

# Vision 2020

## A Vision for Northeast Indiana

**Report**  
September 2010



*In Association With:*  
Team Kolzow, Inc.

*Prepared For:*  
Northeast Indiana Fund



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# A message from the Co-Chairs

## *Why a vision, why now.*

Northeast Indiana is a comfortable place to live and work. It is easy to live here, and with the low cost of living, we can get by.

This mindset is not good enough for us anymore, and it is certainly not good enough for our children.

The truth is, we are suffering the consequences of a long-term economic decline in our 10-county region. The result is that for every dollar the average worker in America makes, we make only 80 cents in Northeast Indiana. Our per-capita income has decreased for about 15 years, with no resolution in sight. Who knows how much further it could drop if we fail to create a sense of urgency for reversing the decline.

We must stop being comfortable with the status quo in Northeast Indiana. We must create the solution. The time is now, and we'll do it together through Vision 2020.

Be outrageous. There is no reason we can't be more than "good enough."

Over the course of six months, Vision 2020 sparked more than 2,000 individual conversations about Northeast Indiana and what we have the potential to be. From the regional leadership of our Coordinating Group and industry-specific focus groups, to individual county outreach meetings and topical group meetings which addressed the five pillars of 21st Century Talent, a Competitive Business Climate, Entrepreneurship, Infrastructure and Quality of Life, Vision 2020 gathered people and ideas. The process encouraged community involvement and worked to develop a collective pride in our region.

On June 23, 2010, the Vision 2020 Regional Economic Summit brought the region together to share our visions and shape our future. Over 1,000 Northeast Indiana residents voted on what they thought was most important to moving the region forward. This report reveals those votes and what it will take to move the strategies to action and our goals to reality in Northeast Indiana by 2020.

This is a challenge to each of you. The easy part is over; now, the hard work will begin. But with a vision, strong leaders, collaboration and an appreciation for Northeast Indiana – we can do it.

Albert Einstein said, "We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them." It will take out of the box

thinking, and a lot of action, to change our ways and our way of life. But the results will be worth it: we'll have more innovation, more reasons to love living here, better jobs and education, a better economy and better ways to get around. And, most importantly, hope for the coming generations.

Thanks for starting this journey with us. We hope you'll be with us along the way, working and celebrating as we continually improve our corner of the heartland. Vision 2020 can and will lead to a bright, bold future for Northeast Indiana.

Sincerely,

Keith Busse and Mike Packnett  
Vision 2020 Co-chairs

#### **Coordinating Group**

Andy Briggs  
Dr. Earl Brooks  
Tobias Buck  
Keith Busse  
Joe Dorko  
Mayor Ted Ellis  
Brian Emerick  
Steve Ford  
Scott Glaze  
Mayor Suzanne Handshoe  
Mayor Tom Henry  
Sandi Kemmish  
Mike Kubacki  
Tom Leedy  
Jim Marcuccilli  
September McConnell  
Mike Packnett  
Commissioner Nelson Peters  
Joe Pierce  
Dr. Wendy Robinson  
Heather Schoegler  
Tracy Shafer  
Pat Sullivan  
Bob Taylor  
Dr. Michael Wartell  
Mayor Norm Yoder  
Dr. Jo Young Switzer

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Steve Ford  
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Mike Packnett  
Mac Parker  
Joe Pierce  
John Sampson  
Bob Taylor  
Mayor Norm Yoder  
Dr. Jo Young Switzer

## **21<sup>st</sup> Century Talent Group**

Russ Baker  
Liz Bushnell  
Melissa Carpenter  
Dr. Blair Dowden  
Scott Glaze  
Leonard Helfrich  
Risa Herber  
Celia Herrell-Shand  
Rick Jones  
September McConnell  
Bruce Menshy  
Jac Price  
Kathleen Randolph  
Jonathon Ray  
Tracey Shafer  
Christina Smith  
Judy Sorg  
Bruce Stach  
Dr. Michael Wartell

## **Competitive Business Climate Group**

Rep. Matt Bell  
Jack Bercaw  
Rep. Randy Borrer  
Roger Cromer  
Kevin Custer  
Joe D'Italia  
Ben Eisbart  
Mike Glinski  
Sam Graves  
Kathy Heuer  
Joni Howell  
Sen. Dennis Kruse  
Sen. David Long  
Jim Marcuccilli  
Don Monesmith  
Rep. Win Moses  
Rita Padmore  
Sean Ryan  
Beth Sherman  
Burt Sipe  
Kip Tom  
Mary Tonne  
Jim Widner

## **Entrepreneurship Group**

Beth Bechdol  
Elton Bishop  
Bill Connelly  
Brian Emerick  
Karen Goldner  
David Lefever  
Joe Ruffolo  
Mark Sapusek  
Denny Springer  
Phillip Stoller  
Pat Sullivan  
Andrew Thomas  
Vicki Thompson  
Dave Wood  
Daryl Yost

### **Infrastructure Group**

Bob Alderman  
Dan Avery  
Don Babcock  
Andrew Briggs  
Justin Brugger  
Jerry Burns  
Gene Donaghy  
John English  
Bill Geiger  
Matt Kelley  
David Koenig  
Paul Lagemann  
Geoff Paddock  
Commissioner Nelson Peters  
Tory Richardson  
Mayor John Schultz  
Sharon Stroh  
Barry Wiard

### **Quality of Place Group**

Michael Barranda  
Parker Beauchamp  
John Bray  
Dr. Earl Brooks  
Jim Cook  
Meg Distler  
Barry Dupen  
Mayor Ted Ellis  
Mayor Tom Henry  
Keith Huffman  
Matt Kelley  
Sandi Kemmish  
Lori Keys  
Mike Marturello  
Coni Mayer  
Terry Rayle  
Dr. Wendy Robinson  
Heather Schoegler  
Jim Sparrow  
Beth Thornburg  
Irene Walters  
Brent Wake

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# 1. Executive Summary

## VISION STATEMENT

A COMMUNITY REINVENTED EVERY DAY! VIBRANT, PROGRESSIVE, INNOVATIVE AND FULL OF OPPORTUNITY.

## OVERVIEW

In December 2009, the ten-county Northeast Indiana region embarked in an unprecedented effort to develop an economic development vision. The effort, Vision 2020, lasted six months. It started in January 2010 and ended in June with the convocation of the Northeast Indiana Regional Summit attended by over 1,000 community leaders.

In those six months over 50 different types of meetings took place involving over 2,000 conversations. It is safe to say that never in the history of Northeast Indiana had so many leaders engaged in such an intense and prolonged conversation with one goal: to develop a bold yet implementable economic development vision. The mission statement above captures the potential of the Northeast Indiana region if the effort to develop the vision is implemented.

## WHY A VISION, WHY NOW

Vision 2020 was motivated by a number of factors.

- The region sustained a 17 percent decline in per capita income in the region from 1994, when residents' income was at 96.2 percent of the national average, to 2008, when it had dropped to 79.5 percent of the national average. The decline continues.
- The 2009 Regional Dashboard of Economic Indicators published by Cleveland State University, which compares the performance of 136 metropolitan areas of between 300,000 and 3.5 million residents, shows that Northeast Indiana is consistently at the bottom of comparable metropolitan areas: 132 in per capita income, 121 in employment, 133 in Gross Domestic Product, 134 in productivity.
- Areas comparable to Northeast Indiana such as Greenville, Chattanooga, Providence, Pittsburgh, and Oklahoma City have

### Chapter Organization

1. Executive Summary is organized into the following sections:

Overview

Why a Vision, Why Now

The Process

Understanding the Region

Developing the Vision

Five Goals to Reinvent the Region

Five Goals

An Outregious Transformation

Implementing the Vision

Organization of the Report



*Figure 1.1: The Summit included a number of discussion periods. During the discussion periods participants could Twitter comments and express ideas and concerns. The comments were projected on the Summit screens for everyone to see.*



*Figure 1.2: The electronic keypad enabled a dialogue among over one thousand participants providing instant feedback to questions.*

succeeded in turning around and transforming themselves through vision, leadership, a strong commitment to quality of life and place, and coordinated, collaborative action.

These considerations prompted the region's leadership to come together and ask the question: What will it take to turn the region around? This is the question Vision 2020 set out to answer.

