

## TOWN PROFILE

## SECTION I

Located in North Central Indiana, Syracuse is a small town with a lot of character. The lake community is located on Syracuse Lake and Lake Wawasee, the largest natural lake in Indiana. Syracuse is home to a permanent population of 3,000 residents; however, the community blossoms into a bustling city as more than 25,000 lake enthusiasts flock to the area between May and September.



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## *Town History*

### **FIRST INHABITANTS**

The first inhabitants of the area around Lake Wawasee and what is now known as Syracuse were Native Americans. The mound builders, followed by the Delawares, found the area's lakes to have plenty of fish and the local prairies and forests to have plenty of game. The Delaware tribe left the region under a treaty in 1818. The Native Americans that next lived in the area were the Miami. At the time of the first whites to the area, these people lived mostly in what is now known as Turkey Creek and Van Buren Townships. The Miami had two groups of people living in the region under two chiefs. These chiefs were Flat Belly and his brother Wauweeaskee, namesake of Lake Wawasee. The Miami signed a treaty in 1826 that gave them 36 sections of land in Kosciusko and Noble Counties. When the treaty was signed less than two hundred Miami were in the area.

### **TOWN'S EARLY YEARS**

Syracuse's first two white settlers, Samuel Crosson and Henry Ward, built a dam on Turkey Creek and then set up a grist mill on Lake Syracuse. This mill allowed local residents to produce food such as flour and cornmeal. Also during the 1830s, a small general store/ trading post was located in Syracuse.

The presence of the mill and trading post made Syracuse a destination for nearby farmers. Four years later, in 1836, the grist mill was washed away into the lake, but the creation of what would become the town of Syracuse was inevitable. That year also saw the construction of the town's first school and the establishment of the cemetery. In 1836, a milk sickness disease spread and wiped out much of the community. Then, in August 1837, Crosson and Ward completed the town's plat of 101 lots. In the following years, a hotel and a sawmill also opened up in Syracuse. The hotel was a sign of things to come as visitors to the nearby lakes started arriving early in the town's history.

The first roads to the community were from Syracuse to Sparta (in Noble County) and Milford. With roads, the town could now begin to attract residents and trade with other communities. During the following years the sawmill and forthcoming flour mills were the town's top employers. Also at this time, a mill race was built with the hopes that it would supply hydroelectric power to the town.

During the 1850s, the first religious groups to locate in the area were the Methodists and the German Baptists. In 1867, the Church of God was built and used by five different denominations on a rotating circuit; and in April 1870, the Methodist Episcopal Church of Syracuse was organized.

## THE RAILROAD

By 1869, the population of Syracuse had reached 350 persons. In 1873, the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad announced plans to pass through the Syracuse area. Local workers and resources were used to help with the track's construction and on October 5, 1874, the first train arrived.

The railroad significantly reduced the amount of time it took for people to get to and from Syracuse. Once the railroad was completed, growth in the community increased rapidly. In 1900, one hundred local men were employed as part of the ice extraction process (ice was cut from the lakes and loaded onto trains). The railroad also became the method of delivery of mail and other forms of freight to the community.

In 1900, there were 928 people living in Syracuse. One of these people was J.P. Dolan, who became a major influence on the town's development of education, historical preservation, and establishment of utilities.



This boom period also saw the hiring of the first town marshal, organization of the State Bank of Syracuse (1899) and creation of the town library and newspaper. Annexations of the Wood, Avery, Windsor, and Ketring additions also took place in the early 1900s. The annexations and growth spurred by the presence of the railroad contributed to the population of Syracuse tripling from 600 in 1897 to 1,800 in 1907.

Another major annexation occurred in 1973 when the court approved a protested annexation by Syracuse. This doubled the town's previous land area, extended public services to the new residents, and increased the population from 1,546 in 1970 to 2,579 in 1980.

## **EARLY INDUSTRIES**

In 1898, the Sandusky Portland Cement Company located a factory in Syracuse to take advantage of marl from nearby Lake Wawasee. The employment opportunities of this company were also a major catalyst of growth in Syracuse. In 1901 there were one hundred men working at the plant.

In 1903, as the result of a strike in the previous year, the company brought in a train with carloads of Hungarian immigrants to work and live in Syracuse. The company built some housing for these people and by 1907 there were an estimated 225 employees in the factory; and in 1912, the company announced that it would be able to take material from the lake year round. However, in 1920 the cement plant closed. Environmentalists had finally succeeded in stopping of the removal of marl from the lakes.

Other local companies of the early 1900s were the Syracuse Boat Manufacturing Company, Advance Radiator Company (at peak had one hundred employees), and the Syracuse Foundry. Historically, other factories that located in the town were of the woodworking nature. Companies such as the Syracuse Table/Cabinet Company and other furniture, carriage and wagon companies made use of local timber to produce their products.

## **LATER INDUSTRIES**

In the 1940s and 1950s, the mobile home manufacturing business became the major industry in the area. Plants located in and around Syracuse to be near the major plants in Elkhart County. Some of the companies that located operations in Syracuse include Liberty, Monarch, Vega and Commodore, which were known for paying higher wages.

With the help of Eli Lilly and local subsidies and incentives, a company named Weatherhead located in Syracuse during the 1950s. Their primary products were brass parts that could be used in hydraulic units. The factory employed more than 500 individuals and served as a growth catalyst for the town. In 1978, Dana Corp. acquired the plant and converted it to produce axles. Two years later, Dana consolidated all of its operations into the Syracuse plant.

The community has also been blessed with several boat manufacturers over the years. Sea Nymph, Outboard Marine Company, Godfrey Marine, and Rinker Boat have established successful enterprises in the Syracuse community.

### OAKWOOD PARK

Oakwood Park is located to the southeast of Syracuse on Lake Wawasee. The park is a place where people from around the region go for camps and retreats generally of a religious nature. The park originally opened in 1892 as a forty-acre permanent camp meeting ground for the Indiana Evangelical Conference.



Before the IEC gained ownership of the land it had been owned by the Pottawatomi Indians, the B. & O. Railroad, and it was also used as a vacation spot on the lake.

As the IEC developed, the meeting ground filled with tents, cabins, a hotel and many various religious buildings. In 1902, the Park filled in some of the lagoons near the lake and added more recreational facilities. Ministers constructed many of the buildings to reduce costs. At this time Oakwood Park was increasing in attendance, but was still in financial strain.

In 1931, one of the ministers of the park planted an apple orchard that would be a major source of income for the park. By 1941 modern roads had finally reached the park and a sea wall was built to protect the park from the damaging waves of Lake Wawasee.

In 1946, various denominations combined and made Oakwood Park a key center of activities. Classrooms, a grocer, book store and various administrative offices were now located at the park. By 1956-57 over 700 youth were attending camp at Oakwood Park at two major campsites: Lakewood and Camp Oaks.

During the 1960s, residents made it part of their service to help other local churches, concentrating on youth programs. During this time, the Oakwood Center building was constructed.

Due to the aging of facilities and financial hardships, the Park was sold in 1999 to the United Methodist Foundation for Adult Christian Education. The goal of this foundation is to continue the traditions of the park as well as bring adults and other groups to the park to secure its future. The park expanded with the construction of the Oakwood Inn and Conference Center. The 77-unit inn boasts fabulous views of Lake Wawasee. The inn features a conference center and dining facilities.

# Syracuse Comprehensive Plan

## Town Character

The visual character of a community is an expression of its identity. Good or bad, the visual character of the buildings and landscape in Syracuse are what visitors remember and with which residents identify.



### COMMERCIAL AREAS

Syracuse is divided in half by the railroad tracks. The business areas on each side of tracks have a very different and distinctive character.

### DOWNTOWN

Downtown Syracuse has the character of a traditional small town business district. Brick buildings close to the street, wide sidewalks, and storefront window-shopping characterize this area. On-street parking separates pedestrian traffic on the sidewalk from the automobile traffic on the roads, while the store windows, signs, and awnings provide an atmosphere comfortable to pedestrians.



### HIGHWAY 13

The commercial development near Pamida at the north end of town and the commercial strip south of the railroad tracks each has a very different feeling. The dominance of roads, parking lots, power lines, signs, and automobiles characterize this area. A lack of sidewalks makes this area uninviting for pedestrians, and the large distance between buildings and the street combines with large signs to cater to the automobile.

Just as the commercial development in Syracuse is split by the railroad tracks, residential housing is split by season. Lakefront homes, many of which are occupied only during the summer months, differ dramatically from homes in the rest of the community.

## **TOWN NEIGHBORHOODS**

Homes in the town of Syracuse are, for the most part, older homes built before World War II. They feature one and a half or two-story construction, and many have porches. Trees are fully mature, and alleys provide rear access to homes. Some streets feature sidewalks, while others do not.



