





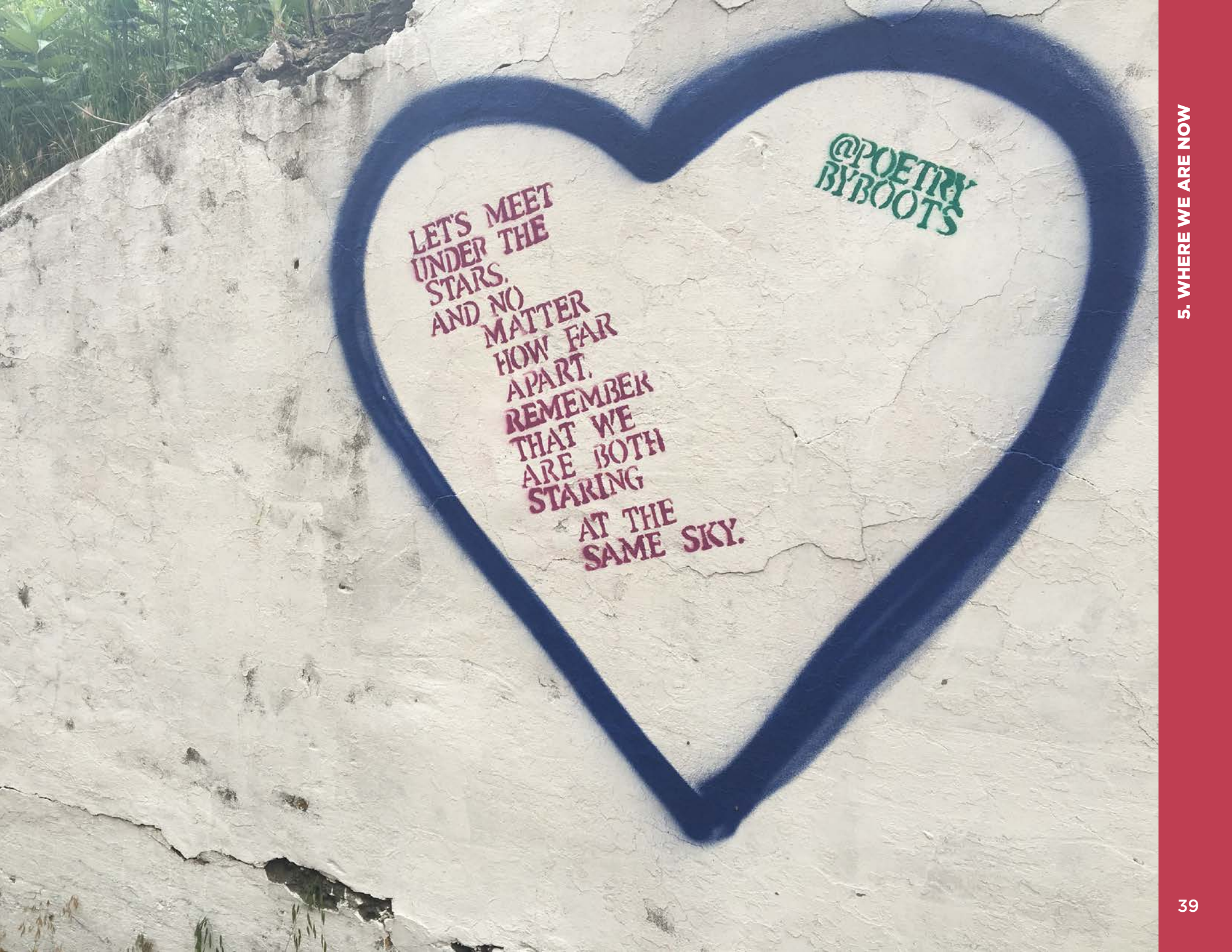
chapter 5

where we are now?

This chapter is intended to document baseline conditions in the City of Gary while providing context for future regulations that are flexible and adaptable. It provides an up-to-date snapshot of key issues and opportunities facing the city and indicators for monitoring progress over time. It includes a range of information and data about the social, physical, natural, economic, and transportation conditions in Gary. Data and information in the document were collected from a variety of sources, including statistics from the City and U.S. Census, conversations with community leaders, and City staff.

This chapter is divided into five sections:

- 1. Built Environment.** This section provides an overview of the existing land use and development across the city, including an analysis of general land use patterns, parks, schools, and community facilities, and property conditions, including vacancy and blight.
- 2. Economy.** This section summarizes existing policies, practices, and trends related to market and economic conditions in the city. It provides an assessment of key industry/job sectors, City finances, and growth opportunities.
- 3. Nature.** This chapter provides an inventory of the existing natural areas and environmental conditions in the city.
- 4. Transportation.** This section provides a summary of the existing circulation network and transportation facilities in the city, such as roadways, freight/goods movement, transit, and bicycle/pedestrian facilities.
- 5. Social Context.** This section provides an overview of the existing demographic, socio-economic, and health characteristics of the city. It uses U.S. Census data, City and County data, and other sources to provide a big picture analysis of the current social context within the city.



LET'S MEET
UNDER THE
STARS,
AND NO
MATTER
HOW FAR
APART,
REMEMBER
THAT WE
ARE BOTH
STARING
AT THE
SAME SKY.

@POETRY
BYBOOTS



WATCH US GROW



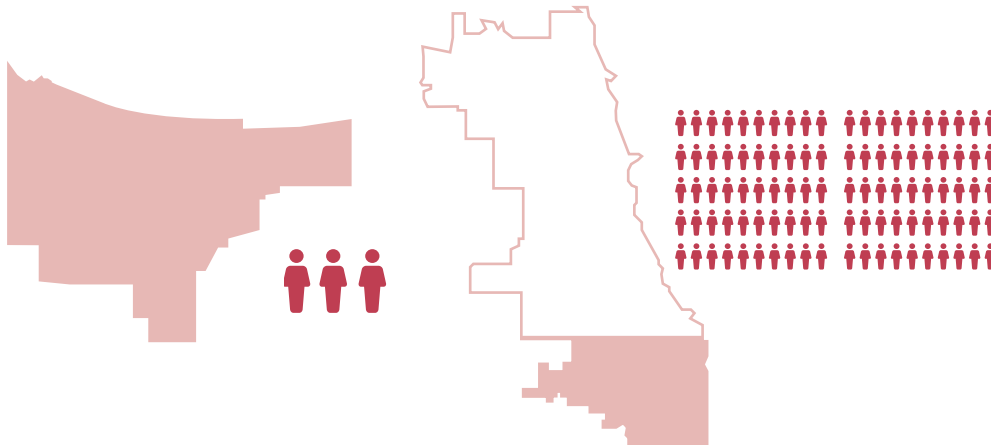
National Register of Historic Places

Built Environment

The City's population decline has slowed in recent years and appears to be stabilizing. What has been left in its wake is a large city footprint, approximately 50 square miles in size, with a fraction of the population. Land, particularly vacant land, is one of Gary's greatest assets and also its greatest challenges. Today, over 40 percent of the city's land is vacant and many neighborhoods are challenged by blight and constrained resources and services. In addition, lack of planning in Gary's early development and poor land use decisions in recent decades have resulted in impractical and conflicting land use patterns across the city, with residential neighborhoods too close to heavy industry and heavy rail, and industrial lands directly abutting sensitive natural habitats. In recent years, the City of Gary has extensively inventoried vacant buildings and property information to better understand and baseline existing conditions. This section depicts the current state of land and the built environment in the city. It provides an overview of the existing land use pattern, parks, schools, and other community facilities, and property conditions, as well as future direction to revitalize neighborhoods and turn public and vacant land into assets for redevelopment and economic growth.

at-a-glance

DENSITY

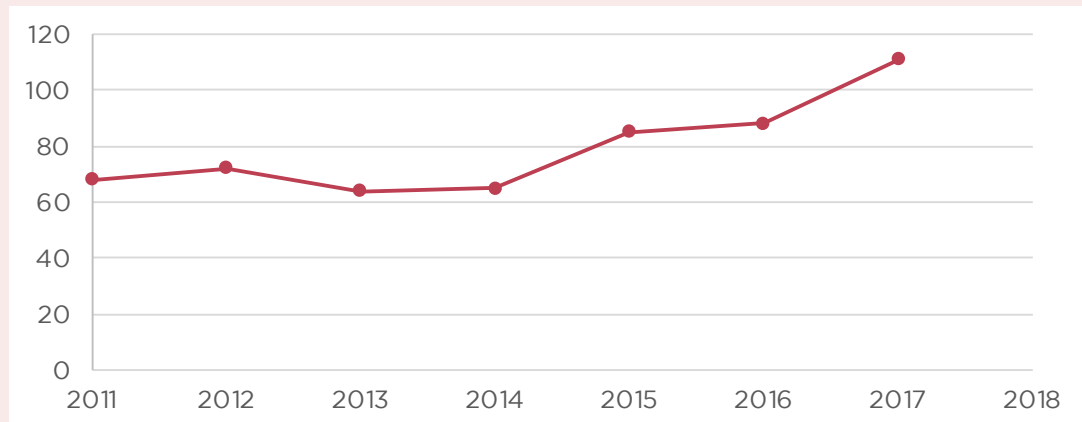


Gary is **25%** the size of Chicago by **area**, but only **3%** by **population**

AVERAGE HOME PRICE



NUMBER OF HOME SALES OVER TIME



VACANCY, BLIGHT, AND TAX DELINQUENCY



1 in 5 Gary homes are **vacant**



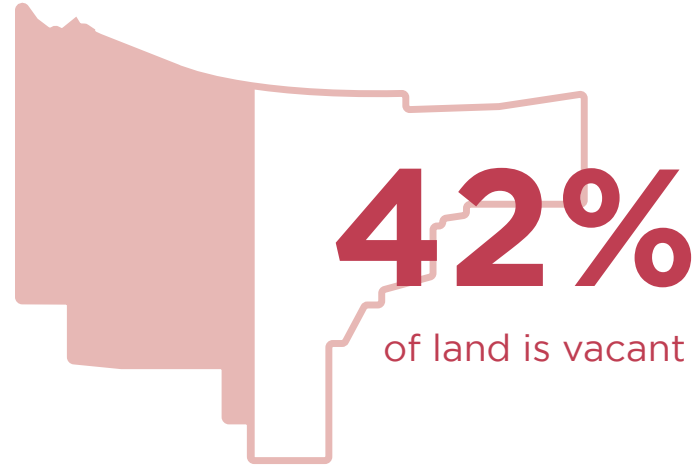
2 in 5 Gary homes are **blighted**



1,317 demolitions since 2015



\$100M estimated cost to demolish all vacant buildings in Gary



42%
of land is vacant



1 in 5 homes on tax sale every year

37.5% of parcels were tax delinquent in 2017/18



3.4% from 2010/11

Sources: US Census American Community Survey (ACS) 2012-2016 5-year estimates, US Census 2000 and 2010, Home Sales and Demolitions - City of Gary, Gary Counts Survey

EXISTING LAND USE

This section provides an overview of existing land use patterns in the city, as illustrated in Figure 5-1. Existing Land Use. Additional details on existing land use and conditions can be found in the neighborhoods section of Chapter 6. Planning Frameworks.

RESIDENTIAL

The vast majority of the city is composed of single-family residential neighborhoods. Most of Gary's housing is single-family homes built in the early to mid-20th century, accompanied by a mixture of multi-family duplexes and larger apartment buildings. The Gary Housing Authority manages 1,425 housing units (and 1,763 housing vouchers) and is currently modernizing many of its larger residential properties in less centrally-located areas of town including its Colonial I and II properties in Glen Park and the Dorie Miller housing complex in Pulaski. Very little contemporary housing exists in Gary and new home construction over the past 20 years is almost exclusively located in the Small Farms and Miller neighborhoods.

BUSINESS AND COMMERCIAL

Commercial activity, stagnant for decades, has left Gary's most prominent corridors blighted. Retail, dining, and commerce is relegated to several small nodes, a few strip malls, and one- to two-block stretches along Broadway, Grant Street, Lake Street, 5th Avenue, 25th Avenue, and Ridge Road. Occupied commercial buildings are largely overwhelmed by neighboring vacant and abandoned properties. Blight even persists in the most densely occupied commercial areas along Grant Street, Broadway, and Lake Street.

LIGHT MANUFACTURING AND HEAVY INDUSTRIAL

Over a third of Gary is industrial land, a product of U.S. Steel's influence and legacy. Heavy industry exists north of the Indiana Toll Road (I-90) along the lakefront while lighter industry, warehousing, and trucking uses are positioned around the I-65 interchange, Melton Road (U.S. 20), and along Cline Avenue. In many areas, industrial land directly abuts residential neighborhoods, creating negative impacts of traffic, noise, and pollution.

PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

Gary is rich with natural assets. Unique and biodiverse habitats, dune and swale ecosystems, and abundant wetlands, parks, trails, and miles of lakefront provide an opportunity to increase and enhance open space citywide. Rare and valuable conservation areas are located along the Calumet River, the Indiana Dunes National Park, and in Buffington Harbor (discussed further in the Nature context section). Yet many of these sensitive habitats sit directly adjacent to industrial land, threatening the ecological health of these ecosystems. In addition to actively managed parks and conservation land, the city contains numerous unmanaged natural open spaces, particularly in the floodplain of the Little Calumet River.

INSTITUTIONAL LAND

The City of Gary's municipal campus Downtown contains City Hall, the Lake County Courthouse, Adam Benjamin Metro Center, and ancillary office space. In addition, major educational centers exist along 35th Avenue from Broadway (home to Indiana University Northwest and Ivy Tech), eastward to the Gary Career Center and repurposed former Ivy Tech Community College campus. These two central nodes maintain substantial working hour populations and contain the largest clusters of institutional land uses in Gary. Other institutional uses, such as schools, community centers, libraries, and churches are scattered throughout the city's residential neighborhoods.

BLIGHTED AND UNDERUTILIZED LAND

Despite defined historic development patterns, vacant land, blighted lots, and abandoned buildings comprise a large share of land in Gary. Though not traditionally classified as a "use" (and therefore not illustrated on Figure 5-1), the prevalence of vacancy should be largely considered as new land use maps, zoning codes, and investment decisions are made. The flexibility and creativity afforded by repurposing one-in-five properties in Gary can provide great value as we plan for our future. Vacant land is shown in Figure 5-2.

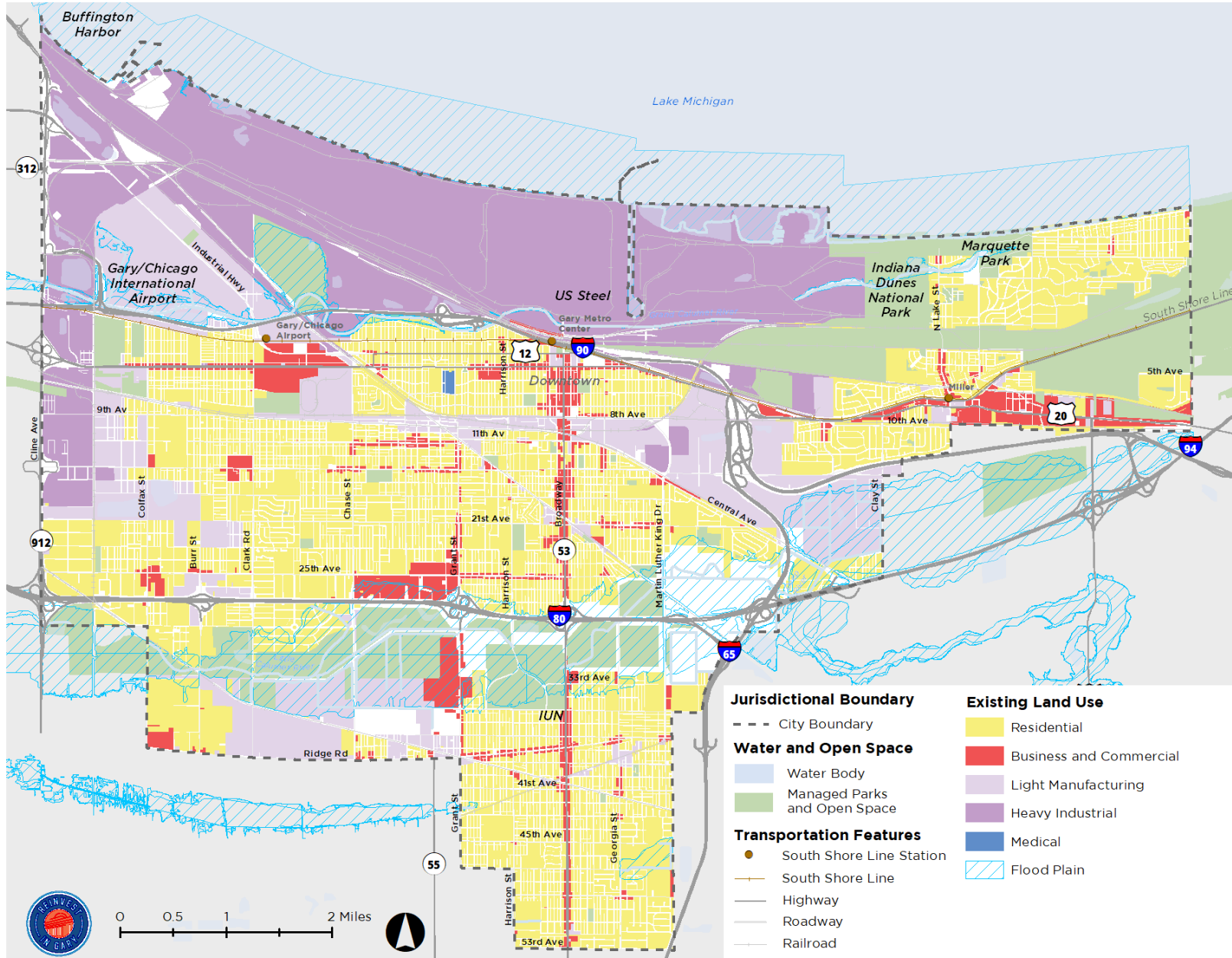


Vacant lots and abandoned buildings



Lake Street neighborhood retail

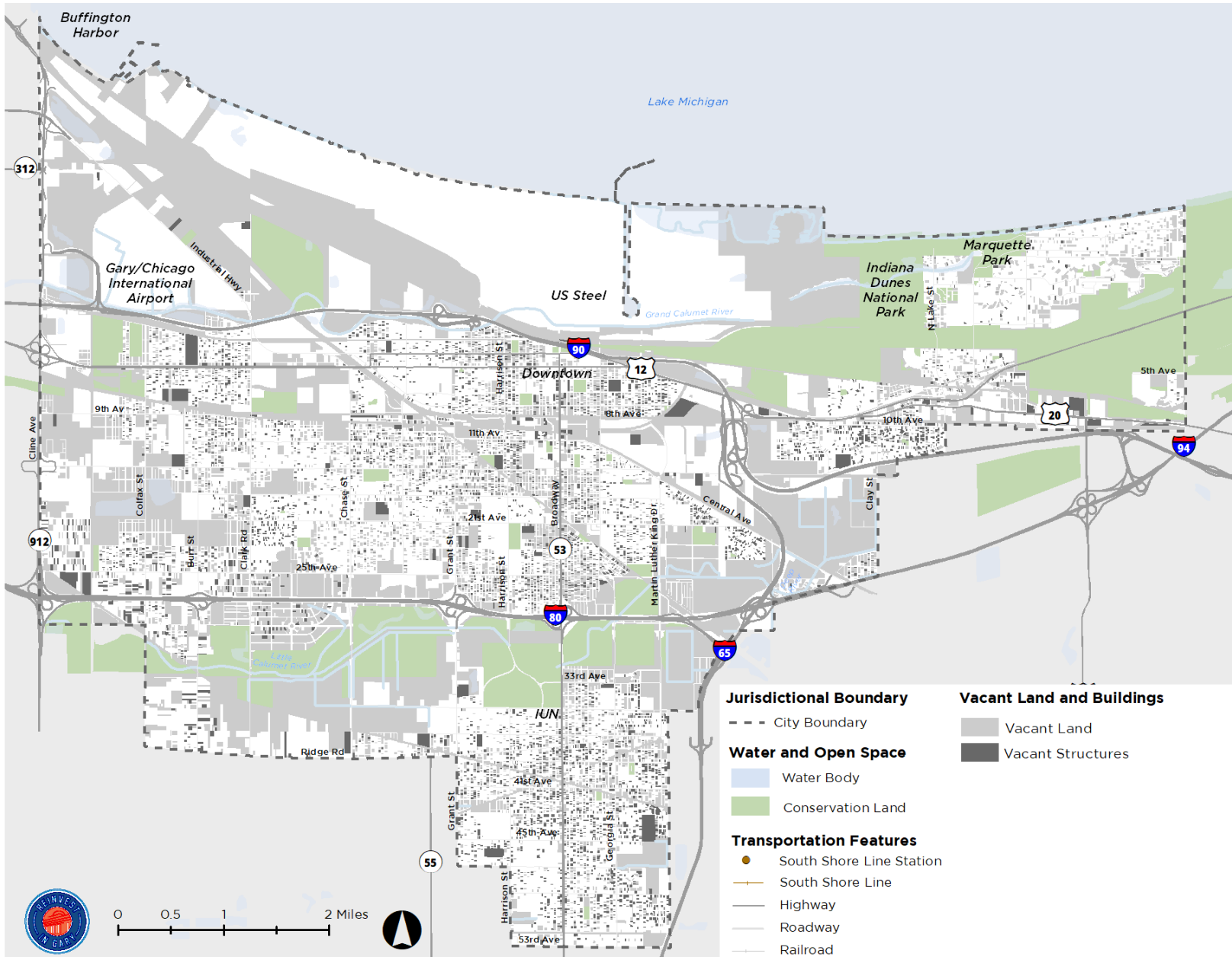
FIGURE 5-1. EXISTING LAND USE



Note: Data was not available to differentiate and show institutional uses on this map.
 Source: City of Gary Redevelopment Commission
 City of Gary Comprehensive Plan

* Best available data at time of publication

FIGURE 5-2. VACANT AND UNOCCUPIED LAND



Source*: Gary Counts Survey (2015)

* Best available data at time of publication

PARKS, SCHOOLS, COMMUNITY FACILITIES

PARKS

Gary’s vast park system was originally designed for 200,000 residents, all of whom would benefit from being within a short walk to their park. The 1964 Comprehensive Plan established a minimum standard of 10 acres per 1,000 residents to accommodate the current and future residents – approximately 1,800 acres. Gary’s 57 resulting parks present both an opportunity for redevelopment and a challenge for maintenance and programming. Thirty of these parks are actively managed by the Gary Department of Public Parks, which performs regular maintenance and upgrades to park facilities and equipment. Of the City’s active parks, eight are designated as Tier 1 parks, which enjoy greater use and receive more resources, based on traffic, regional significance, and geographic distribution across each of Gary’s Council Districts (see Table 5-1 below). Six additional Tier 2 parks primarily serve their adjacent communities and tend to be less of an attraction outside of the neighborhoods they serve. In addition, there are 27 inactive park sites throughout Gary – formerly active parks that are no longer being maintained by the City.

Recent park renovations have been met with mixed reception. Marquette Park’s 2011-13 renovation has resulted in a significant increase in usage, and additional investments have been made by community and advocacy groups for programming and accessibility improvements. Reed Park renovations in 2016 included the creation of a splash pad, improvements to the park pavilion, and installation of native plantings. However, many residents voiced concerns regarding continued maintenance of park improvements, consistent with other parks in the system. Since adoption in 2009, the Gary Parks and Recreation Master Plan has been used largely to manage maintenance and effectively resource an overburdened parks district. In

addition to maintenance issues, residents have voiced concerns about park safety and access. The Public Parks Department is currently evaluating the utility of each of its parks, resident needs, and updating the master plan. Parks serve Gary not only for recreation and open space, but also as potential growth and stabilization opportunities. The updated Parks and Recreation Master Plan will address the potential to repurpose, develop, and consolidate park land citywide, while carefully balancing new park renovations with continued maintenance of existing parks.

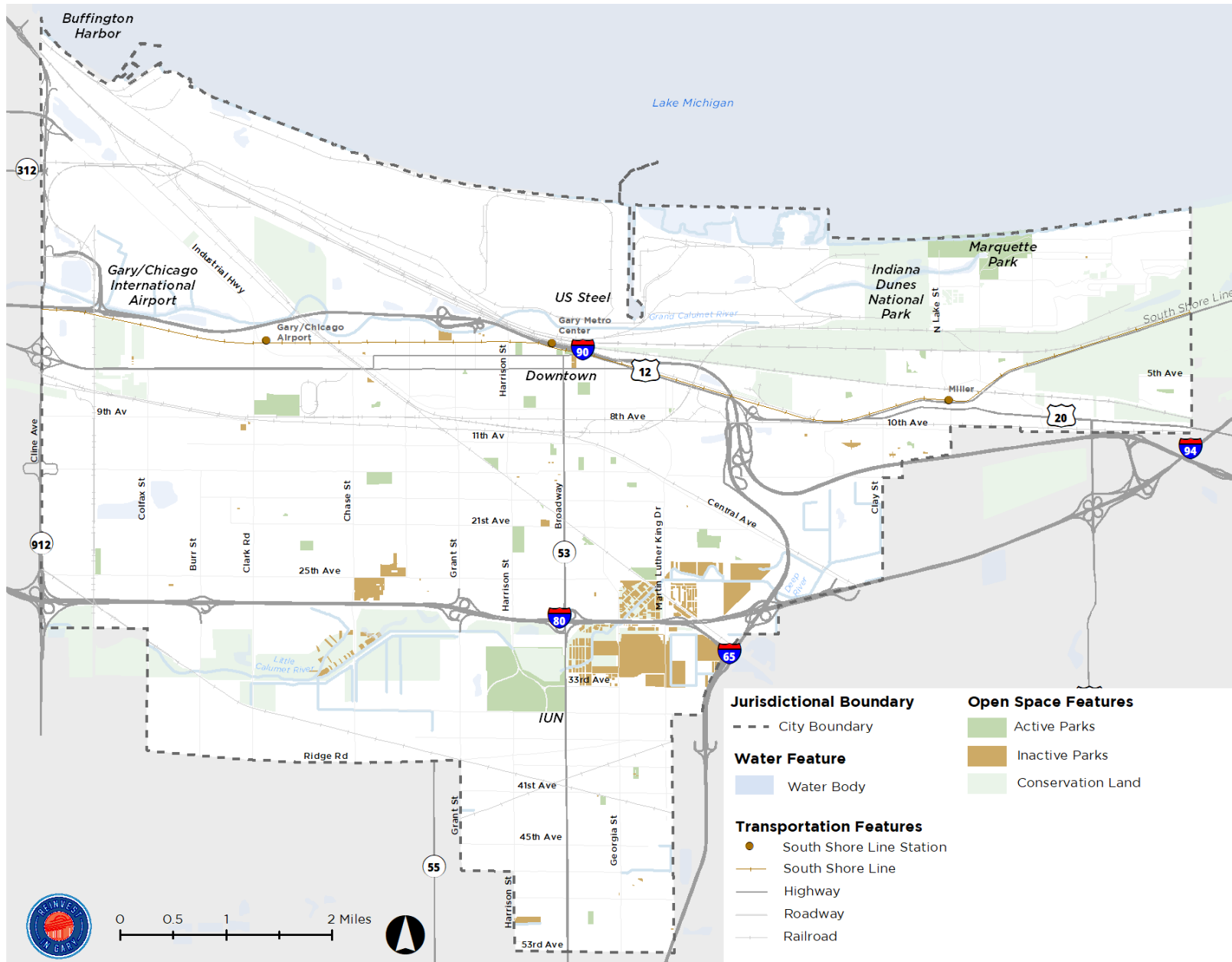
TABLE 5-1. PARK CLASSIFICATIONS

TIER 1 (Jewel and Regional Parks)	DISTRICT
Glen Ryan Park	1 st District
Brunswick Parks	2 nd District
Tolleston Parks	3 rd District
Reed Park (formerly Washington Park)	4 th District
Roosevelt Park	5 th District
Howe Park	6 th District
Marquette Park	Regional
Gleason Golf Course	Regional
TIER 2 (Community and Neighborhood Parks)	
Jackson Park	
Hatcher Park	
Buffington Park	
Borman Square Park	
Seberger Park	
Ironwood Park	



LaBroi Park in the Aetna neighborhood

FIGURE 5-3. CITY OF GARY PARKS



Source*: City of Gary Redevelopment Commission and Public Parks Department

* Best available data at time of publication

SCHOOLS

Like parks and other built institutions, Gary's school inventory was created to serve a population nearly twice its size. The 1964 Comprehensive Plan projected the total student enrollment would increase from 37,000 students in 1960 to 58,000 in 1985 necessitating a significant expansion of school facilities in the city.