## THE PROCESS

### Understanding the Region

The ten-county region of Northeast Indiana has been carefully studied. In the past ten years, over 24 studies have focused on various aspects of economic development in the region. They were analyzed to identify similarities, differences, and omissions in the region's economic development policies. The studies, a list of which is available in Appendix A, show remarkable agreement on desired regional goals and implementation strategies. They also show that this agreement has not produced an implementable game plan for the region, or a consensus on how to turn those agreed upon goals and strategies into reality.

### Developing the Vision

The Vision 2020 process was designed to create a ten-year game plan for Northeast Indiana and to elicit regional agreement on how to revitalize the region. It used the findings of the 24 studies as the starting point of a six-month dialogue among regional leaders that included 22 focus group interviews, two meetings with high school students, ten regional outreach meetings and four sets of meetings by six topical groups. This regional conversation produced the vision statement, goals, strategies and action steps described in this report. It culminated in the Regional Economic Summit that set priorities and ratified a regional commitment to implementation in the form of a Regional Pledge. The Summit and the steps that led to it have established a workable methodology of regional consensus building in Northeast Indiana. The goodwill created in the process must now be applied to turn the vision into reality. Summary reports of the focus group interviews and of the regional outreach meetings can be found in Appendices B and C.

An ad-hoc 27-member Coordinating Group that included business,

education, the public sector and healthcare led the process. The Northeast Indiana Fund retained the services of ACP Visioning+Planning and Team Kolzow to design and facilitate the vision.

## FIVE GOALS TO REINVENT THE REGION

The vision for Northeast Indiana is organized around five pillars:

- Competitive Business Climate
- Entrepreneurship
- 21st Century Talent
- Infrastructure
- Quality of Life.

The five pillars embody the belief that building a sustainable regional economy is more than just attracting new jobs but rather something that permeates all aspects of life. The five pillars represent what the region needs to provide for its businesses and residents to prosper, as well as the areas where the region's efforts need to be focused over the next ten years to achieve the transformation set in the vision statement. A full presentation of the five pillars is in Appendix D.

The vision identifies a goal for each of the pillars. Each goal describes a desired outcome or future condition in simple yet compelling terms. They address the most critical aspects of the region's life: the business environment, opportunity for business creativity and entrepreneurship, education and workforce readiness, infrastructure and the natural and cultural aspects that make the region special. Addressing each of these

*The following Regional Pledge was read at the end of the summit and signed by the public:*

*"In acknowledgement of the significant economic decline that has challenged our region since 1995; we the citizens of Northeast Indiana do solemnly pledge to face this crisis and come together to turn the tide of the last 15 years. We are no longer willing to be complacent and allow others to determine our fate; we are committed to working together across county borders, political boundaries and competing community interests to align ourselves behind one common goal. We pledge to be Outrageous, to take Bold action to reinvent our regional community, and to hold one another accountable to creating a vibrant, progressive, innovative community that is full of opportunity. We ARE Northeast Indiana."*

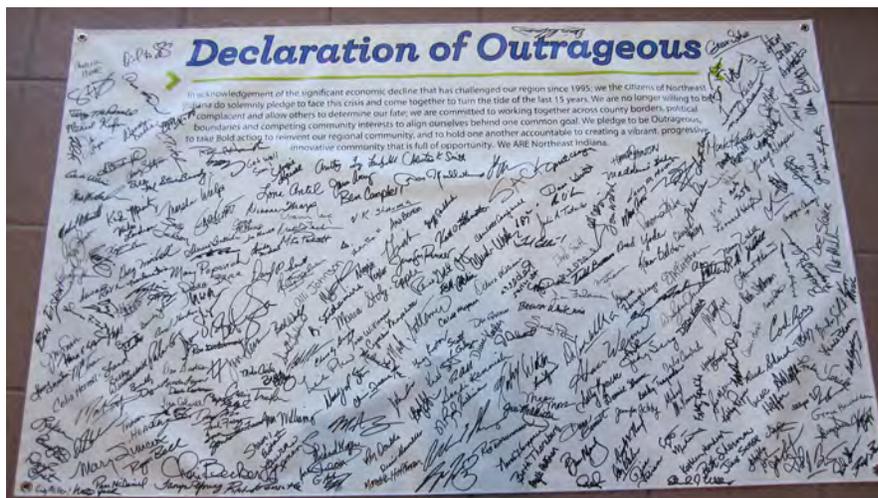


Figure 1.3: The Regional Pledge, better know as the Declaration of Outrageous, was signed by Summit participants and regional supporters.

goals is critical to achieving the overall vision.

### Five Goals

These five goals express the region's aspirations for the future in simple terms and are the foundation upon which specific actions were identified through the process.

To create a positive business climate:

**Moves businesses from decision to revenue!** The region is a magnet for local, national and international businesses.

To support entrepreneurship:

**Accelerates success!** The region has the most growth-oriented business in the Midwest and the tools to help them.

To prepare talent ready for 21<sup>st</sup> Century challenges:

**Embraces education!** The region has a vibrant talented workforce that captures the attention of the world.

To support business through infrastructure:

**Connects the rest of the world!** The region moves people, commerce and ideas on a sustainable, future-ready infrastructure system.

To capitalize on its quality of life:

**Exudes confidence!** The region actively celebrates its assets, entrepreneurial spirit, community engagement and creativity.

The goals were developed by the five Topical Groups. The vision's Coordinating Group finalized the goals and developed the mission statement for Vision 2020.

## AN OUTRAGEOUS TRANSFORMATION

It is the year 2020 and the Northeast Indiana region has been recognized for becoming a vibrant, progressive and innovative community full of opportunities. The tremendous transformation is credited to the region's leadership that, at the conclusion of Vision 2020, pledged to work collaboratively with razor sharp focus to implement fifteen core strategies and "to change the story we tell about ourselves." This is the story of this outrageous transformation.

Taking advantage of its strong manufacturing base and tradition of innovation, the region was able to become a national and international

magnet for emerging technology businesses. This was the result of a deliberate focus on business cluster development, a set of incentives and a sustained lobbying effort at the state level.

The region took a proactive stance in recruiting and supporting entrepreneurship and businesses in the early growth stage. To do so, the Northeast Indiana region established recruiting outposts internationally. Working with local universities and their networks, as well as local businesses with international links, the region scouted for viable ideas and businesses to bring to the Northeast Indiana. It also established tools to support and assist start-up business including the creation of a highly sophisticated and transparent web portal to support new businesses, linking them to resources, information and know-how.

In approaching economic development, Northeast Indiana took a comprehensive and holistic approach. Such an approach was strongly supported by regional leaders who saw education, the development of infrastructure and quality of life as critical factors in positioning the region.

In the area of education and workforce training, the region focused on two strategies: to ensure access to higher education to academically qualified high school graduates and to promote and build awareness about educational opportunities, specifically in the area of workforce training and retraining. The former was intended to eliminate barriers to academic attainment, indirectly addressing a region-wide lack of appreciation for education. The latter helped address more immediate workforce training and retraining needs. An important contribution in setting the education and workforce goal and strategies was given by the participation of high school students to the visioning process. Their message to leaders was: "Challenge us. Give us the opportunity to gain a quality education and quality jobs to keep us in the region." Vision 2020 responded to this message by actively engaging young students in the vision's implementation.

The message from those involved in infrastructure was a message of connectivity, coordination and balance. The region came together to develop an unprecedented regional plan that set the framework for future development. The plan focused on traditional infrastructure, such as the construction of roads to facilitate internal and external links and the mobility of people and goods. It also established a balance between growth and conservation, protecting natural assets while identifying growth areas, linking jobs with the location of housing, and, specifically, identifying the best location for regional scale industrial sites.

The regional plan eliminated a long-standing obstacle to a competitive

business climate: the strenuous and often antagonistic permitting process. The plan recommended the streamlining of land use regulations throughout the region. Finally, the creation of a ten-county Regional Development Authority – a first in its size – established a sustainable revenue stream to pay for infrastructure improvements recommended by the plan.

A critical activity brought into focus the excellent quality of life assets of Northeast Indiana: the creation of a network of trails conceived not only to promote healthy lifestyles but also as an alternative way to link neighborhoods, schools and nature. In the regional plan, the network established Northeast Indiana as “one of the most connected regions in the country.” In support of this initiative, the region developed a Quality of Life compact signed by all jurisdictions to celebrate its assets and identity.

