

# NORTHEAST INDIANA COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2015-2019

This comprehensive economic development strategy was developed by the Region III-A Development and Regional Planning Commission with assistance from the Northeastern Indiana Regional Coordinating Council and with the guidance, feedback, and support of the Regional CEDS Committee. The Strategy and monitoring is possible with a recurring federal grant from the Economic Development Administration that is administered by Region III-A Development and Regional Planning Commission.

This strategy was developed in 2015, approved by the Region III-A Board of Directors in March 2015, and submitted to the Economic Development Administration for approval on March 31, 2015. Per regulation, this strategy will be updated every five years by Region III-A Development and Regional Planning Commission and the Regional CEDS Committee. During the life of the Strategy, the Commission and Committee will periodically review the Strategy to assess progress and outcomes.

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## REGION III-A PLANNING COMMISSION BOARD OF DIRECTORS APPROVAL BY RESOLUTION

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This Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy was approved by the Region III-A Development and Regional Planning Commission Board of Directors, referred to as the Board, in March 2015 after review and consideration of the Strategy. See resolution provided on the right. Board membership at the time of Strategy approval is provided below.

### Region III-A Planning Commission Board of Directors

Jac Price, LaGrange County Commissioner (Board President)  
Ron Smith, Steuben County Commissioner (Board Vice President)  
Tom Wall, Huntington County Commissioner  
Brian Hauptert, Wabash County Commissioner  
Don Amber, Whitley County Commissioner  
Paul Shepherd, Avilla Town Councilman

### RESOLUTION

#### A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE REGION III-A COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Whereas the Region III-A Development and Regional Planning Commission has sought the input of cities, counties, and economic development organizations around the region, and

Whereas the Region III-A Development and Regional Planning Commission has had an active strategy committee working on the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for the region,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE REGION III-A DEVELOPMENT AND REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

The Region III-A Development and Regional Planning Commission Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy is hereby approved.

Approved this 19<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2015

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
John (Jac) A. Price, Chair

Attest:  
  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Jessica Grossman, Executive Director

## **PURPOSE OF COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

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This comprehensive economic development strategy (hereafter referred to as the “CEDS”) is designed to bring together the public and private sectors in the creation of an economic roadmap to diversify and strengthen the northeast Indiana regional economy. It analyzes the regional economy, establishes regional goals and objectives, develops and implements a regional plan of action, and identifies investment priorities and funding sources. It integrates the region's human and physical capital planning in the service of economic development. It is the result of a continuing economic development planning process developed with broad-based and diverse public and private sector collaboration, and sets forth the

goals and objectives necessary to solve the economic development problems of the region and clearly define the metrics of success. Finally, it provides a useful benchmark by which the regional economy can evaluate opportunities with other regions in the national economy.

The CEDS strategy and monitoring is possible with a recurring federal grant from the Economic Development Administration that is administered by the Region III-A Development and Regional Planning Commission.



## PLANNING ORGANIZATION & STRATEGY COMMITTEE

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The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy has been created through a partnership between Region III-A Development and Regional Planning Commission (Region III-A) and Northeastern Indiana Regional Coordinating Council (NIRCC). Both agencies were created and operate as voluntary regional units of government serving portions of the greater Northeast Indiana region.



**Figure 1: Region III-A Economic Development District**

Region III-A is designated as an Economic Development District through the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA). It also serves as a Rural Planning Organization providing transportation planning, community and economic development support to its member counties: Huntington, LaGrange, Noble, Steuben, Wabash and Whitley. The Northeast Indiana Housing Partnership, Inc. is a not-for-profit corporation wholly owned by Region III-A for the purpose of providing affordable and safe housing options within its six county service area.

NIRCC serves as a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), as designated by the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) and Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) for the Fort Wayne / New Haven / Allen County urbanized area. That urbanized area has extended into neighboring Huntington and Whitley counties in recent years, primarily as a result of residential growth in southwest Allen County. NIRCC also serves as a Rural Planning Organization for Adams, Allen, DeKalb and Wells counties, providing transportation planning and community and economic development support.



**Figure 2: Northeastern Indiana Regional Coordinating Council**

Figure 3 illustrates the federal EDD as it has existed in Northeast Indiana since 1982, and the expansion counties which are being included in this CEDS. The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) prepared by the EDD is a requisite for federal financial assistance from EDA. The CEDS process and product is intended to serve a greater purpose in Northeast Indiana.

**Table 1: Counties and Communities in the Region**

<b>Adams County</b>	<b>DeKalb County</b>	<b>LaGrange County</b>	<b>Steuben County</b>	<b>Wells County</b>
Berne	Altona	Howe	Angola	Bluffton
Decatur	Ashley	LaGrange	Clear Lake	Markle
Geneva	Auburn	Shipshewana	Fremont	Ossian
Monroe	Butler	Topeka	Hamilton	Poneto
	Corunna	Wolcottville	Hudson	Uniondale
	Garrett		Lake James	Vera Cruz
	Waterloo		Orland	
<b>Allen County</b>		<b>Noble County</b>		<b>Whitley County</b>
Fort Wayne		Albion		Churubusco
Grabill		Avilla		Columbia City
Huntertown	<b>Huntington County</b>	Cromwell	<b>Wabash County</b>	Larwill
Leo-Cedarville	Andrews	Kendallville	La Fontaine	South Whitley
Monroeville	Huntington	Kimmell	Lagro	
New Haven	Markle	Ligonier	Laketon	
Woodburn	Mount Etna		North Manchester	
Zanesville	Roanoke		Roann	
	Warren		Somerset	
			Wabash	



**Figure 3: Northeast Indiana CEDS Region**

## STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

### BACKGROUND RESEARCH

The first step in the development process of the CEDS was to research the regional economy. This analysis is provided in the “Background” section. Data sources from which this information is drawn include:

- U.S. Census Bureau
- Bureau of Labor Statistics
- U.S. Economic Development Administration
- Indiana Department of Workforce Development
- Indiana Business Research Center at Indiana University's Kelley School of Business
- Northeast Indiana Regional Partnership
- Northeastern Indiana Regional Coordinating Council
- Indiana Department of Transportation
- Fort Wayne Citilink
- Indiana Department of Natural Resources

### CEDS COMMITTEE

The second step in the process was to form a committee to guide the development and implementation of the Strategy. Throughout this document this group is referred to as the “CEDS Committee”. The majority of the Committee had served on the previous CEDS Revision and was kept on to take advantage of having experienced the process before. The Committee is made up of two individuals from each of the ten counties, one from the public sector and one from the private sector. Four additional members represent organizations with a regional mission. One individual represents the region’s primary city, Fort Wayne. Individuals that represent regional departments of the State of Indiana agencies that serve the region were also included. Finally, one at large individual and one individual who served as legal counsel was involved. The CEDS Committee was as follows:

**Table 2: CEDS Committee Members**

Name	Agency / Company	Representing	Type
Larry Macklin	Adams County EDC	Adams County	Private
John Schultz	Mayor, City of Decatur	Adams County	Public
Phillip Burt	Burt, Blee, Dixon, Sutton & Bloom	Allen County	Private
Roy Buskirk	Allen County Council	Allen County	Public
		DeKalb County	Private
Don Starkey	DeKalb County Commissioner	DeKalb County	Public
Mark Wickersham	Huntington County United EDC	Huntington County	Private

<b>Tom Wall</b>	Huntington County Commissioner	Huntington County	Public
<b>Mark Leu</b>	LaGrange County REMC	LaGrange County	Private
<b>Jac Price</b>	LaGrange Co Commissioner	LaGrange County	Public
<b>John English</b>	Noble County REMC	Noble County	Private
<b>Paul Shepherd</b>	Avilla Town Council	Noble County	Public
<b>David Koenig</b>	Steuben County EDC	Steuben County	Private
<b>Ron Smith</b>	Steuben County Commissioner	Steuben County	Public
<b>Bill Konyha/Keith Gillenwater</b>	EDG of Wabash County	Wabash County	Private
<b>Brian Hauptert</b>	Wabash County Commissioner	Wabash County	Public
<b>Tim Ehlerding</b>	Wells County EDC	Wells County	Private
<b>Todd Mahnensmith</b>	Wells County Council	Wells County	Public
<b>Alan Tio</b>	Whitley County EDC	Whitley County	Private
<b>Don Amber</b>	Whitley County Commissioner	Whitley County	Public
<b>Greg Leatherman</b>	Director of Community Development	City of Fort Wayne	Public
<b>Valerie Richardson</b>	IPFW Community Research Institute	Regional	Higher Education
<b>Mark Becker</b>	Greater Fort Wayne Inc.	Regional	Private
<b>Gene Donaghy</b>	Northeastern REMC	Regional	Private
<b>Vince Buchanan</b>	Regional Chamber of Northeast Indiana	Regional	Private
<b>Brook Steed</b>	Northeast Director	Indiana Economic Development Corporation	Public
<b>Ryan Shrack</b>	Northeast Liaison	Indiana Office of Community & Rural Affairs	Public
<b>Todd Johnson</b>	District Director	Indiana Department of Transportation	Public
<b>Kathleen Randolph</b>	President & CEO	Work One	Public
<b>Wesley Shie</b>	Director	Northeast Indiana SBDC	Higher Education
<b>John Stafford</b>		Private Citizen / Interested Party	Private
<b>Michael Moellering</b>	Burt, Blee, Dixon, Sutton & Bloom	Legal Counsel	Private

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## PROCESS

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The CEDS Committee met to consider the regional economy over two separate meetings. At the first meeting, which was held on December 18, 2014, the Committee performed a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) Analysis. Using the information developed during this analysis they then developed the goals and objectives for the CEDS. It was decided that the goals should align with those developed by the Northeast Regional Partnership and that the initiatives considered by the Partnership's public involvement process should be included as potential objectives for the CEDS process.

Following this meeting, the CEDS Committee members each received access to an online survey. The survey presented the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats developed during the meeting, and asked committee members to assess the list and to suggest additions that seemed appropriate.

Further, the goals and objectives were also presented. Committee members were asked to select six objectives for each goal that they deemed essential for meeting the goal. Each of the objectives was then scored to determine what portion of the committee had selected them. Those objectives that had received at least 50% of the committee member's votes were selected to be used as the objectives for the second meeting.

At the second meeting, which was held on January 15, 2015, the CEDS committee was presented with the goals and the objectives that had been selected through the survey process. The Committee was divided into three groups with each group considering two of the goals and their respective objectives. For each goal, the groups developed a series of projects that could be implemented in order to meet the goal and its objectives. At least two projects were

developed for each objective. Once the projects were developed for a goal, a second group then considered the projects, adding to or amending the projects as they deemed appropriate.

Following the meeting, the CEDS Committee received a survey outlining each of the goals and objectives, and those projects that had been selected for each. The committee was asked to designate each project as either "Vital", "Suggested", or "Remove". "Vital" projects were those that were considered essential to accomplishing the goal. "Suggested" projects were those that should be implemented but that were not considered essential. Finally, "remove" was selected for those projects that the committee member felt should not be implemented. Using this feedback, each of the projects was assigned to either "Suggested" or "Vital", or removed from the list.

Surveys were implemented using Google Forms.

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## ACTION PLAN

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Using the input received on the SWOT analysis, as well as the Goals, Objectives, and Projects, a set of 12 strategies were developed. In most cases the strategies overlapped several goals and objectives, and each combined multiple projects. The strategies were presented to the CEDS Committee during the third meeting held on March 5, 2015 and comments were received. Based on these comments the strategies were amended to reflect the CEDS Committee's preferences.

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## COMMENT PERIOD

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The CEDS was available for public review at the Region III-A website (<http://region3a.org>) beginning on February 16 and ending on March 18, 2015. Comments were received by phone, in writing, or by email.

## BACKGROUND AND CURRENT TRENDS

The CEDS must contain a background of the economic development situation of the region that paints a realistic picture of the current condition of the region. This background must include a discussion

of the economy, population, geography, workforce development and use, transportation access, resources, environment, and other pertinent information.

## POPULATION AND QUALITY OF LIFE

### TOTAL POPULATION

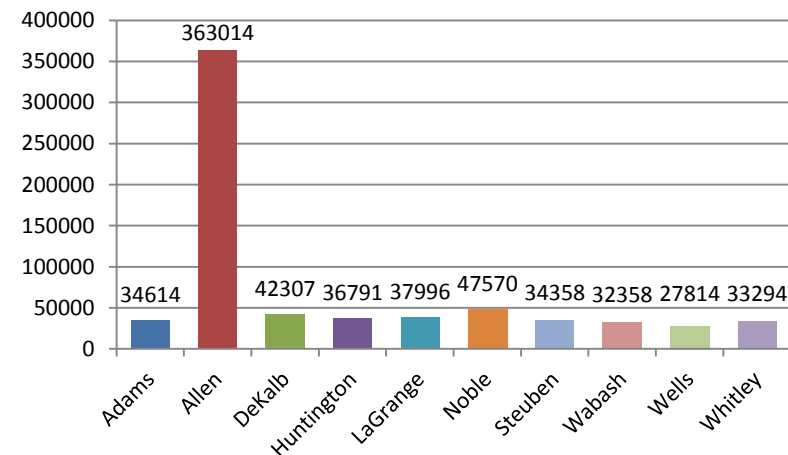
#### Region

The region counties—Adams, Allen, DeKalb, Huntington, LaGrange, Noble, Steuben, Wabash, Wells, and Whitley—have a total population of 690,116 people, according to 2013 U.S. Census Data. In terms of population, Allen County is the largest county in the region with a population of 363,014, or 53%. This is due to the largest city in the region, Fort Wayne, being located in Allen County. Fort Wayne’s population reached 256,496 in 2013, which is approximately 71% of Allen County’s population and 38% of the population in the region. Allen County is followed in population size by Noble, DeKalb, LaGrange, Huntington, Adams, Steuben, Whitley, Wabash and Wells County in descending order. See Figure 4.

#### Population Change

The population in the region has seen a total growth of 73% since 1950 (388,486 people in 1950 to 681,728 in 2010). From 1950 to 1970 the region saw double-digit changes in growth. But from 1980 to 1990 it saw only a 3.4% change in total growth. See Figures 5 and 6.

Figure 4: Population of Region Counties in 2013

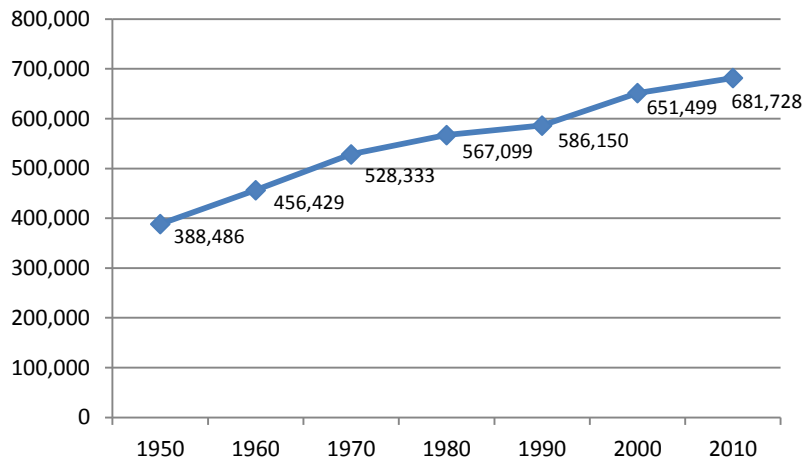


Source: Stats Indiana Counties in Profile

A breakdown of population over time shows that LaGrange, Steuben, Allen and Noble Counties have seen the greatest percent of change from 1950 to 2010. LaGrange County has seen the greatest change in population with 141.9% growth. This can be explained by the large percentage of Amish in the county. LaGrange

County has the highest average household size in the region with 3.2 per household, as well as the largest population of Amish. The Amish population in 2010 was 14,664 people, or 39.5%, with an average of 6-8 children per household.

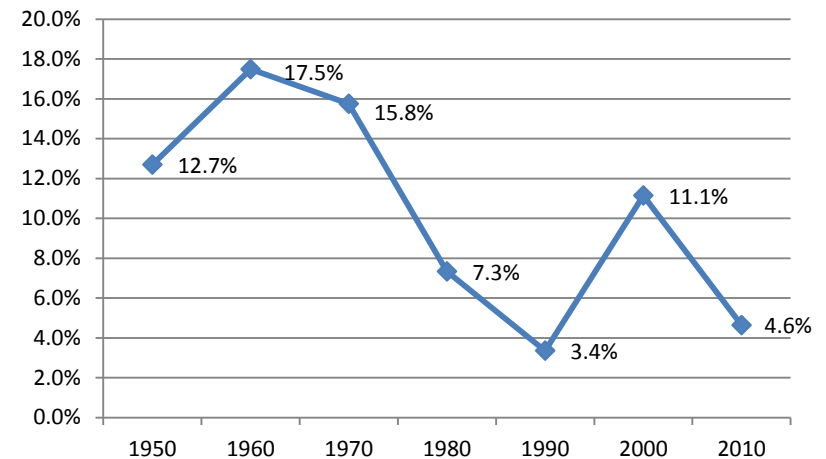
**Figure 5: Population Change 1950 – 2010**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

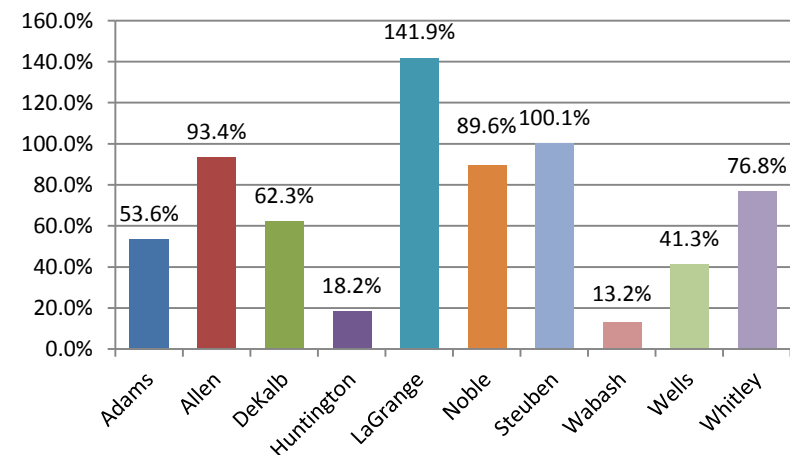
Steuben County has seen 100% growth since 1950 with an average household size of 2.5. Allen County has experienced 93.4% growth with an average household size of 2.6. Noble County has experienced 89.6% growth since 1950 with an average household size of 2.5. See Figure 7.

**Figure 6: Rate of Population Change By Decade 1950 – 2010**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

**Figure 7: Population Change 1950 to 2010**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

The smallest percent of change is seen in Wabash and Huntington counties. Wabash has seen only a 13.2% increase in population since 1950 and Huntington County has seen an 18.2% increase in the population since 1950. Wabash County has an average household size of 2.4 persons. From 1980 to 2010 it experienced a negative 10.2% change in population. Huntington County has an average household size of 2.5 persons. It had a negative 2.5% change from 2000 to 2010.

**Table 3: Change in Population from 2000 to 2010**

Counties	2000	2010	Change	Difference
Whitley	30,707	33,292	8.4%	2,585
Allen	331,849	355,329	7.1%	23,480
LaGrange	34,909	37,128	6.4%	2,219
DeKalb	40,285	42,223	4.8%	1,938
Steuben	33,214	34,185	2.9%	971
Noble	46,275	47,536	2.7%	1,261
Adams	33,625	34,387	2.3%	762
Wells	27,600	27,636	0.1%	36
Huntington	38,075	37,124	-2.5%	(951)
Wabash	34,960	32,888	-5.9%	(2,072)
Region Total	651,499	681,728	4.6%	30,229

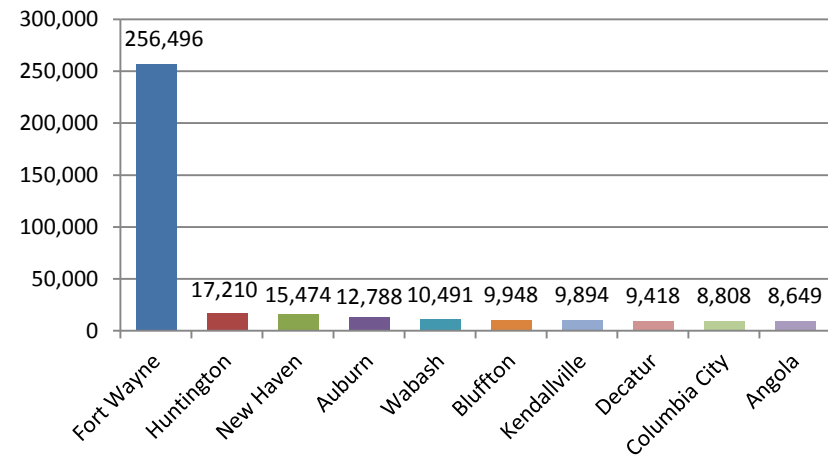
Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Looking at the most recent decade, data shows an overall population increase in the region between 2000 and 2010 of 4.6%. The absolute numbers shows continued growth, however, 78% of this growth is from an increase in the population of Allen County. The City of Fort Wayne experienced a 23% increase in population in 2010. It grew from 205,727 in 2000 to 253,691 in 2010. Part of this growth is the result of Fort Wayne increasing in size due to its annexation of a portion of Allen County. Whitley County had experienced the highest change with an 8.4% increase of 2,585

persons, and Wabash County had experienced the greatest reduction in population with a decline of 2,072 persons, or -5.9% change since 2000. See Table 3.

The City of Fort Wayne dominates the region in population. Fort Wayne's population in 2013 was 256,496. This is nearly 15 times larger than the second largest community, the City of Huntington, at 17,210. The City of New Haven is third with a population of 15,474. See Figure 8.

**Figure 8: Population of Cities in 2013**



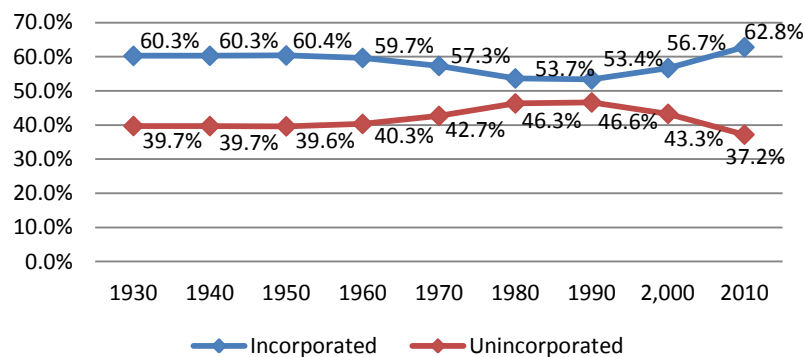
Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Aside from overall population counts in the region, counties, and cities, it is important to highlight the difference in change between the incorporated and unincorporated areas in the region, even if it simply confirms well-known trends. As is the case across the United States, population growth occurs primarily in the incorporated or more urban areas of the region rather than the unincorporated rural areas. That being said, it is important to note that the



northeast region of Indiana has not always been consistent with the trends due to the availability of numerous lakes, Amish culture and agricultural communities. It is interesting to highlight that from 1960 to 1980 the region saw a 14.6% increase in unincorporated areas and a -10.1% decrease in incorporated populations. But from 1990 to 2010 the region saw a 17.7% increase in incorporated areas and a 20.2% decrease in unincorporated areas. See Figure 9 and Table 4.

**Figure 9: Incorporated Vs. Unincorporated Populations**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

**Table 4: Change in Incorporated Vs. Unincorporated 1930-2010**

	1930-1950	1960-1980	1990-2010
Incorporated	0.2%	-10.1%	17.7%
Unincorporated	-0.3%	14.9%	-20.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

In the past century, the population of incorporated areas has steadily increased aside from the loss and leveling out that occurred from 1970-1980. In the past decade, the region's incorporated area

experienced a 15.9% increase, while the unincorporated area experienced a 10.1% decrease. In absolute numbers, the incorporated area increased by 58,742 while the unincorporated area decreased by 28,513, which reflects the overall increase in the region's population of 30,229. See Table 5.

