



The  
**HORIZON**  
Project

Today's Vision for a  
Dynamic Elkhart County  
Tomorrow

## Final Report

***The Horizon Project is funded by:***

*The Elkhart County Community Foundation, the Elkhart County Convention & Visitors Bureau, the City of Elkhart, AEP, NIPSCO, GTE, and the Elkhart County Economic Development Corporation*

***Project consultants are:***

*The Ball State University Center for Economic and Community Development, Koehn Consulting, and the Hudson Institute*



## Table of Contents

---

Acknowledgements .....	5
Introduction .....	11
Executive Summary .....	15
Overview .....	17
Community Vision and Plan .....	22
Benchmarks .....	27
The Process .....	29
Overview .....	31
Methodology .....	32
Conclusion .....	37
The Plan .....	39
Vision .....	41
Action Plan .....	41
Benchmarks .....	78
Appendices	
Acronyms and Glossary .....	A
Demographic and Economic Analysis .....	B
Review of Past Projects and Plans .....	C
Community Leadership Workshop Summary .....	D
Individual Interview Report .....	E
Focus Group Reports .....	F
Key Issues Report .....	G

*This page intentionally left blank.*

---



---

## **Acknowledgements**

---

Thank you to the special citizens of Elkhart County who through their participation in community workshops, action planning teams, focus groups, individual interviews, and working meetings demonstrated a genuine dedication to creating a dynamic Elkhart County tomorrow.

Special thanks go to the following organizations and individuals for their support, leadership, and considerable commitment to the Elkhart County Horizon Project.

### **Project Sponsors:**

The Elkhart County Community Foundation  
Elkhart County Convention & Visitors Bureau  
City of Elkhart  
City of Goshen  
Elkhart County Economic Development Corporation  
AEP  
NIPSCO  
GTE

### **Steering Committee**

William P. Johnson, Flying J, LLC, Chair  
Diana Lawson, FCDME, Elkhart County Convention & Visitors Bureau, Vice Chair  
Larry Andrews, Nappanee Chamber of Commerce & Redevelopment Commission  
Wilbur Bontrager, Elkhart County Community Foundation Board  
Bill Bradley, Economic Development Corporation of Elkhart County  
Mark Brinson, Planning and Development, City of Elkhart  
Tom Byers, Planning and Development, Elkhart County  
Deb Conley, Community Development, Elkhart County  
Craig Fulmer, Elkhart County Community Foundation Board  
Wes Graff, Goshen Chamber of Commerce  
Dave Hess, Administrator, Elkhart County  
Joe Hauflaire, Planning and Development, City of Goshen  
John Leavitt, Elkhart County Community Foundation Board  
Lowell Miller, Town Manager, Town of Middlebury  
Mark Mow, Elkhart Community Schools  
Phil Penn, Elkhart Chamber of Commerce  
Alma Powell, retired School Administrator  
Jerry Quatman, United Way of Elkhart County  
Earl Taylor, Elkhart County Community Foundation  
Jerry Trolz, Elkhart County Community Foundation

# The Horizon Project

---

## Action Planning Teams

### **Business Retention, Attraction and Redevelopment**

William P. Johnson, Flying J, LLC (Co-Chair)

Dave Ogle, The Truth (Co-Chair)

Bill Bradley

Dan Boecher

Mark Brinson

Craig Buche

Brandon Erlacher

Randy Foster

Chris Graff

Dina Harris

Tom Irions

Alan Kauffman

Harold Loewen

Carol McDowell

Ross Miller

Dan Oakley

Phil Penn

Steve Pettit

Shirley Showalter

Tom Stark

Dale Weaver

Scott Welch

### **Tourism Development**

Richard Pletcher, Amish Acres, LLC (Co-Chair)

Diana Lawson, FCDME, Elkhart County Convention & Visitors Bureau (Co-Chair)

Larry Andrews

Dee Ashbaugh

Nancy Banks

Ellie Billey

Wilbur Bontrager,

Tim Frick

Kyle Hannon

Dennis Harney

Peg Hoffer

Mike Huber

The Honorable Allan Kauffman

Levi King

Michael Kubacki



---

Robert Miller  
Ron Schmanske  
Anthony Showalter  
Jim Siegmann  
Cary Summers  
Brian Wiebe  
Meg Wolgamood  
Jenni Wysong

**Land Use**

Bob Pfaff, Baker & Daniels (Co-Chair)  
Phil Gordon, retired county Extension Agent (Co-Chair)  
Larry Bontrager  
Tom Borger  
Nancy Brown  
Geoffrey Church  
Rob Dunlop  
Fred Feick  
Larry Gautsche  
Bill Goheen  
Joe Haufflaire  
Gretchen Helman  
David Hess  
Ken Jones  
Glenn E. Killoren  
Don Lehman  
Rob Letherman  
Michael Malone  
Eleanor Morehouse  
Dean Morehouse  
Beth Neff  
Tom Pletcher  
Ken Pletcher  
Adlai Schrock  
Dennis Sharkey  
Amos Sheets  
Allen Troyer  
Meg Wolgamood  
Mike Yoder

## **The Horizon Project**

---

### **Government Coordination**

Gordon Lord, Yoder, Ainlay, Ulmer & Buckingham (Co-Chair)  
John K. Letherman, FM Stone Commercial (Co-Chair)  
Tom Byers  
Joseph Hauflaire  
Rick Jenkins  
The Honorable Allan Kauffman  
Andrew Maksymovitch  
Bob McCoige  
The Honorable David Miller  
Lowell Miller  
Tom Roeder  
Phid Wells  
Phil R. Stiver  
Bill Wuthrich  
Larry L. Thompson  
Eric Horvath  
Dan Boecher

### **Workforce Development**

Juan A. Manigault, Northern Indiana Workforce Investment Board (Chair)  
Steve Arnold  
Steve Barkdull  
Ellen Krulewitch  
Don Krabill  
James Pyle  
Lisa Walencius

### **Education P – 12**

Milt Thomas, Rapidribbons (Chair)  
Connie Deuschele  
Cindy Gillard  
Kerry Lawson  
Myrl Nofziger  
Randy Robertson

### **Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development**

Carl Tiedemann, The Tiedemann Group (Co-Chair)  
Allon LeFever, formerly of Goshen College (Co-Chair)  
Dennis Blyly  
Jim Acheson



---

James Dague  
Carol Davis  
Mark Fessenden  
Jeff Gillaspay  
James Hiatt  
George Marlow  
Tom McArthur  
Tom Payne  
Emerson Ropp  
Linda Rupnow  
Dale Weaver

**Social Services**

Jerry Quatman, United Way of Elkhart County (Co-Chair)  
Jon Housand, Elkhart County Community Foundation (Co-Chair)  
Jim Siegmann  
Omer Nisley  
Miriam Martin  
Terry Hogenboom  
Jill Freshour  
Tom Cutler  
Joan Andrews  
Laurie Nafziger  
Gene Yoder  
Kevin Deary  
Charlene Speicher  
Dina Harris  
Tony Sommer  
Dick Kallenberg  
Al Wengard  
Bob Watkins  
Paula Shively

The Horizon Project gained additional benefit from the involvement of the Elkhart County Mayors, Elkhart County Commissioners, City-County Council, City and County Planners and Elkhart County School Superintendents

## The Horizon Project

---

### **Project Staff:**

Elkhart County Convention & Visitors Bureau  
Mike Huber, Cindy Ostrom and Jessica Miller-Barnhart

Flying J LLC  
Sue McCall

### **Consulting Team:**

Center for Economic and Community Development, Ball State University  
Elaine M. Fisher and Rose Scovel, AICP

Koehn Consulting  
Dennis Koehn and Rich Caplan, Caplan & Associates

Hudson Institute  
Shane Burkhardt, AICP



---

# Introduction

---

*This page intentionally left blank.*



Elkhart County long enjoyed an enviable local economic environment. In the late sixties per capita income was 110.5% of the nation, declining in the seventies but still above the state average in 1999. The county's manufacturing strength is legendary, employment grew by 17.6% between 1989 and 1999; and manufacturing employment still accounts for 56.2% of total county earnings and pays the highest average annual wage.

In recent years, community leaders recognized the significantly changed national and global environment and its increasing impact on the local economy. The consolidation and movement of manufacturing activity offshore, the loss of high paying jobs and the increasingly technology-based economy, made clear the necessity for Elkhart County citizens to jointly and proactively build a plan that would ensure the county would have a thriving and sustainable economy long into the future.

Some years ago community leaders began thinking from a county perspective. Valuable countywide collaborations include the creation of the Elkhart County Community Foundation and some years later the development of the Economic Development Corporation of Elkhart County. The decision to conduct a countywide visioning and planning process was the next wise and logical step. The determination to incorporate a broad spectrum of issues into the planning process, signified a recognition by organizers that the economy of the 21<sup>st</sup> century rests upon a holistic, economic and community development foundation. The community that has a rich quality of life, an environment that nurtures the growth of commerce; provides opportunities for all citizens to reach their full potential and practices intelligent land-use, is positioned for success in the new economy.

The Horizon Project planning process was guided by the Steering Committee and designed to be informative, inclusive and action focused. The intention was to provide data that enabled participants to gain a common understanding and a factual explanation for recent changes in the community economy; to conduct a participatory process that resulted in a vision for the future that is shared by leaders and citizens; and most importantly to create a recognition that a changed environment requires change on our part.

During the first Community Leadership Meeting participants identified their priority concerns.

- National and global competition, the exodus of corporate headquarters, lack of a diversified economic base – reliance on one major industry, and the need to build an entrepreneurial climate to nurture the growth of new businesses
- Redevelopment of brownfields and abandoned industrial sites
- Improvement of educational attainment for all, preparing the current and future workforce, and strengthening early childhood education
- Institution of county-wide land-use planning, managing growth and controlling sprawl
- Strengthening cooperation and coordination among elected officials and local, county and regional planning agencies
- Embracing cultural diversity

## The Horizon Project

---

- Developing communities : building neighborhoods, developing appropriate housing, increasing childcare services, and developing amenities that keep and attract the young professionals of tomorrows workforce and the workforce that commutes from surrounding counties
- Developing a broader leadership base, recovering from the loss of white collar leadership, and the development of future leaders

Discussions also identified some critical overarching issues included:

- The recognition that economies are regional not local, hence the need for identification of regional business clusters and regional collaboration
- An acknowledged need for collaborative relationships and alliances across all issues and throughout and between the public and private sector
- Increased diversity is a trend all communities are seeing, it brings along the challenge of fully integrating people into the community and the workforce plus the opportunity to build a more accepting and creatively diverse community
- A realization that, as other nations continue to develop the loss of well paid, low skilled jobs will also continue, thus diversification strategies and creative development tools will play a key role in revitalizing traditional manufacturing economies

These priorities and issues helped set the agenda for Action Planning Teams and were incorporated into their discussions and the resulting plan. The aggressive and detailed Action Plans in this document are a testament to the hard work and dedication exhibited by a broad and tremendously dedicated group of Elkhart County volunteers representing a cross-section of community constituencies.

The Horizon Project Steering Committee will be reorganized as the Horizon Project Commission with the responsibility of guiding and monitoring the implementation of the plan and Implementation Teams are being guided through the initial phase of implementation planning.

Horizon Project Chairman, and Chair of the new Commission, William P. Johnson states, “I believe the people of Elkhart County are committed to uniting for the common good and share:

- a willingness to accept the need for change
- a willingness to accept the responsibility for the way things are and the way things will be
- a commitment to a shared, common vision of the future
- a proactive, action oriented mindset
- a desire to build a diverse, participatory, community leadership base
- a capacity for handling continued, systematic change, and
- a dedication to building the best possible community for this and future generations



## **Executive Summary**

---

*This page intentionally left blank.*



---

## Overview

---

### Background

By many measures, Elkhart County is a successful, growing community. A closer look reveals a not so reassuring picture.

