets.**

### Strategy 4.1.

Upgrade the customer experience, convenience, transportation function, and appearance of the US 30 corridor, Merrillville's primary commercial core. With other US 30 communities and NIRPC, develop and implement a regional corridor plan.

### Strategy 3.2.

Establish and reinforce existing commercial clusters outside of the main highway corridor, including 73rd and Taft, 73rd from Broadway to Madison, 61st and Broadway, 93rd and Broadway, and Whitcomb at US 30.

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Identify Merrillville as a location for unique businesses and international food. Develop a commercial marketing campaign marketing these businesses.



## GOAL 6

**As development and changes in land use occur, maintain and design such major environmental assets as streams and drainageways, wetlands, floodplains, prairies, and forested areas.**

### Strategy 6.1.

Preserve areas designated as Priority 1 Conservation Areas in the Deep River and Hoosier Prairie resource areas, delineated by the Calumet Land Conservation Partnership's Conservation Action Plan. Develop a significant regional trail in the Deep River corridor.

### Strategy 6.2.

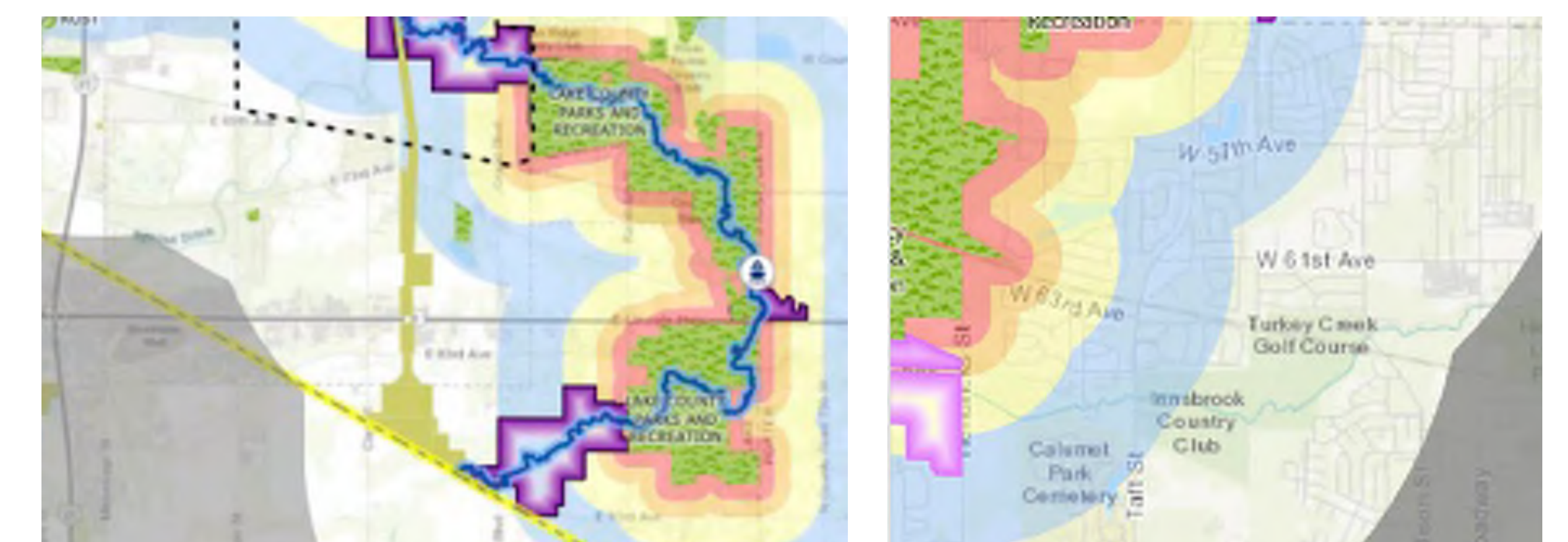
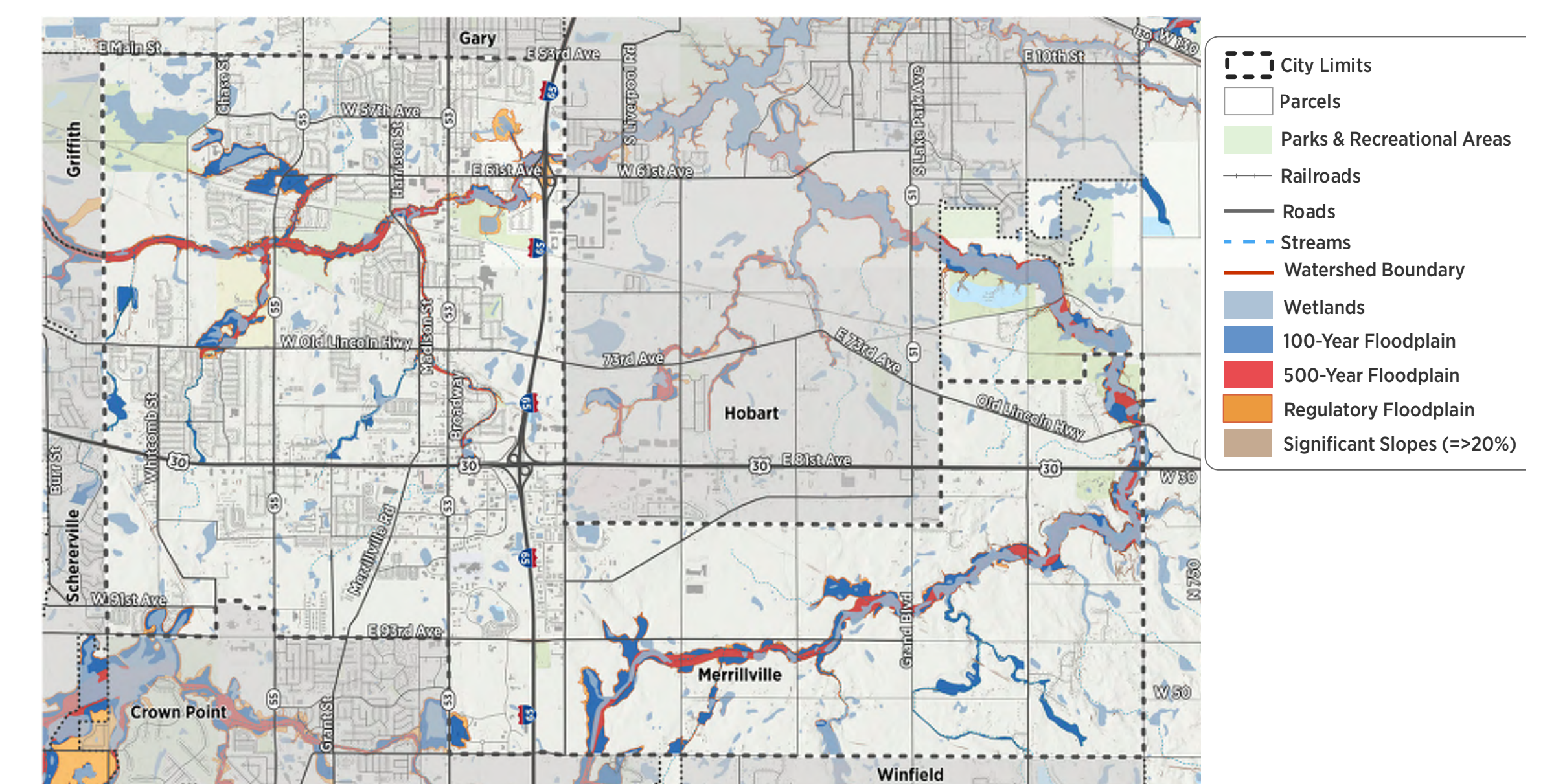
Follow development guidelines for buffer zones around managed areas proposed by the Conservation Action Plan

### Strategy 6.3.

Establish development guidelines for subdivisions and non-residential projects that maintain natural drainage patterns and drainageways. Provide density incentives and flexibility to compensate for preservation of environmental assets.

### Strategy 6.4.

Encourage use of conservation development techniques for large lot subdivisions in the eastern reaches of the Panhandle.



Resource conservation areas in the Conservation Action Plan. The Deep River and Hobart Marsh area (left) and Hoosier Prairie (right)



# THE MOMENTUM SIX: Major Project Initiatives

## GOAL 1

Strengthen Merrillville's sense of community and common purpose by identifying six major areas of strategic focus that both take advantage of strategic assets and have the ability to transform the Town's self-image and its role in the larger region.

### Strategy 1.1.

Create a concept that unifies and connects some of Merrillville's most important civic and recreational assets -- the Dean and Barbara White Community Center, Hidden Lake Park, and Merrillville High School -- into a unique central district and the beginning of the economic and commercial revitalization of the Broadway Corridor.

### Strategy 1.2.

Implement enhancement and redevelopment programs of North Merrillville's two highly visible commercial "plazas" -- Broadway Plaza at 54th Avenue and Crossroads Plaza at 61st Avenue.

