



**PORTER COUNTY PLAN COMMISSION
Resolution No. 16-03**

Resolution concerning Great Lakes Basin, LLC and the proposed Great Lakes Basin Railroad and their proposed request to construct a railroad through southern unincorporated Porter County, Indiana.

Whereas, pursuant to I.C. 36-7-4-200 series, the Porter County Board of Commissioners has established the Porter County Plan Commission as advisory plan commission under Indiana Statute.

Whereas, the Porter County Plan Commission has by law been created to guide the growth and development of the unincorporated area of Porter County, IN accordance with the Porter County Land Use and Thoroughfare Plan (comprehensive plan) for the following purposes:

- To promote the public health, safety, morals, comfort, convenience, and general welfare.
- To promote the orderly, responsible, and beneficial development and growth of the areas within the unincorporated area.
- To protect the character and stability of residential, agricultural, institutional, commercial, industrial and natural areas.
- To minimize or avoid congestion in the public streets and to ensure safe, convenient, and efficient traffic circulation.
- To preserve and enhance the scenic beauty, aesthetics, and environmental integrity of the unincorporated area.
- To protect the scale and character of existing development from the encroachment of incompatible uses.

Whereas, the Plan Commission believes that the establishment of a proposed railroad and utility corridor through Porter County, Indiana is against the principles of the Porter County Land Use and Thoroughfare Plan and the Porter County Unified Development Ordinance.

Whereas, the Plan Commission believes that the creation of the Great Lakes Basin route as proposed before the Federal Surface Transportation Board will pose significant negative impacts upon the citizens of Porter County, Indiana, due to:

1. Proposed route is through the prime farmland of Porter County and some of the most productive soils in the Country. Said route will further damage the agricultural business with the proposed line going through Pinney-Purdue Research Farm. Said research farm that educates farmers on best practices and crop research for quality products. Said farm was positioned to be away from the urban area so as not to be affected by lights, noise, and vibration.
2. The agricultural drainage system is extensive and damage to this system that drains either towards the Lake Michigan or Kankakee River water shed could result in substantial loss of revenue due to flooded fields from broken drain tiles and interruption of the storm water flow. Numerous ditches traverse southern Porter County to drain unincorporated Porter County and cities such as Valparaiso. Maintenance of this drainage system is of vital importance.
3. Negatively impacting the agricultural land with a non-compatible land use will disrupt farm operations that counties strive to protect and foster the agricultural environment. The Porter County Land Use and Thoroughfare Plan outlines goals and visions for the preservation of farm land and protection of their operations.
4. The Future Land Use map attached to this Resolution from the Land Use and Thoroughfare Plan the protection of Porter County's valued land by focusing development next to the cities and towns for the use of their water and sanitary services. The map also shows the industrial nodes and the locations for future industrial development within the county. Proposing spurs along the Great Lakes Basin contradicts the goals set forth by Porter County's citizens and their elected officials. The industrial areas are focused next to the cities and towns for their services and to take advantage of the infrastructure in these areas. Spurs for future development shall bring in incompatible land uses next to existing; increase the costs of municipalities to develop safe infrastructure for the traveling public and place an undue burden on the costly to maintain such facilities. This is not economic development but fostering sprawl in the worst way in the costs to the counties air, water and visual qualities.
5. Increasing the probability of train accidents at any number of newly proposed at-grade railroad crossings.
6. Closed roads for railroad tracks will increase traffic trips and mileage for vehicular trips and most importantly farm operations furthering the emissions and damage of the air quality.

7. Effecting the transportation routes of local schools with increase route times added vehicular times and an increase danger due to railroad crossings.
8. Increasing critical response time for emergency response personnel with route changes to avoid train traffic and stoppage at grade crossings further endangering the health and safety of the citizens.
9. Increasing the costs of local emergency responders to handle train accidents or incidents due to lack of necessary equipment to deal with such situations.

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved, that effective April 27, 2016, the Porter County Plan Commission that the proposed railroad by Great Lakes Basin, LLC will burden the citizens of Porter County, Indiana and said impacts cannot be mitigated or engineered.

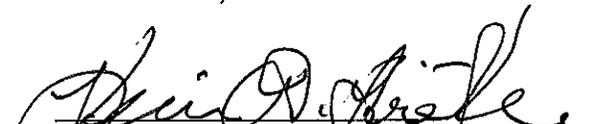
Therefore and Be It Further Resolved, for all reasons stated herein the Porter County Plan Commission hereby opposes and recommends the denial of the Great Lakes Basin Railroad project.

