

## Strategic Plan

July 17, 2018

## Table of Contents

### [Executive Summary](#)

[About this Strategic Plan](#)

[A New Structure for the MPO](#)

[Grow an Independent MPO](#)

[Consider Formalizing the Organization as a Regional Convener](#)

[Model 1: All-In-One Board: Strong Commission](#)

[Model 2. All-In-One Board: Strong Executive Board](#)

[Model 3. Strong Executive Committee](#)

[Conclusion](#)

[Phase I: 2019-2020 Become an Independent MPO](#)

[Phase II: 2020-2021 Grow the Independent MPO](#)

[Phase III: 2021 and beyond Formalize the Organization as a Regional Convener](#)

### [Chapter 1: Headwinds or Smooth Sailing?](#)

[Putting the Central Indiana Regional Strategic Plan in Context](#)

### [Chapter 2: About this Process](#)

[Benchmarking and Site Visits](#)

[Existing Plan Review](#)

[Stakeholder Engagement](#)

### [Chapter 3: Facilitating the Future, A Call to Action](#)

[Transportation Planning in Central Indiana](#)

[Incorporate a Regional Vision for Freight Planning](#)

[Performance Measures and Target Setting](#)

[Equity and Environmental Justice](#)

[Land Use and Housing in the Central Indiana Region](#)

[Create a Regional Land Use & Housing Think Tank](#)

[Develop a Regional Vision and Playbook for Land Use and Housing Typologies](#)

[Provide Technical Assistance on Common Land Use and Housing Issues](#)

[Water Resources in the Central Indiana Region](#)

[Convene Water-related Organizations to Develop a Platform for Collaboration](#)

[Economic Development in the Central Indiana Region](#)

[Develop a Regional Economic Competitiveness Strategy](#)

[Serve as a Convener and Think Tank on Economic Development & Disruptions](#)

[Develop a Data Warehouse and Dashboard](#)

### [Chapter 4: Structure and Timeline](#)

[Phase I: 2019-2020 Become an Independent MPO](#)



[Phase II: 2020-2021 Grow the Independent MPO](#)

[Phase III: 2021 and beyond Formalize the Organization as a Regional Convener](#)

[Regional Planning Commission](#)

[Economic Development District](#)

[Regional Development Authority](#)

[Regional Transit Authority](#)

[Appendix and Methodology](#)

[Models of Regionalism](#)

[Peer Organizations and Precedents](#)

[Atlanta](#)

[Denver](#)

[Panel Methodology](#)

# Executive Summary

## About this Strategic Plan

During the fall of 2017, the Indianapolis MPO engaged Fourth Economy Consulting, Greenstreet, and Nelson\Nygaard, to help determine the appropriate role and scope for the organization in the future through a strategic planning process. The resulting process has engaged over 200 community stakeholders to discuss regional needs and the possible role that the MPO can serve in the future. These individuals provided insights into the opportunities and challenges throughout the region within the context of how the region has evolved.

Like many regions in the 1960s, Central Indiana's local manufacturing base was in decline and Indianapolis was struggling with rapid depopulation as residents moved to newer suburban areas just beyond city limits. Unigov was proposed as a solution, a way for Indianapolis to keep its suburbanizing population and tax base, while capitalizing on the efficiencies of consolidated public services. **The 1970 passage of Unigov made Central Indiana a national leader** in regional consolidation, virtually eliminating the problem of fragmented, duplicative local government. By stabilizing the city's tax base, local leaders were able to reinvest in downtown, execute the famous amateur sports strategy, and maintain a viable municipal budget.

During this time, places around the country that did not consolidate had to create functional working relationships between their many jurisdictions, and new federal housing, transportation, and environmental funding was often mandated regional coordination. Some states - including Indiana - passed regional planning enabling acts to create regional planning commissions, and many others formed Councils of Government (COGs) for their major metro areas. These organizations were generally a forum for collaboration and decision making, but they lacked the funding, lawmaking, and enforcement powers that would have been required to create a new level of government between state and local. This was the era that produced the Highway Trust Fund and its mandate for metropolitan planning organizations, which was **the origin of the Indy MPO** and MPOs for every region in the country larger than 50,000 people.

Most of northern Marion County was built out by the late 1990s, and the next, larger wave of suburban construction took place almost entirely outside of Marion County - in Hamilton and Boone Counties to the north, Hendricks County to the west, and Johnson County to the south. After Unigov was adopted in 1970, about 71% of the region's residents lived in Marion County. In 2017, that number is down to 48%, and Indianapolis-Marion County is just one of 39 local units of government within the MPO's planning area. Unigov has had its successes, but **50 years of outward growth has brought the need for interlocal cooperation full circle.**

There was a stark divide in how regions addressed regionalism in the 1990s and 2000s, and some regions (like Indianapolis) never really made the leap from the era of Unigov. Meanwhile, Indy's peers were recognizing the region (rather than the jurisdiction) as the basic building block of the national economy and starting to take a more multidimensional and comprehensive approach to planning that integrated related topical areas such as land use, transportation, open space, and air quality. **Benchmark communities across the country are**

**recognizing the value of the regional perspective**, addressing the same set of issues, and creating platforms to address regional problems.

Today, most of the big challenges facing regions **cannot be solved by one local jurisdiction acting alone**. Water planning, transportation, air quality, and housing are regional issues, not local ones confined to just one jurisdiction. Furthermore, these **topics are so interconnected** that you can't speak to leaders in one field without mentioning at least one other. Just because state and federal statutes require certain agencies or bodies to perform certain tasks, why do they have to be separate? In order to utilize resources as efficiently as possible, and to get a complete picture of the forces impacting the region, our institutions will have to consider these interrelated issues at the same time, across a broader geography than is any single jurisdiction's responsibility.

Through this process stakeholders from various sectors and representing communities throughout the region have expressed that the MPO is the one organization that has demonstrated an ability to plan at the regional scale and manage programs in a trust building transparent process. Stakeholders have endorsed that the time is right for the MPO to advance its role in the region at a time when the region's challenges may be poised to slow economic progress if more regional planning is not addressed.

In order to ensure that the Indy MPO is serving the region in a way that is truly regional in nature and is able to respond to regional planning needs, this plan proposed a three-step approach to growing the organization:

1. **Create an Independent MPO** - The first step in better serving the region is to become independent from the City of Indianapolis. The planning, financial, and logistical tasks associated with this will occur from 2019 - 2020.
2. **Grow an Independent MPO** - Once the MPO is independent, the focus can shift to expanding roles to support a broader range of planning-related functions. Though this work will grow and evolve over time, initial steps to build capacity and establish these functions will take place from 2020 - 2021.
3. **Consider Formalizing as a Regional Convener** - Though the MPO can support most of the recommendations identified through this process, some would be enhanced by embracing a different organizational structure. These options will be considered beginning in 2021.

## A New Structure for the MPO

Currently, the MPO is housed within the City of Indianapolis. This is a relic of the merger between the City of Indianapolis and Marion County, which made sense at the time; however, Marion County only makes up about half of the region today and it **no longer makes sense for the regional organization to be housed by the largest city**.

Some implications of this relationship include: the Metropolitan Development Commission currently approves MPO contracts, the MPO's budget is approved as part of the City budget, and the hosting arrangement requires Marion County residency for MPO staff. This relationship results in potentially politically challenging situations, as well as the potential for a negative perception of City influence on the MPO. Though that has not been the case, the perception alone hampers the MPO's ability to be an effective regional organization. Though the MPO

would lose some cost-efficiencies, **becoming an independent organization will make the MPO more operationally efficient, more nimble, and better positioned to meet the needs of our growing region.**

The chart provided here summarizes the analysis that operational analysis that has been conducted and highlights the pros and cons of the current hosting agreement.



Prepared by S. Northup & A. Gremling  
Indianapolis MPO  
April 26, 2018

# MPO-Indianapolis Hosting Agreement

## Pros

- + City provides approximately **\$2M capital float each year.**
- + The hosted arrangement allows for **low overhead**, which keeps operating costs low as planning funds remain flat.
- + **Legal, HR, and financial services are included** in very low hosting fee (currently \$35,000/year).
- + Relatively **low rent** (doesn't include parking).
- + City contracts (like IT and printing) allow for more **affordable services.**
- + **Access to other City services** like procurement, trainings, staffing services, and internal audit.
- + City employees are eligible for the **Public Employee Retirement Fund** (though an independent agency could become PERF-eligible, as CIRT is).
- + The Metropolitan Development Commission meets bi-weekly, enabling **quick, regular contract approval.**

## Cons

- **Legal, HR, and Financial Services** would need to either be hired or contracted, which would certainly cost more than the MPO pays today.
- **Limited control of salaries and other staffing decisions.** The City has denied salary increases numerous times, including once very recently, which has resulted in attrition and difficulty attracting strong candidates.
- **Lack of attention** from dedicated City staff.
- MDC approval of contracts and City PO approval **could easily become politicized.**
- Many **City enterprise contracts offer inconsistent service quality**, and the MPO has no recourse (expensive/slow tech support, infrequent hardware updates, poor internet access, limited software options, poor printing services).
- Hosting arrangement subjects MPO to many **potentially objectional policies** (Marion County residency requirements, IT contract oversight, onerous vendor insurance requirements, no work from home policies, time-consuming / redundant policies, slow adoption of digital and new technology solutions).
- **Budget approval** as part of the City. Very difficult and time consuming (months, or quarters) to amend the budget.
- **Slow processing** of contracts for signature, routing of purchase orders.
- The potential for **negative perception of City influence over MPO business**, which can hurt both the MPO and the City of Indianapolis.

Additionally the MPO worked with the consulting firm KSM to assist with estimating the cost implications of becoming an independent MPO. While additional analysis, including service quotes, will be required, the analysis resulted in the following additional cost estimates to support an independent MPO .

- \$400,000 Increase in Operating Spend
- \$190,000 Increase in Capital Spend
- Assuming no new revenue sources. The MPO should explore the potential to reclaim additional planning dollars
- MPO contract spending would reduce to offset increased operating costs
- More MPO operational tasks would move in-house

**The MPO senior leadership has been working with the Admin Committee since late 2017 to review, refine and validate the recommendation that the MPO become an independent organization with a non-profit tax status.** This recommendation is also supported by the MPO's federal authorizing agency, the Federal Highway Administration.

This action can begin with an affirmative vote of the IRTC in mid-2018, which will allow the MPO to begin to take the necessary organizational formation actions and further refine the cost estimates.

## Grow an Independent MPO

At the start of the strategic planning process, the MPO sought to answer four key questions that community stakeholders posed:

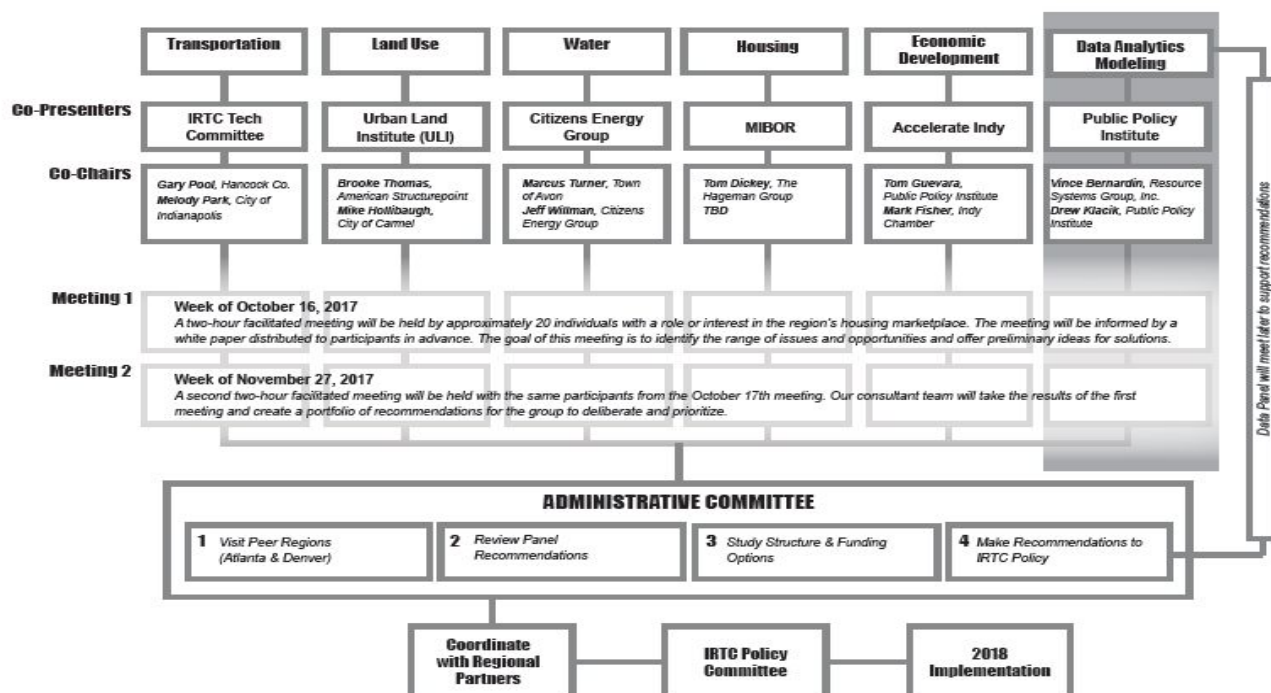
- Does Central Indiana have the planning infrastructure to support long-term economic prosperity and population growth?
- Are we doing enough to identify the opportunities and threats to our region?
- How does the region balance growth and quality of life?
- Can we build on the regional planning experience of the MPO to better manage relationship between transportation, housing, land-use and economic development?

Early conversations in the planning process directed the MPO team to focus on six areas of exploration:

- Enhanced Transportation planning
- Land Use Utilization
- Water Resource Management
- Housing
- Economic Development
- Data Analytics and Modeling

These areas of exploration were used to engage over 200 stakeholders to assess the existing planning efforts, and better understand the gaps that exist and opportunities to do better. The image below maps the stakeholder engagement process.

## Indianapolis MPO Strategic Plan



What became readily clear was the interest and enthusiasm that stakeholders demonstrated in having the conversations and contemplating how the region could be stronger in the future. What was also clear was the regional reputation of the MPO and interest in exploring how it can serve these broader planning-related needs.

The MPO is already a high-functioning regional body that engages all of the region's cities, towns, and counties more than a dozen times a year; the MPO's 15 professional staff are dedicated to understanding Central Indiana's 1500 square miles and thinking about how all of the interconnected pieces come together. This existing capacity is a resource that can provide the foundational basis for advancing new roles.

Based on the stakeholder engagement process, the following new roles and scope for the MPO are being advanced for consideration and refinement in what we are calling a mid-term time period (2020-2021). While some preparatory work can begin in 2019, implementation will follow in 2020 and beyond.

Four primary future roles for the MPO have been identified:

- **Convene** - The MPO can regularly bring together regional partners to discuss issues in their fields, to analyze data trends, better understand the root cause of issues, and to identify collaborative solutions to move Central Indiana forward. While incentives to participate would certainly strengthen the MPO's position as convener (e.g. ability to offer funding), the MPO would be convening stakeholders in a purely voluntary manner and not be taking on any new regulatory or governing functions.
- **Inform** - Set benchmarks and track data trends. This "observe and report" role will support planning and decision-making, and will include hosting speakers and providing public education support.



- **Plan** - Use professional planning staff to document expert discussions, formalize strategies, and track implementation strategies.
- **Fund** - Identify federal, state, and other third-party funding opportunity for regionally significant projects.