### Strategy 1.3.

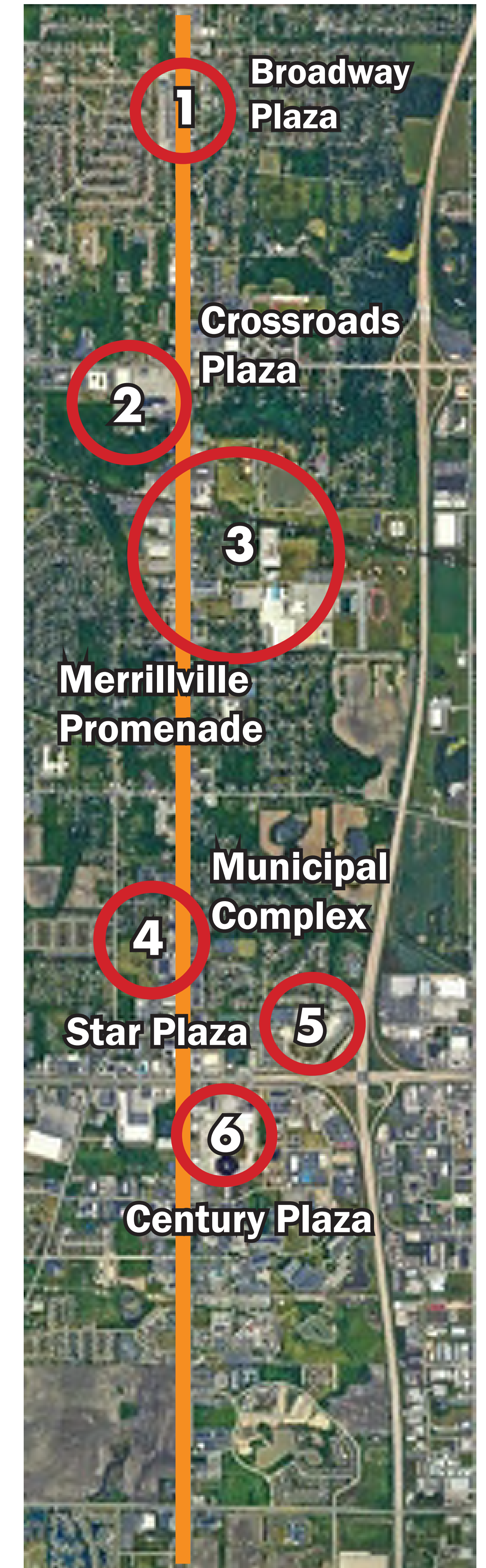
Execute a development program for the existing Municipal Complex and adjacent land.

### Strategy 1.4.

Realize the importance of the former Star Plaza site at I-65 and Broadway to the entire community and region and develop an ambitious but realistic program that speaks to the needs of the community and the entire region.

### Strategy 1.5.

Propose a redevelopment program for the large vacant areas within the interior of Century Plaza, taking advantage of the site's visibility and transportation advantages.





# THE MOMENTUM SIX: North Merrillville “Plazas”

## GOAL 2

Adapt and enhance two major “strip” commercial centers along Broadway to serve the north side of Merrillville and advance neighborhood conservation efforts in surrounding areas.

### Strategy 2.1.

Maintain Broadway Plaza as a strong neighborhood retail center with a market area that includes North Merrillville and Gary.

### Strategy 2.2.

Components of the Broadway Plaza improvement project would include:

- Facade improvements (1)
- Parking lot redesign and reconstruction with landscaping (2)
- Improved walkway adjacent to the center (3)
- Sidewalk with streetscape elements along Broadway (4)
- A clear pedestrian way from Broadway to the center (5)
- High visibility crosswalk at 54th Avenue (6)
- BMX bus rapid transit station (7)

### Strategy 2.3.

Create a public/private partnership with the shopping center owners, the Town, and the Redevelopment Authority (RDA) to implement the project.

## Broadway Plaza Concept

Aerial View

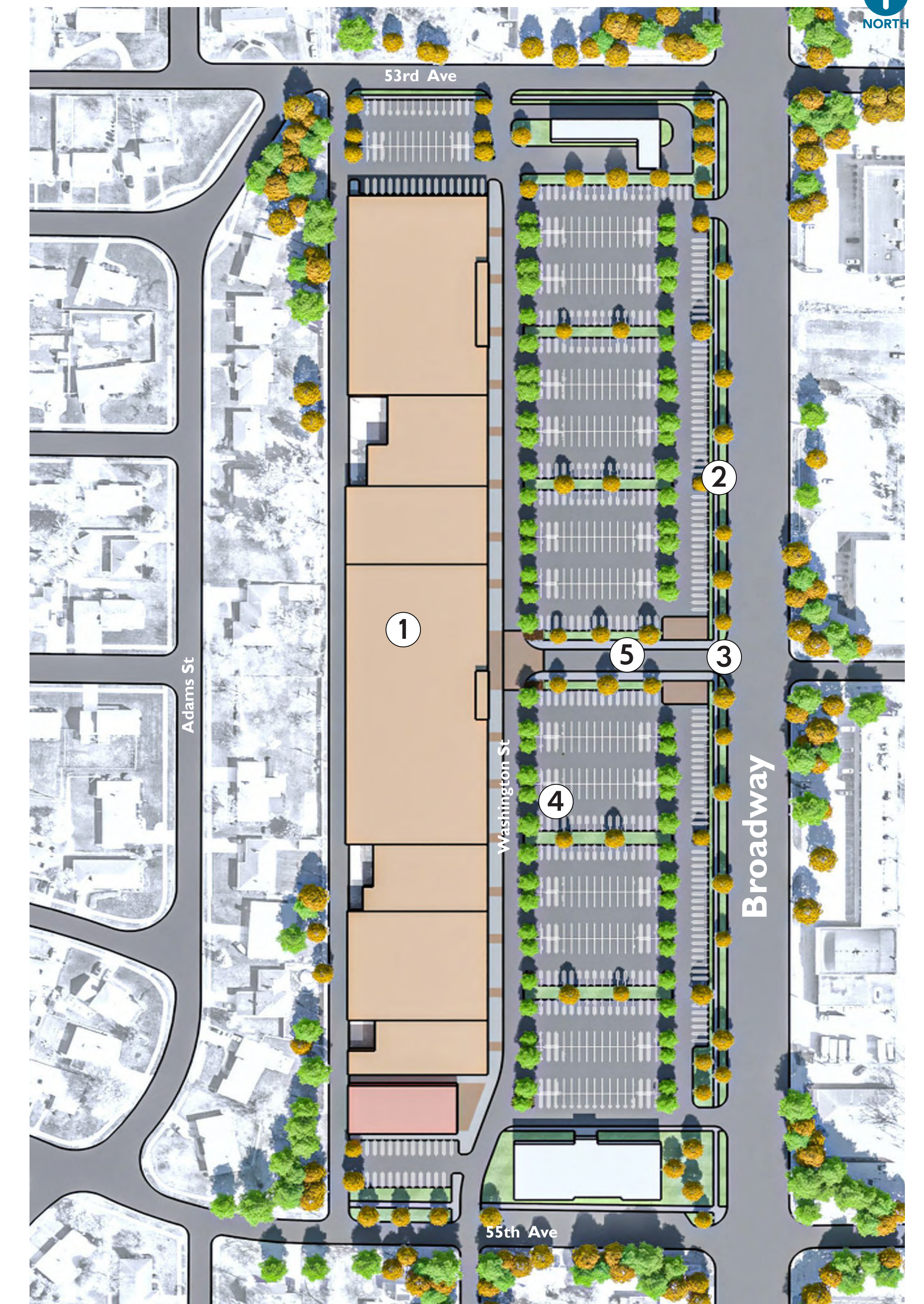


Current Aerial



1. Retain current commercial spaces.
2. Enhance the sidewalk along Broadway.
3. Create “Entryway Feature” to Broadway Plaza.
4. Enhanced landscaping features throughout the Plaza.
5. Expanded walkway to businesses.

Plan View



# THE MOMENTUM SIX: North Merrillville “Plazas”

## GOAL 2

Adapt and enhance two major “strip” commercial centers along Broadway to serve the north side of Merrillville and advance neighborhood conservation efforts in surrounding areas.

### Strategy 2.4.

Redevelop Crossroads Plaza as a mixed use project, downsizing its retail component and introducing residential use.

### Strategy 2.5.

Components of the Crossroads Plaza improvement project could include:

- Retention of existing grocery and adjacent large building for reuse. (1)
- New storefronts along south wall. (2)
- Retention of existing fast food pad sites and health center along 61st Avenue with improved circulation. (3)
- Enhanced Broadway sidewalk and streetscape (4)
- Greenway linking Broadway sidewalk to major commercial elements. (5)
- Downsizing and landscaping of parking lot. (6)
- New townhomes with an interior green street. (7)
- Neighborhood playspace. (8)
- Mixed use development on Broadway with apartments and adjacent storefronts. (9)
- Improved access and parking for event center. (10)
- Connect project to Broadway Promenade. (11)
- High visibility crosswalks at 61st and Broadway with enhanced BMX station (12)

### Strategy 2.6.

Create a public/private partnership with the current property owner, the Town, and the Redevelopment Authority (RDA) to implement the project. Use Tax Increment Financing and other available development finance tools.

## Crossroads Plaza Concept Aerial View



## Plan View



1. Retain grocery store building.
2. Add missing middle housing.
3. Trail connections and greenspace.
4. Additional commercial space.
5. Retain existing commercial on north end of Plaza.
6. Pedestrian pathway from Broadway to grocery store.
7. Landscape enhancements throughout Plaza.



Current Aerial



# THE MOMENTUM SIX: Merrillville Promenade

## GOAL 3

Create a new type of community focus by linking three major assets of Merrillville's civic and recreational life – the White Community Center (active recreation, wellness, and events), Hidden Lake Park (open space, passive recreation, and family life), and Merrillville High School (education and spirit).

### Strategy 3.1.

Establish a partnership of three public entities necessary to carry out this cooperative project: Lake County, the Town of Merrillville, and the Merrillville School District.

### Strategy 3.2.

Use an enhanced and continuous shared use path – the Merrillville Promenade – as the mechanism to connect these features. The initial phase of the Promenade focuses on Broadway between 61st and 68th Avenue.

### Strategy 3.3.

Resolve the barriers that break the potential continuity of the Promenade. The strategic projects necessary to complete the concept include:

- A major streetscape and shared use path along Broadway using excess right-of-way.
- An underpass under the railroad corridor to link the high school campus and Hidden Lake Park.
- A pedestrian overpass over Broadway connecting the Community Center to the High School campus.

