

INDIANA DUNES CLUB

Design Philosophy & Market Position

A land-planning point of view for the next phase of development on Lake Kai, Michigan City, Indiana.

A NOTE ON THIS LAND

For the first ten thousand years after a retreating glacier left them in its wake, the dunes were threatened only by high winds and waves. Now man has stepped in — towering dunes, natural fern grottos, beautiful old trees. These are the environmental conditions we are asking the next generation of development to sit lightly within, not to erase.

“These dunes are somewhat unique, and, collectively, probably represent the largest accumulation of sand dunes along any fresh water body in the world. The environmental conditions under which they were formed no longer exist: once destroyed, these dunes are not likely ever to regain their present significant size and extent.”

THE LAST COVETED PARCEL

Indiana Dunes Club sits on land that will not come available again. It is the closest remaining parcel to Lake Michigan in this stretch of the Indiana shoreline, and the only property in Michigan City — or across Long Beach and Grand Beach — that offers direct access to both Lake Kai and Lake Michigan. That combination of scarcity and dual-water access is the foundation of the project's demand: there is no comparable site left to build, and no way to replicate the position once it is spoken for.

A LAND-PLANNING INHERITANCE, NOT A COPY

Beach Walk, when it was first planned, was the closest thing the Midwest had to Seaside — a genuine traditional neighborhood design, built on layered design principles that most residents could feel but not name: the sequence of right-of-way parking, fence, yard, tree, and porch that makes an entrance into a community feel considered before a single house is seen.

“You can't put your finger on it, but when you drive in, it feels good.”

That discipline eroded over time. Lots shrank in the later phases, and after the founding developer departed and the community went through bankruptcy, the incoming board had neither the land-planning background nor the architectural code to protect the original intent. What replaced it was a rental-yield model: homes with seven bedrooms inside roughly 2,200 square feet, no parking, no landscaping, no fencing, no attention to detail. The result is a place that no longer delivers the feeling it was originally designed around.

The opposite failure mode is Whispering Dunes: large lots, no architectural code, and no land planning at all — effectively a suburban cul-de-sac with expensive houses on it, but no community, no programming, and nothing that distinguishes one lot from the next beyond size.

Indiana Dunes Club is planned as neither. It draws on Beach Walk's original land-planning discipline without repeating its architecture, and it rejects the undisciplined large-lot model of Whispering Dunes in favor of genuine design intent.

ARCHITECTURAL DIRECTION

The architecture will be traditional in character — in the way a street along Highway 30A reads as traditional — but drawn from varied vernacular forms from around the world rather than a single regional template. Replicating Beach Walk's existing look would read as “Beach Walk 2.0” and command only a scarcity premium, on the order of 15–20% over comparable product. A distinct design aesthetic, by contrast, is what unlocks a 40–50% premium driven by design rather than scarcity alone. **Doug Farr has been identified as the land planner for the project.**

LOT STRATEGY

A 50' × 100' lot is emerging as the likely standard — a conventional Michigan City build site, and large enough, with the right setbacks, to read as meaningfully more generous than Beach Walk's original entrance lots, many of which are only 40–45 feet wide despite feeling larger due to the smaller lots behind them. White Pines, by comparison, sits at roughly a third of an acre. An open question is whether the project pursues PUD status, as Beach Walk's founder originally did to allow varied lot sizes, or plats a consistent grid of 50' × 100' lots around the lake.

WHO THIS IS BUILT FOR

The target buyer is not primarily an investment audience. It is a buyer purchasing an elevated position — often someone who admired the original Beach Walk but has grown disillusioned with its current board, amenities, and lack of parking, and is looking for what that community used to represent, built to a higher standard.

*Prepared as an internal design and positioning summary for Indiana Dunes Club, Lake Kai, Michigan City, Indiana.
For consideration in external and website materials.*