

The
HORIZON
Project

Today's Vision for a
Dynamic Elkhart County
Tomorrow

Process to Date

Horizon Project Action Planning Team Co-Chairs

- **Business Attractions/
Retention/Re-development**
 - William Johnson
 - Dave Ogle
- **Tourism Development**
 - Richard Pletcher
 - Diana Lawson
- **Land Use**
 - Bob Pfaff
 - Dave Hess
- **Government Coordination**
 - Gordon Lord
 - John Leatherman
- **Social Services**
 - Jerry Quatman
 - Jon Housand
- **Education K – 12**
 - Milt Thomas
- **Workforce Development**
 - Juan Manigault
- **Entrepreneurship/Small
Business Development**
 - Allon LeFever
 - Carl Tiedemann

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Vision for the Future

- Elkhart County Vision for the Future
 - Elkhart County will be a globally recognized center for creativity. This reputation will be built by residents who have the courage to take risks and help each other succeed in an environment of tolerance and respect that provides opportunities for all. Outstanding businesses and talented professionals will locate in our county because of the excellent schools, rich cultural life, clean and healthy environment, safe attractive neighborhoods and vibrant downtowns. The entrepreneurial culture of the county will be supported by a highly skilled workforce, a diverse economy, opportunities for life-long learning and effective governmental collaboration and community planning

Horizon Project Planning Goals

- **GOAL 1:** Develop an aggressive and creative business development and revitalization strategy.
- **GOAL 2:** Support the redevelopment and revitalization of downtowns and urban areas as a mechanism for controlling sprawl, encouraging smart growth, and attracting and retaining the knowledge and creative class worker needed to support business retention and expansion efforts.

Goals, continued

- **GOAL 3:** Build upon Elkhart Counties reputation as a center for creativity by creating an environment in which entrepreneurs can grow, prosper and contribute to the economic prosperity of the county through the creation of new businesses and new jobs

Goals, continued

- **GOAL 4:** Build a tourism strategy that enhances the industry's role as an economic development strategy and protects vital rural aesthetics through expanded partnerships, increased public education and awareness, and new tools promoting the expansion of businesses, facilities, and events that both attract visitors and improve the quality of life and place for local residents.

Goals, continued

- **GOAL 5:** Establish a functioning, recognized forum and structure for expanded intergovernmental communication, cooperation, and collaboration (proposed name “Elkhart County Intergovernmental Forum”), involving leaders of County Government, the towns and cities of Elkhart County, and when appropriate, other local governmental units and agencies.

Goals, continued

- **GOAL 6:** Through the Intergovernmental Forum, and other cooperative local intergovernmental efforts develop a mindset, philosophy and culture of increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of local government in Elkhart County through creative and farsighted planning, spending, and programming.

Goals, continued

- **GOAL 7:** Create a well-planned community that enables compatible development in industrial, commercial, residential and agricultural sectors while maintaining visual appeal, preserving green space, and protecting the natural environment.

Goals, continued

- **GOAL 8:** Create an adaptive and educated workforce capable of meeting the changing demand of the workplace sustaining public-private sector leadership that promotes the workforce and career development continuum as the key for future business growth and economic development.

Goals, continued

- **GOAL 9:** Build a world-class K-12 education system by encouraging and assisting the Elkhart County Schools in their efforts to fully implement P.L. 221(No Child Left Behind)
- **GOAL 10:** Insure adequate and affordable social services are provided to meet the needs of all Elkhart County residents.