Currently there are 31 active schools sites and 29 inactive school sites in the city (see Figure 5-4). Due to a number of factors - poor performance, population loss - the Gary Community School Corporation (GCSC) currently serves less than half of the 13,000 students educated in Gary at 9 sites. The remainder of Gary's students are served by charter schools (22 sites in the city) and by the Lake Ridge School District, adjacent to Gary's Black Oak neighborhood, outside city limits.¹

The unfavorable perception of Gary's school system has hindered residential growth for families with school-aged children and has also led to the construction of numerous charter schools in Gary. Due to limited availability of lots large enough to build on in residential areas, several new charter schools are sited in incompatible light industrial corridors (e.g. Thea Bowman Academy on 5th Avenue; Charter School of the Dunes on Melton Road) or in repurposed facilities not originally intended as school buildings. These areas lack adequate pedestrian infrastructure, making sidewalks and crosswalks an added infrastructure need in some areas of the city where few other pedestrian-oriented land uses are present.

As GCSC continues to reduce school sites and evolve over time, it alters the age-old planning tenet of building residential neighborhoods and amenities around schools. At the same time, the size of vacant GCSC holdings present redevelopment opportunities, though they are limited by the typically residential character of the communities in which they are located and once served.

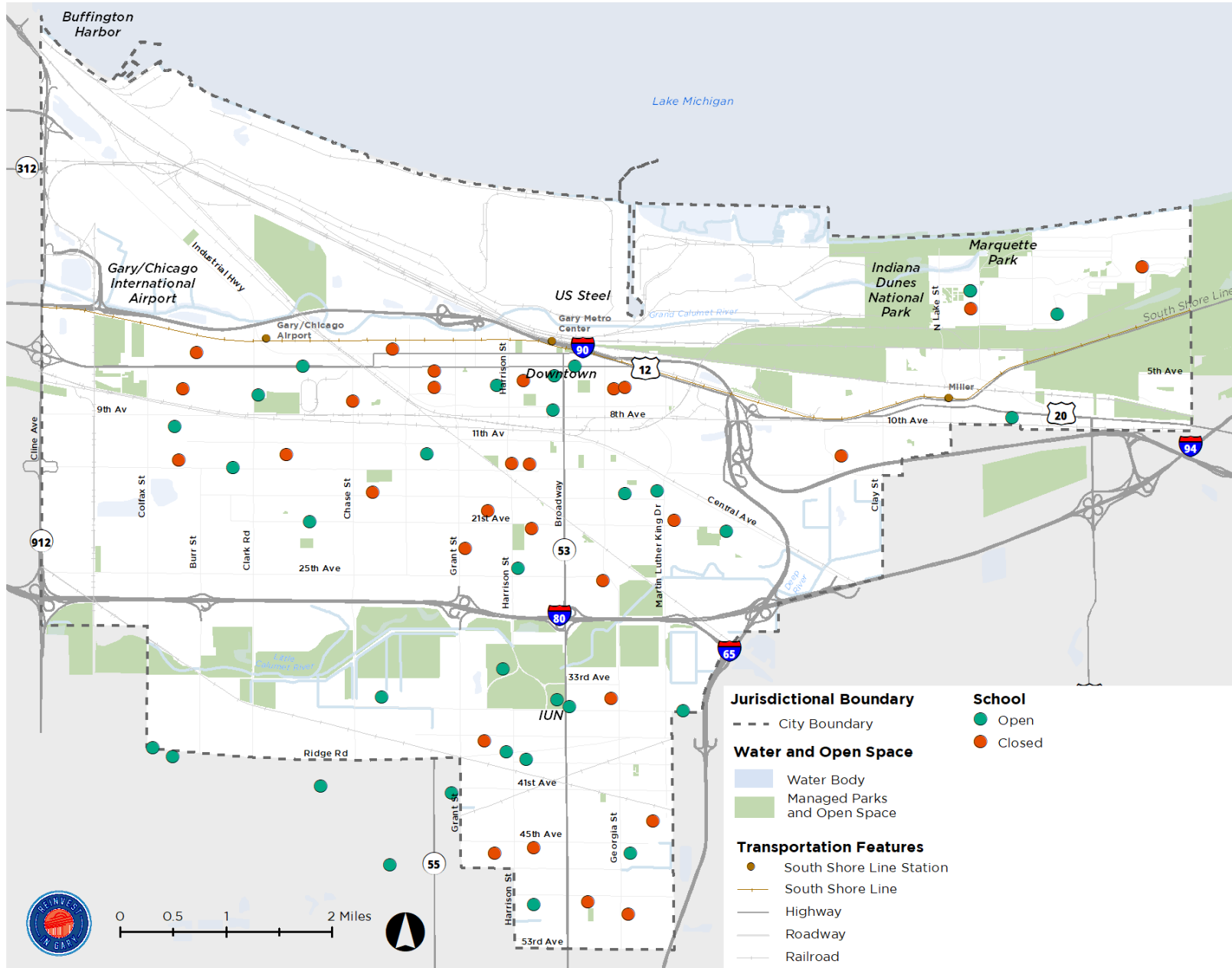
Indiana University Northwest, the system's largest commuter campus by enrollment, is located on Broadway at 35th Avenue and is Gary's largest institution of higher learning. The 36-acre campus has recently expanded across Broadway with the opening of a new arts and sciences building in 2017, which it shares with Ivy Tech Community College, which recently vacated its property on 35th Avenue several blocks to the east. The university campus has opportunities for further growth along 35th Avenue, Broadway, and adjacent to Gleason Park to the west. 35th Avenue is bookended by Indiana University Northwest to the west at Broadway and the Gary Career Center to the east at Georgia Street. The recently vacated GHA Colonial Gardens site and closed former Benjamin Franklin Elementary School provide redevelopment opportunities to build on the existing educational assets and leverage the significant daytime population.



Roosevelt High School, 25th Avenue

¹ *K-12 School Enrollment - Indiana Department of Education*

FIGURE 5-4. SCHOOLS



Source*: City of Gary Redevelopment Commission, GCSC

* Best available data at time of publication

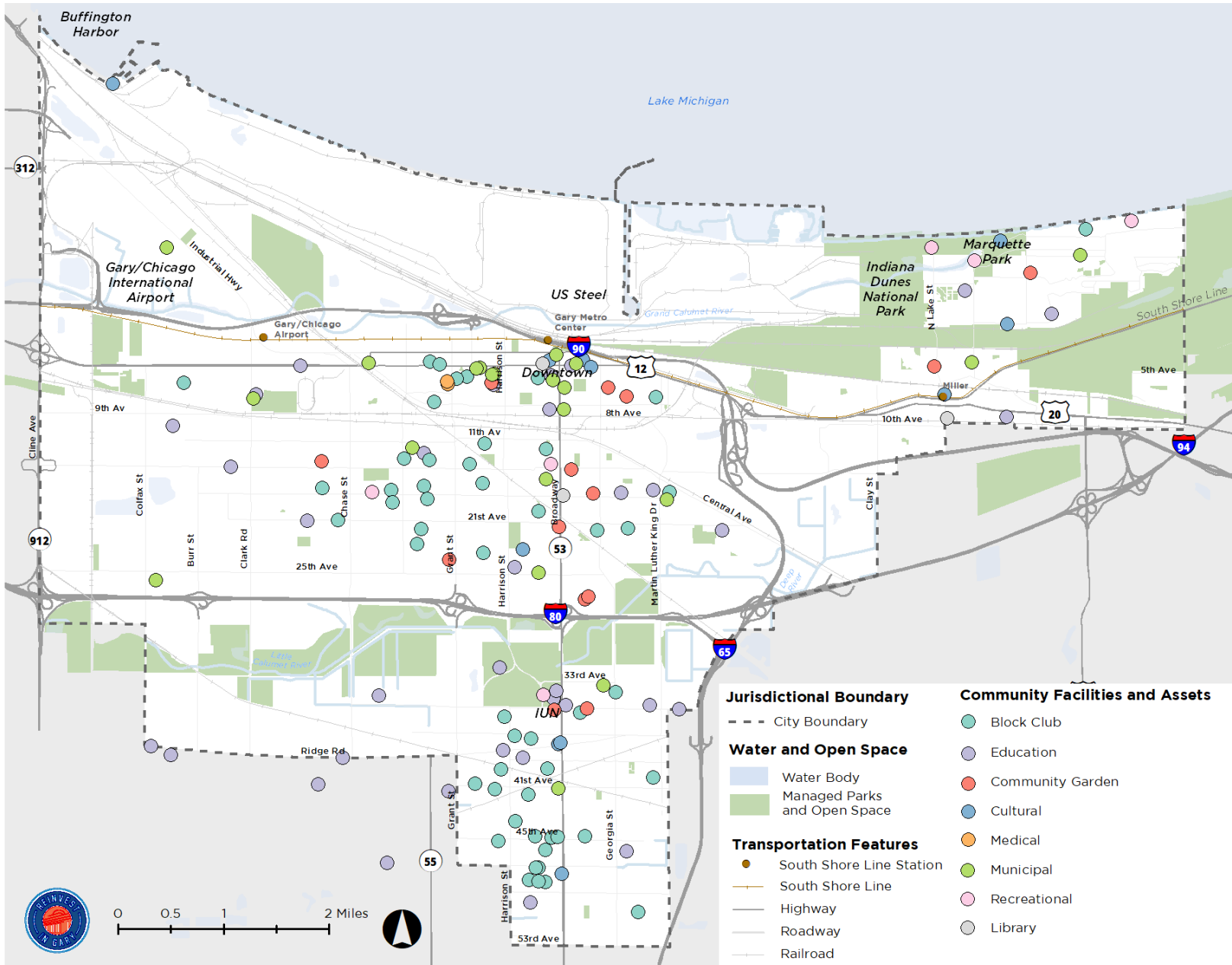
COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Community anchor facilities like schools, churches, libraries, community gardens, and community centers are concentrated in Gary's central neighborhoods such as Downtown, Midtown, University Park, and Glen Park due to their locations along heavily trafficked roads and transit routes (see Figure 5-5). However, these areas also experience some of the highest concentrations of vacancy and blighted property, creating a mismatch between location of core services and population density.



Holy Angels Cathedral on Tyler Street

FIGURE 5-5. COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND ASSETS



Source*: City of Gary Redevelopment Commission, Delta Institute

* Best available data at time of publication

PROPERTY CONDITIONS, VACANCY, AND BLIGHT

PROPERTY CONDITIONS

After decades of population loss, nearly a fifth of all property in Gary is abandoned and severely tax delinquent. The highest concentrations of occupied well-maintained properties are located in the West Side, Ambridge Mann, Tolleston, Small Farms, and Miller neighborhoods. The city's core along the Broadway corridor has the highest rates of blight and vacancy, destabilizing Gary's most centrally-located neighborhoods. The highest vacancy areas also have the best access to amenities, transit, and transportation infrastructure, creating an opportunity to redevelop Gary's central core to take advantage of that proximity, exploring alternative land uses beyond the traditional land use patterns of commerce and higher-density residential.

A 2015 study conducted in partnership with the University of Chicago's Harris School surveyed property conditions citywide. See Figures 5-6 and 5-7 for results of the survey.

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO STUDY

The City, in partnership with the University of Chicago Harris School, spent two years surveying each parcel in Gary to improve planning and to catch properties before they become too damaged to repair. Nearly 200 people volunteered their time to help collect information on each property in Gary's 50+ square miles. The comprehensive survey was completed in Fall 2014, and the City continues to update the data, which can be found at www.garycounts.org.

FIGURE 5-6. PROPERTY CONDITIONS

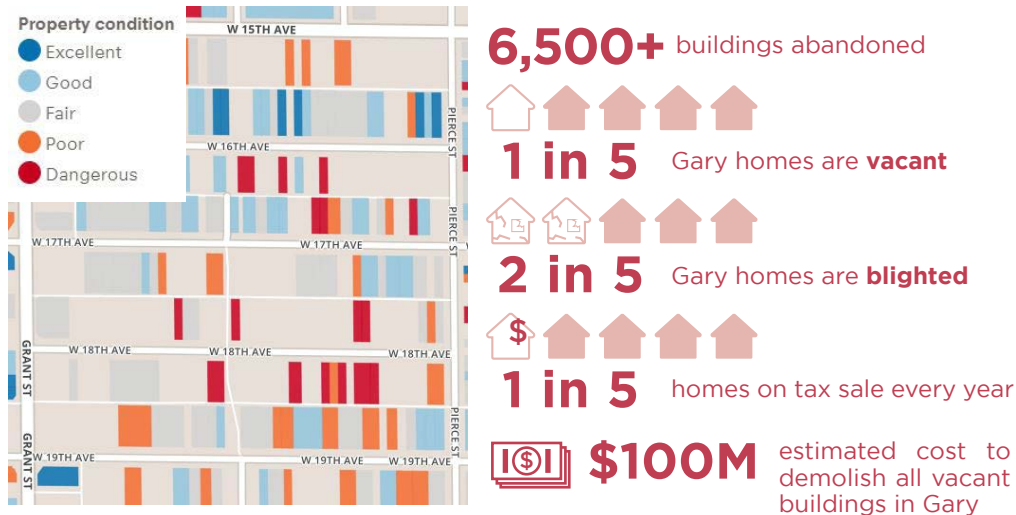
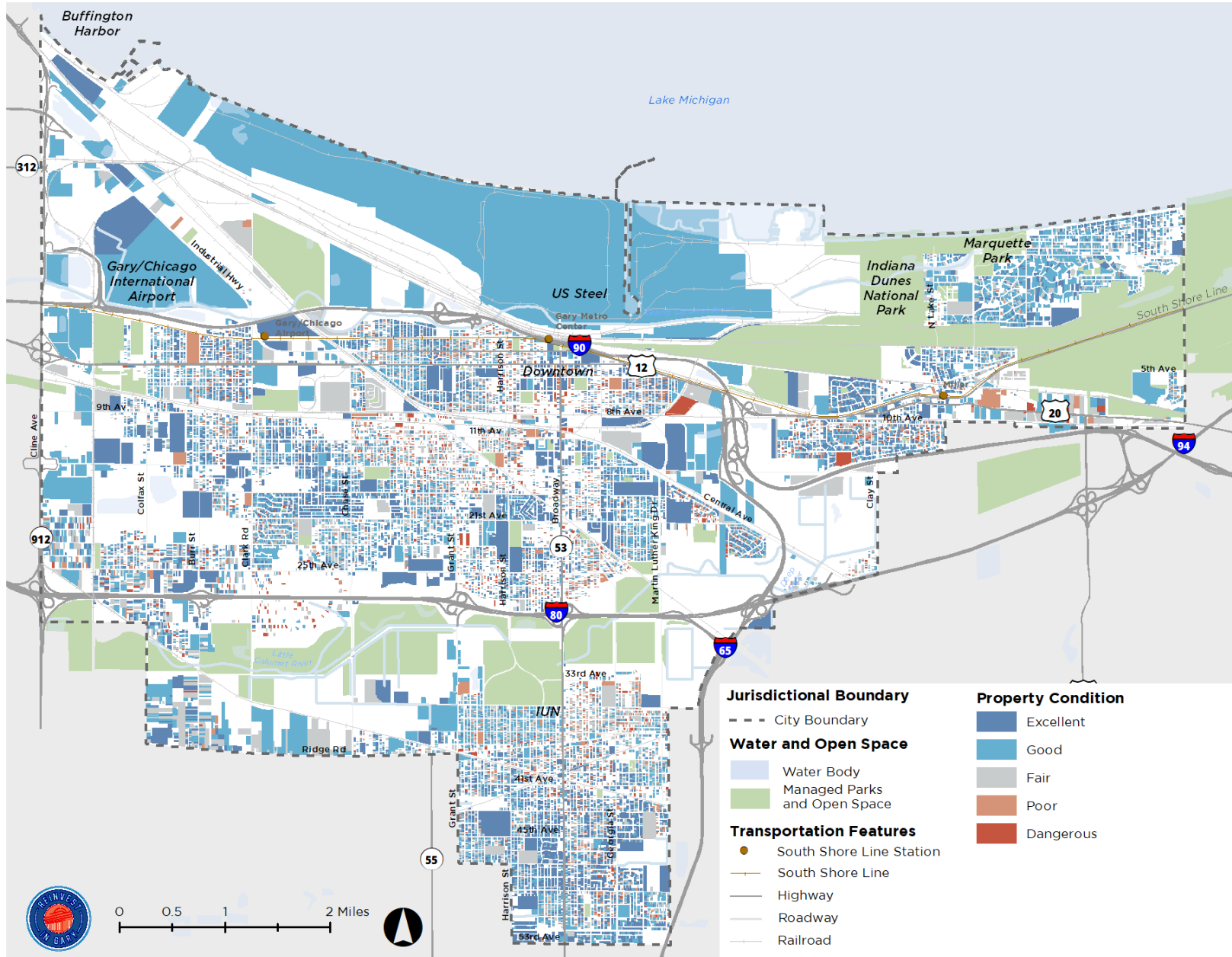


FIGURE 5-7. PROPERTY CONDITIONS



Source*: Gary Counts Survey (2015)

* Best available data at time of publication

VACANT LAND

Approximately half of Gary's entire footprint is vacant land, and nearly a third of all housing units are also vacant. As the city's population has declined, housing units have gone empty, contributing to the abandonment of other properties from storefronts and restaurants to institutional buildings like schools and libraries.

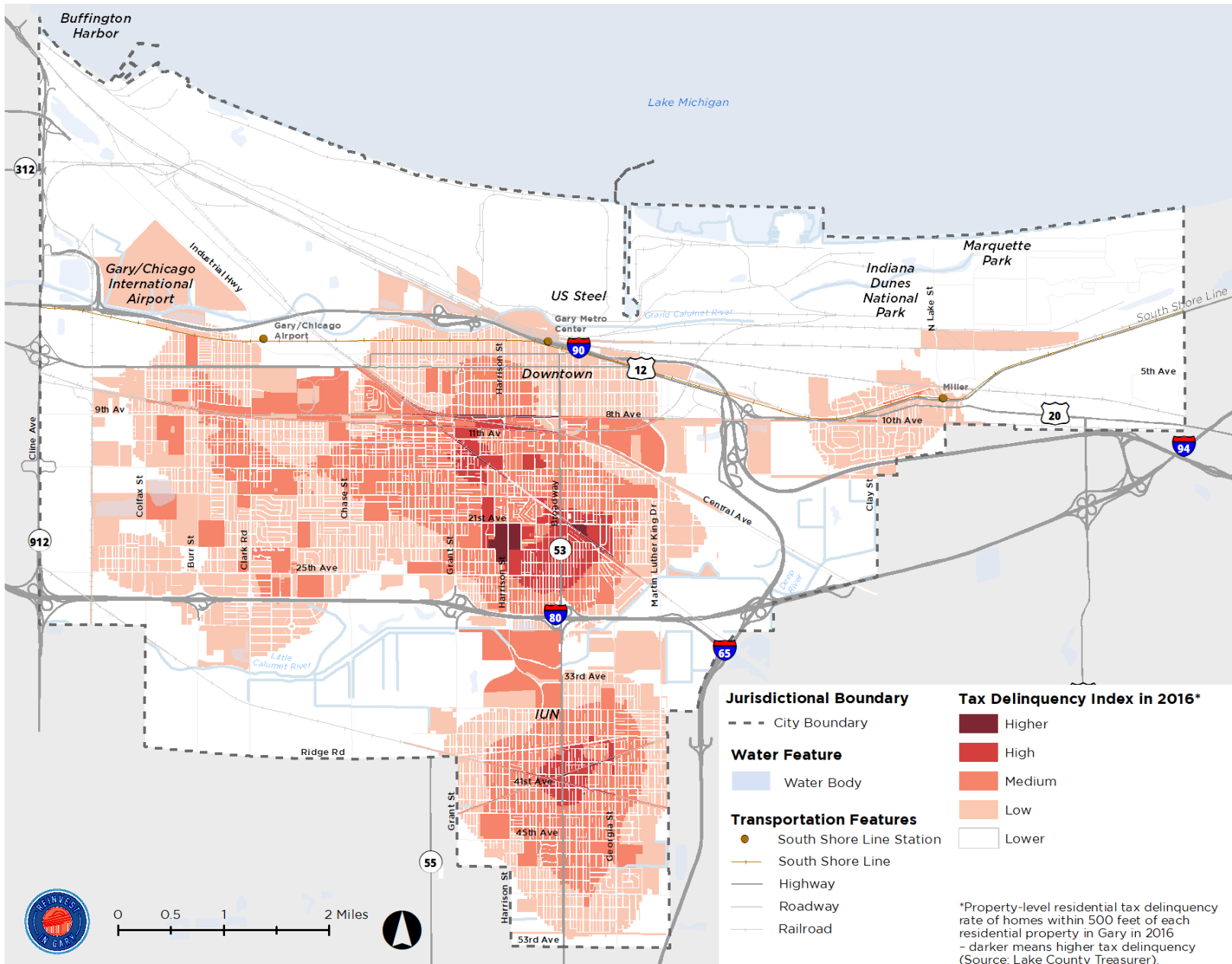
Though there are many areas where vacant land dominates the community, the majority of vacant parcels are small and interspersed within neighborhoods and along key corridors. Attrition in many of Gary's residential neighborhoods has resulted in only a few occupied homes on entire blocks, consistently from block-to-block. As neighbors move out or pass away, vacancy quickly becomes abandonment; this presents a serious challenge to community stabilization, public health and safety, and overall quality of life. Opportunity exists in many such neighborhoods to repurpose neighborhoods over time as blocks become empty.

While tax collection has consistently decreased citywide, many areas of the city have seen relatively little change in tax collection per parcel, which indicates relative population stabilization after years of decline (see Figure 5-8. Tax Delinquency Rate and Figure 5-9. Change in Tax Delinquency Rate). Some neighborhoods have been gradually stabilizing and experiencing an increase in home sales and tax collection rates. Some residential neighborhoods that are stabilizing or in transition, like parts of Brunswick, Ambridge, and Horace Mann, are targeted for blight elimination and infrastructure investments to support continued improvement and growth.



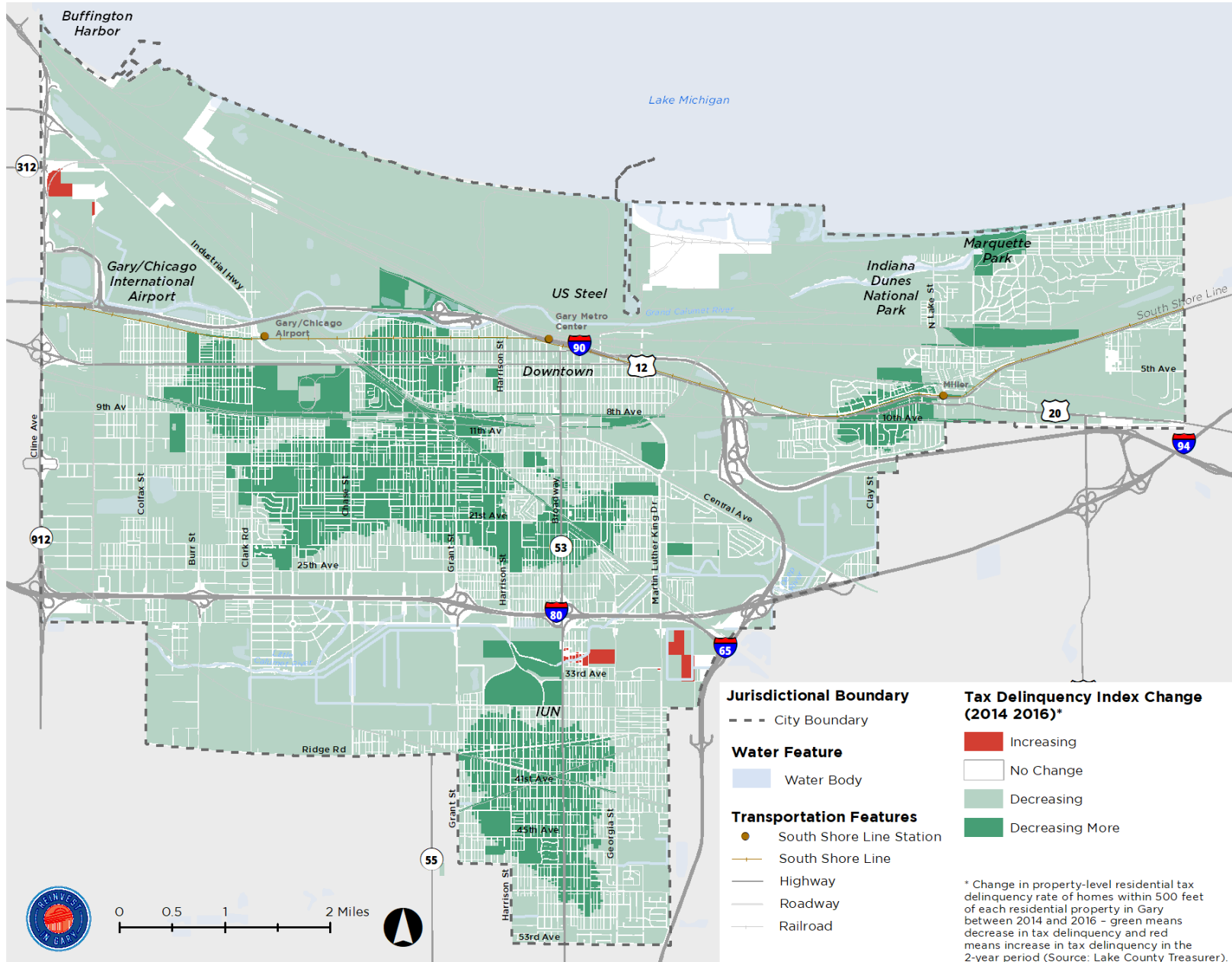
Vacant lots

FIGURE 5-8. TAX DELINQUENCY RATE (2016)



Source*: Lake County Treasurer

FIGURE 5-9. CHANGE IN TAX DELINQUENCY RATE BETWEEN 2014 AND 2016



Source*: Lake County Treasurer

BLIGHT ELIMINATION

The City of Gary runs a substantial demolition and deconstruction program to remove buildings in poor or dangerous condition throughout the city. The 2015 parcel survey estimated more than 6,500 vacant buildings in need of demolition. Since 2012, the City has demolished more than 1,300 dilapidated structures. Years of disinvestment has also led to thousands of consistently tax delinquent properties, with unpaid taxes dating back at least three years. Over 11,000 properties, representing more than 1-in-5 properties in Gary, end up on the County Treasurer’s tax sale auction each year, and 94 percent never sell.² These abandoned properties lead to City services for board-up, security, and often demolition, with no return or cost recovery, representing a sunk cost to Gary taxpayers.

Blight elimination has occurred to target abandoned structures in otherwise stabilizing areas and in large concentrations to remove significant public safety concerns. In the past ten years, the majority of blight elimination has consisted largely of demolitions. The Green Infrastructure Plan (see Appendix A), provides more direction on additional blight elimination strategies as well as where demolition can achieve a greater return for the purpose of both beautification and stormwater management.

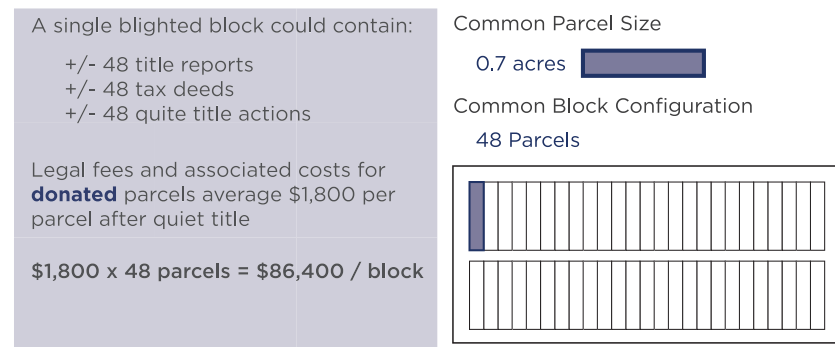
SITE ASSEMBLY

Perhaps the greatest obstacle to scalable redevelopment is availability of contiguous vacant or public land. While as much as a fifth of all parcels in Gary are vacant, ownership varies from property to property, creating few sites large enough to effect redevelopment. An average Gary city block is comprised of 48 separate parcels, each less than a tenth of an acre in size. With disinvestment and population loss, this makes land

² Source: https://www.communityprogress.net/filebin/150928_TASP_Gary_Report_FINAL.pdf.