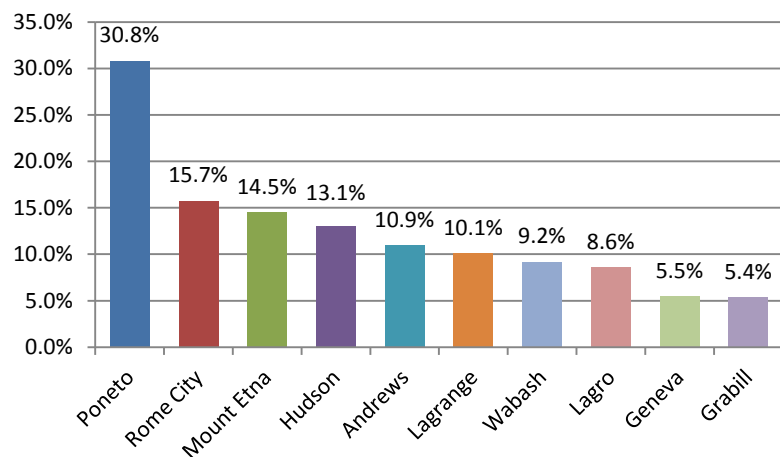
**Table 5: Change in Incorporated Vs. Unincorporated 2000-2010**

	2000	2010	Change
Incorporated	369,414	428,156	15.9%
Unincorporated	282,085	253,572	-10.1%
Total	651,499	681,728	4.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Most losses in the incorporated areas occurred in smaller cities in the region that have an average population of just over 2,800. However, the exceptions are the City of Huntington and City of Wabash. Both cities have a population of over 10,000 people and each experienced a decline in their populations that corresponds with their respective counties. The City of Wabash saw the greatest numerical loss of 1,077 people, or 9.2% decrease in its population since 2000. The direct cause of this population was a result of the recession and the city's connection to the automobile industry. GDX (General Tire) closed with a job loss of 840. In addition, Wabash Magnetics and Dexter Axle closed with job losses of 186. The town of Poneto in Wells County saw largest proportional decline of 30.8% in population in 2010: from 240 to 166 people. See Figure 10.

**Figure 10: % Population Loss 2000-2010**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

#### POPULATION TRENDS

Important elements in population change to consider are not just absolute numbers but also the age and culture of the people who live in the region. Overall, Indiana's population is aging and becoming more diverse.

#### Age

First, the median age of residents in Wabash, Steuben, Whitley, Wells, Huntington, DeKalb and Noble are above the average in the State of Indiana. Allen, Adams and LaGrange have the youngest median age per county, ranging from 35.7 in Allen County to the 31.2 in LaGrange County. As noted earlier, LaGrange County has a large community of Amish that tend to have larger families of 6-8 children. The median age in all counties has increased since 2000 and the average median age of the counties in the region is 40.1.

This is compared to a median age of 37 in the State. The two counties that saw the greatest increase in median age are Steuben County at a 6.2 year increase and Noble County with a 5.0 year increase. The next two counties, Wabash and DeKalb, tied with an increase of 4.4 years in median age. See Table 6.

**Table 6: Median Age 2000 - 2010**

	2000	2010
Wabash	37.5	41.9
Steuben	35.5	41.7
Whitley	36.9	41.0
Wells	36.8	40.9
Huntington	36.2	39.8
DeKalb	34.7	39.1
Noble	33.3	38.3
Allen	34.1	35.3
Adams	32.9	34.0
LaGrange	29.5	31.2
Region	34.7	40.1
State	32.9	37.0

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Another indicator of an aging population is the percentage of the population that is aged 65 and over. Wabash, Wells, Steuben and Huntington County have above 14% of the population that are aged 65 and over. Noble, Allen and LaGrange Counties have the least percentage of residents aged 65 and over. As this pattern in regional data reflects once again, LaGrange County has the youngest population with only 11.6% that is aged 65 or over. See Table 7.

**Table 7: % Population 65 Years and Older**

	2000	2010	Increase
Wabash	15.7%	18.1%	2.4%
Wells	14.1%	15.7%	1.6%
Steuben	11.9%	14.9%	3.0%
Huntington	14.1%	14.7%	0.7%
Whitley	13.0%	14.0%	0.9%
Adams	13.4%	13.8%	0.4%
DeKalb	11.4%	13.1%	1.7%
Noble	11.0%	12.5%	1.5%
Allen	11.4%	11.9%	0.5%
LaGrange	10.0%	11.6%	1.6%
Region	11.5%	12.9%	1.4%
Indiana	12.4%	13.0%	0.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

### Natural Change

Natural change in a population is the number of births minus the number of deaths, which excludes population increase or decrease due to migration. The ratio of births to deaths is decreasing in the region, so in effect natural change is decreasing in most of the counties and the region. Consequently, the older counties reflect the greatest negative natural change such as Wabash and Huntington - therefore the population in the region is aging. See Table 8.

**Table 8: Natural Change in Region 2000-2010**

	2000	2010	Change
Adams	257	357	100
Allen	2641	2621	-20
DeKalb	218	153	-65
Huntington	149	32	-117
LaGrange	514	551	37
Noble	369	182	-187
Steuben	168	89	-79
Wabash	63	-61	-124
Wells	124	65	-59
Whitley	159	105	-54
Region	4662	4094	-568

Source: STATS Indiana

### Race and Ethnicity

Over 34% of the region's population increase from 2000 to 2010 is attributed to the growth of the Hispanic and Latino population. This is compared with 43% of the State having growth attributed to the Hispanic and Latino population. All counties in the region saw an increase in this population from 2000 to 2010. Noble County experienced the largest percentage change with an increase during this time period from 7.1% to 9.6% of the total population, or 2.5% overall. However, Allen County had the largest numerical change of 9,216 persons, a 2.3% increase. Relative to Indiana, only Noble and Allen County have proportionally higher populations of Hispanic and Latino residents. See Table 9.

In terms of overall diversity, the region is predominantly white with 89.1% of the population identifying this as their race. This is slightly higher than the State of Indiana whose white population is 86.3%. The next two highest racial groups in the region are Blacks and Asians, which represent 6.7% and 1.9% respectively. The diversity in the region comes from Allen County with a white population of 81.4%, a Black population of 12.2%, and an Asian population of 3.2%. Each of the other nine counties in the region has a white population of at least 97%.

**Table 9: Percentage Hispanic or Latino in 2000 and 2010**

	2000	2010	Change
Adams	3.3%	4.1%	0.8%
Allen	4.2%	6.5%	2.3%
DeKalb	1.7%	2.4%	0.7%
Huntington	1.0%	1.7%	0.7%
LaGrange	3.1%	3.5%	0.4%
Noble	7.1%	9.6%	2.5%
Steuben	2.1%	2.9%	0.8%
Wabash	1.2%	2.1%	0.9%
Wells	1.4%	2.0%	0.6%
Whitley	0.9%	1.5%	0.6%
Indiana	3.5%	6.0%	2.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

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#### POPULATION PROJECTIONS

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The population projections from 2010 to 2020 suggest that Allen County will see the highest rate of population increase at 6.9%, adding a total of 24,404 people over the course of the decade. Whitley County follows this with a projected growth rate of 6.1%, adding 2,041 people. Third is LaGrange County, adding 5.7% or 2,109 people. Wabash and Huntington County are projected to

experience a decline in population, -5.0% and -2.2% respectively. This will reduce the Wabash population by 1,628 and Huntington by 825. The region as a whole is projected to grow by 4.5%, adding 30,853 people to the population. See Table 10.

**Table 10: Population Projects for 2020**

	2010	2020	Change
Adam	34387	35542	3.4%
Allen	355327	379731	6.9%
DeKalb	42223	43651	3.4%
Huntington	37124	36299	-2.2%
LaGrange	37128	39237	5.7%
Noble	47536	48870	2.8%
Steuben	34185	34679	1.4%
Wabash	32888	31260	-5.0%
Wells	27636	27977	1.2%
Whitley	33292	35333	6.1%
Region	681726	712579	4.5%

Source: STATS Indiana, using data from the Indiana Business Research Center, IU Kelley School of Business

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#### QUALITY OF LIFE INDICATORS

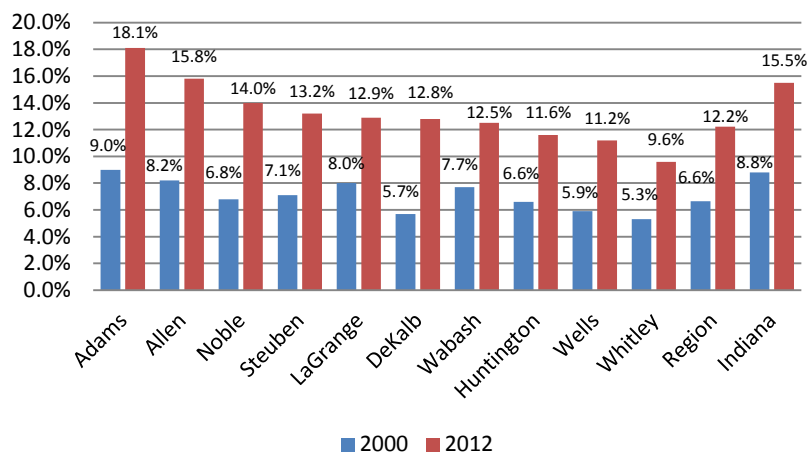
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A broad analysis of the quality of life in the region is important to consider when building a strategy to strengthen and diversify the region's economy. The goal of economic development is to improve the quality of life for residents and to minimize the financial assistance required by them. Areas with high levels of poverty and financial assistance may be facing workforce and employment challenges that should be addressed.

#### Poverty

One way of determining the extent of poverty in the region is analyzing the ratio of income to poverty level. This indicator specifically identifies how income compares to the set poverty level for a county. The poverty rates are highest in Adams County at 18.1%. Allen County ranks second with a 15.8% poverty rate. The lowest poverty rate is seen in Whitley County with a poverty level at 9.6%. See Figure 11.

**Figure 11: Poverty Rate Comparison by County 2000-2012**



Source: STATS Indiana

The highest median household income is seen in Whitley, Wells and Allen Counties. The lowest median incomes are seen in Adams, Huntington and Noble Counties. Allen County has the highest per capita income in the Region. Due to the larger families seen in LaGrange County, its per capita income is the lowest at \$26,846. It is also ranked the lowest per capita income in the State. See Table 11.

**Table 11: Per Capita Income and Median Household Income**

	2012 Per Capita Income	2012 Median Income
Adams	\$31,964	\$42,944
Huntington	\$34,783	\$43,552
Noble	\$31,846	\$44,192
Wabash	\$36,851	\$45,849
Steuben	\$33,231	\$46,412
LaGrange	\$26,846	\$47,870
DeKalb	\$34,533	\$48,116
Allen	\$37,371	\$48,795
Wells	\$36,775	\$49,264
Whitley	\$36,023	\$52,081
Region total	\$33,861	\$47,167

Source: STATS Indiana

### Financial Assistance

The number of households receiving food assistance has increased over 100% from 2003 to 2013 in all counties except Wabash, which saw a 98% increase in the number of households receiving food assistance. Allen County has the highest actual number of households receiving food stamps as well as the highest dollar-per-person benefit. Huntington experienced the highest percentage change in benefits with an increase of 61% in benefit since 2003. In 2013, LaGrange County received the least benefits per person and has the fewest number of households receiving food assistance. DeKalb had the largest percentage change with a 181% increase in

the number of households receiving food assistance since 2003. See Tables 12 and 13.

**Table 12: Households Receiving Food Stamps 2003 and 2013**

County	Year	Households Receiving Food Stamps	% Change in Households
Adams	2003	633	100%
	2013	1263	
Allen	2003	11,100	116%
	2013	24,027	
DeKalb	2003	694	181%
	2013	1,952	
Huntington	2003	832	128%
	2013	1,898	
LaGrange	2003	309	176%
	2013	853	
Noble	2003	810	152%
	2013	2,044	
Steuben	2003	666	126%
	2013	1,503	
Wabash	2003	1,945	98%
	2013	3,849	
Wells	2003	449	115%
	2013	964	
Whitley	2003	511	124%
	2013	1143	

Source: STATS Indiana

**Table 13: Food Stamp Benefits per Person 2003 and 2013**

County	Year	Benefit per Person	% Change in Benefit
Adams	2003	\$84.09	45%
	2013	\$122.08	
Allen	2003	\$87.38	48%
	2013	\$129.20	
DeKalb	2003	\$83.35	40%
	2013	\$117.06	
Huntington	2003	\$75.87	61%
	2013	\$122.34	
LaGrange	2003	\$76.65	49%
	2013	\$114.51	
Noble	2003	\$84.52	42%
	2013	\$119.86	
Steuben	2003	\$88.07	35%
	2013	\$119.12	
Wabash	2003	\$82.68	47%
	2013	\$121.52	
Wells	2003	\$82.68	47%
	2013	\$121.52	
Whitley	2003	\$81.57	46%
	2013	\$119.50	

Source: STATS Indiana

For Medicaid, the eligible recipients and recipients served increased in all counties from 2003 to 2013. It is interesting to note that

although Adams and Allen counties have the highest poverty rate, and Whitley County has the lowest poverty rate, Whitley County's percentage of change for the number of Medicaid recipients increased by 60% since 2003, whereby Adams County had one of the lowest percentages of increase in Medicaid recipients of 36% change. See Table 14.

**Table 14: Number of Medicaid Recipients 2003 and 2013**

County	Year	Number on Medicaid	% Change
Adams	2003	2,932	36%
	2013	3,987	
Allen	2003	41,397	52%
	2013	62,947	
DeKalb	2003	3,945	55%
	2013	6,130	
Huntington	2003	3,881	36%
	2013	5,292	
LaGrange	2003	2,055	62%
	2013	3,327	
Noble	2003	4,582	53%
	2013	6,993	
Steuben	2003	3,075	51%
	2013	4,653	
Wabash	2003	4,101	33%
	2013	5,469	
Wells	2003	2,251	43%
	2013	3,230	
Whitley	2003	2,342	60%
	2013	3,743	

Sources: FSSA-Medicaid 2003 Annual Report and FSSA Enrollment by County and Health Plan, STATS Indiana

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#### POPULATION CONSIDERATIONS

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- ✓ The total population for the region was 690,116 in 2013. Allen County had the largest population due to it being home to the region's largest city, Fort Wayne.
- ✓ The region saw high growth rates from 1950-1970. This slowed in 1980-1990, picked back up in 2000, and slowed again in 2010. Overall, the region has grown 73% since 1950.
- ✓ The highest growth rates since 1950 were seen in LaGrange, Steuben, and Allen counties, 141.9%, 100.1%, and 93.4% respectively. The lowest growth occurred in Wabash and Huntington counties, 13.2% and 18.2% respectively.
- ✓ Since 2000, Whitley, Allen, and LaGrange counties have grown the most, 8.4%, 7.1%, and 6.4% respectively. Huntington and Wabash counties have seen a decrease of -2.5% and -5.9% respectively, during that same period.
- ✓ The largest city in the region is Fort Wayne, which is 15 times larger than the next largest city, Huntington.
- ✓ From 1930 to 1990, the region's unincorporated areas were growing faster than the incorporated areas. This trend has reversed since 1990. In 2010, the incorporated areas of the region make up 62.8% of the population, while the unincorporated made up 37.2%.

- ✓ The largest proportion of the population lost in any community was Poneto with a 30.8% loss. Rome City and Mount Etna were next with losses of 15.7% and 14.5% respectively.
- ✓ The median age in the region in 2010 was 40.1, which is higher than the State of Indiana which is 37.0. This was an increase from 34.7 for the region in 2000. The oldest population in the region was Wabash County (41.9), followed by Steuben (41.7) and Whitley (41.0) counties.
- ✓ Wabash County also had the highest percentage of individuals over 65 years of age with 18.1% in 2010. This was a 2.4% increase since 2000. The next two counties with the highest percentage of the population over 65 years of age in 2010 were Wells (15.7%) and Steuben (14.9%).
- ✓ Natural change (births minus deaths) is decreasing in the region, leading to an aging population. Wabash is the only county where deaths are outpacing births, although every county except Adams and LaGrange saw a reduction in natural change between 2000 and 2010.
- ✓ Noble County has the highest percentage of population that is Hispanic or Latino at 9.6%. This was a 2.5% increase between 2000 and 2010. Allen County is the only other county whose percentage of Hispanic and Latino population is higher than the State of Indiana (6.0%) at 6.5%. That population has grown 2.3% between 2000 and 2010.
- ✓ Allen, Whitley and LaGrange counties are projected to grow the most by 2020 at 6.9%, 6.1%, and 5.7% respectively over 2010 populations. Wabash and Huntington counties are projected to shrink 5.0% and 2.2% respectively.
- ✓ The number of people living in poverty has increased substantially across the region between 2000 and 2012. The highest rates of poverty are in Adams (18.1%), Allen (15.8%), and Noble (14.0%) counties.
- ✓ Whitley, Wells, and Allen counties have the highest Median Household Income. Allen, Wells, and Wabash have the highest Per Capita Income.
- ✓ DeKalb and LaGrange counties have the highest increase in the number of individuals receiving food stamps from 2003 to 2013. Wabash and Adams counties have the lowest.
- ✓ Huntington County has the highest increase in benefits received from 2003 to 2013. Steuben County has the lowest increase in benefits received during the same period.
- ✓ LaGrange and Whitley counties have the highest percentage increase in Medicaid recipients from 2003 to 2013. Wabash, Adams, and Huntington counties have the lowest percentage increase in Medicaid recipients over the same time period.



## ECONOMY AND WORKFORCE

Given that the primary focus of this Strategy for the 10-county region is the economy, the basic population summary is followed by an analysis of the region's current employment, industry, and income trends. This will provide a valuable context from which to understand the other aspects of the region, e.g. transportation, housing, etc.

### EMPLOYMENT

#### Total Employment

Total employment in the region was 309,927 in 2013. Slightly more than half of the jobs were in Allen County. This is due to the large population center that exists in the City of Fort Wayne. The rest of the employment was relatively evenly distributed between the other nine counties, each having between 4% and 7% of the total employment. See Table 15.

**Table 15: Employment by County in 2013**

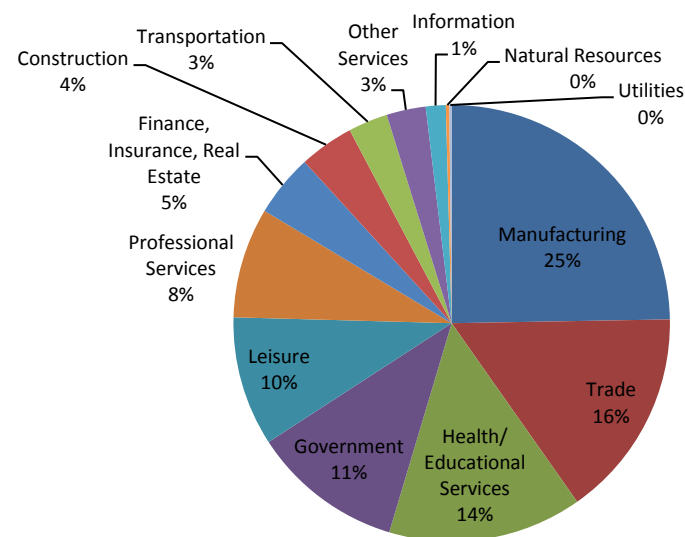
County	Employed	%
Adams	13,910	4.5%
Allen	163,791	52.8%
DeKalb	19,173	6.2%
Huntington	17,652	5.7%
LaGrange	15,804	5.1%
Noble	20,336	6.6%
Steuben	15,865	5.1%
Wabash	14,581	4.7%
Wells	12,849	4.1%
Whitley	15,966	5.2%
Region	309,927	100.0%

Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2013

#### Employment by Industry

The largest employment sector in the region is Manufacturing with 71,783 workers or 25% of the workforce. The second largest is Trade, including both retail and wholesale, with 45,081 workers or 16% of the workforce. The other major employment sector in the region is Health/Educational Services with 41,731 workers or 14% of the workforce. The industry sectors with the least employed workers are Natural Resources, Utilities, and Information. See Figure 12.

**Figure 12: Employment by Industry Sector in Region III-A**



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Indiana Department of Workforce Development, 2013

The largest private employers in the region reflect this industry sector distribution. The two largest employers are health service

providers. Six of the remaining top ten are manufacturing companies. The other two major employers come from the financial and information sectors. See Table 16.

**Table 16: Top Ten Major Private Industry Employers**

<b>Company</b>	<b>Products/Services</b>	<b>Employment in FTE</b>
Parkview Health Systems	General Medical and Surgical Hospitals	5,395
Lutheran Health Network	General Medical and Surgical Hospitals	4,667
General Motors	Motor Vehicle Manufacturing	3,909
Steel Dynamics Inc	Headquarters, Scrap Metal Processing & Steel Manufacturing	2,302
Lincoln Financial Group	Insurance Carriers	1,970
BF Goodrich	Rubber Tire Manufacturing	1,580
Allied Recreation Group	Recreational Vehicles	1,244
ITT Exelis	Wireless Networking Systems	1,165
B.A.E. Systems Platform Solutions	Aircraft Electronics	1,150
Frontier Communications Corp.	Wired Telecommunications Carrier	1,150

Source: Northeast Indiana Regional Partnership

All of the major employers have locations in Allen County except for Allied Recreation Group, which is only located in Adams County. The healthcare providers each have locations in multiple counties.

Parkview has locations in Allen, Huntington, LaGrange, Noble, and Whitley counties. Lutheran has locations in Allen, DeKalb, Huntington, and Wells counties. Steel Dynamics has locations in Allen, DeKalb, and Whitley counties. The location of these employers may, in part, account for the population distribution throughout the region.

**Table 17: Change in Employment by Industry 2012-2013**

	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>% Change</b>
Manufacturing	69,729	71,783	2.9%
Trade	44,536	45,081	1.2%
Health/Educational Services	39,028	41,731	6.9%
Government	32,824	32,563	-0.8%
Leisure	27,358	27,852	1.8%
Professional Services	23,915	23,741	-0.7%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	13,216	13,417	1.5%
Construction	11,560	11,720	1.4%
Transportation	9,063	9,207	1.6%
Other Services	8,351	8,429	0.9%
Information	4,348	4,291	-1.3%
Utilities	577	511	-11.4%
Natural Resources	1,870	1,943	3.9%
Total	298,139	301,064	1.0%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Indiana Department of Workforce Development

Comparing 2013 data to 2012, half of the industry sectors experienced an increase in employment. The exceptions to this were in Government, Professional Services, Information, and Utilities which each saw a decrease in employment. Most notable was the increase in Health/Educational Services, which grew 6.9% and added 2703 jobs to the workforce in 2013. The largest decrease, 11.4%, was in the Utilities sector, which, due to the small

size of this sector, resulted only in a loss of 66 jobs. Overall, the number of people employed increased by 1%, adding 2925 total jobs. See Table 17.

### Business Units by Size

The jobs in the region were supported by 16,189 business units. 92.8% of these businesses had fewer than 50 workers. More than half of all employers employed 4 or fewer employees. These businesses, while making up a large portion of the business units, accounted for less than 5% of all workers. 44.6% of all employees worked in businesses with 100 or more employees. The largest 50 employers in the region employ about 16% of the workforce. Slightly more than half of all workers were employed by small employers with fewer than 100 employees. See Table 18.

**Table 18: Business Units and Employees by Business Size**

Business Size	Business	
	Units	Employees
0 to 4 employees	50.5%	4.7%
5 to 9 employees	18.9%	6.8%
10 to 19 employees	13.5%	9.9%
20 to 49 employees	9.9%	16.3%
50 to 99 employees	3.9%	14.5%
100 plus employees	3.3%	44.6%

Source: Hoosiers by the Numbers

### Work Sites by Industry

The industry sector with the highest number of worksites in the region is the Trade sector, which includes both wholesale and retail trade. In 2013 there were 3,273 worksites throughout the region in this sector. Professional Services was second and Construction was

third, with 2,361 and 1,637 respectively. See Table 19. This is notable because these two sectors have a relatively small proportion of the overall workforce, each worksite having a low number of workers. Manufacturing, which has the largest number of employees, has comparatively fewer worksites (1,305), due to the large workforce employed at each site.

**Table 19: Number of Worksites by Industry in 2013**

Industry	Number of Worksites
Trade	3,273
Professional Services	2,361
Construction	1,637
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	1,621
Leisure	1,578
Other Services	1,374
Health/Educational Services	1,341
Manufacturing	1,305
Government	682
Transportation	572
Natural Resources	253
Information	180
Utilities	33

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Indiana Department of Workforce Development

### Wages

From 2012 to 2013 average annual wages increased by 2.05% or \$717 per year for all industry sectors. All industry sectors saw an increase with the exception of Professional Services, which decreased 0.77% (\$266 per year). The industry sector with the highest increase was Information, which increased 3.6% or \$1399

per year. This was followed by Financial, Insurance, and Real Estate, which increased by 3.03% or \$1,183 per year, and Government, which increased by 2.91% or \$953 per year. See Table 20.

