

# Quality of Life Indicators

Draft

June 2003



Northwest Indiana  
Quality of Life Council

# Quality of Life Council

Creating a Sustainable Future for Northwest Indiana

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June 6, 2003

Dear Reader:

The Northwest Indiana Quality of Life Council is pleased to release this draft of its 2003 quality of life indicators. As an organization, we intend to use these indicators to guide our ongoing deliberations concerning the region. We hope that they will be used in other ways as well.

- Most importantly, we hope that the policy recommendations included at the conclusion of each section will be used by decision-makers to craft public policy at the local, county, regional, and state levels of government.
- We believe that the business community can use this report to formulate investment and community engagement strategies.
- We anticipate that various institutions in the nonprofit and civil sectors of our community will use it to develop initiatives in keeping with their respective missions.
- Similarly, we encourage organizations that have a more local focus to use our indicators as a backdrop against which to develop and pursue their objectives.
- We encourage the media to use this report in deciding when and how to facilitate the public's ongoing discussions about the future of the region.
- We hope that this report and the analyses that it engenders will contribute to a broader understanding of the region's assets, challenges, and potential among citizens.
- Finally, we encourage school systems to use this report to supplement curricula, particularly at the high school level.

As is noted above, this edition of our indicators is a draft. We would appreciate any comments or recommendations that you might care to share by July 31, 2003. During August, our Operations Committee will consider any feedback that is received, and, in September 2003, we will release our final set of quality of life indicators. Comments can be addressed to Daniel Lowery, Northwest Indiana Quality of Life Council, c/o IUN/SPEA, 3400 Broadway, Gary, IN 46408. Dr. Lowery can also be reached at [dlowery@iun.edu](mailto:dlowery@iun.edu) or (219) 981-5629.

Thank you in advance for your assistance on this important project. We trust that our final set of indicators will prove useful to you.

Sincerely,

James Dworkin, Ph.D.  
Chairman

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# 1.0 Introduction

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## 1.1 The Development of Community-based Indicators

Over 200 communities in the United States have developed community-based indicators of one type or another. The first national conference on the subject took place in Denver in 1996 and attracted participants from 150 different communities. This development can be attributed, in part, to the federal government's Healthy People initiative. However, larger societal trends have prompted the development of community-based indicators as well. In fact, four tendencies over the last 30 years have contributed to the kinds of data-gathering, assessment, and community-based action that are promoted in the Healthy People initiative and other related endeavors.

- The first of these trends pertains to our collective understanding of the concept of human flourishing, which has expanded greatly over time. Indeed, there is a growing disillusionment with money as the primary or sole measure of human happiness. National and international metrics, such as gross national product and gross domestic product, are no longer viewed as sufficient. As is noted in the introduction to the Northwest Indiana Quality of Life Council's first indicators report: "Quality of life' is ultimately more important than 'standard of living.' 'Standard of living' refers solely to the private domain and to the disposable income that we use to purchase things individually. 'Quality of life' refers to the public domain. It's the sum of things that people purchase collectively, such as the healthcare system and those things we need to live but do not purchase, like the air we breath." The popular management literature points to a similar disenchantment with financial measures of well-being at the level of the individual. In and of itself, money is no longer believed by many to constitute well-being, thus the need for more comprehensive sets of community-based indicators.
- The systematic focus of many indicators initiatives also reflects an appreciation for the interconnectedness of the many factors that together contribute to a high quality of life. First attaining prominence in the 1960s, systems theory rejects the closed metaphor of the machine. It holds that social and environmental systems are more like living organisms. They are affected by a broad range of factors and interact with these factors in complex ways.

Systems theory lies at the heart of the concept of "sustainability," which undergirds many community-based indicators initiatives. A systems model is used to illustrate the relationships that exist among the six broad categories that are included in the United Way of America's State of Giving Index. A systems model is also featured in the federal government's Healthy People initiative to illustrate the interrelationships that exist among six broad categories: biology; individual behavior; the social environment; the physical environment; policies and interventions; and access to healthcare.

- The devolution of some national programs to the state, regional, and local levels of government has also contributed to a growing interest in community-based indicators. The Nixon Administration's New Federalism was followed, in turn, by the Reagan Revolution of the 1980s and the Republican Contract with America in the 1990s. Although these developments have been criticized by some as an abandonment of certain national commitments, others have described them as milestones in the rebirth of a concern for community.
- The total quality movement is also consistent with the development of community-based indicators. W. Edwards Deming and Joseph Juran, who, along with others, contributed so much to the reengineering of business and manufacturing practices in the United States in the 1980s and 1990s, argued that measurement is central to the concept of continuous improvement. "You cannot improve what you do not measure." In the same way that advertising cannot ensure a good product or service, community-based measures that focus solely on the kinds of data that might attract new residents, consumers, and investors to a community cannot alone engender positive change. A community must gather data

across a broad front. It is not enough, however, just to gather data; measures of performance must be linked to an improvement planning process. Exemplary community-based initiatives include processes that link the gathering of data to action steps of one kind or another.

This conceptual location of the community-based indicators movement suggests that it is much more than a passing fad. It may, in fact, be the key to a renewed understanding of community. More specifically, McKiernan and Plantz contend that community-based indicators can “create unity, ignite commitment from diverse community stakeholders, and lay a solid foundation for future action.” Using similar language, Besleme and Mullin argue that indicators projects can “cultivate a sense of shared responsibility for community health and well-being... They (can) help bridge the gap between government and citizens, build important coalitions within communities, (and) draw attention to problems and negative trends before they become damaging...”

## 1.2 Design Principles

Although community-based indicators have been organized around various principles, three now predominate: the vision set forth in the Healthy People initiative; the concept of “sustainability”; and the focus on children and families that is promoted by the Annie E. Casey Foundation and the Search Institute. In 2000, the Northwest Indiana Quality of Life Council adopted “sustainability” as a guiding principle in developing its first set of community-based indicators. A total of 75 indicators were selected based on this concept. The criteria used to select the indicators and the categories into which they were organized are each associated with the concept of “sustainability,” which is defined by the President’s Commission on Sustainable Development as “an evolving process that improves the economy, the environment, and society for the benefit of current and future generations.” Similarly, the International Council for Local Economic Initiatives defines “sustainable development” as a program that can “change the process of economic development so that it can ensure a basic quality of life for all people while protecting ecosystems and community systems that make life possible and worthwhile.”

In a general way, the principle of “sustainability” can be differentiated from other approaches to the development of community-based indicators by its focus on the balance that exists between economic development and environmental health. This is not to say that Healthy People initiatives or indicators projects that are guided by a concern for children and families are antithetical to this balance. In fact, indicators projects that are based on all three of these organizing principles have much in common. Differences implicit in these alternative approaches can be viewed as a matter of foregrounding and backgrounding. In the case of Healthy People initiatives, wellness is emphasized. In the case of “sustainability” initiatives, the balance between economic development and environmental health is foregrounded. And indicators that reflect the model advocated by the Annie E. Casey Foundation and the Search Institute foreground children and families.



We believe that each of these approaches is valuable, so much so, that we have located a “family icon” near indicators that are particularly relevant to the well-being of children and families. Like the concept of sustainability, we believe that a community-wide commitment to children and families can contribute to positive change.

A focus on race is also appropriate in Northwest Indiana. Race has been correctly identified as our “Achilles heel.” It is relevant – indeed central – to a number of the indicators that are presented in the following pages. A second icon will thus be employed to identify indicators that are particularly relevant to our ongoing exploration of race and the role that it plays in our shared life.



## 1.3 Design Changes

This edition of the Northwest Indiana Quality of Life Council’s community-based indicators includes three changes. First, we have adopted a strength-based approach in the narrative that accompanies each indicator. This is in keeping with “appreciative inquiry,” a method that calls attention not just to problems and challenges,

but to assets and resources as well. For this reason, our section headings suggest an agenda that we believe should be endorsed by the entire community. They are “aspirational” in nature.

- Our demographic indicators are organized around the vision of “A Diverse Community” (2.0).
- Economic data is positioned under the heading “A Thriving Community” (3.0).
- Indicators pertaining to the twin poles of income and poverty are presented in a section entitled “A Community of Opportunity” (4.0).
- Our environmental indicators embody the challenge to create “A Community in Balance with its Environment” (5.0).
- Indicators pertaining to education reflect our commitment to attain status as “A Learning Community” (6.0).
- Health data is organized under the heading “A Healthy Community” (7.0).
- Housing is addressed in a section entitled “A Community of Viable and Open Neighborhoods” (8.0).
- Our transportation indicators reflect our desire to create “An Accessible Community” (9.0).
- Indicators that address public safety are presented under the heading “A Safe Community” (10.0).
- Data pertaining to the cultural and recreational assets of the region are organized in a section entitled “A Community that Appreciates the Arts and Celebrates Life” (11.0).
- Finally, a broad set of indicators that reflect the civil dimension of our shared life as a region is included in a section entitled “A Community of Engaged and Caring Citizens” (12.0).

The second change involves the use of “grades” and trend summaries. They do not reflect a rigorous scoring process as such, but a starting point for discussion. Again, a community cannot improve what it does not measure. And measurements necessarily involve comparisons against past performance, against other communities, or against goals. We hope to engender the kinds of comparisons that can lead to positive action across a broad front.

Finally, policy recommendations are included in this report in a more explicit way than they were in our initial set of indicators. These recommendations are intentionally broad in nature. They are more suggestive than prescriptive. Again, our goal is to stimulate discussion that can lead to positive action across a broad set of concerns. Our recommendations are included at the close of each section. They are presented again in a summary fashion in the appendix.

#### 1.4 Findings

The data in this report address a three-county region – a community – that is simultaneously beset by difficult and complex challenges and blessed with untapped resources and assets. The following summary represents – in our view – a snapshot of this larger picture. The grades and trend assessments illustrate where we now stand and the direction in which we are heading.

Section	Indicator Category	Grade	Trend
2.0	A Diverse Community	D	Hopeful
3.0	A Thriving Community	D	Promising
4.0	A Community of Opportunity	D	Stagnant
5.0	A Community in Balance with its Environment	C+	Improving
6.0	A Learning Community	C-	Mixed
7.0	A Healthy Community	I	Unknown
8.0	A Community of Open and Viable Neighborhoods	C	An Opportunity
9.0	An Accessible Community	D	Disappointing
10.0	A Safe Community	B-	Encouraging
11.0	A Community that Appreciates the Arts and Celebrates Life	B+	Vibrant
12.0	A Community of Engaged and Caring Citizens	B-	Emerging

Table 1

## **1.5 Recommended Uses**

We hope that this report will be used in several ways.

- Most importantly, we hope that the policy recommendations included at the conclusion of each section will be used by decision-makers to craft public policy at the local, county, regional, and state levels of government. In our view, there is a need to leaven our current approach to public policy – which is too often reactive rather than proactive and incremental rather than strategic in nature – with a perspective that is both longer and broader in view.
- We trust that the business community will use this report to formulate investment and community engagement strategies that will benefit today’s employees, owners, and investors AND their children and grandchildren.
- Further, we anticipate that various institutions in the nonprofit and civil sectors of our community will use this report to develop strategies in keeping with their respective missions. This includes the region’s three United Way organizations, our community foundations, the religious community, labor unions, and the many other institutions that contribute collectively to our overall quality of life.
- Similarly, we encourage organizations that have a more local focus (e.g., neighborhood and interest-based organizations) to use this report as a backdrop against which to develop and pursue their objectives.
- We also encourage the media to use this report in deciding when and how to facilitate the public’s ongoing discussions about the future of the region.
- We hope that this report and the discussions that it engenders will contribute to a broader understanding of the region’s assets, challenges, and potential among citizens, and that this, in turn, will lead to their engagement in the full life of their respective communities.
- Finally, we encourage schools systems to use this report to supplement curricula, particularly at the high school level. The front lines of public policy are increasingly local and regional rather than statewide and national in nature. Again, this report should serve this purpose.

## **1.6 Acknowledgements**

A report of this kind draws on the assistance of many individuals and various governmental and non-governmental resources. Four sets of acknowledgements are particularly appropriate, however. The groundbreaking contribution by Jerry Long to the development of the Northwest Indiana Quality of Life Council’s first set of community-based indicators in 2000 must be noted. Working under the direction of Father Tom Gannon of the Heartland Center, Mr. Long established a pattern that is still very much reflected in this edition of our indicators.

Lake Area United Way’s Vision Council has devoted the last two years to an ongoing analysis of the well-being of children and families. As is noted above, this perspective has been fully incorporated into this report. We trust that it will prove useful to the Vision Council and to other organizations with similar missions.

The data reflected in this report are drawn from sources that are both original and secondary in nature. The 2000 Census proved particularly useful. Four statewide data sources proved useful as well: the Indiana Business Research Center ([www.ibrc.Indiana.edu](http://www.ibrc.Indiana.edu)); the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission ([www.nirpc.org](http://www.nirpc.org)); the Indiana Youth Institute ([www.IYI.org](http://www.IYI.org)); and the Indiana Department of Education ([www.ideanet.doe.state.in.us](http://www.ideanet.doe.state.in.us)). These secondary sources are cited in those instances in which the data presented were drawn from their databases and reports. Readers are thus encouraged to make use of these valuable resources as well.

Finally, the graduate students who participated in a statistics class conducted in the School of Public and Environmental Affairs at Indiana University Northwest during the Fall 2002 semester are commended for their many contributions to this report. They included Michael Anderson, Keely Bell, Elizabeth Boger, Kamay Carter, Kimberly Collins, Barbara Crenshaw, Phillip Daniels, Kysha Egungbemi, Andre Franklin, Derek Hall, Delaine Hunter, Cathy Iovanella, Danisha Jenkins, Carolyn Jordan, Brenda Joshua, Melinda Lunghofer, Carla Manuel-

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## 2.0 A Diverse Community

Data from the 2000 Census tell two very different stories. The population demographics of the urban core, which includes Gary, Hammond, East Chicago, and Michigan City, have changed little over the course of the last 10 years. At the same time, Porter County has experienced dramatic growth as have several towns in south Lake County. Three sets of data follow. We start with population data. This is followed, in turn, by data pertaining to race and ethnicity. And we close with data that describes the makeup of households in Northwest Indiana. These basic data provide a framework for much of the more detailed information that follows.

Population	Lake	LaPorte	Porter
2000	484,564	110,106	146,798
1990	475,594	107,066	128,932
1980	522,910	108,630	119,810
1970	546,253	105,342	87,114

Table 2; Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Population (Lake County)	1990	2000	% Change
Winfield	645	2,298	256.3%
St. John	4,921	8,382	70.3%
Dyer	10,923	13,895	27.2%
Schererville	20,155	24,851	23.3%
Lowell	6,430	7,505	16.7%
Merrillville	27,257	30,560	12.1%
Crown Point	17,728	19,806	11.7%
Munster	19,949	21,511	7.8%
Cedar Lake	8,885	9,279	4.4%
Hobart	24,440	25,363	3.8%
Schneider	310	317	2.3%
Lake Station	13,899	13,948	0.4%
New Chicago	2,066	2,063	-0.1%
Whiting	5,150	5,137	-0.3%
Highland	23,696	23,546	-0.6%
Hammond	84,236	83,048	-1.4%
Griffith	17,914	17,334	-3.2%
East Chicago	33,892	32,414	-4.4%
Gary	116,646	102,746	-11.9%
Balance	36,447	40,561	11.3%

Table 3; Source: NIRPC

Seven towns and cities in Lake County experienced population growth in excess of 10 percent. Wanatah was the only town in LaPorte County in which the population increased by 10 percent. And in Porter County, six town and cities grew by more than 10 percent.

At 11.9 percent, Gary was the only large city or town in the region to suffer a significant decline in population over the 10-year period ending in 2000.

### 2.1 Population

Lake County's population fell by 1.9 percent between 1990 and 2000. The total decline over the 30-year period that ended in 2000 was 11.3 percent. LaPorte County's population increased by 2.8 percent between 1990 and 2000. Its population has increased by 4.5 percent since 1970. In contrast, Porter County's population increased by 13.9 percent since 1970. The number of people living in Porter County has increased by 68.5 percent over the last 30 years.

Population (LaPorte County)	1990	2000	% Change
Wanatah	852	1,013	18.9%
Pottawattamie Park	281	300	6.8%
LaPorte	21,507	21,621	0.5%
Westville	5,255	5,211	-0.8%
Kingsford Heights	1,486	1,453	-2.2%
Michigan City	33,822	32,900	-2.7%
Trail Creek	2,463	2,296	-6.8%
Kingsbury	258	229	-11.2%
Michiana Shores	378	330	-12.7%
LaCrosse	677	561	-17.1%
Long Beach	2,044	1,559	-23.7%
Balance of County	38,043	42,633	12.1%

Table 4; Source: NIRPC

Population (Porter County)	1990	2000	% Change
Porter	3,118	4,972	59.5%
Portage	29,062	33,496	15.3%
Chesterton	9,118	10,488	15.0%
Beverly Shores	622	708	13.8%
Hebron	3,183	3,596	13.0%
Valparaiso	24,414	27,428	12.3%
Kouts	1,603	1,698	5.9%
Town of Pines	789	798	1.1%
Burns Harbor	786	766	-2.5%
Ogden Dunes	1,499	1,313	-12.4%
Dune Acres	263	213	-19.0%
Balance of County	54,475	61,322	12.6%

Table 5; Source: NIRPC

**Population Projections**

	Lake	LaPorte	Porter
2020	503,185	113,217	169,493
2015	500,195	112,698	166,306
2010	496,886	112,124	162,781
2005	492,903	111,433	158,537
2000 (baseline)	486,308	110,289	151,509

Table 6; Source: U.S. Census Bureau

The U.S. Census does not predict significant changes in this pattern of population growth and decline over the course of the next 20 years. Lake County's population is expected to increase by a modest 3.5 percent. In LaPorte County, 2.7 percent growth is anticipated. Again in contrast to the Lake and LaPorte Counties, the population of Porter County is expected to increase by 11.9 percent between now and the year 2020.

**Age Cohorts (2000)**

	Lake	LaPorte	Porter	Indiana
Median	35.9	37.1	36.3	35.2

Table 7; Source: Indiana Business Research Center

Age represents another important demographic variable. It can shed light on a community's economic vitality as well as its social needs (e.g., education and services for seniors). In fact, age is one of the few variables in which we do not find significant differences among the region's three counties. At 37.1 years, LaPorte County's median age is about two years older than the median age for the state as a whole. The median ages in Lake and Porter County are closer to the state median. In Lake County, the percentage of residents under the age of 18 stands at 26.7 percent, while 13.0 percent of the population is over the age of 65. In LaPorte County, 26.4 percent of the population is under the age of 18 and 13.5 percent is over the age of 65. In Porter County, individuals under the age of 18 account for 25.8 percent of the population. At 10.9 percent, seniors account for a smaller percentage of Porter County's population.

**Age Cohorts (2000)**

	Lake	LaPorte	Porter	Indiana
Senior (65 plus)	63,234	14,912	15,972	752,831
Adult (18-64)	291,533	68,192	93,024	3,753,258
School Age (5-17)	95,158	19,886	28,314	1,151,181
Preschool (0-4)	34,639	7,116	9,488	423,215

Table 8; Source: Indiana Business Research Center

**Age Cohorts (2000)**

	Lake	LaPorte	Porter	Indiana
Senior (65 plus)	13.00%	13.50%	10.90%	12.40%
Adult (18-64)	60.20%	61.90%	63.40%	61.70%
School Age (5-17)	19.60%	18.10%	19.30%	18.90%
Preschool (0-4)	7.10%	6.50%	6.50%	7.00%

Table 9; Source: Indiana Business Research Center

## 2.2 Race and Ethnicity

**Race (2000)**

	Lake	LaPorte	Porter	Indiana
One Race	475,585	108,432	144,854	6,004,813
▪ African-American	122,723	11,156	1,344	510,034
▪ American-Indian	1,343	342	326	15,815
▪ Asian	3,983	498	1,341	59,126
▪ White	323,290	94,972	139,946	5,320,022
▪ Other	24,246	1,464	1,897	99,816
Two or More Races	8,979	1,674	1,944	75,672
Hispanic (any race)	59,128	3,402	7,079	214,536

Table 10; Source: Indiana Business Research Center

Race remains a defining characteristic in the region, in large part due to the lack of diversity that is present in most towns and cities in Northwest Indiana. In all, 25.3 percent of Lake County's residents identify themselves as African-American. This compares to 10.1 percent and .9 percent respectively in LaPorte and Porter Counties. African-Americans account for 8.4 percent of the population statewide. Just under a third of all African-American citizens who live in Indiana reside in the region.

In all, 12.2 percent of Lake County's residents identify themselves as Hispanics. This compares to 3.1 percent and 4.8 percent respectively in LaPorte and Porter Counties. Hispanics account for 3.5 percent of the population statewide. Just under a third of all Hispanics who live in Indiana call the region home.

Again, race is a defining characteristic of the region because of the lack of diversity that exists in individual communities. In 2002, the Detroit News used Census data to identify



<b>Percent African-American Population (2000)</b>	
Gary	84.0%
East Chicago	36.1%
Westville (skewed by institutional residents)	26.4%
Michigan City	26.3%
Merrillville	22.9%
Pottawattamie Park	16.3%
Hammond	14.6%
Griffith	10.1%
Kingsford Heights	9.7%
Balance of Lake County	4.7%
Trail Creek	2.7%
Schererville	2.1%
La Porte	1.9%
Valparaiso	1.6%
Portage	1.4%
Crown Point	1.4%
Hobart	1.4%
Highland	1.3%
Balance LaPorte County	1.0%
Munster	1.0%
Porter	0.8%
Lake Station	0.8%
Beverly Shores	0.7%
Dyer	0.7%
Whiting	0.6%
New Chicago	0.5%
Balance Porter County	0.5%
Chesterton	0.4%
Long Beach	0.4%
Winfield	0.3%
Schneider	0.3%
Michiana Shores	0.3%
Hebron	0.3%
Burns Harbor	0.3%
Ogden Dunes	0.2%
La Crosse	0.2%
St. John	0.1%
Town of Pines	0.1%
Wanatah	0.1%
Cedar Lake	0.1%
Lowell	0.0%
Dune Acres	0.0%

Table 11; Source: NIRPC

the ten most segregated metropolitan areas of the country. The Gary metropolitan area, which includes Lake and Porter Counties, scored second on the list, just behind Detroit and just ahead of Milwaukee. The appropriateness of this ranking is evident in the concentration of or absence of minorities in individual communities in the region. African-Americans, in particular, remain concentrated in the region's urban core. The only four cities or towns in the region in which we see significant diversity overall are East Chicago, Michigan City, Merrillville, and Hammond. But even in these cases, neighborhoods tend to be segregated by race.

As a percent of total population, the foreign-born do not comprise a significant proportion of the population in Lake, LaPorte, or Porter Counties. And the majority of the foreign-born in each county are naturalized citizens. Even in Lake County, which has a sizable Hispanic population, English is the primary language spoken in most households. In LaPorte and Porter Counties, the percentages of households in which some language other than English is employed as the primary communications medium are comparable to the percentage for the state. At the same time, 5,201 households in Northwest Indiana can be classified as "linguistically isolated."

<b>Number Foreign-born (2000)</b>				
	<b>Lake</b>	<b>LaPorte</b>	<b>Porter</b>	<b>Indiana</b>
Naturalized Citizens	14,319	1,464	2,349	70,983
Non-citizens	11,529	1,266	2,010	115,551

Table 12; Source: U.S. Census

<b>Percent Foreign-born (2000)</b>				
	<b>Lake</b>	<b>LaPorte</b>	<b>Porter</b>	<b>Indiana</b>
Percent	5.3%	2.5%	3.0%	3.1%

Table 13; Source: U.S. Census

<b>Percent Households in Which English Is Only Language Spoken</b>				
	<b>Lake</b>	<b>LaPorte</b>	<b>Porter</b>	<b>Indiana</b>
Percent	86.5%	94.1%	93.8%	93.6%

Table 14; Source: U.S. Census

<b>Linguistically Isolated Households (2000)</b>			
	<b>Lake</b>	<b>LaPorte</b>	<b>Porter</b>
Households	4,318	498	385

Table 15; Source: U.S. Census

### 2.3 Households

The traditional household in which a married couple live with their minor children is becoming something of a rarity. In Lake and LaPorte Counties, just over one-fifth of all households now fit this conventional pattern. Porter County's percentage of traditional households far exceeds the percentages in Lake and Porter Counties as well as the percentage for the state as a whole. The number of people who live alone in Lake and Porter

**Types of Households (2000)**

	Lake	LaPorte	Porter	Indiana
Married with Children	21.5%	22.6%	27.6%	23.8%
Married without Children	27.2%	31.3%	32.1%	29.8%
Single Parent Households	11.3%	9.3%	7.4%	9.1%
Living Alone	25.8%	25.2%	22.2%	25.9%
Other	14.2%	11.6%	10.7%	11.4%

Table 16; Source: Indiana Business Research Center



Counties now exceeds the number who live in households comprised of married couples who live with their minor children. And at 11.3 percent, the percentage of single parents who live with their children far exceeds the

percentages in LaPorte County, Porter County, and, indeed, the state as a whole. The percentage of single parents who live with their children in LaPorte County is comparable to the state's percentage. The percentage in Porter County is substantially smaller than the state's percentage.

**Grade:** Demographic data are not typically "graded" in reports of this kind because a community's demographics are generally framed as a backdrop against which specific public policy concerns can be addressed. In this view, race, per se, does not lend itself to public policy initiatives of one kind or another. This is not to say that race is ignored in other community-based indicators projects. On the contrary, it is often featured as a key element in one policy domain or another, typically education, housing, health, or economic opportunity. As has been noted, however, race is now broadly recognized as Northwest Indiana's "Achilles heel." So, even though it is featured throughout this report, it is appropriate to address race directly in our assessment of the region's demographic profile.

A grade of "D" is assigned in recognition of the tremendous challenge that we face with respect to diversity. In fact, it is possible to avoid a grade of "F" only because of certain recent initiatives undertaken by the Unity Council of Healthy Communities in LaPorte County, United for a Purpose in Porter County, Valparaiso University, the City of Hammond, the Race Relations Council of Northwest Indiana, the Catholic Diocese of Gary, and other organizations.

**Trend:** Hopeful.

**Goal:** The Quality of Life Council recognizes that greater understanding and education cannot serve as a substitute for action. For this reason, specific actions that address disparities that occur along racial and ethnic lines are identified in several sections of this report. At the same time, polarization along racial lines is endemic to the region. And we believe that certain institutions can do a great deal to break down the barriers that exist between and among White, African-American, and Hispanic citizens. We believe that they can contribute to greater understanding across confessional lines as well. Unfortunately, it is not possible to establish a concrete goal with respect to this kind of understanding; no baseline as such now exists. To this end, our first action step focuses on the gathering and analysis of data. Once a baseline has been established, we encourage the region to commit to "substantial improvement" before the year 2010.

**Action:** To a certain extent, race relations can be improved through the full implementation of the action steps that are included in the several sections of this report. Indeed, positive action, at this point in time, will probably be needed in order to establish the conditions for ongoing dialogue on this most difficult of concerns. At the same time, certain steps can be taken to promote dialogue.

- The Race Relations Council of Northwest Indiana should develop and administer an annual survey designed to assess the quality of race relations in the region. The resulting data should then be published and used by various institutions and organizations in the region to develop appropriate action agendas.

- The efforts undertaken by the Unity Council of Healthy Communities of LaPorte County and Valparaiso University to sponsor “study circles,” a proven methodology developed by the Topsfield Foundation, should be applauded. These efforts should be continued and expanded. Churches, school systems, businesses, and labor unions should step forward to sponsor study circles pertaining to race.
  
- The ongoing efforts of the Race Relations Council of Northwest Indiana to develop “best practice pledges” pertaining to race for various sectors of the community (e.g., law enforcement, nonprofit organizations, school systems, the media, the business community, etc.) should be pursued to completion. The pledges should then be circulated for consideration and adoption by the identified institutions and organizations.



## 3.0 A Thriving Community

The economy of Northwest Indiana is in the midst of a profound change. Three facts testify to the breadth of the fundamental restructuring that is now underway.

- According to the 2000 Census, 22.4 percent of Lake County residents who work now do so in Illinois. The percentage of Porter County workers who commute to their jobs in Illinois now stands at 8.9 percent. We are rapidly evolving into a “bedroom” community for the City of Chicago.
- Following dramatic reductions in the 1980s and the early 1990s, manufacturing employment in Lake County fell by another 7.1 percent over the 3-year period that ended in March 2001. The comparable reductions in LaPorte and Porter Counties over this same time period were 11.3 percent and 13.5 percent respectively. Since a dramatic restructuring of the steel industry is now underway, additional reductions should be anticipated. Manufacturing – the traditional foundation of the region’s economy – is in sharp decline.
- The gaming industry now employs over 6,000 individuals in Lake and LaPorte Counties. It is one of the few bright spots in Northwest Indiana’s depressed economy.



Viewed in isolation, no one of these trends is “good” or “bad.” Access to the Chicago real estate market can be viewed as a strength. Industries experience life cycles; they are born, they mature, and they decline. And the gaming industry has provided a much-needed boost – both in terms of employment and in terms of tax revenues – to an economy that has otherwise struggled over the last 20 years. Nevertheless, the dramatic restructuring that is now underway points to the need for a more comprehensive approach to planning than has heretofore been marshaled to this end. Indeed, the following questions should be posed.

- Assuming that we choose to become a “bedroom” community for employers in Illinois, do we have a transportation infrastructure in place to take advantage of our proximity to Chicago?
- Assuming that we want to retain our manufacturing base, does the tax burden that firms bear promote additional investment? Are we competitive with other regions?
- Assuming that a regional economic base is desired, is the electronic and communications infrastructure in place sufficient to attract high tech firms that engage in “clean” technologies?
- Assuming that we want to redevelop brownfields that stand vacant along the northern borders of Lake, Porter, and LaPorte Counties, what steps will be needed to catalyze the development of a container industry, an industry that puts a premium on proximity to train lines and interstate highways?
- Assuming that the gaming industry is here to stay, how can other natural and man-made amenities in Northwest Indiana be packaged to develop a sustainable recreation industry?

Two categories of indicators follow. The first pertains to employment. The second set addresses several specific industries (i.e., the steel industry, gaming, activity at the Port of Indiana, and farm production). Most of the data included in this section of the report are drawn from the 2000 Census and the Indiana Department of Workforce Development.

### 3.1 Employment

<b>Labor Force (2001)</b>			
	<b>Lake</b>	<b>LaPorte</b>	<b>Porter</b>
Number	219,320	54,230	74,270

Table 17; Source: Indiana Department of Workforce Development

<b>Labor Force as Percent of Population (2001)</b>				
	<b>Lake</b>	<b>LaPorte</b>	<b>Porter</b>	<b>Indiana</b>
Percent	45.2%	49.0%	49.9%	50.7%

Table 18; Source: Indiana Department of Workforce Development

the state's age distribution suggests that this lower percentage is less a function of high numbers of young and/or old citizens and more a function of a high number of "discouraged workers."

