

# WHITE RIVER REGIONAL OPPORTUNITY INITIATIVE (WR-ROI) - REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

PREPARED FOR SUBMISSION  
TO IEDC-READI - SEPTEMBER 2021

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY //

THIS REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR THE WHITE RIVER REGIONAL OPPORTUNITY INITIATIVE (WR-ROI) REPRESENTS A TRANSFORMATIONAL OPPORTUNITY TO SUPPORT POPULATION GROWTH, TALENT ATTRACTION AND RETENTION, AND SMART ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN THE WR-ROI REGION.

The WR-ROI Region is made up of three Central Indiana counties – Hamilton, Madison, and Marion – as well as Zionsville in Boone County, and McCordsville in Hancock County. The cities and towns of Carmel, Fishers, Noblesville, Westfield, Anderson, Indianapolis, Zionsville, and McCordsville, as well as Carmel Clay Parks and Recreation, Hamilton County, Hamilton County Tourism, the Corporation of Economic Development Anderson/Madison County, the Indianapolis Metropolitan Planning Organization, and Develop Indy, as members of the WR-ROI Partnership, contributed to the development of this plan. Many of the region’s anchor institutions, leading organizations, and influential stakeholders were interviewed about this plan to ensure consistency of regional vision and goals. **All of these partners are united in their pursuit of opportunities for economic, population, and wage growth that a clean, healthy, scenic White River corridor can bring.**

Home to almost 1.5 million people, the WR-ROI Region has grown significantly over the last ten years, gaining 10% population from 2010 to 2020 (compared to Indiana’s 4.2%). The WR-ROI seeks to continue that trend, while making appropriate investments in physical and social infrastructure to ensure new and long term residents have what they need to thrive, and developing the White River into a world-class attraction that serves Hoosiers and tourists alike for generations to come. **This includes enhancing quality of place, quality of life and wellbeing, environmental health, and sustainability; boosting support for business, entrepreneurship, and innovation activity; training and education initiatives to prepare the workforce for future economic trends; and equitable development projects that ensure the WR-ROI Region is an attractive place where all residents benefit from growing economic opportunity in the coming decades.**

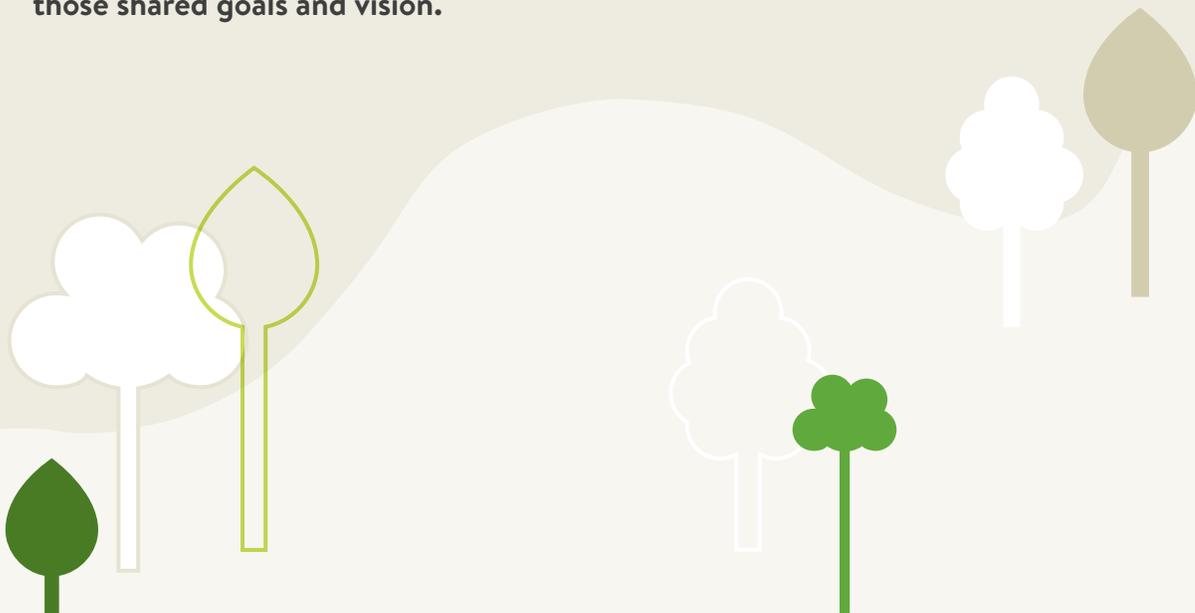
The projects and programs included in this regional development plan catalyze \$461,832,200 of co-investment to the \$49,943,272 in READI requested funds. If granted to the WR-ROI, READI funds will be a critical part of more than \$500 million of new projected investment into the WR-ROI Region, including **hundreds of new residential units, hundreds of thousands of new commercial square footage, hundreds of acres of open, green, and community space, miles of riverfront development and floodplain preservation, and dozens of miles of trail networks.** Many of the portfolio projects are part of a multi-phase development, and their completion will bring additional investment to the area for many years beyond the projects’ completion.

Each of the projects and programs in the portfolio are geared up to begin in late 2021 or early 2022 and have the support of the appropriate public and private partners to ensure successful implementation. They present a huge opportunity for the region as a whole, not just as individual communities, to unite around the enhanced access to economic opportunity, housing, connectivity, recreation, and other amenities represented in this plan.

This is especially true in the region's rural communities. **While home to almost a quarter of the state's population, the WR-ROI contains many rural census tracts**, particularly in Madison County. And as many communities within the WR-ROI serve in large part as suburbs or exurbs of Indianapolis, they are looking to grow in a way that is responsible and sustainable. This includes prioritizing infill and dense, mixed-use development to minimize development's impact on rural spaces and the natural environment, while providing new housing, commercial space, and vibrant downtowns, as well as greenspace, trails, waterfront access, and other amenities for current and future residents as these and urban areas across the region continue to grow.

Most of all, the WR-ROI seeks to preserve and celebrate the wide open spaces that provide recreation opportunities, tranquility, and connection to nature that make the region so special for the people who call it home. Investments in protecting, enhancing, and increasing access to the natural environment by both residents and visitors highlight that commitment. Rural workforce development projects and programs are also included in the WR-ROI portfolio, which is key given disparities in education among urban and rural counties.

All in all, this regional development plan and investment portfolio seek to increase quality of life and quality of place in the WR-ROI, foster a stronger entrepreneurial ecosystem within the region, generate high-quality and high-wage job opportunities to increase the region's per capita income, and create vibrant places that attract and retain high caliber talent to the region and to the state, anchored around Central Indiana's greatest public asset: the White River. **This document reflects the regional collaboration and commitment of stakeholders throughout the WR-ROI communities to work together toward those shared goals and vision.**





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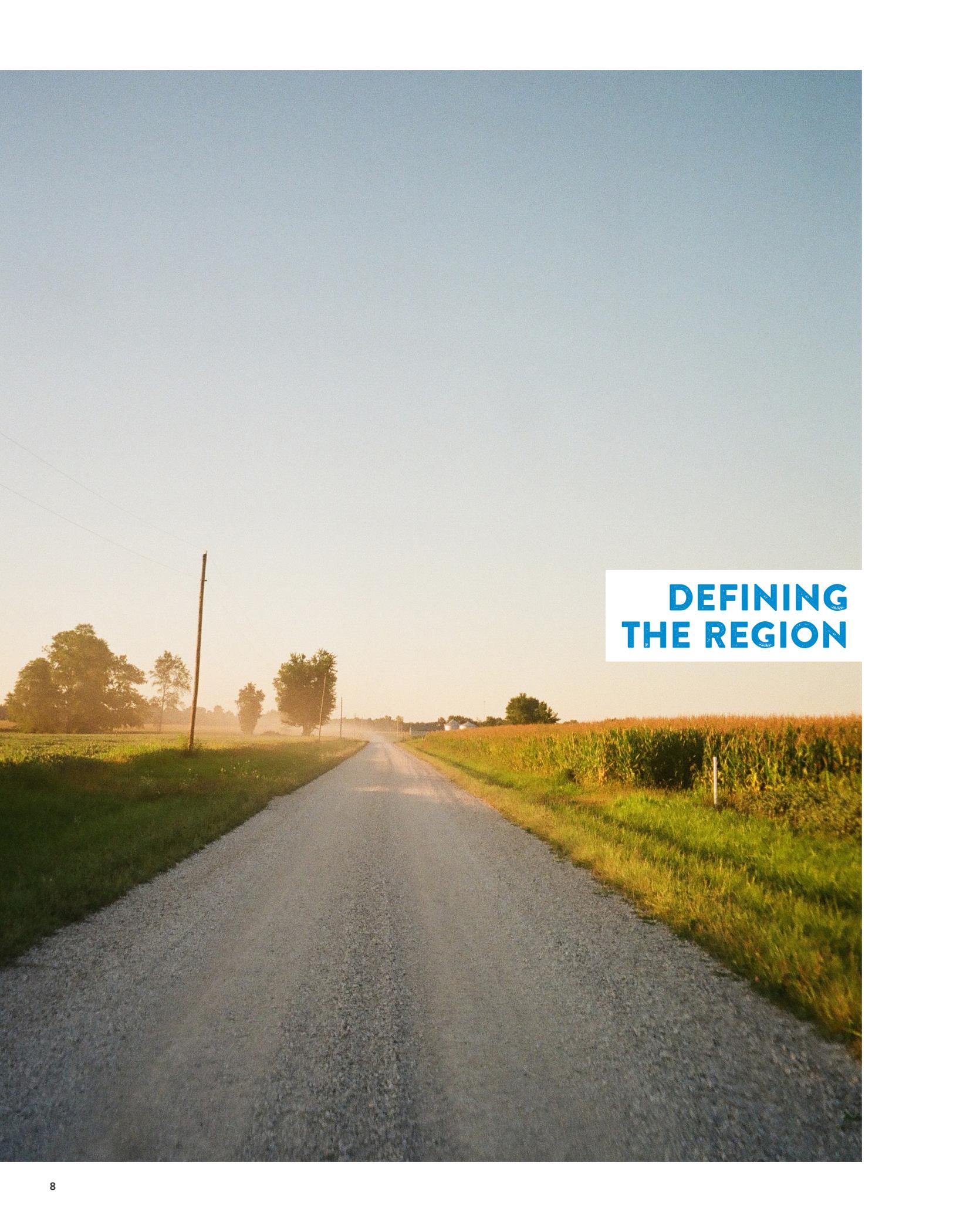
**INTRODUCTION TO THE WR-ROI**



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**DEFINING  
THE REGION**

## Defining the Region

**T**he White River Regional Opportunity Initiative (WR-ROI) Region is made up of three Central Indiana counties – Hamilton, Madison, and Marion – as well as Zionsville in Boone County, and McCordsville in Hancock County. The cities and towns of Carmel, Fishers, Noblesville, and Westfield in Hamilton County; Anderson in Madison County; Indianapolis in Marion County, Zionsville in Boone County; and McCordsville in Hancock County, as members of the WR-ROI Partnership, contributed to the development of this regional development plan. They are all part of the laborshed, watershed, and recreation-shed that surround the White River.

Other towns and cities within Hamilton, Madison, and Marion counties that were not initially involved in the planning process due to capacity constraints would inarguably benefit from the population growth and economic development resulting from the plan's implementation. Stakeholders within those communities are in contact with the planning partnership and can engage in projects where applicable as implementation of the plan begins.

Communities within neighboring Boone and Hancock Counties that were not involved in the planning process due to lack of close proximity or connection to the vision of the White River Regional Opportunity Initiative could potentially become partners in implementation where appropriate and be included in future regional efforts moving forward.

## THE WHITE RIVER REGIONAL OPPORTUNITY INITIATIVE (WR-ROI)

All of the communities involved in the planning effort are connected by their proximity to the 362-mile west fork of White River, which bisects the state and has defined the landscape of Indiana as both a vital economic resource and important social amenity for generations.

The White River Regional Opportunity Initiative partners are united in their belief in the opportunities for economic growth and prosperity that a clean, healthy, scenic White River corridor can bring, as it already delivers great benefits to the nearly 1.5 million people living within the region. These partners reaffirmed their commitment to fostering this growth through participation in the development of this plan.

The region is a job center and an economic hub for the state, as it employs 736,800 people, and includes the state capital, Indianapolis. It has also grown at a faster pace than the state as a whole since 2010, gaining 10% population from 2010 to 2020 (compared to Indiana's 4.2%). This was driven in large part by a significant 25% population gain in Hamilton County during that time period.

The WR-ROI Region contains several anchor institutions and influential stakeholders that are key to shaping the region's economy and social fabric. These include education institutions like Indiana University, IUPUI, Anderson University, and Ivy Tech; philanthropies like the Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust, Lilly Endowment, the Central Indiana Community Foundation (CICF), and Hamilton County Community Foundation; environmentally engaged organizations like Conner Prairie, White River Alliance, Friends of the White River,

Noblesville Parks & Recreation, Carmel Clay Parks & Recreation, Hamilton County Parks & Recreation, and the Marion and Hamilton County Soil & Water Conservation Districts; corporate partners like Citizens Energy Group, Christopher Burke Engineering, and Indiana American Water; and key planning and economic development entities like Hamilton County Tourism, Inc., Visit Indy, Amplify Indy, Develop Indy/Indy Chamber, Nickel Plate Arts, and Hamilton County Economic Development Corporation. Representatives from many of these organizations were interviewed for the formation of this plan, and shared their vision for economic growth in the region. Those comments are included throughout this regional development plan.

These cultural, environmental, and philanthropic partners were closely involved in the development of the White River Vision Plan, which served as the inspiration for creating the WR-ROI. Many of the same WR-ROI stakeholders participated on numerous committees that helped shape environmental, economic, and equity goals during the two years of meetings and conversations that took place during the White River Vision Plan's development. All of the WR-ROI partners are committed to advancing those goals through the implementation of this Regional Development Plan, and most of these stakeholders continue to work on specific implementation pieces ranging from raising public awareness about the river's ecological conditions to providing opportunities for the public to experience and interact with the river as a regional asset.



# CURRENT STATE OF THE REGION

The WR-ROI is made up of a diverse set of counties, from urban to rural, with a variety of industry and income mixes, and racial, cultural, and ethnic diversity.



# DEMOGRAPHICS

Population	Marion	Hamilton	Madison	WR-ROI Region	Indiana
Total Population 2020	966,183	344,238	129,681	1,440,102	6,754,953
Population Growth or Decline 2010 to 2020	7.0%	25.4%	-1.5%	10.0%	4.2%

Households	Marion	Hamilton	Madison	WR-ROI Region	Indiana
Households 2019	372,358	119,789	51,003	543,150	2,570,419

Educational Attainment	Marion	Hamilton	Madison	WR-ROI Region	Indiana
High School Diploma or More - Pct. of Adults 25+ 2019	86.1%	96.8%	88.4%	86.5%	88.8%
Bachelor's Degree or More - Pct. of Adults 25+ 2019	30.9%	59.3%	18.4%	37.3%	26.5%

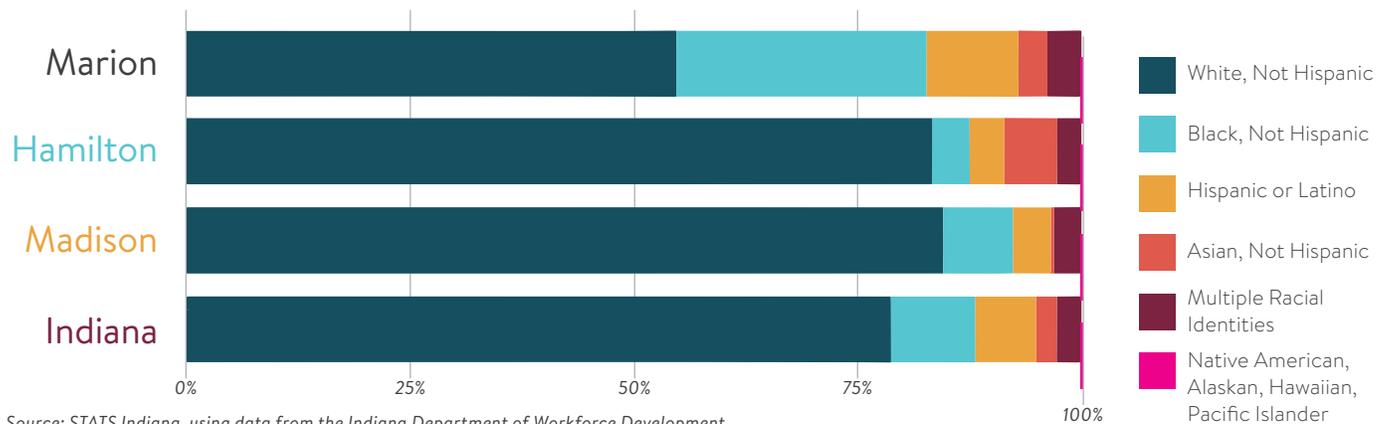
Source: STATS Indiana, using data from the Indiana Department of Workforce Development

The WR-ROI Region is currently home to nearly 1.5 million people, accounting for almost a quarter of the state's total population. The WR-ROI's population has grown by 10% over the last 10 years, well above Indiana's overall growth rate of 4.2%. Both Hamilton and Marion Counties saw significant population gains (25.4% and 7%, respectively) between 2010 and 2020. Madison County,

which is the most rural of the three, had just a slight population decline of 1.5% over that same period.

The rate of higher education completion (those 25 years old and above with a Bachelor's degree or more) is also higher in the region (36.1%) relative to the state (26.5%).

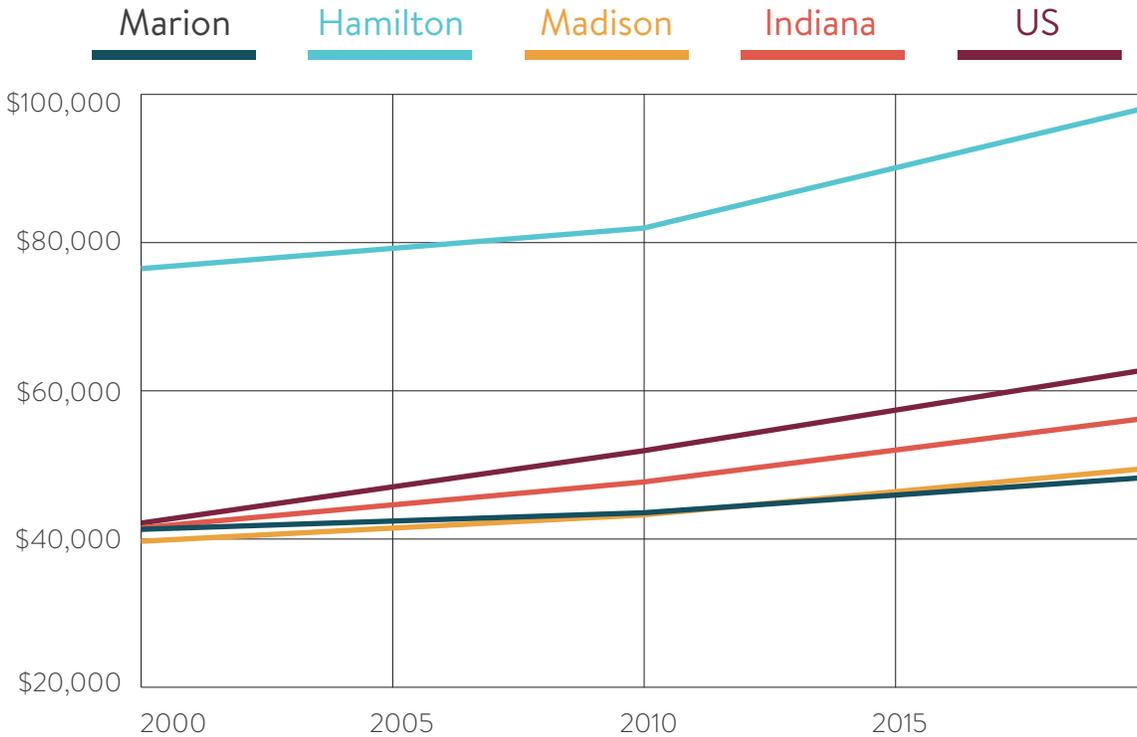
## RACIAL AND ETHNIC MAKEUP



Though the WR-ROI Region is majority white and non-hispanic, Marion County is the most diverse in the region, with nearly 50% of its population identifying as non-white. Marion County is also home to the largest share

of people in the region (10%) who identify as Hispanic or Latino. Madison and Hamilton, at 4% each, both fall below Indiana's share of 7% Hispanic or Latino.

## MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME (2000-2019)



Source: STATS Indiana, using data from the Indiana Department of Workforce Development

Median household income has grown in the region from 2000 to 2020, but is not changing at a consistent rate across the region. While Hamilton County outpaced Indiana’s median household income and its growth rate, Madison and Marion Counties fell just behind the state’s rate of change.