- In the late 60's, Elkhart County per capita income stood at 110% of the U.S. per capita income. The county still fairs well compared to the region (St. Joseph, Elkhart, Marshall, Kosciusko counties) and the state but in 1999 the county per capita income was only 92.3% of the U.S.
- Manufacturing accounts for 45% of the workforce and 56.2% of total county earnings, compared to 30% statewide and 20% in the U.S. Manufacturing pays the highest annual wage in the County at \$19.92 an hour but that is now only 92.9% of the regional rate, 82% of the state and 80.9% of the U.S.
- 22.4% of the county workforce live in surrounding counties and take 19.7% of their earned income spending power back to those counties.
- In 2000, only 15.5% of Elkhart County citizens over 25 years of age had a 4-year degree or better, compared to 19.4% at the state level and 24.4% nationally.
- Of the 121 undersupplied occupations, most will require advanced skills training but vocational enrollment in the region is below that of the state.

There are many other issues that cause leaders to question the readiness of Elkhart County to compete in the global arena and the necessity for the community to build a thriving, sustainable economy.

- The inner cities are not seen as attractive places to live, locate a business or develop housing; they are badly in need of redevelopment and as a result increasing numbers of professionals are choosing to live outside of the main cities and prime farmland is being threatened by urban sprawl.
- Despite the huge increase in the Hispanic/Latino population, Elkhart County does not present itself as the cultural diverse, open, accepting community preferred by today's high technology workers and businesses.
- The county is highly dependent upon the manufacturing economy. Business consolidation and downsizing have resulted in the loss of higher paying jobs, corporate headquarters and the related white-collar jobs and leadership capacity.
- The county has not seen a significant increase in the use of technology or the development of the skilled workers necessary to move into the advanced manufacturing arena or other high technology related economic sectors.
- A unique cultural diversity enables tourism to play a central role in the local economy. Along with value-added agriculture it provides opportunities to diversify the economy while preserving a valued quality of life.

## The Horizon Project

---

- Job growth has been accompanied by declining average earnings thus increased pressure on the social and physical infrastructure.

If Elkhart County is to obtain the same status in the new economy that it held in the old one, citizens must recognize that globalization is not a fleeting trend, as other nations develop the United States and Elkhart County will face ever-increasing competition in all economic sectors. In the words of Horizon Project Chairman William P. Johnson, “globalization is the over-arching international system shaping the domestic policy and foreign relations of virtually every nation and it will not go away!”

If Elkhart County is to compete in the global environment it must embrace a philosophy of holistic community development by:

- Investing in an infrastructure of innovation that builds locally grown and locally owned businesses: financial and regulatory support for new and existing businesses, creative programs and initiatives to support local entrepreneurs and creative economic diversification efforts, plus proactive efforts to develop, modernize and maintain the existing industry base.
- Building the foundation for sustainable development: first class school systems, intelligent land use, development of aesthetically pleasing and vibrant downtowns, a healthy balance between the built and natural environment plus a rich cultural and recreational quality of life necessary to keep and attract the best and brightest.
- Creating the highly skilled workforce necessary to keep and attract technology rich businesses: build a commitment to lifelong learning; provide the programs and services necessary to move individuals up the skills ladder, partner with and/or locate institutions of higher education in the county.
- Building the most creative, effective system of government possible: maximize collaborative efforts, remove inessential duplication, streamline processes and procedures, and remove geographic developmental inequities.
- Thinking regionally because economies are not local: understand the regional economy and identify regional industry clusters, work in partnership with other counties in the region and structure county economic development efforts within a regional context.

### **Introduction**

In early 2002, a group of forward thinking community leaders collectively determined to organize and finance a Visioning and Community Planning Process. The project Steering

Committee, comprised of a broad, cross-section of community representatives, contracted with the Ball State University’s Center for Economic and Community Development (CECD) to design, guide and facilitate the planning process. The consulting team was comprised of CECD, Koehn Consulting and Hudson Institute.



**Steering Committee**

<p><b>William P. Johnson (Chair)</b> Elkhart County Community Foundation Board</p>	<p><b>Diana Lawson (Vice Chair)</b> Executive Director, Elkhart County CVB</p>
<p><b>Larry Andrews</b> Executive Director, Nappanee Chamber of Commerce &amp; Redevelopment Commission</p>	<p><b>Wilbur Bontrager</b> Elkhart County Community Foundation Board (Middlebury)</p>
<p><b>Bill Bradley</b> Executive Director, Economic Development Corporation of Elkhart County</p>	<p><b>Mark Brinson</b> Director of Planning &amp; Development, City of Elkhart</p>
<p><b>Tom Byers</b> Director of Planning &amp; Development (Elkhart County)</p>	<p><b>Deb Conley</b> Community Development Coordinator (Elkhart County)</p>
<p><b>Craig Fulmer</b> Elkhart County Community Foundation Board (Elkhart)</p>	<p><b>Wes Graff</b> President, Goshen Chamber of Commerce</p>
<p><b>David Hess</b> Administrator, Elkhart County</p>	<p><b>Joe Hauflaire</b> Director of Planning &amp; Development, City of Goshen</p>
<p><b>John Leavitt</b> Elkhart County Community Foundation Board (Nappanee)</p>	<p><b>Lowell Miller</b> Town Manager, Town of Middlebury</p>
<p><b>Mark Mow</b> Elkhart Community Schools</p>	<p><b>Phil Penn</b> President &amp; CEO, Elkhart Chamber of Commerce</p>
<p><b>Alma Powell</b> Retired School Administrator</p>	<p><b>Jerry Quatman</b> President, United Way of Elkhart County</p>
<p><b>Earl Taylor</b> President, Elkhart County Community Foundation</p>	<p><b>Jerry Trolz</b> Elkhart County Community Foundation Board (Goshen)</p>

## The Horizon Project

---

### Process

The Horizon Project process was designed to guide the Elkhart County community through the creation of a comprehensive vision of their future and the development of goals and actions necessary to attain that vision. The vision and corresponding actions were developed and supported by input from the community on major issues they saw impacting Elkhart County's future as well as a complete analysis of the general economic climate of the community.

### **Project objectives**

- Prepare a comprehensive analysis of the demographic, socio-economic and land use features of Elkhart County, identify areas of competitive advantage and areas of stagnation and decline.
- Provide guidance, facilitation and technical assistance in the creation of a comprehensive, community-based strategy for general and economic development based upon the identification of major issues impacting the county's growth and overall quality of life.
- Build consensus on how the county should approach major issues through broad based community involvement in (1) interpreting and responding to demographic and economic analysis, (2) developing a comprehensive strategic plan, and (3) developing and committing to an implementation strategy.

The process took approximately one year and included the preparation and presentation of a County and Regional Economic and Demographic Analysis and an extensive community input process including three Community Leadership Public Meetings, ten Focus Groups and ten individual interviews with local leaders. The data and input generated by these activities, plus topic research and background information on the practices of other communities, provided the foundation upon which eight Action Planning Teams created the goals, objectives, action plans and benchmarks that form the core of the Horizon Project Plan.



---

**Action Planning Teams**

**Business Retention, Creation, Attraction and Redevelopment**

Co-Chairs: Dave Ogle and William P. Johnson

**Tourism Development**

Co-Chairs: Richard Pletcher and Diana Lawson

**Land Use**

Co-Chairs: Bob Pfaff and Dave Hess

**Government Coordination**

Co-Chairs: Gordon Lord and John Letherman

**Workforce Development**

Chair: Juan Manigault

**Education P – 12**

Chair: Milt Thomas

**Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development**

Co-Chairs: Allon LeFever and Carl Tiedemann

**Social Services**

Co-Chairs: Jerry Quatman and Jon Housand

# The Horizon Project

---

## Community Vision And Plan

---

### Vision

The vision for Elkhart County's future was created by the Steering Committee from the input provided by approximately one hundred and thirty Elkhart County citizens who participated in the Community Leadership Meetings.

**“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.”**

### Goals and Objectives

#### 1. Business Retention, Creation and Attraction

**Build upon Elkhart County's renowned entrepreneurial spirit by creating an environment in which new, existing and newly locating businesses can grow, prosper and help diversify the Elkhart County Economy.**

Objective 1.1: Develop an Existing Industry Development Program.

Objective 1.2: Establish an Elkhart County Investment Board and Investment Capital Fund.

Objective 1.3: Establish a Technology-Based Incubator.

Objective 1.4: Create a Small Business Development Committee and Entrepreneurial Assistance One-Stop.

Objective 1.5: Study the feasibility of creating a network of incubators in the larger communities.

Objective 1.6: Develop an advanced Telecommunications Infrastructure.

Objective 1.7: Support the expansion and modernization of transportation, and sewer and water systems.

Objective 1.8: Develop a financial incentive policy and programs.

Objective 1.9: Develop a Targeted Industry Attraction Program.



Objective 1.10: Strengthen The Economic Development Corporation of Elkhart County.

## **2. Redevelopment**

**Support the redevelopment of downtowns and urban areas to manage sprawl, encourage smart growth, eliminate the appearance of blight and attract and retain the knowledge and creative class worker needed for future business development.**

Objective 2.1: Create the Elkhart County Redevelopment Forum.

Objective 2.2: Give brownfields and other redevelopment areas a more competitive edge in attracting commercial and other types of development.

Objective 2.3: Explore the idea of establishing an Obsolete Building Redevelopment Fund.

Objective 2.4: Support the participation of all Elkhart County communities in the IACT Downtown Program.

## **3. Tourism Development**

**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 3.1: Create a single, interlocking brand to market Elkhart County.

Objective 3.2: Promote the expansion of existing and creation of new facilities and events including the development of downtowns for arts, culture and entertainment.

Objective 3.3: Educate the community on the positive community impact of tourism activity.

Objective 3.4: Explore new tourism development funding strategies including the creation of a new taxing authority.

Objective 3.5: Create a comprehensive tourism development land use policy agenda.

## **4. Workforce Development**

**Create an adaptive and educated workforce capable of meeting the changing demands of the workplace, and create public-private sector leadership that promotes the workforce and career development continuum as the key for future business growth and economic development.**

Objective 4.1: Establish an Elkhart County Workforce Development Advisory Council.

## The Horizon Project

---

Objective 4.2: Implement or augment a skills assessment and certification system for schools and businesses.

Objective 4.3: Explore the feasibility/necessity of establishing computer-learning centers across the county.

Objective 4.4: Develop a campaign that promotes the workforce and career development continuum to all constituent groups.

### 5. P-16 Education

**Build a world-class P-16 education system by encouraging and assisting the Elkhart County Schools and the Elkhart County community in their efforts to fully implement P.L. 221 and the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) federal law.**

Objective 5.1: Establish a positive and safe environment for teaching and learning in every school.

Objective 5.2: Develop a curriculum that enables each student to meet mandated achievement requirements.

Objective 5.3: Select and train and/or retrain a staff member that will be responsible for implementing each districts policies, procedures, programs and curriculum requirements for all students.

Objective 5.4: School Boards in Elkhart County will create an annual Action Agenda for implementing the district's goals.

Objective 5.5: Each School District in Elkhart County will establish and maintain a proactive Public Relations Program that both gathers input and disseminates information about teaching and learning.

Objective 5.6: Establish joint venture programs between schools and two, 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.

Objective 5.7: Provide access to preschool or nursery school that gives every child high quality readiness training that enables them to begin Kindergarten at age 6.

Objective 5.8: Coordinate all existing career education programs in all Elkhart County school districts with any new components from the Learning Generation Initiative, Workforce Development or other related organizations.

Objective 5.9: Through the Community in Schools Program (CIS) develop a vision and plan to help children and young people in Elkhart County develop the skills and abilities necessary to be successful adults.



Objective 5.10: Develop county-wide forums of teachers and administrators from all school districts to address: computer technology and cooperative purchasing agreements; curriculum (establish best way to use Plato, Workkeys and other assessment and/or teaching tools); development of a Community Report Card and development of a proactive public relations program.