## **LAKESIDE NEIGHBORHOODS**

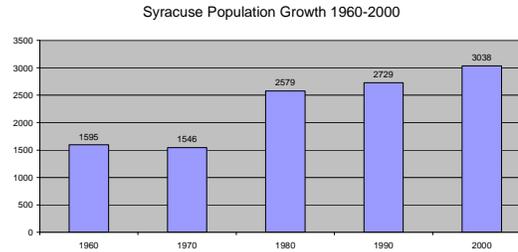
Lakeside homes, being along the waterfront and having higher property values, tend to be newer than those in the rest of Syracuse. Some areas surrounding the lake have modest summer cottages, while an increasing number of homes are large, elaborate second homes. Lakeside homes tend to be secluded in groves of trees, and private boat docks take the place of sidewalks. These areas have a very private feeling to them.

# Syracuse Comprehensive Plan

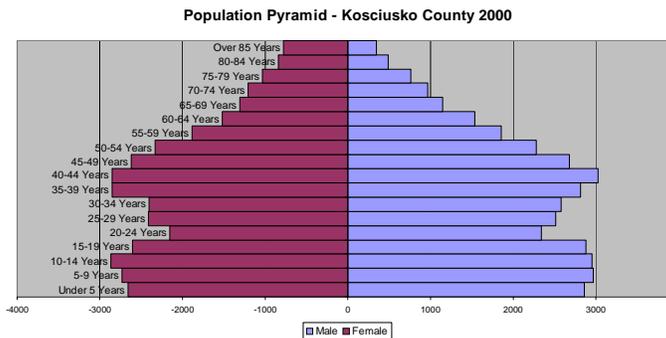
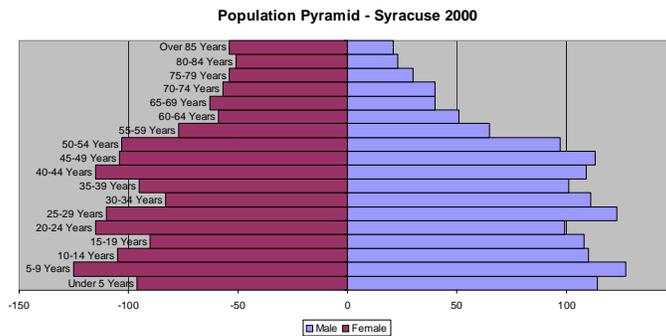
## Demographics

### POPULATION AND AGE

According to historical population data, the population of the town of Syracuse has doubled since 1960. As of July 1, 2004 US Census Bureau estimates the town to have 3,033 residents, which is a slight decrease from the last census in 2000. From 1990 to 2000 the town's growth rate was 11.3% compared to 13.4% for the county.



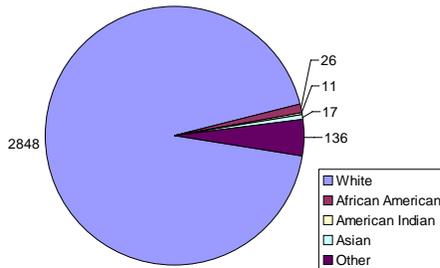
Current development trends, however, suggest that the town is not growing at the same rapid rate as the county. Based on current trends, the population will remain fairly steady unless annexation occurs or new housing additions are constructed in the town limits. This observation can be highlighted in the graphs to the left, which are population pyramids showing age categories in 10 year increments for both the town of Syracuse and Kosciusko County.



The population pyramid for the town is more weighted in the midsection and near the top, which defines an aging population for the community. Although, the median age in both the town and the county is 35.1 years of age, there are different population trends occurring. With natural birth and death rates, the county's population will be more balanced and the pyramid shape will remain intact. On the other hand, the town's pyramid base will continue to shift upward unless new growth is experienced.

### RACE AND ETHNICITY

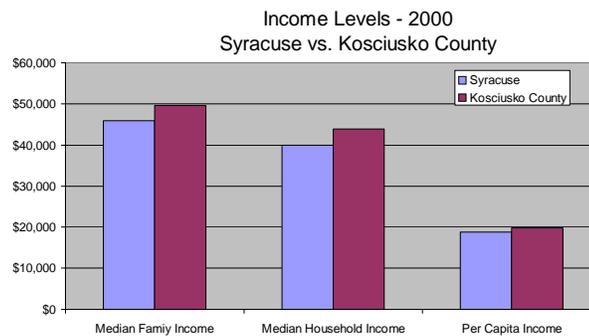
Syracuse Population by Race 2000



Syracuse is predominately a white community without much diversity in race. However, the trend from 1990 to 2000 has seen a greater number of races move into the community. In 1990, the percentage of white residents was 99.4% compared to 93.7% in 2000. Additionally, those residents of Hispanic or Latino ethnicity has increased from 1.5% to 4.6%, which is consistent with other Northern Indiana communities.

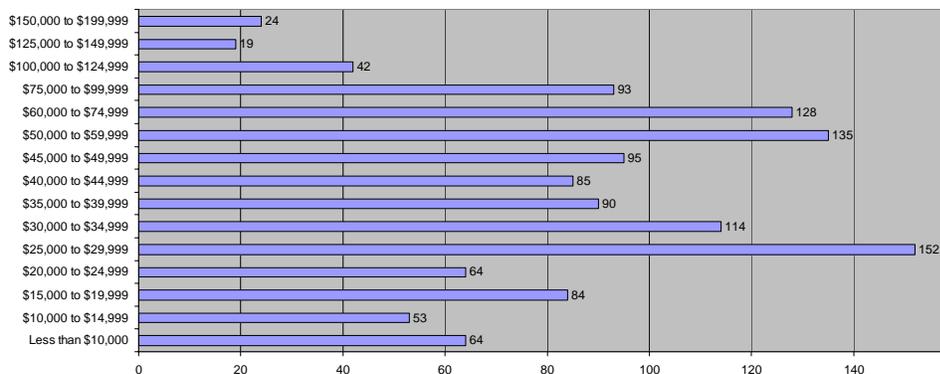
### INCOME AND POVERTY STATUS

The distribution of wealth in the Syracuse community is skewed with numerous families near poverty levels on one end of the spectrum and wealthy families at the other end. In 2000, 3.2% of 790 families were below poverty levels. Another 8% of all families were at 150% of poverty level. In contrast, over 14% of all families made more than \$75,000 annually. The graphs above and below depict the distribution of income in the community and compares income levels with the county averages.



*Income levels for Syracuse households and families are slightly below Kosciusko County State of Indiana averages.*

Household Income Distribution Syracuse 2000



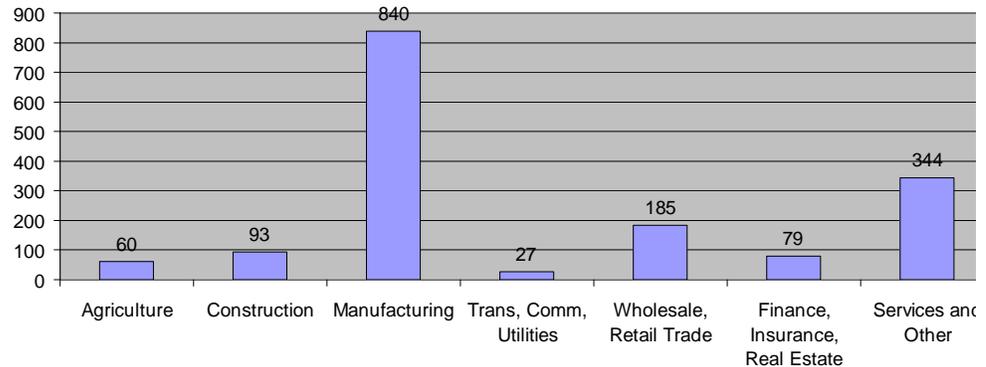
## EMPLOYMENT DATA

Examining the employment for the community, a strong conclusion can be drawn with the abundance of manufacturing jobs. Census data from 2000 confirms that an overwhelming majority of residents hold occupations in the manufacturing sector with residents work locally making boats and RV trailers. Also, the U.S. Census Bureau estimates that about 40% of town residents work in the community. Due to the number of jobs available, the daytime population increases by nearly 50%, with 1487 workers commuting to the community.

Syracuse has a larger number of businesses than most small communities due to the seasonal population and the daytime workers commuting into the community. The retail sector in particular hire additional employees as a result of this influx of people to Syracuse.

The unemployment rate in Kosciusko County for September 2005 was 3.9% compared to the national average of 5.1% and the state average of 4.9%. Compared to other counties in Indiana, Kosciusko has one of the lowest unemployment rates in the state.

