



# ANNUAL REPORT

2022

*City of La Porte Department of Community Development & Planning*

## Overview

For the Department of Community Development and Planning (CDP), 2022 was a year about developing a cohesive team framework for intensive collaboration and improving internal file management processes. It was a year of changes in staff leadership, but we've created a smooth transition with how the department functions to be more efficient for our residents.

CDP is proud of our accomplishments in 2022 and look forward to building on the momentum in 2022 to make La Porte The Place To Be!

## Redevelopment Commission Projects

### PUBLIC OFFERING OF REAL ESTATE

The RDC accepted bids for the sale of two 12.5 acre parcels on Boyd Boulevard to two separate developers for future industrial development.

### INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

The RDC provided funding for extension of wastewater infrastructure on McClung Road for future residential development. The RDC provided funding for replacing asphalt on a section of north Boyd Boulevard in conjunction with a sewer separation project from Lincolnway to Darlington Street.

### DOWNTOWN LA PORTE

The RDC and BID jointly funded the cost of an updated Parking Study with Walker Parking Consultants to develop recommendations for parking throughout Downtown La Porte. The RDC funded the Monroe Streetscape Design with Hitchcock Design Group for future redevelopment of the existing public parking lot in coordination with the Heart of La Porte Plan.

### NEWPORTE LANDING

The RDC sold the property at the north corner of North Madison Street and NewPorte Boulevard to Smoothie King, which finished construction by Fall 2022. Aldi finished construction and opened to the public in Fall 2022. The existing Aldi on the west side of the

City closed with the completion of construction at the new development site on the east corner of Pine Lake Avenue and Truesdell Avenue. 7-Eleven also finished construction and opened to the public in late Fall 2022 at the north corner of Pine Lake Avenue and Truesdell Avenue.

#### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TARGET AREA

The RDC unanimously voted to establish an Economic Development Target Area for Pine Lake Development, LLC at 1251 Pine Lake Avenue.

## Business Improvement District

#### PLANTER, PAVERS TREE GRATES, BENCHES, TRASH CANS, AND STREETLIGHT MAINTENANCE ISSUES

The City Planner completed a total inventory of all BID infrastructure items including planters, pavers, tree grates, benches, trash cans, and streetlight condition ratings. The inventory was used by the BID to develop a plan for fixing deterioration of infrastructure with available funds. The Director of Community Development and Planning worked with the BID to repair three planters and removal of one planter at the west corner of Jackson Street and Lincolnway. Among the three planters repaired in 2022 were the east corner of Madison Street and Lincolnway, the south corner of Monroe Street and Lincolnway, and the east corner of State Street and Clay Street. The Director and Engineering Coordinator continue to work with the BID to resolve streetlight maintenance issues.

#### HOLIDAY DECORATION COORDINATION

The Engineering Coordinator provided support to the BID with the purchase of additional light bulbs for the wreaths and coordinated setup of the holiday decorations for the 2022 season.

## Historic Preservation Commission

The HPC met a total of twelve times in 2022. They approved zero Certificate of Appropriateness and reviewed one house for the Home Owner Repair Program to help satisfy the CDBG program's Section 106 Review requirements. City staff administratively approved four Certificate of Appropriateness. CDP updated the HPC webpage with a new revised locally designated historic district city property map based on the current list of locally designated historic district properties. The HPC was active in 2022 with sales of the City of La Porte Historic Preservation Commission Coloring Book at various events including the Fire Department Pancake Breakfast, LakeFest, and the Sunflower Festival. The HPC presented to the La Porte County Realtors Association educational offerings for the local historic districts in the City of La Porte at one of their member meetings in May. The HPC provided the schools with a second round of coloring books. The HPC co-hosted a Historic Windows Workshop in coordination with Indiana Landmarks for historic property homeowners. The HPC is working on developing educational materials to be more of a resource for property owners that want to do renovations to the exterior of their homes. The HPC submitted the Final Grant Report and two copies of the coloring book to Indiana Humanities for the grant funds.

## Trails, Greenways, & Blueways Master Plan Update

The City of La Porte began the process of updating the Trails and Greenways Master Plan from 2014 with assistance from Mckenna Associates to develop the Trails, Greenways, and Blueways Master Plan. The Plan will be key in identifying short and long term recommendations as well as strategies for implementing public improvements related to walking, bicycling, and paddling throughout the City of La Porte. The planning process, with assistance from community members on the Steering Committee, started off on a great foot. The City developed and published a community survey that had over 140 responses. The City and Mckenna hosted a full day beginning with a short urban bicycle tour around La Porte featuring various infrastructure such as multi use trails, community facilities, and a discussion amongst the dozen or so riders outside Hailmann Elementary School. The day included a walking tour in the afternoon that highlighted several areas around the downtown area where bicycle and pedestrian safety improvements will be made in the coming year as well as potential future opportunities for additional safety improvements based on feedback from citizens. The day concluded with an evening public workshop that provided more detailed public input

regarding the development of priority walk, bike, and paddling route recommendations. This information will be presented later in the Spring next year for the public to comment on the proposed priority routes and strategies related to improving walking, bicycling, and paddling accessibility throughout the City of La Porte.