Objective 5.11: Establish a forum(s) consisting of educators, business and community leaders to address: annual action agendas, common goals and commitments to the Horizon Plan and future community needs, community development impediments and united positions on state and federal laws impacting education.

Objective 5.12: Work in partnership with the Indiana Education Roundtable to incorporate as required, recommendations in the ***Indiana P-16 Plan for Improving Student Achievement*** into the Horizon Project Education Plan.

## **6. Government Coordination**

**Establish a functioning, recognized Elkhart County Intergovernmental Forum and structure for expanded intergovernmental communication, cooperation, and collaboration involving leaders of county government, the towns and cities of Elkhart County, and when appropriate, other local governmental units and agencies. Through the Intergovernmental Forum develop a mindset, philosophy and culture for increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of local government in Elkhart County through creative and farsighted planning, spending, and programming.**

Objective 6.1: Cause local governmental units to formally commit to participating in the Intergovernmental Forum.

Objective 6.2: Establish a regular meeting schedule and standard agenda format for Forum Meetings.

Objective 6.3: Recognize, embrace and when appropriate, act upon the ultimate Horizon Project Development Plan.

Objective 6.4: Identify and encourage cost and revenue sharing opportunities at and between local and county government levels.

Objective 6.5: Identify actual and desired levels of public service and the feasibility of closing the gap plus the potential for merging programs and eliminating duplication.

Objective 6.6: Identify strengths and weaknesses in the Elkhart County economy, social structure, and culture, and to the extent possible utilize local and county government to build upon the former and mitigate the later.

## The Horizon Project

---

### 7. Land Use

**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: Establish a Land Use Advisory Council of city and county planners and other essential experts to guide a comprehensive land use planning process.

Objective 7.2: Develop a combined city/county comprehensive land-use policy plan.

Objective 7.3: Identify in the comprehensive plan all current green space with the intention of developing protective mechanisms.

Objective 7.4: Develop uniform, countywide ordinances by which the comprehensive plan policies will be implemented and encourage development that increases density and utilizes existing infrastructure.

Objective 7.5: Request interim review by appropriate governmental bodies of curb cut policies, county zoning and subdividing ordinances, including the Three Acre Rule.

### 8. Social Services

**Insure adequate and affordable social services are provided to meet the needs of all Elkhart County residents.**

Objective 8.1: Inventory and assess the current Elkhart County social services catalog and its responsiveness and applicability to current needs.

Objective 8.2: Create the optimum Elkhart County Social Services Network.

Objective 8.3: Insure sustainable funding sources are available to maintain the necessary level of services to Elkhart County.

Objective 8.4: 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.



---

## **Benchmarks**

---

The Horizon Project Commission will guide the implementation of the plan. A number of Implementation Teams will undertake the responsibility for meeting certain goals and/or objectives and will measure the success of their efforts against the following benchmarks:

- The gap between Elkhart County and the national per capita personal income will close by 5% by 2010.
- Establish a locally available research and investment capital fund in the minimum amount of \$10 million.
- The number of net new businesses in preferred growth sectors will increase by 5% by 2010.
- The total economic impact generated by visitors to Elkhart County will increase 25% by 2010, exceeding \$350,000,000.
- Increase assessed valuation in current TIF districts and/or increase in the number of projects over a specified time period.
- The percentage of Elkhart County residents with college degrees will equal or exceed the state level by 2010.
- 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.
- The percentage of high-school students passing the GQE (ISTEP) will meet or surpass the state average in each Elkhart County School Districts by 2010.
- Dropout rates in each Elkhart County school district will equal or fall below the state average by 2010.
- Average hourly earnings in total private employment will be within 5% of the national average by 2010.
- A well-functioning Intergovernmental Forum that results in measurable savings in all municipal budgets and a measurable increase in revenue sharing activities.
- A poverty ranking below the 70th percentile by 2010.
- Significant reduction in the duplication in social service programs.

*This page intentionally left blank.*



---

## The Process

---

*This page intentionally left blank.*



---

## **Overview**

### **Introduction**

In early 2002, a group of community leaders, representing a broad cross-section of Elkhart County development related organizations, collectively decided to organize and fund a countywide, visioning and community planning process. The county had undergone planning efforts in the past, and based upon observed changes in the physical, economic and cultural environment the group felt it was important for the citizens to collectively re-envision their desired future, to fully understand the implications of operating in a global economy, and to develop and implement an aggressive plan to build a community with a sustainable economy and a rich quality of life.

It was determined that the process would include a demographic and economic analysis of the county and surrounding region, an assessment of current land use, a social impact analysis and a review of past plans and reports. Members of the Steering Committee were also committed to an open and inclusive planning process that would encompass all aspects of community and economic development; a process in which all community constituencies would participate and upon completion, embrace.

The primary consultant was the Ball State University Center for Economic and Community Development (CECD), facilitation services were provided by Koehn Consulting and additional assistance was provided by Hudson Institute.

The role of the Steering Committee was to guide the planning process to completion and, following the initial plan development, to continue to serve as the plan review and oversight implementation body.

### **Role of Strategic Planning**

Strategic planning is a systematic process for managing change and creating the best possible future. In an environment of constant change community leaders must anticipate and prepare for the impact of current and emerging trends on the future environment.

Strategic decision-making should be guided by quantitative and qualitative factors. "Intuition is extremely important in strategic thinking and planning, intuition that is, which represents a leap in thinking preceded by a very careful analysis of the facts" (John W. Keller, Regional and Community Planning, Kansas State University). Local leaders are critically important to plan development, their intuition about the community is much more keen than that of outside consultants.

## **The Horizon Project**

---

The planning process then, must involve the assessment of the current community situation, from both a quantitative and qualitative perspective. The factual analysis, augmented by the vision and assessment of citizens, provides the foundation for the development of the goals, objectives and actions that comprise the final plan. The plan outlines the road map and the desired direction. Needless-to-say, success lies in the community's organization of, and dedication to the implementation of the plan.

### **Role of Demographic and Economic Analysis**

Before a community can intelligently develop strategies for community and economic development, it is essential to understand area demographics, the nature of the current local economy and the community's strengths and weaknesses as a location for individuals, businesses and the desired economic activity. Analysis is therefore an essential component of the planning process.

The primary focus of the economic analysis presented in this report is the 'basic' economy, those activities that generate revenue inflows as a result of the sale of goods and services to non-local markets. The analysis addresses such questions as:

- What is the current condition of the local economy?
- Compared to other areas, how has the local economy performed? Has economic performance strengthened or weakened over time?
- What is the underlying structure of the local economy? Which industry groups account for the area's economic performance and condition?
- Which local industries appear to be in a strong competitive position? Which are in a weak position?
- How are larger trends affecting the area's locational assets or liabilities?

It is not the purpose of this analysis to reveal the ultimate "fix" for a community, but rather to support rational and informed discussion about economic challenges and possible solutions that enable citizens to reach consensus on preferred policy options.

## **Methodology**

---

### **Purpose**

The process was designed to guide the Elkhart County community through the creation of a comprehensive vision of their future and the development of goals and actions necessary to attain that vision. The vision and corresponding actions were developed and supported by a complete analysis of the general economic climate plus considerable input from the community on the major issues they saw impacting Elkhart County's future.



Project objectives:

- Prepare a comprehensive analysis of the demographic, socio-economic and land use features of Elkhart County, identify areas of competitive advantage and areas of stagnation and decline.
- Provide guidance, facilitation and technical assistance in the creation of a comprehensive, community-based strategy for general and economic development based upon the identification of major issues impacting the county's growth and overall quality of life.
- Build consensus on how the county should approach major issues through broad based community involvement in (1) interpreting and responding to demographic and economic analysis, (2) developing a comprehensive strategic plan, and (3) developing and committing to an implementation strategy.

### **Analysis**

The comprehensive analysis of demographic and economic features of the county and region was conducted using secondary data from national and state and sources including:

- U.S. Census Bureau
- U.S. Department of Labor
- U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis
- U.S. Department of Justice
- Indiana Department of Workforce Development
- Indiana Department of Education
- Indiana Family and Social Services Administration
- Indiana State Board of Tax Commissioners

Data for analysis are published periodically, depending upon the specific agency. For most economic data, either 1999 or 2000 was the last year for which reliable data was available at the time of this analysis. The business cycle used for this analysis was 1989 to 1999.

Analysis was conducted in the following areas:

- Demographics
- Growth and Farmland Preservation
- Income and Poverty
- Housing
- Education
- Employment
- Earnings
- Targeted Industry Analysis
  - Specialized Industries
  - Producer Services
- Agriculture
- Social Impact Analysis

## The Horizon Project

---

The analysis of available numeric data can provide useful information on the status of a local, regional or national economy.

The Elkhart County analysis included identification of the local economic base and areas of industry specialization. Industries that account for the largest share of earnings or employment do not necessarily represent those that are the underpinnings of the local economy. Those industries that are most crucial for growth are those that produce goods and services that are exported outside of the local economy. These industries are known as the economy's "economic base" or "export base" and are often referred to as "basic" industries. The export of goods and services generates an inflow of cash into the economy. This is the fuel that makes the economy work.

The analysis of the export base of the economy identifies those sectors of the economy that are "basic", and those in which there is sufficient specialization that substitution of imports by local goods and services might be successful. Location Quotient Analysis helps determine the community's economic base and along with Shift-Share Analysis will determine those local industries that hold a competitive advantage in the national economy.

Population growth and the location of that growth, along with data about the location of prime farmland were used to determine which prime farmland was threatened by development.

Social impact analysis was used to assess the impacts on society of individual development projects that result in long-term population growth. Any future development and population change sets in motion a chain of events that affects the social environment. The demands of additional individuals must be met by various governmental and non-governmental social service organizations. Impact modeling attempts to quantify the stresses that population growth from development, would place on various elements in the community including health and social services, public safety, libraries, schools and parks.

### **Process**

The consulting team worked with the Steering Committee to structure the research agenda and the planning process. The research and analysis work was completed during the early summer of 2002. The input and consensus building process was solidified and a project website was developed. Draft documents and process updates were posted at key points during the process.

A press conference was conducted by the Steering Committee on July 15, 2002. William P. Johnson, Chair and Diana Lawson, Vice Chair, launched the county-wide, visioning and planning process to be known as the Horizon Project: Today's Vision for a Dynamic Elkhart County Tomorrow.

The initial step in the actual planning process was the first of three Community Leadership Workshops, held on September 11, 2002, and attended by over 130 Elkhart County citizens. The goals were to:



- Explain the Horizon Project purpose and the process
- Present and explain the economic and demographic analysis conducted
- Have participants identify the economic, demographic, physical, social and cultural strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for Elkhart County and set initial priorities for focusing attention and action
- Have participants identify areas for more in-depth input through focus group discussions or interviews

The workshop input revealed nine key areas of importance: economic and business development; redevelopment; government coordination/land use; educational attainment; cultural diversity; community development/social services and leadership.

Following the workshop, consultant Dennis Koehn worked with the Steering Committee members to organize and conduct a series of focus groups based on the suggestions of the workshop participants. Focus groups fell into two categories 1) discussions with specific population groups, and 2) discussions of particular issues, they included:

- Agriculture
- Business Development
- Educational Attainment
- Intergovernmental Cooperation
- African American Group
- High School Group
- Young Adult Group
- Older Adult Group

Koehn also conducted individual interviews with a cross-section of community leaders representing various constituencies.

The BSU consultants in partnership with Steering Committee leaders summarized the input from the first Community Leadership Workshop, the Focus Groups and the Individual Interviews and matched the results to the relevant research and analysis findings.

Based upon the prioritization of issues by participants in the workshop, a list of suggested Action Planning topics and teams was prepared.