Occupation by Number of Workers  
Syracuse 2000

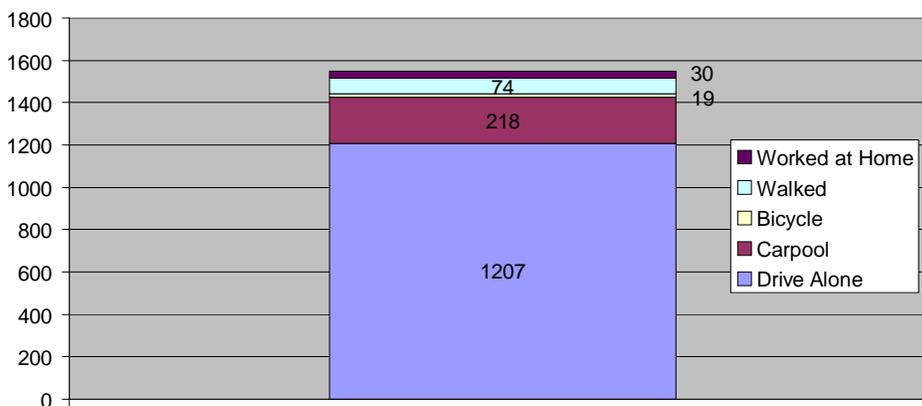


Major Employers of Syracuse			
Business Name	Appx. Number of Employees	Business Name	Appx. Number of Employees
Rinker Boat Company <i>Fiberglass Boats</i>	519	Oakwood Inn <i>Hotel and Conference Center</i>	86
Wawasee School Corporation <i>Public Education</i>	450	Liberty Homes, Inc <i>Manufactured Homes</i>	82
Parker Hannifin <i>Rubber Parts</i>	260	Traction Products (Dana) <i>Axle Parts</i>	62
Aero Coach Dutchman <i>RV Trailers</i>	191	Polywood <i>Recycled Plastic Patio Furniture</i>	50
Godfrey Marine <i>Aluminum Boats</i>	152	Town of Syracuse <i>Public Services</i>	42
Ameri-Camp <i>RV Trailers</i>	110	Miller's Merry Manor <i>Nurshing Home</i>	38

### JOURNEY TO WORK

The graph to the right depicts the means of transportation for workers over the age of 16 in the community. Surprisingly, only 78% of residents drive to work alone. According to the census data, carpooling is conducted by 14% of the population. Another trend is the number of those walking or riding bicycles to work, which accounts for 6% of the population. The mean travel time to work is 16.8 minutes. Another interesting statistics is that 26.2% of workers leave home to go to work before 6:00 AM.

Means of Transportation  
Syracuse 2000



# Syracuse Comprehensive Plan

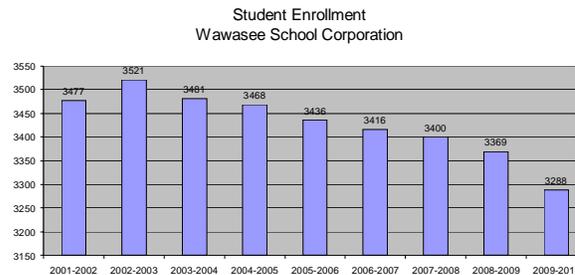
## Education

### WAWASEE SCHOOL CORPORATION

Syracuse is served by the Wawasee School Corporation. The school corporation provides education for residents in the northeast part of Kosciusko County including the communities of Milford and North Webster. The school corporation contains three elementary schools, two middle schools, and one high school.

#### ENROLLMENT

The total student enrollment for the Wawasee School Corporation has seen a slight decline the past four years. Based on current birth and death rates, the adjacent graph indicates that school enrollment projections will continue to decline over the next four years.

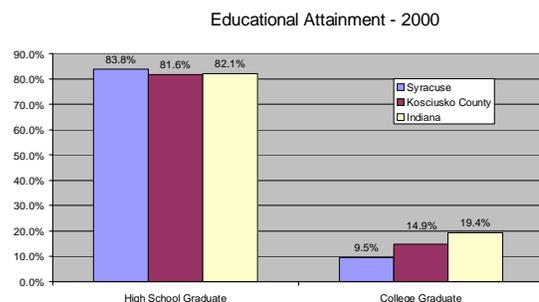


#### SCHOOL CORPORATION FINANCING

Dr. Mark Stock, Wawasee School Superintendent, indicates that the school corporation's financial position is in good condition. Because of the high assessed valuation of the Wawasee Schools and the low administration costs, the school corporation can still provide high educational levels. Based on assessed valuation per student, the corporation is ranked second in the State of Indiana. Considering the tax rate of the corporation, Wawasee Schools has the third lowest rate in the state. Although these rankings are favorable to local taxpayers, the corporation is limited on the amount funding that it receives from the state based on current funding calculations.

#### EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

The community has a higher percentage of residents graduating from high school than the county and state averages; however, in contrast, the number of college graduates is significantly less for town residents. More than 70% of high school graduates seek higher education, but it appears that many those do not return to the community. The current graduation rate is at 84%, which is below the state average of 90%.





*Syracuse  
Elementary  
School*



*Wawasee  
Middle School*



*Wawasee  
High School*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Syracuse has a very unique pattern of development. Traditional development has occurred along the railroad and the Highway 13 Corridor. Commercial and industrial uses tend to be located along these transportation routes. Residential land uses are focused within the older part of the community and along the lakefront of both lakes. However, newer housing developments have been built on the periphery of town near the high school. Surrounding the community to the north, west, and southwest are traditional agricultural uses.

Rarely are there conflicts between the Kosciusko County's Comprehensive Plan and zoning map and the existing land uses; however, there are incompatible land uses adjacent to each other because of existing development patterns. In older neighborhoods, residential dwellings were built next to industrial uses along the railroad. Also, lake access questions have historically resulted in a few areas where commercial and residential uses conflict.

Some may consider the strip commercial uses along Highway 13 as sprawl; however, this area is most suitable for business activity because the transportation network can support the traffic. The biggest issue facing land use is the lack of available land for development within the town proper. There is a lack of land available for all three land uses; residential, commercial, and industrial. Most undeveloped areas within the town are environmentally sensitive and should be protected from development. For future land use planning, the town will need to consider territory outside the corporation limits for development.

### **ZONING ORDINANCE**

Syracuse is unique in that it has given up its zoning power to the Kosciusko County Area Plan Commission, but retains its own board of zoning appeals. Currently, the town is governed by the county's comprehensive plan, zoning ordinance, subdivision control ordinance, flood control ordinance, and erosion control ordinance. While these ordinances have served Syracuse in the past, the generalities of some of the ordinances no longer serve the immediate needs of the town to effectively plan land use and growth.

As the town looks at expanding its boundaries, cooperation with the Elkhart County Planning Department will be necessary. Any land use planning north of the county line must be consistent with the plans for growth management in Benton Township.

In order to understand the land use issues facing Syracuse, it is necessary to consider a brief overview of the zoning that governs the development within the town. Please refer to the zoning classification table on the following page.

## ZONING DISTRICTS

The town of Syracuse has six of the nine total zoning districts within its borders. All zones apply with the exception of the Agriculture II, Environment, and Industrial III zones. A brief description of the purpose of each zoning classification follows.

**Environmental:** Limited to agriculture, recreation, and certain other open land uses. The purpose is to prevent intensive development of land that is unsuitable for development.

**Public Use:** Limited to uses which are a benefit to the public. These may or may not be taxed and may be owned and operated publicly or privately.

**Agriculture:** Purpose is to protect prime agricultural land and related use from urban growth. Single family houses are allowed on separate tracts.

**Agriculture II:** Purpose is to allow the development of some tracts of marginal agricultural land into low density, rural atmosphere residential subdivisions. It allows the mixing of residential and agriculture use.

**Residential:** Limited to dwellings, public and semipublic uses which are associated with neighborhoods. Purpose is to create an attractive, stable and orderly residential environment.

