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# Economic Development Strategy

## Miami County, Indiana



July 2006

# Economic Development Strategy

Miami County, Indiana

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Miami County Economic Development Authority

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- 1.0 Introduction .....1
  - 1.1 Process.....1
  - 1.2 Assessment of Opportunities.....2
  
- 2.0 Economic Base Assessment.....3
  - 2.1 Industrial Sectors.....3
    - 2.1.1 Key Industrial Sectors – Regional View.....3
    - 2.1.2 Key Industrial Sectors - Miami County View .....4
    - 2.1.3 Manufacturing – Regional View .....6
    - 2.1.4 Manufacturing - Miami County View .....7
  - 2.2 Employment.....8
    - 2.2.1 Major Employers.....8
    - 2.2.2 Employment Trends.....8
    - 2.2.3 Unemployment.....10
    - 2.2.4 Employment Projections .....10
  - 2.3 Education & Skills Base.....13
    - 2.3.1 Education Trends.....14
  
- 3.0 Community Asset Assessment.....16
  - 3.1 Peru .....16
  - 3.2 Converse .....16
  - 3.3 Bunker Hill .....17
  - 3.4 Denver .....17
  - 3.5 Mexico .....17
  - 3.6 Chili and Sante Fe .....18
  
- 4.0 Economic Opportunities Assessment.....19
  - 4.1 Reconnaissance .....19
  - 4.2 Industry Clusters.....19
    - 4.2.1 Miami County Regional Clusters .....20
    - 4.2.2 Miami County Local Clusters .....21
  - 4.3 Miami County Supply Chain Overview .....21
    - 4.3.1 Inputs.....21
    - 4.3.2 Outputs .....22
  - 4.4 Local Manufacturing Labor Force.....22
    - 4.4.1 Source of Labor .....22

- 4.4.2 Existing Skill Base .....23
- 4.4.3 Key Industrial Skill Requirements .....23
- 4.5 Advantages & Disadvantages .....24
  - 4.5.1 Advantages (Strengths) .....24
  - 4.5.2 Disadvantages (Weaknesses) .....25
- 4.6 Key Industry Opportunities .....27
  - 4.6.1 Advanced Logistics .....27
  - 4.6.2 Agriculture & Bio-Fuel Technologies .....28
  - 4.6.3 Tourism .....30
  - 4.6.4 Regional Spin-Off Supply .....30
  - 4.6.5 Aircraft Maintenance & Re-Manufacturing .....32
  - 4.6.6 General Targets .....32
- 5.0 Development Opportunities Assessment .....33
  - 5.1 Overall Observations by Existing Industries .....33
  - 5.2 Individual Industrial Park Assessments .....34
    - 5.2.1 Peru Industrial Park .....34
    - 5.2.2 North Miami Industrial Park .....35
    - 5.2.3 Grissom Aeroplex .....37
    - 5.2.4 North US 31/24 Industrial Development Area .....38
- 6.0 Economic Development Vision .....39
- 7.0 Economic Development Recommendations .....41
  - 7.1 Key Strategic Future Development Areas Overview .....43
  - 7.2 US 31/24 Corridor Opportunity Area .....45
    - 7.2.1 US 31/24 Corridor Opportunity Area Development Concept .....46
    - 7.2.2 US 31/24 Corridor Opportunity Area Development Phasing .....47
  - 7.3 Grissom Aeroplex .....53
  - 7.4 Business 31 Peru Gateway .....56
  - 7.5 Peru Industrial Park .....57
- 8.0 Economic Development Strategies and Action Plan .....58

## 1.0 Introduction

On July 1, 2005, Miami County’s two principal economic development organizations, the Grissom Redevelopment Authority and Peru/Miami County Economic Development Corporation, consolidated into one collaborative economic development entity of benefit to the entire county. This consolidation of resources and efforts created the need and opportunity to craft a new comprehensive economic development vision and strategy for the newly formed entity, the Miami County Economic Development Authority (MCEDA).

The following document presents a broad vision and strategy that offers MCEDA the opportunity to take maximum benefit from the staff, program and property assets of the combined organization. The document provides an overall vision, direction and framework for action to guide the economic betterment of all Miami County well into the future.

### 1.1 Process

MCEDA began the development of the Economic Development Strategy in the Fall of 2005. MCEDA empanelled a project steering committee composed of various community-wide interests to work with MCEDA staff and planning consultants, HNTB and Randall Gross/Development Economics. Regular meetings of the Steering Committee guided the assessment of existing conditions and the identification of alternatives and final recommendations. Consultant research, observations and one of one interviews with major employers and key officials grounded the base line analysis for the project. Public information meetings at key project milestone points in March and May 2006 provided additional guidance and input to the effort.

The following document presents the findings of the Steering Committee. The document presents a baseline assessment, vision, and a series of broad strategies and action plan for the continued economic growth and betterment of Miami County, Indiana.

#### Steering Committee Members

<u>Name</u>	<u>Representation</u>
Michael Bakehorn	American Stationery
Denise Day	Peru/Miami County Chamber of Commerce
Carmine Gentile	Maconaquah Schools
Gary Hawley	Miami County Commissioner
Gary Horner	Purdue Extension Service
Kurt Krauskopf	Bryan Steam/City Council
Roger Merriman	Peru Utilities
Shirley Mull	Miami County Council
Chuck Oldfather	Carriger/Oldfather Realty/Board of Realtors
Steve Reiff	Town of Converse Economic Development
Terry W. Smith	Rock Industries/ Chamber
Jim Walker	Mayor- City of Peru
Larry West	Square D

## 1.2 Assessment of Opportunities

An important objective of this Economic Development Strategy is to develop approaches for increasing employment opportunities for Miami County residents. The county is still feeling the impacts of the BRAC '91 decision to close Grissom Air Force Base, which reduced the county's employment and overall economic base. It is also important to develop strategies to assist existing businesses expand and to recruit and attract new businesses that build on Miami County's competitive advantages as a location for industrial development.

The following pages of this report provide assessments and recommendations organized into the following sections:

Economic Base Assessment –A brief overview of the county's economic base and its positioning within the region, in terms of its industrial sectors, employment, education, community assets, and other factors.

Community Assets Assessment – A review of the relative strengths and weaknesses of existing communities in Miami County and how they support or detract from economic betterment goals.

Economic Opportunities Assessment –Findings from an economic opportunities assessment that analyzed inputs from field reconnaissance and business interviews, and focused on industrial clusters, supply chain factors, labor force & skills base, and overall strengths and weaknesses in an assessment of the county's competitive advantages for attracting certain industries.

Development Opportunities Assessment - Findings of a review of the physical assets of existing industrial parks and recommendations to sustain and improve long term viability of these assets. This section also presents recommendations for expansions to these industrial parks and the creation of future employment centers in Miami County.



Miami County features a number of economic assets including a diverse employment base and attractive communities such as Peru, Indiana shown above.

## 2.0 Economic Base Assessment

This section provides an overview of the Miami County economic base, in terms of key businesses, industry sectors, employment trends, and community assets. Labor force education and skills base are also assessed, and issues are identified that area addressed through program and policy recommendations in this Economic Development Strategy.

### 2.1 Industrial Sectors

The key industrial sectors in north central Indiana and Miami County are discussed below and are illustrated in the charts on the following page in order to provide some context on the mix of industries driving the regional and local economies.

#### 2.1.1 Key Industrial Sectors – Regional View

In 2000, manufacturing was the main economic driver in north-central Indiana, accounting for more than 40% of all jobs. By comparison, manufacturing accounted for just 18% of jobs nationwide in 2000 (falling to only 12% by 2005).

Together with retail trade (23%) and services (22%), these three sectors account for close to 90% of all jobs in the north-central Indiana region. The health of retail trade is in large measure tied to income generated through the other sectors, and the regional economy is heavily dependent on manufacturing as a source of that income.

Other employers in the region include government (4%) and construction (3%). None of the others generates more than 2.0% of the region’s employment base. And while the region is perceived to be largely rural in character, with a large agricultural land base, only 1.0% of the region’s employment is in agriculture.

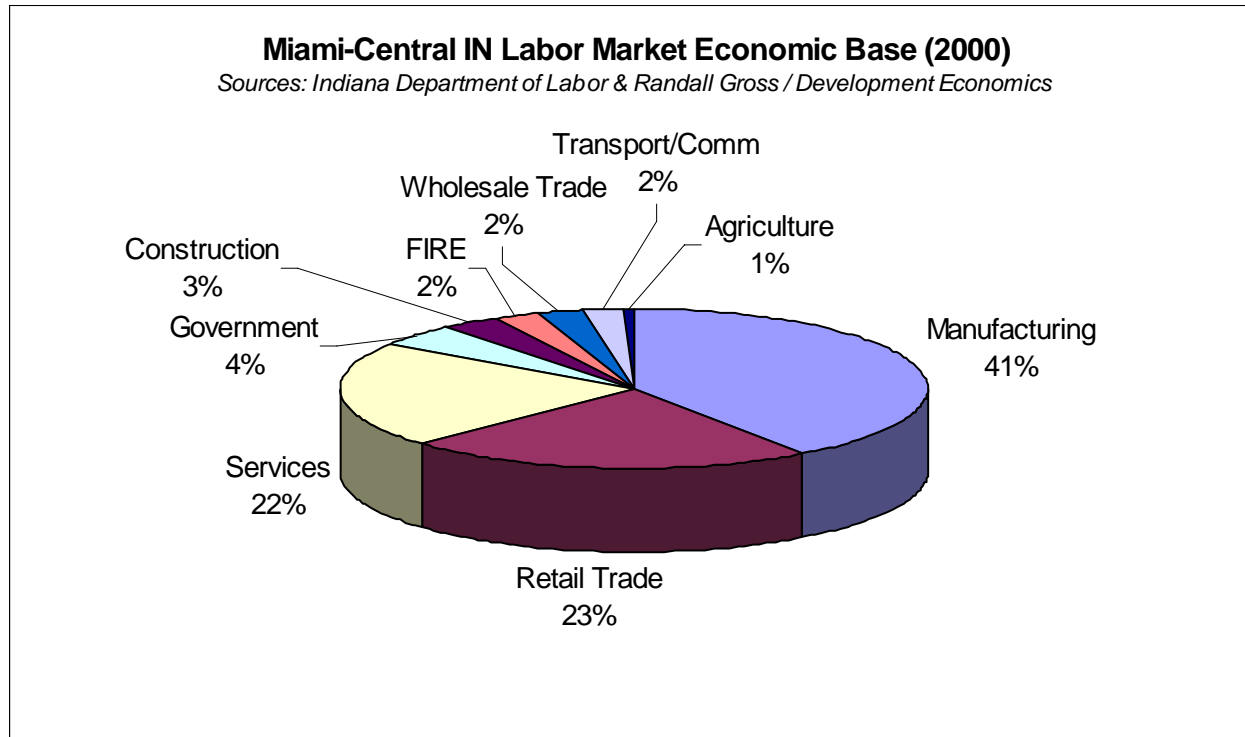
Chart 1 on the following page shows the distribution of the Miami County/Central Indiana Labor Market Economic Base in 2000.



Miami County features a diversity of manufacturing concerns including, from top to bottom, Square D, Heraeus Electro-Nite and Woodcrest Manufacturing



Chart 1



**2.1.2 Key Industrial Sectors - Miami County View**

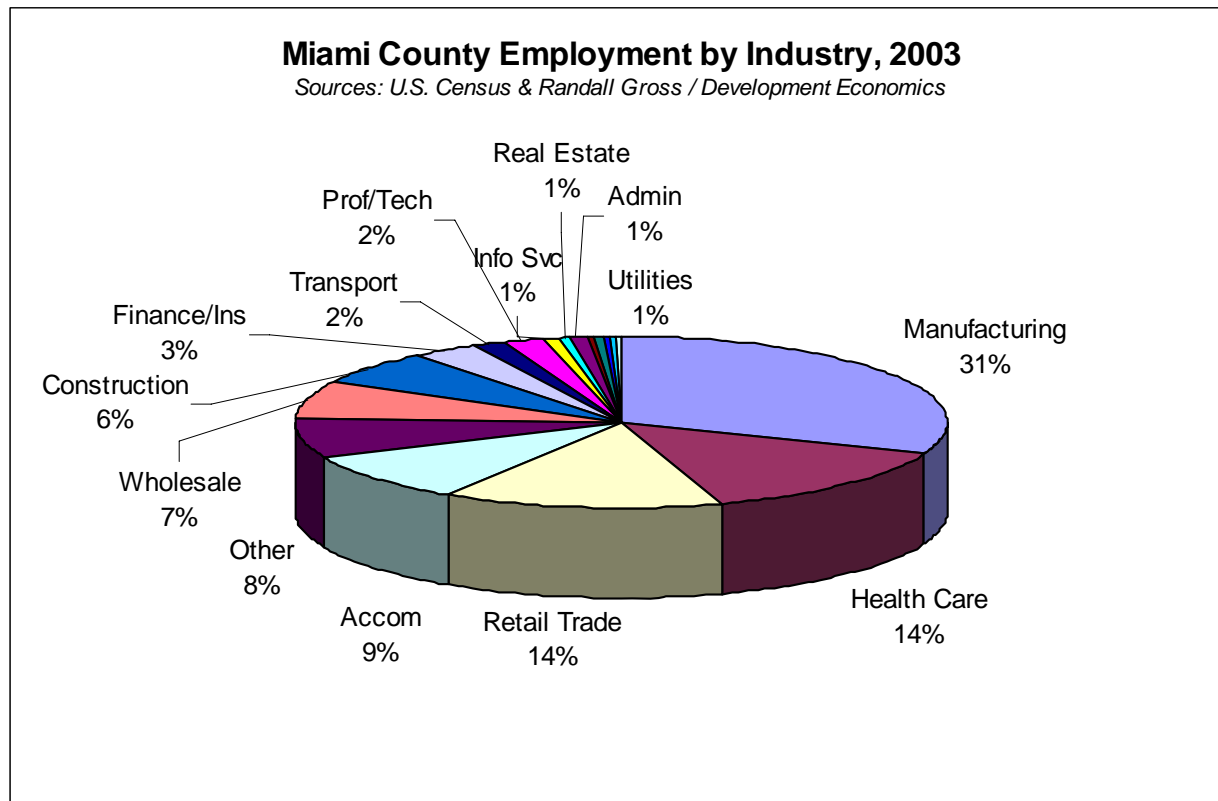
Miami County is a relatively rural county in the north-central Indiana region. While agriculture is the largest land use, the county’s economy is driven primarily by manufacturing, health care, retail, and tourism/accommodations. These four economic sectors accounted for almost 70% of all jobs in the county in 2003.



Other important employment sectors included wholesale trade, construction, and finance. Many of the county’s farmers and agricultural landowners hold primary jobs in other industries. Agricultural & food processing is included in the manufacturing sector and accounts for about 4.0% of all jobs in the county. Thus, even though agriculture is not a major “direct” employer, it is part of a larger cluster of related industries that includes food manufacturing, transportation, and wholesale trade.

Chart 2 below shows the distribution of employment by industry in Miami County in 2003.

**Chart 2**

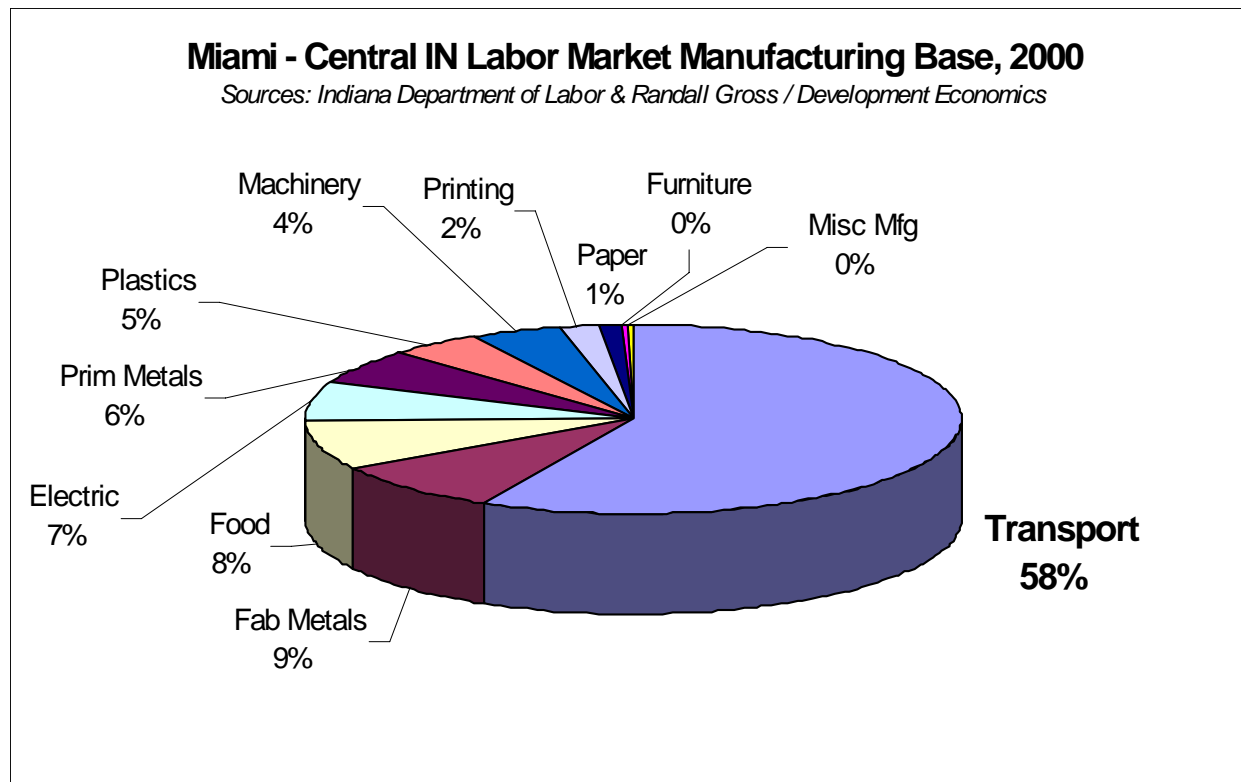


While manufacturing is the single largest sector of employment in Miami County, the county is less dependent on manufacturing in comparison to the Central Indiana labor market as a whole.