These roles will be applied across four disciplines:

- **Transportation** - In addition to strengthening the MPO's current role, an expanded role will include adopting and tracking targets for performance measures, supporting a regional vision for freight, and enhancing the project selection process and tools to address equity. Each of these activities will be performed in consultation with key partners.
- **Economic Development** - The area of economic development is one where there is already regional capacity, but it is focussed on the transactional side of economic development and not the mid- to long-term planning side. The recommendation that the MPO consider an economic development role was made by the Indy Chamber and Accelerate Indy as they recognize the need for a planning partner and one that integrates with the transportation infrastructure to support economic development.

Working with regional partners, the MPO will support the creation and implementation of a regional comprehensive economic development strategy. This process can facilitate the application for Economic Development District status by the MPO or Regional Development Authority. This role will not involve the MPO taking on any direct business-focused administrative role, such as a Local Economic Development Organization (LEDO) or the Indy Partnership; rather the MPO will collaborate with those entities through active engagement and planning.

- **Land Use and Housing** - In addition to continuing work on transit oriented development, the MPO can expand its capacity to convene stakeholders, provide data and analysis, and provide technical assistance around land use and housing. This role will not include any form of top-down land use policy development; rather, this process has highlighted the strong desire for local autonomy combined with a recognition that an opportunity exists to provide backbone support for communities working to address similar challenges and opportunities at both the multi-municipal and regional scale.
- **Water** - In addition to continuing to participate in the Drinking Water Collaborative, the MPO can support additional convening to establish regional goals around water supply and quality, provide government relations capacity, and support data and analysis. Water resource management is a complex issue that can impact economic potential and quality of life. The MPO's role will be to convene appropriate stakeholders and provide analysis to identify specific issues and opportunities, and support those stakeholders in developing policies or programs. When asked by regional water partners the MPO may utilize government relations capacity to advocate for regional priorities.

A focus on these activities and the corresponding MPO roles can begin in what is considered a mid-term phase. This phase can commence following the successful process of the MPO becoming an independent organization and the establishment of all business processes. As currently defined, this mid-term period can commence in 2020 and advance through 2021 and beyond.

These activities, as defined, are all voluntary on the part of the MPO and those stakeholders that accept the offer to convene. Since the original stakeholder convening conducted during the strategic planning process, many of the participants have expressed interest in continuing the process.

## Consider Formalizing the Organization as a Regional Convener

As an independent organization, the MPO will be able to take on many of the proposed expanded roles and scope as described in the previous section. However, other organizational structures will better enable the MPO to act as a true regional convener and support a full range of roles. As part of the strategic plan process, the MPO leadership team and members of the Administrative Committee visited Atlanta (Atlanta Regional Commission) and Denver (Denver Regional Council of Governments) to better understand how their regional MPO provides additional capacity. In both cases, the MPO is housed under a larger structure that allows them to work on and coordinate with additional regional activities including water, housing, land use and economic development.

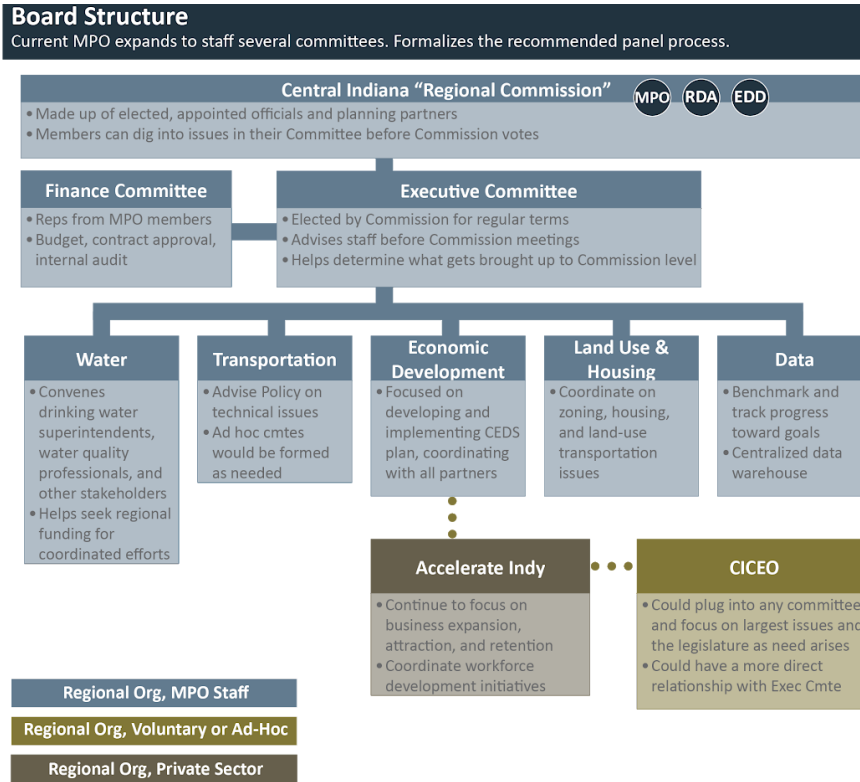
The MPO leadership team and consultants explored what potential models could exist in Central Indiana to allow for continued expansion of their regional role and a formalized recognition of these increased responsibilities.

In total, nine different models of an organizational structure were analyzed. Included here are the three model structures that provide the most positive benefits and limit negative consequences. The additional model structures are included in the full strategic plan. These models are presented for further analysis and eventual deliberation by the Indianapolis Regional Transportation Council. .

The current consideration is that some form of formalization of the MPO as a regional convener would not occur prior to 2021. It will be important to consider future forms as the MPO grows into other subject matter areas and needs for regional capacity are identified. Structure conversations and changes will be brought before the Indianapolis Regional Transportation Council. Any and all changes should consider and coordinate with regional initiatives like Central Indiana Council of Elected Officials, etc.

## Model 1: All-In-One Board: Strong Commission

*Similar to the Atlanta Regional Commission: Central Indiana establishes a regional board with current MPO staff supporting the additional efforts. In this model, the Commission holds all final decision-making authority. The Admin and Finance Committees could be combined if desired.*

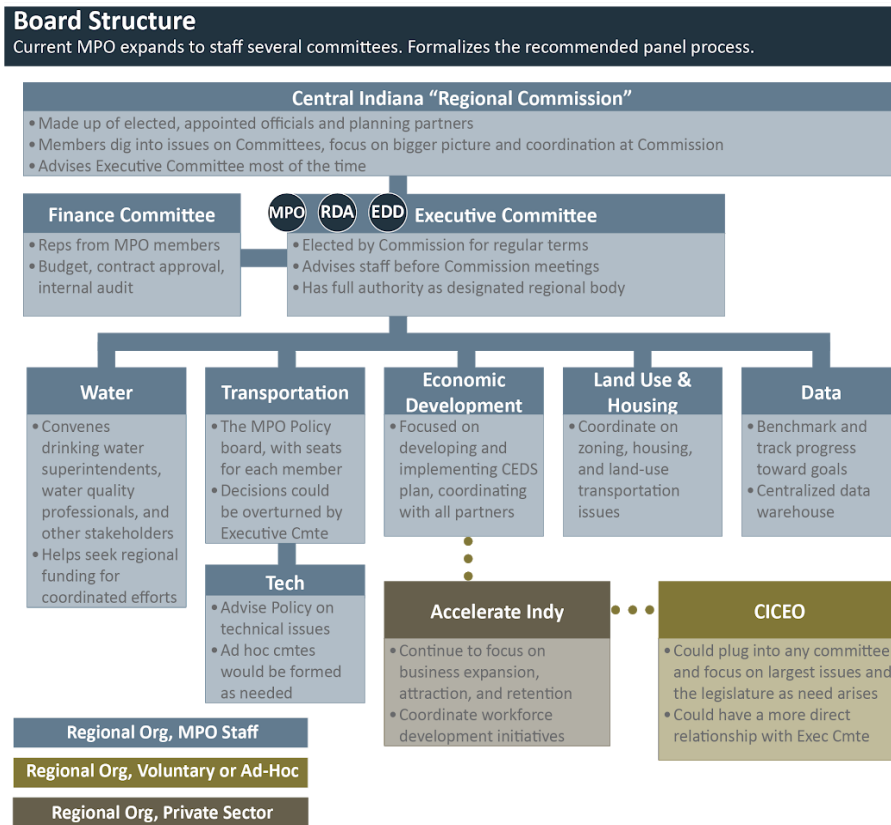


Prepared by S. Northup & A. Gremling | Indianapolis MPO | DRAFT June 7, 2018

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More engagement of members through Commission and Committees, could help break down silos</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many more meetings for members, though more local staff may become engaged in regional collaboration</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Current IN statute allows this basic structure as a Regional Planning Council (RPC)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Though the RPC statute could handle this structure, local leaders may want to consider amending some RDA powers as it may be a more manageable structure</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This is a phased approach to expansion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It would take time and funding to expand staff appropriately</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shared regional staff drives efficiencies and acts as effective go-between for various topics</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Easy to add or remove funding sources, designations, and topic areas as necessary</li> </ul>	

## Model 2. All-In-One Board: Strong Executive Board

*Similar to the Nashville Regional Council: Central Indiana establishes a regional board that all other regional boards can coordinate with. Current MPO staff becomes regional staff for all efforts. In this version, the Executive Board holds final authority.*

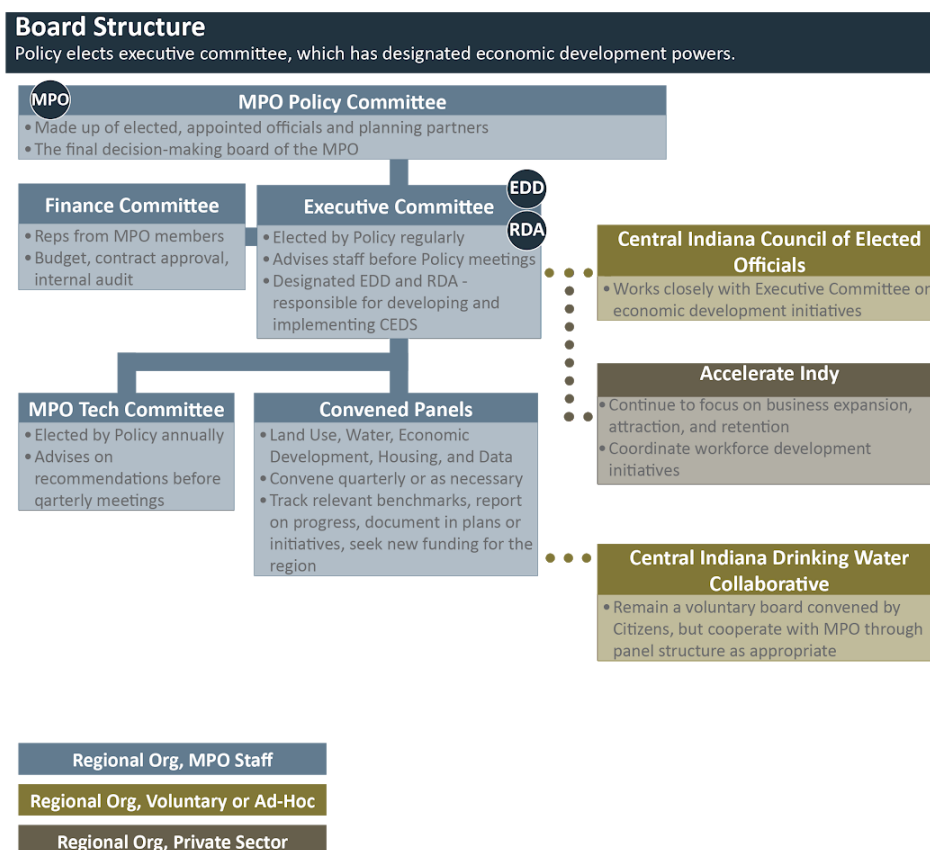


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Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can act more quickly and nimbly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why have the Commission level? Would serve more as an 'ambassador' organization</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develops expertise in regional issues at Executive Committee level</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lots of power consolidated with one smaller board</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More engagement of members through Commission and Committees, could help break down silos</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lots of meetings for Executive committee members</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shared regional staff drives efficiencies and acts as effective go-between for various topics</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Easy to add or remove funding sources, designations, and topic areas as necessary</li> </ul>	

## Model 3. Strong Executive Committee

*In addition to their advisory role to MPO staff on regional transportation issues, Executive Committee gets state and federal economic development authority.*



Prepared by S. Northup & A. Gremling | Indianapolis MPO | DRAFT June 7, 2018

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Foster transportation and economic development expertise on the Executive Committee</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Major pressure on the Executive Committee to execute for both transportation and economic development</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transportation and economic development are considered by the same members, but boards with separate authorities are able to dive deeper as necessary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creates dynamic between CICEO and Executive Committee on issues related to economic development.</li> </ul>

## Conclusion

The MPO strategic planning process has identified three potential phases of activity that should occur to strengthen the organization and the role that it serves in the community.

### Phase I: 2019-2020 Become an Independent MPO

This phase is focused on the MPO securing the resources needed (internally and externally) to be a stand alone organization. Focus will be on continuing to move MPO initiatives forward, while the organization moves to a new business model.

#### **Business Process**

- Form a 'transition team' to advise on business policies (HR, procurement, financial system, IT, bylaws, etc.)
- Begin independent designation of MPO Policy Board with State and Governor's Office establishing specific separation date (likely in 2020)
- Determine structure, staffing, and funding plans
- Implement new internal internal policies (standard operating procedures, etc)

#### **Transportation**

- Retain and continue to pursue talented staff
- Improve and expand data collection per Data Analytics and Modeling Plan
- Builds scenario planning tools
- Update multimodal plans (ped, bike, regional transit)

#### **Land Use & Housing**

- Continue land use panel's focus on transit oriented development and scenario planning as it relates to transportation planning

#### **Economic Development**

- Work with regional partners to scope, secure public and private funds for an updated CEDs plan

#### **Water**

- MPO Leadership team will continue to attend Drinking Water Collaborative meetings

### Phase II: 2020-2021 Grow the Independent MPO

After the MPO has completed the transition from a hosted organization to an independent organization, it can begin to build upon the foundational tasks. The recommendations in phase II should be reviewed with members and regional partners to make sure needs haven't changed since creation.

#### **Business Process**

- Study branding for new regional organization
- Expand staff capacity for convening, facilitation and human centered design

- Establish data warehouse and launch open data portal

#### ***Transportation***

- Continue tracking performance measures and begin reporting
- Review and implement analysis tools for project selection
- Expand Conexus partnership and update regional vision

#### ***Land Use & Housing***

- Continue land use panel's focus on transit oriented development and scenario planning as it relates to the Long Range Transportation Plan
- Study activity center and corridor analysis program alternatives

#### ***Economic Development***

- Begin CEDS update (hold contract, convene partners)
- Begin designation as a federally-recognized Economic Development District

#### ***Water***

- Convene water-related organizations to define shared goals and opportunities for collaboration
- Utilize government relations capacity to assist regional water partners

### **Phase III: 2021 and beyond Formalize the Organization as a Regional Convener**

This phase requires further consideration and regional deliberation on form and function. These activities are what has been contemplated at this time.

#### ***Business Process***

- Establish new board structure, bylaws
- Expand staff to take on additional roles and produce more in-house

#### ***Transportation***

- Re-evaluate traffic counting program
- Utilize new data sources for advanced scenario planning techniques
- Adopt 2025 Long Range Transportation Plan

#### ***Land Use & Housing***

- Establish land use and housing committee
- Provide technical assistance to membership
- Establish metrics and track relevant data
- Document progress and update plans

#### ***Economic Development***

- Establish economic development committee
- Establish metrics and track relevant data
- Document progress and update plans

- Manage EDA sustaining funding stream

**Water**

- Establish regional water committee, focussed on both supply and quality
- Establish metrics and track relevant data
- Document progress and update plans



## Chapter 1: Headwinds or Smooth Sailing?

One thing is certain in communities - there is no such thing as status quo. Regional economies and demographics are in constant motion and often interact to either foster strength and prosperity or at times the opposite. The Indianapolis region has benefited in recent years from both a strong economy and positive demographic trends. Recent work by the IU Public Policy Institute (IU PPI) noted the recognition that has been bestowed on the region:

- Kiplinger – Top 10 place to start a business
- Livability – 3rd best downtown
- Forbes – top 10 places for young professionals and high tech job growth
- Money Magazine – Fishers best place to live in the US, Carmel #16, Avon #17, Greenwood #22
- Wall Street 24/7 – Hamilton county 13th best county to live in

The question was the posed, 'will this success last'?