**Table 20: Annual Wages by Industry Sector for 2012 and 2013**

	2012	2013	Change
All industries	\$34,868	\$35,584	2.05%
Natural resources	\$31,349	\$32,136	2.51%
Construction	\$39,353	\$39,942	1.50%
Manufacturing	\$44,830	\$45,971	2.55%
Trade, Transportation, Utilities	\$30,493	\$30,904	1.35%
Information	\$38,914	\$40,314	3.60%
Financial, Insurance, and Real Estate	\$39,045	\$40,228	3.03%
Professional services	\$34,677	\$34,411	-0.77%
Education/health services	\$30,327	\$30,497	0.56%
Leisure	\$11,595	\$11,764	1.46%
Other services	\$20,749	\$21,134	1.86%
Government	\$32,792	\$33,745	2.91%

Source: Bureau Labor Statistics, 2012 & 2013

#### UNEMPLOYMENT

##### Total Unemployment

The unemployment rate for the region was 6.8% in 2013, which is less than the unemployment rate of 7.2% for the State of Indiana. In fact, the unemployment rate in each of the ten counties in the region is lower than the State as a whole. The lowest unemployment rate was 5.8% in LaGrange County and the highest was 7.1% in Noble, Steuben, and Wabash counties. See Table 21.

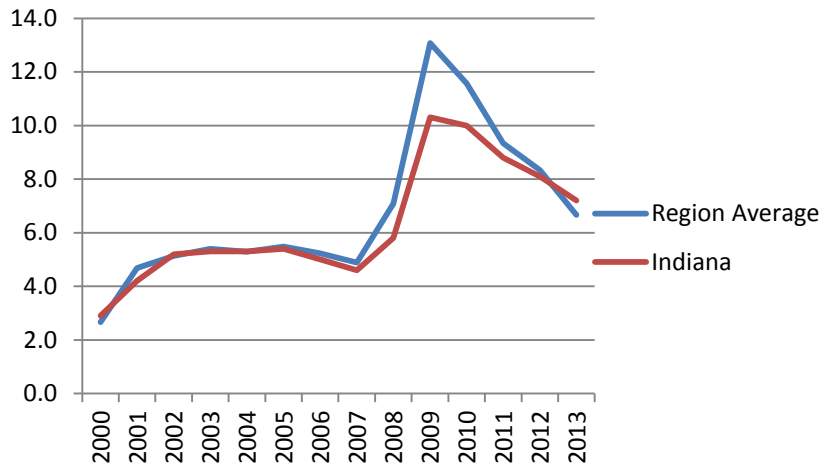
**Table 21: Unemployment Rate by County in 2013**

County	Rate
Adams	6.2%
Allen	6.9%
DeKalb	7.0%
Huntington	6.7%
LaGrange	5.8%
Noble	7.1%
Steuben	7.1%
Wabash	7.1%
Wells	6.2%
Whitley	6.5%
Region	6.8%
Indiana	7.2%

Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics

When comparing the average unemployment rate since 2000 of the counties in the region to the State of Indiana, it can be seen that the region was more heavily impacted by the recession than was the State. From 2007 through 2012 the average unemployment rate of the counties in the region was higher than that of the State. The region in 2013, however, had a lower unemployment rate than the State, suggesting that the area is recovering at a rate that exceeds the recovery of the State. See Figure 13.

**Figure 13: Average Unemployment Rate of Counties in the Region Compared to State of Indiana from 2000 through 2013**



Sources: Stats Indiana, Indiana Business Research Center, Indiana Department of Workforce Development, Bureau of Labor Statistics

### Employment Losses by Industry

Looking more closely at the employment dynamics, a total of 558 jobs were lost in the region between 2012 and 2013. These losses were offset by gains in other sectors, resulting in an overall gain of 2,925 jobs. The sector with the highest total number of jobs lost was Government, with a loss of 261 jobs, or 0.8%. Professional Services experienced the second highest number of losses with 174 jobs lost, or 0.7%. Information and Utilities also saw lost jobs, 57 or 1.3% and 66 or 11.4% respectively. While the percentage of jobs lost in these sectors was higher than the other two, they represented fewer jobs due to the lower overall employment in these sectors. See Table 22.

Only state-level jobs were lost in government from 2012 to 2013. A total of 437 state jobs were lost in the region. Both the federal and

local governments added positions. Seven (7) were added at the federal level and 169 were added at the local level.

**Table 22: Employment Losses by Industry**

	2012	2013	% Change	Change
Government	32,824	32,563	-0.8%	-261
Professional Services	23,915	23,741	-0.7%	-174
Information	4,348	4,291	-1.3%	-57
Utilities	577	511	-11.4%	-66

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Indiana Department of Workforce Development

### FUTURE EMPLOYMENT

The Indiana Department of Workforce Development provides estimates of current and projected occupational employment for a 10-year projection period. These data are updated every 2 years. Readers should view the estimates of projected employment as indicators of relative magnitude and probable direction rather than as estimates of absolute values.

Projections are provided for “Economic Growth Regions” (EGR). The region encompassed by Region III-A and its partners for the purpose of this Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), is the same as Economic Growth Region #3 except that EGR3 includes Grant County as well. To correct for this addition all projection numbers are multiplied by 91.4%, which is the proportion of the population from EGR3 that exists in the region covered by this CEDS.

Over the ten-year period from 2010 to 2020 it is projected that the total number of jobs will increase by 39,530 positions or 12.9%. The top increase in terms of percentage will be in Healthcare Support, which will add 3,226 jobs or 33.9%. The next highest increase will be

in Healthcare Practitioners, with a total of 5,018 jobs or 28.5%. Both Construction/Extraction and Personal Care and Service are projected to increase by 24.1%. This is projected to create 2,994 jobs in Construction/Extraction and 1,992 jobs in Personal Care and Service. Increases in these sectors, with the exception of Construction/Extraction, are driven by an aging population. See Table 23.

**Table 23: 10-Year Occupational Projections**

<b>Occupational Title</b>	<b>2020 Projection</b>	<b>Total Growth</b>	<b>% Change</b>
Total, All Occupations	345,011	39,530	12.9%
Healthcare Practitioners	22,645	5,018	28.5%
Office and Administrative Support	45,666	3,897	9.3%
Sales	35,920	3,822	11.9%
Transportation and Material Moving	29,577	3,648	14.1%
Healthcare Support	12,745	3,226	33.9%
Construction/Extraction	15,408	2,994	24.1%
Food Preparation and Serving	27,895	2,570	10.1%
Education, Training, and Library	17,683	2,217	14.3%
Production	44,873	2,079	4.9%
Personal Care and Service	10,244	1,992	24.1%
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	14,538	1,731	13.5%
Business and Financial	11,426	1,339	13.3%
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	10,276	1,146	12.6%
Management	16,107	972	6.4%
Community and Social Services	3,727	707	23.4%

<b>Occupational Title</b>	<b>2020 Projection</b>	<b>Total Growth</b>	<b>% Change</b>
Computer and Mathematical	5,925	590	11.1%
Protective Service	5,733	544	10.5%
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media	4,697	535	12.8%
Life, Physical, and Social Science	1,930	265	15.9%
Architecture and Engineering	5,380	124	2.4%
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	1,092	7	0.7%

Source: Hoosiers by the Numbers, Indiana Department of Workforce Development

## INCOME

### Per Capita Income

Per capita income is calculated by taking the total income in an area and dividing it by the number of people there. It provides a measure of the “average” income.

All per capita incomes in the region’s counties are lower than the State per capita income of \$38,622. Wabash County has the closest income at \$38,453. Wells and Allen County are next with incomes of \$37,854 and \$37,560 respectively. LaGrange County has the lowest income at \$27,627. See Figure 14. The average per capita income of the ten counties in the region is \$34,738, which is 90% of the State per capita income. The region has consistently averaged between 88% and 90% of the State per capita income since 2010. See Figure 15.

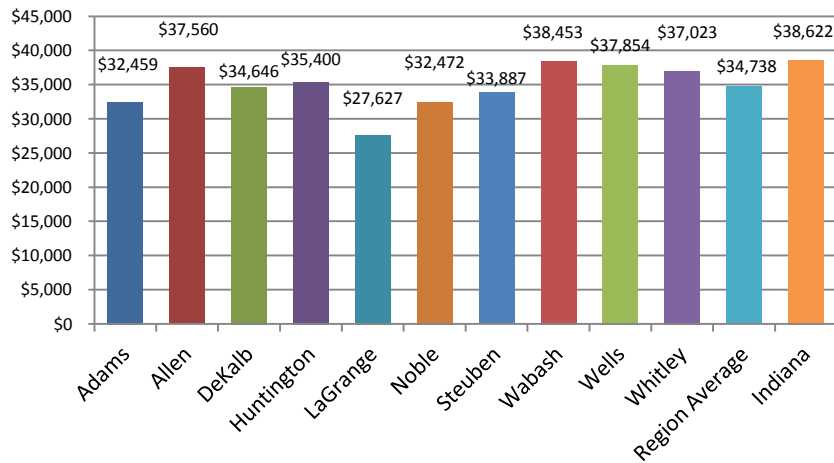
### Median Household Income

The median household income divides the household income distribution into two equal parts: one-half of the cases fall below the median income and one-half are above the median. The

advantage of this measure is that it is not affected by extremely high or low incomes that can distort the per capita income, especially in areas of low population. See Figure 16.

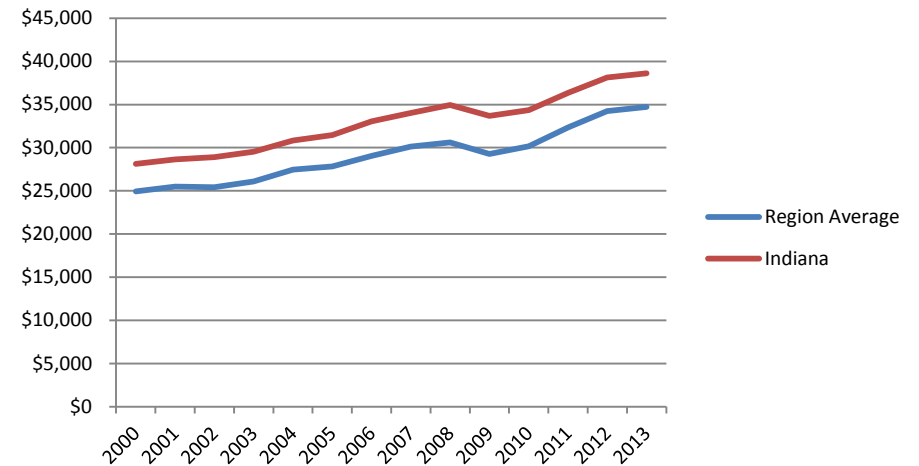
The average median household income of the ten counties is \$46,908, which is very close to the median household income for the State (\$46,954). Four of the ten counties have median household incomes that are above that of the State, the highest being in Whitley County (\$52,081). Wells County had the second highest at \$49,264 and Allen County had the third highest at \$48,795. The lowest median household income in the region was in Adams County at \$42,944. This was followed by Huntington and Noble counties, which were \$42,944 and \$44,194 respectively.

**Figure 14: Per Capita Income in 2013**



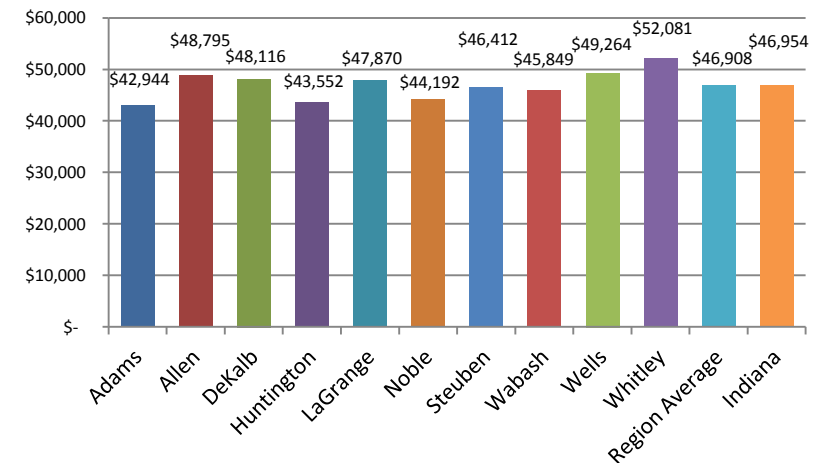
Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis

**Figure 15: Per Capita Income since 2000**



Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis

**Figure 16: Median Household Income in 2012**



Source: US Census Bureau

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## INDUSTRY CLUSTERS

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This section of the report is provided by the Northeast Indiana Regional Partnership. The Northeast Indiana Regional Partnership is a public-private partnership established to help build a globally competitive economy in the 10-county region by generating business leads and building regional capacity through product development and effective regional collaboration.

### Vehicle Manufacturing

Northeast Indiana has a deep history of innovation and manufacturing in the automotive sector, having produced some of the earliest cars such as the Auburn, Cord and Duesenberg, as well as some of the earliest trucks by International Harvester. The Fort Wayne region continues to have a very high concentration of vehicle manufacturing with those jobs making up 21.4% of the manufacturing employment compared to 7.1% for the United States (Source: EMSI 2014.3 Class of Worker, QCEW using NAICS 3361, 3362, and 3363). The vehicle employment base in the Fort Wayne area is diverse, including a major OEM automotive assembly plant, many tier I, II and III component suppliers, and manufacturers of truck components, recreational vehicles and trailers. The region's largest automotive manufacturer, General Motors, announced in 2011 that it would invest approximately \$275 million in its Fort Wayne assembly plant as it gears up for production of the next generation Sierra and Silverado pickup trucks

Average labor costs for automotive workers in the area fall below the industry national average and are competitive with those of automotive communities such as Nashville and Montgomery in southern states. Labor availability of skilled automotive workers in the region is very high due to industry downsizing over the past decade. Availability of engineers is also very high due in part to the recent departure of Navistar, which consolidated its Fort Wayne

truck design and test center at its US headquarters in the greater Chicago area. Navistar employed over 1,000 engineers at its Fort Wayne location prior to the consolidation, with many of these employees choosing not to relocate.

### Food Processing

The Fort Wayne region has a strong and steadily growing concentration of food processing companies. The entire food delivery chain is represented. Significant row crop and livestock operations exist, supported by major grain and processing firms. A strong position exists in dairy including eggs, milk and ice cream production. Major specialty products including, marshmallows, pretzels, cookies, pickles, and fine chocolates are well established in the region. Adjacent counties are home to the largest duck processor in the U.S. and a major tomato processor. Agritourism is growing and is uniquely canvassed with a strong Amish population throughout the area. Warehousing and distribution is also prevalent.

Unlike many regions throughout the United States, Northeast Indiana is fortunate to have an abundance of excess water capacity to support the needs of food processing companies. A large supply of certified shovel ready industrial sites across the Fort Wayne region have the infrastructure in place (water/sewer capacity, highway and rail access, competitive electric/gas rates) to support new food processing projects.

Major agricultural products include:

- Corn - Indiana is the 5th largest corn producing state. In 2012, there were 650,081 acres of corn harvested for grain in the 10-county Northeast Indiana region. POET Biorefining and Green Plains each operate ethanol plants in the region using this corn supply.



- Soybeans - Indiana is the 5th largest soybean producing state. In 2012, there were 678,117 acres of soybeans harvested in Northeast Indiana. Bunge operates a large soybean milling operation in Decatur.
- Wheat - Nearly 57,000 acres of wheat were harvested for grain in Northeast Indiana in 2012. Star of the West operates a soft wheat flour mill in Ligonier that supplies many of the region's bread and snack food baking operations.
- Milk - Indiana is 8th in the nation for the number of milk cow farms. The Fort Wayne region registered 777 milk operations with over \$130 million in sales in 2012. Edy's and Dean Foods all have ice cream plants in Northeast Indiana.

Given the strong food and beverage employment base, the region offers a healthy supply of workers who have been trained to work in an FDA-regulated food processing environment. Purdue University, located in nearby West Lafayette, Indiana, is regarded as a global leader in food science and technology. Purdue has long served as an educational and research partner to Fort Wayne region food processing companies.

### **Medical Devices**

The region's medical device companies are market share leaders in the \$37 billion orthopedic and biologics industry. Medical device companies in Northeast Indiana control 34% of the worldwide orthopedic market, translating into \$12 billion in revenues. Combined together, companies in the Fort Wayne region control 60% of the \$6.6 billion worldwide hip replacement market and 64% of the \$6.7 billion worldwide knee replacement market. Orthopedic companies with spinal implants divisions hold over 20% market

share in the \$7.3 billion spine surgery market, and this share could increase on the heels of the recent \$21 billion JNJ-Synthes merger.

Fort Wayne-area firms produce a diversified product set spreading across various medical device markets. Companies in the region supply or create products for the following markets:

- Orthopedic Implants
- Surgical Instrumentation
- Implant Cases
- Orthotics
- Cardiovascular
- Endoscopy
- Implant Sterilization
- Medical Grade Wire
- Orthodontics
- Injection Molding and Precision Plastics

The medical device industry in the region is comprised of firms throughout the value chain, providing logistical advantages and cost savings for larger OEMs. Medical device sterilization, precision machining, molding, contract manufacturing, and testing are all performed in the region. Iotron Industries recently invested \$15 million in Northeast Indiana and owns the technology for IMPELA® Electron Beam sterilization, which is an innovative and environmentally safe method of sterilizing medical devices. C&A Tool competes in multiple markets based on its in-house machining and engineering capabilities. These include turning, milling, CNC machining, grinding, and metal laser sintering. Greatbatch Medical, which pioneered the first implantable pacemaker, specializes in a complex medical market including implant grade batteries, vascular access systems, precision metal forming, micromolding, orthopedic implants and delivery systems. Nemcomed, an orthopedic contract

manufacturer focusing on R&D / prototyping and product development, recently announced its second expansion in 5 years.

### **Insurance**

Northeast Indiana has served as a founding place for successful insurance companies fueled by innovative product lines. Lincoln National Corporation, a Fortune 500 company with over \$10 billion in revenues, was founded in Fort Wayne, Indiana. The company's insurance products hold market leading positions in 10 key product lines. MedPro Group, which was acquired by Berkshire Hathaway, was founded in Northeast Indiana and is the nation's highest rated medical malpractice carrier. In maintaining Midwest values and integrity, Brotherhood Mutual Insurance was also founded in Northeast Indiana and focuses on insuring churches and related ministries. Jobs in the insurance field account for 55.1% of all jobs in the finance and insurance industry in Northeast Indiana compared to 38.6% for the United States (Source: EMSI 2014.3 Class of Worker, QCEW, using NAICS 524).

Insurance companies choose the Fort Wayne region for reasons beyond that of history. As of January 2008, the Indiana premium tax rate was lowered to 1.3%, which minimizes a domestic's retaliatory tax exposure when doing business in other states. Domestic insurers may opt to pay the premium tax or the corporate gross income tax. The tort reform act of 1995 emphasizes personal responsibility. Key elements include applying comparative fault, rather than strict liability to products liability cases dealing with defective design or failure to warn, restricting the awarding of punitive damages and allowing any person who caused or contributed to an injury to be named as a non-party. Indiana has consistently been rated one of the top states for commercial lines by the Property and Casualty Insurance Association of America (PCIAA). Indiana was ranked 4th in the nation by the Institute for Legal Reform in terms of the overall lawsuit climate in a state.

### **Logistics**

Northeast Indiana serves as a strategic distribution hub for businesses distributing product to the Great Lakes/Midwest region, located approximately 2 hours from Indianapolis and 3 hours from Chicago, Detroit, Columbus and Cincinnati. Northeast Indiana is among the lowest cost regions in the U.S. for serving national markets, ranking 8th in the country according to Taimercia. Calculated costs for national distribution from Fort Wayne fall within one percent of the lowest cost center. General Mills, Family Dollar, Kroger, Wal-Mart, and Sweetwater Sound have major distribution centers in the Fort Wayne region.

The region is served by two Class I freight railroads, CSX and Norfolk Southern. Numerous Norfolk Southern main lines converge in Fort Wayne, connecting to Detroit, Chicago, Cincinnati, Buffalo, Kansas City and Toledo with a major east-west CSX main line from Chicago to the Northeast passing through Auburn, Indiana. Numerous Class III lines by Rail America and the Indiana Northeastern Railroad also serve the region. Fort Wayne is headquarters to Triple Crown, an affiliate with Norfolk Southern Corporation, which provides bimodal, truckload transportation services throughout the eastern two-thirds of the United States and portions of Canada.

### **Defense**

Fort Wayne-area defense contractors bring in millions of dollars every year, employ thousands of specialized personnel, and develop products that change our nation. This includes such giants as General Dynamics, ITT Exelis and USSi. The defense industry in Northeast Indiana is vitally important to the region.

Northeast Indiana defense contractors work across a variety of defense-related disciplines to produce innovative devices that serve our troops both on the ground and in the air. The defense industry in Northeast Indiana produces assets such as communication

systems for use underwater, on the ground, in the air, and via satellite. Fort Wayne-area defense contractors also contribute to our nation's aerospace products and parts, battlefield software, armored vehicle components, logistics and research and development.

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#### **ECONOMY AND WORKFORCE CONSIDERATIONS**

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- ✓ Total employment in the region is 309,927. Slightly more than half of all workers are employed in Allen County. The remaining nine counties each employ between 4% and 7% of the workers.
- ✓ The largest employment sector in the region is Manufacturing. The second largest is Trade. The third largest is Health/Educational Services.
- ✓ The industry sectors with the least employed workers are Utilities, Natural Resources, and Information.
- ✓ The major employers in the region are located primarily in Allen County. These come from the Health Services, Manufacturing, Financial and Information sectors.
- ✓ A total of 2,925 jobs were gained between 2012 and 2013. Most industry sectors saw an increase in employment with the exception of Government, Professional Services, Information, and Utilities. These sectors saw a loss of 558 jobs.
- ✓ Slightly more than half of all employees worked in firms that had fewer than 100 employees. The largest 50 employers in the region employ 16% of the workforce.
- ✓ Between 2012 and 2013 average annual wage increased 2.05% for all industries. All sectors saw increases in wages except for Professional Services.
- ✓ Unemployment ranges from a low of 5.8% in LaGrange County to 7.1% in Noble, Steuben, and Wabash counties. The region as a whole was at 6.8% unemployment in 2013, slightly below the State of Indiana at 7.2%.
- ✓ Job growth is projected in the Healthcare (Practitioners 28.5%, Support 33.9%), Personal Services (24.1%), and Construction (24.1%) sectors.
- ✓ The per capita income of each of the region's counties was lower than the State per capita income. The average has been between 88% and 90% of the State each year since 1990. The highest per capita incomes were in Wabash, Wells, and Allen counties. LaGrange was the lowest.
- ✓ The average median household income of the region's counties was almost the same as the State's median household income. Whitley, Wells, and Allen counties were the highest. Adams, Huntington, and Noble were the lowest.
- ✓ Six primary industry clusters were identified. These were vehicle manufacturing, food processing, medical devices, insurance, logistics and defense.

## HOUSING

When composing an economic development plan it is vital to consider housing that is both quality and affordable. Those that reside in the region should have a variety of housing options from which to choose that are of proper quality and affordable. Also, if we are to attract new people and businesses there must be an adequate housing stock. Our organization both directly and through partnership arrangements services 10 counties in addressing the housing needs of the entire region.

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### HOUSING STOCK

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#### Total Housing Units

From 2000 to 2010 the total number of housing units in the region increased by 8.7% or 23,473 units (See Table 24). The total population also increased, but only by 4.6%. To reconcile this disproportionate relationship there was a decrease in household size of 2.4% on owner-occupied units (See Table 25) and 2.9% of renter-occupied units (See Table 26). Also, there was a decrease in occupancy rates of all housing units by 3.4% (See Table 27) which also explains the discrepancy between housing units and population.

Comparing counties in the region, the total housing units in Whitley County increased the most in terms of percentage, 13.8%. Also seeing double-digit growth were Steuben and Noble counties with 11.8% and 10.3% respectively. All counties saw increases in housing units. The county with the lowest increase was Wabash County which saw a 1.0% increase in housing in spite of their population decreasing by 5.9%.

**Table 24: Total Housing Units**

County	2000	2010	% Change
Adams	12,404	13,014	4.9
Allen	138,905	152,184	9.6
DeKalb	16,144	17,558	8.8
Huntington	15,269	15,805	3.5
LaGrange	12,938	14,094	8.9
Noble	18,233	20,109	10.3
Steuben	17,337	19,377	11.8
Wabash	14,034	14,171	1.0
Wells	10,970	11,659	6.3
Whitley	12,545	14,281	13.8
Region	268,779	292,252	8.7
Indiana	2,532,319	2,795,541	10.4

Source: US Census Data

Comparing statewide, our region saw housing unit growth, but was below the statewide average of 10.4%. This is attributable to numerous factors, one being population growth being greater in other areas of the state.

The trend in household size is downward for the decade. There are two exceptions to this. First is renter-occupied units in LaGrange County which saw an increase of 5.08%. Second, owner-occupied units in Allen County saw neither an increase or decrease.