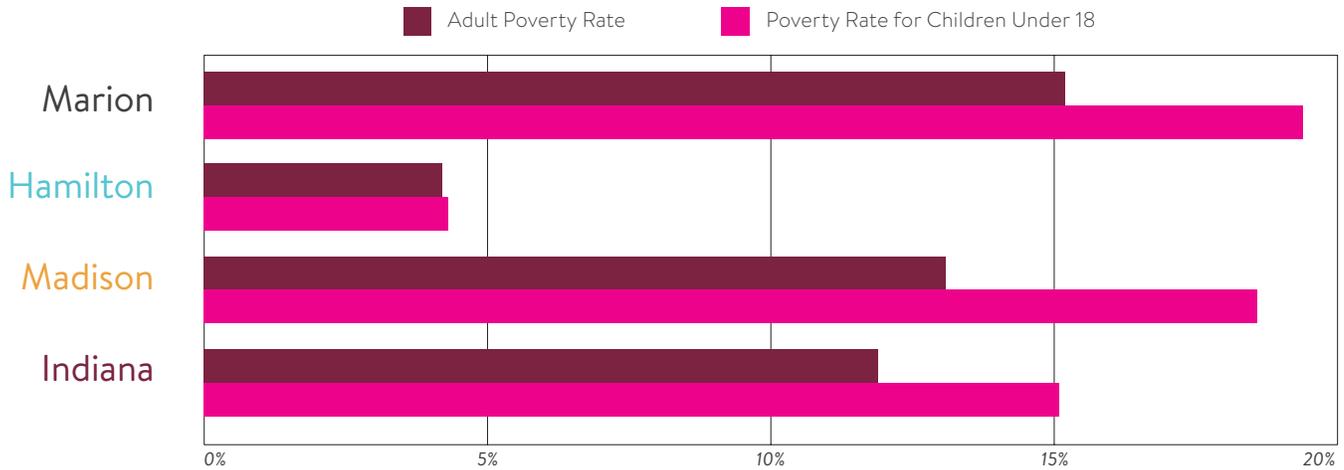
## PERSONAL PER CAPITA INCOME

	Marion	Hamilton	Madison	Indiana	US
2019 Income	\$54,405	\$77,263	\$39,428	\$48,678	\$56,474
2009 Income	\$39,285	\$52,167	\$28,756	\$34,102	\$39,284
% Change	38.5%	48.1%	37.1%	42.7%	43.8%

Source: STATS Indiana, using data from the Indiana Department of Workforce Development

As with median income, Hamilton County saw the largest increase in personal income per capita between 1989 and 2019. Hamilton also outpaced Indiana and the US, whereas Marion’s growth rate was below state and national averages. Madison saw the most modest rate of change, remaining the lowest in the region and below state averages.

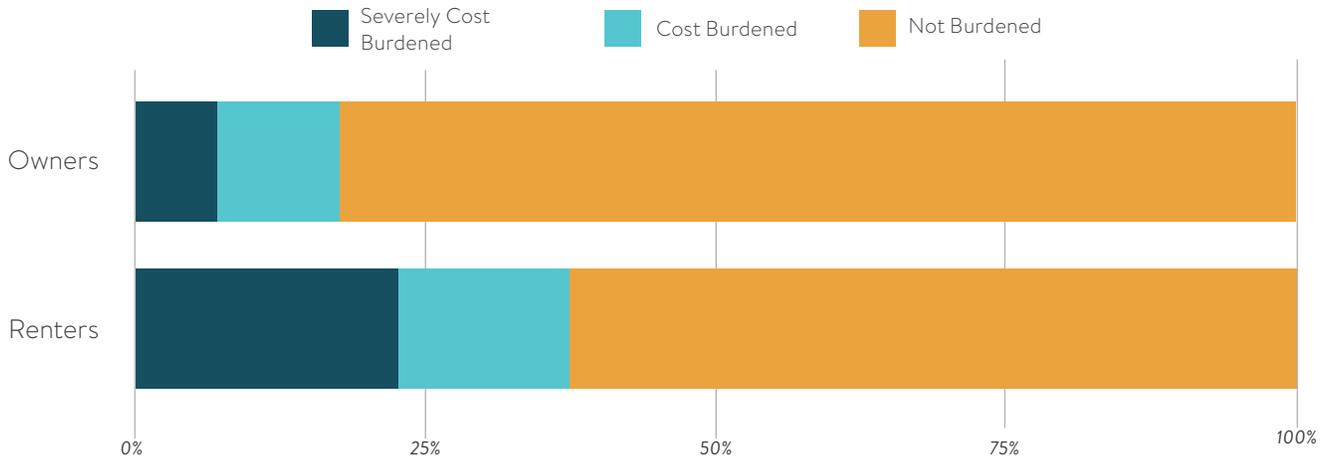
## POVERTY RATE 2019



Source: Census American Community Survey, 2016-2020

The adult and child poverty rates are greater than the state share in both Marion and Madison Counties. Hamilton’s poverty rates are lowest overall – the county’s adult poverty rate is just a third of the statewide poverty rate, and its child poverty rate is only around a quarter of the state’s.

## COST BURDENED HOUSEHOLDS 2019



Source: Census American Community Survey, 2016-2020

A cost burdened household is one spending more than 30% of their income on housing costs. A household is considered severely cost burdened if they spend more than 50% of their monthly income on housing. Housing burden impacts both renters and homeowners in the WR-ROI Region, though renters are more likely to be cost burdened than owners. Cost burdened households vary across the region, but surpass the state averages in many cases. The rate of severely cost burdened households is higher in Madison County than in the state.

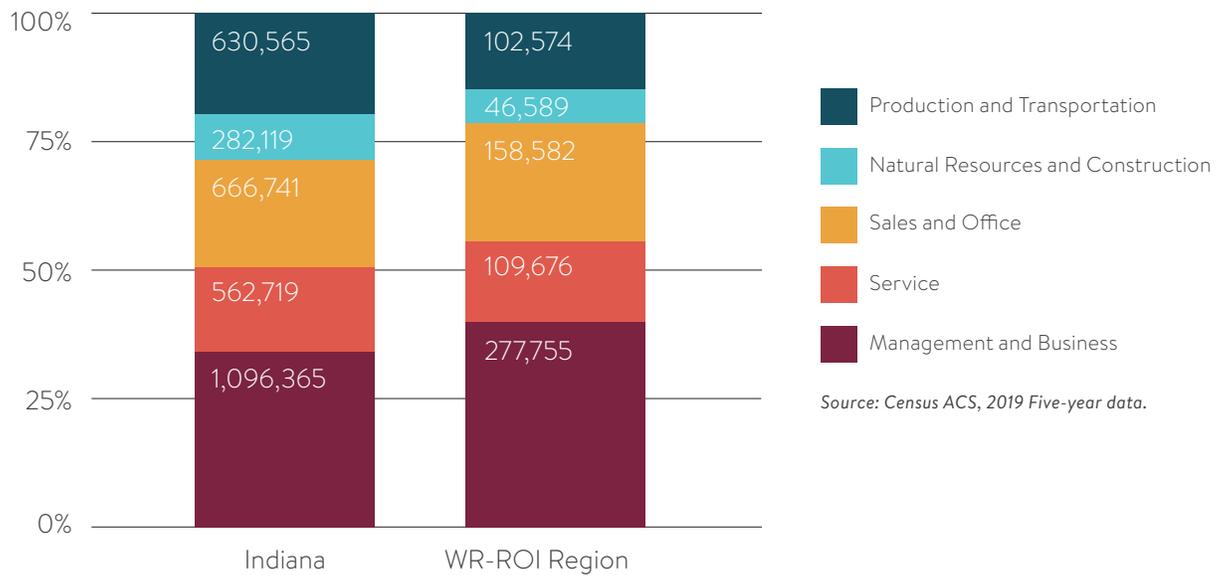


# ECONOMY

The region's economy has grown steadily since 2015, driven primarily by the Health Care industry. Significant employment in the Retail Trade, Administrative and Support, Manufacturing, Accommodation and Food, Professional and Technical, and Educational Service industries has also furthered economic growth in the region.

Management and Business is the largest occupational group and represents a higher share of the regional economy than in Indiana as a whole. Production and Transportation occupations are less represented in the region compared to the state. The region would have more than 34,000 additional jobs in Production and Transportation occupations if it had the same share as Indiana.

## OCCUPATIONS

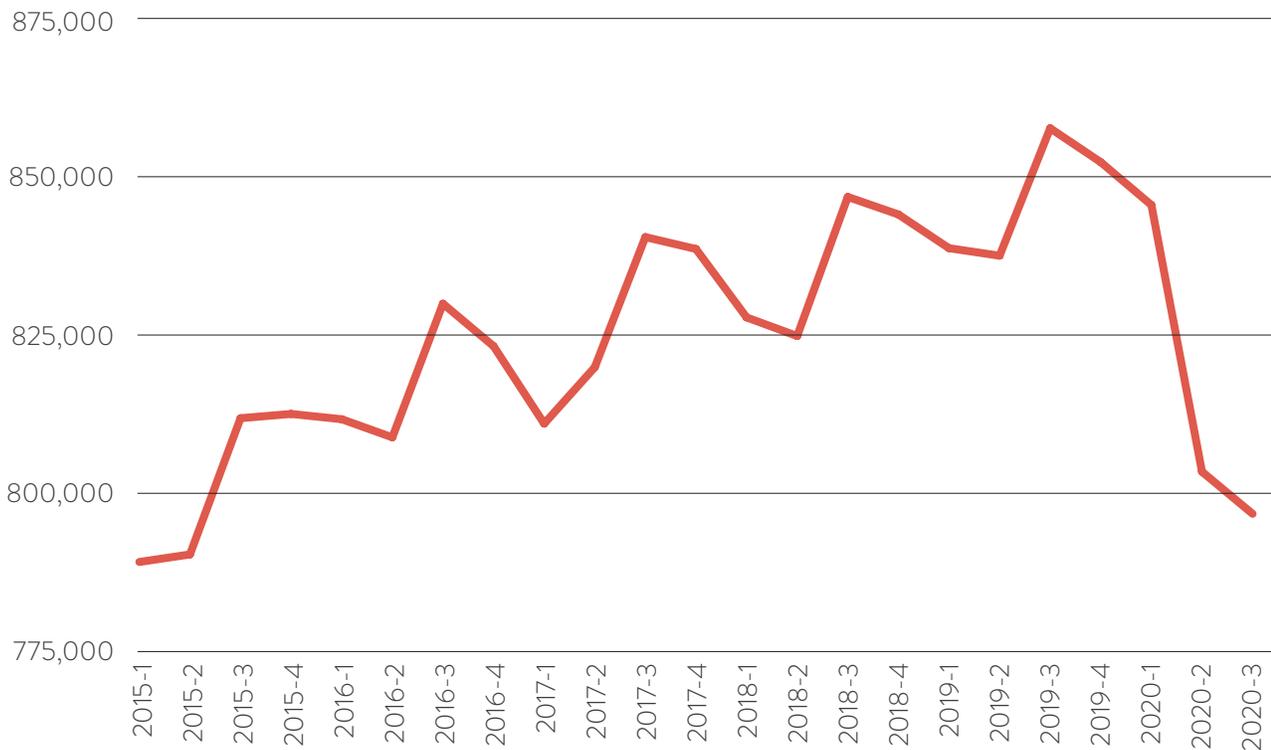


## ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The COVID-19 pandemic affected economies around the globe, and the WR-ROI Region is no exception. As of Q3-2020, the region was down more than 60,000 jobs from its peak employment in Q3-2019. Nearly 42,000 jobs were lost between the first and second quarters of 2020 and the usual seasonal gain in the third quarter of 2020 was instead a continued decline.



## TOTAL EMPLOYMENT IN THE WR-ROI REGION



Source: Quarterly Workforce Indicators, U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-Q1 to 2020-Q3.

COVID-19 impacted every sector of the regional economy. Before COVID-19, only five sectors experienced an average quarterly loss in employment, but during the pandemic, 15 sectors had losses and only five had gains. Accommodation and Food experienced the largest quarterly losses during COVID-19. Health Care, which had the strongest quarterly gains pre-COVID-19 experienced a significant reversal. Construction was one of the few sectors in the region that grew faster during the COVID-19 quarters, which may reflect the start of the construction season.

## AVERAGE QUARTERLY CHANGE

Sector	Pre-COVID-19 2015 Q1 - 2020 Q1)	During COVID-19 (2020 Q2 - 2020 Q3)	2020 Average Employment
Accommodation and Food	192	-7,900	61,864
Administrative and Support	251	-4,097	70,522
Agriculture, etc.	-4	130	1,333
Arts and Recreation	89	-1,227	12,062
Construction	371	1,111	41,082
Educational Services	168	-2,760	57,238
Finance/Insurance	228	107	46,813
Health Care	974	-1,787	139,395
Information	-157	-612	13,621
Management	26	-389	12,178
Manufacturing	-70	-939	68,747
Mining and Extraction	3	-3	481
Other Services	135	-1,881	25,467
Professional and Technical	380	-145	58,797
Public Administration	35	300	28,535
Real Estate	136	-447	14,845
Retail Trade	-102	-2,163	77,325
Transport/Warehouse	81	-874	43,030
Utilities	-12	1	3,298
Wholesale Trade	64	-560	38,409

Marion County accounted for 76 of every 100 jobs in the region as of Q3-2020, but it also accounted for 84 of every 100 jobs lost during COVID-19. Even though Marion County has nearly four times as many jobs as Hamilton County, it was only averaging a gain of 1,600 jobs per quarter before the COVID-19 recession, which suggests that the regional economic center may have been shifting, with the pandemic accelerating the trend.

Source: Quarterly Workforce Indicators, U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-Q1 to 2020-Q3.

## AVERAGE QUARTERLY CHANGE IN EMPLOYMENT

	Marion	Hamilton	Madison	Region
Pre-COVID	1,599	1,158	32	2,789
COVID	-20,196	-2,904	-1,028	-24,128

Source: Quarterly Workforce Indicators, U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-Q1 to 2020-Q3. The COVID-19 period begins 2020-Q2. Data is only available through 2020-Q3, data on Post-COVID-19 employment is not yet available.

# PRIOR PLANNING AND REGIONAL COLLABORATION

The WR-ROI Region has undergone a number of prior planning efforts, including most recently the White River Vision Plan. Completed in December 2019, the plan lays out a comprehensive and coordinated regional vision for enhancement of the White River over several decades. The plan was the result of a year-long process between the City of Indianapolis, through its Department of Metropolitan Development; Hamilton County Tourism, on behalf of its partners, Hamilton County and the cities of Carmel, Fishers, and Noblesville; and Visit Indy. **The White River Vision Plan has served in large part as the basis of the WR-ROI Partnership collaboration, and demonstrates prior and ongoing regional collaboration separate from the READI grant's state funding. The White River Vision Plan's costs were financially supported by program partners from both the private sector and government.**

Exercising authority granted by the Indiana General Assembly in IC 36-7-7.7, the Indianapolis Metropolitan Planning Organization (Indianapolis MPO) is an independent regional organization focused on convening, informing, planning, and funding high-priority regional efforts. The Indianapolis MPO has a staff of 14 full time professional planners, administrators, data modelers, and financial management personnel committed to coordinating regional transportation, housing, land use, economic development, and environmental initiatives. The Indianapolis MPO hosts and staffs the Central Indiana Regional Development Authority (CIRDA), which is structured to maintain a regional development plan and to apply for, accept, and disperse state economic development funding.

The Indianapolis MPO is currently developing an updated Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for the Central Indiana region, to be completed in February 2022, which contains proposed guiding principles well aligned with the READI program: Partnership and Regional Alignment, Equitable Growth, Recovery and Resiliency,

and Connectivity, within a framework of Talent, Innovation, and Place. Communities in White River ROI Region will continue their collaboration through the existing structures and momentum of CIRDA and the Indianapolis MPO.

Other studies and plans recently undertaken by communities within the WR-ROI include:

- 2020 Bicentennial Agenda
- 2020 Indianapolis Anti-Displacement and Inclusive Growth Strategy
- 2020 Noblesville Alternative Transportation (NAT) Plan
- 2020 Noblesville Comprehensive Plan
- 2020 Noblesville Parks and Recreation Master Plan Update
- 2020-2025 City of Carmel Zone-Improvement Plan
- 2021 Central Indiana Community Foundation (CICF) Connected Communities Initiative
- 2021 Noblesville Housing Analysis (Updated from 2016)
- Accelerate Indy 2021
- Carmel Clay Parks and Recreation Master Plan 2020-2024
- Carmel Clay Parks and Recreation-White River Greenway North Extension Feasibility Study
- Castleton Strategic Revitalization Plan
- City of Fishers Comprehensive Housing Study (currently underway)
- Fishers 2040: A Framework for Our Future (Updated in 2021)
- Fishers Arts & Culture Master Plan
- Hamilton County South River District Concept Plan
- Hamilton County Tourism Vision 2025 Plan
- IMPO Central Indiana Regional Centers Study
- Indianapolis Equitable Growth Strategy and Equitable Incentives Package
- Indianapolis Resiliency Plan
- Indy Destination Vision, Visit Indy
- Indy Moves
- Indy Rezone TOD Overlay district (2021)
- IndyGo Comprehensive Operations Analysis
- MIBOR-IMPO Regional Housing Preference Survey
- Nickel Plate Trail Master Plan 2040
- Red, Purple, and Blue Line Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Strategic Plans (all 2021)
- Riverside Regional Park Master Plan
- White River Perceptions Baseline Research (Hamilton County Tourism)

These plans were reviewed during the course of developing this regional development plan, to ensure commonality of vision and goals among the communities in the WR-ROI. Through that review several common themes were identified. These themes, which serve as driving principles for the region's economic growth, are incorporated into this regional development plan.



## DRIVING THEMES OF REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### Smart growth

- + Land use planning that encourages fiscal, environmental, and cultural sustainability
- + Context sensitive design (i.e. rural areas see development that is rural, like wider streets than in less rural areas)
- + Infill and dense development rather than sprawl, where appropriate

### Mobility and connectedness

- + Multi-modal transportation that connects the region's communities
- + A fully connected network of existing transit, greenways, trails, and pedestrian paths
- + Attractive, walkable, and vital downtowns/city centers that serves as the nucleus of the town

### Placemaking

- + Celebration of and building on civic pride, community identity, and sense of place, including the use of marketing and storytelling (with unified messages) to promote the region
- + Historic and small-town charm preservation
- + Vibrant, entrepreneurial, inclusive spaces for live + work environments

### Ecology-based economic development

- + Enhanced park, trail, and water recreation opportunities
- + Reclaimed riverfront to drive economic growth
- + Climate resilience and environmental conservation
- + Protection of endangered species; and protection and improvement of water quality, avoiding development on wetlands and floodplains
- + Ag-tech, drones, and cyber security as emerging sectors and focus of education and workforce development efforts

These themes address key challenges and opportunities within the WR-ROI communities, and lead to shared strategies implemented within and across those communities.

## KEY CHALLENGES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND GOALS

### Land development & mobility

- + Avoid sprawl in favor of infill development to accommodate Central Indiana's **population growth** responsibly



- + **Connect communities in the region** via multi-modal transportation networks
- + **Enhance recreational mobility** along the White River
- + **Keep downtowns the hearts of unified communities**, while fostering emerging regional centers and building new ones

### Placemaking

- + Maintain **unique** character, sense of place, and history of the region's communities
- + Enhance **vibrancy, innovation, and entrepreneurship**
- + Promote **consistent branding, design, built form, and "gateways"**
- + Identify and celebrate the **White River as a community asset and amenity**, and focus development opportunities toward the riverfront
- + Celebrate the **diversity** of region's communities and preserve places on the river for **generations** to come

### Ecology

- + Expand access to trails and rivers, and provide **educational opportunities** to learn more about the ecosystem and support volunteer natural asset stewardship
- + **Continue water quality** improvements and awaken from a period of underutilization and ecological degradation
- + Create a diverse selection of **facilities and amenities** to accommodate indoor and outdoor recreational pursuits
- + **Increase year round leisure, recreation, and economic activity** in the WR-ROI Region

These challenges, opportunities, and goals are reflected in the strategies, projects, and programs contained in this regional development plan.



## STAKEHOLDERS AND EXECUTION



The White River Regional Opportunity Initiative (WR-ROI) Partnership was formed under the Central Indiana RDA (CIRDA) within the Indianapolis MPO. Advisory Members of the Partnership include representatives from the following entities: the City of Carmel, City of Fishers, City of Noblesville, and City of Westfield in Hamilton County, Carmel Clay Parks and Recreation, Hamilton County and Hamilton County Tourism, the City of Anderson in Madison County, the Corporation of Economic Development Anderson/Madison County, the City of Indianapolis in Marion County, the Indianapolis Metropolitan Planning Organization, Develop Indy, the Town of Zionsville in Boone County, and the Town of McCordsville in Hancock County. Names and contact information for the members of the WR-ROI are included in the [Appendix](#).