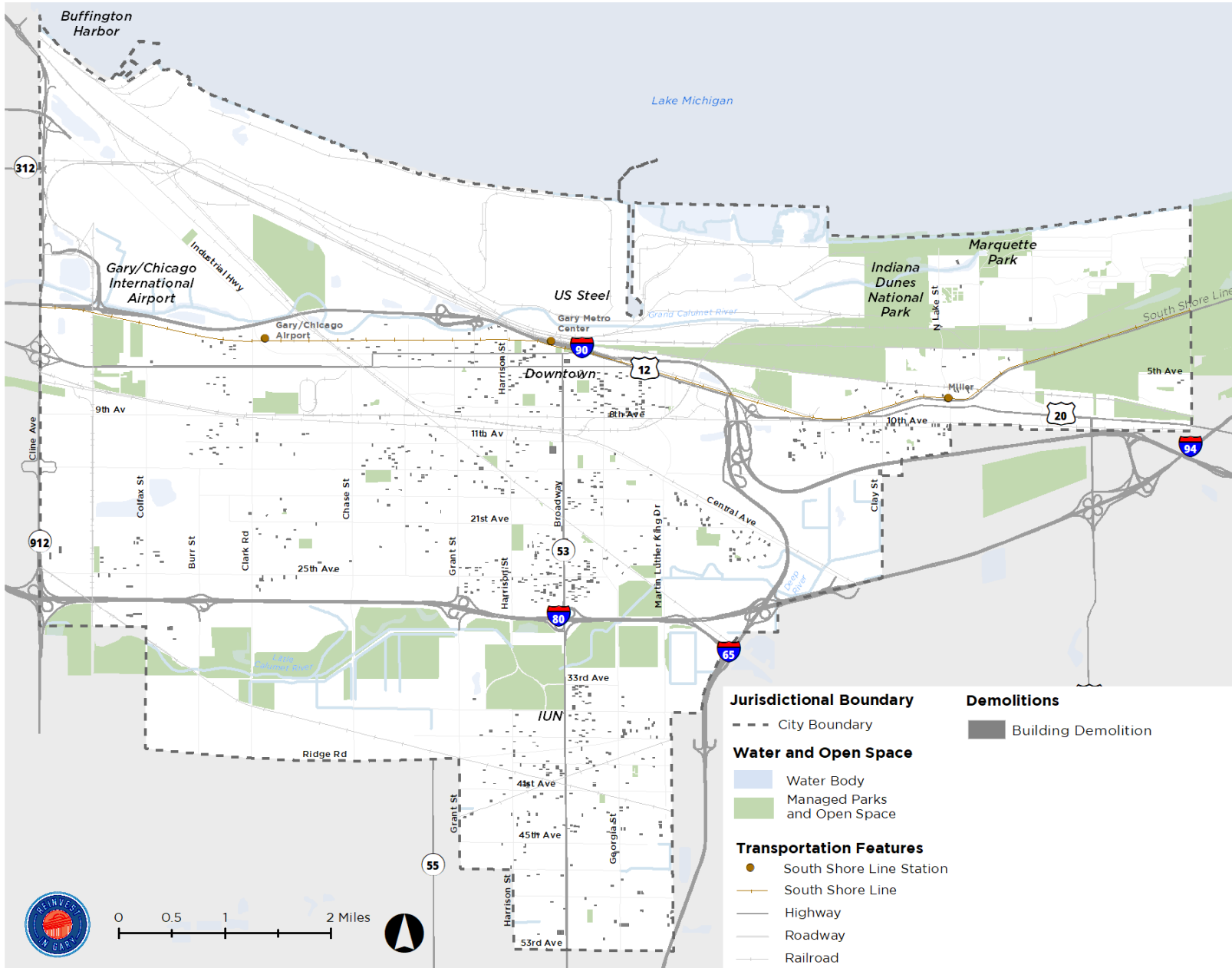
assembly difficult. More than 90 percent of publicly-owned parcels – defined as property held by the City of Gary, Gary Redevelopment Commission, Parks Department, or County – are vacant single-family lots. Sites large enough to effect significant development will require the aggregation of dozens of individual parcels.

FIGURE 5-10. CHALLENGE OF SITE ASSEMBLY



Sheraton Hotel demolition in Downtown Gary (2013)

FIGURE 5-11. CITY DEMOLITION PROJECTS 2012-2019



Source*: City of Gary Redevelopment Commission

* Best available data at time of publication

HISTORIC PRESERVATION IN GARY

The City of Gary offers a wealth of historic and culturally significant properties, especially near Downtown. There are currently three designated historic districts and nine individual properties that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the Nation's official list of historically significant structures.

CITY CENTER HISTORIC DISTRICT

The City Center Historic District, located in Gary's Downtown, is one of two historic districts in Gary listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The existing buildings in the Downtown City Center are mostly commercial, early 20th century architecture. A majority of the City Center Historic District is located along Broadway between 4th Avenue and 9th Avenue. The following are a few examples of historically-important buildings:

- Lake County Courthouse
- Gary City Hall
- Gary State Bank
- Hotel Gary
- The Palace Theater
- City Methodist Church

SOUTH BROADWAY AND HISTORIC MIDTOWN

A section of Broadway south of the City Center District includes smaller scale commercial buildings. The buildings in this area are in generally good condition. One building that stands out the most on South Broadway is the former American State

Bank Building. South along the Broadway corridor is a district that is one of the most culturally-significant areas in the Gary. Known as Historic Midtown or the Central District, this area was one of the most notable African-American communities in Gary and was well known as a haven for many talented Jazz and Blues musicians of the 20th century. Historic Midtown is generally located south of 15th Avenue, north of Gleason Park, east of Harrison Boulevard, and west of Carolina Street.

ADDITIONAL HISTORIC DISTRICTS AND OTHER SCATTERED SITES

Gary has several notable residential areas, primarily west of Downtown. These areas include a range of residential building types and cover the following districts:

- **West 5th Avenue Apartments Historic District.** W. 5th Avenue between Taft and Fillmore Streets, majority built 1920-1930.
- **Horace Mann Historic District.** Between W. 5th and W. 8th Avenues and Roosevelt and Cleveland Streets, majority built 1920-1940.
- **Eskilson Historic District.** Between W. 5th and W. 3rd Avenues and Cleveland and Grant Streets, majority built 1927-1930.
- **Lincoln Street Historic District.** Between W. 6th and W. 8th Avenues and Hayes and Fillmore Streets, majority built circa 1920.

Located near the City Center Historic District is a wide range of historic buildings in varying conditions. This includes educational, residential, commercial, and religious facilities, such as the Gary Union Station, Sax Block Building, East Side Branch Library, and Ralph Waldo Emerson School.

The Miller and Marquette Park area also possesses some notable buildings. Marquette Park has two historically-important structures designed by the well-known Prairie School architect, George W. Maher: The Marquette Park Bathing Beach Pavilion and the Recreation Pavilion.

CONTINUING PRESERVATION EFFORTS

Due largely to neighborhood activism and new municipal resources, historic preservation in Gary has seen a resurgence in the last several years. The Decay Devils, a non-profit dedicated to activating vacant spaces, has revitalized the former Union Station on Broadway and continues programming to coalesce arts, culture, and historic preservation.

The City's Redevelopment Department has conducted annual Gary Preservation Tours over the summer, complete with docents and historical information on Gary's most historic properties. This includes the dedication of an historic marker at the City Methodist Church, and art installations across Downtown.

Finally, the City Council reactivated its Arts, Culture, and History Committee in 2017, which focuses on recognizing Gary's significant historical legacy.



Dalton Arms Apartments on 5th Avenue

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The City's infrastructure, street grid, and facilities were built for a growing population of nearly 200,000 residents, to largely accommodate single-family residential neighborhoods and several strong commercial corridors. These systems are too large for the current population and too costly to maintain.
- Vacant land and buildings are among Gary's most undervalued assets.
- Many inactive schools, parks, and other community facilities are scattered throughout the city, creating unsafe conditions and blight that destabilizes neighborhoods. The unpredictability of GCSC makes planning around school buildings difficult.
- Public facilities and parks need to be consolidated to better reflect population trends and budgetary realities.
- Key neighborhood anchors provide an opportunity to prioritize neighborhood stabilization and investment.
- Many residents are in areas of the city that are sparsely populated and unlikely to return to their previous residential character.
- The central core of the city has the highest vacancy and highest concentration of blight, yet these are the areas with the best access to public services, community amenities, and transportation assets.
- Due to attrition and disinvestment, major commercial corridors are left with large stretches of blight and abandonment with only a scattering of active uses.
- Redevelopment of vacant properties is challenged by a lack of market demand and costly, resource-intensive parcel assembly.
- Opportunity exists to use vacant public land as a tool for neighborhood revitalization, through targeted investment and repurposing of land for new uses.
- Gary's existing green network serves multiple benefits. Expansion to include largely deserted adjacent residential neighborhoods, including parks, can advantage flood protection, habitat conservation, passive recreation, and beautification in areas that are costly to maintain and service (and are often left with neither maintenance nor services as a result).

GARY'S BUILT ENVIRONMENT: WHERE ARE WE HEADED?

Gary is evolving. A rational framework for embracing Gary's change is desperately needed. Investment and development should be focused along transit stops, at existing activity centers, and in areas that are already relatively stable. It is unlikely that Broadway will ever again return to the five miles of storefronts and restaurants it was in the 1960s; many formerly dense residential neighborhoods are not like to be fully-occupied again. As Gary's economy and social context evolve, its built environment will too. Decisions should be made to embrace these changes and adapt with Gary's dynamism. Investments and land use decisions need to balance the areas of greatest need with the areas of greatest potential.

KEY PRIORITIES

1. **Utilize Data-driven Land Management.** The Gary Space Time Analytics Data System (G-STADS) is fully built and housed at the Gary Sanitary District's GIS department. This system is invaluable in enabling efficient use of City services and thoughtful planning. G-STADS needs to be continually maintained, populated, and integrated with the planning department's GIS capabilities going forward. Market data, existing amenities, and community priorities should be applied to make land use and investment decisions based on market conditions and not tradition.
2. **Establish Flexibility in Zoning.** This Comprehensive Plan provides a road map for a total overhaul of land use regulation in Gary. Currently underway, the zoning ordinance revision needs to be completed and applied to allow for modern administration of redevelopment standards. Flexibility in zoning should also extend to new housing that provides greater variance and more options like tiny homes and collective housing. The land use map, as presented in this Plan, will serve as a guide that reflects reality and includes the priorities of our citizens.
3. **Embrace Gary's Evolution.** Sometimes referred to as "smart decline" or "right-sizing," Gary's physical footprint is simply too big to adequately meet the needs of its residents. Blight can be managed through thoughtful zoning. Certain areas should simply be off-limits to building. Rather than one or two buildings amid a sea of empty storefronts on major corridors, development should be centered around transit, in activity centers, and adjacent to community anchors. At the same time, abandoned blocks should be replaced by trees and open space to control supply and demand and prevent further blight. Sparsely populated neighborhoods need to be restored to forests and wetlands while stable neighborhoods need continued investment. Utilizing G-STADS, investment needs to be directed to those areas that will experience a return on that investment.
4. **Enable Creativity at the Neighborhood Level.** Gary's artists, gardeners, preservationists, activists, chefs, musicians, and entrepreneurs are central to our city's vitality and they are reinvesting a lot of energy Downtown and in our neighborhoods. Let them! Creativity should be encouraged in community-led efforts to reclaim vacant land. Arts, public spaces, expanded natural areas and urban forests, and urban agriculture should not only be allowed but also encouraged. Unlike prior codes and regulations, Gary's redevelopment code will be enacted to encourage growth not simply manage it. Regulations and permitting should be loose and enabling, while not irresponsible, and information should be actively shared and promoted by the City administration. The revised redevelopment code should reflect this as a priority and honor the work put in by neighborhood-level activists and citizens.

KEY INDICATORS:

As Gary continues to evolve, information and data can serve as a baseline to measure progress towards meeting the long-term imperatives set forth in this Plan. The At-a-Glance sections of this chapter provide a snapshot in time of the physical, economic, environmental, transportation, and social conditions of the city. The following is a list of key indicators that will be used going forward to understand trends, evaluate progress, and guide future decision-making as it relates to Gary's built environment.

- **Population.** As the most important long-term indicator, population measures our condition as a city and allows us to effectively plan for and provide services to our neighborhoods.
- **Demolitions** (per the City's Redevelopment Department). Demolitions remains a key indicator in quantifying blight removal, to allow for redevelopment and neighborhood stabilization. Demolitions also illustrate progress in evolving Gary's physical footprint.
- **Average home price** (per County Assessor data). Though slow in changing, average home price is an indicator of market conditions.
- **Tax Delinquency Rate.** The tax delinquency rate tracks population and market condition change.





Economy

Gary's economy is currently suffering the effects of decades of population decline and restructuring in key industries, such as manufacturing. Gary has more jobs than employed residents with 1.2 jobs for every employed resident, but this fact reflects the city's demographic challenges more than its strength as a job center. Between 2010 and 2018, Gary lost six percent of its population (nearly 630 people per year).³ Only 51 percent of working-age residents are in the labor force compared to 63 percent for the U.S. as a whole. If Gary had a similar level of residents in the labor force, there would be an additional 8,300 residents in the labor force. Instead of 1.2 jobs per employed resident, the ratio would flip to 1.5 employed residents for every job in Gary.

Like population decline, the city is also experiencing job loss. The City of Gary had a total net loss of more than 3,800 jobs between 2005 and 2015 and has experienced job loss in seven out of the last ten years. Gary briefly recovered from the Great Recession of 2007 to 2009, but those gains were wiped out by losses from 2011 to 2015. From 2010 to 2015, Gary lost an average of 630 jobs per year. Job losses have occurred in industries that serve local residents, as well as those that serve external markets.

Continued population loss is a drain on the tax base, the labor force, and the businesses that serve the population. Gary is not likely to turn around its demographic challenges quickly, but it can reinvigorate its industrial sector as an engine for economic growth. To spur economic growth and redevelopment, Gary will need to leverage its three primary assets:

- A central location for the U.S. and Canadian markets
- Available land suitable for industrial use; and
- Significant transportation and infrastructure assets.

³ U.S. Census Bureau, *Population Estimates Program (PEP), April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2018. Population and Housing Unit Estimates.*

at-a-glance

JOBS

29,656 jobs in Gary

51% labor force participation rate

1.2 jobs per employed resident

SMALL BUSINESSES

6,467 small businesses in Gary

64% women-owned **31%** men-owned

80% minority-owned **17%** non minority-owned

Note: Remaining % difference represents businesses that are both or not classifiable by race or gender.

MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME



Gary
\$28,895

Lake County
\$50,905

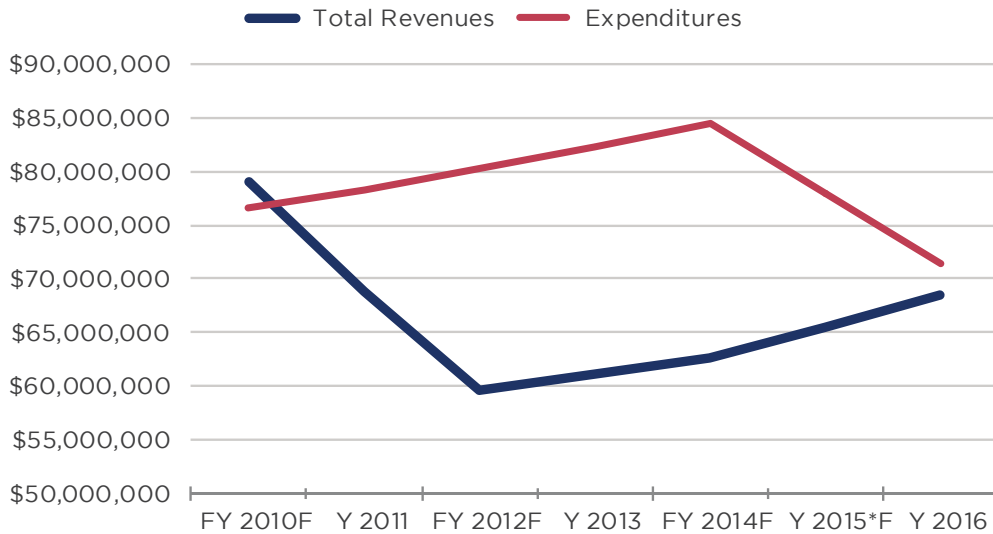


-26%

Decrease in median household income since 1999

Sources: Median Household Income - US Census American Community Survey (ACS) 2012-2016 5-year estimates, US Census 2000 and 2010; Jobs and Top Employment Sectors - US Census LEHD 2005 and 2015; Small Businesses - US Census Survey of Business Owners and Self-Employed Persons (SBO) 2012

STRUCTURAL DEFICIT



GENERAL FUND BUDGET

\$100M



2010

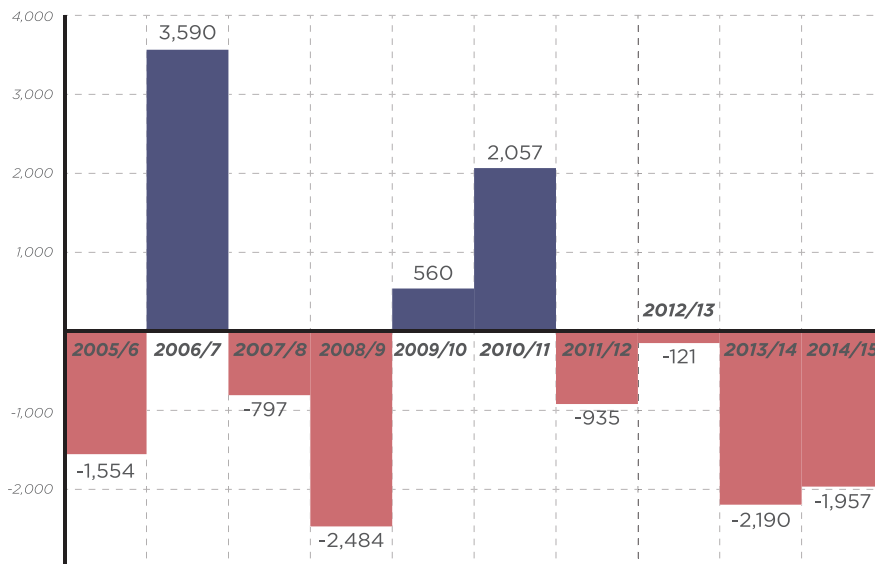
\$54M



2016

EMPLOYMENT OVER TIME

Annual Job Change in the City of Gary 2005 - 2015



KEY INDUSTRIAL SECTORS

Because Gary lacks the resources to go it alone, the City of Gary can maximize its development opportunities by aligning its plan with the Northwest Indiana Forum Ignite the Region strategy and leveraging the resources and capacity of these organizations to advance the development of Gary. Based on Gary's strengths, there are three primary sectors of opportunity for industrial development in the City of Gary.

- **Heavy Industry.** Gary has a strategic location in proximity to Chicago and intermodal transportation infrastructure, as well as manufacturing and other end users. It also has a strong manufacturing culture and deep base of skills, with an existing manufacturing sector partnership in the region. There are opportunities to expand into several subsectors of heavy industry including steel/metals, chemicals, plastics, wood products, machinery, manufacturing tools, electronics, and biofuels.
- **Intermodal Transportation and Logistics.** Northwest Indiana lies within a day's drive to 80 percent of the U.S. population. With its easy access to Chicago, major highways (I-90, I-80/I-94, and I-65), and network of Class 1 railroads, as well as its port and airport facilities, Gary can attract intermodal transportation and logistics industries, particularly in the Buffington Harbor area.
- **Agricultural Products and Food Processing.** A number of major employers in the agricultural and food processing industry are located nearby, such as Albanese, American Licorice, Cargill, ConAgra, Urschel, and Monsanto. Gary's strong transportation infrastructure and intermodal connections, including marine, rail, air, and trucking connections would serve their transportation needs. Gary also offers proximity to major population centers and consumer markets which would further attract businesses in this sector. The City has an opportunity to leverage its

existing base of innovative businesses involved in food production, processing, and packaging.

It is important to note that there are trade-offs between these sector opportunities that have to be balanced in planning for the future. Some of these trade-offs and considerations include:

- Intermodal activities can support and complement both heavy industry or agricultural products and food processing.
- Heavy industry fits the traditional economic base of the City of Gary and has many of the location factors desired by these industries, but many of these industries are not generating more job opportunities.
- Agricultural products and food processing is a growth sector, but it is sensitive to air quality that could negatively impact the processing and packaging of food. To grow this sector, Gary will need to find sites that provide sufficient air quality and that will not be impacted by pollution from nearby heavy manufacturing.

A CITY OF OPPORTUNITY

Gary is poised to become a "City of Opportunity" for women and minorities who want to own their own business. Gary features a large proportion of women and minority-owned small businesses. Out of approximately 6,500 businesses in the City of Gary, there are more than 4,100 women-owned businesses and more than 5,100 minority-owned businesses. At 64 percent, the rate of women-owned businesses is twice the rate for the U.S. and the percent of minority-owned businesses in Gary is 80 percent, more than three times the rate for the

U.S. With a significant base of existing women and minority owners, Gary can leverage their experience as mentors to future generations of business owners. Increasing the locally-owned and operated businesses in Gary helps to insulate the Gary economy from the decisions of externally-owned corporations.

There are currently more than two dozen organizations, agencies, and programs in Northwest Indiana that are providing support for entrepreneurship and business development. Table 5-2 provides a list of existing programs and resources that provide support for Gary businesses and entrepreneurs. Building stronger linkages between these programs, the Gary Micro-Enterprise Initiative (GMI), and the women and minority business owners in the city will help to connect new entrepreneurs to the variety of existing resources available through state and regional partners. Through the creation of the GMI, and the development of ArtHouse and the Stage Small Business Incubator, Gary has already taken steps to create an environment to nurture entrepreneurs and startups. Gary should ensure that its land use and zoning codes allow more vacant and underutilized space to be converted for business incubators, accelerators, and co-working spaces that can further fuel Gary’s home-grown entrepreneurial energy.

TABLE 5-2. BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES

Program	Description
ArtHouse: A Social Kitchen	ArtHouse provides access to a commercial kitchen rental for local residents and emerging businesses, culinary business incubation program (CBI), rental space for events and meetings, a pop-up café, and gallery/exhibition space.
Gary Micro-Enterprise Initiative (GMI)	GMI is an eight-week entrepreneurship training course provided – in partnership with the city’s Department of Commerce and U.S. HUD’s Community Development Division – to the city’s small businesses. Participants learn business structure and planning, financial management, marketing, and other business-related topics.
Northwest Indiana Small Business Development Center (state, local chapter)	The Indiana Small Business Development Center (Indiana SBDC) provides technical assistance to small businesses with the hope to make positive and measurable impact on its formation, growth, and sustainability and to help Hoosier Entrepreneurs start stronger, grow faster, and work smarter.
Purdue Commercialization and Manufacturing Excellence	Purdue Commercialization and Manufacturing Excellence serves as a catalyst for economic development and technological transfer throughout Northwest Indiana and provides advanced manufacturing opportunities-related training for manufacturing companies of all sizes.
Purdue Technology Center and Research Park of NWI	Modeled after Purdue Research Foundation’s successful incubation program in West LaFayette, the Center provides reasonably priced, flexible incubation space, as well as a shared office services to a variety of businesses.
The Stage Small Business Incubator	Gary’s first co-working space where entrepreneurs can learn, create, network with others and build their own stage for business success. The space hosts retail pop-up stores for entrepreneurs to test their business idea and offers financial literacy classes, permitting workshops, and other entrepreneurship education programs.

INFRASTRUCTURE

The City of Gary is host to a diverse array of infrastructure assets and holds one of the most unique assets in the regional portfolio – the Gary/Chicago International Airport (GYI), a full-service airport that is capable of serving general aviation, corporate, commercial, and cargo users. GYI's 8,859 foot runway is the longest in the region after O'Hare. GYI can handle aircraft from anywhere in the world and provides a fully-staffed air traffic control tower that avoids the congestion outside of O'Hare and Midway airports.

GYI anchors a multimodal transportation hub that benefits Gary and all of Northwest Indiana. The Gary/Chicago International Airport is also home to a state-of-the-art General Aviation U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) facility. This is the newest CBP facility in northwest Indiana and the Chicago metropolitan region and provides airport users with new international travel options. GYI also sits within the boundaries of a Free Trade Zone, providing additional benefits to airport customers.

The economic future of Gary, and its ability to develop and to maintain the manufacturing and logistics base of the region will depend on a number of critical transportation and infrastructure assets. These assets are shown in Figure 5-12 and described further in the Transportation section of this chapter.

- Buffington Harbor (port) provides long-term capacity for expanding shipping and complementing the Port of Indiana Harbor.
- Gary/Chicago International Airport links to road and rail assets but further development is hindered by land use and environmental constraints.

- Freight rail is widely available through the city, but mobility is hampered by extensive at-grade crossings that must be addressed.
- Truck routes provide a high level of service on both north-south and east-west routes, but the local road network is deficient in many places.

For Gary to grow its industrial base and the transportation and logistics industry, these assets must be developed to better link the vacant, available land in Gary with intermodal transportation that provides easy access to customers and suppliers.

FIGURE 5-12. EXAMPLE OF KEY INFRASTRUCTURE ASSETS IN GARY



Source*: USA Major Highways and US Railroads, ESRI,

* Best available data at time of publication

STRUCTURAL DEFICIT

Gary’s government spending has long exceeded the amount it receives in taxes in a given year, a concept called structural deficit. The City relies heavily on property taxes, but these taxes cover only 42 percent of the expenditures needed to run the City. Property taxes generate \$953 per acre on average versus expenses of more than \$2,200 per acre. The City has been closing the gap between total revenues and expenditures by cost-cutting and developing new revenue sources, but its budget remains challenged by the State-imposed property tax caps and by market conditions.

According to analysis, most of the property in Gary costs more to service than it generates in taxes. This is due to a combination of low property values, State-imposed tax caps, and the rising cost of services. For each parcel in the city, comparing the maximum amount of taxes it can generate versus the estimated

expenditures required by that parcel provides an estimate of the return on investment (ROI) per acre. To balance its tax base, the City needs to reduce the properties with a negative ROI and increase the properties with a positive ROI. The city has one-third of its acreage with a negative ROI of more than – \$1,000 per acre and two percent of the acreage with a negative ROI of more than – \$10,000 per acre. There are 5,600 acres where each parcel costs the City more than \$100,000 each.

Given the constraints on the City’s tax base and school system, the opportunities for development need to consider the cost to deliver services. Based on what it costs the City to provide services, each type of property must generate a minimum level of tax revenue to pay for the minimum level of services, as shown in Table 5-3. The Gary Community School Corporation spends approximately \$1,800 of local money per student.

TABLE 5-3. BREAK-EVEN TAX GENERATION BY PROPERTY TYPE

Property Type	Break-Even Tax Generation per Acre*	Estimated Value per Acre
Commercial	\$9,800	\$445,000
Industrial	\$3,200	\$144,000
Residential - Commercial**	\$32,400	\$1.48 M
Residential - Ownership**	\$3,000	\$272,000
<p><i>*These values are based on a cost per acre - not the cost to individual owners or residents.</i></p> <p><i>**The tax generation applies to city tax revenues and does not consider school taxes or costs.</i></p>		

Source: Lake County Assessor

Gary will need higher-value development that will generate more in taxes than it has to spend to service the land. The focus on restoring the tax base through redeveloping low-value commercial and industrial land allows the City to leverage one of its key assets and challenges – the large amount of vacant land. Restoring the tax base will allow the City to provide better services and a higher quality of life for residents.

RECENT SUCCESSES

Gary has many challenges, but it has also made significant progress in rebuilding. The following describes some of the recent projects and business investments that are helping to bolster the local economy and create job growth.

- **Local Trax Project.** In December 2018, Gary received \$15.2 million in matching state funds through Indiana's Department of Transportation's new Local TRAX Rail Overpass program to close the crossing along North Clark Road. This railroad crossing has been the most dangerous in Indiana and one of the most dangerous in the United States. Improving the safety at the crossing presents an opportunity for increased infrastructure and hundreds of acres for development in the industrial area around this crossing.
- **U.S. Steel.** U.S. Steel will be investing, at minimum \$750 million for state-of-the-art technology into their Gary Works plant as part of U.S. Steel's \$2 billion AMP asset revitalization program. The 3,800 employees at the facility make sheet products, strip mill plate in coils, and tin products. The deal includes a payment in lieu of taxes that will generate \$2 million in annual revenue for the City of Gary, Gary Community School Corporation, and the Gary Public Library. In addition to the payment, U.S. Steel will also donate \$100,000 in total to a community development fund.
- **Alliance Steel.** As of December 2018, Alliance Steel will be moving its headquarters from Bedford Park, IL to Gary and will create 130 jobs through 2023. The \$19.7 million investment in a 250,000 square foot facility will begin in 2019 and finish in 2020.
- **Amazon.** Amazon recently opened a delivery station in Gary with 500 employees and a location off I-65 with access to I-90 and I-94. The facility offers opportunities for people to develop their own Amazon delivery service with up to 40 employees if they make an investment of \$10,000 and training in Seattle.



