Small Cities, Big Futures

Collaboration, Economic Development, Talent, and Community Development

April 2019

Using nine Midwestern Peer Cities with corporate headquarters or significant production facilities for well-known American companies, the Kosciusko County Economic Development Corporation's Small Cities, Big Futures project evaluated quantitative and qualitative data from these communities. The results? Nineteen recommendations to leverage Warsaw's orthopedic medical device and agribusiness industries to improve local prosperity and quality of life.

KEDCo worked with a local steering committee and the Community Research Institute at Purdue University Fort Wayne (CRI) to study these Peer Cities, often home to Fortune 500 companies, to understand how to grow Warsaw's economy and improve quality of place.

The Peer Cities are:

- **Batesville, Ind. (Ripley County):** Batesville Casket Co., Hillenbrand, Inc., and Hill-Rom Holdings
- **Benton Harbor, Mich. (Niles-Benton Harbor MSA):** Whirlpool Corp.
- **Bloomington, Illinois (Bloomington-Normal MSA):** State Farm Insurance
- **Columbus, Ind. (Columbus, Ind. MSA):** Cummins, Inc.
- **Findlay, Ohio (Findlay Micropolitan):** Marathon Petroleum Corp. and Cooper Tire & Rubber Co.
- **Lancaster, Ohio (Fairfield County):** Anchor Hocking Co.
- **Midland, Michigan (Midland MSA):** DowDuPont, Inc., Dow Chemical Co.
- **Peoria, Illinois (Peoria MSA):** Caterpillar Inc.

Warsaw, Ind. (Warsaw Micropolitan/Kosciusko County): Zimmer Biomet Holdings, DePuy Synthes Companies, and other orthopedic medical device manufacturers

19 Recommendations

CRI offers 19 recommendations to Warsaw's leaders as a result of the Small Cities, Big Futures project. Warsaw starts from a position of strength to build on key industries and assets.

Collaboration

1. **Strengthen collaboration across sectors:** Use an interdisciplinary approach to solve problems and make Warsaw better.
2. **Encourage and support corporate, private-sector investment in community and economic development:** Improving Warsaw improves quality of place improves the corporate culture of the employers' hometown in the competition for talent.

3. **Create network of peer cities to share ideas, best practices:** Work together with some of these Midwestern cities to communicate successes.

4. **Play the long game:** This work will take years, not months. Don't give up.

Economic Development

5. **Strengthen Warsaw's agricultural sector:** Production agriculture and agribusiness industries offer new economic development opportunities.

6. **Evaluate economic development capacity:** Assess local commitments for economic development initiatives.

7. **Explore formal agreements among KEDCo, chambers of commerce, visitors' bureau:** Use a collaborative approach to make resources go further.

8. **Visit the corporate headquarters of companies with Warsaw locations:** Develop relationships with the home offices to show the value of continued local investment.

9. **Leverage tourism potential:** Use Warsaw's proximity to Chicago, Indianapolis, Fort Wayne, and South Bend to grow interest in local quality-of-place features that are attractive to visitors and future residents.

10. **Enhance entrepreneurial supports:** Develop an entrepreneurship ecosystem to support business builders, emphasizing orthopedic medical devices and agribusiness.

11 **Develop Warsaw's identity:** Create a recognizable identity or brand for Warsaw as a great place to live, work, and play.

12. **Develop a boutique hotel open to the public with conference and event space:** This property would be unique to the area with appeal to both corporate and leisure travelers.

13. **Explore a land trust for future development:** Ownership of real estate for future commercial, industrial, mixed-use or even residential projects determines the future of Warsaw.

Talent

14. **Continue support of educational, training programs and opportunities that connect to workforce needs:** The demand for skilled workers won't end any time soon so the pipeline of newly trained workers is critical for the success of Warsaw's employers.

15. **Create talent attraction programs that connect job candidates and their families to Warsaw employment and lifestyle prospects:** Implement a program for Warsaw's prospective employees and their families, using tactics from human resources departments.

16. **Connect second-home property owners to Warsaw:** Convert part-time or seasonal guests into year-round, full-time champions by engaging them with life in Warsaw.

Community Development

17. **Update comprehensive countywide land use plan:** Produce a land use plan for all of Kosciusko County and engage the public to create a unified vision.

18. **Create an Economic Improvement District:** Add a district to provide dedicated funding for programming and projects.