Advisory Members of the Partnership met weekly from the time the region was formally submitted to the IEDC for consideration for READI on July 1, to review prior plans and ongoing initiatives in each community, align around vision for the future, determine regional development goals, and select projects and programs to include for consideration for READI funding. Through that process, each stakeholder participating in the planning process affirmed their commitment to ongoing collaboration and partnership and implementation of selected projects in their communities.

At this time, in addition to the WR-ROI Partnership Advisory Members, CIRDA will maintain responsibility for full execution of the enclosed plan, including budget and grant administration, as well as periodic updates to reflect successes and evolving priorities.

Formed in 2015 during IEDC's Regional Cities initiative, the Central Indiana Regional Development Authority supports regionally significant investments in Central Indiana. CIRDA's focus area of Hamilton, Johnson, and Marion counties includes nearly 1.1 million residents, or nearly 17 percent of all Hoosiers. CIRDA's board is comprised of five appointed officials, two from Indianapolis-Marion County and one each from Westfield, Carmel, and Greenwood.

Should IEDC choose to fund this WR-ROI plan, CIRDA would assume all grant management, fiduciary, and disbursement roles. No new structures or processes would need to be created: Indianapolis MPO staff utilizes Oracle NetSuite enterprise resource planning software, which includes CIRDA-specific accounts and all necessary banking connections already established. Suballocation processes will also follow Indianapolis MPO project funding practices, and the CIRDA board, as Voting Members of the WR-ROI, will stay true to this plan's project selection criteria to the greatest extent possible for project funding. Sufficient auditing, internal controls, and approval paths are already in place, as certified by the Indiana State Board of Accounts in their 2020 audit of the Indianapolis MPO, and for READI would be covered by a 3.5% administrative fee. More information on CIRDA may be found at:

[indympo.org/maps-resources/rda](http://indympo.org/maps-resources/rda).

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The WR-ROI executed a deliberate community engagement process to ensure that regional stakeholders were involved in the formation of this regional development plan who are committed to its vision of investing in infrastructure and development around the White River to restore the river's ecology, attract visitors and new residents, promote vibrancy and economic growth, and improve community health. The partners issued an initial press release to advertise their intention to form together as a region following the announcement of the READI grant by the State of Indiana. That press release is attached in the [Appendix](#). It solicited municipalities within Madison, Marion, and Hamilton counties, as well as other nearby towns and cities that have a connection to the White River and its economic benefits, to reach out to express their interest in joining the WR-ROI Partnership.

The WR-ROI published a [public-facing website](#) that described the goals of the WR-ROI Region and the READI grant. Partners of the WR-ROI pushed that website out to organizations within their networks and communities in order to proactively engage a diverse group of individuals, organizations, and interest groups during the planning process. The website included a Request for Information form where stakeholders submitted their project and program ideas for consideration for inclusion in this Regional Development Plan and READI funding request. Partners worked with

individual entities within their communities that were interested in submitting projects and programs to ensure those submissions fit READI criteria in addition to regional goals and vision.

WR-ROI Partnership Advisory Members evaluated more than 45 submitted ideas through a rigorous, two-month process that resulted in the ultimate selection of the fourteen projects included in this proposal. Additional projects that were submitted but not selected for this READI submittal are included in the [Appendix](#), to be considered for execution in the WR-ROI region, should future funding opportunities arise.

Hamilton County Tourism and the Indy Chamber will continue to host the [mywhiteriver.com](#) website and post updates about the WR-ROI's READI plan and projects implementation, in conjunction with a PR Communications Committee, made up of a sub-committee of the current WR-ROI partnership. This will include contact information for a primary media contact (currently the Communications Director at the City of Noblesville) who can answer specific inquiries and direct questions to the appropriate WR-ROI partner. The development of the White River Vision Plan between 2018 and 2019 served heavily as the basis of this regional development plan, and included the voices of more than 13,000 community members. The engagement process to create a vision and priorities for the White





River included 1,350 survey users, 515 public meeting attendees, face-to-face conversations at dozens of community events, and 427 online meeting views — all with an emphasis on diverse representation from underrepresented demographics through partnerships with local and regional community organizations. Every effort was made to ensure a broad coalition of voices were heard, from the rural farm families in the northern part of the study area, to urban residents concerned about the potential for gentrification in their communities with improvements to the river.

Following the White River Plan's development, through the Pulliam White River Partners initiative, more than two dozen organizations have joined talents and shared strengths to create a White River Watershed network, all working to support the river's sustainability to ensure we have a vibrant economy in the future. They also form the nucleus of the White River Vision Plan's implementation partners, along with local and state governments.

In addition, WR-ROI partners shared lists of critical stakeholders and anchor institutions, many of whom were interviewed to provide their perspectives on goals for the region, as well as specific initiatives they would like to undertake to reach those goals. Dozens of these stakeholders supported this plan's development and

eventual implementation, by submitting projects and programs for consideration or by committing to fund and/or partner on key projects. These include education institutions like Indiana University, IUPUI, Anderson University, and Ivy Tech; philanthropies like the Walton Family Foundation, Richard Fairbanks Foundation, Lilly Endowments, Pulliam Charitable Trust, and CICF (Central Indiana Community Foundation); environmental organizations like Conner Prairie, White River Alliance, Friends of the White River, Carmel Clay Parks & Recreation, and Hamilton County Parks; corporate partners like private developers, Citizens Energy Group, Christopher Burke Engineering, and Indiana American Water; and key planning and economic development entities like the Indianapolis MPO, EmployIndy, Visit Indy, and Develop Indy, as well as the Hamilton County Soil & Water Conservation District, Invest Hamilton County, Hamilton County Tourism, and the Corporation for Economic Development Anderson/Madison County.

A meeting with the mayors and other key elected officials from each of the WR-ROI's participating communities was held in early September, and each affirmed their commitment to this regional development plan through letters of support that can be found in the [Appendix](#).

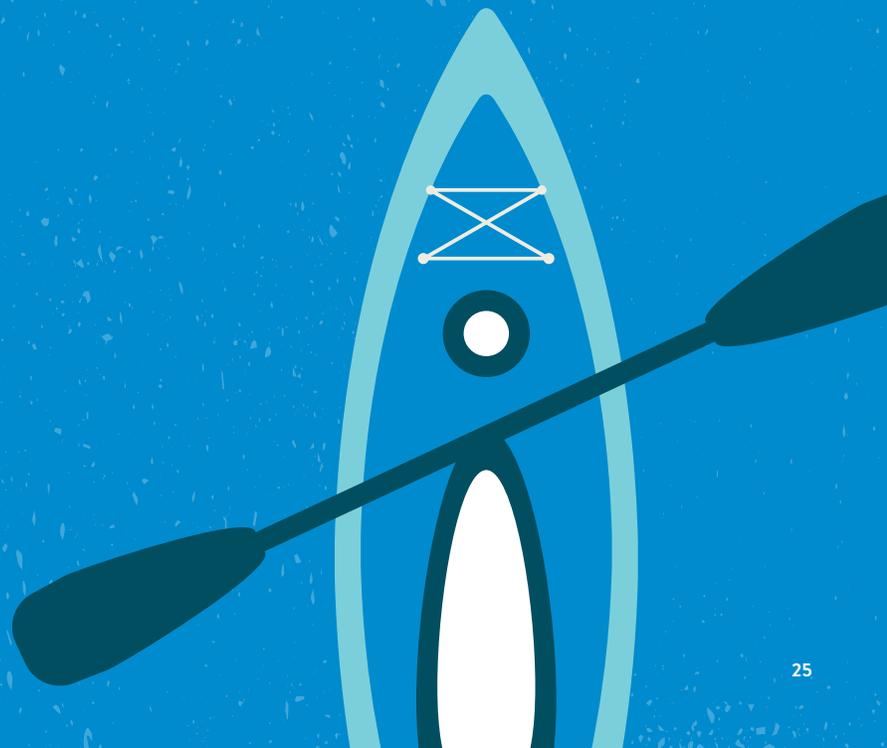


**REGIONAL TRENDS,  
VISION, & IMPACT**



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## THE REGION'S VISION

The WR-ROI Partnership developed a vision statement that will guide actions within the regional development plan for the next 5 years:

**Building generational economic opportunity in the WR-ROI Region through vibrant, connected, and accessible places, unique recreation opportunities, and ecological preservation and education.**

The region will unite around preserving, cleaning, and developing its greatest public asset: the White River. There is a direct connection between the health of the White River and the wellbeing of the region, as well as the state. The White River is not an “owned” amenity - it is a public good that if well-managed, invested in, and cared for, will pay dividends to all who call Indiana home.

The WR-ROI regional development plan will guide the development of the White River into a world-class attraction that serves Hoosiers and visitors alike. Flowing

through the state, the White River has always served as the region’s artery. For the region to continue to grow and thrive, the river must be clean and accessible. After decades of neglect, this Regional Development Plan seeks to reverse past trends of underutilization and ecological degradation. The plan outlines strategies to restore the river’s ecology, attract visitors and new residents, promote vibrancy and economic growth, and improve community health.





Ultimately, a clean, accessible, and attractive White River improves the WR-ROI's quality of place. WR-ROI already boasts a high quality of life thanks to its low cost of living, abundant amenities, and expanding economy. Under this plan, trails for cyclists and pedestrians will stem from the river and connect towns, ultimately creating a less car-dependent region. For families, the river presents opportunities to teach children about the importance of our natural resources as well as protecting wildlife. And an enhanced White River will further position the region to attract high-paying employers and skilled workers who are looking to live in an area with access to quality recreation options.

A 2021 study of central Indiana residents by the White River Vision Plan about their perceptions of the White River clearly indicates the desire for development along the corridor where appropriate. About 60% of respondents said they would use services and products offered along the river if more were available.

By making improvements to infrastructure and development around the White River, the WR-ROI seeks to preserve the river's floodplain and ensure the area is prepared for increased precipitation. WR-ROI also aims to incorporate responsible growth strategies when developing the riverfront. This refers to developments that are sustainable, meet the needs of communities, and boost economic vitality.

WR-ROI plans to replicate the past successes of river-based cities like Louisville and Nashville that enhanced their riverfronts and consequently improved their economies.

The vision for the region will be promoted widely to help attract and retain people in the region. Part of this regional development plan includes investing in Project Amplify - a Regional Talent Attraction & Image Marketing Initiative created and run by the Indy Chamber. This marketing initiative will ensure robust content creation and delivery, a regional ambassador program, and targeted advertising in external markets with high concentrations of talent needed for the region's key industries. It will also be used to highlight the specific programmatic and project investments made through the READI grant to people across the region, throughout the state, and around the globe.

**The visionary identity of the region as a hub of activity and economic opportunity anchored by the White River will help put Central Indiana on the map for visitors, businesses, and potential new residents to the region.**

# SWOT ANALYSIS

## STRENGTHS

- + Strong population growth and growing workforce potential
- + Universities in the area can help stabilize the economy during recessions
- + Trails, parks, and opportunities for recreation already exist
- + Many of the towns have charming and popular downtowns that serve as the commercial hub
- + Indiana is a business-friendly environment with low taxes
- + Workforce development programs through local universities and trade schools that provide residents with necessary skills for new jobs
- + Youth sports is a major source of revenue for the region's tourism sector

## WEAKNESSES

- + Socioeconomic segregation between Marion County and Hamilton County and Madison County and Hamilton County
- + Not enough affordable workforce housing options
- + Failure to keep college graduates in the region
- + Lack of transit options
- + Region needs to prove it can work together and align goals





## OPPORTUNITIES

- + White River clean up could spur economic development and increase tourism
- + Attracting larger base of remote workers by creating a high quality of life and providing adequate broadband internet
- + Connecting each cities' downtowns through bicycle/ pedestrian trails
- + Improving climate resiliency by protecting floodplains and investing in green energy alternatives
- + Possibly attracting businesses from Illinois due to Indiana's more favorable tax policies
- + Investing in new technologies associated with water management
- + Infill development prioritized over sprawl
- + Brownfield development is a priority
- + Many family-friendly communities in the region
- + Increased year-round recreational opportunities

## THREATS

- + Failure to develop and clean the White River could result in the region falling behind benchmark riverfront-capital cities in business attraction
- + Without adequate workforce housing, the region will not be able to attract employers to the region
- + Gentrification could occur once development projects are completed along the White River
- + Failure to adapt and train the region's workforce so they're qualified for the jobs of the future
- + Population growth could cause strains on physical and social infrastructure



## TRENDS & BENCHMARKS

## Trends & Benchmarks

**T**here are a number of ongoing and projected trends that the WR-ROI intends to leverage that take advantage of its strengths, opportunities, and assets. These include industry growth and productivity, talent attraction and development and population growth, entrepreneurship and innovation, equitable development, and ecological improvements. A number of benchmark regions based on similarities to the WR-ROI in population size, industry makeup, innovation activity, and/or strength of a river-based economy have been identified. These benchmark metropolitan statistical areas (MSA) will be used to measure comparative progress and help evaluate the plan's success over time:

- + Denver-Aurora-Lakewood, CO Metro Area
- + Louisville/Jefferson County, KY-IN Metro Area
- + Grand Rapids-Kentwood, MI Metro Area
- + Charlotte-Concord-Gastonia, NC-SC Metro Area
- + Raleigh-Cary, NC Metro Area
- + Columbus, OH Metro Area
- + Madison, WI Metro Area

# INDUSTRY GROWTH & PRODUCTIVITY

The area’s employment in key industries has been growing steadily, with the Health Care, Professional and Technical, Construction, Finance and Insurance, and Administrative industries growing fastest over the past several years. Industries that lead the region in terms of overall employment include Health Care, Retail Trade, Manufacturing, Administrative and Support, Accommodation and Food, Professional and Technical, and Educational Services. These leading industries offer a mix of employment opportunities that pay a living wage, require a variety of educational experience (from minimal training to advanced degrees), are traded sectors and therefore import value into the state, and

are modernizing in terms of technology adoption. Taken together, all industries in the region generate \$73,127 in GDP per capita (2019).

Pre-pandemic, the WR-ROI was adding over 2,700 jobs annually, at a 2% growth rate. Average compensation (which consists of wages and salaries plus employer contributions for employee pensions, insurance funds, and government social insurance) in the WR-ROI is almost \$71,500, which is slightly lower than in some of its benchmarks but in line with regional cost of living. Per capita income is \$58,445, which is higher than most of the benchmarks.

	PCI 2019	Annual Emp Growth	GDP per Capita 2019	Avg Compensation
<b>WR-ROI Region</b>	<b>\$58,445</b>	<b>2.0%</b>	<b>\$73,127</b>	<b>\$71,444</b>
Charlotte-Concord-Gastonia, NC-SC Metro Area	\$53,916	3.7%	\$66,925	\$73,595
Columbus, OH Metro Area	\$52,477	2.3%	\$61,374	\$70,181
Denver-Aurora-Lakewood, CO Metro Area	\$67,236	3.4%	\$79,254	\$82,139
Grand Rapids-Kentwood, MI Metro Area	\$50,330	3.1%	\$55,368	\$61,725
Louisville/Jefferson County, KY-IN Metro Area	\$52,134	1.9%	\$53,599	\$65,237
Madison, WI Metro Area	\$62,087	1.9%	\$76,368	\$70,710
Raleigh-Cary, NC Metro Area	\$57,851	3.9%	\$74,450	\$74,058



# TALENT & WORKFORCE

	Labor Force Participation Rate (16+)	Population with Bachelors Degree or Higher
<b>WR-ROI Region</b>	<b>67.5%</b>	<b>36%</b>
Charlotte-Concord-Gastonia, NC-SC Metro Area	67.0%	35%
Columbus, OH Metro Area	67.6%	37%
Denver-Aurora-Lakewood, CO Metro Area	71.4%	44%
Grand Rapids-Kentwood, MI Metro Area	67.6%	33%
Louisville/Jefferson County, KY-IN Metro Area	65.2%	30%
Madison, WI Metro Area	71.8%	46%
Raleigh-Cary, NC Metro Area	69.1%	47%



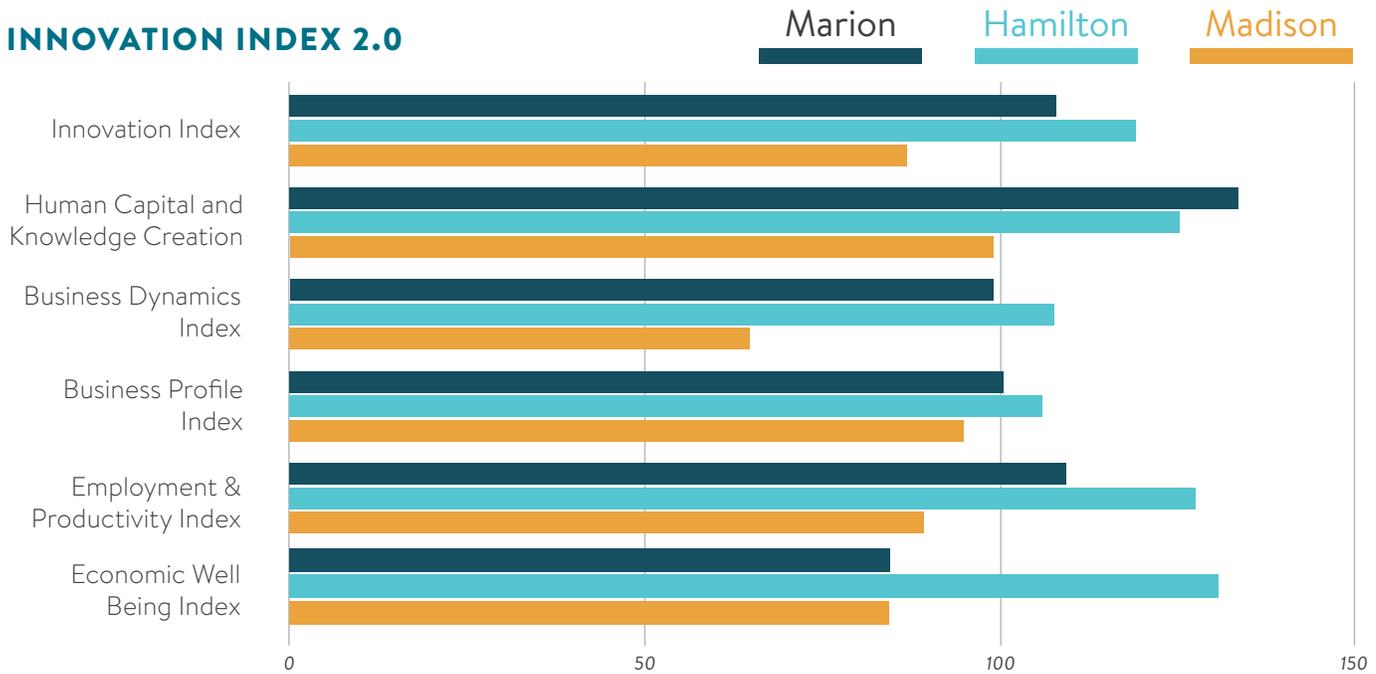
The WR-ROI Region has experienced a 10% surge in population growth over the last ten years, well above Indiana’s overall growth rate of 4.2%. Much of this population growth is in people of prime working age - the region has seen labor force participation grow at 6.9% since 2012, higher than the state’s rate of 4.2%. As many communities within the WR-ROI are growing suburbs and exurbs of Indianapolis and part of a growing laborshed, we expect to see growth in the WR-ROI’s labor force participation rate continue to grow to meet and exceed more of its benchmarks over the coming decade.

The rate of higher education completion (those 25 years old and above with a Bachelor’s degree or higher), is also higher in the region (36.1%) relative to the state (26.5%). This is good news as more industries and employers are requiring advanced training and skills as they adopt new technologies

# ENTREPRENEURSHIP & INNOVATION

The Innovation 2.0 Index provides insight into the innovation capacity and innovative output of a region. The measures are county based with scores ranging from 0 to 200, where 100 represents the U.S. Benchmark.