- Business Attraction, Retention and Redevelopment
- Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development
- Tourism Development
- Government Coordination
- Land Use
- Education P-12
- Workforce Development
- Building on the Value of Cultural Diversity
- Social Services

## The Horizon Project

---

A second Community Leadership Workshop was conducted on November 6, 2002. The goals were to:

- Develop a broader understanding of community and economic development through a presentation by a recognized leader in the field
- Review the summarization of the input from the first meeting, the focus groups and the interviews vis-à-vis the relevant research findings
- Guide the participants through the process of creating a vision of the ideal Elkhart County 10-20 years in the future
- Confirm Action Planning topics, review the Action Planning process and recruit volunteers for Action Planning Teams

Immediately following the second workshop the Executive Committee of the Steering Committee and the consulting team members developed a draft Vision Statement from the prioritized components shared by the workshop participants. The final, shared vision guided the development of goals, objectives and action plans by the designated Action Planning Teams.

Concurrently, Action Planning Team Co-Chairs were chosen and took part in a brief training session. Consultants outlined the action planning process and terminology definitions to be utilized throughout the process.

- A vision is a set of shared values, a rational, positive hope for the future
- A goal is a broad statement of intent designed to lessen or negate the impact of a threat or weakness, or build upon a strength or opportunity
- An objective is a specific, measurable initiative or project (activity undertaken to help accomplish a goal)
- A benchmark is a measure against which you set and gauge your progress
- An action or implementation plan is a detailed workplan that identifies specific actions, responsible parties and timetables developed to accomplish an objective or goal

Beginning in December 2002 Action Planning Teams met on a regular basis to define goal(s) and work on the development of objectives and action plans. Consultants provided the members of each team with a Resource File containing technical assistance materials and examples of best practices in their particular area of focus. They also attended team meetings as requested. Preliminary Action Plans were completed and consultants prepared a composite draft of the Horizon Project Plan in late May 2003. The plan was forwarded to all Action Plan Teams for their review and was posted on the project website.

The CECD staff with Steering Committee leaders, developed a set of macro benchmarks based on the goals and objectives developed by Action Planning Teams, and against which the success of the Horizon Project would be measured. Those benchmarks are included in the following Action Plan.



A third and final Community Leadership Workshop was conducted on May 28, 2003. Attendees numbered over 100 and included Steering Committee members, Action Planning Team Co-Chairs and members, elected officials and interested citizens. Goals were to:

- Present a draft of the Horizon Plan that had been approved by the Steering Committee
- Review the suggested benchmarks and seek feedback
- Secure comments and feedback on the plan
- Share the implementation process and structure

As the process moved toward its conclusion, additional meetings were held to address issues raised at the Community Workshop, to obtain specific expertise and to discuss and clarify issues being addressed by more than one Action Planning Team.

On the evening of August 19, 2003, Horizon Project Chair, William P. Johnson spoke to a gathering of elected officials, Steering Committee members, Action Planning Team members and numerous other project participants. With eloquence and passion he spoke of the state, national and global environment that necessitated the Horizon Project planning process and, more importantly the plan implementation. He expressed his commitment to leading the Horizon Project Commission (reformed Steering Committee) for the next three years. Each attendee received a copy of the Horizon Project Executive Summary and a Resolution in support of the plan, to be shared and hopefully adopted by all governmental units and development related organizations involved in and affected by the Horizon Project Plan.

## **Conclusion**

---

If Elkhart County is to obtain the same status in the new economy that it held in the old one, citizens must recognize that globalization is not a fleeting trend, as other nations develop the United States and Elkhart County will face ever-increasing competition in all economic sectors. In the words of Horizon Project Chairman William P. Johnson, "globalization is the over-arching international system shaping the domestic policy and foreign relations of virtually every nation and it will not go away!"

If Elkhart County is to compete in the global environment it must embrace a philosophy of holistic community development by:

- Investing in an infrastructure of innovation that builds locally grown and locally owned businesses: financial and regulatory support for new and existing businesses, creative programs and initiatives to support local entrepreneurs and creative economic diversification efforts, plus proactive efforts to develop, modernize and maintain the existing industry base.

## The Horizon Project

---

- Building the foundation for sustainable development: first class school systems, intelligent land use, development of aesthetically pleasing and vibrant downtowns, a healthy balance between the built and natural environment plus a rich cultural and recreational quality of life necessary to keep and attract the best and brightest.
- Creating the highly skilled workforce necessary to keep and attract technology rich businesses: build a commitment to lifelong learning; provide the programs and services necessary to move individuals up the skills ladder, partner with and/or locate institutions of higher education in the county.
- Building the most creative, effective system of government possible: maximize collaborative efforts, remove inessential duplication, streamline processes and procedures, and remove geographic developmental inequities.
- Thinking regionally because economies are not local: understand the regional economy and identify regional industry clusters, work in partnership with other counties in the region and structure county economic development efforts within a regional context.

As Chairman William P. Johnson states, “If we are to be successful, the Elkhart County community must make a commitment to unite for the common good with:

- a willingness to accept the need for change,
- a willingness to accept responsibility for the way things are and the way things will be,
- a commitment to a shared, common vision for the future,
- a proactive, action oriented mindset,
- a desire to build a diverse, participatory community leadership base, and
- a capacity for handling continued, systematic change, and a dedication to building the best possible community for this and future generations.”



---

## The Plan

---

*This page intentionally left blank.*



---

## Vision

---

A vision statement represents a set of shared values, a pragmatic but hopeful view of a desired future developed by a broad representation of a community’s citizenry. Over 130 people participated in the creation of the vision for the future Elkhart County.

**“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.”**

---

## Action Plan

---

The Action Plan or implementation plan identifies what will be done, how will it be done and who will do it. The following addresses these questions through Goals, Objectives, Action Steps and Implementation Responsibility.

### **Business Retention, Creation and Attraction**

<b>GOAL 1:</b> Build upon Elkhart County’s renowned entrepreneurial spirit by creating an environment in which new, existing and newly locating businesses can grow, prosper and help diversify the Elkhart County Economy.
---

**Objective 1.1: Recognize the importance of maintaining and expanding Elkhart County’s existing industry base by developing a proactive Existing Industry Development Program**

#### **Action Steps:**

- 1.1.1 Identify Elkhart County’s key industries according to: presence in the county or region; importance to long-term economic health of community; potential for incorporating more advanced applications of technology etc.
- 1.1.2 Organize an Industry Group for each key industry and facilitate regular meetings to help identify current and future impediments to growth and success in Elkhart County (taxes/regulation; infrastructure; workforce; labor costs, etc.); opportunities for collaboration for mutual benefit (training, etc); mechanisms for growth (advanced technology, export growth, etc.)

## The Horizon Project

---

- 1.1.3 Maintain regular communications with economic developers in the nine-county region to identify regional existing industry strategies i.e. developing region-wide buyer/supplier chains – building industry clusters.
- 1.1.4 Partner with surrounding counties to create a Regional Industry Roundtable for key leaders from targeted regional industry clusters.
- 1.1.5 Develop a local/regional “CEO forum” where industry and business leaders can discuss common problems and opportunities.
- 1.1.6 Develop resources and programs to assist businesses and industry in evolving to more advanced manufacturing techniques.
- 1.1.7 Create linkages with education entities and work in unison to alter current curriculum that would allow for better alignment with future needs of manufacturers.
- 1.1.8 Work with local colleges and universities to move toward specific niches rather than offer redundant programs.

### **Benchmarks:**

- An Existing Industry Program will be organized and fully operational

**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 retention and expansion of existing businesses, and the development of qualified small and/or new business start-ups**

### **Action Steps:**

- 1.2.1 Identify individuals with the dedication, skill and recognized leadership ability to build the investment fund
- 1.2.2 Determine investment pool target amount (\$10-12 million)
- 1.2.3 Develop a plan to roll out the concept with all potential partners and investors
- 1.2.4 Identify possible sources of funding for business development and new business start-ups
- 1.2.5 Identify one or two Venture Capital companies to manage the fund and determine investment decisions.

### **Benchmarks:**

- The Elkhart County Investment Board will be created
- 10 sources of venture capital will be identified
- A Venture Capital Fund of \$10-12 million will be created



**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.**

**Action Steps:**

1.3.1 Form a Technology-Based Incubator Task Force

1.3.2 Review requirements necessary to obtain a Certified Technology Park designation from the Indiana Department of Commerce

Any city, town or county with a redevelopment commission is eligible to have an area designated as a Certified Technology Park if certain requirements are met, including: demonstrating the significant support of a research university; a commitment to the commercialization of products; access and utilization of public and private resources in the park; the existence of, or proposed development of, a business incubator; the development of a business plan or the assurance that the park will be used for high technology business activity. In addition, a firm commitment must be shown from at least one business primarily engaged in a high-technology activity creating a significant number of jobs that will locate within the park.

1.3.3 Identify and secure a location for the Technology Park/Incubator

1.3.4 Create a partnership with a research university

1.3.5 Secure a commitment from one high tech firm to locate in the park

1.3.6 Submit an application for Certified Technology Park designation

**Benchmarks:**

- The Technology-Based Incubator Task Force will be organized

**Objective 1.4: Create a Small Business Development Committee of the Elkhart County Economic Development Corporation for the purpose of building an entrepreneurial assistance one-stop for the provision of educational, managerial and financial assistance, and information dissemination to new entrepreneurs.**

**Action Steps:**

1.4.1 Create the Small Business Development Committee

## The Horizon Project

---

- 1.4.2 Identify educational, financial and managerial assistance and resources available to Elkhart County's new/small businesses.
- 1.4.3 Document the "best practices" of other communities that have implemented successful Small Business and Entrepreneurial encouragement programs
- 1.4.4 Develop and implement a "delivery system" for providing technical assistance and disseminating information to the target market.

### **Benchmarks:**

- A Small Business Development Committee will be formed
- Three small business development 'best practice' communities will be identified and analyzed
- An information delivery system will be developed

**Objective 1.5: Study the feasibility of developing 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. The goal would be to attract small, high growth companies, with the potential of creating high paying jobs.**

### **Action Steps:**

- 1.5.1 Arrange for a feasibility study to be conducted
- 1.5.2 If a network is deemed feasible, develop the business plan for a network of integrated incubators, geographically dispersed across Elkhart County including entrepreneurial firm research, budgets, facility identification etc.
- 1.5.3 Define what technology services exist in Elkhart County, such as Maple Tronics wireless network, availability of fiber optics, etc.
- 1.5.4 Determine funding sources for the development of the Incubator Network.
- 1.5.5 Create an entrepreneurial support network for incubator clients as well as other entrepreneurs, including the creation of linkages between Goshen College, Notre Dame University, and Indiana University, access to potential sources of capital, and assistance with securing facilities after graduation from the incubator.

### **Benchmarks:**

- A technology incubator network feasibility study will be completed



---

**Objective 1.6: Develop the telecommunications infrastructure necessary to expand and attract Elkhart County's desired business and industry base**

**Action Steps:**

- 1.6.1 Form a Telecommunications Task Force
- 1.6.2 Contract with Purdue or Ball State University to conduct an assessment of the county's current telecommunications system
- 1.6.3 Create a plan for the development of a countywide, 21<sup>st</sup> century telecommunications infrastructure

**Benchmarks:**

- An Elkhart County Telecommunications Plan will be completed

**Objective 1.7: 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**

**Action Steps:**

- 1.7.1 Maintain involvement in the proposed countywide, comprehensive planning process
- 1.7.2 Communicate the infrastructure needs of business and industry to the appropriate bodies and throughout the appropriate processes
- 1.7.3 Work with local and county government and the appropriate state agencies to implement the desired changes

**Benchmarks:**

- A connection between the EDC of Elkhart County and the Comprehensive Plan process will be established

**Objective 1.8: Develop a financial incentive policy and programs directed toward the retention and attraction of business and industry that will most benefit or diversify the county economy and encourage smart growth and redevelopment.**

**Action Steps:**

- 1.8.1 Organize a task force to review key existing industry clusters, identified attraction targets and land-use and redevelopment goals stated elsewhere in the Horizon Strategic Plan.