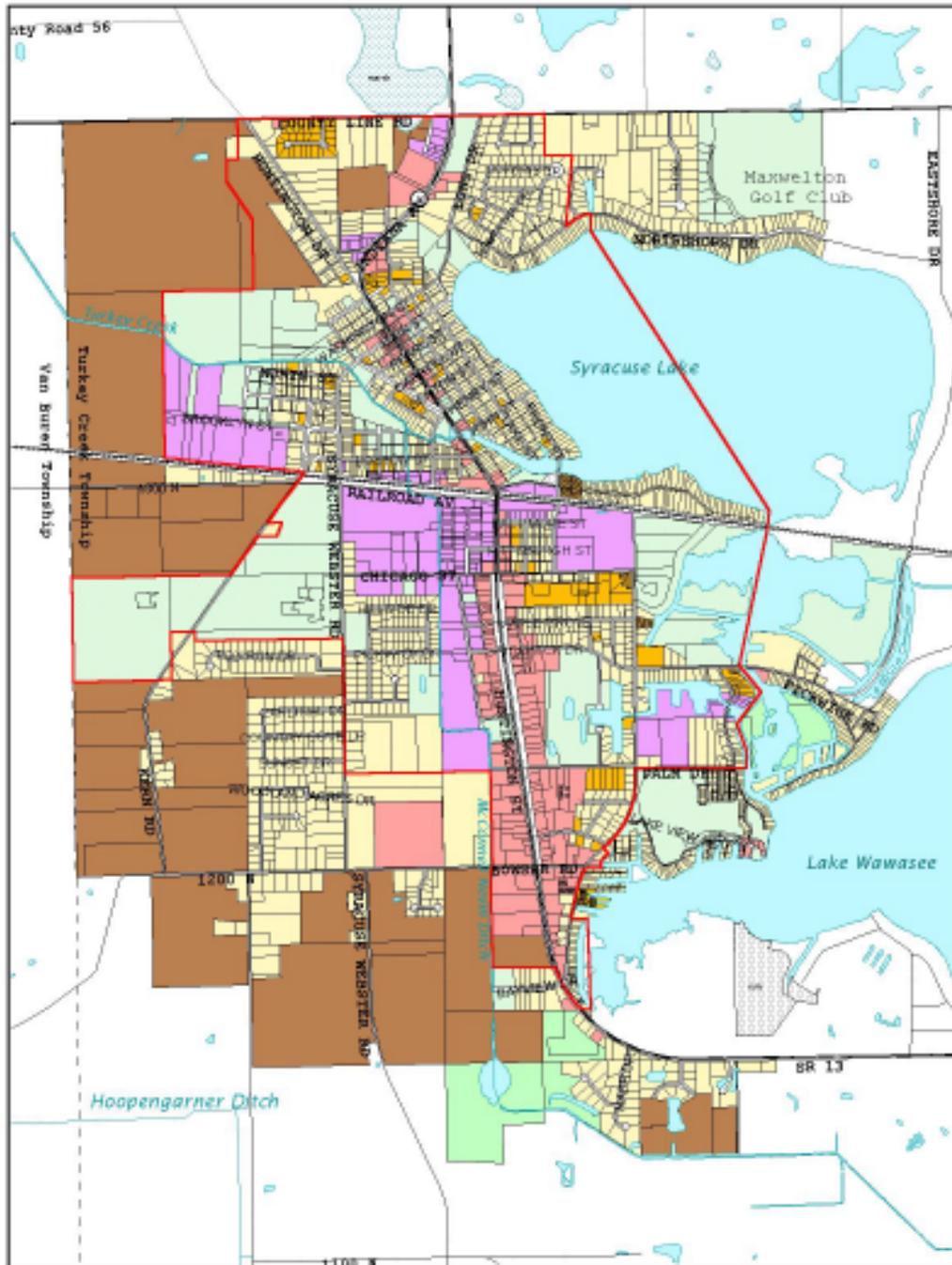
**Commercial:** Purpose is for retail or service uses. Will permit manufacturing processes which are conducted within a closed structure.

**Industrial I . Limited Industrial:** Limited to industrial uses having high standards of performance and limited impact on adjacent areas. This use can be located in close proximity to a residential zone.

**Industrial II . Light Industrial District:** Limited to the development of industrial uses for the operation of fabricating, manufacturing, processing, wholesaling, warehousing and ancillary related offices.

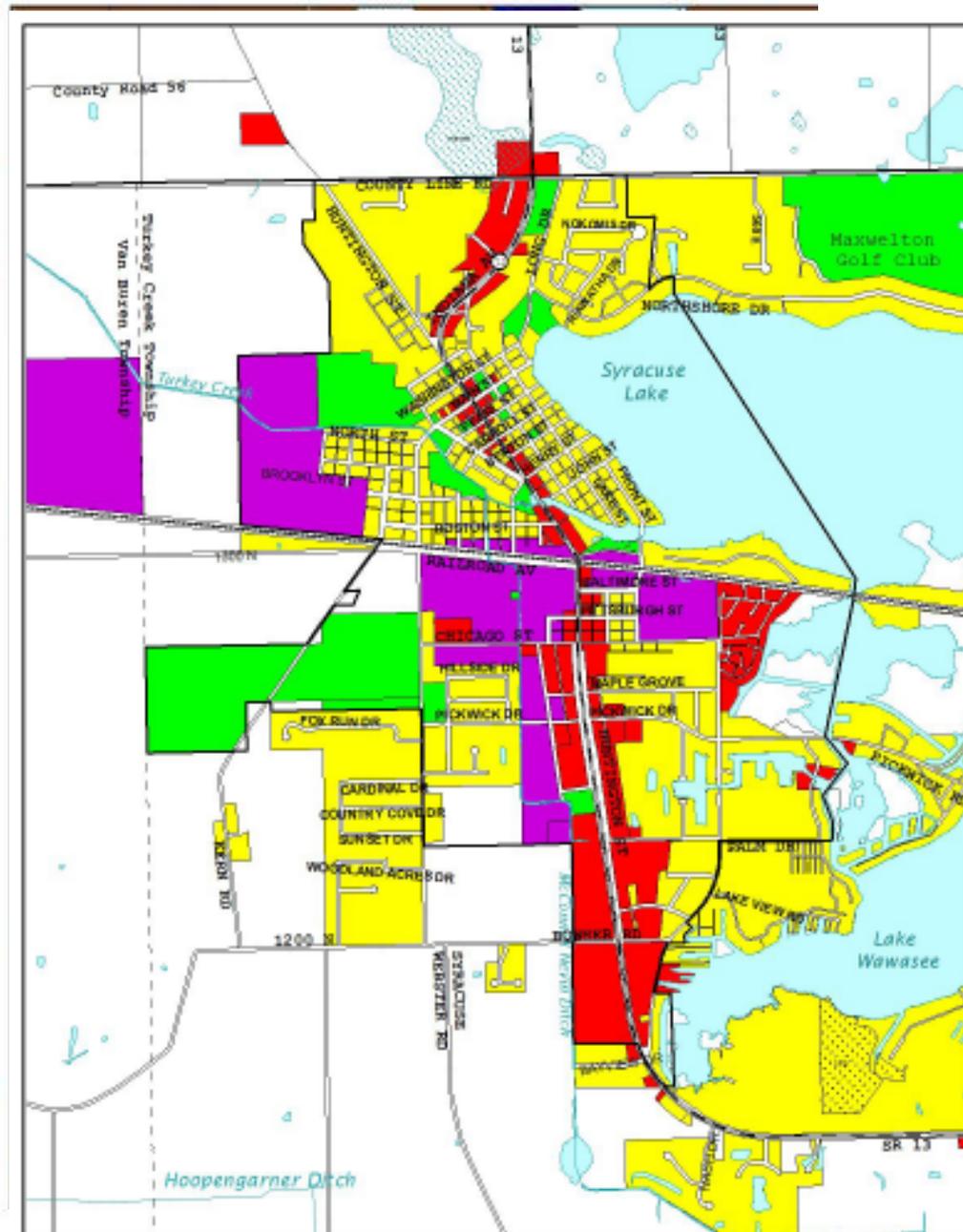
**Industrial III . Heavy Industrial District (not located in Syracuse):** Limited to development of heavy industrial uses including heavy fabricating, manufacturing, processing, extraction, heavy repair, and dismantling industries.

