



Summary of Past Plans and Reports

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Comprehensive Land Use Plan for the Elkhart Urban Area

Findings:

- Added designations for office park, business park, & gateway interchange district due to addition of an interchange at CR17 & I80/90.
- Added urban service boundary.

Kid's Count

2000

Findings:

- While per capita income rose and unemployment dropped in the county between 1990 and 1999, the percent of children in poverty increased from 9.9% to 11.7%.
- Child abuse and neglect decreased significantly in the county between 1990 and 1999.
- The number of home schooled children increased dramatically from 1990 to 1999, from 15 to 479.
- The percentage of babies with low birth weights increased from 1990 to 1998. During the same period the percentage of mothers who received prenatal care during the first trimester dropped from 74.5% to 69.6%.
- While the rate of infant deaths decreased from 1990 to 1998, the rate of child deaths has increased.
- Noncompliance with youth tobacco access laws has risen from 9.1% in 1997 to 30% in 1999.

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Nappanee Labor Force Study 1996

Findings:

- Study serves to answer if expansion of local employment base is healthy and desirable.
 - Strategies were then derived from a public workshop.
 - Assessed valuation grew more rapidly than Elkhart County, but median income and housing values were lower.
 - Population growth in the city was faster than that of the county.
 - Recommended policies should be adopted into the city's comprehensive plan.
 - RV and manufactured housing is the economic base of the community.
 - Shift-share analysis used 1988 – 1993, which were at two different points in the business cycle. Also use of the location quotient was too simplistic.
 - Industry specializations include: leather products, instruments, lumber & wood, rubber & plastics, transportation equipment, furniture & fixtures, fabricated metal, and chemicals & allied products.
 - Desired employee characteristics sighted were typical soft skill lists.
- Goals that were drawn from this study include: identifying appropriate areas for business development, incentive programs for complimentary businesses, identifying and targeting research & development and high-tech professional firms, responsible annexation of industrial property, working with schools on development of job skills, better communication of local employment opportunities, improving the supply of low and moderate housing, and targeting areas for infill housing with flexible regulations and fee schedules.



Economic Impact of Elkhart County's Tourism & Travel Industry 1998-2000

Findings:

- Industry contributed \$272.5 million to the economy in 2000. Direct expenditures account for \$182.2 million. This was an improvement from 1998.
- 1/3 of tourism jobs are in high wage occupations.
- Lodging and attractions sectors are important. 3/5 of spending was from these sectors.
- The study uses the Certec model combined with an IO model for indirect and induced effects.
- Tourism is a large and growing business in Elkhart County.
- Direct expenditures related to 3,133 jobs in 1998 and grew to 3,390 jobs in 2000. Indirect expenditures accounted for 1,054 jobs in 1998 and 1,140 in 2000.
- Major sectors within the tourism industry include food and beverage spending, attractions, shopping and lodging, transportation, and souvenirs.
- The tourism economy consists of pass-through travelers, destination travelers and VFRs.
- Over 3 million destination travelers came to Elkhart County in 2000. How many were pass through travelers?
- Travel expenditures by Category
 - Food and beverage 31%
 - Souvenirs 5%
 - Transportation 9%
 - Attractions 22%
 - Shopping 19%
 - Lodging 14%
- Strongest State Markets
 - Illinois 32%
 - Indiana 28%
 - Michigan 10%
 - Ohio 7%
- Typical visitor to the Elkhart area is likely to be a college graduate working in a professional job.
- The source most often used to plan a trip to Elkhart County is the Internet
- Day trips (35%) and short 1-3 night trips (51%) make up most visits 61% are on their first trip to the county
- Most visited attractions
 - Amish Acres
 - Notre Dame
 - Shipshewana
 - Local Parks
 - Essenhous Country Inn

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Northern Indiana State of the Workforce 2002