The 15 strategies that made this transformation possible are described in Chapter 3: A Vision for Northeast Indiana.

## IMPLEMENTING THE VISION

The implementation of Vision 2020 will require a concerted effort to master resources and leadership to implement the 15 strategies of the vision. It will also require deliberate steps to energize the community and to keep the region apprised of progress. The day-to-day staff support for implementing the vision will be provided by the Northeast Indiana Fund (NIF). Leadership and guidance will be provided by a governing entity, provisionally called the Coordinating Group.

The vision recommends that the implementation of six of the fifteen strategies be delegated to existing regional organizations. It recommends the creation of ad-hoc task forces to implement an additional six strategies. It recommends steering and oversight committees to implement the remaining three strategies.

A detailed description of implementation, including a matrix of all the recommended action steps is included in Chapter 4: Implementation.

## ORGANIZATION OF THE REPORT

The report is organized in two parts. Following this Executive Summary, Part I of the report includes the following chapters:

**Chapter 2 – The Process** describes the over 50 meetings that led to the development of Vision 2020.

**Chapter 3 – A Vision for Northeast Indiana** describes goals and

strategies of the vision.

**Chapter 4 – Implementation** recommends how to structure and organize the vision’s implementation.

Part II of the report contains four appendices that provide summaries of the process steps and additional background information.

**Appendix A** contains a bibliography of the studies and reports analyzed at the beginning of the process.

**Appendix B** provides a summary of the focus group interviews.

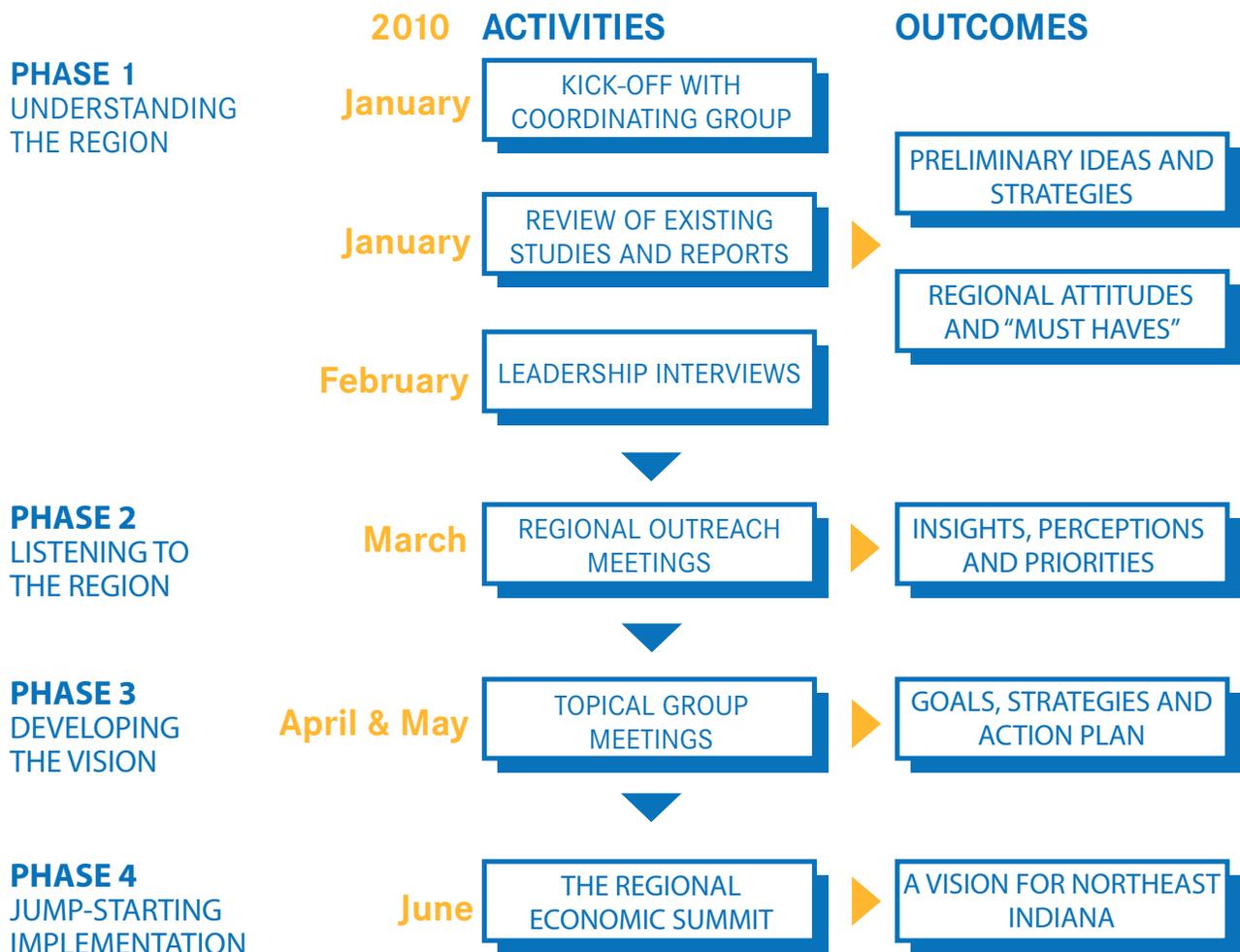
**Appendix C** contains the summaries of the public outreach meetings.

**Appendix D** provides an overview of the role the five pillars play in economic development based on previous studies of the region.

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## 2. The Process

The following diagram explains the structure of the six-month Vision 2020 process. The process was divided into four phases: Understanding the Region, Listening to the Region, Developing the Vision, and Jumpstarting Implementation. Each phase included one or more activities with a specific outcome to each activity. For example the outcomes of Phase 1: Understanding the region were ideas and strategies and an understanding of regional attitudes and must haves. The outcomes of Phase 1 became the foundation of the activities in Phase 2 where the ideas, strategies and must haves became the baseline for discussion at the ten regional outreach meetings. This transparent linking of ideas and process culminated in the Regional Economic Summit. The Summit, while concluding the Vision 2020 process, jump-started the regional implementation effort. This chapter summarizes the key steps of the regional engagement process that led to the development of the recommendations contained in this report.



### Focus Group Interviews

The regional dialogue started with 22 focus group interviews engaging over 100 leaders in areas such as transportation, government, manufacturing, distribution, planning and land use, health care, workforce, education, entrepreneurship, quality of life and agribusiness. The interviews provided at first glance strengths and weaknesses, emerging trends and issues related to regional engagement and cooperation in each of those areas. They also generated a preliminary list of “must have,” policy directions important to the disciplines represented. The “must haves” were merged with strategies from the study review creating a preliminary baseline of ideas upon which to build the regional dialogue.

### Regional Outreach Meetings

The dialogue moved to each of the 10 counties. Meetings organized by LEDOs brought together over 400 regional leaders to discuss the five pillars from the perspective of each county. The regional outreach meetings were a breakthrough. They demonstrated the high level of interest in the region to share ideas and seek cooperative solutions and they added a fresh, local perspective to the ideas and “must haves” included in the baseline. They also brought to the forefront the fact that quality of life issues truly connect the regional community together. The meetings yielded prioritized ideas and “must haves” for each pillar establishing a more complex baseline that was used by the Topical Groups to create the vision.

### Meeting Students and Regional Leaders

Three activities were scheduled with the ten regional meetings: two meetings with 30 high school students and a meeting with members of Leadership Fort Wayne and Young Leaders of Northeast Indiana. The student had brainstorming sessions with questions probing their perceptions about the region. The outcome brought into focus the students’ strong attachment to the region, tempered by the concern that the region might not offer quality jobs after graduating college. They also provided perspective on what makes the region attractive to them as a place to live. The leadership meeting followed the same format of the regional meetings and was attended by over 100 participants. The outcome brought to the forefront leadership issues in the region.