19. **Develop new housing options, including higher-end apartments and market-rate single-family homes:** Study and understand market conditions to identify future developments.

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Small Cities, Big Futures project recommendations

STEERING COMMITTEE

APRIL 2019

Small Cities, Big Futures

Project purpose

"[H]elp the Kosciusko EDC understand the dynamics of other similarly sized communities that are reliant on a single employer or industry."

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Peer cities: High performers

Findlay, Ohio: Marathon Petroleum Corp. and Cooper Tire & Rubber Co.

Midland, Michigan: DowDupont, formerly Dow Chemical Co.

Benton Harbor, Michigan: Whirlpool Corp.

Bloomington, Illinois: State Farm Insurance

Columbus, Indiana: Cummins Engine

Peer cities: Corporate HQ loss

Lancaster, Ohio: Anchor Hocking

Peoria, Illinois: Caterpillar Inc.

Batesville, Indiana: Hill-Rom Holdings, formerly Batesville Casket Co.

Quantitative, qualitative analysis

Data from Warsaw and Peer Cities

- Profiles on primary employers
- Quality of life features

SWOT-PEST sessions with steering committee (November)

Site visits to Findlay, Benton Harbor (February)

Written report and two-page handout

Results: 19 actionable recommendations to improve Warsaw's prosperity and quality of place

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Site visits: Findlay, Benton Harbor

Tim Mayle, Director
Findlay-Hancock Economic Development

Rob Cleveland,
President/CEO
Cornerstone Alliance

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4 categories of recommendations

1. Collaboration
2. Economic Development
3. Talent
4. Community Development

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Collaboration

1. Strengthen collaboration across sectors

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1. What

Work across sectors, disciplines

Collaboration becomes default

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1. Why

Consistent theme in other Peer Cities

Findlay Formula

- Cited by Site Selection Magazine

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2. Encourage and support corporate, private-sector investment

FOR COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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2. What

Investment in community assets

Improves local quality of place, quality of life

- Ability to attract, retain talent

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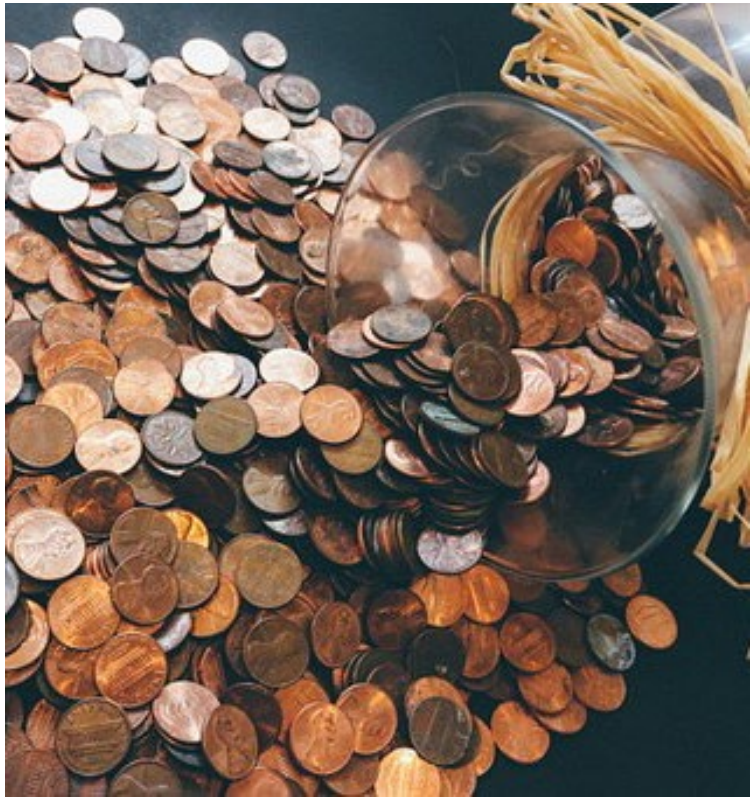
2. Why

Consistent pattern in other Peer Cities

- **Midland**: Dow, foundations
- **Findlay**: Marathon's $100 million downtown revitalization
- **Columbus**: Modern architecture
- **Benton Harbor**: Whirlpool Foundation



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3. Create Small Cities, Big Futures network

TO SHARE IDEAS, BEST PRACTICES

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3. What

Informal network with:

- Findlay
- Benton Harbor
- Columbus
- Midland
- Batesville

Share ideas, solve problems

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3. Why

Similarly sized

Manufacturing focused

Familiar opportunities, challenges

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4. Play the long game

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4. What

No short-term thinking

This work takes time

Don’t give up

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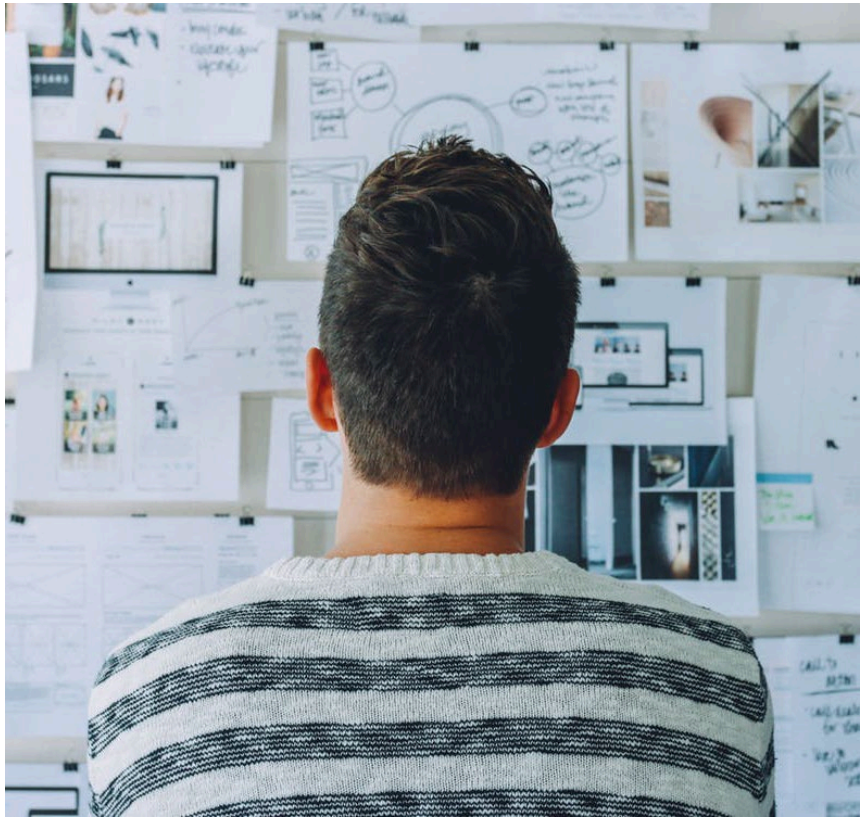
4. Why

Complex challenges

Not easy

Others' successes came over time



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Economic Development

5. Strengthen Warsaw's agricultural sector

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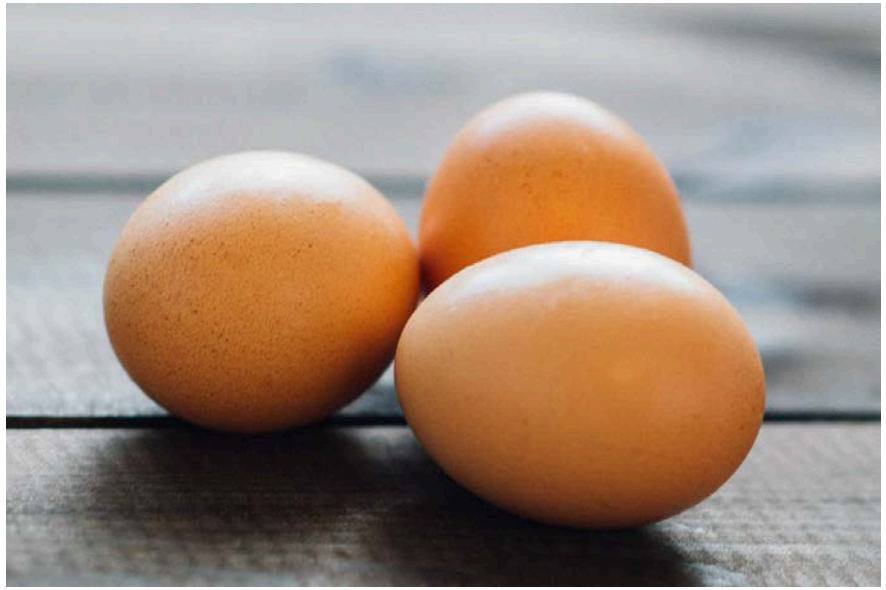
5. What