# Syracuse Comprehensive Plan

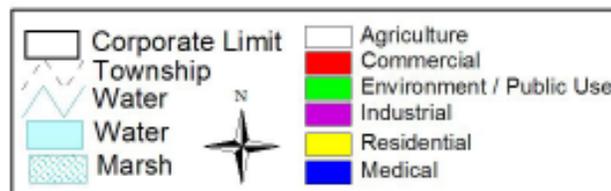


**CURRENT LAND USE MAP**





**CURRENT ZONING MAP**



# Syracuse Comprehensive Plan

## Transportation

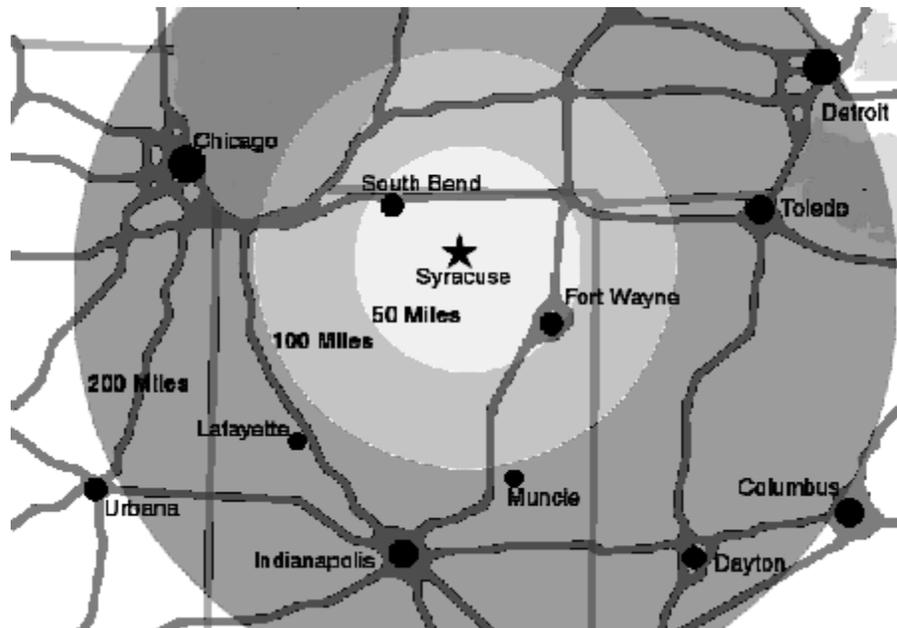
### LOCATION

Transportation is a very important issue in Syracuse. Being a town in a rural county, Syracuse does not have the advanced transportation features of major cities, but the services provided by the town meet the needs of the community.

Access into the county and Syracuse specifically is limited. The large arterial highways are SR 6, SR 15, and SR 30. State Road 13 is the only highway leading into Syracuse, which causes congestion problems during seasonal periods.

Syracuse is centrally located to larger metropolitan areas including South Bend and Fort Wayne. These cities provide many important amenities for the citizens of the town such as shopping opportunities, airports, restaurants, etc. Geographically, the community is within three hours of Indianapolis and Chicago. The map below shows distances to key surroundings in the Syracuse area.

**Distance to Surrounding Cities**



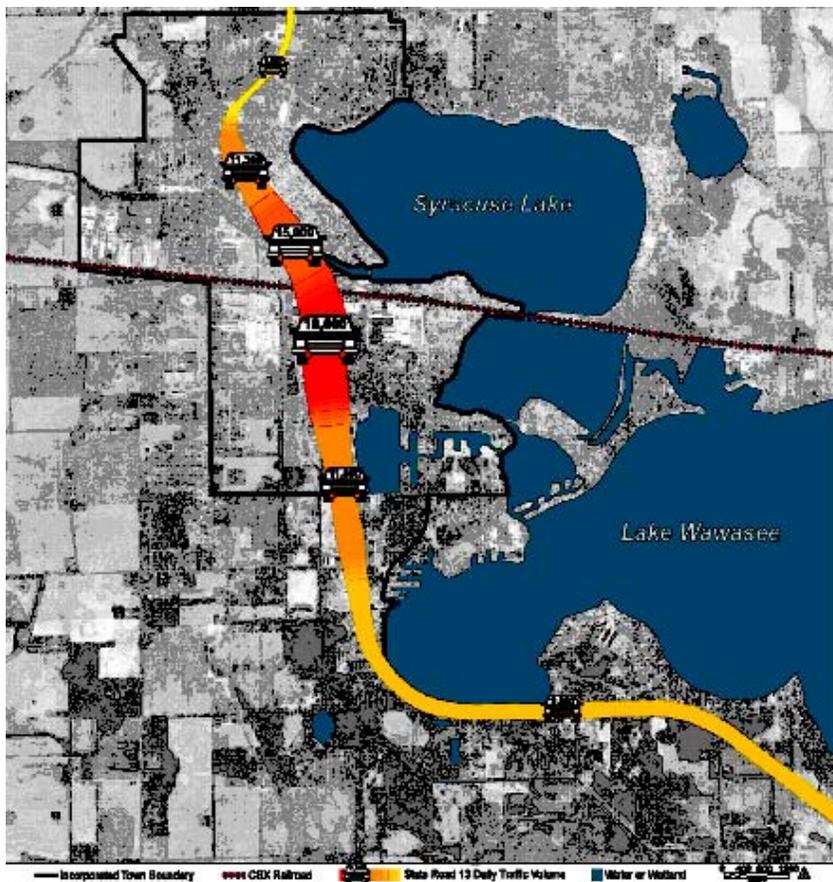
*Syracuse is conveniently located between Fort Wayne and South Bend*

## TRAFFIC ISSUES

Syracuse faces difficult traffic issues. These issues revolve around congestion on SR 13, which often stems from railroad traffic and the influx of vehicular traffic during the summer months. The map below illustrates traffic counts and density along SR 13. Traffic flow into the Syracuse area increases until one reaches the center of the town near the intersection with the railroad tracks. Because the traffic counts are averaged, it is important to take into consideration the difference between the winter and summer months. The increase in summer population increases the summer traffic counts substantially.

Another cause for the congestion is the lack of alternate routes through town or a railroad overpass. Vehicles have difficulty traveling around or through Syracuse other than SR13. At times, the highway becomes temporarily blocked for train traffic and vehicles are stacked for several blocks. Providing for an alternate route would help alleviate some of the pressure on the highway.

### 1998 Annual Average Daily Traffic Counts



*At its busiest point, near the railroad, SR13 has an average of 18,500 vehicles passing through per day. Winter counts are lower, while summer traffic counts are much higher. Source: INDOT*

## STATE ROUTE 13

SR 13 is the only major access into the town of Syracuse; it has its strengths as well as its weaknesses. Because it is the only major thoroughfare, many businesses want to locate on this highway. It does well to attract the businesses; however, it also poses many traffic problems. A frontage road was developed to alleviate some of this congestion; however, too many



access roads were constructed, which has aggravated the congestion problems. Plans were approved for the widening of the road, which would have alleviated some of the traffic problems along the highway; however, the state and the community shelved the project as result of a consensus of the number of lanes to be constructed. Another issue for SR 13 is the lack of pedestrian facilities. Because Syracuse is a

small town, walking is feasible for the residents. However, difficulties lie in the Village area between Chicago Street and Bowser Road, which is not very pedestrian friendly. With local businesses located in such a small area, allowing for pedestrian access to this area is essential.

## CSX RAILROAD

The CSX railroad is a predominant transportation feature in the town. The railroad runs east-west through the center of town. On the crossing at Main Street, 50-70 trains pass through the crossing daily at speeds of 60-70 mph. Though the trains move quickly, their frequency results in congestion on Highway 13.

The CSX railroad does provide safety features, such as warning signals, crossing arms, stop signs, and pavement signs. A problem facing Syracuse, however, is that all the crossings are on one main circuit. This could prove to be a great hazard for the town if the circuit malfunctions.



## HOUSING STOCK AND TRENDS

## Housing

The housing stock in Syracuse varies from turn of the century homes in the central part of the community to old lake cottages that have been demolished or converted into large homes. With the community being near the lake, some housing is occupied seasonally. The trend, however, has steadily seen these second homes become permanent homes for a few residents of the lake community. Rental units for seasonal and permanent residents are available as well.

Currently, the town has 1380 households. This number has remained fairly steady the past 20 years with very little new construction occurring within the town limits. New construction, however, has occurred quite rapidly in Turkey Creek Township, particularly with condominium projects around the lakes. Also, the town has witnessed growth on the periphery of the corporate limits; but, many of these subdivisions have not desired town services and annexation of these built areas has not been pursued.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the number of housing units nearly doubled in the Town of Syracuse between 1970 to 1980. This increase is largely attributed to a large annexation that occurred in 1973, which incorporated existing housing in the south part of the town and Potawatomi Heights on the north side.

The community has an adequately balanced amount of owner occupied units versus rental units. In the 2000 census, 67.2% of the homes were owner occupied. At the same time, 89.6% of the housing units were occupied. Of those units that were vacant in 2000, about 57% were used for rental or seasonal purposes.

Housing values in the community vary greatly because they are influenced by the lakes. According to recent data from local real estate offices, lake homes values average \$385,000 versus \$110,000 for off lake properties. Typical lakefront property ranges between \$7,000-\$12,000 per lineal feet on Syracuse Lake and between \$12,000-\$17,000 on Lake Wawasee. In many instances, the land value alone is greater than the homes themselves. For homes in town and off the lake, recent real estate sales command about \$60 per square foot. More affordable homes in the \$100,000-\$150,000 sell more quickly and average about 140 days on the market. However, this price point is not as competitive as in surrounding communities such as Goshen and Warsaw due the lake factor.

