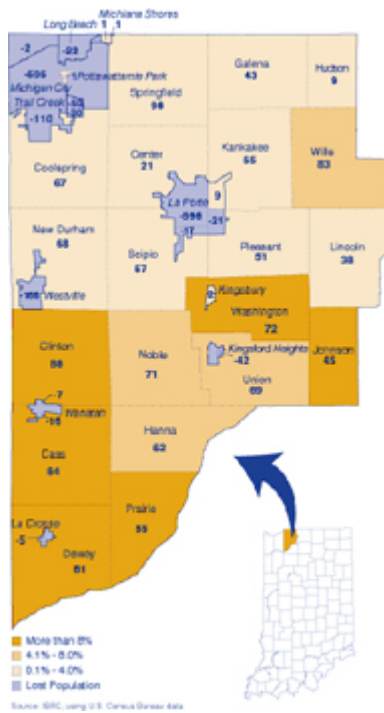


Economic Impact Of Development Corridor In Laporte, Indiana



Client

Facts

Period

2008

Project Country

**By Economic Development Research Group with Bernardin, Lochmueller & Associates,
for the City of LaPorte, Indiana, 2007**

The Economic Development Corridor Feasibility Study for LaPorte, Indiana, analyzed the feasibility of a new roadway corridor for re-routing through-traffic on major highways from the downtown area of the city of LaPorte. A key goal of the study was to determine the extent to which the proposed corridor improvements presented the potential to yield economic growth and job creation, retention and attraction.

Such changes can occur insofar as the proposed highway system improvements reduce the cost of doing business in LaPorte, improve access to customer and labor markets, and/or increase transportation efficiency (such as for just-in-time production), making LaPorte a more attractive place to do business. EDR Group's contribution to the feasibility study quantified these economic development opportunities in terms of job attraction for both the City of LaPorte as well as the County.

This analysis was completed using LEAP, the Local Economic Assessment Package. LEAP is an award-winning tool used by local economic development agencies to evaluate local economic development needs and opportunities. For this study, it was used to evaluate existing economic characteristics and trends (Economic Profile), identify industries for which the current level of transportation access is a barrier to future job growth (Opportunities and Barriers), and quantify potential job attraction due to improved rail intermodal connectivity.

An examination of traffic patterns and user benefits revealed no appreciable impacts. Instead, it was determined that the principal benefit of the project would be to provide access to future industrial sites, particularly those associated with a proposed intermodal rail facility.

The LEAP model estimated that the LaPorte Economic Development Corridor would attract approximately 407 (direct) jobs to the city of LaPorte by 2030, adding a total of 766 jobs to the county economy including indirect and induced jobs. These jobs would add more than \$33 million in income to the county's economy and generate nearly \$112 million in output.

The corridor would also provide access to development sites to accommodate future job growth. Even without the job attraction due to completion of the corridor, employment forecasts show demand for between 50 and 140 acres of new commercial and industrial space. The current supply of highway accessible employment lands in LaPorte is dwindling. The corridor would provide highway access to considerable amounts of developable land, allowing the city to meet this demand and accommodate future job growth.

Though the LEAP analysis showed that the city of LaPorte has the potential to create more than 6,300 jobs if key barriers to job growth are resolved, the proposed Economic

reasons for this. First, the principal barriers to job growth in LaPorte are: 1) a relatively small labor-force; and 2) workforce education/skill level. Neither transportation access (highway, rail, air or port) nor access to developable industrial sites were among the principal barriers.

The LaPorte Economic Development Corridor does not increase the size of the labor market catchment area nor address workforce training issues. The corridor would provide access to future industrial sites to accommodate future job growth. This job growth could occur as companies relocate from the congested Chicago metro area, particularly if the proposed intermodal facility is built. It could also occur as companies in higher tax areas of Illinois and Michigan seek lower taxes. In this respect, the corridor could be an important factor in ensuring that LaPorte achieve the full job attraction potential of other economic development efforts.

Contact Persons