Macro Benchmarks

- **The percentage of Elkhart County residents with college degrees will equal or exceed the state level by 2010**
 - (Today State 19.4%, Elkhart County 15.5%)
- **The percentage of non-college bound, high-school graduates from each school district, participating in vocational education programs will equal or exceed the state percentage by 2010**
 - (State average 3.6% - pretty low; Elkhart County ranges from 4.8% to 1.3%)
- **The percentage of high-school students passing the GQE (ISTEP) will meet or surpass the state average in all Elkhart County School Districts by 2010**
 - (Percentage passing GQE/ISTEP was 54-84% ...all at or above state average except Elkhart)

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Macro Benchmarks, continued

- **Graduation rates in each school district will meet or exceed state average by 2010**
 - (State at 90% in 2001, Elkhart County 82.5%-98.4)
- **The number of net new businesses in preferred growth sectors will increase by an average of 2% annually through 2010**
 - (Can track net new businesses in county business patterns, by NAICS codes)
- **Average hourly earnings in total private employment will be within 5% of the national average by 2010**
 - (Elkhart County currently at 90.8% of U.S., 101.3% of state. We could break it down to focus on key sectors..Manufacturing currently at 80.9% of U.S, 82% of state....Finance, Insurance Real Estate currently at 61% of U.S, 81.6 of state)

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Macro Benchmarks, continued

- **Close by 5% the gap between Elkhart county and the national per capita personal income by 2010**
 - (Elkhart County currently at 92% of national, 100.8%)
- **Elkhart County will establish a locally available research and investment capital fund in the minimum amount of \$10 million.**
- **The total economic impact generated by visitors to Elkhart County will increase 25% by 2010, exceeding \$350,000,000.**
- **Elkhart County will see an increase in assessed valuation in current TIF districts and/or increase in the number of projects over a specified time period**
- **Elkhart County will see an increase in the number of redevelopment areas**

Macro Benchmarks, continued

- **Elkhart County will see a well-functioning Intergovernmental Forum that results in measurable savings in all municipal budgets and a measurable increase in revenue sharing activities**
- **The Elkhart County poverty ranking will be below the 70th percentile by 2010**
 - (Last quartile)
- **Elkhart County will significantly reduce the duplication in social service programs**

Business Retention, Attraction and Redevelopment

- **GOAL 1: Develop an aggressive and creative business development and revitalization strategy.**
 - Objective 1.1: Recognize the importance of maintaining and expanding Elkhart County's existing industry base by developing a proactive Existing Industry Development Program
 - Objective 1.2 Establish the Elkhart County Investment Board, under the auspices of the Elkhart County Economic Development Corporation, for the purpose of building an investment capital fund that will be dedicated to the implementation of projects and initiatives focused on the retention and expansion of existing businesses, and aid in the development of qualified new business start-ups
 - Objective 1.3: Aggressively pursue a creativity-driven, economic strategy by partnering with an Indiana research university to establish a Technology-Based Incubator and creating opportunities for entrepreneurs to establish or expand businesses with the potential to retain and attract members of the creative class.

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Goal 1, continued

- Objective 1.4: Develop the telecommunications infrastructure necessary to expand and attract Elkhart County's desired business and industry base
- Objective 1.5: Encourage and support the development of transportation, and sewer and water systems that meet the current and future needs of Elkhart County business and industry
- Objective 1.6: Develop a financial incentive policy and programs directed to the retention and attraction of business and industry that will most benefit or diversify the county economy and encourage smart growth and redevelopment.
- Objective 1.7: Develop a Targeted Industry Attraction Program
- Objective 1.8: Strengthen and further develop The Economic Development Corporation of Elkhart County, their staffing, organizational structure, and their partnerships with business, local and regional economic and community development organizations

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Business Retention, Attraction and Redevelopment

- **GOAL 2: Support the redevelopment and revitalization of downtowns and urban areas as a mechanism for controlling sprawl, encouraging smart growth, and attracting and retaining the knowledge and creative class worker needed to support business retention and expansion efforts.**
 - Objective 2.1: Explore the idea of establishing a fund or funds to assist companies interested in purchasing older, obsolete industrial facilities, to cover the cost of returning the building to productive use.