Amazon delivery station

Photo Credit: The Chicago Crusader

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Gary's jobs decline has been largely brought about by changes in the steel industry over the last 50 years, which has greatly reduced manufacturing employment.
- Population loss has reduced Gary's tax base, labor force, and the customer base for businesses that serve residents.
- Gary features a high proportion of women and minority-owned small businesses. Increasing the locally-owned and operated businesses in the city could help to grow Gary's economy and insulate it from external forces.
- Gary needs partners with resources. The City of Gary can maximize its development opportunities by aligning its plan with The Northwest Indiana Forum to Ignite the Region strategy.
- The three key growth sectors for the city include heavy industry, intermodal transportation and logistics, and agricultural products and food processing.
- Gary must leverage its existing assets – location, available land, and transportation infrastructure – to reinvigorate its industrial sector as an engine for economic growth.
- For Gary to grow its industrial base and the transportation and logistics industry, critical transportation assets (Buffington Harbor, the Gary/Chicago International Airport, freight rail, and truck routes) must be developed to better link the vacant, available land in Gary with intermodal transportation that provides easy access to customers and suppliers.
- Gary has long suffered a structural deficit. Redevelopment must focus on generating property values and taxes that are higher than the cost to deliver services.
- More employment districts are needed to build the tax base and provide more potential areas for jobs and development.
- Gary has developed momentum with a string of recent business successes such as the Alliance Steel Headquarters and Amazon Delivery Station.

GARY'S ECONOMY: WHERE ARE WE HEADED?

As Gary redevelops, it must leverage the strengths of its edges to rebuild the core. It needs to strategically address the disconnect between resources and needs, and it needs to address the disconnect between residents and industry so that Gary residents have access to quality jobs.

KEY PRIORITIES:

1. **Leverage Regional Resources and Investments for Infrastructure.** Gary lacks the resources to independently achieve all of its goals. It must coordinate with regional partners to develop and market the Gary/Chicago International Airport and the surrounding areas, as well as the key elements of the regional intermodal transportation infrastructure that complement the airport - Buffington Harbor, and the freight rail and trucking networks. Available industrial parcels near the airport and other intermodal sites should be designated as high priorities for investment and development in the near term. In order to facilitate development, there should be a designated single point of contact for all of these properties.
2. **Develop Opportunity Sectors.** Workforce and training agencies should identify the pool of Gary residents with skills transferable to industries targeted in the Ignite the Region plan, with a special emphasis on those that are also targets for development in the City of Gary. Redevelopment efforts should prioritize the sectors that can employ these residents and where a pipeline of local labor force exists. Gary has abundant vacant land for redevelopment, but it must be evaluated to align with these opportunity sectors so that land assembly and preparation can be targeted to generate the highest impact.
3. **Grow the Tax Base.** The City should help grow the tax base through a combination of the following strategies:
 - **Rising Tide.** Target investments to improve underperforming properties, those with a negative ROI. If these properties can achieve break-even, it could increase Gary's property tax revenues by as much as \$139 million annually.
 - **Convert Tax Exempt Properties to Taxable.** If the City were to convert all of the tax-exempt properties into taxable properties, even with the State-imposed tax caps, it could generate an additional \$39.5 million annually.⁴
4. **Make Gary a City of Opportunity.** Despite its many challenges, local entrepreneurship has taken root in Gary. The city has high rates of women and minority-owned businesses. Gary can become a City of Opportunity and help local residents build stability and prosperity through locally-owned businesses. A number of programs and assets are already operating in the city, but there is no mechanism to coordinate these programs or ensure that referrals are made to different providers. The existing state and regional resources should be organized in a network to coordinate and support entrepreneurship in the City of Gary. Partnering with the local development efforts, vacant and underused spaces should be converted for business incubators, accelerators, and co-working spaces.

⁴ Note: Some property will have to remain tax exempt, so the City may only be able to realize some portion of this maximum amount.

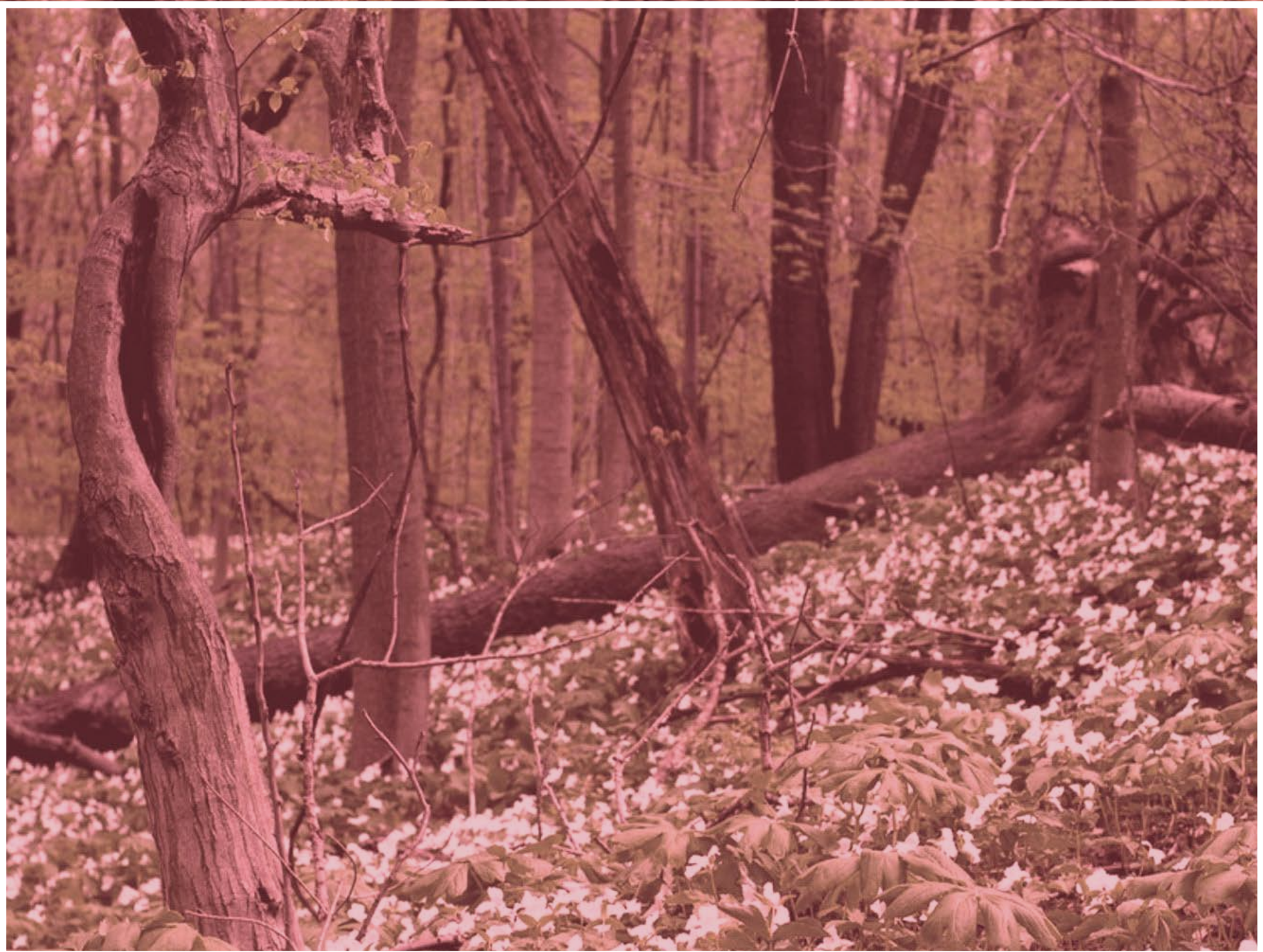
KEY INDICATORS

The following is a list of key indicators that will be used going forward to understand trends, evaluate progress, and guide future decision-making as it relates to Gary's economy.

- **Jobs per Employed Resident.** Representing both the city's demographic challenges and strength as a jobs center, this measure tracks the evolution of the labor force and employment base in the city.
- **Jobs in Target Industry.** Given the city's focus on a few targeted sectors, this economic indicator captures the change in jobs (and businesses) within the city.
- **Structural Deficit.** Overall this metric illustrates how effectively the city is bridging the gap between revenues and expenditures.
- **Woman and Minority-Owned Businesses.** Women and minority-owned businesses are a key measure of the "City of Opportunity."



HMD Trucking facility groundbreaking in Gary. Photo Credit: Indiana Economic Development Corporation



Nature

Gary exists within the Indiana Dunes ecosystem, a unique and diverse coastal environment that spans the southern shores of Lake Michigan. The Indiana Dunes ecosystem is special for a number of reasons, including its biodiversity, rare native species, recreational opportunities, and its beauty. Gary possesses both significant environmental assets and challenges. The city contains 13 miles of lakefront, 2,623 acres of conserved duneland ecosystem, 4,269 acres of wetlands, and 109 acres of actively managed park land in addition to other unmanaged natural areas and open spaces.

Yet these natural resource assets coexist alongside issues of severe flooding, polluted stormwater runoff, contaminated properties, invasive species, and illegal dumping, all of which threaten the quality of the city's land, water, and air. The following section provides an overview of environmental conditions in the city, including existing open space and conservation land, wetlands, floodplains, and stormwater management. Lastly, it provides future direction for how the City can protect, expand, and connect Gary's natural landscape, better manage stormwater, and revitalize neighborhoods through beautification and recreation.

at-a-glance

MILES OF LAKEFRONT



13

3.5 miles of lakefront with public access

PARKS

30

active

27

inactive

57
total



109

acres of actively managed parks

OPEN SPACE



4,269

acres of wetlands



2,623

acres of conservation land

TRAILS



12.9

miles of existing trails



30+

miles of existing + planned trails



EXISTING CONSERVATION LAND

Gary's existing conservation areas reflect an Indiana Dunes ecosystem that existed prior to modern development. This ecosystem is comprised of sand dunes, oak savannas, swamps, bogs, marshes, prairies, rivers, and forests, all of which mix together over 15,000 acres and 15 linear miles of National Lakeshore, State preserves, land trust properties.

Formed from the movements of prehistoric glaciers, the Indiana Dunes stand at the crossroads of many different ecosystems, resulting in a unique mixture of soils and plant life that are rarely found in the same location. Jack pines that are common to the northern regions of Canada coexist with prickly pear cactus, more common to the American southwest. Reptiles like the Five-lined Skink and the Slender Glass Lizard, more commonly found in the American southeast, coexist with rare and endangered wildlife like the Karner Blue Butterfly. In total, over 1,400 species of vascular plants and over 900 different wildlife species exist in the Indiana Dunes, making it the 8th most diverse ecosystem in the National Park system. Due to its biodiversity and rare native species, the Indiana Dunes played an important early role in the development of ecology science, by serving as the living lab for Henry Cowles, an early 20th century botany scholar at the University of Chicago, known as the "father of plant ecology."

The Indiana Dunes also boasts many globally-rare landscapes, including black oak savanna, an ecosystem where eastern hardwood forests meet western tallgrass prairies. Less than 0.02 percent of high-quality black oak savanna still exist in the Midwest, making the 1,045 acres in the Indiana Dunes a significant concentration of this rare feature. "Dune and swale" is also a globally-rare landscape found in the city and is composed of parallel ridges with marshy depressions formed by the glaciers and receding coastlines. This landscape is home to many rare plant and animal species.



Indiana Dunes National Park



Miller Woods

Serving as the western gateway to the Indiana Dunes, Gary possesses 2,623 acres of conserved duneland ecosystem, managed by the National Park Service, Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Shirley Heinze Land Trust, and Nature Conservancy. Figure 5-13 shows conservation land in the city, as well as active and inactive City parks. While remnant features of this ecosystem can be found throughout the city, there are five primary areas of conserved native landscape in Gary: the Lake Michigan Coastline, Miller Woods/Green Heron Pond/Bayless Dune, Clark and Pine Nature Preserve, Ivanhoe Nature preserve, and the Little Calumet River Prairie and Wetland.

LAKE MICHIGAN COASTLINE

Of the 13 miles of Lake Michigan coastline in Gary, 3.5 miles is comprised of publicly-accessible beach front, representing nearly 16 percent of the regional total (over 22 miles). This includes grass-covered sand ridges and blowouts, in addition to public beaches. The ecosystem is dynamic and perpetually shifting. The entirety of Gary's beachfront is publicly-owned by the City of Gary and the National Park Service.

MILLER WOODS/GREEN HERON POND/ BAYLESS DUNE

Serving to bookend the Miller neighborhood on Gary's east lakefront, Miller Woods, Green Heron Pond, and Bayless Dune are a combination of properties owned by the National Park Service and Shirley Heinze Land Trust. The properties possess the entire range of unique features in the Indiana Dunes ecosystem, with trails to support public access. This includes black oak savanna, forested dunes, marshes, bogs, prairies, and a succession of unique plant life running from one feature to the next.

CLARK AND PINE NATURE PRESERVE

Owned and managed by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, the two primary parcels that comprise Clark and Pine Nature Preserve combine for approximately 300 acres of dune and swale landscape, including sand

This section draws heavily from the Gary Green Link Plan and the Green Infrastructure Plan.



Wetlands

savanna, sand prairie, wet prairie, sedge meadow, emergent marsh, and shrub swamp. These properties are located just east of the Gary/Chicago International Airport and are completely surrounded by industrial uses and heavy infrastructure.

IVANHOE NATURE PRESERVE

Managed jointly by the Nature Conservancy and Shirley Heinze Land Trust, Ivanhoe Nature Preserve provides approximately 113 acres of dune and swale, composed of black oak savanna, sandy beach ridges and narrow wetlands, with diverse communities of flora and fauna. Ivanhoe is located directly to the west of Gary's Brunswick neighborhood, with 5th Avenue (U.S. 20) splitting the north and south portions of the property.

LITTLE CALUMET RIVER PRAIRIE AND WETLANDS

Running along the Little Calumet River from Cline Avenue to Martin Luther King Boulevard, hundreds of parcels make up this federally-designated floodplain area. The area is a mixture of wetland, prairie, and woodlands. This natural corridor is managed by a combination of the Little Calumet River Basin Development Commission, the Gary Department of Public Parks, and Indiana University Northwest (IUN). It is highlighted by an 80-acre site that is bisected by the Little Calumet River, west of Broadway, and to the northwest of Gary's Gleason Park and IUN. The prairie and wetlands provide a critical buffer between the Little Calumet River and adjacent development during flood events.

PARTNERSHIPS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Irrespective of the habitat type, public agencies and nonprofit land trusts are the primary stewards of conservation land in Gary, overseeing land management, restoration and enhancement activities in the city's natural areas (including wetlands). In addition to oversight of their existing land holdings, the acquisition of valuable, unprotected natural areas is a primary focus of these organizations and agencies. In particular, acquisition of parcels that connect and consolidate fragmented habitat into a cohesive property is a primary focus. Partnerships between the City and these public agencies and land trusts increases habitat for wildlife, and in many instances, expands well-maintained, publicly-accessible natural areas for residents.

Partnerships with various environmental organizations are also critical for connecting the management of the city's environmental assets with its workforce development needs. An example is the City's Urban Conservation Team, a municipal landscaping corps that includes plant and soil experts who

maintain decorative landscaping and green infrastructure through the city, including Downtown, throughout the City's parks, and at the existing Vacant to Vibrant sites in Aetna. The Urban Conservation Team originally grew out of the City's "Gary for Jobs" initiative, which focused on workforce development for the city's re-entry population. Oversight, expansion, and continued development of the Urban Conservation Team will increase the City's ability to effectively manage conservation land and green infrastructure, by advancing the training of a local green infrastructure workforce in Gary. Over the long term, the City's focus on green infrastructure workforce development will also increase the capacity of local contractors. As new participants come through Gary for Jobs, and new employees come through the Urban Conservation Team, they will develop skills that could potentially serve as the basis for running or working at successful habitat management, green infrastructure, and landscaping businesses.



Vacant to Vibrant site rendering in the Aetna neighborhood. Photo Credit: City of Gary Department of Green Urbanism

GARY'S PARKS: NATURE IN THE CITY

The environment, of course, does not start and stop at the boundary lines of conservation land. Gary's 57 parks, playgrounds, and tot lots serve as critical sources of open space within the city's neighborhoods. The following provides information on high-value natural resources at many of Gary's parks (and a few school sites). City parks are described in more detail in the Built Environment section of this chapter.

- **Marquette Park.** The crown jewel of Gary's park system, and abutting the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore property, Marquette Park boasts numerous high-quality natural features of the Indiana Dunes ecosystem, including sand dunes, lagoons, upland forests, and wetlands. The park underwent a \$28 million redevelopment and enhancement in 2010, including restoration of the dunes, remediation of the lagoons, and installation of wet prairies on the eastern portion of Grand Boulevard.
- **Brunswick Park.** One of the largest parks in the city, Brunswick possesses 33 acres of remnant black oak savanna, dune and swale, and upland forest, and has been the focus of recent trail development and wetland mitigation efforts.
- **Hatcher Park.** Located in the Pulaski neighborhood, and sitting directly to the north of the wetlands that run along the Little Calumet River corridor, Hatcher Park possesses bottomland forests while the southern portion exists in the floodplain.
- **Seberger Park.** Located on Bell Street and 25th Avenue, Seberger Park possesses 6.5 acres of wetlands and forests that include rare and native species.
- **Edison Park.** Located in the Brunswick neighborhood, Edison Park possesses 4 acres of native prairie and woodlands, on the northern portion of a vacant school site.

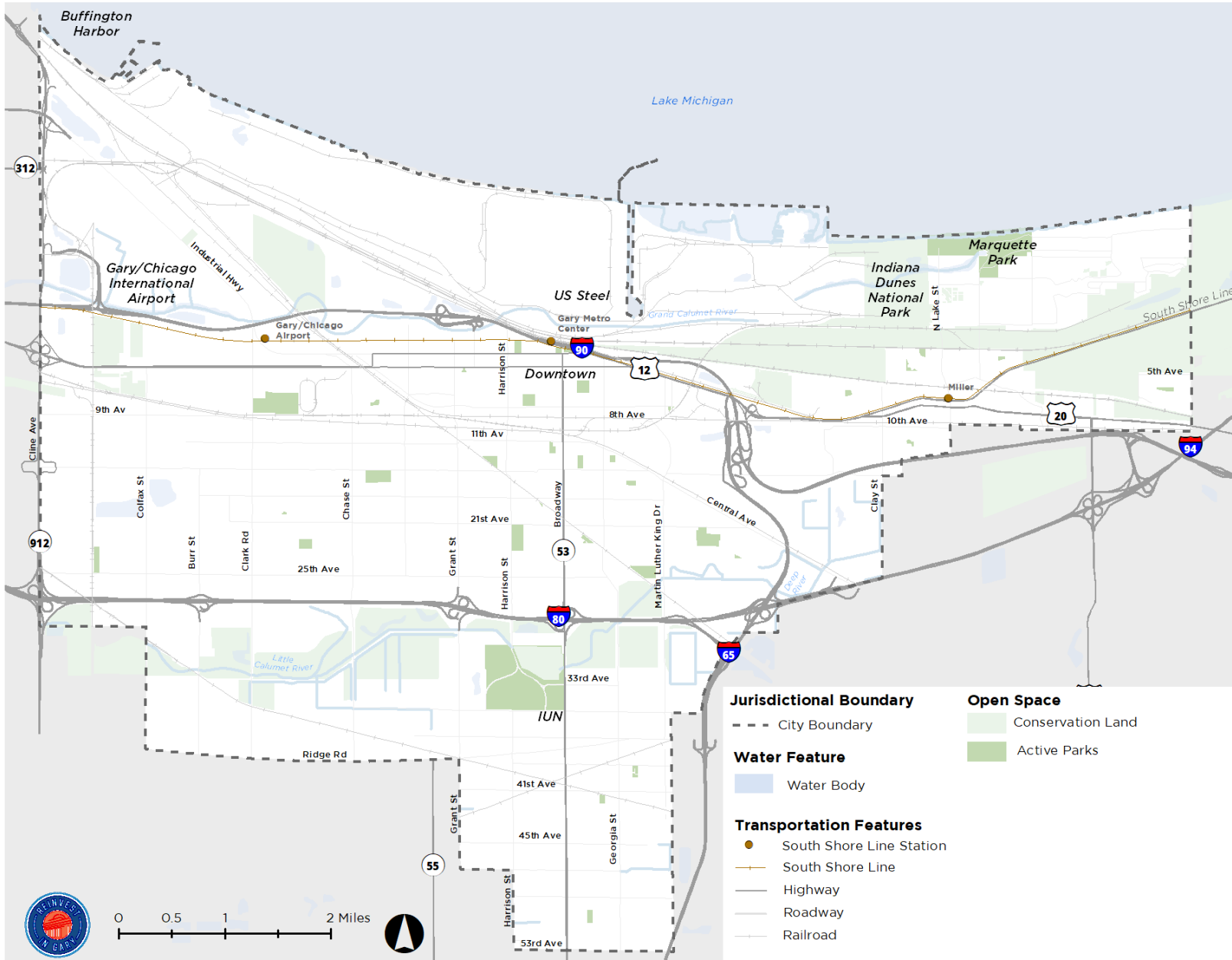
The native features overlap with a section of the park that includes an abandoned pool.

- **Diamond Park.** Located at 25th Avenue and Prospect Street in the Pulaski neighborhood, standing at 47 acres, Diamond Park sits directly to the north of the Little Calumet River, the floodplain, and Little Calumet River Basin Development Commission property. While the park is almost entirely overgrown, it possesses significant wetland features.
- **Ernie Pyle School.** Located in the Tolleston neighborhood at 19th Avenue and Taney Street, the vacant Ernie Pyle school site holds nearly 8.5 acres of upland woods on a preserved forested dune, with a corridor of black oak trees running perpendicular.
- **Little Calumet River Wetlands and Gleason Park (southern corridor).** Located just northwest of IUN, Little Calumet River Wetlands, and Gleason Park include a mixture of wetland, prairie, and woodlands.



Marquette Park

FIGURE 5-13. EXISTING CONSERVATION LAND AND ACTIVE CITY PARKS



Source*: City of Gary Redevelopment Commission and Public Parks Department, Delta Institute

* Best available data at time of publication

FLOODING AND STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

Gary struggles with significant flooding and stormwater issues. This is a product of two main factors: impervious surfaces and the high water table along its rivers. As a dense urban city with a vast number of streets, parking lots, and existing structures, a large percentage of the city's surfaces are impervious, meaning that when it rains, stormwater is less likely to be absorbed where it falls, and instead runs off into the City's sewer system. The second factor is the high water table along riparian areas like the Little Calumet River. During rain events or periods of snow melt, the river's surface water can overrun its banks, and flood the adjacent areas, which is particularly problematic if those areas have impervious surfaces. Excessive flooding and stormwater runoff can cause damage to existing structures and infrastructure in the city, and pose numerous threats to water quality, by overwhelming its sewer systems, and carrying pollutants into fresh water bodies. Figure 5-14 shows the federally-designated floodplains in Gary. The following section describes the water quantity and water quality issues in Gary.

COMBINED SEWER OVERFLOWS AND THE LONG TERM CONTROL PLAN

Like many legacy cities, Gary has a combined sewer system (see Figure 5-15 Gary Stormwater Diagram) that joins domestic sewage, industrial wastewater, and stormwater runoff into the same pipe. This system is designed to efficiently transport the combined wastewater to a sewage treatment plant, where it is treated, and then discharged into a water body. The problem with a combined sewer system is that during large storm events, when a significant volume of stormwater rushes into the system, the wastewater in this system will overflow and discharge polluted, untreated water into either the Grand or

Little Calumet Rivers, ultimately ending up in Lake Michigan. As a result, Gary's Combined Sewer Overflows (CSOs) have negative impacts on the water quality, and for this reason, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) placed the Gary Sanitary District (GSD) under a consent decree to better control its CSOs through the creation of a Long Term Control Plan (LTCP). The LTCP will provide alternatives, design and performance criteria, and a capital improvement schedule to assist GSD in reducing CSO-related pollution over a 25-year period. Figure 5-16 shows Combined Sewer System and Municipal Separated Stormwater Sewer System areas in the city.

MUNICIPAL SEPARATED STORMWATER SEWER SYSTEMS (MS4S)

Gary also possesses a Municipal Separated Stormwater Sewer System (MS4) as shown in Figure 5-16. Most of the MS4 areas are located along the Little Calumet River, a riparian corridor prone to flooding, as well as Glen Park, and areas north of U.S. Route 20. In Gary as in other communities, MS4's do not connect with wastewater treatment facilities. In turn, polluted stormwater runoff simply enters the MS4, and is disposed untreated into the city's water bodies. Due to the serious implications that this system can have on water quality, MS4's are regulated by the U.S. EPA and Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) through a permitting process. To reduce the risk of non-point source pollution from properties and development sites in the city, the Gary Stormwater Management District undertakes a series of Minimum Control Measures (MCMs) with property owners and developers.

MAINTENANCE CHALLENGES

A key challenge facing the City is maintaining these aging infrastructure systems. Due to population loss, disinvestment, and resulting vacancy, utilities like the GSD and GSWMD must now manage systems that remain the same in size (built for a city footprint of 200,000) but benefit from fewer rate payers. This results in less revenues to fund basic repairs, modernize the City's sewers and stormwater systems, and satisfy its regulatory obligations from state and federal agencies.

RIVER FLOODING

Flooding is a persistent problem in Gary. In September 2008, the Little Calumet River flooded adjacent properties throughout the region after nine inches of rain fell in 24 hours. In Gary, much of the campus at Indiana University Northwest flooded, Interstate 80/94 (which runs parallel to the Little Calumet River) was closed for a week, and many of the neighborhoods that sit adjacent to the river experienced massive flooding and property damage. In total, it is estimated that the cost of the flood was \$881 million throughout the region. The river is managed by the Little Calumet River Basin Development Commission (LCRBDC), a public authority that oversees its levee system and adjacent floodplain. Since 2008, the LCRBDC has made significant efforts to improve the River's levees in Gary, as well as acquire and manage critical parcels in the floodplain. This includes pump station improvements at Burr Street, and raising the road grade at Clark Road, Grant Street, 35th Avenue, and Harrison Street.

Local flooding is likely to be impacted by climate change. Since 1951, total annual precipitation has increased by over 13 percent across the U.S. Great Lakes region. Likewise the

⁵ *Climate Change in the Great Lakes Region References. University of Michigan / Michigan State GLISA. Retrieved from <http://glisa.umich.edu/gl-climate-factsheet-refs>*

frequency and intensity of extreme weather and severe storms has increased, with the amount of rain falling during the largest storms increasing by 35 percent since 1951. Scientists anticipate this trend will continue in the future, increasing the likelihood of damages from flooding.⁵

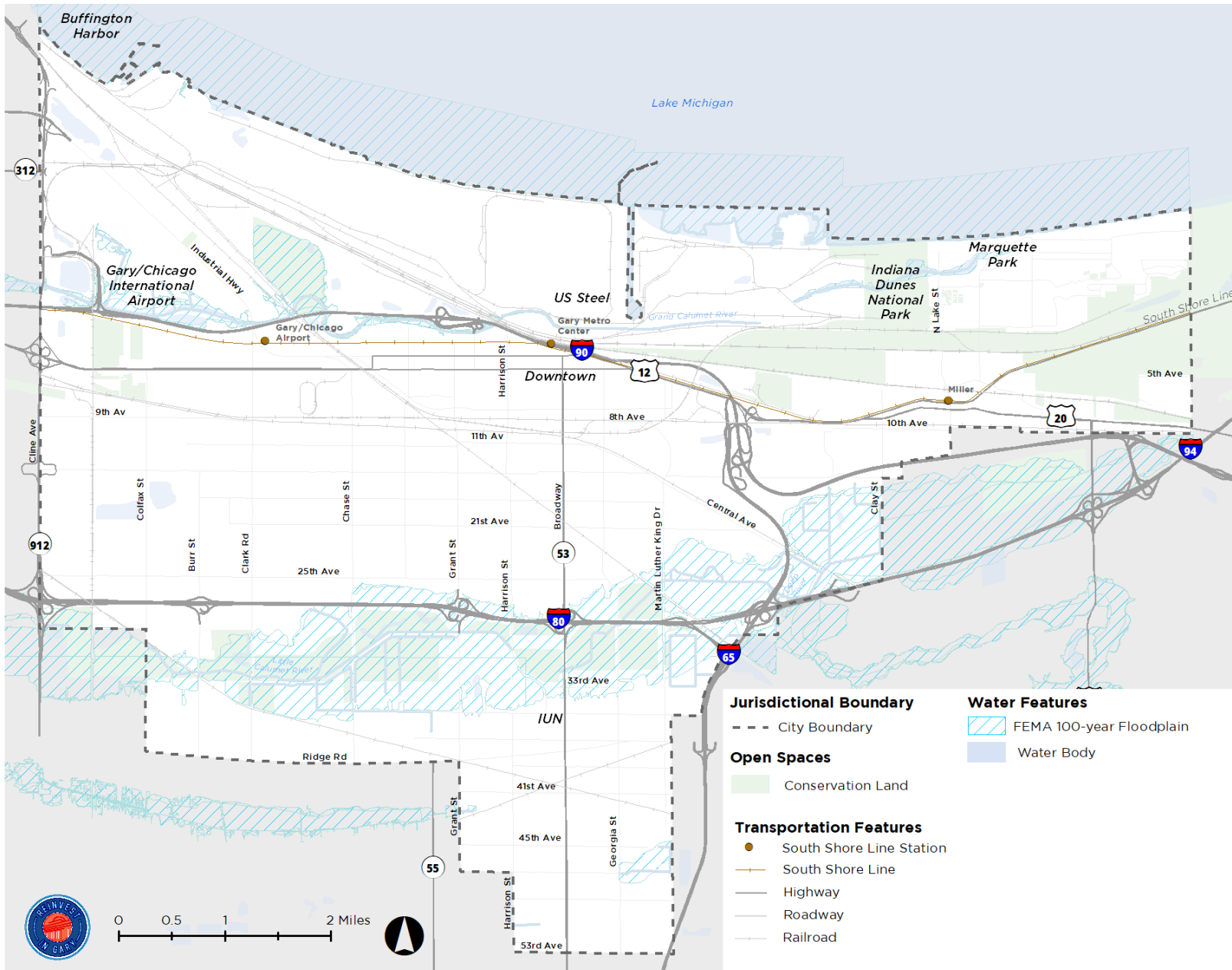
PARKS AND STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

While many of Gary's parks provide the city's residents with access to recreational amenities and high value conservation land, the City's parks also hold the potential to assist with stormwater management and flooding problems by serving as an ideal location for installing green stormwater infrastructure. Oftentimes built into a dense urban environment, many of the City's parks are surrounded by impervious surfaces like roads and buildings. Additionally, with 27 of the City's 57 parks vacant and many active parks underutilized, green stormwater infrastructure represents a clear opportunity to reprogram this park space to reduce the impact of flooding and runoff on citizens.