Develop production agriculture, agribusiness industries



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5. Why

Existing strength

Diversify local economy

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6. Evaluate local economic development capacity

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6. What

Assess local ED commitment

- Public and private sectors

Work more closely with Orthoworx

6. Why

Other Peer Cities had different ED models

Build on what exists

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7. Explore formal agreements among KEDCo, chambers of commerce, visitors' bureau

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7. What

Evaluate working relationship options

- Strategic alliance?
- Co-location?
- Contractual relationship?

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7. Why

Findlay's Alliance model

- Chamber
- LEDO
- Visitors' Bureau

Supports collaborative efforts

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8. Visit corporate HQ of companies with Warsaw locations

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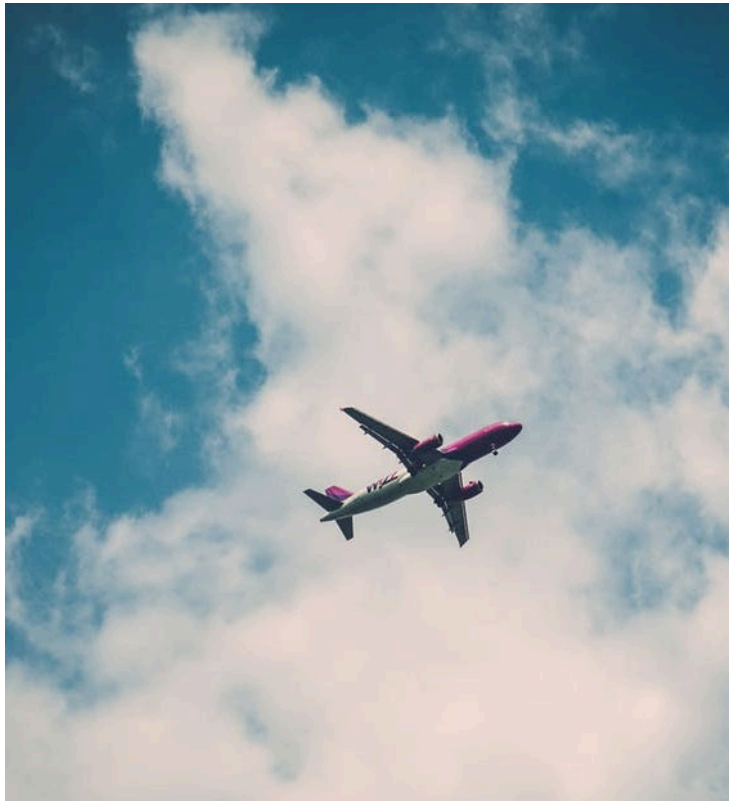
8. What

Develop relationships, including visits from local leaders, with corporate home offices

Demonstrate Warsaw's value



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8. Why

Shows why Warsaw investments critical to company's health

Findlay visits these offices

- Many foreign auto suppliers

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9. Leverage tourism potential

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9. What

Warsaw's natural, outdoor resources key asset

Increasing tourism focus

Interest in creating new activities

- Especially winter

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9. Why

Lakes, multiuse trails mentioned as community strength

Today's visitors may become tomorrow's residents

Economic development

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10. Enhance entrepreneurial supports