Entrepreneurial & Small Business Development

- **GOAL 3: Build upon Elkhart Counties reputation as a center for creativity by creating an environment in which entrepreneurs can grow, prosper and contribute to the economic prosperity of the county through the creation of new businesses and new jobs**
 - Objective 3.1: Form a permanent network of Elkhart County professional advisors, possibly under the direction of the Economic Development Corporation (EDC) for the purpose of raising venture capital funds for small business start-up and development.
 - Objective 3.2: Provide an information clearinghouse to inform entrepreneurs and small business owners throughout the county of financing mechanisms and technical assistance tax incentives available to small/new businesses in Elkhart County.

Goal 3, continued

- Objective 3.3: Develop a network of, technology focused, small business incubators in Elkhart, Goshen, Middlebury and Nappanee. The incubator facilities would be technologically linked and support individual IT infrastructures, with particular focus on broadband Internet access. Systems need to be put in place at the outset that are scalable, can adapt well to emerging new technologies and allow clients to set up their IT networks and connect to the Incubators network services as soon as they move in.
- The goal would be to attract small, high growth companies, with the potential of creating high paying jobs, (the community needs the companies that have 6 employees today and could grow to 600 in the future) and stimulating the County's economy in the future. All though the focus would be on securing high growth start-up companies the incubators would welcome early-stage companies that are beyond the start up stage, as well as companies that are restructuring.

Goal 3, continued

- Objective 3.4: Document the “best practices” of other communities that have implemented successful Small Business and Entrepreneurial encouragement programs
- Objective 3.5: Develop a network of educational services and collaborate with state initiatives to develop programs that support the education and training needs of small businesses and entrepreneurs. Priority will be given to encouraging local educational institutions to develop programs specific to small businesses and entrepreneurs.

Tourism

- **GOAL 4: Build a tourism strategy that enhances the industry's role as an economic development strategy and protects vital rural aesthetics through expanded partnerships, increased public education and awareness, and new tools promoting the expansion of businesses, facilities, and events that both attract visitors and improve the quality of life and place for local residents.**
 - Objective 4.1: Tourism industry representatives will create partnerships with the RV industry, agri-business, and emerging cottage industries to create a single, interlocking brand to market Elkhart County based on hospitality, quality craftsmanship and entrepreneurial ingenuity. The brand should be flexible enough to allow future integration of regional partners.
 - Objective 4.2: Promote the expansion of existing and creation of new facilities and events that will increase the number and length of stay of visitors to Elkhart County.

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Goal 4, continued

- Objective 4.3: Enlighten and educate the residents, government officials, and business operators within the region on the positive community impacts associated with the tourism industry.
- Objective 4.4: Develop new countywide strategies for the purpose of funding activities that support the vision of the community and the tourism industry, which might include creating a new taxing authority.
- Objective 4.5: Create a comprehensive land use policy agenda that accommodates new development compatible to the tourism industry that will be communicated to and carried out by city and county public officials and planning commissions.
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Government Coordination

- **GOAL 5: Establish a functioning, recognized forum and structure for expanded intergovernmental communication, cooperation, and collaboration (proposed name “Elkhart County Intergovernmental Forum”), involving leaders of County Government, the towns and cities of Elkhart County, and when appropriate, other local governmental units and agencies.**
 - Objectives 5.1: Cause local governmental units to formally commit to participate in the Intergovernmental Forum, and to regularly provide senior leader representation at its meetings and participate in its undertakings; such should expand upon, augment, or succeed (but not terminate) the planning and land use meetings involving County Government, Goshen City, and Elkhart City, the “Mayor’s Round Table” meetings, and other existing relationships fostering governmental cooperation involving elected officials and administrative staffs.

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Goal 5, continued

- Objective 5.2: Establish a regular meeting schedule and standard agenda format for the meetings of the Intergovernmental Forum, to include methods of introducing matters for review or action, which matters may originate from participating governmental units, other local governmental units, action teams of the Horizon Project (or successors thereto), or when appropriate, nongovernmental entities; such matters shall specifically include the Substance and Implementation Benchmarks set forth.
- Objective 5.3: Recognize and embrace, when appropriate, the ultimate Strategic Plan of the Horizon Project, and serve as a vehicle for coordinating and enhancing the role of local governmental units in the implementation of such Plan.