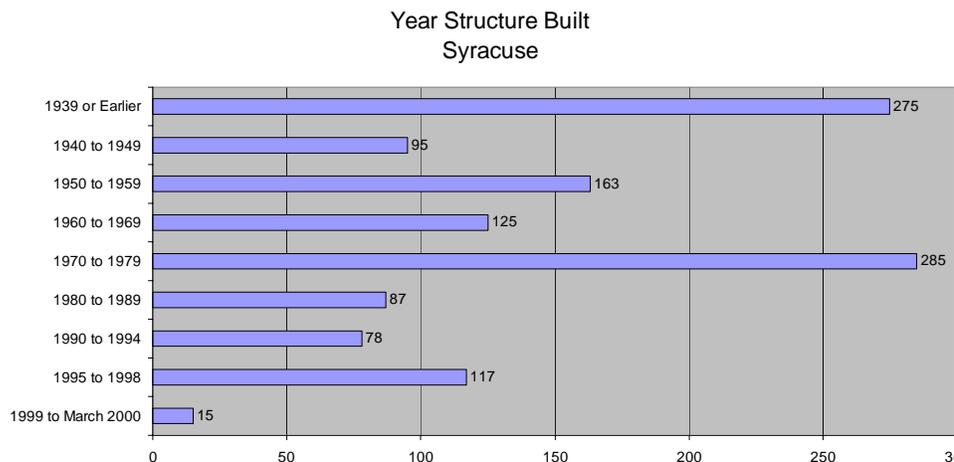
The Town of Syracuse has recently hired a building inspector to ensure quality housing construction in the community. The focus in the past year has been on improving existing substandard or unsafe properties. In the coming year, the town has plans to ramp up the inspection service and require all improvement location permits to have plan review and inspection during the construction process in order to be proactive in building code enforcement.

# Syracuse Comprehensive Plan

## Housing Study

A recent housing study conducted by the Housing Opportunities of Warsaw in January 2005 made the following conclusions on housing trends in Syracuse. The respondents were asked to agree or disagree with the following statements.

- *The housing in my community is fine.*  
25% Strongly Agree or Agree - 40% Strongly Disagree or Disagree
- *Housing stock in the community is in good condition.*  
20% Agree - 45% Strongly Disagree or Disagree
- *My community needs to focus on adding housing through rehabilitation of existing structures.*  
60% Strongly Agree or Agree - 10 % Disagree
- *My community needs to focus on improving housing through new construction.*  
70% Strongly Agree or Agree - 10% Disagree
- *Homeowners in my community can generally afford to make housing repairs.*  
50% Strongly Agree - 20% Disagree
- *There is enough affordable single family housing in the community.*  
10% Agree - 65% Strongly Disagree or Disagree
- *My community needs affordable housing for first-time buyers.*  
75% Strongly Agree or Agree - 10% Disagree



The housing study asked survey participants to rank the following community issues in regard to housing:

Cost of Housing/Affordability - 80% Very Significant or Significant

Condition of the Outside of the Homes - 75% Very Significant or Significant

Condition of the Inside of Homes - 50% Very Significant or Significant

Moving from Renting to Owning a Home - 60% Very Significant or Significant

Senior Housing - 70% Very Significant or Significant

Handicap Accessibility - 45% Very Significant or Significant

Plumbing Problems - 35% Very Significant or Significant

Electrical Problems - 35% Very Significant or Significant

Environmental Issues - 35% Very Significant or Significant

<b>Syracuse Housing Statistics - 2000</b>	
Number of Housing Units	1380
Occupied Housing Units	1236
Vacant Housing Units	144
Owner Occupied Units	830
Renter Occupied Units	406
Median Housing Value	\$85,600
Median Year Structure Built <i>Owner Occupied</i>	1964
Median Year Structure Built <i>Renter Occupied</i>	1972
Lived in Same House Since 1995	52%
Lived in Different House Since 1995 - Same County	23%

# Syracuse Comprehensive Plan

## Town Services

### TOWN ORGANIZATION

The Town of Syracuse is governed by a five member town council with the council president serving as the municipal executive. The town council serves the capacity as the legislative and fiscal body, which adopts ordinances and resolutions and approves financial matters dealing with the town affairs. Also, a clerk-treasurer, elected by the town residents, handles the day to day financial matters including payroll, claims, utility payments, and cash investments. Town council members and the clerk-treasurer serve staggered four year terms.



The town council has appointed a town manager to oversee the daily operation of town business. The town manager is the supervisor of the four department heads including police, fire, public works, and parks. The town manager also prepares the annual budget, which operates on a calendar year basis.

The budget for the Town of Syracuse in 2005 was \$4.6 million. With a healthy assessed valuation of \$181 million, the town's net tax rate of \$1.39/\$100 of assessed valuation is one of the lower municipal rates in the area.

### STREET DEPARTMENT

Syracuse has several roads and highways within its limits. The 17 miles of streets maintained by the town of Syracuse remain in good condition, as do those maintained by

Kosciusko County and the State of Indiana. The department has five full-time employees that routinely plow snow, sweep streets, and remove vegetation and debris. The town contracts with Severn Trent Services, who operates and manages the entire public works department including street, water, and sewer.



## POLICE DEPARTMENT

The Town of Syracuse has a Police Department of its own, and its jurisdiction is bound by the town limits. Area law enforcement agencies have a cooperative jurisdictional agreement, allowing for more efficient policing. The Syracuse Police Department is staffed with nine full-time officers and five reserve officers. Currently, the department is adequately staffed for future growth.



The Town of Syracuse is perceived as a safe community with non-violent crimes such as burglary, identity theft, check deception and credit card fraud being dominant crimes in the area. Because many of the properties in the Syracuse-Wawasee area are vacation homes, they are more prone to burglary because they are vacant for extended periods.

## FIRE DEPARTMENT

Fire protection is adequate in Syracuse. Syracuse is serviced by Turkey Creek Township's Fire Department, which is stationed in Syracuse. The Fire Department is staffed with 40 firefighters (7 full-time/33 volunteers). Development on the lakefront continues to create a greater demand for services from the Fire Department. Several items are being addressed to improve fire protection to the lake areas. A new fire station has been constructed by the township on McClintic Road near Wawasee Middle School; a dry hydrant system around the lakeshore has been implemented; and, storm sirens have been erected in strategic locations around the lake. In the future, the town and township will need to explore the possibility of creating a fire protection territory to adequately fund fire protection to all taxpayers of Turkey Creek Township



