



INDIANA
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REGIONAL CITIES INITIATIVE

2015 REPORT



INTRODUCTION

The Indiana Economic Development Corporation (IEDC) is pleased to submit this report to the Legislative Council in accordance with IC 5-28-37-8, providing the General Assembly and the public with an update on the Regional Cities Initiative.

Upon taking office in 2013, Governor Pence tasked the IEDC with identifying major threats to Indiana's economic future. The IEDC concluded that population stagnation—and a correlating lack of new talented workers moving to the state—represents the single largest threat to economic development over the long term. This is supported by today's historically low state unemployment rate, even after accounting for an increasing labor force participation rate.

This effort precipitated the call for the Peer Cities Report that detailed our examination of the regional economies across the nation that performed exceptionally over the previous two decades. These 11 regional economies were identified using 78 different measures. The Report identified nine universal and foundational principles common among these 11 economies. These principles serve as the basis for the Regional Cities Initiative. The Peer Cities Report was released in the Fall of 2014 and can be found [here](#).

The IEDC then assisted Governor Pence in pursuing House Enrolled Act (HEA) 1403 in the 2015 session. HEA 1403 provided the framework designed to support the Regional Cities Initiative by incentivizing regional collaboration directed at improving quality of place.

What is the objective of the Regional Cities Initiative? Simply put, its objective is to transform Indiana into a destination for talent. Tireless work at the local, regional, and state level over the last decade has made Indiana a state that works for business. Indiana's recognized national and global standing now allows us to concentrate on making our regions—composed of counties, cities, towns, and neighborhoods—nationally and globally recognized places to live, work, and play. Workers increasingly choose where to live based on a set of factors that is not necessarily led by a job. For example, they choose Durham, North Carolina because it's now known nationally as a great place for an entrepreneur to create a real business out of an idea.

By partnering with regions that are pursuing excellence in quality of place and embracing the nine universal principles, the state can accelerate their development and enhance promotional efforts that lead to new Indiana workers and businesses.

As of this report, the IEDC has not entered into agreements with any region and therefore has no information to report related to grants or loans from the Indiana Regional Cities Fund. However, the following sections of this report provide a summary of the activities and events that will soon lead to financial partnerships with region(s).



REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITIES

State statute (HEA 1403) requires the applicant for matching funds under the Regional Cities Initiative to be a regional development authority (RDA). An RDA is a body corporate and political composed of member units of local government and operated by five (5) appointed board members. The member units must agree on the RDA's five (5) board appointments. For purposes of the Regional Cities Initiative, an RDA that is chosen to be a financial partner with the state must enter into an agreement with the IEDC and is then responsible for executing the region's comprehensive plan.

Upon formation, an RDA must provide written notification to the IEDC. Following are the RDAs formed this year as of this report. It should be noted that the Northwest Indiana RDA is not included below as it was formed in 2005 under a distinct enabling statute.

CENTRAL

Composition: Cities of Carmel, Greenwood, and Westfield; Marion County

RDA Board members: Tavonna Askew Harris, Keith Lauter, Chris Pryor, Jack Russell, and Bill Shel Drake

EAST CENTRAL

Composition: Delaware and Henry Counties

RDA Board members: Pending

NORTH CENTRAL

Composition: Elkhart, St. Joseph, and Marshall Counties

RDA Board members: John Affleck-Graves, Dallas Bergl, John DeSalle, Dr. Pete McCown, and Regina Emberton

NORTHEAST

Composition: Adams, Allen, DeKalb, Huntington, Kosciusko, LaGrange, Noble, Steuben, Wabash, Wells, and Whitley Counties

RDA Board members: Brad Bishop, Andrew Briggs, Gene Donaghy, Bob Marshall, and Jeff Turner

NORTHWEST

Composition: Lake and Porter Counties

RDA Board members: Chris Campbell, Tom Dabertin, Donald Fesko, Ed Glover, Bill Joiner, Randy Palmateer, and Harley Snyder

SOUTHEAST

Composition: Clark and Scott Counties

RDA Board members: Pending

SOUTHWEST

Composition: Gibson, Posey, Vanderburgh, and Warrick Counties

RDA Board members: Beth McFadin Higgins, Howard Nevins, Dan Potje, Jim Ryan, and Rick Schach

WEST CENTRAL

Composition: Knox, Sullivan, and Vigo Counties (Pending)

RDA Board members: Pending



Central Region | IndyGo Downtown Transit Center



East Central Region | Planning and sketches

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS

In March 2015, the IEDC Board adopted a set of guidelines that delineate the basic requirements for regional development plans that are submitted as applications for matching funds through this Initiative. They are intended to incorporate the principles from the Peer Cities Report and can be accessed in full here.

The primary components of all regional development plans include the following:

- Description of the region, including demographic and economic indicators
- Current and future opportunities and challenges
- A bold vision for the region's future
- Specific activities and projects that must be accomplished in order to achieve the vision

The IEDC intends to become a financial partner with up to two regions to accelerate the execution of their regional development plans

TIMELINE

July 15th

IEDC Board appointed members of the Strategic Review Committee:

- John Thompson, Chair (Thompson Distribution Company & IEDC Board Member)
- Keira Amstutz (Indiana Humanities)
- Kathy Davis (Davis Design Group)
- Larry Gigerich (Ginovus)
- Steve Goldsmith (Harvard University)
- Gary Hobbs (BW*i*)
- Ryan Kitchell (IU Health)
- Chris LaMothe (Elevate Ventures)
- Mark Maassel (Indiana Energy Association)
- Mitch Roob (KERAMIDA)
- Paul Wheatley (The Wheatley Group)

August 18th through September 2nd *Regional Site Visits*

- We're seeing momentum in each region proving the initiative's strategic importance. In August, regional community leaders hosted site visits to discuss and display their region's vision.
- IEDC leadership traveled to each region to hear and learn about major parts of their applications. The vision, ingenuity and energy coming from local and regional leaders has been impressive.

In North Central, we toured South Bend's former Studebaker Plant to hear about its planned revitalization, saw the progress of Elkhart's Wellfield Gardens and saw its sites for anticipated growth, and viewed the projects built through collaborative initiatives with Notre Dame.

In North East, we boated down the St. Mary's River to see the sites of the new riverfront projects in Fort Wayne, toured the former Clyde Theater to hear of its revitalization and walked the streets of Downtown Fort Wayne to hear of projects happening around the 11 county region.

In East Central, we saw how Muncie is revitalizing its downtown residential facilities and White River development as well as New Castle's up-and-coming arts district that builds upon Robert Indiana's legacy.

In Northwest, we saw the region's vision for the Dune's State Park building revitalization and the vision to leverage the South Shore Line to capitalize on Chicago's commuting population as well as the momentum already seen in the community through additions of Gary's 18th Street Brewery and Whiting's shoreline park.

In Central, they told us about Indianapolis' vision for the 16 Tech Park and the IndyGo Redline as well as showed the sites already created by public-private partnerships across the region.

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS—cont.

August 31st

Submission deadline for regional development plans

September through October

Review of plans

- The Strategic Review Committee, assisted by the IEDC and key state agencies, will determine the review method. This will include a return-on-investment analysis along with weighting and scoring of other pertinent factors.

October 6/7th

Regional presentations to the Strategic Review Committee

November/December

Strategic Review Committee Recommendations and IEDC Board Consideration

For more information on the Regional Cities Initiative contact:

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North Central Region | South Bend Public/Private Partnership



Northeast Region | St. Mary's Riverfront



Northwest Region | South Shore Line