<b>Unemployment Rate</b>				
	<b>Lake</b>	<b>LaPorte</b>	<b>Porter</b>	<b>Indiana</b>
Jan-03	6.20%	7.50%	5.10%	5.40%
Jan-03	8.00%	7.80%	6.50%	5.90%
Feb-03	5.00%	5.00%	3.80%	4.40%
Jan-00	5.40%	5.10%	3.80%	3.80%
Jan-99	4.60%	4.30%	3.50%	3.60%

Table 19; Source: Indiana Business Research Center

<b>Unemployment Rate by Race (2000)</b>				
	<b>Lake</b>	<b>LaPorte</b>	<b>Porter</b>	<b>Indiana</b>
African-American Female	13.7%	9.3%	1.1%	11.4%
African-American Male	17.1%	10.7%	4.3%	12.9%
Hispanic Female	9.6%	9.6%	7.0%	9.5%
Hispanic Male	8.3%	2.1%	4.1%	6.8%
White Female	4.8%	4.2%	4.0%	4.2%
White Male	5.1%	3.5%	3.9%	4.2%

Table 20; Source: U.S. Census

Labor statistics indicate that Northwest Indiana retains a significant labor force. Technically, it includes those who are currently employed as well as those who are actively looking for work. It is significant, therefore, that the labor force in Lake County represents only

45.2 percent of the County's population, a percentage that lags behind both LaPorte County and Porter County, which more closely mirror the state's average of 50.7 percent. The fact that Lake County's age distribution does not vary significantly from

Unemployment rates in all three of Northwest Indiana's counties have rebounded from recent highs that were established in January 2002. At 6.2 percent

and 7.5 percent in January 2003, Lake County and LaPorte County continue to lag behind the state in this important measure of economic performance. Again, it must be remembered that this indicator does not include "discouraged workers."



Gross unemployment figures do not tell the whole story. The level of unemployment in the region's Hispanic community is much higher than it is among non-minority citizens. And the comparable rates for African-American males and females living in Lake County is nothing short of catastrophic.

A more detailed analysis of employment trends at the county level provides additional evidence of the dramatic changes that are now underway. As is noted above, Lake County lost 7.1 percent of its manufacturing jobs over the course of the 3-year period that ended in March 2001. At 11.5 percent, the loss of construction jobs was even higher, however. At the same time, substantial growth was recorded in four emerging industries: the arts and entertainment and recreation industries (11.4%); transportation and warehousing (8.4%); information technologies (25.9%) and real estate (27.1%).

LaPorte County lost 11.3 percent of its manufacturing jobs over this same 3-year time period. It also lost a significant number of jobs in the transportation/warehousing industry (9.9%) and in the finance and insurance industries (8.7%). Increases were reflected in professional, scientific, and technical positions (16.6%) and jobs in real estate (41.4%).

Bucking the stagnant trends recorded in Lake and LaPorte Counties, Porter County experienced substantial gains in several categories of employment over the 3-year period that ended in March 2001: 7.2 percent in the healthcare and social assistance category; 8.0 percent in the construction trades; 8.9 percent in other non-governmental services; and 14.0 percent in professional, scientific, and technical positions. Substantial losses

were recorded in two categories: 13.5 percent in manufacturing and 14.6 percent in jobs classified as administrative in nature. Upper management jobs also decreased by 40.8 percent.

**Private Non-farm Employment (Lake County)**

	Mar-98	Mar-01	Percent Change		Mar-98	Mar-01	Percent Change
Manufacturing	36,252	33,669	-7.1%	Finance and Insurance	5,767	5,361	-7.0%
Healthcare and Social Assistance	26,087	26,715	2.4%	Information	2,206	2,777	25.9%
Retail Trade	26,585	25,708	-3.3%	Real Estate/Rental and Leasing	1,971	2,505	27.1%
Accommodation/Food Services	15,617	15,558	-0.4%	Non-public education	1,992	2,384	19.7%
Other Non-Govt Services	10,302	10,773	4.6%	Management	1,308	2,333	78.4%
Construction	11,956	10,580	-11.5%	Utilities	1,750	2,313	32.2%
Admin Support/Waste Mgmt	8,003	8,702	8.7%	Non-local Management Services	375	1,073	186.1%
Arts and Entertainment/Recreation	6,953	7,775	11.8%	Unclassified	55	49	-10.9%
Wholesale Trade	7,137	7,062	-1.1%	Mining	55	38	-30.9%
Professional/Scientific/Technical	5,708	6,112	7.1%	Ag. Services/Forestry	8	11	37.5%
Transportation/Warehousing	5,369	5,822	8.4%				

Table 21; Source U.S. Census

**Private Non-farm Employment (LaPorte County)**

	Mar-98	Mar-01	Percent Change		Mar-98	Mar-01	Percent Change
Manufacturing	10,808	9,587	-11.3%	Finance and Insurance	847	773	-8.7%
Retail Trade	6,622	6,450	-2.6%	Non-local Management Services	750	750	0.0%
Healthcare and Social Assistance	5,246	4,989	-4.9%	Information	623	655	5.1%
Accommodation/Food Services	3,473	3,775	8.7%	Management	197	592	200.5%
Construction	1,959	2,079	6.1%	Real Estate/Rental and Leasing	307	434	41.4%
Admin Support/Waste Mgmt	1,949	1,905	-2.3%	Utilities	375	375	0.0%
Other Non-Govt Services	1,709	1,774	3.8%	Non-public Education	290	347	19.7%
Wholesale Trade	1,589	1,762	10.9%	Mining	27	175	548.1%
Arts and Entertainment/Recreation	1,376	1,331	-3.3%	Ag. Services/Forestry	10	10	0.0%
Professional/Scientific/Technical	907	1,030	13.6%	Unclassified	17	9	-47.1%
Transportation/Warehousing	1,122	1,011	-9.9%				

Table 22; Source U.S. Census

**Private Non-farm Employment (Porter County)**

	Mar-98	Mar-01	Percent Change		Mar-98	Mar-01	Percent Change
Manufacturing	12,410	10,737	-13.5%	Finance and Insurance	1,289	1,030	-20.1%
Retail Trade	6,666	6,726	0.9%	Arts and Entertainment/Recreation	787	819	4.1%
Healthcare and Social Assistance	5,060	5,423	7.2%	Information	852	812	-4.7%
Accommodation/Food Services	4,619	4,869	5.4%	Real Estate/Rental and Leasing	650	672	3.4%
Construction	3,897	4,209	8.0%	Utilities	375	375	0.0%
Other Non-Govt Services	2,434	2,650	8.9%	Non-local Management Services	209	221	5.7%
Non-public Education	2,273	2,389	5.1%	Upper Management	211	125	-40.8%
Admin. Support/Waste Mgmt	2,765	2,360	-14.6%	Mining	10	55	450.0%
Wholesale Trade	2,169	2,219	2.3%	Ag. Services, Forestry	4	15	275.0%
Professional/Scientific/Technical	1,327	1,513	14.0%	Unclassified	15	15	0.0%
Transportation/Warehousing	1,051	1,137	8.2%	Ag. Services, Forestry	8	11	37.5%

Table 23; Source U.S. Census

The makeup of Northwest Indiana's largest employers further testifies to the changing nature of our economy. All firms in the region that employ 500 or more individuals are listed below in descending order. Three industries account for 18 of the 28 employers that are listed. Five of the top 28 employers are steel mills; five

Major Employers in Region (2002)		
	Location	Employees
Ispat Inland Steel	East Chicago	8,500
USX Corporation	Gary	8,000
Bethlehem Steel (now ISG)	Burns Harbor	6,000
LTV Steel (now ISG)	East Chicago	3,000
NIPSCO	Merrillville	2,200
BP	Whiting	1,800
National Steel (now U.S.S.)	Portage	1,600
Empress Casino	Hammond	1,600
St. Margaret Mercy	Hammond	1,555
Community Hospital	Munster	1,500
Methodist Hospitals	Gary/Merrillville	1,417
Porter Memorial	Valparaiso	1,302
Trump Casino	Gary	1,200
Harrah's Casino	East Chicago	1,200
St. Anthony's Medical Center	Crown Point	1,157
Cooper Industries	Michigan City	1,100
Blue Chip Casino	Michigan City	1,100
Majestic Star Casino	Gary	900
St. Catherine's Hospital	East Chicago	853
LaPorte Hospital	LaPorte	720
St. Mary Medical Center	Hobart	700
St. Anthony's Hospital	Michigan City	680
Weil-McClain	Michigan City	675
St. Margaret Mercy	Dyer	659
Sullair Corporation	Michigan City	550
Cerestar	Hammond	550
Trans-Apparel	Michigan City	500
Lever Brothers	Hammond	500

Table 24; Source: NIRPC

are casinos; and eight are hospitals. The remaining employers include such familiar names as NIPSCO, BP, Lever Brothers, and Cerestar, which has since been sold. Northwest Indiana's economy has long been associated with large firms. Although they are still a part of the landscape, large firms are increasingly confined to a very few industries, most notably steel, the gaming industry, and healthcare.

In contrast to the non-farm economy, few changes were recorded in farm employment over the 4-year period that ended in 2000.

Farm Self-Employment/Employment			
	1996	2000	% Change
Farm Proprietors	1,892	1,859	-1.7%
Farm Employees	2,380	2,400	0.8%

Table 25; Source: U.S. Census

At best, the employment picture for Northwest Indiana over the last several years can be described as mixed. As our traditional manufacturing base declines, some new industries are emerging, most notably gaming and the transportation and warehousing industries.

The picture is a bit more bleak when we look ahead to the kinds of skills that employers in the region expect to be in demand in the coming years. The survey results provided below point to a low-tech service economy, an economy with few of the high paying jobs that we have come to take for granted in Northwest Indiana over the last 100 years.

**Skills in Demand**

Lake County	LaPorte County	Porter County
1. Receive payments and make change.	1. Receive payments and make change.	1. Adhere to safety procedures.
2. Apply good listening skills.	2. Use cash registers.	2. Apply good listening skills.
3. Work as a team member.	3. Maintain safe work environment.	3. Load and unload.
4. Follow detailed instructions.	4. Use sales techniques.	4. Follow detailed instructions.
5. Adhere to safety procedures.	5. Apply health/sanitation standards.	5. Use computer.
6. Follow customer instructions.	6. Balance cash register.	6. Work as a team member.
7. Manage time effectively.	7. Follow and give instructions.	7. Receive payments and make change.
8. Perform more than one task at a time.	8. Unpack/inventory store goods.	8. Follow and give instructions.
9. Use cash registers.	9. Apply food handling rules.	9. Maintain safe work environment.
10. Follow and give instructions.	10. Organize and work with records.	10. Manage time effectively.
11. Prioritize tasks.	11. Sell merchandise.	11. Apply health/sanitation standards.
12. Balance cash register.	12. Handling merchandise.	12. Apply loading/unloading procedures.
13. Load and unload.	13. Price merchandise.	13. Follow customer instructions.
14. Apply health/sanitation standards.	14. Use a computer.	14. Organize and work with records.
15. Unpack/inventory/store goods.	15. Describe/demonstrate goods/services.	15. Use computers with client data.
16. Organize and work with records.	16. Work as a team member.	16. Keep records and maintain files.
17. Maintain safe work environment.	17. Manage inventories and supplies.	17. Process and prepare forms.
18. Use computer.	18. Apply merchandising techniques.	18. Use computer keyboard.
19. Apply food handling rules.	19. Apply product knowledge to marketing.	19. Apply food handling rules.
20. Serve customers/clients.	20. Sell merchandise to public.	20. Handle money.

Table 26; Source: Indiana Department of Workforce Development

**Jobs Anticipated to Be in Demand in 2008**

1. Cashiers.
2. Retail sales persons.
3. General office clerks.
4. Heavy truck drivers.
5. Registered nurses.
6. General managers and top executives.
7. Childcare workers.
8. Telemarketers.
9. Home health aides.
10. Systems analysts.

Table 27; Source: Indiana Department of Workforce Development

A similar conclusion follows from the results of an Indiana Department of Workforce Development survey that identified the kinds of jobs that are expected to be in demand in 2008. Again, few of these jobs represent the kinds of high-skill, high-pay jobs that college graduate, in particular, are seeking.

These data point to a need for the development of a coordinated economic development strategy for Northwest Indiana. Over the last century, the region's economy was defined by its manufacturing base. It is now clear that a fundamental change in the makeup of our economy is well underway. Planning is not required for this to take place. A coordinated economic development strategy could, however, contribute to the development of an economy that is more balanced and environmentally benign.

This does not mean that Northwest Indiana should acquiesce to the decline of its manufacturing base. It simply means that certain public policy choices pertaining to taxes, transportation, and land use will favor one form of development over another. These choices are too important to be left to chance and the vagaries of incremental decision-making processes. Progress can only be maximized if a measure of coordination is employed.

### 3.2 Leading Industries

The remaining indicators in this section pertain to specific industries that have contributed significantly to the region's economy in recent years or hold significant promise to do so in the future. They include the steel industry, gaming, the Port of Indiana, and agriculture.

**Tons of Steel Produced in Indiana**

2002	20,600,000
2000	25,667,000
1990	21,231,000
1980	19,820,000

Table 28; Source: Indiana Department of Commerce

In the face of increased international competition and with the burden of substantial "legacy costs" (i.e., the costs of retirees' healthcare and pension benefits), the steel industry reeled through much of the 1990s. From 2000 to 2002, the overall production of steel in Indiana declined by 19.7 percent. Additionally, three of the region's steelmakers (i.e., LTV, Bethlehem Steel, and National Steel) were forced to declare bankruptcy. Despite this downturn, the steel industry in the United States remains one of the most efficient in the world.

**Person-Hrs. per Ton of Steel Produced**

1998	3.2 hrs.
1983	10.1 hrs.

Table 29; Source: American Iron and Steel Institute

With the imposition of temporary tariff relief in 2002, the steel industry secured time to reorganize, a process that is now underway. The assets of bankrupt LTV were purchased by ISG, a newly formed steel company, and Bethlehem Steel and National Steel were purchased by ISG and United States Steel respectively. As of this writing, the long-term prospects for the industry remain uncertain, however.

**Gaming Boat Admissions (2002)**

Blue Chip	3,384,262
Harrah's	5,062,388
Horseshoe	4,766,533
Majestic Star	2,547,868
Trump	2,664,331

Table 30; Source: Indiana Gaming Commission

The gaming industry's contribution to Northwest Indiana's economy over the last 7 years has been significant. With over 18 million boardings in 2002, the region's five casino boats have exceeded the expectations of those who promoted the industry in the 1990s. The construction industry has benefited significantly from the development of the public infrastructure that supports the industry as well. And the benefits in terms of jobs have already been noted.

Gaming Tax Distributions (1996-2000)	
Build Indiana Fund	\$502,253,579
Cities with Gaming Boats	\$253,754,956
Lake County	\$74,163,392
LaPorte County	\$1,217,470
Convention and Visitors Bureaus	\$8,633,809
Division of Mental Health	\$8,633,809

Table 31; Source: NIRPC

Gaming Boat Taxes Paid (2002)	
Blue Chip	\$53,773,164
Harrah's	\$78,828,970
Horseshoe	\$84,653,586
Majestic Star	\$33,573,794
Trump	\$32,835,820

Table 32; Source: Indiana Gaming Commission

The impact on the tax bases of the host cities and counties has been no less dramatic. In all, gaming boats in Lake and LaPorte Counties paid \$283 million in taxes in 2002. Since 1996, more than \$850 million in gaming tax revenues have been distributed to various units of local

and state government. Although the use of these revenues has engendered some controversy, a significant share of the tax proceeds have been used for infrastructure development. The gaming industry is not without its critics. While Northwest Indiana's five gaming boats are generally regarded as "good corporate citizens," it would behoove the state to monitor the social implications of gambling on an ongoing basis, especially if this can be accomplished in conjunction with the "problem gambler" programs that all of the casino boats now have in place.

The Port of Indiana is cited here because of its significant potential to the region. The nexus of major highways, railways, and the southern terminus of the Great Lakes, all of which are located on the doorstep of the nation's third largest city, suggest that further development of a vibrant intermodal transportation industry might be in order. In fact, the decline of the manufacturing sector and the increasing efficiency of the manufacturers who remain make land available for this purpose. Recent developments bode well for this prospect, most notably, the repeal of the state's inventory tax. Other barriers must still be overcome, however, including the resolution of environmental impacts that could attend increased use of the Port's facilities. For this reason, it is more likely that the Port of Indiana will play a complementary role in an intermodal network that is largely rail- and highway-based.

Port of Indiana (Tons Processed)	
2000	2,264,628
1990	1,686,139
1980	1,250,312

Table 33; Source: Ports of Indiana

Farming remains an important component of Northwest Indiana's economy. As is noted above, employment in this sector of the economy stabilized over the course of the 1990s. Corn and soybean production, in particular, remain strong. In 2001, LaPorte County accounted for 47.3 percent of the region's corn production and 44.1 percent of the region's soybean production.

Bushels of Field Crop Production (2001)			
	Lake	LaPorte	Porter
Corn	8,608,600	15,524,000	8,674,000
Soybeans	2,490,300	4,059,800	2,646,400
Wheat	154,200	152,400	166,400

Table 34; Source: U.S. Census

**Grade:** A grade of "D" is assigned to this indicator category in order to call attention to the need for coordinated planning pertaining to Northwest Indiana's economic future. At the same time, there is good news with respect to our economy, if one accepts the fact that a fundamental transformation is now taking place. The restructuring of the steel industry is underway. The gaming industry in Northwest Indiana has stabilized at a high level of productivity. Much of the infrastructure needed to support the development of a viable container industry is in place. The region's housing market is strong. The inventory tax has been abolished. And the property tax imbalance between homeowners and the business community is now being addressed.

At the same time, the kind of coordinated planning that will be required to support a "thriving community" is not yet in place. Tax policy, land use policies, and infrastructure development (i.e., transportation systems and communications systems) profoundly influence the business decisions that are reserved to the private sector.

**Trend:** Promising.

**Goal:** The Quality of Life Council recommends that Northwest Indiana develop a robust planning process to support the development of an economy that is both sustainable and less reliant on just one or two industries. We believe that this kind of planning can only be accomplished on a regional level. This recommendation does not constitute a call for “unigov,” a policy option that would entail a much more dramatic form of restructuring. It is instead a call for coordinated planning pertaining to tax policy, land use, and infrastructure development. If Northwest Indiana fails to institute processes of this kind, we fear that emerging opportunities will be lost and development will proceed along a path that is beneficial to some in the near-term, but, nevertheless, detrimental over the long-term.

**Actions:** This broad process goal addresses all three of the Quality of Life Council’s fundamental concerns: sustainable economic development; environmental well-being; and social equity. The following specific strategies are recommended.

- The Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission should assume the responsibility for coordinating economic development planning in the region. This will require dedicated funding, support from elected officials at the municipal and county levels of government, and a clear demarcation of the respective responsibilities of the public sector and the private sector in this regard.

We believe that the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission should focus on infrastructure (i.e., tax policy, land use planning, and infrastructure development), and that the private sector – most effectively through the work of the Northwest Indiana Forum – should assume the lead in marketing the region and in facilitating the introduction of new firms to Northwest Indiana. Although the public sector and the private sector each have important roles to play in this regard, the full accomplishment of the above goal cannot be realized without a high level of cooperation across sector lines. In and of itself, the private sector cannot create the infrastructure that a thriving business community requires. At the same time, there is no public sector substitute for the kind of strategic and tactical decisions that individual business firms make every day or the kind of collective action that the business community now pursues through local chambers of commerce or through the Northwest Indiana Forum and other organizations that employ a regional or statewide focus.

- Assuming that the task noted above is fully embraced by the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission and that the requisite level of cooperation between the public sector and the private sector can be achieved, we recommend that formal analyses be conducted with respect to the following public policies: (1) coordinated land use planning coupled with tax base sharing across the three-county region; (2) tax policy changes that reflect the new realities of Northwest Indiana’s economy (i.e., a declining manufacturing base and a strong housing market that is rapidly being integrated into the Chicago housing market); (3) the infrastructure needs of the emerging container industry; (4) the communications infrastructure required to attract higher tech if not high tech industries; (5) the infrastructure and public policy decisions required to support the development of the Chicago-Gary Airport; and (6) the short- and long-term environmental impacts of various economic development scenarios. Detailed analyses will be required before more specific policy recommendations with respect to each of these several issues can be advanced. And this, of course, is why coordinated economic development planning is needed at this important point in the region’s history.



## 4.0 A Community of Opportunity

Prospects for Northwest Indiana’s economy cannot easily be separated from the implications that economic development or stagnation hold for individuals and families. Historically, high paying jobs are the most effective antidote to poverty. At the same time, however, regional and sector-based analyses can obscure some of the impacts that follow in the wake of economic change. They can also mask impacts that fall disproportionately on certain sectors of the community. This section of the report should thus be read together with the preceding section. It is closely related to economic development, that is, to the creation of a “thriving community.” It focuses, first, on individual and household income and, second, on poverty.



The data and analyses that follow tell of story of significant disparity. Northwest Indiana is a region of great wealth and a region of desperate poverty. It is a story that has a great deal to do with race and the historic development of Northwest Indiana’s towns and cities. And it presents challenges that will have to be overcome, if the region is to achieve a high quality of life over the long term.

### 4.1 Income

In 1999, per capita income in Lake and LaPorte Counties lagged behind the state average of \$20,397. In contrast, per capita income in Porter County stood at a significantly higher level. This does not, however, tell the whole story. This analysis examines differences across three dimensions: race; family structure; and community.

The percentage of households in the region with total incomes of less than \$20,000 per year should be alarming to policy makers. More than a fifth of all families in Northwest Indiana subsist on total household incomes of less than \$20,000 per year, a modest amount by any calculation.

A breakdown of this data along racial and ethnic lines is even more disturbing. More than one-third of all African-American families in Lake County report household incomes below this threshold. The comparable figure for LaPorte County is 32.6 percent. And nearly a fourth of all Hispanic families in Lake County subsist on less than \$20,000 per year.

Per Capita Income (Tax Year 1999)				
	Lake	LaPorte	Porter	Indiana
Total	\$19,639	\$18,913	\$23,957	\$20,397

Table 35; Source: NIRPC

Percent Households with Less than \$20,000 Income (Tax Year 1999)				
	Lake	LaPorte	Porter	Indiana
White Householder(s)	17.5%	19.6%	14.9%	19.4%
African-American Householder(s)	36.8%	32.6%	14.5%	34.8%
Hispanic Householder(s)	23.4%	21.0%	12.4%	23.3%

Table 36; Source: U.S. Census

Family Income in 1999 (Lake County)		
	Median	Mean
Married Couples	\$59,619	\$68,957
Male Householders	\$39,435	\$47,445
Female Householders	\$25,122	\$31,595

Table 37; Source: U.S. Census

Similar disparities can be found between households headed by married couples and single householders, particularly female householders. In 1999, the average income in female-headed households in Lake County stood at \$25,122, less than 64 percent of the comparable amount for male-headed households. In LaPorte County, the average income in female-headed households was only \$25,205;



the difference between female- and male-headed households was somewhat less, however. In Porter County, the base for both female- and male-headed households was significantly higher; nevertheless, the disparity between the two was even greater than in Lake County. Family income in female-headed households is lower – and in most cases much lower – than in households headed by males and in households headed by couples.

Family Income in 1999 (LaPorte County)		
	Median	Mean
Married Couples	\$54,860	\$62,254
Male Householders	\$36,901	\$47,265
Female Householders	\$25,205	\$31,044

Table 38; Source: U.S. Census

Family Income in 1999 (Porter County)		
	Median	Mean
Married Couples	\$67,052	\$79,117
Male Householders	\$44,810	\$47,271
Female Householders	\$31,710	\$37,392

Table 39; Source: U.S. Census

Median Household Income (Tax Year 1999)	
Dune Acres	\$94,843
Ogden Dunes	\$76,924
St. John	\$71,378
Long Beach	\$71,364
Winfield	\$65,641
Munster	\$63,243
Dyer	\$63,045
Schererville	\$59,243
Beverly Shores	\$59,107
Chesterton	\$55,530
Burns Harbor	\$53,929
Crown Point	\$52,889
Highland	\$51,297
Wanatah	\$50,625
Porter	\$50,625
Griffith	\$50,030
Kingsbury	\$50,000
Merrillville	\$49,545
Lowell	\$49,173
Hobart	\$47,759
Portage	\$47,500
Schneider	\$46,339
Michiana Shores	\$46,250
Valparaiso	\$45,799
Kouts	\$44,850
Cedar Lake	\$43,987
Trail Creek	\$43,750
Hebron	\$42,103
Town of Pines	\$41,875
Pottawattamie Park	\$37,500
Lake Station	\$36,984
Westville	\$36,761
LaCrosse	\$36,667
Hammond	\$35,526
LaPorte	\$35,376
Whiting	\$34,972
Michigan City	\$33,732
New Chicago	\$32,759
Kingsford Heights	\$32,169
Gary	\$27,195
East Chicago	\$26,538

Table 40; Source: NIRPC

These disparities are even more evident when median income is disaggregated by municipality. The \$44,840 difference in the median incomes of St. John and the City of East Chicago in Lake County is noteworthy. The median household income in East Chicago is less than 38 percent that of St. John. In LaPorte County, the \$37,632 difference between Long Beach’s median household income and the median for Michigan City is also significant. The median in Michigan City is less than half that in Long Beach. As might be expected, the distribution of household incomes in Porter County is more homogenous in nature. Nevertheless some differences do exist.



It should be obvious that these dramatic differences in household income correspond closely with differences in the racial and ethnic makeup of Northwest Indiana’s towns and cities. As is noted above, Northwest Indiana remains the second most segregated region in the county. This is not to say that equality of economic opportunity should be confused with equality of economic outcomes. Indeed, it would be surprising if few differences among the mean household incomes reported by communities in Northwest Indiana were reported. Nevertheless, the feedback loop that exists between a lack of economic opportunity and economic outcomes has been well-documented. Schools that perform more poorly, limited access to jobs, high crime rates, and inadequate transportation systems contribute in a significant way to poorer economic outcomes. And as a community becomes poorer, the very infrastructure that is needed to assist individuals and families in lifting themselves out of poverty deteriorates. A self-fulfilling cycle can thus ensue.

The key question is this: Can a high quality of life be achieved in a region that manifests such a deep and growing divide between “those who have” and “those who have not”? The answer, we think, is “no.” Over time, a chasm of this sort can only rebound to the detriment of everyone who lives in Northwest Indiana.

#### 4.2 Poverty

To this point, we have concentrated on income as an indicator of opportunity. Poverty can be understood as a complementary phenomenon. An absolute measure of poverty is used in the United States to establish eligibility for certain governmental



**Poverty Rate (1999 Tax Year)**

	Lake	LaPorte	Porter	Indiana
All Individuals	12.2%	8.7%	5.9%	9.5%
Children Under Age 18	17.8%	11.5%	6.8%	11.7%

Table 41; Source: Indiana Business Research Center

**Poverty Rate (1999 Tax Year)**

	Lake	LaPorte	Porter	Indiana
White	6.5%	7.1%	5.7%	7.8%
African-American	25.6%	21.7%	8.7%	23.2%
Hispanic	15.6%	17.9%	8.2%	17.8%

Table 42; Source: U.S. Census

**Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (Monthly Avg.)**

	Lake	LaPorte	Porter	Indiana
2001 (TANF)	8,884	687	326	39,395
1990 (AFDC)	11,245	1,121	507	52,732

Table 43; Source: Indiana Youth Institute

**Food Stamps (Monthly Avg.)**

	Lake	LaPorte	Porter	Indiana
2001	50,901	6,266	3,606	331,206
1990	51,836	6,787	3,179	315,742

Table 44; Source: Indiana Youth Institute

County was \$13.00 per hour or \$27,446 annually. The comparable rates in LaPorte County and Porter Counties respectively were \$10.86 per hour or \$22,944 annually and \$13.72 per hour or \$28,967 annually. Developed by the Indiana Coalition on Housing and Homeless Issues, the self-sufficiency standard testifies to the conservative nature of the federal government's poverty standard and the uphill nature of the battle that working families, in particular, face.

Three traditional measures of poverty are included in this section of the report: the poverty rates for all age cohorts and for children; poverty disaggregated by race per county; and welfare assistance and food stamp eligibility. The pervasive nature of poverty is evident even in these more conservative indicators of poverty. Tables 41 and 42 confirm a finding that has become commonplace in large urban centers: poverty is increasingly a phenomenon of minorities and children. In Lake County, 17.8 percent of children were poor at the close of 1999. As alarming as this finding may be, it was recorded before the United States and Northwest Indiana, in particular, experienced the economic downturn that hampers economic development to this day. The LaPorte County experience mirrors the experience of the state as a whole, with just over one in ten children living in poverty. Porter County fares much better in this regard.

African-Americans and Hispanic citizens experience much higher levels of poverty than do White citizens. At 25.6 percent and 21.7 percent respectively, the proportion of African-Americans in Lake and LaPorte County who live in poverty is comparable to the proportion for African-Americans statewide. As is the case statewide, the poverty rates for Hispanics in these two counties lies between the rates experienced by Whites and African-Americans. All races in Porter County fare better than do their respective counterparts in Lake and LaPorte Counties.



Eligibility for public assistance programs declined from 1990 (AFDC) to 2001 (TANF) by 21 percent in Lake County, 39 percent in LaPorte County, and 36 percent in Porter County. Eligibility rolls in the state as a whole declined by 25 percent over this same 12-year time period. In all, 1.8 percent of Lake County residents, .6 percent of LaPorte County residents, and .2 percent of Porter County residents receive TANF benefits. Finally,

programs. It was originally established in 1962 based on the concept of a market basket of food products and assumed that food costs represented one-third of a poor household's total expenses. The poverty rate is updated every year to account for inflation. It now stands at \$12,400 per year for a family of two that includes one child and \$18,244 per year for a family of four that includes two children.

Although the poverty rate is widely criticized for a variety of reasons, most notably that it fails to account for persistent inflation in housing costs in recent years, it does provide a measure of stability to our ongoing assessment of the complex phenomenon of poverty. Alternative measures of poverty have been developed over the years. The Indiana self-sufficiency standard, for instance, subtracts certain federal subsidies from the local costs of housing, childcare, food, transportation, and healthcare to calculate a county-specific "self-sufficiency" wage. In 2002, the self-sufficiency wage for a single adult and one infant residing in Lake

the number of citizens who receive food stamp benefits in Northwest Indiana has been stable over the last 12 years. In all, 10.5 percent of Lake County residents, 5.7 percent of LaPorte County residents, and 2.5 percent of Porter County residents receive food stamps.

Non-Marital Births (Percent of All Births)				
	Lake	LaPorte	Porter	Indiana
2000	48.3%	39.4%	25.6%	34.6%
1990	39.3%	31.0%	15.8%	26.2%

Table 45; Source: Indiana Youth Institute

Grandparents Responsible for Grandchildren Under Age 18			
	Lake	LaPorte	Porter
Number	5,804	919	908

Table 46; Source: U.S. Census



Lake County now occur outside of marriage. Nearly 40 percent of all births in LaPorte County are to single parents. Even in Porter County, which enjoys a significantly lower rate of non-marital births than do Lake and LaPorte Counties, one quarter of all births are to unwed mothers. The dramatic rise in the number of grandparents in all three counties who raise their grandchildren also testifies to this significance of this social challenge.

The close association of poverty and a whole host of adverse outcomes with out-of-wedlock births should sound an alarm among governmental officials, the nonprofit community, school systems, and the religious community.

Poverty is a complex phenomenon. Several of the factors identified elsewhere in this report can be viewed either as causes or effects of poverty and sometimes both. It is essential, however, that we call attention to one factor that is closely associated with poverty: the incidence of non-marital births.

In fact, we are in the midst of a 30-year epidemic in non-marital births. Nearly half of all births in

**Grade:** A grade of "D" is assigned to this section of the report in recognition of the significant and growing divide that exists between "those who have" and "those who have not" in Northwest Indiana.

**Trend:** Stagnant.

**Goal:** The Quality of Life Council recommends that nonprofit organizations in Northwest Indiana, including the religious community, intermediary organizations such as the United Way, and community organizations of various kinds, dedicate themselves to a 20 percent reduction in poverty among the region's impacted populations, most notably African-American and Hispanic citizens and their children, by the year 2010. Income and poverty statistics should be used to track performance in this regard.