#### Chapter Organization

2. The Process is organized into the following sections:

Focus Group Interviews

Regional Outreach Meetings

Meeting Students and Regional Leaders

Topical Groups

Economic Summit

### The Topical Groups

Five Topical Groups were formed, one for each pillar. Each Topical Group included regional representatives who were passionate and knowledgeable about their topic. They met four times over a period of two months. Group members pledged to be stewards of the ideas gathered through the process and to use them to develop goals and strategies for each pillar. They developed the goals by identifying major recurring themes among the ideas. They brainstormed strategies to achieve the selected goal and, once settled on the strategies, they developed an action plan for implementing each strategy. Their work ultimately brought the vision into focus. The results of the Topical Group activities were presented to the region at the Economic Summit.

### The Regional Economic Summit

The Summit was the last step in the process. The purpose of the Summit was to present the vision to the regional community in its entirety, to prioritize elements of the vision, and to establish a regional commitment to implementation. Over 1,000 residents of the region participated in this live dialogue facilitated by the use of electronic keypads that provided instant feedback, enabling a transparent and unprecedented process. The format consisted of a sequence of presentations, followed by table discussions, and finally voting with the keypads. During the discussion period, participants could use Twitter to express their thoughts. Their comments were publicly displayed on four giant screens to add to the transparency of



*Figure 2.1: A participant to the Regional Economic Summit signs a banner-size version of the Regional Pledge.*



*Figure 2.2: Participants could see the results of polling questions instantaneously.*

the process. At the conclusion, participants were asked to sign a pledge in support of the implementation of the vision.

It is fair to say that a convocation of this size and purpose was a first in the history of the ten counties. Following the spirit of goodwill created by the Summit, an open and transparent implementation process must now realize the goals and strategies of Vision 2020.

### Summit Facts

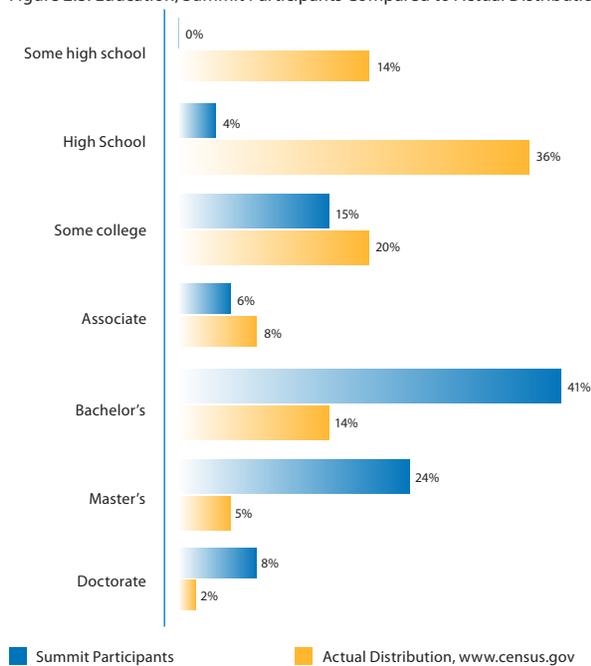
The main purpose of the Economic Summit was to gather a representative group of region residents to prioritize Vision 2020's strategies. This was accomplished by using electronic keypads capable of tabulating responses instantaneously. The Summit also offered an opportunity to learn more about participants' attitudes about the region and to measure their interests in implementation. Responses are summarized below.

### Demographics

#### 1. A well-educated group...

The education level of the participants was generally higher than that of the region as a whole.

Figure 2.3: Education, Summit Participants Compared to Actual Distribution of Residents

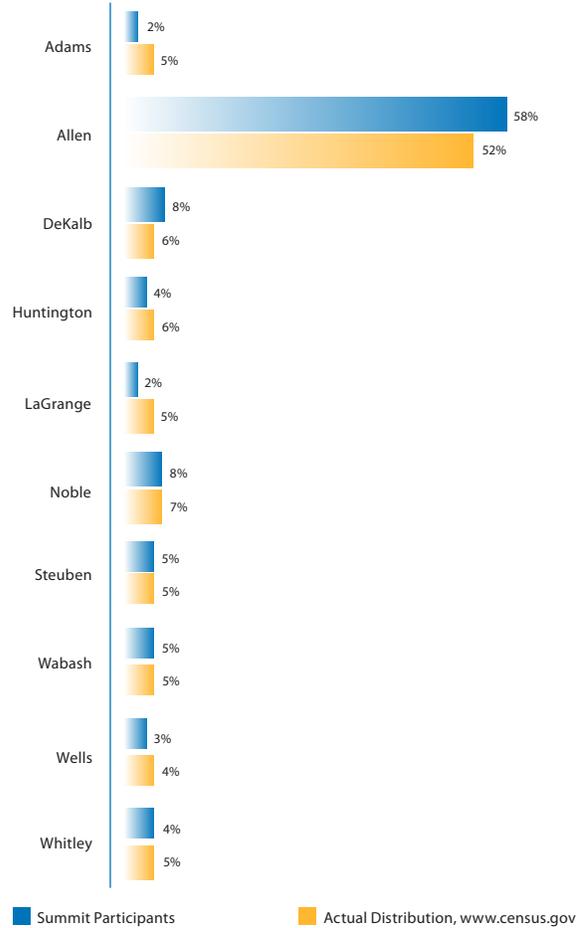


The largest percentage (41 %) of Summit participants had a bachelor’s degree compared to 14 percentage for the region. The number of participants with high school degree (4.5 %) and some college (15 %) were lower than the region as a whole (respectively 36.6 % and 20 %).

2. A well-balanced geographic participation...

The regional make up of the participants closely matched the population distribution in the ten-county area. The diagram below shows the distribution of Summit participants (in blue) compared to actual distribution of residents by county (in yellow).

Figure 2.4: Population, Summit Participants Compared to Actual Distribution of Residents by County



### 3. An older group

Summit participants were older when compared with age groups in the region. Nearly 81 percent belonged to the 25 to 65 age cohorts compared with 52 percent for the same cohorts in the region.

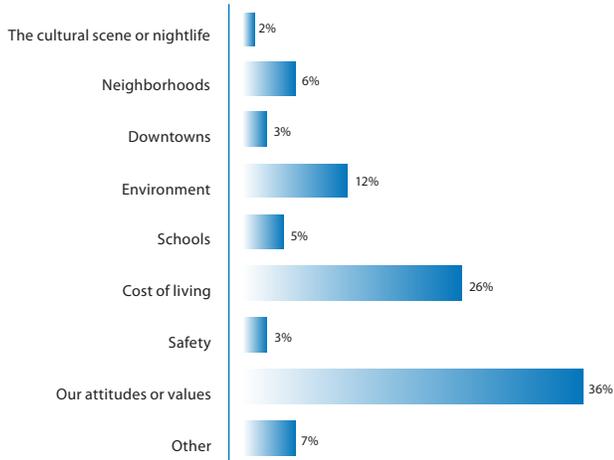
### 4. A group well connected to the region...

Thirty-seven percent of all participants had lived in the region all of their lives, 21 percent reside in the region because of family connections, and over 33 percent as a result of their jobs. Thirty-seven percent of participants remain in the region on account of family.

### Insights on the region's strengths and weaknesses

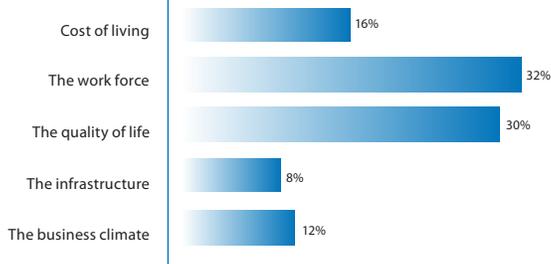
Several questions probed the participants' perceptions of the region.

Figure 2.5: What would you talk about to convince someone to move here?



