

CREATING TOMORROW TODAY

CREATING THE PLAN

The 1st Comprehensive Regional Plan for all of Northwest Indiana

For the first time in its history, NIRPC is taking up the task of creating a single Comprehensive Regional Plan for Lake, Porter and LaPorte counties. The historical significance is accented by the fact that we begin the planning process in 2009, a milestone year marking the 100th anniversary of Daniel Burnham's famous Plan of Chicago. The Burnham plan, widely



credited as the blueprint for Chicago's transformation from an overgrown hog town into a modern metropolis, left as its visible legacy a public lake-

front, an extensive forest preserve network, and a rationalized transportation system of railroads and highways. But it also left us an important conceptual legacy: the idea of regionalism. Burnham envisioned a Chicago region that stretched "... from Kenosha on the north, around to DeKalb on the west, and thence to Michigan City on the south..." This was "no little plan," but rather a metropolitan guide for an entire century. Similarly, NIRPC's new plan is looking to the future; this plan will establish a vision that stretches across Lake, Porter and LaPorte counties and will take the region out to the year 2040.

NIRPC's comprehensive regional plan, though focused on a smaller geographic scale and a more imminent horizon than that of Burnham, is no less ambitious. This ambition is finding expression in two ways. First, NIRPC's planning scope is expanding to integrate five areas: transportation, environmental management, economic development, land use and social equity. And second, NIRPC is working to involve an unprecedented number of North-

west Indiana residents and regional interests in the planning process.

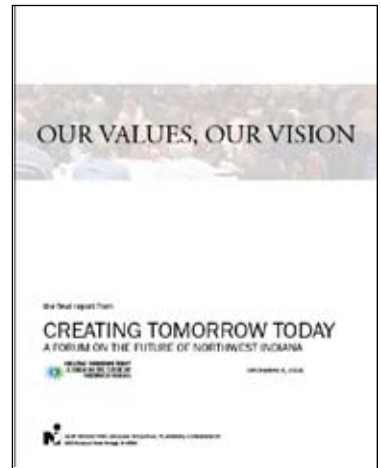
Expanded Planning Scope

NIRPC is the Metropolitan Planning Organization for Northwest Indiana. As such, one of its primary responsibilities has been the completion of a long range, multi-modal transportation plan to guide the programming of federal dollars. Recent legislation, though, expanded NIRPC's scope to include environmental and economic development issues. Previous plans such as the Marquette Plan began the shift towards a broad, all-inclusive approach to planning in Northwest Indiana. Now, in form of the Comprehensive Regional Plan, NIRPC will for the first time be creating a truly integrated plan for the entire region, identifying recommendations across five areas: transportation, economic development, environmental management, land use and social equity.

Unprecedented Public Involvement

In this planning process, NIRPC is engaging a greater number of citizens and stakeholders by providing involvement opportunities that move beyond the typical public comment period. Gathering the vision, values, and priorities of citizens from across the region was the key goal of the December 6 Forum on the Future of Northwest Indiana held at the Radisson Hotel in Merrillville. At that day-long event, 500 people from all walks of life engaged in small table discussions to identify and rank priorities using keypad polling. Additional sub-regional cluster workshops are planned in each county. Citizens are also invited to participate in working groups that focus on specific topics. These groups will be generating the ideas – including the goals, objectives – that will shape the plan.

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Our Values, Our Vision: the Final Report from the Forum on the Future of Northwest Indiana is available at www.nirpc.org



A regional mapping exercise at the Dec. 6 Forum on the Future.



500 participants learn keypad polling at the Dec. 6 Forum on the Future.

Why a Comprehensive Regional Plan?

Federal law requires a regional *transportation* plan that addresses a number of issues, including population forecasts, air quality, congestion management, safety, etc for every metropolitan area in the United States. However, we are finding that comprehensive regional planning is uniquely suited to address many of Northwest Indiana's challenges. How so, you ask? Well, let's unpack the term.

Why Comprehensive?