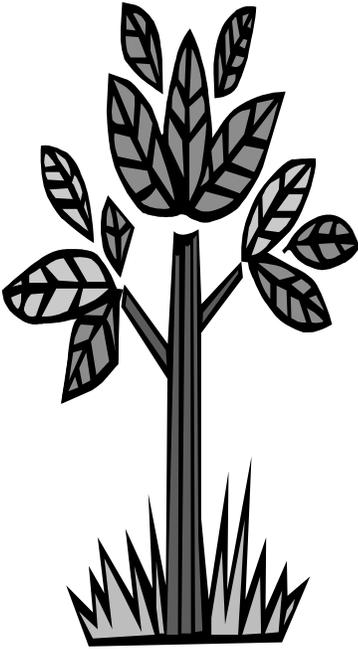
We have no illusions about the difficult nature of this task. As is noted above, poverty is a complex phenomenon that is deeply ingrained in the fabric of our society. We believe, however, that a focus on children on families can be successful. Regardless on one's perspective on the fundamental cause of poverty – whether its is social or personal in nature – there is broad agreement that children living in poverty are not responsible for their disadvantaged circumstances and that children are generally best raised in the context of families. We believe that this common ground provides a sufficient foundation for a community-wide crusade against the persistent poverty that plagues the region. Lacking progress on this issue, it will be difficult for Northwest Indiana to claim to be a true "community of opportunity."

**Actions:** The above goal addresses two of the Quality of Life Council's three fundamental concerns: sustainable economic development and social equity. Although specific action steps identified in other sections of this report promise to ameliorate, at least to some extent, the incidence and effects of poverty, three additional action steps are appropriate here.

- The United Way organizations of Northwest Indiana should coordinate a sustained region-wide focus on the well-being of children and families. Although this effort should be led by the nonprofit sector, the support of the public sector and the private sector should be enlisted as well.
- Innovative programs that promise to reduce the incidence of teenage pregnancy should be identified, funded, implemented, evaluated, and, if successful, replicated throughout the region.
- Innovative programs that provide social support to single parents should also be identified, funded, implemented, evaluated, and, if successful, replicated throughout the region.



## 5.0 A Community in Balance with its Environment



Assessing the region's environmental status is a challenge. More than 40 percent of the nation's steel is produced in Northwest Indiana. A substantial portion of the oil used in the Midwest is refined in the region as well. Indeed, our economy is based on manufacturing. At the same time, the region can be defined by its relationship with Lake Michigan and the complex ecology that is associated with the lakeshore. How then to balance an economy based on manufacturing processes that, even in the best of circumstances, produce a variety of toxins with an environment that is both unique and fragile? More to the point, is such a balance even possible?

Additionally, no section of this report pertains to a domain that is more intertwined with the several other components that together contribute to our shared quality of life. The interaction between manufacturing processes and the environment has already been noted. The environment is deeply impacted by housing development and the region's complex network of roads and railways as well. In turn, environmental well-being profoundly affects our health and provides venues for recreation that cannot be duplicated elsewhere. The Quality of Life Council has adopted the concept of "sustainability" in developing this report for this very reason. Economic development supported by changes in our transportation infrastructure must be pursued in a way that protects and even enhances the environmental assets that the region enjoys.

Finally, a great deal of environmental policy falls under the shared jurisdiction of the federal and state levels of government. Indeed, most of the substantial progress demonstrated with respect to air, water, and solid waste disposal over the last 30 years is attributable to federal legislation adopted in the 1970s. At the same time, however, local and regional decisions can profoundly affect the environment, most notably decisions pertaining to land use and economic development.

This section of our report is divided into four sub-sections. The first pertains to air quality and the second includes several indicators that address water quality. The third sub-section focuses on solid and hazardous wastes. Section four addresses sprawl. Other indicators that pertain to the environment are located elsewhere in this report, most notably in the several sections that focus on health, transportation, and recreation. In fact, a broad range of indicators can be marshaled with respect to this policy domain. The Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission's Environmental Management Policy Committee, for instance, is now engaged in the development of a more comprehensive set of environmental indicators. We support this effort.

### 5.1. Air Quality

The federal government has established standards pertaining to six air pollutants, all of which have been demonstrated to have adverse affects on people.

- Carbon monoxide (CO) is an odorless, tasteless, colorless gas that is emitted from any form of combustion. CO is produced by combustion processes, including engine combustion, wood burning, open burning, and industrial processes of various kinds. CO reduces the blood's capacity to carry oxygen. It can cause headaches, dizziness, nausea, listlessness, and, in high dosages, death. The standard for CO is less than 33 parts per million recorded in 1-hour average concentrations and less than 9 parts per million recorded in 8-hour average concentrations.
- Nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) is a poisonous gas that is produced as a byproduct of high temperature combustion. NO<sub>2</sub> is a by-product of fossil fuel combustion, including both engine combustion and various industrial processes. NO<sub>2</sub> is harmful to the lungs, irritates bronchial and respiratory systems,

and can increase asthma symptoms. The standard for NO<sub>2</sub> is an annual average concentration of less than .053 parts per million.

- Ozone (O<sub>3</sub>) is formed when nitrogen oxides and volatile organic compounds react in the presence of sunlight. It is a key component of smog. It is produced by engine combustion, power plants, gasoline storage and transfer, and the use of paints and solvents of various kinds. O<sub>3</sub> can irritate the eyes, nose, throat, and respiratory system. It can be especially harmful to individuals with chronic heart and lung disease, as well as the very young, the very old, and pregnant women. Children, in particular, can be at risk during the summer months due to increased activity outside. The standard for O<sub>3</sub> is less than .12 parts per million recorded in 1-hour average concentrations and less than .08 parts per million recorded in 8-hour average concentrations. A region cannot be determined to be in "attainment" if the first standard is exceeded more than one day each year. In the case of the second standard, the fourth highest value recorded in the year rounded to the nearest .01 cannot exceed the standard.



- Particulate matter (PM<sub>10</sub>) of less than 10 microns in diameter in size is contained in dust that can be stirred up from paved and unpaved roads and construction processes. Like CO<sub>2</sub>, fine particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>), is produced by various combustion processes, including engine combustion, wood burning, open burning, and manufacturing processes. When inhaled, fine particles can become embedded deep in the lungs where they can damage delicate tissues. Particulate matter can be especially harmful to those who suffer from heart and lung diseases, as well as pregnant women, young children, and senior citizens. The 99<sup>th</sup> percentile score for particulate matter of less than 10 microns must not exceed the established standard, which reflects a 24-hour average value. In addition, annual average concentrations must not exceed a prescribed standard. Similar percentile values and average annual scores apply in the case of fine particulate matter as well.
- Sulfur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>) is a gas that is produced by the burning of fuels with a high sulfur content. It is produced by fossil fuel power generation, engine combustion, and industrial processes of various kinds. SO<sub>2</sub> can irritate the respiratory system and can increase symptoms in asthmatic patients. The standard for SO<sub>2</sub> is less than .14 parts per million recorded in 24-hour average concentrations and less than .03 parts per million on average recorded over the course of a year.
- Lead (Pb) is produced in various ways, including smelting processes and battery production. Pb exposure can damage the central nervous system, thus affecting motor function and reflexes. It can damage kidneys and the brain. Indeed, it can permanently impair the capacity to learn. Children are more affected by Pb exposure than adults. A quarterly standard is used in the case of lead. This level cannot be exceeded on a single day in a calendar quarter in any given year.

Two indicators are employed in the case of these "index" pollutants. The air quality index (AQI) is produced by the Environmental Protection Agency. It includes only five of the above pollutants; it does not account for the presence of lead in the environment. The AQI employs a five-level rating system. A score of 0 to 50 is classified as "good" air quality; 51 to 100 indicates "moderate" air quality; 101 to 150 calls attention to conditions that are "unhealthy for sensitive groups"; 151 to 200 indicates "very unhealthy" air quality; and air quality scored between 301 to 500 is deemed "hazardous." The "unhealthy for sensitive groups" category was added in 1999.

The Environmental Protection Agency employs four levels of analysis in reporting AQI data: (1) the percent of days in each year in which the air was good, moderate, or unhealthy; (2) the highest score recorded in the year; (3) the value recorded in the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile of scores; and (4) the median score. In this scheme, scores that reflect air quality that is hazardous for sensitive groups is grouped with scores that reflect moderate air quality. Scores indicating air quality that is unhealthy, very unhealthy, and hazardous are grouped as well.

Lake County (2002)	% Days Air Quality Was Good	% Days Air Quality Was Moderate	% Days Air Quality Was Unhealthy	Highest Recorded Score	90 <sup>th</sup> Percentile Score	Median Score
2001	69.2%	30.8%	0.0%	92	71	42
2000	81.1%	18.9%	0.0%	87	56	33
1999	73.2%	26.8%	0.0%	97	69	34
1998	65.2%	34.5%	0.3%	103	67	39
1997	77.5%	22.2%	0.3%	108	64	35

Table 47; Source: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

LaPorte County (2002)	% Days Air Quality Was Good	% Days Air Quality Was Moderate	% Days Air Quality Was Unhealthy	Highest Recorded Score	90 <sup>th</sup> Percentile Score	Median Score
2001	72.5%	27.1%	0.4%	92	71	42
2000	85.0%	15.0%	0.0%	87	56	33
1999	78.6%	21.1%	0.3%	97	69	34
1998	71.0%	28.5%	0.5%	103	67	39
1997	78.9%	20.8%	0.3%	108	64	35

Table 48; Source: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Porter County (2002)	% Days Air Quality Was Good	% Days Air Quality Was Moderate	% Days Air Quality Was Unhealthy	Highest Recorded Score	90 <sup>th</sup> Percentile PSI Score	Median PSI Score
2001	72.2%	27.8%	0.0%	92	67	40
2000	80.1%	19.4%	0.0%	92	57	31
1999	74.4%	24.9%	0.5%	106	69	32
1998	67.7%	31.8%	0.5%	116	67	32
1997	79.7%	19.7%	0.5%	103	62	30

Table 49; Source: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Building on substantial progress demonstrated over the last two decades, the data for Lake, Porter, and LaPorte Counties indicates stable air quality. Only one unhealthy day was recorded in 2000 and 2001, and that score was recorded in LaPorte County. Over this 2-year span, the median scores in all three counties fell in the good range. And the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile value recorded in all three counties fell in the moderate range. The picture is complicated, however, when we disaggregate the scores recorded in the moderate category. In all, air quality in Northwest Indiana was unhealthy for sensitive groups on 14 occasions in 2000 and on 33 occasions in 2001. And approximately one-third of all people in the United States fall into this category. Children can be at particular risk during the summer months due to an increase in outside play.

Performance against the applicable standards represents the second indicator used in the case of index pollutants. In 2003, Lake, LaPorte, and Porter Counties all failed to meet the two standards established for ozone. Ozone exceeded both the .12 parts per million 1-hour standard and the .08 parts per million 8-hour standard. In Lake County, the annual mean standard for fine particulate matter was exceeded as well. As a result, Northwest Indiana continues to be in "non-attainment" of federal air quality standards. As is noted above, this holds serious implications for health, most notably for at-risk populations. Further, it places restrictions on the availability of federal funds that could otherwise be used for road construction. It also means that citizens of Northwest Indiana must continue to have their vehicles tested for emissions on regular basis.

Lake County	CO (ppm)		NO <sub>2</sub> (ppm)	O <sub>3</sub> (ppm)		SO <sub>2</sub> (ppm)		PM2.5 (µg/m3)		PM10 (µg/m3)		P <sub>b</sub> (µg/m3)
	2nd Max 1-hr	2nd Max 8-hr	Annual Mean	2nd Max 1-hr	4th Max 8-hr	2nd Max 24-hr	Annual Mean	98th Percentile	Annual Mean	99th Percentile	Annual Mean	Quarterly Mean
2003	4.8	2.6	0.019	0.125	0.101	0.032	0.006	40	17.7	106	30	0.03
1993	7.8	4.5	0.019	0.116	0.079	0.052	0.01			135	39	0.16

Table 50; Source: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

LaPorte County	CO (ppm)		NO <sub>2</sub> (ppm)	O <sub>3</sub> (ppm)		SO <sub>2</sub> (ppm)		PM2.5 (µg/m3)		PM10 (µg/m3)		P <sub>b</sub> (µg/m3)
	2nd Max 1-hr	2nd Max 8-hr	Annual Mean	2nd Max 1-hr	4th Max 8-hr	2nd Max 24-hr	Annual Mean		2nd Max 1-hr	2nd Max 8-hr	Annual Mean	2nd Max 1-hr
2003				0.136	0.107	0.015	0.004	32	13.5			
1993				0.123	0.093	0.029	0.007					

Table 51; Source: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Porter County	CO (ppm)		NO <sub>2</sub> (ppm)	O <sub>3</sub> (ppm)		SO <sub>2</sub> (ppm)		PM <sub>2.5</sub> (µg/m <sup>3</sup> )		PM <sub>10</sub> (µg/m <sup>3</sup> )		P <sub>b</sub> (µg/m <sup>3</sup> )
	2nd Max 1-hr	2nd Max 8-hr	Annual Mean	2nd Max 1-hr	4th Max 8-hr	2nd Max 24-hr	Annual Mean	2nd Max 1-hr	2nd Max 8-hr	Annual Mean	2nd Max 1-hr	
2003				0.132	0.101	0.031	0.005	33	14.2	66	22	
1993				0.12	0.089	0.03	0.008			57	25	

Table 52; Source: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Air Toxins (2000-2001 Mean Averages for Lake and Porter Counties)			
	Lowest Average	High Average	CEP Benchmark
Benzene	.22	.83	.038
Chloroform	.10	.10	.0088
Chloromethane	.44	.51	.27
Styrene	.12	.65	.47
Carbon Tetrachloride	.06	.07	.011
Trichloroethene	.08	.13	.11
P-dichlorobenzene	.03	.04	.025

Table 53; Source: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

The Environmental Protection Agency and the Indiana Department of Environmental Management also test for the presence of certain non-index air pollutants that are believed to cause cancer or other serious health problems. There are no standards as such for these toxic chemicals. Therefore, a region cannot be designated as in or out of compliance. Nevertheless, as part of the Environmental Protection Agency's Cumulative Exposure Project (CEP), certain benchmarks have been established for outdoor

concentrations of these several toxins. The lowest average concentrations recorded in Lake and Porter Counties during 2000 and 2001 exceeded the benchmarks established for benzene, chloroform, chloromethane, carbon tetrachloride, and p-dichlorobenzene. And the highest average concentrations recorded exceeded the applicable benchmarks established for styrene and trichloroethene.

## 5.2 Water Quality

As disconcerting as some of the data pertaining to air quality may be, water pollution may represent a longer-term challenge to the region. Indeed, the importance of high quality water cannot be over-estimated. All communities in Northwest Indiana derive their drinking water from Lake Michigan, surface water, or groundwater systems. In 2002, it was confirmed that Lake Michigan's water quality was impaired for E. coli and persistent fish consumption advisories for polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and mercury, and the groundwater system in the Pines was confirmed to have been contaminated by a landfill.



Additionally, various manufacturing processes in the region depend on ready access to water. And a great deal of recreational activity in Northwest Indiana involves water, most notably a wide range of activities centered on our 40-miles of shoreline along Lake Michigan. For these various reasons, maintaining the quality of the region's several water systems should be regarded as a very high priority.

It must be noted that considerable progress has been demonstrated with respect to water quality.

- The region enjoys a number of high quality streams, rivers, and lakes;
- Total maximum daily load rules pertaining to water quality impairments are being developed and will be implemented;
- The Great Lakes Initiative has established stricter standards for water quality in the Lake Michigan Basin;
- The Environmental Protection Agency has developed a Lake Michigan Lakewide Management Plan;
- U.S. Steel is now in the process of dredging 5 miles of the highly contaminated Grand Calumet River;
- New phase II regulations pertaining to storm water runoff have been established;
- Regulations concerning confined animal feeding operations have been adopted;
- Federal and state monitoring of industry and municipalities with respect to water quality continues;
- Various federal and state clean-up programs are in place;
- Soil and water conservation districts, the Natural Resource Conservation Service, and the Purdue Cooperative Extension Service continue to address soil preservation and conservation practices pertaining to agricultural lands;
- Many stream and wetland restoration projects are underway;

- The state is in the process of amending septic standards for nitrate levels in the case of new septic systems, and
- Watershed-based planning has been initiated throughout the region.

These and other projects provide a good deal of hope.

Challenges do remain, however. And the distinction between “point sources” of pollution and “non-point sources” is particularly important with respect to these challenges. Point sources, including municipal sewage treatment, combined sewer overflows, industrial wastewater, and electrical power plants, can be monitored. “Non-point sources” are more difficult to control. They include soil erosion due to runoff, agricultural activities, land development, and deposition from air pollution. Further, maintaining water quality is complicated by the systemic nature of water pollution. Pollution is transported through the lakes, rivers and streams, groundwater, and wetlands in which it is discharged, making it difficult to identify the point at which it entered the environment. Finally, cleaning up or “remediating” impacted water bodies can be time consuming and costly.

Our water remains at risk. The Indiana Department of Environmental Management has included Lake Michigan on its list of impaired water bodies, citing fish consumption advisories for polychlorinated biphenyls and mercury and the chronic presence of E. coli bacteria, an indicator of septic or fecal contamination.

Beach closings also testify to Lake Michigan’s vulnerability. They immediately impact recreation activities, but the long-term implications for the quality of our drinking water and the ecology of the Lake may be even more important. Due to high E. coli levels, beaches in Northwest Indiana were closed for 92 days in 2001, including 71 closures and advisory warnings in LaPorte County, 18 in Porter County, and 3 in Lake County. At this time, it is not clear whether this record number of closings was due to higher levels of contamination or improved monitoring.

Beach Closings	
2002	61
2001	92
2000	30
1999	32
1998	64
1997	30
1996	40

Table 54; Source: Lake Michigan Federation

Additionally, 50 inland lakes and waterways are now deemed “impaired” by the Indiana Department of Environmental Management. Impairments include impaired biotic communities, fish consumption advisories for polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB’s) and mercury (Hg), cyanide, oil and grease, ammonia, chlorides, as well as the E. coli bacteria.

As is noted above, water systems can be contaminated by various point and non-point sources of pollution. We suspect that a reduction in the number of overflows involving combined sewer systems can have a positive effect on the health of Lake Michigan as well as the receiving waters upstream of Lake Michigan. And with respect to groundwater, the Indiana Department of Environmental Management has identified ten “high priority” sources

Waterbody Name	County	Parameters of Concern
Main Beaver Dan Dt - Above Niles Ditch & Crown Point WWTP	Lake	Impaired Biotic Communities
Portage Burns Waterway (Previously Burns Ditch)	Porter	FCA for PCB & Hg, Impaired Biotic Communities, E. coli
Burns Ditch (Previously Little Calumet River)	Lake	E. coli, Impaired Biotic Communities, FCA for PCB & Hg
Deep River-Tributary (Merrillville)	Lake	Impaired Biotic Communities, Siltation, E. coli
Dunes Creek	Porter	Impaired Biotic Communities, E. coli
Grand Calumet River - Gary to Indiana Harbor Canal	Lake	E. coli, FCA for PCB & Hg; Cyanide; oil and grease
Grand Calumet River - Headwaters	Lake	FCA for PCB & Hg; Cyanide; oil and grease; Ammonia; Impaired Biotic Communities
Grand Calumet River - Gary to Indiana Harbor Canal	Lake	Impaired Biotic Communities
Grand Calumet River - Illinois to Indiana Harbor Canal	Lake	FCA for PCB & Hg; Ammonia; Cyanide; Chlorides; E. coli
Marquette Park Lagoons	Lake	FCA for PCB
Indiana Harbor Canal Main Channel	Lake	E. coli; FCA for PCB & Hg
Lake George Branch-Indiana Harbor Canal	Lake	E. coli; FCA for PCB & Hg Impaired Biotic Communities; Oil and Grease
Lake George	Lake	FCA for PCB
Lake Michigan Shoreline	Lake, Porter, LaPorte	E. coli; FCA for PCB & Hg
Little Calumet River	Porter, LaPorte	E. coli; FCA for PCB & Hg
Little Calumet River	Lake	Cyanide; E. coli; FCA for PCB & Hg, Impaired Biotic Communities
Niles Ditch	Lake	Impaired Biotic Communities

of pollution statewide: commercial fertilizer applications; confined animal feeding operations; underground storage tanks; surface impoundments; landfills constructed prior to 1989; septic systems; shallow injection wells; industrial facilities; materials spills; and salt storage.

Additional data pertaining to three of these concerns follow: combined sewer overflows; underground storage tanks; and septic systems. We then close this sub-section of the report with a brief focus on wetlands.

In the past, cities and towns designed sewer systems to receive storm water runoff, domestic sewage, and industrial wastewater in the same pipe. More often than not, these “combined sewer systems” carry all wastewater to the municipal treatment plant, where it is treated and discharged into an approved water body. During periods of heavy rainfall or snowmelt, however, the capacities of these systems can be overwhelmed. As a result, overflows occur: untreated wastewater – including human and industrial waste, toxic materials, and debris – is discharged directly into a stream, river, or lake.

Eight cities and towns in Northwest Indiana continue to rely on combined sewer systems. Presumably, all eight will be required to bring their systems into compliance with federal requirements by the year 2005. All communities with combined sewer systems are now being required to develop control plans designed to reduce the number and severity of wastewater overflows. In phase II, they will be required to develop and implement long-term control plans that will bring them into eventual compliance with the Clean Water Act. In most cases, this will require the construction of separate sewer systems.

The state also closely regulates underground storage tanks

Salt Creek; Clark Ditch and Other Tribs	Porter	E. coli
Salt Creek	Porter	Impaired Biotic Communities
Trail Creek	LaPorte	E. coli; FCA for PCB & Hg
Trail Creek Tributary Basin	LaPorte	Impaired Biotic Communities
Turkey Creek Mainstem; Turkey Creek - Merrillville	Lake	E. coli; Impaired Biotic Communities
Wolf Lake	Lake	FCA for PCB
East Branch Trail Creek and Other Tribs	LaPorte	E. coli
West Branch Trail Creek and Other Tribs	LaPorte	E. coli
Galena River	LaPorte	E. coli; Impaired Biotic Communities
Kintzele Ditch and Tribs	LaPorte/Porter	E. coli
Rice Lake Tributaries and Outlet Stream	Porter	E. coli
Coffee Creek Basin	Porter	E. coli
Damon Run-Swanson Lamporte Ditch; Damon Run & Trib	Porter	E. coli
Damon Run and Tributary	Porter	Impaired Biotic Communities; E. coli
Gustafson Ditch - Other Tribs	Porter	E. coli
Cedar Creek	Lake	Impaired Biotic Communities
Cobb Creek/Breyfogel Ditch	Porter	Impaired Biotic Communities
Crooked Creek	LaPorte, Porter	Impaired Biotic Communities
Kankakee River - Mainstem	Lake, LaPorte	E. coli; FCA for PCB & Hg; Impaired Biotic Communities
Bull Run Basin	Lake	Impaired Biotic Communities
East Branch Stony Run	Lake	Nutrients; Total Dissolved Solids; Chlorides
Singleton Ditch - Bruce Ditch/Bailey Ditch	Lake	Impaired Biotic Communities; Total Dissolved Solids
Singleton Ditch - Bryant Ditch	Lake	E. coli
Cobb Ditch - Sievers Creek	Porter	Impaired Biotic Communities
Salisbury Ditch	LaPorte	Impaired Biotic Communities
Kankakee River - Travis Ditch/Long Ditch	LaPorte	E. coli
Little Kankakee River - Byron	LaPorte	E. coli
Little Kankakee River - Mill Creek-Fish Lakes	LaPorte	Impaired Biotic Communities
Pine Creek-Horace Miller Ditch	LaPorte	E. coli
Lower Fish Lake	LaPorte	FCA for PCB & Hg
Little Calumet River	Lake	FCA for PCB & Hg; Cyanide; Impaired Biotic Communities
Cedar Lake; Cedar Creek	Lake	FCA for PCB
Dyer Ditch	Lake	Impaired Biotic Communities

Table 55; Source: Abbreviated from Indiana Department of Environmental Management

Municipality	No. of Combined Sewer System Outfalls
Chesterton	1
Crown Point	5
East Chicago	3
Gary	12
Hammond	20
LaPorte	1
Michigan City	2
Valparaiso	1

Table 56; Source: Indiana Department of Environmental Management

because of their proclivity to leak and contaminate groundwater. According to the Indiana Department of Environmental Management, a spill of only three gallons of gasoline can despoil a town's drinking water supply.

The state tracks all underground storage tanks that have ever leaked petroleum or other hazardous substances into the soil or groundwater. The Indiana Department of Environmental Management now categorizes 1,177 such sites in Northwest Indiana as active cases, and 23.5 percent of these underground storage tanks are regarded as high priorities.

Septic systems also represent a potential source of groundwater pollution. According to retired Purdue University soil scientist Joe Yahner, every Indiana county suffers from failing septic systems. Septic systems are designed to filter harmful organisms and chemicals out of wastewater before they reach lakes, rivers and streams, and groundwater. Nevertheless, poorly constructed and poorly maintained septic systems can release E. coli and other disease-

causing organisms into soils, ground-water, and surface water. Despite stronger regulations and inspection programs, impacts to water bodies from septic systems continue.

Wetlands play a vital role in protecting the quality of lakes, rivers and streams, and groundwater. Wetlands absorb the kinds of inorganic and organic nutrients that are included in farm fertilizers and septic system runoff. They filter pollutants, including pesticides and heavy metals, and trap eroded soil particles. Beyond this, wetlands help control flooding, support fisheries and other wildlife, help to minimize erosion, and provide recreation opportunities.

In 1985, the Indiana Department of Natural Resources and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service sponsored the mapping of all wetlands statewide. Based on a 1991 analysis of these maps, Indiana retained 813,000 acres of wetland habitat, a mere 15 percent of the wetlands that existed prior to settlement. In the late 1700s, 24 percent of the state was covered by wetlands. By the mid-1980s, wetlands had been reduced to approximately 3.5 percent of the state's total surface area. In the 1991 report, it was estimated that wetlands comprised between 6 percent and 9.9 percent of the surface areas of Lake, LaPorte, and Porter Counties. Unfortunately, this data has not been updated since the 1980s. And presumably, additional loss of wetlands has occurred since that time, given the level of development that has occurred in Lake and Porter Counties since the 1980s. Given the fragile nature of Northwest Indiana's various water systems and the critical role that wetlands play in preserving water quality and in assimilating flood waters, it would be prudent to protect those wetlands that still exist in the region.

### 5.3 Solid Wastes

Tons of Municipal Waste Produced			
	Lake	LaPorte	Porter
2001	1,099,149	110,455	107,780
2000	1,100,952	128,926	106,677
1999	1,115,650	124,388	95,070
1998	930,599	134,509	80,199

Table 60; Source: Indiana Department of Environmental Management

Solid waste is typically divided between two broad categories: municipal waste and hazardous waste. Municipal waste includes any solid waste that is generated by community activities or the operation of a residential or commercial establishment. Municipal waste can be disposed of in landfills or through incineration. All cities and towns in

Underground Storage Tanks that Have Leaked (Not Resolved)			
	Lake	LaPorte	Porter
High Priority	159	46	72
Medium Priority	521	71	123
Low Priority	134	32	19

Table 57; Source: Indiana Department of Environmental Management

Septic Systems (Number)			
	Lake	LaPorte	Porter
2000	Not Yet Reported		
1990	18,274	18,002	14,444

Table 58; Source: U.S. Census

Septic Systems (Percent)			
	Lake	LaPorte	Porter
2000	Not Yet Reported		
1990	10.7%	17.8%	32.0%

Table 59; Source: U.S. Census

<b>Municipal Waste Produced (2000)</b>			
	<b>Lake</b>	<b>LaPorte</b>	<b>Porter</b>
Pounds Per Capita	4,544	2,342	1,453

Table 61; Source: Indiana Department of Environmental Management

Northwest Indiana rely on landfills for this purpose. As might be expected, hazardous waste is much more closely controlled than is municipal waste.

Two public policy concerns tend to come to the fore with respect to solid waste: the potential for groundwater contamination and landfill capacity. In recent years, various proposals to develop new landfills in the region have met with stiff resistance.

The production of municipal waste has plateaued in recent years. Interestingly, however, per capita waste production is substantially higher in Lake County than it is in LaPorte County or Porter County. Indeed, it is more than three times Porter County's per capita production level. This anomalous data may be due, in part, to a change in the state's solid waste classification system in 1996. Various categories of solid waste, including

<b>Curbside and Drop-off Recycling Diverted (2000)</b>			
	<b>Lake</b>	<b>LaPorte</b>	<b>Porter</b>
Tons	28,865	9,248	27,161

Table 62; Source: Solid Waste Districts

construction and demolition debris, were folded into the municipal waste category at that time. Lake County's higher level of economic activity may thus be contributing to a significant difference in per capita waste production. It can also be difficult to determine the origin of municipal waste products due to the way in which it is collected and transported to landfills, most notably via transfer stations.

<b>Curbside and Drop-off Recycling Diverted (2000)</b>			
	<b>Lake</b>	<b>LaPorte</b>	<b>Porter</b>
Pounds Per Capita	119.1	168.0	370.0

Table 63; Source: Solid Waste Districts

At the same time, however, it is clear that Porter County is much more efficient in recycling solid wastes. At 370 lbs of recycling per capita per year, it far out-performs both Lake County and LaPorte County in this regard.

<b>2001 Landfill Capacity in Tons Per Year</b>	
Newton	1,176,499
Deercroft	881,725
County Line	530,075
Prairie View	243,547
Munster	157,622

Table 64; Source: Indiana Solid Waste Annual Report

Five different landfills are used by municipalities and private operators in Northwest Indiana. Only two of these five – the Deercroft Recycling and Disposal Facility in LaPorte County and the Munster Landfill – are actually located in the region. At the end of 2000, the state's landfills retained a total capacity of 140 million tons. This represents an increase of almost 32 million tons since 1995. In fact, in 2000, out-of-state trash accounted for 17 percent of the waste disposed in Indiana landfills. The remaining volume is predicted to last until sometime in 2014. And it is expected that landfill expansion will provide additional capacity beyond this date.

<b>Hazardous Waste Produced (2001)</b>			
	<b>Lake</b>	<b>LaPorte</b>	<b>Porter</b>
Tons	288,319.5	1,578.0	403,972.6

Table 65; Source: Indiana Department of Environmental Management

A total of 693,845 tons of hazardous waste was produced in Northwest Indiana in 2001. By way of comparison, 1,392,750 tons of hazardous waste was produced in the region in 1989.

Most hazardous waste generated in the region is treated on-site using protocols that are regulated by the Clean Water Act. Hazardous waste that cannot be treated on-site is shipped to hazardous waste treatment, storage, and disposal facilities.

Six sources accounted for 95.6 percent of the hazardous waste produced in Lake, LaPorte, and Porter Counties in 2001: Bethlehem Steel, BP, Tierra Environmental Services, Pollution Control Industries, Hammond Terminal, and United States Steel Corporation. Bethlehem Steel was by far the largest producer of hazardous waste in 2001, accounting for 56.7 percent of the total for the three-county region.

## 5.4 Sprawl

Sprawl has been defined as "dispersed development outside of compact urban and village centers along highways and in rural countryside." Policy analyst Anthony Downs has identified ten "traits" that are often associated with sprawl:

- Unlimited outward extension;
- Low-density residential and commercial settlements;
- "Leapfrog" development;
- A fragmentation of powers over land use among many small localities;
- The dominance of private automotive vehicles;
- No centralized planning or control of land uses;
- Widespread strip commercial development;
- Significant fiscal disparities among localities;
- The segregation of types of land uses in different zones; and
- A reliance on the trickle-down or filtering process to provide housing to low-income households.