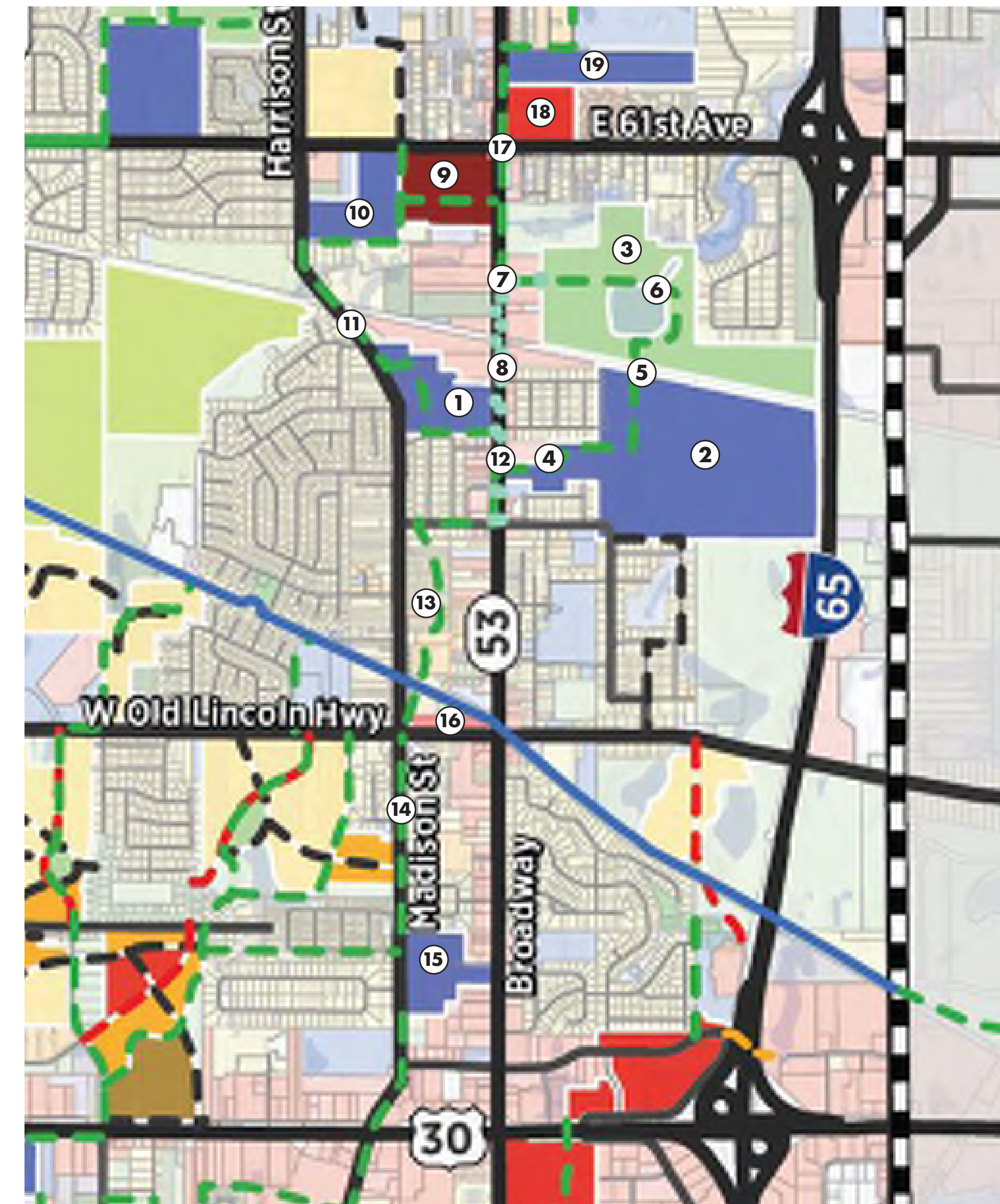
### Strategy 3.4.

Envision the Promenade as a project that expands over time to other parts of Merrillville and becomes integrated into the Town's park and trail system.

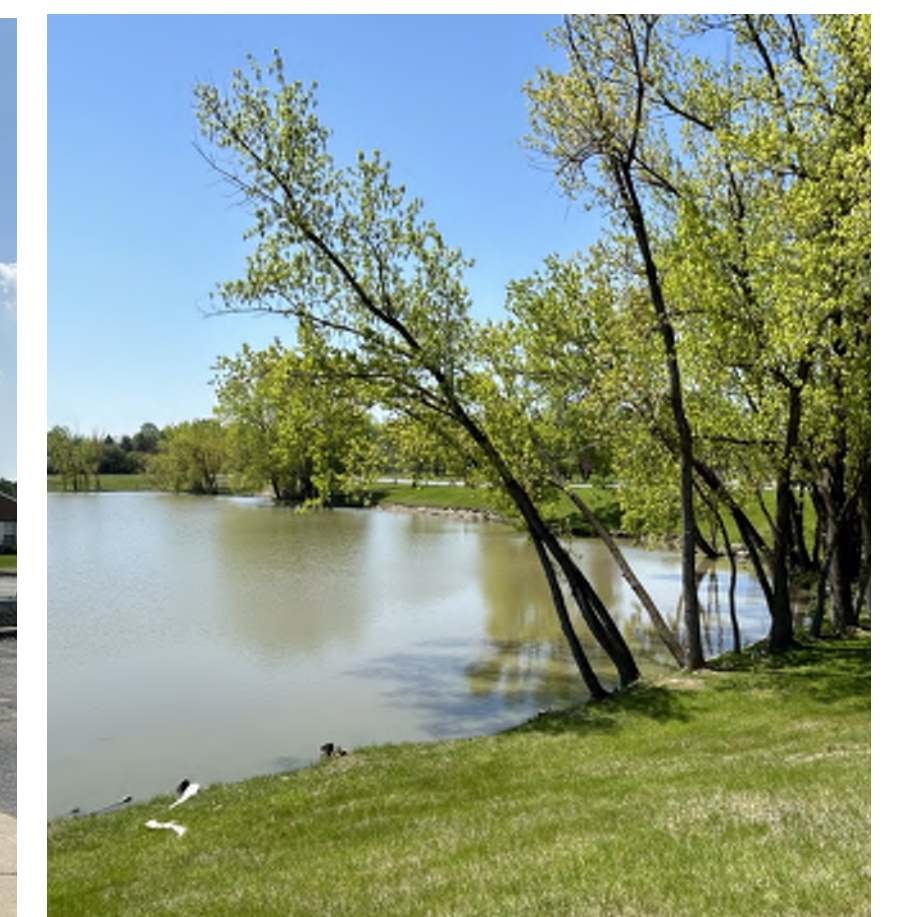
### Strategy 3.5.

Encourage new consumer-oriented retail, food service, and commercial development in the vicinity of the high school and community center connection.

## Momentum Promenade Concept



1	Dean and Barbara White Community Center
2	Merrillville High School
3	Hidden Lake Park
4	High School Trail
5	Railroad Underpass
6	Hidden Lake Trail
7	Expanded Park Entrance and Landscaped Path
8	Broadway Streetscape and Shared Use Path
9	Crossroads Plaza Redevelopment
10	Fielier School and Path
11	Madison Street Path
12	Broadway Overpass
13	Turkey Creek Path
14	Madison Street Sidepath
15	Municipal Complex
16	Merrillville Historic District
17	61st Ave Transit Node
18	Shoppers World Center
19	Andean High School



1. Pedestrian bridge links the Dean and Barbara White Community Center to the Merrillville High School.
2. Sidepath to the Dean and Barbara White Community Center.
3. Sidepath to Merrillville High School.

# THE MOMENTUM SIX: Town Hall Development

## GOAL 4

Develop the expanded Municipal Complex site between Broadway and Madison as a mixed use development site and potentially as a town center district anchored by a new Town Hall.

### Strategy 4.1.

Evaluate the existing Municipal Complex site and additional land comprising about 19 acres as the site for a new Town Hall and potentially a town center district.

### Strategy 4.2.

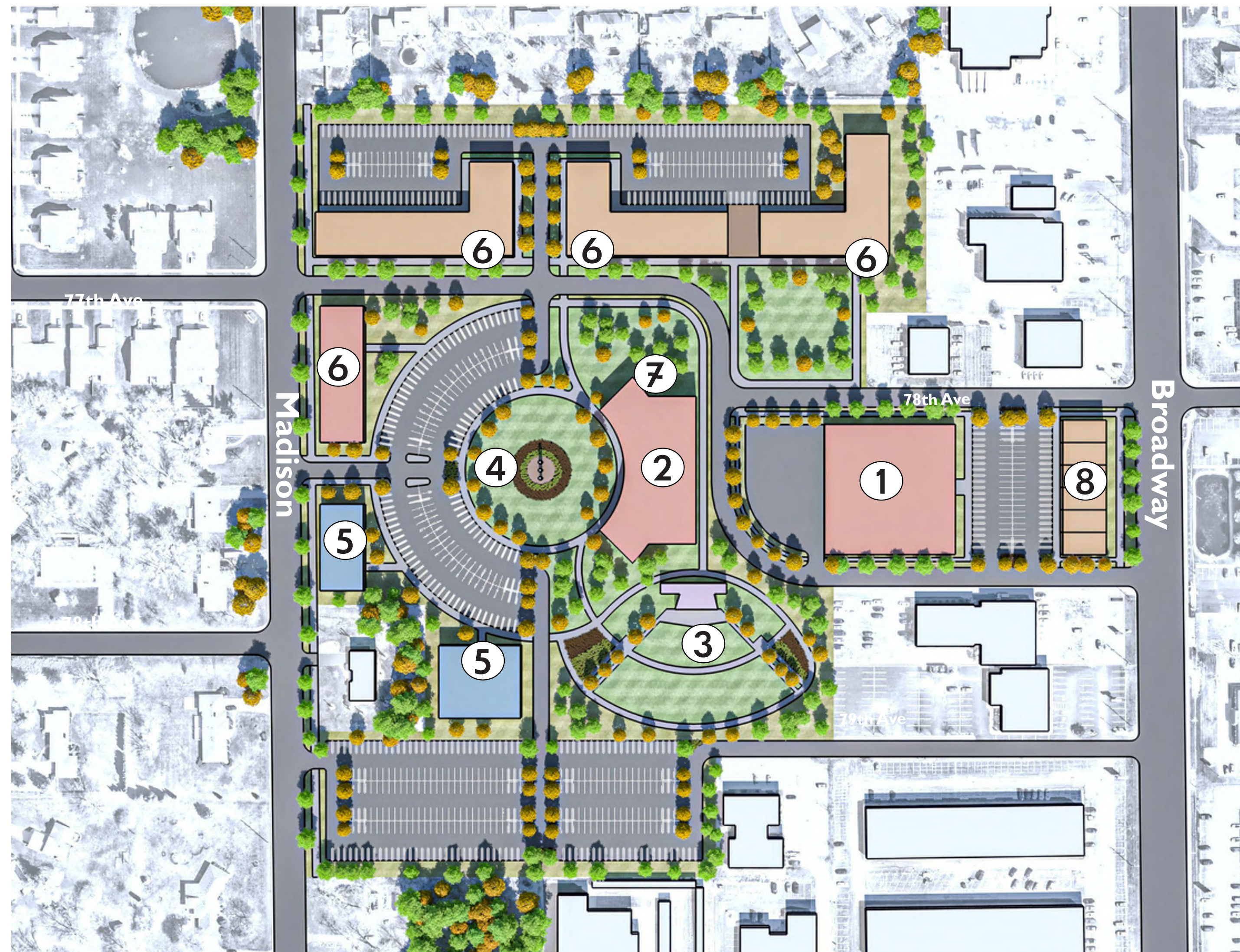
Devote the existing town hall building exclusively to public safety use.