A comprehensive planning approach is beneficial because it produces a more balanced and sustainable plan. It does this by pulling stakeholders and citizens out of our silos and giving everyone a place at the table. Transportation, environmental management, economic development, land use and social equity are naturally integrated. We all grasp this intuitively. Consider, for example, a rush hour traffic jam. In this daily phenomenon, we see how *land use* decisions about the location of housing

and employment created a situation where a particular mode of *transportation*, the car, is necessary for *economic* activity. Since this is the only option, we all exercise it, only to find that we've jammed up the roads for each other. So we sit there idling, releasing exhaust into the air, and creating a toxic *environment*. Meanwhile, those who are unable to drive find it increasingly difficult to find work, which threatens *social equity*.

The planning process itself moves from the general to the particular; and thus reflects the interdependence of the five planning areas. We are beginning with a broad vision of the region, which stands as a cohesive picture of our desired future. As we move forward in the process, our scope will narrow and our recommendations become more refined, until we have precise policies. Along the way, we continually check and review our recommendations against one another, so that the plan that emerges is internally consistent and working to advance

the vision and promote smarter, more sustainable investments and policy.

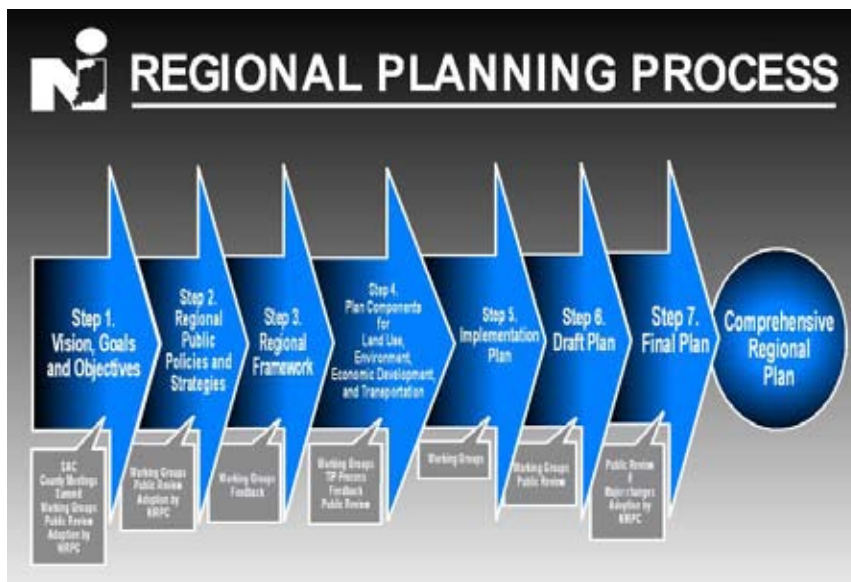
Why Regional?

Cities, towns and counties each make their own comprehensive plans, but the scopes of these plans are too narrow to address the issues of Northwest Indiana. Although we have a history of fierce independence, a

the world. The hulking industrial plants that characterize our region import raw materials from around the world and distribute the finished products just as far. In so doing, they provide jobs for people throughout the region.

A regional plan is necessary because it recognizes these systems and brings together citizens from around the region to identify issues and coordinate on common concerns, projects

and initiatives. Instead of every city, town and county trying to "go it alone" and working at cross-purposes, collaboration at the regional level creates efficiencies and facilitates cooperation. This saves us time and money as we all seek to improve the quality of life in Northwest Indiana and ensure that everyone in Northwest Indiana shares in its well-being.



growing realization of our *interdependence* calls us to the task of creating a regional plan. We may live in separate communities, but we are linked in many ways: we drive on the same roads, breathe the same air, drink (and are inundated by) the same water and depend on many of the same job opportunities.

In other words, the natural and manmade systems of Northwest Indiana do not stay within political boundaries. Our transportation system, environmental assets and economic resources boast significance on the state, national and global scales. Consider that millions of people and millions of dollars of goods pass through our region on a daily basis, cutting across municipalities on regional rail lines and roads. Fragile ecosystems in places like the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, which stretches across Lake, Porter and LaPorte counties, provide a home for diverse plants and animals in combinations found nowhere else in

Why Plan?