### 2.1.3 Manufacturing – Regional View

If the region’s overall economic base is dependent on manufacturing, its manufacturing base is even more concentrated in the transportation sector. Transportation equipment manufacturing accounts for almost 60% of all manufacturing in the region (and thus, almost one-quarter of all jobs). As a result, the region is highly dependent on jobs in this industry. Chart 3 below illustrates the distribution of manufacturing jobs by sector for the region as a whole.

Chart 3



Manufacturing of transportation equipment has concentrated in this region for a variety of reasons, including the strategic location near Detroit’s automobile companies and within the “automotive corridor” extending south from Detroit into Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Alabama. This corridor has attracted vehicle manufacturing facilities over decades thanks to its central location and logistical advantages for distribution throughout the U.S.

Other manufacturing industries in the region include those that supply the transportation equipment industry (such as fabricated metals, electronics, primary metals, plastics, and machinery) as well as food, printing, and paper.

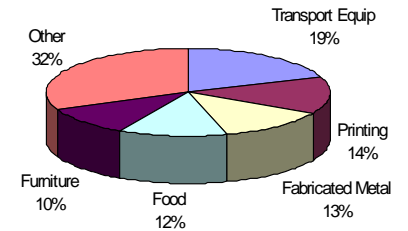
**2.1.4 Manufacturing - Miami County View**

Miami County is *much less dependent* on vehicle manufacturing than the region as a whole. Still, transportation equipment is the largest manufacturing industry in the county and represents about 19% of manufacturing employment, with about 500 jobs. Almost two-thirds of Miami County manufacturing is concentrated in the transportation equipment, printing, fabricated metal, food, and furniture industries. Printing & publishing has 14% of employment, followed by fabricated metals (13%), food (12%), and furniture (10%). Chart 4 to the right illustrates the distribution of manufacturing employment by sector for Miami County.

Other industries represented in Miami County’s manufacturing base include rubber products, electrical equipment, machinery, steel, chemicals, wood products, computer equipment, textiles & apparel, and others.

**Chart 4**

**Miami County Manufacturing Base, 2003**



Miami County’s manufacturing base is far more diverse and evenly distributed than the surrounding region. Five sectors, transportation equipment, printing, fabricated metal, food and furniture production, account for nearly 70% of Miami County’s manufacturing base.

Other industries comprise 32% of the manufacturing base and include rubber products, electrical equipment, machinery, steel, chemicals, wood products, computer equipment, textiles, and apparel.

## 2.2 Employment

The county’s labor force & employment base is summarized on the following pages in terms of its major employers and employment trends by industry sector. Regional employment projections are also discussed as relevant to the county.

### 2.2.1 Major Employers

The county’s major employers include primarily manufacturing companies, producing a broad range of products in a variety of industries ranging from food to stationary and transportation equipment. The largest employers (having over 100 employees) are listed in the table to the right.

These employers represent approximately 2,150 or almost 28% of the county’s 7,680 non-government jobs. Thus, small businesses having less than 100 employees represent 72% of the county’s private employment.

### 2.2.2 Employment Trends

Miami County’s private employment declined by over 200 jobs, or 2.6%, between 1998 and 2003. Twelve of the county’s 19 major economic sectors experienced a drop in employment during this period, which coincides with the tail end of a national economic “boom” as well as the recession of 2001-02. Table 1 on the following page illustrates employment change by specific industry.

Employment fell sharpest in the administrative support, information services, transportation, education, and wholesale trade sectors. The county lost over 100 wholesale jobs, with employment declining by 16.5% in this sector. Administrative support saw the sharpest percentage job loss, 64.2%, declining from 123 to 44 workers.

On the positive side, employment increased in professional and technical services, real estate, health care, lodging, and certain other services. Professional / technical services saw the fastest increase, at 34.7%, adding 35 jobs during the five-year period. However, county’s health care industry added by far the most jobs (132) yielding a growth rate of 13.8%. Health care expanded to almost 1,100 jobs during this period, making it the second largest sector in the county after manufacturing.

### Major Employers

<u>Employer</u>	<u>Employees</u>
Square D Company	+/-520
ConAgra Foods	+/-400
American Stationary	+/-300
Trelleborg Automotive	+/-220
Bryan Steam	+/-170
Timberland RV Company	+/-170
Heraeus Electro-Nite Company	+/-160
Snavelly Machine	+/-110
Western Reman Industrial	+/-100

**Table 1: At-Place Employment Trends by Sector, Miami County 1998-2003**

Industry	1998	2003	1998-2003 Change	
			Number	Percent
Agriculture	10	10	N/A	N/A
Mining	60	19	N/A	N/A
Utilities	40	40	N/A	N/A
Construction	517	487	(30)	-5.8%
Manufacturing	2,435	2,391	(44)	-1.8%
Wholesale Trade	626	523	(103)	-16.5%
Retail Trade	1,098	1,063	(35)	-3.2%
Transportation/Warehousing	192	137	(55)	-28.6%
Information	119	64	(55)	-46.2%
Finance/Insurance	267	263	(4)	-1.5%
Real Estate	52	62	10	19.2%
Prof/Tech Services	101	136	35	34.7%
Mgt Services	40	10	N/A	N/A
Admin Support	123	44	(79)	-64.2%
Education	29	24	(5)	-17.2%
Health Care	956	1,088	132	13.8%
Arts/Entertainment/Recreation	38	37	(1)	-2.6%
Accommodations	702	728	26	3.7%
Other	487	583	96	19.7%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7,892</b>	<b>7,684</b>	<b>(208)</b>	<b>-2.6%</b>

Note: N/A means Not Applicable.

Sources: US Census; Randall Gross / Dev. Economics.

Health care is a growing employer nationally, thanks to a combination of an aging population, longer life spans, constantly improving medical technologies, and expanding service options. Health care employment is often concentrated in communities that are centers for regional health services, such as in Kokomo. Peru serves as the health care hub for Miami County and surrounding areas.

While manufacturing suffered nationally during the recent recession, employment in this sector fell by only 1.8% (a loss of 44 jobs) in Miami County during the 1998 to 2003 period. Manufacturing still dominates the local economy, with almost 2,400 jobs.

### 2.2.3 Unemployment

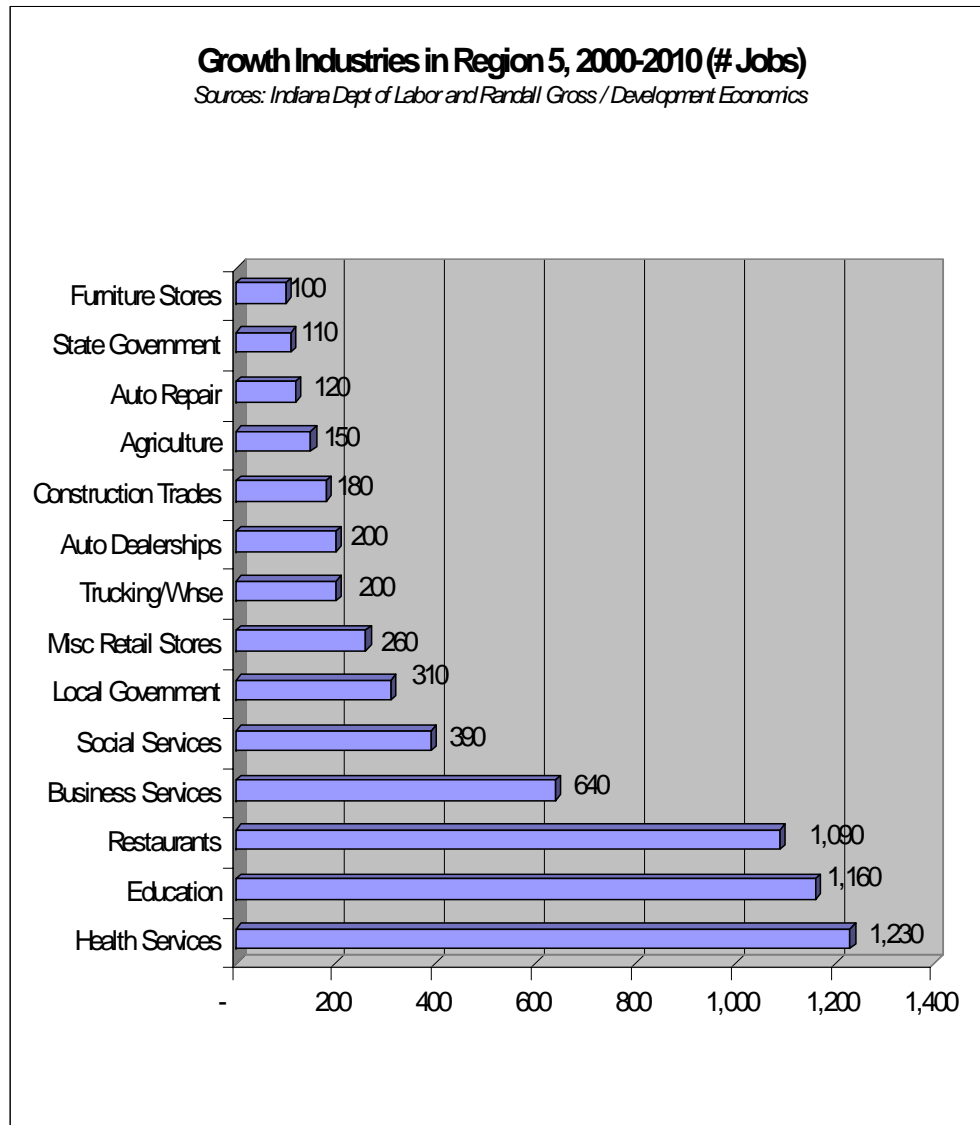
The Kokomo labor market, of which Miami County is associated, had an unemployment rate of almost 6.0% as of November 2005, the third highest of 14 labor markets in the state. Only Anderson and Terre Haute had higher unemployment rates at that time. The healthiest labor markets included Columbus, Lafayette, and Elkhart-Goshen, all of which had unemployment in the 4.3% range.

### 2.2.4 Employment Projections

Employment projections for Region 5 (north-central region including Miami County) have been produced for the 2000 to 2010 period by the Indiana Department of Labor (DOL). The State is projecting significant job growth during this period in health care, education, restaurants, and business services.

The region is expected to gain over 1,200 health care jobs during this ten-year period, which would seem consistent with recent health care growth in Miami County alone. The region would also gain almost 1,200 education jobs, 1,100 restaurant jobs, and 640 business services jobs. More modest growth is expected in social services, local government, miscellaneous retail stores, trucking & warehousing, and automotive dealerships. Overall projections for growth industries are shown in the following chart, based on the Indiana Department of Labor data through 2010. Chart 5 on the following page illustrates the projected job growth for Region 5 as estimated by the Indiana Department of Labor.

Chart 5



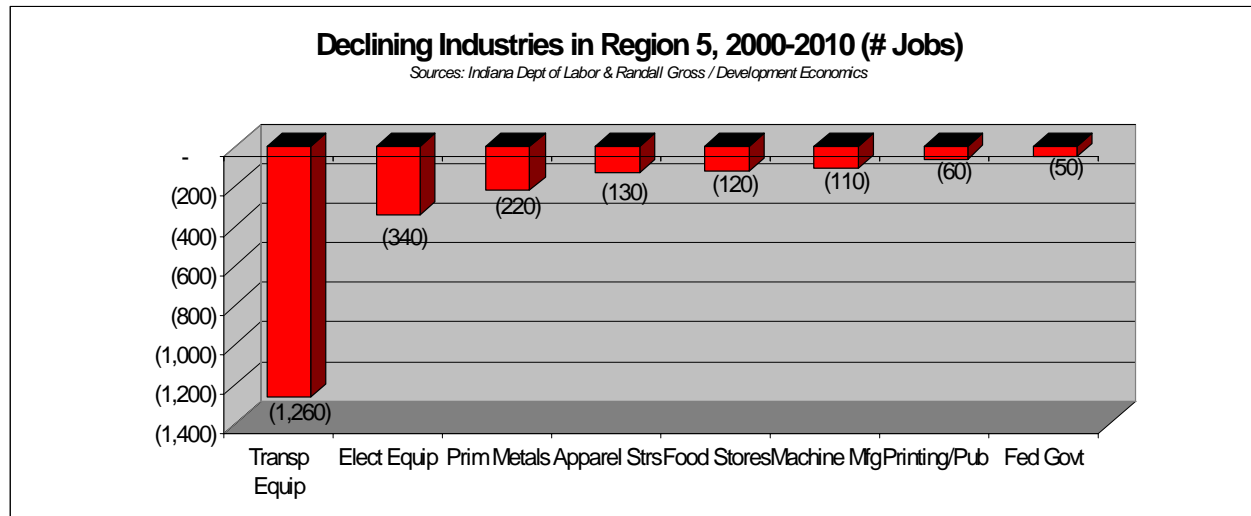
Health Services is the sector that is projected to grow the most through 2010 in the area followed by education services, restaurants, and business services according to the Indiana Department of Labor.



There are also several industries for which DOL is projecting declining employment. Most of these losses are expected in the manufacturing sector. Of particular concern is the transportation equipment industry, where the outlook is bleak: losses of almost 1,300 jobs are expected by the state through 2010. The region’s dependency on transportation equipment manufacturing will not help buffer it from cutbacks that could exceed this number should Chrysler decide to reduce its Kokomo operations.

Additional manufacturing job losses are expected in the electrical/electronic equipment, primary metals, machinery, and printing & publishing industries. Not coincidentally, most of these industries are in direct support to transportation equipment manufacturing. Non-manufacturing job losses are projected in apparel & food retail stores and in the federal government. The retail losses may be directly related to demographic or income declines resulting from cutbacks in transportation manufacturing. Chart 6 below illustrates the states estimated job losses by sector for Region 5.

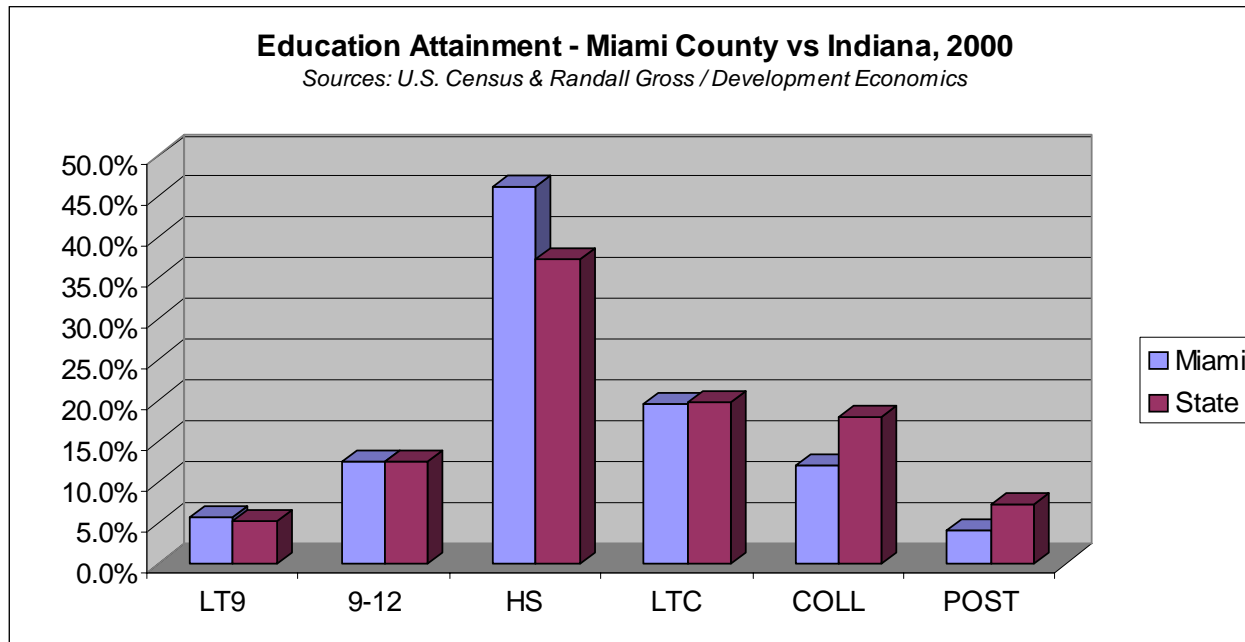
Chart 6



### 2.3 Education & Skills Base

Labor force development is a critical issue for Miami County as part of its economic development efforts. Educational attainment provides a measure of the level to which Miami County can compete for certain types of jobs. While 45% of Miami County’s adults have attained a high school education, the county lags behind the state in higher education. Chart 7 below shows this comparison.

Chart 7



The share of Miami County adults with a college education is relatively low, at about 12% versus the statewide average of almost 20%. The county compares even less favorably on post-graduate education, with 4.0% of Miami County adults having a graduate degree of higher versus

almost twice that share of adults statewide. One reason that Miami County's residents are less likely to have a higher education is the fact that those who leave the county to pursue higher education do not return after they have graduated. The other reason for this disparity is that the employment opportunities are just not available in the county for those with higher levels of education. Regardless of the reasons for this disparity, higher incomes are typically correlated with higher levels of education. So, Miami County incomes will remain lower than average so long as few of the county's jobs are available for those with higher levels of education.

### 2.3.1 Education Trends

Over time, Miami County has garnered an *increasing* share of the state's population with less than a high school education, and a *declining* share of the state's population with college or post-graduate education. In other words, the disparity in education levels is increasing over time. Chart 8 on the following page shows this trend.