Green infrastructure project in front of City Hall

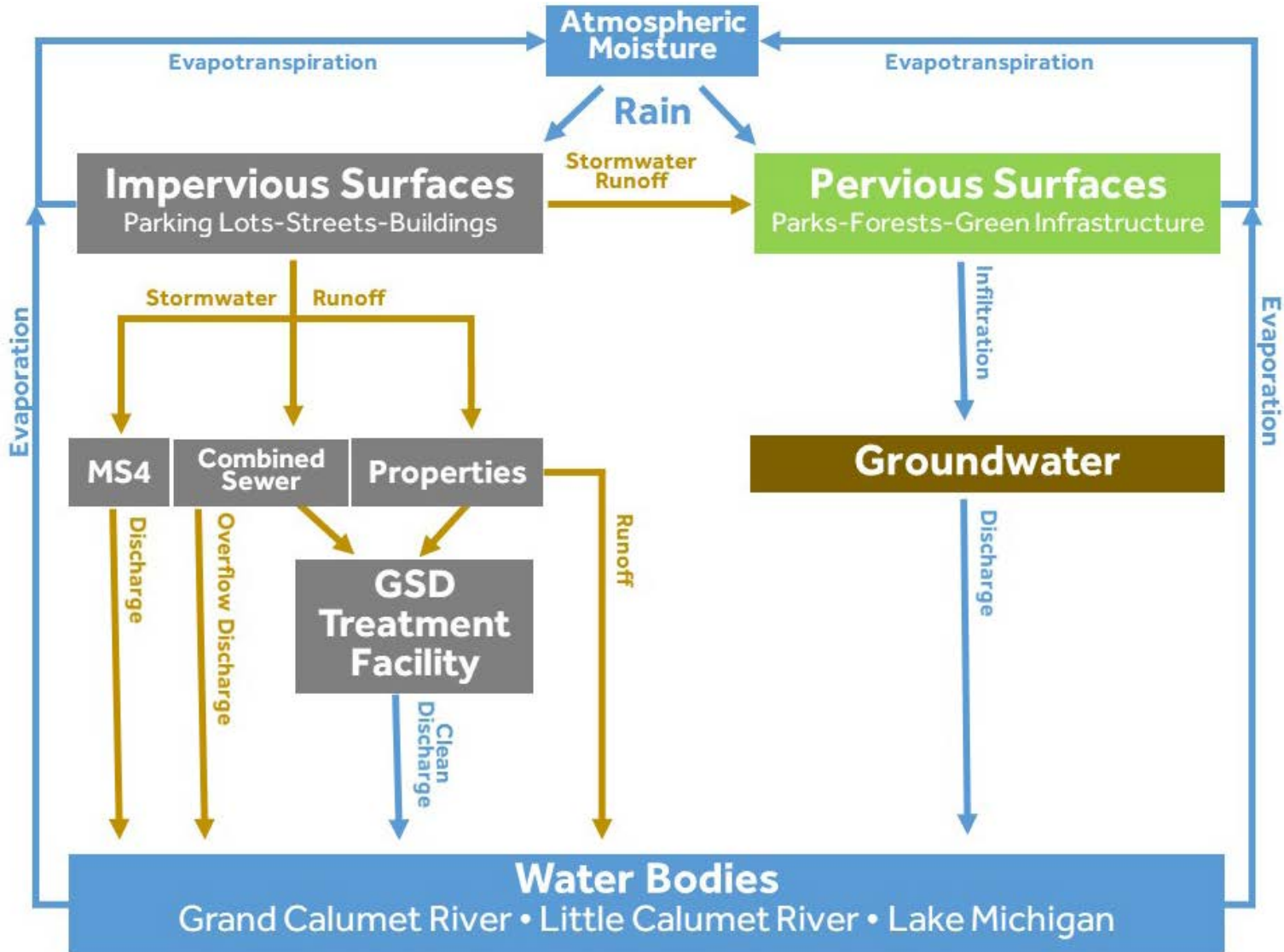
FIGURE 5-14. FEMA FLOODPLAINS



Source*: FEMA

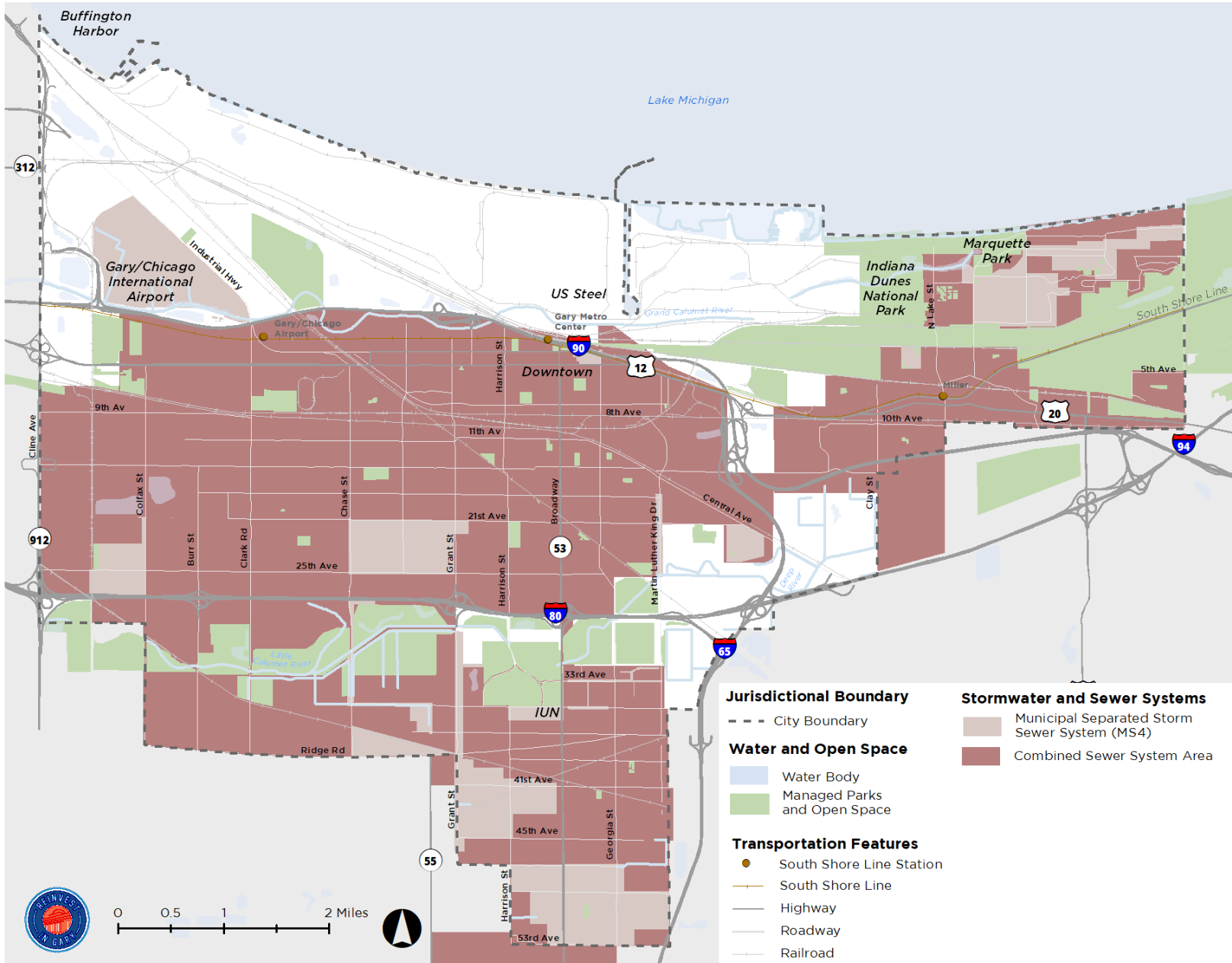
* Best available data at time of publication

FIGURE 5-15. GARY STORMWATER DIAGRAM



Source: Gary Green Infrastructure Plan

FIGURE 5-16. GARY COMBINED SEWER SYSTEM AND MUNICIPAL SEPARATED STORMWATER SEWER SYSTEM



Source*: Gary Green Infrastructure Plan

* Best available data at time of publication

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The City of Gary is rich in natural assets, with unique and biodiverse habitats, such as the dune and swale landscape.
- Much of the city's most sensitive natural habitats sit directly adjacent to heavy industry.
- Severe flooding and stormwater management issues threaten the quality of the city's land and water.
- Due to population loss, disinvestment, and resulting vacancy, utilities like the GSD and GSWMD must now manage systems that remain the same in size but benefit from fewer rate payers. This results in less revenues to fund basic repairs, modernize the City's sewers and stormwater, and satisfy its regulatory obligations from state and federal agencies. This plan can provide a framework for the City's utilities, on where to prioritize stormwater and sewer infrastructure to match future users and support future growth.
- Vacant land provides an opportunity to expand and connect existing open space and recreation assets.
- Vacant and inactive City parks provide an opportunity to reduce flooding and stormwater runoff through the installation of green and blue infrastructure.

GARY'S NATURAL CONTEXT: WHERE ARE WE HEADED?

Even with the significant environmental assets and improvements made in Gary and Northwest Indiana over the last 50 years, the 21st century brings an emerging series of environmental challenges, driven increasingly by climate change. Future environmental efforts in the city will need to focus on expansion, restoration, and enhancement of Gary's native landscape while balancing existing and future development with nature.

KEY PRIORITIES

- 1. Restore Ecological Health.** As a legacy industrial city, Gary struggles with contamination issues on many of its industrial and commercial properties. In addition to contaminated brownfields throughout the city, the majority of the city's developed land is built on an urban fill whose composition may not match that of the native soil, nor be clean enough to grow native plant species. In addition, climate change, stormwater runoff, poor soil conditions, existing transportation practices, and invasive species threaten the health and stability of Gary's ecosystems. To restore the ecological health of natural areas in and around developed parts of the city, work must be done to remediate soil and water, and to remove invasive species. In addition, land use and development policies should be put into place that help limit the spread of invasive species and buffer natural assets from sources of pollution.
- 2. Balance Nature and Development.** In planning the city's future land use patterns, the task of balancing nature with existing and future development involves numerous complicating factors, including how to retrofit areas to better address environmental concerns without inhibiting development, or how to engage in vacant land management strategies that benefit other adjacent uses. While protecting natural areas is a critical concern, in a city like Gary that has struggled with disinvestment and a loss of jobs, population, and tax base, redevelopment and economic development are deeply critical needs. There are a number of measures that the City can take to balance industrial redevelopment with environmental protection.
- 3. Development Regulations.** Sound land use policies and development regulations should be put into place to guide a development's location and apply controls on the environmental impacts from a particular land use (like air pollution, stormwater, etc.).
- 4. Wetland Mitigation.** Opportunity exists to establish wetland mitigation techniques such as restoration, creation, or enhancement of wetlands, to compensate for permitted wetland losses in industrial and redevelopment areas.
- 5. Green Land Buffers.** The establishment of land buffers should serve as a key strategy in the City's long-range planning. Land buffers are effective at reducing the impacts of development on water bodies and natural areas, mitigating flooding from water bodies and wetlands in developed areas, and balancing incompatible land uses (i.e., reducing the impact of industrial areas on residential areas).
- 6. Implement the Green Infrastructure Plan.** The recently completed Gary Green Infrastructure Plan (2019) provides a blueprint for how the City can plan, implement, regulate, and manage green and blue infrastructure improvements across the city.

As identified in the Plan, targeted green and blue infrastructure projects such as green street corridors, stormwater parks, community gardens, and beautification projects have the ability to expand and restore Gary's natural landscape, reduce flooding and stormwater runoff, improve water quality, address blight and vacant land, and revitalize neighborhoods. The Green Infrastructure Plan is discussed further in Chapter 6. Planning Frameworks and provided in Appendix A.

7. **Complete the Gary Green Link Vision.** Building upon Gary's existing conservation assets, the Gary Green Link Plan (2005) highlighted a vision for enhancing and connecting the city's various native ecosystems (and 11 out of the city's 15 neighborhoods) into a conservation loop and trail system, to the benefit of the city's residents, plant life, and animal life. Since the Plan's adoption in 2005, 1.2 miles of trail has been built, and 38.76 acres of new conservation land has been acquired. While the entire 38.25 miles and 9,735 acres of the Gary Green Link remain a visionary project, implementation of this conservation loop remains the priority of the City, including both restoration of habitat and the implementation of the Green Link's trail infrastructure.
8. **Promote Eco-Tourism.** The Indiana Dunes National Park stands as only one of four national parks in the Midwest. Situated less than a 40 mile from Downtown Chicago, it's proximity within a densely-populated metro region makes it highly accessible to a population of around 10 million. That said, the Indiana Dunes can oftentimes stand as an unrecognized or under appreciated environmental asset in the Chicago metro region and the Midwest, and the fact that Gary has a National Park can be surprising to many in the region who primarily view Gary for its factories and vacant properties. There is an unrealized opportunity to draw visitors to the Indiana Dunes and promote eco-tourism as a driver for economic development and job creation in the city.

KEY INDICATORS

The following is a list of key indicators that will be used going forward to understand trends, evaluate progress, and guide future decision-making as it relates to Gary's environment.

- **Miles of Trails.** Easily tracked by both currently existing trail network and those that go on-line as the Green Link and others are further implemented and the network grows.
- **Acres of Conservation Land.** A good indication of stewardship, and a way to monitor the health of Gary's various ecosystems and assets.
- **Green Infrastructure Projects Completed.** A basic standard to track progress on implementing modern practices by the Gary Sanitary District, City of Gary Board of Public Works and Safety, the City of Gary Department of Green Urbanism, federal partners, state partners, non-profits, and even developers as Gary moves to implement green infrastructure.



Transportation

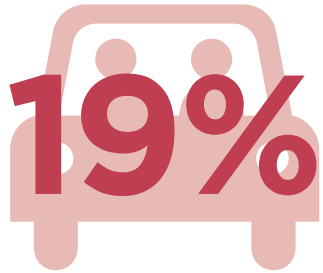
Gary is a well-established regional transportation hub based on its strategic location and robust network of transportation assets. Gary is easily accessible from multiple interstates, the regional highway network, and major roadways, and the layout of the local street network is well connected to the regional grid. The extensive railroad network facilitates freight mobility to Gary and through the region and many industrial parcels within the city have access to rail through existing rail spurs or the potential for new spurs. In addition, the South Shore commuter rail line serves to move Gary residents throughout the region. Figure 5-17 shows the regional transportation network.

Within Gary, there are 67 miles of Interstate Highways and 54 miles of U.S. and State Highways served by multiple interchanges and intersections. Over 150 miles of heavy rail mainline exist within City limits with 108 miles of active track, 48 miles of inactive track and hundreds of individual rail spurs connecting mainline track to adjacent properties. The city has over 435 miles of local streets, 500 miles of sidewalks, and several hundred miles of alleys. Figure 5-18 shows the transportation network in Gary.

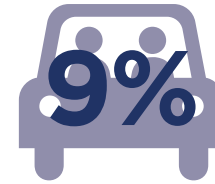
Gary's extensive transportation network is both a blessing and a burden. It offers incredible opportunities for freight and intermodal facility expansion (and job creation), but the general poor condition of the local street network remains a fiscal challenge given the years of deferred maintenance and extent of the network itself. Likewise while the city will continue to serve as a regional transportation hub, many Gary residents have limited access to an automobile and rely on public transportation for mobility, limiting the opportunity to access jobs beyond the City limits.

at-a-glance

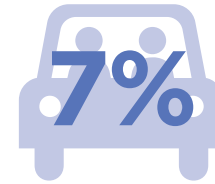
VEHICLE OWNERSHIP



of Gary households do not own a car,
DOUBLE that of the county & state



Lake County

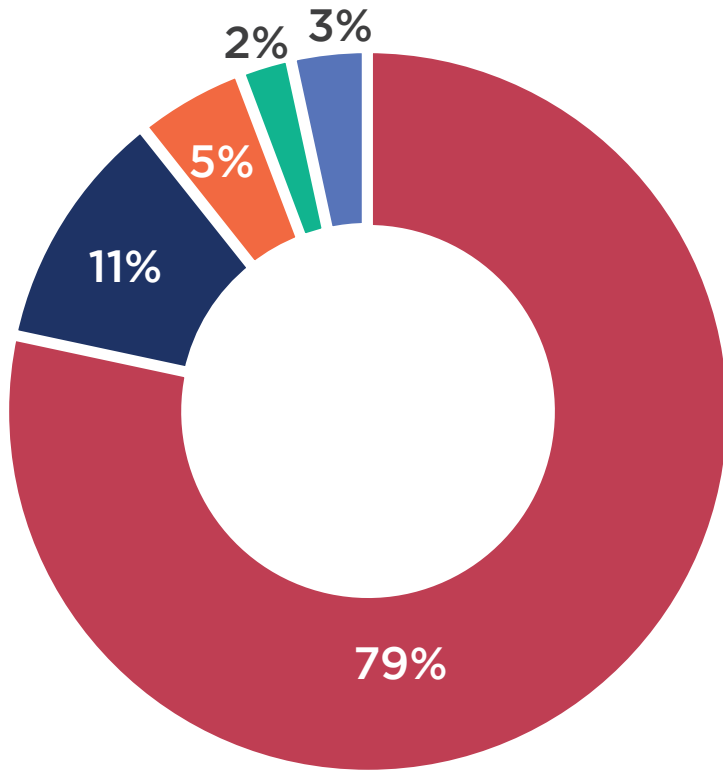


Indiana

WHERE WORKERS GO EACH DAY



HOW PEOPLE GET TO WORK



- Drove alone
- Carpool
- Public Transit
- Bike/Walk
- Other/Telework

GARY PUBLIC TRANSIT ANNUAL RIDERSHIP



800,645

total rides in 2018



4.7%
from 2017



218,350

total rides in 2018



33%
from 2017

Sources: Travel Mode and Vehicle Ownership - US Census American Community Survey (ACS) 2012-2016 5-year estimates; Worker Inflow/Outflow - US Census LEHD 2015 LODES data, Gary Public Transportation Corporation (GPTC)

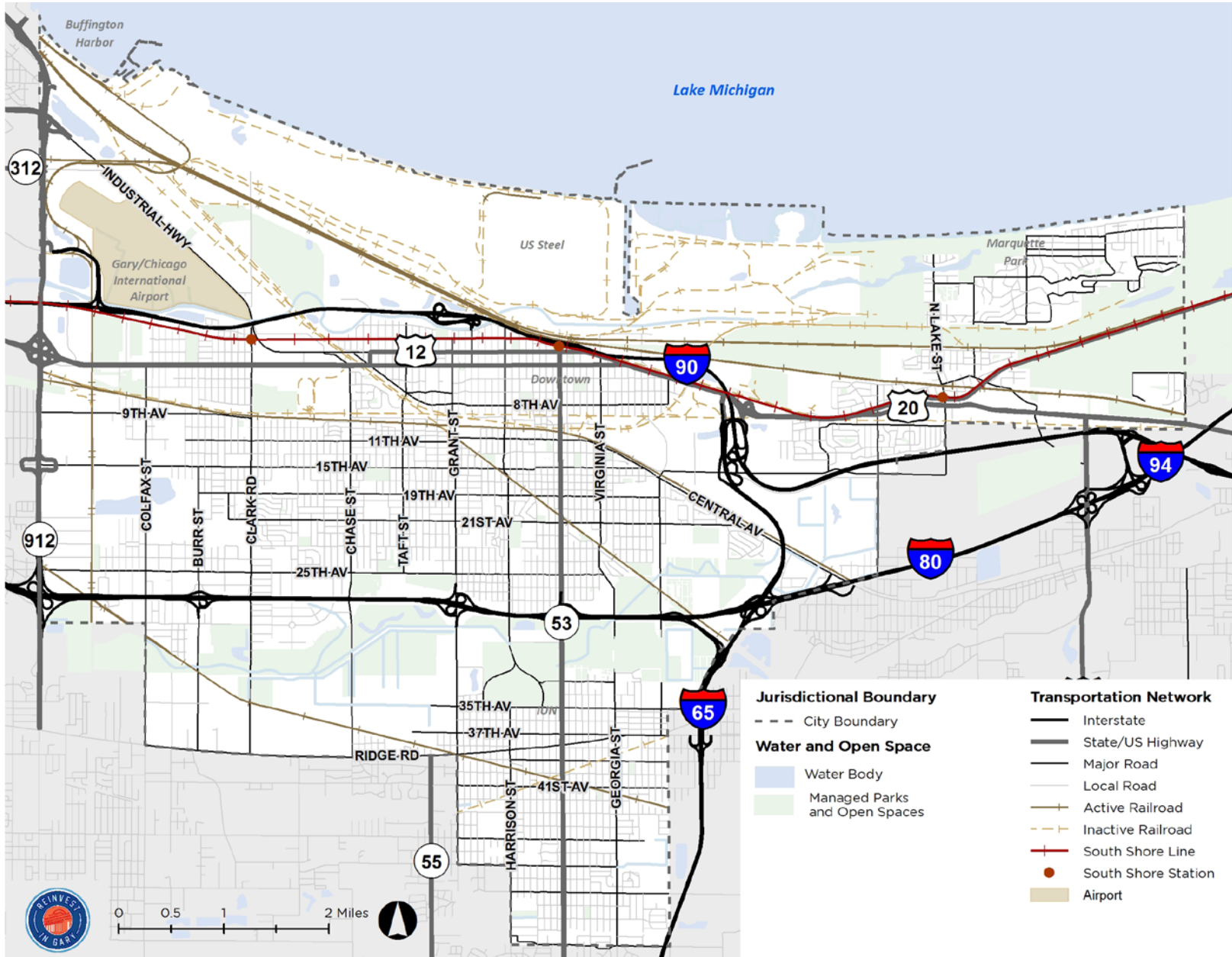
FIGURE 5-17. REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION CONTEXT



Source*: USA Major Highways and US Railroads, ESRI, TomTom

* Best available data at time of publication

FIGURE 5-18. LOCAL TRANSPORTATION CONTEXT



Source*: INDOT Roads and Rail Lines (IndianaMap), South Shore Line

* Best available data at time of publication

ROADWAYS

The following section describes Gary's existing roadway network, including highways, the local street network, and designated truck routes. Figure 5-19 illustrates the roadway network across the city.

HIGHWAYS

Gary has robust interstate and highway access. Interchange locations within the city from the highway network have generally remained the same over the past several decades. The non-tolled interstate and regional highway network in Gary and throughout Northwest Indiana is operated and maintained by the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT). Generally, the system is in good operating condition. Interchange and access improvements, such as reconfiguration of the I-80/94 and I-65 system interchange and the redesign of the I-65 and Ridge Road were completed in recent years and an expansion of I-80/94 was completed in 2008.

LOCAL STREET NETWORK

Gary's original street network has remained largely intact. Local streets, traffic signals, signs, sidewalks, and alleys are operated and maintained through the City's Department of Public Works. The City conducts routine maintenance, repair, and rehabilitation of the local street network with a mixture of local, State, and federal funds. The City is required by INDOT to maintain a Pavement Asset Management Plan (PAM Plan) to track, manage, and prioritize decisions related to roadway preservation and to support applications for federal-aid projects. Since 2014, 83.2 miles of local streets have been repaved within the city.

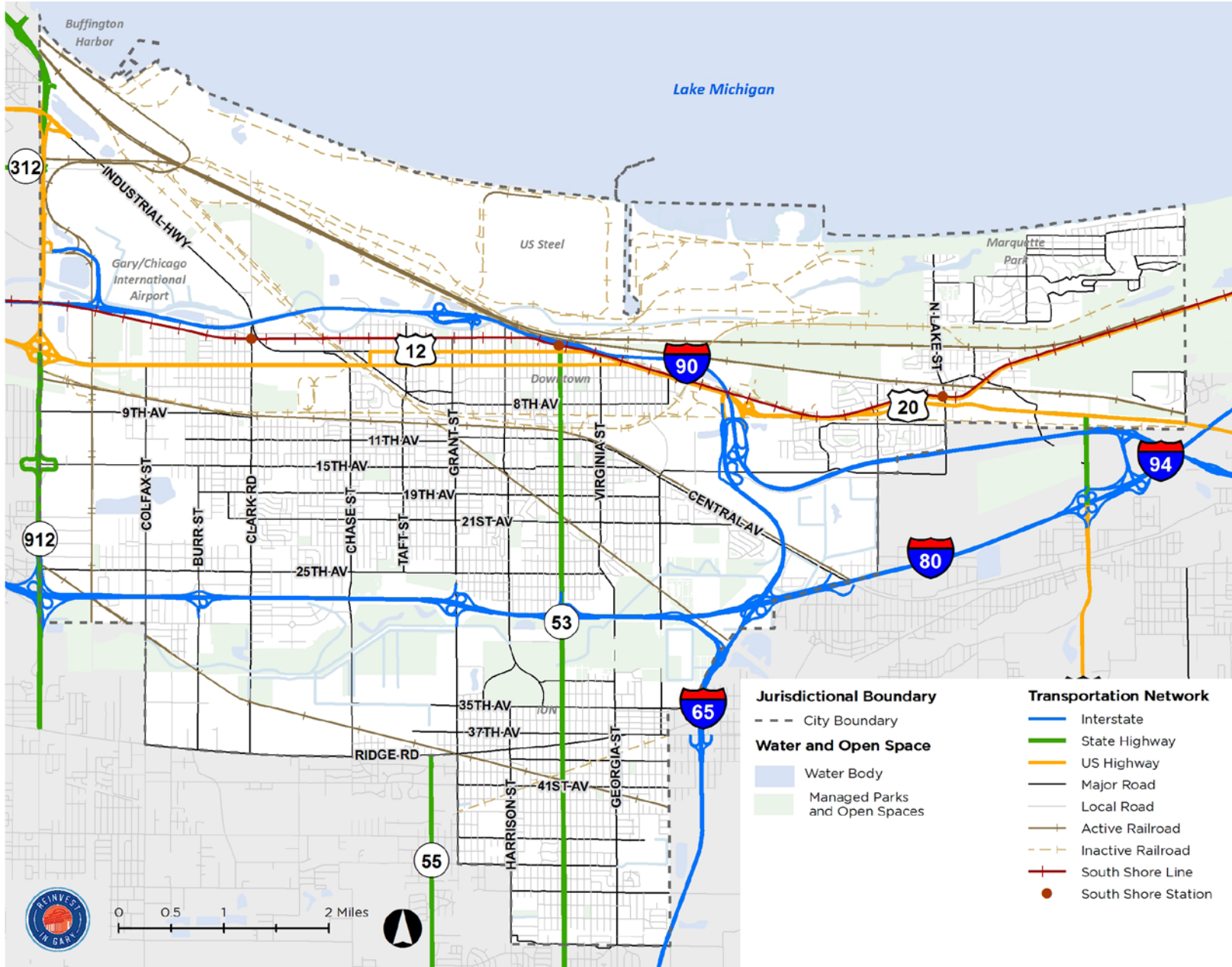
Despite this success, the single largest challenge to the roadway network in Gary is the condition of the local street network. Deferred maintenance, limited State and federal funding, lack of revenue to provide local match requirements (usually 20 percent of project costs) to leverage state and federal funds, the size of the network, and the volume of needs present significant challenges. Local streets will continue to degenerate as maintenance continues to be deferred which in turn will require more intensive rehabilitation work. Further, the local street network is greatly impacted by flooding and drainage issues and the deterioration of drainage structures complicates roadway maintenance and rehabilitation and increases overall project costs. Gary's green infrastructure initiative (see the Green Infrastructure Plan, outlined in Chapter 6 and provided in Appendix A) is intended to help reduce the costs of addressing drainage issues throughout the city.