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10. What

Support entrepreneurs and entrepreneurial ecosystem

- Emphasis on key industries

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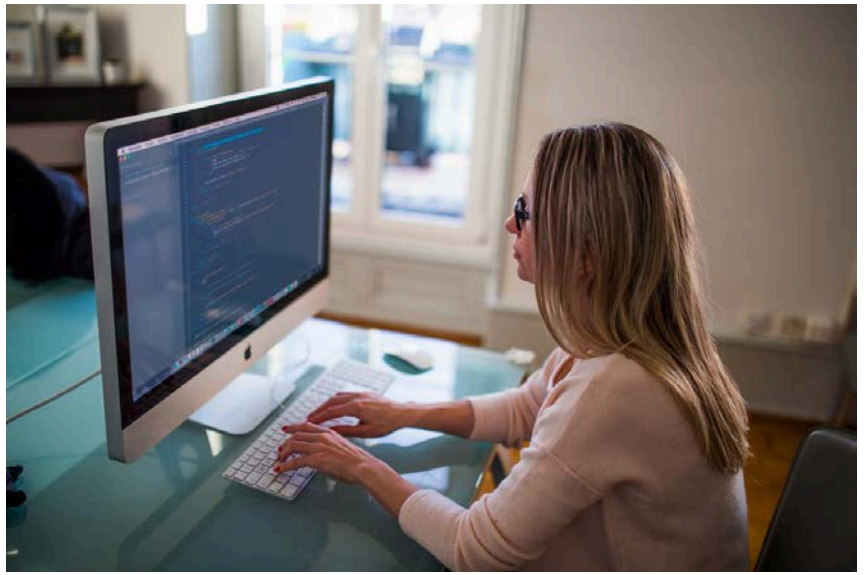
10. Why

"Grow your own"

People with existing roots

Enhance local clusters

Interest in entrepreneurship in Peer Cities



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11. Advance Warsaw's identity

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11. What

Local brand

Opportunities with Regional Partnership's Make It Your Own

11. Why

Came up during SWOT-PEST analysis

- Respondents didn’t think Warsaw was known for much

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12. Develop a boutique hotel open to public

WITH CONFERENCE, EVENT SPACE

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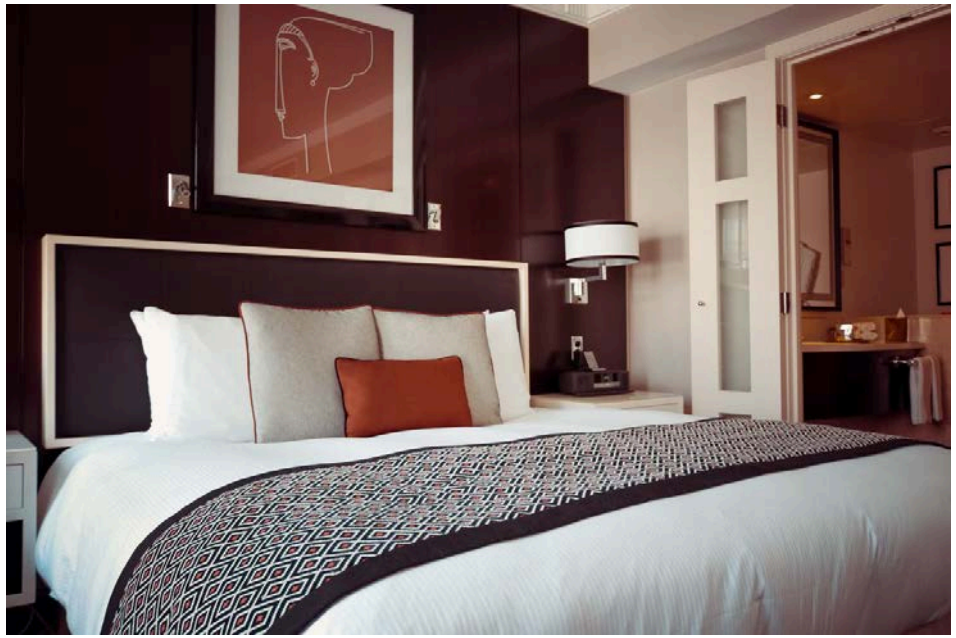
12. What

Full-service hotel (usually less than 100 rooms)

- Located downtown
- Distinctive character

Appeal for business and leisure clientele



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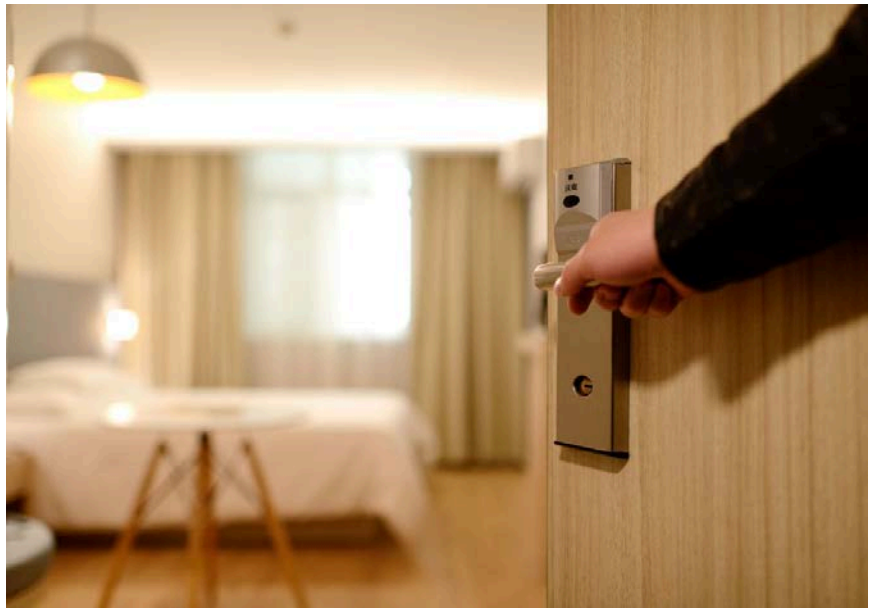
12. Why