In order to predict the answer, the IU PPI team analyzed data from peers including cities that are recognized as finalists for the Amazon HQ2 bid. The results demonstrate that economics and demographics may be pointing to a retraction from continued success.

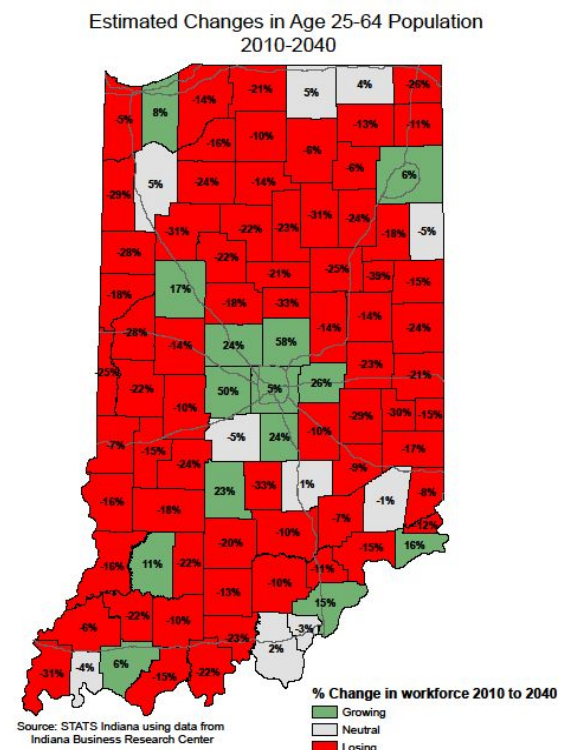
In terms of population change, the MSA is doing well in the Midwest but slower than the US. In terms of benchmarks they note the following 2011 – 2016 Population Change :

- Austin 15.5%
- Raleigh 12.0%
- Nashville 9.8%
- Denver 9.7%
- Columbus 6.0%
- Indianapolis 4.9%
- Milwaukee 1.6%
- Pittsburgh -0.7%

Concerns with these stats include a low and declining birth rate in Indiana and an over independence on attraction of residents from IL, OH and MI that is likely not sustainable.

Further analysis conducted by IU PPI shows that overall job growth is not a major cause for concern, as demonstrated in the following percentages and MSA ranking in 2016.

- Nashville MSA 4.0%, 6th
- Austin MSA 3.8%, 7rd
- Raleigh MSA 3.7%, 10th
- Denver MSA 2.6%, 37th
- Indy MSA 2.5%, 40th
- Columbus MSA 2.5%, 44th
- Milwaukee MSA 0.8%, 87th
- Pittsburgh MSA 0.1%, 95th



But, based on the change in job growth shown below, they note that wages are low and growth is slow, with only Nashville lower; however, Nashville's wages are growing twice as fast.

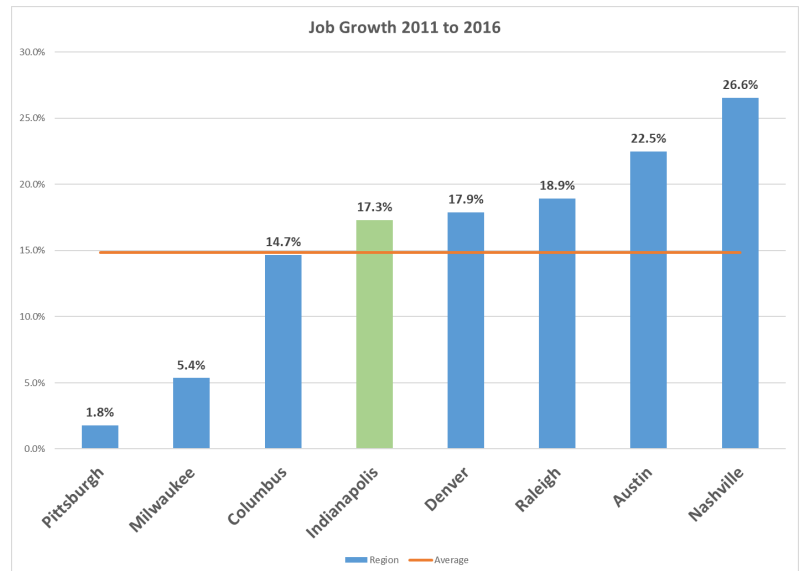
#### 2006 to 2016 change in median wage and rankings

- Raleigh MSA 13.0%, 4th
- Pittsburgh MSA 12.0%, 7th
- Columbus MSA 8.6%, 34th
- Denver MSA 8.0%, 36th
- Nashville MSA 7.7%, 40th
- Austin MSA 7.3%, 43rd
- Milwaukee MSA 4.6%, 75th
- Indy MSA 3.6%, 85th

In addition, their analysis shows that poverty is growing fast in the 2011-2016 period.

#### Change in Poverty Rate, 2011 - 2016

- Denver MSA -19.1%
- Austin MSA -17.4%
- Pittsburgh MSA -14.9%
- Nashville MSA -8.6%
- Raleigh MSA -8.6%
- Columbus MSA 0.9%
- Milwaukee MSA 3.4%
- Indianapolis MSA 6.3%



This analysis tells us that the strength of the Indianapolis region may be fading without an intervention. The economic and demographic headwinds are beginning to create issues throughout the region. The data presented here is just a small sample of other analysis that is being or can be conducted. What to do in order to change course and continue to foster success will require a thoughtful set of planned actions. The MPO strategic planning process has sought to begin to define the framework for such actions and make recommendations for possible role(s) that the MPO may serve.

## Putting the Central Indiana Regional Strategic Plan in Context

*"To think intelligently of the future is to think regionally."*  
John Gardner

As the Indianapolis Metropolitan Planning Organization (identified below as the *Indy MPO*, or just the *MPO*) and its partners progress through this strategic plan to engender broader regional coordination, it's important to keep the discussion in context. Regional planning is not a new concept, and the issues associated with getting local governments to work together are not new, or unique, to Central Indiana.

The 1970 passage of Unigov virtually eliminated the problem of fragmented, duplicative local government, making Central Indiana a national leader in regional consolidation. After Unigov was adopted in 1970, about 71% of the region's residents lived in Marion County. In 2017, that number is down to 48%, and Indianapolis-Marion County is just one of 39 local units of government within the MPO's planning area. Unigov has had its successes, but 50 years of outward growth has brought the need for interlocal cooperation full circle and our region needs a better model for regional planning.

**1. We're residents of a region.** A resident in Carmel may work in northern Indianapolis and shop in Carmel. And on the weekends, they may watch sports at Lucas Oil Stadium and watch their kids play soccer at Grand Park in Westfield.

**2. Challenges cross silos and jurisdictions.** . Today, most of the big challenges we are dealing with are regional and cannot be solved by one local jurisdiction acting alone.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, they are interrelated. Land use and transportation, housing and economic development, impaired streams and shovel-ready sites... these issues are so interconnected that you can't speak to leaders in one field without mentioning at least one other. Just because state and federal statutes require certain agencies or bodies to perform certain tasks, why do they have to be separate? In order to utilize resources as efficiently as possible, and to get a complete picture of the forces impacting the region, our institutions will have to consider these interrelated issues at the same time, across a broader geography than is any single jurisdiction's responsibility.

**3. There is value in setting - and tracking progress toward - a regional vision.** In order to solve those complex, cross-border challenges, we need a shared vision to answer the question, "What do we want to create?" Leadership for creating a shared vision—one that will capture the collective mind and will - begins with creative tension. Creative tension emerges from seeing clearly where we want to be (the vision) and describing truthfully where we are now (the current reality). The gap between the two generates creative tension. It is that space, which this planning process has occupied, and which the MPO can continue to advance through a new model of regional planning.

There was a stark divide in how regions addressed regionalism in the 1990s and 2000s, and some regions, like Indianapolis, never really made the leap from the era of Unigov to modern forms of regional collaboration. The concept of Megaregions emerged in more modern eras, and economic development theory began to recognize the region (rather than the jurisdiction) as the basic building block of the national economy. Indianapolis's benchmark communities are recognizing the value of a regional perspective, addressing the same set of issues, and creating structures to address regional problems.

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<sup>1</sup> Katy Sorenson, Miami-Dade Board of County Commissioners, in Hudnut *Changing Metropolitan America* p 42

To do so, communities have adopted a spectrum of approaches that range from “complete local autonomy” to “complete regional control.” While Central Indiana certainly leans heavily toward local autonomy (at least as much as Indiana Code allows), it is particularly important to be clear about what roles and responsibilities will be left with current seats of power at the state, county, and local levels.

Our aim is to clearly identify things that should be tracked, considered, and planned for at the regional level, to explore the fields that MPO members are asking us to help address, and to ensure that the structure of our regional planning is optimized for the vision our communities want to achieve. This has not included issues like local control of land use decisions, direct economic development efforts, council on aging services, or transit operations. The Drinking Water Collaborative is a good example - they’ve maintained that their voluntary structure is key to their great participation rate, and that could be a delicate balance that the IRTC will have to respect. What has been considered through this process has been means of regional planning and coordination around issues of regional-significance, *not* regional governance.

## Chapter 2: About this Process

### Benchmarking and Site Visits

When planning for the future of the Indy MPO, there is no need to reinvent the wheel; organizations in similarly sized cities to Indianapolis provide inspiration in terms of organizational structure, programming, and engagement with the larger community. During the benchmarking process, the MPO performed site visits to two peer organizations: Denver Regional Council of Government and the Atlanta Regional Commission. In addition we reviewed benchmark information on several other organizations.

In Atlanta, the Atlanta Regional Commission, which is descended from the first publicly supported, multi-county planning agency in the U.S., oversees the MPO, the Economic Development District, the Area Agency on Aging, and several other regional initiatives, as well as creating the regional plan. Through an innovative structure, the Atlanta Regional Commission's programs are interlocking and, together, support the goal of better air quality standards through denser development, transportation planning, and resource sustainability.

In Denver, the Denver Regional Council of Governments is a planning organization where local governments collaborate to establish guidelines, set policy and allocate funding in the areas of:

- Transportation and Personal Mobility
- Growth and Development
- Aging and Disability Resources

DRCOG is organized as a council of governments, with the DRCOG itself serving as a planning organization, technical assistance provider and forum for visionary local member governments. DRCOG also functions as a Regional Planning Commission per Colorado state statute and prepares the plan for the physical development of the region, known as Metro Vision. It is the federally designated Area Agency on Aging (AAA) and serves as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the region.

In both Atlanta and Denver, the regional planning entity takes on much more than simply land use or transportation. Their role covers the myriad issues that are better addressed at a regional level, and from this viewpoint they can coordinate state and federal resources, involve differing groups of stakeholders in planning, and ensure that communities are moving forward on an overall vision. Examples from many other regional entities are included in this section, showing how these groups are organized and how to tackle issues such as housing, transportation, and resource planning.

For more information on the benchmarking and site visits conducted as part of this process, see the Appendix.

### Existing Plan Review

To strengthen our understanding of the planning landscape in Central Indiana, several plans and reports developed by local organizations and collaboratives were reviewed. These plans focused on issues important to the region, such as water, housing, transportation, and economic development. A list of the specific plans reviewed is below:

#### *Economic Development*

- Indianapolis Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy
- Indianapolis Inclusive Growth Strategy
- Metropolis of Indiana Report

#### *Housing*

- Housing in the Evolving American Suburb
- City of Noblesville Housing Analysis

#### *Transportation*

- Central Indiana Regional Transit Authority Strategic Plan, CIRT

#### *Water*

- Central Indiana Council of Elected Officials Water Report
- Central Indiana's Regional Water Supply Plan

#### *Additional Plans*

- Central Indiana Regional Development Plan, CIRT
- Central Indiana Regional Cities Application, CIRT
- Indianapolis MPO Organizational Study
- Indy 2020 Agenda
- Innovation MPO Report

As a whole, these plans shared a vision of growth for the region, both economically and in population. These plans proposed different perspectives on how to initiate and sustain growth, ranging from affordable housing to an adequate water supply.

The region is currently grappling with how to remain competitive with its peers around the country - Columbus, Denver, and Nashville were mentioned as competitors in the majority of the plans. These peer cities have been able to attract workers from other parts of the country with a significant amount of these workers being young. The Central Indiana region has also been able to attract young workers, but most of these individuals come from other parts of the state. This is not a sustainable strategy for talent attraction, as it leaves the region vulnerable to population shifts in the more rural parts of the state. It was noted in several reports that if the region wants to grow, then it is imperative that it is able to attract workers from outside of Indiana, which requires Central Indiana to become more competitive and alluring to these individuals.

#### *Economic Development*

The key questions that the economic development related reports seek to address are "How can Indianapolis compete with its peers (Columbus, Denver, Nashville)?" and "What areas of the economy should the Indianapolis region focus on developing?" An underlying theme in all of these reports is a focus on how the region can attract and retain Millennial talent. The CEDS report that was led by the Indy Chamber recommends focusing on four areas to address these questions:

- Workers - better education pipeline and attraction and retention of talent
- Businesses - improve entrepreneur and small business start-up services, stimulate local venture capital and microlending program
- Places - encourage and support growth of public transportation, invest in placemaking efforts, advocate for changes in state's restrictions on home rule
- Image - develop brand identity for the region, create solid public relations efforts

Given the need to address housing, transportation, and other quality of quality-of-place issues in order to achieve those economic development objectives, this became an area of inquiry for this planning process.

#### *Housing*

The housing reports analyzed the relationship of the suburbs to the urban core of Indianapolis. As Indianapolis faces housing supply issues, individuals will move to the outlying areas, allowing them to remain close to the city. The suburbs are a significant part of the Indianapolis region and are growing more than other peer cities. As these areas continue to grow, the region needs to be mindful of issues, such as affordability, talent attraction, and transportation. As more individuals move to the suburbs, while working in the city, the region will need to plan for how to connect these areas via the transportation network.

#### *Water*

Central Indiana's water supply has kept up with population growth thus far, and Central Indiana's Regional Water Supply Plan estimates that the region has enough ground water to last until 2030, assuming no major droughts, contamination incidents, or other unexpected external impacts. To ensure the availability of water in future years, the plans reviewed emphasized a need for cooperative planning to manage water conservation and usage in the region. These reports also noted the inextricable link water has to the future population growth and economic vitality of the region. In 2015, the Central Indiana Council of Elected Officials published the most recent report focused specifically on regional water resource planning.

#### *Transportation*

One issue that lead to the development of transportation-related plans is fragmented funding at the state level, which has made it difficult to implement regional transit plans. To address this issue of funding, the plans considered the development of public-private partnerships, which would also help guide transportation services to specific employment districts. In Central Indiana Regional Transportation Authority's 2017 Strategic Plan, the organization notes that the region should pursue a strategy to centralize transit planning, scheduling, and operations and look to pursue inter-regional travel and collaboration.

As the region considers transportation, it will need to think through connecting the suburbs with the urban core, promoting transportation as a tool to connect underrepresented populations to opportunities, as well as a means to attract millennial talent, and incorporating transportation into discussions related to other areas, such as housing and economic development to ensure that there is alignment in these areas.



