

NORTHWEST INDIANA PROFILE

A PUBLICATION OF ONE REGION



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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GREETINGS



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I am pleased to present you with the 2012 Quality of Life Indicators Report. It comes to you from One Region, the new organization that resulted from the merger of the former Northwest Indiana Quality of Life Council and the One Region, One Vision initiative undertaken by The Times Media Co.

This report is the result of more than a year of careful analysis of data from a variety of sources. As many of you will remember, similar reports were published in 2000, 2004 and 2008. This 2012 report reflects back on those earlier documents, in which the Quality of Life Council struggled to refine the nature of the indicators and the data points that best characterize them. It offers a current analysis but also looks at the trends over the past decade. And this year, we have offered a dashboard graphic for each topic area to show if the indicator itself has improved, worsened or remained unchanged.

I want to acknowledge, in particular, the many contributions made by the Research Committee of One Region. This committee, chaired by Leigh Morris, has worked extensively to assist our research consultant, Tina Rongers of Karnerblue Era, LLC, and her team in the production of the report. I

also want to thank Ben Cunningham and his staff at the Times for their efforts in creating the layout for this publication. Finally, this publication would not exist were it not for the financial support provided by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, represented by Harry J. Vande Velde III of the Legacy Foundation.

In the coming weeks we will conduct a number of community conversations regarding the data presented in this 2012 report. I urge you to participate in one or more of these conversations, which will be held throughout Lake, Porter and La Porte counties.

In addition, I am pleased with the progress being made at One Region. Our action projects are all well underway as we attempt to identify specific approaches to improving our community.

I am honored to serve as your Executive Director and look forward to the many contributions One Region can make in the quality of life of our citizens.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dennis Rittenmeyer". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Dennis Rittenmeyer,
Executive Director of One Region

INTRO

Twelve years ago the Northwest Indiana Quality of Life Council was formed to be a collective voice for sustainable economic, environmental and social progress in the region. It soon became apparent that in order to open conversations, set priorities and move forward, the council needed to collect data that would indicate both problems and progress. So in 2000, the first Northwest Indiana Quality of Life Indicators Report was published.

Now, the Northwest Indiana Quality of Life Council and the One Region, One Vision initiative are a single non-profit organization, One Region, focused on improving the quality of life in Northwest Indiana.

This 2012 Indicators Report presents a baseline view of Northwest Indiana and serves as a relevant tool for One Region to use in its civic engagement. The report fulfills three primary purposes:

1. To provide an objective assessment of conditions in ten categories considered to be leading indicators of the quality of life in Northwest Indiana.
2. To identify and evaluate trends in each of these categories during the period from 2000 to 2010.
3. To stimulate dialogue and actions that address opportunities to enhance the quality of life.

Each chapter provides an overview of why the topic is important to the region, a historical perspective on the issue and the current analysis. Questions are posed by the author to stimulate thought about what the data does or does not say and what else might need to be considered. Calls to action are the ideas and suggestions of the author on where One Region stakeholders might or could begin. A system of arrows and blocks indicate if indicator performance has improved, remained steady or has declined over time.

This report is not an exhaustive list of data collected in prior years nor is it a comprehensive analysis of all facets of the leading indicators. But beginning with the analysis in this report – including insight on where the data so far have fallen short – One Region can structure a process for collecting the right data consistently and continually.

The more useful and readily available the indicators can become, then the more that fact-based information and dialogue can shape policy and action in Northwest Indiana. These measured outcomes, as signs of marked progress, can then be used to hold people and organizations accountable for producing mutually-beneficial results.

EXECUTIVE

The 2012 Quality of Life Indicators Report is a portrait of a region in transition. Many barriers and disparities remain, and there are substantial gaps in our knowledge of the facts about Northwest Indiana. But there also are opportunities for conversation, leadership and action. This makes it an exciting time to focus on quality of life.

The data trends in this report show that Northwest Indiana is in a state of flux. Its industrial past is fading, as it searches for a new future in high-skill manufacturing and the service economy. It still is divided in many ways by class and race, and those divisions are reflected in disparities in education, safety, income and access to health care. Its population

is growing older, a fact that affects everything from transportation to policing.

But it also is growing more diverse, and particularly more Latino, a fact that may call for changes in education, housing and workforce development, among other areas. More natural areas are being conserved and restored, and air pollution has been reduced, but the region still depends almost entirely on cars and trucks, despite the greenhouse gas emissions they create, the health risks they raise and the sprawling development they encourage. It is a region that recreates, entertains and gives back. Though in the final analysis, the baseline data reveal that the region's quality of life remains much the same in 2010 as it was in 2000.

HOW ARE INDICATORS IN THE REGION TRENDING?

▲ IMPROVEMENT ■ STEADY ▼ DECLINE

PEOPLE	■
ECONOMY	■
ENVIRONMENT	■
TRANSPORTATION	▼
EDUCATION	■
HEALTH	▼
PUBLIC SAFETY	■
HOUSING	■
CULTURE	▲
GOVERNMENT	■

SUMMARY

PEOPLE

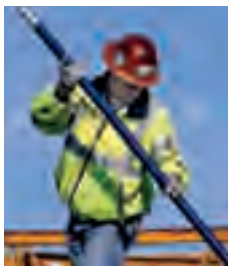
People matter, and the way people live in Northwest Indiana is changing. The population is becoming more diverse, with substantial increases in the number of Latinos and the proportion of people who do not speak English at home. Married households are now outnumbered by other household arrangements and married couples with children are a decreasing minority. The region's population also is aging, with substantial implications in every area.



OVERALL RATING: ■

ECONOMY

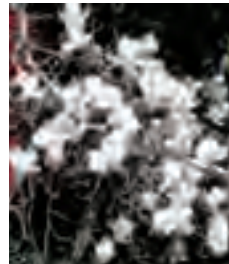
Northwest Indiana is a prime location to do business. The industrial past has given way to a more uncertain future that will require greater diversification, innovation and entrepreneurship and a workforce trained for a wider variety of occupations, particularly in service industries, health care and transportation. Employers will require better educated and higher skilled workforce. Stubborn disparities persist in income, education and employment.



OVERALL RATING: ■

ENVIRONMENT

The Lake Michigan shoreline defines Northwest Indiana. A unique combination of heavy industry, residential development and ecological biodiversity make for a stark contrast along the lakeshore. Industrialization and urbanization account for higher concentrations of environmental degradation. Air, water and land are cleaner. Yet the effects of other key environmental factors, like energy and climate change, are largely unknown. A more sustainable region is gradually occurring.



OVERALL RATING: ■

TRANSPORTATION

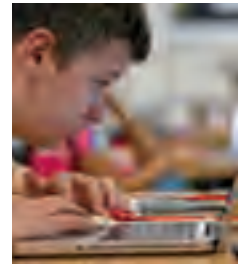
Our infrastructure moves goods and people where they need to go, anywhere in the world. Northwest Indiana's residents, workers and goods still move mostly by car and truck, with associated costs in emissions, sprawl, congestion and accidents. Public transit remains fragmented, underfunded and underutilized. Local public transit systems are inefficient and costly compared to other similar systems. Greater intra-regional transit connectivity needs further study.



OVERALL RATING: ▼

EDUCATION

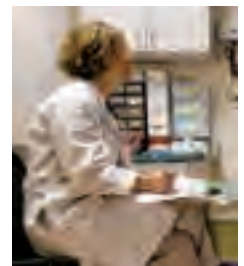
Educational attainment is the key to Northwest Indiana's progress. Yet children still do not have equal access to a good education. While some areas have high-performing K-12 schools, others perform well below state standards. A child's chances of succeeding in school depend greatly on where she lives and which school she attends. The population of students is changing, with a rapid growth in Hispanic students. Data are unsatisfactory; important questions such as how well the education system is preparing students for the workplace to come remain unstudied.



OVERALL RATING: ■

HEALTH

Health and well-being reflect the quality of care and value of human life. Although there are sparkling new hospitals and medical facilities, Northwest Indiana overall ranks poorly within the state and against national benchmarks for most measures of access to health care, delivery of health care, health outcomes and the behavioral and environmental factors that tend to harm. Data in previous indicators reports were scanty, inconsistent and not comparable, forcing this report to start fresh with county-level data. But better data choice, collection and access are essential for the future, especially in addressing disparities.



OVERALL RATING: ▼

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PUBLIC SAFETY

Essential services help to protect and secure the region. The urban core of the region has fewer violent crimes, but still is violent and unsafe. The effectiveness of community policing strategies has not been studied. There has been no coordinated effort in the region to study and take action on the root causes of youth crime and delinquency. Public safety agencies still do not broadly cooperate and share information effectively. And little attention has been paid to the non-crime sources of danger to the region's residents, such as fire, auto accidents, grade crossings, drownings, natural disasters and disparities in ambulance response times.

OVERALL RATING: ■



HOUSING

Northwest Indiana is a good place to call home. Yet, the effects of the nationwide housing collapse and the ensuing recession are clearly felt in Northwest Indiana. New home starts have slowed to a crawl and, while home values continue to rise in the region, that growth has greatly slowed in the past few years. Both homeowners and renters are having a harder time paying for housing, and there are more vacant homes. But long-term disparities in housing opportunity and patterns of segregation remain, as do the environmental and other costs associated with sprawling development.

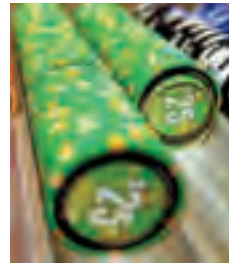
OVERALL RATING: ■



CULTURE

Arts and culture, along with charitable giving, enrich the lives of Northwest Indiana residents and visitors. Despite a struggle for more funding, program offerings and patronage are strong. Overnight lodging related to visiting family and friends and the area attractions, like the casinos and the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, drive tourism. Wages, spending and taxes generated make the tourism and travel industry a growing sector of the economy. More nonprofit organizations have modest means to address community needs, yet charitable giving to them is not evenly distributed.

OVERALL RATING: ▲



GOVERNMENT

Leadership operates with the people in mind; however, Northwest Indiana still is a long way from efficient, trusted, effective government. A major shift in the property tax system has drastically cut many local agencies' budgets, and they struggle to deliver essential public services and plan for the future as tax revenues fall, populations decline and tax bases shrink. These circumstances make it all the more urgent for local governments to streamline and cooperate to lower costs, but they remain fragmented with often overlapping responsibilities. The 2007 Kernan-Shepard Report on streamlining government has had little effect on producing good government.

OVERALL RATING: ■



ANALYSIS

The Quality of Life Indicators serves to quantify sustainable progress in Northwest Indiana. The baseline data reveal that the region's quality of life remains much the same in 2010 as it was in 2000.

What does sustainability and the data tell us? That the performance of the economy, environment, people, education, housing, health, government, transportation, arts and culture, and public safety are interconnected. This interdependence holds true for Lake County, Porter County and La Porte County being smaller parts of the whole region. But sustainable progress requires real accountability.

The effects of major accomplishments have had little net impact on the numbers. There has been incremental improvement in a few areas such as in crime rates, educational attainment and water quality, and there are a few bright spots such as wages, charitable giving, air quality and recreation. There have been a number of highly publicized initiatives that had limited local or short-term success. But overall, there has been little systemic change, and the region has made little progress on tackling its major challenges or fully optimizing its assets since 2000.

Though the Quality of Life Indicators Reports have often made acute observations about the state of the region, their data and analysis have been too inconsistent to create real accountability or provide a fully informed basis for action.

One Region needs a functional and intellectually honest knowledge base to guide future strategy and to make it possible to judge what works. Future initiatives should be clearly linked to overall strategies for progress and should be clearly linked to metrics that can measure their impact. Over time, the core indicators should be able to pick up evidence that the strategy is working or failing. As the picture improves and new visions form, Northwest Indiana communities can come to see themselves as one region.

VISION FOR THE FUTURE

"A REGION RICH IN DIVERSITY, PROVIDING A HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE WITH OPPORTUNITIES FOR EACH PERSON TO REACH THEIR FULL POTENTIAL AND LEAD A REWARDING LIFE THAT BENEFITS SOCIETY." - **MARK MAASSEL, PRESIDENT, NWI FORUM**



PEOPLE

“WE ASPIRE TO BE A REGION THAT IS DIVERSE AND VALUES INCLUSION.”

Before we can ask “where are we headed,” we have to know who we are. Though the demographics of Northwest Indiana have changed over the years, one major characteristic remains constant: The region has no single “dominant city” that defines us because no one city is dominant. Instead, the cities of Hammond, East Chicago, Gary and Michigan City, when thought of as an urban core, are comparable to the central cities of other metropolitan areas yet are encompassed by smaller and growing cities and towns that compromise our region.

Highly urbanized areas that include rural life, like Northwest Indiana, attract and reflect a diversity of people. The challenge becomes how best to create a marketplace and hometowns that are desirable to a range of needs, interests, eclectic tastes and rich cultures.

A LOOK BACK

When the first “Northwest Indiana Quality of Life Indicators for Progress” report was published in 2000, its writers noted that from 1970 to 1990 the region, like other older industrial cities, had seen a dramatic population shift from the urban core to outlying areas. Northwest Indiana’s urban core population loss was 28.7 percent, compared to

21.7 percent in other metropolitan areas in the Northeast and Midwest.

Locally, northern sections of Lake County were contracting and its suburban and rural areas were expanding. Porter County was developing most rapidly while La Porte County grew slightly. Meanwhile, the region became more racially and ethnically diverse between 1970 and 1998. As of 1998, Northwest Indiana had 12 percent of the state’s population, but 29.5 percent of its African-American and 51 percent of its Hispanic residents.

As with other metropolitan areas at the time, the population shifts left poverty concentrated in the urban core. Poverty was especially concentrated in Lake County, where most blacks and Latinos lived, the majority of them in low-income neighborhoods. Between 1970 and 1998, the proportion of people living in poverty in Northwest Indiana increased from 8.5 percent to 13.4 percent. The 2000 report concluded that it was not in anyone’s interest to leave each city on its own to address these problems: “Disparity requires regional solutions.”

The 2004 report recognized racial division as the “Achilles’ heel” of Northwest Indiana. Though the region overall was increasingly diverse, members of its racial and ethnic groups still led separate lives in segregated communities. Lack of appreciation for

diversity was seen as an obstacle to regional progress.

The demographic trends fluctuated somewhat, but the trajectory was nearly unchanged: Northwest Indiana was growing, but not evenly. From 1990 to 2000, Porter County grew quickly, yet the urban core communities and La Porte County grew hardly at all.

Meanwhile, households in Northwest Indiana were changing. Lake County had the highest rate of single-parent homes, at 11.3 percent in 2000. The proportion of people living alone, an average of 24 percent regionally, was nearly equal to the proportion of households consisting of married parents with children.

In the 2008 report, the perspective changed from seeing racial division as a liability to viewing diversity as a social asset that could fuel creativity and innovation, and therefore economic growth. Northwest Indiana’s history has resulted in patterns of division and exclusion by race, class, religion, nationality and politics. A major challenge for the region was creating a sense of inclusiveness, community cohesion and collective identity going forward.

In 2006, 73 percent of Northwest Indiana’s people were white, 18 percent were black and 9 percent were of other races, and 10.9 percent were Hispanic. The 2008 report noted a historic shift: More people were coming to Northwest Indiana from other parts of the nation than were emigrating from other countries.

PEOPLE

THE NUMBERS NOW

The way we live is changing. Today we are less likely to be part of a household with a married couple and children, and more likely to live in a single-parent family home or alone. We are aging: The region's median age is approaching 40, with fewer young people and more graying baby boomers.

In 2010, Northwest Indiana accounted for 11.9 percent of Indiana's population and its population has increased by 4.1 percent since 2000. But most of that increase has been in Porter County. Lake and La Porte counties grew far more slowly than the rest of the state.

We have an increasing number of Latinos, Asians and people of combined ancestry in our population. While whites accounted for 78 percent of its population in 2010, that figure is down 2 percent from 2000. The proportion of African Americans stood at 19 percent of the population, but the Hispanic population has grown rapidly to 13 percent.

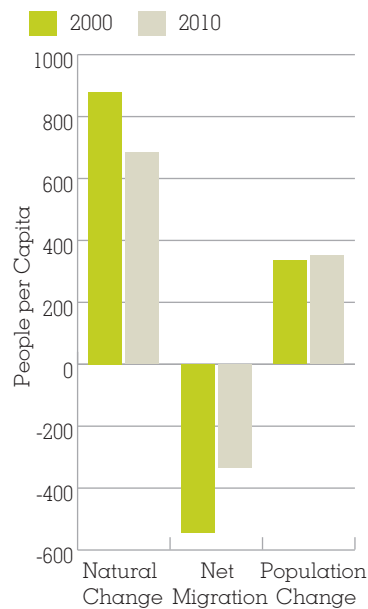
In 2010, English was not the primary language in 9.3 percent

of the region's households, up from the 8.5 percent of households in 2000. The proportion of non-English-speaking households was greatest in Lake County and fewest in La Porte County.

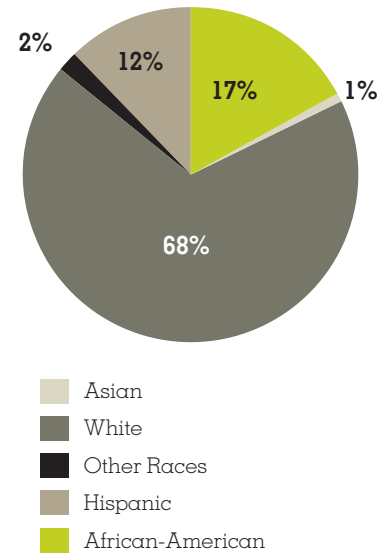
The region also is more diverse in how its residents live. Married people are no longer a majority of households in Northwest Indiana; more households now are headed by single parents or people living alone. Only in Porter County do more than a quarter of households consist of married couples with children.

The aging of Northwest Indiana has substantial implications all across the region, for the business, employment, government, health care, education and infrastructure. The populations of people ages 45-65 and 65 and older are increasing while the population of young people is largely flat. From 2000 to 2010, the median age for the Northwest Indiana region increased from 36.4 to 38.5, with the population of La Porte County aging most rapidly.

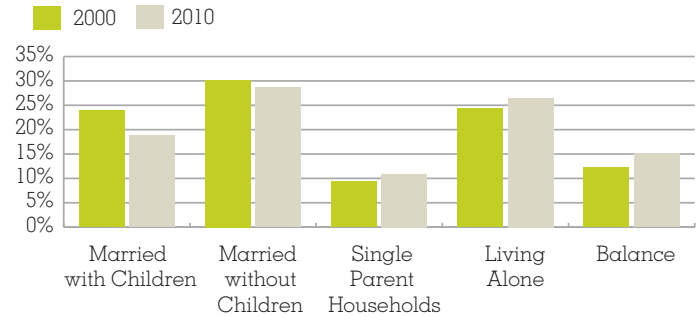
Population Change



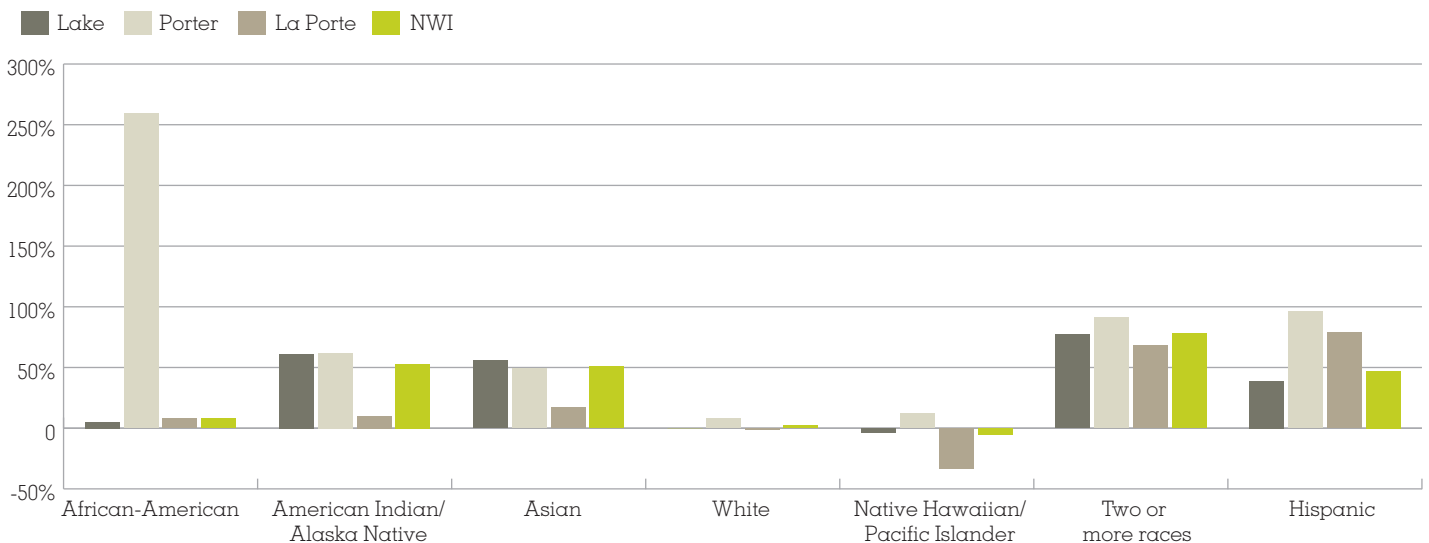
NWI Population by Race & Ethnicity



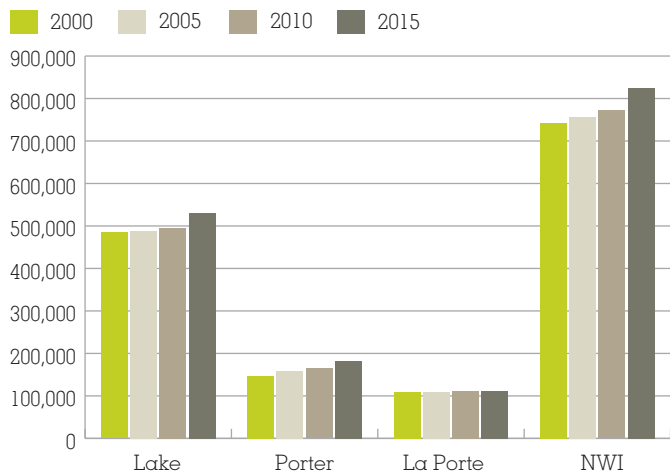
NWI Households by Type, 2000-2010



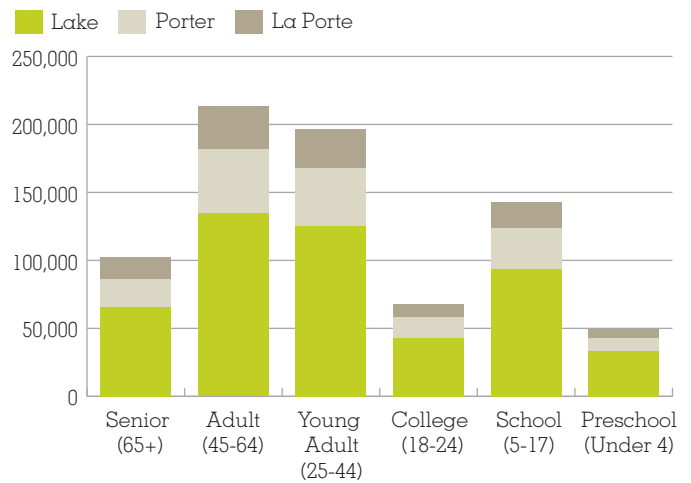
NWI Race & Ethnicity Percent Change, 2000-2010



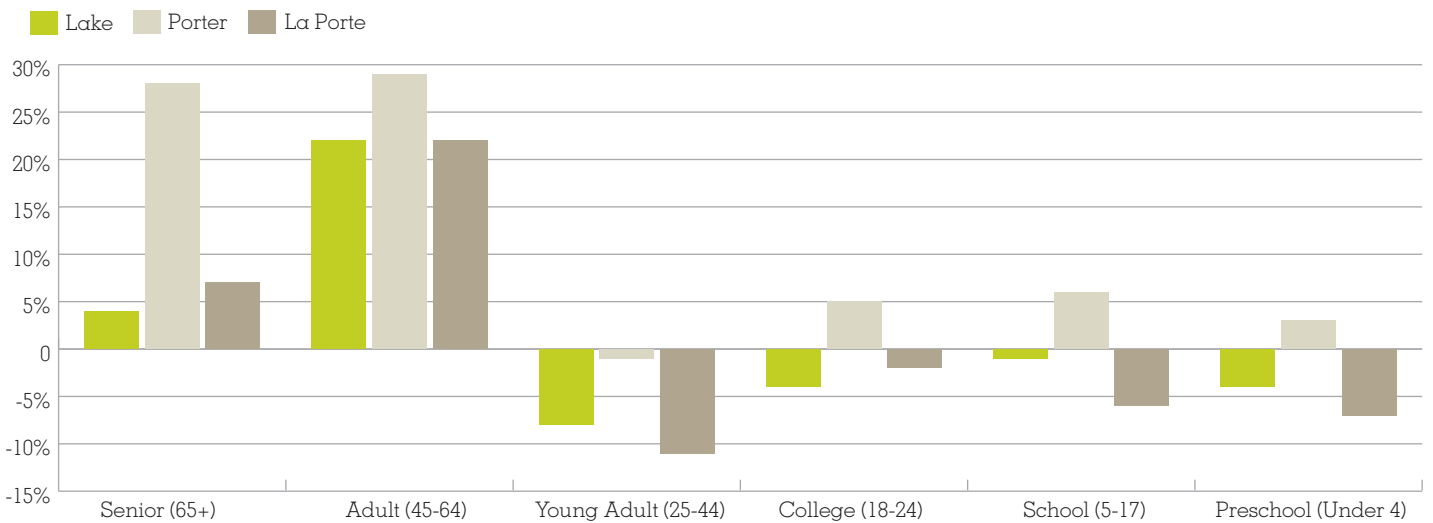
NWI Population, 2000-2010 and Projection, 2015



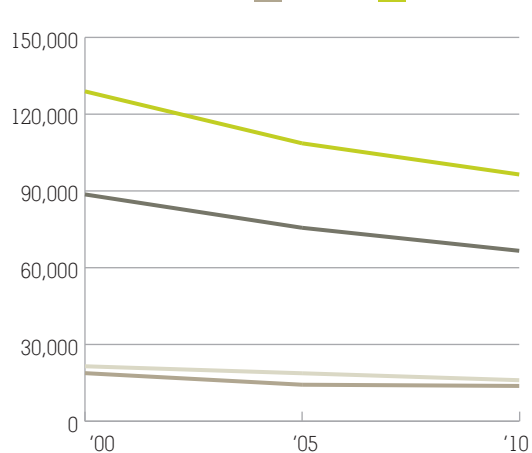
NWI Population by Age Groups, 2010



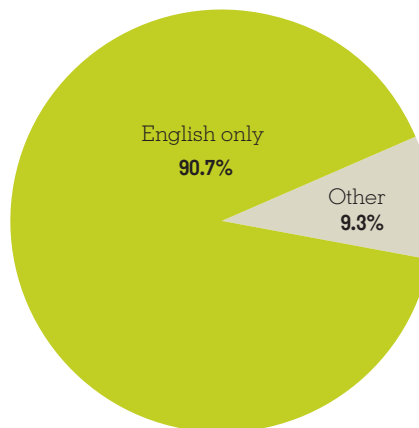
NWI Change in Age Groups by County, 2000-2010



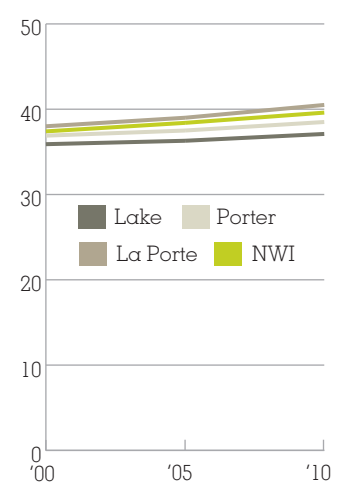
Population Age 5+ with Disability



NWI Primary Language Spoken in Home, 2010



Median Age, 2000-2010



PEOPLE

WHERE WE STAND

Northwest Indiana is a human tapestry being woven as people are born, as they come to the region, as they move within the region or leave. We are not living in the world of 30, 50 or 100 years ago. Perceptions, needs and assets have changed, even though cities and towns maintain their distinctive character and traditions. Too often, the people of Northwest Indiana have defined themselves by their historic differences. Now, we need leadership to work toward a new cultural identity that aligns better with the realities of our dynamic population.

Race, class and other factors may divide but they are not all-powerful. According to the Knight Foundation's Soul of the Community, Gary Report 2010, communities whose residents have a strong sense of emotional attachment tend to be more prosperous and forward-looking. And that sense of attachment has less to do with demographics, the study says, than with the perceptions of residents that they live in a good place, as measured by aesthetics, openness and social offerings.

The Knight Foundation report found that cities and towns in Northwest Indiana lagged well behind their peers of the same size in all the study's key drivers of community attachment. The study rated emotional connection in the Gary region, inclusive of the three counties, at 2.80 out of a possible 5, significantly worse than the 3.57 average for 26 cities the foundation studied nationally.

The demographic indicators that tell us who lives here and under what conditions provide the background for considering what needs to be done to improve the quality of their lives. As we seek to foster a more connected community of people who work together for the vital future of the region, we will need to further explore:

How can we make the region more inclusive as well as diverse?

How can we bring people from diverse communities together around a common



vision for Northwest Indiana?

How can we create equal opportunities for all in the region?

Given that the region's future workforce is likely to include a greater proportion of Latinos, how can we create a more welcoming culture?

How can we improve connections within and between communities in the region?

WHAT WE NEED TO KNOW

The data now available give us only a bald and sketchy understanding of the people of Northwest Indiana, and especially of the way they relate to each other how they relate to each other, within an across the divisions of race, class, income, geography and language. Among the questions that call for more research and better measurement are:

How do people of different ages, classes, races, ethnic groups and primary languages perceive their communities, the larger region and their place within it?

What are the demographic make-up of the region's cities and towns?

How are jobs, occupations and education distributed among them?

How much do they interact in various ways?

How do they perceive each other?

How do they see their future?

CALL TO ACTION

A common body of knowledge about the demographics of Northwest Indiana would be a powerful tool for addressing the region's future challenges. It would be most useful if a collection of information were centralized, maintained online and open to all. The Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Council's 2040 Comprehensive Plan is one place to begin.

The region needs leadership to address issues around race, immigration, aging and other shifts in demographics, and it needs strong champions for creating a more welcoming and inclusive region.

One Region's planned community conversations, funded through the Knight Foundation, can be the start of understanding how Northwest Indiana leaders might foster stronger bonds among residents, within and between its cities and towns.

PEOPLE

POPULATION TRENDS

POPULATION CHANGE

RACIAL AND ETHNIC DISTRIBUTION

POPULATION BY AGE GROUP

AGE BY COUNTY

RESIDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

HOUSEHOLD TYPE

LANGUAGES SPOKEN IN HOUSEHOLDS



ISSUES TRENDING ▲ IMPROVEMENT ■ STEADY ▼ DECLINE

LEARN MORE

U.S. Census Bureau,

www.quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/18000.html

Stats Indiana, www.stats.indiana.edu

Hoosiers by Numbers, www.hoosierdata.in.gov



ECONOMY

“WE ASPIRE TO BE A REGION THAT IS THRIVING AND VALUES ECONOMIC PROSPERITY FOR ALL.”

Northwest Indiana's brawling industrial past has given way to a more uncertain future that will require greater diversification, innovation and entrepreneurship and a workforce trained for a wider variety of occupations. Stubborn disparities persist in income, education and employment.

Coming out of the recession, the economic breakthrough for the region may rely heavily upon, not just manufacturing and construction, but the growing sectors of logistics, healthcare and profession services. Major innovations may sprout from local research and development units in local businesses, at universities' centers and government affiliates. Area businesses and a highly qualified and career-ready workforce benefit from increase productivity.

A LOOK BACK

When the “Northwest Indiana Quality

of Life Indicators for Progress” report was published in 2000, the economy was strong and the labor market was tight. Though workers in some sectors enjoyed good wages, nearly half of Northwest Indiana families did not have enough income to cover their basic needs. Urban core communities had high rates of unemployment, twice that of the region as a whole, and were losing jobs.