## INNOVATION INDEX 2.0

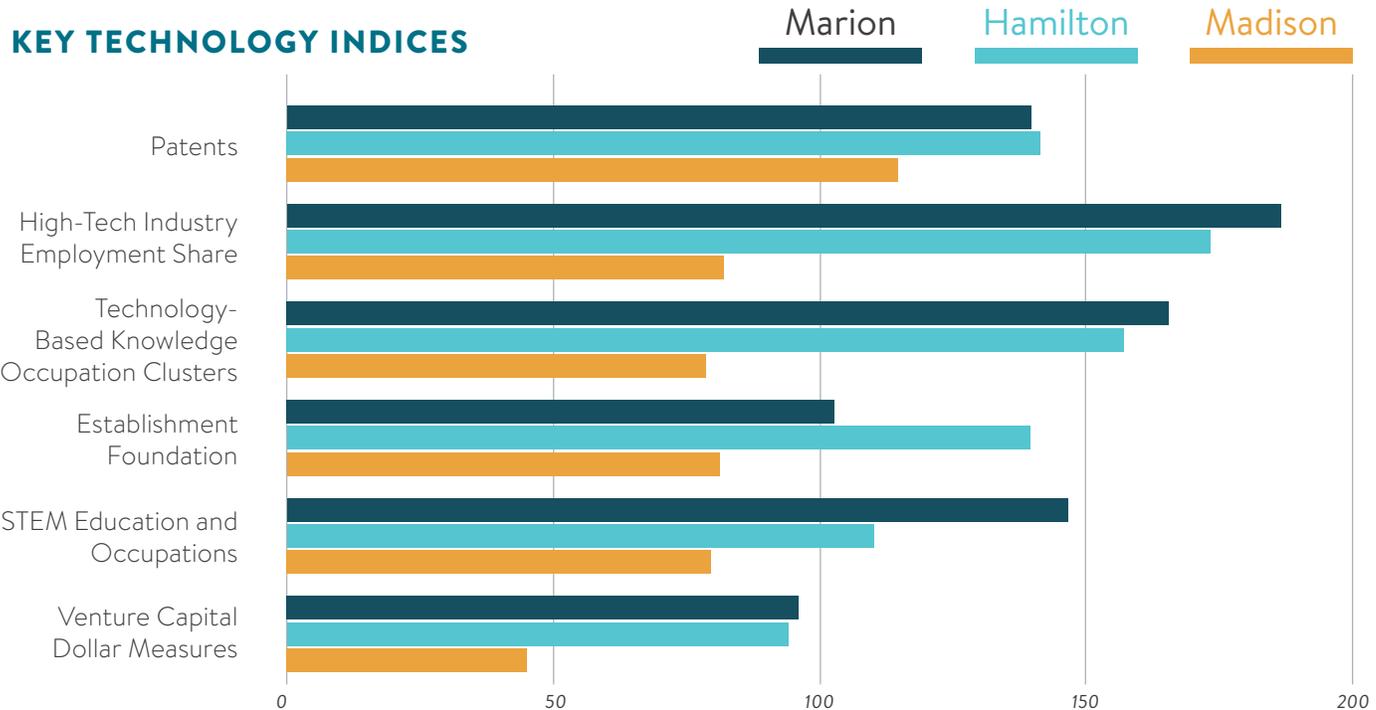


Source: StatsAmerica, Innovation Index 2.0

Hamilton and Marion Counties are above the U.S. benchmark on the Innovation Index overall, though Marion is below the U.S. benchmark on the Business Dynamics Index – which gauges the region’s competitiveness by looking at entry and exit of individual

firms – and the Economic Well Being Index – which evaluates economic well-being and standard of living for residents. Madison county lags the U.S. benchmark and its regional counterparts on every index.

## KEY TECHNOLOGY INDICES



Source: StatsAmerica, Innovation Index 2.0

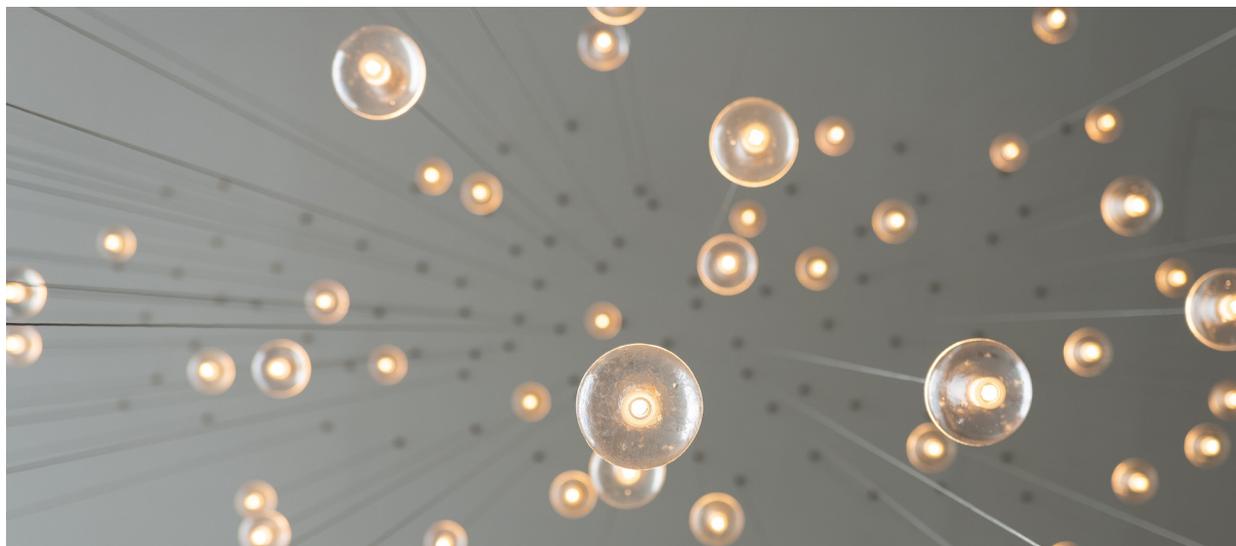
Hamilton and Marion Counties perform well on several of the Key Technology Indices – sub-indices of the Innovation Index – with scores well above the U.S. benchmark for high-tech industry employment, technology-based knowledge occupations, and patents, the one area in which Madison County bests the U.S. benchmark.

For example, with the recent relocation of INCOG BioPharma Services and Stevanato Group, Fishers is emerging as a life-sciences hub and intends to partner with these institutions to encourage innovative biotechnologies that can benefit both their operations and environmental health. The Fishers and Carmel Wastewater Treatment Facilities are adjacent to this property creating opportunities to partner with Citizens Energy Group to provide training for the labor force on innovative infrastructure and technology advances around water quality.

	Business Birth Rate per 100 Establishments	RD per 10,000 people	Venture Capital per 2019 Employment	Employment in firms less than 5 years old
<b>WR-ROI Region</b>	<b>8.7</b>	<i>not available at non-MSA level</i>		<b>7.83%</b>
Charlotte-Concord-Gastonia, NC-SC Metro Area	10.4	\$3.0	\$3.0	\$3.0
Columbus, OH Metro Area	8.9	\$69.2	\$69.2	\$69.2
Denver-Aurora-Lakewood, CO Metro Area	11.5	\$28.6	\$28.6	\$28.6
Grand Rapids-Kentwood, MI Metro Area	7.8	\$11.6	\$11.6	\$11.6
Louisville/Jefferson County, KY-IN Metro Area	7.9	\$23.5	\$23.5	\$23.5
Madison, WI Metro Area	7.4	\$249.4	\$249.4	\$249.4
Raleigh-Cary, NC Metro Area	10.7	\$57.1	\$57.1	\$57.1

The region’s performance is more uneven on STEM education, occupations, and establishment formation, and falls below the U.S. benchmark for venture capital dollars.

The WR-ROI is in the middle of the pack compared to other benchmark regions on business birth rate, with 8.7 new establishments per 100 in 2018. Employment in firms under five years old is just 7.8%, lower than all but one benchmark (Grand Rapids).

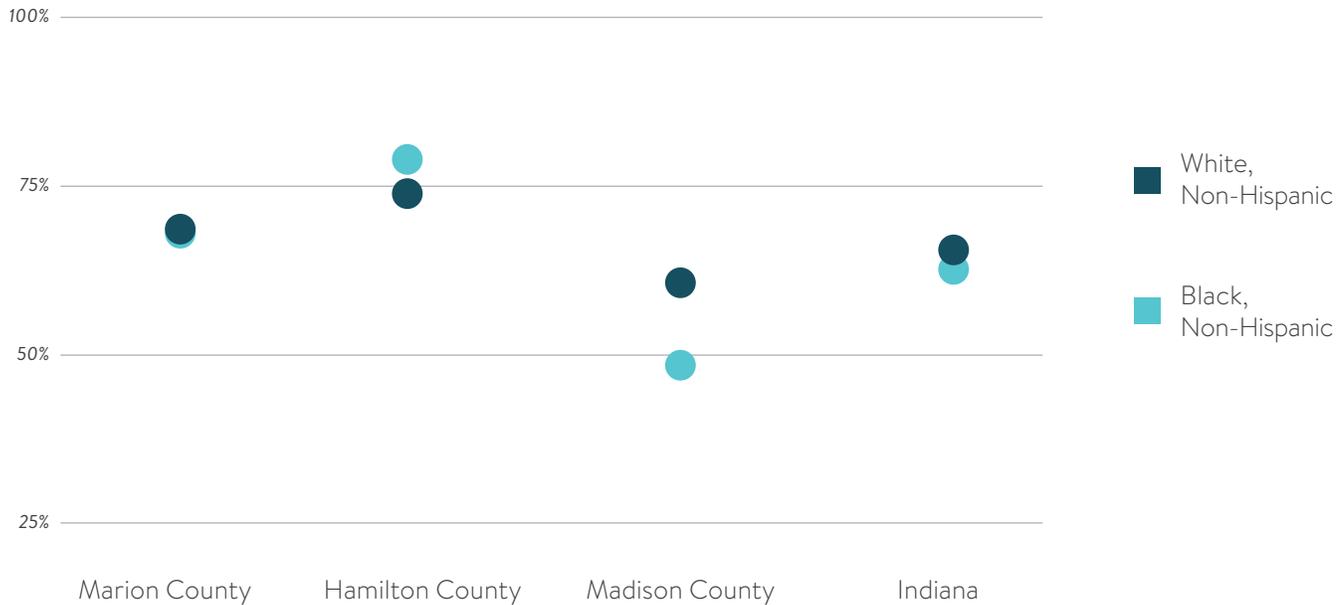


# EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT

As the region diversifies its population racially and ethnically and continues to welcome new residents from around the globe, it is important to ensure that economic opportunity is accessible to all people throughout the

communities of the WR-ROI. Examining labor force participation by race can help pinpoint potential racial disparities in the region's workforce.

## LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION BY RACE 2019



Source: Census American Community Survey, 2016-2020

Marion, the largest county, is the closest to racial parity in workforce participation, with 68.9% of the white population and 68.3% of the black population above the age of 16 in the labor force. Hamilton sees a smaller share of white people in the workforce, but both white and black labor force participation rates are above state

averages. Madison lags behind the state in labor force participation overall, and shows approximately a 12 percentage point difference in labor force participation between the populations of the two largest racial groups in the region.





	Non-white Non-Hispanic Labor Force Participation Rate (16+)	Share of Non-white Non-Hispanic with Household Income below \$35,000
<b>WR-ROI Region</b>	<b>68.4%</b>	<b>45.8%</b>
Charlotte-Concord-Gastonia, NC-SC Metro Area	62.1%	31.7%
Columbus, OH Metro Area	69.6%	34.8%
Denver-Aurora-Lakewood, CO Metro Area	57.3%	26.0%
Grand Rapids-Kentwood, MI Metro Area	68.8%	36.0%
Louisville/Jefferson County, KY-IN Metro Area	44.5%	37.2%
Madison, WI Metro Area	76.8%	33.0%
Raleigh-Cary, NC Metro Area	47.5%	25.2%

The WR-ROI Region performs better than many of its peers in non-white non-Hispanic labor force participation, but has a much higher share of its non-white non-Hispanic population earning a household income of lower than \$35,000, indicating potential disparity in quality of opportunity available.

# ENVIRONMENTAL

There are also environmental metrics established by the White River Vision Plan that the WR-ROI will continue to track. The White River Watershed Health Report Card, included in the WR-ROI's READI project portfolio for proposed funding support, can help support tracking these improvements.

## 1) Restore the river's environment and ecology and adapt to a climate resilient future

The White River in Marion and Hamilton Counties alone includes roughly 6500 structures in the flood plain study area. While acquisition of all these properties is not feasible, targeting areas that repeatedly flood and where landowners are regularly displaced and willing to sell would begin to support flood plain restoration where appropriate to help the river be naturally more resilient.

### Metrics:

- + Reduce structures in the flood plain area every year through voluntary relocation efforts.

- + Of the river's 6 low-head dams, work to introduce 2 rock ramp alternative dams to allow for better and safer access for boaters on the river but also better support the river's health in the long term

## 2) Stewart River Health

Continue work on mitigation of Combined Sewer Overflows (CSOs) to improve water quality in a meaningful way while creating a cross-boundary plan to support management of urban and natural ecosystems by setting shared visionary goals.

### Metrics:

- + Reduce all CSOs by 90% by the year 2030
- + Work with city urban foresters and soil and water conservation districts to expand and invest in invasive species mitigation plans and re-introduce appropriate vegetation in a comprehensive effort with a shared set of goals.





### 3) Draw people to the White River and Increase Year Around Activities

Use the river for year-around arts and entertainment, recreation, community gathering and learning. Draw people to, along, into and across the White River’s publicly accessible spaces. Using the White River Vision Plan’s measurements of publicly accessible launches and trail access, look for ways to improve access at currently existing parks for a variety of levels of engagement.

#### Metrics:

- + Increase public river-related programming to reach a baseline and then a growth of 10% in public program offerings, especially focused from November-March
- + Identify areas where there is a need for more and better access and create a prioritized comprehensive plan of investments for the coming decade.

### 4) Build Economic Strength and Identity

Expand the river’s role in everyday lives to build regional economic strength and community identity. The White River brand development program, funded by the Pulliam Charitable Trust, has a 2022-2023 goal to grow positive attitudes about the river and create a much more positive and larger identity for the river. It is important to celebrate the diversity of the region’s White River communities to preserve places for everyone for generations to come, and create public policies that ensure these river neighborhoods are not gentrified.

#### Metrics:

- + Research was conducted in 2021 asking central Indiana residents what their perceptions were of the White River. See measurable growth by 2025 (at least 10% from the 2021 baseline) in positive attitudes about the river as a regional asset in followup perception surveys.
- + Create a regional partnership to support home ownership retention in at-risk areas, and establish public policies to support remaining in place, to retain existing ownership in neighborhoods in 5 years.

# RURAL COMMUNITIES IMPACT

The WR-ROI Region, while home to almost a quarter of the state’s population, contains many rural census tracts, particularly in Madison County. As outlying areas within the WR-ROI serve in large part as suburbs or exurbs of Indianapolis, communities like McCordsville, Zionsville, Westfield, and Noblesville are looking to grow in a way that is responsible and sustainable. Rather than sprawling into greenfield space as the default approach, the communities within the WR-ROI choose to take a more thoughtful and deliberate course of action to manage the steady population growth seen in the region over the past decade.

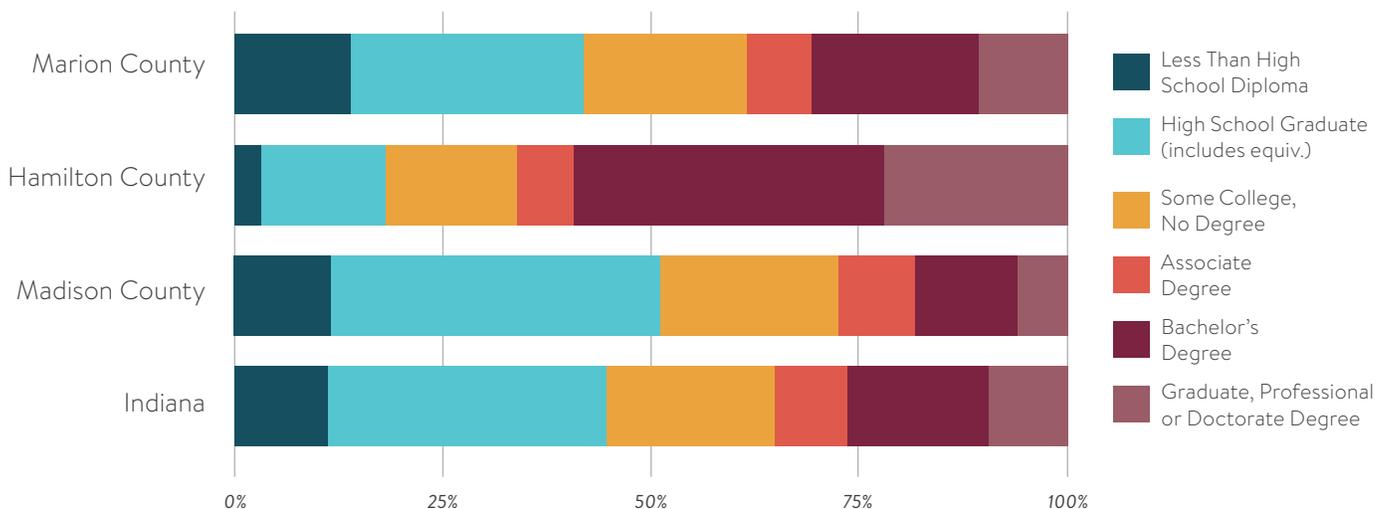
This includes prioritizing infill and dense, mixed-use development proposed in projects like the McCord Square Town Center Project & Riverfront District, Federal Hill Economic Impact District Expansion, and the Zionsville Gateway Area. All of these projects minimize development’s impact on rural spaces and the natural environment, while providing new housing, commercial space, and vibrant downtowns, as well as greenspace, trails, waterfront access, and other amenities for current and future residents as these and urban areas across the region continue to grow.

Most of all, the WR-ROI seeks to preserve and celebrate the wide open spaces that provide recreation opportunities, tranquility, and connection to nature that make the region so special for the people who call it home. Investments in protecting, enhancing, and increasing access to the natural environment by both residents and visitors highlight that commitment: The Hamilton County South River District/Conner Prairie West Side Expansion will connect the Conner Prairie campus to three nearby scenic parks and provide environmental education focused on land and water conservation to students/visitors; The Nickel Plate Trail will connect several trail loops within the Indianapolis Greenways Trails system along an 8.6-mile multi-modal network that serves over 95,000 residents and 2,250 employment sites; And the Riverside Amphitheater Splash Park and Water Quality improvements will redevelop 33 acres on the river near Anderson’s downtown core into a year-round gathering place for recreation, entertainment, and health and wellness for the community and region. All of these amenities will be promoted to residents and visitors to enhance quality of life and place throughout the WR-ROI.

## RURAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT, EDUCATION, AND TRAINING

Rural workforce development projects and programs are also included in the WR-ROI portfolio, which is key given disparities in education between urban and rural counties.

### EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT



Source: STATS Indiana, using data from the Indiana Department of Workforce Development

Educational attainment varies across the counties of the region. Marion’s education rates are similar to state averages, for example, while Hamilton county holds a larger share of college degrees. High school completion is the most common highest level of educational attainment in Madison county. While this in itself is not unusual by state standards, Madison has a higher rate of people without a high school diploma (14%) than the state average (11%).

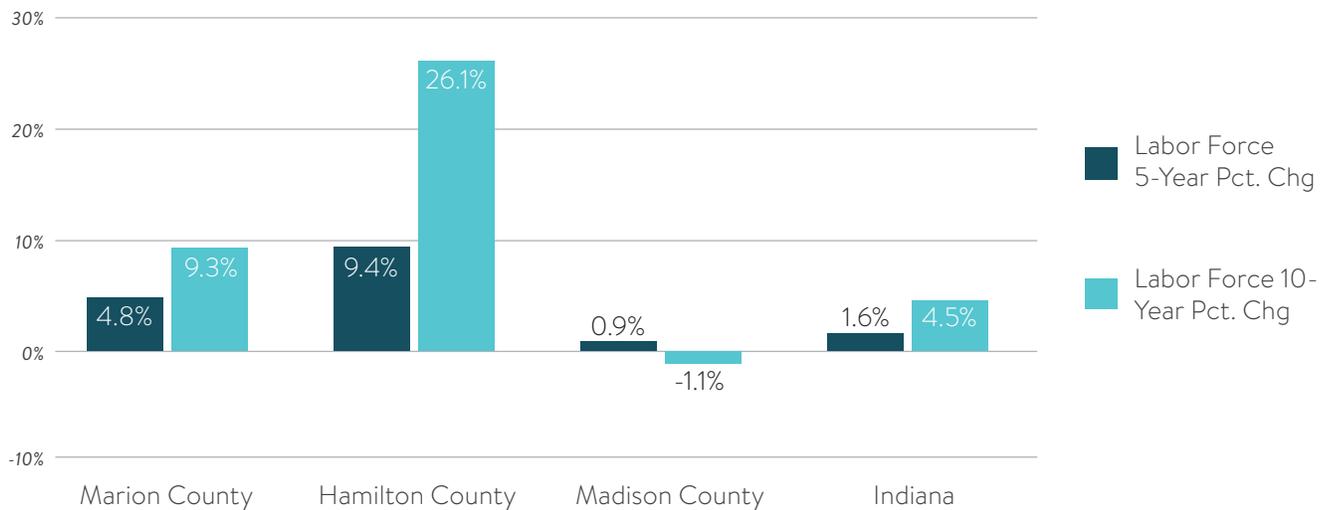
This makes the inclusion of EmployIndy in the region’s investment portfolio – a program which has been working for years to create new registered and earn-and-learn apprenticeships in Indianapolis, and is now

planning to scale the program to serve youth, adults, and dislocated workers in all counties throughout the WR-ROI – an important way to ensure workforce development investments in urban areas result in gains in rural areas as well.