Findings

- This was also the foundation for a comprehensive community planning process.
 - Greater growth was experienced in Elkhart County than other counties in the region, greater growth was amongst young people resulting in the lowest median age in the region.
 - 45 percent increase in the Hispanic population.
 - All employers report the Hispanic/Latino workers as loyal, productive, dependable and demonstrate a higher work ethic than other elements of the workforce.
 - Access to computers was less in the region than the rest of the state.
 - Elkhart County had a decrease in available child-care despite having the greatest number of children in the child-care age range.
 - Labor participation rates are high leaving fewer qualified individuals to tap into the workforce.
 - Earnings per job are the highest in Elkhart County.
 - Manufacturing is still a strong component of the county.
 - Educational attainment slightly trails the state, although the region has a slightly higher concentration of bachelor degree earning individuals.
 - Higher growth rate in K-6 population than anywhere else in the state. Elkhart schools need strategies to cope with this growth.
 - Dropout rates are high for the region, which does not help in attracting advanced manufacturing and other skill-oriented industries.
- Of the 121 under-supplied occupations, most will require advanced skills training.
 - Vocational enrollment in the region is below the state, which is better than the region.



Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, MACOG 2001

- Elkhart has the highest per-capita personal income in the state
- Hay and poultry are large production areas for agriculture
- RVs, modular homes, braking materials, and biotech are major regional products
- There should be 55 acres of recreational land per 1000 persons
- Elkhart has an enterprise zone.

“The vision is to live in a community with diverse job opportunities, with multiple sources of revenue, and with a workforce that is flexible and ready to work when needed. The vision identifies a region that seeks to meet human needs efficiently as they arise. Where education is of the standard articulated by the community, and where human health is protected for generations to come. The vision is to live in a region where technology and development go hand in hand and where development has positive impacts in the present and in the future.”

Priorities:

- Corridor developments, high speed rail, south shore expansion, cell towers, high-tech infrastructure
- Brownfields redevelopment
- Downtown redevelopment
- Farmland protection
- Economic diversification is all about high-tech industry with activities like R&D, engineering, technology and applied sciences.

Education Objective

- To bring community resources in line and increase where necessary

Environment Objectives

- To maintain the region’s Clean Air “maintenance” status and continue to improve current air quality.
- To expand existing infrastructure and examine the use of alternative technologies that maintain and improve the public health and that are environmentally friendly.
- To maintain and improve both surface and groundwater quality.
- To develop a mechanism to handle the expanded waste stream, which should include identification of new technologies and methodologies for conservation and reduction of solid waste materials.

Human Services Objectives

- To improve access to human, health, and social services for the vulnerable populations in the region; the focus is on their immediate needs and trends.

Infrastructure Objectives

- To promote development of integrated comprehensive plans that promote efficient delivery of government services; emphasize the development of more livable communities; and enhance improved quality of life.
- To encourage the utilization of brownfield sites having the greatest potential for development.

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- To encourage and promote development within the service capacity abilities of municipal sewer and water utilities.
- To support the implementation of the MACOG 2025 Transportation Plan, which will, in effect, direct funding to improve major roadways in the region.
- To ensure data systems are compatible with one another and work toward true regional GIS access through cooperative participation and agreements.

Quality of Life Objectives

- To attract hi-tech jobs to the region.
- To develop a trained and educated workforce for the hi-tech industry.
- To recognize and promote that properly planned growth is a quality of life issue.
- To provide arts, etc. opportunities in order to attract and retain residents.

Resource Development Objectives

- To develop/maintain technical assistance programs, financing systems, and seamless delivery of services.
- To recognize that each county's needs differ – a cookie cutter approach may not prove successful for each county in the region.
- To understand private vs. public available funding (for small business); to technically organize financing resources; to promote regional cooperation in the development of gap financing among lenders.
- To promote the use and exposure of existing technical assistance tools (for small business).

State and Local Government Objectives

- To improve the cooperative and collaborative environment between cities, towns, and counties in order to enhance regional economic development.

Transportation Objectives

- To improve and maintain regional linkages.
- To develop, enhance, and coordinate the distribution of available employees and employers.

Workforce Objectives

- To make labor market data readily available, current, user friendly, and regionwide.
- Work to obtain statewide statistics and data from Workforce Development Services and other agencies.
- To improve the training of the region's residents.
- To build on regional strengths and promote quality of life.