The goal set forth in the report was “to obtain economic prosperity that is sustainable, equitable, and competitive in the global economy.” It recommended that the region pursue policies that would achieve balanced growth with a focus on urban revitalization.

When the next report was published in 2004, the structure of the regional economy was changing. Northwest Indiana's ability to adapt was being tested by globalization and business fluctuations. Manufacturing jobs were lost as the global steel industry consolidated through mergers and acquisitions. But the prosperous casino industry bolstered local

employment and tax revenues.

The report suggested that the region's economy could be positioned for growth by fostering the transportation, distribution and logistics industry; overhauling Indiana's tax structure; investing in telecommunications; redeveloping brownfields; and better marketing.

By the time the next report was published in 2008, the old economy had given way to the new. To move ahead, businesses needed to focus on innovation and workers needed to learn new skills. Jobs that were being created in the service sectors did not pay as much as the manufacturing jobs that had been lost. Major changes in the tax structure were being contemplated and debated downstate.

The transportation and warehousing sector had, in fact, grown in employment, providing an opportunity to focus job training and employment efforts. As established businesses contracted, more people were self-employed.

It had become even more important for workers to attain more and better education, skills and credentials, and there was hope that education might equalize the continued lower earnings and higher unemployment of women and people of color. The income gap between the rich and poor, especially for Northwest Indiana's neediest households, grew.

THE NUMBERS NOW

Over the last several years, the United States and the world have struggled through one of the worst recessions in modern history. Northwest Indiana is not immune. Yet an increasingly diverse business sector helped keep the regional economy relatively stable during 2000-2010.

While large companies have traditionally carried the region's economy, small businesses now play a greater role. In 2010, Northwest Indiana contained 16,217 businesses, 99 percent of them with 250 or fewer employees. From 2000 to 2010, the region held on to 281,769 jobs, a decline of 6.7 percent. Job losses were greatest in Lake County and least in Porter County. Meanwhile, average annual wages from 2006 increased 8 percent to \$37,806 in 2010.

Unemployment in Northwest Indiana stood at 10.6 percent in 2010 and was highest in La Porte County at 11.9 percent. Though the 10.6 percent unemployment rate represents 37,696 people looking for jobs who could not find them, the number of job seekers had tripled since 2000.

The greatest declines were seen in business sectors that have traditionally been the base of the Northwest Indiana economy. There were 15 percent fewer construction firms in 2010 than in 2000, with 2,802 fewer workers. But for those construction workers who remained, wages increased by 32 percent to \$61,557, the greatest gain in any sector.

The manufacturing, wholesale and retail trade sectors in the region lost 330 firms between 2000 and 2010, a decline

of 25 percent. Manufacturing alone lost more than 5,000 jobs between 2006 and 2010 but average annual wages increased 3 percent during the period to \$59,898.

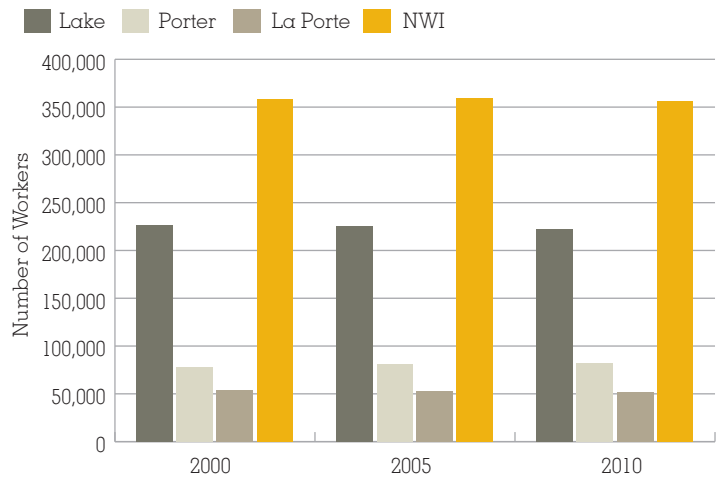
Long-term trends nationwide show jobs moving from manufacturing to service industries. Northwest Indiana's service sector grew by 621 firms over the period, an increase of 5 percent, and its total employment was nearly flat, with a net loss of 162 jobs. Service sector average wages increased by 7 percent from 2006-2010 to \$31,106.

In 2010, small businesses accounted for 68 percent of the region's jobs, compared to 66 percent in 2000. Meanwhile, public sector employment contracted by nearly 3,000 jobs from 2006-2010, average wages grew to \$35,719, an increase of 7 percent.

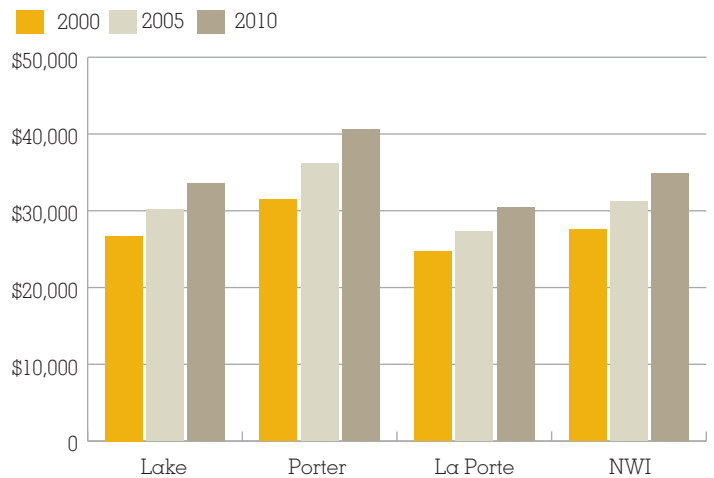
A more diverse economy needs a more skilled workforce. In 2010, nearly 28 percent of the regional population over age 25 has an associate's degree or higher, up from 23 percent in 2000. However, the proportion of high school graduates has remained largely unchanged over the last decade at about 37 percent.

The average per capita income in the region in 2010 was \$34,848, up 26 percent from 2000. It was 12.7 percent less than the U.S. national average of \$39,937 but 2.5 percent more than the Indiana statewide average at \$33,981. However, the level of poverty in Northwest Indiana had increased to 14.9 percent in 2010, compared to 15.3 percent for both the state and the nation.

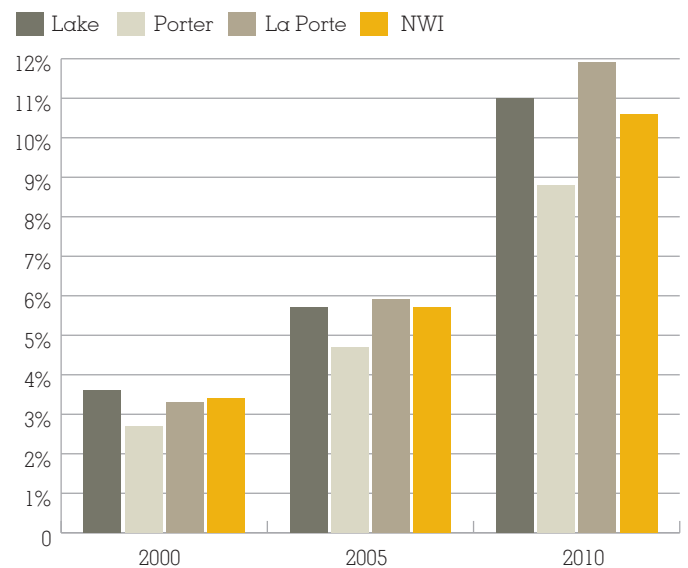
Labor Force Size

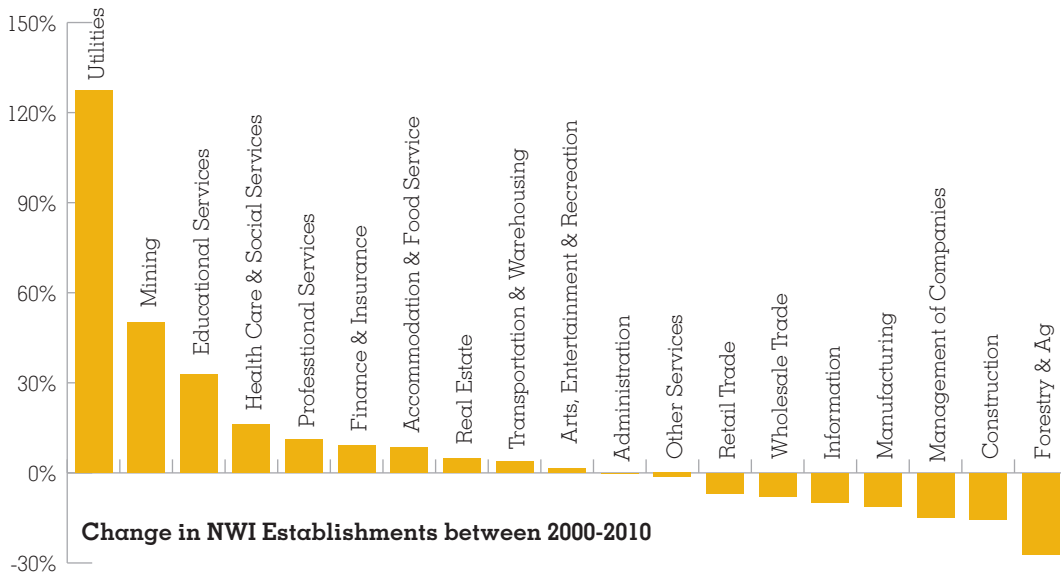


NWI Per Capita Income

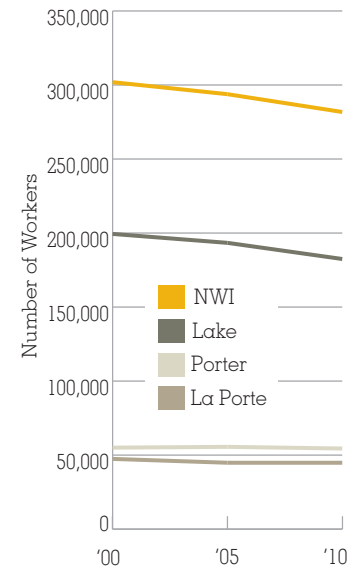


Unemployment Rate

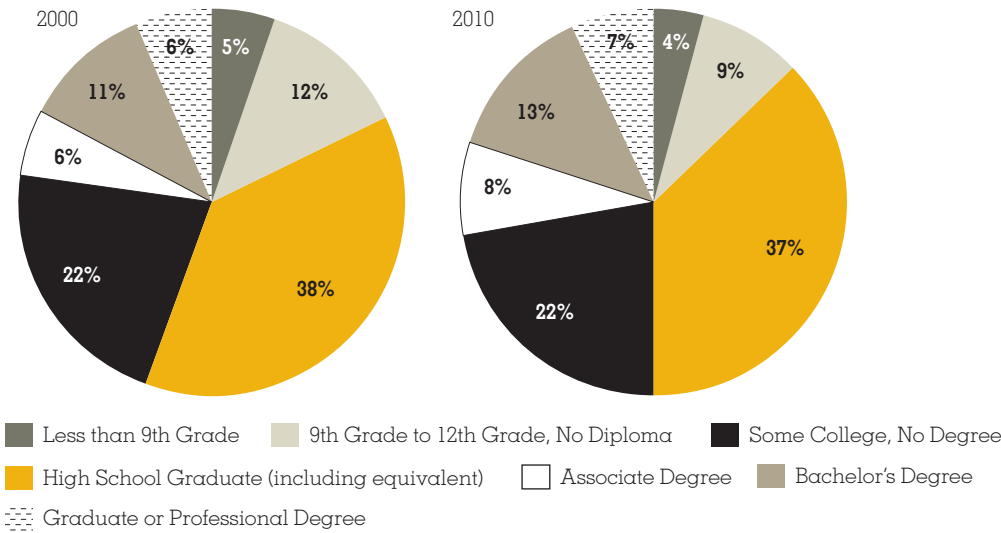




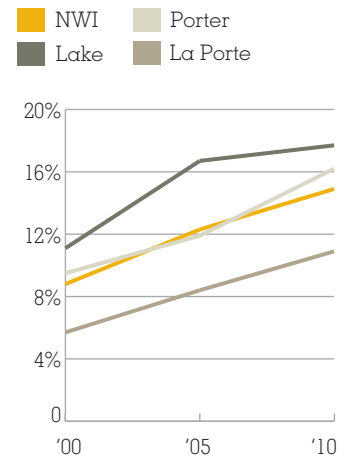
Total Employment within NWI Establishments



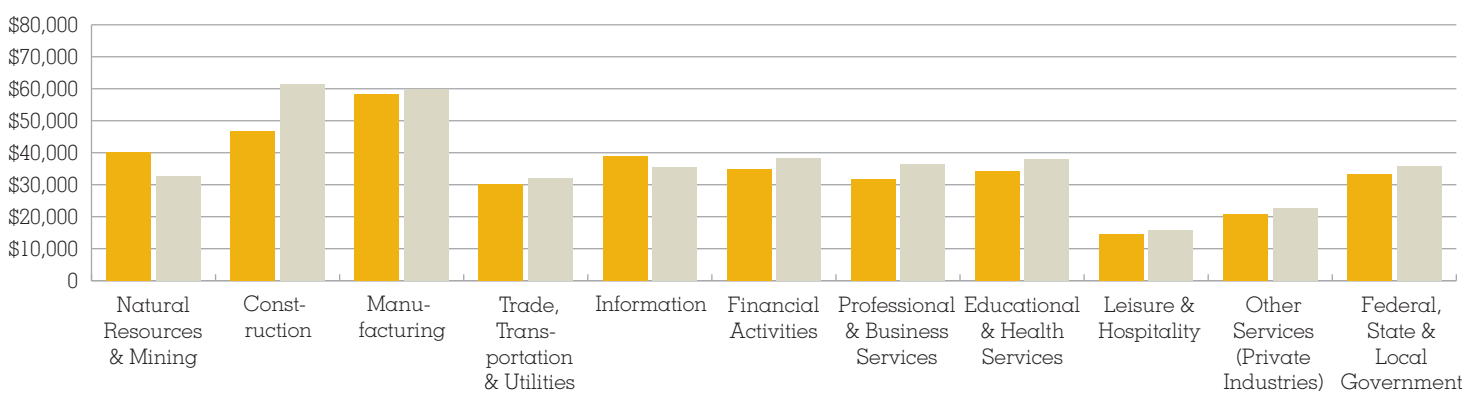
NWI Educational Attainment



NWI Poverty Rates



NWI Annual Average Wages by Sectors



ECONOMY

WHERE WE STAND

Today, economic transformation is underway. Though needs still dwarf resources, cities and towns across the region are undertaking projects, large and small, that show their resilience even during a long, deep national recession. Significant private sector investments are being made, such as BP Whiting Refinery's \$3.8 billion modernization project and United States Steel's \$220 million investment in its coke-making facilities.

Large-scale public works projects, such as the Gary Chicago International Airport and Marquette Plan projects including Hammond's Wolf Lake Park, are creating construction-related jobs and paving the way for long-term business and employment growth. Other development projects are neighborhood specific, like new housing or site specific, such as brownfield redevelopment.

Each of these investments contributes in its own way to overall progress. But much work still needs to be done to fill the various "legacy gaps" that place women, people of color and the poor at a disadvantage in accessing capital, employment, education and higher wage income. These barriers and disparities affect economic development outcomes for the entire region and ultimately shape the pursuit of a higher quality of life.

The economic indicators presented here can provide a baseline for looking ahead. But as a region which seeks to thrive, with a sustainable, competitive and just economy, we must ask hard questions.

What should our economic priorities be?

What are the best development strategies to achieve those priorities?

How will economic development initiatives address the historic economic gaps and barriers for women, people of color and the poor?

How can we imagine working together to become a thriving community?

Today, Northwest Indiana is making



progress in diversifying its economy. Yet until the urban core communities of Hammond,

East Chicago, Gary and Michigan City are successfully revitalized, it cannot claim to

ECONOMY

BUSINESS BY INDUSTRY ▲

EMPLOYMENT BY COUNTY ■

WAGES PAID BY EMPLOYERS ▲

LABOR FORCE ■

UNEMPLOYMENT ▼

WORKFORCE EDUCATION ■

INCOME ▲

POVERTY ▼

ISSUES TRENDING ▲ IMPROVEMENT ■ STEADY ▼ DECLINE

LEARN MORE

CWI, www.innovativeforce.org

IBRC, www.stats.indiana.edu

IEDC, www.iedc.in.gov

IDWD, www.hoosierdata.in.gov

IDWD, www.nidataplus.com

NIRPC, www.nirpc.org

NWI Forum, www.nwiforum.org

NWI RDA, www.rda.in.gov



have achieved the objective identified in the 2000 report: a thriving community in which economic prosperity and opportunity exist for all. Subsequent reports identified the major barriers to and real opportunities for economic growth.

WHAT WE NEED TO KNOW

There are many questions that, at this state of research, do not have answers. Better data would do much to inform conversation and planning.

What additional information should be collected about businesses, such as revenues,

that will tell us about the trajectory of growth and employment? Compared to cost of living and GDP?

What is the region's equivalent to the gross domestic product?

How can the region become a more attractive place to invest?

How well are businesses and workers connecting jobs and skills?

What barriers are preventing more students and workers, especially African Americans and Latinos, from earning degrees and credentials that can equip them for jobs?

What actions would lessen the wage gap between rich and poor and improve economic prospects for people of color and women?

What further research is needed about

the connections within the region's economy between education, employment and income, including such factors as substance abuse and language barriers?

CALL TO ACTION

The region needs what it has lacked in the past, a comprehensive, integrated economic development strategy that addresses priority investments and the disparities and positions Northwest Indiana for future growth.

With service enterprises and small business accounting for an increasing proportion of economic activity and jobs, Northwest Indiana should consider how existing assets can be leveraged to meet their needs and how small businesses can be tied into broader economic development efforts. The more entrepreneurial, innovative and productive business owners and workers can become, the stronger the region will be.

The infrastructure assets are considerable, including a location within the nation's third largest metropolitan area at the hub of North America's transportation network; major global manufacturing firms; prominent universities, as well as community colleges and vocational schools; and a national park that attracts 2 million visitors a year, as well as a popular state park and other natural and recreational areas. But making the most of these assets will require increased cooperation and coordination across political boundaries.

Several leading institutions and organizations, as well as major firms, already are undertaking strategies for economic change. Major players in regional economic planning include the Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority, the Northwest Indiana Forum, the Northwest Indiana Regional Planning Council, the Northwest Indiana Economic Development District, the Indiana Economic Development Corporation, the Center of Workforce Innovations, and the six local Universities and Colleges.

But these efforts are being undertaken separately. They need to be integrated and focused to produce a single comprehensive strategy that includes actions whose impact can be measured. A truly regional economic development strategy can only be considered effective if it measurably improves the quality of life for residents throughout the region.

One Region now offers a platform to launch regional and community-based initiatives for economic development. Each of the public, private and non-profit sectors, and every business owner, student and worker has a role and responsibility in contributing to a more competitive, attractive, prosperous region for all.



ENVIRONMENT

“WE ASPIRE TO BE A REGION THAT SUPPORTS STEWARDSHIP OF OUR UNIQUE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT HELPING TO ASSURE THE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF CURRENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS.”

The Lake Michigan shoreline defines Northwest Indiana. Once, the Indiana Dunes were valued mainly as a site for ports, industry and sand mining. But in recent decades, understanding has grown that the remaining natural areas in the Dunes and beyond are sacred treasures that the region holds in trust for all Americans and for future generations.

Meanwhile, the environmental costs of development and industrialization, including the health effects of pollution and the contribution to climate change, have been recognized. Project and issue-based partnerships between business, government and non-profit organizations are more evident.

Just as it is particularly blessed, Northwest Indiana is particularly challenged to achieve a cleaner, safer, richer environment and a sustainable balance between nature and the built environment.

A LOOK BACK

The 2000 Quality of Life Indicators

Report recognized a legacy of environmental degradation in Northwest Indiana. A century of industrial production and real estate development had consumed much of the area near the lakeshore and heavily affected the quality of the region's air, water and land. The stated goal that year was to restore, maintain, and improve environmental quality, equity and compliance, and prevent any future degradation. A key finding was that as federal standards became more stringent, Northwest Indiana would have to work harder, using more coordinated, regional approaches, to manage its natural resources.

The report saw that the greatest natural asset of the region is the Lake Michigan ecosystem, a unique biosphere of ecological diversity created by the convergence of several biological zones. The delicate habitats of rare plants and animals that are protected by the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore and the Indiana Dunes State Park are mixed in among steel mills, power plants and residential communities along the shore. The unanswered

question of the time was: “How can the region grow while also restoring and protecting our natural environment?”

At the time, air pollution in Northwest Indiana greatly exceeded standards for both particulate matter and ground-level ozone, earning the region a federal label as a “non-attainment area.” Between 1994 and 1999, the report found, air quality in Northwest Indiana had not changed significantly.

Watershed management was a major concern, given the serious impairment of the region's two river systems, the Little Calumet-Galien system and the Kankakee basin. The report expressed particular concern about meeting clean water standards, fish consumption, contaminated sediments and loss of wetlands. Aquatic invasive species, urban and agricultural pesticide and fertilizer runoff and particulate pollution that settled from the air were seen as key factors in the vulnerability of the region's waters.

Northwest Indiana's population was producing 2 tons of solid waste annually per person. That was 11 pounds a day, well above the national average of 3 to 5 pounds. The generation of hazardous waste had decreased between 1989 and 1997.

Development patterns and land use have an immense effect not only on open space, but on air and water pollution and oil and water consumption. The report looked at the effects of the sprawling land-use patterns in the region. As more land was developed in the Chicago area, the report predicted, natural areas and habitats would be threatened.



Poor and minority populations would be concentrated in older, urbanized areas. The development of outlying subdivisions would empty out older areas, leaving them with surplus capacity that would go to waste.

Between 1982 and 1997, almost 70,000 acres of farmland in Northwest Indiana was turned over to development. The population of the urban core became less dense while the outlying areas became more densely populated. More workers commuted by car, since public transportation did not extend into the suburbs.

The 2004 report called on the region to be a community in balance with its environment through an ethic of stewardship, ensuring a sustainable future for generations to come. It called for a comprehensive land-use strategy to counter the effects of sprawl and manage watersheds, collaboration within the region's environmental community to enhance an ethic of stewardship and a commitment to cleaner air through greater use of alternative fuels. There was support for the creation of the Marquette Greenway Plan to put land along Lake Michigan back to recreational, natural and productive use. The report also called for state and federal environmental agencies to speed up approval of permits for industrial uses.

Data indicated that environmental quality in Northwest Indiana had improved over the previous three decades, though many problems remained. Air quality was better, but the region was still designated as a non-attainment area for particulate matter and ozone.

Water quality remained a challenge. Lakes and rivers were polluted from specific points such as combined sewer outflows, by particulate pollution from the air, by septic systems, and by agricultural runoff, among other causes. Contaminated sediment lay in harbors and rivers. As wetlands were developed, their water-filtering capacity was lost. Beaches often were closed because of dangerous levels of E. Coli bacteria. Every body of water in the region was impaired in some way.

The amount of solid waste produced in the region continued to rise, although the amount of hazardous waste produced in the region was down to 693,845 tons in 2002 compared to 1.3 million tons in 1989.

The report noted that as of 2000, most of the region's population lived in urbanized areas, and the urbanized areas continued to spread. Nearly 28,000 acres of farmland were lost between 1997 and 2002. Of the area seen at risk for development, 22 percent was in Lake County, 14 percent in Porter County and 12 percent in La Porte County. Open space made up about 2 percent of Lake County, 5 percent of Porter County and 3 percent of La Porte County.

By the time the next report appeared in 2008, Northwest Indiana had completed the planning process for the Marquette Greenway Plan and key environmental and business leaders had participated in the designing the Great Lakes Compact, a multistate agreement addressing water quality and usage rights. With a sense that the future of Lake Michigan

and Indiana's shoreline were more secure, the report saw the region as making strides in protecting its natural assets.

Air quality continued to improve, though federal standards for ozone and particulate matter still were not met. Though water quality was better, many rivers, lakes and Lake Michigan beaches still were polluted and beach closures due to E. Coli continued. Municipal storm sewers continued to overflow into Lake Michigan and its tributaries. Regulatory issues made it hard to tell whether shoreline industries were reducing their discharges into the lake.

At a time when concerns about climate change were increasing, the report raised the issue of adapting infrastructure to handle potential flooding from more severe storms likely to become common in a warmer and more turbulent climate. Water conservation also was raised as an issue, though the rate of consumption in the region had decreased from 2002 to 2006.

Solid waste sent to landfills increased between 2002 and 2006. The cleanup of contaminated sites, known as brownfields, was a new indicator of environmental quality; in 2007, about 50 sites in the region was involved in four state remediation programs.

Greenhouse gas emissions were another new concern. Vehicle miles travelled were steady from 2000 to 2006. Meanwhile, the report noted that the region had 70 miles of recreational trails in 2008, up from just 15 in 1990. Nearly 58 more miles of trails were planned.

ENVIRONMENT

THE NUMBERS NOW

Air quality in Northwest Indiana improved between 2000 and 2010. The number of days a year on which air quality was described as “good” by the USEPA, increased by 27 days or 13 percent. The number of “moderate” air quality days fell 11 percent, while days described as “unhealthy for sensitive groups” declined 70 percent. On average, of each year in the past decade, eight months were “good” air quality days, nearly four months were “moderate” and about two weeks were “unhealthy.”

Fine particles in the air affected air quality in the region an average of 137 days each year over the past decade. They affected air quality on 211 days on average each year in Lake County, 109 days in Porter County and 89 days in La Porte County. Larger particles affected Porter County an average of 41 days a year, compared to 12 days in Lake County.

Ozone pollution impairs air quality and triggers ozone action days, when people are encouraged to limit ozone-producing activities such as driving while people in fragile health are urged to stay indoors. The annual number of ozone days fell on average by a week, from 101 days in 2000 to 94 days in 2010. Ozone was the greatest hazard in La Porte County, where there were an average of 157 days affected by ozone. Porter County averaged 111 ozone days and Lake County averaged 64.

Sprawl has continued. Data from the U.S. Census show that Northwest Indiana became more densely populated over the decade, from 489 people per square mile in 2000 to 509 in 2010, a 4 percent increase. The density of housing units also grew, from 186 per square mile to 213 over the decade.

The amount of solid waste produced and discarded in the region grew 27 percent during the decade, from 1.3 million tons in 2000 to 1.6 million tons in 2008. On average, the region produced 2.2 tons of solid waste per person in 2010, up from 1.8 tons in 2000. Northwest Indiana accounted for 12 percent of Indiana's solid waste in 2000 and 14 percent in 2008.

A 32 percent increase in the amount of solid waste produced and discarded in Lake County accounted for much of the increase. In 2000, Lake County produced 1.1 million tons of solid waste, or 2.3 tons per person. In 2008, the county produced 1.4 million tons or 2.9 tons per person.

Brownfield redevelopment of once-contaminated industrial sites for other uses presents a significant opportunity for Northwest Indiana, where so much industry has come and gone. The total number of Northwest Indiana sites being cleaned up through state environmental programs rose 21 percent, from 1,413 cases in 2005 to 1,743 cases in 2010. Lake County had seven

times as many cleanup sites as Porter County or La Porte County.

While brownfields remediation aims to restore degraded land for people to use, ecological restoration aims to bring back natural ecosystems, wildlife and water flows. According to a 2006 report, “The Restoration Revolution in Northwest Indiana,” the region had 166 ecological restoration and natural conservation projects completed or underway.

This inventory was a first for the region and exemplified a major shift in how contaminated sites and degraded properties were regarded and managed. Partnerships forged between public, private and nonprofit sectors played a key role in these efforts. Of the 166 restoration and conservation sites, 59 percent were in Lake County, 29 percent in Porter County and 12 percent in La Porte County. This survey is currently being updated by the Center for Regional Excellence at IU Northwest.

Poor water quality affects not only drinking water supplies but the recreational uses and natural value of Lake Michigan and its tributaries. Combined sewer overflows, point and non-point source pollution and agricultural runoff may carry an overload of nutrients and other substances that degrade rivers and streams.

The total stream mileage tested for pollution in the region increased by 44 percent from

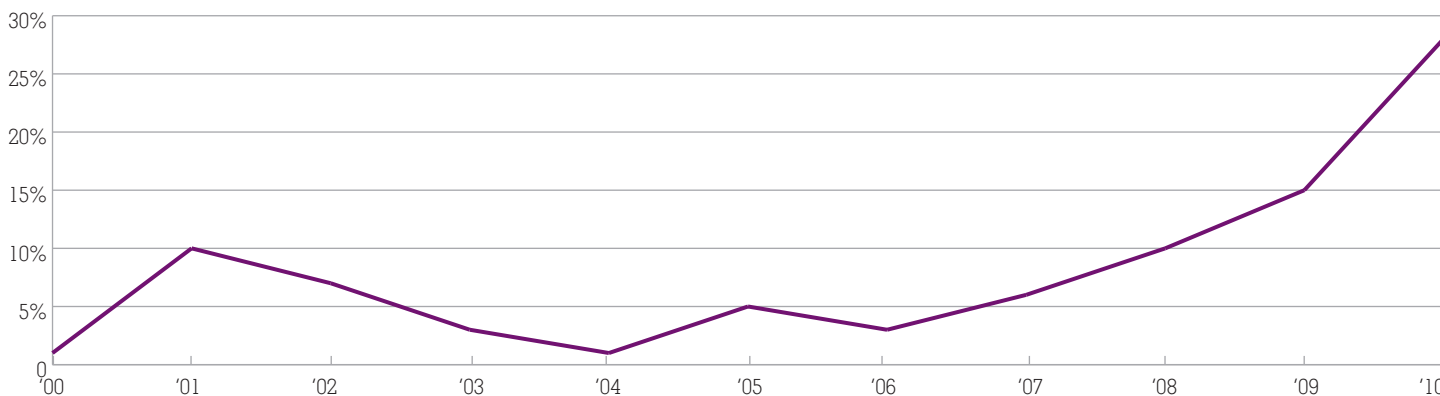
1,770 miles in 2002 to 2,546 miles in 2010. Of those stream miles, 57 percent were found to be polluted in 2002 and 54 percent in 2010. The leading water quality problems in the region's streams were impaired biotic communities (imbalances in aquatic ecosystems, an indicator of pollution), E. Coli bacteria and warnings against eating fish caught in waters polluted with PCBs.

Of the 1,770 stream miles tested in 2002, E. Coli accounted for 11 percent of the stream impairments, impaired biotic communities for 11 percent and PCB and mercury fish consumption advisories for 8 percent each. Of the 2,546 miles tested in 2010, impaired biotic communities accounted for 27 percent of impairments, E. Coli for 12 percent and PCB fish consumption advisories for 9 percent.

Beach action days are days during the swimming season on which poor water quality results in advisories or closures. Between 2000 and 2010, the average percentage of beach action days in Northwest Indiana grew significantly.

