

The final region that has submitted an Indiana Regional Cities proposal is the Northeast plan. The economic core is the City of Fort Wayne, which accounts for one-third of the regional population and nearly one-half of regional jobs. Fort Wayne is the seventy-sixth largest municipality in the United States and the second largest in Indiana.

This application includes 38 projects to be implemented in the next two years alone, with a total investment of \$400 million. Once the plan, titled “Road to One Million,” is entirely implemented, over \$1.4 billion in visionary projects will have been invested in improvements, such as:

- A regional trail system and the Fort Wayne Riverfront Development, connecting residents to nature;
- Regional broadband and an array of innovation and entrepreneurship centers, connecting workers to ideas;
- Nine new or expanded arts venues across the region, anchored in unique downtown districts, connected via trails and connecting patrons to culture; and
- \$40 million in redevelopment and revitalization of 11 downtowns (\$440 million total), connecting citizens to community.

The projects fall into four categories:

- Connecting to Nature – greenways and blueways projects, such as the Regional Trail Network and the Fort Wayne Riverfront Development that build on our natural assets such as our three rivers, our existing trails, and our parks;
- Connecting to Community – downtown and community development projects that make the region a great place to live by investing \$40 million per community in redevelopment and revitalization;
- Connecting to Culture – arts and culture projects that support Cultural Districts across the region by building on the unique assets of each community, such as Whitley’s musical instrument industry, DeKalb’s museums, and Decatur’s sculpture tour, and
- Connecting to Ideas – education and industry-driven projects that will help retain and attract students and entrepreneurs, while also connecting to nature, culture, and/or community, including five co-working and/or incubator spaces anchored in downtowns throughout the region.

By implementing these projects to create a quality of place that will help the region retain and attract residents, the population can grow to one million residents. The impact of that population growth will depend on attracting a more educated talent-base, with possible results being:

- 120,000 new people in the workforce
- \$29 million more in real gross domestic product
- \$8 million more in total wages
- 40,000 more children (ages 0-17) and 94,000 more young adults (ages 25-44)
- 143,000 more housing units
- 30 percent growth in arts patronage visits among adults

The population growth will be the true return-on-investment, because with it will create a stronger economy and a more vibrant community. For more information on the Northeast Plan,

visit: <http://indianaregionalcities.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/the-road-to-one-million-plan-194-pgs.pdf>

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