## The Horizon Project

---

- 1.8.2 Review traditional (TIF, Tax Abatement, Tax Credits, etc.) and creative mechanisms used by other communities or designed by the task force to encourage the desired type of growth and development (i.e. encourage brownfield over greenfield development; reward investment in advanced technology; promote new/small business development, etc.)
- 1.8.3 Create a menu of recommended incentive tools for consideration and adoption by a coalition of county public and private leaders.
- 1.8.4 Establish local development incentive fund if appropriate

### **Benchmarks:**

- A financial incentives policy and programs will be researched, developed and approved

### **Objective 1.9: Develop a Targeted Industry Attraction Program**

#### **Action Steps:**

- 1.9.1 Identify the locally and regionally strong, industry/business clusters – bio-med, recreational vehicles, etc. and those other industry sectors the county wishes to attract or feel would fit Elkhart County strengths
- 1.9.2 Explore the feasibility of developing a county industrial park or parks
- 1.9.3 Develop a county and regional targeted marketing and attraction strategy that builds upon existing local/regional cluster strengths (target similar businesses, their buyers, suppliers, headquarters, etc.)

### **Benchmarks:**

- A Targeted Industry Attraction Program will have been developed and implemented

### **Objective 1.10: 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**

#### **Action Steps:**

- 1.10.1 Fully develop partnerships with local and regional development entities. Clearly define roles, organize collaborative efforts – remove duplications
- 1.10.2 Build the organizational structure and committee system to handle the workload
- 1.10.3 Create a full-time position dedicated to Existing Industry Development



- 1.10.4 Develop and publicize a county business development strategy for existing business and business attraction including incentive policy and programs
- 1.10.5 Support and stimulate a tourism economic development strategy
- 1.10.6 Develop an internal (county) marketing strategy, defining role and roles of partners, outlining services, incentives available to existing business, publicize each major business success.

**Benchmarks:**

- A plan to expand the human and financial resources available to the EDC will be developed

**Implementation Responsibility**

The Economic Development Corporation of Elkhart County will take primary responsibility for the prioritization and implementation of the objectives set forth in Goal 1. The organization is seeking to recruit one hundred volunteers to work on the various committees and sub-committees that will be asked to take responsibility for the implementation of the above objectives

**Redevelopment**

**GOAL 2: Support the redevelopment of downtowns and urban areas to manage sprawl, encourage smart growth, eliminate the appearance of blight and attract and retain the knowledge and creative class worker needed for business retention and expansion in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.**

**Objective 2.1: Create and convene the Elkhart County Redevelopment Forum comprised of redevelopment professionals from the county and municipalities, along with selected legal, financial, civic and development leaders for the purpose of developing and implementing a county Redevelopment Plan**

**Action Steps:**

- 2.1.1 Organize the Forum; determine the scope of work and a regular meeting schedule
- 2.1.2 Inventory and target areas for redevelopment over the next ten years. Compile a list of all resources available to accomplish this.
- 2.1.3 Determine the criteria the State of Indiana uses to define brownfields and other prime redevelopment sites

## The Horizon Project

---

- 2.1.4 Inventory all brownfields in the county
- 2.1.5 Identify and integrate local, regional and national governmental resources already in place that can serve our redevelopment efforts, by September 15, 2003
- 2.1.6 Inventory and summarize all redevelopment related studies done throughout Elkhart County
- 2.1.7 Create a list of brownfield and other redevelopment targets throughout the county
- 2.1.8 Create a mechanism for the ongoing identification of brownfields as they develop
- 2.1.9 Create recommendations for maintaining commercial and industrial properties above brownfield levels, even when abandoned

### **Benchmarks:**

- The Elkhart County Redevelopment Forum will be organized and operational

**Objective 2.2 Give brownfields and other redevelopment areas more of a competitive edge in attracting commercial and other types of development. Remove barriers and help with marketing efforts to reuse urban sites wherever possible.**

### **Action Steps:**

- 2.2.1 Build a countywide commitment and communication tools to foster redevelopment of downtowns, inner cities and brownfield sites
- 2.2.2 Look at how TIFs and other incentives are being used, and ask if they can be directed to favor disadvantaged areas over more marketable ones
- 2.2.3 Facilitate redevelopment projects by streamlining local and county government processes
- 2.2.4 Review and amend building and zoning codes if necessary to spur redevelopment
- 2.2.5 Work with local and state officials and associations to remove tax inequities between cities and county that penalize growth in redevelopment areas
- 2.2.6 Encourage the arts, cultural events and recreational opportunities in downtowns and other redevelopment areas

### **Benchmarks:**

- Incentives that encourage the use of brownfields will be established



- Brownfields and areas of perceived blight are reduced
- City and county codes, ordinances, abatements and incentives reward and facilitate redevelopment.

**Objective 2.3: Explore the idea of establishing a fund or funds to assist companies interested in purchasing older, obsolete facilities, to cover the cost of returning the building to productive use.**

**Action Steps:**

2.3.1 Explore the options of creating one county fund or individual local funds

- Determine the source(s) of funds
- Develop the criteria by which fund distribution would be determined
- Determine who would administer the fund(s)

**Benchmarks:**

- The feasibility of creating a Building Revitalization Fund will have been determined

**Objective 2.4: Support the participation of all Elkhart County cities and towns in the Indiana Downtowns program sponsored by IACT.**

**Action Steps:**

2.4.1 Encourage and support each community in the development of an action agenda that builds upon their unique and competitive market strengths (office, residential, specialty retail, cultural center, events and festivals, etc.)

2.4.2 Encourage and support each community to capitalize on their strengths of cultural diversity, affordable housing, and cultural strengths to market an image attractive to knowledge and creative class businesses and workers

**Benchmarks:**

- Each Elkhart County community will develop a Downtown Action Agenda

**Implementation Responsibility**

A newly created Elkhart County Redevelopment Forum will be responsible for the above stated objectives. The Forum members will include redevelopment professionals from the county and municipalities, along with a selection of legal, financial, civic and development leaders.

# The Horizon Project

---

## Tourism Development

**Goal 3:** Build a tourism strategy that enhances the industry 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 3.1:** 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.

### **Action Steps:**

3.1.1 Create a white paper outlining:

- a. Existing marketing activities/results
- b. Examples of collaborative marketing
- c. Local collaborative marketing opportunities

3.1.2 Identify all cooperative partners/stakeholders, including:

- a. Tourism industry reps
- b. Economic development professionals
- c. Industry CEOs/marketing professionals
- d. Government officials

3.1.3 Convene stakeholder marketing summit focused on educating participants

3.1.4 Conduct preliminary market research and define product

3.1.5 Develop marketing implementation plan and use protocols for all partners

3.1.6 Create cooperative marketing budget for program implementation

### **Benchmarks:**

- Marketing white paper will be completed
- List of partners and stakeholders will be compiled
- Stakeholder summit will be facilitated and will result in general agreement on collaborative marketing program by tourism, economic development, and RV industry partners



- Product definition and market research will be completed, and will identify market strengths and opportunities for all partners
- Implementation planning will take place
- Combined marketing budget will be raised from partners during implementation planning

**Objective 3.2: 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.**

**Action Steps:**

- 3.2.1 Develop funding strategy for Christmas Star holiday event
- 3.2.2 Implement Christmas Star holiday event
- 3.2.3 Study the feasibility of creating new facilities, including
  - a. outdoor convention center
  - b. RV industry showcase pavilion
  - c. state of the art visitor's center
- 3.2.4 Expand opportunities for arts, culture, and entertainment businesses as redevelopment themes for downtown Elkhart, Goshen, and Nappanee
- 3.2.5 Identify opportunities to build on existing arts and cultural facilities such as Goshen College Music Center, Elco Theater, Elkhart Civic Theater, Amish Acres, etc.
- 3.2.6 Identify growth/expansion barriers for existing businesses (Essenhaus, Amish Acres, etc)
- 3.2.7 Develop job creation criteria and quality standards for tourism related businesses
- 3.2.8 Create a tourism related incentive program based on quality standards and job creation criteria

**Benchmarks:**

- The current statute governing use of the Innkeeper's Tax will be modified to fund start-up costs associated with the Christmas Star event
- The Christmas Star holiday event will be in operation for the 2004 Holiday season
- Complete a feasibility study for an outdoor convention center
- Fund and initiate an arts and entertainment market analysis
- Establish marketing partnerships to promote at least one significant event with Goshen College Music Center, Elco Theater, Amish Acres, and Elkhart Civic Theater
- Conduct a survey of existing business to identify growth opportunities and barriers

## The Horizon Project

---

- Define incentives, and begin offering as soon as possible (tourism development program)

**Objective 3.3: Enlighten and educate the residents, government officials, and business operators within the region on the positive community impacts associated with the tourism industry.**

### Action Steps:

3.3.1 Create tourism communication agenda, to include:

- a. Economic impact
- b. Current marketing activities
- c. Strengths of existing product
- d. Opportunities for future growth
- e. Critical issues

3.3.2 Utilize Horizon Project database to identify key stakeholders and community leaders

3.3.3 Develop an on-going communication program that will provide a focused tourism-related message to identified target audience, to include:

- a. Written communication via e-mail and newsletters
- b. Media relations campaign

3.3.4 Establish regular contact meetings with key elected officials to allow for dialogue on critical issues

3.3.5 Work with Goshen College to develop an on-line virtual community that complements local resources and attractions

3.3.6 Identify tourism industry representatives willing to serve on local economic development boards

### Benchmarks:

- Complete communication agenda
- Initiate meetings with new partners
- Develop regular e-mail communication to allow partners an open format to promote major tourism accomplishments
- Meet with Goshen College staff to develop virtual community program goals
- Identify one tourism industry representative to serve on each ED board

**Objective 3.4: 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.**



**Action Steps:**

3.4.1 Create priority list of tourism projects, including:

- a. Christmas Star
- b. Marketing activities
- c. Open space preservation activities
- d. Gateway enhancements
- e. Business development incentives

3.4.2 Define the possible funding strategies and activities related to each project

3.4.3 Create tourism development program, funded through combination of public and private sources, including but not limited to:

- a. Revised Innkeeper's Tax
- b. Food & Beverage Tax
- c. County Economic Development Income Tax
- d. Project specific TIF revenues

3.4.4 Define the legal, administrative and organizational structure of the authority empowered to collect and oversee distribution of funds

3.4.5 Create a consortium of tourism business representatives to lobby for local and state legislation changes as appropriate

**Benchmarks:**

- Establish annual priority project list
- Establish committee including TAG representatives and elected officials to explore taxing authority alternatives
- Create tourism development program

**Objective 3.5: 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.**

**Action Steps:**

3.5.1 Identify target areas for tourism development while fostering distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place

3.5.2 Create a written position statement on priority land use issues, based on following key principles

- a. Preserve open space, farmland and historical areas

## The Horizon Project

---

- b. Encourage reuse of urban brownfield sites as an alternative location for new industrial and commercial development
- c. New tourism development to occur in or contiguous to existing communities
- d. Discourage all spot development in rural areas
- e. Establish agricultural buffer zones between non-agricultural uses or property with an agricultural zoning designation to help minimize potential incompatibilities among land uses
- f. New development built within 500 feet of an agricultural use in an agricultural district should contain restriction clauses or disclosure agreements acknowledging adjacent agricultural uses

3.5.3 Establish regular contact meetings with key elected officials to allow for dialogue on critical issues

3.5.4 Work in conjunction with Land Use Action Group to establish an agricultural land preservation task force that actively supports conservation easement purchases and/or donations

3.5.5 Establish the true economic value of open space, and true cost of greenfield development

3.5.6 Create a database of human resources based on individual areas of expertise

### **Benchmarks:**

- Tourism development target areas identified
- Written position statement completed
- Expand use of agricultural tax increment financing districts and use of area land trust
- Annually monitor amount of agricultural land lost for non-agricultural development using 2003 as a base year
- Explore legislation options to provide incentives for brownfield redevelopment
- Human resource database completed

### **Implementation Responsibility**

The Tourism Development Implementation Team, most of who served on the Action Planning Team, will provide overall guidance and leadership in the implementation of the identified objectives and action steps. It will be their responsibility to prioritize the stated objectives and set implementation timetables.