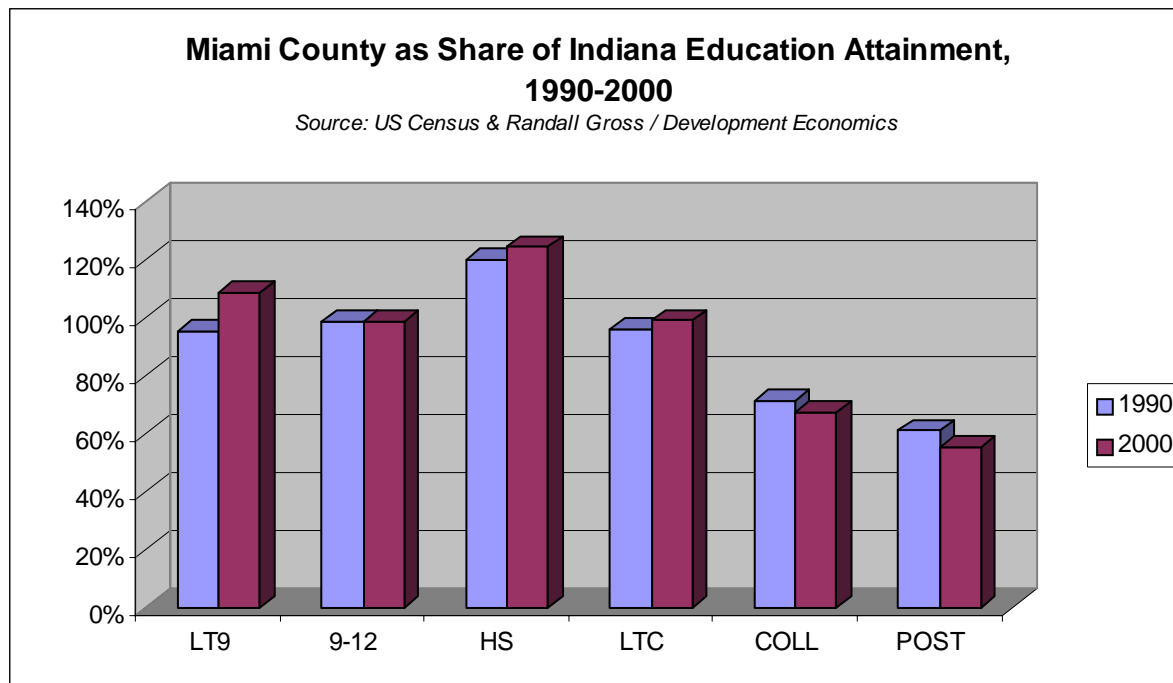
It is not necessarily the case that this increasing disparity results from an under-performing school system. Rather, the case could be made that there is a vicious circle where a lack of educated workers results in less opportunities to attract certain professional businesses, which in turn results in fewer educated workers. The businesses that do locate in the county tend to be much more dependent on a modest-, low- and unskilled labor force who lack the resources to "move up" into higher skilled jobs.

The vast majority of the county's workers have a high school diploma. However, almost 20% of adults (4,300 people in Miami County) lack even a high school degree either because they never completed high school or due to circumstances that kept them from making it that far. Where there are low- and modest-wage jobs that need to be filled, local employers generally have to recruit from this low-educational attainment group. These under-educated workers are often associated with a series of personal and workforce issues, such as:

- Lack of ability to read or write
- Lack of ability to understand English as a second language

- Lack of ability to do simple math or measuring
- Substance abuse
- Family & personal problems
- Health ailments and physical constraints
- Mental diseases or disorders
- Lack of day care or youth services
- Lack of transportation, and others

Chart 8



### 3.0 Community Asset Assessment

Miami County’s existing community assets and conditions were examined as they relate to the overall economic base and the competitiveness of each community for certain economic activities. Findings from this assessment are summarized on the following pages according to each community.

#### 3.1 Peru

Peru is the County Seat and largest city in Miami County. As such, it is the county’s hub for government, health care, finance, trade, and professional services. The city has a relatively diverse manufacturing base and is home to several Industrial Parks (see detailed analysis of industrial assets elsewhere in this report) and a growing industrial employment base. The city also has a small tourism industry, with a circus museum / festival and several other attractions. Hotels report relatively high occupancy (75 to 80%, compared to 65% national averages), and have been successful in attracting meetings to town. Peru has relatively diverse housing stock, including some high amenity executive golf-oriented housing, as well as more affordable housing in town and nearby (at Grissom).

While Peru does have a busy downtown with several architecturally and historically significant buildings, it has a relatively limited retail base. Downtown Peru’s retail mix and overall shopping environment has only marginal existing appeal to consumers. The city has not attracted significant destination shopping as yet. This could be considered a crucial deficiency for attracting businesses, which are more likely to locate where such amenities exist.

#### 3.2 Converse

Considering its size and its relatively isolated location, Converse appears to have a healthy economy as exemplified by its busy little business district. The business community in converse appears to be relatively diverse, with some primary industries (agriculture and manufacturing), as well as finance, insurance, real estate (FIRE); retail and wholesale trade (including seed suppliers); and other services. Converse is home to a fairly substantial new bank headquarters,



Downtown Peru offers the potential to establish a vibrant mix of activities and amenities of benefit to the area as a whole.

and has several small but friendly downtown parks and public spaces. The community is oriented to its agricultural environs, but is not a slow or sleepy little town.

### 3.3 Bunker Hill

Bunker Hill's small business district, in contrast to that of Converse, is clearly in need of economic betterment. This community was heavily dependent on activity at Grissom Air Force Base and on sales generated by base workers who lived in the area. Not surprisingly, the closure of the base had a devastating impact on Bunker Hill and its business base. More than 10 years after closure, this business district continues to struggle, with a significant amount of vacant and boarded buildings. Bunker Hill, however, is still the most proximate business area to the Grissom Aeroplex and to former base housing areas. As that housing is gradually absorbed back into the market, demand for some retail will grow over time, creating more demand for retail businesses in the Bunker Hill environs.

### 3.4 Denver

On the north side of the county, Denver offers a surprisingly pleasant and appealing "quaint" little business district. Businesses, including a small grocer, are oriented to serving the local community. Since there is limited regional retail in Peru, and it is too far to drive into Peru regularly for convenience purchases, Denver's small business district has thrived and grown. Recreation amenities in the community have also helped make it an appealing place to live and raise a family.

### 3.5 Mexico

Mexico, which is located somewhat closer to US 31 and is more accessible to Peru, has been less successful in maintaining its business base. The community has some convenience uses but otherwise has a high vacancy rate and limited amenity value. Housing in the area is relatively attractive however, and there may be opportunities to re-invigorate the once lively business district.

Many communities in Miami County are hampered by an abundance of vacant buildings and basic infrastructure, such as sidewalks, that are in need of repair, such as shown in the examples below from Peru.



### 3.6 Chili and Sante Fe

Both Chili and Sante Fe are small communities with very limited existing business base. However, like other towns in the county, they have nice housing areas in a rural setting that offer lifestyle and amenity value for those who seek it. Forests, rolling topography, and other natural features along some of the winding roads also add considerable value that sets these areas apart from the open agricultural regions in the southern half of the county.



## 4.0 Economic Opportunities Assessment

This section of the report assessment provides baseline findings on the county’s key opportunities for economic development, with a particular focus on manufacturing and other industrial uses. The assessment is based on various inputs and reconnaissance and includes analysis of existing industrial clusters, supply chain, and labor force characteristics. Relative advantages and disadvantages for locating businesses in Miami County are summarized. Finally, key opportunities are identified based on these inputs.

### 4.1 Reconnaissance

Input to this economic opportunities assessment came from a variety of sources, including interviews with existing businesses in the area, field reconnaissance, and site visits. A cluster analysis was completed to assess the overall existing industry clusters and how they have formed as a result of the area’s competitive economic advantages for those industries. The economic trends analysis and labor market assessment also provided input. Finally, information on the existing real estate market was also used as input to this opportunities assessment.

### 4.2 Industry Clusters

Industrial clusters for the purposes of this analysis are agglomerations of mutually supportive businesses across industries that have formed as a result of an area’s competitive advantages for producing particular products. Hollywood, CA is an example of a cluster, where the film industry and all of its support activities have clustered for mutual benefit. That cluster includes not only film production companies (engaged in the “manufacture” of a motion picture), but also video producers, music recording companies, talent agencies, marketing and advertising agencies, site location specialists, catering companies, transportation & equipment rental agencies, sound & lighting engineers, labor unions, various designers, travel agencies, tour companies, and a host of other activities interrelated with the making and selling of movies.

Tourism is one of the potential growth industries in Miami County due to a number of unique assets including the Peru Circus, Circus Museum, Miami County Museum, Cole Porter residence, Nickel Plate Trail, and many other recreation amenities



Economically, clusters are identified by the share of businesses or employment engaged in that activity as compared with regional or national averages. Where a community or region has a higher than average share (typically 2 to 3 times the average) of business or employment associated with an activity, it can be associated with a clustering effect. Where the cluster exists, there are typically economies of scale in production, supply, and distribution; significant numbers of workers skilled or trained in crafts associated with the activity; research, emerging technologies, and entrepreneurial resources related to the activity; and networking and marketing advantages from being associated with the location. Thus, a cluster indicates existing competitive advantages for existing and new businesses operating from that location.

Another example shows that a modest-sized city like High Point, North Carolina, can benefit from its marketing association with a particular industry cluster (furniture, in that case), which has fed the city's reputation as the hub for that industry. Even though High Point lost its furniture manufacturing base to China and other overseas competitors over time, the city has capitalized on its association with this cluster to establish the world's largest furniture trade show (the Home Furnishings Market) -- a major employer -- and a host of other supportive businesses in the furniture and home furnishings industries.

#### 4.2.1 Miami County Regional Clusters

The north-central Indiana region is a center for advanced transportation equipment manufacturing, with almost four times the national average share of employment and business within this industry and associated spin-off activities. As noted before, however, the region is also more vulnerable to economic downturns as a result of this dependency and the state anticipates a decline in this industry in the near term.

The region also has a cluster in agri-business. While not as significant as transportation, the region's agri-business cluster still has an employment ratio in this region that is 2.5 times the national average. Agri-business includes not only farms and agricultural production so much as it includes the manufacture and/or sale of agricultural equipment, petrochemicals, business services, and agri-products and processes.

Other key regional clusters include education services and advanced materials production. While borderline clusters (at just 2 times the national averages for those activities), there are clearly some existing synergies within these areas that can create opportunities for existing and new businesses. The advanced materials cluster relates in some measure back to the manufacture and development of transportation equipment, but certainly there are other markets beyond that industry.

#### **4.2.2 Miami County Local Clusters**

Miami County also has several concentrations of businesses, although not exactly diversified to the stage where they can be called “clusters” with significant cross-industry synergies. Nevertheless, such concentrations include companies engaged in machining or re-manufacturing, as well as those involved in the production of transportation components (some of which supply the transportation equipment industries in either Kokomo or Elkhart). There is also a small concentration of businesses engaged in the manufacture of testing or sensing instruments. Finally, Miami County does have its share of agriculture and distribution-oriented businesses.

### **4.3 Miami County Supply Chain Overview**

Based on data collected through interviews with existing businesses and from other sources, the existing industrial supply chain was analyzed in more detail. Key inputs, as well as the geographic and company sources for those inputs, were identified. An understanding of the product generated by Miami County businesses was also developed in terms of the output and target markets for that output. Key labor market issues were identified. Findings from these analyses are summarized below.

#### **4.3.1 Inputs**

The key inputs supplied to Miami County manufacturers include the following items: Machinery, castings, paper, pork bellies, packaging film, steel, ink, hardware/tooling, information technology, aluminum supplies, plastic parts, chassis, refrigeration, furniture, and others.

These inputs are invariably sourced from the Midwest region (80%), of which 50% is from within the state of Indiana. Few businesses noted that their inputs were generated directly from other

companies within Miami County, suggesting that there were few existing major supply relationships that had been developed to date between local producers. However, many of these same companies do source ancillary & peripheral goods (e.g., office supplies, catering, minor hardware, etc.) locally. The 20% remaining inputs were sourced nationally or internationally, with a number of businesses importing specialty parts, components, or machinery. Most of these goods are imported by truck from central nodes such as Indianapolis.

#### **4.3.2 Outputs**

Miami County produces a variety of manufactured goods, including: Machinery, transportation equipment, measuring instruments, pork products, grain, stationary, and others.

The market for Miami County goods is primarily (80%) national, with goods shipped to both coasts and all regions. However, there is a much larger share of goods headed to the northeast for finishing or for direct distribution. About 10% of goods are manufactured for distribution primarily in Indiana. The remaining 10% of goods are destined for export to international markets. Most product is currently shipped out by truck to major distribution hubs, again Indianapolis but also Chicago.

### **4.4 Local Manufacturing Labor Force**

This section provides a more in-depth analysis of the local labor force, in terms of the labor market area, existing skills, and the key skill requirements of existing local businesses.

#### **4.4.1 Source of Labor**

Over 40% of Miami County workers commute out of the county for work. The county is part of the Kokomo labor market, with a substantial number of county residents commuting each day to Kokomo's manufacturing plants and other businesses. However, businesses within Miami County draw primarily from within the county. Based on data collected from local industrial businesses, an average of about 75% of their employees lives within Miami County. Another 20% lives in Wabash, Cass, or other surrounding counties. Only about 5% of the industrial labor force is commuting into Miami County from Kokomo and Howard County.

#### 4.4.2 Existing Skill Base

Based on information collected from Miami County industrial employers, between 75% and 78% of their workforce is engaged in basic unskilled or semi-skilled jobs including basic labor. About 6% are in machine maintenance (both skilled and semi-skilled) positions; another 7% are in skilled, technical jobs; and 8% are in administration or management-level positions. About 1% to 3% of the jobs are in non-manufacturing occupations such as order processing.

Among all county *residents* (based on 2000 Census data), about 26% work in production / laborer occupations, 11% in skilled professional and technical positions, 19% in management occupations, 20% in sales or other “pink” collar office positions, with the remainder in service jobs (13%), construction (10%), and farming (less than 1%).

Given that 40% of the county’s residents are commuting out for work, it would appear that there is “leakage” in management-level, technical/professional, and non-manufacturing position workers from the county. In other words, the county does not supply the jobs for residents with skills in these occupations. At the same time, there is also apparently inflow of unskilled and basic labor workers into the county in order to meet the needs of existing industrial employers. This was confirmed above in estimates that at least 25% of industrial workers are commuting into Miami County.

#### 4.4.3 Key Industrial Skill Requirements

Since a very high share of Miami County’s industrial employment is in unskilled and semi-skilled labor occupations, the skill requirements are very basic. Such requirements include an ability to read and spell, a good “attitude,” an ability to work well with others, basic math abilities, and clean of drug abuse. For semi-skilled positions, the industrial employers appreciate experienced workers, but a college degree is not required.

The implication of these skill assessments is that Miami County may have dual objectives with respect to economic development: one is to meet the needs of residents for creating and enhancing management, technical/professional, and non-manufacturing employment

opportunities closer to home; and second, to meet the needs of Miami County industrial businesses for unskilled and semi-skilled workers, regardless of where they happen to live.

## 4.5 Advantages & Disadvantages

The relative advantages and disadvantages of Miami County as a business location were assessed based on input from existing businesses on factors including access, buildings & land, labor force, and others. The basic findings from this assessment are summarized below.

### 4.5.1 Advantages (Strengths)

Miami County businesses have identified several important advantages that have either attracted them to this central location or have become important to their operations there. Among these relative strengths are the following:

- Access to Supply Base - Miami County is centrally located within the region and nationally. In particular, Miami County offers ready access to the Midwest supply base. Since businesses report that 80% of their inputs are supplied from within the Midwest (often through distribution hubs like Indianapolis, Chicago, or Detroit), Miami County provides a good location for intake of those supplies.
- Access to Markets - The county's central location also offers good access to markets, including large population centers in the Midwest and East Coast.
- Relatively Low Labor Costs - While Indiana labor rates are higher than in right-to-work states, Miami County does not have the competitive framework that drives up wages in Kokomo and other nearby industrial centers.
- Available Building Space - The availability of buildings, such as at the Grissom Aeroplex, is an important asset that has helped attract businesses to the community.

- Low Real Estate Costs - Low land and building costs relative to larger markets, helps make Miami County attractive to businesses that do not need a metropolitan location.
- Low Cost of Living - The area's relatively low cost of living, including the price of housing, is particularly attractive for businesses with low-skilled and modest-wage workers.
- Availability of Labor - Miami County and the surrounding labor market have had somewhat higher rates of unemployment, reducing competition for labor and pressure on wage rates. However, businesses do complain of competition from Delco and other Kokomo plants for skilled workers.

#### 4.5.2 Disadvantages (Weaknesses)

By the same token, Miami County's industrial businesses have also noted several important disadvantages or weaknesses that need to be addressed. Most of these weaknesses relate to the difficulty in finding high-quality labor:

- Lack of Qualified, Entry-Level Workers - While there is no shortage of applicants, businesses complain that the applicants lack skills and qualities required for even low-skilled work. Businesses must compete with Delco and other Kokomo industrial businesses for the "cream" of the labor force. As a result, turnover rate is high among these positions, costing companies more than necessary just to maintain their existing workforce capacity. For example:
  - Many workers demonstrate a poor attitude, lacking in their ability to work with others and in their overall work ethic
  - Drug addiction is a serious problem among low-skilled workers.
  - Many applicants exhibit low self-image, which translates into poor hygiene and a lack of resources and interest.



- Entry-level workers lack basic life skills, as well as work skills and machine operator experience.
- There is a shortage of machine maintenance workers.
- It is perceived that Ivy Tech does not provide the targeted training that is needed for these positions or that workers switch to other training made available to them and move into jobs elsewhere.
- Lack of Technical and Professional “Salaried” Workers - Miami County lacks the amenities that attract technical and professional workers who have post high-school degrees. At the same time, the county’s existing, home-grown base of professional workers commutes to higher-paid jobs in Kokomo or elsewhere. Among the amenity-driven issues impacting on the professional workforce are the following:
  - Miami County lacks a strong retail shopping amenity base, and Peru has little destination shopping appeal.
  - The county is a long commute from Indianapolis and other metropolitan areas, which restricts opportunities for dual-income households.
  - The county lacks private, non-sectarian schools, which provide an alternative to public education where there are perceptions that public schools do not meet parents’ standards.
  - Other lifestyle issues that impact on all workers include the quality and availability of recreation amenities, arts & cultural facilities, and other amenities. In some cases, the county’s existing amenities are just not maximized or promoted. On the positive side, the county does offer a relatively diverse housing mix and lacks the kind of traffic congestion that commuters in Indianapolis or even Kokomo experience.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has found through long-term research a correlation between economic growth and amenity base in non-metropolitan counties. Those counties that have a high level of amenities (whether natural amenities such as mountains or beaches, or cultural and other lifestyle amenities), have consistently (over 30 years) out-performed non-amenity counties in terms of employment and economic growth. Many of the counties that have lost population and job base over the 30-year period also lacked amenity value as rated by the Department of Agriculture. This factor therefore has implications for Miami County in its efforts to attract and retain business in a competitive climate.