### Strategy 4.3.

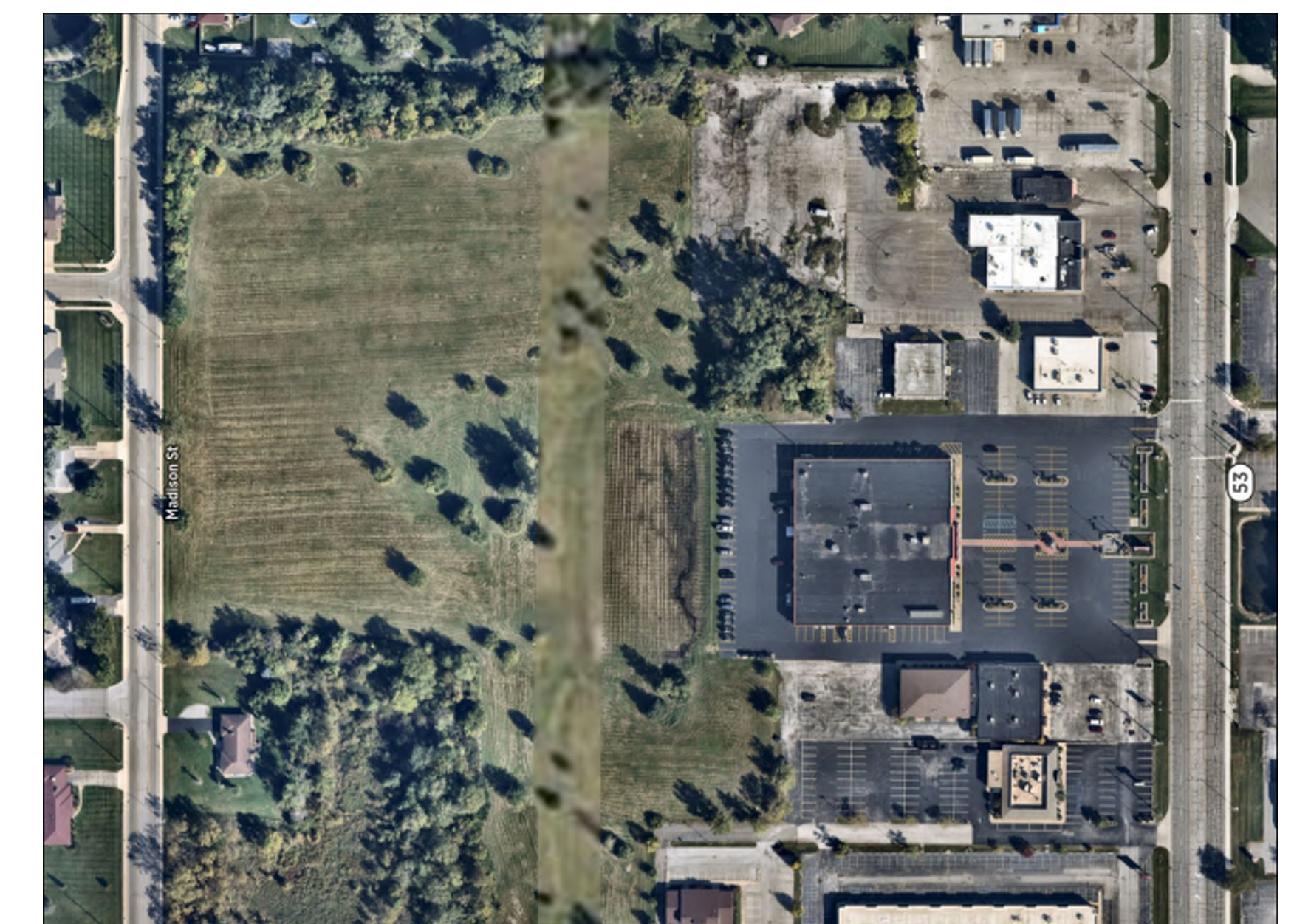
Establish a development program for the site, potentially including an outdoor amphitheater or performance space, offices for various community agencies and nonprofits, and mixed density residential development. Alternative future would concentrate on new infill residential development.

### Strategy 4.4.

Maintain a strong relationship to the Broadway corridor, including street-oriented commercial development and clear street and path connections to the west part of the site.



1. Police Headquarters (Existing Town Hall).
2. New Town Hall.
3. Amphitheater.
4. Flag Plaza and Municipal Green.
5. Community Offices.
6. Town Center Mixed Use (Private Development).
7. Playspace.
8. Broadway Commercial.



Current Aerial



# THE MOMENTUM SIX: Star Plaza

## GOAL 5

**Renew Star Plaza as a pre-eminent center of community life, an attraction for families both living in and considering Merrillville, and an important asset for the entire Northwest Indiana region.**

### Strategy 5.1.

Secure the agreement and partnership of the philanthropic owners of the Star Plaza property to help create the vision for the site and participate in its implementation.

### Strategy 5.2.

Use public investment and initiatives as a catalyst for substantial private mixed use development. Private development components can include residential, commercial, office, and hospitality development, but understanding that creating a public place that naturally attracts people will be the critical element that distinguishes this development site from others.

### Strategy 5.3.

Potential public use elements could include a central park, children's museum, discovery playground, and an indoor/outdoor performance venue and amphitheater, building on the original fame of the location.

### Strategy 5.4.

Provide visible sites and significant incentives for private development, using public features as a catalyst for new investment, recognizing the importance of this site not just for Merrillville but for the larger Northwest Indiana Region.

### Strategy 5.5.

Provide visible sites and significant incentives for private development, using public features as a catalyst for new investment, recognizing the importance of this site not just for Merrillville but for the larger Northwest Indiana Region.

### Strategy 5.6.

In recognition of this regional importance, assemble a partnership of the Town, the Redevelopment Authority (RDA), Lake County, the Northwest Indiana Regional Planning Commission, and the private philanthropic center to assess and commit the resources and techniques necessary to implement the project. Use Tax Increment Financing and other available development finance tools.

### Strategy 5.6.

Provide good and enjoyable access to the site by all forms of transportation, including pedestrian, bicycle, micro-mobility, and transit.

### Strategy 5.7.

Use existing street patterns where possible but provide realignments where necessary to improve traffic flow and create better connectivity.

### Strategy 5.8.

Connect the site to surrounding neighborhoods but ensure that they are separated from site-generated traffic and other external effects.

## Plan View



1. New Mixed Use Development
2. Indoor/Outdoor Amphitheater
3. Destination Playground.
4. Commercial Development.
5. High Density Residential.
6. Trails Throughout
7. Pedestrian Bridge crossing Highway 30.
8. Continue Delaware Pl and Carolina Pl through to 80th Pl.

## Examples



La Vista (NE) City Center: Mixed use residential/commercial/office development with performance venue and Central Park



Omaha (NE) Riverfront: Discovery playground and Illuminarium interactive science museum for all generations

# THE MOMENTUM SIX: Century Plaza

## GOAL 6

Develop a potential reuse program for the interior of Century Plaza, taking into account the state of current markets and probable needs for a variety of uses, including space for small enterprises and start-ups.

### Strategy 6.1.

Work with the current property owner to develop a realistic, market-driven reuse program for the interior of the Century Plaza site that is consistent with the character of the surrounding environment.