**Table 25: Average Household Size of Owner-Occupied Units**

<b>County</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>% Change</b>
Adams	3.02	2.87	-4.97
Allen	2.69	2.69	0.00
DeKalb	2.72	2.67	-1.84
Huntington	2.65	2.59	-2.26
LaGrange	3.21	3.12	-2.80
Noble	2.82	2.78	-1.42
Steuben	2.60	2.52	-3.08
Wabash	2.57	2.44	-5.06
Wells	2.71	2.70	-0.37
Whitley	2.67	2.62	-1.87
Region	2.76	2.70	-2.37

Source: US Census Data

**Table 26: Average Household Size of Renter-Occupied Units**

<b>County</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2010</b>
Adams	2.10	2.05
Allen	2.15	2.29
DeKalb	2.26	2.20
Huntington	2.32	2.27
LaGrange	2.56	2.69
Noble	2.42	2.41
Steuben	2.29	2.12
Wabash	2.28	2.09
Wells	2.18	1.99
Whitley	2.17	1.99
Region	2.27	2.21

Source: US Census Data

**Housing Tenure**

Most of the counties had housing occupancy over 90% in 2000 and 2010. The counties of LaGrange, Noble, and Steuben show lower housing occupancy percentages than the remaining seven counties. This is due to the number of lake homes in each county. These homes are classified as seasonal homes. Many of these homes are second homes for residents and get used primarily in the summer months. Because of this the occupancy percentages for LaGrange, Noble, and Steuben are skewed lower. See Table 27.

**Table 27: Housing Occupancy by Percent of Total Housing Units**

<b>County</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>Change</b>
Adams	95.3	92.3	-3.0
Allen	92.7	90.6	-2.1
DeKalb	93.7	90.9	-2.8
Huntington	93.3	90.0	-3.3
LaGrange	86.8	82.3	-4.5
Noble	91.6	86.3	-5.3
Steuben	73.5	68.7	-4.8
Wabash	94.2	90.2	-4.0
Wells	94.8	92.5	-2.3
Whitley	93.4	91.0	-2.4
Region	90.9	87.5	-3.4

Source: US Census Data

From 2000 to 2010, the percentage of housing occupancy in all counties in the region decreased. There are numerous factors that attributed to this. One of them is that housing stock increased at a faster rate over the decade than did population. As a result supply of housing outpaced demand for housing.

### Age of Housing

The age in housing stock varies across all counties in the region. Wabash County has the oldest median year built in the region with 1957 for owner-occupied and Huntington County has the oldest for renter-occupied with 1959. The county with the youngest median year is Steuben County with 1979 for owner-occupied and 1982 for renter-occupied. See Table 28.

**Table 28: Median Year Built for Owner-Occupied Units**

County	Median Year Built	Margin of Error
Adams	1965	(+/-) 3
Allen	1973	(+/-) 1
DeKalb	1973	(+/-) 3
Huntington	1958	(+/-) 3
LaGrange	1978	(+/-) 3
Noble	1971	(+/-) 3
Steuben	1979	(+/-) 2
Wabash	1957	(+/-) 3
Wells	1963	(+/-) 3
Whitley	1974	(+/-) 2

Source: 2006-2010 American Community Survey Selected Population Tables

There is a great deal of variance in the median age of homes in the region. The difference in age is 22 years from the oldest county to the youngest county on owner-occupied homes and is 23 years on renter-occupied. There isn't a clear distinction on which type of housing is older. In six of the counties, owner-occupied is older while in four counties renter-occupied is older. While age varies, so does quality. Many of the counties in the region have expressed concern to varying degrees regarding blight. See Table 29.

**Table 29: Median Year Built for Renter-Occupied Units**

County	Median Year Built	Margin of Error
Adams	1973	(+/-) 3
Allen	1969	(+/-) 1
DeKalb	1968	(+/-) 7
Huntington	1959	(+/-) 8
LaGrange	1977	(+/-) 4
Noble	1975	(+/-) 2
Steuben	1982	(+/-) 3
Wabash	1960	(+/-) 5
Wells	1963	(+/-) 8
Whitley	1974	(+/-) 5

Source: 2006-2010 American Community Survey Selected Population Tables

### Cost of Housing

The ten counties in the region have a mix of rural and urban areas. In nine of the counties, the largest cities are measured in the tens of thousands. Only in Allen County is there a city in the hundreds of thousands, Fort Wayne. One would expect this to cause a great deal of variance in the cost of housing, but that simply is not the case. Allen County, because of having a larger city, does have a higher median monthly housing cost (owner-occupied, with mortgage). The counties of LaGrange, Noble, and Steuben are higher on housing cost due to the number of lake homes in those counties. Lake homes are more expensive than non-lake homes due to them providing additional amenities and typically being second homes.

**Table 30: Median Monthly Housing Cost (Owner-Occupied, with a mortgage)**

County	Estimate	Margin of Error
Adams	971	(+/-) \$58
Allen	1054	(+/-) \$18
DeKalb	995	(+/-) \$44
Huntington	994	(+/-) \$45
LaGrange	1118	(+/-) \$59
Noble	1035	(+/-) \$46
Steuben	1058	(+/-) \$43
Wabash	890	(+/-) \$44
Wells	962	(+/-) \$48
Whitley	1080	(+/-) \$56

Source: 2008-2010 American Community Survey 3-year Estimates

It is also important to consider the cost of housing in terms of household income. The data in Table 30 is for homes that are owner-occupied and have a mortgage. The three counties that have lake homes are slightly higher than the other counties.

The housing costs as a percentage do run higher in the three counties with lake homes: Noble, LaGrange, and Steuben. The only other county that is statistically even with the counties with lake homes is DeKalb County. Otherwise there is a noticeable drop off in owner costs as a percentage of income. Based on the percentages, most of the housing in the region is deemed affordable. See Table 31.

**Table 31: Median Monthly Housing Cost as Percent of Household Income**

County	%	Margin of Error
Adams	22.9	(+/-) 1.1
Allen	20.4	(+/-) 0.5
DeKalb	23.8	(+/-) 1.2
Huntington	21.4	(+/-) 1.1
LaGrange	24.6	(+/-) 1.6
Noble	23.8	(+/-) 1.3
Steuben	23.1	(+/-) 1.1
Wabash	21	(+/-) 1.4
Wells	20.9	(+/-) 1.6
Whitley	22.6	(+/-) 1.0

Source: 2008-2010 American Community Survey 3-year Estimates

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#### HOUSING CONSIDERATIONS

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- ✓ From 2000 to 2010 the number of housing units increased by 8.73% while the population increased by 4.64% in the region.
- ✓ The average household size of both owner-occupied and renter-occupied units decreased from 2000 to 2010 in the region. The only exception was renter-occupied units in LaGrange County which increased by 5.08%.
- ✓ From 2000 to 2010 all counties saw an increase in housing units, and all counties but two saw an increase in population, Huntington and Wabash.

- ✓ With the exception of lake homes, which are classified as seasonal occupancy, occupancy rates are over 90% throughout the region.
- ✓ From 2000 to 2010 occupancy rates declined in every county in the region. This is due to the number of housing units growing at a faster rate than population for the decade. This decade did see the housing boom and subsequent bust which explains a possible overbuilding situation with homes.
- ✓ The age of homes varies greatly throughout the region. The difference in age is 22 years from the oldest county to the youngest county on owner-occupied homes and is 23 years on renter-occupied homes.
- ✓ Housing costs for owner-occupied units are fairly consistent throughout the region. The counties with lake homes have higher costs due to lake homes being second homes with more amenities.
- ✓ Housing costs as a percent of household income are also fairly consistent throughout the region. Again, lake homes skew the data in the counties where they are located.



## TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

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The transportation system allows people and goods to move within and outside of the Northeast Indiana region, which is extremely important for the region's economy. Several transportation modes are utilized in the region, including basic automobile transportation, semi-truck and rail freight, public transportation, airports, and pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure. This section will provide an overview of the road network, freight transportation, airports, public transportation, and the bicycle and pedestrian facilities serving the region.

A key component for a successful transportation system is adequate transportation planning. Region III-A and our planning partners at the Northeast Indiana Regional Coordinating Council (NIRCC) provide transportation planning services to the counties within the region. These planning agencies are a link between the motoring public, elected officials, local units of government, transportation agencies, engineers, and the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) in serving transportation priorities. Both Region III-A and NIRCC collect, process, and maintain transportation data throughout the region that is utilized to both meet Federal requirements and also assist with project development.

Both agencies develop or assist with the development of transportation plans within the region. These plans identify and analyze transportation needs, then develop and recommend projects to address those needs. Region III-A assists communities with project development, then prepares and maintains project inventory type transportation plans for Huntington, LaGrange, Noble, Steuben, Wabash, and Whitley Counties. NIRCC, as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) serving the Fort Wayne Allen County Urbanized Area, prepares and maintains the long-range transportation plan for the Fort Wayne Allen County

Urbanized Area. NIRCC also prepares and maintains short range rural transportation plans for Adam, Allen, DeKalb, and Wells Counties.

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### ROAD NETWORK

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Indiana is called the "Crossroads of America" with good reason. The state has fourteen interstate highways which pass through it. Northeast Indiana is served by two major interstate highways, I-69 (North/South) and I-80/90 (East/West), also known as the Indiana Toll Road. The two interstate highways intersect near Fremont, Indiana near the Michigan and Ohio state lines in the northeast corner of the state. The region also has access to seven U.S. highways (6, 20, 24, 27, 30, 33, and 224) and over twenty state roads (1, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 13, 14, 15, 16, 37, 101, 105, 109, 114, 115, 116, 120, 124, 127, 205, 218, 301, 327, 427, 827 and 930) that cross the Region. The interstate, U.S. highway, and state road systems provide connectivity throughout the region to nearly twenty major U.S. and Canadian markets within a 500 mile radius. Businesses in the region have a one-day drive by truck to more than 40% of the U.S. population and over one-fifth of the Canadian population.

The highway system consists of seven classes of roadways. These range from interstate to the local streets in cities and towns. The seven classes are listed below:

- Interstates
- Principal Arterials (Freeways / Expressways)
- Other Principal Arterials
- Minor Arterials
- Major Collectors
- Minor Collectors
- Local

The interstates, US highways, and state roads within the region listed previously are classified as either interstates, principal arterials, other principal arterials, minor arterials, or major collectors. INDOT is responsible for maintaining and improving these facilities. The maintenance and improvement of roadways outside of INDOT's jurisdiction is the responsibility of the local units of government (counties, cities, and towns). These roadways are classified as either minor arterials, major collectors, minor collectors, or local roads. The United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) has Federal Aid funding available to local units of government for the completion of roadway improvement projects on roadways which are classified as major collectors or above. There are three distinct groups of Federal Aid funding available to the local units of government within the region. Group 1 funding is for urban areas with populations greater than 200,000; Group 3 funding is for cities/towns with populations of 5,000 – 49,999; and Group 4 funding is for cities/towns with populations under 5,000 and counties. The Region does not contain any areas that qualify for Group 2 funding (urban areas with populations of 50,000 – 199,999). Group 1 funds are administered by NIRCC and the Group 3 and 4 funds are administered by INDOT. These Federal funds require a twenty percent local match and are awarded through a competitive application process.

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#### **FREIGHT TRANSPORTATION**

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Freight movement contributes significantly to economic development in the region. As stated previously, the region is located within a 500 mile drive of nearly 20 major U.S. and Canadian markets. The Fort Wayne area is considered a regional hub with ready access to the cities of Chicago, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, Detroit, Indianapolis and Toronto, Canada. The region has multiple distribution facilities located along its interstates and

highways. There is also a substantial amount of semi-truck traffic originating outside of the ten county region that travel through the Region while heading to their destinations. Currently, 57% of the semi-truck traffic statewide are through trips. Data relating to the number of tons of goods shipped by road is not tracked accurately. However, there has been an increase in the volume of semi-truck traffic of approximately 2% on average in the past three years, on some corridors.

Railroads are also an important transportation mode in the region. The state of Indiana has 4,450 miles of track, approximately 425 miles in the northeast section of the state. The region is served by two Class I freight railroads; CSX and Norfolk Southern. Numerous Norfolk Southern main lines converge in Fort Wayne and connect to Detroit, Chicago, Cincinnati, Buffalo, Kansas City and Toledo. CSX has a major east-west main line from Chicago to the northeast passing through Auburn. Numerous Class III lines by Rail America and the Indiana Northeastern Railroad also serve the region. The latest data available published in 2009 by Wilbur Smith Associates states that 247 million tons of goods pass through the state annually. Of that number, 54.4 million tons were either coming into or going out of the state. Freight passing through the state accounted for 171.1 million tons with 21.5 million tons traveling inside the state. Indiana ranks first in the nation in rail tons of primary metal products originated (over 8 million tons), third in the nation in terms of its number of freight railroads with 42, and 11th nationally in Class I rail mileage.

The region is also home to an intermodal facility. Intermodal is defined as the transportation of freight using multiple modes of transportation i.e. truck, rail, and ship. Fort Wayne is headquarters to Triple Crown, an affiliate of Norfolk Southern Corporation, which provides transportation services throughout the eastern two-thirds of the United States and portions of Canada. Norfolk Southern

operates an intermodal facility located on the east side of Fort Wayne. The Norfolk Southern Triple Crown Facility utilizes roadrailers, which are highway truck trailers with interchangeable wheel sets. The roadrailers combine truck and rail line haul movements. The Triple Crown fleet consists of 5,500 trailers that are 53 feet long and 102 inches wide. A typical train size is 73 units, but the Federal Railroad Administration has authorized the operation of trains of up to 155 units. There are a total of eleven origin-destination pairs from Fort Wayne, including sites in Canada and Mexico. The principal commodity market is automotive parts, and the highest origin-destination to Fort Wayne is to and from Atlanta, Georgia; Kansas City, Missouri; and Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Other commodities served by Triple Crown include appliances, paper, and food. There are also an additional three intermodal facilities within 200 miles of Fort Wayne. CSX operates an intermodal facility in North Baltimore, OH, less than 90 miles from Fort Wayne; while Norfolk Southern operates additional intermodal facilities in Chicago, IL (159 miles) and Columbus, OH (167 miles).

The region also has ready port access. The Port of Toledo on Lake Erie is located just over 100 miles from Fort Wayne and the Port of Indiana-Burns Harbor on Lake Michigan is approximately 125 miles away from Fort Wayne. Both ports have the facilities needed to deal with all types of bulk, break bulk, project cargo, and containers.

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#### AIRPORTS

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The region is home to the Fort Wayne International Airport (FWA). FWA is a regional facility with runways of 12,000 ft, 8,000 ft and 4,000 ft; providing over 100 weekly non-stop departures to Chicago, Atlanta, Detroit, Dallas/Fort Worth, Minneapolis, Philadelphia, Charleston, and other major cities. FWA served over 500,000 passengers in 2013 and is home to four major carriers: Delta,

United, American, and Allegiant Air. In addition to passenger transportation, FWA also provides air freight being handled at freight terminals by Federal Express and UPS. In 2012, FWA handled approx. 12,183 tons of cargo. Significant to FWA, the newly expanded Foreign Trade Zone (FTZ #182) serves the ten counties in the region, in addition to neighboring Jay and Blackford counties, offering duty exemptions and payment deferrals for many businesses engaged in importing and exporting.

The region is also home to six general aviation airports (DeKalb County Airport, Huntington Municipal Airport, Kendallville Municipal Airport, Smith Field in Fort Wayne, Tri-State Steuben County Airport, and the Wabash Municipal Airport); two of which have runways over 5,000 ft (DeKalb County Airport and Huntington Municipal Airport). These airports are primarily utilized by private pilots.

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#### PUBLIC TRANSIT

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The region has one municipal public transportation system serving the urbanized area within Allen County and several rural public transportation systems. In terms of economic development, studies show every dollar spent on public transportation creates a five dollar benefit. Within Allen County, passenger transportation for the general public is provided by Citilink. Citilink operates fourteen fixed and point deviation routes providing service throughout the cities of Fort Wayne and New Haven. Included in their fourteen routes is their campus Link and MedLink services. The campus Link service provides frequent and free circulator service between the IPFW and Ivy Tech campuses, as well as nearby shopping and residential areas. The MedLink service connects the Parkview Randallia Campus located off of State Boulevard to Parkview Regional Medical Center located at Interstate 69 and Dupont Road. Citilink's MedLink and campus Link routes operate in partnership

with Parkview Health Systems, Ivy Tech Community College and Indiana University Purdue University Fort Wayne (IPFW). These community partnerships have allowed for expansion of services with dwindling local, state and federal subsidies. Citilink provides service Monday thru Saturday. An up-to-date route map, including service information, can be found at [www.fwcitilink.com](http://www.fwcitilink.com).

In addition, Citilink has specific responsibilities related to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) that can also be accomplished, in part, through improved transit access and mobility. This legislation requires Citilink to provide wheelchair accessible fixed route service and a complementary paratransit service called Citilink Access. Citilink Access is Citilink's demand-response bus service designed to provide persons with disabilities an equivalent level of service as that provided by Citilink fixed route service. Citilink Access provides origin to destination, curb-to-curb service for persons with disabilities who are medically certified as being unable to utilize the accessible fixed route service. Citilink Access operates during the same hours and geographical area as the Citilink fixed route service. Citilink Access program eligibility requirements and operating policies are determined by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The cost per one-way trip for Citilink fixed routes is \$1.25 and the cost per one-way trip for Citilink Access is \$2.50. Funding for Citilink's services primarily comes from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5307 Urbanized Area funding program, state transit funding, and local tax revenue.

There are also eight counties with rural public transportation systems within the Region providing demand-response public transportation services to the general public. These counties include: DeKalb (DeKalb Area Transit – DART); Huntington (Area Transportation); LaGrange (LaGrange County Area Transit); Noble

(Noble Transit System); Steuben (STAR Transportation); Wabash (Wabash County Transportation); Wells (Wells on Wheels – WOW!); and Whitley (Whitley County Transit). In general, these rural transportation systems are operated by the county's Council on Aging or a similar non-profit agency and provide transportation services to seniors and individuals with disabilities. These systems utilize both accessible and non-accessible vehicles ranging from cars and minivans to fourteen passenger small transit vehicles. Service is typically provided Monday thru Friday. The cost per one-way trip varies by county, ranging between \$2.00 and \$4.00, with the average being \$2.50. Funding for rural public transportation comes from the FTA's Section 5311 Rural Transit program administered by INDOT and local funding from area communities and foundations within each county. Typically, rural transit does not receive additional funding from the state or local tax revenue. Adams and Allen Counties do not have a rural public transportation provider; however transportation services are available within these counties. In general, there are several taxi and private transportation companies serving the ten county region. In Adams County, the Adams County Council on Aging provides transportation services to seniors and individuals with disabilities. In Allen County, non-profits such as Aging and In-Home Services of Northeast Indiana and the Community Transportation Network, as well as several private providers, operate transportation services within and outside of Citilink's service area, focusing on transportation for seniors and individuals with disabilities.

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#### **BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES**

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There has been continued emphasis on the development, connectivity, and completion of trails and pedestrian facilities throughout the region. Trails are not only important to the facilitation of recreational activities, but also serve as an alternate method of transportation to the traditional car. These facilities are

crucial in increasing the safety of pedestrians and cyclists by giving them alternatives to the busy roadways within the region. Comprehensive connectivity and integration of these trails and facilities is crucial to their success. In recent years, both INDOT and local units of government have begun the trend of including trail and pedestrian facilities as part of major roadway improvement projects to increase connectivity. In 2013, the City of Fort Wayne integrated designated bike lanes along streets within the downtown core; a practice most likely to be followed by other communities within the region. There is also an emphasis on trail connectivity within counties from community to community and also from county to county. A prime example of county to county connectivity within the region is the State Priority Trail, also known as the Pufferbelly Trail, stretching from Ouabache State Park in Wells County to Pokagon State Park in Steuben County. This trail will travel 81 miles through Wells, Allen, DeKalb, and Steuben Counties. Currently, 19.3 miles out of the 81 mile trail exists, while the remaining portions are either under development or planned.

All of the counties within the region currently have trails open, as well as trails under development or planned. Adams County has approximately 7 miles of trails open with additional trails planned, including a 4.36 mile rails to trails project to connect Berne and Geneva. Allen County has the most robust trail system in the region with nearly 246 miles of trails open, under development, or planned. Within Allen County, Fort Wayne Trails, Inc. and the area park departments work together to plan, develop, and construct an interconnected trail system. Currently, within Allen County there is approximately 64 miles of interconnected trails connecting the urban and rural areas. DeKalb County has approximately 5.5 miles of trails open and another 3.7 miles planned. Huntington County has approximately 1.5 miles of trails open outside of the 36 miles of trails within their two (2) state parks. An additional 1.5 miles of trail is planned within the Town of Markle. LaGrange County has 3.5

miles of trail open that connects Goshen to Shipshewana, as well as approximately ten additional miles of trails within the area parks and nature preserves. Noble County has approximately four miles of trails open outside of the approximately 32 miles of trails within the area parks and nature preserves. A trail is planned to connect Kendallville and Rome City. Steuben County has approximately six miles of trails open, with nearly nine miles planned to connect Fremont and Angola, outside of the approximately 48 miles of forested trails located throughout the county. Wabash County has approximately 70 miles of trails open, under development, or planned; with a majority located in area parks. Approximately 22 of those miles are planned for the urban areas of North Manchester and Wabash. Wells County has 23 miles of trails open or planned, with a majority of the open trails within area parks. Finally, Whitley County has approximately 17 miles of trails open, with a majority located in area parks and within Columbia City and South Whitley.

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#### TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM CONSIDERATIONS

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- ✓ Transportation planning in the ten-county region is done by Region III-A and the Northeastern Indiana Regional Coordinating Council (NIRCC). Region III-A works in Huntington, LaGrange, Noble, Steuben, Wabash, and Whitley counties. NIRCC works in Adams, Allen, DeKalb, and Wells counties.
- ✓ Indiana has 14 interstate highways pass through it, two of these intersect in the region. Additionally, the region has seven U.S. highways, and 20 state roads.
- ✓ Fort Wayne is a regional freight hub with access to several large Midwestern cities. This includes semi-truck and

railroad traffic. The region is home to an intermodal facility and also has ready port access.

- ✓ The region is home to the Fort Wayne International Airport, which provides both passenger and freight services. The region is also home to six general aviation airports, which are primarily used by private pilots.
- ✓ The region has one municipal transportation system serving the urbanized area within Allen County and eight rural public transportation systems.

- ✓ There has been continued emphasis on the development, connectivity, and completion of trails and pedestrian facilities throughout the region. All counties have trails open, as well as trails under development or planned.

## GEOGRAPHY, LAND USE, AND ENVIRONMENT

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### REGION

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The region is characterized by a relatively homogenous topography ranging from 730 to 850 feet above sea level in the six counties south of DeKalb and Noble counties, to gently rolling hills with elevations up to 1100 feet above sea level in the northern four counties. Agricultural pasture and crop land is the predominant land use in the region which makes up over 72% of the land use. Land classified as developed accounts for a relatively small percentage of land use of the region at slightly more than 11%. There are also several special features to be considered within the region including a National Natural Landmark, State-designated special rivers and streams, and many natural land preserves.

The region is situated amongst 153,600 acres of wetlands and has more lakes than any other region in Indiana, with over 700 natural lakes in Steuben and LaGrange counties alone. The majority of the lakes in the region are Kettle Lakes, which were formed as the glaciers receded and melted after the last great glaciation, the Wisconsinan glaciation, over 10,000 years ago. The lakes located within the region provide many eco-services including angling, flood mitigation, and recreation. They are also a major revenue generator for the surrounding area, especially during the summer months as the population of the area will nearly double as seasonal homeowners return to the area.

There are over 5,722 miles of flowing water located within the region, which serve as sources of irrigation water for the vast crop land, drinking water, fishing and boating, and provide habitat to state- and federally-listed endangered and/or threatened species. There are three major regions located within the area; the Wabash Region, Western Lake Erie Region, and the Southeastern Lake

Michigan Region. The Maumee River, with headwaters located in downtown Fort Wayne in Allen County, is the largest contributor to the Great Lakes, specifically Lake Erie. It is also currently a major concern for the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Department of Agriculture (USDA) due to large algal blooms and “Dead Zone” in the Western Lake Erie Basin. The largest and most dangerous algal bloom to date occurred the summer of 2014, and shut down the water supply of Toledo and surrounding areas for several days.

The ten-county region is located within three physiographic regions; the Maumee Lake Plain, Central Till Plain, and Northern Moraine and Lake. Soils in the region range from very poorly- to somewhat poorly-drained silt, clay, and loams in the southern half of the region, to moderately well-drained to well-drained sand and loams in the northern counties. All soils are suitable for row crop production; however, the northern counties, especially LaGrange, have a greater number of producers utilizing irrigation practices than in southern counties. The southern counties typically have to install tile drains to move water off of the crop fields.

The region has many environmental resources that are assets to the cultural and economic pursuits of the area. However, it is important to consider the vulnerability of these resources to contamination from human activities in both agricultural and urban land uses. Land and water conservation and preservation must be considered in any development project.