Percent of Population Living in Urban Core	
2000	37.3%
1990	33.9%

*Table 67; Source: U.S. Census*

We believe that this list of traits is quite reflective of much of the development that has occurred in Northwest Indiana over the last 30 years. The growing number of Lake County and Porter County residents who now work in Illinois has already been noted. Within the region, the

Loss of Farmland (1982-1997)			
	Lake	LaPorte	Porter
Acres	433	43,039	25,750

*Table 67; Source: USDA, Census of Agriculture*

percentage of residents who live in the urban core cities of East Chicago, Gary, Hammond, and Michigan City declined by 3.4 percent after precipitous declines in the 1970s and 1980s. The concentration of poverty that continues to attend this phenomenon has also been noted. Further, the amount of farmland lost to development was significant in both LaPorte County and Porter County during the 15-year period that ended in 1997.

Loss of Farmland (1982-1997)			
	Lake	LaPorte	Porter
Change	-0.3%	-9.4%	-24.2%

*Table 68; Source: USDA, Census of Agriculture*

(Unfortunately, a new census of agriculture will not be available until 2004. Nevertheless, we should expect to see additional losses since the last census in 1997.) Finally, in a 1999 report, the Open Lands Project identified the amount of land in each of the region's three counties that is at risk for development over the course of the next 10 years. The estimates range from a low of 12.35 percent in LaPorte County to a high of 21.86 percent in Lake

Land at High Risk for Development			
	Lake	LaPorte	Porter
Percent of Total Acres	21.86%	12.35%	14.15%

*Table 69; Source: Open Lands Project*

Land Permanently Allocated as Open Spaces			
	Lake	LaPorte	Porter
Percent of Total Acres	2.40%	2.72%	5.05%

*Table 70; Source: Open Lands Project*

County. In contrast, the amount of land that has been permanently allocated to "green spaces" ranges from 2.40 percent of Lake County to 5.05 percent of Porter County.

The problem, of course, is that sprawl is costly over the long-term. It results in a significant loss of green space, urban disinvestment, and higher taxes. A recent Maryland study, for instance, predicts that between now and the year 2020 sprawl will cost Maryland residents about \$10 billion more for new roads, schools, sewers, and water than would be necessary if growth was more concentrated. Similar studies in California, New Jersey, Florida, and elsewhere have demonstrated a direct relationship between sprawl and the spiraling cost of government.

Sprawl is a complex issue. It intersects with economic development, income and poverty, transportation, and housing, as well as the environment. The perceived efficiency and effectiveness of government plays a role as well, as does race. Nevertheless, the cost of new infrastructure and the availability of land that has already been developed in the region's urban core point to the need for the development of brownfields, that is, land that was once used for industrial purposes, but is once again available for development.

The development of brownfields entails risks, however, most notably potential liabilities for the cost of environmental clean up. The state is now providing assistance in the rehabilitation of 12 brownfield sites in Northwest Indiana. Others remain to be developed. Aside from the many other challenges involved in combating sprawl, additional resources will need to be devoted to the environmental assessment of brownfield sites and the development of incentives to promote their use.

**Designated Brownfield Sites**

Bairstow Slag Dump	Hammond
Bear Brand Hosiery Company	Gary
Bortz Farm	LaPorte
CVS Pharmacy	Highland
Former Wolohan Lumber Site	Crown Point
Industrial Scrap Corporation	East Chicago
Josam Foundry	LaPorte
LaPorte Redevelopment Project	LaPorte
Lme Sludge Disposal	Crown Point
Schreiber Oil	Cedar Lake
Town of Dyer Site	Dyer
West Point Industrial Complex	Hammond

Source 71: Indiana Department of Environmental Management

**Grade:** A grade of "C+" is assigned to this indicator category in recognition of the considerable progress that has been achieved with respect to air and water quality, in particular, over the course of the last 30 years. This progress is attributable, in large part, to federal and state legislation. However, the high level of cooperation that has been demonstrated by industry and the environmental community in Northwest Indiana has been of critical importance as well. A higher grade cannot be assigned for three reasons: (1) a great deal of remedial work remains to be done; (2) the challenge of sprawl has yet to be addressed in any real way; and (3) citizens in Northwest Indiana have yet to embrace an ethic of stewardship with respect to the environment.

**Trend:** Improving.

**Goal:** The Quality of Life Council applauds the joint efforts of the steel industry and the environmental community. As challenging as a collaboration of this kind can be, it must continue. Beyond this, Northwest Indiana should commit itself to the development and implementation of a comprehensive strategy pertaining to sprawl. The cooperation across policy domains, political jurisdictions, and institutional foci that this will require will undoubtedly prove daunting. Nevertheless, we have a exemplary history of collaboration on environmental issues to build on, and this challenge must be surmounted if we are to achieve a high quality of life that is sustainable over the long term. Finally, innovative ways must be developed to engage citizens in the struggle to protect and restore the environment.

**Actions:** These broad goals focus most specifically on the Quality of Life Council's commitment to environmental well-being. They encompass the Council's two other guiding principles – sustainable economic development and social equity – as well, however.

Consistent with the systems perspective that is described in the introduction, steps that address the above goal statement are included in other sections of this report. In section 3.0, we address the need for a communications infrastructure that can attract "clean" industries. We also identify the development of a comprehensive land use plan as a regional priority. In section 7.0, we call for an epidemiological study that would include a focus on environmental concerns. In section 8.0, we recommend the development of the kind of "inclusionary" zoning policies that have proven effective in combating sprawl. And in section 9.0, we recommend that action be taken to improve public transportation throughout the region. The following additional action steps are recommended as well.

- Well-planned and continuous permitting policies and procedures and the consistent and effective enforcement of environmental regulations by the Indiana Department of Environmental Management are both critical to the region. There have been lapses on both counts in recent years. We encourage the state to dramatically improve its capacity – and ultimately its performance – with respect to these two very critical functions.

- The eight communities in Northwest Indiana that still rely on combined sewer systems should take prompt action to bring these systems into compliance with federal regulations. Permitting procedures should not be used to delay unnecessarily the substantial improvements that are now required.
  
- Considerable progress has been made with respect to the contributions that industry makes to air and water pollution and, indeed, the control of contaminated wastes that are generated by manufacturing processes. Additional progress on all three fronts will require the involvement of individual citizens. So, too, will the resolution of challenges associated with sprawl. In fact, we believe that this represents the “next front” in Northwest Indiana’s campaign to protect and restore its considerable environmental assets. We encourage the environmental community to recommit itself to this effort. There is a need to engender a true “environmental ethic” throughout the region. We recognize the enormity of this task. Its importance, however, cannot be overstated. We also recognize that the environmental community cannot accomplish this task alone. The media and schools will have to play important roles as well. And we encourage industry, foundations, and other funders to underwrite innovative and promising programs in support of this objective.



## 6.0 A Learning Community

Education is perhaps more central to the idea of a high quality of life than any other variable. This is undoubtedly so because it is so closely associated with opportunity, particularly the opportunities that our children and grandchildren will enjoy in the future.



For the most part, we will focus on early childhood and K-12 education, and, even more specifically, on K-12 public education. Although elementary and secondary education can also be obtained in a number of religiously-affiliated schools in Northwest Indiana, it is generally recognized that public schools provide the foundation for a community's education system.

This analysis draws on the concept of "human resource capitalism" which was developed by Ray Marshall and Marc Tucker. It assumes that American students have the same innate ability and the same generic capacity to learn as do other students. Marshall and Tucker contend that two barriers stand in the way of student achievement: student motivation and poverty. Reflecting this view, they present two broad strategies: (1) the strategic use of performance standards to promote excellence in teaching and learning; and (2) public policies that strengthen family and community support systems in order to ameliorate the effects of poverty. We believe that this understanding of the challenge facing Northwest Indiana with respect to education

corresponds well with the data that follow. It also reflects the principle of sustainability and systems thinking on which this report is based.

The data included in this section of the report again tell a story of great disparity. Historically, education has not been highly valued in Indiana. In fact, Indiana generally scores in the middle range among the 50 states on most measures of education quality. The data suggest that this level of achievement – or lack thereof – is consistent with school performance in Northwest Indiana.



Four categories of indicators pertaining to education are included in this analysis: educational attainment; educational outcomes; risk factors; and other factors. The first set is drawn from the 2000 Census and reflects county level data pertaining to educational attainment and current enrollment in colleges and universities. The remaining data are drawn from reports that individual school systems make to the Indiana Department of Education.

### 6.1 Educational Attainment

Highest Education Level Obtained (2000)	Lake	LaPorte	Porter	Indiana
Doctorate	0.4%	0.2%	0.9%	0.7%
Professional School Degree	1.1%	1.2%	1.8%	1.4%
Master's Degree	4.0%	3.5%	6.5%	5.1%
Bachelor's Degree	10.7%	9.0%	13.5%	12.2%
Associate Degree	5.2%	5.5%	6.0%	5.8%
Some College; No Degree	22.0%	20.1%	21.7%	19.8%
High School Diploma or Equivalency	37.3%	41.0%	38.0%	37.2%
Less than High School	19.3%	19.5%	11.6%	17.8%

Table 72; Source: U.S. Census

Although Lake and LaPorte Counties mirror the experience of Porter County and the state as a whole in their respective percentages of citizens who have graduated from high school, they lag significantly behind both Porter County and the state in the percentage of citizens who hold college degrees. Even more importantly, nearly one of every five citizens over the age of 25 in Lake and LaPorte Counties lacks a high



school diploma. In Porter County, the percentage of citizens over the age of 25 who lack a high school diploma stands at just over half these values.

College Enrollment (2000)			
	Lake	LaPorte	Porter
Number	24,644	4,525	8,959

Table 73; Source: U.S. Census

On a more positive note, 38,182 Lake, LaPorte, and Porter County citizens are enrolled in post-secondary education programs of one kind or another. This represents 5.1 percent, 4.1 percent, and 6.1 percent respectively of the populations of Lake, LaPorte and Porter Counties. Northwest Indiana is home to six

institutions of higher education: Calumet College; Indiana University Northwest; IVY Tech State College; Purdue University Calumet; Purdue University North Central; and Valparaiso University. Together with other institutions of higher learning in Indiana and elsewhere, these several colleges and universities provide a broad range of options to high school graduates and lifelong learners.

## 6.2 Educational Outcomes

Five sets of outcome indicators are included in this analysis. They include SAT scores, a summary measure of ISTEP scores, the cognitive skills index, graduation rates, and college attendance. Several of these measures are problematic for reasons that will be noted. Consequently, all five indicators should be considered in evaluating the performances of students in individual school districts. Because of the significant disparities that exist among Northwest Indiana’s schools, these data are organized by school district rather than by county. For ease of reference, however, data pertaining to school districts in the same county are grouped together. The data are also arranged in descending order with the average score for the state as a whole indicated at the bottom.



As you will see, schools located in the urban core (i.e., East Chicago, Gary, Hammond, and Michigan City) continue to struggle. At the same time, some school systems

2001-2002 Graduation Rate (Lake County)	
Munster	97.2%
Lake Central	96.6%
Hobart	96.5%
Griffith	96.5%
Gary	96.4%
Whiting	96.3%
Highland	96.3%
Hanover	96.2%
Merrillville	95.9%
Crown Point	95.9%
River Forest	95.8%
Lake Station	95.5%
Tri-Creek	94.9%
East Chicago	94.4%
Hammond	94.3%
Lake Ridge	93.8%
State Average	95.9%

Table 74; Source: Indiana Department of Education

2001-2002 Graduation Rate (LaPorte County)	
Dewey Township	96.7%
LaPorte	96.2%
New Durham	96.0%
New Prairie	95.5%
South Central	94.9%
Michigan City	94.5%
State Average	95.9%

Table 75; Source: Indiana Department of Education

2001-2002 Graduation Rate (Porter County)	
Union Township	96.9%
Valparaiso	96.8%
East Porter County	96.4%
Boone Township	96.2%
Duneland	96.2%
Portage	96.0%
Porter Township	95.0%
State Average	95.9%

Table 76; Source: Indiana Department of Education

located in the region are among the very best in the State. In fact, the wide disparity in educational outcomes among schools districts remains the defining characteristic of public education in Northwest Indiana.

The assessment of educational achievement has changed dramatically in recent years. At one time, graduation rates were considered the most important measure of performance. But, as you can see, all schools in the region report graduation rates in excess of 95 percent. Measurement systems put in place in recent years focus more clearly on learning.

2000-2001 College Attendance (Lake County)	
Munster	92%
Whiting	81%
Highland	80%
East Chicago	79%
Merrillville	75%
Gary	73%
Tri-Creek	73%
Hanover	73%
Lake Central	68%
Crown Point	66%
Griffith	63%
Hammond	59%
Hobart	50%
River Forest	49%
Lake Station	39%
Lake Ridge	32%
State Average	68%

Table 77; Source: Indiana Department of Education

2000-2001 College Attendance (LaPorte County)	
New Durham	73%
Michigan City	65%
LaPorte	65%
New Prarie	64%
South Central	62%
Dewey Township	59%
State Average	68%

Table 78; Source: Indiana Department of Education

2000-2001 College Attendance (Porter County)	
Duneland	79%
Valparaiso	76%
Portage	74%
East Porter County	69%
Union Township	67%
Porter Township	63%
Boone Township	55%
State Average	68%

Table 79; Source: Indiana Department of Education

This measure of performance is based on the self-reports of graduating seniors. Seven of sixteen school systems in Lake County, five of six in LaPorte County, and three of seven in Porter County report college attendance rates below the state average of 68 percent. In several school systems, the percentages fall well below this level. Less than 60 percent of graduating seniors from the following schools attended college after the 2000-2001 schools year: Hammond, Hobart; River Forest; Lake Station; Lake Ridge; Dewey Township; and Boone Township. At 39 percent and 32 percent respectively, the Lake Station and Lake Ridge Schools in Lake County reported the lowest percentages in the region.

2001-2002 Composite SAT Scores (Lake County)	
Munster	1,053
Highland	1,010
Crown Point	1,009
Lake Central	1,007
Griffith	996
Tri-Creek	992
Merrillville	986
Hanover	968
Lake Station	944
Whiting	941
Hobart	941
Hammond	926
Lake Ridge	853
River Forest	823
East Chicago	798
Gary	774
State Average	1,001

Table 80; Source: Indiana Department of Education

2001-2002 Composite SAT Scores (LaPorte County)	
LaPorte	1,057
New Prarie	975
New Durham	955
Dewey Township	949
South Central	947
Michigan City	945
State Average	1,001

Table 81; Source: Indiana Department of Education

2001-2002 Composite SAT Scores (Porter County)	
Valparaiso	1,062
Union Township	1,042
Duneland	1,022
East Porter County	1,001
Porter Township	992
Portage	951
Boone Township	939
State Average	1,001

Table 82; Source: Indiana Department of Education

SAT scores are a key measure of performance. However, they are highly affected by the number of students who take the standardized test. The percentage of graduating seniors who take the SAT ranges from 19 percent in the LaPorte School District to 88 percent in the Munster School District. The statewide average is 55 percent. Having noted this, only four of sixteen school systems in Lake County reported average composite SAT scores above the state average of 1,001. The national average is 1,020. In LaPorte County, only one school system exceeded the average for the state. In Porter County, four of seven school systems reported average composite scores above the state average. With average scores of 798 and 774 respectively, the East Chicago and Gary School Systems reported the lowest average composite scores in the region. The percentage of seniors who took the SAT test in 2001 in these two schools systems was 53 percent and 38 percent respectively.

2002-2003 Cognitive Skills Index (Lake County)	
Lake Ridge	Not Reported
Gary	Not Reported
Highland	Not Reported
Munster	110.3
Crown Point	105.9
Lake Central	105.4
Hobart	104.1
Tri-Creek	102.9
Hanover	102.9
East Chicago	101.2
Merrillville	101.2
Griffith	100.7
Lake Station	99.7
River Forest	99.2
Whiting	98.7
Hammond	96.2
State Average	103.9

Table 83; Source: Indiana Department of Education

2002-2003 Cognitive Skills Index (LaPorte County)	
Dewey Township	110.4
New Prarie	106.5
South Central	104.1
LaPorte	104.0
New Durham	102.1
Michigan City	97.8
State Average	103.9

Table 84; Source: Indiana Department of Education

2002-2003 Cognitive Skills Index (Porter County)	
Valparaiso	108.8
East Porter County	108.5
Union Township	108.5
Boone Township	106.5
Duneland	106.2
Porter Township	105.0
Portage	104.2
State Average	103.9

Table 85; Source: Indiana Department of Education

Schools systems are no longer required to report their cognitive skills index score, although most still do. It is a composite score that remains a part of the state’s annual testing process. It functions, in effect, as a proxy for the student’s body’s global capacity to learn.

The Hammond Schools and the Michigan City Schools score relatively low in this measure of learning capacity.

2002-2003 Percent Above Math and English Standard (Lake County)	
Munster	76%
Lake Central	72%
Hanover	70%
Crown Point	69%
Highland	67%
Griffith	64%
Tri-Creek	61%
Hobart	59%
Merrillville	57%
Lake Station	48%
Whiting	47%
Lake Ridge	43%
River Forest	42%
Hammond	36%
East Chicago	33%
Gary	21%
State Average	58%

Table 86; Source: Indiana Department of Education

2002-2003 Percent Above Math and English Standard (LaPorte County)	
South Central	73%
New Prarie	68%
New Durham	65%
LaPorte	64%
Dewey Township	61%
Michigan City	42%
State Average	58%

Table 87; Source: Indiana Department of Education

2002-2003 Percent Above Math and English Standard (Porter County)	
Union Township	80%
East Porter County	75%
Valparaiso	74%
Porter Township	72%
Boone Township	70%
Duneland	69%
Portage	58%
State Average	58%

Table 88; Source: Indiana Department of Education

This critical measure reflects a mastery of basic mathematics and English lessons. Statewide, 58 percent of 10<sup>th</sup> graders met the state’s standard during the 2002-2003 school year. Nine schools systems in the region reported percentages below the state average. Eight of these nine schools systems are located in Lake County: Merrillville; Lake Station; Whiting; Lake Ridge; River Forest; Hammond; East Chicago; and Gary. At 36 percent, 33 percent, and 21 percent respectively, the Hammond, East Chicago, and Gary Schools Systems scored well below the state average. Only 42 percent of students in the Michigan City Schools met the state standard.

### 6.3 Risk Factors

Our third category of indicators pertaining to education includes five sets of measures that we believe must be addressed if real improvement in the region’s educational performance is to be achieved. They include measures pertaining to: (1) early childhood development; (2) the percent of adults living in each school system who have graduated from high school; (2) the number of students who live in families subsisting on incomes

that fall below the poverty line; (4) the percent of students in each school district who are eligible for free lunches; and (5) the percent of students who live with mothers who have been determined to be at risk.



The correlation between early childhood development and educational outcomes is now well-established. High quality daycare is positively associated with cognitive development,

Licensed Capacity as a Percent of Children Needing Day Care (2000)				
	Lake	LaPorte	Porter	Indiana
Percent	30.0%	14.0%	14.0%	28.0%

Table 89; Source: Indiana Business Research Center

language development, school readiness, and social development. According to one study, 57 percent of children in higher quality childcare have school readiness scores that are above average, compared to only 43 percent of children in below average quality daycare.

Children on Day Care Voucher Waiting List			
	Lake	LaPorte	Porter
2001	352	268	0
1990	867	99	113

Table 90; Source: Indiana Youth Institute

Fortunately, more daycare providers are incorporating early childhood development into the packages of services that they provide to parents, even though

daycare centers licensed in Indiana are not required to incorporate early childhood development into their menu of services. Unfortunately, the percentage of daycare providers who are licensed – thus indicating that they meet the minimum requirements to provide care – meets only a fraction of the need for these services. This is particularly so in LaPorte and Porter Counties where only 14 percent of the children needing daycare services have access to slots located in licensed facilities.

Daycare, including daycare that provides early childhood development services, is also a function of a parent’s ability to pay. The poor and the near poor thus have less access to the kinds of services that have been demonstrated to positively affect a broad spectrum of educational outcomes. According to Susan King of the U.S. Department of Labor: “(S)tudies have now documented that the quality of care children receive depends on the income of their parents. But, not just in a direct way. The best care of all types goes to middle and upper income families. Among families using childcare centers, the people who get the poorest quality care are the working poor and those whose incomes hover just above the poverty line, not the poorest families. And this surprising finding appears to be due to these family's differential access to subsidized childcare, Head Start, pre-kindergarten programs, and so on. These programs are not available to the near poor, only to the very poor. For families not using centers, the lower the family income, the poorer the quality of care. And we know that our poorest families are spending from a quarter to a third of their income on childcare, when they purchase childcare. The rest of us spend about 7 percent of our income on childcare. Taken together, it is a portrait of astonishing inequity in access to quality care and to the financial burden placed on families who are seeking to purchase it.”



The situation in Indiana was exacerbated in 2002 when the eligibility cutoff for daycare vouchers was decreased from 160 percent of the established poverty level to 140 percent.

Head Start is another program that promotes early childhood development. This highly acclaimed program provides free comprehensive, interdisciplinary, preschool child development programs for eligible children and their families. Research has demonstrated that every dollar spent on the Head Start program saves \$7 in public expenditures, including savings in the cost of special education, teen pregnancy, substance abuse, and criminal activity. During the 2000-2001 program year, 13,570 Hoosier children were enrolled in Head Start early education centers.



Percent of Adults in District with Less than H.S. Education (Lake County)	
East Chicago	39.9%
Lake Ridge	39.1%
Lake Station	34.8%
River Forest	34.7%
Gary	32.9%
Whiting	31.5%
Hammond	29.8%
Hobart	20.0%
Merrillville	19.3%
Tri-Creek	19.1%
Hanover	18.5%
Crown Point	16.6%
Griffith	15.6%
Highland	14.3%
Lake Central	13.5%
Munster	11.7%
State Average	23.4%

Table 91; Source: Indiana Department of Education

Percent of Adults in District with Less than H.S. Education (LaPorte County)	
New Durham	29.4%
Michigan City	26.2%
LaPorte	25.3%
New Prairie	23.1%
Dewey Township	17.3%
South Central	15.4%
State Average	23.4%

Table 92; Source: Indiana Department of Education

Percent of Adults in District with Less than H.S. Education (Porter County)	
Portage	22.6%
Boone Township	18.3%
East Porter County	16.8%
Duneland	15.4%
Union Township	13.0%
Valparaiso	11.8%
Porter Township	10.4%
State Average	23.4%

Table 93; Source: Indiana Department of Education

Achievement in education is, in part, attributable to the support systems that students find in the communities in which they live. A community that values education and has high levels of educational attainment provides positive role models to students and can, in effect, supplement the efforts of parents and school systems.

More than one-third of all adults who reside in four school districts in Northwest Indiana lack a high school diploma: East Chicago; Lake Ridge; Lake Station; and River Forest. In all, ten school districts fall below the state average of 23.4 percent with respect to this measure. This suggests that additional support structures may be needed if sufficient support is to be provided to students who attend schools in these school districts.

Percent of Families in District Below Poverty Level (Lake County)	
Gary	36.7%
East Chicago	34.4%
Lake Ridge	20.4%
Hammond	19.4%
Whiting	19.3%
River Forest	15.3%
Hanover	9.9%
Lake Station	7.7%
Hobart	6.3%
Crown Point	5.5%
Griffith	5.2%
Tri-Creek	4.9%
Merrillville	4.0%
Highland	3.8%
Lake Central	2.4%
Munster	1.5%
State Average	11.8%

Table 94; Source: Indiana Department of Education

Percent of Families in District Below Poverty Level (LaPorte County)	
Michigan City	15.8%
LaPorte	10.5%
New Prairie	7.3%
South Central	6.6%
Dewey Township	6.4%
New Durham	6.2%
State Average	11.8%

Table 95; Source: Indiana Department of Education

Percent of Families in District Below Poverty Level (Porter County)	
Portage	8.8%
Valparaiso	5.7%
Boone Township	5.1%
Duneland	5.0%
East Porter County	4.7%
Porter Township	3.9%
Union Township	0.7%
State Average	11.8%

Table 96; Source: Indiana Department of Education

Poverty is closely associated with poor educational outcomes. This problem is particularly acute in two schools districts: Gary, where 36.7 percent of all families live in poverty; and East Chicago, where 34.4 percent of all families are poor. In all, the percentage of families living in poverty exceeds the state average in seven school districts in the region. It is important to note that poverty rather than race is the controlling variable with respect to the educational outcomes that are reported here. Although poor educational outcomes may appear to be endemic in communities with high concentrations of African-American and Hispanic students, this is largely a function of poverty rather than race or ethnicity.

Percent of Students in District in Single Parent Families (Lake County)	
Gary	55.5%
East Chicago	50.5%
Whiting	32.7%
Hammond	32.2%
Lake Ridge	28.8%
River Forest	24.3%
Lake Station	21.2%
Hobart	20.7%
Griffith	19.2%
Highland	17.7%
Crown Point	15.8%
Merrillville	14.4%
Lake Central	14.3%
Tri-Creek	13.3%
Munster	12.8%
Hanover	12.6%
State Average	24.3%

Table 97; Source: Indiana Department of Education

Percent of Students in District in Single Parent Families (LaPorte County)	
Michigan City	30.4%
LaPorte	23.1%
New Durham	22.2%
South Central	15.0%
New Prairie	11.0%
Dewey Township	6.9%
State Average	24.3%

Table 98; Source: Indiana Department of Education

Percent of Students in District in Single Parent Families (Porter County)	
Portage	20.6%
Valparaiso	18.5%
Duneland	17.0%
Boone Township	13.1%
East Porter County	13.0%
Porter Township	12.4%
Union Township	7.0%
State Average	24.3%

Table 99; Source: Indiana Department of Education

Positive educational outcomes are also associated with stable and viable family structures. In six school districts located in the region, the percentage of families living in the school district that are headed by single parents exceeds the state average of 24.3 percent. In two districts, the percentages are more than twice as high as the state average: Gary at 55.5 percent and East Chicago at 50.5 percent. Again, this finding suggests that additional community-based support structures may be needed if the students living in these school districts are to achieve success.

2002-2003 Percent of Students Eligible for Free Lunch (Lake County)	
East Chicago	76.4%
River Forest	62.6%
Gary	58.4%
Hammond	56.3%
Lake Ridge	48.8%
Whiting	46.4%
Lake Station	43.6%
Hobart	19.7%
Merrillville	16.3%
Hanover	13.4%
Tri-Creek	11.7%
Griffith	11.2%
Crown Point	9.0%
Highland	6.6%
Lake Central	6.3%
Munster	3.8%
State Average	25.1%

Table 100; Source: Indiana Department of Education

2002-2003 Percent of Students Eligible for Free Lunch (LaPorte County)	
Michigan City	41.1%
LaPorte	22.6%
New Durham	18.9%
Dewey Township	12.4%
New Prairie	11.5%
South Central	7.5%
State Average	25.1%

Table 101; Source: Indiana Department of Education

2002-2003 Percent of Students Eligible for Free Lunch (Porter County)	
Portage	21.9%
Duneland	13.0%
Valparaiso	11.1%
Boone Township	8.5%
East Porter County	7.2%
Union Township	6.5%
Porter Township	6.1%
State Average	25.1%

Table 102; Source: Indiana Department of Education

The percentage of students in a school district who are eligible for free lunches represents another indicator of poverty, albeit an indirect one. The state average stands at 25.1 percent. In all, eligibility in eight school districts in the region – seven in Lake County and one in LaPorte County – exceeds 40 percent.

Although the association with poor educational outcomes is clear, it is important to again note that the causal variable is poverty rather than race or ethnicity.

## 6.4 Other Factors

Our fourth set of indicators includes three measures that we believe bear watching over the months and years to come: total expenditures per pupil; attendance; and suspensions and expulsions. On their face, they are not closely correlated with the outcomes that are described above.



Nevertheless, expenditures per pupil can serve as a gross indicator of a community's commitment to education. This data can also illustrate the extent to which supplemental resources are being marshaled to ameliorate the pervasive effects of poverty. Further, data pertaining to attendance and expulsions and suspensions can shed light on a school district's strategy for dealing with its most challenging students.

2000-2002 Avg Expense per Student (Lake County)	
Hammond	\$11,568
East Chicago	\$11,432
Whiting	\$10,564
Gary	\$9,907
Lake Ridge	\$9,765
Griffith	\$9,281
Merrillville	\$8,383
Munster	\$8,330
River Forest	\$8,288
Lake Station	\$8,080
Highland	\$7,822
Tri-Creek	\$7,571
Lake Central	\$7,559
Crown Point	\$7,463
Hanover	\$7,044
Hobart	\$6,934
State Average	\$8,337

Table 103; Source: Indiana Department of Education

2001-2002 Attendance Rate (Lake County)	
Munster	97.2%
Lake Central	96.6%
Hobart	96.5%
Griffith	96.5%
Gary	96.4%
Whiting	96.3%
Highland	96.3%
Hanover	96.2%
Merrillville	95.9%
Crown Point	95.9%
River Forest	95.8%
Lake Station	95.5%
Tri-Creek	94.9%
East Chicago	94.4%
Hammond	94.3%
Lake Ridge	93.8%
State Average	95.9%

Table 106; Source: Indiana Department of Education

2000-2002 Avg Expense per Student (LaPorte County)	
Michigan City	\$8,934
Dewey Township	\$8,335
New Durham	\$7,486
LaPorte	\$7,431
New Prairie	\$7,359
South Central	\$7,288
State Average	\$8,337

Table 104; Source: Indiana Department of Education

2000-2002 Avg Expense per Student (Porter County)	
East Porter County	\$10,916
Duneland	\$9,577
Porter Township	\$9,159
Valparaiso	\$8,935
Union Township	\$7,984
Portage	\$7,430
Boone Township	\$6,286
State Average	\$8,337

Table 105; Source: Indiana Department of Education

It should not be surprising that average expenditures per student are not highly correlated with educational outcomes. In Northwest Indiana, the school systems that report the highest average expenditures also report some of the region's most alarming educational outcomes. Again, the dearth of community-based support structures and stable and viable family structures are more telling in this regard. Unfortunately, the precise amount of supplemental resources that are needed to compensate for these challenges is less well understood.

2001-2002 Attendance Rate (LaPorte County)	
Dewey Township	96.7%
LaPorte	96.2%
New Durham	96.0%
New Prairie	95.5%
South Central	94.9%
Michigan City	94.5%
State Average	95.9%

Table 107; Source: Indiana Department of Education

2001-2002 Attendance Rate (Porter County)	
East Porter County	96.9%
Union Township	96.9%
Valparaiso	96.8%
Boone Township	96.2%
Duneland	96.2%
Portage	96.0%
Porter Township	95.0%
State Average	95.9%

Table 108; Source: Indiana Department of Education

Only six school systems in Lake County, three in LaPorte County, and one in Porter County report attendance rates below the state's average attendance rate of 95.9 percent. In fact, there is very little variability among Northwest Indiana's school systems with respect to this measurement category. More importantly, there is no clear correlation between school attendance and student performance, at least at the institutional level of analysis.

As is noted in section of 10.0 of this report, however, local police officials report that a high percentage of those students who are habitually truant eventually come into contact with the police in one way or another. School attendance is thus important not only for the sake of learning. Regular attendance also precludes delinquent behavior.