Very popular in large metros

- Growing popularity in smaller cities
- Many Peer Cities had one

Quality of place feature for tourism, business clients



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13. Explore a land trust for future development

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13. What

Land-trust model to own property for future development

- Commercial
- Mixed-use
- Residential

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13. Why

Used in Fort Wayne, Benton Harbor, Greenville, S.C.

Ownership provides control for future projects

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Talent

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14. Continue support of educational, training programs and opportunities

THAT CONNECT TO WORKFORCE NEEDS

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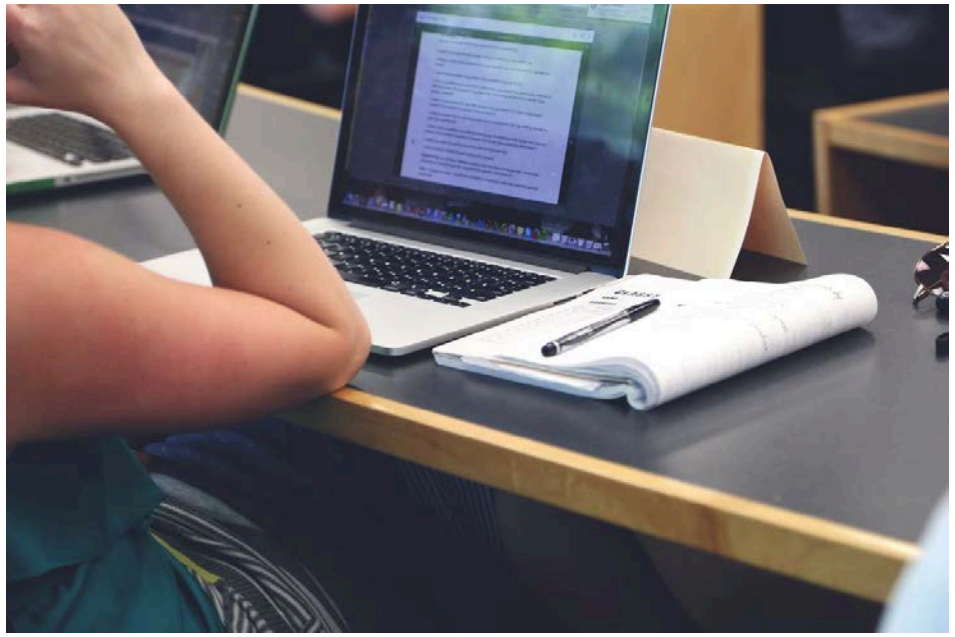
14. What

Existing programs performing well

Meet the current, future need for the skilled workforce



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14. Why

Strong support of existing programs at Ivy Tech, Grace College at SWOT-PEST

Workforce needs not ending anytime soon

15. Create talent attraction programs that connect job candidates and their families

TO WARSAW EMPLOYMENT, LIFESTYLE PROSPECTS

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15. What

Programs that introduce job candidates to Warsaw

- Include the “trailing” spouse/partner
- During job interview
- After placement?