### Adams County

Adams County is approximately 217,537 acres (339.9 square miles) with a flat, homogenous topography ranging in elevation from 760 to 860 feet above sea level. Soils in the county are nearly level to

gently sloping and are very poorly- to somewhat poorly-drained. Due to the type of soils present in Adams County, much of the agricultural land is tile-drained to open water.

The main drainage located within Adams County is the St. Marys River Watershed which is a major contributor to the Maumee River; however the Upper Wabash Watershed is located in the southwest corner of Adams County. The Wabash River, which runs northwesterly from the southeast corner of Adams County is given a special designation in the Indiana Code as part of the Wabash River Heritage Corridor. There are approximately 545 miles of rivers, streams, and ditches located in Adams County, many of which have been channelized for the ease of water drainage on agricultural land. Flooding has been an issue in the county seat of Decatur in the past.

Adams County has 469 lakes, ponds, reservoirs, swamps, and marshes. All are relatively small, with the largest one measuring only 49 acres. Most of the lakes, ponds, and wetlands are privately owned, although there are seven public reservoirs.

The predominant land use in Adams County is agricultural with nearly 87% of the land used for row crops or pasture land, and only 7% of the land is considered developed. Approximately 1163 acres of land is classified as wetlands. Due to the ability of wetlands to absorb floodwaters and various urban and agricultural pollutants, the wetlands located within Adams County should be considered during development of surrounding land.

Adams County has five county parks and/or nature preserves managed by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IN DNR), ACRES Inc., or the county parks department, beyond the local town/city parks departments. These areas are important to preserve, not only for the recreational opportunities afforded to area residents, but also to maintain vital habitats for several state

and federally-listed endangered species. There are several trails located within Adams County, including the 0.56 mile Baltzell-Lenhart Woods Nature Trail and boardwalk, Munro Nature Preserve 0.5 mile natural trail, Limberlost County Park 0.53 mile nature trail, and the Rainbow Bottom State Historic Site 1.3 mile nature trail. There is also a 3.8 mile asphalt and crushed stone greenway in Decatur that is accessible for foot and bicycle traffic. The Decatur Greenway connects many area attractions and runs adjacent to the St. Marys River to Kekionga Park, a 50 acre city park that is used by boaters and hikers. Finally, there is a 4.36 mile Rail-to-Trail asphalt trail proposed to connect the communities of Berne and Geneva in southern Adams County.

### **Allen County**

Allen County is the largest county in Indiana at 422,382 acres (660 square miles) and is home to the second largest city in Indiana, Fort Wayne, is located. Allen County has a relatively homogenous topography ranging in elevation from 750' in northeast Allen County to 900' in northwest Allen County. Southern Allen County is very flat with elevations ranging from 790' to 810' above sea level. There are eleven soil associations in Allen County. The soil type present is typically a silt-loam, or silty-clay-loam and the general slope ranges from 0 to 6%. Most of the county is poorly drained; however, the majority of the soils present in the City of Fort Wayne are moderately well-drained. It should be noted that in northwest Allen County, where a substantial amount of new development is occurring, there is a significant amount of muck soils, which are not suitable for development of any kind without the addition of soil amendments.

There are five large drainages that are partially located within Allen County. Approximately two-thirds of Allen County is located within the Western Lake Erie Basin, with the remaining third of the county being located within the Wabash River Basin. The most significant



waterbodies found in Allen County include the Maumee River which begins at the confluence of the St. Joseph River and St. Marys River in downtown Fort Wayne, and the Eel River, a major tributary to the Wabash River located in northwest Allen County. The St. Joseph River, which begins in Branch County, MI is the drinking water source for the 256,496 residents of Fort Wayne, and with a contributing land area of nearly 700,000 acres is the largest tributary to the Maumee River. The Maumee River is the largest contributor to the Great Lakes Region, specifically Lake Erie. Of significance is Cedar Creek, located in northcentral Allen County, which is designated by the State of Indiana as one of only three Scenic Rivers in the state. Cedar Creek is also designated by the State of Indiana as “having outstanding ecological importance”, “having statewide or greater significance,” and “having outstanding water quality.” The Little River and Wabash River, partially located in Allen County, are also listed in the State of Indiana’s Outstanding Rivers list for being a part of the Wabash River Heritage Corridor. Portions of the Maumee River and Little River are designated as navigable in the IN State Code. There are 1,128.94 miles of rivers and streams in Allen County. Due to urban development and row crop production on the east side of Allen County, many of the streams and ditches have been channelized to allow for fast disbursement of water to reduce the risk of flooding. There have been instances of flooding within Allen County in the past, however, flooding has not been a major issue within the County. Due to poor drainage many of the crop fields suffer from ponding of excess water during heavy rain events.

Allen County has 1663 lakes, ponds, reservoirs, swamps, and marshes; most of which are privately-owned ponds. There are only 50 lakes in the county which are greater than 10 acres in size, and all are less than 50 acres with the exception of the Cedar Creek Reservoir and Hurshtown Reservoir. Both reservoirs are located

near Leo-Cedarville, and are frequently used for fishing, swimming, and boating by area residents.

The predominant land use in Allen County is agricultural with nearly 68% of the land being used for row crop production or pasture. The county is the most populated county in the region, as City of Fort Wayne is located there. This also makes it the most developed county in the region, with just over 22% of the land cover being classified as developed. Approximately 5,339 acres of land is classified as wetlands, which should be considered during any development due to the eco-services provided by wetlands.

Allen County is listed as a “Critical County” for recreation areas in the 2011-2015 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, due to it not having the recommended 55 acres of outdoor recreation area available per 1,000 people. There are twelve parks and/or nature preserves located within Allen County which are managed by the IN DNR, ACRES Inc., or the county parks and recreation department, beyond those that are managed by local municipalities. ACRES Inc. is actively working to obtain additional property, especially along the Cedar Creek corridor due to its Scenic River designation. There are nearly 246 miles of trails open, under development, or planned in Allen County including 70.42 miles of nature trails in parks and preserves, a 25.4 mile snowmobile trail in the southeast quadrant of the county, 83.25 miles of riparian area trails adjacent to the Maumee River or one of its many tributaries, 5.25 miles of tow paths, and 94.76 miles of urban trails. It is also important to note that the State Priority Trail, also known as the Pufferbelly Trail, is partially located in Allen County and is part of the Rails-to-Trails path in Allen County which makes up approximately 12.89 additional miles of trails. Finally, more independent trails are being connected to make non-traditional means of transportation more accessible. There are currently 9.56

miles of connector trails in Allen County including a 1.94 mile connector path from Leo-Cedarville to Grabill.

### **DeKalb County**

DeKalb County is approximately 232,801 acres (363.75 square miles) with a varying topography. Average topography ranges from 800' to 900' above sea level in most of the county. The exception is northcentral DeKalb County and westward where the topography is typically 900' to 1050' above sea level. There are eight soil associations within DeKalb County. The majority of the soils in the county are somewhat poorly-drained silt loams with an average slope of 1% - 4%. The northwest quadrant of the county has more fine sandy loams and sandy loams, or loams with an average slope of 0-10% which are all moderately well-drained.

The majority of DeKalb County is located within the Western Lake Erie Basin, and only the very most northwest corner of the county is located within the St. Joseph – Lake Michigan Watershed. Most of the county is located in the St. Joseph River- Maumee River Basin, and the southeast corner of the County is located in the Maumee River Watershed. The major drainage located within DeKalb County is the St. Joseph River, which is the drinking water source for the City of Fort Wayne and is the largest contributor to the Maumee River. It should be noted that Fish Creek, a high water quality stream located within DeKalb County in the St. Joseph River Watershed is of particular interest to The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and other environmental groups. It is the only remaining habitat for the federally-listed endangered White Cat's Paw Pearly Mussel. Fish Creek is also listed in the Indiana Code as an Outstanding River due to its ecological importance. Cedar Creek, a state designated Scenic River, originates in DeKalb County, though much of it is channelized as it runs through the City of Auburn and agricultural land. The

majority of Cedar Creek that runs through DeKalb County is not designated a Scenic River as the designation does not occur until County Road 68 in the most southern portion of the county. There are 480.98 miles of flowing water in DeKalb County. While numerous streams in DeKalb County are under maintenance by the county surveyor, many of them have not been channelized when compared to other mostly agricultural areas. However, the natural sinuosity of the streams has been altered to aid in the movement of water during heavy rain events. Flooding has not been a major issue in DeKalb County, though small floods have occurred within the past decade.

DeKalb County has approximately 1,508 lakes, ponds, reservoirs, swamps, and marshes, most of which are very small. There are only three waterbodies greater than 50 acres, of which two are wetlands and the other a built-up lake; Indian Lake.

The predominant land use in DeKalb County is agricultural with nearly 76% of the land being used for row crop production or pasture. Approximately 8% of the county is considered to be developed, with the majority of the development in the county seat of Auburn. As a result of glaciers receding to northern Indiana where they eventually melted during the Wisconsinan glaciation, the northern four counties of the region (DeKalb, Steuben, LaGrange, and Noble) have more wetlands than the rest of the region. DeKalb County has approximately 9,927 acres of land classified as wetlands, which should be considered during any development due to the eco-services provided by wetlands.

There are three nature preserves located within DeKalb County which are all managed by The Nature Conservancy, beyond those that are managed by the local municipalities. It should be noted that DeKalb County does not have a county-managed parks and recreation department. TNC is actively working to obtain more land

adjacent to the sensitive Fish Creek to preserve the water quality in the creek and help save the imperiled White Cat's Paw Pearly Mussel. There are only 9.25 miles of trails located within DeKalb County, including one short connector trail from Van Buren Street in Auburn to the planned Pufferbelly Trail, one "long distance" asphalt trail of 0.3 miles, 1.83 miles of trails in a park setting located within the city limits of Auburn, 5.9 miles of Rails-to-Trails systems which includes a portion of the Pufferbelly Trail, and one 1.3 mile segment of riparian trail along the St. Joseph River. Currently, only 5.45 miles of trails are open, and the rest of the trails are in the planning stage for development.

### **Huntington County**

Huntington County is approximately 248,099 acres (387.7 square miles) with a relatively homogenous topography ranging in elevation from 800 to 870 feet above sea level. However, there are some areas in the northwest quadrant of the county with an elevation as high as 900' above sea level, and around the City of Huntington there are elevations as low as 700' above sea level. There are seven soil associations in Huntington County. The majority of the soils are either Blount silt loam which has an average slope of 1-4%, is somewhat poorly-drained and has little frequency of ponding or flooding or Pewamo silty clay loam, which has an average slope of 0-2% and is poorly-drained and has frequent ponding. Due to the type of soil present in Huntington County, much of the agricultural land is tile-drained to open water.

Huntington County is located in the Wabash River Watershed, with the majority of the county being located within the Upper Wabash River and the Salamonie River sub-watersheds. The Wabash River, which flows westerly from Wells County through the City of Huntington, and the Little River, a major tributary to the Wabash River which flows southwesterly from the northeast corner of Huntington County until it meets the Wabash in the City of

Huntington, are given a special designation in the Indiana Code as part of the Wabash River Heritage Corridor. Additionally, Little River and the Wabash River located in Huntington County are designated as "navigable" in the Indiana State Code. There are approximately 591 miles of rivers, streams, and ditches located within Huntington County, many of which have been channelized for the ease of water drainage on agricultural land. Flooding has been an issue in the county seat of Huntington. The US Army Corp of Engineers (US ACE) constructed the JE Roush Reservoir in Huntington County in 1969 to help mitigate flooding issues. However, flooding is still possible with extreme rain events, such as the event that took place in July 2003.

Huntington County has approximately 380 lakes, ponds, reservoirs, swamps, and marshes. There are only seven surface waterbodies in Huntington County greater than ten acres. There are two significant waterbodies located in the county, both of which are a part of a State-owned property. A portion of the 2,704.6 acre Salamonie Lake is located in the southwest quadrant of the county, and the JE Roush Reservoir is 829 acres and is located in the northeast quadrant. Both are major attractions to Huntington County as they provide many outdoor recreational opportunities including boating, fishing, and wildlife watching.

The predominant land use in Huntington County is agricultural with nearly 77% of the land being used for row crops or pasture and only 9.6% of the land is considered to be developed. Approximately 1,455 acres of land is classified as wetlands. Due to the ability of wetlands to absorb floodwaters and various urban and agricultural pollutants, the wetlands located within Huntington County should be considered during development of surrounding land.

Huntington County has two parks and/or nature preserves managed by the IN DNR, beyond those managed by local municipalities. Both

parks contain large impoundments that have become home to many species of flora and fauna, and are economically important recreational areas for the community. These areas are important to preserve, not only for the recreational opportunities afforded to area residents and tourists from outside the county and region, but also to maintain vital habitat for several state- and federally-listed endangered species. There are very few trails located within Huntington County, most of which are located within one of the state parks, with the exception of 1.16 miles of trails located within a park setting, and a 0.28 mile walking path around the Parkview Huntington Hospital in the City of Huntington. There is an additional 36 miles of trails located within the two state parks. Finally, there is a 1.47 mile asphalt trail planned for development in the Town of Markle.

### **LaGrange County**

LaGrange County is approximately 247,490.9 acres (386.7 square miles) with a gently rolling topography ranging in elevation from 825' above sea level in the northwest quadrant of the county to 1030' in the southeast quadrant of the county. There are eleven soil associations in LaGrange County. The majority of the soils are either sandy-loam or loamy-sand with an average slope of 0-6%. All the soils located within LaGrange County are well-drained and very limited for placement of septic tanks and sewage lagoons. Due to how well the soils are drained, LaGrange County crop land is heavily irrigated, which can cause pollution issues, as well as issues with lowering the water table, if an irrigation plan is not developed and implemented.

LaGrange County is located wholly within the Southeastern Lake Michigan Watershed, with the sub-watersheds Pigeon River, Fawn River, and Elkhart River located partially within the county. The Pigeon River, which flows northwesterly from the Pigeon River Fish and Wildlife Area, and the Fawn River, which flows westerly from

Steuben County, while meandering north and south between MI and IN, are both designated as an Outstanding River by the State of Indiana and is on the State Heritage Program for its "outstanding ecological importance." They are also a State-designated canoe trail, although, the Fawn River is the only one listed in the Indiana Code as "navigable." There are approximately 813 miles of rivers, streams, and ditches located within LaGrange County, many of which have been channelized for the ease of water drainage on agricultural land. Flooding has not been a major issue in LaGrange County due to the type of soils present in the county.

LaGrange County has over 3,000 lakes, ponds, reservoirs, swamps, and marshes which provide many eco-services, including recreation and food production. There are over 200 lakes in the county that are greater than 10 acres in size, many of which have become built-up over time with residential housing or seasonal vacation homes. The predominant land use in LaGrange County is agricultural with nearly 70% of the land being used for row crops or pasture land. It is important to note that there is more livestock production in LaGrange County than in any other county in the region, and the trade continues to grow as more individuals in the county are building large livestock barns on small plots of crop land that have been converted. Only 6.8% of the land is considered to be developed. LaGrange County is ranked second in the region for the amount of land that is classified as wetlands, with approximately 37,930 acres of wetlands (13% of the land cover). LaGrange County puts an emphasis on wetland preservation and conservation. Due to the ability of wetlands to absorb floodwaters and various urban and agricultural pollutants, and the many endangered and threatened species that rely on wetlands for habitat and food sources, this should be considered during development of surrounding land.

LaGrange County has thirteen parks, nature preserves, and/or wildlife refuges managed by the IN DNR, TNC, or ACRES Inc. beyond those managed by local municipalities. Many of the parks are centered around lakes and/or wetlands. The Indiana DNR manages three public access sites/fishing sites in LaGrange County as well. Of significance is the Pigeon River Fish and Wildlife Area which is a 12,323 acre park that offers fishing, hunting, boating, and wildlife viewing, and contains many wetlands. Located within the Pigeon River Wildlife Area is the Tamarack Bog Nature Preserve, which was designated as a National Natural Landmark in 1973. The 150 acre Tamarack Bog is home to six distinct vegetation types and 34 mammals. These areas are important to preserve, not only for the recreational opportunities afforded to area residents and tourists, but also to maintain vital habitat for several state- and federally-listed endangered species. There are several trails located within LaGrange County, including a 3.5 mile portion of the 25 mile Pumpkin Vine Rails-to-Trails nature trail; which when completed will connect Shipshewana to Elkhart. There is an additional 9.9 miles of nature trails located within one of the parks or nature preserves mentioned above.

### **Noble County**

Noble County is approximately 266,945.43 acres (417.1 square miles). The topography of the area is characterized by a relatively homogenous landscape in the southern half of the county where the elevation ranges from 850' above sea level in the southeast quadrant to 930' above sea level in the southwest quadrant of the county. Gentle rolling hills start to surface in the northern portion of the county with elevations ranging from 870' to 1000' above sea level. There are ten soil associations found in Noble County. The majority of the soils in are sandy-loams, silt-loams, or loams with an average slope of 0-6%. The soils located within Noble County are mostly well-drained, with the exception of a small amount of clay

soils which are poorly-drained. All soils are rated as "very limited" for placement of septic tanks and sewage lagoons by the USDA.

Noble County is located within three large watersheds; Southeastern Lake Michigan, Wabash, and Western Lake Erie Basins. Those watersheds are further divided in the St. Joseph River - Lake Michigan sub-watershed which covers the majority of the county, the St. Joseph River – Maumee River sub-watershed which is located in east Noble County, the Eel River sub-watershed which is located in the most south-central portion of the county, and the Tippecanoe River sub-watershed which is located in the southwest corner of the county. There are two rivers located partially within Noble County that are listed in the Indiana Code as Outstanding Rivers; The Elkhart River is listed as a state designated canoe/boating route, and the Elkhart River – South Branch is listed as an outstanding river due to its "statewide or greater significance," having "outstanding ecological significance," being a state designated canoe/boating route, and being "formally proposed for state protection or designation." There are approximately 511 miles of rivers, streams, and ditches located within Noble County, many of which have been channelized for the ease of water drainage on agricultural land. Flooding has not been a major issue in Noble County due to the types of soils present in the county.

Noble County has over 1,900 lakes, ponds, reservoirs, swamps, and marshes which provide many eco-services including recreation and food production. There are 225 lakes in the county that are greater than 10 acres in size, some of which have been built-up with residential housing or seasonal vacation homes. Of particular interest is the 630 acre Sylvan Lake, located in Rome City, which is a major tourist attraction in the region. Sylvan Lake also has a 110 acre island which has become a nature preserve with walking trails after its purchase and rehabilitation in 2011.

The predominant land use in Noble County is agricultural with over 74% of the land being used for row crops or pasture. Only 6.9% of the land is considered to be developed. Noble County is ranked third in the region for the number of classified wetlands, with approximately 18,435 acres of wetlands (5.9% of the land cover). Wetlands are important natural features to consider during development due to their ability to absorb floodwaters and many urban and agricultural pollutants, and due to the habitat they provide which many endangered and threatened species rely on for survival.

Noble County has an abundant source of natural areas for local residents and tourists to enjoy. Noble County is home to sixteen parks and nature preserves, which are managed by the IN DNR, TNC, or ACRES Inc. The IN DNR manages one public access fishing site in Noble County. There are also many local town/city managed parks located in Noble County. Included in the sixteen parks and nature preserves is the famous Gene Stratton Porter State Historic Site in Rome City. Gene Stratton Porter is the most read female author from Indiana and an avid conservationist whose 150-acre estate is open to the public to explore. Chain O' Lakes is also a significant park located in Albion. Chain O' Lakes consists of nine interconnected kettle lakes which were formed in the glacier recession during the Wisconsin glacialiation. Located in Chain O' Lakes is the Stanley Schoolhouse built in 1915, and proposed to be listed on the National Registry of Historic Places. There are 31.94 miles of trails located within Noble County, and most are located within one of the aforementioned parks. There are 2.85 miles of walking path around Bixler Lake in Kendallville, with another .62 mile path from the Bixler Lake trail to and around the Windmill Museum located just outside of Kendallville. Finally, there is .69 mile of walking path around Parkview Hospital, also located in Kendallville.

### **Steuben County**

Steuben County is approximately 206,383.18 acres (322.47 square miles). The topography of the area is characterized by a relatively homogenous landscape of gently rolling hills. The elevation of Steuben County ranges between 900' and 1,100' above sea level. There are eight soil associations in Steuben County. The majority of the soils are loams, or loams with sand or silt. Most soils are poorly-drained, with the exception of those mixed with sand, which are scattered throughout the county. The average slope is 0-6% and all soils are very limited for the placement of septic tanks and sewage lagoons.

Steuben County is located mostly within the St. Joseph River – Lake Michigan Watershed. The eastern quarter of the county is predominantly within the St. Joseph River – Maumee River Watershed. There are two rivers located partially in Steuben County that are listed in the Indiana Code as Outstanding Rivers; The Fawn River, located in LaGrange and Steuben Counties, is listed as a State Heritage Program site as it has “outstanding ecological importance” and Fish Creek, located in Steuben and DeKalb Counties, is listed as it has “outstanding ecological importance” and it being a “state-designated canoe/boating route.” There are approximately 449 miles of flowing water located within Steuben County, many of which have been channelized for the ease of water drainage on agricultural land. Flooding has occurred during the winter and spring months in Steuben County along the Pigeon Creek, Fish Creek, and their tributaries.

Steuben County has over 3,600 lakes, ponds, reservoirs, swamps, and marshes which provide many eco-services including recreation and food production. There are 235 lakes in the county greater than ten acres in size, some of which have been built-up over time with residential housing or seasonal vacation homes. Steuben

County is known throughout the region as the “County of 101 Lakes,” with at least four densely populated lakes including Crooked Lake, the Lake James chain of lakes, Clear Lake, and Hamilton Lake.

The predominant land use in Steuben County is agricultural with over 62% of the land being used for row crops or pasture. Steuben County is dotted with many livestock operations, and pasture/hay fields represent nearly 22% of the agricultural land use in the county. Slightly over 10% of the land is considered to be developed, largely due to many built-up lakes and the city of Angola. Steuben County is ranked first in the region for the amount of land classified as wetlands, with approximately 41,184 acres of wetlands (19.9% of the land cover). Wetlands are important natural features to consider during development due to their ability to absorb floodwaters and many urban and agricultural pollutants, and the habitat they provide to many endangered and threatened species.

Steuben County has an abundant source of natural areas for local residents and tourists to the area to enjoy. Steuben County is home to twenty-four parks and nature preserves, which are managed by the Indiana DNR, The Nature Conservancy, or ACRES Inc. There are also many local town/city managed parks located in Steuben County. Many of the preserves house some of the wetlands mentioned above. Steuben County has made preserving/conserving wetlands a priority due to their ability to hold floodwaters and various pollutants and protect the lakes, which are important to the economy of the county. A major attraction to Steuben County is Pokagon State Park which is situated on the shore of Lake James. Pokagon is Indiana’s fifth state park. Established in 1925, it has many unique features created by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) between 1934 and 1942. One feature created by the CCC is the ¼ mile long Toboggan Run, though the run existing their today has been altered from the original design built by the CCC. Trine State Recreation Area abuts Pokagon State Park, which highlights

the ability to protect the natural environment through public-private partnerships. With so many protected natural areas located in the county, there are nearly 48 miles of forested trails. There are an additional 4.03 miles of urban trails and 2.15 miles of trails located within a riparian zone. Finally, there are nearly nine miles of connector trails planned to connect Fremont and Angola. This trail system will be part of the Pufferbelly Trail, the Indiana State Priority Trail.

### **Wabash County**

Wabash County is approximately 269,296.16 acres (420.78 square miles). The topography of the area is relatively homogenous with an average elevation of 800’ above sea level, and extreme elevations from 750’ and 900’ above sea level. There are twelve soil associations in Wabash County. The majority of the soils are silt loams with a slope between 0 and 4%. Most soils are somewhat poorly-drained and are very limited for the placement of septic tanks and sewage lagoons.

Wabash County is located within the Wabash River Basin which is split into four sub-watersheds; Eel River, Upper Wabash River, Salamonie River, and Mississinewa River Watersheds. The northern half of Wabash County is located in the Upper Wabash River Watershed, which is also the major river that flows through the County. There are two rivers located partially within Wabash County that are listed in the Indiana Code as Outstanding Rivers; the Eel River which flows southwesterly to meet the Wabash River is a state-designated canoe route, and the Wabash River which also flows southwesterly is part of the Wabash River Heritage Corridor. The Wabash River and Mississinewa Rivers are designated as “navigable” in Indiana State Code. There are approximately 714 miles of rivers, streams, and ditches located within Wabash County, many of which have been channelized for the ease of water drainage on agricultural land. Flooding has been an issue in Wabash

County, specifically flooding of the Wabash River, which typically occurs in the spring.

Wabash County has over 791 lakes, ponds, reservoirs, swamps, and marshes. There are only two lakes larger than 50 acres; Mississinewa Lake and Salamonie Lake, both of which are adjacent to state parks and offer many recreational opportunities. Only thirteen waterbodies found in Wabash County are bigger than ten acres.