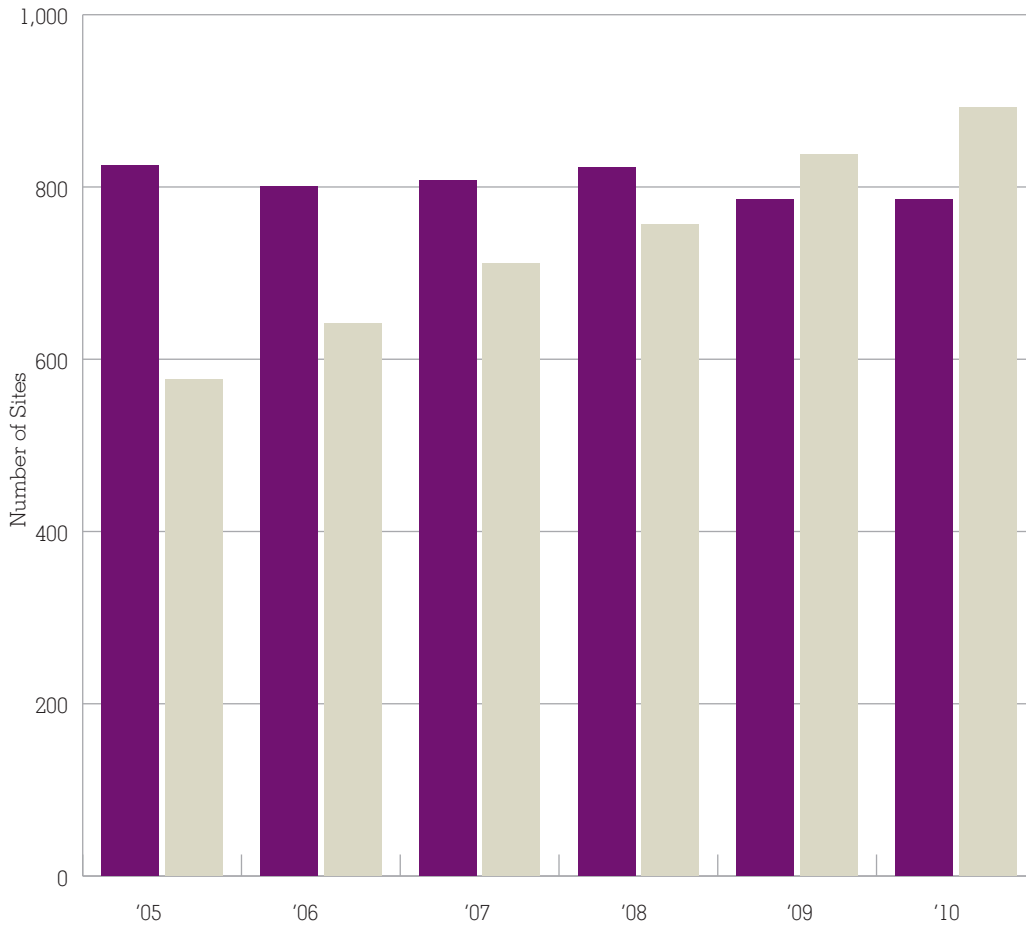
In 2000, on average, the region's 33 monitored public beaches had beach action days 1 percent of the swimming season. In 2010, on average, they had beach action days 28 percent of the time. Increased pollution, weather events, and better water quality testing likely contributed to this dramatic increase.

Percent of Beach Days Under Beach Action, NWI



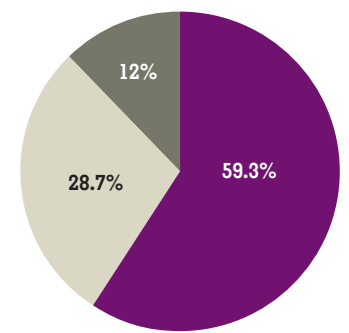
Environmental Remediation

Active Cleanup Sites Closed Cleanup Sites



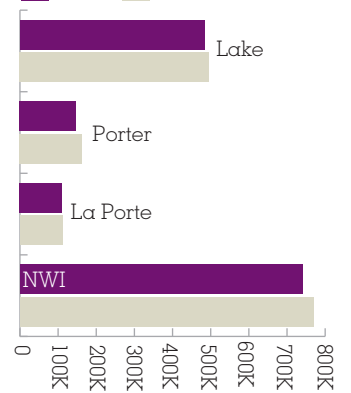
Land Restoration, Number of Sites, 2006

Lake Porter La Porte



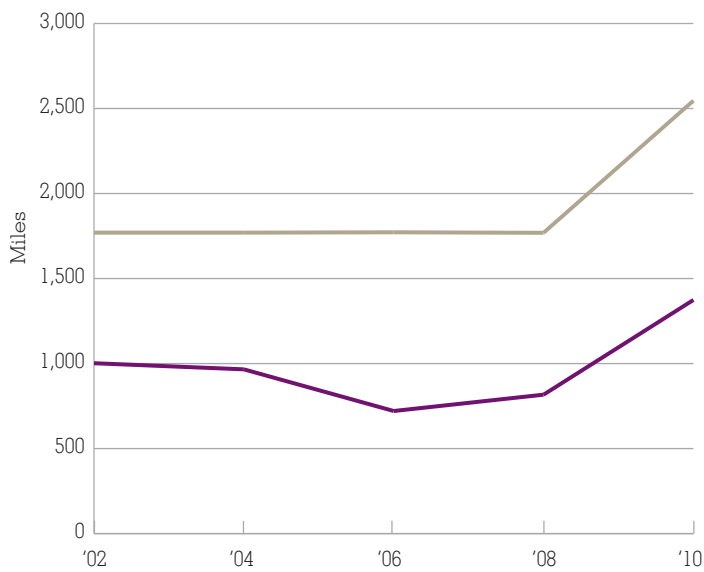
Waste Tons Disposed, estimate

2000 2008



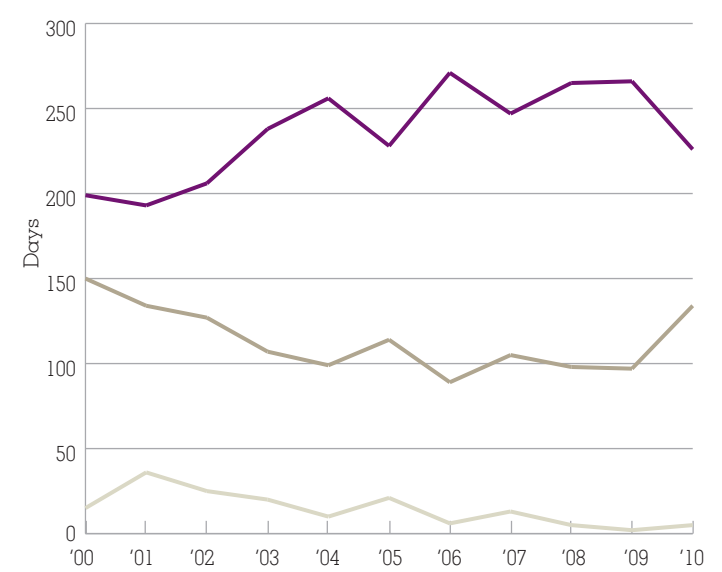
Total Stream Mileage and Total Impaired Stream Mileage

Impaired Stream Mileage Total Stream Mileage



Air Quality Index

Good Moderate Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups



ENVIRONMENT

WHERE WE STAND

Northwest Indiana can be cautiously optimistic about environmental progress. Although the region is heavily burdened by the residual effects of its industrial past, there is some evidence of environmental improvement in recent years.

For example, we are making progress on air quality, though the region is not in federal compliance for ozone, which is a matter of debate. Although Northwest Indiana participates in the overall air quality of the greater Chicago area, there is no doubt that sources within the region, including industry, power plants and automobiles, contribute heavily to air pollution and therefore to water pollution.

The region's inability to consistently meet federal air quality standards affects its business climate as well as the health and well being of its residents. So, though the data show that air quality is improving somewhat, more needs to be done to understand and mitigate air pollution.

We are more appreciative our rivers, streams and beaches, especially for recreational uses such as swimming, paddling and fishing. The data in this report about water quality are ambiguous, because they span a period in which the amount of testing greatly increased. But more testing has, at a minimum, led to a greater awareness of the extent of water pollution, which is the first step toward solving the problem.

We are cleaning up the contamination in more brownfield sites so that these underutilized lands can be once again put to productive use. We also have seen a remarkable increase in the amount of natural area restoration and conservation, a sign of a shift in attitudes toward the region's natural heritage. At the same time, several local colleges and universities have begun to offer courses or majors in sustainability, conservation, clean energy and restoration, another sign of this shift in values.

We have found a role for business in the framework of sustainability. Governments, universities, nonprofits, community members, and businesses are coming to a different

understanding of their environmental responsibilities.

Yet we still have a long way to go. Optimizing the region's environmental assets cannot be fully realized because of a wide range of issues, ranging from PCB and mercury residues that make it unsafe to eat fish caught in our streams and lakes, to beach closures because of harmful levels of bacteria, to failed septic systems that pollute wells and combined sewer overflows that dump untreated sewage in Lake Michigan and its tributaries after rainstorms.

These problems, and the greater uncertainty that comes with a changing climate, will require large investments in pollution control, site remediation, modernizing infrastructure, and rethinking strategies. But funding for major capital projects is scarce, particularly with federal and municipal budgets strapped.

Newer planning and engineering practices present cost effective alternatives to traditional approaches to capital projects, however. Many of the green infrastructure and ecosystem services projects can be implemented and maintained, research shows, at lower costs and with greater environmental and public benefits. But innovation will require imagination, creativity and changes in funding formulas and capital project planning, particularly on the matter of combined sewer overflows.

The region continues its unchecked sprawl, with all the traffic, emissions, and resource problems it brings. And given population projections, that sprawl can only get worse, unless there is a concerted effort to change patterns of development, regionalize transit, and encourage more efficient land use. Northwest Indiana has been slow to adopt a regional energy agenda, despite several successful local initiatives. There is no regional mass transit system, nor a regional approach to recycling.

In general, efforts to address environmental problems suffered from the same lack of cooperation and coordination that plagues the region in so many areas. Although a cultural shift toward sustainability is happening, the framework is not evident.



WHAT WE NEED TO KNOW

The environmental indicator baseline needs refinement and expansion to usefully track progress. A holistic view of the environment would provide greater perspective on how environmental quality is improving over time. Here is a sample of the factors and the kinds of questions that could be asked. Further questions are found in this report's appendices.

ENVIRONMENT

AIR QUALITY INDEX ▲

SOLID WASTE DISPOSAL ■

ENVIRONMENTAL REMEDIATION ▲

LAND RESTORATION ■

WATER QUALITY ■

BEACH CLOSURES ▼

ISSUES TRENDING ▲ IMPROVEMENT ■ STEADY ▼ DECLINE

LEARN MORE

Greenways and Blueways, www.greenwaysblueways.com/kml-library.aspx

IDEM, www.in.gov/idem/nps/3180.htm

IFA, www.in.gov/ifa/brownfields/

NIRPC, www.nirpc.org/environment/restoration.htm#RestorationList

The Openlands Project, www.openlands.org/

USDA, www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/technical/nra/nri



AIR

How can we usefully measure greenhouse gas emissions and other environmental costs from automobile use in Northwest Indiana?

How can air modeling and public health data inform decision makers and the public on the health impacts of air pollution at the region and community levels?

How can we better understand the reasons for Northwest Indiana's poor air quality and track progress toward cleaner air?

WATER

How can we measure the threat to ground water and wells, from septic systems, pipelines, runoff and other sources?

What are the total projected costs of upgrading water and sewer infrastructure to remedy combined sewer overflows in the region? What strategies and tools, beyond regulatory measures, could be formed to accomplish this infrastructure rebuilding?

How can we consistently measure where water quality is improving or slipping in streams, rivers and lakes? How can we consistently measure the effects and trends of

point-source discharges? How do we measure the impact of non-point-source pollution and what strategies can reduce it?

LAND

How can we better grasp the relationships between land use and environmental quality? What strategies can lead to more efficient land use and development with less environmental impact?

How can we measure changes in building and development practices and their contribution to environmental improvement?

How many acres of dedicated open space are there in the region? Per person? In each of the counties? How can we track the preservation of open space?

How can Northwest Indiana improve the rate of cleanup of brownfield sites? And how can communities' best prepare for the optimum reuse of those sites?

What is the level of farmland preservation in the region? How is coordinated and supported? How many acres are being lost annually?

What are the regional trends in food scarcity, local foods and community gardening?

ENERGY

How does the energy efficiency of Northwest Indiana homes, businesses, schools and governments compare to efficiency elsewhere? What strategies can reduce energy use and therefore greenhouse gas emissions?

BIODIVERSITY

How many acres are managed as natural areas or are under restoration? How is the number changing?

How can we measure the quality and value of ecosystems in the national and state parks, as well as nature preserves and land trust properties? What factors inside and outside the natural areas affect that quality, and how can governments, nonprofits and other players work to improve it?

CALL TO ACTION

The environment is a perfect illustration of the cross-cutting issues and the interconnectedness of the indicators themselves. It is impossible to think clearly about the present and future environmental quality in the region without also thinking about transportation, land use, population distribution, public health, education, workforce development, government and recreation.

It also is impossible to talk about working toward a sustainable future by examining the indicators independently, and without making sure it is environmentally sustainable. Environmental issues in the region have never been framed in a broad way that incorporates all the factors. Now is the time to do so.

One Region should consider the creation of a Sustainability Roundtable that includes multi-sector representatives and that will work to integrate the environment into the work of the various action groups. This roundtable could work closely with the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission and its 2040 Comprehensive Plan implementation.

A combined sewer overflow taskforce should be considered to evaluate the barriers to separation of water and sewer systems and to develop a cohesive regional strategy for remedying CSOs.

Environmental metrics should be broadened and more detailed, to include other factors such as biodiversity and energy, and contain data connected to efforts beyond regulatory measures.

Sustainability provides a solid framework for building a more resilient future. Education is the first step in that process. The people of the region need information about the existence of the region's unique ecosystems, experience firsthand the value of them, and learn of the stewardship ethic for creating a future that is safer, cleaner and greener.



TRANSPORTATION

"WE ASPIRE TO BE A REGION THAT IS INTERCONNECTED ENABLING PEOPLE AND GOODS TO MOVE FREELY."

Transportation has shaped Northwest Indiana, from the days when Native American trading trails led along the dune ridges to the time of massive mills that unload iron ore from Lake Michigan ships and send steel by rail and truck throughout the world. For a region strung along three counties that sits on the edge of a major metropolitan area, how goods and people will move is a vital question. The health of the region's

economy and the well-being of its people depend on it.

A LOOK BACK

In the 2000 Quality of Life Indicators for Progress report, the transportation discussion revolved around the region's dependence on automobiles and the environmental

impact of that dependence. The population shift from the urban core to suburban development was creating sprawl. People had to drive more often and farther. In the 1990s, the 10.9 percent growth in car and truck ownership was three times as high as the population growth of 2.9 percent. There were approximately 570,000 vehicles involved in 2.4 million daily trips covering 19.9 million miles a day over 5,500 miles of local roadways.

The additional traffic and congestion were contributing to air quality problems and land use issues. While total vehicle miles traveled was on the rise, there was not enough public transportation to meet the potential demand.



Only 31.2 percent of the estimated potential demand for public transit was being met by the existing system – a problem that we will see continues today.

The report's authors saw a manifest need for a unified regional effort to provide more public transit to meet the needs of Northwest Indiana without compromising the environment or contributing to sprawl.

The 2004 report focused less on cars and more on the potential of commuter rail and bus transit to mitigate congestion and sprawl. Cars remained the primary mode of transportation in the region. More people were commuting daily into Illinois and between Indiana counties. One reason that public

transit was not an effective alternative was its fragmentation into separate bus systems.

The creation of a regional transportation authority to serve the urban core, beginning with Lake County, and the expansion of commuter rail service to outlying areas was the call to action. They asked the region to commit to the creation of a public transportation system that fully met the needs of all communities in the region by 2010.

But in 2008, Northwest Indiana had yet to fully develop a regional public transportation system. Federal funding supported a number of bus systems, with some channeled through the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission. The newly created Regional Bus

Authority, funded in the short term through the Regional Development Authority, was a sign of progress. In the Regional Bus Authority's strategic plan, it was estimated as of 2007 that an additional 2.3 million trips annually were needed to serve the unmet demand in Northwest Indiana.

The South Shore Line passenger rail service provided an important link to jobs, recreation and culture in downtown Chicago, with ridership that increased 17.6 percent from 2000 to 2007. Conversely, bus ridership in the region fell 33 percent during the same period as funding and revenues were reduced and services cut despite an overwhelming need.

TRANSPORTATION

THE NUMBERS NOW

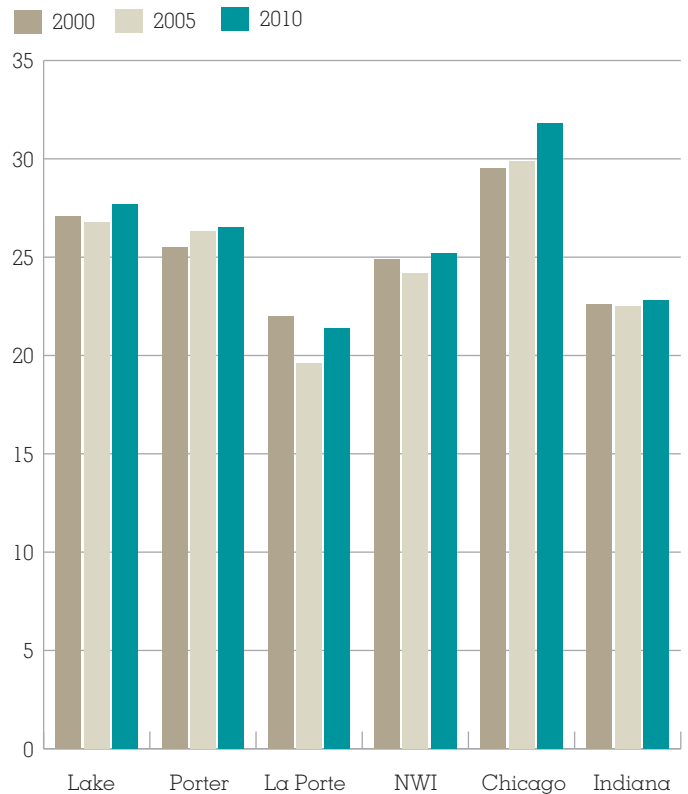
More recent data show that the recession has had a serious impact on public transportation. During 2000-2010, ridership on the South Shore Line to downtown Chicago fell 3 percent to 3.7 million riders. More recent years show a steeper rate of decline as a weaker economy led to fewer workers commuting into the city for work.

Bus transit ridership declined from 3.0 million riders in 2000 to 1.7 million riders in 2010. For a brief period, an infusion of federal transportation stimulus dollars and regional development grants supported an expansion of public transit routes and services in Northwest Indiana's urban core and to downtown Chicago that contributed to a 7 percent increase in ridership to 1.7 million from 2009 to 2010. But despite the significant short-term investments, regional bus transit collapsed in 2012 for lack of a commitment to permanent, long-term funding.

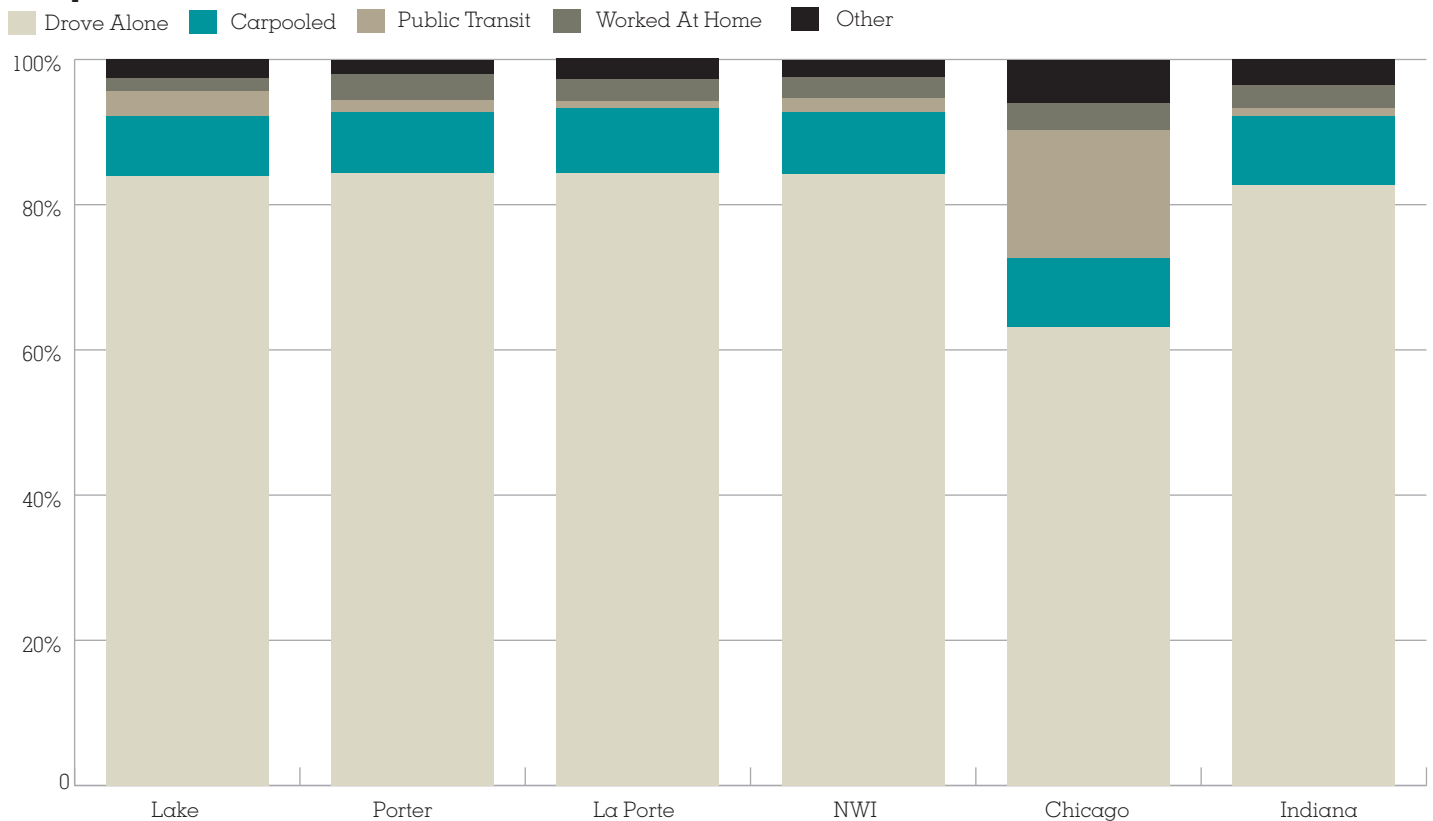
Northwest Indiana residents still get around mostly by car today, but their driving patterns are changing. Though people in the region were traveling fewer vehicle miles to work in 2010 than in 2000, the trips were longer, in part, from congestion. 2.8 percent of people were working from home in 2010 than in 2000, and there were nearly 3,200 fewer workers from other counties and states coming into Northwest Indiana to work. Regionally, the commute to work averaged 25.2 minutes in 2010.

Data included in this report for the first time show that many of the Northwest Indiana's public transit systems are more costly and therefore less inefficient operationally compared to their peers statewide. The urban fixed route systems in Hammond, East Chicago and Gary, cost more to operate, on average \$2.05 per passenger trip, and generate 6 cents less on fares.

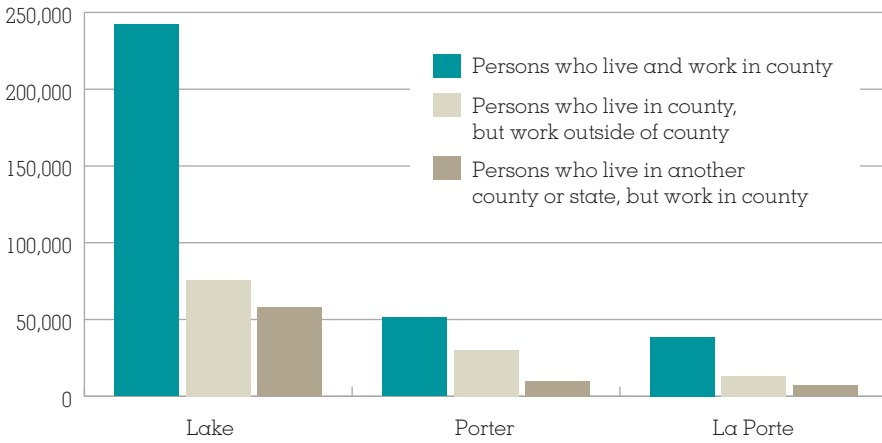
Mean Travel Time to Work (Minutes)



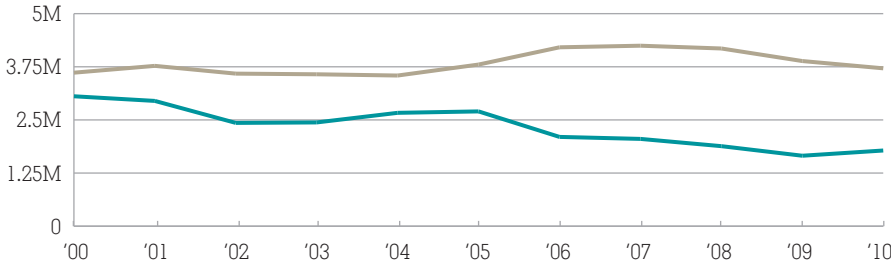
Transportation Means to Work, 2010



Workers Commuting Pattern, 2010



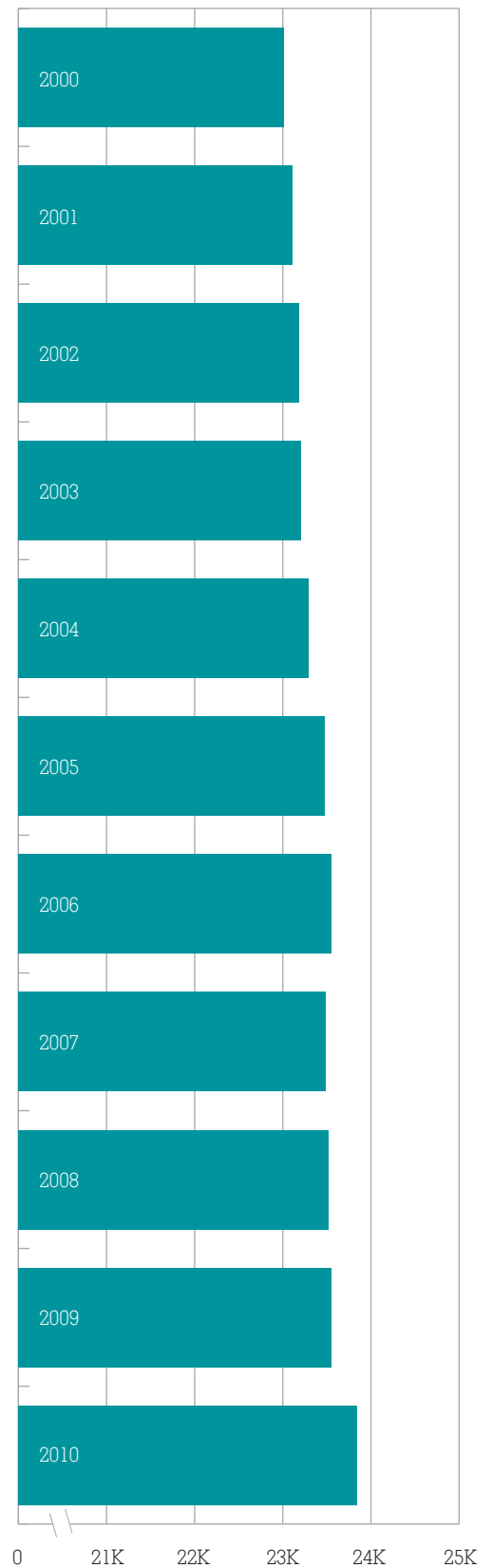
Transit Ridership



NWI Transit Systems and Statewide Peers Comparison, 2010

System	Service Area Population	Total Ridership	Total Vehicle Miles	Operating Expense per Passenger Trip	Operating Expense Per Total Vehicle Mile	Locally Derived Income per Operating Expense	Fare Recovery Ratio
Large Fixed Route Peer				\$4.17	\$5.31	\$0.52	16%
Gary	102,746	910,170	1,036,603	\$7.41	\$6.50	\$0.44	12%
Small Fixed Route Peer				\$8.63	\$4.93	\$0.37	9%
East Chicago	32,414	244,936	200,326	\$6.11	\$7.48	\$0.37	0%
Hammond	83,000	205,985	571,449	\$14.05	\$5.06	\$0.42	5%
Michigan City	32,900	170,367	304,164	\$7.06	\$3.96	\$0.23	9%
Valparaiso	27,428	104,261	402,479	\$15.22	\$3.94	\$0.35	25%
Urban Demand Response Peer				\$15.18	\$2.79	\$0.41	16%
La Porte	21,621	31,969	112,645	\$16.76	\$4.76	\$0.48	17%
NIRPC	320,187	112,899	920,678	\$19.31	\$2.37	\$0.49	12%
No Peer System							
NICTD		3,714,356	3,706,042	\$10.24	\$10.27	\$0.56	46%

NWI Annual Average Vehicle Miles Traveled



TRANSPORTATION

WHERE WE STAND

Though public transit has been seen as a regional need, many of the transit gains of the past decade have been lost. The two primary factors are the fragmentation of the bus systems and the lack of a dedicated source of local funds to match federal and state resources. Splintered transit systems are far less useful to most residents than an integrated system would be. Bus routes that stop at the city line provide little incentive to riders to take the bus or to use it to take the train.

Resistance to consolidation remains a barrier to providing Northwest Indiana residents with the mobility that would contribute to a better quality of life and help communities cope with sprawl and traffic. Alternative land use planning could foster more walkable, less car-dependent neighborhood designs that encourage the use of public transit.

Public transit in the region has not approached its potential to reduce congestion, pollution and sprawl, and its deficiencies leave the most vulnerable populations in the region with scant access to jobs and to essential services such as health care that most of us take for granted.

Northwest Indiana's centrality in the national transportation network is the region's second-greatest strength, after its proximity to Lake Michigan. Its major infrastructure includes railroads, highways, airports, ports and waterways and trails, as well as commuter rail and buses.

Conversations are now taking place about how Northwest Indiana's transportation infrastructure can be optimized for economic growth, livability and recreation. It is essential to find ways to relieve congestion in the national distribution system of highways, railroads and waterways that passes goods through Northwest Indiana and the Chicago area, and to develop a stronger transportation industry and more jobs.

The region's failure to address all of its transportation issues has left sprawl unabated despite the rising environmental, public and personal costs of depending on the automobile.

WHAT WE NEED TO KNOW

So far, the indicators' reports have not delved deeply enough into transportation problems or expanded their analysis to include the movement of goods, as well as people, through the region. Those transportation indicators focused on worker commuting patterns, vehicle usage and public transit ridership. But these sets of data offer only a limited perspective into the full range of transportation issues and assets that affect not just economic activity but in public health, the environment and housing.

Future Quality of Life Indicators reports should explore a much wider range of data, looking comprehensively at automobiles, trucks, railroads, airports, ports, trails and bicycles as well as public transportation, and at the needs of businesses, visitors and the people of all parts of the region, not only the urban core. Solid indicators are needed to predict and track the economic, land-use and environmental impacts of different modes of transportation.

The lack of good data hampers good decision making. To convince policymakers that well-integrated and well-funded public transit is an infrastructure imperative, we need the support of far more research. We need hard data on the needs of potential riders, how greater use of transit might reduce road congestion and smooth the movement of goods, exactly how it could contribute to reducing sprawl and pollution and how an integrated transit system could contribute to an expanding economy as the population increases and the types of jobs available in the region continue to shift.

In considering transportation, One Region also needs to analyze the workforce potential and needs not only of existing industries and of transportation hubs such as the expanded Gary-Chicago International Airport, but also of the small business and home-based businesses that have an increasing share of the region's economy.

Considerable transportation data and metrics can be found in the Northwest

Indiana Regional Planning Commission's 2040 Comprehensive Plan for Transportation and at the Center of Neighborhood Technology's Housing + Transportation Affordability Index. These sources among others should be considered by One Region moving forward.

CALL TO ACTION

Northwest Indiana must grapple with major issues if it is to become a place where people can easily get where they want to go, where the poor and disabled are not isolated, where driving is not the only alternative, where employees can readily get to jobs and businesses have a wide pool of mobile workers, where goods can move efficiently, where patterns of development are not only driven by automobile access, where environmental impacts from vehicles are reduced and where both residents and visitors can easily enjoy the region's natural wonders.

Factionalism and failures to cooperate and integrate planning remain major barriers to connectivity, productivity and cooperation on transportation, as on many issues. But if One Region can provide leadership to gather information and bring parties together, there are substantial assets to tap in addressing transportation problems.

The disconnected, uncoordinated, underfunded, and often redundant bus systems in the region also tend to operate very inefficiently and at high cost. A regional transportation agency is needed to develop a more robust regional bus system.