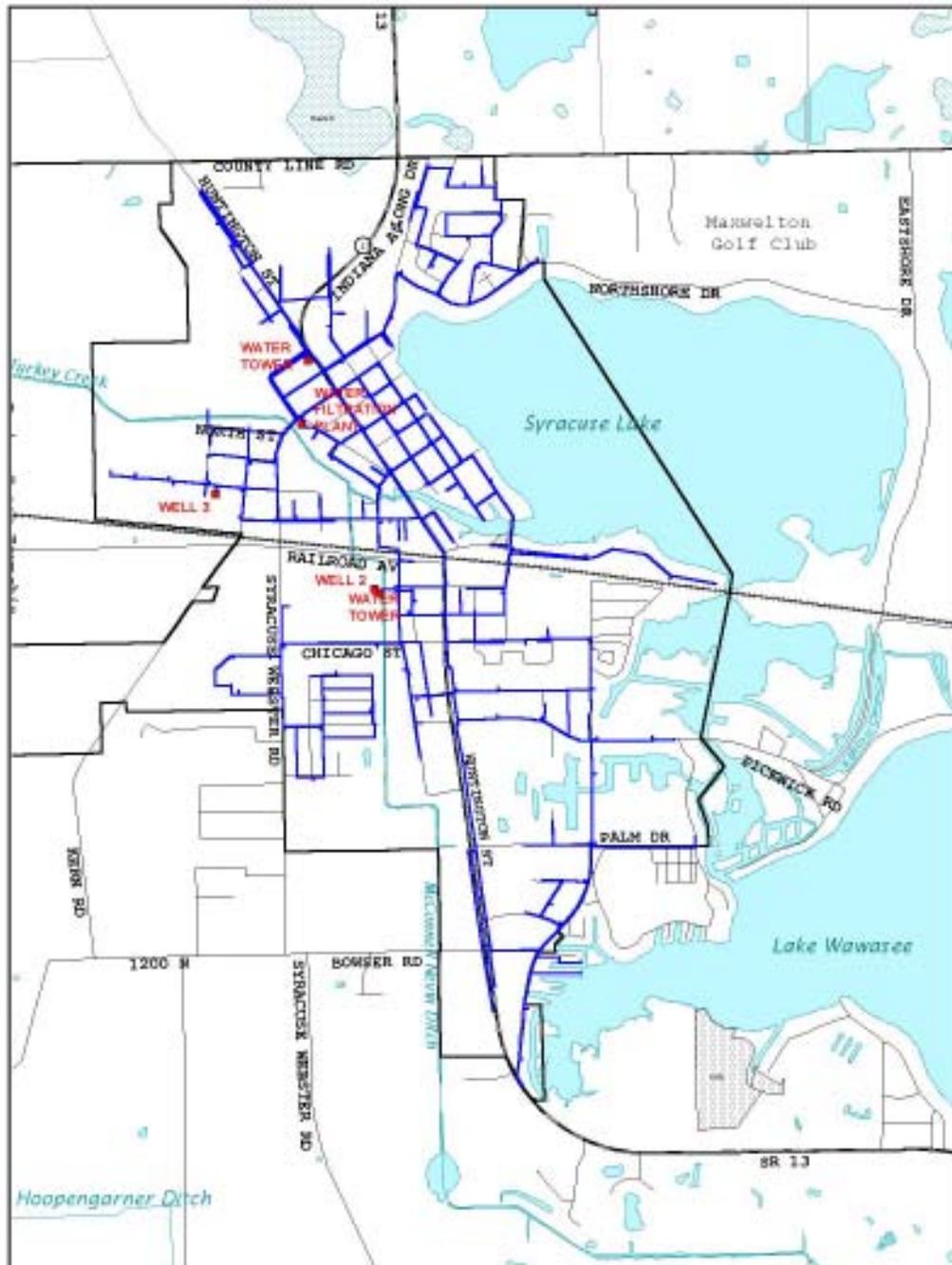
## WATER DEPARTMENT

The Town of Syracuse provides water for the community. It maintains three wells with a pumping capacity of 1.8 million gallons per day (GPD), a treatment capacity of 605,000 GPD, and it can handle a peak demand of 400,000 GPD.

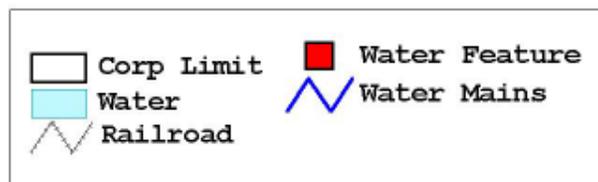
While the town of Syracuse provides an ample supply of water to its citizens, residents in the outlying areas must provide their own water via private wells. Quality of water for those outside of Syracuse may be compromised due to the extraordinary number of septic systems that exist in the crowded development of the lake area.



The quality of water provided by the Town meets existing standards; however, the town is planning an overhaul of its entire water system by 2007. A \$7 million project will replace the three existing wells with a new well field near the proposed filtration plant located on the northwest side of the community. Additionally, a new water tower will be constructed near the high school. The planned improvements will enhance the water quality and provide better water pressure for fire protection.



**CURRENT WATER INFRASTRUCTURE MAP**



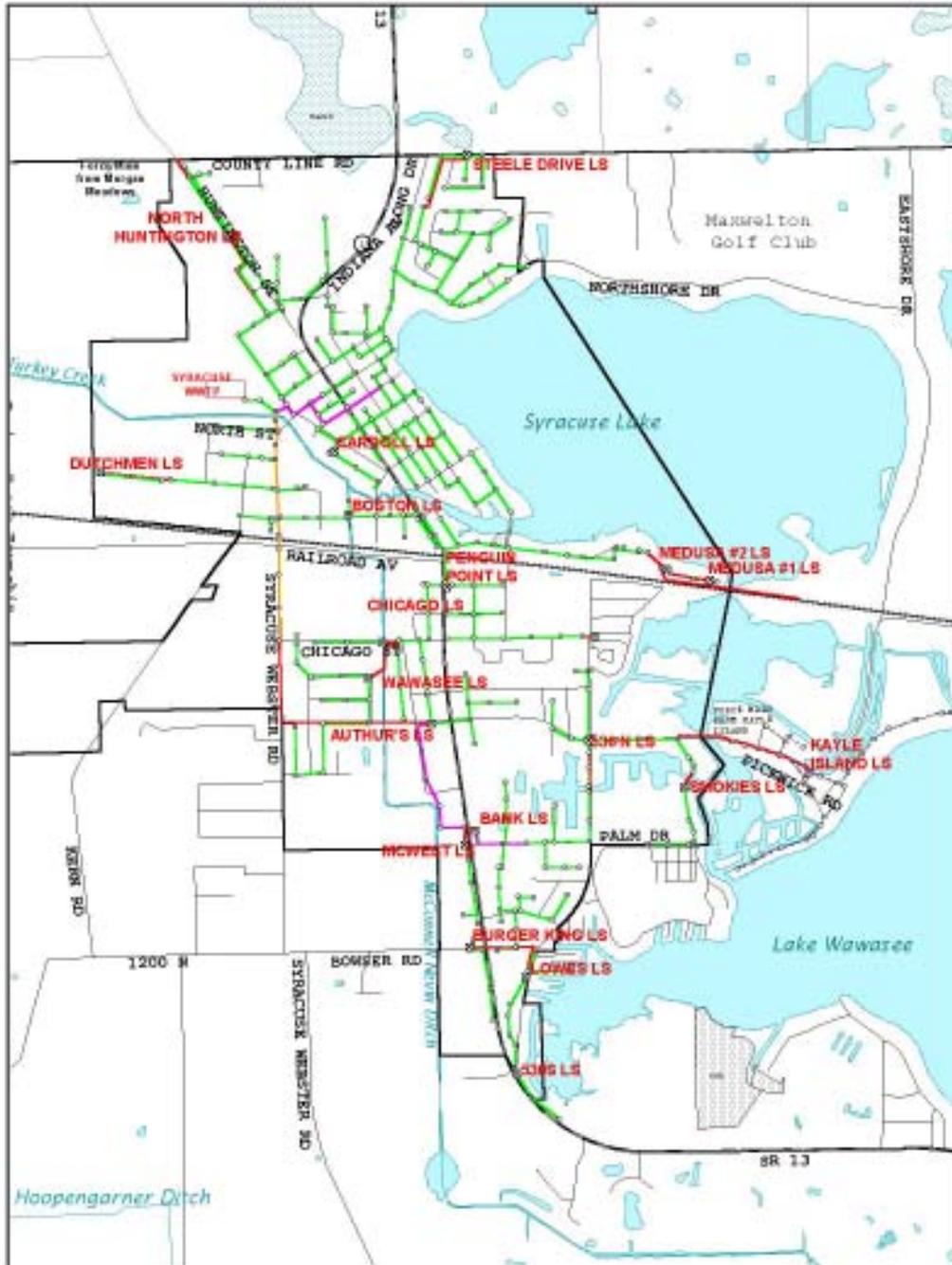
## **SEWAGE TREATMENT**

The Town of Syracuse provides sewage treatment, with a capacity of 1,050,000 GPD; average dry weather flow of 500,000 GPD; average wet weather flow of 650,000 GPD; and peak demand of 700,000 GPD.

Within town limits, the sewage treatment facilities are adequate. The concern lies outside of the incorporated town.

The vast majority of property owners in Turkey Creek Township use septic systems. This poses a threat to the quality of the lake environment. The water in the area lakes appears green due to an excess amount of algae. The algae flourish in the lakes because of the widely used septic systems in the area.





**CURRENT SANITARY SEWER MAP**



## PARKS AND RECREATION

The recreation opportunities offered by Lake Wawasee and its surroundings draw many to the Syracuse area every summer. For town residents, parks and recreation opportunities are a significant quality of life issue. Below is an inventory of current recreational facilities in Syracuse.

### THE LAKES

One of the most important elements of outdoor recreation in Syracuse is the presence of two large lakes. Much of the area’s outdoor recreational activity takes place on the lakes, and people come from great distances to use them. In the summer, people participate in fishing and all types of watersports. Boat parades and other local traditions happen here.

#### Lake Wawasee

Indiana’s largest natural lake  
 3,060 acres  
 Public access to the lake at Tri-County Fish and Game Area

#### Syracuse Lake

Access to Lake Wawasee  
 414 acres  
 Public beach access at Lakeside Park  
 DNR boat ramp near Ward Park

### TOWN PARKS

Syracuse has four town parks: Lakeside, Henry Ward, Crosson Mill, and Hoy’s Beach. The Syracuse Park Department manages the parks. The well-maintained facilities offer a wide variety of activities and traditions such as Lakeside’s July 4th fireworks and the Music in the Park program. The Community Center serves as the hub for senior and youth activities during the week including bingo, euchre, walking, and basketball. The center has a fitness center, computer room, museum, craft room, gymnasium, and a meeting rooms for that can be rented for a nominal fee. The Park Board is planning to construct a skate park to the rear of the community center for skateboarders, in-line skaters, and BMX riders.