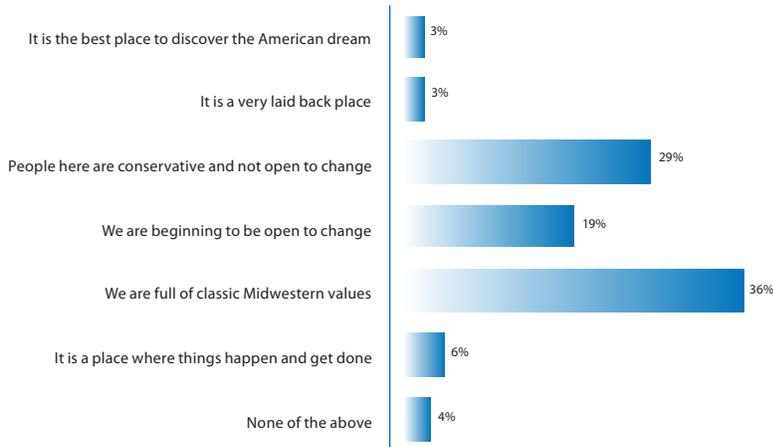
When asked, “What would you talk about to convince someone to move here?” over 36 percent of the participants mentioned “our attitudes or values,” 26 percent mentioned “cost of living.” When asked what would convince a business to come to the region, 32 percent said the work force, 30 percent mentioned quality of life, and 12 percent, business climate. Figure 2.6, next page, gives the full response.

Figure 2.6: What would you talk about to convince a business to come here?



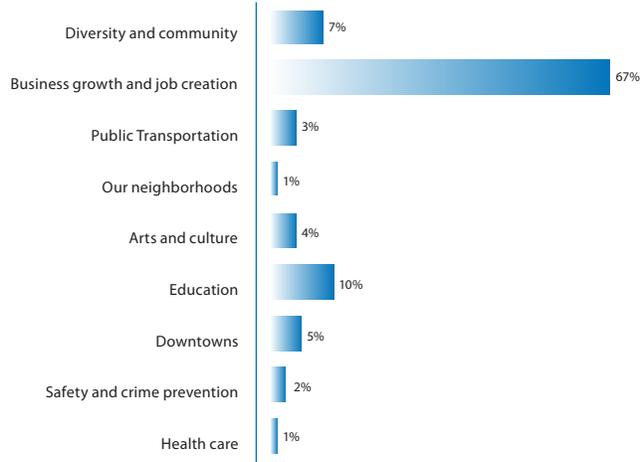
When asked, “How would you describe Northeast Indiana now?” 29 percent agreed with: “people here are conservative and not open to change,” and 19 percent thought the region is changing and agreed with: “We are beginning to be open to change.”

Figure 2.7: How would you describe Northeast Indiana now?



When asked about what would make Northeast Indiana a better region 67 percent responded “business growth and job creation.” When asked what would hold the region back, 42 percent of Summit participants responded with “apathy or fear of change.”

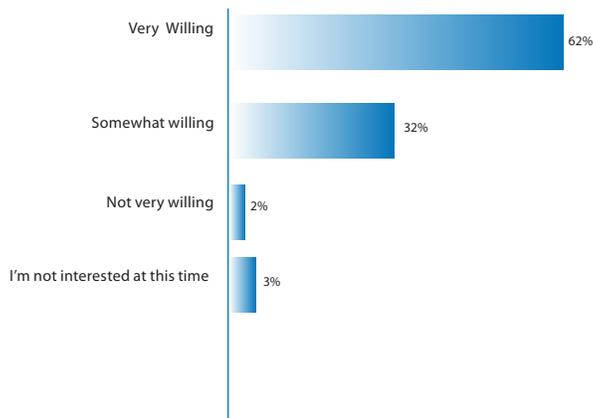
Figure 2.8: What is most important in making us a better region in the coming years?



### A group willing to support implementation

Several questions probed the willingness of participants to stay involved with the implementation of the vision. Seventy-one percent of the participants thought “We have a lot of work to do to succeed in the region.” Twenty-four percent proclaimed to be very optimistic about their future in the region and over 94 percent were very willing or somewhat willing to get involved in the implementation of the vision. Finally, an equal number said they were ready to come and participate in a vision update session.

Figure 2.9: How willing are you to get involved?



## 3. A Vision for Northeast Indiana

Vision 2020 is the result of an intensive and extended public engagement process. The goals and strategies included in this chapter reflect the ideas and contributions of thousands of the region's leaders compiled through a six-month process.

It is a bold vision that aims at reinventing the region and readying it for new challenges. It is an implementable vision focused on a limited number of strategies to channel the momentum and goodwill created by the engagement process into action. It is the lens through which the region's initiatives will be pulled into focus to achieve shared goals. It is the road map that all who care about the prosperity of the region can take along as they begin this journey to the future.

Vision 2020 consists of five goals and a total of 15 implementation strategies. At the Regional Economic Summit, participants prioritized the strategies in order of importance to achieve their goal. All fifteen strategies are included in this chapter organized according to the five pillars. Small descriptions for each capture the flavor of the regional dialogue.

### A. COMPETITIVE BUSINESS CLIMATE

#### Goal

**Moves businesses from decision to revenue!** The region is a magnet for local, national, and international businesses.

#### Strategy 1

***Combine expertise in engineering and manufacturing and provide incentives to emerging technologies.***

This strategy has a dual thrust. It exhorts the region to take advantage of its great expertise in engineering and manufacturing—the recognized strengths of Northeast Indiana that have fueled its success in the past and that given the region its current edge in steel manufacturing and the defense industry, among other industries. It also seeks to establish a positive business climate with incentives to support emerging technologies.

Such refocusing will profoundly impact how the region is perceived and marketed internally and externally.

#### Chapter Organization

3. A Vision for Northeast Indiana is organized into the following sections:

##### Competitive Business Climate

Goal

Strategies

Examples of Success

##### Entrepreneurship

Goal

Strategies

Examples of Success

##### 21st Century Talent

Goal

Strategies

Examples of Success

##### Infrastructure

Goal

Strategies

Examples of Success

##### Quality of Life

Goal

Strategies

Examples of Success

**Cluster Studies**

*In 2009, three cluster studies were funded and completed (the defense industry, food processing, and medical devices). Work has been moving forward, particularly in the defense industry cluster, to implement some of the recommendations of the studies. In 2010, three additional studies are underway for the advanced manufacturing cluster, the transportation and logistics cluster, and the insurance industry cluster. This analysis will lead to an identification of the specific occupational and technical skills needed for the growth of the talent base for the six industries, and recommendations for training and educating the needed talent pool.*

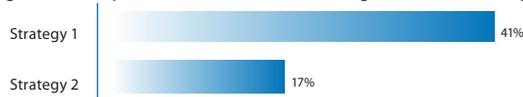
**Strategy 2**

***Develop a legislative agenda that aligns with the Vision and the needs of industry clusters.***

The strategy calls for a sustained lobbying effort necessary to create a favorable business climate that can sustain the region’s vision and support the development of the industry clusters currently under study.

At the Economic Summit the two strategies were prioritized as follows:

Figure 3.1: Competitive Business Climate Strategies: Summit Ranking



**B. ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

**Goal**

**Accelerates success!** The region has the most growth-oriented business in the Midwest and the tools to help them.

**Strategy 1**

***Set up national and international networks to identify and bring to the region viable growth-oriented businesses.***

This strategy suggests an addition to the region’s business recruiting methodology, particularly in the area of businesses that are in the early stages of life. It recognizes that innovation is occurring at a global scale and that Northeast Indiana needs to be proactive in its efforts to identify viable businesses. It recognizes the role that local universities can have in identifying innovative ideas here and abroad. It also suggests that local business with international outreach can play a big role to facilitate the establishment of national and international networks. The desired outcome of this strategy is to increase entrepreneurial businesses in the region, to bring innovation and creativity, and to re-establish the region as a hub for innovation.

**Strategy 2**

***Develop a highly sophisticated and transparent web portal that links to resources and accelerates the idea-to-success process.***

This strategy provides a multi-functional tool to facilitate the success of new businesses. It recommends establishing a complex web portal

that functions as an advanced support network to assist new, early stage companies and foster their success. The functionality of the portal includes screening of potential new ideas and businesses, support at the beginning including marketing and mentorship, identification of resources, information sharing, and other kinds of technical support. Cleveland's JumpStart program has a similar web portal that could be used as a model.

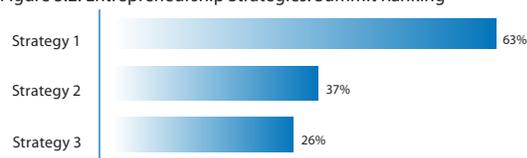
### Strategy 3

#### **Create an investment capital fund for emerging entrepreneurs.**

This strategy was originally part of the Competitive Business Climate pillar. It has been moved here because it addresses a key need for early stage businesses. The current difficulty of raising funds in the region was repeatedly mentioned in the focus group interviews and in the outreach regional meetings as a key obstacle to entrepreneurship development.