The region needs to consider a fully integrated, regional action plan for its transportation infrastructure, inclusive of public transportation, rail, freight, ports, roadways, toll ways, waterways, trails, pedestrians and cyclists as well as roads and highways.

The NIRPC 2040 Plan is a good place to start. But transportation planning must not simply be based on federal funding formulas. Funding mechanisms must be found based on full understanding of transportation and a build-out that spans decades. Such a plan must be fully transparent, cost-effective and accountable process that folds in economic, ecological and community priorities.

The sad state of public transportation must be openly and specifically addressed. Leadership must find a solution, with permanent funding, that provides mobility and connectivity between cities and towns, across counties and into Illinois. That new solution must require and measure efficiency, cost and quality of service, with metrics that hold operators and their funders accountable.

TRANSPORTATION

DAILY VEHICLE MILES TRAVELED

COMMUTING PATTERN

TRANSPORTATION MEANS TO WORK

TRAVEL TIME

PUBLIC TRANSIT RIDERSHIP



MORE

INDOT, www.in.gov/indot/2436.htm
NIRPC, nirpc.org
Stats Indiana, www.stats.indiana.edu/dms4/commuting.asp

ISSUES TRENDING ▲ IMPROVEMENT ■ STEADY ▼ DECLINE



EDUCATION

“WE ASPIRE TO BE A REGION THAT PROVIDES EXCELLENT LIFE-LONG EDUCATION FOR ALL TO EXPAND OPPORTUNITY AND CREATE A HIGHLY QUALIFIED WORKFORCE.”

Access to education is a foundation of a fair society, and educational attainment is key to Northwest Indiana's progress. Education creates a world of opportunity for individuals. But it also contributes to communities by fostering an engaged and informed citizenry and a qualified and adaptable workforce for a vital and competitive economy. The region's shift toward high-skilled manufacturing and service jobs means its residents now need not only a high general level of education, including analytical and communications skills, but also access to specialized training.

Northwest Indiana has some of the best-performing school districts in the state; however, Northwest Indiana also has several low performing school districts. This disparity needs to be addressed so that every young person can achieve a high-quality education and reach for the opportunities that education provides.

A LOOK BACK

In 2000, the Quality of Life Indicators report defined the development of human capital through educational excellence as a critical element of sustainability for the region. The goal set forth was to provide a regional system that fosters educational excellence based on world-class standards. Communities and organizations were urged to place greater emphasis on education, especially in the K-12 public school system. The report saw a particular need for improvement in the School Cities of Hammond, East Chicago and Gary.

The 2000 report found that 93.3 percent of Northwest Indiana students graduated from high school, compared to 88 percent on average statewide. But only 61 percent of local students went on to a four-year college. For those 25

years of age or older in 1990, 13.7 percent in the region had a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 15.6 percent statewide and 20.3 percent nationally.

Only in Porter County did student achievement in every school district exceed statewide average scores on the ISTEP and SAT standardized tests. Students in the urban core, Hammond, East Chicago and Gary, scored lower than the rest of the region and state.

In 2004, the report focused on making the region a learning community that could achieve higher levels of academic performance and commit to lifelong learning. It was argued that new opportunities could be afforded through improving early childhood and K-12 education and removing barriers to student success. Two strategies proposed were the integration of performance standards into schools for promoting excellence in teaching and learning and better support programs to counter the poverty effects that depress academic achievement.

Educational outcomes in the region were improving, but disparities remained. In 2000, 17.6 percent of the region's adult population had a bachelor's degree or higher, still below the state average of 19.4 percent that year. According to the report, a majority of the schools in the region were graduating students at a rate above the state average of 91.2 percent for the 2001-2002 academic year. But in 2001-2002 five districts – Portage, East Chicago, Griffith, Gary and Michigan City – fell below the state graduation rate average. Of the 29 school districts in the region, 11 met or exceed the SAT statewide average score of 1,004. On the ISTEP standardized tests, 63.4 percent of students passed statewide by meeting English and math standards. Of the 29 Northwest Indiana districts, 17 met or exceeded that proportion of students passing the ISTEP exams.

Based on extensive research, it is widely

accepted that factors such as poverty, lack of access to quality day care and illiteracy among caregivers make it harder for students to succeed academically. Data from the 2004 report showed that many children in Northwest Indiana's urban core faced those obstacles.

The report noted that the educational system itself can hamper children's success through inefficiency and lack of support for students. Per-pupil spending did not strongly correlate with student performance. Of the region's 29 school districts, 16 spent thousands more per pupil than the statewide average of \$8,676. Of the five districts with the highest per-pupil cost, four – all in the urban core, with high rates of indicators for poverty – had the poorest academic performance. This finding poses a problem because many residents and policymakers do not understand why such a low correlation is consistently found to exist.

The 2008 report again called for investment in high-quality learning opportunities. Overall, the region continued to become better educated: 9 of 10 people had at least a high school diploma and 20.3 percent of adults had a bachelor's degree or higher.

Yet educational success was not evenly distributed. In 2008, 61 percent of the region's students in grades 3 to 10 passed the ISTEP test. The highest number of student failures on ISTEP came in Gary and Hammond, although this report did not compare local results to the statewide average. Under the requirements of the No Child Left Behind law, 25 of the 29 school corporations met yearly progress requirements in the 2007-2008 academic year. Those that struggled were in the urban core communities.

Per-pupil costs in the region's school districts were at or slightly above the state average during 2000 to 2006. Schools still faced poverty, as the demand for free and reduced lunches grew steadily in every county. As the region's population grew more diverse, more schools faced the challenge of educating students with limited English proficiency.

It was recommended that early childhood education programs in the region be increased, in hopes of improving long-term educational outcomes. One step was expanding undergraduate degree offerings in this field at the local universities and colleges.

EDUCATION

THE NUMBERS NOW

Northwest Indiana is making some progress on education, but major challenges remain. Indications are that more students live in poverty, which is a risk factor for educational failure. The student population is changing and schools need to adapt to teach students with more diverse needs.

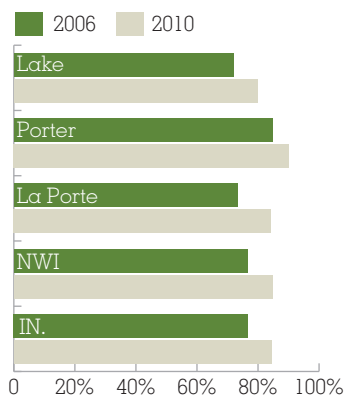
Measures of educational outcomes include attainment levels, graduation rates, standardized exam scores and pass rates and costs per student. In the Economy chapter, the region's 2010 educational attainment level for people over the age of 25 is reported as 37 percent with a high school degree, 22 percent with some college but no degree, 8 percent with an associate's degree, 13 percent with a bachelor's degree and 7 percent with graduate or professional degree. Despite slight increases in higher education attainment, progress is slow.

The average high school graduation rate in the region was 84.8 percent in 2010, slightly higher than the statewide average of 84.5. This was an increase from 76.7 percent in both the region and the state in 2006. Both Lake and La Porte counties lagged behind the statewide average in 2010, while Porter County's performance continued to exceed both its county peers and the statewide average. Disparities were clear within counties as well as between them.

At the district level, high school graduation rates across the region ranged from a low of 52.0 percent to 95.2 percent in 2010. Lake County had some of the highest-performing districts, such as Union Township and Munster, where more than 90 percent of students graduated. But it also had seven out of eight of the lowest-performing schools, with graduation rates below the state average.

Across the region, more high school graduates were likely to pursue post-secondary education and training. As of 2008, the last year for which county-level data are available, nearly 78 percent of high school graduates

4 Year Graduation Rates



planned to attend a two- or four-year college, 9 percent planned on vocational and technical training and 2 percent expected to enlist in the military.

Eighth-grade students were more likely to pass the ISTEP standardized tests in both math and language arts in 2009 than in 2000, especially in Porter and La Porte counties, where passing rates exceeded the statewide average score of 62 percent. But the 10th-graders of 2009 were less likely to pass ISTEP in both math and language arts in 2009 than those of 2000. Statewide, 57 percent of 10th graders passed in 2009, compared to 63 percent in 2000.

The cost of educating a child in the region continued to rise. Per-pupil annual educational expenditures in the region rose 38 percent to \$11,264 between 2000 and 2008. In Lake County, the cost per student rose 49 percent to \$11,762. In La Porte County, it rose 42 percent to \$11,289. In Porter County, per-pupil cost grew 24 percent to \$10,740.

National education research has shown that rates of suspension and expulsion are related to poor student performance. Regionally, total suspensions and expulsions increased 7 percent from 2000 to 2008, from 47,899 to 51,449.

The number of suspensions increased 8 percent overall in the region between 2000 and 2008. The number for Lake County increased 15 percent to 41,933 in 2008. Suspensions in La Porte County declined 31 percent to

4,229 in 2008. Suspensions in Porter County remained steady at 4,093 in 2008.

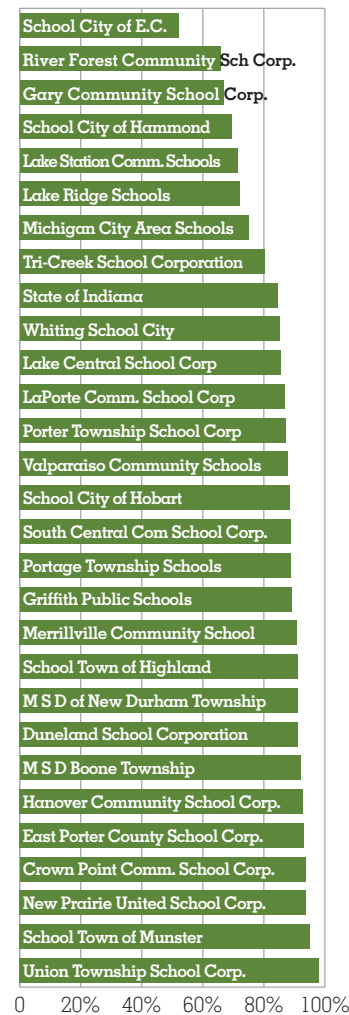
The number of expulsions decreased 5 percent in the region between 2000 and 2008. In La Porte County, the number of expulsions fell 36 percent to 129. In Lake County, expulsions fell 11 percent to 805. However, in Porter County the number of expulsions increased 69 percent, from 154 in 2000 to 260 in 2008.

The rate of students qualifying for free or reduced lunch, a key indicator of poverty in the student population, steadily increased between 2000 and 2010. Statewide, 45 percent of children received a free or reduced lunch in 2010, up from the rate of 28 percent in 2000. In Northwest Indiana, Porter County schools fed 31 percent of children a free or reduced lunch in 2010, up from the rate of 15 percent in 2000. In La Porte County, the rate rose to 52 percent from 27 percent. In Lake County, 52 percent of students received a free or reduced lunch in 2010, up from a rate of 36 percent in 2000.

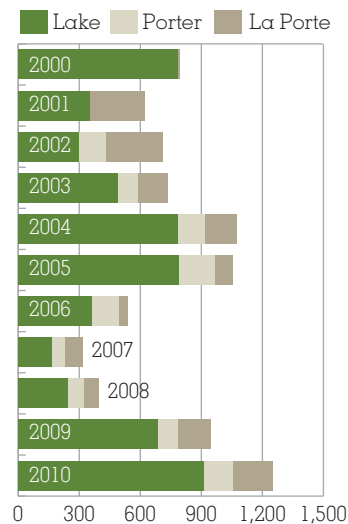
Research shows that children who receive early childhood education such as quality day care do better in school over the long term. The monthly average number of children on a waiting list for child care in the region rose 58 percent between 2000 and 2010, from 791 to 1,251, about 2.5 percent of the population of children 4 and under. Statewide, the average monthly waiting list increased by 233 percent over the same period.

Overall growth in student enrollment is being driven largely by increases in the number of Hispanic and, to a smaller extent, multiracial students. Total kindergarten through grade 12 enrollment in the region grew 3 percent to 141,307 in 2009. Of that total, Hispanic students represented 14 percent, and whites at 53 percent and blacks at 23 percent. The proportions of multiracial students, Asian and American Indian students remained small but growing in size.

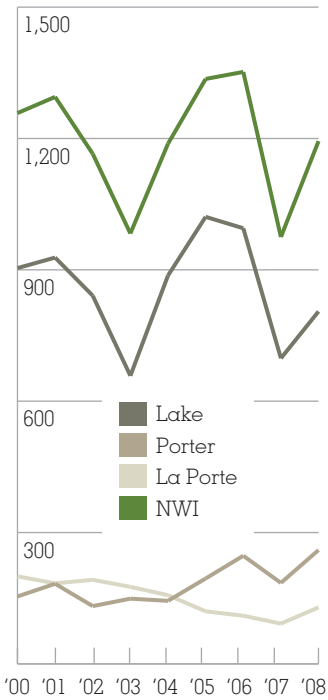
Graduation Rates, 2010



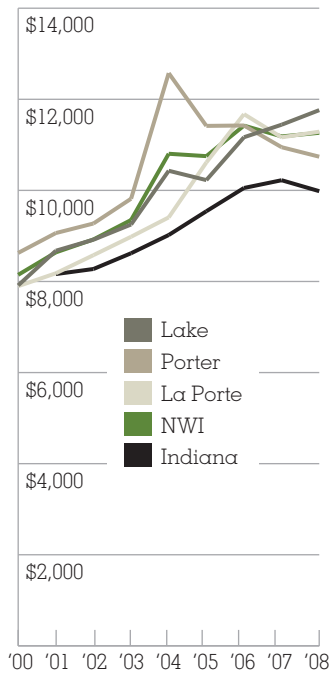
Number of Children on Childcare Waiting List



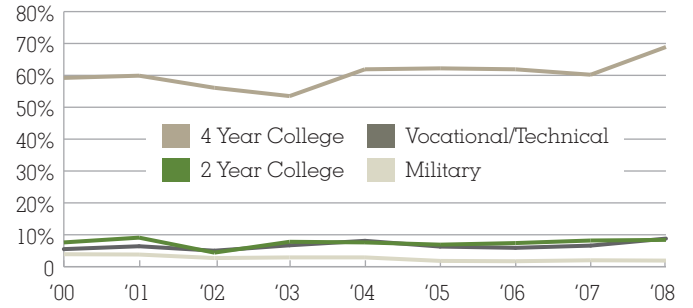
Number of Expulsions



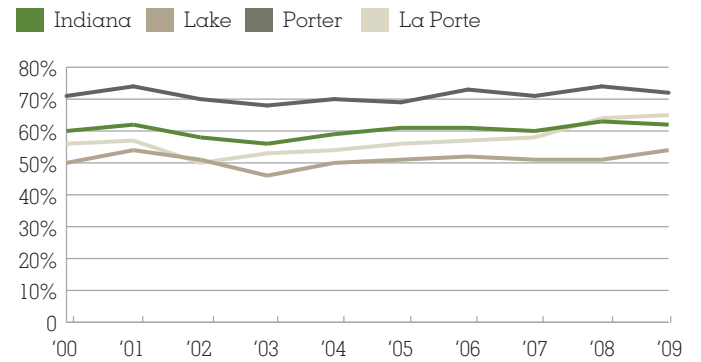
Per Pupil Educational Expenditures



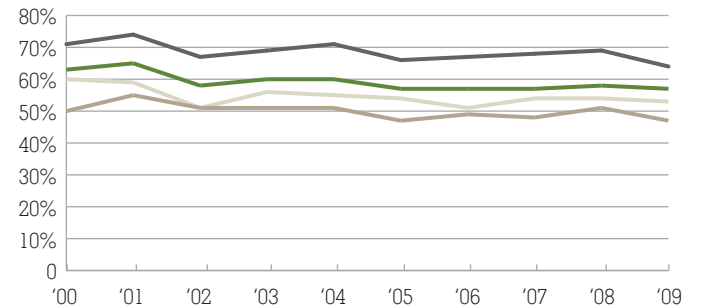
Post High School Graduation Intentions



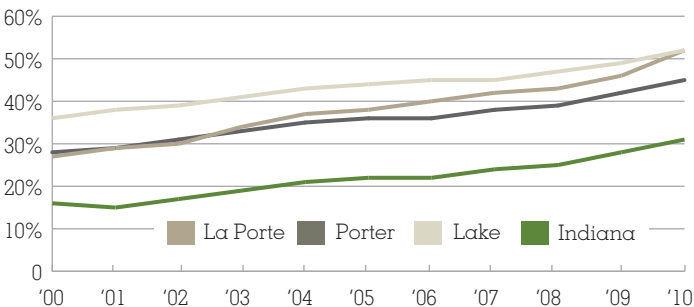
Passing ISTEP, Both Math and Language Arts in 8th Grade



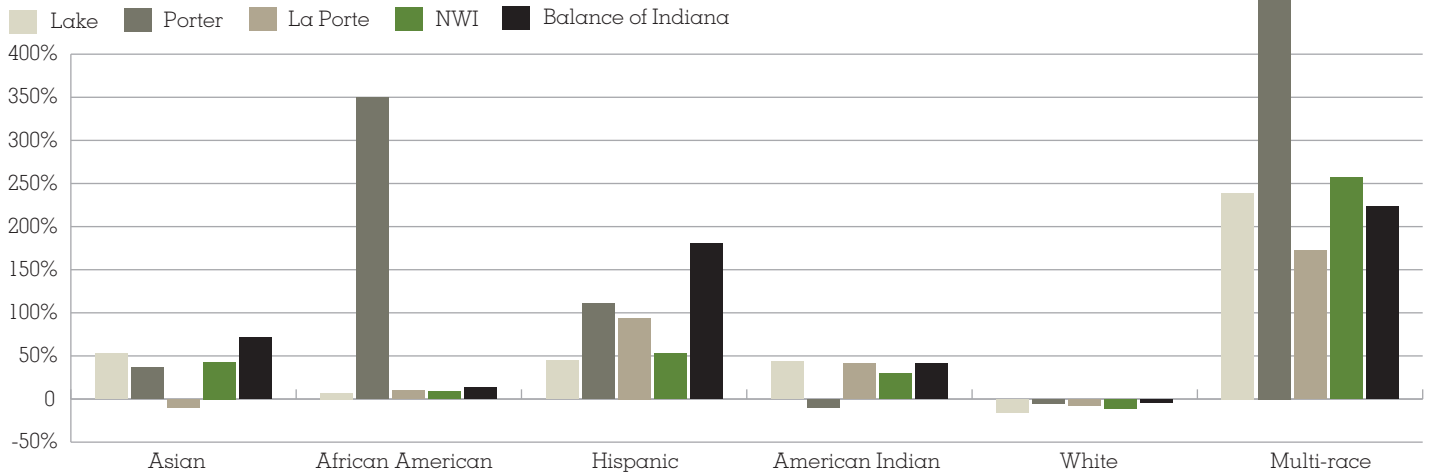
Passing ISTEP, Both Math and Language Arts in 10th Grade



Percent of Students Qualifying for Free or Reduced Lunch



Total Enrollment For All Grades by Race and Ethnicity, 2000-2009



EDUCATION

WHERE WE STAND

Northwest Indiana does not yet have the educational system it needs to provide opportunity for all and to prepare a skilled workforce for meeting business needs. There has been slight progress, but not in all areas.

High school test scores have slipped and graduation rates have barely budged. Achievement is far from evenly distributed. In the urban core, where needs are greatest and children face the most challenges from poverty other barriers, per-pupil costs are high but educational outcomes remain disappointing. A child's chances of succeeding in school depend greatly on where he lives, which school he attends, parent-family support and expectations, background knowledge and readiness for learning.

The population of students is changing, with a rapid growth in Hispanic students. Schools throughout the region must find ways to adapt to a school population with a different cultural background and different challenges, including, perhaps, less proficiency in English.

There are more than 1,000 children each month waiting for spots in day care, but we do not know the context of this situation, and if it is worsening. We do not know how many children are cared for by family members or what the quality of that care might be.

Several exciting and innovative programs are underway in the region but there is no inventory of the full range of education and education-related programs and the impact upon student performance and academic achievement. Programs that link education to workforce and economic development need to be included in that analysis.

Much remains to be learned about the state of education and how it life-long learning influence other quality of life factors.

WHAT WE NEED TO KNOW

There is no shortage of data about education and youth. What is needed is a clear and informed choice of which data are relevant to the issues facing Northwest Indiana, and a commitment of resources to crunch the numbers as they apply to local counties, municipalities, school districts and individual schools. More information must be made accessible and at a scale that will be useful in conversations toward moving school districts, families and communities ahead.

Institutions that could help in that process include the Indiana Department of Education for a wide range of educational performance data, the Indiana Youth Institute for youth statistical information and Lumina Foundation for educational models and initiatives. One Region's educational roundtable should consider partnering with such organizations to decide which data should be collected and how best to coordinate information-sharing among institutions in Northwest Indiana.

The indicators cited in this and previous Quality of Life Indicators reports provide a snapshot of some aspects of primary and secondary education and the factors that hold students back. But there are significant gaps.

For example, we have no data on how well the educational system prepares students for jobs. Do Northwest Indiana schools, both K through 12 and post-secondary, prepare student for the available employment? Do local graduates get hired? Can employers find workers with the education and skills they need? How does the education level of the workforce affect the region's ability to attract investment and jobs? How can we better spotlight innovative programs occurring in the region such as activities in Hobart, Crown Point, and Merrillville and at Banneker Elementary in Gary?

The educational indicators should be chosen that track performance by both



students and schools in the entire educational pipeline, from early childhood through graduate school and occupational training and development. Here are just some of the questions that ought to be answered. Further questions are found in this report's appendices.

How can Northwest Indiana utilize more sophisticated research analysis based on regression analysis to study cause and effect between a given measure and known variables? For example, given a measure of student background such as free and reduced lunch status, and the application of regression analysis, what would be the predicted level of student achievement for various levels of free and reduced lunches at

EDUCATION

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATES	■
POST-HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION INTENTIONS	▲
I-STEP PASSING RATES	■
EDUCATIONAL COSTS	■
EXPULSIONS AND SUSPENSIONS	■
FREE OR REDUCED LUNCH	▼
CHILDCARE WAITING LIST	■
STUDENT DIVERSITY	▲

ISSUES TRENDING ▲ IMPROVEMENT ■ STEADY ▼ DECLINE

LEARN MORE

Indiana Department of Education, compass.doe.in.gov/dashboard/overview.aspx
 Indiana Commission on Higher Education, www.in.gov/che/2340.htm
 Indiana Youth Institute, datacenter.kidscount.org/data/bystate/Default.aspx?state=IN
 U.S. Census Bureau, quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/18000.html
 Center of Workforce Innovations, www.innovativeworkforce.com/research.html
 WorkOne Northwest Indiana, www.nwi.gotoworkone.com/home/index.asp?page=1



a grade level, school or school district, if that quality of teaching and the quality of school was averaged? Using this scenario how many schools or school corporations would be performing as expected, beyond expectations or below expectations?

Is there a way to provide positive reinforcement for those schools' student performance? And when student background as measured by percent of free and reduced lunch is accounted for?

Is there a way to study those schools and school districts whose student achievement is beyond that which is expected to determine what processes and practices have been deployed to enable them to exceed expectations?

To what extent do our Northwest Indiana youth possess the number of "developmental assets" that the Search Institute has identified as critical for future success critical for deciding not to engage in at-risk behaviors?

What are our schools, school corporations, and communities doing to assist Northwest Indiana youth to develop the "assets" that have been researched by youth organizations to be critically important for enabling our youth to exceed, to flourish?

What are the performance outcomes and trends between public, private and charter schools?

What are the performance outcomes of career and technical education in the region?

How can those programs better align with the needs of employers?

What are the enrollment figures, retention rates, and graduation rates in the schools beyond high school? Does data support the need for a comprehensive regional university?

What are the impacts of high schools and universities offering curricula so high school students receive college credit?

How can the task of measuring quality of life be integrated into curricula and research programs at the universities and colleges?

CALL TO ACTION

We have to raise the bar on education in Northwest Indiana. One Region has the potential to provide a forum where the complex issues of education – including touchy background factors such as poverty, race, ethnicity, class, language, money, substance abuse and local politics – can be openly discussed and real strategy for change can be hammered out.

Schools by themselves cannot totally overcome the detrimental impact on student learning that lack of parental support, substance abuse, family dysfunction and negative peer influences create. However, additional institutions must be identified to assist schools and therefore decrease the detrimental impact that these variables have

upon student learning. These institutions need to be identified and formally partnered with schools.

There are research-based models, programs and methods for improving educational performance that Northwest Indiana could access or emulate, if the political will can be found to identify them and develop support for them. Several programs and local initiatives have been undertaken in the region, but their real results and impact have not been studied. If such programs can be demonstrated to have a real impact, they need to be supported and replicated.

One Region needs to be a fearless champion for educational change that redresses inequities across the region, streamlines inefficiencies, adapts to new realities and bases its plans on facts, not stereotypes. The educational roundtable and the newly launched READY program may be the right place to begin.

An educated workforce is essential for the region's economy. We need to make sure that the education system in the region is aligned with opportunities that will be available and with the needs of the region's employers. Today's children will compete for jobs not just with their neighbors but with workers around the world. We owe them an education that prepares them for that challenge.

An educated citizenry is essential to tackle then increasingly complex problems that will face the region and the world. In today's world and tomorrows, children who cannot understand science and history will not be able to make informed decisions as voters, parents and neighbors. Children who cannot read and write cannot compete.

Every child's future is valuable but so too are the workers. There is no higher priority in Northwest Indiana than making sure its children and labor force are prepared for every opportunity and every challenge to come.

READY is the regional education and employer alliance for the development of youth which was organized and invested in by business, K-12 education, post-secondary education, elected officials, civic and community leaders and economic and workforce development professionals. The goal of READY is to increase the number of students in the region going to post-secondary education without the need for remediation, to accelerate college credit attainment of high schools students, to fully prepare students for careers, and to ensure that our region's talent pool has the skills that align directly to the needs of employers in the region.

The vision is for NWI, under the Ready to Work/Ready to Hire Plan, to have a talent pool by 2025 where 60% of the labor force has a post high school credential aligned with employers' needs.



HEALTH

“WE ASPIRE TO BE A REGION THAT PROMOTES GOOD HEALTH AND SAFE ENVIRONMENTS WHILE PROVIDING THE BEST MEDICAL CARE FOR ALL.”

Northwest Indiana has some sparkling new hospitals with modern equipment. But it also has pockets where many residents lack access to health care, especially the kind of ongoing care that can prevent or manage illness rather than treating it in a hospital. Poverty, unemployment, lack of insurance, racial and ethnic segregation and lack of education all are barriers to both health care and health education. More often than not, the poor use emergency and urgent care centers as their primary health care provider, which is costly and does little to prevent illness or manage health.

But one of the region's most severe gaps, ever since the first Quality of Life Indicators report, has been a lack of good, geographically specific data about health needs and health delivery in the region. In order to address the region's disparities and inefficiencies, we need to know more about them.

A LOOK BACK

In 2000, the Quality of Life Indicators Report examined some of the fundamental metrics of health. The key findings were that Northwest Indiana suffered from higher rates of infectious disease, cancer, and cancer-related deaths and substance abuse than the rest of the state, but otherwise was comparable overall. Health problems were worst in Lake County, with its large population and concentration of poverty. For example, it had more low-birth-weight babies and a lower rate of childhood immunizations than the statewide averages.

The goal stated in the report was to provide an effective and affordable system of health care to all Northwest Indiana residents. Many expected this system to be inclusive of infrastructure, access, nutrition, and physical development. These areas were not only lacking in strategic planning

throughout the region, but the supportive resources and partnerships to form it.

The report noted the lack of regionally specific health data. A 2000 study by the U.S. Conference of Mayors had found that midsize American cities and rural towns experienced nearly the same rate of drug, alcohol and tobacco use as urban centers. But because there were no Northwest Indiana-specific data, the authors highlighted health statistics of comparable small metropolitan regions.

The call to action that year was for a regional epidemiological study that would focus on health problems, while identifying resources that could lead to better health outcomes. Committed partnerships were a potential remedy for the lack of a centralized, local data for tracking the incidents of chronic and acute health conditions.

In the 2004 report, it was still a challenge to get good health data on the entire Northwest Indiana region.

The report noted that the Indiana Department of Health had designated Gary, Hammond, East Chicago and Lake Station and a segment of Porter County as “medically underserved communities,” in need of more primary care physicians and dentists. These communities began to address the



problem and later found it to be an access issue. Noteworthy was the finding that a number of physicians chose not to extend healthcare to the uninsured, Medicaid, or underinsured populations. While the nation was experiencing shortages in the areas of primary care and specialty physicians, some of the shortages were attributable to low or no pay situations from those of limited financial means. Not serving this population led to more costly urgent care.

The report stated drug and alcohol abuse remained a major health problem, and moreover, that the Justice Department classified Northwest Indiana as “a high intensity drug trafficking area.” It appeared, however, that Northwest Indiana had sufficient mental health and long-term residential care services.

The leading cause of death in Northwest Indiana was heart disease, followed by cancer. Rates of infant and teen deaths were declining. The report stated that in 2000, the death rate among whites in Indiana was 915 per 100,000, while that for African-Americans was 1,152. A 1999 report had found that death rates among people segregated by race and ethnicity were higher than for those who lived in less segregated neighborhoods. Poverty and other

household conditions were also identified as factors in poor health. The report suggested that the region emulate the federal Healthy People 2010 initiative.

The 2008 Quality of Life Indicators Report drew on local data from a 2005 epidemiological study funded by the three United Way organizations. The Epidemiological Report on the Health Concerns of Northwest Indiana, conducted by Professional Research Consultants, found that the people of the region were less likely to be active and more likely to be obese than the nation as a whole, leading to higher rates of heart disease and diabetes and deaths from those diseases. People in the region also were less likely to have healthy diets consisting of fruits and vegetables.

Northwest Indiana residents were more likely to be smokers, a major factor in health problems, both for smokers and for those exposed to secondhand smoke. Chronic lower respiratory disease death rates were higher in Northwest Indiana than in the nation.

Binge drinking, drunk driving and cirrhosis of the liver occurred at a higher rate in Northwest Indiana than in the U.S. overall. Northwest Indiana had higher incidences of teenage births and HIV deaths

than the national overall, but lower rates of sexually transmitted diseases and a higher rate of condom use.

Children in the region were more likely to be victims of violent crime, including murder, and accidental deaths than in the nation overall. Northwest Indiana residents over the age of 65 years were less likely to receive a flu vaccine than in the nation overall. But they were also less likely to die from pneumonia or influenza. African-Americans and Hispanics living near or at the poverty line had the worst access to health care.

Other data in the 2008 report showed that in 2006, death rates in Northwest Indiana were improving but still were higher than national averages. Heart disease, cancer, lower respiratory diseases, diabetes and kidney disease were the top killers. The infant death rate in Northwest Indiana was higher than for the state as a whole, and was higher for African Americans than other ethnic groups.

The call to action was higher coordination among healthcare institutions and providers to address a range of health issues, with an emphasis on prevention programs. They called for a regional health care group to carry out policies consistent with the goals of the Healthy People 2010 initiative.

HEALTH

THE NUMBERS NOW

Data collection is a continuing challenge for the region. There remains a severe lack of consistent, accessible data on health and health care in Northwest Indiana at a scale that is geographically and socially specific enough to be useful. Although a wealth of health data resides with federal, state, nonprofit and private sources, it is difficult for the public to analyze and use.

Consistent updates are not available for most of the indicator data that were included in the previous reports. Therefore, this report starts fresh, with data for 2010, 2011 and 2012 from the County Rankings and Roadmaps program underwritten by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the University of Wisconsin's Population Health Institute.

According to the County Rankings, the Northwest Indiana region tended to be less healthy than the rest of Indiana between 2010 and 2012. By a number of measures, Lake and La Porte counties were among the least healthy counties in Indiana.

On health outcomes in 2010, including death and disease

rates, Porter County ranked 16th of the 92 counties, while La Porte was 61st and Lake was 84th. On other health factors, including healthy behaviors, clinical care, socioeconomic status and physical environment, Lake County ranked last and La Porte County ranked 77th. Porter County, however, ranked 13th. Although Northwest Indiana overall was comparable to Indiana as a whole, both the region and the state did worse than the nation in every category of measurement.

Northwest Indiana experiences higher incidences of premature death. In 2010, the region averaged 8,291. Low birth weight babies were 8.1 percent of births, and highest in Lake County at 9.3 percent in 2010 and 9.7 percent in 2012.