The staff of the Elkhart County Convention Visitors Bureau (ECCVB), will be responsible for day-to-day activities in the implementation of the identified objectives and action steps



**Workforce Development**

**GOAL 4: Create an adaptive and educated workforce capable of meeting the changing demands of the workplace by sustaining public-private sector leadership that promotes the workforce and career development continuum as the key for future business growth and economic development.**

**Objective 4.1: Establish the 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.**

**Action Steps:**

- 4.1.1 Identify business, education and community leaders willing to serve on the Elkhart County Workforce Development Advisory Council and secure commitment
- 4.1.2 Fully inform Council members of the predominant skills assessment and skills certification programs available to Elkhart County businesses, schools and individuals (WORKKEYS or other assessment tool and Certificates of Technical Achievement (CTA))
- 4.1.3 Establish a formal linkage between the Council and the Northern Indiana Workforce Investment Board.
- 4.1.4 Have Council review how programs are being used in surrounding counties and in the region

**Benchmarks:**

- The Elkhart County Workforce Development Advisory Council will be organized

**Objective 4.2: 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.**

**Action Steps:**

- 4.2.1 Identify workforce development network stakeholders and partners participating in Elkhart County and their relationship to regional workforce development system

## The Horizon Project

---

- 4.2.2 Convene meeting of workforce development stakeholders and partners to discuss skills assessment and certification systems, and their involvement in developing and presenting a countywide implementation plan.
- 4.2.3 The Elkhart County Workforce Development Advisory Council, in partnership with Elkhart County schools, businesses and the regional workforce development network, will develop a plan to fully incorporate a skills assessment and certification system into the county's business and education systems
- 4.2.4 Develop and present County skill assessment and certification implementation plan
- 4.2.5 Convene county-wide forum on skills assessment and certification system to introduce and promote system to the community
- 4.2.6 Skills assessment and certification system implemented in Elkhart County

### **Benchmarks:**

- A skills assessment and certification system, using WorkKeys (or similar program) and Certificates of Technical Achievement, will be implemented
- All major employers will utilize WorkKeys (or whatever skills assessment tool is chosen) as well as standardized high school portfolios when screening perspective employees.

**Objective 4.3: 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.**

### **Action Steps:**

- 4.3.1 Identify current organizations that have computer labs in the County and are interested in becoming a computer-learning center.
- 4.3.2 Identify new organizations that are interested in becoming a partner to establish computer-learning centers in the County.
- 4.3.3 Identify costs for hardware, software and facilitators for each center and determine which are in-kind contributions and which require funding.
- 4.3.4 Prepare comprehensive plan that includes existing and new centers and how these centers will be linked with existing workforce development network, will be funded to support start-up and overhead cost, will be selected and time frame for selection and opening.
- 4.3.5 Centers open and ready for delivery of services.



**Benchmarks:**

- Computer Learning Centers will be established across Elkhart County to provide access to computer technology and training for children and adults

**Objective 4.4: Develop a multi-faceted media and communications campaign that promotes the workforce and career development continuum to all constituent groups.**

**Action Steps:**

- 4.4.1 Establish a County-wide “Forum on the Future” to support the awareness among constituent groups of emerging skill requirements, training needs, and career opportunities as a result of changing economic realities.
- 4.4.2 Establish formal linkage between regional Ready for Life Internet information system and Elkhart County communications campaign to support information transfer and access for business, education and social service constituents.
- 4.4.3 Develop a communications campaign that addresses the need for change in the corporate culture of companies regarding training and employee development and their commitment to excellent. This campaign needs to address the benefits to the organization and the individual in developing the necessary social and teamwork, technical and life skills that will be required for current and future career opportunities within Elkhart County.
- 4.4.4 Identify the major components of a workforce and career development continuum, which link the “K-16” education system with adult education and lifelong learning.

**Benchmark:**

- A multi-faceted media and communications campaign promoting the workforce and career development continuum will be developed

**Implementation Responsibility**

Implementation of the workforce development goal and objectives will be undertaken by the Workforce Development Implementation Team, comprised of members of the Horizon Project Action Planning Team, the Northern Indiana Workforce Investment Board, the Learning Generation Initiative and the Elkhart County Economic Development Corporation. The team and any newly created bodies will determine priorities and implementation schedules.

## The Horizon Project

---

### Education P-16

**GOAL 5: Build a world-class P-16 education system by encouraging and assisting the Elkhart County Schools and the Elkhart community in their efforts to fully implement P.L. 221 and No Child Left Behind (NCLB)**

**Objective 5.1: School Districts and communities 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.**

#### **Action Steps:**

- 5.1.1 Publish and distribute Student Handbooks of Rules and Requirements at each school. The handbook includes policies and procedures. All students and staff will review the Rules and Requirements Handbook at the beginning of each school year or upon entrance to school
- 5.1.2 Develop a viable “alternative school” educational program for those who have been removed from the traditional school that prepares the student for graduation and/or re-admission to the traditional program.
- 5.1.3 Enforce rules, regulations and mandated attendance policies, including referral to the Juvenile Justice System or placement in an “alternative school”, if required.
- 5.1.4 Coordinate with the Juvenile Justice System for all students who are excluded from the traditional school setting, due to rule and regulation infractions.
- 5.1.5 Maintain buildings in order to create and sustain a positive learning environment.
- 5.1.6 Conduct an annual review of the mandated Safe Schools & Crisis Intervention Plans.
- 5.1.7 Apply uniform and consistent enforcement of policies and procedures, equally to all students.

#### **Benchmarks:**

- Compliance with federal NCLB law

**Objective 5.2: School Districts in Elkhart County will develop a curriculum so that each student can meet mandated achievement requirements which include computer technology, career education and exposure to lifelong learning opportunities, education for school staff and parents on the development needs of students in compliance with Article 7, Student Services Rule.**



---

**Action Steps:**

- 5.2.1 Provide a curriculum that educates the whole child to become a contributing member of society, i.e. develop skills and knowledge to enter the world of work, participate in government by voting, understand personal health and hygiene, be exposed to post high school careers, educational opportunities and the concept of lifelong learning.
- 5.2.2 A planned sequence in career education programs, based on written proficiencies for all students in grades 1-12 will be provided in coordination with other schools.
- 5.2.3 Incorporate field trips, classroom speakers, etc., into the curriculum at each grade level to expose students to government, work places, health services, educational institutions, and places of interest within Elkhart County that compliment curriculum guidelines.
- 5.2.4 Monitor each student's progress from kindergarten through graduation and/or exit from the school district
- 5.2.5 Share each student's progress with his/her parents or guardians through written reports and a minimum of two conferences each year. Include in this conference, information regarding an analysis of the whole student and a plan for meeting graduation requirements, as determined by a team of teachers, student services, etc.
- 5.2.6 Each student will receive an individual interest inventories and career assessment programs that provides analysis of potential career and post high school educational opportunities locally, regionally and beyond. This should include two year and four year schools plus programs available at schools such as Ivy Tech.
- 5.2.7 Each member of the teaching staff will be able to identify and refer students who are experiencing problems that interfere with student learning, and implement school's policies and procedures regarding students and families in need of special services.
- 5.2.8 Offer programs where appropriate that eliminate grade boundaries and allow students to reach academic achievement level, including without limitation: dual enrollment college courses, early entry college courses, Ivy Tech Courses, etc.
- 5.2.9 An annual reevaluation and modification of the curriculum will be conducted

**Benchmarks:**

- Compliance with federal *NCLB* law and the Indiana State Board of Education Student Services Rule – 511 IAC 4-1 Rule 1.5 Student Services

## The Horizon Project

---

**Objective 5.3: 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.**

**Action Steps:**

- 5.3.1 Each schools staff member will teach students, based on the learning requirements set at the local, state and national level.
- 5.3.2 Each member of the teaching staff must fulfill his/ her responsibilities for teaching the required curriculum to all students
- 5.3.3 School level administrators will conduct regular evaluations of all teaching staff as dictated by collective bargaining, local contracts, and local teacher association requirement. The evaluation should include student and peer evaluation, as well as, student achievement levels. Improvement in teaching will be the focus of the evaluation
- 5.3.4 Should evaluation indicate the need for training or retraining, each district offers programs aimed at insuring that each teacher can implement the curriculum to their respective students and the teacher is required to attend.
- 5.3.5 Effective re-mediation programs will be instituted for all students, who do not meet or exceed, mandated local, state and federal guidelines for achievement.
- 5.3.6 Students at all grade levels shall make satisfactory progress toward graduation that adequately demonstrates each districts yearly progress in accordance with PL. 221.

**Benchmarks:**

- Compliance with federal *NCLB* law and PL. 221
- All students show progress and/or improvement toward graduation as they meet or exceed mandated local, state and federal guidelines for achievement.
- All schools establish a clearly defined process for meeting graduation requirements as defined by state guidelines.

**Objective 5.4: School Boards in Elkhart County will create an annual, Action Agenda for implementing the district's goals.**

**Action Steps:**

- 5.4.1 Establish a Forum for Elkhart County School Boards to meet on a regular basis to discuss and share Action Agendas for individual school districts
- 5.4.2 Administrators and staff responsible for implementing the plan.



- 5.4.3 Submit monthly Action Agenda reports via the school board to parents and community.
- 5.4.4 Establish teams that include teachers, administrators, school board members, students, parents, community representatives, etc. to visit area schools to observe best practices and to report and implement those within the school they represent. This “Educational Academy” approach would allow the exchange of thoughts, concerns, issues and best practices.
- 5.4.5 Develop a plan to implement best practices deemed beneficial to district
- 5.4.6 Create annual budgets to assure the fiscal management of implementation plans

**Benchmarks:**

- District goals will be implemented according to the NCLB law and PL. 221

**Objective 5.5: 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 successes.**

**Action Steps:**

- 5.5.1 Create a “Community School” atmosphere by broadcasting the status of learning activities within each school, on a weekly basis.
- 5.5.2 Develop a Public Education Campaign that more fully informs the citizens of Elkhart County what occurs in their schools on a day-to-day basis. Example activities include:
  - a. Conduct monthly parent awareness activities and programs.
  - b. Use volunteers to supplement existing teaching staff.
    - i. Senior citizens as tutors
    - ii. Mentors of all ages.
    - iii. Peer Tutors and high school Tutors
    - iv. Business Partnerships for classroom speakers, workplace tours, etc.
    - v. Conduct periodic daytime school tours for community groups, including service clubs, chambers of commerce committees, etc.
    - vi. Develop an organized field trip program within each school; managed by the principal, that includes tours at each grade level to businesses, government offices, health institutions, etc. within Elkhart County. Field trips should compliment curriculum guidelines.

## The Horizon Project

---

- vii. Publish a monthly School Newsletter for respective community.
- viii. Distribute an annual opinion poll.
- ix. Fosters media exposure that explains the status of learning within the school through weekly articles and stories from the staff that is coordinated by the building and district administrators.
- x. Develops a district "Speaker's Bureau" to make presentations to the community on topics such as: alternative school(s), how we train our teachers, mentoring programs, 30 reasons to select our schools, the importance of writing or reading or math, adult education opportunities, the learning community, what we teach in our schools, technology in our schools, brain research, poverty in education, literacy, etc.
- xi. Establish and utilize Parent Advisory Groups at each school
- xii. Conduct annual student recognition programs at each school for student achievements in Academics, Attendance, Improved Behavior, Athletics, Music, etc.