At the Economic Summit the three strategies were prioritized as follows:

Figure 3.2: Entrepreneurship Strategies: Summit Ranking



### Examples of Successful Programs

The following are examples of programs that have implemented strategies similar to the ones that have been proposed for Vision 2020.

**Cleveland's JumpStart program** – Leaders in Cleveland launched JumpStart in 2004 to accomplish an equivalent transformative leap. Leading the charge were the foundations of the region. They held \$8 billion in assets, almost all donated by first-generation entrepreneurs. Like most foundations, they had done an admirable job of dealing with the growing poverty afflicting Cuyahoga and surrounding counties.

[www.jumpstartinc.org](http://www.jumpstartinc.org)

**Milwaukee's BizStarts program** – BizStarts has worked with nearly 300 entrepreneurs and companies, including several of the 21 high-growth companies that have been started since BizStarts formed. It expects to help even more potential business owners with a \$458,000 three-year federal grant received in May 2010. The grant will boost BizStarts' Venture Track program, which focuses on education and mentoring for entrepreneurs. [www.bizstartsmilwaukee.com](http://www.bizstartsmilwaukee.com)

**JumpStart**  
*Northeast Indiana recently received an Economic Development Administration grant for incorporating the successful JumpStart program from Cleveland into the region's entrepreneurship development. This will enable the Northeast Indiana Fund to examine entrepreneurial interrelationships, and connect entrepreneurs and investors by significantly enhancing JumpStart's IdeaCrossing technology to facilitate deal flow by matching investors, business mentors, and service providers. Additionally, a Regional Entrepreneurship Action Plan (REAP) will be created to focus the implementation of these strategies.*

**North Virginia Technology Council** – In 2003, NVTC was awarded an earmarked federal grant to develop a technology entrepreneur center that would serve as a model for other centers around the country. Today, The Entrepreneur Center @NVTC continues to be a resource hub for technology-focused start-ups and entrepreneurs at every stage of their life cycle. The Entrepreneur Center fosters entrepreneurship in students, mentors the first-time entrepreneur, advises and supports the experienced entrepreneur, and facilitates strategic business relationships in the technology community. [www.nvtc.org](http://www.nvtc.org)

## C. 21ST CENTURY TALENT

### Goal

**Embraces education!** The region has a vibrant talented workforce that captures the attention of the world.

### Strategy 1

***Give every academically qualified high school graduate the opportunity and resources for post-secondary education.***

This strategy addresses the need to eliminate barriers to higher education. The desired outcome is a region with the rate of students gaining access to post-secondary degrees increases dramatically and where graduates are able to use their talents. High school students clearly supported both aims in their two Vision 2020 meetings. The potential alignment of higher education opportunities and job availability can be realized by support from businesses and education leaders in the implementation of the strategy.

### Strategy 2

***Launch a regional communications campaign that inspires and compels Northeast Indiana to embrace training and education with a recognized link to a higher and better quality of life and personal economic viability.***

This strategy is aimed at creating a positive climate in the region toward appreciation for education and life-long training and retraining while building awareness of the links between education, quality of life and personal prosperity.

Education is an area of strength in Northeast Indiana in spite of the region's low appreciation of the importance of education. Strong commitments are currently being made in support of project-based

#### **Talent Initiative**

*The Talent Initiative, established by a \$20 million grant from Lilly Endowment Inc., is a 10-county regional program focused on accelerating education and training initiatives in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).*

*The primary goal of the Talent Initiative is to increase the base of highly skilled workers to meet the needs of the defense/aerospace and advanced manufacturing industries, while reversing the current decline in regional per capita income.*

learning and the introduction of national and international education standards. There are also several programs available that are designed to train and retrain workers and to address changing employment priorities and the short-term needs for a well-prepared work force.

### Strategy 3

***Start early, ages 0 to 5. Institutionalize businesses programs that provide children of employees with a place conducive to learning.***

This strategy focuses on the role that business can play in changing the region’s attitude toward education. Programs that could become a model to implement the strategy are already in place at IPFW and the Fort Wayne Urban League.

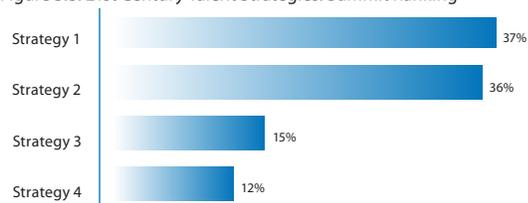
### Strategy 4

***Exceed the State standards by expanding learning time for students and staff in K-12 education.***

This strategy seeks to place the region’s schools at the forefront of education attainment in the state of Indiana. Implementation will require fully-funded collaboration with the region’s economic development leaders. The outcome will be an expanded number of instructional minutes for K-12 students and an increase number of days of professional development for staff, outside of normal instruction periods.

At the Economic Summit the four strategies were prioritized as follows:

Figure 3.3: 21st Century Talent Strategies: Summit Ranking



### Examples of Successful Programs - Workforce Development

The following are examples of programs that have implemented strategies similar to the ones that have been proposed for Vision 2020.

***Dallas Fort Worth Regional Workforce Leadership Council & Regional Clusters*** – The DFW Regional Workforce Leadership Council (RWLC) is a partnership between representatives from industry, workforce providers and education providers in the DFW area. As a member of the Council, the Chamber works to address a perceived information gap between

employers, academia, and workforce suppliers. To close this gap, the Council created targeted industry cluster groups comprised of employers, local workforce boards, community partners and education providers. The clusters allow industries to coordinate workforce activities while leveraging resources for maximum results. To date, the Council has formed clusters in the following industries: Aerospace, Health care, Semiconductor, Logistics and Math/Science Readiness. The Council is currently researching possible clusters in the Information Technology, Trucking, Construction and Tourism industries. [www.dfw-rwlc.com](http://www.dfw-rwlc.com)

## D. INFRASTRUCTURE

### Goal

**Connects the rest of the world!** The region moves people, commerce, and ideas on a sustainable, future-ready infrastructure system.

### Strategy 1

***Develop a regional plan that addresses infrastructure, sustainability, land use, and the optimal location of regional-scale industrial sites, among others.***

The proposed regional plan will establish a framework for decisions that look at issues of infrastructure, land use, sustainability and the location of industrial sites in a comprehensive and holistic manner. The timing of the strategy is propitious as the region is finalizing the merger between Region 3A (the Rural Planning Organization for Huntington, LaGrange, Noble, Steuben, and Whitley counties) and NIRCC (the Northeast Indiana Regional Coordinating Council, the Metropolitan Planning Organization serving Adams, Allen, DeKalb, and Wells Counties). The merger could facilitate the development and, later, adoption of the regional plan.

Implementation of this strategy will require a dual approach. On the technical side, it will require a high level of cooperation among planning agencies to coordinate information and to establish priorities. On the political side, it will require extensive communication with local jurisdictions to ensure their support during the plan's implementation.

The regional plan will also facilitate efforts to establish a consistent and streamlined permitting process throughout the region, as identified in the strategy that follows.

## Strategy 2

***Establish a consistent and streamlined permitting process throughout the region.***

This strategy was originally part of the Competitive Business Climate pillar. It was moved to Infrastructure because it relates strongly to the strategy to develop a regional plan. The issue of expediting the permitting process emerged throughout the process and in all parts of the region as critical to successful economic development. Currently, the process is described as lengthy and often adversarial in nature, and it varies considerably from county to county. The regional plan should include a review of land development regulations and should recommend a revision of those regulations to establish an easier and consistent permitting process throughout the region.

## Strategy 3

***Create a Regional Development Authority that can implement priority regional projects consistent with Vision 2020 and that has dedicated revenue streams.***

The necessary legislation to create Regional Development Authorities is in place. What is unique about this strategy is the unprecedented depth and breadth of its scope, encompassing all ten counties in the region. The Regional Development Authority would provide a mechanism to fund infrastructure projects recommended by the regional plan

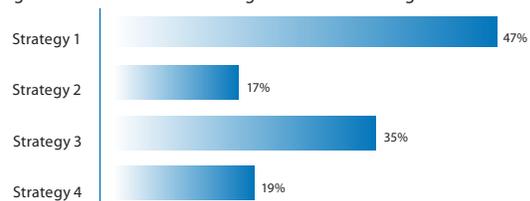
## Strategy 4

***Connect the 10 counties with an extensive fiber optic network.***

This strategy recommends the extension of a fiber optic network to the ten counties following an existing model of community-based network ownership. An extensive fiber optic network is seen as providing a competitive edge to the region.