## Stakeholder Engagement

Fourth Economy conducted nearly 25 interviews with individuals and representatives from organizations who work closely with the MPO or influence planning and economic development in the region. As part of this process, we interviewed representatives from the following organizations:

- Central Indiana Regional Transportation Authority
- Central Indiana Regional Development Authority
- City of Beech Grove
- City of Carmel
- City of Noblesville
- City of Greenwood
- Downtown Indy, Inc.
- Hamilton County
- Health by Design
- Indianapolis Department of Public Works
- Indianapolis MPO
- Indianapolis Neighborhood Housing Partnership
- IndyGo
- Johnson County
- Madison County Council of Governments
- OneZone
- Town of Zionsville

The questions asked as part of these interviews focused on better understanding the relationship between these organizations and the MPO, entities responsible for regional planning, opportunities for and barriers to growth in the region, and issues that are not being addressed at a regional level.

Additionally, during the fall of 2017 the MPO strategic planning team facilitated a set of five “panel” discussions with subject matter experts and over 200 stakeholders to learn more about the key issues facing the Central Indiana region from the perspectives of those who know the most about them.

Four of the panel discussions were themed around areas that the Indianapolis MPO is considering expanding its scope to address – and areas that are within the scope of peer planning organizations in other cities: housing, land use planning, water, and economic development. A fifth panel themed around transportation was more focused, centering on freight, performance measures, and equity/environmental justice, three areas in which the Indy MPO is looking to strengthen its current capabilities.



To engage expert stakeholders ‘panelists’ the MPO partnered with leaders in the community and requested that they serve as co-chairs of the Panels. The following individuals served in this capacity:

- Transportation: Melody Park, City of Indianapolis & Gary Pool, Hancock County
- Land Use: Brooke Thomas, American Structurepoint & Mike Hollibaugh, City of Carmel
- Water: Marcus Turner, Town of Avon & Jeff Willman, Citizens Energy Group
- Housing: Tom Dickey, The Hageman Group & Abbe Hohmann, Site Strategy Advisors
- Economic Development: Tom Guvera, Indiana University & Mark Fisher, Indy Chamber



## Chapter 3: Facilitating the Future, A Call to Action

The following recommendations are based on the planning process described earlier in this document. outlined. These recommendations were vetted with and refined by the MPO's Administrative Committee over the course of three meetings between 2017 - 2018, and shared with the full IRTC in June of 2018.

The topic areas and recommended actions are:

- **Transportation Planning**
  - Incorporate a Regional Vision for Freight Planning
  - Performance Measures and Target Setting
  - Equity and Environmental Justice
- **Land Use and Housing**
  - Create a Regional Land Use & Housing Think Tank
  - Develop a Regional Vision and Playbook for Land Use and Housing Typologies
  - Provide Technical Assistance on Common Land Use and Housing Issues
- **Water Resource Management**
  - Convene Water-related Organizations to Develop a Platform for Collaboration
- **Economic Development**
  - Develop a Regional Economic Competitiveness Strategy
  - Serve as a Convener and Think Tank on Economic Development & Disruptions

# Transportation Planning in Central Indiana

## Incorporate a Regional Vision for Freight Planning

### Description

MPOs are in a unique position to articulate a regional vision that includes freight, which can then inform collaboration between local government, state government, and Indiana's major logistics industry. The MPO should become more involved in freight planning to improve communications between public and private freight stakeholders, to consolidate and improve freight data collection, and to bring new money into the region for the construction and improvement of freight facilities.

### Rationale

- More freight planning by the MPO can help improve communications between public units of government (federal-local-state) and private freight providers. The MPO already successfully coordinates federal-state-local communications, but freight rail planning is often siloed.
- There's a major need for better data, which the MPO may be able to help facilitate. INDOT is using TransSearch data, which will be available to MPOs. Different partners may have different data at their disposal at different points in the process. The MPO could help aggregate and share that.
- The MPO can help identify other federal funding sources (e.g. INFRA, EDA) to support freight planning and investments.
- The MPO can help improve modeling of freight movement.
- The MPO can be a forum to discuss the impact of connected and autonomous vehicles, platooning, and tolling.

### Steps

Based on the presentation of national best practices and consideration of the work underway in the Central Indiana region, the MPO can help jurisdictions acquire additional information and data to support more integrated planning:

- **Develop a Data Clearinghouse:** There is a lack of coordination between freight planning work being done by the private sector and that being done by the public sector. The MPO could facilitate a discussion with Conexus and other private partners and consider developing a data clearinghouse for proprietary information that companies may be hesitant to share broadly. The focus would be on improving communication and iterative collection of data, and increasing the amount of data that all partners have access to to support planning.
- **Develop More Integrated Strategies:** The MPO may be able to work with Conexus and other private partners (e.g. major shippers, logistics providers) to build on the strategies in the Regional Freight Plan and develop a more integrated approach to identifying and prioritizing projects that support freight movement in Central Indiana. Jurisdictions want to play a role in supporting the movement of goods throughout the region, and they are ready to engage with the private sector to determine how to move

forward. Ultimately, this work could lead to a more proactive, rather than reactive, model of freight planning for the region.

### Stakeholders (not inclusive)

- Local Planning Associations
- INDOT - TransSearch data
- Amtrak - trip generation data, understanding rail capacity (95% of their passenger miles are on the freight network)
- Conexus - can share aggregated data
  - Can also help connect major regional manufacturers + largest shippers, as well as the Indiana Railroad Association
- Private freight rail providers
- Private trucking / logistics providers
- Manufacturers, researchers, and policymakers focused on connected and autonomous vehicles
- Municipalities

### Risks

- Lack of participation by private freight providers, rail and truck.
- Wholesale rejection of a public freight plan by private freight providers.
- Heavy use of Non Disclosure Agreements by logistics providers.
- Amount of sources and filters on the data make it challenging to perform quality assurance and control.
- Concern that freight projects competing for Surface Transportation Block Grant or other MPO funds could diminish an already oversubscribed pot of federal money.
- Connected and autonomous vehicles. How will they impact infrastructure needs and freight movement? How will drones impact freight delivery?

## Performance Measures and Target Setting

### Description

The U.S. Department of Transportation recently adopted legislation supporting a transition to performance-driven planning and programming processes that provide greater transparency and accountability, improved project decision-making, and more efficient investment of federal transportation funds. As part of this approach, all recipients of federal-aid highway program funds and federal transit funds will be required to link the investment priorities included in their Transportation Improvement Programs and



Metropolitan Transportation Plans to achieving specific performance targets.

Given federal requirements for performance measurement and the MPO's recent work to develop the Long-Range Transportation Plan 2045 (LRTP), the MPO already plays a significant role in establishing targets and measuring performance. While the USDOT has already established required federal performance measures, the MPO is voluntarily establishing a set of regional performance measures. The LRTP Steering Committee has developed measures related to Mobility, Safety, Sustain, and Prosper, but specific targets have yet to be set.

The MPO should establish a robust process of stakeholder engagement in both rolling out the federal targets and developing the regional targets.

### **Steps**

The next step for the MPO will be to map out an approach to the target-setting exercises, and share that with member jurisdictions for input.

- Ensure engagement and transparency around how measures will impact scoring criteria.
- Consider if individual projects can be measured, or if the MPO will take a portfolio/outcome approach.
- Set based on review of historical projects (how they would perform), trends, and best practices.
- Make more near-term to compel action, and attainable.
- Explore feasibility of project sponsors getting credit for local projects that contribute to the measures.
- Undertake a "road show" to communicate about what is happening, why, how it will affect people, and how they can get engaged.
- Consider when and how to bring in end users.

## **Equity and Environmental Justice**

### **Description**

Equity and environmental justice can be incorporated throughout the planning and project delivery processes. There is a significant opportunity for the MPO to broaden its reach and the services it provides to jurisdictions in the areas of equity and environmental justice. The MPO can provide data and tools to support the inclusion of these principles throughout a plan's or project's lifecycle. The MPO should explore approaches to incorporating equity and environmental justice in project scoring and selection. This should be based on national best practices and clear definitions and data sources for any new criteria.

### **Rationale**

Environmental Justice (EJ) refers to the process of evaluating and analyzing the planning process in reference to the most disadvantaged populations. The Indianapolis MPO identifies seven EJ populations: minority, low-income, English as a second language, no college degree, zero car households, people over 65, and those with physical limitations.

The MPO seeks to treat disenfranchised and disadvantaged populations fairly in all planning and programming efforts. Specifically, such populations deserve to receive their fair share of benefits, to shoulder not more than their fair share of burdens, and to be meaningfully and equitably involved in decision-making. Through the LRTP process, the MPO identified areas with concentrations of EJ populations to be used in planning analysis.

### **Steps**

Specific recommendations included the following:

- The MPO could develop regional guidance on how the benefits and impacts of projects on EJ populations should be evaluated, as approaches to cost-benefit analysis vary widely.
- The MPO should continue to refine and distribute data to help jurisdictions understand where EJ populations are living and working. This information can be used to support local planning and project delivery as well as applications for regionally-significant projects.
- The MPO should consider encouraging local jurisdictions to prioritize local funding to meet specific, community-based EJ needs, freeing regional funds to focus on the types of projects that can support regional access to opportunity.
- The MPO could develop a toolbox of outreach and engagement materials and tactics to support the work of jurisdictions to engage with EJ populations. By having evidence-based tools available across the region, jurisdictions would have consistency in their approach to working with traditionally underrepresented EJ populations. Also consider the unique characteristics/ needs of EJ populations.
- The MPO should explore approaches to incorporating equity and environmental justice in project scoring and selection. This should be based on national best practices and clear definitions and data sources for any new criteria.

**Stakeholders (not inclusive)**

- MPO
- United Way
- SAVI
- Urban League

## Land Use and Housing in the Central Indiana Region

### Create a Regional Land Use & Housing Think Tank

**Description**

The Think Tank would be a forum to address common land use and housing challenges, and challenges that are regional in nature, e.g. blight mitigation/avoidance, big box vacancy. This forum would never seek to usurp or interfere with local control of land use planning. Their scope may include researching economic and demographic shifts or disruptions, and modeling the implications of different development scenarios. In particular, their research would focus on the housing, land use, and transportation impacts. The Think Tank would analyze relevant data, research best practices, identify and highlight local bright spots, and convene stakeholders to better understand causes and solutions. The Think Tank would be comprised of and engage cross-disciplinary stakeholders, including transportation, economic development, and water. The ultimate goal of the Think Tank would be to provide research and information to support planning and policy-making. This may also include hosting speakers and providing public education support.

**Rationale**

There is a need for additional resources to give elected officials and decision makers research and information to inform decisions. This is especially pertinent both for unpopular decisions, and for smaller communities - especially those who are quickly growing – to ensure that their decisions are intentional. The Think Tank could also support other actions by providing research and public education.

### Steps

- Convene organizations already providing research to identify gaps and where the MPO could sponsor additional research on the housing, land use, and transportation implications of existing research

### Stakeholders (not inclusive)

Who should be involved depends on the issue that the Think Tank is addressing. The Think Tank should be comprised of a core body of regional stakeholders who solicit the participation of subject matter experts for time-limited engagements. What is most important is that the Think Tank be regional and non-partisan in its composition. Participants could include:

- Elected officials
- AIM, CICEO
- Professional orgs: APA Indiana Chapter, ULI, AIA, ASLA
- Ball State
- People's Planning Academy
- Regional planning firms
- State representatives
- Local planners
- INDOT
- IPS/School districts
- IndyGo/transit
- Service providers tied to population
- LISC
- Chamber
- MIBOR
- Health by design



## Develop a Regional Vision and Playbook for Land Use and Housing Typologies

### Description

Develop a regional vision for land use and housing, providing model typologies for communities who wish to develop in accordance with the vision. The basis of the vision would be a compilation of existing local comprehensive and land use plans. By combining existing plans, this would allow the region to identify opportunities to create synergies at municipal borders (where neighboring land uses are rarely coordinated) and opportunities to enhance planning of cross-border land uses (e.g. trails). Analysis conducted as part of the



process would also provide insight into regional housing needs and opportunities. Think Tank research would inform the resulting strategies and recommendations, which would include:

- A vision to support land use and housing planning and policy that would not usurp local control.
- A menu of development/growth typologies with supporting strategies and model ordinances for communities to choose to use. Typologies could range from preservation areas, to developing suburbs, to developed urban core areas. Typologies would provide guidance on enhancing housing diversity, mobility, water and land conservation, and economic development opportunities.
- Recommendations for how communities' can better align land uses at borders, to be used the next time they update local plans.
- Recommendations on how to enhance planning of regional land uses.
- Possible identification of ideal locations for future development.

## **Rationale**

### Economic Competitiveness

- Housing and land use are key to our economic development strategy and our aspirations.
- A well-planned, diverse housing market is a key component to a vibrant and sustainable regional economy.
- We must be able to attract talent from outside of Indiana. Changing consumer preferences must be reflected in Central Indiana's communities to attract talent.
- Unplanned and inconsistent land use may have negative financial and talent recruitment issues.
- Employers are citing struggles with workers finding housing near-by (e.g. IKEA).
- A lack of a regional housing strategy exposes the community to risk during economic slowdown or a leveling off of population growth. Individuals engaged during this process have highlighted that the region would suffer more than peers if economic or population disruptions occur.
- Unplanned development has led to unintended consequences and/or conflicting neighboring land uses, that ultimately put the region's competitiveness and ability to attract talent and investment at risk.
- There are certain regional priorities that can't be realized without regional coordination on land use and housing.

### Informed Decision-Making

- We need to be proactive in preparing communities to address economic and demographic shifts.
- The market is not quick to respond to changes (such as changing consumer preferences) without a stated strategy that encourages such development. A strategy could inform new policy and finance tools to incentivize filling gaps in the housing market.
- This would give smaller communities a leg up, especially those who are growing quickly, to ensure that development is intentional.
- Analysis and strategies could help municipalities find creative solutions to increasing revenue by increasing value per acre.
- A regional land use and housing strategy could provide the guidance and support for communities and decision-makers interested in non-traditional or unpopular approaches to planning.

Furthermore, there are certain regional priorities that can not be realized without regional coordination. For instance, consensus on the best location for industrial uses, failure to protect farmland and open space, and equity in distribution of amenities were all identified as high-priority/high-control issues during the first panel. Coordinating where different types of land use make sense throughout the region through the creation of different typologies would help mitigate unintended consequences of neighboring land use decisions.

### **Steps**

- Start with public education/engagement and communications.
  - Create a common communications strategy that helps to build the case for why different communities would agree to common typologies and why regional leaders should care.
  - Tactics could include field trips to show how different development and housing types look, identifying “cheerleaders” and equipping them with educational tool-kits, hosting seminars with council-people, planners, etc., and sharing success stories after launch.
- Ensure a data-driven approach.
  - Initial research would include baseline data on regional housing and land use trends, a regional study of supply and demand for different land uses, an updated consumer housing preference survey, and any other analysis that would support a regional approach, e.g. yield per acre analysis, cost of infrastructure, relationship to education, etc.
- Identify regional land uses and develop basic typologies.
  - Identify land use elements that transcend local municipalities, e.g. trails, water, etc.
  - Start by creating basic typologies that are fairly high-level. Typologies must allow for flexibility and the changing nature of places, e.g. one new development/project could shift the nature of a place.
- Develop a playbook.
  - A playbook would define characteristics of different land use/housing typologies. It would provide generic guidance on how to develop in accordance with best practices for that particular typology. To support that guidance, resources and other best practice examples would be provided. Particular attention would be paid to how to coordinate planning and development at the border between different typologies/land uses.
- Implement incentives.
  - Ideally, a clear rationale, community-supported process, and useful playbook will create the buy-in necessary for the region to adopt an MOU in support of implementation. However, in addition to voluntary buy-in, incentives may be needed to compel implementation. These could include a regional funding mechanism to support communities in implementing projects in line with the playbook, as well as additional points when scoring for transportation grants.
- Create a feedback loop.
  - The typologies and corresponding playbook will require regular evaluation and updates. Performance metrics should be established to help the region understand if adherence to the playbook is leading to desired outcomes.