Elkhart County Park and Recreation Department Master Plan 1998-2002

Findings:

- Mission of the Elkhart County Parks and Recreation Department is to enhance the quality of life of our citizens and visitors by preserving the county's cultural history and natural beauty, and by providing educational and recreational opportunities.
- There are six municipal Parks and Recreation Boards in the county: Elkhart, Goshen, Nappanee, Middlebury, Millersburg, and Bristol.
- Elkhart County Park Foundation formed in the 1980s to solicit, accept, hold, and transfer gifts and donations for the park board.
- Friends of Elkhart County Parks was established in the 1990s to recruit, train, and recognize volunteers for the park system.

Objectives:

Land Issues

- Acquisition of tracts of land to meet the accepted regional park standard of 15 acres per 1,000 population [need 978 more acres]
- Acquisition of trail or greenway corridors that link county parks as well as cities and towns.
- Continue the concept of 20% developed land, 80% undeveloped, preserved open space

Facilities/Buildings

- Maintain/upgrade existing facilities and structures to improve their quality and accessibility.
- Develop trails on the greenway corridors between parks and towns.
- Develop an environmental center at Ox Bow Park, and interpretive facilities at Bonneyville Mill Park.

Communications/Marketing

- Work to educate the public on the value of parks and the stewardship of parks and open space.
- Continue to promote tourism in Elkhart County by providing unique facilities, programs, and activities while working with the Convention and Visitors Bureau
- Continue to produce printed promotional materials

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County Road 17 Comprehensive Plan Amendment 1992

Findings:

Projects anticipated within the CR 17 corridor

- Toll road interchange
- CR 17 improvements (four-lanes, realignment, improvements to six span bridge)
- Elkhart industrial park
- East Gate PUD
- Proposed college site for IU branch campus

Plan

- All access to CR 17 be limited access by way of dedicated public street
- All future commercial industrial development occur only with municipal sanitary sewer
- All off premise signage be prohibited and on premise signage be strictly controlled
- Landscape buffering standard and architectural controls be required and maintained by the Elkhart County Plan Commission
- Elkhart County adopt an overlay zone as a tool to implement the plan

County Road 22 Comprehensive Plan Amendment 1992

Findings:

Projects

- Highway department improvements (repave, lower grade, remove curves, and creation of a CR 22/CR 37 intersection)
- Pumpkinvine Rails to Trails

Plan

- Intergovernmental committee be formed for guidance concerning development in the CR 22 corridor
- Residential development be encouraged on lots of five acres or more
- Encourage environmentally sensitive techniques for specific site development
- Limit to one curb cut per development site
- All future mobile homes special use request should be discouraged
- All off premise signage be prohibited and on premise signage be strictly controlled
- All commercial development along CR 22 should be discouraged



State Road 19 Interchange Comprehensive Plan Amendment 1992

Findings:

Plan

- All off premise signage be prohibited and on premise signage be strictly controlled
- Industrial/commercial development south of the US 20 bypass should be discouraged
- Elkhart County and Indiana should consider realignment of the CR 24/SR 19 intersection
- The Plan Commission should consider zoning map changes from the existing M-1/M-2 to commercial/multi-residential in the northeast portion of the study area
- Rezoning from residential/agricultural to commercial or manufacturing north of the US 20 bypass should be discouraged
- All efforts should be made to upgrade the existing commercial uses along SR 19
- Efforts should continue to upgrade the area at the SW corner of CR 20 and SR 19
- All development north of the US 20 bypass which requires rezoning must be considered by the Plan Commission as a Planned Unit Development

US 20 Bypass Comprehensive Plan Amendment 1992

Findings:

Plan

- All off premise signage be prohibited, and on premise signage be strictly controlled
- The US 20 bypass should not be considered frontage for zoning purposes
- New developments should be required to provide screening from bypass traffic
- In areas which have been previously developed, and are now intersected by the US 20 bypass, screening should be provided by the state or county
- All efforts should be made to insure that the borrow pits (from construction) adjoining the bypass are made safe
- Leap frog development should be prevented

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Elkhart/Bristol Comprehensive Plan Amendment 1995

Findings:

- All access to CR 17 should be limited to dedicated public streets
- All future commercial, industrial, multi-family residential, and professional office use should occur only with municipal sanitary sewer
- All off premise signage should be prohibited, on premise signage should be strictly controlled
- Landscape buffering/architectural controls should be required and maintained by the Elkhart County Plan Commission
- “Limited” business development should be considered appropriate along the CR 17 frontage
- High density residential, business, and professional office development will be considered appropriate north of CR 104
- No further expansion of manufacturing zoning around the existing manufacturing should be permitted
- That the Plan Commissioners and the public encourage the gravel pit to ultimately be converted to a residential or recreational use
- That residential development be encouraged on minimum ½ acre lots unless serviced by municipal sewer
- Public use development should be encouraged along the St. Joseph River
- Encourage the toll booth for the I-80/90 interchange to be located on the north side of the interchange with CR 17
- Agricultural uses should continue to be encouraged

County Road 6 Comprehensive Plan Amendment 1992

Findings:

- Widening project began at Nappanee in 1988 and was scheduled to end at CR 17 in 1994.
- The area contains the Elkhart airport

Plan:

- Development west of the Nappanee street extension should be limited to residential and agricultural
- Commercial and industrial development should be encouraged between the Nappanee street extension and Puterbaugh Creek
- Established residential areas between the Nappanee street extension and Puterbaugh creek should be protected from expanding industrial/commercial development. Expansion of existing residential development is discouraged.
- Residential development should be encouraged between CR 11 and 13 and between CR 106 and 6. Any residential development should be a Planned Unit Development to address the septic/sewer situation
- Single family residential/agricultural land uses should be encouraged east of CR 113
- The Elkhart County Commissioners should explore the feasibility of constructing a local access road within the corridor set aside for the northern bypass
- That all future commercial/industrial development occur only with municipal sanitary sewer
- All existing and future development sites along the Toll Road be encouraged to provide an aesthetic view
- The resolution protecting the Elkhart City Well Field should



- continue to be followed
- Direct curb cuts to CR 6 should be limited
 - All off premise signage should be prohibited and on premise
 - Landscape buffering standards should be required and maintained by the Elkhart County Plan Commission

Elkhart/Wakarusa/Nappanee State Road 19 Thoroughfare Comprehensive Plan Amendment 1996

Findings:

- In 1994 the Convention and Visitors Bureau initiated “Heritage Trail”, a self-guided auto tour of Northern Indiana Amish Country. The entire length of SR 19 in the study area is a designated tour on the “Heritage Trail”
- Historic architecture identified in the study area (Fink-Martin Farm, Wakarusa Railroad Depot, Locke Township District Number 4 School, Farm on CR 52, Harrison Township District Number 3 School)

Tourism challenges

- Limited hotel product, both in number of rooms and quality
- Limited service worker availability
- Limited funding for marketing
- Commercialization
- Tourism opportunities
- Extend tourism season
- Increase sales productivity by increasing conversion rate
- Expand into new target markets
- Expand hotel product
- Increase attraction product

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Downtown Nappanee Retail Market Study

Findings:

- The B&O line that went through Elkhart County in 1974 was only the second eastern railroad to serve Chicago
- The first issue of the Nappanee News was published on March 27, 1879
- Nappanee was incorporated as a town in January 1889 and as a city in 1925

Physical weaknesses of downtown Nappanee

- Boarded up windows
- Cluttered signage
- Dirty windows
- Litter
- Loose bricks
- Hidden parking lots
- Dim street lighting
- Peeling paint
- Lack of public restrooms
- Lack of water fountains
- Lack of handicap accessibility
- Parallel parking
- Broken curbs
- Broken sidewalks
- Pigeons
- Heavy truck traffic
- Unsafe facades
- Mill dust
- Horse manure

Opportunities for downtown Nappanee

- Improve streetscapes and building facades
- Give reasons to visit downtown
- Focus on working together/unity
- Business clusters
- Positive support

Nappanee's mission statement: To develop a thriving downtown retail center comprised of clusters of private business owners, conveying Nappanee's Amish and rural heritage through unified presentation and promotion, resulting in increased activity among the local and tourist markets.