Structured on HR principles

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15. Why

Challenge to recruit highly educated talent to Warsaw

Need to consider spouse, partner

- Probably equally skilled

Programs in Findlay, Benton Harbor

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16. Connect second-home property owners to Warsaw

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16. What

People with summer, second homes in Warsaw may have interest in being full-time residents

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16. Why

Many people already associated with local lake community

- Opportunities for employment, community engagement

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Community Development

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17. Update comprehensive countywide land use plan

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17. What

Create comprehensive land use plan for all jurisdictions

Engage community in process to help build countywide vision

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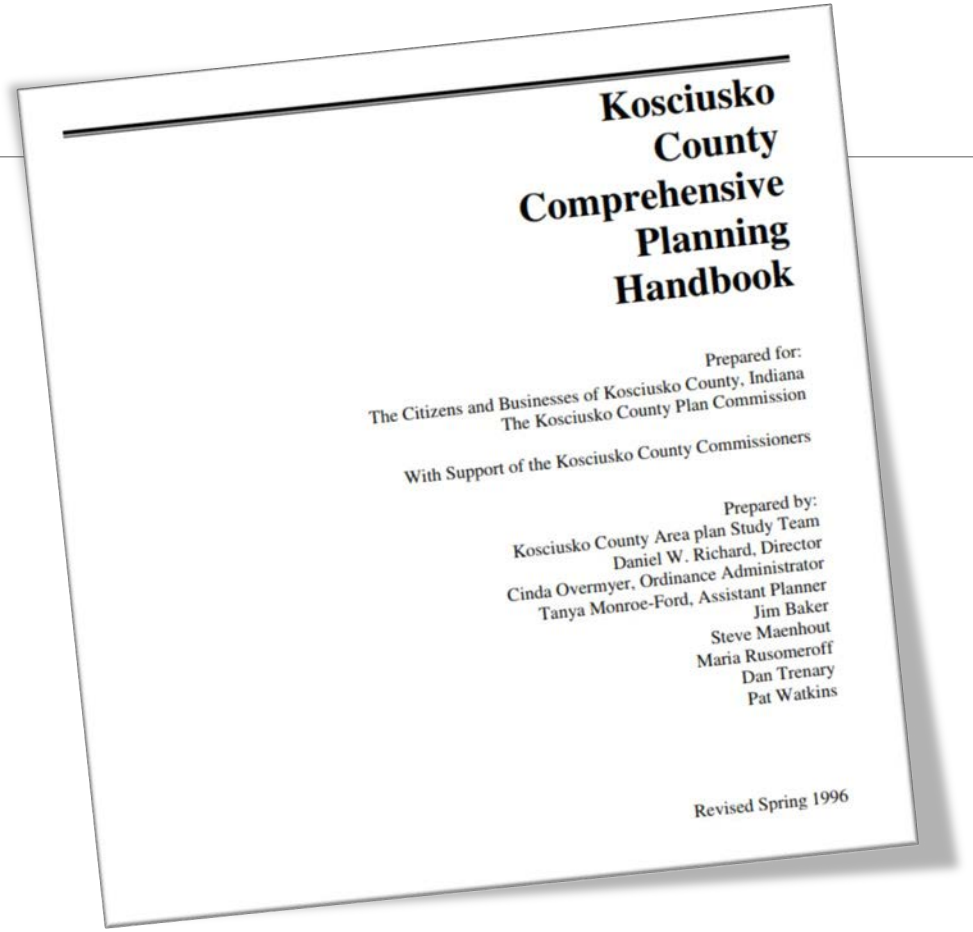
17. Why

No such plan exists

Will guide future growth, development

Existing Kosciusko County plan last updated in 1996



Kosciusko County Comprehensive Planning Handbook

Prepared for:
The Citizens and Businesses of Kosciusko County, Indiana
The Kosciusko County Plan Commission

With Support of the Kosciusko County Commissioners

Prepared by:
Kosciusko County Area plan Study Team
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Jim Baker
Steve Maenhout
Maria Rusomeroff
Dan Trenary
Pat Watkins

Revised Spring 1996

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18. Create an Economic Improvement District

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18. What

Indiana statute permits special-use districts, authorized by property owners

- Typically downtown

Collects assessments for projects, marketing

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18. Why

Dedicated funding source

Way to enhance downtowns

Successfully used in Fort Wayne, Evansville

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19. Develop new housing options

INCLUDING HIGHER-END APARTMENTS AND MARKET-RATE SINGLE FAMILY HOMES

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19. What

Housing needs identified in SWOT-PEST analysis

- Owner-occupied single family
- Higher-end apartments

Opportunity for housing study

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19. Why

Housing needs consistent theme from Peer Cities

Study may help attract developers, builders

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What's next for KEDCo?

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Thoughts and comments

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