2001-2002 Suspensions/Expulsions per 100 Students (Lake County)	2001-2002 Suspensions/Expulsions per 100 Students (LaPorte County)	2001-2002 Suspensions/Expulsions per 100 Students (Porter County)			
East Chicago	58.6	Michigan City	56.3	Portage	17.2
River Forest	35.9	LaPorte	10.8	Porter Township	14.9
Lake Ridge	35.8	New Durham	8.9	Duneland	12.4
Hammond	32.9	New Prarie	6.1	Union Township	6.9
Lake Station	29.3	Dewey Township	1.8	Valparaiso	2.4
Whiting	27.5	South Central	0.1	East Porter County	2.2
Gary	24.5	State Average	13.9	Boone Township	1.7
Merrillville	22.0	<i>Table 110; Source: Indiana Department of Education</i>		State Average	13.9
Tri-Creek	13.0	<i>Table 111; Source: Indiana Department of Education</i>			
Hobart	11.1	<p>It is clear that school districts in Northwest Indiana have adopted very different strategies with respect to discipline. A "no tolerance" policy is now in effect in some school districts, while in others, disciplinary problems are either less prevalent or otherwise resolved. It is important to assess the consequences of expelling high numbers of students, however, both with respect to learning and to the community as a whole. Unfortunately, we have very little data pertaining to this issue. At a minimum, a formal study on this topic is needed.</p>			
Griffith	10.0				
Crown Point	8.9				
Lake Central	7.3				
Highland	4.8				
Hanover	3.0				
Munster	2.9				
State Average	13.9				

Table 109; Source: Indiana Department of Education

**Grade:** A grade of "C-" is assigned to this indicator category to call attention to the great disparity in outcomes that exists among Northwest Indiana's many school systems. Although some of our schools are among the very best in the state, others languish among the state's poorest performers. And even though some students in these schools accomplish a great deal, one cannot avoid the conclusion that the deck is stacked against far too many of Northwest Indiana's young citizens.

If Northwest Indiana is to achieve status as a "learning community," a community-wide effort – indeed a regional Marshall Plan of sorts – will be required. As the above analysis shows, this important undertaking cannot be left just to school systems. Alone, educators cannot possibly overcome the unique challenges that disadvantaged students carry with them into the classroom.

**Trend:** Mixed.

**Goal:** The Quality of Life Council recommends that Northwest Indiana commit itself to reducing disparities in educational outcomes by one-half by the year 2010. This will require significant reductions in the gaps that now exist between high-performing school districts and low-performing schools districts with respect to graduation rates, college attendance, composite SAT scores, performance on the cognitive skills index, and ISTEP+ achievement. At the same time, it is assumed that the school districts that are now performing well will continue to improve. For this reason, the goal of a 50 percent reduction in outcome disparities is an ambitious one; it will be a moving target. Nevertheless, improvement of this kind will be required if a high quality of life is to be accessible to all of Northwest Indiana's young citizens.

**Actions:** Achieving this broad goal is central to two of the Quality of Life Council's three fundamental concerns: sustainable economic development and social equity. The following strategies are recommended.

- Northwest Indiana should embrace and support early childhood education. To this end, proven programs should be promoted, and the means to underwrite the participation of

every child who is deemed to be at-risk for poor educational outcomes should be identified and secured. The highly-acclaimed Parents as Teachers program ([www.patnc.org](http://www.patnc.org)), in particular, is recommended.

- Childcare licensing should be strengthened at the state level. At a minimum, caretaker credentialing should include a minimum number of hours of training in early childhood development.
- The state should restore the eligibility for childcare vouchers to the 160 percent of poverty standard that was in place prior to 2002.
- A broad range of strategies designed to strengthen and support children and families should be developed and expanded. We believe that the United Way organizations of Northwest Indiana – in partnership with the nonprofit sector as a whole and the religious community – can play a significant role in this regard.

Further, we believe that the asset-based strategy developed by the Search Institute could prove useful. (See [www.search-institute.org](http://www.search-institute.org).) This highly-acclaimed nonprofit organization has identified sets of internal and external “assets” that infants, toddlers, children in elementary school, and adolescents must acquire in order to succeed in life. These assets are research-based, fully comprehensive, and focused on such key concerns as the need for support and empowerment, the role of boundaries and expectations, the need to use time constructively, the importance of values, and the need to develop social competencies and a positive identity.

Given the high value that we – both as parents and as a society – should assign to the well-being of children, we recommend that initiatives consistent with this kind of asset-based approach be identified as priorities by funders. Further, the nonprofit community should use the assets promulgated by the Search Institute in developing appropriate outcomes measures. Finally, information about programs that demonstrate positive outcomes should be shared freely in the region so that successful efforts can be replicated.

- Innovative programs that contribute to higher levels of achievement with respect to English and the language arts and mathematics in schools that now report poor educational outcomes should be identified and implemented. We believe that the Discovery Alliance, the three-county effort that is funded by the Lilly Endowment, should play a leading role in this effort.
- Innovative programs that keep students who are now suspended and expelled in educational settings should be identified and implemented.
- Finally, there is a need for a single voice on the subject of K-12 education in Northwest Indiana. We lack a common agenda with respect to this key determinant of the region’s quality of life. A recommendation to this effect was included in the “Reengineering the Economy of Northwest Indiana” report that was developed in 2000 by the Indiana Fiscal Policy Institute and the Indiana Business Research Center under the auspices of the Quality of Life Council. We believe that the recently established Northwest Indiana Consortium for Teacher Education can potentially serve in this role.

## 7.0 A Healthy Community



Healthcare is a particularly difficult issue to analyze on a regional basis. The system of care that is in place is highly fragmented and involves government, employers, and third party intermediaries as well as healthcare providers and patients. And for better or worse, the federal government has assumed the lead in this policy area; local, county, and regional governments play only a limited role. Further, like some other issues (e.g., housing and childcare), healthcare involves access, cost, and quality concerns that are deeply intertwined. Still further, the healthcare industry is in the midst of a profound transition. Indeed, there is some evidence that access and cost issues pertaining to healthcare are once again achieving salience on the nation's public policy agenda. Finally, at a conceptual level, various models can be applied to healthcare. For instance, the disease model focuses on the prevalence and treatment of illness and injury. The ecological model addresses environmental causes of morbidity and mortality. And the behavioral model recognizes that individual behaviors play a significant role in health outcomes.

We believe that all of these and other models, including the public health model, have merit. Nevertheless, the particular set of indicators included in this section was selected largely on the criteria of the behavioral health model, more specifically, on the basis on the Healthy People 2010 initiative that the federal government is using to promote positive health behaviors. This model was selected for two reasons: first, because it lends itself to the development of local and regional action plans; and second, because targeted efforts of this kind can have a dramatic impact on health outcomes. The Healthy People 2010 program consists of 20 focus areas and a large number of goals and objectives. Ten leading indicators, however, have been adopted as part of this national healthcare strategy. We believe that they deserve special attention. Some data that is more reflective of the disease and ecological models of health are featured here as well, particularly as they pertain to minority populations.

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### **Leading Health Indicators (Healthy People 2010)**

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Physical Activity

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Overweight and Obesity

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Tobacco Use

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Substance Abuse

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Responsible Sexual Behavior

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Mental Health

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Injury and Violence

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Environmental Quality

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Immunization

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Access to Healthcare

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*Table 112; Source: Department of Health and Human Services*

One additional caveat must be noted. In fact, we have very little local, county, or regional data pertaining to health behaviors. This domain is "data poor." For this reason, the dearth of sub-state data is featured prominently in the policy recommendations included at the conclusion of this section. The data that follow are drawn from national and statewide databases, including a database underwritten by the Kaiser Family Foundation and the 2001 administration of the Behavior Risk Factor Surveillance System, which includes data obtained from 3,993 individuals statewide. Additionally, the six hospital systems located in Lake County sponsored a survey of 1,000 Lake County residents in 1996. Where appropriate, these data are cited as well. The report to the community that its sponsors published in 1996 needs to be updated and extended to LaPorte and Porter Counties. Nevertheless, it was very well received at the time it was published. Indeed, this report testified to the need for local, county, and regional analyses of these kind.

Our health indicators are divided into three sections. The first includes mortality data pertaining both to the general population and to targeted sub-populations. This is followed by data that addressed cost and insurance coverage. Finally, we close with data pertaining to certain identified risk factors. These data were selected based on the Healthy People 2010 initiative's leading indicators.

## 7.1 Mortality

### Leading Causes of Death (2001)

	Lake	LaPorte	Porter	Indiana
Heart Disease	39.0%	40.6%	40.3%	39.2%
Cancer	24.1%	25.7%	23.4%	23.2%
Other	36.9%	33.7%	36.3%	37.6%

Table 113; Source: Indiana Business Research Center

### Infant Deaths

	Lake	LaPorte	Porter	Indiana
2000	61	10	10	676
1990	77	12	15	827

Table 114; Source: Indiana Youth Institute

### Child Deaths (Age 1-14)

	Lake	LaPorte	Porter	Indiana
2000	24	4	9	305
1990	36	8	10	340

Table 115; Source: Indiana Youth Institute

### Teen Deaths by Accident, Homicide, Suicide

	Lake	LaPorte	Porter	Indiana
2000	40	8	3	256
1990	26	3	14	265

Table 116; Source: Indiana Youth Institute

Heart disease and cancer continue to be the leading causes of death in Lake, LaPorte, and Porter Counties. The percentage of deaths due to heart disease is somewhat higher in LaPorte and Porter Counties than it is in the state as a whole. In contrast, the percentage of deaths attributable to cancer is somewhat higher in Lake and LaPorte Counties than it is statewide. The difference is not great, however, in either case.

Infant and teen deaths continue to be a problem as well, particularly, in Lake County. The high number of teen deaths due to accident, homicide, and suicide in Lake County in 2000 is particularly troublesome and should be viewed as a serious public health concern. Statewide, 59 percent of all deaths in 2001 in the 10 to 24 age cohort were attributable to automobile accidents, homicide, and suicide.



### Leading Causes of Death Among Hoosiers Age 10-24 (2001)

Motor Vehicle Crashes	30%
Homicides	16%
Suicides	13%
Other Injuries	13%
HIV Infections	0%
Other Causes	28%

Table 117; Source: Indiana Business Research Center

Death rates also vary by race. In 1999, the death rate for White Hoosiers per 100,000 population was 923. At 1,234 deaths per 100,000 population, the death rate for African-Americans was 33.7 percent higher. Nationwide, however, some progress has been reported toward the Healthy People 2010 goal to substantially reduce health disparities based on race and ethnicity. During the 1990s,



differentials were reduced for all ethnic groups among 10 of the 17 key indicators that are tracked in this regard, including: access to prenatal care; infant mortality; the incidence of teen births; death rates from heart disease, homicides, motor vehicle crashes, and work-related injuries; the tuberculosis cure rate; the syphilis case rate; and poor air quality. Improvement was also demonstrated in five measurement categories among all racial and ethnic groups except American Indians and Alaskan Natives: total death rate; and death rates for stroke, lung cancer, breast cancer, and suicide.

At the same time, significant differentials along racial and ethnic lines still exist. This is undoubtedly due to a number of variables, including access to care, the environment, and differences in lifestyle. We also know, however, that higher death rates are associated with higher levels of racial segregation, and that this is true both for Whites and for African-Americans. In a study published in the 1999 edition of the Sociological Forum, researchers at the University of Michigan and the University of California at Berkeley examined the link between residential segregation and mortality in 107 cities with populations in excess of 100,000 and African-American populations of at least 10 percent. The City of Gary was listed among the most highly-segregated cities in the study. The analysis established a strong correlation between two different measures of African-American residential isolation and higher mortality rates both for African-Americans and Whites. According to one of the

authors: "This finding is important because it suggests that the poor living conditions associated with very high levels of segregation are costly for the entire society."

## 7.2 Cost and Insurance Coverage

Primary Health Insurance Status (2000-2001)		
	United States	Indiana
Employer	58%	64%
Self-Covered	5%	5%
Medicaid	11%	6%
Medicare	12%	14%
Uninsured	15%	12%

Table 118; Source: Kaiser Family Foundation

Primary Health Insurance Status for Children 18 and Under (2000-2001)		
	United States	Indiana
Employer	61%	70%
Self-Covered	4%	5%
Medicaid	22%	14%
Medicare	0%	0%
Uninsured	12%	11%

Table 119; Source: Kaiser Family Foundation

Number of Children Enrolled in Hoosier Healthwise				
	Lake	LaPorte	Porter	Indiana
2002	31,382	47,620	6,318	433,141
1998	7,889	4,128	2,526	210,423

Table 120; Source: Indiana Youth Institute

In the assessment of Lake County health issues that was conducted in 1996, only 8.5 percent of Lake County residents reported that they lack either private or public health insurance. This figure has undoubtedly risen given the dramatic increase in the number of the uninsured nationwide over the course of the last 10 years. Although the statewide figure continues to fall below the national mean, there are substantial differences related to race and ethnicity. In Indiana, 12 percent of Whites are uninsured, 19 percent of African-Americans are uninsured, and 24 percent of Hispanics are uninsured.



Over 10 percent of all Hoosier children are now uninsured as well. Indiana has achieved recognition, however, for its aggressive enrollment of children, pregnant women, and low-income working families into its Hoosier Healthwise program. In all, 85,320 citizens of Lake, Porter, and LaPorte Counties are now enrolled in this program. This represents 19.9 percent of the statewide total.



## 7.2 Risk Factors

Nine of the ten leading indicators noted in the introduction will be addressed in this section of the report. The tenth indicator focuses on environmental factors, which are addressed in more detail in section 6.0. Unfortunately, we have very little regional, county, or local data pertaining to most of these indicators.

No Leisure Time Physical Activity		
	United States	Indiana
2001	26.2%	25.8%

Table 121; Source: Indiana State Department of Health

The Healthy People 2010 goal for physical activity is no more than 20 percent of the population engaging in no physical leisure time activity.

Overweight or Obese		
	United States	Indiana
2001	56%	58%

Table 122; Source: Kaiser Family Foundation

Our second risk factor is excess weight and obesity. The Healthy People 2010 goal aspires to reduce the percentage of individuals who are overweight to less than 40 percent of the population. This will be a difficult task to achieve given the fact that almost 60 percent of all Hoosiers were overweight or obese in

2001, the eighth highest percentage in the country. This included 68 percent of African-Americans and 61 percent of Hispanics.

The epidemic of overweight and obese children is of particular concern. About 13 percent of children and adolescents are now overweight or obese, more than double the number from 20 years ago. Risk factors for heart disease, such as high cholesterol and high blood pressure, occur with increased frequency in overweight children and adolescents.



Additionally, type II diabetes, previously considered an adult disease, has increased dramatically in children and adolescents. Excess weight and obesity are closely linked to type II diabetes. Finally, overweight adolescents have a 70 percent chance of becoming overweight or obese adults. And this increases to 80 percent if a parent is overweight or obese. Overweight or obese adults are at risk for a number of health problems including heart disease, type II diabetes, high blood pressure, and some forms of cancer. In short, this epidemic in childhood obesity should be treated as a public health priority.

**Cigarette Smoking**

	United States	Indiana
2001	22.7%	27.3%

Table 123; Source: Kaiser Family Foundation

Our third risk factor is tobacco use. In 2001, more than one-fourth of all Hoosiers continued to smoke, the fifth highest rate in the country. There are no significant differentials in this statistics pertaining to race and ethnicity. Tobacco is an equal opportunity killer.

**Percent of Mothers Who Smoked During Pregnancy**

	Lake	LaPorte	Porter	Indiana
2000	15.9%	25.3%	17.1%	20.2%
1990	25.4%	32.6%	27.7%	26.6%

Table 124; Source: Indiana Youth Institute

The number of pregnant mothers who smoke has fallen in recent years. LaPorte County is still experiencing alarmingly high numbers in this performance category,

however. More than one quarter of all expectant mothers in LaPorte County smoked during 2000. This is significantly higher than the comparable percentages for Lake and Porter Counties.



Our fourth risk factor is substance abuse. Northwest Indiana has been identified by the Justice Department as a "high intensity drug trafficking area." And there is no question but that substance abuse continues to be a problem in Northwest Indiana.

In 2001, 27 percent of Hoosiers in the 10 to 24 age cohort reported having used marijuana during the preceding 30 days. Eight percent reported that they had used cocaine at least once. And in 1998, Indiana recorded 3.7 drug-induced deaths per 100,000 population. For African-Americans, the death rate due to substance abuse was 8.2 per 100,000 population. The Healthy People 2010 goal is less than one death per 100,000 population.



Alcohol abuse continues to be a problem as well. In the assessment of Lake County health issues that was conducted in 1996, 4.5 percent of adults identified themselves as chronic drinkers, meaning that they consume two or more alcoholic beverages per day. Statewide, only 2.6 percent of adults identify themselves as chronic drinkers. In 2001, 30 percent of all Hoosiers in the 10 to 24 age cohort reported episodes of heavy drinking in the month preceding the survey.

**Teen Births**

	Lake	LaPorte	Porter	Indiana
2001	882	195	172	10,66
1995	1,296	219	182	12,193

Table 125; Source: Indiana Youth Institute

Our fifth risk factor is irresponsible sexual behavior. Data pertaining to teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases are presented.

**Births to Teens as Percent of Total Births (2000)**

	Lake	LaPorte	Porter	Indiana
1990	14.3%	14.5%	8.0%	12.5%

Table 126; Source: Indiana Business Research Center

Nationwide, the teen birth rate fell 26.2 percent between 1991 and 2001. The rate of decline in Indiana during this same time period was 22.0 percent. The ratio of teen births to total births in Lake and LaPorte

Counties remains quite high, however, In comparison to Porter County and the state as a whole. Data pertaining to income, poverty, and education presented in several of the preceding sections of this report point to the many challenges that accompany teen births, both for the mother and the child.

Sexually-transmitted Diseases per 100,000 Population (2000)		
	United States	Indiana
Chlamydia	258	237
Gonorrhea	132	110
Syphilis	12	13

Table 127; Source: Kaiser Family Foundation

With the exception of syphilis, the incidence of sexually-transmitted diseases in Indiana trails the nation as a whole.

The AIDS epidemic has not escaped Northwest Indiana, however. Lake, LaPorte, and Porter Counties have reported 13 percent of the cases reported statewide to date.

HIV/AIDS				
	Lake	LaPorte	Porter	Indiana
AIDS Cases Reported Since 1982	747	107	82	6,927
HIV Cases Reported Since 1985	489	94	59	3,958

Table 128; Source: Indiana State Department of Health

In all, 542 residents of Northwest Indiana have died from the disease. And 1,008 citizens of Lake, LaPorte, and Porter Counties now have AIDS or carry the HIV infection.

Deaths from AIDS			
	Lake	LaPorte	Porter
Reported Since 1985	446	47	49

Table 129; Source: Indiana State Department of Health

Living with HIV/AIDS (2002)			
	Lake	LaPorte	Porter
1990	763	148	97

Table 130; Source: Indiana State Department of Health

Our sixth risk factor addresses mental health needs. In 2001, over one-third of all Hoosiers reported that they had experienced poor mental health over the preceding 30 days. The percentages were comparable for Whites, African-Americans, and Hispanics. In the assessment of Lake County health issues that was conducted in 1996, 22.8 percent of respondents reported that they have faced or are facing serious bouts of depression. Perhaps not surprisingly, among those who indicated that they have household income below the poverty level, the rate was 44.4 percent.

State mental health expenditures per capita tend to be lower in Indiana than in the nation as a whole. In 1997, only \$40 per capita was expended for this purpose. Only nine states spent less per capita.

Percent Reporting Poor Mental Health During Preceding 30 Days		
	United States	Indiana
2001	34%	36%

Table 131; Source: Kaiser Family Foundation



Our seventh risk factor pertains to injury and violence. Nationwide, 10.6 deaths per 100,000 population were attributable to firearms in 1999. The comparable number for Indiana was 11.3 deaths per 100,000 population. Again, however, there are significant disparities based on race and ethnicity. In Indiana, 38.0 African-American deaths were recorded per 100,000 population in 1999. Only the District Columbia reported a higher death rate due to firearms among African-Americans.

Child abuse and neglect represent a particular kind of violence that holds long-term negative consequences for the community.

Children Reported as Victims of Abuse and Neglect (Lake County)		
	Abuse	Neglect
2001	827	1,364
2000	638	1,072
1999	625	1,186
1998	614	876
1997	689	1,271
1996	1,250	2,315

Table 132; Source: Indiana Youth Institute

Children Reported as Victims of Abuse and Neglect (LaPorte County)		
	Abuse	Neglect
2001	114	153
2000	121	100
1999	151	103
1998	64	87
1997	85	112
1996	194	233

Table 133; Source: Indiana Youth Institute

Children Reported as Victims of Abuse and Neglect (Porter County)		
	Abuse	Neglect
2001	291	1,105
2000	273	857
1999	327	1,017
1998	386	975
1997	342	797
1996	518	815

Table 134; Source: Indiana Youth Institute

Data pertaining to abuse and neglect can be difficult to interpret, however, due to the use of very different intervention strategies and differences in the degree to which the community chooses to engage itself in the life of individual families. Given the significant difference in population and the endemic nature of poverty in some



Lake County communities, one must question, therefore, whether the number of neglect cases in Lake and Porter County are really comparable. Similarly, given data pertaining to poverty, education, and other indicators pertaining to health, is the neglect and abuse of children really so low in LaPorte County? Clearly, differences in enforcement and reporting are reflected in data pertaining to the abuse and neglect of children. By any measure, however, 1,232 instances of abuse reported and 2,532 instance of neglect reported in 2001 in the region must be viewed as a serious concern.

Our eighth risk factor involves the immunization of at-risk populations – both children and the elderly – against disease. Nationwide, 73 percent of children age 19 to 35 months were immunized in 2000. At 72 percent, Indiana ranked 28<sup>th</sup> among the 50 states in this regard.

Percent of Seniors Who Received Vaccines (2001)		
	United States	Indiana
Influenza Vaccine	64.9 %	65.7%
Pneumococcal Vaccine	60%	60.2%

Table 135; Source: Kaiser Family Foundation

For seniors, two types of vaccination are recommended: (a) annual flu shots; and (2) one-time only vaccinations against pneumonia. The Healthy People 2010 goal for flu vaccinations is 90 percent of all seniors on an annual basis. For the pneumococcal vaccine, the goal is 90 percent vaccinated at some point in time. At least with respect to

the influenza vaccine, progress has slowed in recent years. Nationwide, the number of seniors who received flu shots declined by 2 percent between 1999 and 2001. In Indiana, the number who received the influenza vaccine fell by .4 percent. There are significant differences among the races with respect to this performance category as well. Statewide, only 41.9 percent of African-American seniors received flu shots in 2001, and only 29.5 percent have received the pneumonia vaccine.



To a significant extent, our ninth risk factor, access to health care, is intertwined with issues pertaining to insurance coverage and cost, which are addressed above. To supplement this discussion, however, we now focus on prenatal care, a vexing manifestation of the access issue. We will then proceed to the capacity of our healthcare system to meet our needs as a community.

Percent of Mothers Who Received 1st Trimester Prenatal Care				
	Lake	LaPorte	Porter	Indiana
2000	76.90%	72.50%	82.40%	79.40%
1990	75.10%	75.80%	81.40%	78.80%

Table 136; Source: Indiana Youth Institute

Low birthweight is closely associated with, but not entirely attributable to, access to prenatal care. Unfortunately, the percentage of prospective mothers in LaPorte County who have access to or avail themselves of prenatal care in the first trimester lags significantly behind the state's performance as a whole. Lake County's performance lags as well.

Percent of Low Birthweight Births				
	Lake	LaPorte	Porter	Indiana
2000	9.00%	7.30%	6.40%	7.30%
1990	7.90%	6.20%	5.10%	6.60%

Table 137; Source: Indiana Youth Institute

Nevertheless, the percentage of low birthweight births in LaPorte County mirrors the statewide percentage. Lake County's deteriorating performance in this regard



should be of considerable concern. It is certainly attributable to differences based on race and ethnicity. Statewide, 7.0 percent of White infants were born with low birthweights in 2001. For African-American and Hispanic infants, the comparable rates were 13.0 percent and 6.6 percent respectively.

The U.S. Public Health Service Act requires that geographic areas, usually counties or collections of townships or census tracts, that are in need of additional healthcare resources be identified as such. High need designations can also apply to certain demographic sub-groups. This designation is usually based on the availability of resources within a "rational"

service area based on a 30-minute travel time. Other factors include the availability of primary care resources in contiguous areas and high need, for instance, high infant mortality rates or high poverty levels.

In 2003, the Indiana Department of Health identified five “medically underserved” communities in Northwest Indiana: the City of Gary; central Hammond; the City of East Chicago; the City of Lake Station; and the low-income population of Porter County.

Three communities were identified as being in need of additional primary care providers: the City of Gary; the City of East Chicago; and the low income population of LaPorte County. Further, three communities were identified as being in need of additional dental care providers: the City of East Chicago; the low income population of LaPorte County; and the low-income population of Porter County.



No communities in the region were identified as being underserved by mental health providers or providers of long-term residential care.

**Grade:** A grade of “I” is assigned to this policy domain to call attention to the fact that we have very little local data pertaining to Northwest Indiana. Nevertheless, data that are now out of date together with some statewide data are disconcerting.

**Trend:** Unknown.

**Goal:** As is noted above, the federal government retains the lead responsibility on healthcare policy. Fortunately, this issue may again be achieving salience on the public policy agenda. This does not mean, however, that local and regional strategies cannot play a role. In fact, the behavioral health model that is embodied in the Healthy People 2010 initiative lends itself to local and regional strategies of various kinds.

The Quality of Life Council recommends that institutions in Northwest Indiana adopt the goals of the Healthy People 2010 program in their entirety. Particular attention should be paid to the leading indicators that have been established by the federal government. Additionally, explicit efforts should be undertaken to overcome the significant health disparities that exist between White citizens of Northwest Indiana and African-American citizens.

The achievement of the above goals will be complicated by the fact that so little local data pertaining to health is readily available. Indeed, with three exceptions, we believe that the first priority should be the gathering and analysis of local data. Having noted this, three health concerns – our three exceptions – stand out and should be addressed immediately. They include childhood obesity, the clear need for a comprehensive strategy pertaining to substance abuse treatment, and the need for a community-wide commitment to the challenge of child abuse and neglect.

**Actions:** The above goals are consistent with the Quality of Life Council’s focus on social equity. Four action steps are appropriate with respect to this policy domain.

- A formal and sustained effort is needed to document the health and wellness needs of the region. Hospitals, the various healthcare components of the region’s universities, and our county and city public health departments should assume the lead in this effort. We call on them collectively to undertake an epidemiological study of the region. The development of an action plan to address the prevention and treatment of identified needs should then follow.
- Working together with the above consortium, school districts in Northwest Indiana should assume the lead in addressing the epidemic of childhood obesity that is now

well-established. In many cases, this will require a reassessment of decisions made over the course of the last 10 years pertaining to cafeteria services and physical education programs.

- We recommend that the Quality of Life Council and other organizations in Northwest Indiana resist ongoing efforts to divert funds from the national tobacco lawsuit settlement to purposes that do not pertain to public health. More specifically, these funds should be dedicated to substance abuse prevention and treatment (i.e., tobacco, alcohol, and drug use).
- We recommend that efforts be undertaken by the courts to address the full range of needs that families involved in child abuse and child neglect present. We believe that an innovative program now being developed in Lake County's Family Court shows promise in this regard. Similar programs have proven successful elsewhere in the country. Typically, they include comprehensive assessments of the family's circumstances, the development of broad-based intervention strategies, and close monitoring.
- Finally, we encourage all large employers in the region to establish formal wellness programs.

## 8.0 A Community of Viable and Open Neighborhoods

Housing is a critical component of our overall quality of life for three distinct reasons. As is noted in section 3.0, 22.4 percent of Lake County residents who work now do so in Illinois, as do 8.9 percent of Porter County residents. Housing has thus become a vital component of the region’s economy. Beyond this, much of the housing development that has occurred in recent years lies outside of the region’s urban core. As such, it can and has been described as sprawl. Finally, housing patterns can both reflect and contribute to the kind of separation along racial lines that is associated with poor outcomes pertaining to personal income, poverty, education, and health. As is noted in section 2.0, Northwest Indiana remains the second most segregated area of the county.



Three sets of indicators pertaining to housing are included in this section of the report. The first provides a broad profile of housing in Northwest Indiana. The second addresses the issue of cost. And the third looks at housing quality.

### 8.1 Housing Profile

Housing Units (2000)			
	Lake	LaPorte	Porter
Occupied	194,992	45,621	57,616
Vacant	13,359	4,571	2,967

Table 138; Source: NIRPC

Residential Building Permits Issued (1990-2000)			
	Lake	LaPorte	Porter
Number	20,337	4,902	12,636

Table 139; Source: NIRPC

Lake County accounts for 65.4 percent of Northwest Indiana’s occupied housing units. And 15.3 percent and 19.3 percent of the region’s housing units are located respectively in LaPorte County and Porter County. The vacancy rate is a powerful indicator of economic vitality. A low vacancy rate can indicate high demand and thus growth. Conversely, a high vacancy rate can indicate stagnation. LaPorte County’s housing vacancy rate stands at 9.1 percent, almost twice as high as Porter County’s 4.9 percent vacancy rate. At 6.4 percent, Lake County’s vacancy rate falls between these two extremes.

The number of new housing units being build can also points to the relative strength of a community’s economy. Over the last 10 years, more than 20,000 new residential building permits were issued in Lake County. This constitutes 9.8 percent of the housing units in place in 2000. LaPorte County’s 4,902 new housing units also represent a 9.8 percent increase since 1990. In contrast, Porter County’s 12,636 new units indicate a 20.9 percent increase over the last 10 years. This does not tell the whole story, however. Very little of this growth has occurred in the region’s urban core. Only four new residential building permits were issued in the City of Gary in 2002. The comparable figures for East Chicago, Hammond, and Michigan City were two, five, and twenty-five respectively. The number of new residential units in Michigan City is welcomed. Elsewhere in the urban core, we still see little growth in the residential housing sector.



Home ownership has long been viewed as a key component of the “American dream.” Indeed, it has been an explicit goal of national housing policy since at least World War II. At 22.3 percent and 22.1 percent respectively, the percentage of LaPorte County and Porter County residents who rent rather than own their

**Home Ownership vs. Renting**

	Lake	LaPorte	Porter	Indiana
Own Home	64.2%	67.6%	72.7%	65.9%
Rent Home	28.9%	22.3%	22.1%	26.3%
Other	6.9%	10.1%	5.2%	7.8%

Table 140; Source: Indiana Business Research Center

homes are both lower than the statewide percentage. Again, however, this does not tell the whole story. The percentage of residents who rent rather than own is much higher in the region's urban core,

**Living in Group Quarters**

	Lake	LaPorte	Porter
1990	5,648	6,490	3,539

Table; 141; Source: NIRPC

A total of 15,668 citizens of the region's three counties live in group settings, a sector of the market that largely consists of nursing homes. It includes jail and prison facilities as well, however. And this largely accounts for the high number of individuals living in group settings in LaPorte County.

**Median Value of Owner-occupied Housing (2000)**

	Lake	LaPorte	Porter
Value	\$97,500	\$93,500	\$127,000

Table 142; Source: U.S. Census

**Median Rent (2000)**

	Lake	LaPorte	Porter
Monthly Rent	\$544	\$495	\$625

Table 143; Source: U.S. Census

**8.2 Cost of Housing**

Five indicators pertaining to the cost of housing are included in this report. In 2000, the median value of all owner-occupied housing in Porter County was 30.3 percent higher and 35.8 percent higher than comparable values in Lake and LaPorte Counties respectively. Reflecting this same pattern, median rents in Porter County were 14.3 percent higher and 26.3 percent higher respectively than median rents in Lake and LaPorte Counties.

Interestingly, there is very little difference among the three counties with respect to the median percentage of household income that is spent on housing. The median percentage in each county is comparable to the state median of 23.9 percent as well. Even less variation is reflected in the median percentage of household income that is allocated to mortgage payments in Lake, LaPorte, and Porter Counties. The median percentages of household income spent on housing by individuals who own their own homes are comparable as well.

At the same time, the number of renters who spend more than 50 percent of their total income on housing is on the rise. This problem appears to be most acute in Lake County, where nearly 20 percent of all renters devote more than 50 percent of all household income to rent. This phenomenon, of course, is directly related to income. As is noted in table 146, the median household income of renters in all three of the region's counties is approximately half that of home owners. And, again, this problem is a growing concern in the urban core cities of Gary, East Chicago, Hammond, and Michigan City, where the ratio of renters to home owners is high.