### Strategy 6.2.

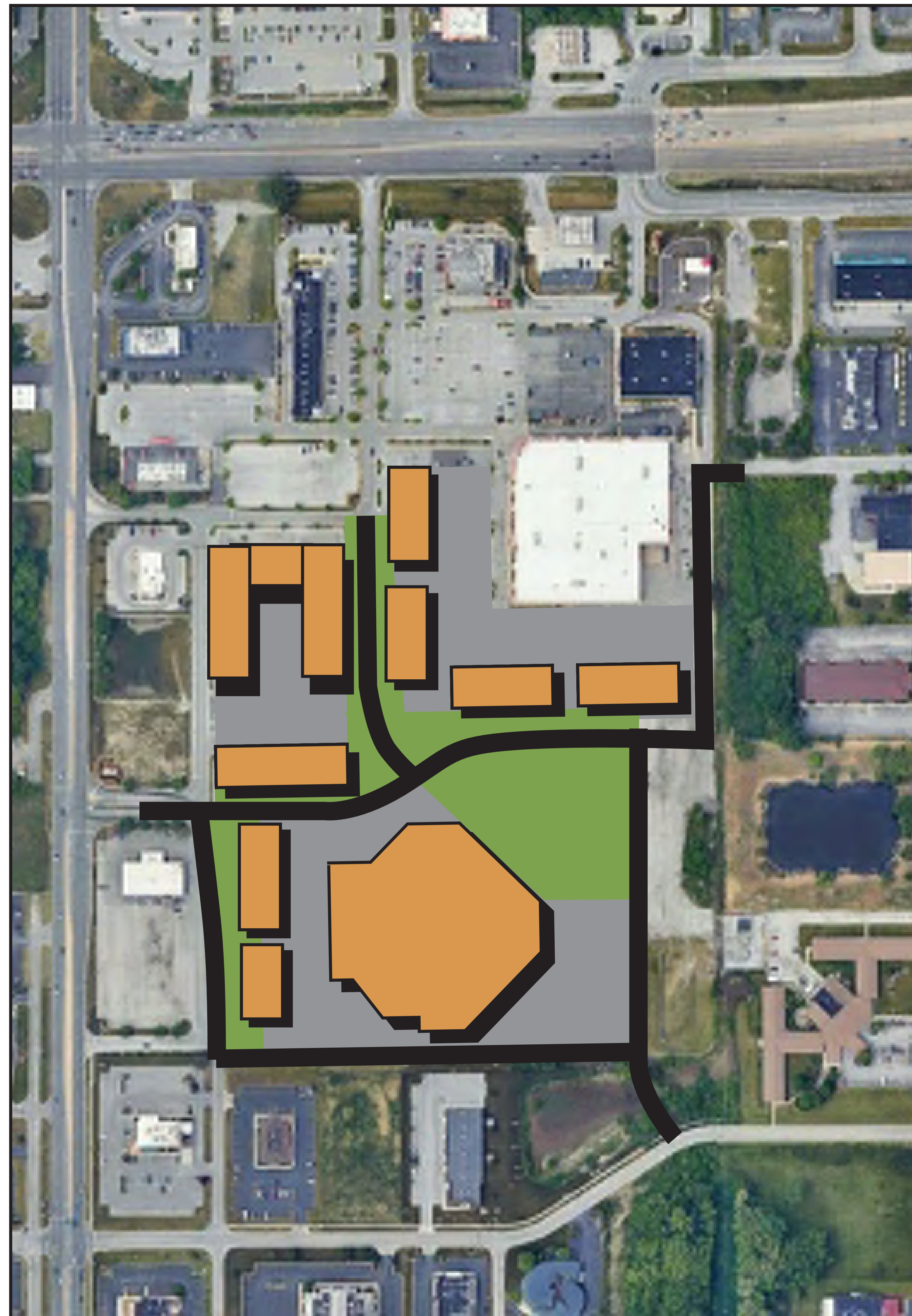
Consider reuse possibilities that add activity, employment, and economic development potential that may not be available in this part of Northwest Indiana. Possibilities include commercial recreation and an enterprise or innovation district, with buildings sized for small and start-up enterprises that might involve some very light industrial characteristics.

### Strategy 6.3.

Provide appropriate zoning, platting, and possible interior street dedications. A possible reuse concept could include interior streets and smaller parcels.

### Strategy 5.8.

Include street and pedestrian linkages to the surrounding commercial neighborhood environment.



Diagrammatic concept for a start-up center at Century Plaza. New street connections, small footprint building, and hidden service areas can create a positive physical environment. The large format box is retained as a multi-tenant incubator or other use requiring a large area.



Buildings for innovative start-ups. Hayden Tract in Culver City, CA

# CREATING CONNECTIONS: Arterial Street Policies

## GOAL 1

Improve the operation of Merrillville's arterial system by addressing current congestion and connectivity issues and future development needs.

### Strategy 1.1.

Divert local traffic away from US 30 around the I-65 interchange with a grade separated crossing of the Interstate connecting E. 79th Avenue and E. 80th Place.

### Strategy 1.2.

Develop an improved and continuous arterial on the west side of Merrillville between the northern town line and 93rd Avenue.

### Strategy 1.3.

Extend 93rd Avenue between Mississippi Street and Grand Boulevard.

### Strategy 1.4.

With future growth, monitor existing minor arterials for issues with capacity and turning movements.

### Strategy 1.5.

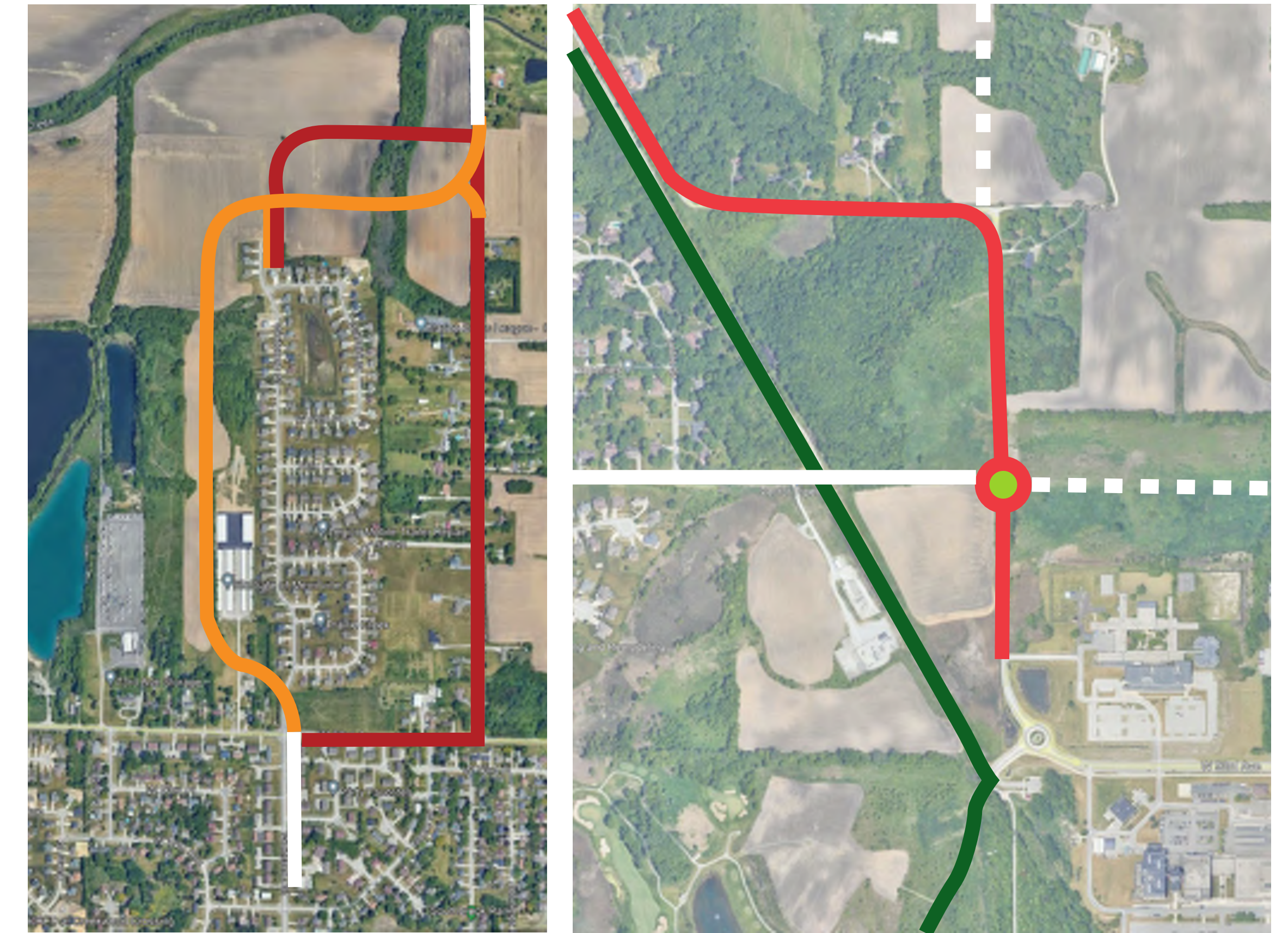
Use roadway improvements to advance Broadway as Merrillville's "Community Main Street." These improvements should be based on a comprehensive regional study of the corridor, including Gary, Merrillville, and Crown Point that considers a variety of transportation, land use, environmental, and urban design factors along this key corridor.



**73rd Avenue** New residential growth, along with supporting parks, community facilities, and commercial, could increase traffic requirements beyond the capacity of rural section arterials. Traffic operation on streets like 73rd Avenue should be monitored for overall operation. Major future improvements should accommodate all modes of transportation.



**80th Place Connection.** Top: alignment of a possible 80th Place tunnel. This includes an 80th Place realignment on the west approach as part of replanning the Star Plaza site. Above: Looking west from the current termination of E. 79th Avenue. Elevation of I-65 making an undercrossing most feasible. This includes an 80th Place realignment on the west approach as part of replanning the Star Plaza site.



**Left: "Westside Arterial" North.** Option A (red) connects Whitcomb Street into Hendricks, although Hendricks would remain the primary route. This option retains the 73rd Avenue jog between Hendricks and Whitcomb. Option B develops a new alignment around the residential area and provides a continuous alignment with Whitcomb south of 73rd Avenue.

**Right: "Westside Arterial" South.** This alignment connects 89th and Whitcomb with the 93rd and Chase Roundabout, eliminating current sharp turns and, with future street connections, improving some of the peak hour traffic issues related to Government Center.



**Broadway.** A Great Street plan for Broadway, undertaken on a regional basis, would include a variety of factors, including road section, possible lane narrowing or reduction, on-street parking, active transportation, access management, and urban design.