Government Coordination, continued

- **GOAL 6: Through the Intergovernmental Forum, and other cooperative local intergovernmental efforts develop a mindset, philosophy and culture of increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of local government in Elkhart County through creative and farsighted planning, spending, and programming.**
 - Objectives 6.1: Identify and encourage the pursuit of opportunities for County Government, and the towns and cities of Elkhart County and other units of local government, to share costs, revenues, technology, facilities, and/or programming to better serve the needs of the Elkhart County community.

Goal 6, continued

- Objective 6.2: Evaluate and define desired public services and programming unavailable in certain areas of Elkhart County, and evaluate the merits and practicality for providing such services and programming to such areas; likewise, evaluate and define circumstances of duplication of public services and programming, and evaluate the merits and practicality of eliminating, coordinating, or merging services and programs in such circumstances.
- Objective 6.3 Identify strengths and weaknesses of the Elkhart County economy, social structure, and culture, and to the extent compatible with the roles and limitations of local government, promote and expand upon the positive components thereof, and attempt to foster improvement in areas where weakness is demonstrated.
- Objective 6.4: Study, learn from, and where appropriate, embrace and act upon defined sections of the Horizon Project Strategic Plan where local governmental participation or cooperation is beneficial or required.

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Land Use

- **GOAL 7: Create a well-planned community that enables compatible development in industrial, commercial, residential and agricultural sectors while maintaining visual appeal, preserving green space, and protecting the natural environment.**
 - Objective 7.1: Develop a combined city/county comprehensive land-use policy plan that guides compatible development in all sectors while encouraging the redevelopment of brownfields, the revitalization of downtowns and the development and maintenance of an infrastructure system that guides intelligent growth.
 - Objective 7.2: Identify in the comprehensive plan all current green space (park, recreation lands, areas of scenic quality, farmland, production woodlands, and preserved woodlands) with the intention of developing protective mechanisms.

Goal 7, continued

- Objective 7.3: Develop uniform, countywide ordinances by which the comprehensive plan policies will be enforced and encourage development that increases density and utilizes existing infrastructure.
- Objective 7.4: Request immediate action be taken by appropriate governmental bodies, both legislative and administrative, to modify and amend various ordinances.

Workforce Development

- **GOAL 8: Create an adaptive and educated workforce capable of meeting the changing demand of the workplace sustaining public-private sector leadership that promotes the workforce and career development continuum as the key for future business growth and economic development.**
 - Objective 8.1: Establish an Elkhart County Workforce Development Advisory Council comprised of key education, community and business leaders to guide the establishment of a countywide workforce and career development continuum and the active involvement of Elkhart County in the regional networks that support shared resources and are committed to furthering both local and regional development.

Goal 8, continued

- Objective 8.2: Implement a skills assessment and certification system that provides a consistent and cost-effective set of standards, including cross-context functionality, easy access and utilization, and is capable of linking with regional, state and national systems, as part of the workforce and career development continuum.
- Objective 8.4: Develop a high degree of computer literacy in the Elkhart County workforce by exploring the feasibility of establishing computer learning centers across the county with access to computer technology and training for children and adults.
- Objective 8.5: Develop a multi-faceted media and communications campaign that promotes the workforce and career development continuum to all constituent groups.

Education K-12

- **GOAL 9: Build a world-class K-12 education system by encouraging and assisting the Elkhart County Schools in their efforts to fully implement P.L. 221**
 - Objective 9.1: School Districts in Elkhart County will establish a positive and safe environment for teaching and learning in every school that encourages each student to be the best that he/she can be.
 - Objective 9.2: School Districts in Elkhart County will develop a curriculum so that each student can meet mandated achievement requirements and includes computer technology, career education and exposure to lifelong learning opportunities
 - Objective 9.3: Each School District in Elkhart County will select and train and/or retrain a staff member that will be responsible for implementing the districts policies, procedures, programs and curriculum requirements for all students.

