

SHAPING THE FUTURE

Power for Good

2021 | uflc.net



Abundant Natural Resources Make it Easy to be Active in La Porte County

Scenic lakes, parks, trails and natural resources offer countless year-round adventures for residents and visitors alike.

Unity Foundation is proud to join Healthcare Foundation of La Porte and all of our communities in striving toward a more vibrant La Porte County for all with natural resources that benefit residents and visitors now and for years to come.

Healthcare Foundation of La Porte (HFL) has made strategic investments of over \$22,000,000 since 2017 to improve a community wide focus on active living and fit lifestyles. HFL is dedicated to empowering residents to live healthy and well in La Porte County to become one of Indiana's top 10 healthiest communities by 2030. Like HFL, Unity believes in investing in our parks and natural resources. Over the years, Unity's support of our many parks exceeds \$1.8 million.

LaPorte County Parks provide more than 600 acres of nature's beauty for enjoyment at 4 locations: Bluhm, Creek Ridge, Luhr and Red Mill. Visitors can enjoy wildflowers, wetlands, stocked ponds, trails, shelters, playgrounds, mountain biking, horseback trails and dog parks. New investments made by HFL include:

- **Luhr Park Land Acquisition and Improvement: \$70,000**
- **Exercise Equipment & Bike Stations: \$77,000**
- **Shared Bikeways Revitalization: \$22,000**
- **Bluhm Park Improvements: \$250,000**

The City of La Porte Park and Recreation Department has a whopping 16 parks for relaxing, recreation, family gatherings, concerts, biking, kayaking, fishing and special events such as Winter Fest and Night Bike Ride. HFL's recent investments include: Chessie Trail, Clear Lake Trail, boardwalk and recreational improvements, Soldiers Memorial Park Accessible Kayak Launch, Stone Lake and Fox Park playground equipment and safety equipment, tennis courts and pickleball courts, exercise plaza and Stone Lake Trail.

Kiwanis-Teledyne Park
on Pine Lake in La Porte, IN



These improvements connect lakes, parks and trails to downtown and provide more ways to enjoy the outdoors!

Other related HFL grants include:

- **Friendship Botanic Gardens:**
Fitness Trail: \$50,000 / ADA Access: \$102,000 / Music Festival: \$25,000
- **Westville Police Department Blue Line Park: \$20,060**
- **South Central Community School Corporation**
South Central Trail: \$182,700
- **Union Mills Conservation Club:**
Basketball Court: \$25,000 / Walking Path: \$107,500

One of the newest La Porte parks, Unity Park was dedicated in 2016 as a gift to the City from the Unity Foundation. The 2-acre treasure has become La Porte's 'front lawn' with a view of Pine Lake, forever open for people to enjoy whether they're driving by on US 35 or walking, biking or boating. The park was already popular for viewing amazing sunsets, enjoying lake breezes, fishing and walking. During COVID, it became a safe space for group activities like Zumba classes, drumming circles and more. It has evolved into a Prom or wedding photo spot. Many weddings and even marriage proposals take place there, making memories and dreams come true. In 2020, thanks to an anonymous donor, a splash pad was added, bringing joy to children and families.

But wait, there's so much more to explore! Indiana Dunes National Park, Shirley Heinz Land Trust, Singing Sands & Calumet Trails, the list goes on.



Stop by Unity Park every Tuesday through Aug. 31 for a delicious lunch break. A new food truck is featured each Tuesday from 10:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. CST.

For ideas on what to see and do in La Porte County visit michigancitylaporte.com.

Learn more about HFL's investments in the community and their Ten 2030 vision at hflaporte.org.

Vibrant

COMMUNITIES OF LA PORTE COUNTY

2 CITIES, 9 SMALL TOWNS, 11 RURAL COMMUNITIES

Vibrant Communities of La Porte County is a once in a generation opportunity to define our path forward. Over a year after its launch, the community betterment effort continues to move full steam ahead in the implementation phase.

