



# VISION & STRATEGY

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### A Global Innovation Economy

As a result of the study process and review of the project portfolio, a vision for Northern Indiana emerged. Northern Indiana is a knowledge-driven, highly connected region that serves and provides access to a global innovation economy. We will be recognized for our world-class higher education and community partnerships, superior access and connectivity, and high-performing communities. Northern Indiana is the proud home of Notre Dame, and will become a region of connected innovation hubs.

The region will achieve this vision by creating a formal “Innovation District Network” (figure 22) effectively linking and coordinating high-value regional city assets, development projects and innovation hubs. Specifically, the region will build upon its legacy industry base, technology

knowledge and capabilities, as well as the strengths of institutions of higher education to retain, attract and create new employment opportunities, increase wages and overall productivity. This network will require and bolster place-based investments designed to both retain and attract the talent needed to grow and sustain the region’s economy.

Based on the region’s existing assets, the nature of the projects proposed, and goals expressed by industry, community and private sector leaders, building upon Northern Indiana’s innovation capacity offers a logical approach for sustained economic opportunity.

FIGURE 22

### THE NORTHERN INDIANA INNOVATION DISTRICT NETWORK



Source: Regional Cities of Northern Indiana

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For the purposes of the RCNI application, the regional network will consist of innovation hub cities, along with Notre Dame, within Elkhart, St. Joseph and Marshall counties:

- Elkhart
- Goshen
- Mishawaka
- Nappanee
- Notre Dame
- Plymouth
- South Bend

Each hub will have at least one formally defined District (generally the central business district and adjacent neighborhoods) targeted for ongoing investment and programming. Beyond the RCNI application and for broader regional planning purposes, there are several adjacent communities in Kosciusko and LaPorte counties and Southwest Michigan that will link in to the greater innovation ecosystem.

The region will leverage and connect activities and investments within these hubs to create higher-wage jobs; attract, develop and retain talent and residents; and create density in terms of both population and deal-flow from innovation activities. These activities, in turn, will generate more innovation, investment and businesses. This will be achieved by leveraging, developing and connecting regional Innovation Districts; expanding innovation resources to conduct R&D for existing and new regional industries; generating spin-outs, startups

and small business growth; and establishing industry partnerships that will attract or develop headquarters and executive functions within the region. The activities will support the existing manufacturing base to increase efficiencies and provide expansion into new markets.

Northern Indiana's Innovation District Network and quality of place investments will expand upon and link an existing diverse asset base of industry, education, placemaking and economic development organizations, resources, infrastructure and projects (figure 23). By linking these assets and filling gaps with Regional Cities investments, Northern Indiana's formal innovation ecosystem and enhanced community amenities will position the region as a major participant in the global marketplace.

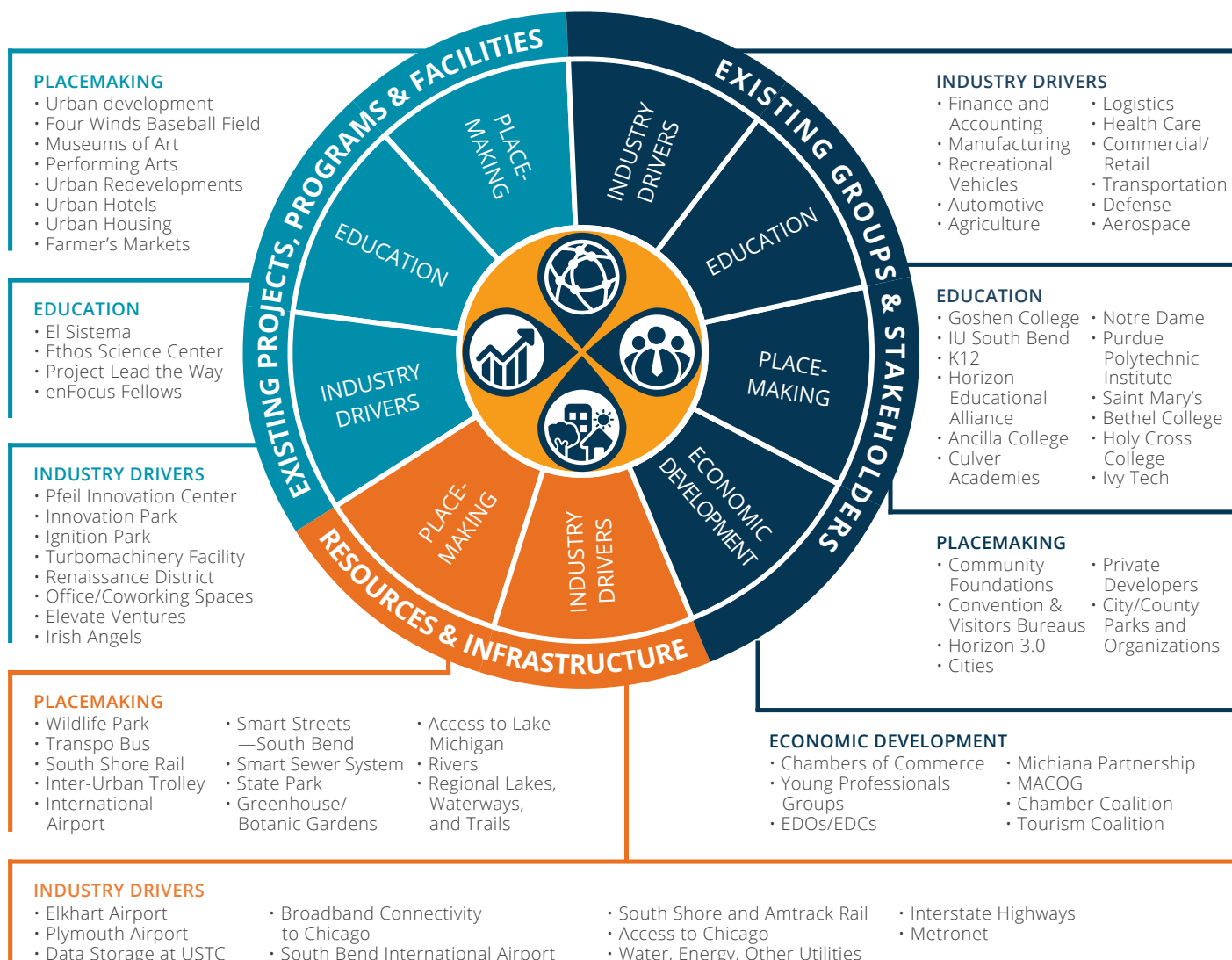
There is a particular objective to further leverage and enhance Northern Indiana's manufacturing base. For instance, there is interest to engage legacy companies such as those within the recreational vehicle (RV) manufacturing sector to determine where new market opportunities and areas to innovate may exist. The ongoing convergence of diverse industry sectors may present opportunities for embedded technologies that are currently unique to the RV industry but could be applied to products or industry sectors. This may be true for other sectors and businesses important to the region.

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Local manufacturers can also leverage tools such as locally developed supplier IQ<sup>[28]</sup> to identify new customers and suppliers. SupplierIQ is a multi-industry business matchmaking platform, designed to improve sourcing decisions, enhance sales growth and promote regional economic success. These opportunities will also generate growth and innovation. Beyond the initial project portfolio identified as part of the RCI opportunity, it is anticipated that ongoing projects, services and programming will be developed.

FIGURE 23

### NORTHERN INDIANA'S INDUSTRY, EDUCATION, PLACEMAKING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ASSET MAP



Source: *Regional Cities of Northern Indiana*

[28] <https://www.supplieriq.us/>