Mobility within the city is also hampered by one-way streets, at-grade crossings of roadway and rail lines, the condition of sidewalks, and the lack of "complete streets" that facilitate vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle travel.

TRUCK ROUTES

The interstates and highways that traverse Gary are also part of the National Truck Network that allows trucks of a certain weight, size, and length to use the system without a permit. INDOT further classifies certain routes as Indiana Extra Heavy-Duty Highways designated to carry heavy loads that exceed the National Truck Network Standard. These routes are specifically designed to withstand heavy loads associated with steel manufacturing. U.S. 20 (Dunes Highway), SR 912 (Cline Avenue), and 15th Avenue (north) are designated as Extra Heavy-Duty Highways. Beyond the Extra Heavy-Duty Highways designation, many other arterial and local streets are designated as truck routes, increasing conflicts with pedestrians and cyclists. Figure 5-20 shows existing truck routes through the city.

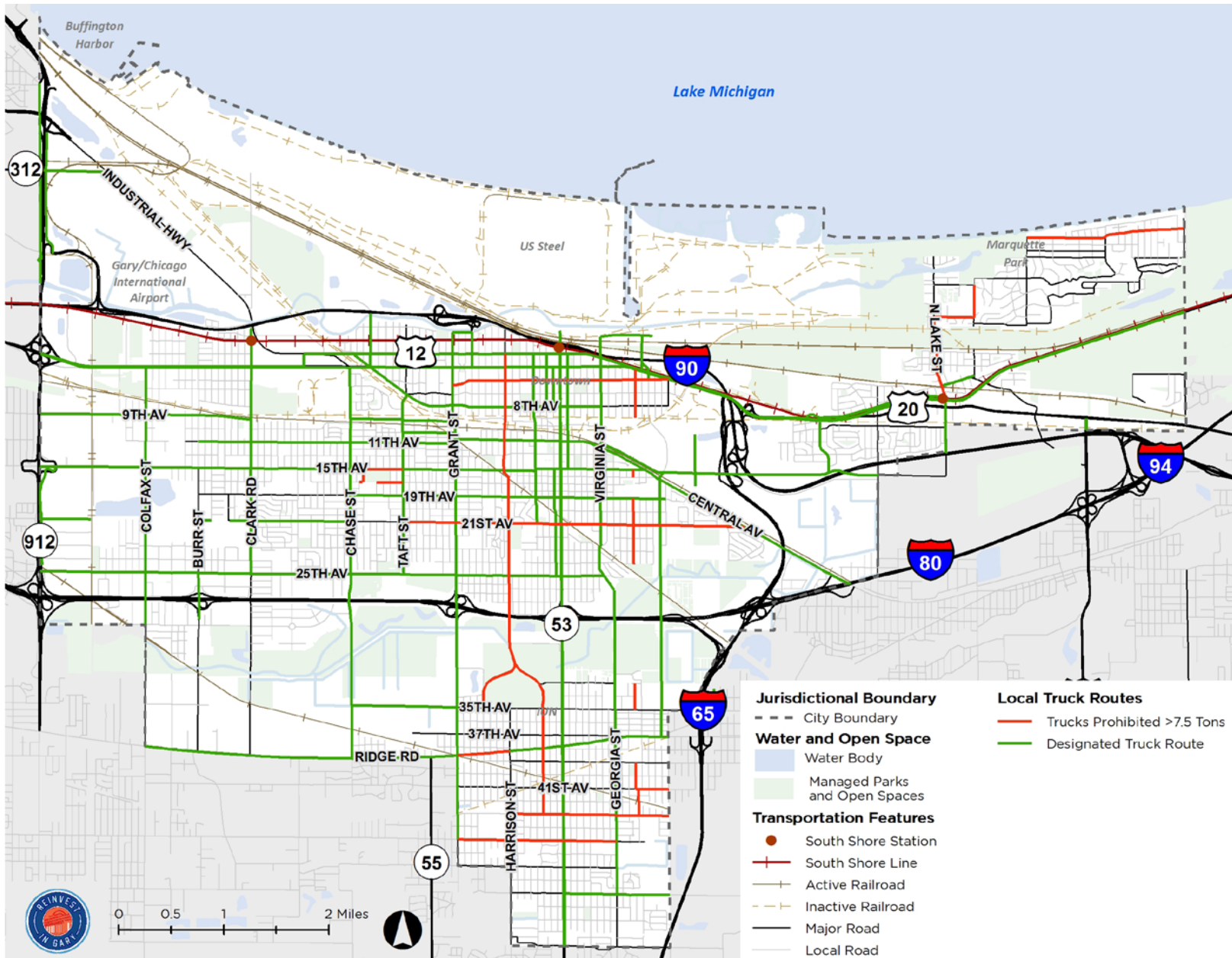
FIGURE 5-19. EXISTING ROADWAY NETWORK



Source*: INDOT 2015 (Indiana Map)

* Best available data at time of publication

FIGURE 5-20. TRUCK ROUTES



Source*: City of Gary

* Best available data at time of publication

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES

Walking and bicycling in Gary is challenging due to the general condition of the sidewalks and roadways and because very few city streets have been retrofitted to accommodate cyclists. Gary has an extensive network of sidewalks, approximately 500 miles, associated with its street grid. Like the local street network, the condition of sidewalks varies but generally sidewalk conditions are poor and continue to deteriorate due to a lack of maintenance. Dedicated on-street bicycle facilities within the city are limited to Marquette Park in Miller and certain trail segments that use an on-street component. Most streets in Gary are not designed to safely accommodate bicyclists. Despite the limited on-street facilities, Gary has 13 miles of open trails as shown in Figure 5-21. The trail system is owned, operated, and maintained by several entities including the Gary Parks Department, Lake County Park and Recreation Department, the Little Calumet River Basin, Indiana Dunes National Park and the Shirley Heinze Land Trust.

The 2005 Marquette Plan proposed the development of an interconnected, regional trail system. Part of this system lies within Gary and is identified as the Marquette Greenway Trail that runs along the lakeshore and the Grand Calumet River from County Line Road in Miller to Cline Avenue on the west side of Gary. A portion of the trail is constructed – from County Line Road to Grand Blvd (Miller Marquette Greenway Section) – but the remaining sections of the planned trail from Grand Blvd to Cline Avenue (Miller Woods Greenway and the Gary Greenway) have not been developed due to complex real estate issues associated with obtaining legal Right-of-Way (ROW), particularly through the Miller Woods section west of Grand Blvd in the vicinity of U.S. Steel that involves former/abandoned railroad ROW.

The Marquette Trail is part of the overall Green Link system. The Gary Green Link is a 30-mile multi-use trail vision circling the city and providing access to the Lake Michigan shoreline, Grand Calumet River, and the Little Calumet River. A portion of the trail has been developed with additional sections planned for completion.

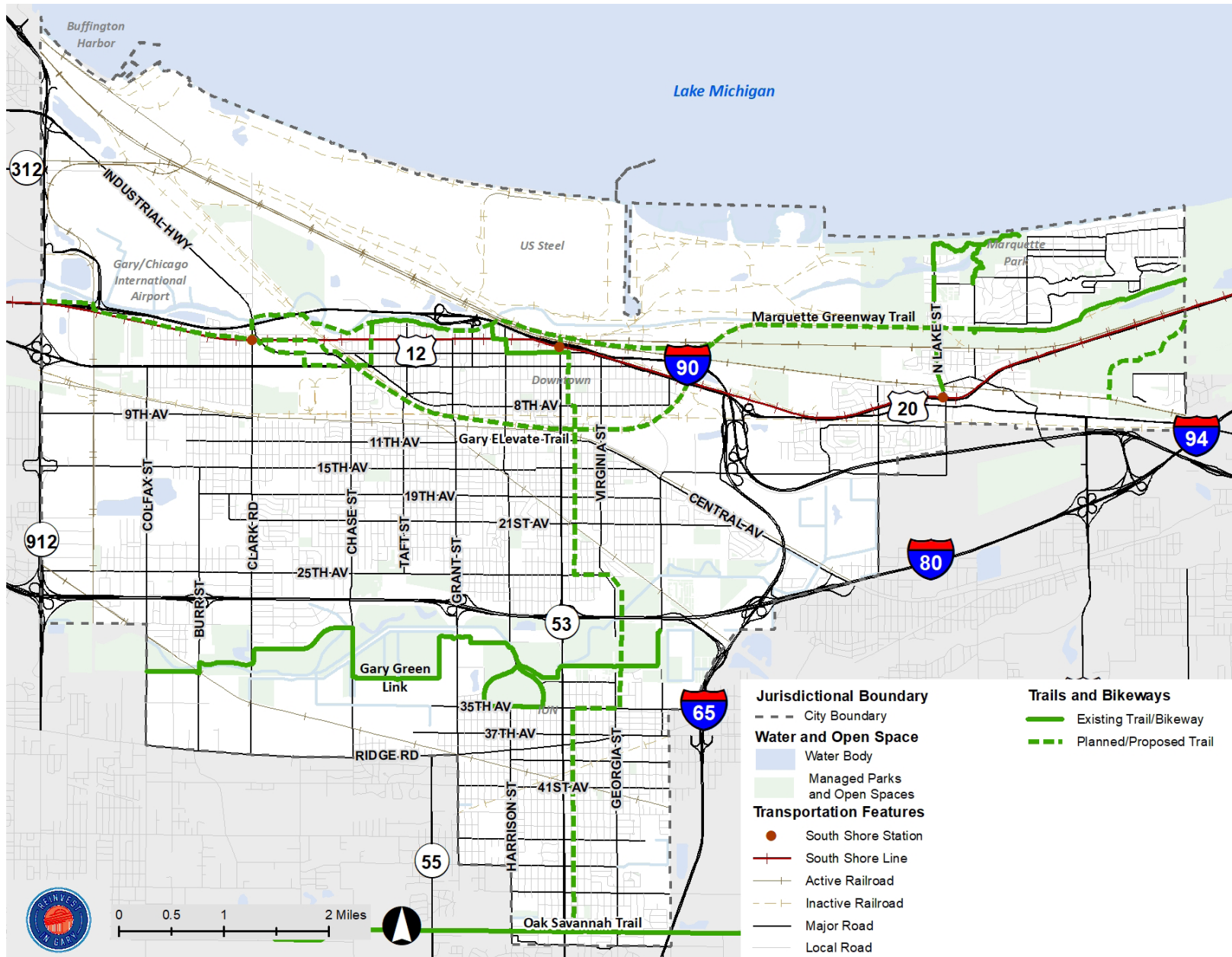
COMPLETE STREETS

The term “Complete Streets” refers to a balanced, multimodal transportation network that is designed to meet the needs of all users of streets including bicyclists, children, persons with disabilities, motorists, movers of commercial goods, pedestrians, public transit riders, and seniors. A complete street is one that provides safe and convenient travel in a manner that is suitable to the local context. A complete street may include: sidewalks, bike lanes (or wide paved shoulders), special bus lanes, comfortable and accessible public transportation stops, frequent and safe crossing opportunities, median islands, accessible pedestrian signals, curb extensions, narrower travel lanes, streetscapes, landscaping, lighting, and more. Complete Street policies are set at the state, regional, and local levels and are frequently supported by roadway design guidelines. Complete streets promote safety and active transportation.

ROAD DIET

Road diets involve the reconfiguration of existing roadways to reduce vehicular travel lanes to accommodate other transportation uses such as bike lanes, sidewalks, multi-use paths, and off-street parking. For instance, a road diet project could include reducing a four-lane roadway to two lanes with a center turn lane, allowing additional space for transit lanes, and/or bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Road diets are low cost, high value projects that enhance safety, increase access and mobility for all users and are often used in conjunction with “Complete Streets” policies and designs to maximize efficiency for all modes.

FIGURE 5-21. TRAIL AND BIKEWAY NETWORK



Also shown on the map is the Gary Elevate trail project, a broad-based immersive planning initiative that focuses on the redevelopment of an abandoned, elevated train line through the Midtown neighborhood of Gary. The trail would connect key neighborhoods and residents to other proposed trail extensions including the Marquette Trail and Gary Green Link Trail.

TRANSIT

Transit service in Gary has always been a local and regional transportation asset for access to employment, education, and services within the city and more regionally. The following section describes the transit network and services in Gary.

GPTC BUS SERVICE

Gary Public Transportation Corporation (GPTC) provides public transit service within the city. The City of Gary purchased Gary Intercity Lines in 1974 and created GPTC through enabling legislation. GPTC made regional transit a priority since the launch of the region's first modern intercity bus routes in 1996. It currently operates 12 routes in Northwest Indiana. Five of these comprise the local network - routes that operate completely within the City of Gary limits, as shown in Figure 5-22. The other seven regional network routes reach Calumet Township, Crown Point, East Chicago, Griffith, Hammond, Hobart, and Merrillville. Some of its recent improvements include more frequent service, infrastructure modernization, and improved connections. In 2018, GPTC introduced rapid bus service along Broadway from Downtown Gary to Merrillville, further described below. GPTC views its role as having a large stake in community development, employment, intermodal transit, and overall growth of the region.

BROADWAY METRO EXPRESS

Since the completion of the Livable Broadway Plan, the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) has taken the lead on capital improvements along the Broadway corridor - roadway resurfacing, installing "bypass lanes" that favor buses, and installing bus stop infrastructure in Gary and Merrillville. Gary,

LIVABLE BROADWAY PLAN

In 2013 GPTC received a grant to fund a mobility study of the Broadway corridor. When the planning effort was launched, it would include examining potential sustainability and land use issues on the corridor. The Livable Broadway Regional Plan ultimately recommended upgrading transit on Broadway in Gary and Merrillville, redesigning the road to be transit-friendly, and providing communities with a "toolbox" of ecological and transit-oriented land use efforts that would make Broadway livable and barrier-free. The multi-faceted approach was worthy of Honorable Mention for Outstanding Plan by the Indiana Planning Association in 2016.



Adam Benjamin Metro Center



Public art benches at bus stops along Broadway

Merrillville, and the Gary Stormwater Management District assisted in funding the bus stop infrastructure. GPTC received grant funding for operations of the service and, recognizing the regional impact on travel between Gary and other communities, the Town of Merrillville and Ivy Tech signed agreements to assist in funding feeder service. The Legacy Foundation also helped fund a contest for branding and corridor artwork to improve Broadway neighborhoods. In February 2018, Broadway Metro Express – Bmx for short – was finally launched.

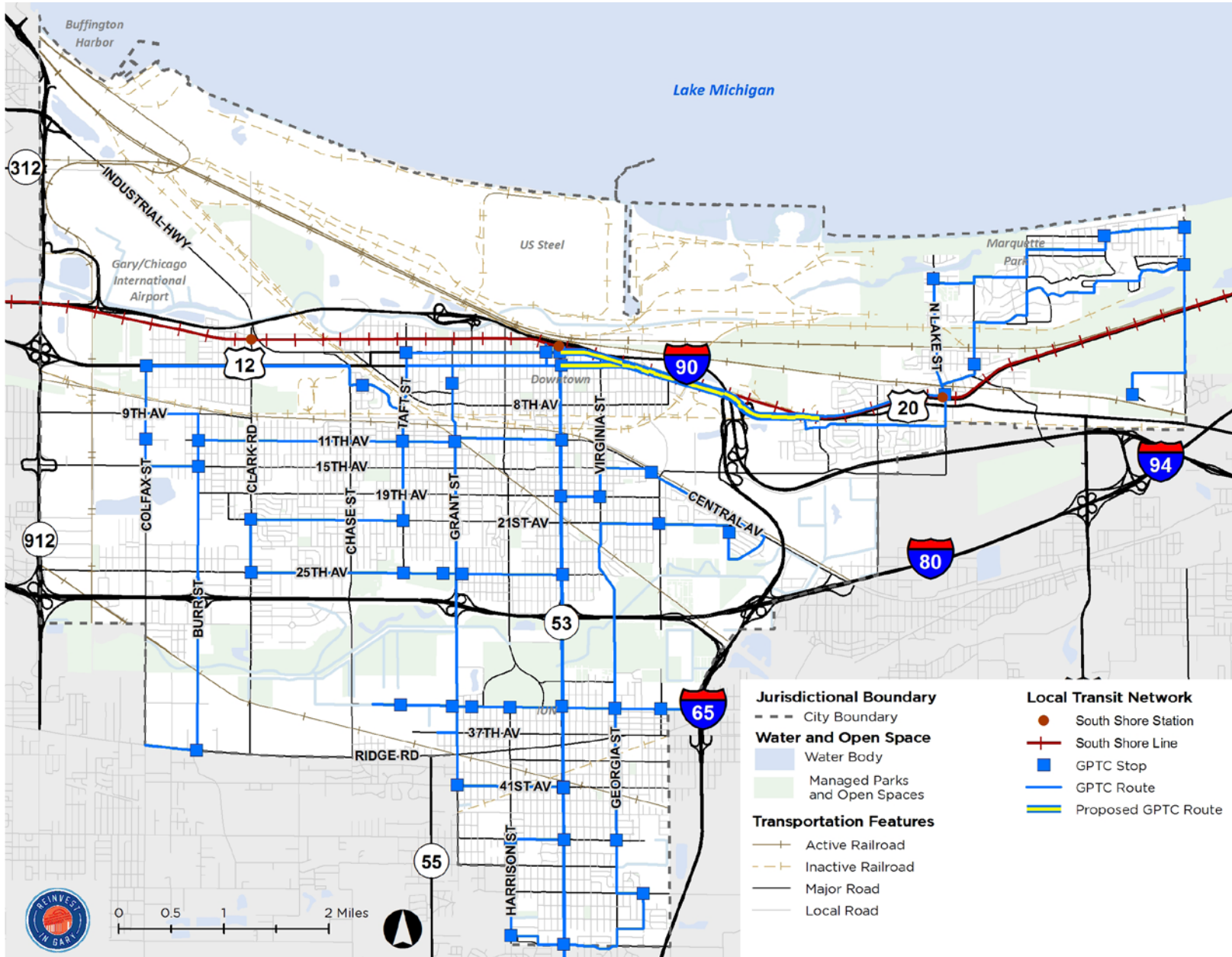
As the State’s first branded “rapid bus” service, the Bmx has brought light rail elements and improved service speed by incorporating limited stops and bus-only lanes at station approaches. In addition, substantial improvements have made to bus stops including prominent signage, sleek shelters, and artwork. Since its inception, four new Bmx stops have been requested (three in Gary and one in Merrillville). In addition, Indiana University Northwest and Ivy Tech jointly opened a new building designed to maximize transit, and other developers are expressing interest in coordinating site layout with transit access. Bmx ridership in 2018 was 218,350 total rides, up 33 percent from 2017.

PASSENGER RAIL

The South Shore Line (SSL) is a 90-mile electric-powered commuter rail line that operates from South Bend International Airport to Millennium Station in Downtown Chicago, Illinois. SSL is operated by the Northwest Indiana Commuter Transportation District (NICTD). The SSL has provided service between Gary and downtown Chicago for over 100 years. The SSL has three station locations in Gary:

- Gary/Chicago Airport (Clark Road)
- Gary Metro Center (Broadway and 4th)
- Lake Street/Miller (Lake Street and U.S. 12)

FIGURE 5-22. TRANSIT NETWORK



Source*: GPTC

* Best available data at time of publication

Total weekday ridership from the Gary stations is approximately 1,100 passengers and the average commute to Chicago is a little over an hour.⁶ Figure 5-23 shows the South Shore Line and stations.

While Amtrak passenger rail also runs through the City of Gary (on shared rail lines with CSX), it does not stop within the city. The nearest station is located in Chicago at Union Station.

FREIGHT RAIL

Given its proximity to Chicago, an extensive rail network has been developed in Northwest Indiana over the past 100 years to accommodate freight movement. There is an extensive railroad network within the City of Gary, largely owned and operated by three Class I railroads: Norfolk Southern (NS), CSX, and Canadian National (CN), along with numerous beltlines. CN has recently invested over \$150M in its Gary Kirk Yard operations near Buffington Harbor and U.S. Steel, north of the Gary/Chicago International Airport.

RAIL CROSSINGS AND BRIDGES

According to the Federal Rail Administration (FRA) there are approximately 142 at-grade rail and roadway crossings within the City of Gary; 118 are public crossings and another 24 are private. FRA's database does not differentiate between active versus inactive track lines. At-grade crossings include heavy rail, commuter rail (South Shore Line), and passenger rail (Amtrak's use of CSX's line). These at-grade crossings impede mobility for the driving public, freight and goods movements, emergency service providers, bicycles, and pedestrians and present safety concerns for everyone. Abandoned railroad bridges also pose a concern; many are in very poor condition and in some cases

⁶ Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District Double-Track Environmental Analysis. Retrieved from <https://www.doubletrack-nwi.com/docs/environmental-assessment-appendicies>

the presence of abandoned railroad bridges impede truck movements creating impediments for under-utilized properties or properties available for redevelopment.

FRA's 2019 Web Accident Prediction System (WBAPS) Report (FRA, May 2019) provides five years of accident data (2014-2018) for 94 at-grade public crossings in the City of Gary. A total of 23 at-grade crossing locations in Gary report accidents. Six locations reported two or more accidents, including:

- Lake Street crossing (155637W) with CSX – 7 accidents
- Clark Road crossing with NS (522646H) – 5 accidents
- Old Hobart Road crossing with CSX (155633U) – 3 accidents
- Clay Street crossing with Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District (870879M) – 2 accidents
- County Line Road crossing with NS (522639X) – 2 accidents
- Grant Street / Ridge Road crossing with NS (478677M) – 2 accidents

An additional 17 crossings report at least one accident between 2014-2018. Rail crossings and rail crossing accident data are shown in Figure 5-25 and Figure 5-26.



Freight rail underpass

FIGURE 5-23. SOUTH SHORE LINE MAP



Source*: South Shore Line

* Best available data at time of publication

FIGURE 5-24. REGIONAL FREIGHT RAIL NETWORK



Source*: Chicago South Shore & South Bend Railroad (www.anacostia.com/railroads/css)

* Best available data at time of publication

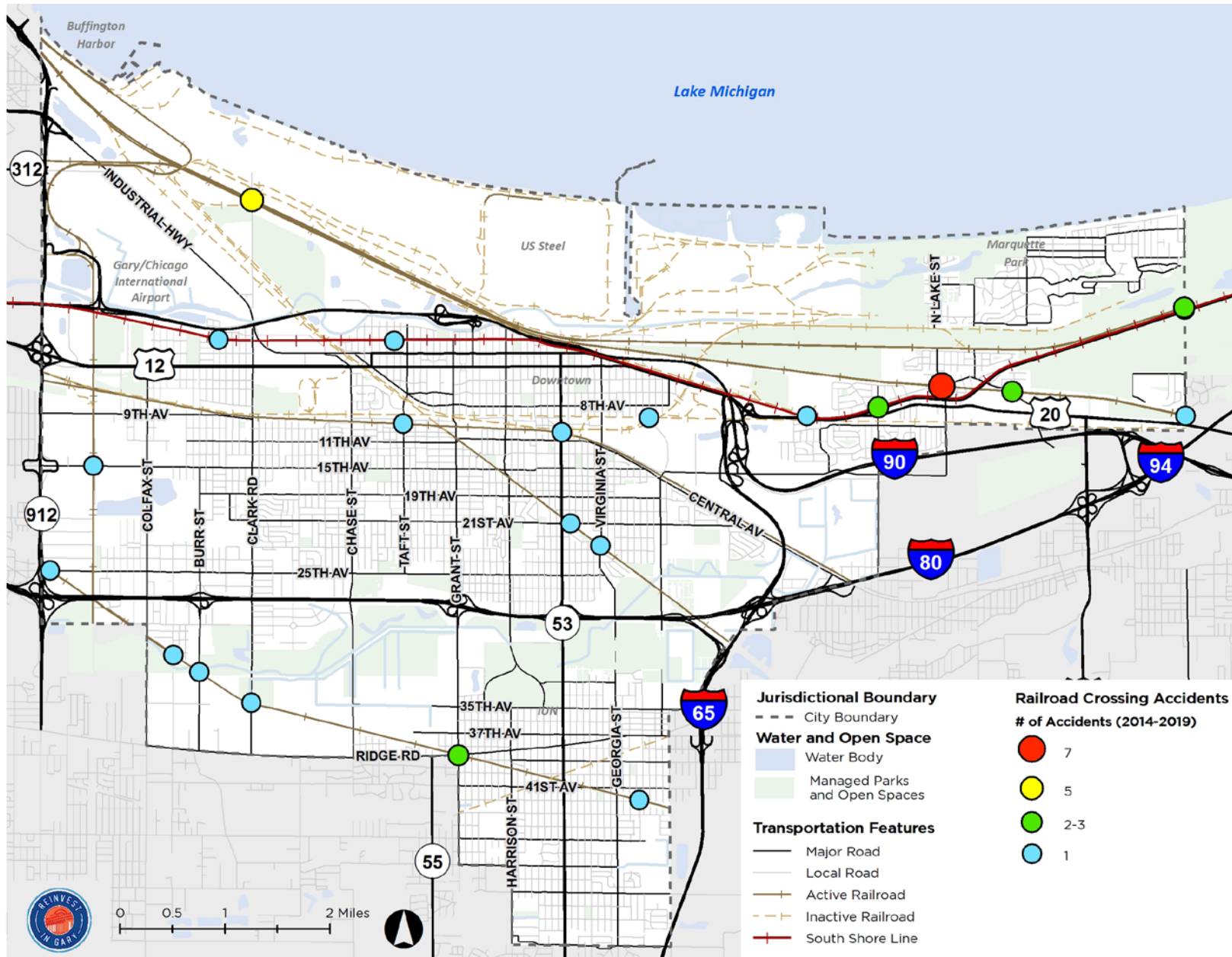
FIGURE 5-25. RAIL CROSSINGS



Source*: Federal Rail Administration Crossing Inventory

* Best available data at time of publication

FIGURE 5-26. RAIL CROSSING ACCIDENTS



Source*: Federal Rail Administration Accident Reports

* Best available data at time of publication

BUFFINGTON HARBOR (PORT)

Buffington Harbor is located in the northwest corner of the City on Lake Michigan and was built in the late 1920's to facilitate shipping from the Universal Portland Cement Company. The harbor is approximately 55 acres with a 2,000-foot pier and 1,200 feet of breakwater (including a small lighthouse). A portion of the harbor was sold in 1995 to facilitate the development of water-based casino operations. Access to the Buffington Harbor area, including the Casino was recently improved by the development of Buffington Harbor Drive off Cline Avenue which included a new grade separation (bridge) and roadway improvements.

Access and mobility within the Buffington Harbor industrial area is a challenge due to the presence of heavy trucks, severe flooding, and low clearance bridges. Most trucks enter and exit the Buffington Harbor area (including U.S. Steel) via Clark Road which includes five railroad crossings. The Clark Road crossing has been identified as the most dangerous at-grade crossing in the State of Indiana and in the top ten nationwide. Further, Buffington Harbor Road that runs through the industrial area requires rehabilitation and upgrades including intersection improvements to better accommodate truck traffic, particularly oversized loads (height and weight).

Casino operations currently dominate the use of Buffington Harbor proper. These land uses impede industrial use of the harbor and further development of the port and port-related facilities within the Buffington Harbor industrial area. However, there are significant changes proposed for the harbor and its surrounding area. Legislation was recently passed by the Indiana State Assembly that will allow casino operations in Gary to relocate from Buffington Harbor. This enabling legislation will facilitate the expansion of the port and redevelopment and industrial expansion within the larger Buffington Harbor industrial area over the next few years.

GARY PORT AUTHORITY

The Port Authority of Gary, Indiana (GPA) was established by Ordinance No. 5247 on February 1, 1977, and is codified in Sec. 2-1469, et seq., of the City of Gary, Indiana (the "City") Code. However, after being established, the GPA went dormant, concurrent with the national period of port stagnation. In 2017, the GPA was re-activated and statutorily authorized to encourage port development within the municipal port district, which encompasses the entire the City of Gary; not just water-based port infrastructure in Buffington Harbor. The GPA has broad governmental and business enterprise powers, for both maritime and non-maritime activity and may be leveraged by the City of Gary and its affiliated agencies as an economic development and multimodal transportation tool.

To guide the GPA over the next five years, a Development Plan Framework communicates the GPA's statutorily authorized mission, vision, and governing authority. The GPA's Development Plan Framework (GPA Framework) also documents the priority initiatives the GPA intends to advance, as a part of establishing itself as a land and maritime presence. The GPA Board of Directors is currently in the process of drafting the Development Framework Plan.