## RURAL LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION

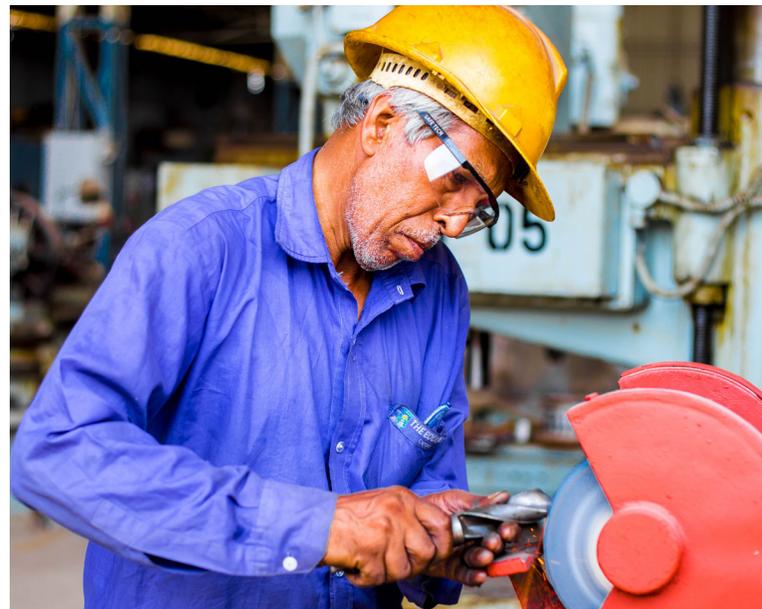
Labor force growth has been positive in Marion and Hamilton counties over both five- and ten- year averages, surpassing state averages. Madison saw a decline between 2009 and 2019, but a slight increase in the last five years.

## LABOR FORCE CHANGE



Source: STATS Indiana, using data from the Indiana Department of Workforce Development

A key component to increasing labor force participation is ensuring the workforce has the appropriate skills and education needed to fulfill employers’ evolving needs. Flagship Enterprise Center (FEC) is bringing key 21st Century skills to rural Madison County, an area that has historically struggled with labor force participation. Partnering with higher ed to expand Anderson University’s new degree and certificate programs in Cyber Security, FEC will support employers in new and growing sectors with Urban Air Mobility and Advanced Manufacturing training programs. These programs target eighth through twelfth grade students with training tools to help cultivate the next wave of workforce and entrepreneurs, while opening the possibility of careers to households that have limited means, creating equity and inclusion, and advancing the 21st Century Talent Region initiative.



## GOAL AND OBJECTIVES - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

The projects and programs included in this regional development plan catalyze \$461,832,200 of co-investment to the \$49,943,271 in READI requested funds. If granted to the WR-ROI, READI funds will be a critical part of more than \$500 million of new projected investment into the White River Region.

This includes \$148,158,093 in local public match from city and town governments, counties, parks and tourism agencies, planning entities, bonds, and TIF allocations; and \$313,674,107 in private match from developers and private equity, corporate sponsors, and philanthropies like the Walton Family Foundation, Richard Fairbanks Foundation, Lilly Endowments, and the Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust. Many of the projects are part of a multi-phase development, and their completion will bring additional investment to the area for many years beyond the projects' completion.

All of the projects and programs that make up the plan's portfolio are geared towards population growth, talent attraction and retention, and smart economic

development to support that growth. This includes enhancing quality of place and quality of life (like 96th & Allisonville White River Park and McCord Square Town Center & Riverfront District), boosting support for business, entrepreneurship, and innovation activity (like North Madison County Spec Building & Shared Space, Zionsville Gateway Area (ZGA), and the Federal Hill District Expansion), workforce training and education initiatives (like the Flagship Enterprise Center and EmployIndy), and equitable development projects (like Canal Village and 16 Tech) that ensure the WR-ROI Region is an attractive place where residents (current and future) benefit from economic opportunity in the coming decades.





As can be seen in the benchmark communities in the previous section, these peers excel in economic indicators like per capita income, annual employment growth, GDP per capita, and average compensation. The WR-ROI seeks to maintain its edge in these areas, where it is in the top of the pack compared to comparable communities. Though boasting a high labor force participation rate and population with a bachelors degree or higher, the WR-ROI can continue to improve in both of these areas to best its benchmark regions. And increasing innovation activity throughout the region, as well as increasing the business birth rate and employment at young firms will make the WR-ROI Region even more competitive for business and talent attraction. The projects in this plan will help improve these metrics, which will be tracked by the WR-ROI over time.

Each of the projects and programs in the portfolio are geared up to begin in late 2021 or early 2022 and have the support of the appropriate public and private partners to ensure successful implementation. They present a huge opportunity for the region as a whole – not just as individual communities – to unite around the enhanced access to economic opportunity, housing, connectivity, recreation, and other amenities represented in this plan.

Success of this plan will be measured by the metrics identified by each of the project owners, and tracked and reported over time. The WR-ROI will also use the White River Watershed Health Report Card to evaluate community and ecosystem conditions via indicators, and increase public awareness about the health of the watershed.





**PROJECT & PROGRAMS:  
THE WR-ROI INVESTMENT  
PORTFOLIO**

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# WR-ROI PROJECT MAP

This map displays the WR-ROI project locations and their proximity to the White River, larger watershed, and regional trail network, as well as how they relate to state and regional economic development impact goals (see legend).

View an interactive version at [mywhiteriver.com/readi](http://mywhiteriver.com/readi).



**MADISON COUNTY**

**SUMMITVILLE**

North Madison County Spec Building & Shared Space



**ELWOOD**

North Madison County Spec Building & Shared Space



**NOBLESVILLE**

Federal Hill District Expansion



**ANDERSON**

Riverside Amphitheater Splash Park and Water Quality



**ANDERSON**

Flagship Incubate - Accelerate - Workforce Development



**FISHERS**

96th & Allisonville White River Park



**MCCORDSVILLE**

McCord Square Town Center and Riverfront District



**INDIANAPOLIS**

Canal Village



**INDIANAPOLIS**

Project Amplify Regional Talent Attraction & Image Marketing Initiative



**HANCOCK COUNTY**

**MARION COUNTY**



**ALIGNMENT WITH THE  
STATE'S SPECIFIC ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES**

## Quality of Place, Quality of Opportunity, Quality of Life

**T**he proposed investments in this section focus on creating high-quality, vibrant places as a way to attract and retain high caliber talent to the region. The projects here include residential, mixed-use, commercial, and recreational developments that revitalize underutilized spaces, or bring new, smart development that is environmentally sustainable and conducive to dense population growth. From equitable housing like Canal Village, to cultural amenities like the White River Park and Riverside Amphitheater Splash Park, to environmental assets like the Nickel Plate Trail – these projects are meant to enhance quality of life and quality of experience to those who call the region home.

- + 96th & Allisonville White River Park
- + McCord Square Town Center Project & Riverfront District
- + Canal Village
- + Nickel Plate Trail
- + North Madison Spec Building
- + Riverside Amphitheater Splash Park and Water Quality
- + White River Watershed Health Report Card

# PROJECT OR PROGRAM 1 - 96TH & ALLISONVILLE WHITE RIVER PARK

**City and County:** City of Fishers, Hamilton County

**Total Cost:** \$269,490,000

**READI Request:** \$7,610,000

**Lead Organization:** City of Fishers

**Start Date:** March, 2022

**Abstract:** The City of Fishers is requesting funding for Phase 1 of the 96th & Allisonville White River Park. This riverfront redevelopment project would protect and preserve the floodplain along the river while providing unique recreation opportunities including a bike and ropes course, canoe launch, treehouse, river overlook, and hammock grove. The Fishers parks system does not have residency requirements and is free and open to the public making it an equitable resource for all. The City intends to capitalize on its existing partnership with Hamilton Southeastern Schools to create educational programs focused on ecology and environmental health. This project is planned to spur a \$98 million mixed-use development which would include 330 multi-family units (all meeting 80% AMI), 66 for-sale townhomes, and 36,000 SF of new commercial space. This mix of housing types and additional commercial space is intended to attract a wide range of workforce talent.

**Public Match:** \$32,640,000 - 23% of total

- + \$1,000,000 Hamilton County Contribution (C)
- + \$21,000,000 TIF allocation with a developer-backed bond for project (C)
- + Phase 2 = \$6,000,000 – Possibility to raise funding
- + Phase 3 = \$3,640,000 – Possibility to raise funding
- + Roundabout contribution = \$1,000,000 – Possibility to raise funding

**Private Match:** \$98,300,000 - 71% of total

- + 20 acres of additional park land (\$15,000/acre) = \$300,000
- + Capital investment from project scope = \$98,000,000

**Impact Metric(s):**

- + Increased share of population of prime working age through talent attraction/in-migration
- + Increased rate of educational attainment (including skilled trades and workforce training partnerships or facilities)
- + Increased property values statewide (e.g. revitalization or redevelopment of vacant, blighted or underutilized assets)
- + Improved health outcomes
- + Improved quality of life (e.g. workforce housing, infrastructure, natural resource development)
- + Improved quality of place (e.g. cultural facilities, community spaces, civic initiatives)
- + Improved innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystems and outputs

**Outcome(s):**

- + \$98 million mixed-use development - 36,000 SF of new commercial space
- + Attainable housing - 330 multi-family units (all meeting 80% AMI) & 66 for-sale townhomes,
- + Preservation of floodplain – 98 acres
- + Additional community space – 108 acres
- + Unique recreation opportunities including a bike and ropes course, canoe launch, treehouse, river overlook, and hammock grove.
- + Training/education opportunities with schools, wastewater treatment plants & Citizens Energy Group
- + Regional connectivity – additional pedestrian paths
- + Upgrades to 96th & Allisonville intersection – improved vehicular flow and emission reduction



## PROJECT OR PROGRAM 4 - MCCORD SQUARE TOWN CENTER PROJECT & RIVERFRONT DISTRICT

**City and County:** McCordsville, Hancock County

**Total Cost:** \$39,000,000

**READI Request:** \$4,300,000

**Lead Organization:** The Town of McCordsville

**Start Date:** April, 2022

**Abstract:** The Town of McCordsville is in the process of developing a Town Center called McCord Square. Currently there are 50+ acres under contract with Rebar Development (Phase I), with another 40 acres under contract with a yet to be named confidential developer. The project will incorporate the rich farming and rural heritage of McCordsville and Hancock County through suggested amenities such as a year-round farmer's market and themes that will attempt to include the look of a round barn and other agricultural related features. The project will see the construction of 1.2 new miles of trail/sidewalk and 15 acres of open space for recreation. The project would also be the first development in the McCordsville area focusing on best practices in creating a sense of place

Phase I will develop infrastructure, including, but not limited to stormwater detention, naturalized water features, trails, utilities, roadways, and open space, and the construction of two mixed-use residential buildings and one commercial building. The Town completed a Retail Gap Analysis, which showed the Town had approximately a 50-75% leakage in various retail businesses. The McCord Square Project hopes to capture some of that leakage. McCord Square will be an economic development driver in our community by providing jobs during and after construction. Employees from the Walmart and Amazon distribution centers coming online soon in Hancock County will have a nearby place to eat, shop and live, all in an environmentally friendly town center.

Protecting Geist Reservoir's water quality is vital in ensuring that the reservoir remains a healthy recreational and drinking water source for our region. The McCord Square plan features environmentally sustainable infrastructure, which includes a stormwater park that will not only serve as retention for stormwater, but will also include a walking path around it, grasses and native plants, benches, and other beautification amenities. We also plan to use permeable pavers in certain areas, and electric vehicle charging stations. All these measures will help to mitigate possible pollutants entering White River and the tributaries along the way.

### Public Match:

- + Town of McCordsville: \$10,800,000 - 28% of total (C)



### Private Match:

- + Rebar Development & Partners: \$28,200,000 - 72% of total (C)

### Impact Metric(s):

- + *Increased share of population of prime working age through talent attraction/in-migration*
- + *Increased per capita income at a rate that meets or exceeds the national average*
- + *Increased property values statewide (e.g. revitalization or redevelopment of vacant, blighted or underutilized assets)*
- + *Improved quality of life (e.g. workforce housing, infrastructure, natural resource development)*
- + *Improved quality of place (e.g. cultural facilities, community spaces, civic initiatives)*

### Outcome(s):

- + 12,000 square feet of new commercial space
- + 200 multi-family, residential rental units
- + 380 FTE jobs during development
- + 70 FTE and 40 PTE permanent jobs following completion of Phase 1
- + Construction of 1.2 new miles of trails/sidewalks
- + 15 additional acres of open space
- + ~\$24 million in new assessed value will be a catalyst for other development.

## PROJECT OR PROGRAM 13 - CANAL VILLAGE

**City and County:** Indianapolis, Marion County

**Total Cost:** \$13,000,000

**READI Request:** \$700,000

**Lead Organization:** BWI, Inc.

**Start Date:** October, 2022

**Abstract:** This READI request is part of the larger development of previously funded Canal Village (CV) development phases. The CV project is a multi-site, clustered, single-family home site development in the northwest area of the Riverside neighborhood along the Canal, just east of the White River and Riverside Regional Park. This redevelopment effort will integrate directly with the quality of life goals of Flanner House and the Indianapolis Neighborhood Housing Partnership (INHP) (both NFPs) efforts to rejuvenate and renew the vibrant spirit that once resonated throughout this north-west side neighborhood. The overarching goal of this phased revitalization approach is to enhance the quality of life of families in need of newly constructed, affordable and workforce-integrated housing that is overlaid with “smart” technology and inclusive economic development solutions. We will target 20% of the homes for those with

physical and mental disabilities, including the homeless. The previously funded and innovative development efforts of BWI (the real estate developer) and INHP through New Market Tax Credits (NMTCs), involved a unique relationship with the City of Indianapolis, Flanner House, HealthNet, and various other non-profit groups. BWI has developed a methodology to increase disposable income of low-income residents by holistically designing energy efficient housing, installing smart energy solutions that leverage gaming technology, and developing transportation solutions that don't require residents to own their own vehicle. This design methodology will be tailored in a unique fashion for Canal Village residents. Ultimately reducing rents, decreasing utility bills, and providing alternative transportation solutions will allow the average Canal Village resident to increase their disposable income by 30-50%. With the support of IHA PBS8 vouchers, READI funds, and the award of low-income housing tax credit in 4Q 2021, we are very confident that the Canal Village III project will aid in the revitalization of the northwest area of Indianapolis. This READI request is for Phase 3 of the Canal Village development. Phase 1 is under construction, phase 2 will start construction later this year, and phase 3 was submitted to the Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority for financing in July 2021.

### Public Match:

- + \$700,000 - City of Indianapolis CDBG
- + \$500,000 - Development Fund Loan
- + \$10,105,962 - Federal LIHTC Equity

### Private Match:

- + \$520,000 - Perm Lender
- + \$200,000 - Syndicator and GP equity
- + \$748,208 - Private Developer Equity

### Impact Metric(s):

- + *Increased share of population of prime working age through talent attraction/in-migration*
- + *Increased property values statewide (e.g. revitalization or redevelopment of vacant, blighted or underutilized assets)*
- + *Improved quality of life (e.g. workforce housing, infrastructure, natural resource development)*

### Outcome(s):

- + Number of households served with new affordable housing
- + Quality of life impact measure by survey results after 6 months of residency
- + New job opportunities in the canal village area



## PROJECT OR PROGRAM 6 - NICKEL PLATE TRAIL

**City and County:** City of Indianapolis, Marion County

**Total Cost:** \$8,617,059

**READI Request:** \$4,499,906

**Lead Organization:** City of Indianapolis, Department of Public Works

**Start Date:** May, 2022

**Abstract:** In 2020, the City of Indianapolis partnered with local leaders to create the Castleton Strategic Revitalization Plan. One of the catalytic projects identified as a high priority was the Nickel Plate Trail (NPT). The Nickel Plate Trail reimagines a former railroad line into an 8.6-mile multi-modal connection to over 95,000 residents and over 2,250 employment sites that account for more than 30,000 jobs. There are already portions completed to the north in Hamilton County. The NPT provides alternative modes of transportation, connects communities, creates residential and business opportunities, and encourages healthy living, redevelopment, and increased property values in the trail area.

The NPT project is a catalytic project from that plan which will turn a suburban, auto-oriented, former industrial-type use area dominated by strip retail centers and commercial areas into a linear park with a sense of place and nodes of mixed-uses. The trail will provide opportunities for recreation, healthy living, economic vitality, and connections between counties, communities, and other trails. The Nickel Plate creates opportunities for several loop trips that intersect the river, including: the existing 62nd Street path to Broad Ripple, intersecting the Monon and Canal Towpath trails; the planned north leg of Indy Greenway's full circle trail along 82nd Street, connecting Castleton with Keystone at the Crossing and beyond and intersecting the Monon; existing paths on 116th Street linking west to the Monon; and the planned Midland Trace Trail, connecting Noblesville with Westfield and Grand Park, intersecting the Monon.

The NPT will become a part of the Indianapolis Greenways Trails system. Indy Parks Greenway trails are maintained by the Department of Public Works.

### Public Match:

- + City of Indianapolis: \$5,747,000 (C)

### Private Match:

- + Binford Redevelopment and Growth: \$10,000 (C)



### Impact Metric(s):

- + *Increased share of population of prime working age through talent attraction/in-migration*
- + *Increased property values statewide (e.g. revitalization or redevelopment of vacant, blighted or underutilized assets)*
- + *Improved health outcomes*
- + *Improved quality of life (e.g. workforce housing, infrastructure, natural resource development)*
- + *Improved quality of place (e.g. cultural facilities, community spaces, civic initiatives)*

### Outcome(s):

- + 16.82 miles of trail which would be a part of a Central Indiana 40-Mile Loop (40.13 miles)
- + Decrease in the Transportation Equity Index as identified in the IndyMoves Transportation Plan
- + Improving public health and safety for individuals within a 1/2-mile walking distance and 3-mile biking distance
- + Improving property values and economic development opportunities for communities as noted in recent studies in the area for the Monon Trail and the Indianapolis Cultural Trail

# PROJECT OR PROGRAM 5 - RIVERSIDE AMPHITHEATER AND SPLASH PARK AND WATER QUALITY

**City and County:** City of Anderson, Madison County

**Total Cost:** \$22,500,000

**READI Request:** \$4,200,000

**Lead Organization:** City of Anderson

**Start Date:** January, 2022

**Abstract:** This two-phase project consists of the creation of a new public park and the elimination of two Combined Sewer Overflows on the White River in Anderson.

The Riverside Amphitheater and Splash Park will redevelop 33 acres on the river near the downtown core into a year-round gathering place for recreation, entertainment, and health and wellness for the community and region. In addition to a local amenity for the entire community to enjoy, this project will have great positive impacts on the river into Hamilton and Marion Counties, and attract more positive growth well into the future. This project will eliminate millions of gallons of combined storm/wastewater from the White River flowing south into Hamilton and Marion Counties.

The elimination of CSO pollutant flow into the river and the addition of this new year-round venue and central city park that is connected to the trails system will create and emphasize healthy living, connect residents to all types of annual events, and would boost community morale.



Anderson Parks and Recreation will maintain the Park with their annual budgets and be responsible for scheduling of events. The wastewater improvements are a part of the City's Wastewater Departments and its budgets.