The movement has empowered Unity Foundation, in partnership with the La Porte County Convention & Visitors Bureau (LPCCVB) and a diverse steering committee comprised of dedicated residents from around the county to take important steps to address the issue that northwest Indiana was getting “older, poorer and fewer” as described by former Congressman Pete Visclosky.

In 2019, we embarked on this significant grass roots community engagement undertaking. The planning process was dynamic, and during community conversations we engaged nearly 1,000 people. We convened groups intentionally to hear from people from the various geographic areas of the county as well as the diverse groups and people that call La Porte County home.

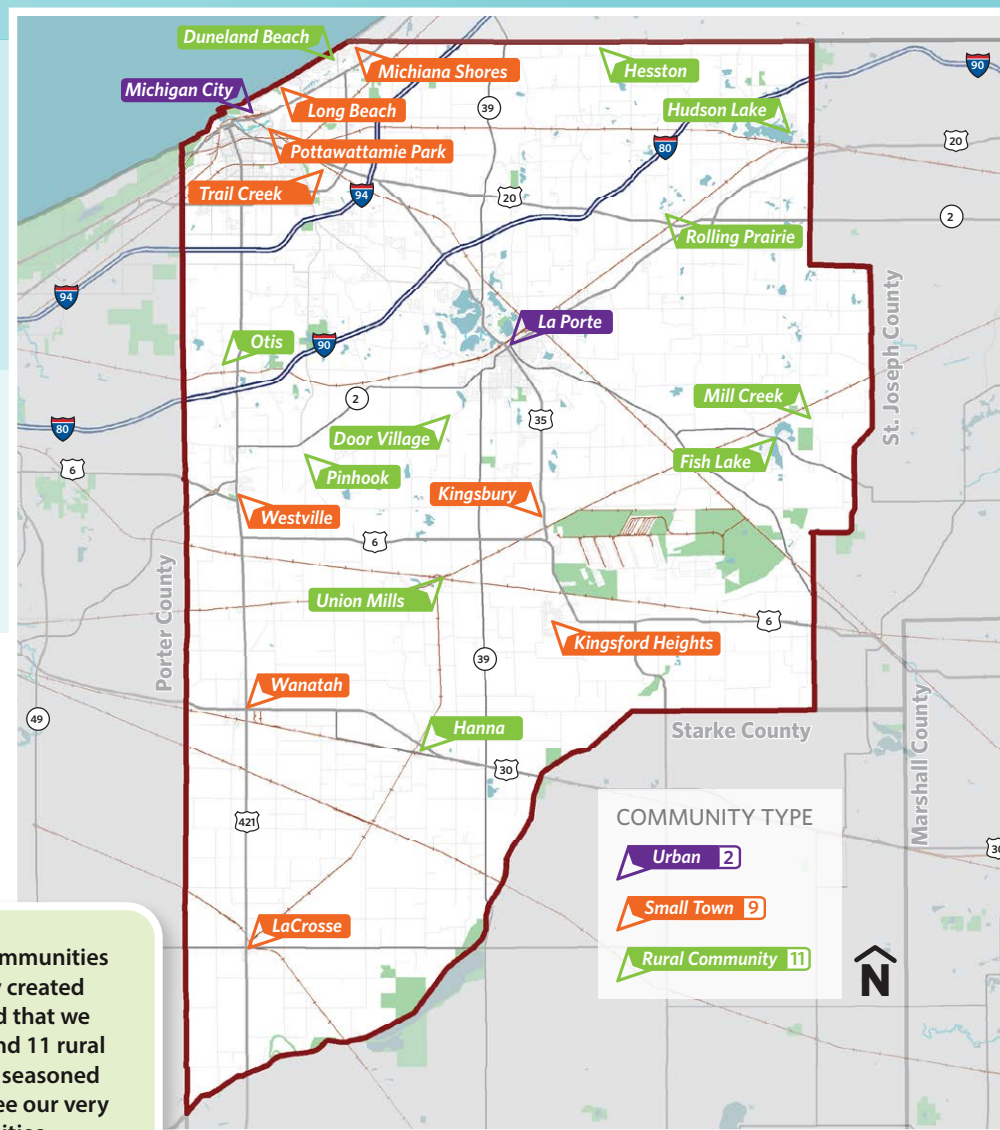
From the many community conversations held, what emerged was the need for innovative leaders and increased civic engagement and knowledge, entrepreneurial supports, and more granularity on solutions to issues like the chronic lack of housing. The conversations ultimately led to the identification of 67 goals or action items that form a county-wide Action Agenda -- a roadmap toward making each community more prosperous.