# CREATING CONNECTIONS: Collector Network

## GOAL 2

Create a connected system of inter-neighborhood collectors to open new development areas, provide options to short and middle distance local trips, and improve links between neighborhoods and to community destinations. the operation Merrillville's arterial system by addressing current congestion and connectivity issues and future development

### Strategy 2.1.

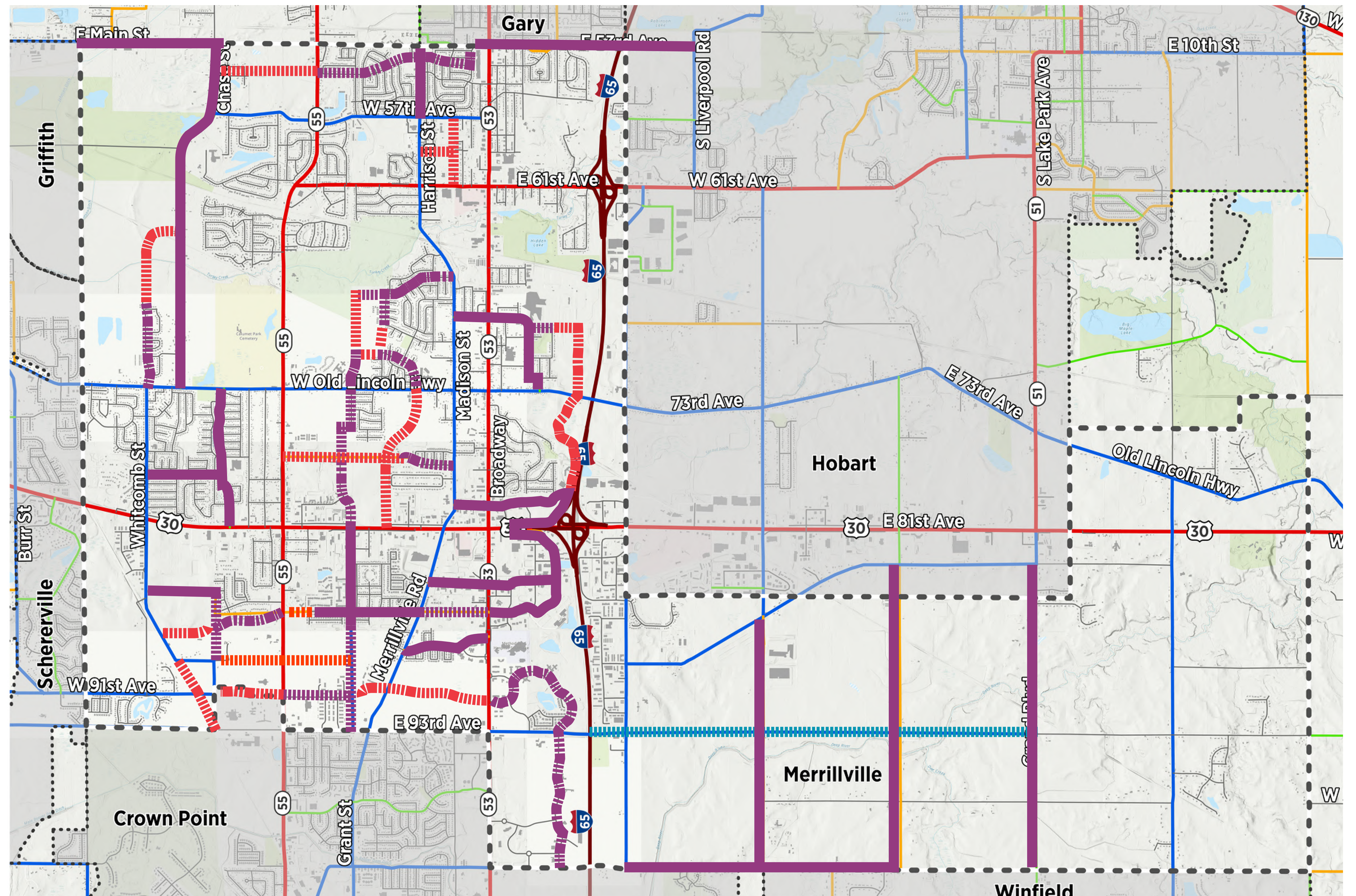
Establish an official street map that identifies collector street corridors.

### Strategy 2.2.

Create a funding program to fund advance collector development or extra street width.

### Strategy 2.3.

Modify the Town's Federal Aid Roadway system to include a full collector network, with an emphasis on inter-neighborhood connections and alternative routes to community destinations.



### Collector and Continuity Opportunities

- Existing collector streets on the Federal Aid network
- - - - - Existing streets proposed for inclusion in collector network
- - - - - New collector and continuity opportunities
- - - - - New arterial corridor





# CREATING CONNECTIONS: Trails and Active Transportation

## GOAL 3

Develop an effective system of trails and connected routes that provide alternatives to the car for access to important community destinations.

### Strategy 3.1.

Work with NIRPC and the City of Hobart to complete the C&O Trail from the Merrillville/Griffith Trailhead to County Line Road.

### Strategy 3.2.

Establish a phased trail and connections master plan, using various federal and regional funding programs and a dedicated annual budget allocation for trail development. The master plan contains a variety of facilities including trails, sidepaths, bike lanes, and complete streets.

### Strategy 3.3.

Implement a cooperative right-of-way and development package with NIPSCO for an east-west Power Line Trail south of 86th Avenue between the Methodist Hospital Campus and the Erie-Lackawanna Trail.

### Strategy 3.4.

Incorporate proposed trails into major private and public/private development projects.

### Strategy 3.5

Include sidepaths or other bicycle infrastructure into major roadway improvement projects

### Strategy 3.6

Execute the Merrillville Promenade concept and its active transportation elements, lining major assets in the central parts of the Town together.

### Strategy 3.7.

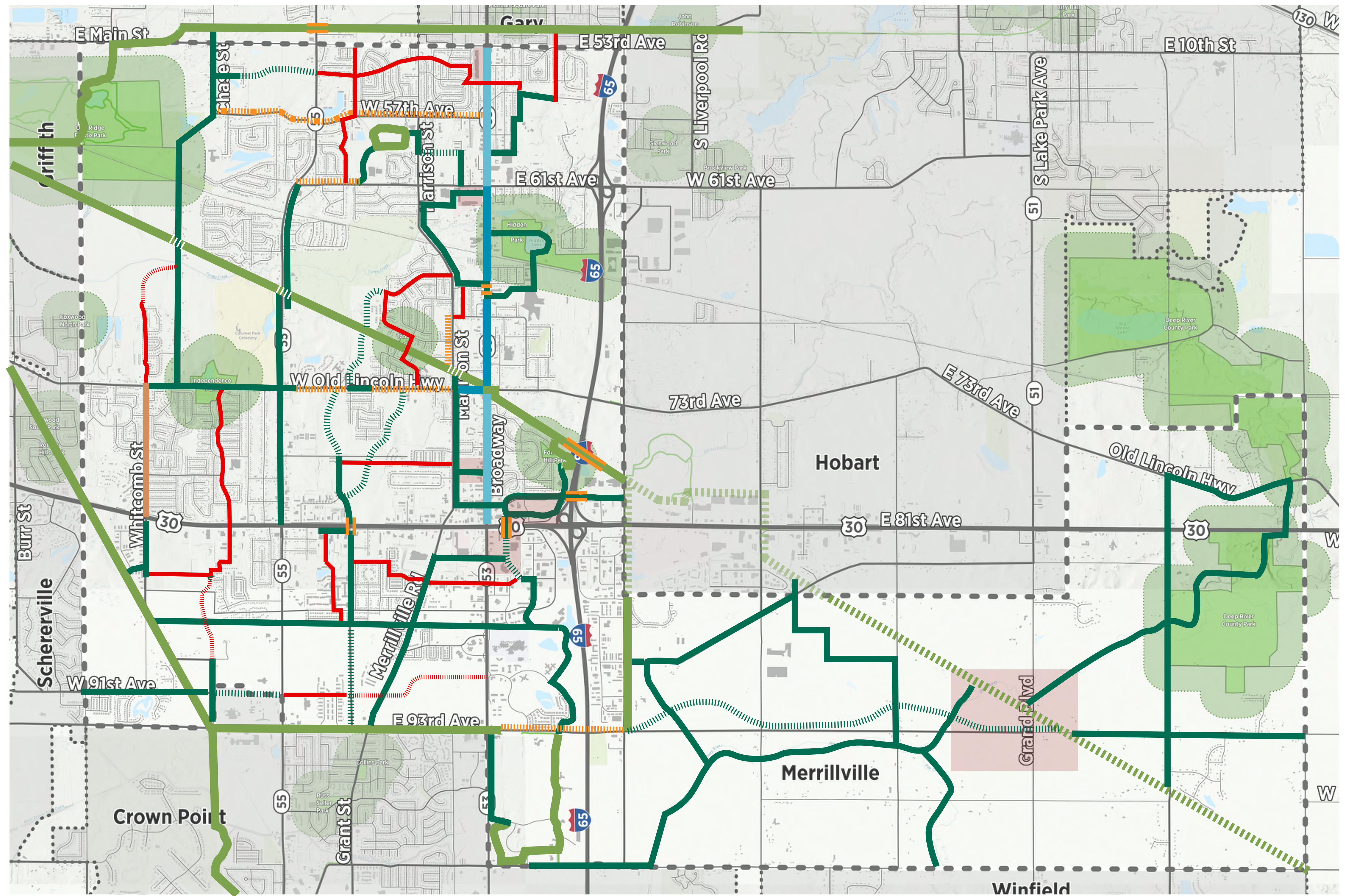
Begin work with the Indiana Department of Transportation and NIRPC to develop bicycle and pedestrian overpasses on US 30 at the Georgia/Rhode Island and Grant intersections and over Broadway (SR 53) between Merrillville High School and the Dean and Barbara White Community Center. Incorporate active modes in the design of the 79th/80th Place tunnel crossing I-65.

### Strategy 3.8.

Implement a bicycle and pedestrian wayfinding program on a community-wide scale, using existing routes and facilities.

### Strategy 3.9.

Upgrade pedestrian and bicycle access to major commercial and civic destinations along the US 30 corridor. This may include parallel streets, frontage roads, and safer crossings, as well as paths along the highway.



## Trail and Path Concept Plan

- Existing Trails and Sidepaths
- ⋯ Proposed Regional Trail Extensions
- Future Trails and Sidepaths on Available Right-of-Way
- ⋯ Future Trails and Sidepaths on Proposed Streets
- ⋯ Sidewalk Widening to Sidepath Standard
- Active Boulevards/Connectors on Existing Streets
- ⋯ Active Boulevards/Connectors on Proposed Streets
- Broadway Community Street Project: Phase 1
- Broadway Community Street Project: Later Phases
- ⋯ Grade Separated Bike and Pedestrian Crossings
- Momentum Six Development Areas



Merrillville Utility Corridor. This corridor presents a major opportunity for connecting neighborhoods and establishing an iconic greenway through the Town's south side.