## Public Match:

- + City of Anderson Amphitheater and Splash Park: \$18 Million (C)
- + City of Anderson & Water Pollution Control: \$4.5 Million (C)

## Impact Metric(s):

- + *Increased share of population of prime working age through talent attraction/in-migration*
- + *Increased property values statewide (e.g. revitalization or redevelopment of vacant, blighted or underutilized assets)*
- + *Improved health outcomes*
- + *Improved quality of life (e.g. workforce housing, infrastructure, natural resource development)*
- + *Improved quality of place (e.g. cultural facilities, community spaces, civic initiatives)*

## Outcome(s):

- + 19 million gallons of combined sewage prevented from entering the White River
- + 97 fewer overflow discharge events from these 2 CSO points which is a reduction of 14.2% of our events
- + Improve overall quality of water in the White River for Anderson and the surrounding region, as well as the environment
- + Redevelopment of 33 acres on the White River
- + Creation of greenspace for community, cultural, and civic events
- + Quality of life attraction into the community
- + Create connectivity to downtown for arts, businesses, trails, recreational activities, and the river for a healthier approach to living
- + Attract small businesses in downtown Anderson
- + Attract new housing to the City of Anderson, eventually increasing property values
- + Retention of households and particularly of youth in community

## PROJECT OR PROGRAM 12 - NORTH MADISON COUNTY SPEC BUILDING & SHARED SPACE

**City and County:** Elwood & Summitville, Madison County

**Total Cost:** \$6,000,000

**READI Request:** \$1,200,000

**Lead Organization:** Madison Co. Chamber

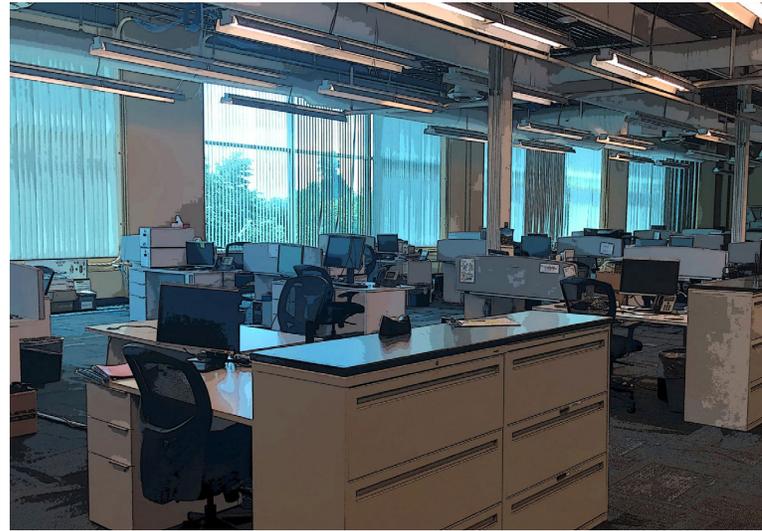
**Start Date:** January, 2022

**Abstract:** This project is building northern Madison County by creating opportunities through space for new businesses and expanding established companies. These two projects would be built in Elwood and Summitville. The Elwood 60,000 SF spec building would be a P3 project. The Summitville project would be in partnership with the town board. Both projects would be supported through partnerships with the County LEDO, CED, Madison County Chamber and the support of the Flagship Enterprise Center, to create jobs and increase average wages.

The County has no private developers presently, no new open space to market, and no direct support system for business startups in the northern part of the County. Annually, the County cannot reply to several potential leads every month due to not having spec space. In Elwood, a proposed manufacturing/distribution spec building would be built in the SR 28 / SR 37 area in partnership with a developer to be procured through an RFP project with their Redevelopment Commission.

The completion of a 60,000 square foot spec building to market to prospective companies and attract new jobs and investment into northern Madison County would be a game changer for northern Madison County. Summitville will expand their Townhall and propose to add class A shared space that new business starts can incubate. This effort will have a partnership with the Flagship Enterprise Center offering business counseling and SBA assistance through Bankable, to help attract new jobs and investment into northern Madison County.

The smaller communities struggle to bring in additional revenue making initial projects feasible in the current economy. This investment would have a strong impact on the quality of life both to the families directly employed and the community as a whole, bringing in additional tax revenue that would allow the Redevelopment Commission to reinvest in programs to help further support small business.



### Public Match:

- + \$5 Million - Elwood Spec Building - Proposed - working through an RFI process with a P3 partner and the
- + City of Elwood
- + \$1 Million - Summitville Shared Space - Confirmed through the Town of Summitville

### Impact Metric(s):

- + *Increased share of population of prime working age through talent attraction/in-migration*
- + *Increased per capita income at a rate that meets or exceeds the national average*
- + *Increased property values statewide (e.g. revitalization or redevelopment of vacant, blighted or underutilized assets)*
- + *Improved innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystems and outputs*

### Outcome(s):

- + 60,000 square feet of new spec building to market to prospective companies
- + New jobs and investment, as well as increase average wages in northern Madison County
- + Redevelop downtown Town Hall building in need of attention
- + New start-up companies created and incubated in partnership with the Madison County Chamber, Corporation for Economic Development, and Flagship Enterprise Center.
- + Small to medium existing companies expanded through incubation
- + Additional tax revenue
- + Small business support

## PROJECT OR PROGRAM 14 - WHITE RIVER WATERSHED HEALTH REPORT CARD

**City and County:** Indianapolis, Marion County

**Total Cost:** \$1,417,800

**READI Request:** \$250,000

**Lead Organization:** White River Alliance

**Start Date:** October, 2021

**Abstract:** The White River Watershed Report Card will evaluate community and ecosystem conditions via indicators, to increase public awareness, and inform and influence decision makers to improve the health of the watershed. This is achieved through the collaborative development of the Report Card which will bring together public officials, agency professionals, and industry leaders to assess the condition, threats, and opportunities in the watershed, which will inform the indicators measured. This will establish baseline conditions and methodology for evaluating the success of regional watershed initiatives and investments, including providing measurement support to the region's READI grant outcome tracking.

A key aspect of the Report Card and overall sustainability and health of the watershed is understanding and improving water quality. The White River Alliance's (WRA) River Assessment Field Teams (RAFT) program is an advanced citizen science program designed to strategically assess water quality in the Upper White River Watershed. This volunteer monitoring program collects high-quality data in order to help fill agency data gaps, tease out pollution hot spots, and measure trends over time. RAFT data can help inform and direct regional projects and programs such as the White River Vision Plan and the READI grant.



### Public Match:

- + \$58,000 - Local Municipal (MS4)
- + \$225,000 - County Health Department Water Sampling

### Private Match:

- + \$475,500 - Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust
- + \$144,500 - Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust
- + \$24,800 - Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust
- + \$80,000 - IU- Environmental Resilience Institute
- + \$160,000 - IU- Environmental Resilience Institute

### Impact Metric(s):

- + *Increased share of population of prime working age through talent attraction/in-migration*
- + *Improved health outcomes*
- + *Improved quality of life (e.g. workforce housing, infrastructure, natural resource development)*

### Outcome(s):

- + Expansion and diversification of the cohort of community, institutional, and governmental partners focused on the White River watershed.
- + Increased community and political awareness and understanding of societal, cultural, economic, health, and environmental conditions of the White River Watershed.
- + Strategic alignment of various partner activities to the White River Report Card
- + Measurement and evaluation of community progress on the social, environmental, and economic health of White River watershed.
- + Routine inter-agency cooperation leading to improved data sharing and comparability between sampling partners and collaboration on strategic monitoring locations.
- + Resources and programs that are focused on areas with high pollution and potential pollution sources identified and addressed.
- + Conservation BMPs and policies adopted to improve/ protect water quality due to continued evaluation, collection, and optimization of water quality data, and coordinate with the Report Card.
- + The public and community leaders are emotionally and physically connected to the water through volunteer opportunities, and become water managers and advocates.

## **Innovation and Entrepreneurship**

**T**he proposed investments in this section work together to foster a stronger entrepreneurial ecosystem within the region, particularly within its rural communities. From the environmental innovation and ag-tech focus at Conner Prairie West Side Expansion and White River Ecology and Education Center; to the arts and creative sector entrepreneurship supported at the Noblesville Cultural Arts District within the Federal Hill District Expansion; to the neighborhood business incubation/acceleration and talent pipeline development at 16 Tech; to the minority business development, incubation, and consulting services of new startups at the Flagship Enterprise Center – these portfolio items will help nurture and grow small business, innovation, and the entrepreneurial spirit in the WR-ROI Region.

- + Hamilton County South River District/Conner Prairie West Side Expansion**
- + Federal Hill Economic Impact District Expansion**
- + 16 Tech Community Business Enterprise + Talent Development**
- + Flagship Incubate - Accelerate - Workforce Development**

# PROJECT OR PROGRAM 2 - HAMILTON COUNTY SOUTH RIVER DISTRICT/CONNER PRAIRIE WEST SIDE EXPANSION

**City and County:** City of Carmel, Hamilton County

**Total Cost:** \$103,077,517

**READI Request:** \$7,310,500

**Lead Organization:** Carmel Clay Parks & Recreation

**Start Date:** March, 2022

**Abstract:** The Hamilton County South River District will be an innovation, education, recreation, tourism, and economic development hub of local, regional, and national significance. Anchored by the White River Ecology and Education Center and public trails along the White River, the district connects Conner Prairie's west-side expansion to three scenic parks. The center will provide environmental education focused on the river to students/visitors and bring together partners united in identifying and teaching best practices in land and water conservation.

Conner Prairie's new Food, Farm & Energy Experiences will explain how food production, farming, and energy production is transforming to feed 10-billion people by 2050. Partners will test and demonstrate best practices for soil and water conservation to prepare farmers globally for new challenges created by the evolving environment. An Innovation Center will attract businesses, educational institutions, and non-profits focusing on land, water, and energy – all key elements to increasing agricultural production.

Supporting these elements, a boutique hotel and lodging that includes modern cabins, and a farm to fork restaurant overlooking the river, will serve as an inspiring location to host conferences, especially centered on environmental sustainability, stewardship, and workforce development..

**Public Match:** \$25,112,131 (24.4% of total)

- + Clay Township: \$7,299,524 (C)
- + Carmel Clay Parks & Recreation: \$1,969,078 (C)
- + Hamilton County Tourism: \$122,000 (C)
- + Carmel Clay Parks & Recreation: \$4,300,000 (P)
- + City of Carmel: \$3,378,429 (P)

- + City of Fishers: \$5,543,100 (P)
- + Hamilton County: \$2,500,000 (P)

**Private Match:** \$70,654,866 (68.5% of total)

- + Conner Prairie: \$1,405,386 (C)
- + Conner Prairie, Private Developers, Corporate Sponsors: \$69,249,500 (P)

## Impact Metric(s):

- + Increased share of population of prime working age through talent attraction/in-migration
- + Increased per capita income at a rate that meets or exceeds the national average
- + Increased rate of educational attainment (including skilled trades and workforce training partnerships or facilities)
- + Increased property values statewide (e.g. revitalization or redevelopment of vacant, blighted or underutilized assets)
- + Improved health outcomes
- + Improved quality of life (e.g. workforce housing, infrastructure, natural resource development)
- + Improved quality of place (e.g. cultural facilities, community spaces, civic initiatives)
- + Improved innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystems and outputs

## Outcome(s):

- + 260 FTE permanent jobs created or retained within Innovation District through the proposed mixed-use development
- + 132,000 square feet of new commercial space
- + 60,500 square feet of new lodging with 116 units and meeting space
- + Improved water quality of White River
- + Professional and citizen science assessments of flora and fauna in or adjacent to the river
- + 107 acres of newly enhanced or created wetlands and natural areas within district
- + 130 acres of agricultural education programming
- + \$25.6 million in new assessed value within district
- + Increase in net assessed values within 0.5 and 1.0 mile of district
- + 800,000 visitors annually to White River Education and Ecology Center
- + Increased average spending in local economy per visitor (admissions, food and beverage, retail, lodgers, and Innovation Center clients)
- + 175,000 users annually on expanded White River Greenway (i.e., walkers/runners, bicyclists)
- + 4.5 miles of new public trails enhancing regional connectivity



## PROJECT OR PROGRAM 3 - FEDERAL HILL ECONOMIC IMPACT DISTRICT EXPANSION

**City and County:** City of Noblesville, Hamilton County

**Total Cost:** \$70,173,408

**READI Request:** \$9,000,000

**Lead Organization:** City of Noblesville

**Start Date:** January, 2022

**Abstract:** The Federal Hill District will be expanded with this project proposal to further expedite the fusion of people, place and economy within an existing urban park directly adjacent to the White River. The White River has been the driving force for a total of \$71M worth of combined investment in Federal Hill Commons Park (\$6M), BlueSky Technology (\$6M), and the recently approved Village at Federal Hill mixed-use project (\$59M). The riverfront amenity is the anchor for the expansion of Noblesville's Downtown culture, west of the river. This project will further enhance the quality of place that has been started with Federal Hill Commons and will establish a hub for talent and regional attraction through a continued momentum of development in the District.

The Village at Federal Hill project included a 30,000 square foot office building in Phase 3. This District expansion includes constructing that office building and creating a state-of-the-art hub for the Noblesville Cultural Arts District on the first floor. This will provide new creative outlets for Noblesville's residents and visitors, support creative entrepreneurship, provide economic mobility for emerging creatives, and give us a new asset with which to celebrate and encourage growth and diversity of our creative economy

### Public Match:

- + (C) \$10,000,000 (public garage) – 13.8% of total
- + (C) \$7,500,000 TIF allocation with a developer-backed bond for project – 10.4% of total
- + (C) \$1,770,000 land donation – 2.4% of total
- + (C) \$981,000 (Hamilton County ARPA funds request for terrace and hydraulic modeling) – 1% of total

### Private Match:

- + (P) \$41,903,408 – 58% of total

### Impact Metric(s):

- + *Increased share of population of prime working age through talent attraction/in-migration*
- + *Increased property values statewide (e.g. revitalization or redevelopment of vacant, blighted or underutilized assets)*
- + *Improved quality of life (e.g. workforce housing, infrastructure, natural resource development)*



- + *Improved quality of place (e.g. cultural facilities, community spaces, civic initiatives)*
- + *Improved innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystems and outputs*

### Outcome(s):

- + \$72 million mixed-use development
- + 40,000 SF of new commercial space
- + Attainable housing - 22 multi-family units
- + Additional community space - 1+ acre
- + Preservation of floodplain
- + Potential upgrades to Logan Street and SR 19 intersection for increased pedestrian safety and connectivity to downtown



## PROJECT OR PROGRAM 8 - 16 TECH COMMUNITY BUSINESS ENTERPRISE + TALENT DEVELOPMENT

**City and County:** Indianapolis, Marion County

**Total Cost:** \$12,500,000

**READI Request:** \$2,500,000

**Lead Organization:** 16 Tech Community Corporation

**Start Date:** January, 2022

**Abstract:** 16 Tech is a 50-acre, global innovation district emerging on the banks of the White River, in the heart of three neighborhoods with historical as well as reimagined relationships with the River. 16 Tech Community Corporation (16TCC) requests READI funding to initiate data-informed, strategic investments in neighbors living and businesses operating near the White River – investments that ensure 16 Tech Innovation District’s economic impacts are equitable and the District’s innovation potential is fully realized because it is fueled by people with diverse experiences, ideas, and talents.

With READI, 16TCC will invest in neighborhood business incubation/acceleration, talent pipeline development, as well as diversification of innovation and employer networks – inclusive strategies that consistently improve financial bottom lines at every scale of the economy, from firm- and household-levels, in neighborhoods and districts, and for counties, regions, and states. 16TCC is leading 16 Tech’s place-making strategy to attract, develop, and retain talent by leveraging downtown Indianapolis’ unique entrepreneurial, corporate, and university assets.

Central Indiana has strong industry clusters, a growing entrepreneurial culture, and a rich nonprofit sector. Yet, this vibrancy seldom benefits low income residents without an intentional structure to include them. 16TCC brings this intentionality, and READI can catalyze equitable, multi-generational economic growth.

### Private Match:

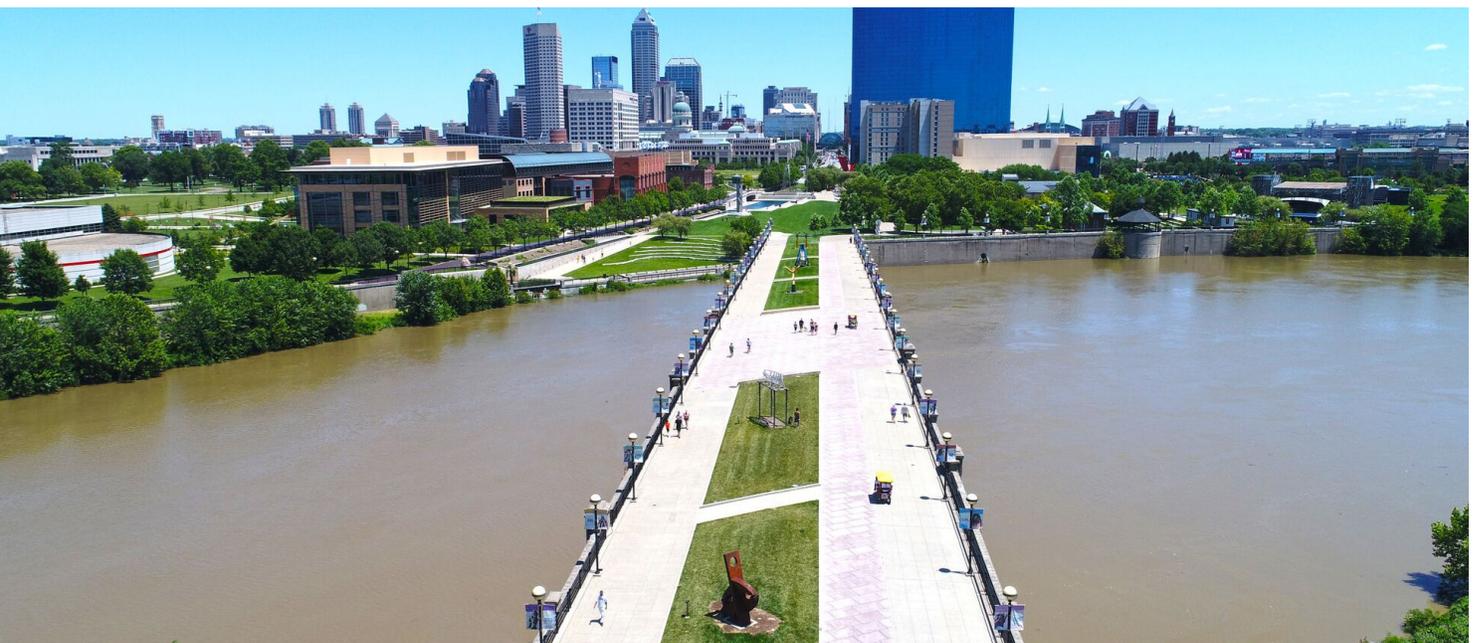
- + 16 Tech Community Corporation: \$10,000,000

### Impact Metric(s):

- + *Increased share of population of prime working age through talent attraction/in-migration*
- + *Increased per capita income at a rate that meets or exceeds the national average*
- + *Increased rate of educational attainment (including skilled trades and workforce training partnerships or facilities)*
- + *Improved innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystems and outputs*

### Outcome(s):

- + Increased business incubation/acceleration
- + Increased job creation
- + Increased household incomes
- + Increased labor market participation
- + Increased educational and vocational credentialing
- + Diversified District business members, vendors, supply chains
- + Diversified talent in District firms



## PROJECT OR PROGRAM 10 - FLAGSHIP INCUBATE - ACCELERATE - WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

**City and County:** City of Anderson, Madison County

**Total Cost:** \$8,750,000

**READI Request:** \$1,750,000

**Lead Organization:** Flagship Enterprise Center

**Start Date:** January, 2022

**Abstract:** The Flagship Enterprise Center has been transformational for Madison County in the last 15 years through brand and business support. This multi-phased project is, in part, centered around the expansion of the facilities at exit 222 on Interstate 69 by acquiring a 53,000 square foot building that will allow FEC to expand partnerships, educational opportunities, and support services, impacting the region. Programs and services range from leveraging an SBA grant targeting minority business development, incubation and consulting services of new startups as well as expansion of Bankable's regional SBA program.

In addition, partnering higher ed with expansion of AU's new degree and certificate programs in Cyber Security, FEC will support partners expanding into new sectors with Urban Air Mobility and Advanced Manufacturing training programs. Some target 8th – 12th grade students with training tools to help cultivate our next wave of workforce and entrepreneurs, while opening the possibility of careers to households that have very limited means to engage and creating equity and inclusion. Partnering with the Madison County Chamber and Corporation for Economic Development to advance the 21st Century Talent Region initiative will be the key metrics to measure outcomes while identifying weaknesses.

This project will greatly enhance the growing entrepreneurial and high-tech educational opportunities for our students and adults alike. This project will strengthen the private public partnerships creating a workforce initiative from middle school through higher-ed and address weaknesses along the way. The recruitment of new business starts and helping to assure their success is always the main challenge. Many have socio-economically disadvantages which will require partnering with local groups to assure equal access.