These are all possibilities to be considered at the board.

### **Stakeholders (not inclusive)**

- Need a strong, cross-sector Steering Committee



- Planning Directors and related staff from throughout the region
- IU Public Policy Institute
- CICEO
- MIBOR
- BAGI
- Historic Preservation Representatives
- Agriculture Representatives
- Real estate developers
- Chamber of Commerce
- Local Economic Development Officials (LEDOs)
- Public Officials
- Banking and financial institutions
- CDFI and non profit developers
- CDCs
- State Housing Finance Agency
- LISC
- ULI
- Indy Partnership

#### **Risks**

- Current fiscal system rewards local jurisdictions (property taxes, etc).
- Cannot be a mandate.
- Don't want it to sit on a shelf. Will require technical assistance and incentives to help implement.
- Especially with funding - must be seen as fair across the region.
- Homogenization - don't want everything to look the same.
- Communications - backlash if perceived as us telling communities what to do.
- Must be collaborative.

## **Provide Technical Assistance on Common Land Use and Housing Issues**

#### **Description**

Many communities throughout the region have limited planning capacity to implement best practices identified by the Think Tank or new strategies and recommendations from the Regional Housing and Land Use Playbook. Even where capacity exists, the support of a "neutral third party" would be valuable in implementing cross-border solutions. The Think Tank findings and best practice guidance included as part of the development typologies are all designed to be resources to support local planners and decision-makers. However, beyond that, the MPO could offer:

- Augmented staff capacity
- Training and education for planning officials and stakeholders
- Planning and implementation grants

The MPO could also help identify and coordinate existing capacity to promote sharing. It is likely that through the other actions, specific types of capacity, training, or funding will be identified. For instance, during the second panel it was noted that training for appraisers and assessors will be critical to the success of more dense, mixed-use communities.

## Rationale

When land use decisions and visioning exercises are exclusive to individual communities and do not consider neighboring communities they can create regional challenges. Communities are “trying to figure out how to build things in the right spots. And once things get in place, they will grow.” Being able to integrate or plan zoning decisions between communities was identified as a potentially valuable type of collaboration. To that end, greater collaboration among planners in the region around zoning was cited as an opportunity area. Elected officials tend to weigh the input of engineers more heavily than the input of planners, because planning recommendations may seem nebulous (compared to data-driven engineering recommendations) and because planning has a longer time horizon.

## Stakeholders (not inclusive)

- Planning Directors and related staff from throughout the region
- IU Public Policy Institute
- MIBOR
- Historic Preservation Representatives
- Agriculture Representatives
- People’s Planning Academy

## Risks

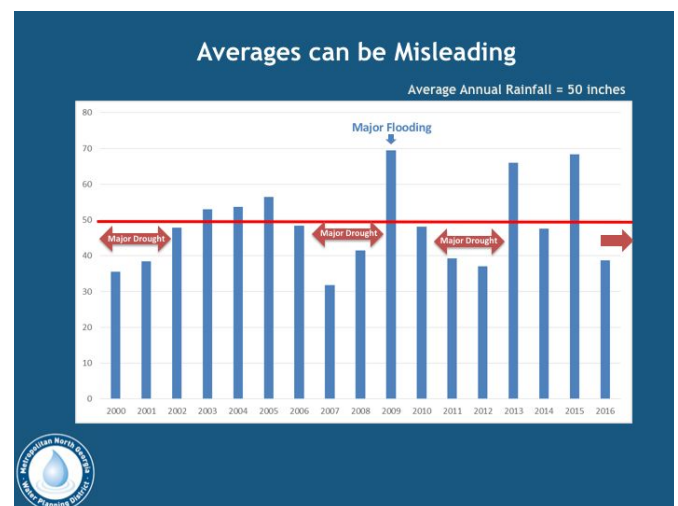
- Creating something that people don’t want - need to engage end-users in design of assistance.
- Has to be quality - create a feedback loop to ensure it’s meeting people’s needs.

# Water Resources in the Central Indiana Region

## Convene Water-related Organizations to Develop a Platform for Collaboration

### Description

The Indianapolis MPO has been tasked by members of its board with assessing the need for water-related planning as part of its future portfolio of regional services. This is the first year that the Indianapolis MPO has considered regional water planning as part of the strategic planning process. Discussions on this topic have focused on two specific areas: a) Drinking water supply; and b) Water quality/stormwater management. The resulting recommendation has been developed through discussion with key stakeholders representing each area.



Source: Atlanta Regional Commission

## **Rationale**

- In order to be economically competitive, the region needs to be able to address the current threats to drinking water availability in some parts of the region. Continued growth in communities is outstripping available water supply, which is a concern for many industries.
- The region should focus on becoming drought resistant.
- While per capita water use is declining, peak water use continues to increase. Reduction measures are needed to support growth and economic development.
- Water supply infrastructure investment is borne by individual utilities and ratepayers, which restricts multi-jurisdictional focus on projects that can support broader growth.
- Impaired streams limit development opportunities.
- Detention basins limit developable space.
- Poor water quality limits potential of riverfront redevelopment.

## **Steps: Regional Drinking Water**

The MPO can serve as a partner to the Drinking Water Collaborative and work with them to recruit additional drinking water system representatives (goal is 100% representation). In 2015, the Central Indiana Drinking Water Collaborative (Collaborative) was formed by the drinking water utilities in the 9 county region to coordinate long-term supply planning and identify critical water supply issues.

This partnership can also explore models from other regions regarding how to organize a regional drinking water focus through a voluntary participation model. This approach would build on the existing formation of the Drinking Water Collaborative and allow for an open access model for participation.

The MPO could support this work in the following ways:

- Support additional investment and deployment of well monitoring.
- Develop an approach to identifying and pursuing funding when water supply projects are of 'regional significance.
- Coordinate transportation projects that will spur growth and assessment of water availability with the adjacent jurisdictions.

From the reports and other research, it seems that not all communities and stakeholders share the same urgency around this issue or see it as an important area of focus. One initial step that this group can take to generate buy-in is to compile data about current water usage and the impacts of withdrawals on stream flows and groundwater levels.

## **Steps: Regional Water Quality and Stormwater**

One of the MPO's new planning factors is "Improve the resiliency and reliability of the transportation system and reduce or mitigate stormwater impacts of surface transportation." There are currently several groups working in the area of water quality and stormwater. This recommendation focuses on a role that the MPO can play in the convening of these groups, providing support aligned with the MPO's core competencies and goals, and opportunities to advance work at the regional level. One concern about the ability of the MPO to support regional stormwater and water quality efforts is that the MPO region is not the full jurisdiction that should be engaged when considering upstream contributors and downstream water users. However, it does represent a core and through other partnerships with neighboring MPO and planning organizations this could be scaled.

The groups that could be engaged to begin this convening role include both Central Indiana-based and multi-region organizations:

- White River Watershed Alliance
- Great Lakes Water Quality Initiative
- ORSANCO
- The City of Indianapolis
- Hoosier Environmental Council
- Indiana Water Monitoring Council
- American Council of Engineering Companies of Indiana
- American Society of Civil Engineers - Metropolitan Indianapolis Chapter

To begin with, these groups could convene to share information about existing efforts and identify areas for collaboration. Stormwater and water quality organizations identified the following areas for the MPO to consider supporting:

- Data: There is a lack of monitoring wells and gauges to inform priorities.
- Funding: Funding is needed for monitoring equipment, cross-border water projects, etc.; EDA funding and Title 8 stormwater fees are possible sources.
- Transportation Projects: There is an opportunity to incorporate water quality in planning for transportation projects; the Complete Streets model could facilitate this.
- Policy: Use influence with policymakers to advocate for policies that enhance water quality; Provide best practices, education, model ordinances on floodplain and wetland protection; A process is needed to inform policy priorities.
- Surveyors: Surveyors control 70% of streams; the MPO could develop policies and incentives to enforce best practices, advocate for policy changes, and create education & training opportunities.

**Stakeholders (not inclusive)**

- Utilities - Drinking Water Collaborative
- Local governments
- Local Economic Development Organizations (LEDOs)
- Public health
- Public/ consumers
- Emergency management agencies - local/ state/ federal
- Purdue Extension
- Agricultural Sector Reps
- State Regulators
- Indiana DNR
- Storm sewer districts

## Economic Development in the Central Indiana Region

### Develop a Regional Economic Competitiveness Strategy

#### Description

Throughout this strategic planning process plans and initiatives have been identified that are working to enhance and catalyze economic growth and quality of life in the region. The Central Indiana region has a comprehensive economic development strategy (CEDS), which was developed in 2015 by the Indy Chamber. It also has a Regional Development Plan, which was developed by the same year by the Regional Development Authority. However, these plans, if better aligned and more robust, could serve as a long-term roadmap for the region to grow and diversify its economy, and grow its population through planning for quality of place investments.

The MPO is best suited to play this long-range planning role and like many peers could author a combined CEDS and Regional Development Plan under a common brand used in other regions, "Regional Economic Competitiveness Strategy". The current CEDS covers some of the ground that the benchmark communities do, and includes several investments that have been identified through this process as regional priorities. Talent attraction was the primary focus of the Regional Development Plan. It included a \$5 million request to fund a Regional Trails and Bikeways Development Plan. It also included a \$15 million request to fund Phase 1 of the Red Line BRT Corridor in an effort to attract residents and improve connectivity.

Similarly, the CEDS addresses the issue regarding the lack of identity with the city of Indianapolis and how this impacts the ability to recruit/retain talent in the region. The CEDS also calls out how the public cites the lack of public transportation as a major complaint, and a section of the strategic plan addresses encouraging and supporting the growth of public transportation. However, a more thorough Regional Economic Competitiveness Strategy (that would serve as both the CEDS and the Regional Development Plan) may be needed to identify the full regional portfolio of needs and opportunities.

Furthermore, in order to take advantage of federal implementation funds, the MPO should become an official Economic Development District, which is required to qualify for Economic Development Administration assistance under its Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance Programs.

#### Rationale

- Economic Competitiveness - Businesses and investors consider a location for expansion or relocation first by analyzing regions and then by digging into specific sites. Clear regional priorities and plans to address known issues are key to economic competitiveness.
- Talent Attraction - The Indianapolis region's growth has been fueled by migration of people from throughout the state rather than net migration from other states. There is a concern that, as time goes on, due to changing demographics and statewide population loss, there won't be enough people to draw from other parts of the state. This underlines the urgency of a regional approach to talent attraction from domestic and global markets. Employers in the region cite the inability to attract skilled workers as a major obstacle for growth and success.
- Quality of Life - This same sense of competition extends to quality of life investments. Communities feel like they are addressing quality of life concerns differently—and view them as a differentiator (for

example, sports complexes, a focus on the arts, a historic downtown, trails). Trails were identified as an important enabler of a regional feeling — but local governments vary in their attitudes towards these types of investments. As a result a local government would likely not be the sole driver or the funder for multi jurisdiction trail connectivity improvements. Addressing regional quality of place needs was a high impact/ high control issue prioritized during the first panel.

### **Steps**

- Convene regional partners to develop a Regional Economic Competitiveness Strategy scope of work. This scope would look at the existing research being undertaken, identify knowledge or defined activity gaps.
- The scope of work would contemplate inputs from the other groups that are being proposed for regional planning (water, land use, and housing).
- Begin the process of applying for a federal Economic Development District as well as requesting planning funds from the Economic Development Administration for the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy work.

### **Stakeholders (not inclusive)**

- Central Indiana Council of Elected Official (CICEO)
- Indy Chamber
- Indianapolis Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)
- INDYGO
- Central Indiana Regional Transportation Authority (CIRTA)
- Indianapolis Department of Metropolitan Development
- MIBOR
- Public Policy Institute
- Central Indiana Corporate Partnership
- Indiana Business Research Center
- LEDOs

## **Serve as a Convener and Think Tank on Economic Development & Disruptions**

### **Description**

Many of the opportunities documented through this process related to economic development have a natural home at the Indy Chamber/ Accelerate Indy. The Chamber/ Accelerate Indy continue to have conversations and take steps towards: a regional revenue-sharing model, implementation of a marketing/branding campaign to support talent retention and attraction goals, and a regional MOU/Code of Ethics on business attraction.

The MPO could create a regional collaborative structure to convene research capacity and regionalize data availability to serve real-time decision making, development scenario modeling, and economic disruption modeling.

This can include supporting these initiatives by providing a data warehouse and the research necessary to inform development and ongoing execution. This role would be further enhanced if the MPO could provide mapping capabilities to support the Indy Partnership and Accelerate Indy as they work with business retention and expansion prospects.

## **Rationale**

As many of the participants in this process have cited, there are several areas where regional collaboration makes sense - regional collaboration on economic development, and in particular business attraction, and funding strategies were two of the high impact/ high control areas prioritized. Data collection and analysis is one area where there is support and a need for additional capacity that the MPO could provide. The capacity of each community to acquire and develop data varies and in some cases limits a community's ability to plan effectively.

The current development and use of data in the region has been described as 'ad hoc', which limits the region's ability to be more strategic and does not allow for ongoing business intelligence and benchmarking. Common areas of data that have been cited include:

- Demographic analysis
- Labor force and workforce information
- Economic information (wages, firm performance indicators, etc.)
- Housing inventory and characteristics e.g. building activity
- Infrastructure inventory
- School capacity
- Hospital capacity
- Quality of Life Indicators

A data warehouse/ research capacity can be developed to assemble core regional indicators and report on them at some common interval (e.g. annual). In addition, a data portal can be developed to allow for all regional partners to access core data on their individual community.

This approach can support a stronger regional message regarding assets and the economic health of the region as leaders interact with potential investors and residents.

## **Steps**

- Convene organizations who collect data and conduct research related to economic development, land use, housing and transportation.
  - Identify what is currently being spent/ invested by stakeholder on data and research to better understand the existing regional capacity.
- Define how these organizations work together to share data and research, identify gaps and develop research agenda topics.
- The MPO could convene, solicit calls for additional research and conduct research related to transportation, land use and housing implications of development and economic disruption related issues.
- Continue to define what areas of research provide regional benefit with local autonomy.
- Build on recent large scale site selection response experiences to better understand what data and other information should be available real-time.
- Develop a process for research interpretation and actions development.
- Serve as a convener for a conversations focussed on economic development incentives.

## **Stakeholders (not inclusive)**



- Accelerate Indy
- Public Policy Institute
- MIBOR
- Central Indiana Corporate Partnership
- Indiana Economic Development Commission
- LEDOs
- Indiana Business Research Council

## Develop a Data Warehouse and Dashboard

### Description

Throughout this process there were several references to the need for a resource to aggregate data from the various disciplines. Housing data relates to land use, land use to economic development, and all of it to transportation planning.

### Rationale

Policy-makers, investors, developers, economic development practitioners, and others lack access to a holistic understanding of current market trends. Smaller municipalities in particular are at a disadvantage when it comes to having the resources to gather and analyze this data.