27 percent of adults in the region smoke on average over the three year period. 17 percent of adults were excessive drinkers, and with the highest proportion at 20 percent in La Porte County during 2012.

The region's uninsured averaged 15 percent of the population under 65 years between

2010 and 2012. La Porte County is experiencing a higher proportion of uninsured persons at 17 percent in 2012. Both Lake and La Porte County were able to reduce the number of preventable hospital stays during this time, but Porter County's rate grew to 92 per 1,000 Medicare enrollees.

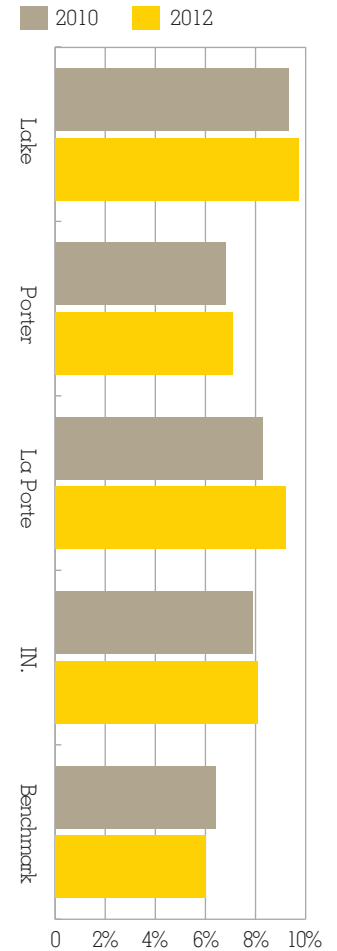
Children and elderly persons represent vulnerable populations. Northwest Indiana's average poverty rate for children was 15 percent from 2010 to 2012.

Lake and La Porte County reached 25 percent of its children living in poverty and at 14 percent in 2012, Porter County is not immune.

Regionally, 20 percent of adults on average lacked social and emotional support. La Porte County adults were most affected, with 20 percent of those surveyed lacking adequate support.

Low income people have a harder time accessing good foods from nearby grocery stores. Fast food restaurants are very accessible in the region, half of all restaurants are fast food establishments.

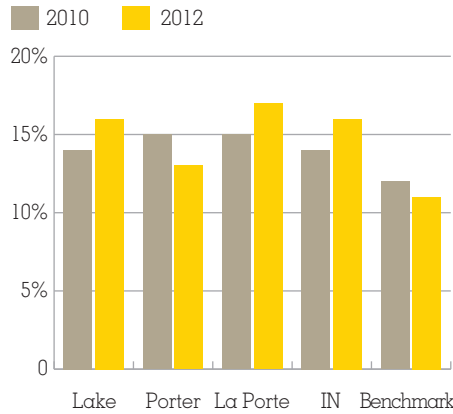
**Health Factors,
Low Birth Weight**



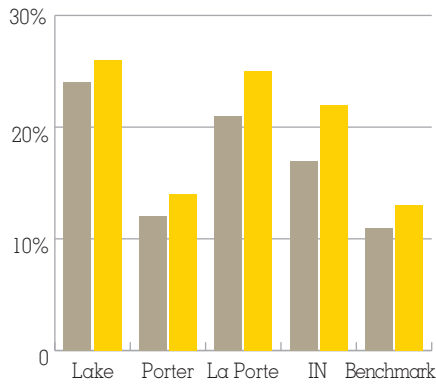
Trends in Health Rankings of NWI Counties Compared to 92 Indiana Counties

	Health Outcomes	Health Factors	Mortality	Morbidity	Health Behaviors	Clinical Care	Social & Economic Factors	Physical Environment	Smoking	Diet and Exercise	Alcohol Use	Unprotected Sex	Access to Care	Quality of Care	Education	Employment	Income	Family and Social Support	Community Safety	Air Quality	Built Environment
Lake '10	84	92	86	76	92	68	91	91	72	92	45	87	32	77	60	48	86	91	92	91	31
Lake '11	84	92	85	75	90	82	92	48	56	92	44	89	65	84	57	46	84	89	92	83	10
Lake '12	84	82	80	77	79	71	80	80	59	80	44	82	37	85	60	53	75	88	86	83	69
Porter '10	16	13	16	22	25	38	10	67	52	28	53	4	52	33	6	12	25	45	37	83	27
Porter '11	18	19	15	20	48	56	10	25	27	77	56	7	53	59	8	25	10	40	28	59	20
Porter '12	18	14	18	20	21	37	8	64	42	18	57	5	15	71	6	16	8	32	72	59	71
La Porte '10	61	77	69	52	72	40	77	79	39	65	78	79	48	41	70	48	73	73	85	75	63
La Porte '11	63	65	69	56	62	41	74	46	61	22	75	79	46	42	69	61	61	82	86	37	53
La Porte '12	65	70	72	59	66	41	73	66	64	34	80	71	56	30	56	75	71	74	47	37	76

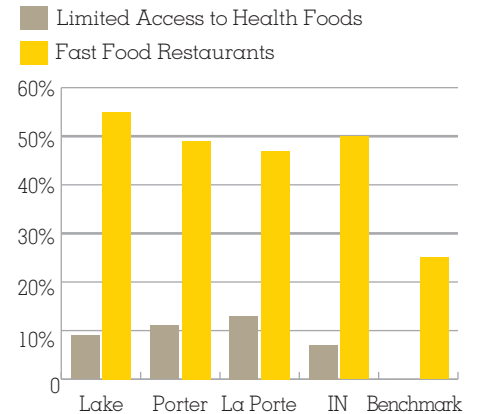
Clinical Care, Uninsured



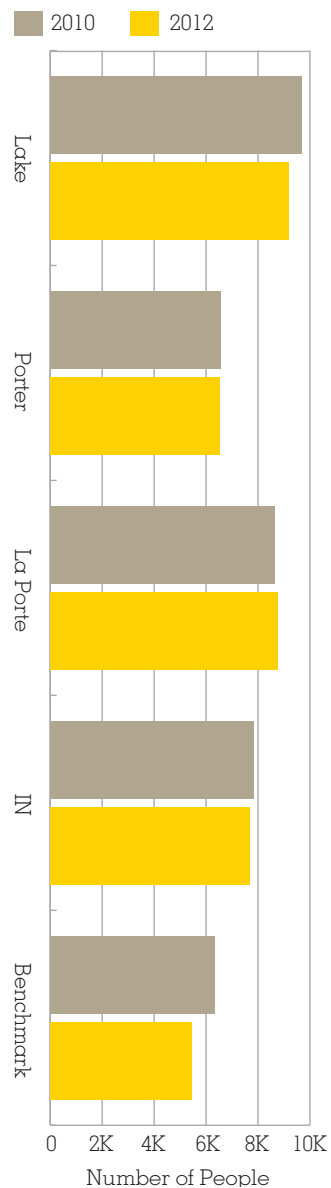
Social & Economic Factors: Children in Poverty



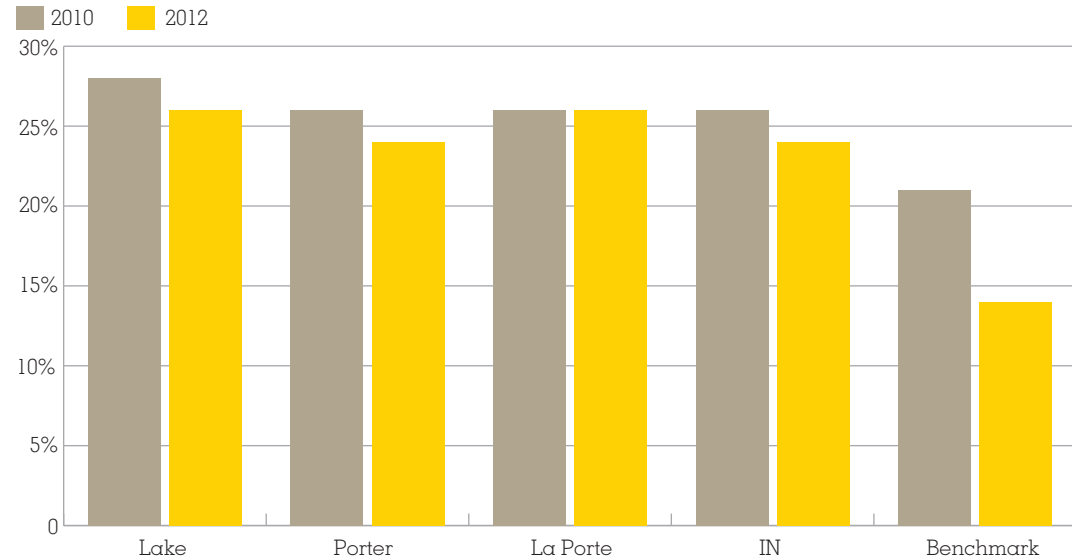
Physical Environment, Fast Food, 2012



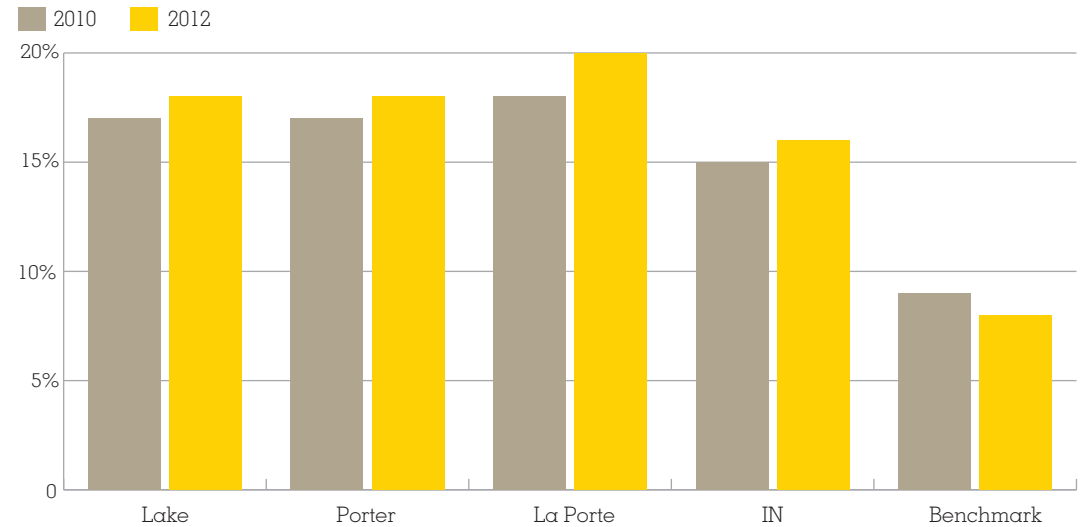
Health Outcomes, Premature Death



Health Behaviors, Adult Smoking



Health Behaviors, Excessive Drinking



HEALTH

WHERE WE STAND

Without good data, it is difficult to focus efforts in the region to promote good health and lifestyles, redress disparities in access to health care and direct investment in new medical facilities and health care capabilities. Though the 2005 epidemiological data could have been analyzed in more specific ways, only region-wide statistics were presented in the 2008 Quality of Life Indicators report. And the benefits gained from the 2005 epidemiological study have nearly been lost because those statistics have not been updated. The result is that in 2012 it is difficult to paint a comprehensive picture of the state of health in the region.

The County Rankings' database helps, but county-level rankings are not specific enough for the best guidance. How do access to care and health conditions, outcomes and attitudes compare among cities, among neighborhoods, between urban, suburban and rural areas, between racial and ethnic groups in the region? How do environmental conditions such as air and water pollution and contamination, as well as sprawling land use and dependence on automobiles, affect health in Northwest Indiana? We don't know. We can guess at regional effects and disparities and their causes, but we do not have hard data on which to base policy and action.

The recent focus in Northwest Indiana health care has been modernizing its medical infrastructure. Several new and expanded hospitals, clinics and offices have been built or are in development. Yet, despite the region's dense population and its concentration of major industry and highways where vehicle accidents are common, it has no trauma center.

Patients with life-threatening injuries, when seconds count, must often be airlifted to Chicago or Indianapolis. As the issue of designated trauma centers has evolved, one major problem exists at all levels, the collected data. In some cases it is not that the data is not being collected, but whether the data is comparable for measurement.

Demands on the health care system in the region can only increase. The aging population will consume more services. Impoverished families need greater primary care access within their neighborhoods. The effects of increasing obesity, including diabetes, are growing nationwide. The health care system is challenged to find the resources to treat the consequences of obesity but also to tackle the causes. The region needs not only new health facilities, but strategies for prevention that include changing underlying behaviors that contribute to health problems and early interventions that minimize those effects.

According to other research, drug and alcohol abuse is consistently higher in communities in which zoning codes fail to restrict the number of businesses selling liquor in a given community. Noticeably, communities of high poverty, low economic development, are flooded with package liquor stores and bars.

Drug trafficking is found to be at its peak when there are low neighborhood connections, abandon buildings, lack of infrastructure maintenance, and high unemployment. These issues are systemic to the symptoms they produce, heart disease, poor nutrition, sexually transmitted viruses, low birth rate and violence.

Even with Northwest Indiana having major resources, roads, rail, lakefront, infrastructure, strategic development to resolve more than pockets of care across the region have neither been effective nor efficient. Clearly, the region needs to do more to promote health and well-being of its residents and the environment in which they live.

WHAT WE NEED TO KNOW

Northwest Indiana needs to develop and support ongoing research and information-sharing on the region's specific needs and priorities. Issue and project based approaches may be an effective way to bring people together in formalizing the health care agenda



under One Region. Examples of existing coalitions around quality of care and health disparities include the following.

The Patient Safety Council formed by hospitals in conjunction with Indiana Hospital Association, is where nurses, physicians, administrators, and quality and risk managers come together as a regional improvement planning council focused on a range of health issues with an emphasis on prevention programs. In regional collaboration, they have successfully implemented several quality

HEALTH

HEALTH RANKINGS SNAPSHOT	▼
HEALTH OUTCOMES	▼
HEALTH FACTORS: HEALTH BEHAVIORS	▼
HEALTH FACTORS: CLINICAL CARE	■
HEALTH FACTORS: SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC	▼
HEALTH FACTORS: PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT	■

ISSUES TRENDING ▲ IMPROVEMENT ■ STEADY ▼ DECLINE

LEARN MORE

- County Rankings and Roadmaps, www.countyhealthrankings.org/#app/indiana/2012/rankings/outcomes/overall
- Indiana Department of Health, www.in.gov/isdh/19096.htm
- Indiana Department of Health, Sunny Start Program, www.in.gov/isdh/21190.htm
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, www.hhs.gov/diseases/index.html
- Center for Disease Control, apps.nccd.cdc.gov/brfss-smart/index.asp



assurance measures, including its first project to synchronize patient wristband colors for health conditions to improve patient care and medical staff treatments.

The Northwest Indiana Health Disparities Initiative represents six counties and a variety of providers. The members, establish major areas of concern in the communities, identify organizations and resources, and build capacity to implement and educate all in impacting change.

The Lake County Minority Health Coalition is focused on areas of health concerns for the most vulnerable populations of all races and ethnic groups within the county and regionally, however, there is an emphasis on African Americans, and Latinos. The Coalition is actively supporting various initiatives to support data, and education on chronic disease.

Federally Qualified Health Centers have federally appropriated funds for primary care in serving underserved communities. There are such centers in Northwest Indiana. Community Health Net, Health Link, NorthShore, East Chicago Health, and Health

Link in Porter and La Porte Counties provide an array of patient services and educational awareness.

Among the gaps in our knowledge of the health of Northwest Indiana are these:

How many Northwest Indiana residents have medical insurance or lack it? What are the barriers to having medical insurance, and how will they be affected by the federal Affordable Care Act? What are the healthcare patterns of each group?

How does the cost of medical care change residents' health behavior, such as delaying seeking treatment or not filling prescriptions?

Where might existing or new partnership opportunities obtain and expand health data?

How should Northwest Indiana integrate hospital facilities and environmental health information into health indicator data?

What are the health and health care disparities among racial and ethnic groups in the region and between localities?

What are trends in pre-natal care, unwed mothers and low birth weight babies?

What are the rates of substance abuse among children and adults, and how do drug

and alcohol use affect employment, accident rates, workplaces and schools?

How can the supply of needed drugs be assured?

How can better understanding of the high rates of teenage pregnancy, unprotected sexual intercourse leading to transmitted diseases and greater condom use be obtained?

What are the significant mental health issues in Northwest Indiana? How do they vary between localities and segments of the population?

Is the model of the federal Healthy People 2010 program – now Healthy People 2020 – useful, or is there a better model for changing behaviors and health care outcomes in the region?

CALL TO ACTION

One Region provides a venue for leading a regional strategy on healthcare through its Healthcare Coalition. The major participant draw of this group is the presence of the CEO's of all hospitals in Northwest Indiana and its relationship with Indiana State Representative Charlie Brown. This action group can focus on shaping policies and aligning of healthcare community in the region.

An update to the 2005 epidemiological study of health in Northwest Indiana is warranted. Partnership opportunity between area hospitals, social services and the local universities may assure an alignment of regional health concerns and resources in the collection of ongoing health statistics and in assessing community needs, on such issues as chronic disease.

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act supports the development of community assessments. As of 2013 this mandate is established for all hospitals. Northwest Indiana hospitals are working together with Purdue University Calumet on strategies to effectively survey these communities. With the deadlines, differing for the hospitals, there is a sense of urgency in getting this module of healthcare reform in place.

Through the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, patient care and healthcare management are to be formed and channeled through healthcare networks. The establishment of such a network in Northwest Indiana would not only fulfill those obligations but the health care industry could gain efficiencies. Schools, corporations, community based and faith based organizations along with social service agencies will be essential in the making of a healthcare network.

The Northwest Indiana Health Disparities Initiative seeks to create a public health institute to develop institutional capacity to address data, research, need assessment, and grant funding opportunities.



PUBLIC SAFETY

“WE ASPIRE TO BE A REGION WHERE PEOPLE AND PROPERTY ARE PROTECTED AND SECURE, AND PUBLIC SAFETY AGENCIES HAVE THE TRUST AND CONFIDENCE OF THE COMMUNITY.”

In healthy communities, people have enough confidence in their safety to put down roots, to enjoy streets, parks and playgrounds, to raise families and buy homes. Businesses have the confidence to invest and expand. Visitors feel secure and welcome exploring beaches and bike trails or stopping at restaurants. In Northwest Indiana, some places meet this description, but many do not.

A LOOK BACK

In 2000, at a time when violent crime was rising in the region, the Quality of Life Indicators Report focused heavily on the urban core. It established a goal of bringing state-of-the-art law enforcement procedures and technology to Northwest Indiana. It also

saw a clear need for greater regional cooperation and integration between law enforcement agencies. The primary indicators were major crime data and death rates from murder, suicide and accidents.

Arrests of adults and juveniles for crimes in the three-county region were up 33.2 percent between 1990 and 1997, from 23,726 to 31,598. Arrests of adults for violent crimes rose 37.8 percent over the same period, from 838 to 1,115 in 1997. Arrests for property crimes by adults increased 28.6 percent, from 3,594 to 4,621. Juvenile arrests were also up 24 percent, from 6,474 to 8,027. Arrests for violent crimes by juveniles rose 45 percent and those for property crimes by juveniles grew by 16 percent. Porter County experienced the largest increases in the number



of arrests for all kinds of crime during this period, partially attributable to the growing population size. The homicide rate in Lake County of 19.6 per 100,000 people was nearly three times the state's rate of 7.2 per 100,000.

The authors of the report saw a need to focus on addressing Lake County's murder rate, the growing juvenile delinquency problem and increasing crime in Porter County.

In the 2004 report, the public safety conversation focused on the potential of community-based policing and innovations in the way crime reports and other data could be gathered and shared broadly between law enforcement agencies and with the public to make communities safer, as was being attempted in New York, Chicago and other cities. This would require much more cooperation and collaboration between local

agencies. Crime still was increasing in Lake County in 2004, but it was increasing faster La Porte County, which had higher crime rates for rape, burglary and larceny.

Juvenile delinquency, defined as crime by people under the age of 18, continued to rise. "Institutional and professional boundaries" between schools, police, courts and other agencies were identified as barriers to addressing factors that gave rise to youth crime and the associated costs.

The stated goal of the 2004 report was for all communities to adopt and fully implement comprehensive data collection and policing strategies (COMPSTAT) by 2010.

The 2008 report introduced a new issue for further exploration: How people's perception of safety influences their behavior. Based on crime arrest data, Northwest Indiana

was determined to be somewhat safer in 2005 than in 2000. Major crime rates were decreasing, with two notable exceptions: Lake County's murder rate of 17.6 per 100,000 people in 2005 remained three times as high as the nation's. And rape offenses in the region were increasing, with a 2005 rate of 25 per 100,000 people. The region's young people appeared a little safer from crime: The number of cases of neglect and abuse were down by 32 percent from 1,719 in 2000 to 1,164 in 2005. The number of cases of child sexual abuse was down 27 percent from 293 to 213.

Meanwhile, juvenile delinquency rose by 40 percent from 2000 to 2005. Expulsions and suspensions as well as substance abuse were seen as factors contributing to criminal behavior by people under 18.

PUBLIC SAFETY

THE NUMBERS NOW

The region overall was relatively less violent in 2010 than in 2000. Most of the major crime arrest rates had declined over the 10-year period.

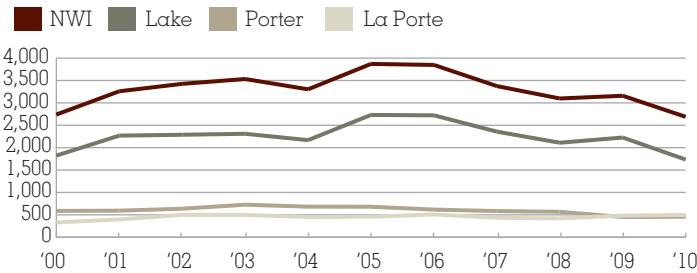
The murder rate in the three-county region fell by 20 percent from 13 to 11 murders per 100,000 people. The Lake County murder rate remained the highest in the region, at 16 murders per 100,000, but had fallen from 19 in 2000. The robbery rate in the region fell 18 percent, from 144 to 118 robberies per 100,000 people. The aggravated assault rate fell 12 percent from 186 to 164 per 100,000 people. Unfortunately, the rate of rapes increased by 4 percent, from 22 to 23 rapes per 100,000, during the same period.

Thefts of personal property rose over the decade. Burglary

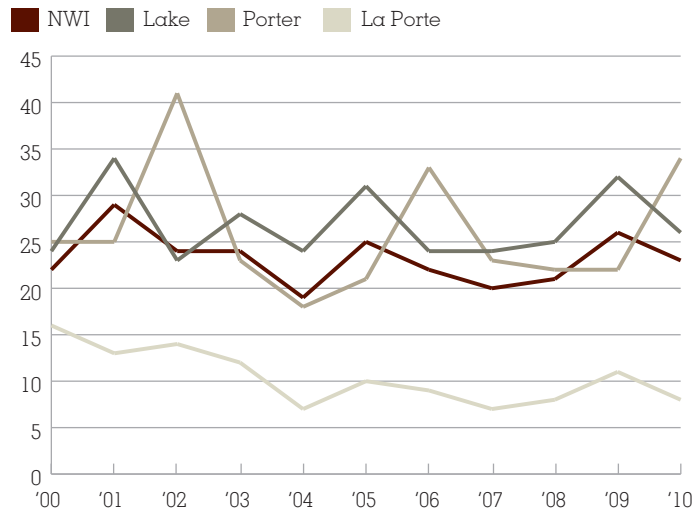
rose 35 percent, from 605 to 815 burglaries per 100,000 people, between 2000 and 2010. Larceny increased 8 percent from 2,199 to 2,026 thefts per 100,000 people. However, vehicle theft declined 28 percent from 488 to 353 per 100,000 people. Juvenile delinquency cases fell by 2 percent in the same period, from 2,739 to 2,689 cases.

Children appeared more safe from adults in 2010 compared to 2000. The number of child neglect cases substantiated by Child Protective Services in the region fell 8 percent, from 1,710 cases in 2000 to 1,579 cases in 2010. Physical abuse cases dropped 45 percent from 457 to 250 confirmed cases. Sexual abuse of people under age 18 also declined by 25 percent from 293 to 216 cases.

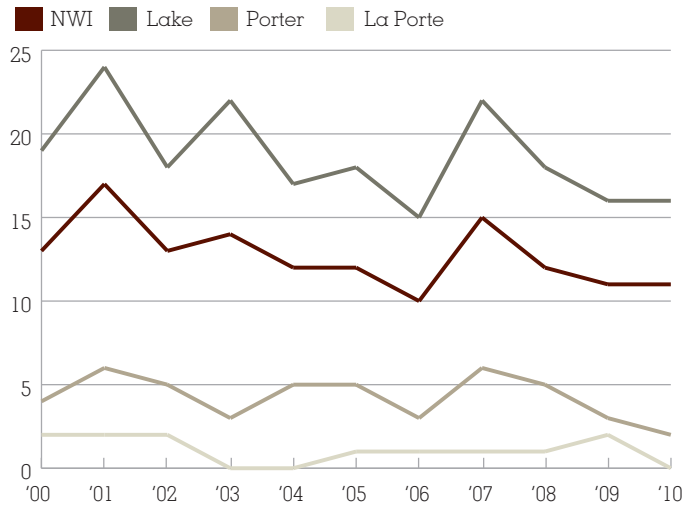
Juvenile Delinquency, Number of Case Filings



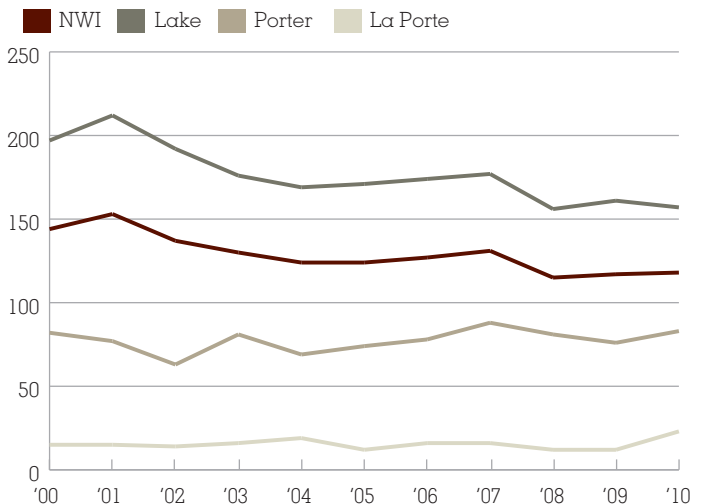
VIOLENT CRIME: Rape per 100,000 per Capita



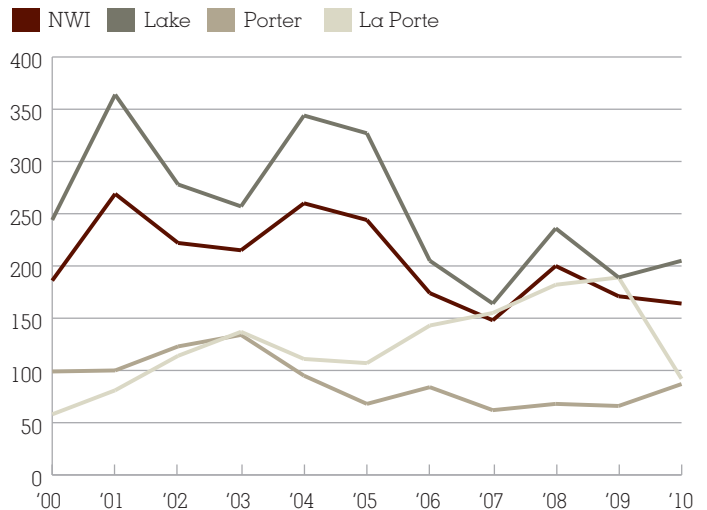
VIOLENT CRIME: Murder per 100,000 per Capita



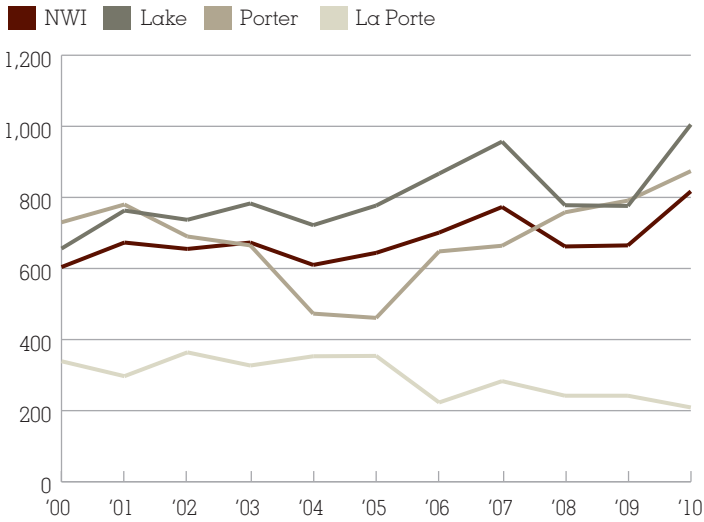
VIOLENT CRIME: Robbery per 100,000 per Capita



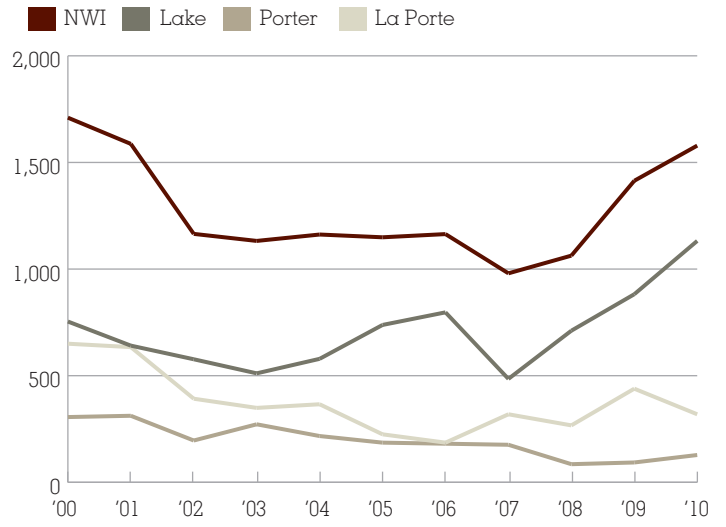
VIOLENT CRIME: Aggravated Assault per 100,000 per Capita



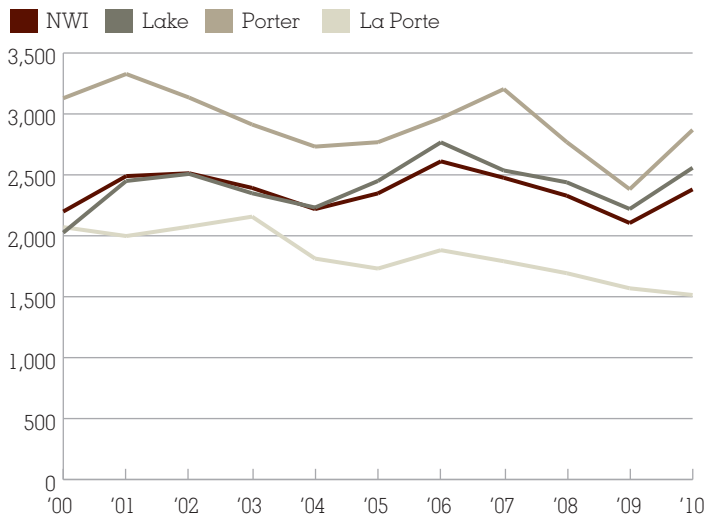
PROPERTY CRIME: Burglary per 100,000 per Capita



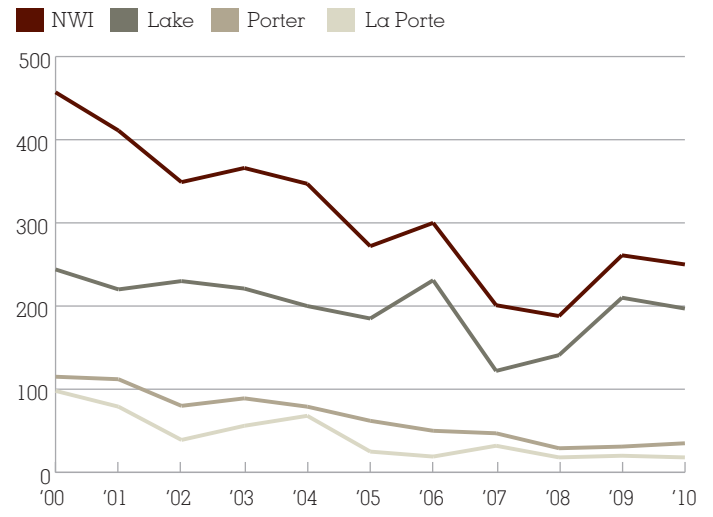
Child Neglect: Substantiated Cases



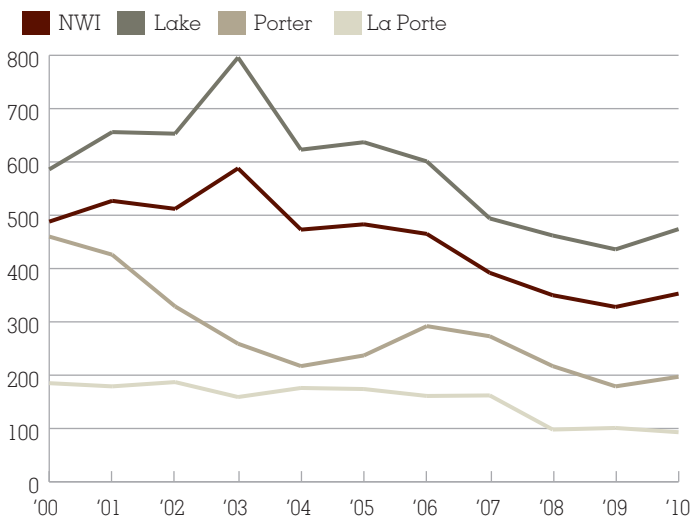
PROPERTY CRIME: Larceny Theft per 100,000 per Capita



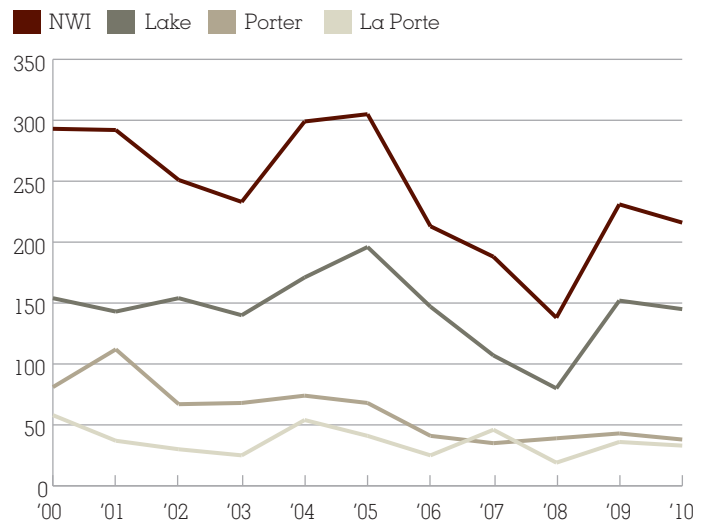
Child Physical Abuse: Substantiated Cases



PROPERTY CRIME: Vehicle Theft per 100,000 per Capita



Child Sexual Abuse: Substantiated Cases



PUBLIC SAFETY

WHERE WE STAND

In general, the broad data that have been included in Quality of Life Indicators reports provide only a sketchy knowledge of crime in the region and little understanding of its causes and effects. Much work remains to be done for the people of Northwest Indiana to both be safe and feel safe from crime.