### Private Match:

- + \$6,900,000 Flagship Enterprise Center Building Innovation Program
- + \$700,000 Urban Air Mobility Center
- + \$700,000 Purdue's STEM
- + \$150,000 21st Century Talent Region
- + \$200,000 INFAME/Hinds Career Center
- + \$100,000 Anderson Impact Center/Madison County Chamber Mentoring Project



### Impact Metric(s):

- + *Increased share of population of prime working age through talent attraction/in-migration*
- + *Increased per capita income at a rate that meets or exceeds the national average*
- + *Increased rate of educational attainment (including skilled trades and workforce training partnerships or facilities)*
- + *Improved innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystems and outputs*

### Outcome(s):

- + Increased training and workforce development
- + Workforce attraction and retention due to advanced training opportunities
- + Creation of new jobs and new investment due to advanced training opportunities
- + Cyber Security Degrees and Certification
- + New start-up companies created, incubated, and accelerated
- + Small to large existing companies expanded through incubation and acceleration
- + Expansion of programming and participation with: Purdue Polytechnic Anderson, Anderson Advanced Manufacturing Program (AAMP), INFame/Hinds Career Center, Impact Center
- + 21st Century Talent Region designation
- + Establishing office and supportive business in the Urban Air sector
- + Focused development of innovation and entrepreneurship
- + Partnership with university resources leading to increase in educational attainment and skill development

## Talent Development and Attraction

**W**hile all of the initiatives listed above contribute to talent attraction and retention by increasing quality of life and opportunity through job creation and support for entrepreneurial ventures, the projects and programs in this section seek specifically to ensure the workforce of tomorrow meets major employer needs, that opportunity throughout Central Indiana is broadcast to the world, and that the growing talent base of the WR-ROI Region has attractive, multi-modal places to live, work, and play. Through EmployIndy's efforts to increase registered and earn-and-learn apprenticeships in high-wage, in-demand occupations and industries; the Zionsville Gateway Area's addition of 300 new jobs and \$3.3 million in new yearly income tax revenue in its enhanced historic downtown district; and Project Amplify's talent attraction and regional image marketing initiatives; the WR-ROI Region will be well-positioned to leverage its winning quality of place to attract and accommodate a growing population of high caliber talent.

- + **EmployIndy Apprenticeship Models**
- + **Zionsville Gateway Area**
- + **Project Amplify Regional Talent Attraction & Image Marketing Initiative**

## PROJECT OR PROGRAM 9 - EMPLOYINDY APPRENTICESHIP MODELS

**City and County:** Indianapolis, Marion County

**Total Cost:** \$11,388,500

**READI Request:** \$2,500,000

**Lead Organization:** EmployIndy

**Start Date:** May, 2022

**Abstract:** EmployIndy and partners have been working to build up registered and earn-and-learn apprenticeships in our city. While much of the work thus far has focused on youth apprenticeships, we are planning to expand our services to more young people as well as adults. EmployIndy is currently working to support apprenticeships through three grant programs, including the Modern (youth) Apprenticeship Program (MAP): a three-year experience in which students emerge with a high school diploma, a nationally recognized credential, and college credits that equip them to enter the workforce or continue on to a college degree. Additionally, the US Department of Labor has awarded CareerWise Colorado, a YARG grant, to expand the number of registered youth apprenticeships. With EmployIndy as a local sub-recipient, these funds are specifically tailored towards creating shared supportive services to build a learning network based on local expertise and diverse economic environments. The Apprenticeship State Expansion grant through DWD has charged EmployIndy with expanding new registered apprentices ages 16 and over by spring of 2022.

With support from IEDC, EmployIndy will expand on our current apprenticeship models to serve more youth and to support adults and dislocated workers, leading to increased pools of skilled candidates, greater access to family sustaining wages, and improved talent alignment. Currently the program is available in Marion County, but this proposed expansion can scale the program to all counties in the WR-ROI. We aim to prioritize employer partners located within 16 Tech Innovation District and the boundaries of the physical Nickel Plate Trail project, though employer partners will not be limited to this vicinity. Once awarded funding in January of 2022, our team will build the program, recruit candidates, and undergo the hiring process, resulting in apprenticeships beginning in the summer of 2022.

### Public Match:

- + Local Match - ARPA: \$2,500,000
- + Youth Apprentice Readiness Grant U.S. DOL ETA (YARG): \$400,000
- + Apprenticeship State Expansion (ASE): \$100,000
- + Workforce Innovation Opportunity ACT (WIOA)- Youth and Adult: \$360,000

### Private Match:

- + JP Morgan Chase NSRN: \$7,000,000
- + Walton Family Foundation: \$2,800,000
- + Salesforce: \$200,000
- + Richard Fairbanks Foundation: \$1,988,500
- + Program Income: \$540,000

### Impact Metric(s):

- + *Increased share of population of prime working age through talent attraction/in-migration*
- + *Increased per capita income at a rate that meets or exceeds the national average*
- + *Increased rate of educational attainment (including skilled trades and workforce training partnerships or facilities)*

### Outcome(s):

- + Experiences include internships, apprenticeships, and full-time hires, but cannot be disaggregated until our CRM is built and distributed among our partners. Individuals engaging in activities will include in-school youth, out-of-school youth, and will expand to other populations including adults and dislocated workers.
- + 2,000 Career Experience activities by the end of Year 1
- + 2,500 Career Experience activities by the end of Year 2
- + 3,000 Career Experience activities by the end of Year 3 (7,500 total at end of grant period)
- + Expanding pathways for registered apprenticeships by 3 by end of grant period



## PROJECT OR PROGRAM 7 - ZIONSVILLE GATEWAY AREA (ZGA)

**City and County:** Town of Zionsville, Boone County

**Total Cost:** \$17,400,000

**READI Request:** \$2,700,000

**Lead Organization:** Town of Zionsville

**Start Date:** December, 2021

**Abstract:** The Zionsville Gateway Area (ZGA) activates a stagnant area and is a prime opportunity for in-fill development that will catalyze the area for this generation and the next. The ZGA addresses challenges and promotes development that complements the character of Zionsville's downtown, especially along the historic Main Street.

The ZGA plan is a whole-community serving, authentically Zionsville approach that brings together a menu of options for Zionsville's downtown: greenspace, trails, parking, commercial, residential and mixed-use development and other community amenities that are both water- and trail-oriented. With our DPW director serving as a member of the White River Alliance Board of Directors for over 15 years, we have a long history of educating visitors and residents around environmental sustainability practices. This plan will incorporate our strong water quality practices and enhance recreational opportunities along the White River watershed. The connection of Zionsville's Big-4 Rail Trail into the ZGA will complete the last gap between linking the northernmost areas of Zionsville to the Monon Trail.

The earnings of employees working and living in the revitalized future gateway is transformative to our region – there will be 300 new jobs, \$3.3 million in new yearly income tax revenue, 400,000 square feet of

new buildings and \$500,000 in yearly A/V. Zionsville's corporate development park (Creekside Corporate Park) is adjacent to the ZGA. The jobs created in the ZGA are amplified by the new jobs and corporate investment in Creekside. This project will diversify our school tax rate base, improve outcomes for service industries and make the area more walkable and accessible, all while preserving the historic charm of our downtown.

**Public Match:** \$14.7 million - 85% of total cost

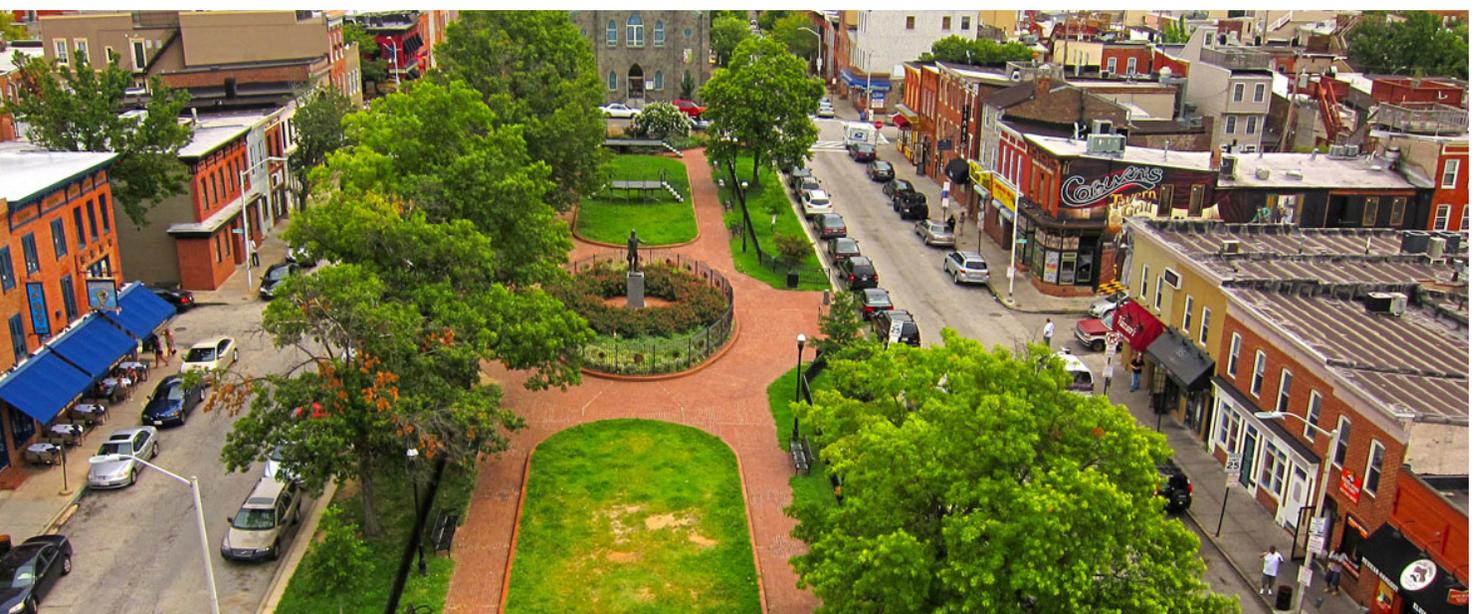
- + \$4.3 million park trail bond – committed
- + \$250,000 CDC pledge – committed
- + \$150,000 food and beverage – committed
- + \$10 million bond issuance – projected

### Impact Metric(s):

- + *Increased share of population of prime working age through talent attraction/in-migration*
- + *Increased per capita income at a rate that meets or exceeds the national average*
- + *Increased property values statewide (e.g. revitalization or redevelopment of vacant, blighted or underutilized assets)*
- + *Improved quality of life (e.g. workforce housing, infrastructure, natural resource development)*
- + *Improved quality of place (e.g. cultural facilities, community spaces, civic initiatives)*

### Outcome(s):

- + 300 new jobs
- + \$3.3 million in new yearly income tax revenue
- + 400,000 square feet of new buildings
- + \$500,000 in yearly A/V



# PROJECT OR PROGRAM 11 - PROJECT AMPLIFY REGIONAL TALENT ATTRACTION & IMAGE MARKETING INITIATIVE

**City and County:** Indianapolis, Marion County

**Total Cost:** \$8,537,190

**READI Request:** \$1,422,865

**Lead Organization:** Indy Chamber

**Start Date:** 2022

**Abstract:** This initiative represents the 9-county Indianapolis region, comprised of the counties of Boone, Hamilton, Hancock, Hendricks, Johnson, Madison, Marion, Morgan, and Shelby.

Talent attraction marketing initiatives have been underway at the regional and county levels for a number of years in many areas throughout the Indianapolis region. Through recent conversations between Project Amplify (regional) and Invest Hamilton County, an opportunity has been identified to collaborate on existing and future efforts regionwide.

Enhanced storytelling ability is the foundation of this joint interest and is the basis for our request within the White River Plan's READI proposal. We are seeking equal allocation funding for each of the Indianapolis region's nine counties for content creation, capacity building, and ambassador network development. Additionally, we are requesting strategic development funding for Invest Hamilton County and encouraging other regional counties with public match funding to join this effort and increase their allocation. Finally, we are requesting financial resources for targeted advertising in external markets with high concentrations of talent needed in our region's key industry sectors

## Public Match:

- + \$375,000 - Hamilton County Government (Projected) 4%
- + \$625,000 - Hamilton County Economic Development Corporation via Public Dollars (Committed) 7%



## Private Match:

- + \$2,792,930 - Lilly Endowment (Committed) 32%
- + \$3,321,395 - Indy Chamber Private/Philanthropic Investment (Projected) 39%

## Impact Metric(s):

- + *Increased share of population of prime working age through talent attraction/in-migration*



## Outcome(s):

- + LifeInIndy.com lifestyle blogs highlighting neighborhoods, things to do, career opportunities, and more,
- + Life In Indy Library provides all regional organizations and individuals high-quality, locally sourced photography, videography, and video assets to raise the visual storytelling ability of our communities
- + A network of resident ambassadors prepared to engage directly with those considering a move to central Indiana.
- + Number of individuals introduced to an ambassador
- + Number of individuals connected to a regional employer
- + Key marketing metrics: page views, clicks, shares
- + Increasing regional awareness in external talent audiences
- + Corporate attraction/retention
- + Supporting small businesses
- + High-wage job creation





# APPENDIX

## CONTACT INFORMATION

### WR-ROI Advisory Members

<b>Portia Bailey-Bernard</b>	Develop Indy	Vice President	pbernard@indychamber.com
<b>Megan Baumgartner</b>	City of Fishers	Director of Community and Economic Development	baumgartnerm@fishers.in.us
<b>Kai Chuck</b>	City of Westfield	Economic Development Director	kchuck@westfield.in.gov
<b>Ryan Crum</b>	Assistant Town Manager	Planning & Development	rcrum@mccordsville.org
<b>Wayne DeLong</b>	Town of Zionsville	Director of Community and Economic Development	WDeLong@zionsville-in.gov
<b>David Eicks</b>	City of Anderson	Deputy Mayor	deicks@cityofanderson.com
<b>Tonya Galbraith</b>	Town of McCordsville	Town Manager	tgalbraith@mccordsville.org
<b>Anna Gremling</b>	Indianapolis Metropolitan Planning Organization	Executive Director	Anna.Gremling@indympo.org
<b>Mark Heirbrandt</b>	Hamilton County	Hamilton County Commissioner	mark.heirbrandt@hamiltoncounty.in.gov
<b>Mike Hollibaugh</b>	City of Carmel	Director of Community Services	mhollibaugh@carmel.in.gov
<b>Julie Johns-Cole</b>	Town of Zionsville	Deputy Mayor	jjohns-cole@zionsville-in.gov
<b>Michael Klitzing</b>	Carmel Clay Parks & Recreation	Director of Parks and Recreation/CEO	mklitzing@carmelclayparks.com
<b>Carmen Lethig</b>	City of Indianapolis	Long-Range Planning Administrator	carmen.lethig@indy.gov
<b>Brenda Myers</b>	Hamilton County Tourism	President/CEO	bmyers@hamiltoncountytourism.com
<b>Sean Northup</b>	Indianapolis Metropolitan Planning Organization	Deputy Director	sean.northup@indympo.org
<b>Sarah Reed</b>	City of Noblesville	Community Development Director	sreed@noblesville.in.us
<b>Taylor Schaffer</b>	City of Indianapolis	Chief of Staff	taylor.schaffer@indy.gov
<b>Rob Sparks</b>	Corporation for Economic Development Anderson/Madison County	Executive Director	robsparks@cedanderson.com
<b>Megan Vukusich</b>	City of Fishers	Director of Planning and Zoning	vukusichm@fishers.in.us
<b>Clayton Whitson</b>	Madison County Chamber	President and CEO	clayton@getlinkedmadison.com

# APPENDIX

## CONTACT INFORMATION

### WR-ROI Voting Members (CIRDA Board)

Board Members	Title		Organization Representing	Email	Phone Number	Officer Positions
<b>Rober</b>	Business Development	The Hagerman Group	City of Indianapolis	RBarnes@hagermangc.com	(317) 577-6836	
<b>Mitch Frazier</b>	President & Chief Executive Officer	AgriNovus	City of Westfield	MFrazier@AgriNovusIndiana.com	(317) 670-9611	Vice Chair
<b>Anna Gremling</b>	Executive Director	CIRDA	Indianapolis Metropolitan Planning Organization	Anna.Gremling@indympo.org	(317) 327-5487	
<b>Keith Lauter</b>	Regional CFO	Franciscan Alliance	City of Greenwood	Keith.Lauter@franciscanalliance.org	(317) 528-8953	Secretary/ Treasurer
<b>Dr. Roderick Perry</b>	Director of Athletics	IUPUI	City of Indianapolis	perryrd@iupui.edu	(317) 278-2599	
<b>Chris Pryor</b>	Government Affairs Director	MIBOR	City of Carmel	chrispryor@mibor.com	(317) 258-5805	Chair

# APPENDIX

## WR-ROI SUPPLEMENTAL PROJECTS FOR FUTURE FUNDING CONSIDERATION

Project/Program Name	Estimated Total Cost	Lead Organization
South Madison Aquatics Center	\$24,000,000	Town of Pendleton
Historic Apartment Housing	\$10,600,000	Madison County Chamber of Commerce
Creekside Trail	\$1,534,078	Town of McCordsville
Winter Zone at Riverside Regional Park	\$18,337,308	Indy Parks (Indianapolis Parks and Recreation Department)
16 Tech Adjacent Projects	\$0	16 Tech Community Corporation
Informatics Diversity-Enhanced Workforce (iDEW)	\$2,729,542	Indiana University School of Informatics and Computing at IUPUI
Junior Achievement of Central Indiana Discovery Center	\$13,000,000	Junior Achievement of Central Indiana
Wigwam Talent and Development Complex	\$38,777,243	Wigwam Holdings
Hamilton County Center for Career Achievement	\$1,314,000	Hamilton County Economic Development Corporation
Just and Clean Indy: Engaging community scientists in monitoring and improving the environmental health of Indianapolis	\$2,000,000	IUPUI (Center for Urban Health)
Physically Active Residential Communities and Schools (PARCS)	\$763,428	Indiana University - Purdue University, Indianapolis

<b>Project/Program Name</b>	<b>Estimated Total Cost</b>	<b>Lead Organization</b>
Hub & Spoke	\$12,420,306	Hub & Spoke Institute & OnPoint Real Estate Solutions
Health Careers Opportunities Program	\$3,200,000	Indiana University - Purdue University, Indianapolis
Central Indiana Maker Hub	\$2,480,000	1st Maker Space, LLC
Innovate WithIN Pitch Competition	\$20,000	The STARTedUP Foundation
Ivy Tech Indianapolis - School of Entrepreneurship and Innovation	\$734,500	Ivy Tech Community College
Ivy Tech Indianapolis - Connect the DOTS: Delivering Opportunities to Students	\$1,305,000	Ivy Tech Community College
Advancing Tech in Indiana - White River ROI	\$2,125,000	Eleven Fifty Academy
City of Lawrence Trades District	\$1,200,000	City of Lawrence, IN
Fostering Innovation & Entrepreneurship in the Active Edge	\$50,000	IUPUI Sports Innovation Institute
Ivy Tech HamCo Nursing & Health Sciences Lab(s)	\$3,500,000	Ivy Tech Community College

**TOTAL COST: \$140,090,405**

# APPENDIX

## READI GRANT PRESS RELEASE



NOT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - June 15, 2021

### Media Contacts

Terri Austin (Anderson) – 765-215-5619, [taustin@cityofanderson.com](mailto:taustin@cityofanderson.com)

Dan McFeely (Carmel) – [dmcfeely@carmel.in.gov](mailto:dmcfeely@carmel.in.gov)

Ashley Elrod (Fishers) – 317-903-9825, [elroda@fishers.in.us](mailto:elroda@fishers.in.us)

Tammy Sander (Hamilton County) – 317-517-9520, [Tammy.Sander@hamiltoncounty.in.gov](mailto:Tammy.Sander@hamiltoncounty.in.gov)

Caroline Ellert (Indianapolis) – 317-617-4631, [caroline.ellert3@indy.gov](mailto:caroline.ellert3@indy.gov)

Clayton Whitson (Madison County) – 765-620-9557, [clayton@getlinkedmadison.com](mailto:clayton@getlinkedmadison.com)

Emily Gaylord (Noblesville) – 260-704-4058, [egaylord@noblesville.in.us](mailto:egaylord@noblesville.in.us)

Vicki Duncan Gardner (Westfield) – 317-416-6612, [vgardner@westfield.in.gov](mailto:vgardner@westfield.in.gov)

### INDY METRO MAYORS, COMMISSIONERS JOIN FORCES IN PREPARATION FOR INDIANA'S READI GRANT, INVITE BUSINESS AND PHILANTHROPIC COMMUNITY TO COLLABORATE

Indianapolis joins Hamilton and Madison Counties, Anderson, Carmel, Fishers, Noblesville, Westfield  
to dream big for White River Redevelopment, Economic Impact

Indianapolis, Hamilton County, and Madison County, Ind. – The mayors of Anderson, Carmel, Fishers Indianapolis, Noblesville, and Westfield and commissioners of Hamilton and Madison County announced today a regional collaboration to apply for Governor Eric Holcomb's Indiana Regional Economic Acceleration and Development Initiative (READI) planning grant and funding.