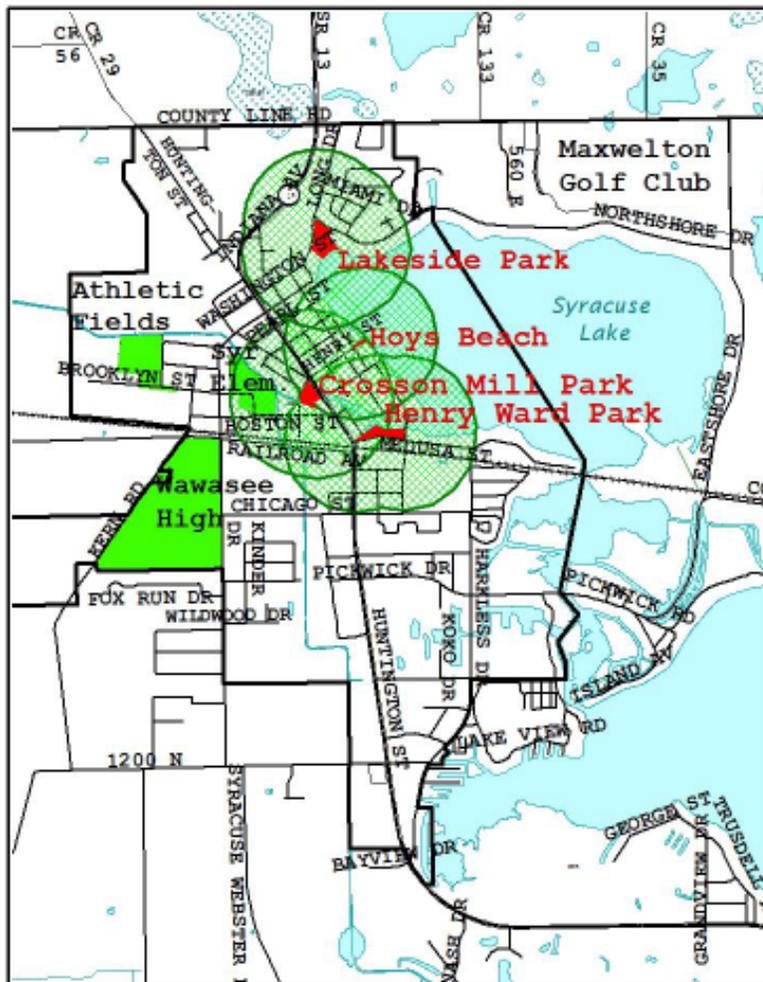
Park Facility Inventory							
Park Name	Acreage	Playground	Pavilion	Picnic Tables	Restroom	Fishing Pier	Beach
Lakeside	7.46	X	X	X	X		X
Henry Ward	1.92	X	X	X	X	X	
Crosson Mill	1.97			X			
Hoy’s Beach	0.2			X			X

### ACCESS TO PARKS

Many town residential areas are within a quarter mile of a park, which is a comfortable five-minute walk at an average 3 m.p.h. pace. However, most residents (shown below in yellow) have very little access to recreation areas. Access for some residents near parks is limited by physical barriers such as a lack of sidewalks or the need to cross SR 13 and other busy streets. In addition, several large residential areas are far from any recreation areas and Syracuse has no trails around the lakes or connecting the parks.

### TOTAL PARK AREA

The 11.55 acres of park land equals 0.00434 acres per person or 230 people per acre. This is calculated for the year-round population; the population greatly increases in the summer, putting even more demand on the parks. Schools (Syracuse Elementary, Wawasee High School) and athletic fields near the industrial park provide additional recreation space on the west side (playgrounds, active recreation areas).



*Most Syracuse residential areas are not within walking distance of a park; residents may have to cross busy streets, or walk where there are no sidewalks.*

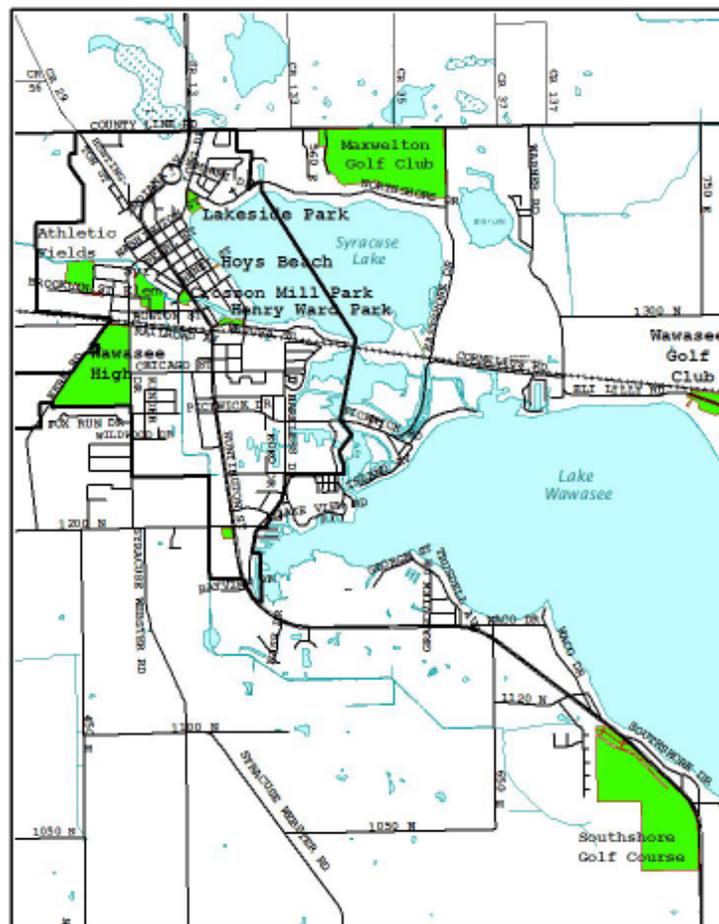
# Syracuse Comprehensive Plan

The National Parks and Recreation Board recommends 2.5 acres of park land per 1,000 people. The recommendations do not specify specific acreage for different types of park land, such as active, passive, or natural areas. Syracuse has 4.3 acres per 1,000 residents but if population doubles or triples in the summer, the town has 2.17 or 1.45 acres, respectively. Recent amendments to NPRB guidelines suggest that these guidelines may not provide adequate facilities. Syracuse would benefit from additional public park land.

## OTHER RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES:

The Syracuse Parks and Recreation department sponsors many programs; however, other local organizations sponsor various programs for children and adults. The town also has some private organizations offering recreational opportunities. Syracuse offers three golf courses, a 20-lane bowling alley, and a movie theater in the downtown. The Lakeland Youth Center provides baseball, soccer, and basketball leagues for the youth of the community. Also, the Rotary Club is planning to construct a new Scout Cabin on a 6 acre tract of land at the end of Wildwood Drive. The land could be developed into another park that supports residential growth on the southwest side of the community.

*Syracuse has 11.55 acres of town parks and several additional recreation sites such as schools and golf courses.*





*Crosson Mill  
Park*



*Lakeside Park*



*Syracuse  
Community  
Center*

# Syracuse Comprehensive Plan

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*Hoy's Beach*



*Henry Ward Park*



**ELECTRICITY**

The Northern Indiana Public Service Company (NIPSCO) provides complete service to the Town of Syracuse, but does not service the entire Kosciusko County area. The Kosciusko Rural Electric Management Company has territory on the south side of town near Kern Road. An ample amount of power production is available to service residential, commercial, as well as industrial growth in the area.

**NATURAL GAS**

NIPSCO also provides complete natural gas service to the Town of Syracuse, as well as the entire Kosciusko County area. There exists a sufficient amount of natural gas to service residential, commercial, as well as industrial development.

**SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT**

The Town of Syracuse also manages its own solid waste. Solid waste in Kosciusko County is transported by municipalities and private companies to three principal destinations. There is currently only one operating landfill in the county near Claypool. Other landfills that are used are in Wabash and Elkhart Counties. The town of Syracuse assumes responsibility for solid waste disposal for its citizens. The town contracts this service with a private waste hauler. Additionally, the town provides curbside recycling with regular trash removal. The Kosciusko County Solid Waste District provides additional recycling containers at the intersection of Sycamore Street and Pickwick Drive

**COMMUNICATION**

Syracuse is equipped with typical communications services. Telephone service to the Syracuse area is provided by Sprint. Subscribers to the local provider have local and long-distance access, as well as Internet access. U4 Communications is a local telephone company that provides these same services. Sprint, Verizon, and Centennial Wireless provide cellular phone service. There are many companies in the area that offer dial-up and high speed internet service. Mediacom is the local provider of cable TV; additionally, there are several satellite TV companies available.