On the Housing front this lack of data could be contributing to a mismatch identified by the Metropolitan Indianapolis Board of REALTORS® (MIBOR) and Indianapolis MPO's survey of Central Indiana residents' views on housing, conducted in 2012. While general satisfaction with quality of life was high compared to national statistics, many residents are not living in their preferred home and/or neighborhood type, indicating a potential mismatch between supply and demand.<sup>1</sup>

### Steps

- Develop a scope for what data the dashboard would collect, who runs/maintains it, etc.
- Identify a funding source.
- Work with MIBOR to understand current plans relative to data.
- Issue specific considerations include:
  - Housing - The MPO could form a partnership with MIBOR to access housing market data to be included in a dashboard to inform planning and policy-making. This dashboard would aggregate existing data on both the supply of and demand for housing. It would analyze the data to show comparisons, trends, and forecasts. Snapshots of the region, counties, and municipalities would be available, as well as access to more detailed data. If goals related to creating a healthy housing market are established, corresponding indicators could be established and tracked through the dashboard. Ideally, the dashboard would also pull in related data on transportation assets, population, and land use (e.g. zoning, planned developments, etc.) would also be compiled through the dashboard. This dashboard could build off of existing tools such as SAVI and IndyVitals.
  - Water - The Drinking Water Collaborative has begun to assemble a report on supply and demand in order to identify regional issues. This data can be made available to key stakeholders to



better understand water availability and issues around land use and economic development.

There is a need for increased attention around reduction of peak water demand.

- Economic Development - The Indy Chamber and various LEDO partners access and publish data on a variety of topics. Opportunities exist to align this data on a regional scale and view the integration of economic metrics with other variables including housing, land use, transportation and water. In addition several communities utilize impact modeling and are paying for the same service over and over. There may be an opportunity to centralize this role.

**Stakeholders (not inclusive)**

- MIBOR
- Indy MPO
- Real estate developers
- Public Officials
- Banking industry
- CDFI and non profit developers
- State Housing Finance Agency

## Chapter 4: Structure and Timeline

### Phase I: 2019-2020 Become an Independent MPO

#### ***Business Process***

- Form a 'transition team' to advise on business policies (HR, procurement, financial system, IT, bylaws, etc.)
- Begin independent designation of MPO Policy Board with State and Governor's Office
- Determine structure, staffing, and funding plans
- Implement new internal policies (file management, standard operating procedures)

#### ***Transportation***

- Retain and continue to pursue talented staff
- Improve and expand data collection per Data Analytics and Modeling Plan
- Builds scenario planning tools
- Update multimodal plans (ped, bike, regional transit)

#### ***Land Use & Housing***

- Continue land use panel's focus on transit oriented development

#### ***Economic Development***

- Work with regional partners to scope, secure public and private funds for an updated CES plan

#### ***Water***

- MPO Leadership team will continue to attend Drinking Water Collaborative meetings

### Phase II: 2020-2021 Grow the Independent MPO

#### ***Business Process***

- Study branding for new regional organization
- Expand staff capacity for convening, facilitation and human centered design
- Establish data warehouse and launch open data portal

#### ***Transportation***

- Adopt targets for performance measures, track, and begin reporting
- Review and implement analysis tools for project selection
- Expand Connexus partnership and update regional vision

#### ***Land Use & Housing***

- Continue land use panel's focus on transit oriented development
- Study activity center and corridor analysis program alternatives

**Economic Development**

- Begin CEDS update (hold contract, convene partners)
- Begin designation as a federally-recognized Economic Development District

**Water**

- Convene water-related organizations to define shared goals and opportunities for collaboration
- Utilize government relations capacity to assist regional water partners

**Phase III: 2021 and beyond Formalize the Organization as a Regional Convener**

*Note: this phase requires further consideration and regional deliberation on form and function. These activities are what has been contemplated to this time.*

**Business Process**

- Establish new board structure, bylaws
- Expand staff to take on additional roles and produce more in-house

**Transportation**

- Re-evaluate traffic counting program
- Utilize new data sources for advanced scenario planning techniques
- Adopt 2025 Long Range Transportation Plan

**Land Use & Housing**

- Establish land use and housing committee
- Provide technical assistance to membership
- Establish metrics and track relevant data
- Document progress and update plans

**Economic Development**

- Establish economic development committee
- Establish metrics and track relevant data
- Document progress and update plans
- Manage EDA sustaining funding stream

**Water**

- Establish regional water committee, focussed on both supply and quality
- Establish metrics and track relevant data
- Document progress and update plans

## Regional Convener Models

While most of what is recommended in this strategic plan will be able to be implemented through an expanded MPO, there are additional regional planning structures that could facilitate access to additional funding and/or streamline regional collaboration and planning. These organizational models include:

- Regional Planning Commission (also called Planning Councils and Council of Governments)
- Economic Development District
- Regional Development Authority
- Regional Transportation Authority

The following descriptions provide highlighted information to allow for future deliberation by the MPO Administrative committee and appropriate partners.

Regardless of the model chosen, if any, the following values were highlighted consistently throughout the planning process and should provide guidance on the best path forward.

### **Governance**

- Grassroots engagement model
- Maintain local autonomy
- Ensure broad regional representation
- Balance of city/ county leadership
- Independent organization

### **Role in the Community**

- Independent third party
- Leverage the resources of regional partners
- Add capacity for communities to make informed decisions
- Do not create, and if possible eliminate, any redundancy in organizational mission and work product

### **Work Product**

- Primarily focused on planning
- Take a leadership role when needed, possibly including implementation
- Provide research and data resources to all collaborating parties
- Strike a balance of services to all member communities

The following information describes the four existing models that could serve in some way as a regional convener. Each has positive and negative attributes and an entirely new model may be preferred.

## Regional Planning Commission

There are 15 Regional Planning Commissions throughout the State of Indiana, with many forming over 25 years ago. The use of the formal name Regional Planning Commission is optional and in fact only 8 of the 15 organizations in the state have 'commission' in their name. The Indianapolis MPO region is not presently served by such an entity. The map of current regional planning commissions and their titles published by the Indiana Association of Regional Councils is included on the following page.

Regional Planning Commissions are authorized by Indiana Code 36-7-7 with the most recent amendments occurring in 1981.

### **Procedure for Establishment**

The following describes the basic approach:

- Two or more counties
- Concurrent resolutions to request the establishment
- Advanced to Governor, who then appoints self or member of staff to act as temporary chairperson for the election of officers
- Chose an organizational name that reflects role and function
- A county may request a change in its participation

### **Members**

- IC 36-7-7-4 dictates a procedure for developing the membership of the commission
- Includes representatives from each county executive and fiscal body
- For each county with a population greater than 50,000
  - County surveyor or designee
  - Two persons appointed by the executive of each municipality having a population of more than 50,000
  - One person appointed by the executive of each of the 7 largest municipalities having a population of less than 50,000.
- County appointments for those with population less than 50,000 include:
  - One person appointed by the executive of each of the 5 largest municipalities
- One voting member appointed by the Governor
- At least  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the commission members must be elected officials

### **Powers and Duties**

- "The commission shall institute and maintain a comprehensive planning and programming and coordinative management process for the region" (IC 36-7-7-7)
  - This means that the organizations are more focussed on planning and policy as opposed to implementation related activities.
- May provide technical assistance to any unit including
  - Public and private grants in aid
  - Cooperative agreements between governments
  - The performance of governmental powers and duties
- Commissions may receive grants and gifts from federal, state, local, private, and philanthropic sources
- For the purpose of providing adequate public services the commission may secure property
- May enter into partnerships with neighboring jurisdictions to coordinate planning
- Shall appoint an Executive Director that shall serve at the pleasure of the commission and recommended by the executive committee, shall maintain all administrative functions

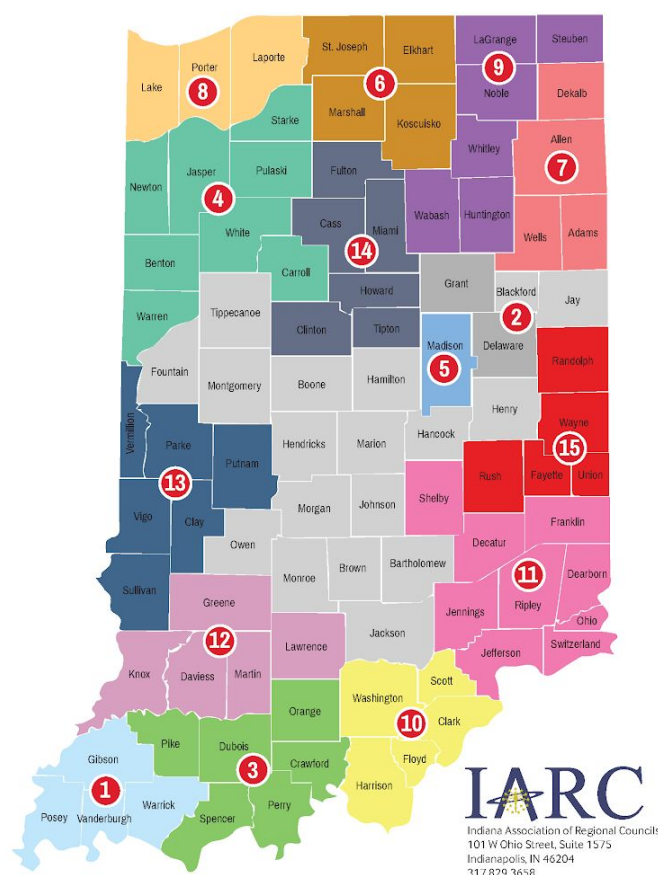
### **Annual appropriation budget**

- Each commissions shall prepare and adopt an annual appropriation budget for operation apportioned to each participating county on a pro rata per capita basis

- Amounts up to \$0.30 shall be certified by the county auditor who shall advertise the amount
- Amounts greater than \$0.30 per capita is subject to review by the county fiscal body in the usual manner of budget review

## Partners

A Regional Planning Commission would partner with each of the political jurisdictions' planning teams and/or individuals involved in that role.



**1. Economic Development Coalition of Southwest Indiana**  
Carol Hagedorn, Vice President  
318 Main Street, Suite 400, Evansville, IN 47708  
P: 812.423.2020 F: 812.423.2080  
chagedorn@southwestindiana.org  
www.southwestindiana.org

**2. East Central Indiana Regional Planning District**  
Bill Walters, Executive Director  
1208 White River Blvd, Ste 127, Muncie, IN 47303  
P: 765.254.0116 F: 765.286.0565  
bwalters@ecirpd.org  
www.ecirpd.org

**3. Indiana 15 Regional Planning Commission**  
Lisa Gehlhausen, Executive Director  
221 E First Street, Ferdinand, IN 47532  
P: 812.367.8455 F: 812.367.8171  
lisa@ind15rpc.org  
www.ind15rpc.org

**4. Kankakee - Iroquois Regional Planning Commission**  
Edwin Buswell, Executive Director  
115 E 4th Street, PO Box 127 Monon, IN 47959  
P: 219.253.6658 F: 219.253.6659  
elb@kirpc.net  
www.kirpc.net

**5. Madison County Council of Governments**  
Jerrold Bridges, Executive Director  
739 Main Street Anderson, IN 46016  
P: 765.641.9482 F: 765.641.9486  
jerry@heartlandmco.org  
www.mccog.net

**6. Michiana Area Council of Governments**  
James Turnwald, Executive Director  
227 W Jefferson Blvd, 1120 County/City Building  
South Bend, IN 46601  
P: 574.287.1829 F: 574.287.1840  
jturnwald@macog.com - www.macog.com

**7. Northeastern Indiana Regional Coordinating Council**  
Dan Avery, Executive Director  
200 E Berry Street, Suite 230  
Ft. Wayne, IN 46802  
P: 260.449.7309 F: 260.449.7682  
dan.avery@co.allen.in.us - www.nircc.com

**8. Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission**  
Ty Warner, Executive Director  
6100 Southport Rd, Portage, IN 46368  
P: 219.763.6060 F: 219.762.1653  
twamer@nirpc.org  
www.nirpc.org

**9. Region III-A Economic Development District & Regional Planning Commission**  
Matt Brinkman, Executive Director  
217 Fairview Blvd, Kendallville, IN 46755  
P: 260.347.4714 F: 260.347.4718  
mbrinkman@region3a.org  
www.region3a.org

**10. River Hills Economic Development District & Regional Planning Commission**  
Jill Saegesser, Executive Director  
300 Spring St, Suite 2A, Jeffersonville, IN 47130  
P: 812.288.4624 F: 812.288.8105  
jsaegesser@riverhills.cc  
www.riverhills.cc

**11. Southeastern Indiana Regional Planning Commission**  
Susan Craig, Executive Director  
405 W US Hwy 50, PO Box 765 Versailles, IN 47042  
P: 812.689.5505 F: 812.689.3526  
susan.craig@sirpc.org  
www.sirpc.org

**12. Southern Indiana Development Commission**  
Greg Jones, Executive Director  
PO Box 442, Loogootee, IN 47553  
P: 812.295.3707 F: 812.295.3717  
gjones@sidc.cc  
www.sidc.cc

**13. West Central Indiana Economic Development District**  
Ron Hinsenkamp, Executive Director  
1718 Wabash Ave  
Terre Haute, IN 47807  
P: 812.238.1561 F: 812.238.1564  
rhinsenkamp@westcentralin.com  
www.westcentralin.com

**14. North Central Indiana Regional Planning Council**  
Steven Ray, Executive Director  
1525 West Hoosier Boulevard, Suite 204  
Peru, IN 46970  
P: 765.689.4026  
sray@ncirpc.com  
www.ncirpc.com

**15. Eastern Indiana Regional Planning Commission**  
Jeff Plasterer, Executive Director  
401 East Main Street  
Richmond, IN 47374  
P: 765.977.3907  
jeffplasterer@gmail.com

## Economic Development District

The creation of an Economic Development District is covered under IC 36-7-7 with details found in Section 13.

An Economic Development District Is a group of at least two adjacent counties that:

- Contains at least two redevelopment counties (counties pursuing economic development)
- Includes an economic development growth center (population); and
- Has been officially designated as an economic development district by the Federal Government which requires:
  - Completion of CEDS (including involvement of all counties) and resolution of approval of CEDS from all counties involved;
  - Acquiring a letter from the governor's office in support of the EDD

## Members

- The counties creating an Economic Development District pass a resolution to approve its creation and to adopt a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy.

## Annual Budget

- Counties may make payments to the Economic Development District at amounts as determined by the board. They may be based on the assessed valuation or the population.
- An Economic Development District may receive annual planning funds from the Economic Development Administration as well as receive additional recognition in the pursuit of federal funding for a wide range of projects that can impact economic development.

## Partners

An Economic Development District would partner with both regional organizations engaged in economic development-related activities, and those currently operating at the local level. As the Economic Development District forms, the MPO should engage with partners such as MIBOR, Central Indiana Corporate Partnership, the Indy Chamber and Indy Partnership, and the region's colleges and universities. At the local level there are several local economic development organizations that can be collaborative partners.

The following organizations are also Economic Development Districts in Indiana:

- [Indiana 15 Regional Planning Commission](#)
- [Kankakee-Iroquois Regional Planning Commission](#)
- [Michiana Area Council of Governments](#)
- [Region III-A Economic Development District and Regional Planning Commission](#)
- River Hills Economic Development District and Regional Planning Commission
- [Southeastern Indiana Regional Planning Commission](#)
- Southern Indiana Development Commission
- [West Central Indiana Economic Development District](#)



## Regional Development Authority

The Central Indiana region has a Regional Development Authority (CIRDA) in place that was established in 2015 as a response to the Regional Cities Initiative. The CIRDA prepared a regional development plan that focused on the following three projects:

- Red Live Electric Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Corridor
- 16 Tech Downtown Technology District
- Regional Trails and Bikeways Development

The CIRDA was not successful in securing match funds from the IEDC for its regional development plan but all three of the defined projects have secured funding support and are advancing. As a companion effort the MPO strategic planning process the CIRDA its own strategic planning process which call for an updated regional development plan and a possible reconfiguration of its board to secure more region-wide representation.