## **4.6 Key Industry Opportunities**

Based on these inputs and analyses, several opportunities were identified for attracting or expanding industry in Miami County. These opportunities build on “synergistic” relationships with existing business clusters and on the county’s strengths in terms of its labor force, location, access, and service advantages.

### **4.6.1 Advanced Logistics**

The advantages of Miami County’s central location will be further enhanced through planned transportation improvements that will increase access along both highways US31 and US24. Interstate capacity, as is promised for US31, will significantly increase the county’s opportunities for distributing and moving goods more rapidly between markets. Miami County already sees relatively healthy demand for warehousing and distribution space, so these improvements will only help further develop this market.

The county’s role in the supply chain can be greatly enhanced through the further development of its advanced logistics capabilities. These capabilities would include not only the road improvements, but also warehousing and distribution capacity, cold storage, rail bulk transfer, and logistics services including freight logistics providers. Training and labor capacity within the logistics industry, from truck drivers through information technology specialists, would add further value to the county’s existing logistics capacity.

Logistics industries have maintained a 17% growth rate, so the opportunities for companies directly engaged in logistics services (e.g., trucking, warehousing & distribution, information technology services, air freight & courier services, freight forwarding & logistics services, etc) will likely continue to increase. More importantly, adding to the county's logistics capacity can only help its existing manufacturers expand their markets while also help the county in marketing to attract additional manufacturing companies.

#### 4.6.2 Agriculture & Bio-Fuel Technologies

Clearly, Miami County's location in the heart of an important agricultural region lends itself to further development of this sector. However, agriculture itself is not a major employer in the county, despite the significant amount of land devoted to agricultural use. The county's opportunities lie not in agriculture per se, but in technologies and businesses that add value to the product generated by farms in the region. It is in the beneficiation (value adding) of agricultural product where the county can find opportunities.

Food products are already an important output in the county although, interestingly, the inputs for production are generally not sourced from this region. For example, the sources for pork products refined and packaged in Miami County are largely out of state. Miami County's opportunities are presently oriented to emerging bio-fuel technologies and related products made from corn and soybeans produced in Indiana. Aside from Miami County's access to the raw product, the county's central location and access to major consumer markets makes it competitive for fuel production. Rapidly increasing costs associated with fossil fuels has helped spur demand for alternative fuel products including ethanol and bio-diesel, among others.

Given growing demand for fuel from such countries as China, the prospects for continued and increasing interest in alternative fuels like bio-diesel looks promising. Other mid-western states have made significant investment in programs to support bio-fuel research and development at the same time that private interest has increased with rising prices and federal tax incentives. Already, alternative fuel production facilities are under development in nearby communities such as Central Indiana Ethanol's facility in Marion and New Energy Corporation's facility in South Bend. However, there has not been significant investment in bio-diesel facilities in Indiana or the

upper Mid-west, despite the fuel's relative advantages over ethanol. Current bio-diesel investments are being made in the following areas:

- Denver (Bio-Energy of Colorado)
- Nettleton, MS (Biodiesel of Mississippi, Inc.)
- Denton, TX (City of Denton)
- Meridian, MS (Earth Biofuels)
- Brooklyn, NY (Environmental Alternatives)
- Redwood Falls, MN (FUMPA Biofuels)
- Houston, TX (Johann Haltermann, LTD)
- Bunceton, MO (Missouri Better Bean)
- Rome, GA (Peach State Labs)
- Seattle (Seattle Biodiesel, LLC)
- Laredo, TX (South Texas Blending)

Two new bio-diesel plants are being financed in Iowa (2), Missouri, and Minnesota (2). Altogether, there are 32 biodiesel plants in operation throughout the country and sales of this fuel are doubling each year, with 2004 sales estimated at 30 million. Federal tax incentives passed in 2005 have had a dramatic impact on lifting sales of the fuel and are expected to have lasting impact on the development of the industry. Overall, growth in environmental technology industries is averaging 15% per year. Thus, the time is ripe for Indiana and Miami County to take advantage of opportunities to pursue this growing entrepreneurial industry, with a particular focus on the development of bio-diesel technologies and production.

### 4.6.3 Tourism

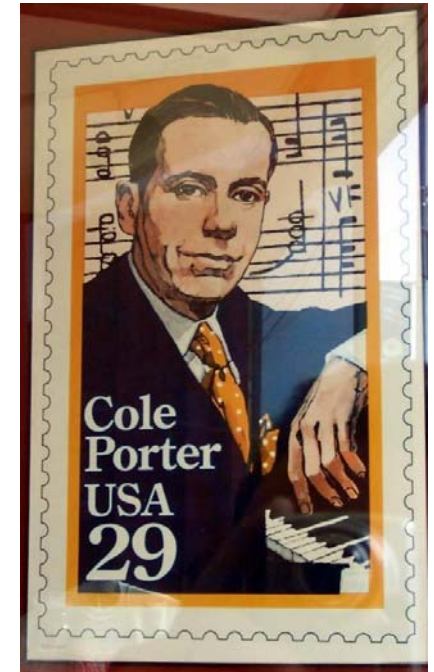
Tourism is a growth industry worldwide and offers prospects for job growth in almost every community. The U.S. tourism growth rate has averaged a healthy 8.0% annually, with some fluctuation depending on fuel prices. Many rural communities and small towns depend on tourism as a primary source of revenues and employment, especially with the decline in manufacturing throughout the U.S.

Miami County offers a base of tourist attractions as a good starting point for growing the tourism industry. The county has celebrated its circus heritage through development of a small museum and an annual festival. As the home of world-famous composer Cole Porter, Peru is finally able to use his house as a resource for tourism. A reservoir, waterways, and rail-to-trails are helping increase the county's recreation base. Importantly, the county's accommodations industry has performed relatively well, with above-average occupancy rates and growing meeting base. Local hotels trace some of this occupancy to spin-off from the region's racing activity.

The reason to encourage tourism in Miami County extends beyond the county's attractions, its high occupancies, and the industry's long-term growth prospects, to the need for creating amenity value in order to attract industry. Tourism helps expand the market for retail and other amenities that are needed to attract professional workers and business. Tourism adds sales for retail stores that allows them to expand or allows developers to attract new tenants. The components of this industry include tourist attractions as well as support services including lodging, restaurants, retail, and meeting or conference facilities. Demand for development of these components should be explored further, such as opportunities for lakeside conference & lodging facilities or an expanded circus museum concept.

### 4.6.4 Regional Spin-Off Supply

Miami County also has an opportunity to retain and attract businesses that supply goods or services to industrial businesses throughout northern Indiana and the surrounding region. This effort is mutually supported by growth and development of the logistics sector. The particular industries which are generating substantive spin-off opportunities include:



Cole Porter postage stamp replica in the Miami County Museum in Downtown Peru.

- Recreational vehicle manufacturing - This industry is highly concentrated and clustered in Elkhart, where the price of land, buildings, and labor have risen to the point where suppliers and even some manufacturers have sought alternative locations nearby to serve this industry. Furthermore, the industry is expanding and new opportunities are emerging through spin-off of independent producers and suppliers. Miami County has attracted one of these manufacturers and is well-positioned to attract others or their suppliers due to the county's proximity to the heart of a highly concentrated industry.
- Machining (transportation equipment) - Clearly, the transportation equipment industry plays a major role in the regional economy of north-central Indiana. While the industry is projected to decline, there is an ongoing need for certain supplies and skills, particularly in machining, for which Miami County already has a competitive advantage through its own clustering.
- Steel production - Also related to the transportation equipment industry, as well as other industries concentrated in the mid-west region, is the ongoing demand for steel and metal products to support the machinery and equipment industries. Again, while this industry is concentrated in the region, employment is declining in part due to foreign competition.
- Food production - As noted previously under Agriculture, there is already some food production within Miami County and the region. Food is a growing industry, linked directly to the growth in demand but also because of the ever-expanding array of niche market products. There are opportunities for businesses to supply the existing food manufacturers in the region (such as through machinery and machining, additive production, printing, or other means), but also for further beneficiation of product for niche markets.
- Packaging - Packaging is a growth industry, thanks not only to consumer demand but also to the plethora of regulatory requirements, logistics needs, and marketing initiatives that add to the market for packaging and boxing services. Growth in local and regional manufacturing also spurs growth in demand for packaging, and many ex-urban, non-metropolitan counties have been successful in expanding or attracting their packaging capacity because the activity can be out-sourced at lower cost.

#### 4.6.5 Aircraft Maintenance & Re-Manufacturing

Miami County has identified an opportunity for aircraft maintenance and re-manufacturing because of the existing assets offered particularly by Grissom Aeroplex. The base facilities, coupled with the experience machining labor base and licensed training programs at Ivy Tech, Purdue, and Vincennes, provide the area with some competitive advantage for attracting aircraft maintenance operations.

The county observes that big-city airport fees and real estate costs are forcing airlines to outsource secondary maintenance services. These third-party maintenance providers are located in ex-urban but central locations like Miami County.

The county is similarly positioned to attract the re-manufacturing (upgrading and refurbishment) of general aviation aircraft. Again, this activity need not occur at major airports and can be attracted to ex-urban locations with the appropriate low-cost facilities, available skilled and semi-skilled labor, and certain financial incentives. Miami County is centrally located, and provides an alternative to congestion, at Indianapolis, Chicago, Cincinnati, Detroit, and other major airports in the region. However, as noted by the county, the availability of scheduled air service may also be important to attracting this activity and Miami County currently lacks such service.

#### 4.6.6 General Targets

Miami County has also expressed an aspiration to attract advanced “lean” manufacturing industries as well as companies that generate high-tech products, as opposed to recruiting low-tech, “smokestack” industry. However, the county’s strategic advantages also need to align with these aspirations. For example, the county must have an available, technically-skilled labor force in order to effectively attract technology-intensive industries. If the interest is focused on supplying secondary inputs to a particular industry such as medical technologies, then those specific inputs should be identified and the requirements for production established and measured against Miami County’s existing position vis-à-vis competitive locations. This should occur in coordination with site selection specialists, as discussed further in the Implementation Action Plan presented at the conclusion of this report.



Runway access and use, airside aprons, hanger space and other aviation assets are unique attributes for tenants at Grissom Aeroplex.



## 5.0 Development Opportunities Assessment

In addition to industry, workforce and community assessments, Steering Committee members considered the physical condition, assets, constraints, and utility of existing industrial park areas and the need to plan for future quality development districts. The following pages present findings of interviews of existing industries, observations of existing industrial parks and recommendations and planning frameworks for future development areas of strategic importance to the long term economic vitality of Miami County.

### 5.1 Overall Observations by Existing Industries

Consultants visited with representative of existing industries to gauge major issues needing to be addressed as part of the Economic Development Strategy. With regard to overall economic development climate and governmental support for their needs all industries were universally supportive of MCEDA and City and County Governments they had worked with. Facility managers said that MCEDA and the community were very helpful and responsive and felt that Miami County was a place where businesses could grow.

With regards to their current facilities, locations within existing industrial parks and the quality and features of those parks, major industries were generally happy with their current locations, their facilities were adequate, they had room to expand, and utility service was adequate for their needs. Consultants also probed major industries' interest in gaining rail service to meet their needs. As none of the industries currently have rail service, none viewed this as a critical need or investment necessary for their purposes. They did view the availability of a rail-served industrial park as useful to attract new industries, however, particularly those dealing in break-bulk commodities such as bio-fuel processing facilities.

When asked about deficiencies or types of improvements they would view as beneficial, most industries commented on the general lack of identifying and directional signage that made it difficult for suppliers, customers, visitors, and job applicants to find their facilities. In some cases, deteriorating roadway surfaces and inadequate turning radii and accommodations for trucks was seen as a problem and a major contributor to appearance and maintenance concerns.



In general, Miami County's business and industrial parks are healthy and sound. Improvements could be made to park entrances, identification and directional signage, and landscape buffers to enhance the ability of the parks to create a positive visual image.

## 5.2 Individual Industrial Park Assessments

As MCEDA’s web site presents specific, current information regarding available buildings and building sites in each industrial park, this section of the report does not contain an exhaustive review of the inventory of available sites and utility capacities. Instead assessment efforts and recommendations focus more on physical improvements and recommendations that could be of benefit to existing park users as well as increase the attractiveness and viability of existing parks for desired future users. The following pages present specific information pertinent to each park.

### 5.2.1 Peru Industrial Park

The Peru Industrial Park is located adjacent to developed areas on the northeastern edge of the City of Peru south of US 24. It is the city’s second oldest industrial park and contains a variety of manufacturing and assembly uses. The overall appearance and condition of infrastructure in the park is fair to poor, particularly related to condition of roadways in the park. Currently, all major sites are either developed or spoken for. Expansion of the park to take advantage of existing roadway frontage and utility access is possible to the east or west of the current park though poor soil conditions would require some level of remediation, depending on potential uses and soil loading considered.

Some specific observations are noted below and in the margin to the right.

#### Highway Access/Visibility Concerns:

- Signage at SR19/Chili Avenue from US 24 not visible
- Opportunities for improvement at corner SR 19/US 24?
- No signage at Lovers Lane entrance
- Truck maneuverability concerns from Lover’s Lane

#### Entrance Conditions:

- No signage at SR 19/Chili Avenue entrance
- Edge condition along SR 19/ Chili Avenue lacks screening

The principal improvement needs at the Peru Industrial Park are signage improvements from US 24 and Hwy 19, landscape screening improvements along Hwy 19 and roadway pavement improvements throughout the park.



- Pavement is in poor condition at main entrance

Tenant Signage:

- Styles and sizes vary
- Directional signage lacking or difficult to read
- No illumination for night-time viewing

Opportunities/Needs:

- Outdoor storage areas need screening
- Pavement improvements and strengthening are needed to meet truck traffic needs

**5.2.2 North Miami Industrial Park**

The North Miami Industrial Park is located in a rural portion of the County north of US 24 and east of US 31. It currently has two light manufacturing/warehousing users. The overall appearance and condition of infrastructure in the park is good. Currently, there are major sites available for acquisition. Given the existing availability of sites elsewhere and the desire to promote new development closer to existing developed areas of the County, no expansion of the park is recommended in the near term.

Some specific observations are noted below and in the margin to the right.

Highway Access/Visibility Concerns:

- No signage from US 24
- Poor pavement conditions
- Truck maneuverability concerns

The North Miami Industrial Park is in a remote setting and could benefit from directional signage at US 24 and Broadway as well as on-site roadway and driveway improvements to improve truck access and mobility.



Entrance Conditions:

- Approach road presents an attractive, though remote/rural image
- Business park lacks identification signage

Tenant Signage:

- Styles and sizes vary
- No illumination

Opportunities/Needs:

- L&M wall graphics?
- Landscape edge improvements
- Paving needs for graveled parking areas?
- Truck turning radii improvements on private driveways into sites



The North Miami Industrial Park has uses that have gravel parking and delivery areas which may be appropriate in this remote location. Consultants, however, recommend more definitive policies and adoption of covenants, conditions and restrictions for all parks spelling out when non-permanent paving will be permitted or desired.

**5.2.3 Grissom Aeroplex**

The Grissom Aeroplex is located adjacent to US 31 about five miles south of Peru and is the former Grissom Air Force Base. The Grissom Aeroplex currently features two main development areas, a series of available buildings and sites in the former cantonment area of the base and a new development area south of the runway. The conversion of the base to private uses has been largely successful since identification of realignment under BRAC '91. There are, however, key sites and buildings available that are being actively marketed by MCEDA, including buildings and sites with direct airside access. The overall appearance and condition of infrastructure in the park is good. A key consideration related to the future of the park is the need for close coordination with the Indiana Department of Transportation should US 31 be considered for upgrading to interstate standards in the future. If this occurs, access improvements and changes would be necessary to satisfy state roadway safety requirements and meet access needs for various parts of the park and surrounding areas. Potential access and roadway network improvement suggestions are shown in Master Plan Framework Diagram for Grissom found in Section 7 of this report.

Some specific observations are noted below and in the margin to the right.

Highway Access/Visibility Concerns:

- Good visibility and access from US 31
- SR 218 signage is difficult to read and understand

Entrance Conditions:

- Roadways are well maintained and present an attractive image
- Signage is clear and illuminated

Tenant Signage:

- Some tenant signage exists but ultimately direct visitors to destinations
- Tenant signage at buildings varies in style and appearance and does not present a consistent image



Grissom Aeroplex features a number of buildings and building sites from the former Grissom Air Force Base that are available to suit the needs of a variety of tenants.



Opportunities/Needs:

- Ample opportunities for new businesses exist in various building facilities
- Rail spur opportunities may exist if desired
- Interest in airfield use by private industries exists
- Signage consistency could be improved

**5.2.4 North US 31/24 Industrial Development Area**

The North US 31/24 Industrial Development Area is a collection of several industrial sites located adjacent to US 31 and north of the US 31/24 interchange. Though not a platted industrial park per se, it does represent an important base of manufacturing for the County. While there is land available adjacent to existing industrial uses, there are no major platted or subdivided sites available for acquisition. Given the existing availability of sites elsewhere, the desire to promote new development closer to existing developed areas of the County, and the concern over the potential loss of direct access to US 31 should it be improved to interstate highway standards at some point in the future, no expansion of the area for industrial or commercial users is recommended in the near term. Instead, it is recommended that new users attracted to proximity to the US 31/24 interchange be encouraged to locate in the planned strategic development area south and east of the interchange as described in Section 7 of this report.

Directional signage to individual buildings and tenants throughout the Grissom Aeroplex could be improved. It is currently difficult to find desired final destinations. The park could benefit from a better wayfinding system and orientation maps at park entries.