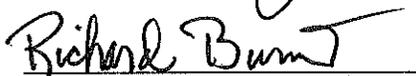
This Day of April 27, 2016

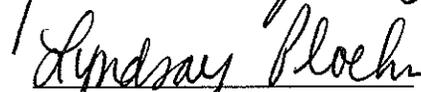

Bob Poparad, President

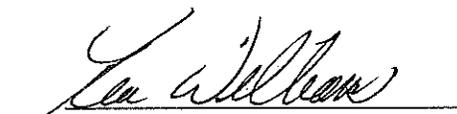

Mitch Peters, Vice-President

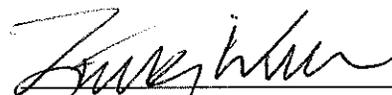

Laura Blaney

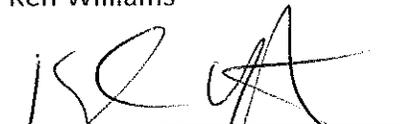

Kevin Breitzke


Richard Burns


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Luther Williams


Kyle Yelton

Attest: 
Robert W. Thompson, Jr., AICP
Director



PORTER COUNTY LAND USE & THOROUGHFARE PLAN

Figure 25: Future Land Use Plan

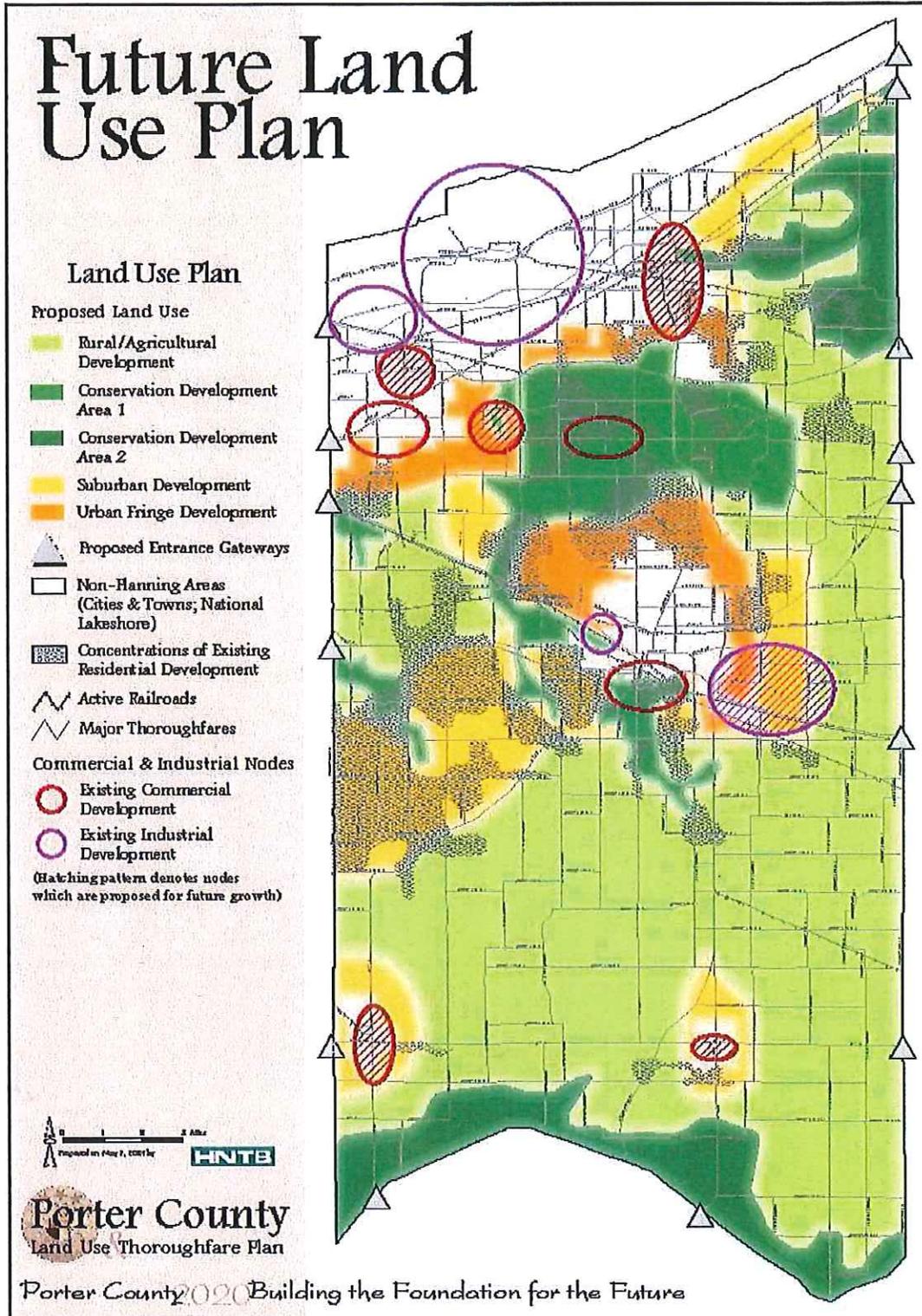




Figure 9: Prime Farmland