Complete (or multi-modal) Street Concept: Nieman Road in Shawnee, KS. Street redesign included a sidepath with two pedestrian crossing medians and streetscape features. The project has generated several major residential and commercial development projects.



Erie-Lackawanna Tunnel under US 30 in Merrillville.



# CREATING CONNECTIONS: Pedestrian Access

## GOAL 4

Complete a strategic sidewalk and walkway system designed to give pedestrians clear, pleasant, and safe routes to primary pedestrian destinations, including parks, schools, and recreation facilities.

### Strategy 4.1.

Institute a major sidewalk development program with financing based on the premise that strategic pedestrian improvements are a general benefit to all members of the community.

### Strategy 4.2.

Focus sidewalk development on areas that lack coverage and exhibit relatively low incomes, making them more dependent on walking and transit. These areas are generally north of 73rd Avenue between Madison and I-65.

### Strategy 4.3

Provide at least one continuous sidewalk route in each direction within a 15 minute walking radius of elementary schools, parks, and trails.

### Strategy 4.4

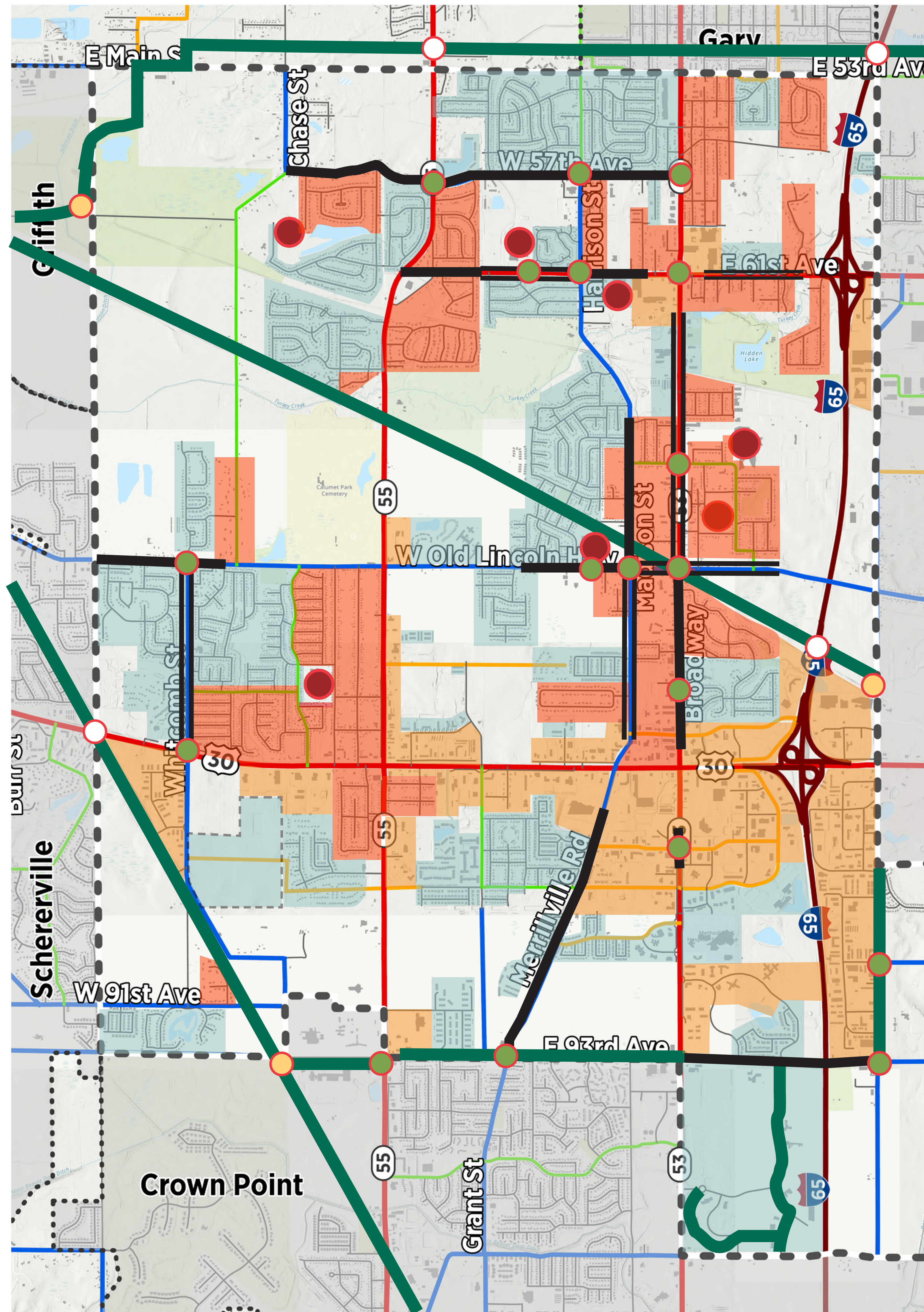
Develop continuous sidewalks on at least one side of all arterial and collector streets and within new subdivision plats.

### Strategy 4.5

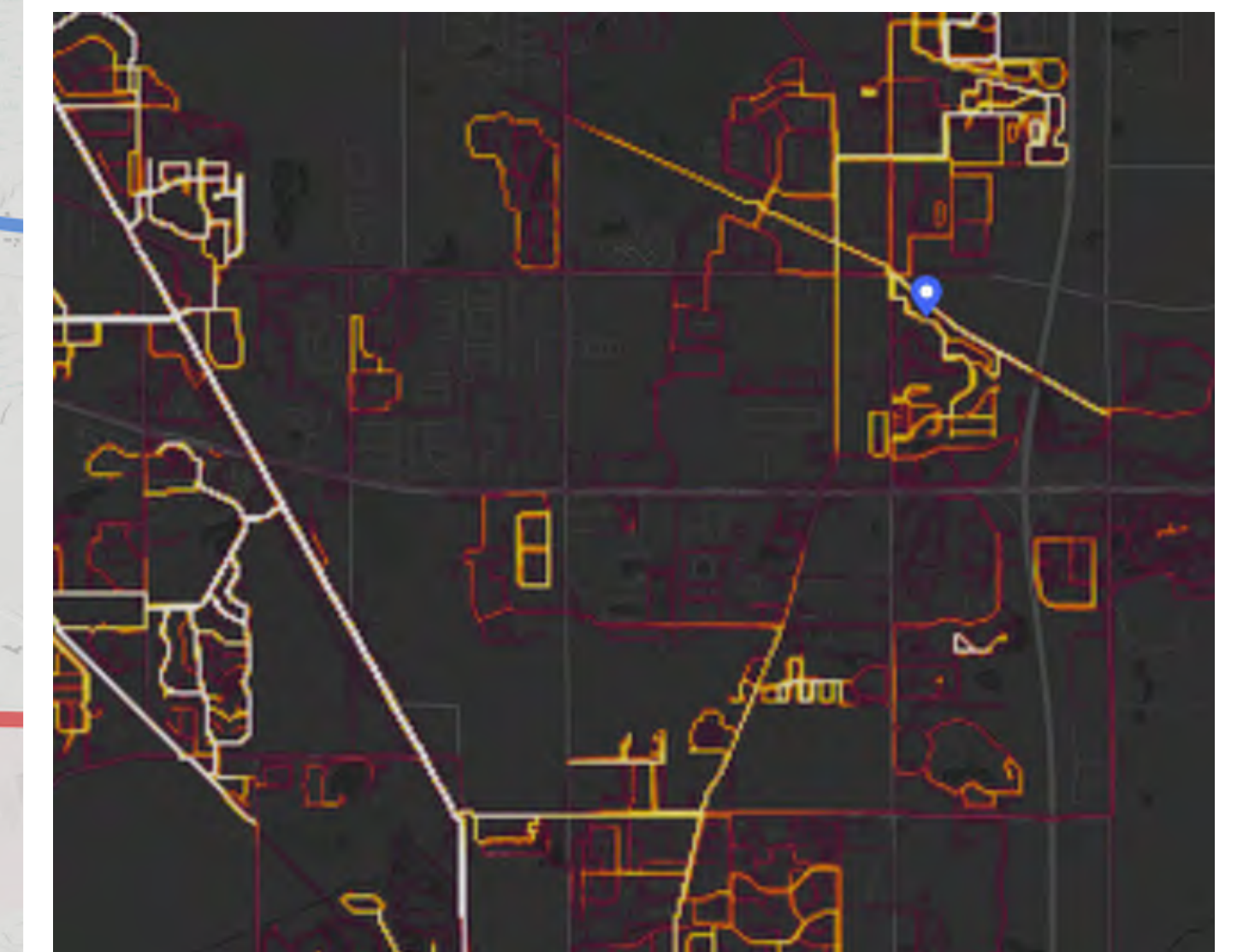
Implement a pedestrian crossing improvement program that includes high visibility crosswalks and crossing signage and crossing protection at unsignalized intersections near schools and major destinations.

### Strategy 4.5

Eliminate standard practices by various agencies, private and public, that place obstacles to clear passage along sidewalks for all people, including people with disabilities. Create and enforce standards that require a 5-foot minimum width and a setback from the back of curb.



**Obstacles on Madison Street.** Back of curb sidewalks unbuffered from moving traffic and obstructed by mailboxes and light poles make life difficult for pedestrians.



**Where People Walk in Town.** Strava heat map illustrating density of participating pedestrians and bicyclists.

### Pedestrian Infrastructure Coverage

- Sidewalk on Arterial—1 side
- == Sidewalk on Arterial—2 side
- Shared Use Path
- Trailheads
- Arterial Pedestrian Crossing with Signals
- Grade Separated Pedestrian/Bike Crossings
- Areas with Good Sidewalk Coverage
- Residential Areas Lacking Sidewalks
- Non-Residential Development Lacking Sidewalks
- Schools

# CREATING CONNECTIONS: Transit

## GOAL 5

Partner with transit operators, municipalities, and regional agencies to create a cost-effective, unified public transportation system with Merrillville as a major point of access.

### Strategy 5.1.

Support and cooperate with NIRPC and regional communities and transit operations to establish a coherent, regional system.