**Median Percentage of Household Income Spent on Housing (2000)**

	Lake	LaPorte	Porter	Indiana
Rent	24.8%	23.6%	23.2%	23.9%
Own Home with Mortgage	19.9%	19.8%	19.6%	19.3%
Own Home without Mortgage	10.9%	9.9%	9.9%	9.9%

Table 144; Source: U.S. Census

**Percent of Renters Paying More than 50% of 1999 Household Income on Rent**

	Lake	LaPorte	Porter	Indiana
Percent	18.5%	15.1%	15.4%	15.5%

Table 145; Source: U.S. Census

**Median Income of Home Owners vs. Renters (2000)**

	Lake	LaPorte	Porter	Indiana
Renters	\$25,069	\$24,614	\$31,781	\$25,550
Home Owners	\$50,760	\$47,781	\$60,672	\$49,688

Table 146; Source: U.S. Census

### 8.3 Housing Quality

Three measures of housing quality are typically employed in reports of this kind. Median age can serve as a rough indicator of quality. This indicator must be used in conjunction with others, however, because an older home can hold higher value than a newer home. The mean number of occupants per room can serve as an indicator of crowding. And finally, a count of the number of homes that lack basic amenities can be used to isolate pockets in which housing needs are the greatest.



Median Year Housing Units Were Constructed (2000)				
	Lake	LaPorte	Porter	Indiana
Year	1960	1960	1974	1966

Table 147; Source: U.S. Census

Occupants per Room (2000)				
	Lake	LaPorte	Porter	Indiana
.50 or less	66.9%	71.6%	71.9%	72.1%
.51 to 1.00	28.9%	26.3%	26.3%	25.6%
1.01 to 1.50	2.8%	1.6%	1.4%	1.6%
1.51 to 2.00	1.0%	0.5%	0.2%	0.5%
2.01 or More	0.4%	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%

Table 148; Source: U.S. Census

Basic Housing Amenities (2000)			
	Lake	LaPorte	Porter
No Plumbing	1,601	272	232
No Kitchen	2,285	367	327
No Telephone	4,923	1,003	571

Table 149; Source: U.S. Census

telephones) is small, but largely concentrated in Lake County. In all, .7 percent of households in Lake County lack plumbing facilities and 1.1 percent lack kitchen facilities. The comparable figures in LaPorte County are .54 percent and .73 percent respectively. And in Porter County, .38 percent of all homes lack plumbing facilities and .38 percent lack kitchen facilities. In all, nearly 5,000 homes in Lake County lack telephones. Just over 1,000 homes in LaPorte County and just under 600 homes in Porter County lack telephones.

In the year 2000, the median age of all housing units in both Lake County and LaPorte County stood at 40 years. This is 6 years older than the statewide median and 14 years older than the median age of housing in Porter County.

Although acute for those who suffer from it, severe overcrowding is something of a rarity in Northwest Indiana. As might be expected, however, it is a more serious problem in Lake County than it is in LaPorte or Porter Counties. Only 4.2 percent of households in Lake County have more than one occupant per room. In LaPorte County and Porter County respectively, 2.2 percent and 1.7 percent of households exceed this standard. Statewide, the percentage is 2.3 percent.

Similarly, the percentage of homes lacking the basic amenities (i.e., plumbing, kitchen facilities, and

**Grade:** A grade of "C" is assigned to this policy domain to call attention to the two-tiered nature of housing in Northwest Indiana. On the one hand, housing has emerged as an important economic asset in the region. On the other, the uneven distribution of affordable housing units in Lake and Porter Counties, in particular, is exacerbating divisions between the wealthy, the middle class, and the poor. It is also underwriting the continuation of a destructive pattern of racial segregation in the region.

**Trend:** An opportunity.

**Goal:** We recommend that communities in Northwest Indiana adopt zoning laws, ordinances, and other initiatives designed to ensure that at least 10 percent of all new housing constructed in those communities over the course of any 3-year time period qualify as affordable housing. Further, this goal should be fully realized in all individual communities by 2010.

**Actions:** The above goal is fully reflective of the Quality of Life Council's commitment to sustainable economic development, environmental well-being, and social equity. Two action steps are recommended.

- As Northwest Indiana’s chief planning body, the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission should coordinate and facilitate discussions among the many municipal planning bodies in the region and organizations such as the Northwest Indiana Open Housing Center pertaining to affordable housing. Broad-based discussions on this topic should lead to the development of interlocal agreements or compacts that are sufficiently robust to provide for a substantial increase in and the wider distribution of affordable housing in the region.

Because other communities have successfully faced this challenge, we believe that “benchmarking” may prove helpful. We should draw lessons from successful efforts wherever they can be found, including the practice of housing “set-asides.” Also called “inclusionary zoning,” this approach links affordable housing to market-rate, private development. Typically, a developer agrees to sell or rent a percentage of units in a new development (i.e., 7 to 15 percent) at prices that low- and moderate-income families can afford. In return, they receive a “density bonus” of up to 20 percent. Additional units are thus created, but not through the purchase of more land. Programs of this kind can be developed on a voluntary basis or through the use of zoning ordinances. However, codified systems have proven a good deal more effective in such communities as Burlington, Vermont, Santa Fe, New Mexico, and Montgomery County, Maryland. According to a discussion paper developed by the Brookings Institution’s Center on Urban and Metropolitan Planning, initiatives of this kind “institutionalize something that middle- and upper-income home buyers take for granted, that housing is not just about sturdy walls and a sound roof, but also about neighborhoods and opportunities. Beneficiaries of these ordinances include not only minimum-wage workers, but also teachers, police officers, and service workers – productive citizens who form the foundation of any community.”

We have no illusions about the difficulties that this action step will entail. Certainly, it will require political leadership and a community-wide commitment to long-term planning rather than to the kind of short-term planning that – although appealing over the short-term – is unlikely to produce results that are sustainable over time.

- Northwest Indiana’s four Habitat for Humanity organizations have emerged as leaders in the effort to build affordable housing in the region. We encourage churches, the business community, and other entities to support the efforts of these and other similar organizations. Indeed, we believe that they can play a key role in achieving the goal that is established above. Over time, this issue should assume status as an “initiative of choice” in Northwest Indiana.

## 9.0 An Accessible Community



Transportation is both the lifeblood of the region and the bane of commuters. It is of growing importance for two reasons. Traffic congestion and access to mass transit have assumed increased salience given the dramatic rise in the number of residents in Lake and Porter County who work in Illinois. Further, prospects for developing a viable warehousing and container industry is tied as much to Northwest Indiana's network of interstate highways as it is to the availability of brownfield sites appropriate to this purpose and the demise of the state inventory tax. At the same time, a dearth of public transportation options contributes to growing congestion on the roads, a phenomenon that is clearly related to sprawl.

Ironically, the region's failure to expand its network of commuter rail transport limits its ability to fully exploit its emerging status as a bedroom community for Chicago's booming economy, even as it inhibits – at least to a small extent – sprawl. One could only wonder what the growth patterns of the last 10 years would have been had the Westlake Corridor of the SouthShore rail line been in place in 1990. For this reason, transportation planning cannot be separated from land use planning. They must be conducted hand-in-hand.

Three sets of indicators pertaining to transportation are included in this section of the report. The first consists of counts of vehicles owned by residents, businesses, units of government, and nonprofit organizations located in Northwest Indiana. This is followed by an analysis of commuting patterns. Finally, we focus on the number of accidents that occur on the region's roads.

### 9.1 Vehicle Census

Passenger Vehicle Registrations			
	Lake	LaPorte	Porter
2000	277,918	69,367	90,927
1990	255,420	61,529	76,835

Table 150; Source: NIRPC

It will come as no surprise to commuters that the number of automobiles and trucks on the road has increased over the course of the last 10 years. The number of vehicles registered in Lake County has increased by 8.8 percent. In LaPorte County, there are 12.7 percent more vehicles on the road than there were in 1990. And reflecting the County's dramatic growth over the last 10 years, the vehicle count in Porter County is up 18.3 percent. Interestingly, the percentage increase in the number of vehicles registered in Lake County exceeded the percentage change in population by 10.7 percent. In LaPorte County, the increase in the number of vehicles exceeded the percentage increase in the population by 15.5 percent. Reflecting this same pattern, the percentage change in the vehicle count in Porter County (i.e., 18.3 percent) exceeded the percentage change in the County's population count (i.e., 13.9 percent).

### 9.2 Commuting Patters

Location of Worksite (2002)			
	Lake	LaPorte	Porter
In County of Residence	72.1%	74.0%	56.2%
Outside County of Residence/In State	5.5%	21.4%	34.9%
Outside State of Residence	22.4%	4.6%	8.9%

Table 151; Source: U.S. Census

It has already been noted that an increasing number of citizens of Northwest Indiana are working in Illinois. Nearly one-fourth of Lake County residents and nearly one-tenth of Porter County residents now work in Illinois. The critical importance of transportation systems that are quick, reliable, and

<b>Travel into Lake County to Work (2000)</b>	
From Porter County	21,530
From Illinois	11,437
From LaPorte County	1,837
From Other Non-Lake County Locations	6,369

Table 152; Source: Indiana Department of Revenue

safe is further illustrated in the significant incidence of cross-county commuting in LaPorte and Porter Counties. In all, 26 percent of LaPorte County residents work outside of LaPorte County; and 43.8 percent of Porter County residents work elsewhere. Travel into Lake County – particularly from Porter County – is significant. Over 20,000 Porter County residents travel into Lake County to work each day.

<b>Travel Time to Work (2000)</b>			
	Lake	LaPorte	Porter
Less than 30 Minutes	33.1%	42.1%	64.5%
30 to 44 Minutes	23.6%	19.2%	19.6%
45 to 59 Minutes	12.0%	14.1%	7.6%
60 Minutes or More	31.2%	24.6%	8.3%

Table 153; Source: U.S. Census

Commute times are another indicator of accessibility. Given the high number of citizens who work outside of their counties of residence, it should not be surprising that commuting times are on the rise. In all, 42.2 percent of Lake County residents spend 45 minutes or more in commuting to work. The comparable figures for LaPorte and Porter Counties respectively are 38.7 percent and 15.9 percent.

<b>Means of Transportation to Work (2002)</b>				
	Lake	LaPorte	Porter	Indiana
Drive Alone	80.7%	83.6%	85.5%	81.8%
Car Pool	11.3%	9.8%	7.8%	11.0%
Public Transit	3.2%	1.0%	1.3%	1.0%
Other	2.8%	3.0%	2.9%	3.3%
Work at Home	2.0%	2.6%	2.5%	2.9%

Table 154; Source: U.S. Census

At the present time, most commuters drive alone to work. The percentage of Lake County commuters who drive alone is just slightly below the state average of 81.8 percent. The percentage of LaPorte County and Porter County residents who drive alone exceeds the state average.

<b>Daily South Shore Ridership</b>	
1998	3,369,557
1995	3,295,987

Table 155; Source: MultiSystems

As expected, given the dramatic increase in the number of citizens of Lake and Porter Counties, in particular, who work in Illinois, ridership on the SouthShore Commuter Rail Line is up. At the same time, very few residents in Northwest Indiana rely on the five fixed route bus systems (i.e., East Chicago Public Transit, Gary Public Transportation Corporation, Hammond Transit System, Michigan City Municipal Coach, and Tri-State Coach Lines) or any of

the demand-response para-transit systems (i.e., Hobart Township, LCEOC, North Township Trustees Office, Opportunity Enterprises, Porter County Community Services, South Lake County Community Services, and TransPorte) that are available in some locations. Reliance is significantly higher, however, among minority populations than it is among the public as a whole. In all, 5 percent of African-Americans in Lake County depend on public transportation. The comparable figure in LaPorte County is 3.0 percent. At 3.4 percent, Hispanics living in Lake County are also more dependent on public transportation than is the public as a whole.



<b>Percent Reliance on Public Transportation to Commute to Work (2000)</b>				
	Lake	LaPorte	Porter	Indiana
White	2.7%	0.8%	1.3%	0.7%
African-American	5.0%	3.0%	1.3%	5.5%
Hispanic	3.4%	1.6%	2.8%	2.2%

Table 156; Source: U.S. Census

This is not to say that commuters prefer driving to all other commuting options. Lack of availability and lack of reliability also play a role. In fact, an extensive study conducted under the auspices of the Northwestern Indiana Planning

<b>Unmet Need for Public Transportation</b>			
	Lake	LaPorte	Porter
Percent of Need Not Met	73.7%	90.6%	97.6%

Table 157; Source: NIRPC

Commission in 1999 determined that a significant portion of need for transportation services is not being met. Overall, only 23.3 percent of the region's need for public transportation is being met. According to the report issued at the conclusion of the study: "Transit services need to be expanded to

underserved communities in Lake, Porter, and LaPorte Counties. In Lake County, the communities needing local services and/or connections to the urban areas in northern Lake County are Hobart/Lake Station,

Merrillville/U.S. 30 Corridor, Crown Point, and areas in rural Lake County. In Porter County, local transit alternatives should be provided in Valparaiso, Portage, and in the rural communities to the south. North-south service connecting Valparaiso, Chesterton and NICTD should also be considered to provide access to NICTD for the transit dependent and to ease station parking congestion. In LaPorte County, local service alternatives should target LaPorte and the rural areas (of the County).”

### 9.3 Accidents

Our last set of indicators in this section pertains to accidents. In Lake and Porter LaPorte Counties, the number of accidents is down as are traffic fatalities. Both indicators are on the rise in Porter County, which should not be surprising giving the dramatic increase in population that the County has experienced in recent years.

Vehicle Crashes (2000)			
	Lake	LaPorte	Porter
Total	19,838	4,208	4,982
Alcohol Related	851	220	215

Table 158; Source: Indiana Criminal Justice Institute

Vehicle Fatalities			
	Lake	LaPorte	Porter
2001	79	27	20
1994	61	22	25

Table 159; Source: Indiana Department of Transportation

**Grade:** A grade of “D” is assigned to this policy domain to reflect our failure, to date, to fund the development of a regional strategy for public transportation, despite the noteworthy efforts of the Lake County Regional Transportation Authority, which has been ably led by Dennis Rittenmeyer. This action is important for two reasons. One, the need for a regional transportation strategy has been clearly established. And two, our failure as a community to come to a consensus on this matter jeopardizes collaboration across a broad range of other issues. Conversely, success in this regard would engender confidence that we can succeed on a whole host of other concerns as well, including economic development, healthcare, public safety, and government efficiency.

**Trend:** Disappointing.

**Goal:** We recommend that Northwest Indiana commit itself to the creation of a public transit system that fully meets the needs of all communities in the region by 2010.

**Actions:** The achievement of this goal would reflect all three of the Quality of Life Council’s organizing principles: sustainable economic development; environmental well-being; and social equity. Three action steps are recommended.

- All members of the General Assembly from Northwest Indiana should vigorously support legislation that would enable Lake County to enact a food and beverage tax to fund the Lake County Regional Transportation Authority. Once this enabling legislation is passed in the General Assembly, Lake County authorities should move quickly to enact the tax.
- Once funded, the Lake County Regional Transportation Authority should move quickly to developed a public transit plan that addresses identified needs in Lake County while accounting for the eventual expansion of services into Porter County and LaPorte County.
- A great deal of controversy attends the transportation planning process that is administered by the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission. We believe that this is largely attributable to the fact that transportation planning is now conducted in the absence of a regional land use plan. As provided for in section 3.0 of this report, political leaders in the region should undertake the development of a comprehensive

land use plan for the region through the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission.

Consistent with this recommendation, further study should be conducted on certain major transportation improvements that have been proposed (e.g., the Westlake corridor of the SouthShore Rail line and the south Lake County expressway). In the absence of a comprehensive land use plan, however, they should not be pursued to completion. Lacking such a plan, both improvements could be expected to contribute significantly to additional sprawl.

## 10.0 A Safe Community

Crime – or perhaps, more appropriately, the perception of crime – can severely undermine a community’s overall quality of life. Indeed, it can ignite a devastating cycle of deterioration. As crime increases, parks go unused, homes are abandoned, schools decline, and housing values plummet. In turn, the tax base is eroded and the public sector’s capacity to meet critical needs is crippled.

This “spiral of deterioration” is certainly evident in Northwest Indiana’s urban core. In fact, crime is not distributed evenly in the region. And as a result, some citizens live as hostages in the own neighborhoods, while others steer clear of these known or suspected “hotspots.”

It is essential, therefore, that proven strategies be adopted to address crime throughout the region. Fortunately, there is reason to believe that progress is being made in this regard. The U.S. Attorney’s Office has demonstrated a renewed focus on certain “hot spots” in the region’s urban core. As a result, for instance, 1,938 firearms were confiscated in Lake County alone in 2001 and 2002. Additionally, greater cooperation between and among local police departments, the region’s sheriff’s offices, the state police, and federal officials has been fueled by improved technology, growing concerns about international terrorism, and effective leadership at the federal and county levels. Further, certain judicial initiatives – including the use of drug courts in Lake County and a renewed focus on the family unit in some juvenile courts – show promise. Finally, the concept of “problem-oriented policing” seems at long last to be taking hold in the region.



We believe that this last innovation, problem-oriented policing, shows particular promise. Sometimes referred to as the “broken windows strategy” or “quality of life policing,” it is a proven strategy that has contributed to dramatic decreases in crime in New York City and elsewhere. It focuses on crimes that are often considered to be minor in nature, such as vandalism, drug offenses, disorderly conduct, and trespassing, as well as the kind of serious crimes with which some communities in Northwest Indiana are all too familiar. The goal is to solve problems early on before a cycle of decline can set in. Together with James Q. Wilson, George L. Kelling, is considered an author of this innovative approach to policing. He has visited Northwest Indiana on several occasions as a guest of Calumet College of St. Joseph. Dr. Kelling argues that traditional policing strategies – “incident-oriented” policing – can never be effective in and of itself, first, because serious crime is “adventitious,” it makes use of the abandoned buildings, alleys, and parks that exist in declining neighborhoods. In this way, criminal behavior can “lock in” a cycle of decline. Effective intervention requires that abandoned buildings be torn down, that alleys be cleaned up, and that parks be reclaimed for children and families. Further, incident-oriented policing is less than effective because it tends to yield the neighborhood to those who are inclined to commit crimes and incite others to do so as well. “Law abiding citizens who are afraid to go out onto streets yield control of these streets to people who are not frightened by these signs of decay. Law-abiding citizens, already fearful, see things occurring that make them even more fearful.” In Dr. Kelling’s view, a “single drug bust can thus be viewed as a surrogate for 24 hours of terror.”

Two sets of data follow. Neither, however, is fully reflective of problem-oriented policing. In fact, we do not have the kind of neighborhood-based data that is needed to support problem-oriented policing strategies. It should be no surprise, therefore, that our first recommendation will again focus on the need for local data. Nevertheless, the data that follow effectively communicate the nature of the public safety challenge that we face as a region. The first sub-section addresses the incidence of various types of crimes, and the second sub-section focuses on juvenile offenses.

## 10.1 Criminal Activity

### Crimes Reported (2000)

	Lake	LaPorte	Porter
Murder	90	4	2
Rape	119	30	22
Robbery	959	98	21
Aggravated Assault	1,208	150	97
Burglary	3,184	840	503
Larceny-Theft	9,938	3,648	3,078
Motor Vehicle Theft	2,971	557	279

Table 160; Source: Federal Bureau of Investigations

### Crimes Reported per 10,000 Population (2000)

	Lake	LaPorte	Porter
Murder	1.9	0.4	0.1
Rape	2.5	2.7	1.5
Robbery	19.8	8.9	1.4
Aggravated Assault	24.9	13.6	6.6
Burglary	65.7	76.3	34.3
Larceny-Theft	205.1	331.3	209.7
Motor Vehicle Theft	61.3	50.6	19.0

Table 161; Source: Federal Bureau of Investigations

### Arrests (2000)

	Lake	LaPorte	Porter
Murder	26	2	4
Rape	19	5	1
Robbery	161	20	7
Aggravated Assault	830	107	140
Burglary	256	105	71
Larceny-Theft	2,179	540	474
Motor Vehicle Theft	240	26	33
Fraud	180	76	62
Vandalism	297	142	101
Total Drug Offenses	2,107	266	578
Offenses Against Family and Child	100	76	10
Driving Under the Influence	3,048	611	654
Liquor Law Violations	1,691	287	753
Drunkenness	2,190	404	468
Disorderly Conduct	1,052	93	46

Table 162; Source: Federal Bureau of Investigations

7.0, or the housing data that is presented in section 8.0. Crime – like education – is a community problem that must be addressed across a broad front. Jobs and education are a part of the picture, but so, too, is the reclamation of certain communities on a neighborhood-by-neighborhood basis. This is why problem-oriented policing can make a significant contribution toward a dramatic improvement in the region's overall quality of life.

Our focus on crime must extend beyond the mere incidence of crime. There are a total of 21,425 inmates in Indiana prison facilities. The vast majority of these individuals will be returning to the community over the

While Indiana ranked 14<sup>th</sup> among the 50 states in terms of population in 2000, the number of crimes reported per 100,000 Hoosiers was 3,751.9, the 29<sup>th</sup> highest "index" value in the nation. Indiana ranked 19<sup>th</sup> in terms of murders, 32<sup>nd</sup> in the incidence of rapes, 24<sup>th</sup> in robberies, 32<sup>nd</sup> in the number of aggravated assaults reported, 23<sup>rd</sup> in terms of burglaries, 30<sup>th</sup> in the number of larceny-thefts reported, and 26<sup>th</sup> in the number of motor vehicle thefts.

The number of crimes reported in Lake County – both in real terms and on a per capita basis – is substantially higher than it is in Porter County. A citizen is still more likely to be robbed or assaulted in Lake County than he or she is in Porter County. LaPorte County, presents a more complex picture, however. The overall incidence of crime in LaPorte County is much higher than it is in Porter County. In fact, it falls between the extremes presented by Lake County and Porter County in several crime categories, including murder, robbery, and aggravated assault. And on a per capita basis, the incidence of rape, burglary, and larceny-theft is actually higher in LaPorte County than it is in Lake County.

We know that county-level data do not tell the whole story, however. The incidence of crime in some neighborhoods is much higher than it is in some other neighborhoods. And, as data addressed in section 7.0 indicate, African-Americans are much more likely to suffer from certain kinds of crime than are White citizens. The incidence of drug-induced deaths in Indiana is twice as high among African-Americans as it is among White Hoosiers. Similarly, African-American citizens are three and one-half times more likely to die in a firearm incident than are White citizens who live in the state. At 53.1 percent, the majority of adult prison inmates in Indiana are White; 39.2 percent, however, are African-American.



We do not believe that these data can be understood apart from the economic data that is presented in section 3.0, the poverty data that is presented in section 4.0, the education data that is presented in section 6.0, the data pertaining to substance abuse that is presented in section

course of the next 5 years. Statewide, 61.1 percent of them were convicted of crimes against persons or property and another 19.3 percent were convicted for controlled substance violations. In fact, 24.2 percent of the adult inmate population has been convicted of one or more drug offenses. (According to local officials, virtually everyone who is now jailed in our three county facilities is addicted to one or more controlled substances, even though most are awaiting trial or serving sentences for other kinds of offenses.)

Community corrections was adopted in the late 1970s in a statewide effort to reduce recidivism and to reduce costs. In fact, two-thirds of all felons are rearrested within 3 years of their release from prison. As an alternative to incarceration, options provided for in community corrections programs hold offenders accountable for their offenses. At the same time, they are able to hold jobs, support their families, and make restitution to their victims. They are also afforded access to the kinds of services that are not typically available in prison. Lake, LaPorte, and Porter Counties are among the 62 counties in the state that have community corrections programs. They all serve the community well.

## 10.2 Youth and Crime

### Juveniles Committed to the Department of Corrections

	Lake	LaPorte	Porter
1990	64	7	30
2001	92	41	16

Table 163; Source: Indiana Youth Institute

### Juvenile Status Case Filings

	Lake	LaPorte	Porter
1990	13	0	0
2001	247	98	65

Table 164; Source: Indiana Youth Institute

### Juvenile Delinquency Case Filings

	Lake	LaPorte	Porter
1990	1,626	176	326
2001	2,269	593	397

Table 165; Source: Indiana Youth Institute

Juvenile crime is a predictor of adult crime, both for individuals and for the community as a whole. A total of 1,798 minors are now confined in juvenile corrections facilities in Indiana. Approximately two-thirds have been convicted of crimes against persons or property. Another 9.8 percent have been convicted for controlled substance violations. At 54.7 percent, the majority of juvenile inmates in Indiana are White; 38.8 percent are African-American.

We believe that the community should focus on the early predictors of criminal behavior among young people. Juvenile status filings pertain to children and adolescents who have been placed under the jurisdiction of a local court for one reason or another. Delinquency filings pertain more specifically to criminal behavior. And local officials report that expelled, suspended, and truant students are likely to engage in behaviors that will bring them into contact with the police.

These and other early indicators of criminal behavior should elicit a broad range of interventions, but not just from the police. Schools clearly have a role to play, as do the courts and human service providers in the nonprofit community. Again, challenges of this kind cross traditional jurisdictions. Data in section 6.0 pertaining to student expulsions and suspensions, for instance, indicate that some school systems in the region have adopted a "no tolerance" rule in dealing with discipline problems. While this may or may not make sense from an education perspective, it surely makes no sense from a public safety perspective. A coordinated approach would seem to be in order, and this, of course, will require collaboration across a minefield of institutional and professional boundaries.

### Grade:

A grade of "B-" is assigned to this policy domain to acknowledge the dramatic increase in cooperation that has taken place in the law enforcement community in recent months and years. Cooperation among local law enforcement officials and cooperation among local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies hold promise for dramatic improvement in public safety in the region. Further, the law enforcement community has demonstrated that it is open to dramatic changes in the way that it does business. Most notably, it has played a significant role in promoting the need for a broader range of substance abuse treatment options in the region. In the past, police officials have tended to view treatment strategies as competitors for scarce public funds. Further, tentative steps have been taken toward the development of problem-

oriented policing strategies of various kinds. Still further, greater sensitivity to concerns about race and ethnicity is clearly evident in a number of local police forces. All of these developments are promising.

At the same time, it must be noted that we have little data that can be used to guide the development, implementation, and evaluation of problem-oriented policing strategies. There is a great need to develop local capacity in this regard. Further, it must be noted that problem-oriented policing strategies are being implemented in a pro forma way in some communities. Indeed, some "community-oriented policing" strategies seem to be designed as much to secure federal funding and to placate the community as to improve public safety.

**Trend:** Encouraging.

**Goal:** All communities in Northwest Indiana are encouraged to adopt and fully implement comprehensive, data-based problem-oriented policing strategies by the year 2010.

**Actions:** The achievement of this goal would contribute to two of the Quality of Life Council's organizing principles: sustainable economic development and social equity.

Several action steps that are included in other sections of this report pertain to the public safety challenges that the region faces as well. Economic development in the urban core is certainly germane to this goal. More specifically, the dramatic increase in opportunities for substance abuse treatment that is called for in section 7.0 should be viewed as a public safety priority as well as a public health priority. In section 7.0, we also note an innovative family intervention that is being developed in the Lake County courts. Finally, the call for innovative approaches to discipline problems in the schools that is advanced in section 6.0 is as much related to public safety as it is to education.

Two additional recommendations follow.

- The newly-established Law Enforcement Institute at Calumet College of St. Joseph has committed itself to helping local law enforcement agencies in developing a broad range of indicators that can support the full implementation of problem-oriented policing strategies. The region should support the Institute in this effort, and local police officials should avail themselves of this potentially valuable resource. Additionally, we encourage the Law Enforcement Institute to pursue the development of assessment tools that can be used to monitor the effectiveness with which problem-oriented policing strategies are implemented in the region and their overall effectiveness in reducing crime.
- Police agencies in the region are encouraged to develop and implement state-of-the-art problem-oriented policing strategies. Lip service, creative labeling, and marketing will not suffice. In fact, we believe that the key to effective implementation depends as much, if not more, on our mayors, city councils, town boards, and town managers as it does on our police chiefs. Public support is required if efforts of this kind are to succeed. We encourage political leaders in every community in Northwest Indiana to educate themselves about this innovative approach to law enforcement and to support its full development and implementation in their individual communities.

## 11.0 A Community that Appreciates the Arts and Celebrates Life



Based on the billboards that litter our highways, a traveler passing through Northwest Indiana might conclude that the arts and recreation in the region consist of little more than exotic dancing and fireworks. Imagine, then, how surprised this visitor might be to learn that the arts and recreation, in general, are thriving in the region. Indeed, because of its close proximity to the City of Chicago, its location along Lake Michigan's southern shore, and an indigenous arts community that is growing in diversity and strength, Northwest Indiana scores more highly in this indicator category than in any other.

But how do we measure performance with respect to the arts and recreation? Counting events, patrons, visitors, and financial returns does not work very well. With respect to the arts, quality is at least as important as quantity. Further, the events and activities that comprise the arts and various forms of recreation are incommensurate in many respects. How does one compare a casino to a play? Does one new ball field equal a well-established, community-based festival? Alas, beauty lies in the eye of the beholder and sports allegiances defy explanation. (Have you ever tried to reason with a Cub fan?)

At best, we can note the tremendous range of aesthetic and entertainment experiences that are available to citizens of Northwest Indiana. Although we focus exclusively on the region, we should keep in mind that our blessings with respect to the arts and recreation are tremendously enhanced by the many world-class venues that are located in Chicago. Additionally, we should not forget that recreation activities, in particular, have emerged as a key component of our economy. The economic impact of the region's five casino boats was noted in section 3.0. In 2000, over 1.9 million individuals visited the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore. The Star Plaza Theater attracts visitors from across the Midwest. The newly-constructed "Steel Yard" – the home of the SouthShore Railcats baseball team – is viewed as an economic anchor for the City of Gary. And the City of Hammond is striving to develop an arts community as part of its downtown revitalization initiative. In fact, the ongoing development of the arts and various forms of recreation in Northwest Indiana is fully consistent with the assets-based focus that is described in the introduction to this report. Our focus here, however, is more on the aesthetic and entertainment value that these events and activities provide than it is on their economic return.

A partial listing of some of the region's arts and recreation assets thus follows. It is designed only to illustrate the breadth of the opportunities that are available to all of us.

- Any listing of the region's natural assets must begin with the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore. It provides a vast array of educational and recreational opportunities. The National Lakeshore extends across Lake, Porter, and LaPorte Counties and includes approximately 15,000 acres of land, 2,182 of which is administered by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources. With 1,418 vascular plants of various kinds – 90 of which are on the state's threatened or endangered list – the Indiana Dunes ranks seventh among all of our national parks in native plant diversity. It should also be noted that the science of ecology was born in the Indiana Dunes. Dr. Henry Cowles, the father of ecology, conducted many of his landmark studies in Northwest Indiana.