## 6.0 Economic Development Vision

As the Economic Development Strategy project progressed, Steering Committee members crafted and refined an overall economic development vision. This vision helped guide the creation and evaluation of economic development strategies contained in Section 9 of this report. The basic components of the economic development vision for Miami County are as follows:

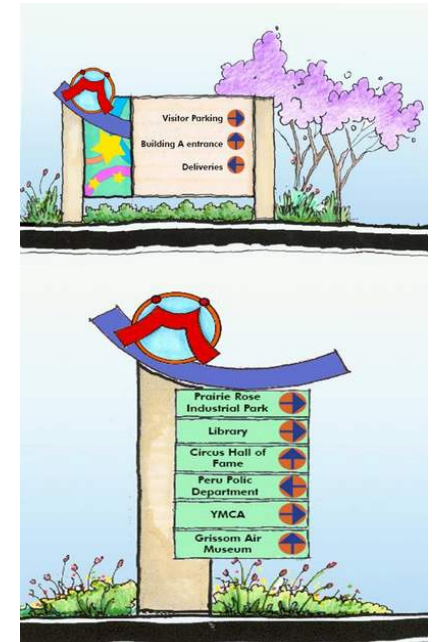
1. Create a multi-dimensional and complete community:
  - a. Maintain a high level of economic diversity in multiple sectors including: advanced manufacturing, distribution, warehousing, back-office, agriculture
  - b. Promote an abundance of motivated and capable semi-skilled workers
  - c. Create an enhanced quality of life
  - d. Provide quality living opportunities for a variety of age groups in a variety of housing types and price ranges
  - e. Offer quality recreational opportunities that help tie the community together and enrich daily living
  - f. Promote a broader variety of retail development
  
2. Capitalize on unique attributes:
  - a. Grissom Aeroplex, highways, low cost of living, and centralized location
  - b. Tourism potential from heritage and recreation resources
  - c. Miami County’s broad agricultural base
  
3. Strengthen community pride and involvement:
  - a. Cultivate an increased sense of community pride and purpose through active participation in civic matters
  - b. Define and celebrate successes of benefit to the community

A new common graphic identity for community gateways, special districts, industrial parks, and neighborhoods could be a way to tie community assets together visually and bring a consistent level of quality, identity and clarity to the area’s many assets. Consultants explored some possible theme ideas that could be used in a variety of sign types such as for a community gateway or special district or industrial park (below) and examples of site specific and directional signage (on the next page).

Appendix A presents further examples and a discussion on wayfinding principles in general.



- 4. Increase workforce educational attainment, training and well-being:
  - a. Continue to exceed expectations of industries in skilled workforce matters
  - b. Increase basic life skills competencies in reading, math and science
  - c. Promote life long learning to expand personal opportunities



Consultants incorporated a circus tent motif and the letter “M” for Miami County to create a graphic vocabulary and colorful and memorable logo that could have many applications as illustrated in the various sign system types shown above and on the preceding page.



## 7.0 Economic Development Recommendations

Steering Committee members considered a number of evaluation factors and options in the creation of specific economic development recommendations. Section 8 presents specific strategies and actions as part of the Economic Development Strategy, particularly those related to workforce development and industry retention and recruitment policy. This section of the report documents overarching ideas, guiding principles and general recommendations for physical development issues associated with economic betterment for Miami County.

Key recommendations are:

1. Focus “like” industries and uses in similar industrial parks and settings:
  - a. Locate small scale warehousing, light manufacturing, R+D, and office uses at the Grissom Aeroplex Cantonment Area and in the emerging development areas in the US 31/24 corridor.
  - b. Locate large scale warehousing, light manufacturing and distribution uses in the North Miami Industrial Park, at the Grissom Aeroplex South Industrial Park and in emerging development areas in the US 31/24 corridor.
  - c. Locate heavy industries and those requiring outdoor storage or assembly areas in the North Miami Industrial Park and at the Grissom Aeroplex South Industrial Park
  - d. Locate large manufacturing facilities requiring significant employment in expanded areas of the Peru Industrial Park, Grissom Aeroplex South Industrial Park and in emerging development areas in the US 31/24 corridor.
  - e. Locate agri-business and agricultural processing concerns in rural areas outside of small towns in the county
  - f. Consider the establishment of rail-served agri-business park west of US 31 on sites with rail access and roadway access to US 24

Industries needing outdoor storage of vehicles or materials should be located away from major gateways and roadways and should be clustered with similar users.



2. Provide for a high quality community appearance to attract high quality industries, retail and residential development:
  - a. Enhance the aesthetics of existing industrial park entrances and edges
  - b. Require a high degree of building and landscape aesthetics in new development areas along major highways such as US 31, US 24 and Broadway
  - c. Locate heavier industries and those requiring outdoor storage in locations that are remote from existing residential areas or key highway corridor image zones
  - d. Require buffers between industrial development areas and residential development areas
  - e. Encourage re-use and redevelopment of vacant or underutilized, centrally located retail areas prior to approving new retail development
  
3. Use a “master planning approach” to prepare area development plans that selectively amend the City’s and County’s Comprehensive Plans for the following benefits:
  - a. Provide for a quality development pattern and framework of compatible roads and land uses
  - b. Provide for a logical extension of roads and infrastructure that can be supported financially by the development induced
  - c. Protect opportunities in key development areas, such as along US 24 as well as sites with potential rail access
  - d. Build a network of roadway connectivity and capacity that supports development goals while providing access and mobility to and from US 31 after the institution of strict access controls and elimination of most existing access points

Industrial park edges should be enhanced with landscape screening and other elements to present an attractive edge to adjoining residential and commercial districts.



### 7.1 Key Strategic Future Development Areas Overview

Following the recommendation to adopt a proactive “master planning approach” for key strategic development areas, the Steering Committee examined a number of potential future development areas across Miami County. Consultants prepared alternative future development plans outlining future development areas, land uses and corresponding roadway networks for each of these areas deemed critical. Consultants also prepared “master planning framework” maps for the key areas to document consensus recommendations from feedback from the Steering Committee and from the community at-large as gathered through input at the final project public meeting held May 4, 2006.

To aid in the preparation of Future Development Guides, the Steering Committee and consultants used the following guiding principles:

- Protect opportunities and flexibility for future strategic future development needs
- Maximize use and utility of existing infrastructure and cost-effective expansions
- Provide for access needs based on proposed upgrading of US 31 to interstate highway standards
- Cluster development to create synergistic opportunities and reinforce/support existing developed areas
- Pursue adoption of key development strategies by local jurisdictions and governing bodies
- Pursue annexation phasing and timing of infrastructure expansion in an orderly and logical manner where investments in roadways and utilities can be recouped through the associated increase in economic activity in a reasonable time frame.

It should be noted that these Future Development Guides are used to illustrate the recommendations of the Steering Committee as part of the Economic Development Strategy. They will need further review, coordination and refinement through the normal planning process used by the affected jurisdiction, for example Miami County and the City of Peru. Each governing



Miami County Government and the City of Peru and other outlying communities will need to partner with each other to take advantage of key strategic development opportunities of benefit to the entire county, such as the development of the US 31/24 interchange and corridor opportunity area and Grissom Aeroplex.

body with jurisdictional authority will need to consider adopting these plans, or refined versions thereof as amendments to their current comprehensive planning and capital improvements program documents.

Key areas needing advanced area plan amendments to the City of Peru and/or Miami County's Comprehensive Plans, Thoroughfare Plans, and/or Capital Improvement Programs are:

- US 31/24 Corridor Opportunity Area
- Grissom Aeroplex
- Business 31 Peru Gateway
- Peru Industrial Park (expansion)

The following pages present specific recommendations for each special planning area identified above. Narrative text and Future Development Guides illustrate key recommendations and phasing strategies for the US 31/24 Corridor Opportunity Area and for Grissom Aeroplex.





## 7.2 US 31/24 Corridor Opportunity Area

The large area east of US 31 and south of US 24 represents a unique opportunity for Miami County and the City of Peru to work collaboratively to protect one of the area’s most important future economic and community development assets. Proactive and collaborative strategies and actions are needed, however, between the City of Peru and Miami County to protect this important future development opportunity area. Chief among these is the amendment of comprehensive planning and capital improvement program documents to incorporate the ability to accommodate the proposed future development plan represented by Future Development Guide in the Economic Development Strategy.

The US 31/24 Corridor Opportunity Area represents one of the greatest assets for the future economic development in Miami County. Careful, coordinated planning and a long-term phased approach to development will be necessary to maximize the potential of this key land resource.

This large land area has several unique advantages:

Regional Highways - It has good access and visibility from US 31 and US 24 and good connection potential to Broadway, Peru’s principal retail corridor.

Proximity to Development - It is positioned strategically between the City of Peru and Grissom Aeroplex.

Amenities – It has a number of amenities including a major golf course, wooded areas, water bodies and creeks, rail access, and proximity to existing retail shopping areas on Broadway.

Utilities – Water and sewer utilities are available at each end of the proposed development area, are sized appropriately to handle new development and can be easily extended in a phased manner to serve development as demand warrants.

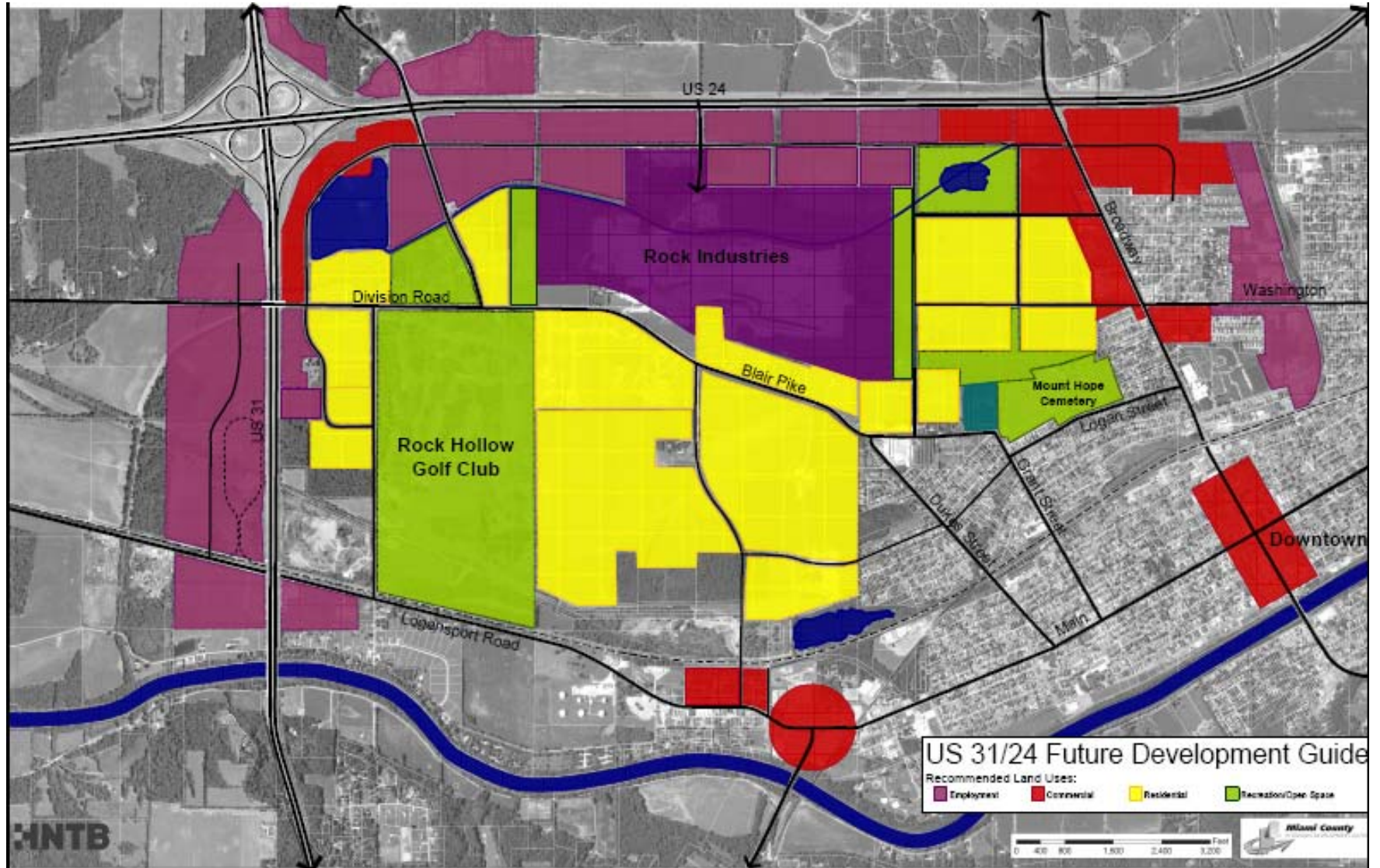
### 7.2.1 US 31/24 Corridor Opportunity Area Development Concept

The underlying development concept behind the plan is as follows:

1. Create a multi-use development district that offers attractive sites for new light manufacturing and office/warehouse uses fronting along US 24 between Broadway and the US 31/24 interchange.
2. Reinforce existing retail development along Broadway and in Downtown Peru by focusing general commercial retail development along the eastern end of the development area fronting Broadway.
3. Create a special tourism attraction/accommodation and highway services development zone in the vicinity of the US 31/24 interchange.
4. Connect development in the US 31/24 interchange area with development around the Broadway/US 24 area to create attractive opportunities for development in between these two nodes.
5. Provide for a permanent green space buffer around the quarry and protect on-going and viable operations of the quarry well into the future.
6. Provide opportunities for use of water detention areas as recreational and/or visual amenities for surrounding development
7. Promote the logical extension of surrounding street networks into and across the development area to improve mobility and create enhanced economic relationships between existing developed areas and new development areas.
8. Create opportunities for new residential development at varying densities and price ranges to support housing needs of working persons where school and park infrastructure amenities are nearby or easily reached.



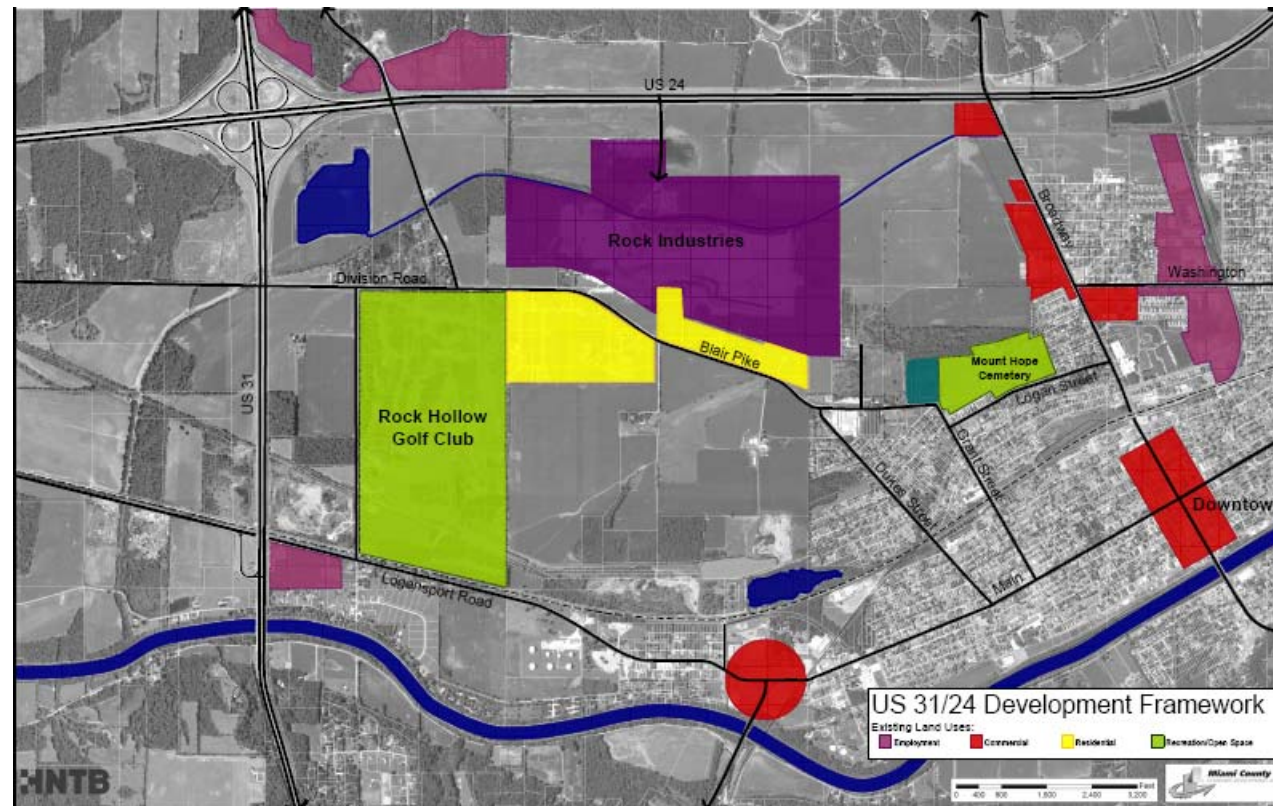
US 31/24 Corridor Opportunity Area Future Development Guide – Ultimate Build Out Condition



**7.2.2 US 31/24 Corridor Opportunity Area Development Phasing**

The area illustrated by the US 31/24 Corridor Opportunity Area Future Development Guide represents an ample supply of land that will be able to accommodate Miami County’s economic development needs well into the future. As such, it is recognized that a phasing strategy will be needed to pursue a logical and methodical course of utility extensions, annexations and development as the real estate market warrants. The following pages illustrate a possible phasing scenario. Comments in the margin at the right highlight key actions in each phase.