### Strategy 5.2.

State a preference for the “hub” network recommended by the 2050+ Metropolitan Transportation Plan. Offer capital assistance to enhance amenities and accommodate hubs within Merrillville.

### Strategy 5.3

Ensure that designated bus stops are fully accessible, visible, and connected directly to public sidewalks and paths. Incorporate shelters, schedule information, and other amenities into bus stops, particularly along the Broadway bus rapid transit line.

### Strategy 5.4

Within a regional system, design and implement a flexible mini-transit operation that complements fixed routes and provides access to local destinations.



**Regional hub transit system.** In the preferred concept above, two transit hubs where routes converge within a short period would serve the Merrillville-Hobart area. The Broadway BMX is a major trunk of this system, which also provides good service to the South Shore Line and the new West Lake branch. An alternative, corridor-based network was also considered and is shown on the right.



# TOWN OF PARKS: Neighborhood Parks

## GOAL 1

Increase the number, coverage, and service level of neighborhood parks in Merrillville.

### Strategy 1.1.

Focus attention on heavily populated neighborhoods that lack neighborhood park service.

### Strategy 1.2.

Update the city's 2014 parks master plan. In that update, expand the standard menu of neighborhood parks beyond the current uniform offerings of playground equipment and a short park path. Tailor park design to the needs and demographics of specific neighborhoods.

### Strategy 1.3

Ensure that neighborhood parks are accessible to all users and at a minimum have direct, accessible pedestrian connections from major streets.

### Strategy 1.4

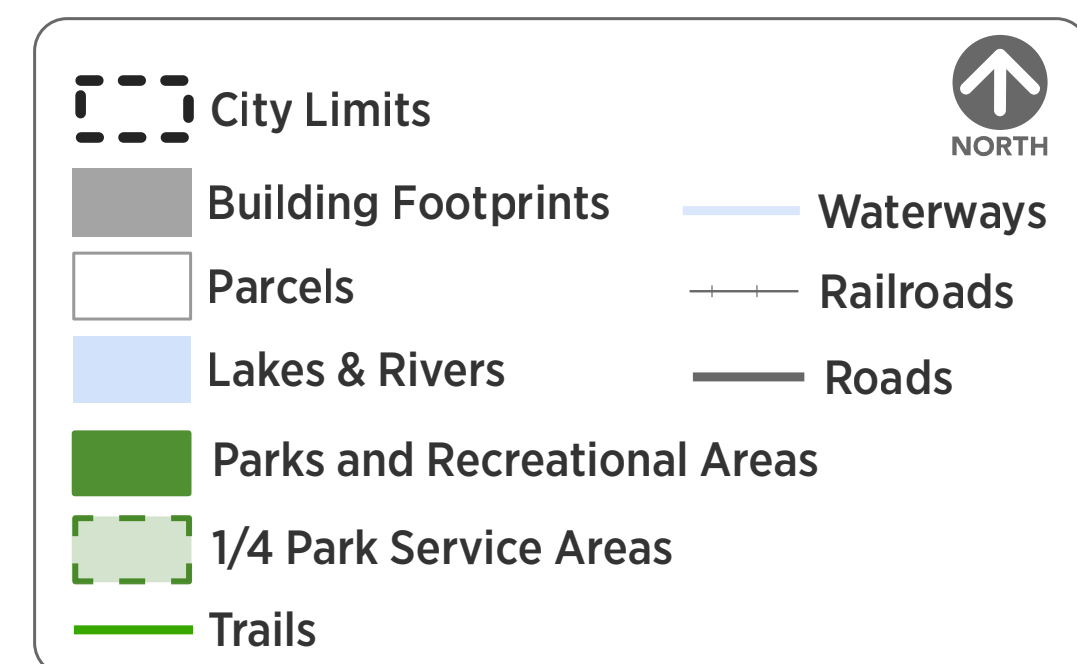
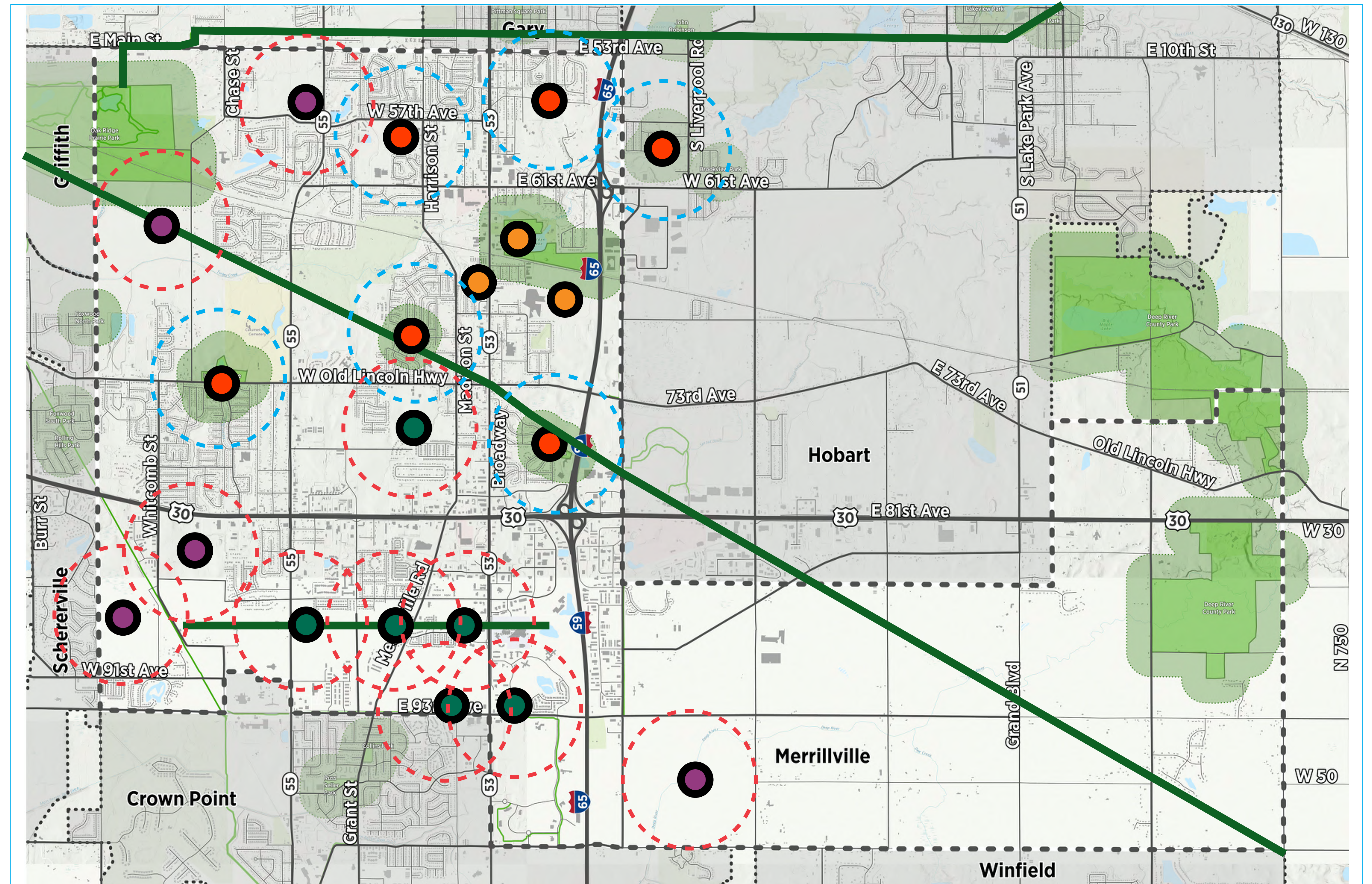
Establish a reliable annual funding mechanism for neighborhood park rehabilitation and facility improvement. Provide a capital improvement program that provides for the upgrading of one existing neighborhood park per year.

### Strategy 1.5

Create criteria for the acceptance, minimum size, and location of neighborhood parks in new subdivisions. Establish a financing mechanism by which developers either contribute suitable land for a neighborhood park or contribute funds on a service area basis to help the Town acquire a suitable facility.

### Strategy 1.6

Relate neighborhood park development and site location to trails and other element of the active transportation system.



# TOWN OF PARKS: Community Parks

## GOAL 2

Develop or improve accessibility and facilities to major community park facilities.

### Strategy 2.1.

Complete and implement a master plan for the development of Pruzin Park in North Merrillville.

### Strategy 2.1.

Increase coordination with Ross Township and Lake County to improve accessibility for all residents and visibility of township and county parks.

### Strategy 2.3.

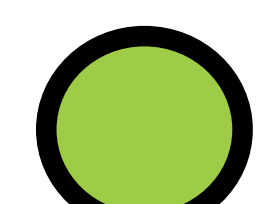
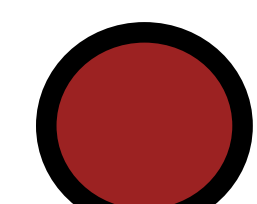
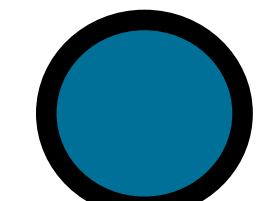
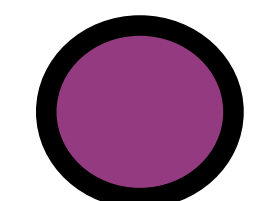
Identify and begin the process of securing property for two future community parks, as proposed by the 2014 Parks Master Plan. One of these parks would be adjacent to and part of the proposed Village Center around 93rd Avenue and Grand Boulevard. The other would be in the Deep River Greenway farther to the west.

### Strategy 2.4

Establish a reliable annual funding mechanism for neighborhood park rehabilitation and facility improvement. Provide a capital improvement program that provides for the upgrading of one existing neighborhood park per year.

### Strategy 2.5

Include a major civic park as part of the redevelopment of Star Plaza.

-  Pruzin Park Master Plan and Implementation
-  Town, Township, and County Coordination
-  New Major Community Parks
-  Star Plaza Civic Space