## Active Living Workshop update

The City conducted a successful Active Living Workshop in coordination with Indiana Health by Design and the Department of Health Division of Physical Activity & Nutrition that city residents and local organizations were apart of to identify community priorities to improve the health and wellbeing of all citizens. As a result of the Active Living Workshop, the City developed a one-year action plan to educate and engage residents and visitors about active transportation modes of travel through bicycle and pedestrian safety improvements. The City is currently working completing the La Porte Proud – Slicer Pathway on A and 8<sup>th</sup> Streets that will be a key project in filling sidewalk gaps and accessibility for residents between the La Porte High School and Kesling Campus community facilities. The completion of this project will allow the City to accomplish the goal to educate and engage residents and visitors on a well-travelled street corridor as a positive example of what a livable and complete street can do for the community.

# Site Review, Plan Commission & Zoning Board

## IMPROVING APPLICATIONS TO BE MORE USER FRIENDLY

In 2022, the City Planner is working with the Engineering and Building Services Department to provide feedback on online application forms that will be available for the public to fill out and submit later in 2023 as a part of the OpenGov system transition.

## PROJECTS REVIEWED

Projects that went through Site Review, Plan Commission, or Zoning Board in 2022 include the following:

- 2105 Monroe Street (Exceed Maximum Area Limitations for Detached Garage)
- 156 Seymour Avenue (Exceed Maximum Area Limitations for Detached Garage)
- 297 Waverly Road (Reduce Minimum Side Yard Setback from 7 feet to 4 feet)
- 2927 Silverbrook Avenue (Use Variance to Allow Two Family Dwelling)
- 1301 5<sup>th</sup> Street (Special Exception to Allow Expansion of Mini Storage Units)
  - Also conducted Site Review as part of the BZA process)
- 1505 Lincolnway (Special Exception to Allow Automobile Body Repair/Paint Shop)
  - Also conducted Site Review as part of the BZA process)
- 1530 Michigan Avenue (Use Variance to Allow Four-Unit Multi Family Dwelling)
- 120 Eastshore Parkway (Reduce Minimum Rear Yard Setback from 25 feet to 12 feet)
  - Also conducted Site Review as part of the BZA process)
- 804 Pine Lake Avenue (Use Variance to Allow Addition to Existing Single Family Dwelling)
- 2437 Monroe Street (Use Variance to Allow Gas Station)
  - Also conducted Site Review as part of the BZA process)
- 2308 Hillside Court (Reduce Minimum Front Yard Setback from 25 feet to 18 feet)
- Lots 3 and 4 of Eastgate Subdivision (Site Review meeting for Industrial Building)
- LPCSC Transportation Center (Site Review meeting for new bus garage location)
- 234 Pine Lake Avenue Retail Development (Site Review meeting for retail development)
- 202 Pine Lake Avenue Taco Bell Remodel & Addition (Site Review meeting for addition)
- 333 Boyd Boulevard Wal Mart Remodel & Pickup Storage Addition (Site Review meeting)
- 1540 Genesis Drive Industrial Building Addition (Site Review meeting)
- 309&313 Lincolnway Permanent Accessory Food Vendors (Site Review meeting)
- 1251 Pine Lake Avenue Restaurant & Bar Development (Site Review meeting)

The City Planner has also provided a breakdown of the number of applications processed and approved by each appropriate Commission with this report for your information.

PLANS IN 2023 INCLUDE:

- Start City Comprehensive Plan process
- Update Zoning & Subdivision Ordinance
- Develop & Implement One-Year Action Plan from Active Living Workshop in 2022
- Finish Trails and Greenways Plan Public Engagement, Adopt, & Implement Plan
- Complete the La Porte Proud – Slicer Pathway Sidewalk and Trail Project in 2023
- Obtain Railroad Quiet Zone from the Federal Railroad Administration
- Completion of constructing the Clear Lake Greenway Loop Trail, Stone Lake Trail and Chessie Trail second phases
- Investigate opportunities for smart growth with the North-South Corridor
- Develop Pattern Book for the downtown area streetscape improvements
- Completion of Parking Study for the downtown area
- Implement the results of the citywide housing study
- Create strategy for Monroe Street streetscape improvements and adjacent areas
- Increase Housing Development and Redevelopment on City-owned properties