The urban core of the region may have fewer violent crimes, but it still is more violent and unsafe than its residents have a right to expect. Though Community Oriented Policing programs have been established in Gary and in other places and have helped focus police attention in some problem areas, the strategy's overall effectiveness in reducing crime in the region has not been studied or proven.

Cooperation and collaboration between public safety agencies remains an unrealized goal. There is no unified 911 system in Lake County despite both Porter and La Porte counties having successfully implemented centralized, countywide 911 systems. There is a Northwest Indiana Major Crimes Task Force, but local police agencies may choose not to call on its expertise. Police training, equipment, tactics and preparedness are not uniform throughout the region; local governments vary widely in the resources they afford to police departments. Intelligence about gangs, drugs and other sources of crime is not widely shared.

There has been no coordinated effort in the region to study and take action on the root causes of youth crime, including such factors as family structure, lack of recreational opportunities, truancy, suspensions and expulsions from school, drugs and gangs. Programs for youth that might reduce juvenile crimes and for ex-offenders that might reduce recidivism are ill-coordinated and underfunded.

Though it is crucial that people and property are protected from crime, it is only

part of the public safety picture. The safety of the region's people also is affected by fire; natural disasters such as tornadoes, automobile accidents, grade crossing train accidents and derailments; hazardous materials leaks; drownings on the region's beaches; and other dangers.

There has been no coordinated study of the sources of danger to Northwest Indiana residents, but if the region reflects national trends, heart attacks and accidents, particularly vehicle accidents and accidents in the home, are more common causes of death and injury than crime.

Though the three counties of Northwest Indiana have nearly 12 percent of Indiana's population, the region has no trauma center. The nearest of the state's eight trauma centers are in South Bend and Fort Wayne. Trauma is the primary cause of death of people under age 45 and trauma patients are known to be at least 25 percent more likely to survive if taken to a trauma center than an emergency room, so the availability of trauma care is a significant public safety issue.

Such factors as ambulance and fire crew response times as well as police response times can have a major effect on the safety of residents, and they vary considerably.

The lack of coordination and cooperation that is characteristic of the region affects not only crime-fighting but also the response to other emergencies such as major storms and hazardous materials situations, in an area with many industrial areas and heavily used freight train lines.

Grade crossings on railroad lines are a significant hazard and the scene of numerous tragedies. Coordinated study and action might help prevent injury and losses.

In general, it seems that One Region needs to take a much broader view of public safety, including not only crime and programs required to prevent crime in the first place, but all dangers that the region's residents face.



WHAT WE NEED TO KNOW

An informed consideration of the public safety needs of Northwest Indiana would explore crime far beyond the bare crime rate data collected in previous Quality of Life Indicators reports. But it would also explore many other dangers to the public, how the region's agencies handle them and what can be done to better respond to or prevent injury, death and property damage.

Among the many questions that could usefully be considered are:

CRIME AND POLICING

How does crime differ between localities? What is the sociological and demographic background of crime in the region?

What do we know about gangs in the region? Drugs? How can information about gangs and drugs be productively shared?

PUBLIC SAFETY

MURDER	■
ROBBERY ARRESTS	■
RAPE	▼
AGGRAVATED ASSAULT	■
BURGLARY	▼
LARCENY THEFT	▼
VEHICLE THEFT	■
JUVENILE DELINQUENCY	■
CHILD NEGLECT	■
CHILD PHYSICAL ABUSE	■
CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE	■

ISSUES TRENDING ▲ IMPROVEMENT ■ STEADY ▼ DECLINE

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Federal Bureau of Investigation, www.fbi.gov
Indiana Youth Institute, www.iyi.org
Annie E. Casey Foundation, www.aecf.org



What is the background of the increase in rapes in the region?

What can be done to reduce recidivism of ex-offenders returning to the community?

How can crime data and other intelligence be usefully collected, analyzed and shared for more efficient policing, better community involvement and a deeper understanding of the occurrence and causes of crime?

Where are the gaps and strengths in operations, training and equipment among police in the region, and how might better coordination and combined effort improve law enforcement?

PERCEPTION

How do both the actual incidence of various crimes and residents' perceptions of crime affect feelings of connectedness and well-being as well as such metrics as property values?

How are perceptions of police conduct related to arrest rates and crime prevention?

What programs have been shown to

reduce crime or community perceptions of safety and how could these be emulated?

YOUTH

What is the role of schools in youth crime, including truancy, suspensions and expulsions, and what is the effect of youth crime on education in the region?

How does youth crime correlate with education, dropout rates, attendance, income, drug use and family structure?

Why have crimes against children shown a decrease in the last few years?

FIRE, AMBULANCE AND FIRST RESPONSE

What are response times of fire crews and ambulances in various localities? How are those response times related to budget and to different methods of organization and staffing?

How do trauma death rates in Northwest Indiana compare to other areas? How are

death rates for traumas related to travel time to trauma centers?

How many traffic accidents and home accidents are there in the region? How many involve injury or death? What factors contribute to accidents and what measures might be taken to mitigate deaths and injuries?

CALL TO ACTION

The region needs to take a cooperative, regional approach to public safety; to understand more about crime and all the dangers to the residents of Northwest Indiana; and to freely share that knowledge. Only with a shared knowledge of all the factors that endanger people and property can law enforcement, emergency responders, government, schools, social service agencies, business and residents cooperate on holistic approaches to make the region safer.

Data – both current crime data and analytic data on crime and other hazards – need to be regularly collected over the long term in a consistent form so that comparisons are easy and progress can be tracked and extended.

The region is greatly hampered by factionalism between agencies and jurisdictions and in some cities and towns mistrust exists between police and the community. The complex hazards of today's world demand an open-minded approach that is not hampered by historic barriers and boundaries and can lead toward greater integration and cooperation.

A strong regional institution that has the confidence of law enforcement as well as the public could be a force for greater coordination, training, efficiency and accountability. A regional approach also would have great benefits in fire and emergency response and disaster preparedness, and in making the case for better trauma care.

The region should be open to emulating crime and accident prevention programs and strategies that have been successful elsewhere, including those that operate beyond conventional policing, such as early intervention for youth offenders or when violence is brewing. Jurisdictions should take a hard look at different approaches to drug enforcement.

The grade crossings research undertaken by the Center for Innovation through Visualization and Simulation at Purdue University Calumet and its partners should be formalized into a transportation strategy.

All efforts on public safety, whether by law enforcement, government, schools, churches or philanthropy, should be well coordinated and designed with accountability measures built in so their real utilization and effectiveness can be assessed.



HOUSING

“WE ASPIRE TO BE A REGION WHERE EVERYONE HAS A HOME IN A SAFE, INCLUSIVE AND FRIENDLY NEIGHBORHOOD.”

For decades, owning a home has been the bedrock of the American dream. Many families were drawn to Northwest Indiana in search of good factory jobs that would enable them to buy a home, the biggest investment most middle-class people ever make. Over time, more affluent homeowners seeking newer homes drove the development of rural areas into suburban subdivisions.

Overall, the region's population may be more diverse today, but its neighborhoods are not. The invisible boundaries between ethnic and racial groups not only make life more difficult for both homeowners and renters seeking a better life, but can hamstring the region in adapting to ongoing demographic changes and creating more sustainable patterns of residence and development.

In Northwest Indiana, the recent real estate turmoil only exacerbates weaknesses created by historically segregated housing patterns. The national boom and bust in real estate that

took place during the 2000s, coupled with job losses from the ensuing national recession, has brought a cascade of foreclosures revealing the vulnerabilities of not only individual homeowners but the communities in which they reside.

A LOOK BACK

When the 2000 Quality of Life Indicators Report was published in 2000, affordable housing was viewed as the main challenge for housing. Demand was high for larger homes in new, outlying subdivisions, while the housing market collapsed in older neighborhoods where there was little or no new housing investment. Residents of the urban core were left trapped in deteriorating neighborhoods, with depressed home values that denied them the opportunity to move outward into new homes. The effect was to concentrate poverty

in the region's urban core.

According to the report, housing starts, or building permits, grew 26 percent in the region overall, from 2,637 permits issued in 1990 to 3,920 in 1999. Incorporated areas issued 52 percent of building permits, while 48 percent were for unincorporated areas, an indication that much of the new investment was occurring in outlying areas. In Lake County, of the 1,907 permits issued, 73 percent were in incorporated areas and 27 percent were not. In Porter County, of the 1,622 permits issued, 36 percent were in incorporated areas and 64 percent were not. In La Porte County, of the 391 permits issued, 16 percent were for incorporated areas and 84 were for unincorporated areas.

The report cited a 1999 study by the Indiana Housing Finance Authority that defined factors that place people at risk of being unable to afford decent housing. The study found that of 92 counties in Indiana, Lake County had the most residents at risk. Porter County ranked fifth and La Porte County ranked 25th. Based on this analysis, the authors found that in Northwest Indiana, where about one-third of residents could not afford fair market rents, a majority of the population likely did not have access to good-quality affordable housing.

The goal stated in the report was to provide



a regional system of quality affordable housing for all Northwest Indiana residents.

Four years later, the 2004 Quality of Life Indicators Report included statistics that confirmed that housing investment and opportunity were moving from both the urban core and from rural areas of Northwest Indiana to new suburban areas, while households that struggled to afford housing remained concentrated in Lake County.

About two-thirds of Northwest Indiana's population owned homes while one-third were renters.

The median home value in 2000 was \$97,500 in Lake County, \$93,500 in La Porte County and \$127,000 in Porter County. Lake and La Porte County had the oldest housing stock, with a median age of 40 years, compared to a median age of 34 statewide. In Porter County, the median age of homes was 26 years. Median rents were \$495 in La Porte County, \$544 in Lake County and \$625 in Porter County.

Housing vacancy for all reasons in 2000 was highest in La Porte County, where 9.1 percent of dwellings were unoccupied. The vacancy rate in Lake County was 6.4 percent and in Porter County it was 4.9 percent.

The 2004 report also noted demographic factors such as the 15,668 people living in

group homes, the 12.7 percent of the population over 65, the 17.4 percent with disabilities and the 8 percent who do not own cars. It urged planners and developers to consider how changes in the population, such as a growing proportion of older people, will affect housing needs.

The report urged the region to aspire to be a community of viable and open neighborhoods filled with affordable good homes. Since most new development was taking place in sprawling outlying communities and new homes tended to be more expensive than the older housing stock, the authors suggested that the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission convene a regional dialogue on affordable housing issues, including ordinances that might require zoning changes and set-asides. They recognized, however, that finding the political will to take action toward equalizing housing disparities in Northwest Indiana would be a formidable task.

In the 2008 Quality of Life Indicators report, suburban sprawl took the stage along with housing affordability. New concerns emerged about the lack of housing close to workplaces, energy efficiency, homelessness and healthy living environments.

Between 2000 and 2006, the report found, housing starts in the region had increased 2

percent to 3,556 new multi-unit and single-unit buildings. Median home values in 2006 were \$122,100 in La Porte County, \$131,300 in Lake County and \$148,500 in Porter County, all exceeding the state median of \$120,700. It was noted that median home values were \$69,100 in Gary and \$96,700 in Hammond. The rate of home ownership, the proportion of households in the region that owned their homes, was 73.1 percent in 2006, compared to 74.2 percent statewide and 68.8 percent nationally.

In 2006, 31.3 percent of Northwest Indiana homeowners had mortgage payments that exceeded 30 percent of their income, the conventional threshold for unaffordability. Among renters, 17.7 percent had rent payments that exceeded 30 percent of their income.

More than 1 in 10 homes in Northwest Indiana were vacant in 2006. In the region overall, 31,277 homes, or 10.7 percent, were vacant. In Gary, 24.6 percent of homes were vacant, and in Hammond the rate was 10 percent.

Reflecting the ongoing real estate crisis, the report noted that foreclosure rates were up 176 percent in Lake County and 195 percent in Porter County during the first quarter of 2008, compared to the same period in 2007.

HOUSING

THE NUMBERS NOW

The effects of the nationwide housing collapse and the ensuing recession are clearly felt in Northwest Indiana. Both homeowners and renters are having a harder time paying for housing, and there are more vacant homes. But long term disparities in housing opportunity remain, as do the environmental and other costs associated with sprawling development.

Housing starts peaked between 2001 and 2005 and then began a sharp decline. Overall, the annual number of housing starts in the region fell from 3,475 in 2000 to 1,297 in 2010, a decline of 63 percent.

There were 818 housing starts in Lake County in 2010, a decline of 58 percent from 2000 and 73 percent from the peak in 2003. Porter County had only 251 housing starts in 2010, down 77 percent from the number in 2000 and 81 percent from the peak in 2003. In La Porte County, there were 228 starts in 2000, down 48 percent from 2000 and 60 percent from the county's peak in 2005.

Average home values continue to rise in the region, but more

homeowners are spending a greater portion of their income on housing.

The average median home value in Northwest Indiana overall was \$145,167 in 2010, an increase of 40 percent from the average value of \$103,867 in 2000. The rate of increase slowed in the second half of the decade. The median home value in Lake County rose 47 percent between 2000 and 2010, to \$141,400. Porter County's median rose 37 percent to \$168,300. La Porte County's median rose 36 percent to \$125,800.

Mortgage payments have become more burdensome, with more than a quarter of the region's homeowners paying more than 30 percent of their household income for housing. In 2010, 28.6 percent of homeowners in Northwest Indiana, or 41,670 households out of 209,343 units, had crossed that threshold, compared to 17.4 percent in 2000.

In Lake County, 31.1 percent of homeowners were at that threshold of unaffordability, up from 19.2 percent in 2000. In Porter County, the proportion

was 28.3 in 2010, up from 16.3 in 2000. In La Porte County, the figure was 26.5 percent in 2010, up from 16.8 percent in 2000.

Rents, too, are harder to afford. The average median rent for the region's 73,138 renters' units in 2010 was \$739, up from \$555 in 2000, a 33 percent increase. In Lake County, the 2010 median rent of \$747 was up 37 percent over the 10 years. In Porter County, the 2010 median rent of \$803 had increased 28 percent since 2000. And in La Porte County, the 2010 median rent of \$667 was up 35 percent since 2000.

More than half of renters in Northwest Indiana are paying more than 30 percent of their household income for housing. The proportion of renters meeting that standard of unaffordability rose to 54.8 percent in 2010 from 33.8 percent in 2000. In Lake County, the proportion was 54.7 percent of renters, up from 36.1 percent in 2000. In Porter County, it had increased to 52.5 percent in 2010 from 32.6 in 2000. In La Porte County, the proportion was 57.2 percent in 2010, up from 32.7

percent in 2000.

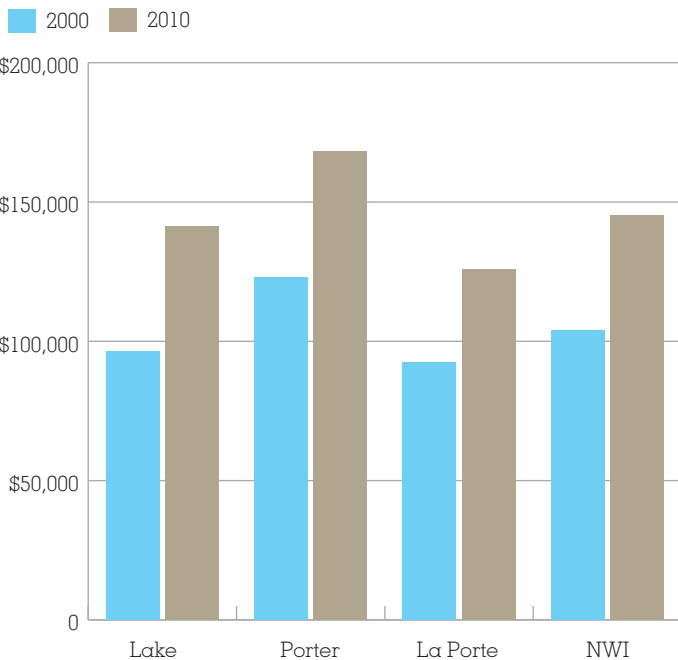
An increasing number of dwelling units are vacant, in a weak housing market in which abandoned or unkempt property can damage property values and breed crime. Of the available housing stock in Northwest Indiana, 9.6 percent were vacant in 2010, compared to 7.3 percent in 2000.

Between 2000 and 2010, the vacancy rate rose from 6.9 to 9.9 percent in Lake County, from 5.1 percent to 6.3 percent in Porter County and from 10 percent to 12.6 percent in La Porte County.

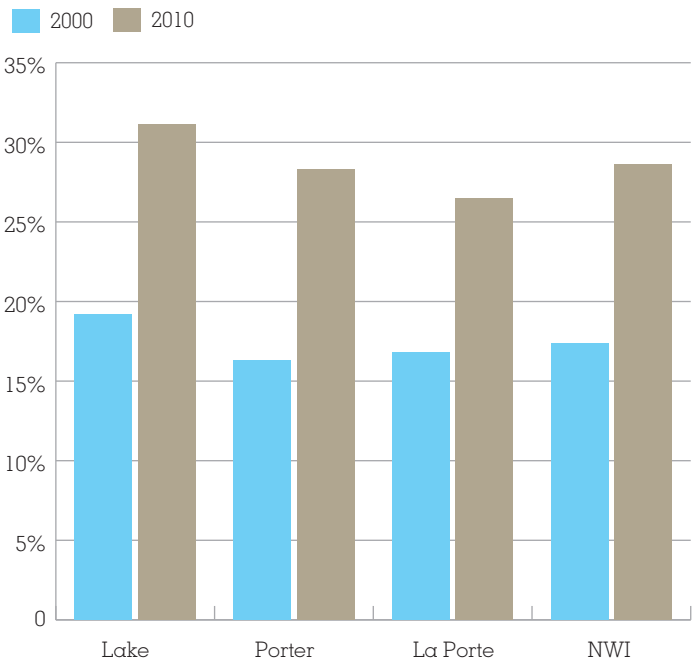
Though data are not readily available to show change in foreclosures, the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago reports that in 2010, 5.15 percent of homes in Lake County were in foreclosure. In Porter County the rate was 3.75 percent and in La Porte County it ranged from 3.76 to 4.46 percent.

Data from the Federal Reserve of New York show that in the third quarter of 2010, the proportion of mortgages that were at least 90 days delinquent was 5.1 percent in Lake County, 3.7 percent in Porter County and 3.1 percent in La Porte County.

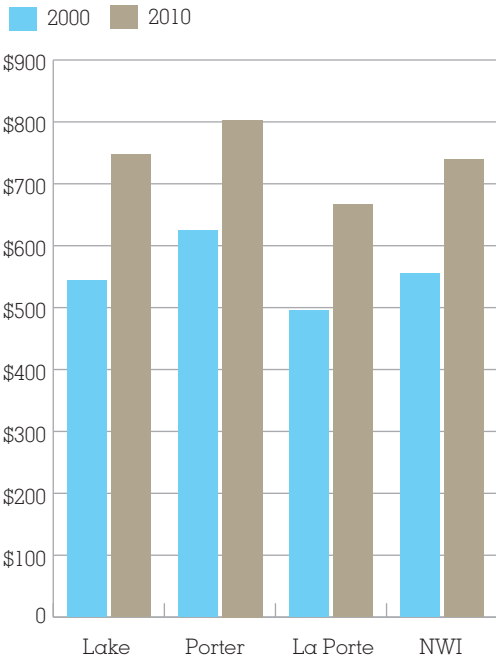
Median Value



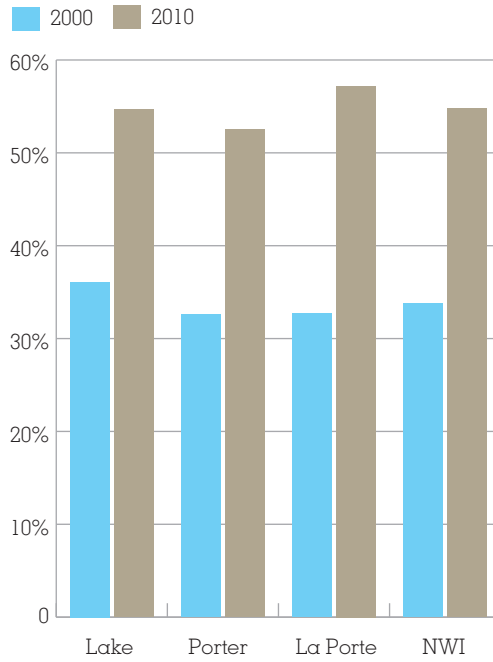
Homeowner Affordability



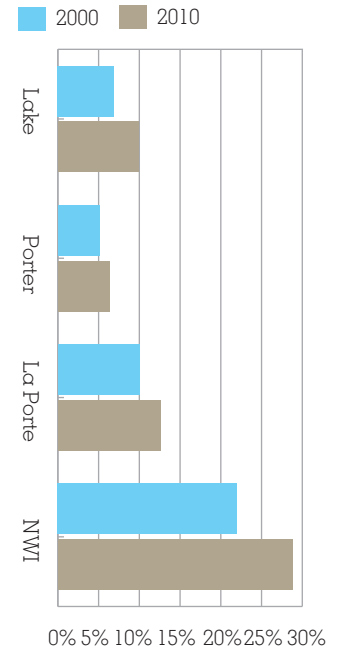
Median Gross Rent



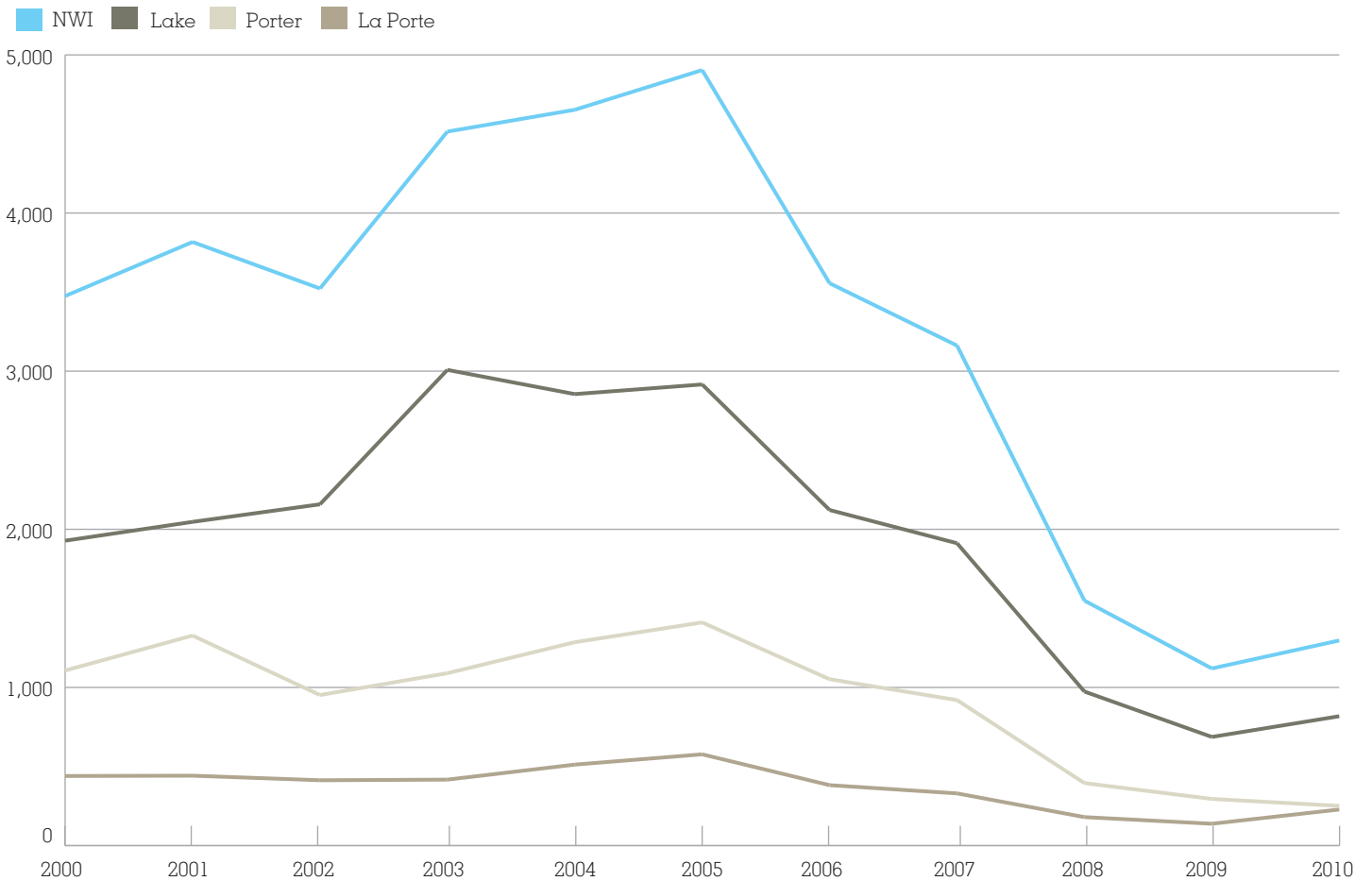
Renter Affordability



Vacant Homes



Housing Starts



HOUSING

WHERE WE STAND

Quality of life means that people have good homes in safe, stable, inclusive neighborhoods, whether these homes are owned or rented. For many in Northwest Indiana, such a life may be getting out of reach.

Northwest Indiana still struggles, like much of the nation, to show strong signs of real estate market recovery. Fewer homes are being built in the region and employment is depressed in the construction trades. A far greater proportion of both homeowners and renters are having a harder time paying for housing, which has substantial implications for the rest of the region's economy.

It is unclear to what extent vacant homes are contributing to increased risks and costs in communities. But Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission's 2040 Comprehensive Plan, Housing section, reported that in the cities of Hammond, East Chicago and Gary, Michigan City and La Porte, between 2 and 15 percent of homes had been abandoned for three years or more.

Home values may still be growing slowly overall, but homeowners who cannot sell their homes, cannot move to change jobs, or to realize their gains, create a drag on the economy.

Segregation in housing by income, ethnicity and race remains a reality. According to US Census figures applied to a segregation index, nearly 9 in 10 whites in Northwest Indiana would have to move to make whites and blacks evenly distributed across all neighborhoods, making the region among the most segregated in the nation. The effects of communities divided by race, ethnicity and income show up in patterns of school achievement and crime, among other factors.

Beyond the immediate crisis, underlying shifts in demographics and other factors will alter the longterm needs and demand for housing in the region. Last century's focus on leaving the urban core behind and developing sprawling, disconnected subdivisions of single-family homes will not meet future needs.

A greater proportion of the population

will be elderly, often with disabilities. More people will live alone without children or in single-parent households. Increasingly, immigrants will bring different ways of living, such as multigenerational extended families sharing homes. The growing proportion of Hispanics may not live as tightly segregated as blacks and whites. Knowledge-based employers will need highly educated and skilled employees who seek more amenities where they live. The financial, environmental and personal costs of long automobile commutes will continue to rise. Northwest Indiana must find ways to offer a wider mix of affordable housing options at various income levels for a more diverse population with more diverse needs and wants.

Adapting to these new realities, and others such as the need for energy efficiency, offers different opportunities for the future. Creative thinking among public officials, planners, architects and builders may lead to different patterns of housing development that create closer communities with more amenities that are less dependent on cars, where it is easier to walk or use public transit and to know your neighbors, where disabled or older people are not isolated or endangered, where a variety of housing options allow families and individuals to remain in the area at different stages of their lives.

A strong housing stock strengthens the tax base so that governments can afford to provide high-quality services. Strong property values encourage private investment and support cultural amenities.

Homeownership can create a sense of attachment and reinforce community bonds, but only if it is genuinely affordable for families. It is understood from the lessons of the housing boom that many homeowners did not have a realistic understanding of what they could afford and what they could afford to risk. Better financial education and disclosures are essential if tomorrow's home market is to be truly sound. But more careful lending will mean that many people will remain renters, and renting makes more sense for many people in any case. So any housing policy must make sure that there are safe, affordable options for renters, too.



WHAT WE NEED TO KNOW

There are substantial gaps in the housing indicators. The Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission can serve as a data resource for land use planning and mapping at the block level, and the Metropolitan Planning Council may provide information on successful housing programs taking place in the Chicago area and elsewhere. Philanthropic organizations, like the Porter

HOUSING

MEDIAN HOME VALUE ▲

MEDIAN GROSS RENT ■

HOMEOWNER AFFORDABILITY ■

RENTER AFFORDABILITY ▼

HOUSING VACANCY ■

HOUSING STARTS ▼

ISSUES TRENDING ▲ IMPROVEMENT ■ STEADY ▼ DECLINE

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US Census, factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=DEC_10_SF1_QTH1&prodType=table
Stats Indiana, www.stats.indiana.edu/topic/housing.asp
US Department of Housing and Urban Development, portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/states/indiana
Center for Neighborhood Technology, htaindex.cnt.org/
Indiana Economic Digest, www.indianaeconomicdigest.net/main.asp?SectionID=31&subsectionID=217&articleID=30924



County Community Foundation, and housing non-profit organizations, are addressing other concerns such as homelessness and Veterans assistance.