**Existing Development Conditions**

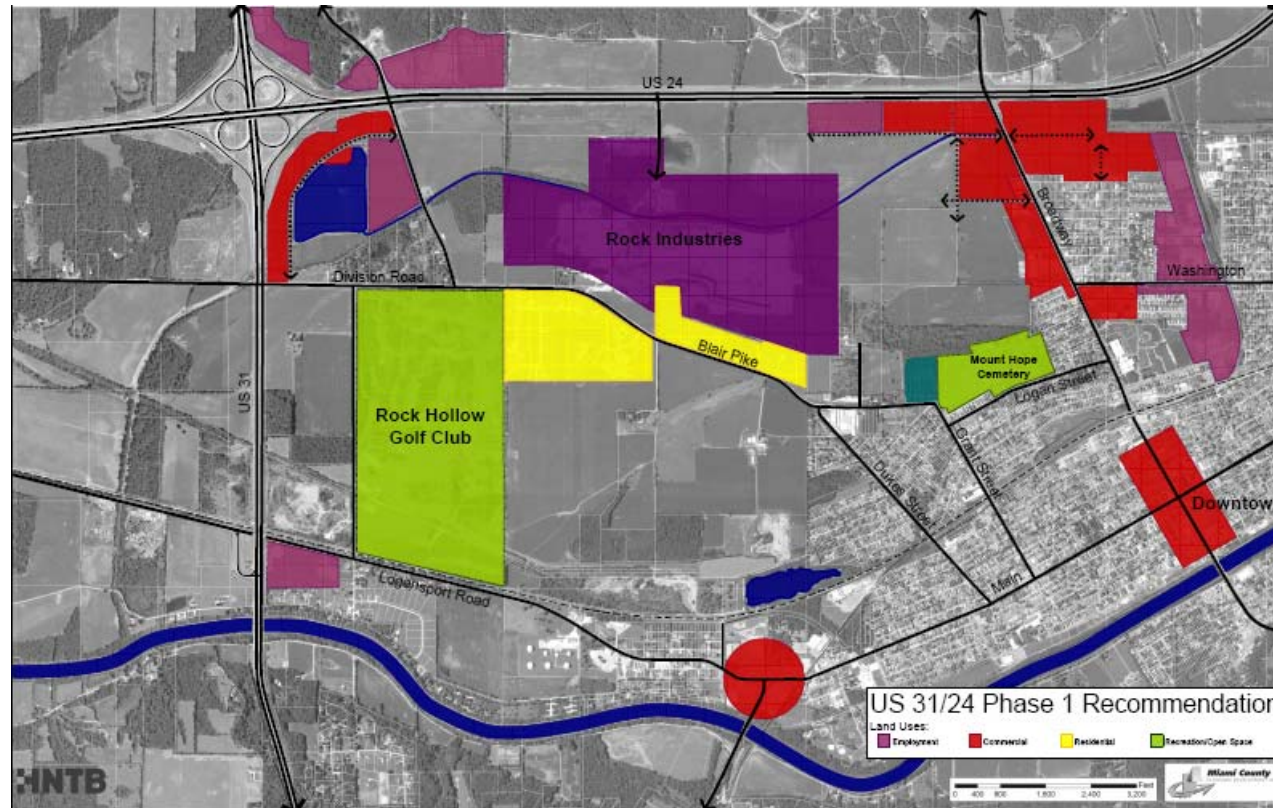


Current uses that anchor the area include: Rock Hollow Golf Club, Rock Industries, residential uses along Division Road/ Blair Pike, and various retail uses along Broadway to the east. The City of Peru’s original industrial park can be seen in its nearby location north and south of Washington. The US 31/24 North industrial development area and outdoor storage area can be seen north of US 24.

While it should be noted that Rock Industries is well-screened from view through natural buffers and setbacks from surrounding properties, careful land use planning around the quarry will be necessary to avoid encroachment issues



**Phase 1 Development Guide Recommendations**

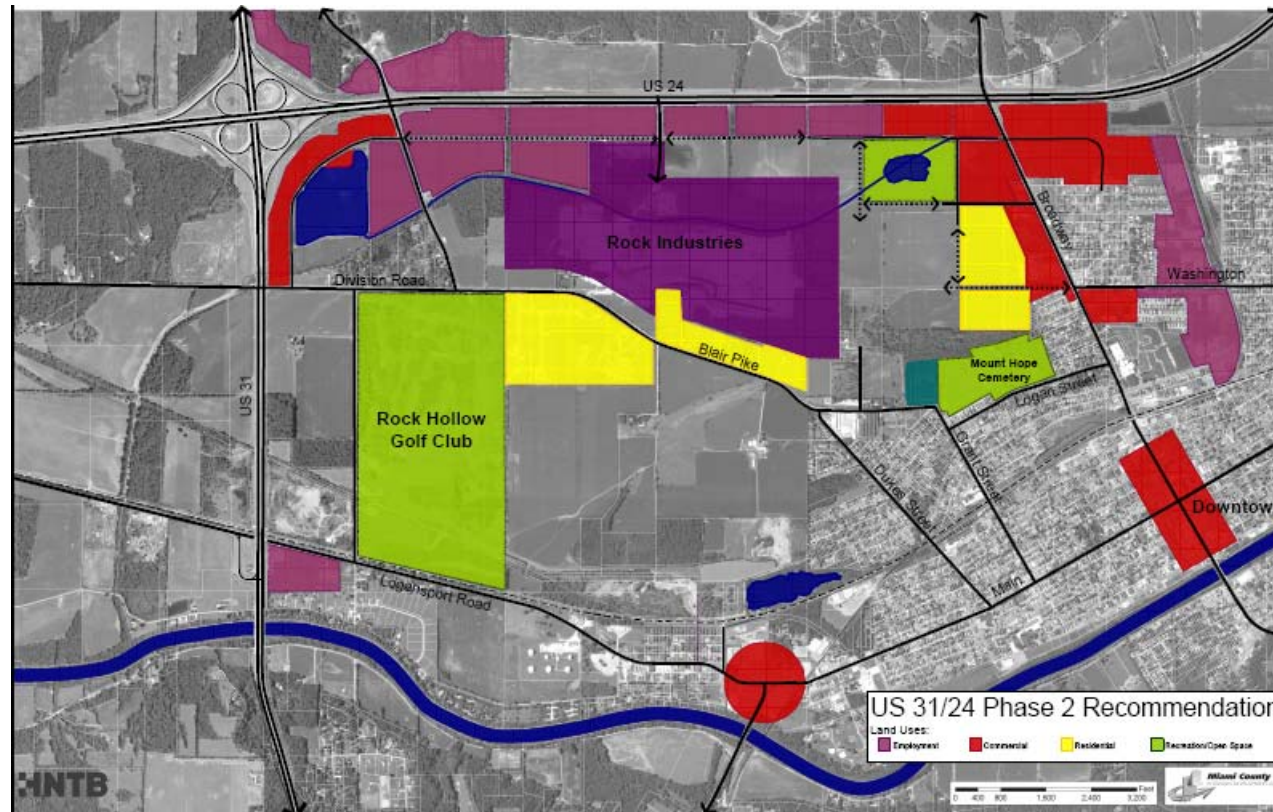


Phase 1 recommendations include the following:

Provide initial extensions of roadways and utilities from Eel Creek Road to serve the proposed “Heartland Crossing” development in the north-western quadrant of the development area. This area would be ideally used for tourism related attractions and accommodations. Major local and regional retail destinations should be focused along the Broadway corridor to the east to reinforce existing retail establishments and Downtown Peru.

Provide initial extensions of roadways and utilities from Broadway west to serve the north-eastern quadrant of the development area. This area represents the best location for continued retail and professional services development and the beginnings of new office/warehouse and light manufacturing development along a parallel access road to US 24.

**Phase 2 Development Guide Recommendations**



Phase 2 recommendations include the following:

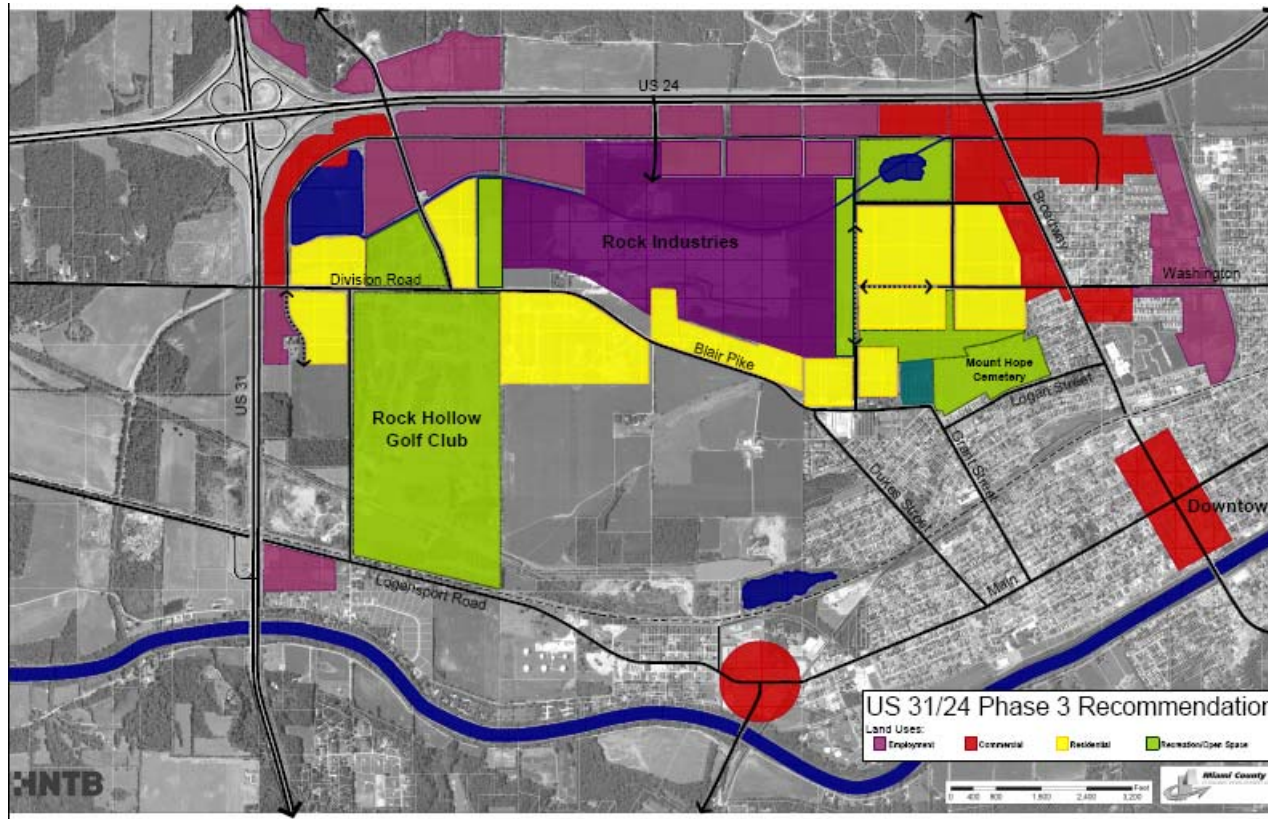
The principal recommendation in Phase 2 is to construct a road parallel to, and south of, US 24 to connect the Heartland Crossing development area with the Broadway development area. This would create access and synergy between these two development nodes and would open up a sizeable area of land for a number of warehouse, office/warehouse, and light manufacturing uses.

In addition to development along US 24, this phase recommends extending Washington Street west of Broadway to create an area for new residential development, assuming more housing will be needed based on an increase in jobs in the area. This housing area would be close to existing and newly developing retail areas along Broadway and Downtown and both retail and residential areas would benefit from this relationship.

Another recommendation would be to consider development of a regional recreation amenity and storm water detention area to provide an amenity for future employment and residential development while accommodating any needed drainage improvements. Further study is necessary to determine the extent of any needed regional drainage improvements that might arise as the area converts from agricultural uses to urban development.



Phase 3 Development Guide Recommendations

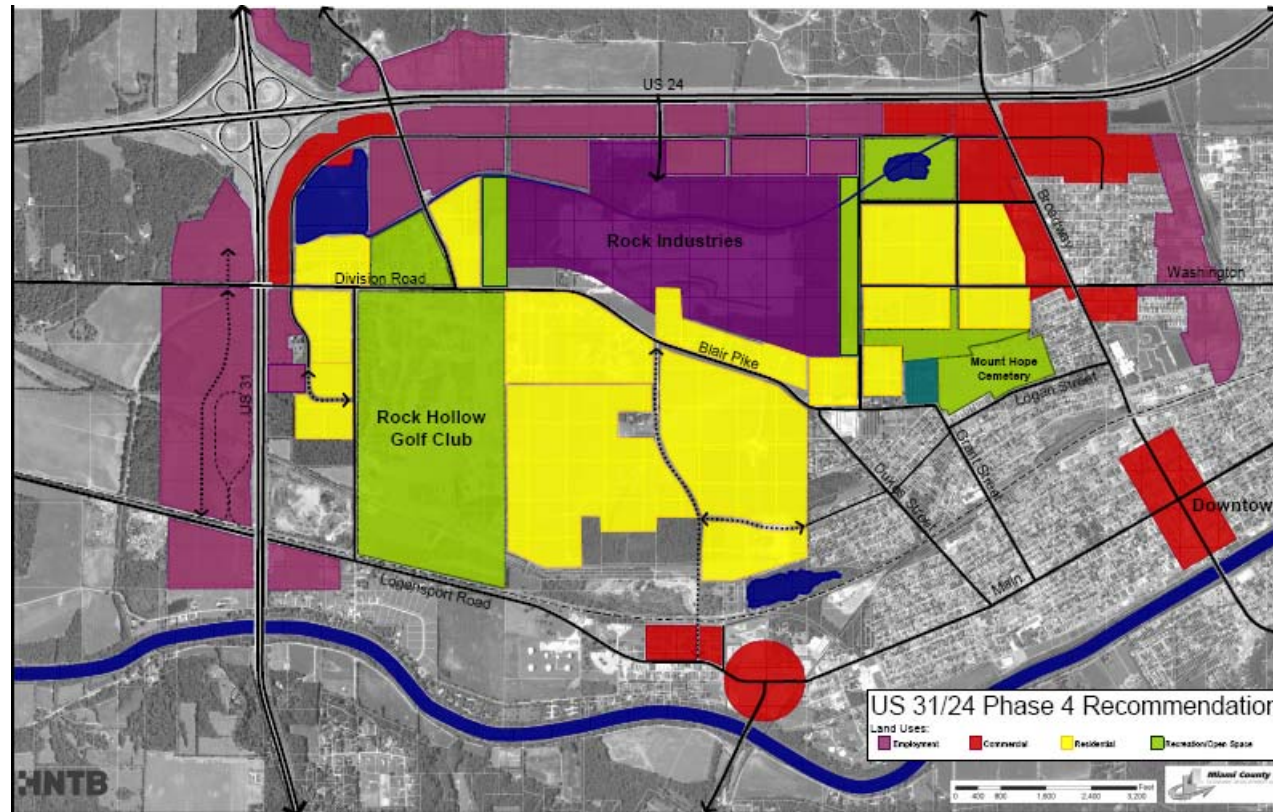


The principal recommendations in phase three are to complete the network of roadways in the northern half of the area and fill in remaining parcels with employment and residential uses as the market warrants.

Another key recommendation is the establishment of permanent green buffers, trails and/or recreation areas between Rock Industries and adjacent proposed residential areas to the east and west of the quarry.

As market demand warrants, Phase 3 also recommends the extension of roadways and utilities south of Division Road between US 31 and Rock Hollow Golf Club

**Phase 4 Development Guide Recommendations**



The final phase of development focuses on extending roadways and utilities south of Division Road/Blair Pike to create new residential development areas as needed and extends roadways and utilities west of US 31 to create industrial development areas that can be served by rail.

A key assumption in Phase 4 is that US 31 would be upgraded to interstate highway standards at some point and that access to this area would be limited to US 24 and Business 31 through Peru. Accordingly, the provision of a robust internal circulation network to serve the area is important.

One key need is to use an existing surface railroad crossing to create a through roadway connection between Blair Pike and Logansport Road/ Main Street. This would offer needed connections to link and serve the southern portion of the development opportunity area.

### 7.3 Grissom Aeroplex

Grissom Aeroplex has been a successful example in the conversion of a former US Air Force Base into a multiple-use economic asset for Miami County. There continues to be a high level of interest in remaining parcels and buildings in the former Cantonment Area and in the South Industrial Park. A number of good plans and activities are already in place to guide the continued economic development of Grissom. The ability to now market Grissom collaboratively under the new MCEDA structure will help ensure maximum benefit of this asset for the county as a whole.

Accordingly, recommendations in this Economic Development Strategy are focused possible enhancements to efforts at Grissom, such as improving signage and identity consistency discussed earlier in the report, and an examination of future access improvements and reconfigurations that might be necessary if US 31 is upgraded to interstate highway standards.

#### 7.3.1 Roadway and Access Improvements for Consideration

Today Grissom enjoys good visibility and access to US 31 and adjoining County Roads to the north and south of the installation. If US 31 is upgraded to interstate highway standards at some point in the future, however, access points and connecting roadways at Grissom would most likely need to be modified. Discussions and studies would be needed with the Indiana Department of Transportation (InDOT) to determine ultimate needs and options.

While ultimate implementation may be far in the future, it is important to preserve potential needed right of way and access points as development decisions are made incrementally over time. A key need will be to preserve maximum flexibility and ensure on-going viability of the economic development potential for Grissom, namely an interchange with US 31 and “front door access” to development areas in the Cantonment Area and South Industrial Park from this interchange.

It is possible that SR 218 would be a logical roadway receiving consideration by InDOT for an interchange if US 31 were improved to interstate highway standards. Assuming this, consultants recommend a number of possible minor improvements and changes to the existing roadway network as outlined in the Grissom Access and Roadway Improvement Recommendations exhibit.