In addition to those mentioned above, planning itself is important for a number of reasons. Planning encourages wise choices, and good planning helps create communities that offer better choices for where and how people work and live. By enabling civic leaders, business interests, and citizens to play a meaningful role in the building of our community, planning also bridges gaps and promotes engagement. The act of making a plan brings people and organizations together to identify shared goals and determine how much time, money and other resources are needed to reach them. An ambitious vision is great, but by itself it is merely an idea. Implementation requires the support of many partners, including the federal, state and local governments, private businesses and non-profit agencies. A plan shows these potential partners that our region is serious and prepared to make the vision a reality.

The CRP Planning Team

Playing significant roles alongside the NIRPC staff and the public are a nationally-recognized consultant team and a stakeholder-comprised Steering Committee. Planning consultants HNTB and AmericaSpeaks have signed on to provide technical assistance and expertise. These firms bring with them a number of innovative tools, such as keypad polling, and capabilities, like scenario-building, which will be used throughout the planning process.

Directing the process is a Steering Committee chaired by Mayor Chuck Oberlie of Michigan

City. Mayor Oberlie, a veteran urban planner and NIRPC commissioner, brings to the table a keen understanding of both local and regional issues. The committee includes representatives from local governments, nonprofit advocacy and community groups, universities and private enterprise.

In addition, an Outreach Subcommittee has formed for the purpose of assisting NIRPC with on-going outreach efforts throughout the development of the CRP. This subcommittee will provide significant support and guidance leading up to public events, such as

the Subregional Cluster workshops, regional open houses, and a future Regional Assembly. Working closely with NIRPC staff they will work to expand outreach to underrepresented constituencies, monitor results of outreach efforts, and recommend additional strategies to improve participation in the planning process.



The Steering Committee:

Roosevelt Allen, Jr. <i>Lake County</i>	Phil Gralik <i>RW Armstrong Engineering</i>	Richard Morrisroe <i>East Chicago</i>
Mike Aylesworth <i>IDEM</i>	Michael Griffin <i>Town of Highland</i>	Kay Nelson <i>Northwest Indiana Forum</i>
Don Babcock <i>NIPSCO</i>	Jerry Halperin <i>Indiana Department of Transportation</i>	Bob Nickovich <i>Lake County Parks</i>
Geof Benson <i>Town of Beverly Shores</i>	Richard Herr <i>Hoosier Environmental Council</i>	Sandy O'Brien <i>Sierra Club Dunelands Group</i>
Mitchell Bishop <i>La Porte County</i>	Marie Hoggs <i>Senior Citizens Representative</i>	Charles Oberlie <i>City of Michigan City</i>
Joan Bliss <i>Retired Citizen</i>	Pat Jackson <i>NW IN Federation</i>	Sylvia Planer <i>Hispanic Coordinating Council</i>
David Blumenthal <i>The Center of Workforce Innovations, Inc.</i>	Martin Jaffe <i>U of IL at Chicago, Urban Planning/Policy</i>	Jill Ritchie <i>US Steel Corporation/Gary Works</i>
Peter Borcz <i>Interested Region Citizen</i>	George T. Janiec <i>Disability Community Board Member</i>	Carolyn Saxton <i>Lubeznik Center for the Arts</i>
Lee Botts <i>Environmental Advocate</i>	Jim Jessup <i>Leadership La Porte County</i>	Mary Stewart-Pellegrini <i>The Stewart Management Group</i>
Kevin Breitzke <i>Porter County Surveyor</i>	Danita Johnson-Hughes <i>Edgewater Systems for Balanced Living</i>	Daniel Suson <i>Purdue University; School of Eng/Math/Sci</i>
Bryan Bullock <i>Revitalization First/Attorney at Law</i>	Dr. Earl Jones <i>IUN Environmental Justice Partnership</i>	Ellen Szarleta <i>IUN SPEA</i>
A.J. Bytnar <i>Lake County</i>	Keith Kirkpatrick <i>KPM Group; Leadership Northwest Indiana</i>	Debbie Thomas <i>IUN: Center for Regional Excellence</i>
Cassandra Cannon <i>United Urban Network Inc.</i>	Eric Kurtz <i>Town of Odgen Dunes</i>	Mary Jane Thomas <i>City of La Porte</i>
Ken Dallmeyer <i>Regional Bus Authority</i>	Carl Lisek <i>South Shore Clean Cities, Inc</i>	Bob Thompson <i>Porter County Plan Commission</i>
Jan Dick <i>Valparaiso Pathways Committee</i>	Lou Martinez <i>Lake Area United Way</i>	Garry Traynham <i>Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore</i>
Beth Downes <i>City of Hammond</i>	Myrna Maldonado <i>City of East Chicago</i>	George Van Til <i>Lake County Surveyor</i>
Dale B. Engquist <i>Retired Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore</i>	Sergio Mendoza <i>Lake Michigan Coastal Program</i>	Olga Velazquez <i>Mayor of Portage</i>
Michael Genger <i>Town of Porter</i>	Leigh Morris <i>Indiana Toll Road</i>	Joseph Wszolek <i>GNIAR; Joseph Wszolek & Associates</i>
Christopher Meyers <i>City of Gary</i>		