5.5.3 Invite community assistance and utilize community resources in achieving learning goals.

5.5.4 Re-establish the school as the center of the neighborhood or community by bringing the community into the school.

### **Benchmarks:**

- Compliance with federal NCLB law

**Objective 5.6: Each Elkhart County School District will establish joint venture programs with two year, four year and technical schools, and local businesses so that all high school students have access to post high school credits through AP courses, dual credit courses, and school to work internships with local businesses.**

### **Action Steps:**

5.6.1 Encourage higher education institutions to offer courses related to high levels of technology and other needed areas of study for credit and encourage the provision of on-site training.

5.6.2 Before graduation, arrange for high school students, especially juniors and seniors to have access to affordable post high school programs and/or develop strategies for soliciting funds to support these programs.



- 5.6.3 Include “college prep” courses in the curriculum and an equal number of “technical skills” courses targeted at students who may either go to college or enter the workforce upon graduation.
- 5.6.4 Focus school to work programs on internships, job shadowing, and summer employment in existing businesses that expose students to possible career opportunities they may not otherwise explore.

**Benchmarks:**

- Compliance with federal NCLB law

**Objective 5.7: All children in Elkhart County school districts will have access to preschool or nursery school that provides high quality readiness training that enables them to begin Kindergarten by age 6.**

**Action Steps:**

- 5.7.1 Create a committee of officials from school districts, government, businesses, churches, hospitals, etc., to explore and develop programs to implement effective pre-school education within Elkhart County.
- 5.7.2 Assure that all youth of Elkhart County would have access to this preschool program through needs-based scholarships provided by local charitable organizations and the private sector.
- 5.7.3 Ask school districts to provide guidelines, in-service and evaluation of teaching and learning requirements for all preschools. This would provide continuity from preschool to kindergarten and home-school to public school. These guidelines, in services and evaluations would be on going.
- 5.7.4 Schools and community resources personnel will meet regularly to develop and implement strategies for involving parents and/or guardians in the process of promoting early childhood education. Action Plans will be shared with Elkhart County School Districts and community agencies
- 5.7.5 A forum consisting of school superintendents from each district, workforce development, Learning Generation Initiative and business representatives from all school districts will meet several times a year to plan efforts to meet this goal

**Benchmarks:**

- Compliance with NCLB law
- Children in Elkhart County begin Kindergarten with required readiness skills.

## The Horizon Project

---

**Objective 5.8: Coordinate existing career education programs currently in place in all Elkhart County school districts (as required by PL 221 and NCLB), with any new programs from the Learning Generation Initiative or other Elkhart County organizations whose mission includes career education.**

### **Action Steps:**

- 5.8.1 Identify existing career education programs currently in place in Elkhart County School Districts.
- 5.8.2 Establish plans to dovetail any new programs with effective programs currently in place.
- 5.8.3 “Credential” students in each school district in a compatible manner with business and industry requirements.
- 5.8.4 A working committee consisting of representatives from each school district including the district curriculum director and high school guidance director, representatives from the Learning Generation Initiative and other Elkhart County organizations whose mission includes career education would meet several times a year to discuss progress on the stated objective and action steps.
- 5.8.5 Identify and retain a coordinator to write grants, facilitate regular meetings, and monitor the action strategies to meet this goal.

### **Benchmarks:**

- Coordination of each students career education program to meet NCLB law
- In compliance with Student Services Rule – 511 IAC 4-1 Rule 1.5

**Objective 5.9: Through the Community in Schools (CIS) Program and mentoring programs, 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.**

### **Action Steps:**

- 5.9.1 CIS will work in partnership with public school principals, superintendents, teachers and administrators to broker services that connect schools with available community resources.
- 5.9.2 These brokering services will utilize a committed field staff to customize, develop, and facilitate effective school-specific programs that partner with families, schools and community leaders to create a support system for students.



- 5.9.3 These programs will be built on support for schools from businesses, community organizations, government agencies, social service providers, and volunteer groups.
- 5.9.4 CIS will ensure that all services are personalized, coordinated, and accountable.
- 5.9.5 Schools will contribute to these efforts through the development of adult to student mentoring programs to provide support, instruction, guidance and caring to identified students in need of additional adult resources.
- 5.9.6 Mentoring training will be offered through an identified community group/individual or a coordinator from the school community
- 5.9.7 A Student Leadership Academy will be designed and implemented for emerging student leaders, identified by an agreed upon criteria for participation in this Academy. Students from all Elkhart County schools would be eligible.

**Benchmarks:**

- Full implementation of the Community in Schools Program
- An Annual Report demonstrating the outcomes of the mentoring program would be presented to each School Board
- The Student Leadership Academy will be designed and implemented by a committee of representatives from each Elkhart County School Board
- Each year a selection of Elkhart County students would complete the Leadership Academy Program and upon completion provide service to their schools
- An Annual Report demonstrating the outcomes of the Student Leadership Program would be submitted to each Elkhart County School Board

**Objective 5.10: Establish a series of forums of educators, administrators, and community and business leaders representative of all school districts, to address the key issues impacting education countywide.**

**Action Steps:**

- 5.10.1 Clarify the issues around which Forums should be created. Key issues include:
  - a. Addressing computer technology and cooperative purchasing agreements
  - b. Curriculum (establish best way to use Plato, Workkeys and other assessment /teaching tools)
  - c. Creation and distribution of a Community Education Report Card
  - d. Development of a proactive public relations program.
  - e. Discussion among county school boards on annual action agenda's, common goals and commitments to the Horizon Plan

## The Horizon Project

---

- f. Discussion on future community needs, community impediments and the development of united positions on state and federal laws impacting education

5.10.2 Establish the purpose of each Forum

5.10.3 Identify and contact the appropriate individuals chair and to serve on each Forum

**Objective 5:11: Work in partnership with the Indiana Education Roundtable to incorporate as required, recommendations in the *Indiana P-16 Plan for Improving Student Achievement* into the Horizon Project Education Plan.**

### **Action Steps:**

5.11.1 Maintain communications between the Horizon Project Commission and the Elkhart County representatives on the Indiana Education Roundtable

5.11.2 Move issues that impact the Horizon Project Education P-12 Plan to the appropriate entities.

### **Implementation Responsibility**

Responsibility for meeting the objectives that pertain the PL 221 and the federal, No Child Left Behind Law, lies in the hands of each individual school district. The schools in partnership with the Learning Generation Initiative and other organizations that share a similar mission will address career Development and Youth Development initiatives. The Horizon Project Commission, in partnership with the Education P-12 Action Planning Team will guide the establishment and organization of all Forums.

### **Government Coordination**

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



**Objectives 6.1: 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.**

**Action Steps:**

- 6.1.1 Each governmental unit will enter into an inter-local agreement, or other binding commitment, to participate in the Intergovernmental Forum
- 6.1.2 County Government, each town, and each city will establish a method for sending representatives, and matters for review of action, to the Intergovernmental Forum
- 6.1.3 Establish a methodology for evaluating the effectiveness of the Intergovernmental forum, to include reflection upon actions taken or programs supported, and consideration of proposals for enhancing cooperation, communication, and collaboration among local governmental units.

**Benchmarks:**

- All governmental units will agree to participate in the Intergovernmental Forum Representation and evaluation procedures will be established

**Objective 6.2: 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.**

**Action Steps:**

- 6.2.1 Elkhart County Department of Public Services will establish a regular meeting schedule, agenda format, participation list, and methods of presenting matters for review and discussion by the Intergovernmental Forum

## The Horizon Project

---

6.2.1 Elkhart County Department of Public Services assign a staff person to the Intergovernmental Forum, to serve as its executive secretary and/or liaison, responsible for arranging meetings, developing agendas, maintaining participation lists, and otherwise documenting the undertakings and actions of the Intergovernmental Forum

### **Benchmarks:**

- Operational procedures will be established
- Necessary staff will be assigned

**Objective 6.3: 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.**

### **Action Steps:**

- 6.3.1 Receive, analyze, effect, or modify the roles and responsibilities of the Forum and/or participating governmental units as stated in the Horizon Project Strategic Plan
- 6.3.2 Study, learn from, and where appropriate, act upon defined sections of the Horizon Project Strategic Plan where local governmental participation or cooperation is beneficial or required.
- 6.3.3 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 identified in the Horizon Plan and where weakness is otherwise demonstrated.

### **Benchmarks:**

- Review the Horizon Project Plan and modify roles and functions of the Forum as appropriate

**Objectives 6.4: 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.**

### **Action Steps:**

- 6.4.1 Identify, study, enhance, or reject areas for intergovernmental cooperation, efficiency, cost savings, or service expansion or contraction, on a perpetual basis, to include:



- a. Comprehensive land use planning, differentiating among the various municipalities and unincorporated areas of the County when appropriate.
- b. Countywide sewer district, to include the existing municipal sewer operations and the existing conservancy districts.
- c. Consistency and/or coordination among governmental units relative to TIF districts, revitalization areas, tax abatement, and tax incentives.
- d. Shared or combined services for police, fire, ambulance, emergency, communication (911) services, and animal control.
- e. Coordination in transportation projects, on a County-wide or broader regional basis, to include topics such as U.S. 31, railroad underpasses or overpasses, expansion of County Road 6 west to St. Joseph County, the south peripheral or thoroughfare road for Goshen, County Road 17, a northeasterly thoroughfare or bypass road for Goshen, County Road 40 from Wakarusa to St. Joseph County, State Road 19 south of Elkhart, County Road 9 north of Elkhart, among others.
- f. Coordination of programming, activities, and expertise among the Redevelopment Commissions and Economic Development Commissions of the County, and the Elkhart County Economic Development Corporation.
- g. Coordination and sharing in adoption and implementation of MS-4 program.

**Benchmarks:**

- Consistently scan the horizon for opportunities to increase efficiency and cost savings

**Objective 6.5: 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.**

**Action Steps:**

- 6.5.1 Develop through the Intergovernmental Forum, or other cooperative efforts, an ongoing methodology for studying, promoting, or rejecting programs, concepts, or standards of a County-wide variety, to include:
  - a. County wheel tax.
  - b. State and Federal grants.

## The Horizon Project

---

- c. Economic and tax incentives.
- d. Consistent user fees on various governmental services.
- e. Regional airport authority.
- f. Public transportation systems.
- g. Area Plan Commission, or coordinated alternatives thereto.
- h. A community college or other center of higher education of a public nature
- i. Hospitals of the County as regional, broad service medical facilities.
- j. GIS programs and services

### Implementation Responsibility

Creation of the Intergovernmental Forum will be guided by the Government Coordination Implementation Team with the assistance of the Horizon Project Commission and in close partnership with:

- a. Mayors of cities and town councils of towns, and County Commissioners and County Council at County Government level.
- b. Elkhart County Department of Public Services relative to initial coordination and facilitation of meetings and agendas, and the creation of staff position(s) and filling of same.

Members of the Intergovernmental Forum will have the primary responsibility for the implementation of the Horizon Plan objectives, along with:

- 1. Designated representatives from local governmental units charged with participating in the cooperative undertakings, and in bringing to the Intergovernmental Forum matters of import to be addressed.
- 2. Horizon Project leaders and committee members seeking governmental cooperation and assistance with regard to the pursuit of the Strategic Plan of the Horizon Project.

### 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.**



**Action Steps:**

- 7.1.1 Meet with all city, town, township and county executive and legislative officials to obtain consent and approval of the land use goals and objectives recommended by the Horizon Group.
- 7.1.2 Establish a Land Use Advisory Council with city/county planners and other essential individuals/experts to guide the Comprehensive Land Use Planning process and on-going updates.
- 7.1.3 Determine scope and process:
  - a. Identify current land uses
    - i. Use GIS and other existing data
    - ii. Gather and review current plans
  - b. Gather and review all current ordinances from the several governmental units of the cities, towns and county.
  - c. Conduct demographic analysis
  - d. Develop policy/plan for transportation/circulation
  - e. Develop policy/plan for infrastructure development
  - f. Develop policy/plan for preservation of agricultural land
  - g. Develop policy/plan for development of downtowns
  - h. Develop policy/plan for housing development
  - i. Project future land use needs
- 7.1.4 Work with the Economic Development Corporation to mesh business expansion and location activity with a brownfields redevelopment strategy.