GARY/CHICAGO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

The Gary/Chicago International Airport is located in the northwest corner of the city just north of I-90 (Indiana Toll Road) and the intersection of SR 912 (see Figure 5-27). Opened in 1954, the 663-acre airport is 25 miles from the Chicago Loop and often referred to as Chicago's unofficial 3rd airport after Midway and O'Hare International. The airport is easily accessible by Interstates I-90, I-80/94, I-65, and SR 912 (Cline Ave) and located in the immediate vicinity of three Class I railroad lines and Buffington Harbor on Lake Michigan. The airport is a critical regional transportation asset and an engine for economic growth within Gary and the region.

The airport has undergone significant changes since the development of the 2001 Airport Master Plan and the 2008 City of Gary Comprehensive Plan. The airport has completed over \$50M of infrastructure improvements including the long-awaited extension of the main runway in 2015, the construction of a new U.S. Customs and Border Control (CBP) facility in 2018, and various runway and apron rehabilitation projects. The private Fixed Base Operators (FBOs) at the Airport have also invested millions of dollars into their facilities including Gary Jet Center's \$3M Corporate Flight Center completed in 2017. The airport has robust highway access and Airport Road, the primary local route to the airport, has undergone substantial improvements. Extensive rail lines are located immediately to the north.

Existing land uses and environmental constraints around the airport present a challenge for expansion planning. Currently, the airport is surrounded by private landowners some of which have operations that are incompatible with airport operations or complicate airport expansion. Further, many properties around

the airport have known environmental contamination or are reputed to have environmental contamination (brownfields). Given its proximity to Lake Michigan and the Grand Calumet River, the area around the airport has a high water table, existing wetlands, and historic remnants of dune and swale habitat which is highly valued for conservation and protection.



Gary/Chicago International Airport
Photo Credit: The Chicago Crusader

MASTER PLAN

The airport is currently in the process of updating its Master Plan (expected late 2019). The new plan will provide an aviation forecast for the next 20 years and align the goals and objectives of the airport administration, operators, City of Gary, and other key stakeholders. The Master Plan will also outline opportunities to improve both airfield and terminal area facilities to meet the aviation and transportation needs of northwest Indiana and the greater Chicago metropolitan region.

CARGO-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT (COD)

Cargo-oriented development (COD) is a planning and zoning framework (similar to TOD) that focuses on using freight transportation or logistic clusters to spur development, capture efficiencies, create jobs and generate economic vitality. The purpose of a COD framework is to increase local employment opportunities by bringing distribution and industrial operations together to serve industry needs. By improving abandoned lands and developing vacant properties with COD in mind, employment and living quality is improved within these clusters. This concept is similar to transit-oriented development.

FIGURE 5-27. AIRPORT AND PORT



Source*: City of Gary

* Best available data at time of publication

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Gary has a robust multimodal transportation network comprised of roads, rail, airport, transit, and port facilities. Regional access and mobility are well served by Interstate and Highway access and heavy rail.
- Much of the local street network, including sidewalks, suffer from deferred maintenance and drainage issues.
- There are few on-street bicycle facilities in the city. Major corridors and key streets in neighborhoods would benefit from “Complete Streets” redesign and/or Road Diets.
- Gary has an extensive network of active rail lines that intersect with roadways creating at-grade intersections that pose safety concerns and impede mobility. The remedy for at-grade crossings include safety improvements, crossing closures, or grade separation. Many city streets already dead-end at railroad tracks and more are proposed. Grade-separation projects involve either bridging the road or rail or developing an underpass. These projects are very expensive and time consuming to design and construct. Many rail crossings in the City would benefit from safety improvements. There are also several abandoned railroad bridges that are in very poor condition and/or impede redevelopment by blocking potential truck movements due to their low profile.
- Local and limited regional transit (Gary, Merrillville and Hammond) is provided by the Gary Public Transportation Corporation. However, the lack of a true regional transit system and lack of vehicle ownership limits the ability of Gary residents to access jobs, goods, and services within Northwest Indiana.
- The Gary-Chicago International Airport and Buffington Harbor are underutilized assets. Enabling legislation to relocate casino operations in Gary provides an opportunity to redevelop Buffington Harbor by expanding existing port operations, and develop deep port facilities and intermodal/logistics facilities.

TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT (TOD)

Transit-oriented development (TOD) is a planning and zoning framework that promotes dense, walkable, mixed-use development (commercial, residential, recreational) around transit stations. Successful TOD projects focus on community context, and convenient access to transit fosters development, while promoting densities to encourage people to use the transit system. Focusing growth around transit stations capitalizes on public investments in transit and provides opportunities for revitalization, congestion relief and leveraging of public and private investment.

GARY'S TRANSPORTATION NETWORK: WHERE ARE WE HEADED?

Transportation and infrastructure planning, projects, and priorities should align with land use and economic development initiatives. Major improvements should be tied to key corridors, tax, and/or job-generating assets, and improve mobility for people and goods. Significant funding decisions have been made and projects are currently in the queue with both state and federal partners, however the City can continue to look for more opportunities to maximize its transportation assets.

KEY PRIORITIES

- 1. Focus Investment to Leverage Gary's Position in the Regional Transportation Network.** Targeted investments can take advantage of Gary's unique link in the regional network. One hundred years ago, the Northwest Indiana Region built around Gary. As a result, all roads lead through Gary (both literally and figuratively). The City can leverage its position to ensure investment continues to be made in Gary as the regional transportation network modernizes.
- 2. Prioritize Accessibility and Connectivity to Employment.** Land use policies and investments should continue to provide the greatest returns on investment. Gary's public transit should enable connectivity to job centers; bike routes should facilitate alternative methods to access job centers and transit for those residents without a car; land use policies and zoning regulations should facilitate transit-oriented development around Gary's major transit stops and cargo-oriented development in Buffington Harbor.
- 3. Modernize the City's infrastructure to get the Largest Return on Investment.** NIRPC's Complete Streets policy serves as a guide to ensure multiple modes of transportation are considered when new infrastructure is installed or upgraded. This concept can be followed with better coordination between utility providers, the Gary Sanitary District, and the City of Gary. Excess infrastructure can be identified and investments in isolated neighborhoods can be avoided to the benefit of taxpayers as Gary embraces the changes that affect the city's built footprint.
- 4. Integrate Infrastructure Data by Utilizing G-STADS.** Continue to utilize and invest in the City's central data system network, shared with the Gary Sanitary District, to better coordinate investments in areas where they make the biggest impacts to the infrastructure system and on residents' collective quality of life.

KEY INDICATORS

The following is a list of key indicators that will be used going forward to understand trends, evaluate progress, and guide future decision-making as it relates to Gary's transportation context.

- **Funding.** Amount of funding secured and expended for infrastructure, road maintenance, green infrastructure, and other related transportation projects through state, federal, private, and grant funding. This measures the City's ability to match public investments with priorities as articulated in this document.
- **Completed Projects.** Projects completed by the Gary Sanitary District, City of Gary, GPTC, or partner organizations in any given year. This and funding are the key indicators to track progress in modernizing Gary's outdated, yet robust, transportation network.
- **Transit Ridership.** Number of riders using GPTC bus and BRT service.

*Who's
Lovin' You?*



Social Context

As the City's population and resources have declined, residents have been faced with an increasingly poor quality of life, including public safety issues, low workforce participation, low educational attainment, and significant health issues. Improving public safety, health, education, and access to jobs consistently came up as a community priority and are critical to Gary's recovery and long-term prosperity. As the City evolves, it must protect and enhance the assets that make it a great place to live, work, and recreate.

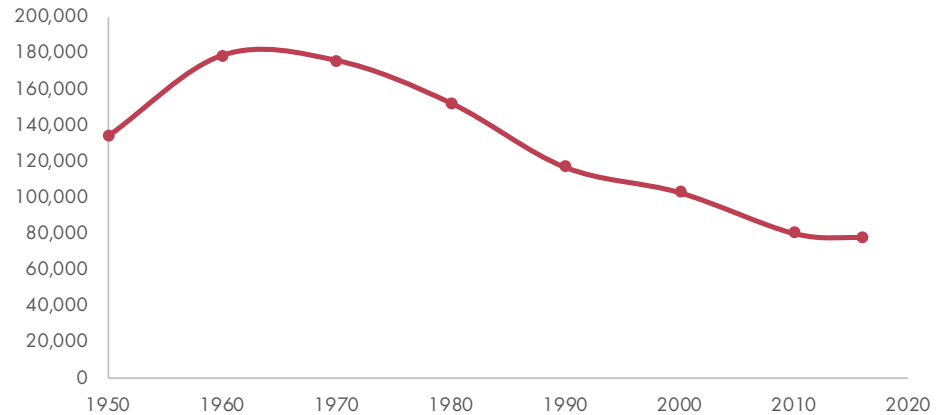
This section provides a general overview of the current demographic, social, educational, and cultural conditions in the City of Gary. This includes age and gender, race and ethnicity, education, health, safety, arts, and culture. Data is drawn from the U.S. Census, the American Community Survey (which tabulates socio-economic data between the decennial census), and the CDC 500 Cities Project. It also includes key strategies to promote a safe, healthy, and equitable community for current and future Gary residents.

at-a-glance

77,858 people live in Gary

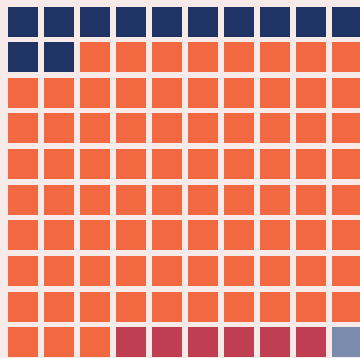


POPULATION OVER TIME



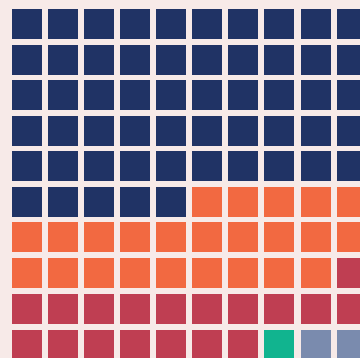
RACE / ETHNICITY

Gary



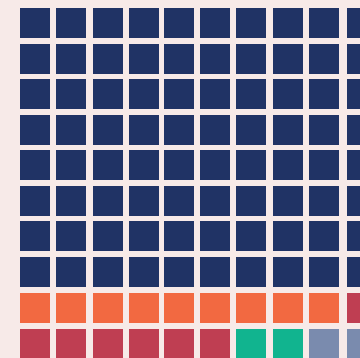
- White (12%)
- Black (81%)
- Hispanic/Latino (6%)
- Asian (<1%)
- Other/2 or More Races (1%)

Lake County



- White (55%)
- Black (24%)
- Hispanic/Latino (18%)
- Asian (1%)
- Other/2 or More Races (2%)

Indiana

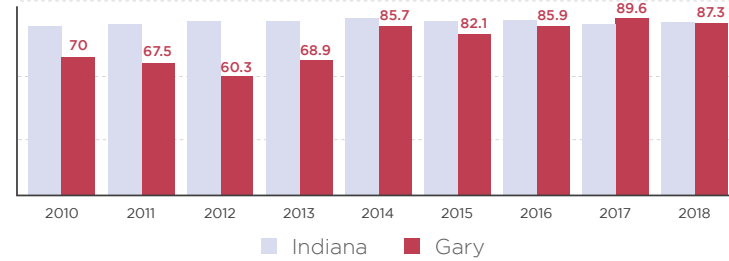


- White (80%)
- Black (9%)
- Hispanic/Latino (7%)
- Asian (2%)
- Other/2 or More Races (2%)

ADULTS WITH A COLLEGE DEGREE



HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATE

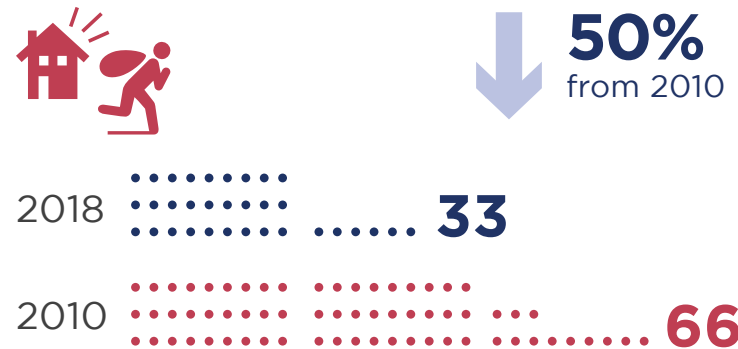


K-12 SCHOOL ENROLLMENT

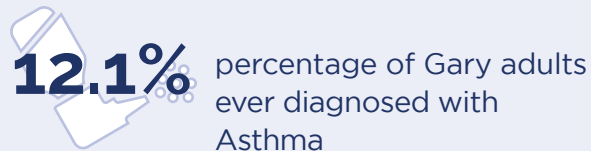


PROPERTY CRIME RATE

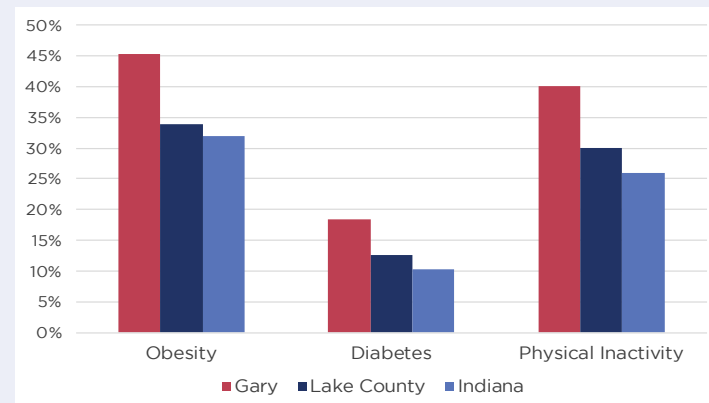
Number of crimes per 1,000 residents



% WITHOUT HEALTH INSURANCE



LIFESTYLE HEALTH RISK FACTORS



DEMOGRAPHICS

Understanding Gary’s demographics will help planners, public health professionals and city decision makers plan for change, and target appropriate programs and services. Information on age and sex of a population are important because people of different ages and gender have different health needs. For example, women of child-bearing age may have specific maternal health needs, while senior adults are considered more vulnerable and may have more chronic health issues.

Race and ethnicity also play a role in determining health outcomes due to various distinct social, economic, and environmental factors. Knowing the racial composition of a community can provide context about culturally-appropriate solutions. Current population demographics are compared to past numbers, as well as comparisons to Indiana and Lake County to give perspective on the contrast between Gary and the neighboring region.

Although Gary has seen significant population decline over the last 50 years, the rate of decline is slowing and the population seems to be stabilizing. Between 2010 and 2016, the total population declined by about three percent, as compared to a 22 percent population decline between 2000 and 2010. The current population of Gary is just under 80,000 people.

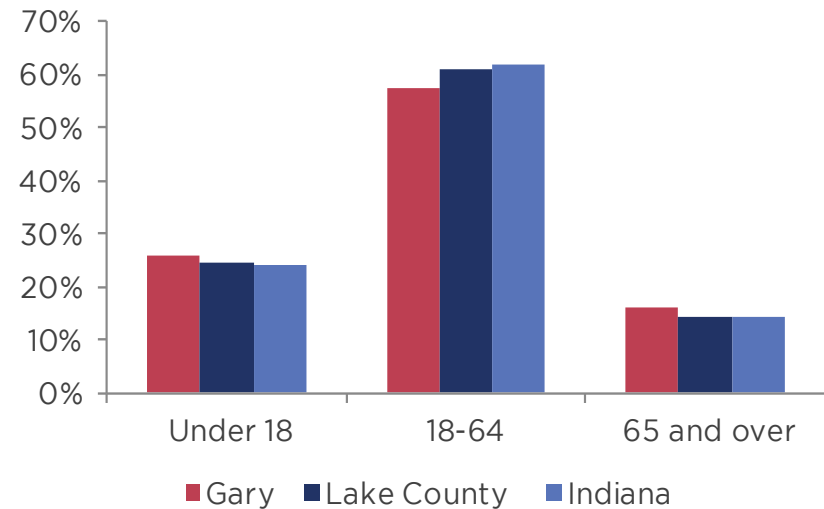
Gary is a predominately African-American community. The majority of the population, 81 percent, identifies as Black, compared to 24 percent for Lake County and nine percent for Indiana.

The population of Gary contains a greater percentage of both younger (under 18) and older residents (over 65) than the county and state. Paralleling national trends, the city has seen a shift in age distribution in recent years, with working age residents leaving Gary, and older residents aging in place

(see Figure 5-28.). In addition, of the total households in Gary with children under 18, approximately 6,000 or 57 percent are headed by single parents, making access to childcare and after school programs a high priority.

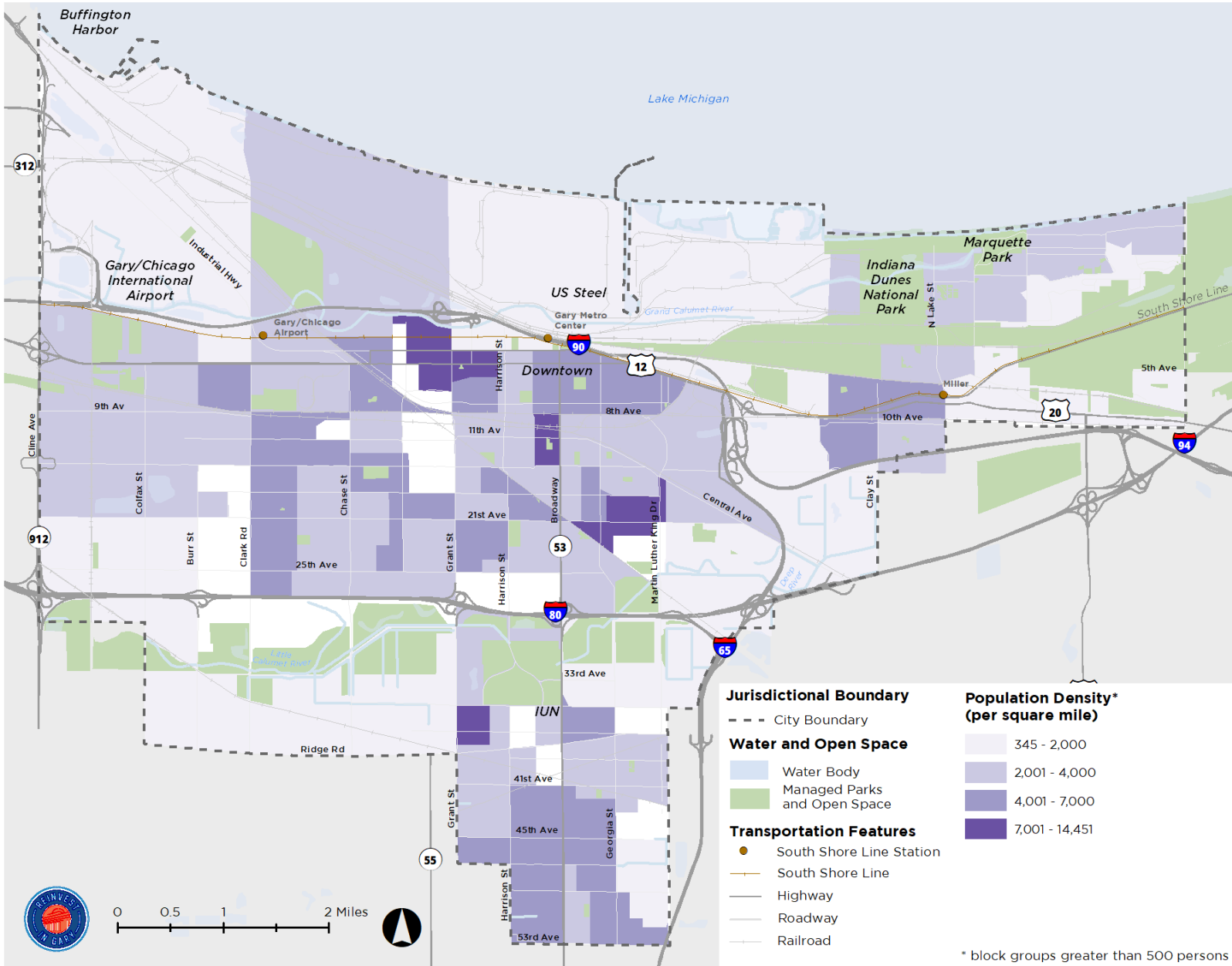
In 2000, according to the U.S. Census the City of Gary’s largest household segment was the “baby boomer” generation, or those born between 1946 and 1964. Gary’s aging population will continue to grow as other segments decline, as “boomers” age in place, younger residents move away, and the pace of new residents moving in continues to slow.

FIGURE 5-28. AGE OF POPULATION



Source: 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

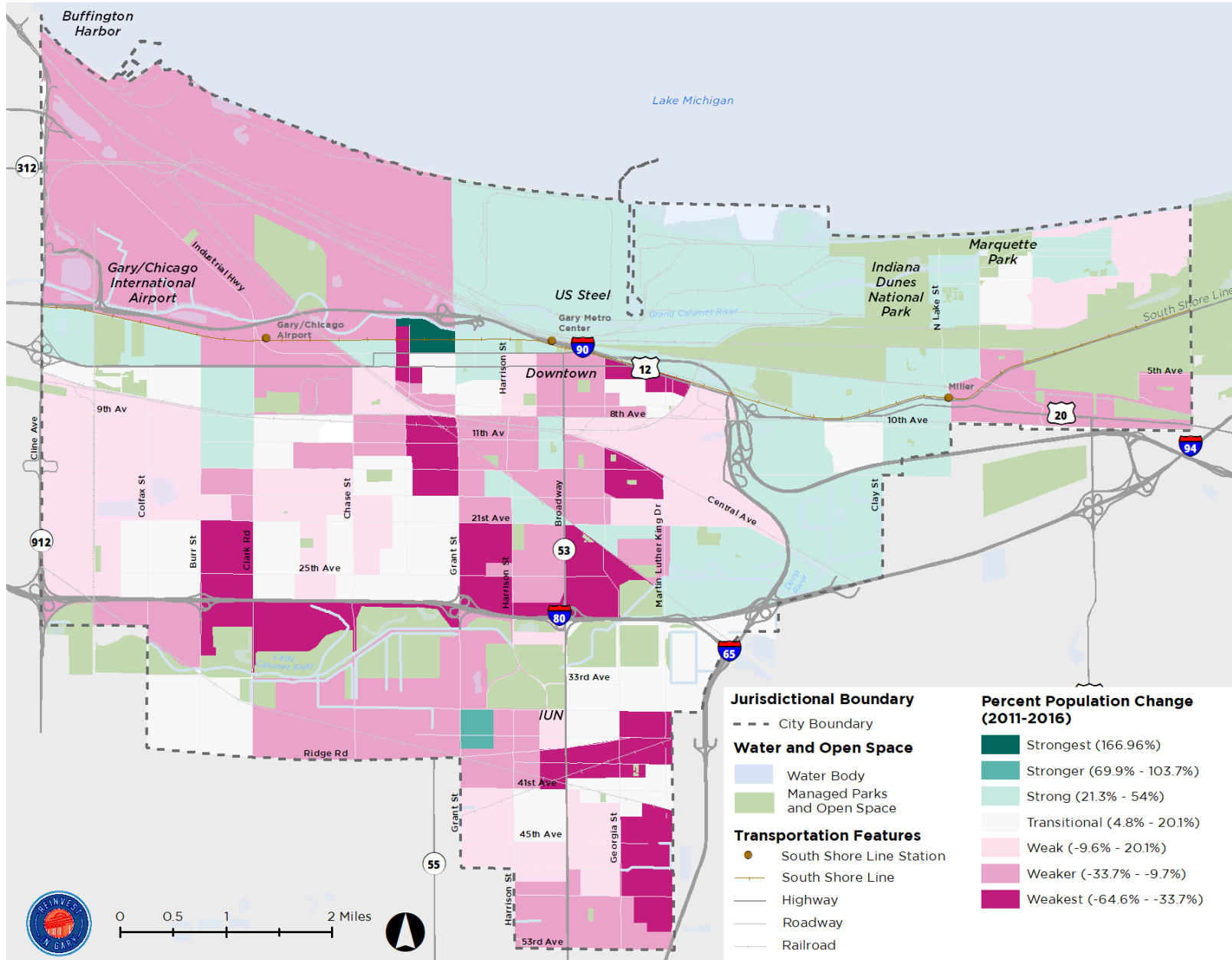
FIGURE 5-29. POPULATION DENSITY



Source*: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS)

* Best available data at time of publication

FIGURE 5-30. PERCENT POPULATION CHANGE 2011-2016



Source*: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS)

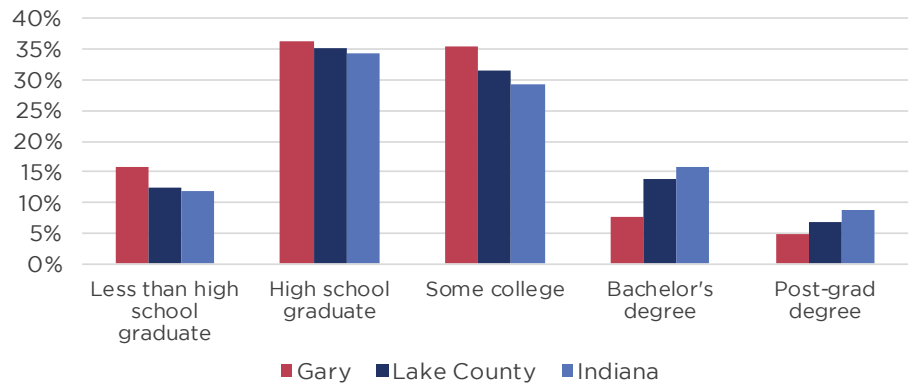
* Best available data at time of publication

EDUCATION AND INCOME

As the overall population of the city has declined, so has school enrollment in Gary. The K-12 school enrollment for 2018-2019 was approximately 13,136 students (K-12 School Enrollment - Indiana Department of Education 2018-2019), compared to 17,518 in 2010 (ACS 2010 5-year Estimates). Of that number, nearly half the city’s children attend charter schools, while others attend schools in adjacent cities. Access to quality education remains an issue in Gary. In 2017 the State tasked an emergency management team to run the Gary school district – fixing buildings, improving academics and tackling its debts in hopes of attracting students back to the district. However, confidence in the school district remains low. Gary Community School Corporation (GCSC) has closed a number of schools between 2008 and 2018, and Gary has been without a public middle school since Williams Annex closed in December 2016. Figure 5-4 shows the active and inactive schools within the city.

Overall educational attainment levels in Gary lag behind the County, Chicago metro region, and state. As shown in Figure 5-31, the percentage of the population with a college degree is only 13 percent as compared to 21 percent for Lake County and 25 percent for the state. Educational attainment is even higher in the Chicago metro area, with 37 percent of the population holding a bachelors degree or higher. This puts Gary residents at a significant disadvantage when competing for jobs in the region.

FIGURE 5-31. EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT



Source: 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Increased levels of education have been associated with increased income, higher levels of nutrition and physical fitness, and better health outcomes.

A family of two college graduates earns on average over \$30,000 more than a family of two high school graduates. Household median income in Gary is approximately \$28,895, approximately half that of Lake County. This is further compounded by the fact that median household income in Gary has fallen by 26 percent since 1999.

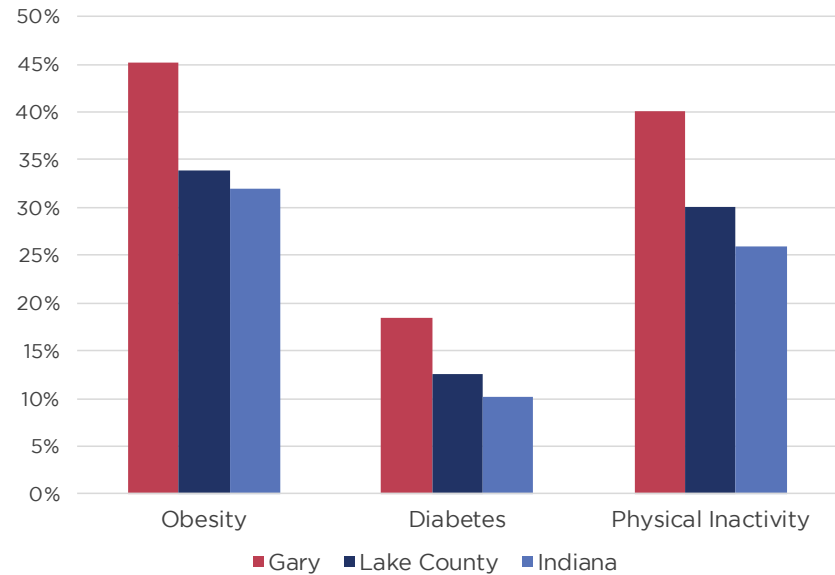
Poverty and income are strongly associated with a person’s health. Mortality and morbidity rates typically increase for people with lower incomes, creating health disparities. Likewise, poor health can contribute to reduced income, limiting workforce participation and contributing to the phenomena known as the “poverty-trap.” As income inequity continues to grow, it is likely that health disparities will also increase over time.