Funded in part by a \$150,000 Lilly Endowment Gift VII Implementation grant, our efforts have transitioned from research and planning to implementation. We have made steady and solid progress on key action items, including: studying what kind of housing is needed and where it should be; investing in our leaders, emerging leaders and entrepreneurs; and building the entrepreneurial infrastructure – locally and regionally.

It takes all of us to strengthen La Porte County, now and forever. Partner organizations around the county are working toward these shared goals. For example, Healthcare Foundation of La Porte’s significant efforts to improve health indicators will be linked to the Vibrant Communities process and results.

Everyone’s help is needed to fulfill the community vision. Join us in creating a more vibrant La Porte County for all! Learn more, get involved and adopt the vision at vibrantlpcounty.com.

An unlikely star of Vibrant Communities is the map of La Porte County created during the process. It showed that we have 2 cities, 9 small towns and 11 rural communities. Even our most seasoned residents were surprised to see our very unique collection of communities.



Sacred Heart Catholic Church,
Wanatah



Housing Ranked Highest Need

Of the 67 action items that came out of the Vibrant Communities process, citizens ranked the need for a countywide housing inventory and market study as number one. Unity stepped up to get the ball rolling by partnering with the La Porte County Office of Economic Development and the Welcome Home Housing Taskforce. Consulting firm Greenstreet Ltd. was selected and funded by a grant from the Lilly Endowment, Inc.

The effort aims to meet multiple economic development goals for the County, its cities and towns. These goals include the following: ensuring the correct housing options are available for current and future residents, especially the workforce our communities are trying to attract and retain; leveraging important investments, including the South Shore Line Double Track project, to position La Porte County more competitively in the Chicago metropolitan region. Important stakeholders have been actively engaged throughout the study and are positioned to take the next steps.

Want to know what we’ve learned so far?
See the presentation slides at
<https://vibrantlpcounty.com/resources/people/>



NWI BizHub Provides Resources to Build a Better Business

NWI BizHub connects entrepreneurs and small business owners to the right resources at the right time, no matter where they are in their journey of starting, accelerating or expanding their business.

A network of more than 60 local resource partners supports entrepreneurs and small business owners by providing a wide range of business-related services, including: training classes, business planning, financial management, commercialization, regulatory compliance, government contracts, marketing/sales, mentoring, funding, internships, and legal services.

The platform is the result of a shared goal to advance economic growth in Northwest Indiana and encourage an ecosystem that supports all entrepreneurs to become major players in the regional innovation economy. It launched in November 2020 through a collaboration of Unity Foundation of La Porte County, Legacy Foundation, Crown Point Community Foundation, Northwest Indiana Small Business Development Center and the Center of Workforce Innovations, with funding from the Lilly Endowment, Inc.

To see how BizHub helps current or aspiring entrepreneurs, go to
nwibizhub.com or email info@nwibizhub.com.



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Unity Foundation
of La Porte County

Power for Good 

422 Franklin St., Suite C
Michigan City, IN 46360

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us support your favorite charities.**

MISSION

The Unity Foundation will strengthen La Porte County now and forever by building permanent endowments; providing leadership; offering philanthropic vehicles for everyone; and being a catalyst for social and economic vitality.

VISION

We envision La Porte County to be a vibrant collection of unique communities that invest in their diverse people, grow their economic and healthy vitality, and promote innovative leadership through talented citizens for a rich quality of life for all.

SHAPING THE FUTURE^{with} Unity



219-879-0327 | 888-898-6489 | Fax 219-210-3881

unity@uflc.net



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