The predominant land use in Wabash County is agricultural with just under 77% of the land being used for row crops or pasture. The majority of the land is used for the production of cultivated crops, mostly corn and soybeans. Slightly over 7% of the land is considered to be developed, as the towns of North Manchester and Wabash are located in the county. There are very few wetlands in Wabash County. According to the National Land Cover Data, there are only 1190.5 acres of wetlands. Restoring wetlands and preserving the few that currently exist in the county could mitigate some of the flooding issues in the county.

There are five parks/preserves located in Wabash County which are managed by the Indiana DNR, US ACE, or ACRES, Inc. The largest of the parks are the Mississinewa and Salamonie Lake Parks managed by the Indiana DNR. Both offer many recreational activities including boating, camping, hiking, fishing, and wildlife viewing, among other activities. There are also a few county and local town/city managed parks located in Wabash County. There are several trails either currently in existence or in the planning phase in Wabash County. The existing trails consist mostly of trails within the Mississinewa or Salamonie Lake Parks. Slightly more than 22 miles of trails are in the planning phase and will be constructed within the urban areas of North Manchester and Wabash to provide access to transportation routes using non-traditional methods of

transportation. Once all the trails are completed, there will be approximately 70.3 miles of trails within Wabash County.

### **Wells County**

Wells County is approximately 236,879.93 acres (370.13 square miles). The topography of Wells County is very flat, ranging from 800' to 900' above sea level. There are seven soil associations present in Wells County. The majority of the soils are silt loams with slopes ranging from 0-4%, though most slopes are less than 1%. All soils are somewhat poorly-drained and are very limited for the placement of septic tanks and sewage lagoons.

Wells County is located mostly within the Wabash River Watershed, with the exception of the northeast corner and a small portion on the east-central border of the county which is in the Western Lake Erie Basin. Within the larger watershed in Wells County, are three sub-watersheds including the Upper Wabash River sub-watershed through most of the county, the Salamonie River sub-watershed in the southwest corner of the county and the St. Marys River sub-watershed in the northeast corner of the county. There is one river located partially within Wells County listed in the Indiana Code as an Outstanding River; the Wabash River is listed for being in the Wabash River Heritage Corridor. The Wabash River is also designated as "navigable" in the Indiana State Code. There are approximately 549.6 miles of rivers, streams, and ditches located within Wells County, many of which have been channelized for the ease of water drainage on agricultural land. Wells County experiences periodic flood events, especially during the spring months.

Wells County has 584 lakes, ponds, reservoirs, swamps, and marshes. Most are very small, as five are greater than ten acres in size, and the largest one is only 25 acres. Most waterbodies are



privately-owned with few exceptions including Kunkle Lake, a 22-acre lake located in Ouabache State Park east of Bluffton.

The predominant land use in Wells County is agricultural with over 87% of the land being used for row crops or pasture (nearly 75% is row crops such as corn and soybeans). The City of Bluffton and Town of Ossian are the largest populated areas located in Wells County which accounts for the majority of the 6% of land use being classified as developed. Wells County has the least amount of land classified as wetland in the region with only 1,098.8 acres of wetlands presently. Wetlands provide many eco-services including flood and pollution mitigation, therefore, the few wetlands within Wells County should be considered during any development in the county.

Wells County has three parks managed by ACRES, Inc. or the IN DNR, beyond those managed by local municipalities. The Ouabache State Park (pronounced Wabash), located east of Bluffton and 30 miles south of Fort Wayne, provides many activities for outdoor recreation enthusiasts. The other two properties are nature preserves managed by ACRES and provide a natural setting with ADA compliant trails for everyone's enjoyment. There are a total of 23 miles of trails open or planned for development in Wells County. Most of the existing trails are located within one of the three parks mentioned above. Ossian has a small urban trail, and Bluffton has a trail connecting downtown to the Ouabache State Park trails. The trails that are planned will all be a part of the Pufferbelly State Priority Trail.

### **Whitley County**

Whitley County is approximately 216,212.57 acres (847.98 square miles). The topography of Whitley County is very relatively homogenous characterized by very flat stretches of land with an average elevation ranging from 800' above sea level in southern

Whitley County and 950' above sea level in northern Whitley County. There are ten soil associations present in Whitley County. The majority of the soils in Whitley County are loams with slopes ranging from 3-6%, though some slopes are as large as 5-20%. Loams are moderately well-drained. The southern third of the county is composed of mostly silty-clay-loams which are poorly drained and prone to high ponding frequency. All soils located in Whitley County are very limited for the placement of septic tanks and sewage lagoons.

Whitley County is located entirely within the Wabash River Watershed with the majority of the county located within the Eel River sub-watershed. The northwest corner of the county is located in the Tippecanoe River sub-watershed and the southeast corner of the county is located in the Upper Wabash River sub-watershed. There are approximately 463.5 miles of rivers, streams, and ditches located within Whitley County, many of which have been channelized for the ease of water drainage on agricultural land. The major waterbody flowing through Whitley County is the Eel River, a major tributary to the Wabash River. Flooding is not common in Whitley County, though floods causing property damage have occurred within the county in the past.

Whitley County has 1,219 lakes, ponds, reservoirs, swamps, and marshes. Most are very small, as only five are greater than 50 acres in size. However, unlike some of the other counties dotted with small lakes, many of the small lakes within the northern half of Whitley County are built-up.

The predominant land use in Whitley County is agricultural with nearly 79% of the land being used for row crops or pasture (over 75% is row crops such as corn and soybeans). Columbia City and the Town of Churubusco make up the majority of the developed land in Whitley County which accounts for nearly 9% of the land cover

classified as developed in the county. Whitley County has few wetlands; about 2,892 acres of wetlands currently exist within the county. Wetlands provide many eco-services and are home to many endangered and threatened species; therefore they should be considered during any development in the county.

Whitley County is listed as a “Critical County” for recreation areas in the 2011-2015 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, due to it not having the recommended 55 acres of outdoor recreation area available per 1,000 people. Whitley County has five parks/preserves managed by ACRES, Inc. or the IN DNR, beyond those managed by local town/city governments. The parks and preserves in Whitley County are much smaller in size than others located within the region though they do provide an outlet for those in the area looking for outdoor recreation. There are a total of 16.64 miles of trails located within Whitley County, with 3.87 miles of that located within one of the five parks mentioned above. Columbia City Parks and Recreation Department manages one short connector trail, a 1.88 mile riparian trail, and a 6.68 mountain bike trail. Finally, the South Whitley Parks and Recreation Department manages a short 0.88 mile trail within one of its municipal parks.

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#### **GEOGRAPHY, LAND USE, AND ENVIRONMENT CONSIDERATIONS**

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- ✓ 72% of the land in the region is in agriculture, either pasture or crop land. Only 11% of the land is developed.
- ✓ The region has more lakes and wetlands than any other part of Indiana. These were formed when glaciers melted and receded. There are over 5,722 miles of flowing water as well. The regions lakes are a major economic force since many are “built-up” and bring thousands of people to the region each summer.”
- ✓ The Maumee River, whose headwaters are located in downtown Fort Wayne, is the largest contributor to the Great Lakes, and is of concern to the USEPA and USDA due to it significantly contributing to the large algal blooms that form each year in the Western Lake Erie Basin.
- ✓ Allen and Whitley counties are listed as “Critical” for the needed addition of recreation areas in the 2011-2015 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan. However, there are 88 public parks or nature preserves owned by the State, County, or other entities in the region.

## EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

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### PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

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#### **Allen**

Allen County is the largest county in the region, and has the most unique educational environment as well. The county is home to the regional metropolitan area, the City of Fort Wayne.

East Allen County Schools is the largest district geographically, but comes in at a distant second in enrollment numbers. The school district contains three primary schools and three intermediate schools, which along with the three elementary schools provide primary schooling for the students. Past the 5th or 6th grade, there are two middle schools, three junior/senior high schools, and one high school. The district is comprised of portions of the City of Fort Wayne, the smaller communities of New Haven, Harlan, Hoagland, Monroeville, Woodburn, Leo-Cedarville and the surrounding rural areas of the county. Enrollment for the 2013-2014 school year was 9,114 students.

The northwestern part of the county is served by Northwest Allen County Schools. The district consists of seven elementary schools, two middle schools and one high school. This system is home to Carroll High School, which is recognized on a consistent basis for high-quality education. The district is primarily rural, serving an outer portion of Fort Wayne, as well as the smaller communities of Arcola and Huntertown. During the 2013-2014 school year, there were 6,853 students enrolled in Northwest Allen County Schools.

Southwest Allen County Metropolitan School district, as indicated by its name, covers the southwestern portion of Allen County and includes the Aboite-area community. The school system has been

the recipient of a number of awards for providing high-quality education. The district is comprised of six elementary schools, two middle schools and one high school. The total enrollment for 2013-2014 was 6,995.

Fort Wayne Community Schools is by far the largest system in the county, as well as the region. This district covers the city of Fort Wayne, and does extend into some rural area in the southern part of its district. In the 2013-2014 school year, 30,783 students were enrolled in the 51 schools, which employ approximately 4,000 people. Fort Wayne Community Schools are comprised of 34 elementary schools, 11 middle schools and 6 high schools. Due to the sheer size of the system, there are many programs offered to students, including New Tech programs and Anthis Career Center, which both provide a more technical approach to education.

There are also many private schools and academies in Allen County. For the 2013-2014 school year, approximately 10,000 students attended 127 private or parochial schools.

#### **Adams**

North Adams Community Schools serve Decatur, Indiana and the northern portion of Adams County. The enrollment for the elementary, middle and high schools was 1,834 for the 2013-2014 school year. Northwest Elementary, Southeast Elementary, Bellmont Middle School, and Bellmont High School are the schools included in this district. (High school students have a variety of technical-vocational opportunities available, including certification in Project Lead the Way, Pathways to Engineering.)

The towns of Geneva and Berne, as well as surrounding rural areas, are served by the South Adams Community Schools. The enrollment for the elementary, middle and high schools was 1,350 for the 2013-2014 school year. This district consists of one each of an elementary, middle and high school.

The Adams Central School District includes the central portion of Adams County, with their schools being located in the town of Monroe. The majority of the students in this district are from rural areas. With an enrollment for the elementary, middle and high schools at 1,224 for the 2013-2014 school year, Adams Central School District is the smallest in Adams County and is comprised of one elementary, middle and high school. (Adams Central High School provides a program named Adams Central Jet Tech, which started in 2010 with 125 freshmen students to begin the school transformation into the New Tech model.)

### **DeKalb**

Three public school districts encompass the DeKalb County. These districts include seven elementary schools, two middle schools, three high schools and one junior-senior high school. Garrett-Keyser-Butler also offers a vocational cooperative and special education cooperative.

In addition, there is a St. Joseph Catholic school (PK-6) and Lakeside, a private school (PK-12).

DeKalb County Central USD covers approximately half of DeKalb County, and serves the city of Auburn, town of Waterloo and reaches into the town of Ashley, which is situated in Steuben County. The enrollment for the 2013-2014 school year was the largest in the county, with 3,717 students. (DeKalb High School offers the national New Tech program to its students)

DeKalb County Eastern CSD represents the other large portion of DeKalb County, including the smaller communities of Butler, St. Joe, Spencerville and the surrounding rural area. Enrollment was 1,375 for the 2013-2014 school year. DeKalb County Eastern CSD consists of two elementary schools, and a combined junior-senior high school.

The third public school system in DeKalb County is the Garrett-Keyser-Butler Community School District. Although this district consists of a smaller portion of DeKalb County, it holds the second highest enrollment number at 1,750 for the 2013-2014 school year. Garrett-Keyser-Butler consists of one elementary, middle and high school, and also offers vocational and special education cooperatives.

Lakewood Park Christian School is a private school that offers pre-K-12 education for students in the DeKalb County area. Lakewood Park is located in Auburn, and has the smallest enrollment at 607 for the 2013-2014 school year.

### **Huntington**

Huntington County Community School Corporation covers all of Huntington County, and serves the communities of Andrews, Bippus, Huntington, Majenica, Markle, Mt. Etna, Roanoke and Warren, as well as the surrounding rural areas. HCCSC consists of seven elementary schools, two middle schools, and one high school. The enrollment for the 2013-2014 school year was 5,595. Huntington North High School houses Viking New Tech as part of the national New Tech program, an alternative structure for high school students.

Huntington Catholic School provides a private education option for students of Huntington County, offering pre-K-8 education.

Huntington Catholic School is located in the city of Huntington. For the 2013-2014 school year enrollment was 143 students.

### **LaGrange**

Lakeland School Corporation is the home school district for Fawn River. It features three elementary schools, one middle school and one high school. In the fall of 2010, they instituted the New Tech program in their high school. The high school also features Project Lead the Way classes in Engineering, 21st century vocational course offerings, five dual enrollment classes, and a full complement of Honor's/AP classes. Lakeland School Corporation includes the towns of LaGrange, Howe, and Wolcottville, and had an enrollment of 2,160 for the 2013-2014 year.

The small communities of Topeka and Shipshewana are located within Westview School Corporation. Approximately 40% of the K-8 student population come from Amish homes. Westview has three elementary schools serving grades kindergarten through fourth grade and one elementary school for students in grades five and six. All students in grades seven through twelve are housed in one building. The enrollment for the 2013-2014 school year was 2,347.

Howe Military School, founded in 1884, is a coeducational boarding school for grades 5 – 12, located in Howe, IN. The military program was instituted in 1895 and, since 1920 the school has had a Junior ROTC unit sponsored by the Department of the Army. It is the only JROTC military institute in Indiana, Michigan or Ohio. The purpose of the military system is to emphasize leadership, self-discipline and organization. The school's three-pronged approach to education emphasizes intellectual, physical and spiritual growth. Ninety-seven percent of Howe graduates consistently attend college. Howe Military School had an enrollment of 67 students for the 2013-2014 school year.

### **Noble**

East Noble School Corporation serves the communities of Kendallville, Rome City, Avilla and Laotto in Noble County. The district is comprised of five elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school. The enrollment for East Noble School Corporation was the largest in Noble County in 2013-2014 with 3,788 students.

West Noble School Corporation consists of a primary school, catering to the needs of children in kindergarten and first grade, an elementary school for grades 2-5 and a middle and high school. Ligonier, Cromwell and a large surrounding rural area are all served by West Noble School Corporation. The enrollment for the 2013-2014 school year was 2,480 students.

Central Noble School Corporation encompasses the town of Albion, as well as surrounding rural areas. The district includes two elementary schools, and a combined junior/senior high school. In 2013-2014 the enrollment was 1,267.

In the southern portion of Noble County, the Smith-Green Community School district reaches down into the northern portion of Whitley County and includes the town of Churubusco. Smith-Green includes one elementary school, and one combined junior/senior high school; both of which are located in Churubusco, on the Whitley County side of the district. With an enrollment of 1,192 for 2013-2014, this is the smallest school corporation in Noble and Whitley counties.

### **Steuben**

The Hamilton Community School district is the smallest district in Steuben County. It encompasses the town of Hamilton, as well as a large rural portion, and stretches into the rural area of DeKalb County. The system includes an elementary and junior/senior high

that are co-located. Enrollment for the 2013-2014 year was 426 students.

Steuben County Metropolitan School District includes the communities of Angola and Pleasant Lake to form the largest district in Steuben County. There are four elementary schools, one middle school and one high school in the MSD of Steuben County. The enrollment for 2013-2014 was 3,013 students.

Fremont Community Schools is a district that reaches to the most northeastern corner of Indiana, and includes the town of Fremont as well as rural and lake communities. It is a smaller school district, containing one each of an elementary, middle and high school. Total enrollment in 2013-2014 was 968 students.

Prairie Heights Community School Corporation includes the town of Orland in Steuben County, and reaches across the LaGrange County border, with the schools all located in LaGrange County. As this district includes a large rural portion, the total enrollment sits at 1,371 for 2013-2014, with one elementary, middle and high school.

### **Wabash**

Wabash City School district is the central district, which covers the area within the city limits of Wabash. It is the district with the smallest enrollment in the county, with 1,472 students for the 2013-2014 school year. The district consists of one elementary, middle and high school.

The MSD of Wabash County is the largest in the community, with coverage of all areas of the county outside of North Manchester and the city of Wabash. The majority of the district is made up of small towns and rural areas. The enrollment for 2013-2014 was 2165 students between the three elementary schools, and three junior/senior high schools.

The town of North Manchester and the surrounding area is served by Manchester Community Schools. This district covers approximately 1/3 of the northernmost portion of Wabash County. Manchester Community Schools has one elementary, one intermediate, and one junior/senior high school. The total enrollment for 2013-2014 was 1,656 students.

### **Wells**

The Bluffton Harrison Metropolitan School district is comprised of Harrison Township that includes a majority of the city of Bluffton, a portion of the town of Poneto, and the town of Vera Cruz. The school system includes one elementary school, one middle school, and one high school. Total enrollment for 2013-2014 was 1,477 students.

Northern Wells Community School Corporation is situated in the northern portion of Wells County, with the central location of the district being the town of Ossian. The district is comprised of elementary, one middle, one high school, and an alternative school. The 2013-2014 enrollment was 2,412.

The more rural and southern portion of Wells County is served by the Southern Wells Community School corporation, which includes only one elementary and a combined junior-senior high school. The enrollment of 854 for 2013-2014 makes Southern Wells the smallest district in the county.

### **Whitley**

Whitley County is served by two school districts. On the western side of the county, Whitko Community School Corporation serves Whitley and Kosciusko Counties. The district covers four towns between the two counties, and includes two elementary schools,

one middle, and one high school. The total enrollment for 2013-2014 was 1,625 students.

Whitley County Consolidated Schools serves the eastern segment of the county, and includes the county seat of Columbia City. The district consists of four elementary schools, one middle and one high school. For the 2013-2014 school year, there were 3,607 students enrolled in the school system.

Whitley County Consolidated Schools also provides the New Tech program for their students through Eagle Tech. While Eagle Tech uses project-based learning at its core, students still learn all of the same content standards required by all schools in the state but they learn them by working in collaborative groups and completing projects that are relevant to their lives.

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#### **REGIONAL COLLABORATION**

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The Impact Institute (formerly known as Four County Vocational Cooperative until 2013) was formed by a joint service agreement between eleven school corporations in June 1969. The Cooperative provides vocational programs, administers adult education, and coordinates communications with the Indiana Department of Education and other state agencies. The eleven school corporations are located in the four northeast Indiana counties of Noble, DeKalb, LaGrange and Steuben. These school corporations are Central Noble Community Schools, DeKalb County Central United Schools, DeKalb County Eastern Community Schools (whose district also serves as the Local Education Agency), East Noble School Corporation, Fremont Community Schools, Hamilton Community Schools, Lakeland School Corporation, Metropolitan School District of Steuben County, Prairie Heights Community School Corporation, Westview School Corporation and Garrett-Keyser-Butler Community Schools.

Since the inception of Impact Institute in 1969, consortium members have had the vision to utilize the services of the Cooperative to create positive change in the delivery of vocational and adult education in a way that is unique in the state of Indiana. The Impact Institute's vocational and adult education programs use a competency-based curriculum approach and rely on student data and industry driven standards for continuous improvement. Through the support of consortium members, Impact Institute is also the vehicle used in the implementation of other change initiatives, such as School-to-Work, Tech Prep and the Technical Education Initiative.

This organizational structure has provided the management and administrative expertise that have given each school corporation opportunities in both vocational and adult education. The Impact Institute, with a proven track record (95.4% graduation rate) of serving students and community members, partnered with local and national foundations, local and national industry, state education agencies and the Department of Workforce Development to provide additional opportunities and resources to enhance student learning.

These successful partnerships have led to opportunities such as dual credit, articulation agreements, school-to-apprenticeship programs and increased vocational and adult education program offerings. These high school and post-secondary successes truly promote lifelong learning for the four county community.

Area 18 CTE delivers 294 career related class sessions at nine high schools located in Huntington, Blackford, Wells, Adams and Jay counties. These schools have continuously worked to implement career programs that bring workplace relevance to the hallways of the high schools. The integration of academics with real-world career programs happens every day in Area 18 high schools.

Area 18 Vocational Education (now known as Area 18 Career & Technical Education) was established in 1982 with Adams Central, Bluffton-Harrison, South Adams and Southern Wells forming the partnership. North Adams joined the group in 1988, Jay County in 1994, Northern Wells in 1997, Huntington in 1999, and Blackford in 2010.

Area 18 Career & Technical Education has gone from an enrollment of only a few students in 1982 to over 4900 students with 8150 CTE enrollments (averaging 1.6 CTE courses per student) for the 2012/2013 school year.

Heartland Career Center is a technical school, which was formed in 1965 with an agreement between four school corporations. These corporations were Manchester Community School, Metropolitan School District of Wabash County, Peru Community School and Wabash City School. This included all of Wabash County and the area surrounding Peru. The school was originally called Upper Wabash Vocational School and the name was eventually changed to Heartland Career Center to more accurately describe the area and training for students. Other schools within reasonable distance have been invited to join the cooperative program. North Miami Community School joined the cooperative in 1969 and Huntington North began to send students to Heartland in 1990 on tuition basis. Oak Hill began to send students to Heartland in 2002 on a tuition basis. The current facility was opened in 1971 providing classroom and workshop space in a central location. Heartland is a cooperative school operating as an independent school corporation but with no taxation power.

The mission of Heartland Career Center is to provide a stimulating environment and opportunities for students to learn technical skills, attitudes, knowledge, and understanding designed to promote

occupational preparation that will be effective in today's and tomorrow's technical society.

**Table 32: Graduation Rates by County**

<b>Graduation Rates:</b>	<b>2013-14</b>	<b>2011-12</b>	<b>2009-10</b>
Adams	94.2%	93.4%	89.6%
Allen	91.0%	89.7%	89.6%
DeKalb	91.8%	91.6%	87.9%
Huntington	87.7%	88.1%	88.6%
LaGrange	90.1%	89.7%	87.7%
Noble	81.8%	86.7%	78.9%
Steuben	84.8%	88.2%	86.1%
Wells	93.7%	92.5%	89.8%
Wabash	90.3%	91.6%	84.6%
Whitley	92.6%	94.1%	89.1%

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#### **POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION**

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Northeast Indiana is well-served by institutions for higher education, with eighteen institutions with a total enrollment of over 39,000 students.

Of the twelve colleges and universities that are accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges & Schools, eleven of them offer Associate's level degree programs, eight offer Bachelors programs, nine offer Masters programs, and four institutions offer Doctorate-level education.

Six colleges are accredited by the Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges & Schools. Of these, all six offer Associate's level degree programs, and four offer Bachelor degree programs.



**Table 33: Universities and Colleges Accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges & Schools, Higher Learning Commission**

	Approximate Enrollment	Associate's Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Master's Degree	Doctorate
Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne	300			X	X
Grace College, Fort Wayne Campus	20	X			
Huntington University, Huntington	1,120	X	X	X	
Indiana U. Purdue U. Fort Wayne	13,450	X	X	X	
Indiana Tech, Fort Wayne	6,300	X	X	X	X
Indiana Wesleyan, Fort Wayne	540	X	X	X	X^
Ivy Tech, Northeast, Fort Wayne*	9,100	X			
Ivy Tech, Kokomo, Wabash	350	X			
Manchester University, North Manchester	1,350	X	X	X	X**
Trine University, Angola	1,870	X	X	X	
Trine University, Fort Wayne Campus	540	X	X	X	
University of Saint Francis, Fort Wayne	2,380	X	X	X	

^ Indiana Wesleyan University offers an Educational Specialist Degree (Ed.S.) which is a degree and licensure program for candidates who wish to become district-level administrators (superintendents).

\* This campus is part of the State's Community College System, and certifications, courses, and associate's degrees are offered in Eng. Tech, Business, Health Sciences, Production and Mechanic Technologies, and other areas.

\*\* Manchester University College of Pharmacy offers a Doctor of Pharmacy degree (Pharm.D.).

**Table 34: Colleges Accredited by the Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges & Schools\*\***

	Approximate Enrollment	Associate's Degree	Bachelor's Degree
Brown Mackie College, Fort Wayne	660	X	X
Harrison College, Fort Wayne	220	X	X
International Business College, Fort Wayne	400	X	X
ITT Technical Institute, Fort Wayne	280	X	X
MedTech College, Fort Wayne	350	X	
National College, Fort Wayne	50	X	

\*\* Predominantly organized to educate students for occupational, trade, and technical careers.

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#### EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES CONSIDERATIONS

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- ✓ The region has 104,870 students enrolled in elementary, middle, and high school.
- ✓ There are 116 elementary schools, 36 middle schools, 30 high schools, and 11 Jr. Sr. High Schools.
- ✓ There are 28 school districts in the region.
- ✓ There are 18 institutions of higher education serving nearly 40,000 students.
- ✓ This includes 17 that offer Associate's, 12 that offer Bachelor's, 9 that offer Master's, and 4 that offer a Doctorate degree.