At the Economic Summit the four strategies were prioritized as follows:

Figure 3.4: Infrastructure Strategies: Summit Ranking



### **Examples of Successful Programs – Multi-County Developments**

The following are examples of industrial parks programs that stemmed from a regional or multi-county planning process.

***Pellissippi Place***, located in Blount County, TN is a community with a business focus on technology research and development and commercialization. It is a collaborative effort of four local governments that are seeking to further R&D innovations in the Oak Ridge Technology Corridor/Innovation Valley. [www.pellissippiplace.com](http://www.pellissippiplace.com)

**Lexington County Industrial Park** is a 350-acre master planned industrial park located near Columbia, SC. It's designated as a Multi-County Industrial Park, which enhances job tax credits from the state. The MCIP designation allows a company to increase its Job Tax Credits by \$1,000/year and allows for the partnering county to realize an agreed-upon percentage of the project's revenue stream, enhancing regional growth and competitiveness. [www.lexingtoncountyindustrialpark.com](http://www.lexingtoncountyindustrialpark.com)

***LandsEast Industrial Park*** is located in Pitt County and Martin County in North Carolina. The counties have officially entered into an interlocal agreement concerning LandsEast Industrial Park. The document, signed by the Chairmen of the Martin and Pitt County Commissioners, details the terms of revenue and cost sharing between the two counties for the joint park. The agreement specifies that the two counties will evenly share incremental ad valorem tax revenues created by improvements or businesses located within the park. Until this time, each county will retain 100 percent of ad valorem taxes collected. The counties will equally share expenses for the industrial park. The collaboration to develop a joint industrial park officially began in 2005 as both counties aimed to stimulate jobs and investment in under served areas. An advisory committee consisting of eight members, four from Pitt and four from Martin County, guides the development of the park. LandsEast spans almost 800 acres and was approved as a North Carolina Certified Site in late 2008 by the North Carolina Department of Commerce.

## E. QUALITY OF LIFE

### Goal

**Exudes confidence!** The region actively celebrates its assets, entrepreneurial spirit, community engagement and creativity.

### Strategy 1

***Launch a regional multi-modal network that promotes an active, healthy lifestyle and connects and provides access to schools, neighborhoods, businesses and natural and cultural assets.***

Throughout the Vision 2020 process participants supported the idea of creating connectivity at all levels of the region. This idea was adopted by the Quality of Life Topical Group to link together themes of healthy life styles and alternative modes of transportation while increasing the region’s awareness of its natural and cultural assets. Because of its emphasis, this strategy is treated separately from the regional plan (above). Both strategies should be carefully coordinated in regards to planning, but implemented independently to enable stronger private sector, foundation, and grassroots participation.

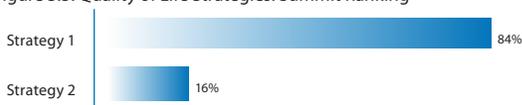
### Strategy 2

***Develop a regional pact to strengthen and celebrate our quality of life, assets and identity.***

This strategy recognizes the fact that Northeast Indiana’s regional identity while growing, is still elusive. It also recognizes that the region has strong natural and cultural assets and that those assets can be the foundation upon which to build a regional identity. The regional pact would elicit a commitment among jurisdictions to cooperate in strengthening and celebrating those assets and in the process build a strong regional identity.

At the Economic Summit the two strategies were prioritized as follows:

Figure 3.5: Quality of Life Strategies: Summit Ranking



### Examples of Success – Connectivity

The following example is of a connectivity programs that can be a model for Vision 2020.

***New York City Biking Initiative*** – In conjunction with several initiatives including the 1997 Bicycle Master Plan, the city of New York has become a leader in bicycle transportation in the United States. Through PlaNYC, Mayor Bloomberg’s sustainability challenge, and the New York City Department of Transportation (NYCDOT) Sustainable Streets program, an incredible jump in biking has occurred. The city has created programs to facilitate biking, and has adapted hundreds of miles of roadways throughout the city into streets with bike lanes.

Bicycling infrastructure has also increased dramatically to support the usage, with the addition of thousands of bike racks, sheltered bike parking structures and several miles of bike paths separated from the roadways. The goal set by PlaNYC and Sustainable Streets of 1,800 miles of bike lanes by 2030 is on track with a current pace of 50 miles each year. [www.nyc.gov](http://www.nyc.gov)



## 4. Implementation

The momentum created by the Economic Summit must be harnessed in the implementation of Vision 2020. To do so, implementation must start expeditiously and the implementation structure (chain of command) must be clear to everyone involved. In the case of Northeast Indiana, implementation should start no later than the early fall of 2010 and one entity must be clearly identified as the go-to organization in regards to staff implementation.

The identification of an organization in charge of all aspects of implementation is particularly important in regional visions. Regions do not have the protocols and enabling powers typically found at the local level. As a result, implementation of the vision is based on the voluntary involvement of entities, each with its own jurisdictional or institutional agenda and mission. Particularly at the beginning of the implementation process, this translates into the need for a great deal of hand holding, coordination, and management of tasks.

Furthermore, leadership in a region is more elusive. Unlike in a single jurisdiction where the leaders and passionate advocates are identifiable, in a region they are more difficult to find and bring together.

### ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Throughout the country, successful visions have been implemented by existing or newly created organizations tasked with sustaining the momentum behind the vision and its implementation. The typical profile of a successful implementation entity is one that is neutral, capable of raising funds, and legitimized by a leadership body that is truly representative of the region's interests.

- Neutrality is a key attribute. As people coalesce voluntarily around specific implementation steps they need to trust the organization in charge and they need to know that it will treat all aspects of implementation impartially.
- The ability to raise funds is also important. Funds must be raised to sustain the organization and to support vision's initiatives. Implementation works best if the organization in charge has operational funds secured or committed for a number of years so that

#### Chapter Organization

4. Implementation is organized into the following sections:

Organizational Structure  
 Implementing the Vision  
 Sustaining and Enhancing Momentum  
     The Cheerleader  
     The Great Communicator  
 Implementing the Vision's Strategies

it can focus primarily on raising funds for the vision.

- The leadership body, formal (as in a board) or informal (as in a steering group), lends credibility the day-to-day operations of implementation.

In Northeast Indiana the day-to-day staff support for implementing the vision will be provided by the Northeast Indiana Fund (NIF) while the leadership body, provisionally called the Coordinating Group, will consist of a diverse group of regional leaders committed to long-term sustained progress in Northeast Indiana. The NIF has the regional reputation, focus and mission needed to implement the vision.

## IMPLEMENTING THE VISION

There are two aspects of implementing the vision:

- Sustaining and enhancing the vision's momentum.
- Implementing the vision's strategies.

### **Sustaining and Enhancing the Vision's Momentum**

To sustain and enhance the momentum and goodwill created by the vision, NIF must play two roles: the cheerleader and the great communicator.

#### ***The Cheerleader***

Over the next few months, NIF must introduce the vision to the region. Even though events such as the Summit have generated media coverage and press, the region needs to hear about the vision from the entity charged with implementing it. In the process of introducing the vision, NIF will introduce itself to the region. It will initiate a new dialogue, one informed by the vision and designed to facilitate its implementation. NIF should:

- Organize presentations throughout the region to elected and appointed officials, business leaders, and special interest groups. These presentations should be targeted to well-identified groups such as City and County Councils, business boards, local Chambers of Commerce, nonprofits, etc. They should focus on organizations that have local or regional credibility and should be tailored to highlight elements of the vision likely to resonate with the selected group. They are not "open-call" type of meetings.
- Identify local champions and stewards and build a cadre of regional vision partners. The more champions, stewards and vision partners

are identified, the higher is the likelihood of local initiatives sprouting throughout the region in support of the vision and toward the implementation of its goals.

- Engage young people in this regional dialogue about the future. This should include high school and college students as well as young professionals organizations.
- Train local speakers and organize local speakers bureaus to continue the dissemination of the vision within counties, cities and communities.