- Located in the former site of Camp Good Fellow in the Dunes, the Indiana Dunes Environmental Learning Center provides teacher training, in-service workshops, and educational opportunities both for children and adults. Its environmental education programs feature “hands-on experience.” The Learning Center is quickly evolving into an important cultural and educational asset.
- An outstanding network of trails is being developed on the abandoned rail lines that cross the region.
- Northwest Indiana’s woodland, wetland, and prairie habitats are celebrated in the recently established Taltree Arboretum, located just west of Valparaiso.
- Northwest Indiana enjoys a large number of unique county and municipal parks, including Deep River Park in Lake County, Washington Park in LaPorte County, and Sunset Hill Farm County Park in Porter County.
- Three public marinas are now open in Northwest Indiana, including the Hammond Marina, the Robert A. Patrick Marina in East Chicago, and the Washington Park Marina in Michigan City.
- Nearly 40 golf courses now dot the region, many of which are highly regarded by golfers.
- The Washington Park Zoo is in the midst of a long-term modernization designed to restore its status as the anchor of the parks system in Michigan City.
- Local theater companies include the Community Theater Guild of Valparaiso, the Footlight Players of Michigan City, the Memorial Opera Company of Valparaiso, the Genesius Guild of Hammond, and the Theater at the Center production company of Munster. These and other local companies conduct plays year-round throughout the region in a number of excellent venues, including the Center for Visual and Performing Arts in Munster and the Memorial Opera House in Valparaiso. In Michigan City, the Canterbury Theater’s summer schedule attracts actors from all over the country, and its winter arts series offers a diverse program ranging from bluegrass to opera.
- Celebrating its 30th year, the LaPorte County Symphony Orchestra produces four major concerts each year, two in Michigan City and two in LaPorte. The Northwest Indiana Symphony Society sponsors the Northwest Indiana Symphony Orchestra, the Northwest Indiana Youth Orchestra, and the Northwest Indiana Symphony Chorus. Its 2002-2003 season will include four classical and four pops concerts, which will be held at the Star Plaza Theatre in Merrillville, and two family concerts. The Society is entering its 62<sup>nd</sup> season.
- Band concerts are conducted on Thursday evenings from mid-June through mid-August at the Guy Foreman Amphitheater in Michigan City’s Washington Park.
- Art exhibits are also conducted year round in a broad range of public and private venues.
- And over the course of the summer, barely a week goes by without a community festival of one kind or another. Indeed, it seems that nothing goes un-celebrated in Northwest Indiana, including pierogis in Whiting, popcorn in Valparaiso, flight and airpower in Gary, Dorothy and Toto in Chesterton, pork in Kouts, and beer during LaPorte County’s Oktoberfest, which, by the way, is celebrated from August 29 through September 1 at the LaPorte County Fair.

These several activities are supported by a robust network of sponsoring and supporting organizations and associations. The Convention and Visitors Bureaus of Lake, LaPorte, and Porter Counties promote a wide array of activities pertaining both to the arts and recreation. The Northwest Indiana Excellence in Theatre Foundation, Inc. uses an annual awards program to feature the work of local theater companies. Arts curricula of various kind are provided by several of the region’s colleges and universities. And the Northern Indiana Arts Association strives to provide “opportunities for artistic expression, education, and cultural appreciation.” Its

educational outreach programs serve nearly 5,000 children each year. It also serves Lake, LaPorte, and Porter Counties as one of the Indiana Arts Commission's twelve regional partners. In this role, it provides technical assistance to artists, organizations, and others who choose to pursue grants offered by the Indiana Arts Commission.

**Grade:** It is entirely appropriate that this indicator be assigned a grade of "B+," the highest grade assigned in this report. The arts are thriving in Northwest Indiana, albeit under many of our "radar scopes." And the recreational opportunities that Lake Michigan affords are unique and, quite simply, outstanding. And as is noted in section 5.0, positive action is being taken to protect the natural assets that the region enjoys, and a complementary set of other assets are being developed as well.

**Trend:** Vibrant.

**Goal:** Concerned parties and organizations in Northwest Indiana should develop and implement a strategy to enhance the profile of the arts in Northwest Indiana. Although substantial progress in this regard has already been demonstrated, the vibrancy and long-term potential of the arts to contribute to our overall quality of life are not yet fully appreciated by many citizens.

**Actions:** The achievement of this goal would contribute to all three of the Quality of Life Council's organizing principles: sustainable economic development; environmental well-being; and social equity.

Three additional recommendations follow.

- As a function of its relationship with the Indiana Art Commission, the Northwest Indiana Arts Association is responsible for the development of a "cultural plan" for the region. The current plan is due to be revised in 2004. We encourage the Association to pursue this update in partnership with a broad range of interested parties in the region.
- We believe that the arts are an essential ingredient in a well-rounded education. Lawmakers are encouraged to fully fund arts and music programs in our public schools. And private funders, including both institutions and individuals, are encouraged to view arts education as a priority.
- We believe that physical education is essential to a well-rounded education as well. Indeed, it can help prepare a young person for a lifetime of positive recreational activities. Further, the social costs of obesity are staggering and growing. Again, lawmakers and school systems are encouraged to fully fund physical education programs in our public schools.



## 12.0 A Community of Engaged and Caring Citizens

The term “strong democracy” was coined by political philosopher Benjamin Barber to describe “politics in the participatory mode, where conflict is resolved in the absence of an independent ground through a participatory process of ongoing, proximate self-legislation, and the creation of a political community capable of transforming dependent, private individuals into free citizens, and partial and private interests into public goods.” According to Barber, our political life can find its fullest expression at the local or community level. He argues that our political concerns should be broad-based, extending well beyond the narrow focus on taxes and spending that has eviscerated our contemporary understanding of citizenship. Like other social critics, Barber believes that today’s citizen is too often conceptualized as little more than a taxpayer or consumer. Indeed, a more complete understanding of citizenship needs to be reclaimed, one that includes all of its attendant rights and obligations.



This section of the report adopts Barber’s understanding of “strong democracy.” It thus rejects the more extreme versions of pluralism in which individuals and groups are portrayed as “utility-maximizers” who aggressively pursue their own short-term interests. Further, it rejects the libertarian view that government is inherently wasteful and that it cannot help but undermine liberty. At the same time, this perspective recognizes that government – especially local government – can be wasteful or even corrupt and that it can fail to engage citizens in the full exercise of their liberties and obligations.

Four sections follow. The first examines the tax burden that local government imposes on citizens. The second focuses on the functions of government; in doing so, it provides a baseline against which local budgets can be examined. In sub-section three, we turn to the nonprofit sector, a key element of Benjamin Barber’s conception of “strong democracy.” Finally, we focus on citizenship and the concept of civility.

### 12.1 Tax Burden

The tax system in Indiana has been significantly overhauled over the course of the last two years. The state’s corporate gross receipts tax has been abolished. The property tax on business inventory has been substantially reduced and will be phased out entirely by 2007. The depreciation floor on certain machinery and equipment has been dramatically reduced, which will, in turn, reduce the property tax liabilities of certain manufacturers. Additionally, all properties in the state are now being reassessed under new market-based guidelines that are expected to engender dramatic shifts in the relative property tax burdens borne by various sectors of the community. For this reason, the data that follow are out of date. They reflect a distribution of tax burdens that no longer exists. This information will, however, provide a valuable baseline against which future data pertaining to this issue can be assessed.

Perhaps surprisingly to some, Indiana is not a “high tax” state. According to a report published by the Indiana Fiscal Policy Institute in December 2002, “Indiana’s per capita state and local taxes of \$2,621 [in 1999] were more than \$500 below the average for the [eight industrial states included in its study] and \$369 less than the U.S. average (\$2,990). The Midwestern states’ average, \$2,956, was \$335 higher. Indiana’s ranks shifted only slightly when income was factored in. Its national rank of 32<sup>nd</sup> highest per person burden dropped to 37<sup>th</sup>.

Indiana’s tax of \$104.70 for every \$1,000 of income earned is well below the averages for the industrial states (\$113.53), the Midwest (\$110.77) and the U.S. (\$110.42).”

Nevertheless, an individual taxing district can contribute to an overall tax rate that is burdensome if it imposes high property taxes. The local property tax is used to finance a wide variety of services provided by local government, including public education, police and fire protection, libraries, some welfare costs, and parks. It consists of three distinct components: the tax levy; the tax base; and the tax rate. The property tax levy represents the amount of funds to be raised. The property tax base represents the assessed value of all real and personal property minus the value of all tax exempt property (e.g., all property used for religious, charitable, or educational purposes). The property tax rate is calculated by dividing the levy by the tax base for all taxable property within the unit. Tax rates are expressed as dollars per \$100 of assessed value.

1999 Assess Property Values (Lake County)	Value	Rank in State	Cum. Percent
Assessed Value by Property Class	\$3,542,640,200	2	100.00%
▪ Commercial & Industrial	\$2,110,077,980	2	59.60%
▪ Residential	\$1,184,748,790	4	33.40%
▪ Agricultural	\$43,037,490	70	1.20%
▪ Utilities	\$204,775,940	2	5.80%
Total Assessed Value Per Capita	\$7,366	74	

Table 166; Source: Indiana Department of Local Government Finance

1999 Assess Property Values (LaPorte County)	Value	Rank in State	Cum. Percent
Assessed Value by Property Class	\$938,340,940	14	100.00%
▪ Commercial & Industrial	\$370,791,050	14	39.50%
▪ Residential	\$410,967,620	14	43.80%
▪ Agricultural	\$80,224,290	15	8.50%
▪ Utilities	\$76,357,980	12	8.10%
Total Assessed Value Per Capita	\$8,543	54	

Table 167; Source: Indiana Department of Local Government Finance

1999 Assess Property Values (Porter County)	Value	Rank in State	Cum. Percent
Assessed Value by Property Class	\$1,733,624,770	7	100.00%
▪ Commercial & Industrial	\$782,148,100	8	45.10%
▪ Residential	\$821,867,640	6	47.40%
▪ Agricultural	\$27,567,130	83	1.60%
▪ Utilities	\$102,041,900	6	5.90%
Total Assessed Value Per Capita	\$11,854	15	

Table 168; Source: Indiana Department of Local Government Finance

It is this tax – the property tax – that has been the focus of much local attention in recent years. Historically, Northwest Indiana has imposed a high property tax burden on industry. In Lake County, in particular, this has manifested itself in the form of deflated assessments of residential properties and high municipal budgets. This twofold strategy made sense when the steel industry was booming. In fact, it was employed in other “rustbelt” communities as well. However, as competitive pressures have increased over the course of the last 20 years, the tax burden on industry has become overwhelming. Indeed, it contributed in a not insignificant way to the recent bankruptcies of LTV Steel, Bethlehem Steel, and Midwest Steel.

Evidence of the first element of this twofold strategy can be found in the relative sizes of the property values assigned to the four classes of property employed in Indiana (i.e., commercial and industrial, residential, agricultural, and utilities). In 1999, residential property represented only 33.4 percent of Lake County’s total assessed value. This compared to 43.8 percent in LaPorte County, and 47.4 percent in Porter County.

It is further evident in the unusually high property tax rates that have long been in place in Lake County. Because residential property in the County was intentionally undervalued over the course of many years and – as we shall see – because property tax levies did not fall as the property tax burden on industry increased during the 1980s and 1990s, high property tax rates were required. If the property tax base is suppressed and the levy remains unchanged, a high tax rate is required. In fact, nineteen of the top twenty gross tax rates in the state are located in Lake County. All but one are located in the northern end of the County. And the result does not change when the state property tax replacement credit is deducted from the gross rate to calculate a net rate. Property tax rates are not nearly as high in LaPorte County and Porter County. And this has contributed to difficulty that governmental and non-governmental entities have experienced in attracting new businesses to Lake County. Until recently, Lake County’s tax structure has simply not been competitive with other counties. (It should be noted, however, that the lowest tax rate in Indiana is also located in Northwest

<b>Tax District (Lake County)</b>	<b>2002 Rate</b>
East Chicago Corp (North)	11.8745
Hammond Corp (North)	11.1065
Gary Corp Calumet Twp Lake Ridge Schools	10.9055
Gary Corp Calumet Twp Gary Schools	10.6973
Gary Corp Hobart Twp River Forest Schools	9.8232
Lake Station Corp Calumet Twp	9.6306
Lake Station Corp Hobart Twp Lake Station Schools	8.8640
Lake Station Corp Hobart Twp River Forest Schools	8.7651
Whiting Corp (North)	8.1979
Hobart Corp Hobart Hobart City Schools Gary Sanitary	7.8637
Calumet Township Gary Sanitary	7.4643
Hobart Corp Hobart Twp Hobart City Schools	7.4056
New Chicago Corp (Hobart)	7.2095
Griffith Corp Calumet Twp	7.0840
Calumet Township	7.0062
Hobart Corp Hobart Twp River Forest Schools	6.9876
Hobart Corp Ross Twp	6.7467
School Schneider Corp (West Creek)	6.5998
Lowell Corp West Creek Twp	6.3588
Lowell Corp Cedar Creek Twp	6.3459
Crown Point Corp Center Twp	6.2862
Crown Point Corp Center Twp Annex	6.2862
Munster Corp (North)	6.2428
Crown Point Corp Ross Twp	6.2397
Cedar Lake Corp Center Twp	6.0854
Merrillville Corp Ross Twp Gary Sanitary	5.9818
Highland Corp (North)	5.9221
Griffith Corp Saint John Twp	5.8068
Saint John Corp Saint John Twp	5.7278
Saint John Corp Hanover Twp	5.6644
Dyer Corp (Saint John)	5.5846
Merrillville Corp Ross Twp	5.5237
Cedar Lake Corp Hanover Twp	5.5106
Winfield Corp Winfield Water District	5.3810
Winfield Corp (Winfield)	5.1773
Schools Schererville Corp (Saint John)	5.1404
Hobart Township	5.0071
Cedar Creek Township	4.9975
Eagle Creek Township	4.9587
Winfield Township	4.9566
Center Township	4.9396
West Creek Township	4.9199
Ross Township	4.7120
Saint John Township School	
Schererville Water	4.4181
Saint John Township	4.3911
Hanover Township	4.3218
Hobart Corp Ross	2.0461

Table 169; Source Indiana Department of Local Government Finance

<b>Tax District (LaPorte County)</b>	<b>2002 Rate</b>
LaCrosse Corp (Dewey)	5.5192
Michigan City Corp - Michigan Twp	5.0022
Michigan City Corp - Coolspring Twp	4.9967
Long Beach Corp (Michigan) MC Sanitary	4.4224
Trail Creek Corp - Michigan Twp MC Sanitary	4.1801
Trail Creek Corp - Coolspring Twp MC Sanitary	4.1746
LaPorte Corp - Kankakee Twp 1	4.1710
LaPorte Corp - Center Twp	4.1701
LaPorte Corp - Scipio Twp	4.1688
LaPorte Corp - Pleasant Twp	4.1671
Pottawattamie Park Corp (Michigan) MC Sanitary	4.1575
LaPorte Corp - Kankakee Twp 2	4.1529
Westville Corp (New Durham)	4.0257
Long Beach Corp (Michigan)	3.9916
Kingsford Heights Corp (Union)	3.9517
Wanatah Corp - Clinton Twp	3.7555
Trail Creek Corp - Michigan Twp	3.7493
Trail Creek Corp - Coolspring Twp	3.7438
Dewey Township	3.7281
Pottawattamie Park Corp (Michigan)	3.7267
Michiana Shores Corp - Michigan Twp	3.4377
Michiana Shores Corp - Springfield Twp	3.4247
Coolspring Township 1 MC Sanitary	3.4059
Hanna Township	3.3930
Kingsbury Corp (Washington)	3.3088
Noble Township	3.3069
New Durham Township	3.2726
Johnson Township	3.2164
Clinton Township	3.1642
Springfield Township	3.1558
Hudson Township	3.0399
Lincoln Township	3.0247
Union Township	3.0186
Coolspring Township 1	2.9751
Michigan Township	2.9674
Scipio Township	2.9501
Pleasant Township	2.9476
Kankakee Township	2.9450
Wanatah Corp - Cass Twp	2.9181
Center Township	2.9090
Galena Township	2.8997
Washington Township	2.8946
Wills Township	2.8916
Coolspring Township 2	2.8797
Cass Township	2.3443
Prairie Township	1.7901

Table 170; Source Indiana Department of Local Government Finance

<b>Tax District (Porter County)</b>	<b>2002 Rate</b>
Valparaiso-Washington Twp	4.4438
Portage City-Westchester Twp	4.3511
Valparaiso (Center)	4.2467
Chesterton-Westchester Twp	4.0838
Chesterton-Liberty Twp	4.0798
Chesterton-Jackson Twp	4.0694
Porter Town (Westchester)	4.0626
Portage City-Portage Twp	4.0087
Burns Harbor (Westchester)	3.8332
Kouts (Pleasant)	3.7209
Beverly Shores (Pines)	3.6557
Dune Acres (Westchester)	3.5588
Porter Township	3.4376
Hebron (Boone)	3.4228
Porter Twp-W Porter Fire	3.3939
Ogden Dunes (Portage)	3.3727
Pleasant Township	3.2940
Union Township	3.2289
Washington Township	3.2160
Morgan Township	3.2111
Pines Town (Pines Twp)	3.2064
Center Township	3.1303
Pine Township-Duneland Schools	3.0627
Liberty Township	3.0313
Jackson Township	2.9749
Westchester Township	2.9638
Portage Township	2.8973
Pine Township-Mich City Schools	2.8662
Boone Township	2.7597

Table 171; Source Indiana Department of Local Government Finance

Indiana. With a gross property tax rate of 1.7901, Prairie Township in LaPorte County enjoys the lowest of the 1,941 property tax rates in effect in the state.)

And this, of course, is the rationale for the several tax reforms, both statewide and locally, that have been enacted over the course of the last 2 years. The elimination of the state's corporate gross receipts tax, a dramatic reduction in the state inventory tax, and a drop in the depreciation floor for some equipment and machinery are all

designed to reduce the tax burden on business and industry. Further, the market-based reassessment of residential properties that is being implemented in response to a lawsuit brought by St. John resident and tax activist Joe Gomeztagle is reestablishing a balance that has long been absent in Lake County's property tax structure.

In fact, dramatic shifts in the relative tax burdens of the commercial and industrial, residential, agricultural, and utility sectors of our local economy can be anticipated as the current reassessment of all properties comes to a

<b>Anticipated Property Tax Shifts (2002-2003)</b>			
	<b>Lake</b>	<b>LaPorte</b>	<b>Porter</b>
Agricultural	-8.3%	-11.3	-11.0
Residential	+16.3%	-8.8	-12.3
Commercial	-28.5%	-22.0	-37.6
Industrial	-21.1%	-27.7	-32.7
Utility	-30.1%	-21.1	-39.1

Table 172; Source: Purdue University Agricultural Economics Department

Lake, LaPorte, and Porter Counties. For manufacturing industries, the property tax burden is expected to fall by 21.1 percent, 27.7 percent, and 32.7 percent respectively in Lake, LaPorte, and Porter Counties.

Although some homeowners – particularly those who live in older homes in Lake County’s urban core – will be surprised by higher property tax bills, we believe that the several reforms described above will contribute to the economic revitalization of the region. Artificially low property tax rates are of limited value in a community in which young adults cannot find work. Additionally, the inter-sector rebalancing of the property tax burden – even in the context of a tax structure that relies less now than in the past on the property tax – is consistent with an economy that is based as much on the Chicago housing market as it is on indigenous business concerns. Finally, the fact that homeowners in Lake County will now be required to bear a greater share of the costs of local government should contribute to greater accountability.

## 12.2 Government Services

This leads to the second element of the twofold strategy that is noted above (i.e., high municipal budgets). It is widely if not universally believed that local government – particularly local government in Northwest Indiana – is profligate in its spending. This was clearly evident in the debate over the county-option income tax in Lake County in 2001 and, again, in Porter County in 2003. During both of these protracted discussions, it was also clear, however, that few citizens have a solid grasp on the realities of local government finances. A review is thus in order, most importantly to aid individual citizens in analyzing county and municipal budgets and hence the services that local government provides.

The information that follows is drawn from analyses conducted by Professor Larry DeBoer of Purdue University’s Department of Agricultural Economics. Additional information can be found at [www.agecon.purdue.edu](http://www.agecon.purdue.edu). It is largely based on data included in the 1997 U.S. Census of Local Government. (This sector-specific census is conducted every 5 years. It is anticipated that data from the 2002 Census of Local Government will be released during May 2003.)

Local government is made up of four distinct kinds of entities.

- Counties are general purpose governments that provide a wide array of services. The most costly categories of service provided by counties include welfare, highways, police and corrections, financial management, and the administration of various courts.
- Municipalities are general purpose governments as well. The biggest single expense that cities and towns incur is for sewers. Other important functions include police and fire protection, hospitals, highways, and airports.

close. Although most sector rates will fall because of certain shifts away from the property tax that were adopted by the state in 2002, residential property owners in LaPorte County and Porter County will see smaller decreases and Lake County homeowners will experience an average increase of 16.3 percent. The property tax burden on the commercial sector of the business community is expected to decline by 28.5 percent, 22 percent, and 37.6 percent respectively in

<b>Local Government Spending by Type of Government (1997)</b>	
School Corporations	43%
Cities and Towns	26%
Counties	21%
Special Districts	9%
Townships	1%

Table 173; Source: Purdue University Agricultural Economics Department

<b>Local Government Spending by Function (1997)</b>	
Education	48%
Hospitals and Health	12%
Other	12%
Environment/Housing	9%
Public Safety	7%
Transportation	5%
Welfare	4%
Administration	3%

Table 174; Source: Purdue University Agricultural Economics Department

- The functions of township governments are now limited to poor relief, fire protection, and property assessment.
- Finally, school corporations and special districts of various kinds are "single purpose" governments that are charged with delivering a particular service.

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**Local Government Spending by Object Code (1997)**


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Employees	44%
Other Operating Expenditures	38%
Construction	8%
Other Capital Expenditures	5%
Interest Payments	4%
All Other	1%

Table 175 ; Source: Purdue University Agricultural Economics Department

In Indiana, these various units of local government provide a broad range of services.

- *Education.* The Census includes elementary and secondary education and libraries in this spending category, with school corporations accounting for 94 percent of the entities included in this category. Education is the most expensive function of local government. Special districts, including library districts, are significant in this category as well.
- *Welfare.* Local welfare is primarily a county function, with counties accountable for three-quarters of all welfare costs, most notably, "children in need of services." Townships administer poor relief programs, which accounts for about 10 percent of local welfare spending. The remaining services in this category are provided by cities and towns.
- *Hospitals/Health.* Hospitals and health programs are primarily a function of county government. Almost three-quarters of all public spending on hospitals and health is controlled by counties, with hospitals accounting for 95 percent of this total. Cities and towns also provide some hospital services as do some special districts created to operate hospitals.
- *Transportation.* Most of the spending in this category is dedicated to roads, streets, and highways. In Indiana, this function is performed by counties and municipalities. Transportation spending is almost evenly divided between counties and municipalities. Non-highway transportation spending is dedicated primarily to airports.
- *Public Safety.* This category includes police, fire protection, and corrections. Cities and towns spend almost two-thirds of the public money spent in this category. Counties spend a considerable amount as well. They provide police protection through sheriffs departments and corrections services are housed in county jails. Townships provide fire protection to people who live outside of cities or towns, and a few special districts provide fire protection as well.
- *Environment and Housing.* This category includes parks and recreation, environmental protection, natural resource management, community development, and housing programs. Municipalities provide three-quarters of these services. The highest cost is for sewers. Cities and towns also spend more on parks and recreation than do counties. Townships provide some park and recreation services as well. Solid waste management is a county, municipal, and special district function in Indiana. Cities are responsible for most housing programs. And special districts are responsible for many of the community development initiatives that are undertaken by local government, primarily through the work of development, planning, and zoning agencies.
- *Administration.* This category includes financial management. In counties, these services are provided by the treasurer, the auditor, and the county assessor. Cities and towns also have clerks and budget agencies. And township assessors and trustee-assessors provide services in this category as well. Judicial and legal services are also included in this category. Counties operate courts and pay for the costs of prosecutors and public defenders. Some municipalities have courts as well. Building maintenance is also included in this category.

- *Other.* This category includes interest payments on debt. Bonds are often sold to finance the construction of buildings and other infrastructure.

How then to assess whether local government is spending too much or too little? This question is a proxy – albeit an imperfect one – for a second question: How then to assess whether local government is doing too much or too little? The tables that follow pertain to county and municipal budgets. These are the two units of local government that have come under the most scrutiny in Northwest Indiana in recent years. Revenues are disaggregated by source (i.e., property tax and other) and the fund to which they are allocated (i.e., general fund, capital fund, and other). Two ratios are then provided. In the first, each taxing unit's appropriation is divided by the total assessed value of all property in that county or municipality. In the second, each taxing unit's appropriation is divided by the number of people living in that county or municipality in 2000.

Together, these two ratios can be used to conduct a baseline assessment of government efficiency. Neither is a self-sufficient measure, however. In an ideal world, units of local government with more financial capacity (i.e., higher property values) can provide more services; need, however, is likely to be greater in counties and municipalities with less financial capacity. Similarly, units of local government that spend less per capita could be very efficient, on the one hand, or neglectful of their duties, on the other. And neither ratio can be used to assess how well a particular service is provided. Nevertheless, a framework for further analysis is provided.

County	2001 Appropriation	Revenue Source		Fund			Appropriation/ Assessed Value	Appropriation/ Population
		Prop. Tax	Other	Gen. Fund	Capital	Other		
Lake County	\$194,397,420	73.3%	26.7%	48.5%	6.3%	45.2%	2.0%	\$401.18
LaPorte County	\$43,824,370	45.8%	54.2%	60.9%	9.7%	29.3%	1.6%	\$398.02
Porter County	\$38,888,255	59.0%	41.0%	68.4%	10.7%	21.0%	0.7%	\$264.91

Table 176 : Source: Purdue University Agricultural Economics Department

Lake and LaPorte Counties spend considerably more per person than does Porter County. And as a percent of total assessed value, Lake County's appropriation is higher than comparable values for LaPorte and Porter County as well. The meaning of these differences can be difficult to decipher, however. On the one hand, some services provided by Lake County government are spread out over a much smaller geographic area. Many of these services (i.e., public safety, road maintenance, etc.) are performed by cities and towns in Lake County. To a certain extent, LaPorte County's rural character thus accounts for its higher per capita costs. On the other hand, Lake County government is responsible for higher per capita welfare, court, and jail expenses.

Comparisons are a bit easier in the case of cities and towns. (See table 177.) In 2001, per capita spending was led by Burns Harbor and Whiting, two relatively small municipalities that benefited from the property taxes paid by two large manufacturers, Bethlehem Steel and BP. The City of East Chicago's per capita expense of nearly \$1,500 is high by any measure. In 2002, East Chicago's appropriation increased by 4.1 percent, less than the 5 percent that is allowed each year, but not significantly so. On a per capita basis, the appropriations of our other three urban core cities – Gary, Hammond, and Michigan City – are more in keeping with the levels of expenditure reported by other cities and towns in the region. Gary and Michigan City both spent just under 40 percent more per person than did Crown Point. They spent about 30 percent more per capita than did Valparaiso and the City of LaPorte. Hammond spent less per capita (i.e., 20.8 percent more than Crown Point, 11.5 percent more than Valparaiso, and just under 15 percent more than LaPorte).

Again, however, these data can be difficult to assess. Public safety costs per capita are considerably higher in our urban core cities. Additionally, all four of these cities are benefiting from casino revenues that are largely reserved to infrastructure development. To a significant extent, this accounts for differences in the ratios created by dividing each municipality's appropriation by its assessed value. The cities of East Chicago, Gary, Hammond, and Michigan City are among the nine municipalities with appropriations that exceeded 3 percent of their assessed property values in 2001. Given the recent restructuring of the property tax, these levels of expenditure can probably not be sustained over the long-term in the absence of casino revenues. This may not be a long-term concern, however, if casino revenues are dedicated to capital projects that eventually contribute to economic development that is sustainable.

Municipality	2001 Appropriation	Revenue Source		Fund			Appropriation/ Assessed Value	Appropriation/ Population
		Prop. Tax	Other	Gen. Fund	Capital	Other		
Burns Harbor	\$1,732,549	81.7%	18.3%	71.5%	15.9%	12.6%	0.17%	\$2,261.81
Whiting	\$10,030,760	52.8%	47.2%	67.1%	4.0%	28.9%	3.78%	\$1,952.65
East Chicago	\$47,355,867	58.3%	41.7%	64.1%	9.1%	26.8%	3.25%	\$1,460.97
Dune Acres	\$293,774	57.1%	42.9%	78.3%	4.0%	17.7%	0.85%	\$1,379.22
Beverly Shores	\$606,950	49.3%	50.7%	67.7%	3.4%	28.9%	1.43%	\$857.27
Gary	\$81,858,470	56.4%	43.6%	72.4%	1.3%	26.4%	5.82%	\$796.71
Michigan City	\$26,018,437	40.4%	59.6%	62.9%	3.2%	33.8%	3.08%	\$790.83
Schneider	\$249,711	32.8%	67.2%	61.8%	3.6%	34.6%	4.47%	\$787.73
Hammond	\$57,433,904	50.3%	49.7%	69.4%	2.7%	28.0%	5.49%	\$691.57
Ogden Dunes	\$875,415	51.0%	49.0%	67.2%	12.6%	20.3%	1.20%	\$666.73
Valparaiso	\$17,014,409	48.9%	51.1%	62.3%	6.0%	31.6%	2.09%	\$620.33
Hobart	\$15,349,324	60.0%	40.0%	75.7%	7.4%	16.9%	2.65%	\$605.19
Munster	\$12,476,057	51.6%	48.4%	46.3%	22.4%	31.3%	2.07%	\$579.98
St. John	\$4,815,216	54.3%	45.7%	62.3%	17.1%	20.6%	1.96%	\$574.47
Crown Point	\$11,341,313	48.8%	51.2%	73.4%	10.9%	15.7%	2.36%	\$572.62
Chesterton	\$5,851,813	47.5%	52.5%	56.8%	18.1%	25.1%	2.02%	\$557.95
LaPorte	\$11,780,328	44.8%	55.2%	58.1%	9.2%	32.7%	2.21%	\$544.86
Michiana Shores	\$175,562	34.6%	65.4%	49.2%	9.3%	41.5%	1.03%	\$532.01
Portage	\$17,294,973	53.5%	46.5%	56.8%	7.3%	35.9%	1.64%	\$516.33
Porter	\$2,532,002	50.2%	49.8%	58.5%	5.6%	35.9%	1.71%	\$509.25
Highland	\$11,198,198	43.6%	56.4%	53.4%	11.1%	35.5%	2.34%	\$475.59
Griffith	\$7,921,285	45.6%	54.4%	63.3%	11.6%	25.2%	2.78%	\$456.98
Schererville	\$10,626,538	50.6%	49.4%	57.7%	12.6%	29.8%	1.46%	\$427.61
Lowell	\$3,190,089	54.0%	46.0%	65.1%	4.1%	30.8%	2.25%	\$425.06
LaCross	\$229,652	40.6%	59.4%	78.3%	0.0%	21.7%	3.07%	\$409.36
Dyer	\$5,393,950	48.3%	51.7%	59.5%	15.0%	25.5%	1.67%	\$388.19
Merrillville	\$11,515,104	46.7%	53.3%	57.5%	15.7%	26.8%	1.44%	\$376.80
Kouts	\$608,821	31.1%	68.9%	67.6%	8.0%	24.4%	1.34%	\$358.55
Cedar Lake	\$3,096,253	46.2%	53.8%	69.8%	5.9%	24.3%	2.27%	\$333.68
Wanatah	\$324,653	42.4%	57.6%	59.5%	8.5%	32.0%	1.19%	\$320.49
Trail Creek	\$682,479	37.7%	62.3%	65.9%	4.5%	29.5%	1.62%	\$297.25
New Chicago	\$600,944	32.8%	67.2%	69.3%	4.5%	26.2%	5.23%	\$291.30
Winfield	\$618,349	33.6%	66.4%	71.2%	3.1%	25.7%	1.05%	\$269.08
Kingsford Heights	\$374,415	26.6%	73.4%	64.0%	4.6%	31.4%	3.22%	\$257.68
Hebron	\$893,248	39.8%	60.2%	73.6%	5.3%	21.0%	1.45%	\$248.40
Lake Station	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Kingsbury	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Long Beach	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Pottawattamie Pk	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Westville	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Pines	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Table 177; Source: Purdue University Agricultural Economics Department

These data shed less light on the quality of service that is provided by government. In fact, we have very little data pertaining to service quality. Moreover, service quality can be notoriously difficult to measure. For instance, does garbage service provided two times rather than one time each week indicate a higher level of service or an irresponsible use of public funds? This question can be reframed for other services provided by local government as well (e.g., public safety, health information, etc.). The recently established Local Government Academy – a partnership involving the region’s colleges and universities – may wish to take on thorny questions of this kind. We encourage it to do so. As in the case of public safety, however, we suspect that broad questions addressing satisfaction may prove most useful in this regard.