### Procedure for Establishment

The establishment of a Regional Development Authority is governed by Indiana Code 36-7.6

- A Regional Development Authority may be established by any of the following
  - One (1) or more counties and one (1) or more adjacent counties.
  - One (1) or more counties and one (1) or more qualified cities in adjacent counties.
  - One (1) or more qualified cities and one (1) or more qualified cities in adjacent counties.
- A county or qualified city may become a member of the development authority only if the fiscal body of the county or qualified city adopts an ordinance authorizing them to participate.
- When a county establishes a development authority, each qualified city and third class city in the county also becomes a member of the development authority, without further action by the qualified city, third class city, or the development authority.
- A county or municipality may be a member of only one (1) development authority.
- A minimum of 8 years of participation is required for all members with a procedure for withdrawal described in the statute.
- Shall prepare a comprehensive strategic development plan.

### Members

A development authority is governed by a development board that includes the following members:

- Five members appointed by written agreement of the executives of the member jurisdictions of the development authority and:
  - May not be an elected official or an employee of a member county or municipality and
  - Must have five years professional work experience in at least one of the following: transportation, regional economic development, business or finance, private, nonprofit sector or academia
- Members serve for four years and there is a process for replacement if necessitated.

## **Powers and Duties**

Development Authorities have broad powers related to implementation of projects including:

- Finance, improve, construct, reconstruct, renovate, purchase, lease, acquire and equip land and projects that are of regional importance (any project that enhances a region with the goal of attracting people or business)
- Lease land or a project to an eligible political subdivision
- Construct or reconstruct highways, roads, bridges
- Acquire land and projects
- Make loans, loan guarantees, and grants

The Regional Development Authority has broader powers as compared to the Regional Planning Commission. This allows the RDA to both facilitate planning and lead implementation.

## **Partners**

A Regional Development Authority needs to engage a broad range of regional partners, including both regional organizations engaged in economic development-related activities and with those currently operating at the local level. If a larger Regional Development Authority was created, the MPO should engage with partners such as MIBOR, Central Indiana Corporate Partnership, the Indy Chamber and Indy Partnership, and the region's colleges and universities. At the local level there are several local economic development organizations that can be collaborative partners. As the range of projects for a Regional Development Authority is larger than an Economic Development District and includes, "any project that enhances a region with the goal of attracting people or business", care should be taken to engage a wide range of stakeholders and partners.

### *Regional Transit Authority*

CIRTA was created in 2004 to support regional public transportation of all types, whether as an operator, a program manager, or a coordinator. The organization has had a prominent role in promoting and implementing regional high-capacity transit initiatives like Indy Connect and local tax referenda, while simultaneously operating connective services in areas with immediate and conspicuous gaps, as well as administering Commuter Connect, Central Indiana's travel demand management program.

## **Members**

For the Indianapolis region the following membership is prescribed

- Two (2) members appointed by the executive of the county having the consolidated city.
- One (1) member appointed by the board of commissioners of the county having the consolidated city.
- One (1) member appointed by the executive of each other county in the authority.
- Two (2) members appointed by the governor from a list of at least five (5) names provided by the Indianapolis regional transportation council.
- One (1) member representing the four (4) largest municipalities in the authority located in a county other than a county containing a consolidated city. The member shall be appointed by the executives of the municipalities acting jointly.

- One (1) member representing the excluded cities located in a county containing a consolidated city that are members of the authority. The member shall be appointed by the executives of the excluded cities acting jointly.
- One (1) member of a labor organization representing employees of the authority who provide public transportation services within the geographic jurisdiction of the authority. The labor organization shall appoint the member.

### **Powers and Duties**

The powers and duties of the RTA are directed to the operations of the board and activities related to public transportation. These include the ability acquire, finance and maintain real property utilized in the execution of activities related to public transportation.

### **Procedure for Establishment**

A fiscal body of a county or municipality may, by ordinance, establish a regional transportation authority (referred to as "the authority" in this chapter) for the purpose of acquiring, improving, operating, maintaining, financing, and generally supporting a public transportation system that operates within the boundaries of an area designated as a transportation planning district by the Indiana department of transportation. However, only one (1) public transportation authority may be established within an area designated as a transportation planning district by the Indiana department of transportation.

### **Partners**

The RTA can work with public and private entities in the planning and operations of public transportation systems.

# Appendix and Methodology

## Models of Regionalism

1. **The Heliocentric Region (pre-1920s):** The old mopolitan form basically had two poles: city and suburb, downtown and the community in which one lived.<sup>2</sup> These places had a definitive “edge of town,” where the city stopped and country began - in this sense, central cities were much larger versions of many of the county seats we see around the state today. The geographic scope of these regions was limited by the speed of available transportation - mostly walking, biking, or horseback. This was the predominant form of development prior to the widespread adoption of automobiles in the 1920s.
2. **The Multi-Centered Region (1880s - 1940s):** As older cities matured, new centers of activity naturally emerged along transit corridors and at the edges of the community, particularly where a central city had grown enough to envelop a smaller established community (areas like Broad Ripple, Meridian Hills). “Streetcar suburbs” emerged along transit routes in growing regions across the country, usually catalyzed by real estate deals with the companies that were operating the transit service. “The spiderweb configuration of the new metropolitan form replaced that of the spoked wheel,”<sup>3</sup> though development was still fairly compact until the widespread adoption of the automobile.
3. **Planned Regionalism (1890s - 1950s):** The turn of the 20th Century brought a revolution in city planning. Daniel Burnham’s famous Plan of Chicago was published in 1909, and Britain’s thought leaders like Patrick Geddes and Ebenezer Howard were making the direct connection between town planning and social issues, Howard founded the *Garden Cities Movement*, an orderly response to overcrowded and polluted industrial cities with rural, self-contained, greenbelt-surrounded communities. Frederic Osborn, and Peter Self later realized that regional planning was the only way to counter sprawl, and they demonstrated the close relationship between urban renewal, suburban expansion, green belts and new towns.
4. **Garden Cities, City Beautiful, & New Towns (1898-1960s):** At the turn of the 20th Century, industrialized cities (which planner Clarence Stein referred to as “dinosaur cities”) were struggling with overcrowded, polluted, chaotic, and generally miserable conditions. Planners, architects, landscape architects, and sociologists begin considering the form of cities, producing a wave of industry advancement that still impacts city planning today. The City Beautiful movement emphasized monumental architecture and urban green space, resulting in many of the distinctly neo-classical American civic spaces we see in older cities today. A similar ethos was applied to the form of cities themselves, perhaps best represented by Daniel Burnham’s 1909 *Plan for Chicago* and Ebenezer Howard’s Garden Cities movement in Britain. As documented in Howard’s 1902 book *Garden Cities of To-morrow*, Garden Cities was an idealised region of strictly planned communities, designed as a collection of cities designed as concentric rings, radial boulevards, and aggressive open space preservation. Each community had prescribed population thresholds for self-sufficiency, at which point a new Garden City would be created. Only two Garden Cities were built before WWII - Letchworth and Welwyn, both in England -

<sup>2</sup> Hudnut, *Changing Metropolitan America* p 41

<sup>3</sup> Hudnut, *Changing Metropolitan America* p 42

dozens of cities around the world have adopted features from Howard's vision, including Reston, VA, Seaside, FL, and Columbia, MD. Howard's work inspired a remarkable group of American architects, planners, and social activists led by Lewis Mumford, Clarence Stein, and Patrick Geddes to form the New Towns movement, and in the 1920s to create Regional Planning Association of America (RPAA). New-towns-in-towns, planned communities. RPAA knew that the new technologies of their time - the automobile, electric power, the telephone, radio - meant a crisis for "dinosaur cities." Instead, cities and their citizens could expand throughout the region into the green world of farms and small towns. The "dinosaur cities" would fade away and the new "regional city" would emerge as a network of New Towns in a perpetually green landscape: the home of an advanced society in union with nature.<sup>4</sup>

5. **Consolidation (1950s - 1980s):** In the decades after WWII, many states were focusing on consolidation to help control costs. The Indiana School Reorganization act of 1959, for example, reduced the number of Indiana school districts from 966 to 402. The consolidation of Indianapolis with Marion County - Unigov - was another prime example, as were similar consolidations in Muncie, Jacksonville, FL, and Nashville, TN. Policymakers implemented Unigov to combine as many jurisdictions as politically possible into as few as possible to help streamline service delivery and avoid the uneven loss (and gain) of tax base, as thousands of Indianapolis residents moved to Marion County's suburbanizing outer townships. The consolidation was limited to just within Marion County limits (with the exception of "excluded cities" Lawrence, Beech Grove, Southport, and Speedway), but it still included the vast majority of the region's population. Serious regional power struggles was avoided for decades.
6. **Regulated Regionalism (1950s - 1990s):** Places that did not consolidate had to create functional working relationships between their many jurisdictions, and new federal housing, transportation, and environmental funding was often mandated regional coordination. Some states - including Indiana - passed regional planning enabling acts to create regional planning commissions, and many others formed Councils of Government (COGs) for their major metro areas. The Atlanta Regional Commission, the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG), and the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) are three prominent examples of still high-functioning products of this era. These organizations were generally a forum for collaboration and decision making, but they lacked the law-making or enforcement powers that would have been required to create a new level of government between state and local. This was the era that produced the Highway Trust Fund and its mandate for metropolitan planning organizations, which was the origin of the Indy MPO and MPOs for every region in the country larger than 50,000 people.
7. **Modern Regionalism (1970s - today):** There was a stark divide in how regions addressed regionalism in the 1990s and 2000s, and some regions (like Indianapolis) never really made the leap from Consolidation or Regulatory Regionalism. The concept of Megaregions emerged in this era, and economic development theory began to recognize the region (rather than the jurisdiction) as the basic building block of the national economy. "Beginning in the 1970s and 1980s, regional planning began to evolve into more multidimensional and comprehensive area-wide plans and long-range strategies that integrated related topical areas such as land use, transportation, open space, and air quality. [More recently,] regional planning has further advanced integration of complex related issues, such as infrastructure, housing, economic development, and environmental planning."<sup>5</sup> As we've looked to

<sup>4</sup> Calthorpe, *The Regional City* p xvii

<sup>5</sup> Piro, Leiter, and Rooney, *Emerging Trends in Regional Planning (PAS Report 586)* 2017, page 4

benchmark communities, it's clear that every region, particularly those who may have delayed addressing interlocal collaboration, are recognizing the value of a regional perspective, addressing the same set of issues, and creating structures to address regional problems.

## Peer Organizations and Precedents

When planning for the future of the Indy MPO, there is no need to re-invent the wheel; organizations in similarly sized cities to Indianapolis provide inspiration in terms of organizational structure, programming, and engagement with the larger community. During the benchmarking process the MPO performed site visits to two peer organizations: Denver Regional Council of Government and the Atlanta Regional Commission. In addition we reviewed benchmark information on several other organizations.

In Atlanta, the Atlanta Regional Commission, which is descended from the first publicly supported, multi-county planning agency in the U.S., oversees the MPO, the Economic Development District, the Area Agency on Aging, and several other regional initiatives, as well as creating the regional plan. Through an innovative structure, the Atlanta Regional Commission's programs are interlocking and, together, support the goal of better air quality standards through denser development, transportation planning, and resource sustainability.

In Denver, the Denver Regional Council of Governments is a planning organization where local governments collaborate to establish guidelines, set policy and allocate funding in the areas of:

- Transportation and Personal Mobility
- Growth and Development
- Aging and Disability Resources

DRCOG is organized as a council of governments, with the DRCOG itself serving as a planning organization, technical assistance provider and forum for visionary local member governments. DRCOG also functions as a Regional Planning Commission per Colorado state statute and prepares the plan for the physical development of the region, known as Metro Vision. It is the federally designated Area Agency on Aging (AAA) and serves as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the region.

In both Atlanta and Denver, the regional planning entity takes on much more than simply land use or transportation. Their role covers the myriad issues that are better addressed at a regional level, and from this viewpoint they can coordinate state and federal resources, involve differing groups of stakeholders in planning, and ensure that communities are moving forward on an overall vision. Examples from many other regional entities are included in this section, showing how these groups are organized and how to tackle issues such as housing, transportation, and resource planning.

### *Atlanta*

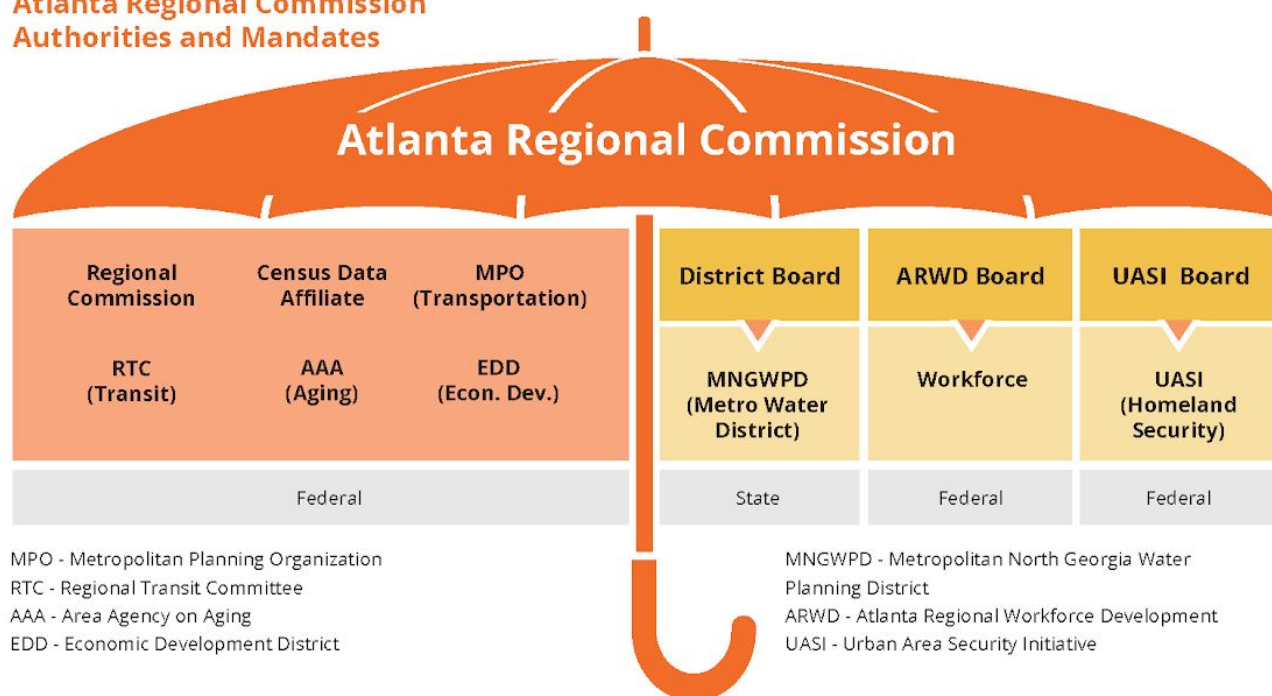
In 1998, due to large and rapid population growth, the Atlanta region became the first large metropolitan area to enter conformity lapse under EPA standards for clean air. If this lapse was not addressed, and air quality not improved, then ARC would lose its federal funding, and the city would become known for an unhealthy environment. Being cited by the EPA was a wake-up call to the community and it made the ARC, and regional planning, more relevant.



Because any plan developed by ARC could not contribute to air pollution, ARC became more innovative. Instead of expanding roads and thereby increasing traffic, they turned their focus to public transportation, working closely with the Metropolitan Atlanta Regional Transit Authority (MARTA). They also centered their regional planning assistance grants around a program called the Livable Cities Initiative, which supports dense, transportation-accessible development of communities around walkable main street environments. The ARC has also taken a lead role on programs that are aligned with sustainable regional planning, such as the North Georgia Water District.

ARC has developed an organizational structure that flexes to integrate different functions and services that enables them to comprehensively cover what may be separate silos in other communities. ARC encompasses the MPO, the EDD, and heads up the regional plan, which is also the CEDS. They are also tasked with administration of the Metro North Georgia Water Planning District, the Atlanta Region Workforce Development Board, and the Urban Area Security Initiative.

