

Economic Development Plans

Section VI

Indiana Department of Natural Resources
Lake Michigan Coastal Program

Regional Cities Initiative: Indiana's Third Coast Gateway Initiative

Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority, Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District, Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission, One Region, and Northwest Indiana Forum

2015

<http://iedc.in.gov/programs/regional-cities-initiative/home/Download/d40f259c-34ce-6748-857a-ff0000c19905/>

About the Plan

This plan is a result of a collaborative effort and application for the Indiana Regional Cities Initiative. While Northwest Indiana's proposal was not selected for funding in the Indiana Regional Cities Initiative's first phase, the projects described in the plan are still being pursued by regional entities and partnerships. The plan proposes a \$270 million investment in the South Shore commuter rail line to improve the linkage between South Bend, Indiana and Chicago. The ultimate goal of the investments is to link Northwest Indiana residents with high-paying jobs and boost the regional economy. The proposal aims to do this by reducing the travel time between South Bend and Chicago to 90 minutes to better connect Indiana to Chicago's employment market, and to connect Chicago to Indiana's tourism assets. The investments would yield projected sales and income tax revenue of \$308.7 million from 2016 through 2025.

Recommendations

There are four phases in the proposed initiative:

1. Double tracking the South Shore rail line between Michigan City and Gary to increase the frequency of trains available and to reduce the delays
2. Renewing the infrastructure of the South Shore rail line between South Bend and Michigan City
3. Realigning the South Bend rail station at South Bend International Airport
4. Realigning the Michigan City rail station

Each project is described in detail in Section 7.

Framework for Creating a Smart Growth Economic Development Strategy: A Tool for Small Cities and Towns

*U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Sustainable Communities
2016*

https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2016-01/documents/small_town_econ_dev_tool_010516.pdf

About the Resource

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency uses the term “smart growth economic development” to describe activities that build upon existing community and economic assets and long-range planning to attract diverse investments in the local economy. The concept focuses on creating strategies that support local businesses, quality of life, and workers. This step-by-step smart-growth economic development tool is geared toward small and mid-sized cities, specifically those with limited population growth, areas of disinvestment, and population segments that are struggling economically. The guide presents a framework from which stakeholders can gather information and explore development opportunities.

Recommendations

The guide walks the reader through the economic development planning process with lists and tables. A smart-growth economic strategy can be developed in five steps:

1. Selecting a focus area
2. Defining the context
3. Setting the goals
4. Identifying the existing assets and barriers
5. Selecting the right tools

This resource includes a list of 17 sample goals, indicators, and corresponding policy tools that can be used to achieve those goals. Goals include encouraging business growth in infill locations, improving access to job training and workforce development opportunities, promoting vibrant commercial districts, ensuring a range of housing types that are affordable to different income levels, maintaining distinctive community character, and promoting mixed-use development.