**Benchmarks:**

- Consent of executive and legislative bodies obtained.
- County Comprehensive Plan completed.
- Adoption of countywide Comprehensive Plan within six (6) months after completion.

**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.**

**Action Steps:**

- 7.2.1 Investigate all opportunities to provide incentives to keep these areas green
- 7.2.2 Identify methods of protecting landowners in these green spaces

## The Horizon Project

---

- 7.2.3 Develop innovative incentives to promote and assist landowners in preserving and identifying green space (i.e., establishing “development credits” that can be purchased from green space areas to be used in areas designated for growth)
- 7.2.4 Coordinate with other agencies and organizations who can assist in land trust activities that secure green space, like Hoosier Farmland Preservation Task Force, Indiana Geographic Information Council, Indiana Land Resource Council, Center for Urban Policy and Environment and IUPUI, Urban Planning Department at Ball State University, Indiana Planners Association, Indiana Farm Bureau, Indiana Capital I-Team Initiative and Wayne County Resource Inventory Council, the Wood-Land-Lakes RC&D, Trillium Land Trust, Nature Conservancy, and others
- 7.2.5 Create/expand an Elkhart County Land Trust (Trillion Land Trust in place)

### Benchmarks

- Green space identified and protective mechanisms developed

**Objective 7.3: Develop uniform, countywide ordinances by which the comprehensive plan policies will be implemented and encourage development that increases density and utilizes existing infrastructure.**

### Action Steps:

- 7.3.1 Planning staff members from towns, cities and county will work collaboratively to study and develop uniform zoning and subdivision ordinances and present the results to the appropriate legislative and executive bodies for approval.
- 7.3.2 Determine urban service boundaries consistent with existing infrastructure and enforced by countywide uniform annexation policies.
- 7.3.3 Mesh business expansion and location activity with a brownfields redevelopment strategy.
- 7.3.4 All governmental entities adopt countywide zoning and subdividing ordinances and building codes.
- 7.3.5 Establish county-wide advisory group of government officials and interested citizens to periodically review (not less often than tri-annually) and make further recommendations for the continuous updating of the comprehensive plan, zoning ordinance, subdividing ordinance and building codes.
- 7.3.6 Compile, categorize and distinguish current land use plans and ordinances of the several governmental units of the cities, towns and county in an attempt to arrive at a starting point.



- (a) Obtain information from all governmental units as may be currently available.

7.3.7 Develop projections for future land use in the County inclusive of transportation, sewer and water needs, green space and various use zones and classifications.

**Benchmarks:**

- Uniform county ordinances developed and adopted

**Objective 7.4: Request action be taken as soon as possible by appropriate governmental bodies, both legislative and administrative, to modify and amend various ordinances.**

**Action Steps:**

7.4.1 Form a permanent network of Elkhart County professional advisors, possibly under the direction of the Economic Development Corporation (EDC).

7.4.2 Seek moratorium on all new curb cuts on numbered County roads and subdivision by auction pending amendment to the County zoning and subdividing ordinances and require rezoning and compliance with subdivision ordinances for the creation of new curb cuts and subdivision of existing parcels.

7.4.3 Amend County zoning and subdividing ordinances to:

- a) Delete 3-acre rule, thereby relying upon County Health Department to determine lot sizes of any subdivision lot accommodating private septic systems and wells recognizing need for separation of the two.
- b) Create a new zoning classification of rural residential (“RR”).
- c) Require all new residential construction in current agricultural zoned areas first to be rezoned to RR zone and all improvements to be in compliance with amended subdivision ordinance prior to the issuance of building permits.
  - (1) Public hearing and notice provisions.
  - (2) Substantial review by staff of all departments.
  - (3) Boundary and building location surveys to be required prior to or as a condition of rezoning and subdivision.
- d) Limit number of newly created curb cuts on numbered County Roads in all areas to one per 1320 lineal feet of road frontage.
- e) Require dedication of road right-of-way by all newly rezoned RR land along numbered County Roads (width dependent upon road classification arterial, etc.).
- f) Forbid new residential curb cuts on numbered County Roads within boundary of lots in newly created RR zones.

## The Horizon Project

---

- g) Any RR lot shall initially be served by a private roadway adjacent to the side of the zone with agreement running with the land to improve the private roadway to County Highway standards, at the earlier of the time of rezoning of additional land, the construction of a second residence adjacent to the roadway or the sale of any land served by the private roadway. County Highway width of right-of-way and intersection requirements will be complied with at the time of the creation of the roadway. Culverts and drainage swales to be constructed and maintained from the time a private right-of-way is created.
  - (1) Private road right-of-way to extend to the rear of any lot upon which construction is to occur with cul-de-sac right-of-way to County standards to be at end of private roadway.
  - (2) No artificial separation of lots from any first construction on private road right-of-way.
  - (3) Bond for construction of roadway to County standards to be posted and maintained until road is upgraded and completed to County highway standards.
  - (4) Upon completion of upgrade of private roadway including cul-de-sac, roadway to be dedicated to and accepted by the County as a public road. Prior to dedication and acceptance, all maintenance, grading, snow removal on private road to be the obligations of the residential owner and/or seller of the land.
  - (5) County to have no obligations with respect to road or right-of-way prior to dedication and acceptance.
- h) Allow three-year special exemption for construction of any residence for additional immediate family members, after public hearing before BZA,
  - (1) Exemption to continue so long as the immediate family member occupies second or subsequent residence. Exemption to be reviewed at public hearing or monitored by staff for three year extensions of permit renewal. Require compliance with Zoning and Subdivision Ordinance when residence is no longer occupied by an immediate family member.
- i) In all areas rezoned for (i) manufacturing, (ii) commercial, (iii) multi family residential, and (iv) manufactured housing projects with a unit density of 3 units per acre or greater after the effective date of the amendment to the ordinance, construction shall be permitted only on properly zoned and subdivided land according to County ordinances and served by municipal or other public utility regulated water and sewer facilities. New construction shall be permitted on private septic systems and private wells only on lands properly zoned prior to the effective date of the amendment.



- j) Promote the use of conservation easements
- k) Expand the existing land trust or create a new land trust to encompass the entire county
- l) Expand the jurisdiction and use the agricultural TIF district
- m) Revise the county permit and fee structure to discourage development in unincorporated areas and ensure that all services to non-municipal residents are fairly and appropriately charged to property owners in unincorporated areas

**Benchmarks:**

- Identified ordinances reviewed, modified and amended

**Implementation Responsibility**

The Land Use Implementation Team will guide the establishment of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan Advisory Council, which will have primary responsibility for guiding the County Comprehensive Planning Process.

**Social Services**

**GOAL 8: Insure adequate and affordable social services are provided to meet the needs of all Elkhart County residents.**

**Objective 8.1: Inventory and assess the current Elkhart County social services catalogue and its responsiveness and applicability to current needs.**

**Action Steps:**

- 8.1.1 Insure all stakeholders i.e. providers and their boards, clients, contributors, volunteers, and the general public are given the opportunity to be involved in this process.
- 8.1.2 Identify and review existing and past studies and plans regarding social service needs and priorities in Elkhart County.
- 8.1.3 If necessary, conduct focus groups, surveys, town hall meetings, etc. to gain input regarding social service needs. Review how plans provide for integration of services, collaborations, and cooperation.
- 8.1.4 Use United Way surveys as they are completed and establish a clearinghouse to review, analyze, and communicate (agency surveys) survey results.
- 8.1.5 Identify services not being provided or those that are underutilized.

## The Horizon Project

---

### **Benchmarks:**

- An effective and efficient social services system that meets the most pressing needs of Elkhart County Citizens will be created

### **Objective 8.2: Create the optimum Elkhart County Social Services Network**

#### **Action Steps:**

- 8.2.1 Convene a subcommittee to evaluate all data/information gathered and prepare a draft of an action plan to address the identified needs.
- 8.2.2 Identify and analyze sources of unnecessary or inappropriate duplication and promote collaborations.
  - a. Develop a subcommittee to deal with this and to explore ways to share administrative functions among agencies.
- 8.2.1 Develop a cohesive, coordinated system of social services that not only provides for the needs of residents, but also actively seeks to identify the root causes of demands for social services.
- 8.2.2 Develop a subcommittee responsible for establishing a baseline of services, establishing standards and promoting accreditation where feasible.
- 8.2.3 Develop a system for reviewing effectiveness, efficiency, and affordability and for promoting continuous improvement and best practices in service delivery.

### **Benchmarks:**

- A series of sub-committees will be organized

### **Objective 8.3: Insure sustainable funding sources are available to maintain the necessary level of services to Elkhart County**

#### **Action steps:**

- 8.3.1 Identify existing known funding sources for social services.
- 8.3.2 Provide training in fund development
- 8.3.3 Identify new potential funding sources for social services
- 8.3.4 Identify State and Federal funding sources and make sure we get our share.
- 8.3.5 Identify Compensation standards and make a plan and develop a plan to obtain funding for livable wages and benefits for social service workers to stop the brain drain and to attract the best.



8.3.6 Develop a system of venture philanthropy to encourage and fund promising social service start-ups.

**Benchmarks:**

- A Sustainable Funding Task Force will be organized

**Objective 8.4: 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**

**Action Steps:**

8.4.1 Support the establishment of a Countywide Leadership Development Academy that enables all communities to participate in the development of local leaders

8.4.2 Develop a plan to encourage younger generations, newcomers to the community to get involved in all aspects of social services i.e. volunteering, board and/or committee service, financial support, fund raising, etc.

- a. Identify young leaders in the County and bring them together in a focus group setting to discuss social service issues
- b. Work with young leaders to develop a plan to engage the younger generations in all aspects of social services.

8.4.3 Develop a plan to help strengthen the leadership of local boards.

- a. Form a subcommittee or action group to address this initiative.

8.4.4 Develop a plan to influence State/Federal entities about the importance of funding and supporting community based services.

- a. Form a subcommittee or action group to address this initiative.

**Benchmarks:**

- A plan for involving youth in all aspects of social services will be completed
- A plan for strengthening local leadership boards will be completed

**Implementation Responsibility**

The Social Services Implementation Team will include representatives of The United Way of Elkhart County, the Elkhart County Community Foundation, the Learning Generation Initiative, the Elkhart County Chambers of Commerce and other interested parties. The implementation of specific objectives will be assigned to a number of sub-committees whose membership will be determined by the Implementation Team.

## The Horizon Project

---

### Horizon Plan Benchmarks

---

The Horizon Project Commission to guide the overall implementation of the plan. Implementation Teams will undertake the responsibility for achieving certain goals and/or objectives and will measure the success of their efforts against the following benchmarks:

- The gap between Elkhart County and the national per capita personal income will close 5% by 2010.
- Establish a locally available research and investment capital fund in the minimum amount of \$10 million.
- The number of net new businesses in preferred growth sectors will increase by 5% by 2010.
- The total economic impact generated by visitors to Elkhart County will increase 25% by 2010, exceeding \$350,000,000.
- Increase assessed valuation in current TIF districts and/or increase in the number of projects over a specified time period.
- The percentage of Elkhart County residents with college degrees will equal or exceed the state level by 2010.
- 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.
- The percentage of high-school students passing the GQE (ISTEP) will meet or surpass the state average in each Elkhart County School Districts by 2010.
- Dropout rates in each Elkhart County school district will equal or fall below the state average by 2010.
- Average hourly earnings in total private employment will be within 5% of the national average by 2010.
- A well-functioning Intergovernmental Forum that results in measurable savings in all municipal budgets and a measurable increase in revenue sharing activities.
- A poverty ranking below the 70th percentile by 2010.
- A significant reduction in the duplication in social service programs.