### Atlanta Regional Commission Authorities and Mandates



The ARC has the advantage of being supported by both the business community and a favorable regulatory environment. Business leaders sit on the board of ARC along with elected leaders from each of the counties in the region. These private interests support innovative planning that supports quality of life programs, for example, the Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce has been a partner in pushing for transportation taxes to be passed. The business community in Atlanta recognizes that attracting talent to the region is a priority, and that coordinated regional planning plays a major part - from decreasing commute times to ensuring water quality.

ARC is supported on a state policy level by strong planning laws in Georgia, such as the Georgia Planning Act of 1989, which help state prepare for growth/development in coordinated, rational manner. Communities must have a plan for growth, and ARC offers services and guidance for the development of these plans, as well as implementation grants through the Livable Cities Initiative. On the other hand, when large development projects are undertaken, review by ARC is triggered to ensure that these impactful developments align with the regional plan. Other planning efforts are also supported by state regulation; the plan developed by the North



Georgia Water District is enforced by the Georgia Environmental Protection Division. The North Georgia Water District develops the regional plan, local governments are responsible for implementing the plan, and Georgia EPD approves the plan and enforces implementation via permits.

During our visit, Executive Director Doug Hooker often cited that they have been engaged in projects because they fit well into the role of a “convener” like no other entity in the region. They have established a level of trust in the community and both governmental partners and non-profit groups turn to them to lead projects that would benefit from a regional perspective. Furthermore, ARC puts significant emphasis on and engaged sophisticated means of public outreach and engagement activities. To us, as observers, it seemed that ARC saw their role as one of servant leadership to the community.

### Denver

In Denver, while visiting the Denver Regional Council of Governments, similar themes arose; specifically those of a regional approach to a crisis, and the importance of building trust among partner communities. Crises have lead to some of the most impactful programs administered by the DRCOG. For example, the business attraction compact that communities in the region belong to was borne from a significant regional economic depression in the 80s. Similarly, the state water planning effort co-occurred with, and was spurred onward by droughts and wildfires.

The Denver region has been able to make some considerable strides as a region – coordinated water planning, growth boundaries, and a regional approach to business attraction. But all of these have not been the result of a top-down directive – they have been the result of years of building consensus and establishing priorities at a local level. There is a sense of regionalism based on the “Colorado First” attitude. This is either because stakeholders genuinely believe in regionalism, or have an interest in showing up to make sure that their viewpoint is heard.

The DRCOG is one of the oldest councils of government in the U.S., formed in 1955 as Denver was experiencing a post-WWII population boom. Today it exists as a planning organization where local governments collaborate to establish guidelines, set policy and allocate funding in the areas of:

- Transportation and Personal Mobility
- Growth and Development
- Aging and Disability Resources

DRCOG is organized as a council of governments, with the DRCOG itself serving as a planning organization, technical assistance provider and forum for visionary local member governments. DRCOG also functions as a Regional Planning Commission per Colorado state statute and prepares the plan for the physical development of the region, known as Metro Vision. The DRCOG demonstrates a strong framework for collaboration that began with the [Mile High Compact](#) and is embodied in the [Metro Vision](#). Metro Vision “*protects and enhances the region’s quality of life, is aspirational, long-range and regional in focus, offers ideas for local implementation, respects local plans, encourages communities to work together, and is dynamic and flexible.*”

By state statute, communities can adopt the regional development plan as their local plan, which is unique to this region. The regional plan doesn’t zone or plan for communities, instead, it’s an aspirational plan. Additionally, 104 Urban Centers are identified, which are designated areas that are projected to see population and employment growth. These Centers are places that have contacted the DRCOG to understand how to

densify better; DRCOG provides funds for planning to develop these areas into mixed-use and multi-modal environments. Since 2007, DRCOG has contributed \$6.3 million to 43 studies.

### **Other Services**

Other than serving as a planning organization, DRCOG performs a broad range of services. They have a research division that provides a significant amount of scenario planning, and data collection reporting, including user surveys from public transportation users. As the Area Agency on Aging they provide a robust set of services for seniors. As the MPO, the DRCOG represents all or part of ten counties, all of which is deemed urban. The MPO facilitates the allocation of federal transportation resources.

### **Funding**

DRCOG is funded primarily through the federal government, which makes up 62% of its budget. Membership dues make up 8% and are determined via a formula that combines assessed value and population. State grants make up 12%. The annual budget is \$23 million, which includes pass-through money.

DRCOG does some interesting things with its funding. It sets aside \$40 million of its funding for a regional traffic signal program coordination program, which is administered by dedicated engineering staff and referred to internally as the “hidden jewel” of the organization. Funding is also provided for regional car and van pool programs. To combat the perception that DRCOG prioritizes projects unfairly, a majority of its project funding goes to county-level committees, which prioritize their own projects to fund. However, a lack of funding has impacted some of the major programs; after several years of investing in light rail, further expansion has been put on hold due to funding shortfalls -- and so there is a burgeoning public transportation issue.

### **Coordination with Other Groups**

Coordination with other regional groups is important for the success of the DRCOG mission, but it has not always been this way. Their current director, Douglas Rex, came from Oklahoma City, where the MPO and the Chamber worked together closely. Under his leadership, the culture of the organization is changing to be more service-oriented, and to really help member communities succeed. They are going out of their way to meet new partners and re-establish partnerships. For example, one partner is the Denver corollary for the CICEO group which has been around for twenty-three years, is well-organized, and has accomplished a significant amount of advocacy work in the region, as well as being an influential voice to legislators.

### **Findings:**

Both Denver and Atlanta are moving toward planning around nodes - Atlanta with LCI and Denver with Urban Centers. These nodes are dense population centers ideally linked with transit. How can Central Indiana make this a regional initiative? How do we get local leaders on board if - hard to make the case for transit, for investing in transit-oriented development if they haven't seen it.

What is the crisis that the Indianapolis region faces that will spur leaders into action and collaboration? Is it population projection either negative (leading to loss of business, a hollowed out core city, poverty, lack of tax revenue) or positive (increased commute times, tax on city/regional services i.e. water, decreased quality of life, lack of housing).

### **Final Peer Observations**

Regional trust is an issue that comes up in conversations with MPOs across the board. Engaging communities can be challenging - there is the issue of less populous communities feeling left out of planning, or as if their

votes do not count, especially if moving forward on regional issues like transportation or water management impacts them negatively or not at all. One way to mitigate this is to ensure that structures are in place that ensure all member communities are treated fairly. Board structure, for example, was shown to be important for both Denver and Atlanta, as well as for Regional Development Authorities in Indiana. Being inclusive and transparent about who is on boards and why provides accountability for the organization and board members. Furthermore, creating a values-driven process for how funding is allocated disperses claims of bias. Both ARC and DRCOG have developed competitive processes to award planning grants, while the RDAs in Northeast Indiana and the Southbend-Elkhart Region created a metric-based process for allocating Regional Cities funding.

### Summary of structures and additional duties of various MPOs

Location	Organization	Structure	Additional (Non-Transportation) Duties
Jacksonville, FL	North Florida Transportation Planning Organization (TPO)	MPO + Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The North Florida TPO also staffs a nonprofit organization (Clean Fuels Coalition) dedicated to advocating for alternative fuels for transportation in the region.</li> </ul>
South Bend, IN	Michiana Area Council of Governments (MACOG)	COG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MACOG is also an RPO (rural)</li> <li>Air and water quality</li> <li>Environmental planning</li> <li>Economic development</li> <li>Data management</li> </ul>
Tampa, FL	Plan Hillsborough	MPO + Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plan Hillsborough is a co-location between Hillsborough County City-County Planning Commission, Hillsborough MPO, and the Hillsborough River Board.</li> <li>The Planning Commission is a consolidated planning organization of the municipalities in the region and also makes recommendations to them.</li> <li>The River Board is a state legislated organization that oversees activity along Hillsborough River Corridor.</li> </ul>
Grand Rapids, MI	Grand Valley Metropolitan Council (GVMC)	COG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>GIS data repository</li> <li>The Lower Grand River Organization of Watersheds is described as an agency of GVMC and is a partnership between municipalities and other organizations dedicated to water resources in the region</li> <li>Clean Air Action and other environmental programs are also linked on the website.</li> <li>Coordinating local legislators and regional planning are also listed as key activities.</li> </ul>
Minneapolis, MN	Metropolitan Council	Regional Governance, Planning & Service Provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Metropolitan Council is a large organization providing many services from planning to transit drivers and park maintenance.</li> <li>Primary areas of focus include transit, wastewater collection, and affordable housing. Metropolitan Council provides planning, services, policy-making, and regional governance under each of these.</li> </ul>

Denver, CO	Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG)	COG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regional planning focused on transportation and land use</li> <li>Advocacy for transportation and older adult programs at the state and federal levels</li> <li>Area Agency on Aging</li> </ul>
Anderson, IN	Madison County Council of Governments (MCCOG)	COG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planning: Comprehensive, land use, park and recreation, site design and landscape, capital improvement plans, housing rehan plan</li> <li>Other services: GIS</li> <li>A “Community Toolkit” for residents is described as a “guide to sustainable living” and discusses environmental, equity, and economic issues in the region for</li> </ul>
Nashville, TN	Nashville Area MPO	MPO (in process of changing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nashville Area MPO is a stand-alone MPO.</li> <li>Joint Committee on Regional Coordination described as partnership with Greater Nashville Regional Council (Planning and Economic Development – 13 counties)</li> </ul>
San Diego, CA	SANDAG	COG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Land use, public safety, regional growth</li> <li>Partners with San Diego County Regional Airport Authority</li> <li>Monitoring and evaluation on “fiscal stability and economic prosperity of the region”</li> <li>Borders Committee between US and Mexico for regional collaboration</li> <li>Mapping, GIS, and demographic data</li> </ul>
Dallas, TX	North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG)	COG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NCTCOG has a long list of additional programs that includes air quality planning, area agency on aging, congestion management, criminal justice, demographics and development, emergency preparedness training, fiscal management and transit operations, GIS, intermodal planning, new leader networks, radio communications, regional 911, regional police academy, a clean &amp; green program, a homeland security grant program, a regional vision plan, and workforce development.</li> </ul>

# Panel Methodology

## Before the Panels

There were three activities that took place before the Panels took place: choosing co-chairs for the panels, selecting the participants, and creating white papers to share with the participants before the discussions.

First, a set of regional leaders in each subject area were asked to be co-chairs for the panels. The co-chairs' duties included attending the panels and observing their proceedings, and then reporting on the recommendations of their panel participants to the Administrative Committee of the MPO at its meeting on December 1, 2017. The Panel Co-Chairs are:

- Transportation: Melody Park, City of Indianapolis & Gary Pool, Hancock County
- Land Use: Brooke Thomas, American Structurepoint & Mike Hollibaugh, City of Carmel
- Water: Marcus Turner, Town of Avon & Jeff Willman, Citizens Energy Group
- Housing: Tom Dickey, The Hageman Group & Abbe Hohmann, Site Strategy Advisors
- Economic Development: Tom Guvera, Indiana University & Mark Fisher, Indy Chamber

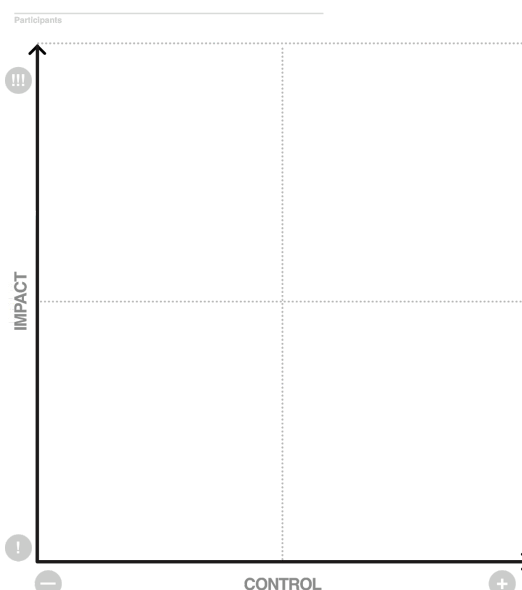
Also, a white paper was written for each Panel by Fourth Economy, Green Street, and Nelson Nygaard, and edited by the MPO staff and co-chairs. These white papers summarized the dozens of stakeholder interviews that Fourth Economy has conducted in the region since June 2017, along with summaries of relevant studies and reports that the Fourth Economy team reviewed, and applicable precedents from other regions and peer planning organizations.

## During the Panels

Four of the five panels were two-hour meetings that followed the same format; the Transportation panel was a longer meeting that covered a more focused range of subjects, but with the same general activities as the other meetings. That format included:

- **Presentation of existing conditions:** A presentation summarizing the material from the white paper;
- **Prioritization of issues facing the region:** Working in small groups, the participants prioritize the issues they saw as being the most critical to the region onto a 2x2 chart where the vertical axis represented greater or lesser impact to the

### RANKING THE ISSUES



### Indianapolis MPO Panel Scenario Planning

SCENARIO	POSSIBLE IMPACTS
STAKEHOLDERS/PARTNERS IN RESPONSE	BIG IDEA FOR THE RESPONSE & ACTIONS TO PREPARE
INFORMATION/DATA NEEDED	
HOW TO TELL IF RESPONSE IS SUCCESSFUL	

region, and the horizontal axis represented having greater or lesser control over the issues as a region.

- **Scenario Planning exercise:** Small groups of participants were assigned a scenario that described a future event that could bring extreme change to the Central Indiana region and asked to describe how the region could react to it. Specifically, the participants were asked to describe the possible impacts of the scenario, the stakeholders and partners that would be involved in the response, the actions that would need to be taken as a part of the response, the information or data that would be needed to implement it, and how to tell if the response was successful.

After both the issue prioritization activity and the scenario planning, the groups presented their findings to the rest of the participants in their Panel to elicit comments and additional ideas from them.

### After the Panels

After the first round of Panel meetings concluded, the consultants set to work, looking across the actions that were suggested in the scenario planning exercise to understand which actions were suggested across the groups. This, ultimately, was the goal of the scenario planning: although it's impossible to understand what will happen in the future, if a common action or type of partnership was suggested across a number of possible futures, then it's likely an action the region should take now to be resilient in the face of any possible number of futures.

Those actions to take per topic area will be reinforced with the key issues that the action addresses or responses to, potential stakeholders that will be involved, and, as applicable, precedents of similar actions or initiatives from other regions.

The co-chairs presented those issues that the Panel participants said should be pursued on a regional level, and the MPO's Administrative Committee deliberated what role the MPO should take in that recommendation (and, consequently, how the MPO's scope and operations should expand accordingly). Generally, the discussion centered on various roles of the MPO including:

- have no role in implementing the recommendation;
- be a planning and data provider to reinforce the recommendation, with no regulation or actual authority;
- be a convener, tracking progress on regulatory goals, and creating a collective impact model around a recommendation;
- offer planning for hire in the subject area, conducting local play for free for MPO members;
- offer members services using the MPO staff and consultants to support the recommendations; or
- be a regulator, establishing and enforcing a recommendation.

During the development of the MPO Strategic Plan there have been a number of recommendations that have been discussed in relation to the need for regional planning. These recommendations have been documented during the review of previous reports, interviews with various stakeholders, and the participation by subject matter experts in panels that covered initial recommendations in the themes of transportation, economic development, water, and use and housing. The panels met twice, first to review scenarios related to the theme,



and second to refine a set of recommendations that were developed in response to the scenario exercises and previous engagement.

During the course of the second panel it became clear that there was significant overlap between many of the themes and their recommendations. In the case of the housing and land use panels there was enough similarity that the co-chairs recommended an integration of the two. The results of these discussions are documented in the following set of recommended Actions that the MPO could undertake on behalf of the region.