### 1.3 Philanthropy

Benjamin Barber’s conception of “strong democracy” focuses on the civil side of life as well as local government. This “third sector” includes nonprofit entities, community-based organizations of various kinds, and the religious community. Unfortunately, we have very little data that testifies to the strength of this civil sector. However, Lake Area United Way is sponsoring a comprehensive study that we hope will shed some light on a broad range of issues pertaining to philanthropy and volunteerism Northwest Indiana. The expected release date for this

**Average Charitable Donation**

	Lake	LaPorte	Porter
2001	\$2,291	\$2,339	\$2,291

Table 178; Source: Chronicle of Philanthropy

**Percent of Discretionary Income Donated to Charity**

	Lake	LaPorte	Porter
2001	7.1%	4.9%	5.9%

Table 179; Source: Chronicle of Philanthropy

**Total Dollars Raised in United Way Campaigns**

	Lake	LaPorte	Porter
2001	\$5,100,000	\$1,600,055	\$1,850,000
2000	\$6,000,000	\$1,246,019	\$2,500,000
1990	\$5,600,000	N/A	\$1,650,000

Table 180; Source: United Way

**Per Capita Dollars Raised in United Way Campaigns**

	Lake	LaPorte	Porter
2002	\$11	\$10	\$12

Table 181; Source: United Way

campaigns. At \$12 per capita giving in Porter County exceeds per capita giving to the United Way in Lake County and LaPorte County.

Again, however, this data is quite limited in scope. We have, for instance, no data pertaining to volunteerism. Yet we know that many individuals are as generous with their time as they are with their discretionary income. The study that has been undertaken by Lake Area United Way should provide a baseline against which the region's future performance in this regard can be assessed.

## 1.4 Citizenship and Civility

**Turnout of Registered Voters**

	Lake	LaPorte	Porter	Indiana
2002 General Election	71%	74%	85%	74%
2000 General Election	55%	54%	68%	55%
1998 General Election	37%	45%	42%	44%

Title 182; Source: Indiana Secretary of State

**Voter Turnout of Citizens Over Age 18 (2000)**

	Lake	LaPorte	Porter	Indiana
Percent	27.2%	27.2%	30.1%	26.4%

Title 183; Source: U.S. Census

"State of Giving Report" is September 2003. We suspect that it will provide valuable information both to donors and the nonprofit community and that its usefulness will extend beyond Lake County.

Some broad measures of performance in this regard are now available to us, however. In 2001, the average charitable deduction claimed on tax returns filed by LaPorte County residents exceeded the averages claimed in either Lake County or Porter County. Calculated as a percentage of discretionary income, however, Lake County residents proved far more generous than their counterparts in LaPorte County or Porter County. On average, households in Lake County dedicated 7.1 percent of their discretionary income to charity, which includes support for churches, synagogues, and mosques as well as the United Way campaign and other nonprofit causes.

Funds raised in United Way campaigns can serve as another measure of philanthropy. It must be remembered, however, that not all nonprofit organizations – even among a full listing of human service providers – are served in United Way

Citizenship is another social good that is notoriously difficult to measure. It is conceptualized by different individuals and, indeed, by different generations in different ways. However, the turnout of registered voters and – more importantly – the percentage of eligible citizens who bother to vote seem to confirm the widespread belief that our concept of citizenship has become somewhat attenuated, as does the high level of misunderstanding about the functions of local government that was evident in recent debates about the enactment of a county option income tax in Lake County and, again, in Porter County.

To a certain extent, this state of affairs is part of a national trend in which the term "citizenship" has evolved into a synonym for the much narrower terms "taxpayer" and "customer." However, our abandonment of a more robust conception of citizenship has been accelerated by a disconcerting history of corruption in Lake County. Those who work closely with elected officials and other public employees know that the vast majority

of them are unfairly tainted by the illegal and unethical acts of a few. Having said this, it is clear that bold steps will need to be taken to retrieve the confidence of a skeptical and disengaged public.

A reinvigorated concept of citizenship is part and parcel of broader concept, civility, which political philosopher David Klingwell defines as a basic virtue that is "focused on political conversation. It is a feature of our talk about justice, not our attitude about the results of that conversation. In that sense, [he has] in mind the idea of a vibrant and politically engaged set of conversational practices, all of them governed by a commitment to self-restraint and sensitivity."

Types of Reported Bias Incidents (1990-2001)	
Vandalism	26
Public Demonstrations	11
Cross Burnings	8
Harassment	4
Murder of Attempted Murder	3

Table 184; Source: Valparaiso University

The data suggest that greater civility is required in many of our political discussions in Northwest Indiana, particularly as they pertain to the question of race. Valparaiso University has tracked bias-motivated incidences in Lake and Porter County over the course of several years. (We do not have similar data pertaining to LaPorte County.) The data are alarming both in terms of the number of reported incidences and in terms of their severity. These kinds of crimes and acts of "in-civility" can no longer be tolerated in a community that aspires to a higher quality of life.

Reported Bias Motivated Crimes (1990-2001)		
	Lake	Porter
2001	36	18

Table 185; Source: Valparaiso University

Fortunately, several organizations have dedicated themselves to this issue, including the Unity Council of Healthy Communities of LaPorte County, United for a Purpose in Porter County,



Valparaiso University, the City of Hammond, the Race Relations Council of Northwest Indiana, and the Catholic Diocese of Gary. With respect to the broader question of civility, we believe that Valparaiso University's Project on Civic Reflection can play an important role as well.

**Grade:** A grade of "B-" is assigned to this policy domain to recognize the significant progress demonstrated in reengineering the region's property tax burden over the course of the last 2 years. This follows action at both the state and local levels of government. Additional work is needed to bring the cost of government down. Nevertheless, there is reason to believe that our tax burden will not in and of itself preclude the achievement of a higher quality of life that is sustainable over the long term. Our grade of "B-" also recognizes the potential value of the "State of Giving Report" that will soon be released by Lake Area United Way, as well as the efforts of several organizations to tackle the challenge of race relations in Northwest Indiana. Although a great deal remains to be accomplished in this regard, the very fact that this most critical of concerns is being addressed in so forthright a manner must be viewed as progress.

**Trend:** Emerging.

**Goal:** We recommend that all units of local government in Northwest Indiana commit themselves to a broad range of public engagement strategies that collectively hold promise both to restore the public's confidence in the public sector and to expand its capacity to serve.

**Actions:** The full pursuit of this goal will contribute to the achievement of all three of the Quality of Life Council's three organizing principles: sustainable economic development; environmental well-being; and social equity. Seven action steps are recommended.

- We remain somewhat skeptical of calls for government consolidation across a broad range of jurisdictions or services. Consolidation can be helpful if it contributes to reduced costs or improved service. A great deal can be accomplished, however, with inter-local agreements of various kinds and other forms of collaboration. Tax base sharing, for instance, has been suggested in the context of economic development.

We recognize that units of government that tax and spend at levels far in excess of the median for their respective counterparts in the region will have to reduce and control their costs to a much greater extent if improved cooperation and, indeed, the consolidation of some services are to be pursued. At the same time, we should keep in mind that units of government that serve the urban core have different cost structures than do units of government that serve suburban and rural populations.

- Greater transparency in local government will be required if the public's confidence is to be restored. We recommended that all units of local government that have yet to do so create web pages. Further, budgets should be posted to these web sites together with background information that can aid citizens in conducting various kinds of analyses.
- All units of local government should develop and adopt robust ethics guidelines. At a minimum, these ordinances or administrative policies should prohibit nepotism, proscribe the solicitation of political contributions from employees, restrict the provision of contractor gratuities, and provide for the appointment of ethics officers at the unit or departmental levels of government.

We recognize that ethics ordinances and administrative policies may do little to deter public officials who are intent on defrauding the public. However, this issue has much more to do with public confidence in local government than it does fraud per se. We encourage the newly-established Local Government Academy to serve as a resource to public entities that choose to pursue this recommendation. Further, we encourage all candidates for public office to adopt this recommendation as a key theme in their election campaigns.

- Innovative approaches are needed to supplement traditional kinds of public input processes, most notably the public hearing. Few citizens now attend public hearings and most tend not to take notice until they are personally affected. We recommend that other methods be employed as well, including interactive web sites, surveys, and focus groups. Again, the Local Government Academy may be able to make a contribution in this regard.
- We encourage elected officials at the state and local levels of government to recognize that local and county-level units of government no longer represent the best vehicle for addressing some kinds of public challenges, most notably, economic development, the environment, and transportation. Local efforts across these three broad fronts need to be supplemented by a financially independent regional governance structure. We believe that a Council of Governments is required for this purpose. We encourage all public officials to support the evolution of the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission into a true Council of Governments.
- We encourage the state to reorganize the various regional planning entities that now play such an important role in the governance of the region in a geographically consistent fashion. Collaboration is hampered and, at times, crippled by the overlapping jurisdictions that now characterize these various planning bodies. Further, based on their shared interests, we believe that Lake, Porter, and LaPorte Counties should constitute a coherent region for most purposes.
- In the preceding pages, several priorities are identified that could benefit from philanthropy. They include: (1) programs that focus on teenage pregnancy; (2) programs that provide social support to single parents; (3) environmental education; (4) early childhood development; (5) programs that support and encourage the

development of healthy families; (6) initiatives designed to help students develop skills in mathematics and the language arts; (7) substance abuse prevention and treatment programs; (8) programs that promise to reduce the incidence of child abuse and neglect; (9) initiatives that promote the construction of affordable housing; and (10) arts education for children and adolescents. We present these various programs as priorities for giving in Northwest Indiana.



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Table 153: Travel Time to Work	
Table 154: Means of Transportation to Work	
Table 155: Daily SouthShore Ridership	
Table 156: Reliance on Public Transportation for Work	

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## Appendix B: Action Steps

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### A Diverse Community...

The Quality of Life Council recognizes that greater understanding and education cannot serve as a substitute for action. For this reason, specific actions that address disparities that occur along racial and ethnic lines are identified in several sections of this report. At the same time, polarization along racial lines is endemic to the region. And we believe that certain institutions can do a great deal to break down the barriers that exist between and among White, African-American, and Hispanic citizens. We believe that they can contribute to greater understanding across confessional lines as well. Unfortunately, it is not possible to establish a concrete goal with respect to this kind of understanding; no baseline as such now exists. To this end, our first action step focuses on the gathering and analysis of data. Once a baseline has been established, we encourage the region to commit to "substantial improvement" before the year 2010.

To a certain extent, race relations can be improved through the full implementation of the action steps that are included in the several sections of this report. Indeed, positive action, at this point in time, will probably be needed in order to establish the conditions for ongoing dialogue on this most difficult of concerns. At the same time, certain steps can be taken to promote dialogue.

- The Race Relations Council of Northwest Indiana should develop and administer an annual survey designed to assess the quality of race relations in the region. The resulting data should then be published and used by various institutions and organizations in the region to develop action agendas.
- The efforts undertaken by the Unity Council of Healthy Communities of LaPorte County and Valparaiso University to sponsor "study circles," a proven methodology developed by the Topsfield Foundation, should be applauded. These efforts should be continued and expanded. Churches, school systems, businesses, and labor unions should step forward to sponsor study circles pertaining to race.
- The ongoing efforts of the Race Relations Council of Northwest Indiana to develop "best practice pledges" pertaining to race for various sectors of the community (e.g., law enforcement, nonprofit organizations, school systems, the media, the business community, etc.) should be pursued to completion. The pledges should then be circulated for consideration and adoption by the identified institutions and organizations.

### A Thriving Community...

The Quality of Life Council recommends that Northwest Indiana develop a robust planning process to support the development of an economy that is both sustainable and less reliant on just one or two industries. We believe that this kind of planning can only be accomplished on a regional level. This recommendation does not constitute a call for "unigov," a policy option that would entail a much more dramatic form of restructuring. It is instead a call for coordinated planning pertaining to tax policy, land use, and infrastructure development. If Northwest Indiana fails to institute processes of this kind, we fear that emerging opportunities will be lost and development will proceed along a path that is beneficial to some in the near-term, but, nevertheless, detrimental over the long-term.

- The Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission should assume the responsibility for coordinating economic development planning in the region. This will require dedicated funding, support from elected officials at the municipal and county levels of government, and a clear demarcation of the respective responsibilities of the public sector and the private sector in this regard.

We believe that the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission should focus on infrastructure (i.e., tax policy, land use planning, and infrastructure development), and that the private sector – most effectively through the work of the Northwest Indiana Forum – should assume the lead in marketing the region and in facilitating the introduction of new firms to Northwest Indiana. Although the public sector and the private sector each have important roles to play in this regard, the full accomplishment of the above goal cannot be realized without a high level of cooperation across sector lines. In and of itself, the private sector cannot create the infrastructure that a thriving business community requires. At the same time, there is no public sector substitute for the kind of strategic and tactical decisions that individual business firms make every day or the kind of collective action that the business community now pursues through local chambers of commerce or through the Northwest Indiana Forum and other organizations that employ a regional or statewide focus.

- Assuming that the task noted above is fully embraced by the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission and that the requisite level of cooperation between the public sector and the private sector can be achieved, we recommend that formal analyses be conducted with respect to the following public policies: (1) coordinated land use planning coupled with tax base sharing across the three-county region; (2) tax policy changes that reflect the new realities of Northwest Indiana's economy (i.e., a declining manufacturing base and a strong housing market that is rapidly being integrated into the Chicago housing market); (3) the infrastructure needs of the emerging container industry; (4) the communications infrastructure required to attract higher tech if not high tech industries; (5) the infrastructure and public policy decisions required to support the development of the Chicago-Gary Airport; and (6) the short- and long-term environmental impacts of various economic development scenarios. Detailed analyses will be required before more specific policy recommendations with respect to each of these several issues can be advanced. And this, of course, is why coordinated economic development planning is needed at this important point in the region's history.

### **A Community of Opportunity...**

The Quality of Life Council recommends that nonprofit organizations in Northwest Indiana, including the religious community, intermediary organizations such as the United Way, and community organizations of various kinds, dedicate themselves to a 20 percent reduction in poverty among the region's impacted populations, most notably African-American and Hispanic citizens and their children, by the year 2010. Income and poverty statistics should be used to track performance in this regard.

We have no illusions about the difficult nature of this task. As is noted above, poverty is a complex phenomenon that is deeply ingrained in the fabric of our society. We believe, however, that a focus on children on families can be successful. Regardless on one's perspective on the fundamental cause of poverty – whether its is social or personal in nature – there is broad agreement that children living in poverty are not responsible for their disadvantaged circumstances and that children are generally best raised in the context of families. We believe that this common ground provides sufficient support for a community-wide crusade against the persistent poverty that plagues the region. Lacking progress on this issue, it will be difficult for Northwest Indiana to claim to be a true "community of opportunity."

- The United Way organizations of Northwest Indiana should coordinate a sustained region-wide focus on the well-being of children and families. Although this effort should be led by the nonprofit sector, the support of the public sector and the private sector should be enlisted as well.
- Innovative programs that promise to reduce the incidence of teenage pregnancy should be identified, funded, implemented, evaluated, and, if successful, replicated throughout the region.
- Innovative programs that provide social support to single parents should also be identified, funded, implemented, evaluated, and, if successful, replicated throughout the region.

### **A Community in Balance with its Environment...**

The Quality of Life Council applauds the joint efforts of the steel industry and the environmental community. As challenging as a collaboration of this kind can be, it must continue. Beyond this, Northwest Indiana should commit itself to the development and implementation of a comprehensive strategy pertaining to sprawl. The cooperation across policy domains, political jurisdictions, and institutional foci that this will require will undoubtedly prove daunting. Nevertheless, we have an exemplary history of collaboration on environmental issues to build on, and this challenge must be surmounted if we are to achieve a high quality of life that is sustainable over the long term. Finally, innovative ways must be developed to engage citizens in the struggle to protect and restore the environment.

Consistent with the systems perspective that is described in the introduction, steps that address the above goal statement are included in other sections of this report. In section 3.0, we address the need for a communications infrastructure that can attract "clean" industries. We also identify the development of a comprehensive land use plan as a regional priority. In section 7.0, we call for an epidemiological study that would include a focus on environmental concerns. In section 8.0, we recommend the development of the kind of "inclusionary" zoning policies that have proven effective in combating sprawl. And in section 9.0, we recommend that action be taken to improve public transportation throughout the region. The following additional action steps are recommended as well.

- Well-planned and continuous permitting policies and procedures and the consistent and effective enforcement of environmental regulations by the Indiana Department of Environmental Management are both critical to the region.

There have been lapses on both counts in recent years. We encourage the state to dramatically improve its capacity – and ultimately its performance – with respect to these two very critical functions.

- The eight communities in Northwest Indiana that still rely on combined sewer systems should take prompt action to bring these systems into compliance with federal regulations. Permitting procedures should not be used to delay unnecessarily the substantial improvements that are now required.
- Considerable progress has been made with respect to the contributions that industry makes to air and water pollution and, indeed, the control of contaminated wastes that are generated by manufacturing processes. Additional progress on all three fronts will require the involvement of individual citizens. So, too, will the resolution of challenges associated with sprawl. In fact, we believe that this represents the “next front” in Northwest Indiana’s campaign to protect and restore its considerable environmental assets. We encourage the environmental community to recommit itself to this effort. There is a need to engender a true “environmental ethic” throughout the region. We recognize the enormity of this task. Its importance, however, cannot be overstated. We also recognize that the environmental community cannot accomplish this task alone. The media and schools will have to play important roles as well. And we encourage industry, foundations, and other funders to underwrite innovative and promising programs in support of this objective.

### **A Learning Community...**

The Quality of Life Council recommends that Northwest Indiana commit itself to reducing disparities in educational outcomes by one-half by the year 2010. This will require significant reductions in the gaps that now exist between high-performing school districts and low-performing schools districts with respect to graduation rates, college attendance, composite SAT scores, performance on the cognitive skills index, and ISTEP+ achievement. At the same time, it is assumed that the school districts that are now performing well will continue to improve. For this reason, the goal of a 50 percent reduction in outcome disparities is an ambitious one; it will be a moving target. Nevertheless, improvement of this kind will be required if a high quality of life is to be accessible to all of Northwest Indiana’s young citizens.

- Northwest Indiana should embrace and support early childhood education. To this end, proven programs should be promoted, and the means to underwrite the participation of every child who is deemed to be at-risk for poor educational outcomes should be identified and secured. The highly-acclaimed Parents as Teachers program ([www.patnc.org](http://www.patnc.org)), in particular, is recommended.
- Childcare licensing should be strengthened at the state level. At a minimum, caretaker credentialing should include a minimum number of hours of training in early childhood development.
- The state should restore the eligibility for childcare vouchers to the 160 percent of poverty standard that was in place prior to 2002.
- A broad range of strategies designed to strengthen and support children and families should be developed and expanded. We believe that the United Way organizations of Northwest Indiana – in partnership with the nonprofit sector as a whole and the religious community – can play a significant role in this regard.

Further, we believe that the asset-based strategy developed by the Search Institute could prove useful. (See [www.search-institute.org](http://www.search-institute.org).) This highly-acclaimed nonprofit organization has identified sets of internal and external “assets” that infants, toddlers, children in elementary school, and adolescents must acquire in order to succeed in life. These assets are research-based, fully comprehensive, and focused on such key concerns as the need for support and empowerment, the role of boundaries and expectations, the need to use time constructively, the importance of values, and the need to develop social competencies and a positive identity.

Given the high value that we – both as parents and as a society – should assign to the well-being of children, we recommend that initiatives consistent with this kind of asset-based approach be identified as priorities by funders. Further, the nonprofit community should use the assets promulgated by the Search Institute in developing appropriate outcomes measures. Finally, information about programs that demonstrate positive outcomes should be shared freely in the region so that successful efforts can be replicated.

- Innovative programs that contribute to higher levels of achievement with respect to English and the language arts and mathematics in schools that now report poor educational outcomes should be identified and implemented. We believe that the Discovery Alliance, the three-county effort that is funded by the Lilly Endowment, should play a leading role in this effort.

- Innovative programs that keep students who are now suspended and expelled in educational settings should be identified and implemented.
- Finally, there is a need for a single voice on the subject of K-12 education in Northwest Indiana. We lack a common agenda with respect to this key determinant of the region's quality of life. A recommendation to this effect was included in the "Reengineering the Economy of Northwest Indiana" report that was developed in 2000 by the Indiana Fiscal Policy Institute and the Indiana Business Research Center under the auspices of the Quality of Life Council. We believe that the recently established Northwest Indiana Consortium for Teacher Education can potentially serve in this role.

### **A Healthy Community...**

The Quality of Life Council recommends that institutions in Northwest Indiana adopt the goals of the Healthy People 2010 program in their entirety. Particular attention should be paid to the leading indicators that have been established by the federal government. Additionally, explicit efforts should be undertaken to overcome the significant health disparities that exist between White citizens of Northwest Indiana and African-American citizens.

The achievement of the above goals will be complicated by the fact that so little local data pertaining to health is readily available. Indeed, with three exceptions, we believe that the first priority should be the gathering and analysis of local data. Having noted this, three health concerns – our three exceptions – stand out and should be addressed immediately. They include childhood obesity, the clear need for a comprehensive strategy pertaining to substance abuse treatment, and the need for a community-wide commitment to the challenge of child abuse and neglect.

- A formal and sustained effort is needed to document the health and wellness needs of the region. Hospitals, the various healthcare components of the region's universities, and our county and city public health departments should assume the lead in this effort. We call on them collectively to undertake an epidemiological study of the region. The development of an action plan to address the prevention and treatment of identified needs should then follow.
- Working together with the above consortium, school districts in Northwest Indiana should assume the lead in addressing the epidemic of childhood obesity that is now well-established. In many cases, this will require a reassessment of decisions made over the course of the last 10 years pertaining to cafeteria services and physical education programs.
- We recommend that the Quality of Life Council and other organizations in Northwest Indiana resist ongoing efforts to divert funds from the national tobacco lawsuit settlement to purposes that do not pertain to public health. More specifically, these funds should be dedicated to substance abuse prevention and treatment (i.e., tobacco, alcohol, and drug use).
- We recommend that efforts be undertaken by the courts to address the full range of needs that families involved in child abuse and child neglect present. We believe that an innovative program now being developed in Lake County's Family Court shows promise in this regard. Similar programs have proven successful elsewhere in the country. Typically, they include comprehensive assessments of the family's circumstances, the development of broad-based intervention strategies, and close monitoring.
- Finally, we encourage all large employers in the region to establish formal wellness programs.

### **A Community of Viable and Open Neighborhoods...**

We recommend that communities in Northwest Indiana adopt zoning laws, ordinances, and other initiatives designed to ensure that at least 10 percent of all new housing constructed in those communities over the course of any 3-year time period qualify as affordable housing. Further, this goal should be fully realized in all individual communities by 2010.

- As Northwest Indiana's chief planning body, the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission should coordinate and facilitate discussions among the many municipal planning bodies in the region and organizations such as the Northwest Indiana Open Housing Center pertaining to affordable housing. Broad-based discussions on this topic should lead to the development of interlocal agreements or compacts that are sufficiently robust to provide for a substantial increase in and the wider distribution of affordable housing in the region.

Because other communities have successfully faced this challenge, we believe that “benchmarking” may prove helpful. We should draw lessons from successful efforts wherever they can be found, including the practice of housing “set-asides.” Also called “inclusionary zoning,” this approach links affordable housing to market-rate, private development. Typically, a developer agrees to sell or rent a percentage of units in a new development (i.e., 7 to 15 percent) at prices that low- and moderate-income families can afford. In return, they receive a “density bonus” of up to 20 percent. Additional units are thus created, but not through the purchase of more land. Programs of this kind can be developed on a voluntary basis or through the use of zoning ordinances. However, codified systems have proven a good deal more effective in such communities as Burlington, Vermont, Santa Fe, New Mexico, and Montgomery County, Maryland. According to a discussion paper developed by the Brookings Institution’s Center on Urban and Metropolitan Planning, initiatives of this kind “institutionalize something that middle- and upper-income home buyers take for granted, that housing is not just about sturdy walls and a sound roof, but also about neighborhoods and opportunities. Beneficiaries of these ordinances include not only minimum-wage workers, but also teachers, police officers, and service workers – productive citizens who form the foundation of any community.”

We have no illusions about the difficulties that this action step will entail. Certainly, it will require political leadership and a community-wide commitment to long-term planning rather than to the kind of short-term planning that – although appealing over the short-term – is unlikely to produce results that are sustainable over time.

- Northwest Indiana’s four Habitat for Humanity organizations have emerged as leaders in the effort to build affordable housing in the region. We encourage churches, the business community, and other entities to support the efforts of these and other similar organizations. Indeed, we believe that they can play a key role in achieving the goal that is established above. Over time, this issue should assume status as an “initiative of choice” in Northwest Indiana.

### **An Accessible Community...**

We recommend that Northwest Indiana commit itself the creation of a public transit system that fully meets the needs of all communities in the region by 2010.

- All members of the General Assembly from Northwest Indiana should vigorously support legislation that would enable Lake County to enact a food and beverage tax to fund the Lake County Regional Transportation Authority. Once this enabling legislation is passed in the General Assembly, Lake County authorities should move quickly to enact the tax.
- Once funded, the Lake County Regional Transportation Authority should move quickly to developed a public transit plan that addresses identified needs in Lake County while accounting for the eventual expansion of services into Porter County and LaPorte County.
- A great deal of controversy attends the transportation planning process that is administered by the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission. We believe that this is largely attributable to the fact that transportation planning is now conducted in the absence of a regional land use plan. As provided for in section 3.0 of this report, political leaders in the region should undertake the development of a comprehensive land use plan for the region through the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission.

Consistent with this recommendation, further study should be conducted on certain major transportation improvements that have been proposed (e.g., the Westlake corridor of the SouthShore Rail line and the south Lake County expressway). In the absence of a comprehensive land use plan, however, they should not be pursued to completion. Lacking such a plan, both improvements could be expected to contribute significantly to additional sprawl.

### **A Safe Community....**

All communities in Northwest Indiana are encouraged to adopt and fully implement comprehensive, data-based problem-oriented policing strategies by the year 2010.

Several action steps that are included in other sections of this report pertain to the public safety challenges that the region faces as well. Economic development in the urban core is certainly germane to this goal. More specifically, the dramatic increase in opportunities for substance abuse treatment that is called for in section 7.0 should be viewed as a public safety priority as well as a public health priority. In section 7.0, we also note an innovative family intervention that is being

developed in the Lake County courts. Finally, the call for innovative approaches to discipline problems in the schools that is advanced in section 6.0 is as much related to public safety as it is to education. Two additional recommendations follow.

- The newly-established Law Enforcement Institute at Calumet College of St. Joseph has committed itself to helping local law enforcement agencies in developing a broad range of indicators that can support the full implementation of problem-oriented policing strategies. The region should support the Institute in this effort, and local police officials should avail themselves of this potentially valuable resource. Additionally, we encourage the Law Enforcement Institute to pursue the development of assessment tools that can be used to monitor the effectiveness with which problem-oriented policing strategies are implemented in the region and their overall effectiveness in reducing crime.
- Police agencies in the region are encouraged to develop and implement state-of-the-art problem-oriented policing strategies. Lip service, creative labeling, and marketing will not suffice. In fact, we believe that the key to effective implementation depends as much, if not more, on our mayors, city councils, town boards, and town managers as it does on our police chiefs. Public support is required if efforts of this kind are to succeed. We encourage political leaders in every community in Northwest Indiana to educate themselves about this innovative approach to law enforcement and to support its full development and implementation in their individual communities.

### **A Community that Appreciates the Arts and Celebrates Life...**

Concerned parties and organizations in Northwest Indiana should develop and implement a strategy to enhance the profile of the arts in Northwest Indiana. Although, substantial progress in this regard has already been demonstrated, the vibrancy and long-term potential of the arts to contribute to our overall quality of life is not yet fully appreciated by many citizens.

- As a function of its relationship with the Indiana Art Commission, the Northwest Indiana Arts Association is responsible for the development of a "cultural plan" for the region. The current plan is due to be revised in 2004. We encourage the Association to pursue this update in partnership with a broad range of interested parties in the region.
- We believe that the arts are an essential ingredient in a well-rounded education. Lawmakers are encouraged to fully fund arts and music programs in our public schools. And private funders, including both institutions and individuals, are encouraged to view arts education as a priority.
- We believe that physical education is essential to a well-rounded education as well. Indeed, it can help prepare a young person for a lifetime of positive recreational activities. Further, the social costs of obesity are staggering and growing. Again, lawmakers and school systems are encouraged to fully fund physical education programs in our public schools.

### **A Community of Engaged and Caring Citizens...**

We recommend that all units of local government in Northwest Indiana commit themselves to a broad range of public engagement strategies that collectively hold promise both to restore the public's confidence in the public sector and to expand its capacity to serve.

- We remain somewhat skeptical of calls for government consolidation across a broad range of jurisdictions or services. Consolidation can be helpful if it contributes to reduced costs or improved service. A great deal can be accomplished, however, with inter-local agreements of various kinds and other forms of collaboration. Tax base sharing, for instance, has been suggested in the context of economic development.

We recognize that units of government that tax and spend at levels far in excess of the median for their respective counterparts in the region will have to reduce and control their costs to a much greater extent if improved cooperation and, indeed, the consolidation of some services are to be pursued. At the same time, we should keep in mind that units of government that serve the urban core have different cost structures than do units of government that serve suburban and rural populations.

- Greater transparency in local government will be required if the public's confidence is to be restored. We recommended that all units of local government that have yet to do so create web pages. Further, budgets should be posted to these web sites together with background information that can aid citizens in conducting various kinds of analyses.

- All units of local government should develop and adopt robust ethics guidelines. At a minimum, these ordinances or administrative policies should prohibit nepotism, proscribe the solicitation of political contributions from employees, restrict the provision of contractor gratuities, and provide for the appointment of ethics officers at the unit or departmental levels of government.

We recognize that ethics ordinances and administrative policies may do little to deter public officials who are intent on defrauding the public. However, this issue has much more to do with public confidence in local government than it does fraud per se. We encourage the newly-established Local Government Academy to serve as a resource to public entities that choose to pursue this recommendation. Further, we encourage all candidates for public office to adopt this recommendation as a key theme in their election campaigns.

- Innovative approaches are needed to supplement traditional kinds of public input processes, most notably the public hearing. Few citizens now attend public hearings and most tend not to take notice until they are personally affected. We recommend that other methods be employed as well, including interactive web sites, surveys, and focus groups. Again, the Local Government Academy may be able to make a contribution in this regard.
- We encourage elected officials at the state and local levels of government to recognize that local and county-level units of government no longer represent the best vehicle for addressing some kinds of public challenges, most notably, economic development, the environment, and transportation. Local efforts across these three broad fronts need to be supplemented by a financially independent regional governance structure. We believe that a Council of Governments is required for this purpose. We encourage all public officials to support the evolution of the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission into a true Council of Governments.
- We encourage the state to reorganize the various regional planning entities that now play such an important role in the governance of the region in a geographically consistent fashion. Collaboration is hampered and, at times, crippled by the overlapping jurisdictions that now characterize these various planning bodies. Further, based on their shared interests, we believe that Lake, Porter, and LaPorte Counties should constitute a coherent region for most purposes.
- In the preceding pages, several priorities are identified that could benefit from philanthropy. They include: (1) programs that focus on teenage pregnancy; (2) programs that provide social support to single parents; (3) environmental education; (4) early childhood development; (5) programs that support and encourage the development of healthy families; (6) initiatives designed to help students develop skills in mathematics and the language arts; (7) substance abuse prevention and treatment programs; (8) programs that promise to reduce the incidence of child abuse and neglect; (9) initiatives that promote the construction of affordable housing; and (10) arts education for children and adolescents. We recommend these various programs as priorities for giving in Northwest Indiana.