## ANALYSIS OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROBLEMS AND OPPORTUNITIES

The CEDS must include an in-depth analysis of the economic development problems and opportunities that identifies strengths and weaknesses in the regional makeup of human and economic assets, and problems and opportunities posed by external and internal forces affecting the regional economy.

### S.W.O.T. ANALYSIS

To achieve the required analysis, the CEDS Committee performed a SWOT Analysis. This involved considering the region's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats—SWOT. This was used to identify both positive and negative aspects of the region, from an internal and external perspective. See Figure 17 for the graphic used to complete the analysis.

The identification of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats is an extremely important component of strategy development because it serves as the primary basis for developing goals and objectives, which was completed during the same meeting. Having completed the SWOT analysis as a committee, the final analysis encompasses committee members' knowledge and expertise, which provides a different and valuable perspective that may not emerge from the data analysis alone.

The SWOT analysis developed for the entire region can be found on the following pages. Please note that these analyses are useful not only for this strategy but also as a reference tool for the counties and cities in the region in decision-making.

Figure 17: SWOT Analysis Framework



Source: Wikipedia

### STRENGTHS

The strengths of the region were identified as:

- Access to natural resources, such as lakes, rivers, reservoirs, parks, nature preserves, energy sources, etc.
- Access to an array of post-secondary institutions for education.
- Regional economic development collaboration between the Regional Partnership of Northeast Indiana and its Regional Opportunity Council, Regional Chamber, Workforce

Development, NE Regional Office of the IEDC, Region III-A, and NIRCC.

- Availability of transportation infrastructure, including two interstates, many US highways and state roadways, east/west railways, and airports.
- Quality of life, specifically the availability of arts, entertainment, bike trails, etc -- examples of this includes the Pulse Opera House in Warren, the Honeywell Center in Wabash, the Embassy Theatre in Fort Wayne, and the Sculpture Walk in Decatur.
- Industrial development, such as the creation of new industrial parks.
- Region III-A, and the grant funding available for local projects.
- The Innovation Center and the associated business incubator.
- Strong industrial base with a particular strength in the manufacturing sector.
- Developing and existing trail system.
- Strong core workforce talent for manufacturers.
- Amish trades orientation benefit to employers.
- Effective small business development center.
- Availability of two state parks and the hunting/sportsman opportunities available on state-owned properties.

- Relatively low crime rates.
- Good labor participation rate.
- City of Fort Wayne's Legacy Fund, which is designed to provide transformational investment and leverage additional resources, projects, programs or policies that will have positive, long-term community impacts and serve as catalysts for other positive and desired change.
- Strong schools, kindergarten thru grade 12, including 6 regional New Tech High Schools.
- Turnstone, which provides a full range of rehabilitative, educational, wellness, athletic and recreational programs and facilities to persons with physical disabilities and their families.
- Sports facilities, including Parkview Field and the Allen County War Memorial Coliseum.
- The Big Goal Collaborative, which aims to increase the percentage of Northeast Indiana residents with high-quality degrees or credentials to 60% by 2025.
- 9 jurisdictional permitting agencies working together to streamline permitting processes.
- Strong core workforce talent for manufacturers including k-12 programs and workforce development for on-going and long-term availability of talent.
- Huntington County Learning Center providing education with 2 year degree certificates, working with local industry and business to provide job-related education, having

teamed up with Huntington County Community Schools, Work One of Indiana, and Ivy Tech.

- Location within 3-4 hour drive of multiple urban areas such as Chicago, Detroit, Cleveland, Columbus, Toledo, Cincinnati, Dayton, Indianapolis and Louisville.
- Low cost of doing business.
- A recent interest in shell buildings.

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#### **WEAKNESSES**

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The weaknesses of the region were identified as:

- The population is less educated than other areas.
- There is less access to entertainment, particularly music options.
- Perception that the region does not have “big city” amenities, such as arts, cultural, entertainment, etc.
- Problems with illegal drug use.
- Wages are not high enough to attract people with technical skills.
- Lack of passenger rail and public transit.
- Lack of housing options in downtown Fort Wayne.
- No major research university in the region.
- Mismatch between jobs demanded and labor force.

- No public transportation for 2nd and 3rd shift workers.
- Struggle to keep airport at level of service demanded.
- Relatively underdeveloped entrepreneur support system.
- High school diploma can be preferred to vocational training received from local vocational schools.
- Lack of new shell buildings – many buildings available are older and less desirable to companies.
- Lack of "white collar" jobs/not a good job mix.
- Low wages in general/low disposable income seen in comparable studies.
- Minority business ownership is not strong compared to other Midwestern areas.
- Venture capital could be higher.
- Patents are not as strong as they used to be.
- Share of population in young adult age groups is weaker than comparable areas.
- Old housing stock.
- Lack of affordable, year-round entertainment, particularly winter events that are free or a low enough cost to be accessible to the entire population.
- Lack of a comprehensive entrepreneurial ecosystem.

- Lack of a sports commission.
- INDOT reluctance to fast pace projects, too much bureaucracy and layers for projects to happen at the speed they could.
- Road use dollars for infrastructure improvements is very low.
- Perception that Indiana is 'flyover country' by being one big corn field.
- Parents and schools remain focused on four year degrees vs. two year or vocational/certificate training programs.
- Career counseling in schools doesn't steer students towards in-demand jobs and the educational path to get them.
- "Our humility can sometimes be a fault. We do a lot of things well and we need to let the world know that."

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#### OPPORTUNITIES

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The opportunities of the region were identified as:

- Centrally located to other metropolitan areas and markets.
- Access to railroad for freight.
- Adequate and affordable housing in the region generally.
- Perception as family-friendly.
- Low crime rates.

- Indiana location, including business and tax-friendly environment.
- Medical industry has invested heavily in region.
- "Our Story" project by the Northeast Regional Partnership .
- Low cost of living.
- Build research & development capacity through greater partnerships between industry and higher education.
- The major reservoirs, lakes and streams for fishing and hunting.
- Agricultural expertise, such as in livestock operations.
- Foreign trade zone.
- U.S. Senator Dan Coats -- not only for his role in the Senate, but his former role as U.S. Ambassador to Germany.
- Multi-company consortium training programs (multiple companies that need the same things would help drive demand and lower the cost).
- Access to vocational schools.
- Guidance/career counselors in educational settings.

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### THREATS

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The threats to the region were identified as:

- Other cities have amenities that the region cannot offer, particularly to people who work electronically and can live anywhere they wish.
- Underfunded and deteriorating public utilities, particularly sewer districts.
- Lack of higher paying “white collar” jobs.
- Chicago bottleneck for getting goods out.
- Many companies in region are not locally owned, so money is lost locally, and leads to companies less involved in local communities and programs.
- Employees being lured away.
- Manufacturers moving business to other countries.
- Brain drain - population of 19-25 continues to decrease.
- Region's educational attainment has not budged for a decade.
- Roadways in the region are in need of improvement in some locations and maintenance on both the state and local systems.
- Lack of skills and education necessary to remain globally competitive.
- Lack of consistent, reliable broadband access.
- Government restrictions on business that make it easy to move out of the U.S.
- Simply talking about change and not taking steps to implement changes.
- The stigma that anything less than a four year degree is not viewed as successful.

## GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND PROJECTS

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The CEDS must contain a section setting forth goals and objectives necessary to solve the economic problems, or capitalize on the resources, of the region. Any strategic project, program, or activity identified in the CEDS should work to fulfill these goals and objectives.

- Goals are broad, primary regional expectations.
- Objectives are more specific than goals, clearly measurable, and stated in realistic terms considering what can be accomplished over the five (5) year time frame of the CEDS.

The CEDS must also contain a section which identifies regional projects, programs and activities designed to implement the Goals and Objectives of the CEDS. This section should identify and describe (1) Suggested and (2) Vital Projects.

This section of the plan identifies the goals and objectives that were developed by the CEDS Committee. The goals were adopted from the work of the Northeast Indiana Regional Partnership. It was decided by the CEDS Committee that it made sense to align the CEDS with these goals so as not to “reinvent the wheel”.

The objectives include those developed by the CEDS Committee directly and those that were previously developed by the Northeast Indiana Regional Partnership. The CEDS Committee evaluated both to determine which should be adopted as the goals for the CEDS document. Those that were selected are shown here in order of preference.

The CEDS Committee also then developed and prioritized projects that would fulfill these goals and objectives. The projects are first

divided into those that are “vital” or essential for the achievement of the goals, and “suggested” or not essential but important. They are then listed in the order of importance as determined by the CEDS Committee.

### GOAL 1: 21ST CENTURY TALENT

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Workforce skills for a knowledge-based economy, excellent education system, workforce retraining, strong regional work ethic and collaboration among businesses and educational institutions.

Objective 1.1: Enhance collaboration among schools, higher education institutions, and businesses to develop more internships and on the job training opportunities.

Objective 1.2: Improve skill set of workforce to attract top companies.

Objective 1.3: Increase the percentage of Northeast Indiana residents with high-quality degrees or credentials to 60% by 2025.

Objective 1.4: Build community-wide appreciation for education, and a commitment of lifelong education and training.

Projects:

Vital

- Increase the number of skilled workers with a strong work ethic and “job-sense” skills.
- Improve the connection between high schools and local employers.



- Find funding sources to sustain programs that expand the skill sets of existing workers.
- Expand job training facilities and educational resources to rural areas and smaller communities to reach more of the population.
- Support Northeast Indiana Works programs.
- Develop a regional database of employers engaged with local institutions through internships.
- Develop strategies to keep local college graduates in Northeast Indiana.
- Support the Big Goal Collaborative initiatives.

#### Suggested

- Expand “Made By Me” campaign to other counties, to show high school students the kinds of jobs that are available at local manufacturers.
- Connect education majors with elementary students for tutoring.

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### GOAL 2: BUSINESS CLIMATE

Globally competitive industry clusters, a diversified economy with a strong manufacturing base, business-friendly tax and regulatory climate and a strong regional brand.

Objective 2.1: Develop a brand for Northeast Indiana. Market the region nationally and internationally.

Objective 2.2: Develop a diversified economy that expands beyond the traditional manufacturing base.

Objective 2.3: Establish a business-friendly tax and regulatory climate. Streamline approvals for economic development projects.

Objective 2.4: Grow existing manufacturing base and attract new manufacturing and distribution companies to the region.

#### Projects:

##### Vital

- Support the LEDO council by providing training opportunities for LEDO’s, board members, and elected officials on the economic development process.

##### Suggested

- Adopt “Our Story” brand developed by the Northeast Regional Partnership throughout the region.
- Encourage all municipalities to do entire permitting process electronically.
- Coordinate zoning designations and standards between counties and cities across region.
- Educate the general public on tax phase-ins and other incentives to correct the misconception of “giving away the farm” to entice businesses.

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### GOAL 3: ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Access to venture capital, strong regional innovation center, formalized entrepreneurial training opportunities and support services including: research, invention evaluation, product development and marketing.

Objective 3.1: Develop a variety of support services to assist entrepreneurs, including business-related research, invention and innovation evaluation, product and service development, and marketing.

Objective 3.2: Enhance access to venture capital – both debt and equity. Better connect entrepreneurs to potential investors.

Objective 3.3: Encourage regional business incubators.

Projects:

Vital

- Develop a regional website of support services for entrepreneurs.
- Develop co-working spaces in rural counties as a first step towards business incubators.

Suggested

- Support and promote the Elevate Ventures funding programs for entrepreneurs.
- Support and promote the work of IPFW's Small Business Development Center.
- Streamline the building permits process in each municipality and county.
- Support and coordinate NE Regional Partnership's regional marketing efforts.
- Support and promote Innovation Center's mentoring programs and incubator services for entrepreneurs.

- Create branches of Northeast Indiana Innovation Center in rural counties.
- Support and promote Trine University's business incubator program.

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#### GOAL 4: INFRASTRUCTURE

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Regional planning that connects land use, transportation and infrastructure investments; affordable energy; enhanced freight; effective public transit; increased shovel-ready development sites; and expanded broadband service.

Objective 4.1: Expand broadband width and availability.

Objective 4.2: Encourage the completion of feasibility and planning studies on regional road projects.

Objective 4.3: Work regionally to identify and finance regional infrastructure priorities.

Objective 4.4: Enhance freight opportunities through improvements to air and rail facilities.

Objective 4.5 Increase state funding of state and county highways.

Objective 4.6: Increase the number of "shovel-ready" development sites.

Projects:

Vital

- Communicate with State Representatives and State Senators on what needs exist.

- Establish a teamwork approach among the counties of the region for letting state officials know what the top priorities are.
- Install fiber in all counties and municipalities.
- Support Vision 2020 Transportation Taskforce in advancing priority projects.
- Evaluate potential funding sources for road maintenance.
- Coordinate with higher education to provide support for those clusters and any diversification efforts, to ensure that the local workforce is adequately prepared for local job opportunities.

#### Suggested

- Utilize cluster analysis; focus on opportunities in the clusters that are already showing progress.
- Promote having preliminary engineering in place for all road projects.
- Promote use of TIF districts for funding maintenance and improvements to infrastructure.
- Document what has happened since the last CEDS and use supporting documentation such as maps and percentage improvements.
- Explore consolidation of water and sewer districts.
- Support a centralized system for intermodal transportation.

- Promote 900 N as a success story.

### **GOAL 5: QUALITY OF LIFE**

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Vibrant downtowns, unique character of communities in the region, stewardship of natural resources, enhanced arts and culture, and higher development standards and amenities.

Objective 5.1: Provide amenities that attract young professionals – including housing, entertainment, recreation, and transportation.

Objective 5.2: Create vibrant downtowns in all region's towns and cities.

#### Projects:

##### Vital

- Determine how to knit together regional trail system and find funding to accomplish it.

##### Suggested

- Develop more opportunities for free entertainment, such as outdoor concerts, festivals, splash pads, and other similar activities.
- Prioritize proposed trails outlined in the Northeast Indiana Regional Bicycle-Pedestrian Transportation Plan.
- Determine which communities and counties have parks departments. Develop parks departments in communities and counties that don't have them.

## PLAN OF ACTION

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Based on the goals, objectives, and projects developed by the CEDS Committee, a Plan of Action was created. The Plan of Action consists of strategies that cut across the goals and objectives, and incorporate many of the projects proposed. The strategies reflect action items that can reasonably be implemented over the next 5-years and that, combined, will have the most impact on the regional economy.

### **STRATEGY 1: SUPPORT AND ALIGN WITH EXISTING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS.**

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Many high quality programs are already engaged in the business of economic development in the region. These range from those who support entrepreneurs, to those engaged in workforce development, to those who plan for and market the region. The strategy is to promote these entities and their services as broadly as possible in order to help them succeed in their individual efforts. By doing this the region will be able to meet its goals most efficiently and effectively. These organizations include:

- Small Business Development Center at IPFW
- Northeast Indiana Innovation Center
- WorkOne Northeast, Northeast Indiana Works
- Elevate Ventures
- Northeast Indiana Regional Partnership, Vision 2020
- Regional Chamber of Northeast Indiana
- Impact Institute, other technical education centers
- Northeastern Indiana Regional Coordinating Council

### **STRATEGY 2: ESTABLISH REGION III-A AND NIRCC AS REGIONAL PLANNING LEADERS.**

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Region III-A and NIRCC have been performing planning services for the region, its counties, and its communities for four decades. Often the services available go unrecognized by those who are potentially served. The strategy is to elevate the profile of these organizations so as to ensure the services they provide are utilized to their fullest extent. These services include:

- Economic Development District – Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy
- Community Development – CDBG, FEMA, and USDA Grant Administration
- Indiana Main Street Organizations
- Parks and Recreation Planning
- Northeast Indiana Housing Partnership
- Transportation planning and technical support

### **STRATEGY 3: DEVELOP AN INFORMATION CLEARINGHOUSE.**

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Information is available on a variety of economic development topics but is not fully disseminated throughout the regional. This includes information that is valuable to entrepreneurs, students, site selectors, communities, planners, and others. The strategy is to create both an in-house and online clearinghouse for this information that is promoted widely in order to reach those with information needs. The information shared would include:

- Local internships

- Entrepreneurial support services
- Regional economic development performance metrics
- Industry clusters
- Federal, State, and Private funding opportunities

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#### **STRATEGY 4: EXPAND URBAN SERVICES TO RURAL AREAS USING A HUB AND SPOKE MODEL.**

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The region is dominated by the urban core represented by the City of Fort Wayne. While this provides goods and services to the region that would not otherwise be available, it has the effect of centralizing many of these to exception of the surrounding rural counties. The strategy is to expand the services currently being provided to the more dense population center into the smaller communities that serve the rural population. The intent is not to “reinvent the wheel” but to utilize a “hub and spoke model” whereby satellite offices of successful existing services are located in the smaller communities in the region. The expanded services would include those provided by:

- Northeast Indiana Innovation Center (incubator)
- WorkOne Northeast, Northeast Indiana Works
- Elevate Ventures
- Impact Institute, other technical education centers

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#### **STRATEGY 5: EXPAND MARKETING OF AREA ASSETS TO REGIONAL SCALE.**

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The region is currently marketed at three scales. Local communities market themselves, counties are marketed by local economic development organizations, and the region is marketed by the Northeast Indiana Regional Partnership (NIRP). The strategy is to continue this three-level marketing, with particular attention being

given to those efforts that benefit the region as a whole. Particular importance is given to supporting and promoting the master narrative developed as part of NIRP’s Our Story Project, which provides answers to the questions of “who are we” and “where are we going” as a region?

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#### **STRATEGY 6: SUPPORT EFFORTS TO GROW CERTIFICATE-BASED ASSOCIATES AND BACHELOR’S DEGREE PROGRAMS.**

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Local employers require a workforce that has basic job-ready skills. These skills can be obtained by workers through existing professional certificate programs. The strategy is to encourage local educational institutions to incorporate the obtainment of certifications into the curriculum of both 2-year associates and 4-year bachelor degree programs. Further, it is to promote the value of such certificates to both the workforce and employers who could benefit from them. These certificate programs include:

- ACT
- Manufacturing Skill Standards Council (MSSC)
- National Institute for Metalworking Skills (NIMS)
- Manufacturing Skills Institute (MSI)
- American Welding Society (AWS)
- International Society of Automation (ISA)
- National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER)
- North American Die Casting Association
- Fabricators & Manufacturers Association, International (FMA)
- International Fluid Power Society (IFPS)
- Packaging Machinery Manufacturing Institute (PMMI)
- American Society for Quality (ASQ)

- American Society of Transportation and Logistics (ASTL)
- Association for Operations Management (APICS)
- SME

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**STRATEGY 7: STREAMLINE THE PERMITTING AND ZONING PROCESSES ACROSS THE REGION.**

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Currently, each community and county adopts its own zoning ordinance. The designation codes for each zone as well as the requirement standards of each can vary from one community to another, as well as between the county and the encompassed communities. This requires that each community and county be individually considered whenever development is undertaken, even if it is within the same region. The strategy is to coordinate as much as possible the zone designation codes and the requirement standards across the region in order to make it easier to navigate these requirements. Also, it is to encourage the use of electronic permit submission technology. Streamlining the permitting and zoning processes across the region will improve the efficiency with which industry can function and grow.

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**STRATEGY 8: EDUCATE THE PUBLIC THROUGH SEMINARS, FORUMS, AND PRESS RELEASES.**

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The public often lacks sufficient and accurate information to fully participate in the economic development process. The strategy is to meet these informational needs by hosting seminars and forums, as well as by releasing information to the press that can help improve the public's awareness. These educational efforts would address the following topics:

- Economic development process and concepts
- Quality of life and community development
- Entrepreneurial services and assistance

- Downtown revitalization and localization

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**STRATEGY 9: FORM A TASKFORCE TO PRIORITIZE REGIONAL PROJECTS.**

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Regional projects should be prioritized in order to ensure that those with the highest return are pursued first and receive the highest degree of assistance in implementation. The Vision 2020 Infrastructure Taskforce organized by the Northeast Regional Partnership would serve as a model for doing this. The strategy is to expand this effort from transportation projects to include other types of regional infrastructure development, such as housing and community development projects.

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**STRATEGY 10: ACTIVELY SEEK FUNDING FOR REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS.**

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Many federal and state funding opportunities exist that could be used to pursue regional-scale infrastructure projects. These projects, which often involve the collaboration of multiple parties, require the leadership of a regional entity to help champion them. The strategy is for Region III-A and NIRCC to provide this leadership and to work with those parties necessary to successfully obtain funding for regional projects. Funding opportunities may come from the following sources:

- Economic Development Administration
- Community Development Block Grants
- Federal Emergency Management Agency
- U.S. Department of Agriculture
- Department of Natural Resources

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**STRATEGY 11: ENCOURAGE “SITE-READY” PROJECTS.**

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Projects that require State funding are more successful in obtaining it if preliminary planning/engineering work has been completed in advance of submitting an application. Similarly, development sites that have obtained “site-ready” designation are more attractive to firms looking to locate in the region due to fewer hurdles necessary to do so. The strategy is to encourage wherever possible the completion of any initial groundwork that will facilitate the successful development of a project. This may include:

- Preliminary engineering
- Planning
- Marketing

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**STRATEGY 12: ENCOURAGE REGIONAL COLLABORATION ON QUALITY OF LIFE EFFORTS.**

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Quality of life for the region’s population is a regional challenge. While the necessities of life are best provided locally, other amenities are often found in other communities within the region. The strategy is to consider these amenities that provide a high quality of life from a regional perspective, and to make them available to the entire region’s population. This requires both the sharing of information and also the coordinating of activities to ensure that residents of the region are aware of and able to take advantage of offerings that are both local and regional. This includes the following:

- Maintaining a regional trails map, and exploring ways to connect the trail system across the regional.
- Creating a regional directory of community festivals and events.

- Promoting connectivity between Arts Councils.
- Facilitating communication between local tourism bureaus.

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**STRATEGY 13: ADVANCE THE 13 TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS BROUGHT FORWARD BY THE INFRASTRUCTURE TASKFORCE, WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON THE TIER 1 PROJECTS.**

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In 2014-15 the Northeast Indiana Regional Partnership convened the Infrastructure Taskforce for the purpose of identifying those transportation projects that were of regional significance. This group identified 13 transportation projects and developed the criteria by which to prioritize the projects. The Local Economic Development Organizations then scored the projects based on the developed criteria and placed them into three tiers according to their relative importance. The strategy is to advance the thirteen projects, placing special emphasis and support behind the Tier 1 projects. The projects and tiers are as follows:

**Tier 1**

U.S. Highway 30  
U.S. Highway 33  
U.S. Highway 6

**Tier 2**

State Route 5  
U.S. Highway 27  
State Route 124/Interstate 69 Interchange  
State Route 8  
State Route 327/Interstate 80/90 Interchange  
State Route 9 – U.S. Highway 20 – State Route 3 (LaGrange/Noble)

**Tier 3**

State Route 9 (Huntington/Whitley)

State Route 205  
U.S. Highway 224  
Wabash County Road 500 E.

**STRATEGY 14: SUPPORT AND ALIGN WITH THE REGIONAL CITIES  
INITIATIVE BEING PURSUED IN THE 10-COUNTY REGION**

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The Regional Cities Initiative is a public-private partnership proposed and led by Indiana Governor Pence with support from the Indiana Economic Development Corporation (IEDC). The goal is to transform Indiana's approach to economic development by creating

dynamic communities that attract and retain talent. Pending funding approval by the State Legislature, IEDC will select one or two regions to support their plans for game-changing quality of life enhancement projects. Through state, local, and private sector commitments, nearly \$1 billion could potentially be leveraged over 8-10 years. The strategy is to support the submission of a compelling proposal for transformational quality of place assets to position Fort Wayne and the Northeast Indiana region as the lead "Regional City" and to achieve state support.



## MONITORING PROGRESS

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The CEDS must list the performance measures used to evaluate the Planning Organization's successful development and implementation of the CEDS. The following measures will be used to assess the effectiveness of the Strategy:

- Number of jobs created through the implementation of the CEDS;
- Number and types of investment undertaken in the region;
- Number of jobs retained in the region;
- Amount of private sector investment in the region through implementation of the CEDS;
- Changes in the economic environment of the region, including the following benchmark indicators:

### Goal 1: 21<sup>st</sup> Century Talent

- Percentage of residents with high-quality credentials
- Expansion of educational facilities to rural areas and small communities
- Number of employers providing internships
- Number of higher education programs that have incorporated certificates

### Goal 2: Business Climate

- Percentage of workers in industry sectors
- Communities coordinating zoning ordinances
- Communities allowing electronic submission of permits
- Number of educational seminars/forums hosted

### Goal 3: Entrepreneurship

- Number of visits to online or in-person information clearinghouse
- Expansion of incubator/co-working facilities to rural areas and small communities
- Coordination of zoning ordinances between counties/communities across region
- Use of electronic submission for local permitting

### Goal 4: Infrastructure

- Availability of broadband throughout the region
- Number of site-ready projects in the region
- Taskforce prioritized projects lists
- Funding obtained for regional infrastructure projects
- Completion of regional infrastructure projects

### Goal 5: Quality of Life

- Number of Main Street organizations in region
- Miles of connected trails in region
- Creation of region trails map
- Number of free entertainment venues in regional directory
- Number of communities with parks departments
- Coordination of Art Councils and Tourism Bureaus

Other measures may be added as seems appropriate as the CEDS evolves from year-to-year.

## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A: CEDS COMMITTEE MEETING 1



#### Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

Developing a Strategy for Northeast Indiana

#### What is the “CEDS”?

- ▶ “Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy”
- ▶ “CEDS” – pronounced “sahds”



#### The Region

- ▶ Region III-A
  - ▶ Huntington, LaGrange, Noble, Steuben, Wabash, and Whitley
- ▶ NIRCC
  - ▶ Adams, Allen, DeKalb, and Wells



#### Purpose

- ▶ Commissioned by U.S. Economic Development Administration
- ▶ Serve as “an economic roadmap to diversify and strengthen regional economies”



## Benefits

- ▶ Process results in a regional strategy with an action plan to strengthen and diversify regional economy
- ▶ Region III-A receives funding to facilitate the development and implementation of the CEDS
- ▶ The region qualifies to apply for applicable Economic Development Administration funding opportunities
- ▶ Projects identified in the planning process may be more likely to receive competitive grant funds
- ▶ Brings public and private sectors together to help create public-private partnerships that can leverage funds



## Requirements

- ▶ New CEDS is required every 5 years
- ▶ Annual performance reports are required
- ▶ 30-day public comment period
- ▶ New Region III-A CEDS is due March 15, 2015



## Committee

- ▶ Committee is responsible for developing CEDS
- ▶ Committee membership must have a majority that represent the main economic interests of the region
- ▶ Committee should include public officials, community leaders, workforce development, higher education, minority and labor groups, private individuals



## Contents

- ▶ Background information about region, including an analysis of economic development issues
- ▶ Goals, objectives, projects, action plan, and discussion of how public and private will work together to achieve goals
- ▶ Measures to gauge economic development success



## Process

### Meeting 1

- ▶ Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats
- ▶ Goals, Objectives, Measures

### Meeting 2

- ▶ Projects
  - ▶ Vital
  - ▶ Suggested

### Meeting 3

- ▶ Lead Organizations
- ▶ Funding Sources



## CEDS Process

### Surveys

### Background information

### 30-Day Public Comment Period

### Meeting 4

- ▶ Final Comments
- ▶ Celebration

Submit to EDA by March 15, 2015



## Questions or Comments

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## SWOT Analysis

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

### SWOT: Internal

- ▶ Strengths: characteristics of the region that give it an advantage over others
- ▶ Weaknesses: characteristics that place the region at a disadvantage relative to others

### SWOT: External

- ▶ Economy
- ▶ Technological change
- ▶ Politics and legislation
- ▶ Sociocultural changes

### SWOT: External

- ▶ Opportunities: elements in the environment that the region could exploit to its advantage
- ▶ Threats: elements in the environment that could cause trouble for the region

### SWOT Exercise

- ▶ Internal
  - ▶ Strengths
  - ▶ Weaknesses
- ▶ External
  - ▶ Opportunities
  - ▶ Threats

Each on a separate page.

## Goals, Objectives, Measures

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

### Goals, Objectives, Measures

- ▶ **Goals**
  - ▶ Overarching principle that guides decision making
    - ▶ **Build on strengths**
    - ▶ **Take advantage of opportunities**
    - ▶ **Correct weaknesses**
    - ▶ **Reduce threats**

### Goals, Objectives, Measures

- ▶ **Goals**
  - ▶ Overarching principle that guides decision making
- ▶ **Objectives**
  - ▶ Specific, measurable steps that can be taken to meet the goal
    - ▶ **S** - Specific
    - ▶ **M** - Measurable
    - ▶ **A** - Attainable
    - ▶ **R** - Relevant
    - ▶ **T** - Time-bound

### Goals, Objectives, Measures

- ▶ **Goals**
  - ▶ Overarching principle that guides decision making
- ▶ **Objectives**
  - ▶ Specific, measurable steps that can be taken to meet the goal
- ▶ **Measures**
  - ▶ Criteria established to measure progress
    - ▶ **Process and outcome**
    - ▶ **Data available**
    - ▶ **Within sphere of influence**

## Example

- ▶ Goal: Strengthen and support entrepreneurs in the region.
- ▶ Objective: Host information sessions about resources available to small, start-up, or expanding businesses in each county.
- ▶ Measures: Number of information sessions hosted in region. Number of attendees at information sessions.



## Example

- ▶ Goal: Strengthen and support entrepreneurs in the region.
- ▶ Objective: Provide grant money that encourages new start-ups in the region.
- ▶ Measures: Number of grants awarded in region. Number of start-ups launched in the region.



## Exercise

- ▶ Goals (one goal per page)
  - ▶ Overarching principle that guides decision making
- ▶ Objectives
  - ▶ Specific, measurable steps that can be taken to meet the goal
- ▶ Measures
  - ▶ Criteria established to measure progress



## Next Steps

- ▶ Meeting 2 – January 15, 2014 at 4pm
  - ▶ Projects
    - ▶ Vital
    - ▶ Suggested
- ▶ Meeting 3 – January 29, 2015 at 4pm
  - ▶ Lead Organizations
  - ▶ Funding Sources
- ▶ Meeting 4 – March 5, 2015 at 4pm
  - ▶ Final Comments
  - ▶ Celebration



## APPENDIX B: CEDS COMMITTEE SURVEY 1



### CEDS Committee Meeting 1

#### SWOT Analysis

Committee members were asked to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the 10 county region. Please review what they came up with and add any new items that you feel were missed. If you feel a list is complete, simply press "Continue" to advance to the next list.

Continue »



### CEDS Committee Meeting 1

#### Strengths

The CEDS Committee identified the following "strengths" for the region:

- (1) Access to natural resources, such as electricity, waterways, and water generally;
- (2) Access to an array of post-secondary institutions for education;
- (3) Regional economic development collaboration between the Regional Partnership of Northeast Indiana and its Regional Opportunity Council, Regional Chamber, and Workforce Development;
- (4) Availability of transportation infrastructure, including two interstates, east/west railways, and airports;
- (5) Quality of life, specifically the availability of arts, entertainment, bike trails, etc – examples of this include the theater in Huntington, the Opera House in Warren, the Honeywell Center in Wabash, and the Embassy Theater in Fort Wayne;
- (6) Industrial development, such as the creation of new industrial parks;
- (7) Region III-A, and the grant funding available for local projects;
- (8) The Innovation Center and the associated business incubator;
- (9) Strong industrial base with a particular strength in the manufacturing sector;
- (10) Developing trail system;
- (11) Strong core workforce talent for manufacturers;
- (12) Amish trades orientation benefit to employers;
- (13) Effective small business development center.

Please indicate any additional "strengths" you feel should be added to this list.

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Continue »





## CEDS Committee Meeting 1

### Weaknesses

The CEDS Committee identified the following "weaknesses" for the region:

- (1) The population is less educated than other areas;
- (2) There is less access to entertainment, particularly music options;
- (3) Perception that the region does not have "big city" amenities, such as arts, cultural, entertainment, etc.;
- (4) Problems with illegal drug use;
- (5) Wages are not high enough to attract people with technical skills;
- (6) Lack of passenger rail and public transit;
- (7) Lack of affordable housing in downtown Fort Wayne;
- (8) No major research university in the region;
- (9) Manufacturers are not growing jobs;
- (10) Mismatch between jobs demanded and labor force;
- (11) No public transportation for 2nd and 3rd shift workers;
- (12) Struggle to keep airport at level of service demanded;
- (13) Relatively underdeveloped entrepreneur support system;
- (14) High school diploma can be preferred to vocational training received from local vocational schools;
- (15) Lack of new shell buildings – many buildings available are older and less desirable to companies.

Please indicate any additional "weaknesses" you feel should be added to this list.

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25% completed

## CEDS Committee Meeting 1

### Opportunities

The CEDS Committee identified the following "opportunities" for the region:

- (1) Centrally located to other metropolitan areas and markets;
- (2) Access to railroad for freight;
- (3) Adequate and affordable housing in the region generally;
- (4) Perception as family-friendly;
- (5) Low crime rates;
- (6) Indiana location, including business and tax-friendly environment;
- (7) Medical industry has invested heavily in region.

Please indicate any additional "opportunities" you feel should be added to this list.

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33% completed

## CEDS Committee Meeting 1

### Threats

The CEDS Committee identified the following "threats" for the region:

- (1) Other cities have amenities that the region cannot offer, particularly to people who work electronically and can live anywhere they wish;
- (2) Underfunded and deteriorating public utilities, particularly sewer districts;
- (3) Lack of higher paying "white collar" jobs;
- (4) Chicago bottleneck for getting goods out;
- (5) Lack of waterways;
- (6) Many companies in region are not locally owned, so money is lost locally, and are less involved in local communities and programs;
- (7) Employees being lured away,
- (8) Manufacturers moving business to other countries.

Please indicate any additional "threats" you feel should be added to this list.

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[Continue >](#)

41% completed

## CEDS Committee Meeting 1

### Goals and Objectives

The CEDS committee decided to adopt the "5 Pillars" developed by the Northeast Indiana Regional Partnership as the goals for the CEDS. Objectives were then added to each goal. Objectives come from (1) the committee brainstorming session, and (2) initiatives developed as part of the Regional Partnership process. During this section of the survey, please help us select those "objectives" that are most relevant today by indicating which six (6) you feel are "most" appropriate for each goal.

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[Continue >](#)

50% completed

## CEDS Committee Meeting 1

### Goal 1: 21st Century Talent

Please check the six (6) "objectives" you feel are most appropriate for this goal.

(An "objective" is a specific and measurable way that the "goal" can be accomplished.)

- ☐ Increase the percentage of Northeast Indiana residents with high-quality degrees or credentials to 60% by 2025.
- ☐ Improve skill set of workforce to attract top companies.
- ☐ Attract former residents who leave for college back to the area to work.
- ☐ Enhance collaboration among schools, higher education institutions, and businesses to develop more internships and on the job training opportunities.
- ☐ Build community-wide appreciation for education, and a commitment of lifelong education and training.
- ☐ Invigorate students to excel in STEM – science, technology, engineering, math.
- ☐ Invest in Pre-K through 16 education and benchmark progress using internationally recognized standards.
- ☐ Ensure a strong employment base and attractive jobs for future workers.
- ☐ Focus on teacher quality and accountability – train teachers in new instruction methods; remove consistently underperforming teachers.
- ☐ Instill a good work ethic in members of the workforce.
- ☐ Link workforce development to target industry clusters (e.g. food, defense, etc.).
- ☐ Expand and improve the skills of manufacturing workers who have lost their jobs.
- ☐ Retain skilled workers and recruit talent from outside the region.
- ☐ Focus on higher education (e.g. Purdue University and extension offices.) Establish a research university in the region.
- ☐ Identify requisite skill sets and focus on these – for example, finance, accounting, technology, etc.
- ☐ Support engineering and technical talent to encourage growth in high tech businesses.

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58% completed

## CEDS Committee Meeting 1

### Goal 2: Business Climate

Please check the six (6) "objectives" you feel are most appropriate for this goal.

(An "objective" is a specific and measurable way that the "goal" can be accomplished.)

- ☐ Prepare regional response to Regional Cities initiative.
- ☐ Enhance economic development incentives. Encourage existing businesses to upgrade their programs and processes. Create tailored incentive packages for prospective businesses.
- ☐ Establish a business-friendly tax and regulatory climate. Streamline approvals for economic development projects.
- ☐ Develop a brand for Northeast Indiana. Market the region nationally and internationally.
- ☐ Develop a diversified economy that expands beyond the traditional manufacturing base.
- ☐ Develop strong leadership in the region – including government officials and the business community.
- ☐ Grow existing manufacturing base and attract new manufacturing and distribution companies to the region.
- ☐ Concentrate on developing targeted industry clusters (e.g. food, defense, etc.).
- ☐ Document and market the region's low real estate cost, low cost of labor, good work ethic, and quality of life.
- ☐ Invest additional financial resources into economic development activities.
- ☐ Retain support for agriculture, even as the region becomes more urbanized.
- ☐ Encourage more public/private cooperation.
- ☐ Catalogue all of the assets in the region (an "asset-mapping" project.) Disseminate to LEDOs and various industries.
- ☐ Understand the economic impact of healthcare and integrate health organizations into economic development activities.
- ☐ Understand and enhance the economic development impact of non-profits. Expand partnerships among non-profits, and between non-profits and the business community.

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66% completed

## CEDS Committee Meeting 1

### Goal 3: Entrepreneurship

Please check the six (6) "objectives" you feel are most appropriate for this goal.

(An "objective" is a specific and measurable way that the "goal" can be accomplished.)

- ☐ Promote available resources, such as the Small Business Development Center, to local entrepreneurs.
- ☐ Develop clearinghouse for business-related information.
- ☐ Encourage regional business incubators.
- ☐ Enhance access to venture capital – both debt and equity. Better connect entrepreneurs to potential investors.
- ☐ Develop a variety of support services to assist entrepreneurs, including business-related research, invention and innovation evaluation, product and service development, and marketing.
- ☐ Encourage existing businesses to take entrepreneurial risks by growing their firms, or investing in new business areas.
- ☐ Create an innovation center that can and will provide entrepreneurial assistance to all counties in Northeast Indiana.
- ☐ Establish a leadership network to foster entrepreneurial coaching and collaboration.
- ☐ Help entrepreneurs market their products and services outside of the region and globally.
- ☐ Recruit back to this region college graduates and young professionals who were originally raised here.
- ☐ Promote the value of entrepreneurial activity throughout the region, highlighting past and present entrepreneurial efforts, and celebrating the future potential of this region.
- ☐ Ensure entrepreneurial support efforts complement the region's target industry clusters (e.g. food, defense, etc.).
- ☐ Formalize entrepreneurial education and provide instruction through seminars and workshops.

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75% completed

## CEDS Committee Meeting 1

### Goal 4: Infrastructure

Please check the six (6) "objectives" you feel are most appropriate for this goal.

(An "objective" is a specific and measurable way that the "goal" can be accomplished.)

- ☐ Regional passenger rail.
- ☐ Improve trail connectivity throughout the region.
- ☐ Increase state funding of state and county highways.
- ☐ Encourage the completion of feasibility and planning studies on regional road projects.
- ☐ Increase the number of "shovel-ready" development sites.
- ☐ Enhance regional planning efforts to ensure connections between land use, transportation, and infrastructure investments.
- ☐ Work regionally to identify and finance regional infrastructure priorities.
- ☐ Expand broadband width and availability.
- ☐ Increase access to affordable energy.
- ☐ Focus on developing an integrated, multi-modal transportation network that effectively links the region's population centers.
- ☐ Enhance freight opportunities through improvements to air and rail facilities.
- ☐ Invest in renewable energy and green infrastructure.
- ☐ Provide for a new east-west highway artery.
- ☐ Develop better, faster, safer transportation options (such as high speed rail) to major hubs like Chicago, Indianapolis, and Detroit.
- ☐ Improve public transportation. Provide affordable, frequent, dependable bus service throughout the region.

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83% completed

## CEDS Committee Meeting 1

### Goal 5: Quality of Life

Please check the six (6) "objectives" you feel are most appropriate for this goal.

(An "objective" is a specific and measurable way that the "goal" can be accomplished.)

- ☐ Increase outdoor recreational activities.
- ☐ Improve coordination between industry, government, and higher education.
- ☐ Create vibrant downtowns in all region's towns and cities.
- ☐ Reduce additional tax burden created when downtown properties are revitalized.
- ☐ Increase facilities that offer live entertainment.
- ☐ Increase collaboration between county tourism bureaus and arts councils.
- ☐ Develop a regional identity that highlights quality of life assets – including favorable tax rates, affordable housing, and strong education system.
- ☐ Provide amenities that attract young professionals – including housing, entertainment, recreation, and transportation.
- ☐ Support active lifestyles in the region – increase walkability and bikability; enhance access to healthy foods; improve access to outdoor spaces and recreational activities.
- ☐ Protect and improve the region's natural areas, including parks, open spaces, and rivers.
- ☐ Celebrate the unique assets and characteristics of various communities throughout the region.
- ☐ Encourage redevelopment and infill instead of sprawling development patterns.
- ☐ Invest in downtown Fort Wayne as the vibrant urban core of the region.
- ☐ Enhance the region's arts and cultural resources – ensure affordability and diversity in scope.
- ☐ Ensure high quality health infrastructure throughout the region, including access to health insurance and primary care physicians.
- ☐ Enhance social connectivity among all races, classes, and ages.
- ☐ Elevate development standards. Create neighborhoods that are sustainable, walkable, and diverse.

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91% completed

## APPENDIX C: CEDS COMMITTEE SURVEY 2



### CEDS Committee Meeting 2

On the following pages, the goals and objectives selected by the CEDS Committee are presented. Following each are a set of "projects, programs, and activities" proposed at the last CEDS Committee meeting to accomplish the goals and objectives. For each, select whether you feel the project is "Vital", "Suggested", or "Should Be Removed".

Select "Vital" for a project if you feel it is essential for achieving the goal. Select "Suggested" for a project if you feel it could be implemented but is not essential. Select "Remove" for a project that you feel should not be included in the CEDS.

Note: to protect the privacy of your responses, we will NOT ask for your name at the end of this survey. However, as a result you will receive the reminder email, even if you complete the survey. Simply ignore it, we will have your responses recorded as long as you press "submit" at the end of this survey.

Continue »

16% completed



### CEDS Committee Meeting 2

#### Goal 1: 21st Century Talent

- Objectives:
1. Enhance collaboration among schools, higher education institutions, and businesses to develop more internships and on-the-job training opportunities.
  2. Improve skill set of workforce to attract top companies.
  3. Increase the percentage of Northeast Indiana residents with high-quality degrees or credentials to 65% by 2025.
  4. Build community-wide appreciation for education, and a commitment of lifelong education and training.

Select "Vital" for a project if you feel it is essential for achieving the above goals and objectives. Select "Suggested" for a project if you feel it could be implemented but is not essential. Select "Remove" for a project that you feel should not be included in the CEDS.

	Vital	Suggested	Remove
Expand job training facilities and educational resources to rural areas and smaller communities to reach more of the population.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Improve the connection between high schools and local employers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Expand "Made By Me" campaign to other counties to show high school students the kinds of jobs that are available at local manufacturers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Support Northeast Indiana Works programs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Increase the number of skilled workers with a strong work ethic and "job-sense" skills.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Provide daycare for workers who need training.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Find funding source to sustain programs that expand the skill sets of existing workers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Support the Big Goal Collaborative initiatives.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Impact pay structures of early learning teachers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Promote online training to help mentors teach students to read.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Connect education majors with elementary students for tutoring.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pilot program to help students fill out FAFSA.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Develop a regional database of employers engaged with local institutions through internships.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Develop strategies to keep local college graduates in Northeast Indiana.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Support and improve funding of local libraries.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Add any additional projects you feel could help accomplish this goal.

« Back

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33% completed



## CEDS Committee Meeting 2

### Goal 2: Business Climate

#### Objectives:

1. Develop a brand for Northeast Indiana. Market the region nationally and internationally.
2. Develop a diversified economy that expands beyond the traditional manufacturing base.
3. Establish a business-friendly tax and regulatory climate. Streamline approvals for economic development projects.
4. Grow existing manufacturing base and attract new manufacturing and distribution companies to the region.

Select "Vital" for a project if you feel it is essential for achieving the above goals and objectives. Select "Suggested" for a project if you feel it could be implemented but is not essential. Select "Remove" for a project that you feel should not be included in the CEDS.

	Vital	Suggested	Remove
Adopt "Our Story" brand developed by the Northeast Regional Partnership throughout the region.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Encourage all municipalities to do entire permitting process electronically.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Coordinate zoning designations and standards between counties and cities across region.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Support the LEDO council by providing training opportunities for LEDO's, board members, and elected officials on the economic development process.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Educate the general public on tax phase-ins and other incentives to correct the misconception of "giving away the farm" to entice businesses.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Add any additional projects you feel could help accomplish this goal.

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50% completed

## CEDS Committee Meeting 2

### Goal 3: Entrepreneurship

#### Objectives:

1. Develop a variety of support services to assist entrepreneurs, including business-related research, invention and innovation evaluation, product and service development, and marketing.
2. Enhance access to venture capital – both debt and equity. Better connect entrepreneurs to potential investors.
3. Encourage regional business incubators.

Select "Vital" for a project if you feel it is essential for achieving the above goals and objectives. Select "Suggested" for a project if you feel it could be implemented but is not essential. Select "Remove" for a project that you feel should not be included in the CEDS.

	Vital	Suggested	Remove
Develop a regional website of support services for entrepreneurs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Support and promote Innovation Center's mentoring programs and incubator services for entrepreneurs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Create branches of Northeast Indiana Innovation Center in rural counties.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Support and promote Elevate Ventures funding programs for entrepreneurs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Support and promote Trine University business incubator's program.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Support and promote the work of IPFW's Small Business Development Center.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Develop co-working spaces in rural counties as a first step towards business incubators.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Support and coordinate NE Regional Partnership's regional marketing efforts.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Streamline building permits process in each municipality and county.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Add any additional projects you feel could help accomplish this goal.

« Back

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66% completed

## CEDS Committee Meeting 2

### Goal 4: Infrastructure

#### Objectives:

1. Expand broadband width and availability.
2. Encourage the completion of feasibility and planning studies on regional road projects.
3. Work regionally to identify and finance regional infrastructure priorities.
4. Enhance freight opportunities through improvements to air and rail facilities.
5. Increase state funding of state and county highways.
6. Increase the number of "shovel-ready" development sites.

Select "Vital" for a project if you feel it is essential for achieving the above goals and objectives. Select "Suggested" for a project if you feel it could be implemented but is not essential. Select "Remove" for a project that you feel should not be included in the CEDS.

	Vital	Suggested	Remove
Install fiber in all counties and municipalities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Promote having preliminary engineering in place for all road projects.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Support Vision 2020 Transportation Taskforce in advancing priority projects.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Promote use of TIF districts for funding maintenance and improvements to infrastructure.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Evaluate potential funding sources for road maintenance.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Explore consolidation of water and sewer districts.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Promote 900 N as a success story.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Utilize cluster analysis: focus on opportunities in the clusters that are already showing progress.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Coordinate with higher education to provide support for those clusters and any diversification efforts, to ensure that the local workforce is adequately prepared for local job opportunities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Support a centralized system for intermodal transportation.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Communicate with State Representatives and State Senators on what needs exist.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Establish a teamwork approach among the counties of the region for letting state officials know what the top priorities are.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Document what has happened since the last CEDS and use supporting documentation such as maps and percentage improvements.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Add any additional projects you feel could help accomplish this goal.

Back Continue

83% completed

## CEDS Committee Meeting 2

### Goal 5: Quality of Life

#### Objectives:

1. Provide amenities that attract young professionals – including housing, entertainment, recreation, and transportation.
2. Create vibrant downtowns in all region's towns and cities.

Select "Vital" for a project if you feel it is essential for achieving the above goals and objectives. Select "Suggested" for a project if you feel it could be implemented but is not essential. Select "Remove" for a project that you feel should not be included in the CEDS.

	Vital	Suggested	Remove
Determine which communities and counties have parks departments. Develop parks departments in communities and counties that don't have them.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Create a regional bike trail map.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Determine how to knit together regional trail system and find funding to accomplish it.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Develop bike-share program in City of Fort Wayne.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Develop more opportunities for free entertainment, such as outdoor concerts, festivals, splash pads, and other similar activities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Add any additional projects you feel could help accomplish this goal.

You MUST press "Submit" to complete your survey.

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100% You made it.



## APPENDIX D: PROJECT REPORT FORM

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### Projects Report Form

2015 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

#### Purpose

The purpose of this request is to develop a comprehensive inventory of projects being planned throughout the region. This inventory will be included in the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), which is currently being prepared for the U.S. Economic Development Administration. Including a project in the CEDS will help to qualify it for federal grant funding.

If you have any questions, contact Jessica Grossman at 260-347-4714 or

[jgrossman@region3a.org](mailto:jgrossman@region3a.org)

**City, Town or County Name**

**Describe the project that you believe your city/town/county is likely to undertake.**

This can include construction projects, programs, policies, or other activities. Include only ONE project per submission of this form.

**What kind of project is this?**

**When will this likely to be undertaken?**

**Have any of the following been completed for this project?**

- ☐ Preliminary Engineering Report
- ☐ Cost estimates
- ☐ Final design
- ☐ Historic review
- ☐ Environmental review

The following only needs to be completed on the first item submitted.

**Person Submitting This Report**

**Phone**

**Email**

**Submit**

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