COMMUNITY HEALTH

A community’s overall health depends on many factors. Eating well, staying active, and seeing a doctor all influence health. Health, however, is also influenced by access to social and economic opportunities, the quality of education, neighborhood conditions, workplace safety, and the cleanliness of water and air, among others. These conditions influence why some people are healthier than others, and why where people live and work matter to community health.

Measures of health status provide information on the health-related quality of life for Gary residents. Self-perceived health status is a measure of how a person perceives his or her health and is a useful indicator of health, allowing comparisons across different populations and geographies. Individuals may choose excellent, very good, good, fair, or poor when responding to this survey question. Figure 5-33 shows the proportion of adults over age 18 who report poor physical health. The map illustrates significant differences across the city in terms of reported health status.

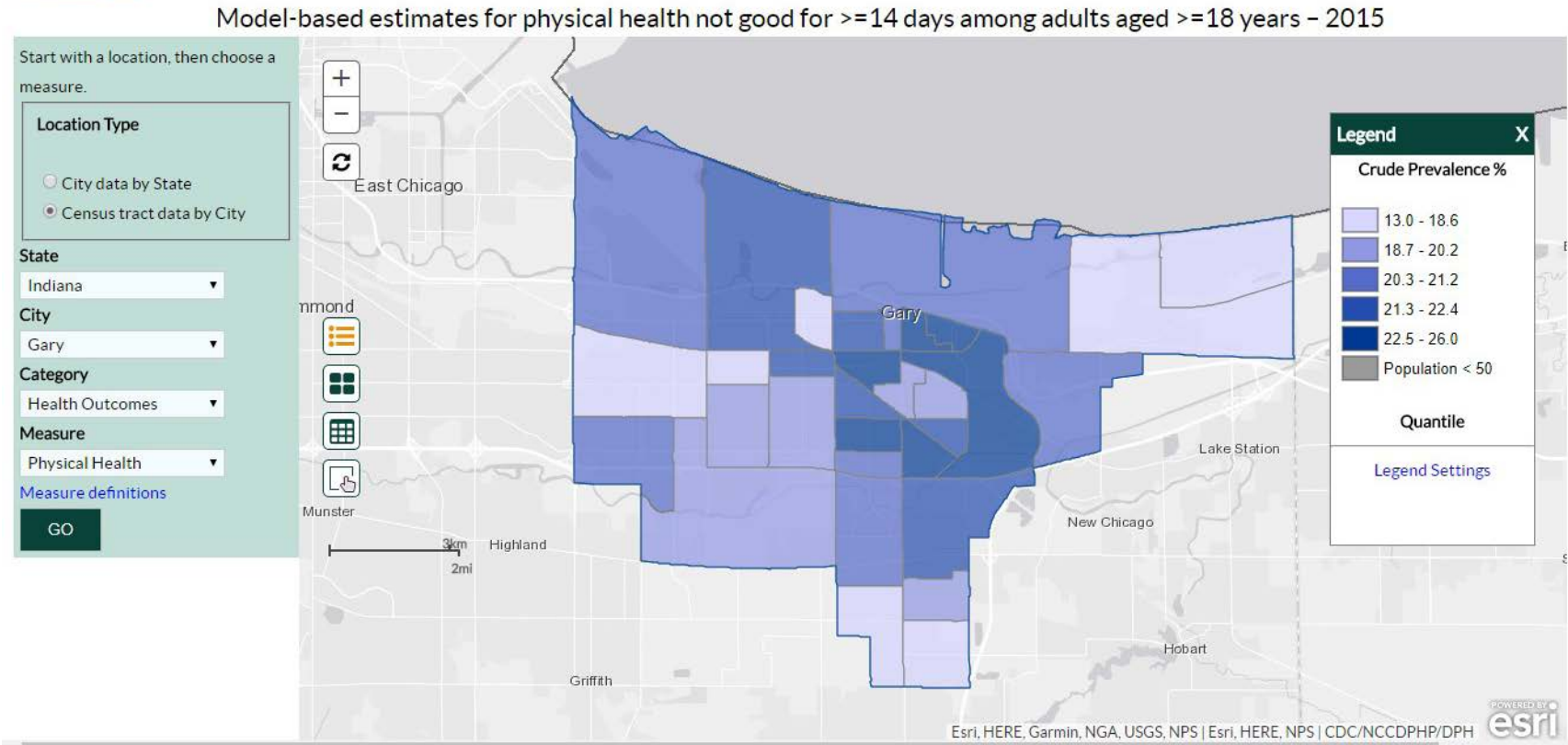
FIGURE 5-32. MODIFIABLE LIFESTYLE HEALTH RISK FACTORS



Source: Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, CDC 2015

Quality of life in Gary is dramatically impacted by public health factors. Gary ranks high in modifiable lifestyle health risk factors such as obesity, diabetes, and physical inactivity, particularly when compared to rates for the County and state (see Figure 5-32). The top three causes of death – chronic lower respiratory disease heart disease, and stroke – have some of the same risk factors, including poor diet and lack of physical activity. Better access to nutritious food and more opportunities for physical activity could reduce Gary residents’ vulnerability to these diseases. Poverty, low levels of education, and lack of access to health care may also contribute to these causes of death. Unfortunately, a significant number of Gary residents, approximately 26 percent, are uninsured, which further contributes to poor health outcomes in the city.

FIGURE 5-33. PROPORTION OF GARY RESIDENTS WHO REPORT POOR PHYSICAL HEALTH



Source*: CDC 500 Cities Project

* Best available data at time of publication

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Environmental health covers a wide range of topics that include the physical, chemical, and biological factors external to a person that impact overall human health. The subject includes air pollution, the quality of drinking water, exposure to chemicals in building and cleaning materials, exposure to soils containing toxic substances, and other similar exposures. Understanding environmental health conditions is a complex problem. There are tens of thousands of substances in our environment. Some of these substances may be harmless, while others are highly toxic; some may cause short-term health issues while exposure to others may cause long-term, chronic health impacts that could lead to death.

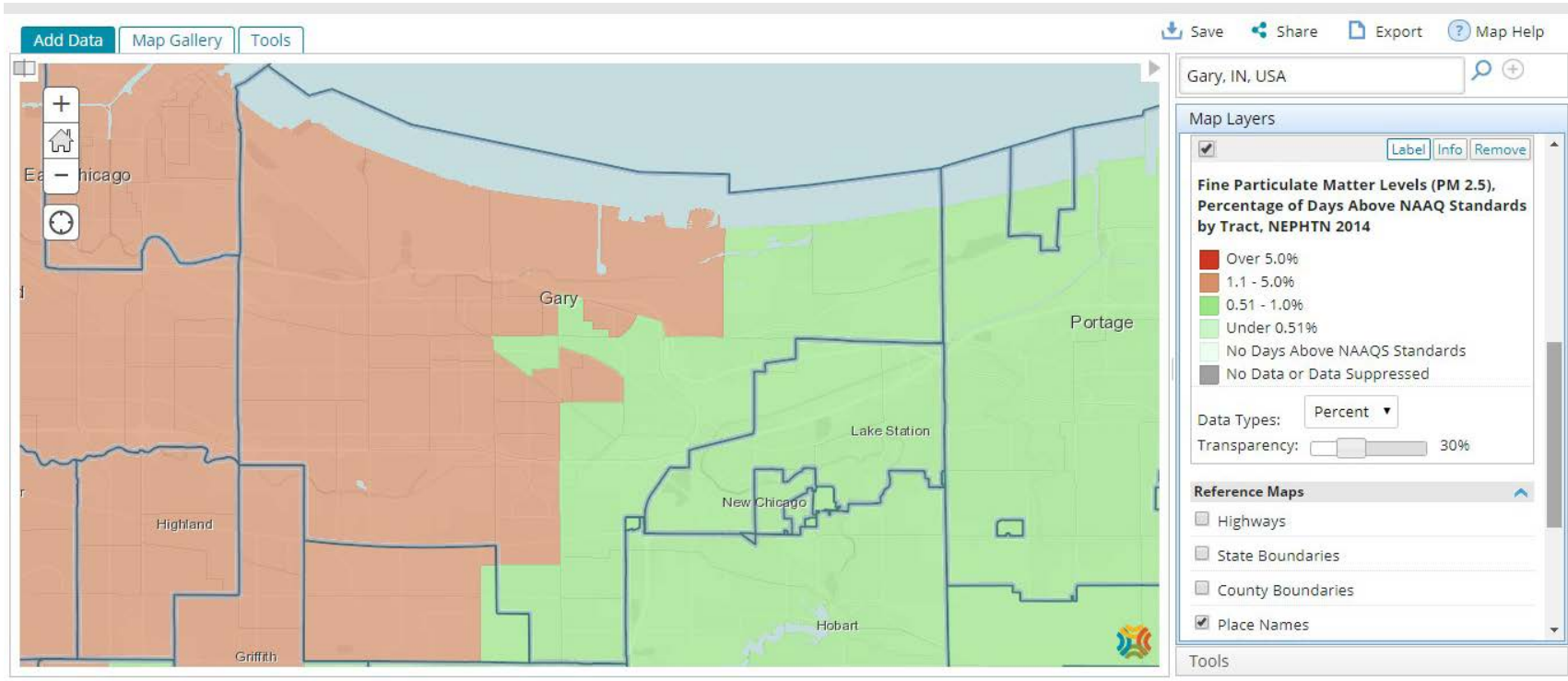
High concentrations of heavy manufacturing uses combined with heavy traffic on I-90, I-80, I-94, and I-65 contribute to poor air quality days, which can result in respiratory illness, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, and cancer. Fine particulate matter can cause asthma attacks in children, in addition to impaired lung function, premature death and death from cardiovascular diseases, and cardiovascular morbidity. While children, youth, and the elderly are among the most vulnerable, all community members are at risk. Figure 5-34 shows percentage of days over national air quality standards for fine particulate matter in Gary.

Gary residents, as well as Lake County residents, also suffer from high rates of asthma. Asthma is a chronic lung disease that includes inflammation and intermittent narrowing of the airways. Asthma can cause repeated episodes of wheezing, chest tightness, shortness of breath, and coughing. Asthma attacks are triggered by a number of factors, including smog, dust, pollen, and smoke. Over 12 percent of adults in Gary are asthma sufferers with significant differences by neighborhood in the city (Figure 5-35).



Air pollution from heavy industry

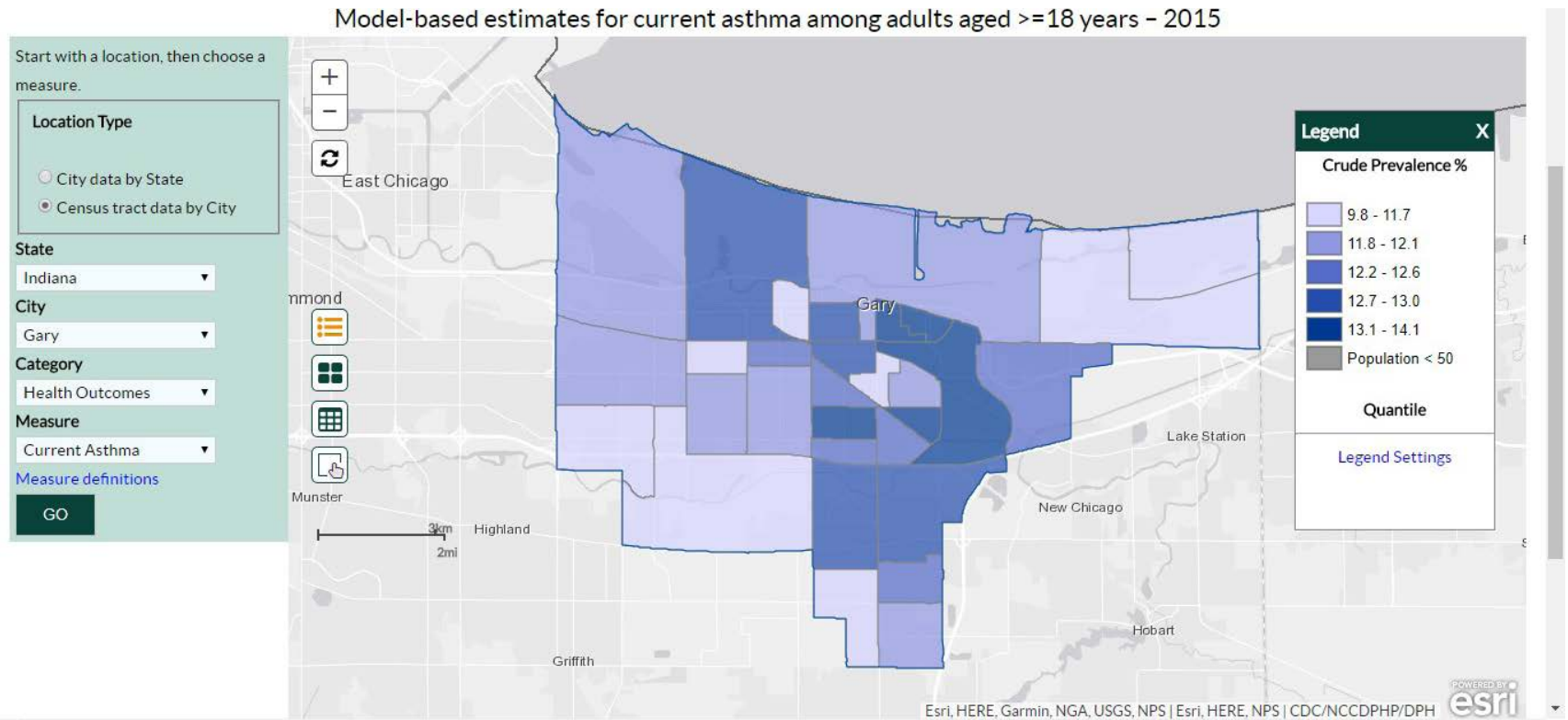
FIGURE 5-34. PERCENTAGE OF DAYS OVER AIR QUALITY STANDARDS FOR FINE PARTICULATE MATTER (PM 2.5)



Source*: CDC 500 Cities Project

* Best available data at time of publication

FIGURE 5-35. PERCENTAGE OF RESIDENTS WITH ASTHMA



Source*: CDC 500 Cities Project

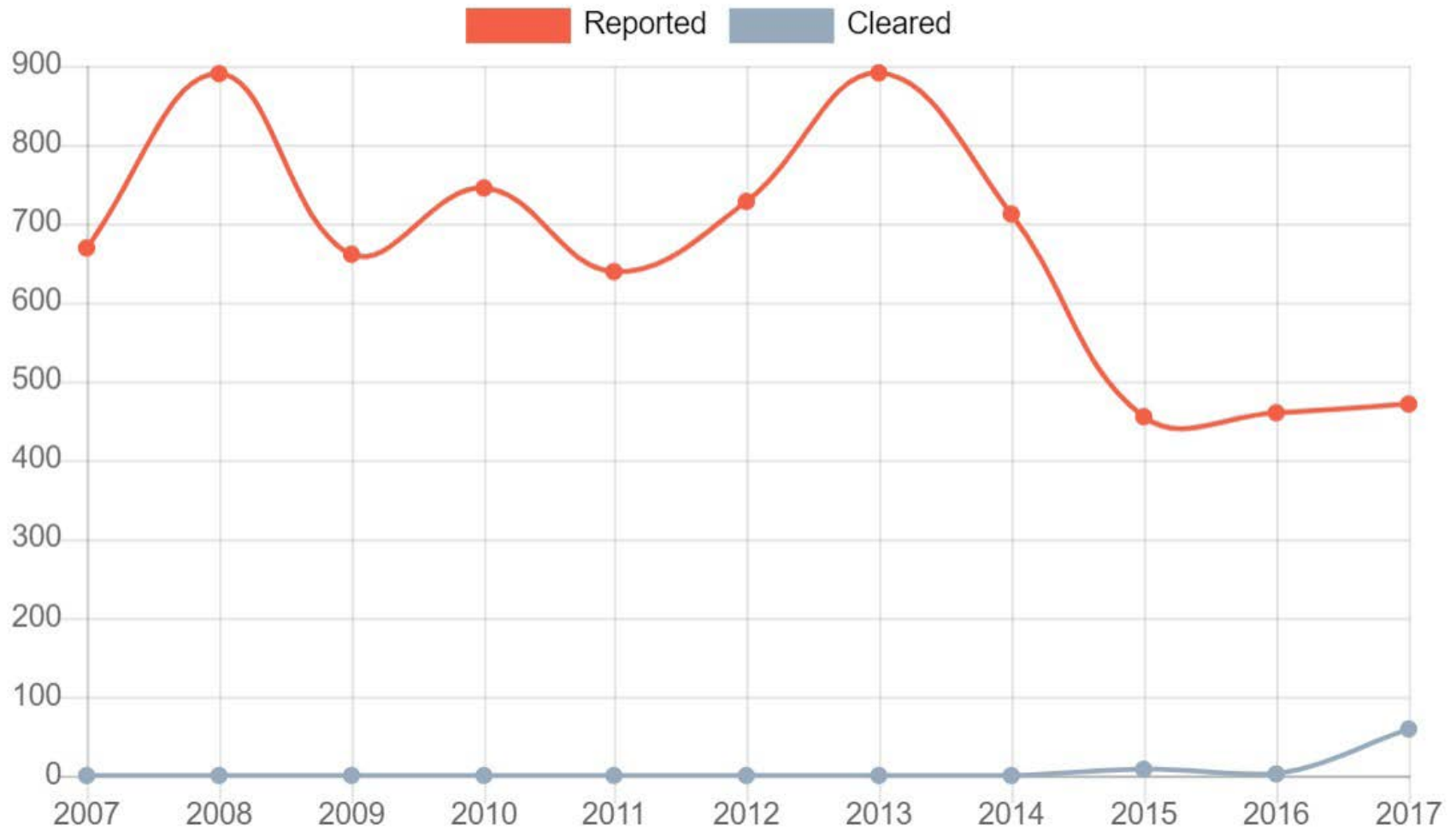
* Best available data at time of publication

CRIME AND SAFETY

A variety of factors can impact community safety, including underemployment, the presence of gangs, racism, and lack of youth and family activities. The perception of crime can also impact individual health, businesses, and social cohesion. Real and perceived crime can have health, social, and behavioral implications for victims and their families, resulting in negative impacts on the neighborhood and community.

In conversations with Gary residents, public safety is a primary concern, even though violent crime rates in the City have been consistently dropping. Property crime and violent crime have seen a significant decrease in reported cases since 2007. The perception of crime is just as much of an issue for Gary as crime itself, impacting residents, businesses, and the City's ability to attract growth and investment. Vacant property, blight, and deteriorating infrastructure conditions contribute to negative perceptions, and detract from quality of life. In particular, the community proposed a greater focus on public safety training and the need for Gary police, fire, and first responders to collaborate with community advocates to help collectively address public safety concerns and pursue funding. Implementing innovative and community-led safety strategies will be fundamental to the long-term stabilization and transformation of Gary's neighborhoods.

FIGURE 5-36. TOTAL VIOLENT CRIMES REPORTED AND CLEARED (2007-2017)



Source: FBI Crime Data Explorer, Gary Police Department Reported Property Crimes (2007-2017).

FIGURE 5-37. TOTAL PROPERTY CRIMES REPORTED AND CLEARED (2007-2017)



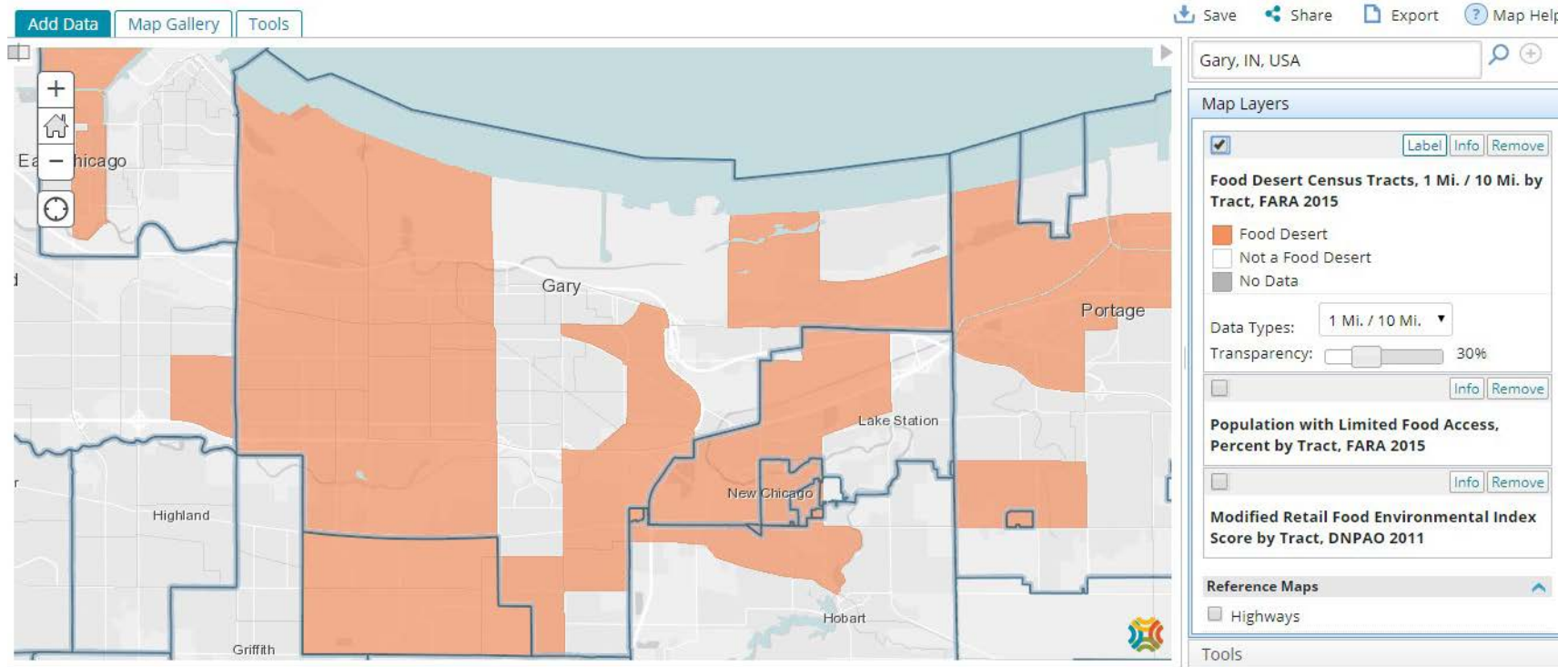
Source: FBI Crime Data Explorer, Gary Police Department Reported Property Crimes (2007-2017).

FOOD ACCESS

Healthy communities provide access to affordable and healthy food at grocery stores, produce markets, community gardens, and farmers' markets. Residents of communities with access to a full-service grocery store tend to eat more fruits and vegetables, have lower body weights, and lower rates of chronic diseases. Local food production can also reduce the distance food is shipped, lowering the environmental footprint of food production and distribution.

"Food access" is based on physical access to a food store (e.g., supermarket, large grocery store, etc.). While various food stores exist in Gary, food access is limited across the city. Much of Gary, including the entire western side of the city, is considered a food desert with limited access to retail food outlets, and every census tract in the city except one either has low, poor, or no access to healthy retailers. Food deserts are areas that lack access to affordable fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat milk, and other foods that make up a full and healthy diet as shown in Figure 5-38.

FIGURE 5-38. FOOD DESERTS



Source*: CDC 500 Cities Project

* Best available data at time of publication

ARTS AND CULTURE

Arts and culture are key elements of a community's quality of life and contributors to the local economy. The city boasts galleries, the Miller Beach Arts & Creative District, and theatres such as the Theatre Northwest. These districts and facilities help create strong neighborhoods while creating local jobs.

ArtHouse, a unique destination for food, culture, and art, opened in the Downtown neighborhood in 2017, and is focused on creating a space that positively reflects the City of Gary and provides a platform for economic and artistic activity in the Downtown area. It provides access to a commercial kitchen rental for local residents and emerging businesses, a culinary business incubation program (CBI), rental space for events and meetings, a pop up café shaped by CBI participants and gallery/exhibition space. The ArtHouse project was funded by Bloomberg Philanthropies and Knight Foundation, based on a conceptual design from world-renowned Chicago-based artist Theaster Gates.



Former Gary Heat Light Water Building - subject of numerous art projects and the 2018 Gary Poetry Project

See the Built Environment section for more information on historic preservation efforts.



ArtHouse



Union Station

The ArtHouse collaboration with Theaster Gates in 2015 sparked an interest in public art in Downtown Gary. Over the last several years, several artists and community groups have painted, performed, or installed artwork in the Downtown neighborhood. In the summer of 2018, #PAINTGARY transformed vacant lots and wall surfaces of primarily abandoned buildings along the Broadway corridor into a series of creative sculptures and murals. Decay Devils, a community group focused on historic preservation and urban exploration, have turned the historic Union Station, previously abandoned, into a vibrant public space, and are expanding their placemaking and community building efforts further Downtown through collaborations with the Legacy Foundation, Knight Foundation, and Gary Public Transit Corporation.

Historic resources also play an important role in the community. As mentioned in the Built Environment section, Gary has two historic districts and eight properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places, however many historic properties have suffered from decades of neglect and fallen into disrepair. The City is exploring creative means to preserve architecturally and culturally significant buildings that still remain, such as the City Methodist Church and the former Gary Post Office. The Gary Preservation Tour, started in 2017, is an annual event that highlights Gary's architecturally significant sites. The tour has helped to generate interest in historic and cultural preservation.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Total population levels within the city seem to be stabilizing around 75,000-80,000 residents. The city has above average youth and senior populations.
- Of the total households in Gary with children under 18, approximately 6,000 or 57 percent are headed by single parents, making access to childcare and after school programs a high priority.
- The city has a low rate of educational attainment, which significantly impacts wealth and income. Lower incomes are linked to disparities in health outcomes.
- High concentrations of heavy manufacturing uses combined with heavy traffic on I-90, I-80, I-94, and I-65 contribute to poor air quality days, which can result in respiratory illness, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, and cancer.
- Property crime and violent crime have seen a significant decrease in reported cases since 2007. The perception of crime is just as much of an issue for Gary as crime itself, impacting residents, businesses, and the city's ability to attract growth and investment. Vacant property, blight, and deteriorating infrastructure conditions contribute to negative perceptions, and detract from quality of life.
- Much of Gary, including the entire western side of the city, is considered a food desert with limited access to retail food outlets, and every census tract in the city except one either has low, poor, or no access to healthy retailers.
- The City's arts and cultural events (e.g., #PAINTGARY and Gary Preservation Tour) and facilities (e.g. ArtHouse) help create strong neighborhoods while creating local jobs.

GARY'S SOCIAL CONTEXT: WHERE ARE WE HEADED?

What makes Gary unique and special is its residents. The City must continue working to stabilize the population and build the education and wealth of Gary residents.


KEY PRIORITIES

1. **Grow Gary's Population.** A growing city reflects a healthy economy, vibrant community, and high quality of life. The city has a talented community, boundless opportunities, and momentum, a key recipe to encourage and foster population growth.
2. **Build Generational Wealth.** The City will foster wealth building from within, through education, knowledge exchanges, supporting talent, and creating opportunities that build on Gary's existing community without displacing it.
3. **Increase Educational Opportunity and Job Training.** Improving access to quality public education, training, and affordable childcare is critical to retain and attract new residents to the city and advance workforce preparedness and employment opportunities for the community. Through partnerships, strategic and coordinated investments, creative land use, and citizen-led efforts, the City can improve education and employment outcomes for residents.
4. **Use Land Use Policy and Zoning to Improve Community Health.** Land use policy and zoning should be used to create better health outcomes by minimizing conflicts between the city's heavy manufacturing and logistics industries and residential neighborhoods.
5. **Maintain Arts and Culture Momentum.** The arts and culture ecosystem is flourishing in Gary. Leverage outside interest and investment in the city's creative economy.

KEY INDICATORS

The following is a list of key indicators that will be used going forward to understand trends, evaluate progress, and guide future decision-making as it relates to Gary's social context.

- **Population.** This measure shows how the city is changing over time and whether the overall population is stabilizing and/or growing.
- **High School Graduation Rate.** This measure tracks the rate at which Gary students graduate from high school, a good indicator of potential and future earning potential.
- **Property Crime Rate.** This measure tracks the frequency of property crimes, a key indicator of quality of life.



When I go outside the house I see
grass and trees sometimes it's really
hot and other times the cold stings
like bees
I see kids playing in the grass
staining their knees
I see a big bright sun that's yellow
light ~~cheer~~
Sometimes I think Gary
isn't as bad as it seems