These efforts will lead to full involvement at both the local and regional levels. They will create a fertile ground of programs and initiatives directly linked to and inspired by the vision but initiated independently and locally.

### ***The Great Communicator***

A common drawback of vision implementation is often the reticence on the part of the leading organization to publicize progress. There is a strong likelihood that such reticence might emerge in Northeast Indiana as a propensity for modesty was identified as a regional trait in the focus group interviews.

In implementing Vision 2020, communicating progress must be a top priority that will require building awareness, understanding and pride throughout the region. Vision 2020 is part of an effort to create a whole new narrative and to tell a new story about the region. A sustained awareness and information campaign will ensure that the new story of Northeast Indiana is owned, but more importantly told, by everyone who lives and works there. This campaign should be conducted in addition to the face-to-face presentations described above. NIF should:

- Engage in a sustained awareness campaign that uses conventional printed and electronic media, as well as electronic tools such as blogs, e-mail blasts, and social media to give the region periodic progress updates.
- Schedule live reports to the community highlighting progress and checking back on the vision. For example, a summit with live feeds to local television stations could be scheduled at the anniversary of the first Regional Economic Forum.

These activities need to be orchestrated to keep the flame of the vision alive, to intercept new issues and opportunities as they emerge, and to create accountability in the process to implement the vision.

## IMPLEMENTING THE VISION'S STRATEGIES

Implementing the vision's strategies is NIF's primary function. Implementing a vision is of course, a complex task. Issues are difficult to tackle and much time and effort are required to create the climate for regional cooperation that is conducive to implement a regional vision. The scope of *Vision 2020*, all encompassing by design, may appear to lack the focus and poignancy often associated with a single-issue campaign, thus requiring additional effort. The process of implementation must be carefully calibrated to energize the region and maximize economic and organizational resources, while summoning the necessary support of the public and private sector.

An equally important aspect of implementing the vision is to sustain leadership's involvement. The most common failure in implementation is loss of leadership after the vision process is complete and implementation is beginning. A vision is not an excuse to relinquish leadership because "someone else in the region will do it." To the contrary, the implementation of a vision is a challenge to existing leaders to do better, think differently, or in the lexicon of *Vision 2020*, to think outrageously. It is also an opportunity to identify new leaders.

*Vision 2020* identified fifteen strategies to implement five regional goals, one for each pillar. For each recommendation, the Topical Groups identified action steps that recognize leading entities, initial steps and indicators of success.

An analysis of the action steps shows that there are three primary tools for implementing the strategies of the vision: regional organizations, taskforces and steering committees.

Six strategies recommend that implementation be delegated to existing regional organizations. It is significant that the six fall into the pillars of Competitive Business Climate, Entrepreneurship, and Infrastructure. The Northeast Indiana Regional Partnership – alone or in associations with existing partners such as WorkOne Northeast, the newly formed Regional Chamber of Northeast Indiana or the Northeast Indiana Innovation Center are seen as partners in implementing several of the vision strategies. Notably they represent organizations that have promoted regionalism and have gained a positive reputation for it.

Six strategies recommend the creation of specific task forces. The taskforces are ad-hoc entities focused on implementing a discrete aspect of the vision. They are the tool to bring together regional leaders and entities, for example the LEDOs. In areas in which a task force is needed, much work needs to go into building regional coalitions. Task forces

represent opportunities to develop and nourish new leadership in the region.

Three strategies recommend the creation of a steering committee or an oversight committee. These strategies are focused on developing a regional plan, including the streamlining of development regulations, and on extending and connecting the region with different ways to move around. The recommendation of creating steering and oversight committees reflects the fact that the three strategies fall distinctly in area of public sector responsibility. The proposed committees are designed to ensure that private sector and special interests are involved in the development of those plans.

### **Successful Programs – Funding a Vision’s Implementation**

***Nine Counties One Vision*** was initiated by business, philanthropic and public sector leaders to develop a vision for the nine-county area surrounding the City of Knoxville, Tennessee. Funding for the vision was structured in such a way that the eponymous organization in charge of conducting the vision and sustaining implementation could remain in business for a period of five years, as stated in their by-laws.

Funding was raised from a variety of sources including businesses, government and foundations. The initial contributor list included 16 entities. Each entity pledged to donate to the organization Nine Counties One Vision \$75,000 spread out over a period of five years. The initial payment was in the order of \$25,000 followed by four additional annual payments of \$12,500. The total raised this way was \$1.2 million and it enabled the organization to proactively support the implementation of the vision for five years before voting itself out of business.

[www.ninecountiesonevision.org](http://www.ninecountiesonevision.org)

***Building regional leadership capacity***

*One of the top priorities coming out of the regional outreach meetings was the need to build leadership capacity in the region. The Young Leaders of Northeast Indiana and Leadership Fort Wayne exist as organizations working toward that end, but more needs to be done regionally to increase the skills and involvement of regional leaders. This is critical to the success and sustainability of the region's vision for the future.*

**Overall Issues**

A few topics arose during the Vision 2020 process that did not fit into one of the prescribed pillars, yet were mentioned frequently enough to become important issues for Northeast Indiana. The following issues and examples of successful programs are listed below.

**Leadership Development: Examples of Successful Programs**

The following are examples of programs that have implemented regional leadership development strategies. Building leadership capacity was a recurring theme discussed during Vision 2020.

***Delta Leadership Institute*** – The DRI, operated by the Delta Regional Authority, was designed to create a corps of leaders with a regional and national perspective. The first class of the institute met in 2005. The program was operated by the DRA in cooperation with Delta State University at Cleveland, Miss. In April 2006, the DRA board chose the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa to coordinate the Delta Leadership Institute. The Delta Leadership Institute was designed to improve the decisions made by leaders across the region. Each of the eight governors and the federal cochairman nominate four people per year for the program, resulting in a class of 36 Delta leaders. [www.deltaleadership.org](http://www.deltaleadership.org)

***Regional Leadership Coalition*** – A bi-state, non-partisan organization of leaders in the Greater Louisville/Southern Indiana region, the RLC is focused on confronting issues that are of critical importance to a 26-county region. Going beyond physical and political boundaries, the RLC focuses its efforts on three key areas: transportation, education attainment and economic development. [www.rlco.org](http://www.rlco.org)

***Leadership Atlanta*** – Leadership Atlanta recognizes that its mission of building a better community in Atlanta would be more readily accomplished if adults were inspired at an earlier age to exercise leadership committed to serving the common good. L.E.A.D. is an initiative of Leadership Atlanta, a leadership program for young professionals. Targeted to a diverse group of motivated and promising individuals between the ages of 25 and 32, L.E.A.D. is designed to equip young leaders with key skills, knowledge and contacts early in their professional and community service careers. [www.leadershipatlanta.org](http://www.leadershipatlanta.org)

### Regional Branding: Examples of Successful Programs

The following are examples of programs that have successfully implemented branding strategies. The notion of developing a brand for the region was a recurring theme discussed during the Vision 2020 deliberations.

**Tacoma, the Wired City** – Tacoma Power, a division of the City’s municipally-owned Tacoma Public Utilities, took a calculated risk in 1997 that has benefited the residents, businesses and development of the City of Tacoma and Pierce County ever since. In keeping with its dedication to its customers, Tacoma Power made a \$100 million investment in installing 700 miles of fiber optic cable within every single right of way in Tacoma. This identity of Tacoma was featured in a Wall Street Journal article.

**The Research Triangle Region** – After a number of years of relative inactivity, the Research Triangle Region became a location initially for major federal government labs. This led to the attraction of major high tech research operations and the rapid expansion of the Research Triangle Park. The area became known as a major R&D location.

[www.researchtriangle.org](http://www.researchtriangle.org)

**A brand for Northeast Indiana**  
*A frequent comment of numerous focus groups, interviews, and outreach meetings was the lack of a recognizable identity for Northeast Indiana by business investors outside of the region, which is hampering the marketing of the region. Although the issue of branding was raised, more economic development marketing experts do not recommend an attempt to “brand” a community or region. Very few, if any, examples exist of successful economic development branding. On the other hand, much can be said about increasing the awareness of the assets of this region among potential site selectors, business investors, tourists, retirees, etc. that all could help raise the standard of living in the region.*