A comprehensive listing of housing stakeholders, along with a development of a regional housing strategy, would prove beneficial in addressing particular topics and answering such questions as:

What is the geographic distribution of residents by race and ethnicity, age, income and disability?

Why do people live in racial and ethnic clusters and divisions?

How are these distributions projected to change, and what factors influence their changes?

What are the housing patterns of residents by race and ethnicity, age, income and disability? Where are the disparities?

How is population decline affecting the costs and delivery of public services?

What is the relationship between housing sprawl and affordability?

What is the true effect of housing vacancy and abandonment on communities, in terms of property values, reinvestment, loss of tax base and cost of government services such as

policing and demolition?

Who is homeless in the region, and why?

What is the energy efficiency of the housing stock in Northwest Indiana, according to different housing types? How can that efficiency be improved?

How can we measure the utilization and effectiveness of housing assistance and financial literacy programs?

What tools and incentives could encourage the inclusion of affordable dwellings in future development?

What is demand and supply of transitional housing, residential substance abuse programs, halfway houses, abuse shelters, assistive living facilities and other therapeutic housing?

What is the extent of environmental and health issues related to housing, such as lead paint contamination and tainted wells? How are these problems distributed geographically and by housing type?

Where are the opportunities for transit-oriented development or the development of "green neighborhoods"?

Where are historic preservation ordinances in effect, and what do they say? What is their potential effect on future development?

CALL TO ACTION

Northwest Indiana needs to build the cities and towns of the future. The right way to recover from today's housing problems is not to return to the same type of housing development approach prevalent in the region before 2005, but to plan for a real estate market that will not only create construction jobs and attract investment in the near term but make Northwest Indiana a place where a changing array of people will want to live, work and stay.

Northwest Indiana needs a regional strategy on housing, and as an extension of the NIRPC 2040 Comprehensive Plan's land use frameworks. Among the factors to be considered in planning for the right kinds of housing in the right places are demographics, economy, recreational amenities, safety, education, conservation and affordability.

Perhaps a housing roundtable or task force should be considered. Of particular interest should be property abandonment, and one program model for the region to consider is the City of Indianapolis' Abandoned Housing Initiative.



CULTURE

“WE ASPIRE TO BE A REGION WHERE RESIDENTS EXPERIENCE VIBRANCY, APPRECIATE THE ARTS, ENJOY LIFE AND GIVE BACK TO GOOD CAUSES.”

Residents of Northwest Indiana have opportunities to enrich their lives with the arts and cultural events, through recreational sports, leisure activities, and entertainment – or to enjoy nature and the outdoors. Though visitors contribute substantially to the region's economy, there is much work to be done to gain visibility and broader support for the artistic, cultural and natural amenities of the region.

Philanthropy, in this report, is being tied into this chapter as a way to broaden the dimension of what it means to be a vibrant community. The impact of charitable giving not only supports the arts and cultural organizations, but those investment dollars

spur economic activity, create jobs and leave a legacy well into the future.

A LOOK BACK

The 2000 report described an arts community in Northwest Indiana that was robust and growing, with local organizations representing the visual and performing arts and offering arts education programs. The local arts scene was bolstered by its proximity to Chicago's world-class institutions. The report also identified financial need to support facilities, staffing and outreach activities.

According to a survey conducted by the Indiana Arts Commission cited in the report, 43 percent of the arts organizations in the region were performing groups, 19 percent were gallery and exhibit space and approximately 11 percent each were arts centers, library and secondary school activities. The most popular programming was music, opera or musical theater, arts education, photography and other visual arts.

Nearly 75 percent of the arts organizations had been established for 10 years or more and one-third owned their own facilities. Of the region's art organizations, 45 percent had annual budgets under \$20,000 and 35 percent had budgets exceeding \$500,000. Forty percent of the arts organizations had audiences of less than 1,000 annually and 40 percent had more than 5,000. The goal for the arts was to build the highest quality and fullest involvement in the visual and performing arts as a vital component of a high quality of life in Northwest Indiana.

Considering recreation separately, the



report pointed to the Lake Michigan shoreline as the region's greatest asset for recreation and tourism. It also noted the entertainment offered by casino gambling.

Northwest Indiana had 728 outdoor recreational sites, with 526 in Lake County, 128 in Porter County and 74 in La Porte County. Natural areas and parks attracted millions of visitors; the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore alone had more than 2 million visitors a year.

Casinos generated the most tax revenue and annual admissions. In 1996, over 21 million people visited the four casinos in the region and between 1996 and 1999, \$686.8 million was raised in gaming tax revenue.

The goal the report stated for recreation and tourism was to ensure that Northwest Indiana residents and visitors had appropriate access to the highest quality regional parks and amenities within the capacity of the region. The call to action was that the region should consider allocating a portion of the proceeds from the casino gambling to

support improvements in regional tourism and residents' quality of life.

In 2004, arts and recreation were combined into a single vision of a region that appreciated the arts and celebrated life as part of the full experience of balanced living. The authors lamented that the region was better known among Chicagoans for unsavory advertisements on prominent billboards along its highways than for its artistic, cultural and natural assets. The call to action was to formulate a cultural plan for Northwest Indiana, rebrand the region and continue funding the arts and physical education in public schools.

The report cited the Lake Area United Way "State of Giving Report," which found that there were 105 nonprofit organizations in Lake County alone focused on arts, culture and humanities. Regionally, cultural activities included art centers, symphony, theater, music, festivals and public lectures. Outdoor recreational amenities were said to have a significant economic impact, although specific dollars were not presented.

The 2008 report added an aspect of arts and culture, an aspiration to be a creative community that values innovation and a sense of play. It argued that creativity and collaboration could give the region an "arts advantage" that would contribute toward economic vitality and quality of life. Key findings included an increase to 260 arts nonprofits in the region by 2008, up 2 percent from 2004. Annual revenues of arts-related nonprofits were unchanged at approximately \$17.3 million. Funding of arts and culture through the Indiana Arts Commission had declined from \$278,519 in 2004 to \$209,333 in 2008 with an average award of \$7,754.

Collaboration and partnerships were seen as strategies for strengthening the arts and cultural movement in the region. Arts districts were seen as a possible conduit, although no specific strategies were outlined for creating them. In the report, arts education was associated with higher-level thinking and creative output that could bolster educational performance particularly in the sciences.

THE NUMBERS NOW

Funding to Northwest Indiana through the Indiana Arts Commission grew 12 percent between 2001 and 2010, from \$142,647 to \$187,679. The number of grants awarded in the region also increased from 21 in 2001 to 32 in 2010, while the average grant amount fell 12 percent from \$6,793 to \$5,865.

According to South Shore Arts' new metrics, its 31 grant recipients served 1.6 million people in fiscal year 2012. Of that number, 73,358 people directly participated in 1,925 activities. The organization served 11,707 artists, including 1,911 under the age of 18 years and 539 who were disabled. Arts activities were supported by contributions of time from 5,442 volunteers.

The Indiana Arts Commission found that in 2009, Northwest Indiana had 1,001 arts-related businesses and 5,248 workers employed in connection with the arts. By 2012 that figure had increased to 1,503 businesses and 11,432 workers, according to the Americans for the Arts' 2012 study of creative industries in Indiana. In the three counties, about 3 percent of businesses are related to the arts.

Northwest Indiana's recreational amenities, including the major casinos, attract millions of tourists each year. Visitors stayed an average of 2.2 days and typically traveled in a party of 3.7 people, according to figures from 2009 and 2010. A majority of visitors surveyed in those

years came from nearby Illinois, Indiana, Michigan and Ohio, but the region also saw visitors from Minnesota, New Jersey, Texas, Florida, and Canada.

The top attractions were each of the four casinos, downtown Chicago, the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, the Indiana Dunes State Park, the Lighthouse Place Outlets and Westfield shopping malls, the Albanese Confectionary, local restaurants, sports events and other attractions such as Deep River Water Park, Zao Island, and Washington Park Zoo.

According to data from 2009 and 2010, Northwest Indiana's tourism and travel industry provided 8,049 jobs and \$141.0 million in wages on average per year. Taxes generated through income and sales taxes connected to tourism and travel averaged \$300.5 million per year.

Visitors spent nearly \$834.7 million on average in the region per year, 37 percent on attractions, 23 percent on food and beverages, 21 percent on shopping, 8 percent on transportation, 7 percent on lodging and 4 percent on souvenirs.

The tourism industry is largest in Lake County, where visitors spent \$1.62 billion in 2010. La Porte County had \$572.3 million in tourism revenue in 2010, while Porter County had \$311.5 million in tourism revenue in 2009 (2010 data was not available).

Arts and other forms of

recreation that improve the quality of our lives depend heavily on philanthropy, a vital force in lively metropolitan areas such as Chicago. Philanthropy in Northwest Indiana is not insignificant; the region's residents gave more than \$230.2 million in personal income to charity annually as of 2008. But overall, they are less generous than average.

The average annual total charitable donation in the region, including donations to churches, was \$1,940, or about 3.6 percent of the region's median income of \$53,785. That is lower than both the state average of 4.5 percent and the national average of 4.7 percent.

Lake County residents gave at the highest rate, about 4.1 percent of their median income, while Porter County residents gave 3.6 percent and La Porte County residents gave 3.2 percent.

Human services, health and education were the focus of more nonprofit activity in the region than the arts, the environment, international affairs or civil rights. There were 3.76 human services organizations per 10,000 people on average in the region. But human services organizations received private contributions and government funding of \$154.33 per 10,000 people. Health activities received \$92.67 on average, while the arts received \$6.33 in funding per 10,000 people and environmental organizations got \$12.

There were 3,626 registered nonprofit organizations in Northwest Indiana in 2010, making up 9 percent of Indiana's nonprofit sector. The number of nonprofits was up 18 percent from 3,074 in 2000. Of the 3,626 registered nonprofits, 2,154 filed the federal tax form 990 in 2010, compared to 1,150 that filed in 2000, a rise of 87 percent.

Both total revenues and total assets of nonprofit organizations in Northwest Indiana grew from 2000 to 2010. Total revenues reached \$2.6 billion in 2010, an increase of 74 percent from \$1.5 billion in 2000. Total assets climbed to \$4.4 billion in 2010, up 50 percent from \$2.9 billion in 2000.

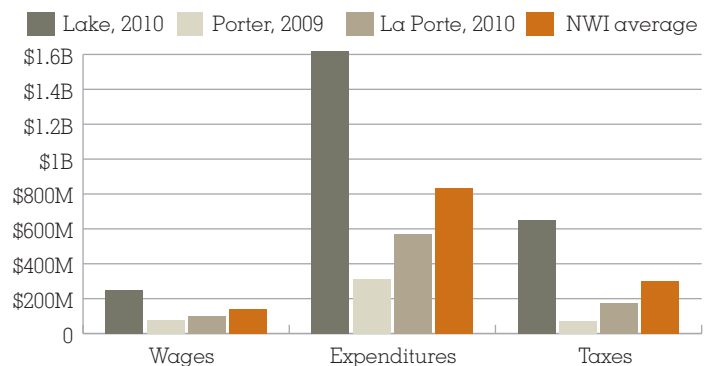
That growth lagged the 80 percent increase in nonprofit revenue statewide but beat the 42 percent statewide increase in assets managed. The greatest concentration of nonprofit assets was in Lake County, with \$2.8 billion, followed by Porter County with \$1 billion and La Porte with \$637.2 million.

In 2011, the median amount of assets held by Northwest Indiana nonprofits was \$144,298. Though 61 percent of nonprofits claimed no assets at all, 7 percent were valued \$1 million or more, 13 percent at between \$100,000 and \$1 million and 18 percent at less than \$100,000. Lake County had 1,954 nonprofits, Porter County had 678 and La Porte County had 559.

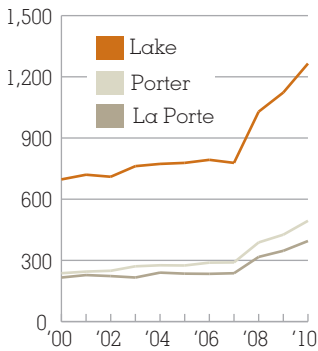
Economic Impact of Tourism and Travel Industry: Expenditures by Sector per Person, Per Day

	Lake (2010)	Porter (2009)	La Porte (2010)	NWI Ave
Lodging	\$116.76	\$92.62	\$106.20	\$105.19
Attractions	\$24.84	\$39.00	\$57.21	\$40.35
Visits to Friends & Relatives	\$53.83	\$52.61	\$67.14	\$57.86
Pass Through	\$33.03	\$16.08	\$29.80	\$26.30
Campgrounds	NA	\$23.09	\$51.15	\$37.12

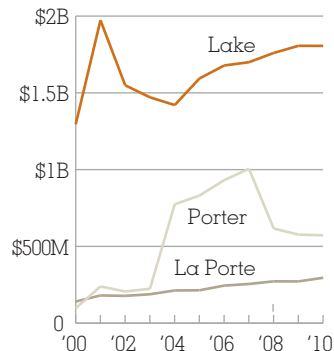
Economic Impact of Tourism and Travel Industry



Registered Nonprofits Filing Form 990



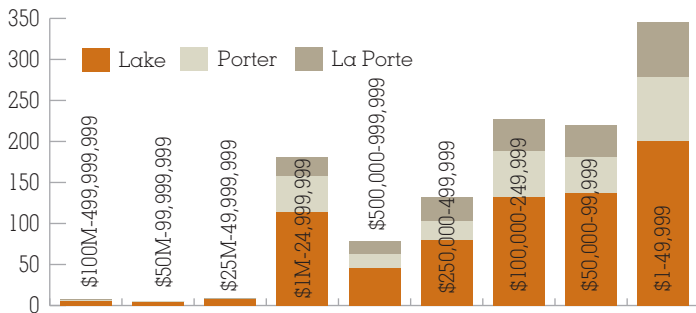
Total Nonprofit Revenue Reported on Form 990



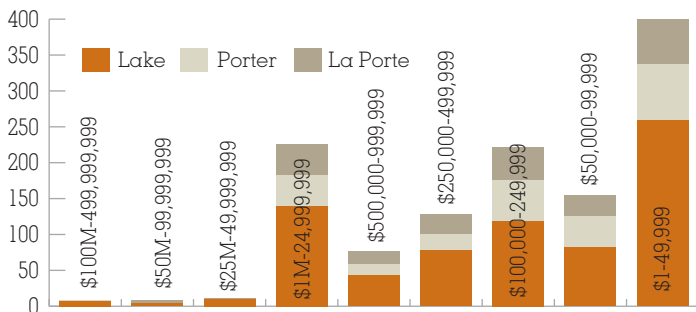
Nonprofit Public Charities Activities, per 10,000 People, 2010

Arts	Lake	Porter	La Porte	NWI Av.
Number of Organizations	0.66	0.68	1.39	0.91
Contributions & Govt. Grants	\$10.00	\$2.00	\$7.00	\$6.33
Total Revenue	\$23.00	\$6.00	\$17.00	\$15.33
Total Expenses	\$24.00	\$7.00	\$13.00	\$14.67
Total Assets	\$31.00	\$11.00	\$27.00	\$23.00
Education				
Number of Organizations	1.40	1.57	0.93	1.30
Contributions & Govt. Grants	\$79.00	\$ 89.00	\$1.00	\$56.33
Total Revenue	\$183.00	\$941.00	\$2.00	\$375.33
Total Expenses	\$166.00	\$989.00	\$2.00	\$385.67
Total Assets	\$313.00	\$3,385.00	\$3.00	\$1,233.67
Environment				
Number of Organizations	0.31	0.48	-	0.26
Contributions & Govt. Grants	\$5.00	\$31.00	-	\$12.00
Total Revenue	\$7.00	\$36.00	-	\$14.33
Total Expenses	\$4.00	\$16.00	-	\$6.67
Total Assets	\$9.00	\$78.00	-	\$29.00
Health				
Number of Organizations	1.05	1.09	1.39	1.18
Contributions & Govt. Grants	\$150.00	\$91.00	\$37.00	\$92.67
Total Revenue	\$2,748.00	\$483.00	\$8,837.00	\$4,022.67
Total Expenses	\$2,642.00	\$464.00	\$8,477.00	\$3,861.00
Total Assets	\$2,428.00	\$329.00	\$10,514.00	\$4,423.67
Human Services				
Number of Organizations	3.53	4.97	2.78	3.76
Contributions & Govt. Grants	\$105.00	\$273.00	\$85.00	\$154.33
Total Revenue	\$254.00	\$503.00	\$360.00	\$372.33
Total Expenses	\$251.00	\$509.00	\$372.00	\$377.33
Total Assets	\$292.00	\$738.00	\$426.00	\$485.33
International				
Number of Organizations	0.10	0.20	-	0.10
Contributions & Govt. Grants	\$30.00	\$51.00	-	\$27.00
Total Revenue	\$30.00	\$51.00	-	\$27.00
Total Expenses	\$30.00	\$47.00	-	\$25.67
Total Assets	\$1.00	\$58.00	-	\$19.67
Civil Rights				
Number of Organizations	0.04	0.14	-	0.06
Contributions & Govt. Grants	-	\$1.00	-	\$0.33
Total Revenue	-	\$1.00	-	\$0.33
Total Expenses	-	\$1.00	-	\$0.33
Total Assets	-	\$1.00	-	\$0.33
Other				
Number of Organizations	1.44	1.77	0.46	1.22
Contributions & Govt. Grants	\$128.00	\$48.00	-	\$58.67
Total Revenue	\$279.00	\$77.00	\$5.00	\$120.33
Total Expenses	\$264.00	\$75.00	\$3.00	\$114.00
Total Assets	\$1,044.00	\$366.00	\$74.00	\$494.67

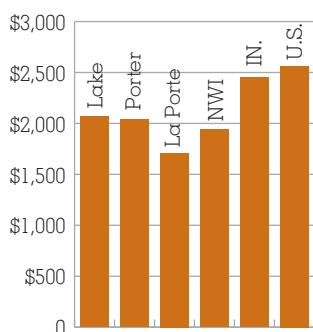
Number of Nonprofit Organizations by Gross Receipts, 2011



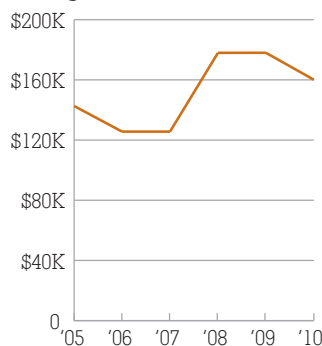
Number of Nonprofit Organizations by Total Assets, 2011



Median Contributions of Charitable Giving, 2008



Block Grant Award to Region 1



WHERE WE STAND

Though phenomenal arts, recreation and leisure, and natural experiences exist in Northwest Indiana and branding messages are improving, a vibrant and modern cultural identity has not fully materialized to reposition Northwest Indiana in the marketplace. Many assets lack high visibility, unifying cultural brand strategy, broad marketing reach, and deep philanthropic support that would enhance the region's image with visitors, investors and potential home buyers or attract more creative industries and jobs that provide related goods and services.

The arts in Northwest Indiana rely heavily on federal and state funding. Charitable giving in Northwest Indiana is low, and the arts are not a high priority for donors. As with many aspects of life in Northwest Indiana, the arts tend to be standalone and would benefit from deeper integration with economic development, community development and public education efforts.

The tourism and travel industry is large and growing, affecting all sectors of the economy. Casino gaming plays a major role in the level of tourism and related spending in the region. Of greater impact may be the reliance of public sector investment using casino revenues to support local economic development and municipal projects as other sources of funds grow scarce.

The Lake Michigan shoreline is the region's defining characteristic and the fact that much of that shoreline is protected by national and state parks is among its greatest assets. Yet it is not clear that these natural assets are appreciated in the region, visible beyond the region or fully supported and marketed to the extent that they could be. Many residents of Chicago, the nation's third-largest city an hour away, do not know that the national park exists. Within the region, the effects of the shoreline, as a recreational amenity for residents, as an attraction to visitors, as an economic engine, are not clearly known.

In every healthy region, philanthropy is an important factor in the quality of life. Although there has been an increase in the

number of nonprofits and the asset base appears relatively solid, considering the current investment conditions, the nonprofit community's effectiveness, financial health and collective impact are not fully understood.

Creating support for the arts and for nature must begin with residents of Northwest Indiana taking advantage of the resources and opportunities that are already available in their back yard. But there is much more to discover and to do before Northwest Indiana can be perceived as a region of cultural, recreational and natural richness.

WHAT WE NEED TO KNOW

Among the topics on which more information is needed are these:

What are the trends in arts education in the K-12 schools and at our universities and colleges? Are the arts gaining or losing ground?

How do Northwest Indiana residents engage in the arts both locally and in Chicago region? Conversely, how are Northwest Indiana institutions positioned to attract patrons from Chicago or its suburbs? What types of arts-related programs and activities are needed?

What is the economic impact of the arts on the economy of Northwest Indiana? What are the types of occupations and jobs in demand? Which cities and towns are leveraging the arts as part of an economic development and quality of life strategy?

How are individual artists supported and promoted? How does art advocacy support both artists and arts and cultural organizations?

If funding is a major barrier to growing the arts, what alternative mechanisms should be considered to retain and expand arts education, arts programs and public art?

How many visitors attend our major natural areas and recreational venues, both private and public? Where do they come from, how long do they stay and how much do they spend? How does this compare to



Northwest Indiana residents? What are the local patterns of use?

What is the economic impact of the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, the Indiana Dunes State Park and other Lake Michigan city parks and beaches?

How are the county parks and recreation systems used and by whom? To what extent do the various jurisdictions that hold natural areas cooperate to attract and serve visitors? Would the region benefit from forming a regional park district system?

CULTURE

INDIANA ARTS COMMISSION FUNDING	▲
ECONOMIC IMPACT OF TOURISM, TRAVEL INDUSTRY	▲
CHARITABLE GIVING	■
CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES	■
REVENUES AND ASSETS OF NONPROFITS	▲
REGISTERED NONPROFITS	▲

ISSUES TRENDING ▲ IMPROVEMENT ■ STEADY ▼ DECLINE

LEARN MORE

Indiana Arts Commission, www.in.gov/arts/index.htm
 Indiana Dunes Tourism, www.indianadunes.com/
 LaPorte County Tourism, www.michiganacitylaporte.com/
 Legacy Foundation, www.legacyfdn.org/
 National Center for Charitable Statistics, www.nccs.urban.org/
 Porter County Community Foundation, www.portercountyfoundation.org
 South Shore Arts Association, www.southshoreartsonline.org/
 South Shore Convention and Visitors Authority, www.southshorecva.com/



How do the major attractions and recreational amenities in Northwest Indiana compare to other venues in the Midwest region?

What is the economic impact of the nonprofit sector on Northwest Indiana's economy? What major needs are being served and which are being neglected? What are the major challenges faced? How can charitable giving make an impact? What metrics should be developed to measure the nonprofit community's collective impact?

Why does charitable giving in Northwest Indiana lag state and national averages?

How are the grant-making priorities of community and private foundations and economic development and community development priorities aligned to leverage more funds and produce greater impact?

CALL TO ACTION

The arts can powerfully enrich the quality of life in a community. Whether as artists or audience, the lives of all people, especially children, can be broadened and heightened

by exposure to the arts. The presence of the arts in a community also is powerful in the perception of its quality of life, not only by residents but by visitors, investors and potential home buyers. More needs to be done to integrate the arts into every aspect of quality of life.

As part of looking at past success, Northwest Indiana should consider updating the community assessment survey and the regional cultural plan of South Shore Arts. Reinstating the annual Arts Summit, with a broader purpose, could foster greater collaboration and coordination among the various stakeholders as well as expand interests. Due to funding cuts, these strategic documents are outdated and regional convenings have diminished. Yet a collaborative framework is already in place through its Regional Arts Council.

One Region and South Shore Arts, using the Regional Arts Council, could initiate an action group to examine the role of the arts and develop a regional arts & cultural strategy for further connecting the arts to community and economic development and education.

The Marquette Plan, a lakefront redevelopment strategy, will be updated with a cultural framework and assets mapping in the coming year. Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission and the Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority received state funding from the Lake Michigan Coastal Program. This addition to the plan presents an opportunity to convene stakeholders and would highlight opportunities for historic preservation and cultural celebration.

Another opportunity is the creation of cultural districts either independently or as part of the Indiana Statewide Cultural District program. Although there is no funding offered by the state, this special designation elevates marketing and promotions of local arts and artists.

Additionally, artists, with little income, seek places where studio space is cheap. The consumers of art, who tend to have money to spend, follow them. Communities should consider the reuse of old industrial and commercial buildings for artists' lofts and studios as one tactic for neighborhood revitalization.

Open space and recreational opportunities in nature also are important in that perception. Though the region is exceptionally blessed with natural areas readily accessible to residents and visitors, and more tourism focus is placed on them, neither residents nor visitors fully take advantage of these natural amenities.

The region needs a comprehensive strategy to both promote and protect the shoreline, for the sake of residents, visitors and the natural areas themselves. A 2011 report by the National Parks Conservation Association on the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore outlines a series of recommendations to preserve and enhance the impact of the park, including a leadership role for the National Lakeshore in integrating the park more deeply into economic and community development arenas. This can serve as a starting place for a serious, thoughtful effort to make the Dunes central to the identity and image of Northwest Indiana.

Entertainment venues, amateur sports and leisure activities continue to attract residents and visitors to the area. More communities are examining how such facilities can bring more athletes and sports enthusiasts to town for tournaments. A regional approach to developing a sports and recreation-based tourism could bolster Northwest Indiana's potential market niche.

Another worthwhile effort was the 2003 State of Giving Report published by the Lake Area United Way, which looked at the nonprofit community of Lake County. One Region, in partnership with the three United Ways and three community foundations should assess the value of carrying out a similar project on a regional scale.



GOVERNMENT

“WE ASPIRE TO BE A REGION SERVED BY EFFICIENT, EFFECTIVE, TRANSPARENT AND ACCOUNTABLE GOVERNMENTS THAT VALUE THE INVOLVEMENT OF ENGAGED AND CARING CITIZENS.”

Northwest Indiana is a patchwork of local governments, often overlapping, that share many problems. They also share a history of division, suspicion, conflicting interests and sometimes hostility that makes cooperation on major issues difficult, as well as a legacy of public corruption that undermines citizens' trust in government.

In today's tough economic climate, many of the region's governments are struggling to deliver essential public services and plan for the future as tax revenues fall, budgets contract, populations decline and tax bases shrink. Other communities are more stable or even growing, but they still must plan how to deliver more efficient and effective government to an increasing population with limited

revenue. The reality is that units of government can no longer afford to go it alone.

A LOOK BACK

In the 2000 Northwest Indiana Quality of Life Indicators Report, the goal was “to produce a system of regional governance that protects the integrity of local units of government while providing regional policies and initiatives to reduce revenue disparities, increase efficiencies, and focus the region's resources on solving regional priorities.” The report saw a need for regional organizations to coordinate planning on priorities including economic development, land use, public

transit, air quality, watershed management and coordination of human services.

The report saw Northwest Indiana as a complex governmental mosaic, characterized by divisions into many local units of government, each with limited geography and functions but often with redundant programs and overlapping services. Northwest Indiana had 78.8 percent more local governments than the average of metropolitan areas in the nation. The number of agencies made it difficult to coordinate activities to solve regional problems that crossed jurisdictional boundaries, as well as increasing the cost of government and property tax burden. The report saw a need for a system of governance that could effectively deal with regional problems while protecting the integrity of local units of government.

Under a previous system of tax assessment and collection, average property tax rates in 2000 were 17.39 percent of assessed valuation in Lake County; 9.51 percent in Porter County; and 9.16 percent in La Porte County, compared to the Indiana statewide average of 8.4 percent. Schools received almost 44 cents of every tax dollar, with 32 cents going to municipalities, 21 cents to county government



and 3 cents to townships.

The number of people registered to vote increased by 10.8 percent between 1990 and 1998, although the report did not provide numbers or proportions of registered voters. The number of voters who turned out to vote in 1998 was 14.7 percent higher than in 1990, although the report did not provide turnout percentages.

The report's authors saw that local governments provide a sense of community and political identification that can be effective for day-to-day delivery of services and offer opportunities for participatory democracy and enriching civic life. But to build a better community and foster a higher quality of life, the report saw a need for regional structures and leadership to solve problems that cross jurisdictional boundaries and are beyond the reach of individual units of government. The greatest challenge facing leadership in Northwest Indiana, the report said, was to find the will to agree on regional policies and the fortitude to abide by these policies once they are set.

The 2004 report stated the ideal community of engaged and caring citizens' vote, understand the value of public goods and

reinvest in community. The report saw voter turnout and charitable giving as two indicators of civic engagement, although it did not drill down on philanthropy in the region.

The property tax burden was an ongoing concern, with widespread dissatisfaction and disagreement over how the tax burden was allocated and how taxes were spent.

The report's authors urged all units of local government in Northwest Indiana to commit themselves to a broad range of public engagement strategies that collectively held promise both to restore the public's confidence in the public sector and to expand its capacity to serve. It urged strategies for consolidating redundant functions through intergovernmental agreements and other forms of collaboration. It also called for local governments to develop and adopt robust ethics guidelines. And it called for the creation of a council of governments at the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission and support of the then, newly-established Local Government Academy.

In the 2008 report, the two greatest issues were seen as the extent of public corruption and the impact of new laws capping property

tax revenue. Given that tax caps were expected to reduce tax revenues, the report saw a need for greater efficiencies in government. But Northwest Indiana was seen as slow to implement the recommendations of the 2007 Kernan-Shepard Report on streamlining local government.

The fact that both voter turnout and nonprofit revenue in the region lagged behind statewide averages was seen as evidence that Northwest Indiana was not yet a caring and engaged community. Voter turnout in the region had lagged state turnout over the past five general elections. In philanthropy, the number of nonprofits in the region remained steady between 2004 and 2008, while revenues per capita grew slightly.

The average gross property tax rate in 2006 was 4.5 percent of assessed valuation in Lake County, 2.53 in Porter County and 2.8 percent in La Porte County. Total spending by all local units of government in 2006 was \$1.4 billion in Lake County, \$367 million in Porter County and \$249 million in La Porte County. At the time of the 2008 report, a major restructuring of the tax system was under debate but had not yet been implemented.

GOVERNMENT

THE NUMBERS NOW

Recent major changes in the property tax system, the source of most local government revenue, have had a major effect on governments' budgets and operations. But with governments still adapting to the changes, the full impact is not yet revealed in the overall trends.

The new structure of property tax controls are driven from market-based property assessments, unlike the old system. It caps the total property tax to be paid at 1 percent of assessed valuation for residential property, 2 percent for commercial and agricultural property and 3 percent for industrial property.

From 2000 to 2010, the total net assessed valuation of property (adjusted for 2001 tax formula changes) in Northwest Indiana increased 87 percent or \$15.7 billion, from \$18.0 billion to \$33.7 billion. In 2010, Lake County's net assessed valuation was \$20.0 billion, Porter County at \$8.6 billion and La Porte County at \$5.1 billion.

Total budget appropriations, the sum of spending by all local units of government in Northwest Indiana, rose 50 percent or \$717 million, from \$1.4 billion in 2000 to \$2.1 billion in 2010. Total budget appropriations increased in each of the three counties over the 10-year period. But beginning in 2007, the tax cap law started to slow government spending, although

it affected some communities much more than others.

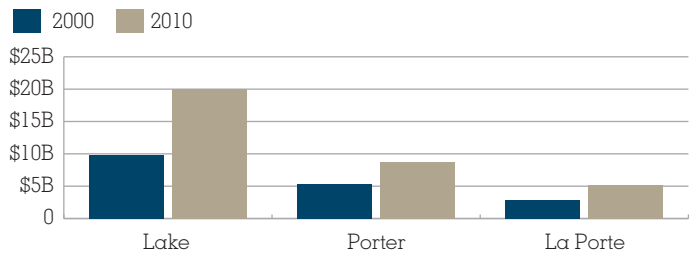
Governmental expenditures per capita fell 36 percent on average in the region, from \$1,793 in 2000 to \$1,148 in 2010. Lake County spending fell 75 percent to \$512 per capita in 2010. Porter County's was \$412 per capita. Only La Porte County grew, by 62 percent to \$2,505. These changes, though, are partially due to changes in the way the State of Indiana reports this data.

