

## **Vision: Where do we want to be?**

The section titled, Vision: Where do we want to be? defines the goals and objectives of the communities within the region. This section focuses on the strategies in place to accomplish these goals and objectives and the threats the region faces in accomplishing these strategies. This section also identifies, prioritizes, and scores each community's future projects.

It is realized that there are numerous obstacles the region must face in order to accomplish these goals. The biggest obstacle the communities in the region face is the lack of available funding. The slowed economy compiled with federal and state budget cuts has left many projects and program's futures uncertain.

### **Economic and Socioeconomic**

**Goal: Promote the development of an economy that enhances the success of existing businesses and that creates and sustains jobs in order to maintain a quality standard of living.**

#### **Strategies:**

- Work with each county's Local Economic Development Directors to develop and market existing and potential industrial sites.
- Keep the lines of communication open with existing industry in order to facilitate in any expansion or development needs.
- Continue to facilitate local industry movements to make regional markets more competitive in the global market.
- Assist local industry and business in finding new ways to diversify from markets that are dwindling.
- Continue to map existing brownfield sites within the region that have the potential for clean-up and re-use.
- Continue to identify funding sources available for the assessment, clean-up and redevelopment of brownfields.
- Meet on a regular basis with local, state, and federal officials to discuss brownfield issues and concerns.
- Encourage state agencies to provide helpful information about a specific site without a threat of regulatory action.
- Continue the development of projects that provide the infrastructure for the growth and development of business and industry.
- Support programs like the Revolving Loan Fund and the Intermediary Relending Program that facilitate the growth of existing business and industry.
- Work together with Indiana Economic Development Council to secure funding for economic development.
- Encourage the state and local government to increase funding for tourism.

### **Threats:**

- Lack of funding available to keep existing Economic Development Corporations functioning.
- Rural businesses cannot meet the commitment requirements that allow communities to develop a industrial site or needed infrastructure.
- The continued decline of the manufacturing industry, especially the wood manufacturing industry.
- Increase environmental restrictions forcing industries to relocate to countries with less stringent policies and that pay their workers less than half of what American workers earn.
- The continued fear of liability on brownfield sites.
- Lack of knowledge of brownfield redevelopment among local leaders.
- Lack of continuity among regional boundaries across the state.
- Lack of industrial sites suitable for development.
- The lack of funding available for site preparation.
- Lack of financial resources available to private industry and local businesses.
- Lack of substantial funding for the establishment of a regional/county wide revolving loan fund.

## **Infrastructure**

**Goal: Ensure that all residents and businesses of the district have adequate access to affordable water, efficient wastewater treatment, and telecommunication infrastructure.**

### **Strategies:**

- Identify and map the existing water and wastewater infrastructure within the region.
- Identify the areas in the region that lack safe clean potable water.
- Identify the areas in the region that do not have access to safe, clean, and affordable wastewater treatment systems.
- Develop projects and continue to seek funding for projects that would extend water lines to the undeserved rural areas within the district.
- Develop projects and continue to seek funding for projects that would extend existing wastewater infrastructure and improve wastewater facilities.
- Continue to educate the federal and state governments for the substantial need for programs that fund water and wastewater infrastructure projects.
- Educate all the residents of the region, about the new affordable wastewater treatment alternatives.
- Facilitate discussions on the feasibility combining water and wastewater systems throughout the region.
- Continue to bring together local residents and elected officials to educate them on the region's need for telecommunications infrastructure in hopes it will be provided in rural areas.
- Encourage communities to look for regional solutions to meet telecommunication needs.
- Support and seek funding for projects that expand telecommunication infrastructure.

### **Threats:**

- Funding for water and sewer infrastructure projects continues to decline annually.
- Lack of local funding available for local governments to use as a match for infrastructure projects.
- Lack of programs that allow the establishment of a revolving loan fund to aid in matching fund for infrastructure projects.
- Small rural communities cannot afford the "readiness to proceed" requirements by state and federal grant agencies without assurance grants will be funded at a future date.
- Residents do not understand the need for safe, clean, potable water and wastewater treatment systems. They are more concerned with water and sewer rates.
- Lack of education on wastewater treatment alternatives.
- Hilly terrain that makes some current forms of telecommunication infrastructure unavailable to portions of the district.
- Lack of education on what opportunities telecommunication infrastructure can bring to the district.

## **Natural and Historic Resources and Physical Environment**

**Goal: To promote a balanced utilization of the region's natural, historic, and physical resources to preserve and protect the environment while maximizing their economic potential.**

### **Strategies:**

- Develop conservation and preservation programs that decrease groundwater contamination and reduce pollution to the region's river and streams.
- Flood Plain Mapping.
- Identify and map areas within the region where abundant mineral resources are located, such as coal, oil, and timber.
- Develop and support projects and programs that protect the region's coal, oil, and timber resources.
- Educate the federal and state governments on the need for the environmental and recreational funding programs that are needed in the region.
- Educate the general public on the clean-up programs across the region.
- Educate the general public on ways to reduce the region's airborne particulate matter count.

### **Threats:**

- Lack of local matching funds for Flood Map Modernization Project
- Lack of funding for general clean-up programs.
- Lack of airborne particulate matter monitors.

# Transportation

**Goal: Promote the effective flow of people and materials within the district.**

## **Strategies:**

- Facilitate discussions with local governments to identify transportation expansion and development needs.
- Convey the identified regional needs to the Indiana Department of Transportation.
- Continue conducting traffic count data collections to determine local needs.
- Continue the progression of the region-wide geographic information system (GIS) to make better planning discussions with the data.
- Support and seek funding for Transportation Enhancement projects.
- Identify and improve railroad safety and crossings throughout the region.

## **Threats:**

- Local and state funding availability.
- Communication with railroad providers out of the state.