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Goal 9, continued

- Objective 9.4: School Boards in Elkhart County will create an annual, Action Agenda for implementing the district's goals.
- Objective 9.5: Each School District in Elkhart County will establish and maintain a proactive Public Relations Program for each school that both gathers input and disseminates information about teaching & learning.
- Objective 9.6: Each Elkhart County School District will establish joint venture programs with two year, four year and technical schools, so that all high school students have access to post high school credits through AP courses, dual credit courses, school to work internships with local businesses, etc. Ideally, Ivy Tech or other institutions would offer courses related to high technology on-site.

Goal 9, continued

- Objective 9.7: All children in Elkhart County school districts will have access to preschool or nursery school that provides high quality readiness training to begin Kindergarten at age 6
- Objective 9.8: Coordination of existing career education programs currently in place in all Elkhart County school districts (as required by PL 221 and *No Child Left Behind*), with any new components from the Learning Generation Initiative, Workforce Development or other related organizations.

Goal 9, continued

- Objective 9.9: Through the Community in Schools Program (CIS) children and young people in Elkhart County will grow to be successful adults, possessed of the skills needed to thrive in a dynamic economy and committed to the pursuit of personal and professional growth through lifelong learning.

(An Objective to be implemented by the Learning Generation Initiative in partnership with each Elkhart County School District)

- Objective 9.10: A forum consisting of superintendents of each of the school districts, and appropriate representatives from business and the community will meet two times per year to
 - Maintain a focus on the future, and assess progress towards our goals, and community impediments towards reaching them.
 - Develop positions on proposed, or passed, educational laws, with the purpose of having a united voice when discussing these with state and federal legislators, Indiana State Chamber of Commerce, Indiana Manufacturing Association, and State Teachers Union.

(An Objective to be implemented by the Horizon Project Steering Committee)

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Social Services

- **GOAL 10: Insure adequate and affordable social services are provided to meet the needs of all Elkhart County residents.**
 - Objective 10.1: Inventory and assess the current Elkhart County social services catalogue and its responsiveness and applicability to current needs
 - Objective 10.2: Create the optimum Elkhart County Social Services Network
 - Objective 10.3: Insure sustainable funding sources are available to maintain the necessary level of services to Elkhart County
 - Objective 10.4: Create the environment and infrastructure necessary for the expansion and development of a leadership base essential to the growth and development of the Elkhart County

Implementation Process

- The Steering Committee will hold a working meeting of Action Planning Co-Chairs, Steering Committee Co-Chairs, Lead Consultant to combine similar Objectives, remove duplication solidify final Goals and Objectives and determine short and long-term Objectives.

Implementation Process continued

- Steering Committee and Action Planning Co-Chairs will confirm the group/organization/entity responsible for the implementation of each Objective (short-term Objectives at minimum).

Implementation Process continued

- If the Action Planning Team is not the party ultimately responsible for the implementation of an Objective(s), the Steering Committee and Action Planning Co-Chairs will identify those individuals on the Team who wish to remain on an Implementation Team that moves the Objectives forward.

Implementation Process continued

- The Steering Committee will seek adoption of final **Horizon Project Strategic Plan** by all Elkhart County development entities: local/county government, Chambers of Commerce, Elkhart County Community Foundation, Elkhart County Economic Development Corporation, and other organizations.

Implementation Process continued

- The Steering Committee will secure commitment to implement from appropriate individuals/organizations/agencies/units of government.
- The Steering Committee will create/confirm Implementation Teams

Implementation Process continued

- A member of the Consulting Team will coach Teams through initial Implementation Plan stages (Dennis Koehn).
- The CECD will compile the final planning document once all Goals and Objectives are finalized.

Implementation Process continued

- A reformatted Steering Committee will remain in place with the commitment to report to the community on an annual basis, the progress against all Goals, Objectives and Benchmarks.