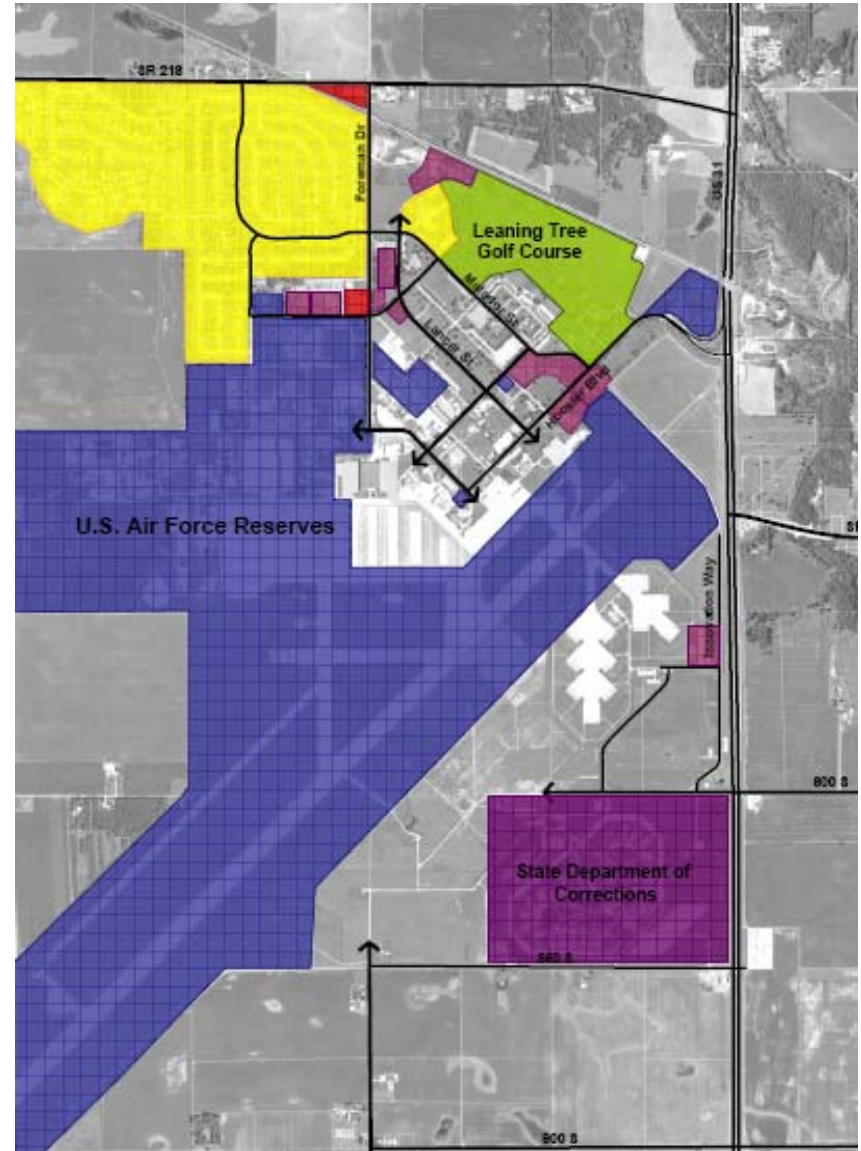
The former railroad right-of-way (overpass over US 31 shown above) along the northern edge of Grissom could offer an opportunity to re-route SR 218 and create a new interchange point with US 31 if US 31 should be upgraded to interstate standards.



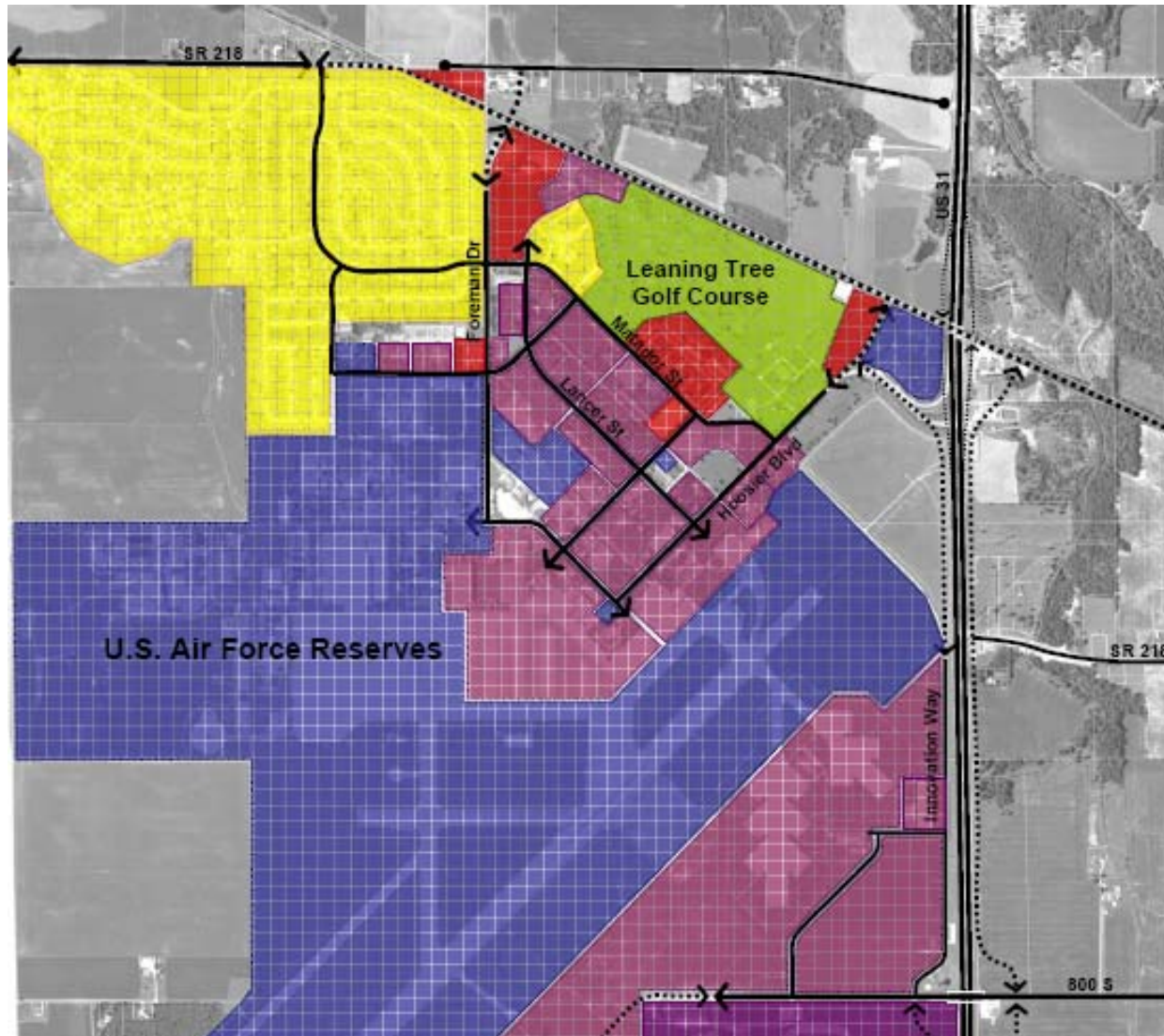
Grissom Current Conditions



Grissom Existing Uses



**Grissom Access and Roadway Improvement Recommendations**



For the purposes of this Economic Development Strategy, consultants assumed that SR 218 and US 31 is a logical future interchange point if US 31 were to be upgraded to interstate highway standards.

The challenge to this assumption is that SR 218 is currently split into two different segments east and west of US 31 and current intersections are two miles apart.

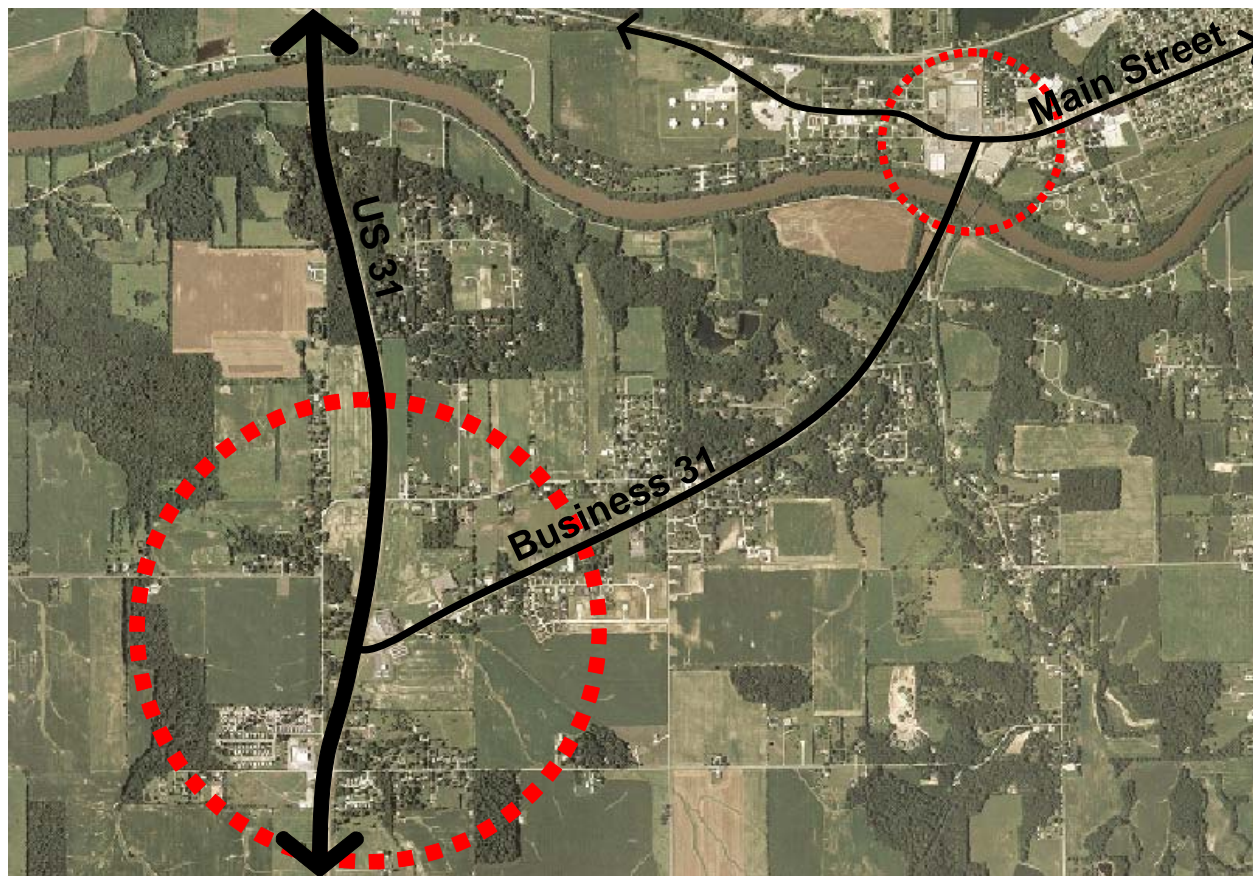
However, a former railroad right-of-way runs along the northern edge of the Cantonment Area and intersects US 31 between these two points. This right-of-way could potentially be used to connect SR 218 east and west of US 31 and offer a single interchange point, as shown in the exhibit to the left.

Assuming this, consultants recommend investigations into to acquisition of the former railroad right-of-way for the possible re-routing of SR 218 and interchange with US 31. The exhibit to the left also illustrates that Hoosier Boulevard and Foreman Drive would need to be re-configured slightly to create primary entrances to the Grissom Cantonment Area from this new roadway segment. Ramps at US 31 would need to be reconfigured and added to provide full access to this new SR 218 alignment. Innovation Way could be extended to Hoosier Boulevard to provide access to the South Industrial Park area and County Roads 800S, 850S and 900S.



### 7.4 Business 31 Peru Gateway

The area surrounding the intersection of US 31 and Business 31, the southern gateway to Peru, provides an important development zone for Miami County. The area is located about halfway between Grissom and the City of Peru and currently features a mix of accommodations, restaurant and residential uses. The appearance of the area is important for the creation of a positive gateway image to the City of Peru from US 31. The graphic below illustrates the area, nodes and corridor of concern where improvements are needed.



While much of Business 31 offers an attractive green gateway and views of the scenic Wabash River valley, developed areas could benefit from aesthetic improvements.

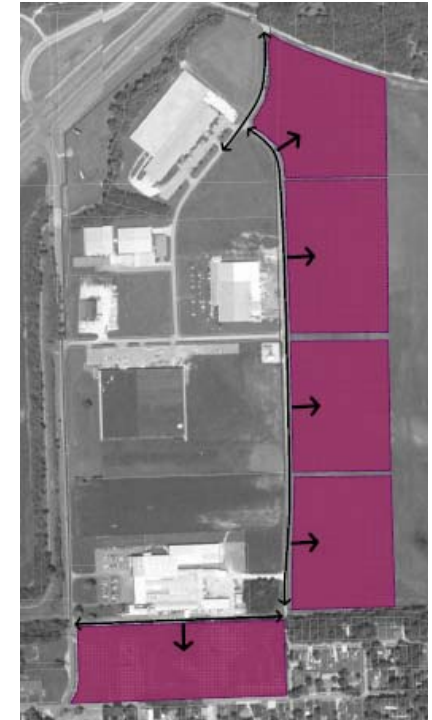


### 7.5 Peru Industrial Park

Although the Peru Industrial Park is generally built out, the Steering Committee discussed three areas of focus for attention as part of the Economic Development Strategy. The first area of focus was on improving the maintenance and visual quality of existing park roadways, entrances and edges as described elsewhere in this report. A number of recommendations to organize and fund these improvements are outlined in Section 8 of this report. These include the creation of an overall management agency or park association, the establishment of an improvement district, and the creation of overlay zones or covenants, conditions and restrictions (CCRs) to guide future improvements on sites in the park.

The second area of discussion involved the need to improve roadway paving and radii conditions at the Lovers Lane entrance to the industrial park from US 24 to better accommodate truck traffic. Current roadway geometry and pavement conditions are not adequate to meet the needs of truck traffic and these areas are deteriorating from the effects of continued use.

The third area of discussion by the Steering Committee was the examination of opportunities for potential expansion of the park to the east, west and south should this be desired, primarily to support expansion needs of existing industries or future location of other industry clusters that could benefit from proximity to current tenants. Although there are soil considerations that would need to be addressed prior to development, the ready access to adjacent roads and utilities could potentially offset any soil remediation or site development costs should these areas be developed for other small industrial uses, warehousing, or storage areas.



Aerial view of expansion areas for the Peru Industrial park (above) and current roadway conditions at the Lovers lane entrance (below).



## 8.0 Economic Development Strategies and Action Plan

As discussed in Section 6, the Economic Development Vision guided the assessment of opportunities, the creation of recommendations and the evaluation of those recommendations throughout the development of the Economic Development Strategy. The following section presents specific strategies and an action plan necessary to implement the Economic Development Strategy for Miami County. The table below illustrates how the specific strategies support or help achieve one or more of the economic development vision statements.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT VISION STATEMENTS	STRATEGIES						
	1. Adopt Economic Development Strategy	2. Strengthen Existing Industrial Base	3. Use Competitive Advantages to Attract Growth Industries	4. Build Local Workforce	5. Capitalize on Community Attributes	6. Strengthen Existing Employment Centers	7. Plan for Future Development Areas
Create a multi-dimensional and complete community	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Capitalize on unique attributes	YES		YES		YES	YES	YES
Strengthen community pride and involvement	YES		YES		YES	YES	
Increase workforce educational attainment, training and well-being	YES	YES	YES	YES			

## Strategy # 1: Adopt Economic Development Strategy

**Approach:** Work with local governments, agencies and organizations to adopt and implement plan recommendations as part of all pertinent official documents as necessary to carry out the actions recommended in the Economic Development Strategy.

Actions		Lead	Support	Timeframe	Resources	Funding
1.1:	Project Steering Committee accepts Economic Development Strategy report	MCEDA	N/A	7/28/06	N/A	N/A
1.2:	MCEDA Board meets to adopt Economic Development Strategy	MCEDA	N/A	AUG 06	N/A	N/A
1.3:	Chamber of Commerce Board meets to adopt Economic Development Strategy	CHAMBER	MCEDA	SEP 06	N/A	N/A
1.4:	City and County Planning Commissions and Councils meet in a combined joint work session to pass resolution in support of Economic Development Strategy and instruct staffs to proceed with process to amend pertinent plans	CITY & COUNTY GOV'T	MCEDA	SEP 06	N/A	N/A
1.5:	Peru Utilities Board meets to adopt Economic Development Strategy	PERU UTILITIES	MCEDA	SEP 06	N/A	N/A
1.6:	City and County Planning Commissions and Councils amend their comprehensive planning and capital improvements program documents to include recommendations from the Economic Development Strategy	CITY & COUNTY GOV'T	MCEDA	OCT 06 - FEB 07	CITY & COUNTY GOV'T STAFF	CITY & COUNTY GOV'T

## Strategy # 2: Strengthen Existing Industrial Base

**Approach:** Create opportunities for existing industries to stay and grow in Miami County and create benefits through networking, joint ventures and local partnerships to build markets, create supply chain efficiencies and increase economic activity.