Voter registration in the region was mixed from 2000 to 2010. The number of voters registered for general elections in the region remained relatively steady at an average of 508,677 registrants during the decade – on average about 331,621 in Lake County, 97,408 in Porter County and 79,659 in La Porte County.

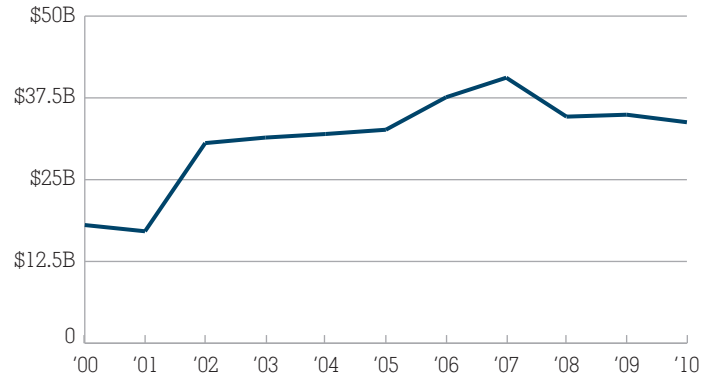
General election turnout averaged about 48 percent in general elections during the decade, usually within two or three percentage points of state and national turnout percentages. As in the state and the nation, turnout spiked in presidential election years, with a peak of 68 percent – higher than the statewide and national turnout – in the general election of 2008.

In primary elections, voter turnout in Northwest Indiana averaged 18 percent during the decade, with a spike to 47 percent in 2008.

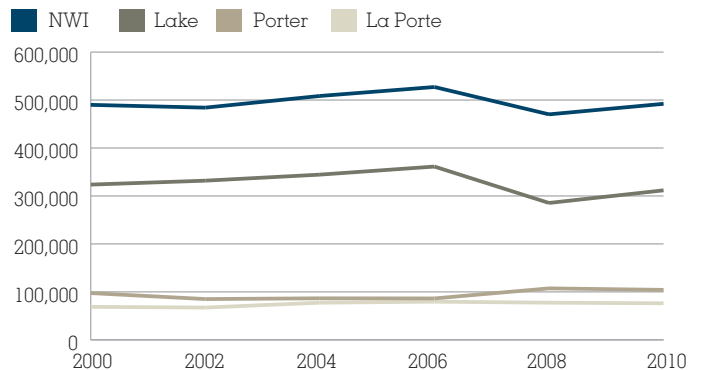
Certified Net Assessed Valuation



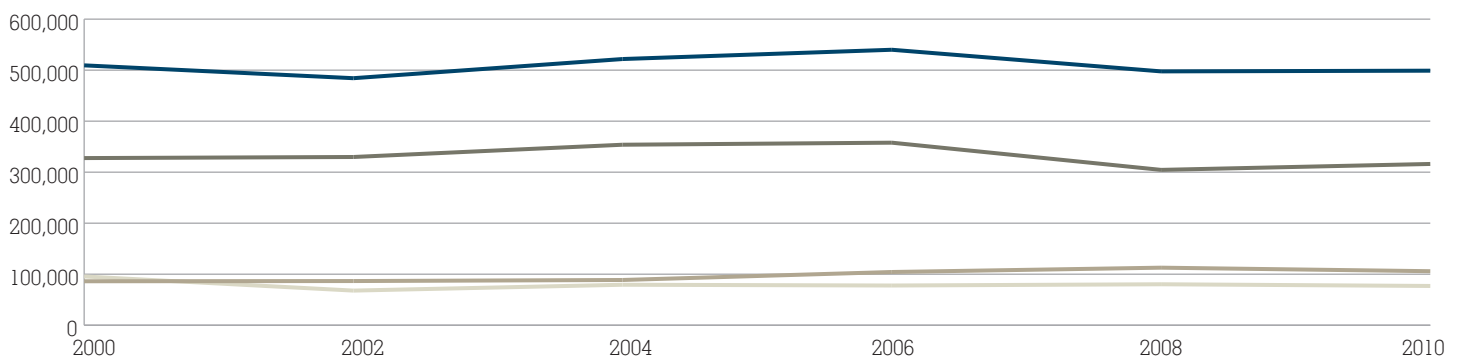
Certified Net Assessed Valuation



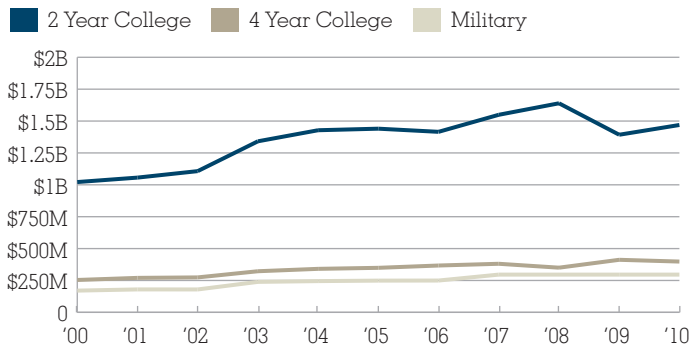
Primary Election, Registered Voters



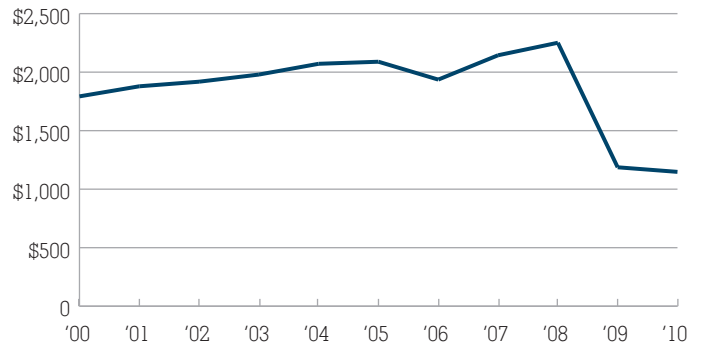
General Election, Registered Voters



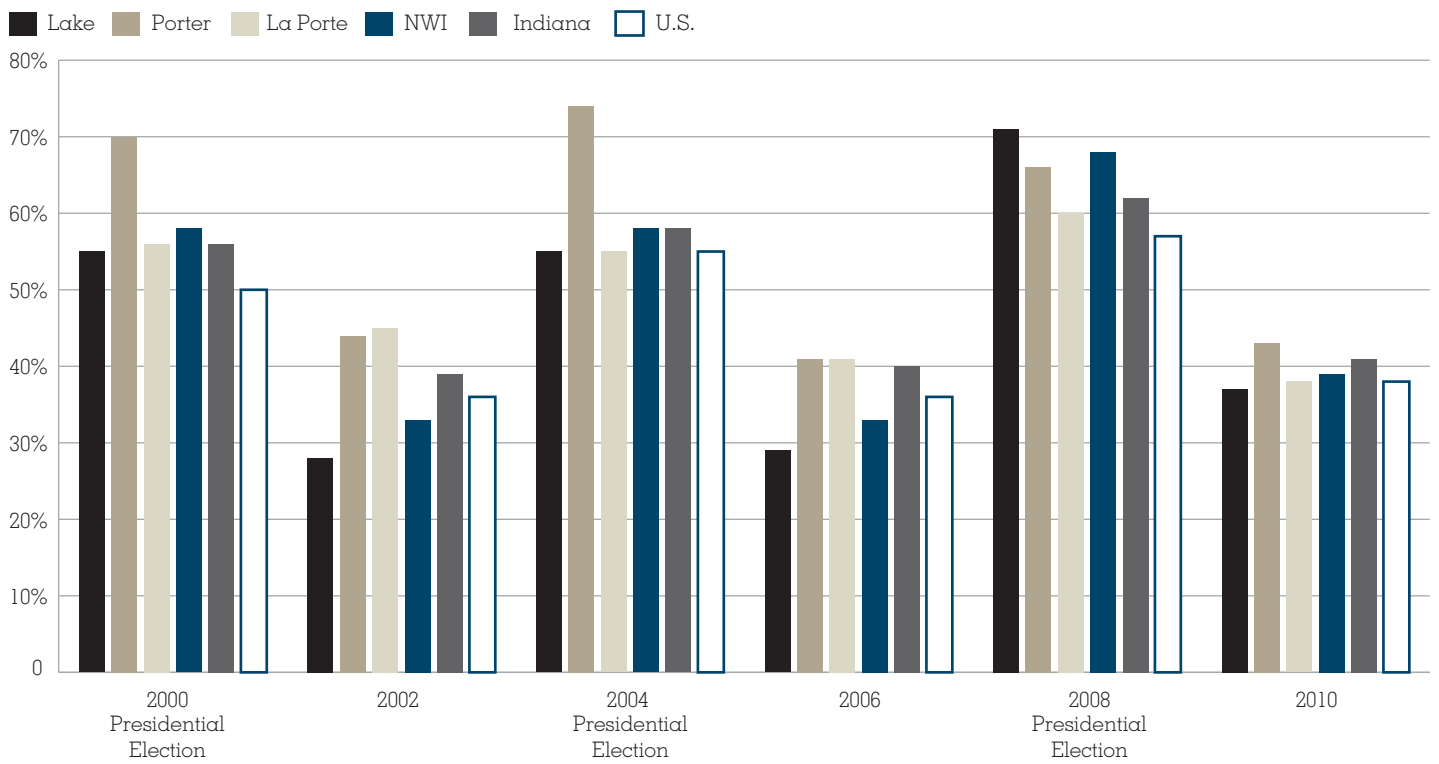
Total Budget Appropriations



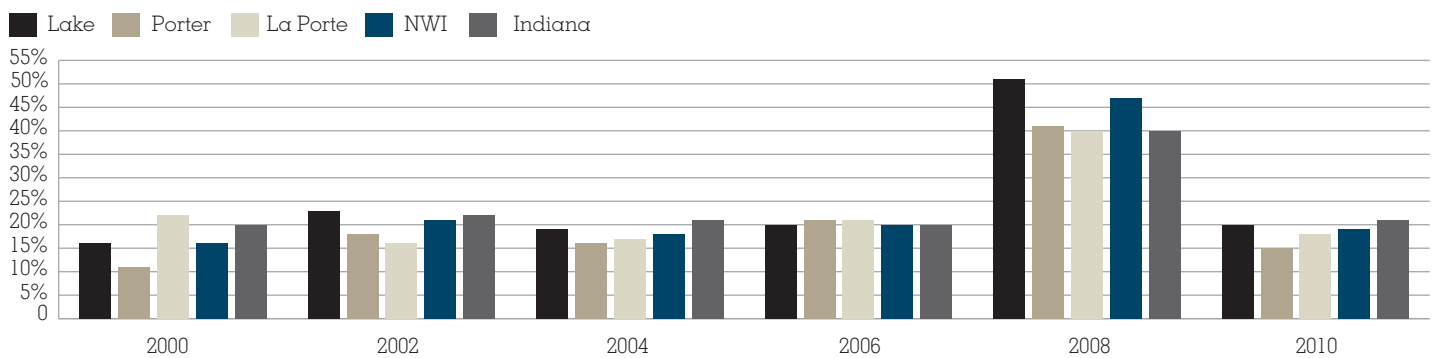
Expenditures per Capita for NWI



General Election, Voter Turnout



Primary Election, Voter Turnout



GOVERNMENT

WHERE WE STAND

Northwest Indiana still is a long way from efficient, effective government. In 2007, the Kernan-Shepard Report identified ways for local government to become more efficient and described tools that could assist government agencies in consolidating resources and streamlining operations. But no action plan was created and no local metrics were devised to track whether there was any impact on government organization, spending or services. In 2012, there is little evidence of progress in the area of government reform in Northwest Indiana.

Local governments are still struggling to adapt to the new reality of tax caps that limit their revenue. The current recession, which has further cut budgets and increased demands for human services, is an added challenge, as are accumulated pension obligations for employees. These strained circumstances make it all the more urgent for local governments to streamline their operations, seek opportunities to combine services and eliminate redundancies, cooperate on common issues or to combine buying power and innovate to deliver essential public services from smaller budgets.

Public corruption remains a persistent reality and a risk to public revenue, leading to all too many scandals and prosecutions of elected and appointed officials. Several strides are being made, through regional initiatives, to address ethical standards and practices in local government. The future outcomes of which should reinforce the value of serving to uphold the public trust.

WHAT WE NEED TO KNOW

The confusion surrounding the recent shift in the property tax system is responsible for only some of the gaps in what we know about government and how it operates in Northwest Indiana. Among the questions that beg to be answered are:

How are public dollars being spent by individual units of government and in various

municipalities?

How much government revenue comes from sales taxes, casinos and other non-property tax sources?

Does an overreliance on some sources of revenue, such as property taxes and casino revenue, inhibit our ability to creatively finance other public works or incentivize private development?

Are there other revenue sources, such as a county income tax, that ought to be considered?

How can we measure what individual governments actually do and how efficiently they do it?

How much revenue do governments spend per capita and on what?

How do the services that Northwest Indiana governments provide compare to each other and to peer communities across the state and nation? What measures can meaningfully compare the extent of services provided?

How are employee pension obligations affecting local government budgets now and in the future?

How can we measure the impact of public corruption and ethical failings in government and their cost to taxpayers? How can we track progress in reducing corruption?

How does public corruption affect citizens' confidence in government and willingness to participate in government?

What is the full range of financial impacts of the property tax caps on local units of government, on property values, on home buying and on private-sector investment?

How can the region increase voter registration and turnout?

What measures could track transparency in government? Could these measures include how fast local governments respond to FOIA requests, or how much of their budget and other information is online?

How do we create stronger community bonds that foster community engagement in democratic processes? What factors inhibit participation in government and local democracy?

within their new and usually smaller means. To improve the quality of life in Northwest Indiana, government agencies must work together, across jurisdictions and with the public and non-profit sectors, in new and innovative ways to make their operations more efficient, to provide the services their communities need, to attract investments that could strengthen the local economy and to leverage resources for projects and programs that no single unit of government could undertake alone.

One Region might lead in creating an action plan under the Committee for Better Government for streamlining local government, based on the recommendations of the 2007 Kernan-Shepard Report

In return, citizens must take a more active role in government, engaging in constructive dialogue and community action to ensure that more voices are heard in shaping the region and that all levels of government are transparent and accountable for the decisions they make, the services they provide and the money they spend.

A more engaged citizenry could raise the standard of official conduct by using their votes to express their intolerance for those who profit from public office and abuse the law for private gain. All local governments should adopt strict ethics policies and demand that they be followed. Training might help establish a new understanding of government ethics, perhaps through the assistance of the Shared Ethics Advisory Commission.

Government should be transparent and accountable. Local governments should make public information readily available in a timely manner, including tax, spending and budget data, agency or department performance and return on investment in programs and subsidies. One Region might lead in developing tools and standards for how statistical data is presented and by setting up and maintaining a centralized, public data source.

That information should help citizens in all of Northwest Indiana understand and judge how their governments function, reduce mistrust of government and encourage participation and encourage caring citizens to become more engaged in solving the problems that face all local governments.

CALL TO ACTION

Governments must get real about living

GOVERNMENT

ASSESSED VALUATION ■

BUDGET APPROPRIATIONS ■

EXPENDITURES PER CAPITA ■

REGISTERED VOTERS ▲

VOTER TURNOUT ▲

ISSUES TRENDING ▲ IMPROVEMENT ■ STEADY ▼ DECLINE

LEARN MORE

Indiana Department of Local Government Finance, www.in.gov/dlgf/8379.htm

Indiana Board of Tax Review, www.in.gov/ibtr/

Indiana Secretary of State, www.in.gov/sos/elections/2393.htm

Purdue University, www.agecon.purdue.edu/crd/localgov/data.htm

Stats Indiana, www.stats.indiana.edu/topic/taxes.asp#property

The United States Elections Project, elections.gmu.edu/voter_turnout.htm

FINAL ANALYSIS

The Quality of Life Indicators Report has helped Northwest Indiana leadership make substantial progress toward addressing the challenges facing the region. The convenings around the report brought people together representatives of business, government and nonprofits who had never worked cooperatively before and who now began to talk and find common ground on serious issues. The process opened up conversations on race and other difficult topics. It gave businesses and environmentalists, governments and community activists a forum where they develop relationships, discover what they agree on, and work on their disagreements. The results of which helped define priorities for the region and create a consensus that those priorities need to be tackled regionally, across jurisdictions and other barriers.

The fostering of regional thinking and action about common problems can be seen in the establishment of the Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority and its efforts to bolster public transportation; in major environmental restoration and cleanup projects being undertaken with support from industry; in the Local Government Efficiency Study and the establishment of the Local Government Academy, the Shared Ethics Advisory Commission, and the Northwest Indiana Race Relations Council, in the Northwest Indiana Epidemiological Study and public-private partnership to address environmental remediation and restoration.

The three Quality of Life Indicators reports since 2000 have sparked important conversations and helped to focus attention on needs, such as public transportation and children and families, which had not previously been seen as regional priorities.

The 2000 report established the understanding that there were things we needed to know about ourselves and our region to improve our quality of life. But the reports since then have not fulfilled the initial premise: to quantify and track specific indicators of conditions in the region so that progress or lack of it can be judged. In that way, the

quality of life indicator process has not met the objective.

Though the reports have often made acute observations about the state of the region, their data and analysis have been too inconsistent to create real accountability or provide a fully informed basis for action.

The reports did not count the same things. Different questions were asked each time. Approaches varied. New topics and indicators were introduced in each report to reflect the interests of its researchers and stakeholders, while other indicators were simply dropped rather than updated. Some of the new data were useful and some were irrelevant. The underlying data sets often were not provided, making it difficult or impossible to backtrack and try to produce comparable statistics today. There was little follow-through from one report to the next, making it impossible to tell whether conditions were improving or not.

Those data force an uncomfortable conclusion: The variability of approaches in previous reports has masked the fact that overall, there has not been much change.

There has been incremental improvement in a few areas such as in crime rates, educational attainment, and water quality and there are a few bright spots such as wages, charitable giving, air quality and recreation. There have been a number of highly publicized initiatives that had limited local or short-term success. But overall, there has been little systemic change, and the region has made little progress on tackling its major challenges since 2000.

HOW TO GET BETTER DATA

Real progress requires real accountability. The region needs a functional and intellectually honest knowledge base to guide future strategy and to make it possible to judge what works. The formation of One

Region provides a window of opportunity to create a new baseline and a new process for the careful collection and tracking of data that will really indicate the quality of life in Northwest Indiana.

ONE REGION NEEDS TO:

A. Settle on a core set of indicator metrics that will be tracked through the coming decades. These indicators must describe the most important aspects of life in the region, answer the most essential questions and span the whole range of interconnected challenges the region must address. They must be defined to ask the same question of the same data source in the same way every time.

B. Publish all these indicator metrics in a usable way so they remain accessible to every citizen and policymaker in the region at any time.

C. Provide a central source where the underlying data sets, or links to the underlying data sets, are always readily available. That provides transparency, but also will allow the underlying data to be crunched in new ways in response to new ideas, developments and challenges.

D. Track the core indicators in the same way consistently, regardless of politics, changes in the membership of the research committee or other forces.

Of course, new questions will come up. New technology and new data will become available. New challenges will arise and will call for additional data. Future reports must address changing circumstances and must include new data that is relevant. But they must not drop or alter the core indicators, or the usefulness of tracking indicators across time will again be lost.

Future initiatives should be clearly linked to overall strategies for progress and should be clearly linked to metrics that can measure their impact. Over time, the core indicators should be able to pick up evidence that the strategy is working or failing.

FINAL ANALYSIS

EVERYTHING IS CONNECTED

The analysis of data for this report pointed up another key insight: how interconnected all the factors of quality of life are.

The 2004 report raised the concept of sustainability, which rested on the interconnectedness of the economy, the environment and the well-being of people. The other seven quality of life themes – education, health, housing, government, transportation, arts and culture, and public safety – all grew out of the connections between those first three. Those connections are everywhere apparent in today's data.

For example, it is impossible to usefully discuss the state of environmental quality in the region without considering data presented under the other themes. Polluted air is a public health issue. Development patterns can encourage or discourage long commutes that contribute to greenhouse gas emissions. Brownfields remediation requires a trained workforce. Polluted water affects the economy's tourism sector.

To plan for better health care means considering how hard it is for patients to get to the doctor in areas where public transportation is unavailable or dysfunctional. To plan for housing development means considering the aging of the population and how the composition of households is changing. To plan for new industries means considering whether they will have an educated workforce. To plan for deploying police means considering population density.

This is another reason for One Region to work to create a central repository of data on

Northwest Indiana: so that metrics from all disciplines are available and understandable by policymakers and decision makers from all disciplines and that planning is not done in statistical silos. There cannot be any excuse for transportation planners not to know about air quality, for education policymakers not to know what employers need or for the general public not to know more about their government.

This report analyzes data mainly at the regional and county level. It would be more useful to have more finely diced data, at the level of municipalities, school districts and ideally even zip codes. It is not possible to produce a printed report with that level of specificity, but there is plenty of room on the internet.

The purpose of more localized data is not to lay blame or to allow policymakers to dismiss problems as someone else's burden. There is no "La Porte County ozone problem" or "Gary public transportation problem." All problems are regional, but local understanding is needed to solve them.

One Region's potential to be a force for real change lies not only in providing a forum for discussion and regional leadership, but in providing a functional common knowledge base from which an informed and engaged citizenry emerges.

KNOWLEDGE FOR THE FUTURE

Northwest Indiana is resilient. It is the genetic makeup of our region to survive and adapt to changing conditions. The most important adaptation we are making is toward cooperation for our mutual benefit.

Historically, Northwest Indiana was a region where differences were more important than common problems, where people lived behind self-imposed barriers of race and class. Governments regarded each other with mutual suspicion and everyone resented interference from outsiders. Viewpoints were narrow and planning was short-term. In the 20th Century, the region stagnated and fell behind. Now it is struggling to catch up.

One Region can develop into a leading civic organization for changing resistant attitudes and dissolve the barriers and fragmentation that are such obstacles to progress. Yet though progress is being made, the lack of connections and integration have resulted in little to no community attachment, as reported in the Knight Foundation's "Soul of the Community" study of the Gary region.

Increasingly, people concerned with public policy and generally, a better future, in Northwest Indiana share an understanding that we are all in this together. We are responsible for our collective future. The future we create must be efficient and sustainable, with resources and burdens that are distributed equitably and a role for everyone in governance.

This report is an attempt to provide a basic set of data about the region to help guide discussions and policymaking, and a general framework for One Region to develop a Quality of Life Indicators process that will provide consistent, accessible high-quality data over the long term. It is a challenge to One Region to improve on the previous process.

Each bit of data in this report is a dot. If enough dots combine, we see a picture. If we get the right dots, the picture will come into sharper focus. As the picture improves and new visions form, our communities can come to see themselves as one region.

VISION FOR THE FUTURE

"I ENVISION IN THE FUTURE FEELING A STRONG AND GROWING AFFINITY AND SENSE OF SHARED DESTINY BETWEEN AND AMONG THE COMMUNITIES WITHIN THE REGION. I SEE TANGIBLE EVIDENCE THAT EFFECTIVE AND EMPOWERED REGIONAL LEADERSHIP IS FACILITATING A RESURGENCE OF NORTHWEST INDIANA AS A VIBRANT ECONOMIC REGION THAT AFFORDS THE OPPORTUNITY FOR AN UNEQUALED QUALITY OF LIFE FOR ALL OF ITS RESIDENTS." - **LEIGH MORRIS, CHAIRMAN, NORTHWEST INDIANA REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**

APPENDICES: METHODOLOGY

The 2012 Quality of Life Indicators Report follows a decade of measuring progress across key domains that impact daily life in Northwest Indiana. This report is the fourth edition in a series of indicators reports issued in 2000, 2004 and 2008 by the Northwest Indiana Quality of Life Council. That organization recently merged into One Region, which is responsible for the release of the 2012 Indicators Report.

The purpose of the study is to examine the extent to which the quality of life in Lake, Porter and La Porte counties has improved during the period from 2000 to 2010, and to establish a baseline of data common among the three previous reports. This two-fold objective addresses concerns of past practices and seeks to assure a more reliable, replicable and relevant research going forward. Under One Region, the Indicators Report will be a communication tool from which community conversations can transform into real action.

This research project set forth to answer the reflective questions: "Where have we been? And, how are we doing today with respect to quality of life?" in order, as a community, to ask "where do we want to go as a region?"

The 2012 Indicators Report presents baseline statistics reported most consistently in the prior three reports. The context around the data derives from the asset base of Northwest Indiana, the inherent attributes that make this region strong, unique, and competitive, and from the interdependence between these assets and the major challenges to achieving sustainable growth and prosperity for all.

Therefore this report does not capture all of the good things happening in the region, nor does it attempt to hide from tough issues, nor is it perfect. The lack of data and the difficulty in obtaining information is a major concern for ongoing refinement and development of the key indicators.

The sustainability of the region depends upon the ability of Northwest Indiana to be more deliberate in critiquing current conditions, maximizing limited resources and leveraging opportunities today and for the benefit of future generations. The findings of this report should inform and engage One Region to produce collective impact, measurable a decade from now.

The method for data collection was to utilize credible, publicly available statistics, either posted online or requested through an agency, from sources used in prior reports or researched in the process of preparing this report. Most of the data sets are governmental sources at the federal, state, regional and local levels. A lesser number of the data sets are third party entities, often times non-profit organizations or affiliated with a major university, that may use both public and proprietary

data and methodologies, and supply analytical tools.

The data collection preference was to utilize user-friendly data sources so that upon the report's publication, the general public could easily navigate those sources themselves. If the data source's process required statistical software for data interpretation or was heavily paper-based, that source was not considered readily accessible for the general public in this analysis. This research approach sought to assure that more data and information could be accessed by Northwest Indiana citizens concerned about quality of life and the future of the region.

In creating the baseline indicators, a comparison of 2000, 2004 and 2008 reports was conducted and frequency of dataset counted. A committee reviewed and approved that baseline. Modifications to the baseline may have occurred upon committee request or the researcher's identification based on available data.

Data were pulled for years 2000 through 2010. If the full ten year series was not available, then at a minimum 2000 or the earliest year and 2010 were collected and analyzed. Data were presented graphically and narratively, with limited use of publishing data tables. Uniformity among chapters was desired.

It is important to note that this report does not detail all of the footnotes or data dictionaries associated with each source. Data concerns, including data discontinuity, variances and changes in methodologies and reporting, can be further researched at that primary source level. Depending on the level of change, the results of the trending the data may be affected.

Averages are not weighted in this report so it should be noted that Lake County tends to represent a larger proportion of Northwest Indiana statistics, and that comparisons with Indiana are not adjusted to exclude the three counties in those figures.

Due to project constraints, this report was prepared using quantitative data analysis and limited qualitative analysis ascertained through the project committee and board of directors input.

The dashboard rating system of arrows and blocks were selected based on the level of change that occurred between 2000 and 2010. If a dataset showed improvement, an up arrow was given. If there was little change to the positive or negative, a block was assigned. If the data showed a worsening of conditions, a down arrow was marked. Then, the ratings were tallied and the greatest frequency was selected for the overall indicator.

For these reasons, the data presented in this Indicators Report serve as a guidepost to quality of life, not as the sole source of data

VISION FOR THE FUTURE

"THE PROGRESSIVE REVITALIZATION OF THE CITY OF GARY IS THE LEADING INDICATOR OF IMPROVED ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY OF LIFE THROUGHOUT A MORE ENGAGED AND PROSPEROUS NORTHWEST INDIANA REGION."

- WILLIAM LOWE,
CHANCELLOR, INDIANA
UNIVERSITY NORTHWEST

and analysis on the ten domains.

Acknowledgements to the visionary founders of the Northwest Indiana Quality of Life Council, Lee Botts and Dr. Mark Reshkin, and its first primary investigators, Jerry Long of the Heartland Institute in conjunction with Dr. Daniel Lowery. Each of whom pioneered the concept of sustainability as a framework for Northwest Indiana. These forerunners saw beyond the region's fractious past and carried a message of interdependence and hope. They found a way to bring together academics, nonprofits, businesses, government agencies and media from across the region around sustainable development issues and to find common ground in the region.

Dr. Reshkin recently wrote, "Lee Botts came here 60 years ago and me 48 years ago when the sky was red from open hearth furnaces smelting red colored iron ore minerals. Perhaps that is why we both feel good about today - but of course with reservations." That legacy, and this research, follows in their footsteps.

The 2012 Quality of Life Indicators Report was produced by Tina Rongers, President, Karnerblue Era, LLC, primary investigator, in collaboration with Beth Botts, Beth Botts Consulting, writing and editing; Beth Dybala, Dybala Consulting, data collection; and, Nick Zivanovic, Zivanovic Photography, data collection.

ENVIRONMENT

Are government agencies' resources adequate to monitor and regulate environmental practices and impacts in the region? How can those agencies be more adaptive and responsive as technology changes and new challenges emerge? What role can green infrastructure play in improving the environment and the economy?

How can we measure the opportunity cost associated with environmental degradation in Northwest Indiana?

How can we define metrics to track environmental justice by measuring disparities in the impact of environmental degradation in the region? How can we change policies to redress those disparities?

How is research at the local universities and colleges being integrated into planning and development? What resources are available to engage faculty and students? How well do the course offerings align with the challenges the region will face?

How can we measure and understand the attitudes of Northwest Indiana residents and businesses about the environment, the region's natural areas and actions that would improve sustainability?

How much do businesses and governments consider sustainability in their operations? How does their reporting reflect their actions?

How do communities and individuals in Northwest Indiana handle solid waste? How many communities have recycling programs and how effective are they?

What are the lawn and garden care practices of Northwest Indiana residents and how do they effect the environment, both in terms of pesticide and fertilizer runoff power tool emissions, and in terms of invasive plant species that affect natural areas?

How many walking, biking and water trail miles are there in the region and how much are those trails actually used?

EDUCATION

What is the percentage of Northwest Indiana graduates who enroll in a four year college and who then graduate with a high-quality degree or credential?

How do local early childhood programs, including quality day care, improve student performance? What are the dominant family structures and early childhood conditions in Northwest Indiana? What are the barriers to accessing and sustaining early childhood programs in the region?

How well do Northwest Indiana children understand basic scientific concepts? How can science be best taught? Are there

innovative educational approaches that could be brought to the region?

How are schools educating Northwest Indiana's special needs students? What major gaps or challenges do these students and their families face?

Why are students doing better on standardized tests in 8th grade but more poorly in 10th grade?

What will Northwest Indiana businesses need from their employees when today's kindergarteners graduate from high school? How can we be sure that we prepare students for the opportunities that will be available?

Of the data available through the Indiana Department of Education, which indicators would best characterize the state of education and workforce readiness in Northwest Indiana?

Of the data available through the Indiana Youth Institute, which indicators would best characterize the state of youth and families in Northwest Indiana?

PUBLIC SAFETY

How many hazardous materials accidents take place in the region?

What are the response plans for hazardous materials accidents, as well as for tornadoes and other natural disasters? Who has jurisdiction? How do the incidence of accidents as well as planning and actual response to both hazardous materials accidents and natural disasters compare to other peer regions?

How many railroad grade crossing accidents occur in the region? How many people are injured or killed in grade crossing accidents and why? What is the cost to railroads and industry? What equipment, public education or other measures might reduce the incidence of these accidents or their effects?

How many traffic accidents are there in the region? How many involve injury or death? How are traffic patterns, road designs, speed limits and other factors related to rates of injury and death? What measures might be taken to reduce these dangers?

What is the rate of home accidents in the region? How are these accidents related to factors such as demographics and housing type? What programs of education, building codes, and other measures have been found to be effective in reducing home accidents and how could these be emulated?

How many drownings are there in the regions? How does this incidence compare to other beach and resort regions? What can be done to reduce the incidence of drowning, especially along the Lake Michigan beaches? Can greater interagency cooperation or better public education play a role?

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