Draft Vision Statement Adopted

At its March 26 meeting, the Comprehensive Regional Plan Steering Committee adopted a working Vision Statement to guide the planning process. The statement was written by a small, volunteer working group from the data gathered at the December 6, 2008 *Forum on the Future of Northwest Indiana*. Led by NIRPC staff and facilitator Ron Thomas of *AmericaSpeaks*, the group met twice in February to pore over material from the *Forum on the Future*, identify the strongest themes, and craft a brief and compelling vision for Northwest Indiana in 2040. In the immediate future, this statement will direct the future efforts of the Steering Committee and the work groups as we continue work on the Comprehensive Regional Plan.

“INvision” Northwest Indiana

“INvision” Northwest Indiana: a vibrant, revitalized, accessible and united region.

Stretching from the treasured shores of Lake Michigan to the historic banks of the Kankakee River and committed to an ethic of sustainability:

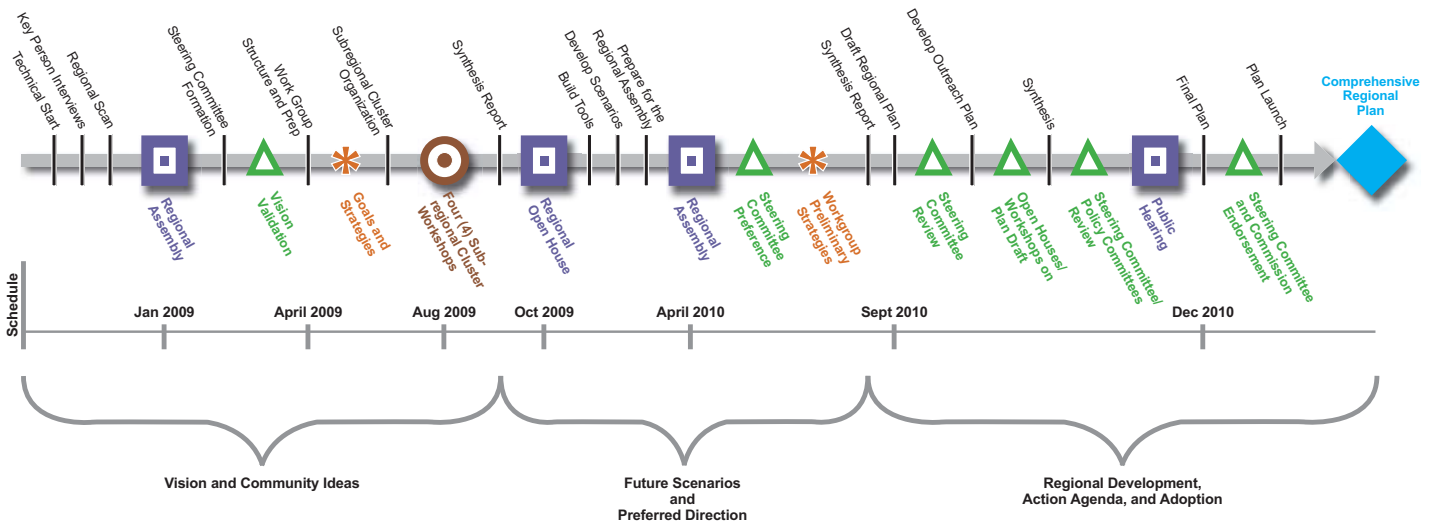
A vibrant region – Our economy is thriving, our people are well educated, and our environment is clean;