Actions		Lead	Support	Timeframe	Resources	Funding
2.1:	Establish an innovative local business consortium to reduce costs and improve efficiencies by exploring the feasibility of providing the following services:	MCEDA	VARIOUS	JAN 07 – ONGOING	VARIOUS	INDUSTRIES & GRANT FUNDING
2.1a:	Create a pooled English language instruction program	MCEDA	IVY TECH	ONGOING	IVY TECH	INDUSTRIES & GRANT FUNDING
2.1b:	Create a pooled health care cooperative	MCEDA	CHAMBER	ONGOING	INSURANCE PROVIDERS	INDUSTRIES & GRANT FUNDING
2.1c:	Create a pooled machine maintenance cooperative or network of providers	MCEDA	IVY TECH	ONGOING	IVY TECH	INDUSTRIES & GRANT FUNDING
2.1d:	Create an information technologies services cooperative or network of providers to offer basic information technologies support services and assist in industry innovation in areas such as business processes, logistics, product development, and customer product customization	MCEDA	IVY TECH PURDUE	ONGOING	IVY TECH PURDUE	INDUSTRIES, GRANT FUNDING & UNIVERSITIES

2.2:	Continue and refine business retention outreach efforts through Executive Pulse program by undertaking the following activities:	MCEDA	PURDUE	SEPT 06 - ONGOING	VARIOUS	UNIVERSITY & GRANT FUNDING
2.2a:	Identify key industry core competencies	MCEDA	PURDUE	QUARTERLY	MCEDA STAFF & PURDUE	UNIVERSITY & GRANT FUNDING
2.2b:	Post core competencies on local and regional web sites to improve networking and accessibility	MCEDA	PURDUE	QUARTERLY	MCEDA STAFF & PURDUE	UNIVERSITY & GRANT FUNDING
2.2c:	Formalize the test program with Purdue University Office of Commercialization to identify new technologies, processes or new product matches to help increase business profitability and diversification	MCEDA	PURDUE	QUARTERLY	MCEDA STAFF, PURDUE & INDUSTRIES	UNIVERSITY & GRANT FUNDING
2.3:	Expand business networking opportunities among businesses in the region to increase efficiency	MCEDA	INDUSTRIES	VARIES	VARIOUS	MCEDA & UNIVERSITIES
2.3a:	Work with Universities to assess opportunities for efficiency in transportation, supply chain, packaging, logistics, networking pooling and sharing	MCEDA	UNIVS	ANNUALLY	UNIVS	UNIVERSITY & GRANT FUNDING
2.3b:	Network with representatives of parent companies of local businesses to identify the potential for other branches of the company to be located in Miami County	MCEDA	INDUSTRIES	QUARTERLY	MCEDA	MCEDA
2.3c:	Continue quarterly CEO Roundtable program to promote networking and keep tabs current industry issues and needs	MCEDA	INDUSTRIES	QUARTERLY	MCEDA	MCEDA

2.4:	Explore new innovative incentives to help retain and grow existing businesses in Miami County	MCEDA	LOCAL GOV'T & INDUSTRIES	SEMI-ANNUAL	MCEDA & LOCAL GOV'T	LOCAL GOV'T & GRANT FUNDING
2.5:	Explore ways to streamline the process and timeframe for receipt of incentives such as by pre-determining and pre-designating existing industrial parks as Economic Revitalization Areas	MCEDA	LOCAL GOV'T & INDUSTRIES	SEMI-ANNUAL	MCEDA & LOCAL GOV'T	LOCAL GOV'T & GRANT FUNDING

### Strategy # 3: Use Competitive Advantages to Attract Growth Industries

**Approach:** Focus efforts on attracting industries where Miami County has a competitive advantage in key industry sectors that are growing locally and nationally.

Actions		Lead	Support	Timeframe	Resources	Funding
3.1:	Focus attraction efforts on the following key industries and supply chain: advanced logistics, agriculture and emerging fuel technologies, tourism industry, regional spin-off synergies, advanced manufacturing sector, as well as high-tech product manufactures, and third-party aircraft maintenance, aircraft manufacturing, upgrades and refurbishments	MCEDA	STATE EDA	VARIES	MCEDA & STATE EDA STAFF	MCEDA & STATE FUNDING
3.1a:	Continue to identify, establish and maintain relationships with site selection consultants specializing in the targeted industries identified	MCEDA	STATE EDA	ONGOING	MCEDA & STATE EDA STAFF	MCEDA & STATE FUNDING
3.1b:	Continue to maintain relationships with regional and state economic development officials and entities	MCEDA	STATE EDA	QUARTERLY	MCEDA	MCEDA
3.1c:	Continue to attend key industry trade shows in targeted industry sectors as budget permits	MCEDA	STATE EDA	AS SCHEDULED	MCEDA	MCEDA
3.1d:	Follow up on industry trade show relationships with site selection consultants with visits to key markets such as Chicago	MCEDA	OTHER EDA	QUARTERLY	MCEDA	MCEDA
3.1e:	Continue to build and maintain relationships with key industrial real estate brokers in Indianapolis and Fort Wayne	MCEDA	OTHER EDA	QUARTERLY	MCEDA	MCEDA

3.2:	Support new Agriculture Growth Industries initiatives being promoted by the State of Indiana	MCEDA	VARIES	VARIES	VARIOUS	VARIES
3.2a:	Plug into the State's agriculture growth initiatives in industrialized livestock production assuming impacts can be mitigated, such as using new technologies to manage and process/convert waste into useable fuels	MCEDA	STATE EDA	SEPT 06	MCEDA & STATE EDA STAFF	MCEDA & STATE FUNDING
3.2b:	Plug into the State's emerging fuel technologies effort including exploring opportunities for collaboration with University and major manufacturer's research efforts	MCEDA	STATE EDA & UNIVS	SEPT 06	MCEDA, STATE EDA STAFF & UNIVS	MCEDA, STATE FUNDING & INDUSTRY GRANTS
3.2c:	Work with the State's economic development and agriculture department to explore the concept of applying an incubator concept to bio diesel and E-85 development and production.	MCEDA	STATE EDA	SEPT 06	MCEDA & STATE EDA STAFF	MCEDA, STATE FUNDING & INDUSTRY GRANTS
3.3:	Establish a business incubator and venture capital program	MCEDA	STATE EDA SBA	SEPT 06 – JAN 07	MCEDA STAFF	STATE EDA & V/C SOURCES
3.4:	Get qualified and listed under Indiana's "Shovel Ready" program	MCEDA	STATE EDA	APPROVED JUNE 2006	MCEDA STAFF	MCEDA
3.5:	Continue to maintain a user-friendly web site and other external communications program and information sharing	MCEDA	N/A	MONTHLY	MCEDA STAFF	MCEDA
3.6:	Explore ways to streamline the process and timeframe for receipt of incentives such as by pre-determining and pre-designating existing industrial parks as Economic Revitalization Areas	MCEDA	LOCAL GOV'T & INDUSTRIES	SEMI-ANNUAL	MCEDA & LOCAL GOV'T	LOCAL GOV'T & GRANT FUNDING



## Strategy # 4: Build Local Workforce

**Approach:** Expand the base of available and qualified workers in Miami County and improve the qualifications, capabilities and employability of the existing work force.

Actions		Lead	Support	Timeframe	Resources	Funding
4.1:	Determine skills gaps in current employer and workforce needs and use local workforce development organizations to build capabilities and qualifications of existing workers	WDSI	MCEDA, IVY TECH & INDUSTRIES	ONGOING	WDSI STAFF & INDUSTRIES	STATE & WIRED GRANT FUNDING
4.2:	Implement Industry/Education Training Partnerships to improve life skills, work ethics and work place values	LOCAL INDUSTRIES	MCEDA & IVY TECH, HIGH SCHS	OCT 06 – JAN 07	MCEDA & IVY TECH STAFF	STATE FUNDING
4.3:	Ensure drug dependency and substance abuse programs and treatments are available to those who may need them	MCEDA	LOCAL HEALTH PROVIDERS	ONGOING	LOCAL HEALTH PROVIDERS	STATE & LOCAL FUNDING
4.4	Pursue the establishment of accelerated and advanced degree programs for working adults at a Miami County campus	MCEDA	IVY TECH	OCT 06 - JAN 07	MCEDA & IVY TECH STAFF	STATE FUNDING
4.5:	Initiate a tracking program and monitoring mechanism to follow up on the effectiveness of work force betterment efforts	MCEDA	IVY TECH & INDUSTRIES	JAN 07 - MAR 07	MCEDA & IVY TECH STAFF	STATE FUNDING
4.6:	Advertise and promote the success of workforce development efforts to local workers, employers and target industries	MCEDA	INDUSTRIES	JUN 07 - ON	MCEDA	MCEDA

## Strategy # 5: Capitalize on Community Attributes

**Approach:** Recognize the business retention and attraction potential of strengthening the utility, functionality and visibility of existing key economic assets, such as Downtown Peru and other small towns in the County to strengthen their contribution to overall quality of life and tourism potential of the area.

Actions		Lead	Support	Timeframe	Resources	Funding
5.1:	Strengthen the quality of life aspects and improve the competitive position of Downtown Peru	CHAMBER	VARIES	VARIES	VARIOUS	VARIOUS
5.1a:	Strengthen and promote tourism assets in Downtown such as the Miami County Museum, the Circus Museum, the Riverfront Park and Nickel Plate Trail, and unique shopping opportunities	CHAMBER	MCEDA	JAN 07 – JAN 09	CHAMBER STAFF	CHAMBER & INDIVIDUAL FOUNDATIONS & ATTRACTIONS
5.1b:	Attract new destination restaurant, retail, and lodging amenities to Downtown Peru	MCEDA	CITY GOV'T	JAN 07 – JAN 09	MCEDA STAFF	MCEDA & CITY GOV'T
5.1c:	Pursue the extension of the Nickel Plate Trail connections to Riverfront Park and identify routes for the trail through the City of Peru and acquire land and access to routes for trail	CITY GOV'T	MCEDA	JAN 07 – JAN 08	CITY STAFF & CONSULTANTS	TRANS ENHANCEMENT FUNDS
5.1d:	Continue to improve the visual quality and character of streets, sidewalks, building facades, and parking areas in Downtown Peru	CITY GOV'T	PROPERTY OWNERS	JAN 07 – JAN 09	CITY STAFF & CONSULTANTS	TRANS ENHANCEMENT FUNDS, & SPECIAL ASSESSMENTS
5.1e:	Develop a marketing plan and strategy that promotes the “bundling” of Downtown Peru tourist attractions and amenities with other recreation, leisure and tourism assets across Miami County	CHAMBER	MCEDA	OCT 06 – MAR 07	CHAMBER STAFF & CONSULTANTS	CHAMBER & STATE TOURISM GRANTS

5.2:	Take actions to strengthen each of Miami County's smaller towns' key attributes to provide quality of life amenities attractive to residents and businesses across the county	LOCAL GOV'T	COUNTY GOV'T & MCEDA	JAN 07 – JAN 09	VARIABLES	VARIOUS
5.2a:	Amboy – Install early warning tornado system and siren, complete uptown park development project, and install welcome and greeting signs at town entries	LOCAL GOV'T	COUNTY GOV'T & MCEDA	JAN 07 – JAN 08	LOCAL GOV'T STAFF	STATE EDA & TRANS ENHANCEDMENT FUNDS
5.2b:	Bunker Hill - Work to fill vacant commercial space and renovate recreation parks, plus secure funding and construct a skateboard park, new community center/town hall, repair and replace where necessary sidewalks and curbs throughout the town	LOCAL GOV'T	COUNTY GOV'T & MCEDA	JAN 07 – JAN 08	LOCAL GOV'T STAFF	STATE EDA & TOURISM FUNDS
5.2:c	Converse - Downtown: Continue to promote and enhance the economic diversity of the Main Street business district and capital improvement projects such as downtown lighting upgrade on Jefferson St. and extension of Washington St. to First St.	LOCAL GOV'T	COUNTY GOV'T & MCEDA	JAN 07 – JAN 08	LOCAL GOV'T STAFF	STATE EDA & TRANS ENHANCEDMENT FUNDS
5.2d:	Converse – Trails/Recreation: Pursue capital improvements such as: connection of Converse Junction to Sweetser Switch Trail, Connection of Converse Elementary to Converse Junction via Safe Trails grant, and Construction of roller blade park as accessory to Sweetser Switch Trail.	LOCAL GOV'T	COUNTY GOV'T & MCEDA	JAN 07 – JAN 08	LOCAL GOV'T STAFF	STATE TRANS ENHANCEDMENT FUNDS
5.2e:	Converse – Industrial Development: Upgrade of a new water tower for the Town of Converse and established a reserve for “build to suit” tenant for Converse Industrial Park at Airport.	LOCAL GOV'T	COUNTY GOV'T & MCEDA	JAN 07 – JAN 08	LOCAL GOV'T STAFF	STATE & FEDERAL EDA FUNDS

5.2f:	Denver - Promote the development of needed public services such as a new fire station, drainage repairs and emergency support services at community center	LOCAL GOV'T	COUNTY GOV'T & MCEDA	JAN 07 – JAN 09	LOCAL GOV'T STAFF	STATE EDA FUNDS
5.2g:	Macy - Pursue storm drainage and sewer improvement projects to address issues, secure funding for a new town hall, and repair and replace where necessary curbs and sidewalks throughout town	LOCAL GOV'T	COUNTY GOV'T & MCEDA	JAN 07 – JAN 08	LOCAL GOV'T STAFF	STATE TRANS ENHANCE'T FUNDS
5.2h:	Mexico - Work to fill vacant commercial space, examine the need for establishment of a wastewater district and construction of a new sewer system, street repair program, new fire station and playground equipment for a community park	COUNTY GOV'T	COUNTY GOV'T & MCEDA	JAN 07 – JAN 09	MCEDA & COUNTY STAFF	STATE EPA & EDA FUNDS
5.3	Promote the acquisition and protection of public access sites to key waterways of interest for recreation use and tourism across the County.	CHAMBER	COUNTY & LOCAL GOV'T	JAN 07 – JUN 07	COUNTY, LOCAL GOV'T & CHAMBER STAFFS	STATE TOURISM FUNDS
5.4	Explore the establishment of a county-wide parks board or authority to implement and manage key recreation assets	COUNTY GOV'T	CHAMBER	JAN 07 – JUN 07	COUNTY AND CHAMBER STAFFS	COUNTY GOV'T
5.5:	Promote a county-wide approach to establishing and maintaining competitive recreation programs and facilities aimed at youth such as softball, little league and emphasize strengths as a marketing potential for business retention, attraction and support of tourism industry	COUNTY GOV'T	LOCAL GOV'T & MCEDA	JAN 07 – JUN 07	COUNTY & LOCAL GOV'T & MCEDA STAFFS	STATE EDA TOURISM FUNDS

## Strategy # 6: Strengthen Existing Employment Centers

**Approach:** Strengthen the utility, functionality and appearance of existing industrial parks to ensure on-going vitality for existing and future industries.

Actions		Lead	Support	Timeframe	Resources	Funding
6.1:	Design and implement a coordinated graphic identity signage system to be used across the County for all promotions, community gateways, attractions, business districts, and industrial parks	MCEDA	LOCAL & COUNTY GOV'TS	JAN 07 – JAN 08	MCEDA STAFF & CONSULTANTS	STATE EDA & TRANS ENHANCEMENT FUNDS
6.2:	Improve the visual character of existing industrial park edges and roadways to create a quality appearance through use of roadway enhancement funds and/or the establishment of special assessment districts	MCEDA	LOCAL & COUNTY GOV'TS	JAN 07 – JAN 08	MCEDA STAFF	STATE & LOCAL TRANS ENHANCEMENT FUNDS & ASSESSMENTS
6.3:	Create and adopt appearance standards to govern individual site development and improvement for any new construction in existing industrial parks	MCEDA	LOCAL & COUNTY GOV'TS	JAN 07 – JAN 08	MCEDA STAFF & CONSULTANTS	STATE EDA FUNDS
6.4:	Work with existing businesses to bring current building, outdoor storage and parking facilities into compliance with appearance standards adopted for existing industrial parks	MCEDA	EXISTING BUSINESSES	JAN 07 – JAN 09	MCEDA STAFF	STATE EDA FUNDS & ASSESSMENTS
6.5:	Seek the establishment and implementation of overlay zoning districts or Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions to govern future expansion or site improvements by existing businesses in existing industrial parks	MCEDA	LOCAL & COUNTY GOV'TS & EXISTING BUSINESSES	JAN 07 – JAN 08	MCEDA & LOCAL & COUNTY GOV'TS STAFFS	MCEDA

6.6:	Examine creating and using a “Management Association Approach” to oversee the on-going management, leasing, and maintenance of existing industrial parks	MCEDA	STATE EDA	OCT 06 – JAN 07	MCEDA STAFF	STATE EDA FUNDS
6.7:	Seek to locate “like” businesses in the same industrial parks to improve synergies and create complimentary industry clusters	MCEDA	EXISTING BUSINESSES	ON - GOING	MCEDA STAFF	MCEDA

## Strategy # 7: Plan for Future Development Areas

**Approach:** Proactively plan for and protect key strategic new development areas while providing flexibility to accommodate future opportunities in a synergistic manner compatible with surrounding development.

Actions		Lead	Support	Schedule	Resources	Funding
7.1:	Work with City of Peru and County Planning staffs and governing bodies to adopt development master plans recommended in this report for key future economic asset areas such as the US 31/US 24 development zone	MCEDA	LOCAL GOV'TS	JAN 07 – JUN 07	MCEDA & LOCAL GOV'TS	MCEDA
7.2:	Examine creating and using a “Management Association Approach” to oversee the master development, management, leasing, and maintenance of large planned development areas	MCEDA	STATE EDA	OCT 06 – JAN 07	MCEDA STAFF	STATE EDA FUNDS
7.3:	Pursue a business location and use of incentives strategy that encourages clustering of like businesses in desired locations	MCEDA	LOCAL GOV'TS	ON-GOING	MCEDA & LOCAL GOV'TS	STATE EDA & LOCAL GOV'TS FUNDS
7.4:	Create and adopt protective covenants and overlay zoning tools to govern the quality of appearance and development on key gateway sites adjoining the US 31, US 24, and Broadway corridors.	MCEDA	LOCAL GOV'TS	JAN 07 – OCT 08	MCEDA & CONSULTANTS	MCEDA
7.5:	Pursue remediation of current visual quality problems negatively impacting economic opportunity such as US 31	MCEDA	LOCAL GOV'TS	JAN 07 – JAN 08	MCEDA & LOCAL GOV'TS	STATE TRANS ENHANCE FUNDS
7.6:	Pursue coordination with Indiana Department of Transportation with regards to future potential access changes to US 31	MCEDA	InDOT	OCT 07 – ON	MCEDA & CONSULTANTS	MCEDA
7.7:	Pursue and protect a site for a future rail-served industrial and/or agricultural park with good access and visibility to key regional highway...	MCEDA	LOCAL GOV'TS	ON - GOING	MCEDA & LOCAL GOV'TS	STATE EDA FUNDS



7.8:	Continue to pursue development of residential areas consistent with the economic and industrial growth needs within Miami County	MCEDA	BOARD OF REALTORS & DEVELOPERS	ON-GOING	MCEDA & BOARD OF REALTORS	MCEDA
7.9:	City of Peru initiates annexation study activities to determine the timing of needed utility extensions and costs	CITY	MCEDA & PERU UTILITIES	MAR 07 – JUNE 07	CITY STAFF & CONSLTS	CITY GOV'T & PERU UTILITIES