Uniting under a shared vision, the cities of Anderson, Carmel, Fishers, Indianapolis, Noblesville, and Westfield, and Hamilton and Madison Counties have begun identifying key programs, initiatives, and projects that will accelerate local, neighborhood economies, quality of place experiences, innovation, and develop, attract, and retain talent.



# APPENDIX

## READI GRANT PRESS RELEASE

The regional group is a coalition of communities that has previously collaborated on the development of the White River Vision Plan, which was released in December 2019. With the addition of Anderson and Madison County, this expands the region further east along the White River through Anderson and Mounds State Park terminating just before reaching I-69. The White River connects each community participating and provides a once-in-a-generation opportunity to transform this underutilized natural resource into an economic, lifestyle, and innovation driver. The committee is organizing to contribute to the development of a proposal to the Indiana READI initiative. These communities are united as part of the labor and recreation shed of the White River region.

The City of Noblesville initiated early coordination and planning efforts by contracting with Fourth Economy to guide the development and planning of a READI Grant submission. Fourth Economy has a proven track record of success in supporting these types of initiatives.

The regional group will focus on an overarching theme of connectivity with supplemental focus areas possibly including trails; transportation; infrastructure; environmental and green economy jobs; workforce and employment centers; and water availability and quality.

The regional group is issuing a call-out for contiguous municipalities, businesses, and philanthropic groups interested in supporting these efforts.

Interested parties may contact the regional group at [READI@mywhiteriver.com](mailto:READI@mywhiteriver.com). The region intends to formalize its partnership and submit its proposal for the planning grant by the July 1 deadline.

More information about the White River Vision plan and the communities in the White River region can be found at [mywhiteriver.com](http://mywhiteriver.com).

###

### About READI

READI builds on the framework and successes of the Indiana Regional Cities Initiative and the 21st Century Talent Initiative, encouraging neighboring communities across the state to work collaboratively to develop a bold vision for their future that, when implemented, will attract, develop and retain talent in Indiana. Regions will develop data-driven, actionable and sustainable development plans that outline strategies focused on improving the quality of place, quality of life and quality of opportunity within their communities. IEDC will award up to \$50 million per region to accelerate the implementation of regional development plans and the programs and projects identified that will catalyze economic and population growth.



# APPENDIX

## READI GRANT PRESS RELEASE

### Quotes of Support

#### Anderson

“This regional collaboration builds upon our connected resources and mutual visions of sustained economic growth and quality of life initiatives that enhance the lives of our citizens,” stated Anderson Mayor Thomas Broderick, Jr. “Our team intends to present a transformative plan that will take advantage of our resources and strengths to advance our region.”

#### Carmel

“The White River is an untapped resource for recreational amenities, natural and environmental appreciation and smart, strategic development that will increase the quality of life for our residents and our visitors,” said Carmel Mayor Jim Brainard. “We are already working with Fishers on other projects involving the river and we enthusiastically support this new coalition that seeks to boost our efforts as a region connected by this beautiful river.”

#### Fishers

“The White River is an incredible natural resource that has been underutilized as a driver for economic, lifestyle, and workforce development,” stated Fishers Mayor Scott Fadness. “This collaboration brings together key stakeholders in the White River region that could see a real impact if chosen.”

#### Hamilton County

“Successful connectivity initiatives can only be achieved through focused collaboration,” said Hamilton County Commissioner Mark Heirbrandt. “I look forward to working with other leaders in our region, and seeing this vision through.”

#### Indianapolis

“The future of the Indy metro region is inextricably interconnected,” said Indianapolis Mayor Joe Hogsett. “Each community has unique assets and distinctive challenges but the success of the region requires us to work together to attract top talent, invest in our residents, and maintain an ecosystem of business innovation. Through this READI grant process, we hope to leverage the White River to jump-start economic and community development projects that will ensure Central Indiana remains an attractive place to live, work, and play.”

#### Noblesville

“With a data driven approach, a collective vision already established with the White River Plan and measurable initiatives to track results, we believe that this focus will achieve the goal of creating a regional development plan that will stand out from the rest,” Noblesville Mayor Chris Jensen said.

#### Westfield

“It is critical that we work as a region to remain competitive in a global marketplace,” said Westfield Mayor Andy Cook. “Although Westfield does not touch the White River, this regional initiative will carry a vision and ideas to look at development downstream and infrastructure improvements east-west from the River to eventually I-69. We are lucky to have this kind of collaboration and vision.”

# APPENDIX

## LETTERS OF SUPPORT



### Administrative Offices

1411 E. 116<sup>th</sup> Street  
Carmel, IN 46032  
317.843.3875 | InTrac: 711  
carmelclayparks.com

September 30, 2021

Secretary of Commerce Bradley B. Chambers, Chief Executive Officer  
Indiana Economic Development Corporation  
1 North Capitol Avenue, Suite 700  
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Dear Secretary Chambers,

As a partner in the White River Regional Opportunity Initiative (WR-ROI), this letter confirms Carmel/Clay Board of Parks and Recreation's support of the collaboration to develop a Regional Development Plan as a part of the READI program. Through this plan, WR-ROI is well-positioned to help attract, develop, and retain talent throughout Indiana by enhancing quality of life place throughout the region, supporting our innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystems that benefit rural communities, and investing in smart economic development to support ongoing population and economic growth. As our name suggests, we have developed a strategy to secure a true ROI (return on investment) by leveraging and unifying around our area's most significant natural resource – the White River.

We recognize the unique opportunity that READI presents to help catalyze investment into the WR-ROI that aligns with the vision, goals, and priorities of our state and region. We welcome a financial partnership to promote strategic investments aligned with the IEDC's objectives for the Indiana READI program and are committed, in close collaboration with the City of Carmel and Clay Township of Hamilton County, to help meet the required 1:1 match of local public funding to support the portfolio of programs and projects submitted in the regional development plan.

In support of the Hamilton County South River District, Carmel Clay Parks & Recreation (CCPR) has secured approximately \$12.2 million in local public funding, far exceeding the \$6.3 million grant request for our proposed district. These commitments include \$7.2 million through the Clay Township Impact Program for River Heritage Park enhancements and a new pedestrian/bicycle bridge spanning the White River, approximately \$3 million from Carmel Utilities for development of overlooks within Thomas Marcuccilli Nature Park, and nearly \$2 million from CCPR's funding sources for expansion of the White River Greenway.

Thank you for this opportunity and ongoing support as we work together to transform our communities and the state's economy for now and in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "R. Taylor III".

Richard F. Taylor III, President  
Carmel/Clay Board of Parks and Recreation

*A nationally accredited &  
gold medal agency*

**EXPLORE  
ENGAGE  
CONNECT**

# APPENDIX

## LETTERS OF SUPPORT

### Central Indiana Regional Development Authority

#### Resolution No. 2021-RDA-002

A RESOLUTION of the Central Indiana Regional Development Authority ("CIRDA") to submit the White River Regional Opportunity Initiative Regional Development Plan (RDP) for the State of Indiana Regional Economic Acceleration and Development Initiative (READI).

WHEREAS, CIRDA provides the opportunity for regional collaboration between Central Indiana communities on economic development projects of regional importance; AND

WHEREAS, as a result of the 2021 Indiana House Act 1001, the Indiana Economic Development Corporation has created the Regional Economic Acceleration and Development Initiative to spur economic development; AND

WHEREAS, several jurisdictions throughout Central Indiana formed an application region and collaborated on a Regional Development Plan (RDP) through the White River Regional Opportunity Initiative to apply for the Regional Economic Acceleration and Development Initiative; AND

WHEREAS, implementation of the White River Regional Opportunity Initiative Regional Development Plan (RDP) will result in significant economic growth, talent attraction, quality of opportunity, and quality of life improvements essential to Central Indiana's overall prosperity; AND

WHEREAS, CIRDA is the applicant for the Regional Economic Acceleration and Development Initiative on behalf of the jurisdictions involved in the White River Regional Opportunity Initiative; AND

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Central Indiana Regional Development Authority will submit the White River Regional Opportunity Initiative Regional Development Plan (RDP) for the Regional Economic Acceleration and Development Initiative on behalf of the member jurisdictions.



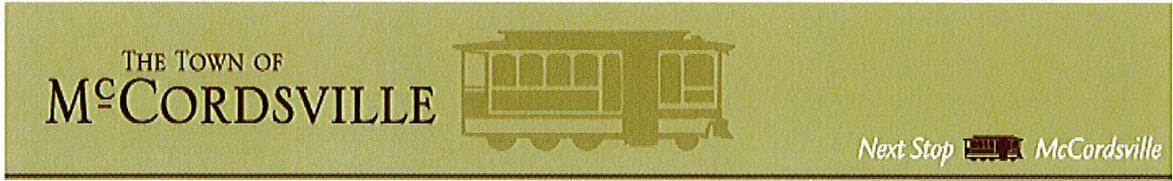
9/23/21

Chris Pryor, CIRDA Board Chair

Date

# APPENDIX

## LETTERS OF SUPPORT



September 14, 2021

Secretary of Commerce Brad Chambers  
Chief Executive Officer  
Indiana Economic Development Corporation  
1 North Capitol Avenue, Suite 700  
Indianapolis, IN 46204

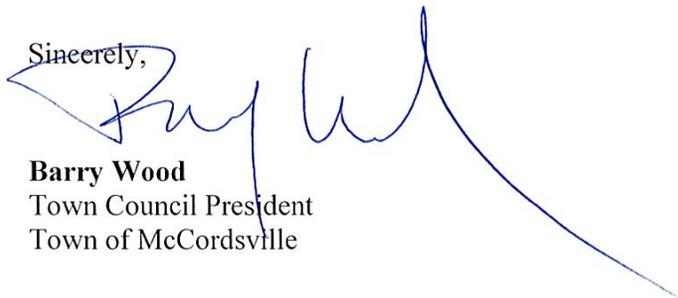
Dear Secretary Chambers,

As the Town Council President of the Town of McCordsville, a proud member of the White River Regional Opportunity Initiative (WR-ROI), this letter is written to express our support of the recent collaboration to develop a Regional Development Plan as a part of the READI program. This program will help grow the population and attract, develop, and retain talent throughout Indiana, by enhancing the quality of life throughout the WR-ROI Region, supporting our innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystems, especially in our rural communities, and investing in smart economic development to support ongoing population and economic growth.

We recognize the opportunity that READI presents to help catalyze nearly \$500 million of new projected investment into the WR-ROI that aligns with the vision, goals, and priorities of our state and region. We welcome a financial partnership with the state to promote strategic investments aligned with the IEDC's objectives for the Indiana READI program and are committed to meeting and exceeding a 1:1 match of local public funding to support the portfolio of programs and projects submitted in the WR-ROI's READI regional development plan. The Town of McCordsville is directly committed to its signature project – McCord Square. We look forward to making this project a reality for our region.

Thank you for this opportunity and ongoing support as we work together to transform our communities and the state's economy for now and in the future.

Sincerely,



**Barry Wood**  
Town Council President  
Town of McCordsville

# APPENDIX

## LETTERS OF SUPPORT



### County of Hamilton State of Indiana

September 30, 2021

Secretary of Commerce Brad Chambers  
Chief Executive Officer  
Indiana Economic Development Corporation  
1 North Capitol Avenue, Suite 700  
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Christine Altman  
Commissioner District 1  
Steven C. Dillinger  
Commissioner District 2  
Mark Heirbrandt  
Commissioner District 3

Dear Secretary Chambers,

The Hamilton County Board of Commissioners is actively participating in the collaborative White River Regional Opportunity Initiative (WR-ROI) READI grant application process and wishes to express our support for what we think could be a transformative opportunity for central Indiana.

Hamilton County also was a committed partner in development of the White River Vision Plan and is an avid supporter of our County's Invest! Hamilton County Workforce attraction and development initiative. The WR-ROI READI program would allow us to aggressively expand on these efforts and connect seven communities that already contribute significantly to the state's own efforts to attract and grow population and talent.

This collaboration, which focuses on innovative community development that also supports workforce attraction and expansion, also helps us prepare long-range for economic stability in an ever-changing environment.

The WR-ROI directly aligns with the vision, goals, and priorities of our state and region. With the state's participation in supporting strategic investments that align with the IEDC's objectives outlined in the READI program, we are committed to meeting and even exceeding the desired 1:1 match of local public funding to support the expansive portfolio of programs and projects submitted as a part of this proposal. The Hamilton County Board of Commissioners has pledged \$3 million in public support as well as time and talent from its knowledgeable staff to the projects in Hamilton County.

The three counties and seven communities engaged in the WR-ROI program and the IEDC and State of Indiana can together create a significant and positive impact on Indiana and provide for a vibrant and resilient future.

Sincerely,

Mark Heirbrandt  
President – Hamilton County Board of Commissioners, District 3

Cc: Christine Altman – V.P. Commissioner, District 1  
Steven C. Dillinger – Commissioner, District 2

# APPENDIX

## LETTERS OF SUPPORT



September 24, 2021

Secretary of Commerce Brad Chambers  
Chief Executive Officer  
Indiana Economic Development Corporation  
1 North Capitol Avenue, Suite 700  
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Dear Secretary Chambers,

Old Town Companies, LLC is proud to work alongside Noblesville in their efforts to continue improving their downtown. I am writing this letter in support of the City’s participation in the White River Regional Opportunity Initiative (WR-ROI). As the city’s partner in the Federal Hill District Expansion, I can acknowledge the significant effort and investment put into the initiative over the last few years by Mayor Jensen, the city staff, and city council members. We have truly worked as a team to plan a development that served the needs of the community while assuring the viability of the private investment.

The City of Noblesville has entered into an Economic Development Agreement for a Public Private Partnership with Old Town to allow us to construct Phases I and II of the Village at Federal Hill. The opportunity afforded by the READI program would allow Phase III to commence, which would have the dual impact of jobs creation through new Class “A” office and culture impact through providing a public arts facility along the White River.

Our company is proud to work alongside Noblesville in this dynamic place-making initiative that will serve to perpetuate human flourishing through the built environment. We respectfully request your support of this proposal as it will serve as a catalyst for the acceleration of redevelopment on the west side of the White River to the benefit of the local and state economy.

Sincerely,

*Justin W. Moffett*  
Justin Moffett, CEO

# APPENDIX

## LETTERS OF SUPPORT



September 30, 2021

Secretary of Commerce Brad Chambers  
Chief Executive Officer  
Indiana Economic Development Corporation  
1 North Capitol Avenue, Suite 700  
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Dear Secretary Chambers,

As Mayor of the City of Fishers in the White River Regional Opportunity Initiative (WR-ROI), this letter is written to express our support of the recent collaboration to develop a Regional Development Plan as a part of the READI program that will help grow the population and attract, develop, and retain talent throughout Indiana, by enhancing quality of life place throughout the WR-ROI Region, supporting our innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystems, especially in our rural communities, and investing in smart economic development to support ongoing population and economic growth.

We recognize the opportunity that READI presents to help catalyze nearly \$500 million of new projected investment into the WR-ROI that aligns with the vision, goals, and priorities of our state and region. We welcome a financial partnership with the state to promote strategic investments aligned with the IEDC's objectives for the Indiana READI program and are committed to meeting and exceeding a 1:1 match of local public funding to support the portfolio of programs and projects submitted in the WR-ROI's READI regional development plan.

Thank you for this opportunity and ongoing support as we work together to transform our communities and the state's economy for now and in the future.

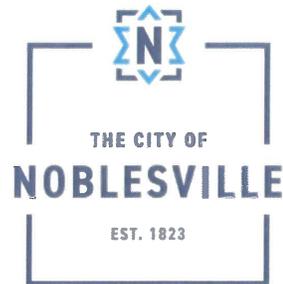
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Scott Fadness". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Mayor Scott Fadness

# APPENDIX

## LETTERS OF SUPPORT



September 21, 2021

Secretary of Commerce Brad Chambers  
Chief Executive Officer  
Indiana Economic Development Corporation  
1 North Capitol Avenue, Suite 700  
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Dear Secretary Chambers,

As the Mayor and Common Council Members of the City of Noblesville, we are writing this letter together in support of our City's participation in the White River Regional Opportunity Initiative (WR-ROI). We have been updated on Noblesville's specific project request and are proud to expand our authentic and unmatched downtown west of the White River with the Federal Hill District Expansion. We have proven our support in the form of an Economic Development Agreement for a Public Private Partnership with Old Town Companies, LLC. for Phase I and II of the Village at Federal Hill. We are excited about expediting Phase III of the project through the READI program.

Noblesville also holds the original contract (executed in May of 2021) that initiated 4<sup>th</sup> Economy's efforts. We recognized early, the opportunity that READI presents to help catalyze nearly \$500 million of new projected investment into the WR-ROI that aligns with the vision, goals, and priorities of our state and region. We welcome a financial partnership with the state to promote strategic investments aligned with the IEDC's objectives for the Indiana READI program and are committed to meeting and exceeding a 1:1 match of local public funding to support the portfolio of programs and projects submitted in the WR-ROI's READI regional development plan.

This project will help grow the population and attract, develop, and retain talent throughout Indiana, by the creation of an innovative workspace that includes office, cultural arts and gathering facilities adjacent to the White River. This will provide new creative outlets for Noblesville's residents and visitors, support creative entrepreneurship, provide economic mobility for emerging creatives, and give us a new asset with which to celebrate and encourage growth and diversity of our creative economy.



# APPENDIX

## LETTERS OF SUPPORT



September 14, 2021

Secretary of Commerce Brad Chambers  
Chief Executive Officer  
Indiana Economic Development Corporation  
1 North Capitol Avenue, Suite 700  
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Dear Secretary Chambers,

As the Mayor of the City of Indianapolis in the White River Regional Opportunity Initiative (WR-ROI), this letter is written to express our support of the recent collaboration to develop a Regional Development Plan as a part of the READI program that will help grow the population and attract, develop, and retain talent throughout Indiana, by enhancing quality of life throughout the WR-ROI Region, supporting our innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystems, especially in our rural communities, and investing in smart economic development to support ongoing population and economic growth.

We recognize the opportunity that READI presents to help catalyze nearly \$500 million of new projected investment into the WR-ROI that aligns with the vision, goals, and priorities of our state and region. We welcome a financial partnership with the state to promote strategic investments aligned with the IEDC's objectives for the Indiana READI program and are committed to meeting and exceeding a 1:1 match of local public funding to support the portfolio of programs and projects submitted in the WR-ROI's READI regional development plan.

Thank you for this opportunity and ongoing support as we work together to transform our communities and the state's economy for now and in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joe Hogsett". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Joseph H. Hogsett  
Mayor | City of Indianapolis



# APPENDIX

## LETTERS OF SUPPORT



TOWN OF ZIONSVILLE | OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

September 16, 2021

Secretary of Commerce Brad Chambers  
Chief Executive Officer  
Indiana Economic Development Corporation  
1 North Capitol Avenue, Suite 700  
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Dear Secretary Chambers,

As mayor of the Town of Zionsville and part of the White River Regional Opportunity Initiative (WR-ROI), this letter is to express my support of the recent collaboration to develop a Regional Development Plan within the READI program. The READI program will help grow the population and attract, develop, and retain talent throughout Indiana by enhancing quality of life place throughout the WR-ROI Region, supporting our innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystems, especially in our rural communities, and investing in smart economic development to support ongoing population and economic growth.

Specific to our proposal for consideration as a part of the READI program, the entrance to the Town of Zionsville was a driving factor in why I ran for mayor. For over a decade, Zionsville's first impression to visitors was a vacant gravel corner lot, a vacant bank, and a crumbling locksmith shop. I knew then we could do better at attracting talent to the region by presenting a welcoming space filled with pathways, multi-modal connectivity, green space, public amenities, thriving businesses, and housing. Hard data already identifies Zionsville as a regional attraction for visitors. My administration is working hard to leverage this knowledge in ways that both enhances and strengthen the economic vitality of the region.

With the demolition of the two buildings on July 28, 2020, we began the first stage of the planning for what would become known as the Zionsville Gateway Area (ZGA). We vowed to involve the public in developing a framework for future development in the ZGA. Along with public input about conceptual ideas and desires, the consultants gathered data to help understand general trends, residents' makeup, and market context.

I recognize the opportunity that READI presents to help catalyze nearly \$500 million of new projected investment into the WR-ROI that aligns with the vision, goals, and priorities of our state and region. I welcome a financial partnership with the state to promote strategic investments aligned with the IEDC's objectives for the Indiana READI program and am committed to meeting and exceeding a 1:1 match of local public funding. The earnings of employees working and living in the revitalized future ZGA is transformative to our region as our study projects 300 new jobs, \$3.3 million in yearly income tax revenue, 400,000 square feet of buildings and \$500,000 in yearly A/V will be created by our efforts.

Thank you for this opportunity and ongoing support as we work together to transform our communities and the state's economy. If I can answer any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Emily Styron", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mayor Emily Styron

1100 West Oak Street Zionsville, Indiana 46077  
estyron@zionsville-in.gov 317.344.1167