A revitalized region – Growth is planned, urban areas are renewed, and natural and rural areas are valued and protected;

An accessible region – Our people are connected to each other and to equal opportunities for working, playing, living, and learning;

A united region – Celebrating our diversity, we work together as a community across racial, ethnic, political, and cultural lines for the good of the region.

Preliminary Program 2040 Comprehensive Regional Plan



KEY

	Civic Event
	Sub-Regional Cluster
	Working Group
	Steering Committee
	Major Technical Tasks

Get involved! Workgroups are forming now!

Over the course of five progressive sessions, the Goal Setting Work Group will develop draft goal statements based on data collected at the December 6 event, the vision statement, and other relevant information. Sessions will be open for the public to participate alongside the members of the CRP Steering Committee and policy committees. At each session, the workgroup will spend some time meeting together as a whole and then some time working in the smaller groups broken out according to the five planning areas of the Comprehensive Regional Plan: transportation, economic development, environmental management, land use and social equity. Ron Thomas of the AmericaSpeaks-HNTB consultant team will facilitate the full group and NIRPC staff members will support the breakout groups. Draft goals will be submitted to the CRP Steering Committee.

Goal Setting Work Group Schedule

Session 1: Wednesday, May 20, 2009 from 9 am - 12 noon
NIRPC Offices
6100 Southport Rd.
Portage, Indiana 46368

Session 2: Wednesday, May 27, from 6 pm - 9 pm
Jean Shepherd Community Center
3031 J.F. Mahoney Drive
Hammond, Indiana 46323

Session 3: Wednesday, June 3, 9 am - 12 noon
Purdue North Central
1401 S. U.S. 421,
Westville, Indiana 46391

Session 4: Wednesday, June 17, 5 pm - 8 pm
Lake County Public Library - Central Library
1919 West 81st Avenue
Merrillville, Indiana 46410

Session 5: Monday, June 22, 5 pm - 8 pm
Indiana University Northwest, Library Conference Center
3400 Broadway
Gary, Indiana 46408

Session 5: Tuesday, June 23, 6 pm - 8 pm
NIRPC Offices
6100 Southport Rd.
Portage, Indiana 46368

Sessions are cumulative and each will be different;
explore the region and attend all 6!

Check our website for more information, including participation opportunities and technical work products.

www.nirpc.org

Questions / Comments?

NIRPC staff are available to speak at the next meeting of your organization.

Your involvement in the development of the 2040 Comprehensive Regional Plan is important to ensure that as a regional community, we are making wise investments, creating sustainable policies and improving the quality of life for ourselves and for future generations.

Questions or comments may be directed to Gabrielle Biciunas at:

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Relay Indiana: 711

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Mail: Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission
6100 Southport Road
Portage, IN 46368

For information on a copy of this document in an alternate format please contact NIRPC.

Upcoming Events

May 20, Goal Setting Work Group

9 am at NIRPC

May 27, Goal Setting Work Group

6 pm at the Jean Shepherd Community Center, Hammond

May 28, CRP Steering Committee

9 am at NIRPC

June 3, Goal Setting Work Group

9 am at Purdue North Central, Westville

June 17, Goal Setting Work Group

5 pm at the Lake County Public Library, Merrillville

June 22, Goal Setting Work Group

5 pm at Indiana University Northwest

June 23, Goal Setting Work Group

6 pm at NIRPC

The CRP Steering Committee meets regularly in the NIRPC Auditorium at 9 am on the fourth Thursday of the month. Meetings are open to the public.



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