



Intergovernmental Issues in Indiana: 2006 IACIR Survey

Indiana Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations
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Center for Urban Policy and the Environment
Indiana University School of Public and Environmental Affairs



February 2007

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**Intergovernmental Issues in Indiana:
2006 IACIR Survey**

February 2007

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Executive Summary

Intergovernmental Issues in Indiana (2006) is the eighth in a series of periodic surveys of elected officials designed to help the Indiana Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations (IACIR) and the Indiana General Assembly understand issues facing local governments. The 2006 survey included 22 questions and addressed many issues included in previous IACIR surveys, as well as “hot topics” affecting local governments currently. The heart of the survey is a series of questions about 57 community conditions in six categories: health, public safety, economics, land use, local services, and community quality of life. Answers to these questions provide useful insights about how local officials feel about the directions in which their communities are heading.

Methods and Response Rate

The IACIR administered the survey to 1,228 officeholders in the summer of 2006, including all members of the Indiana General Assembly, county council presidents, county board of commissioners presidents, mayors, and school board presidents. The commission also surveyed a randomly-selected member of each town council for towns with populations over 500, and two randomly-selected township trustees from each county. The effective response rate was 36 percent.

Findings

Officials show increasing optimism about the future of communities

Three-quarters of officials reported being optimistic about the future of their communities. This represents a slight increase from 2003 and 2004, but still less optimism than in previous surveys.

The health of the economy, cost and availability of healthcare, substance abuse and drug crime, K-12 education, and local roads and streets remain the most pressing issues for many communities

While *high speed internet access, parks and recreation, K-12 education, business attraction and retention, public safety, and overall economic conditions* were chosen most often as improved or as most improved over the last year, no condition was chosen by more than one-fifth of respondents. Officials identified similar issues most often as worsening, most deteriorated, and most important to work on, including economics (*overall economic conditions, business attraction and retention, unemployment and poverty*), *cost and availability of health services, drug and alcohol abuse, drug crime, traffic, and vitality of downtown*. Although listed for the last several years as improving, *K-12 education* also appeared as one of the most important issues to work on over the next two years.

Local governments share services

Significant evidence exists that confirm that local governments engage in a variety of collaborative arrangements with other local governments. Eighty-eight percent of respondents reported that their local government engaged in at least one collaborative local effort with another local government in the same county. With the exception of special districts, a majority of respondents reported positive relationship with other local governments within their county. More than one-third of respondents indicated positive relationships with special districts; about one-quarter indicated neither a positive nor negative relationship.

When asked about collaborative arrangements more generally, *juvenile detention, jail, and emergency dispatch* were listed most often as being provided by another local government. *Economic development emergency medical services, and emergency dispatch* were listed most often as being provided to other local governments.

Infrastructure investment important to communities

Infrastructure investment, particularly for local roads and streets and sanitary sewers, have been identified consistently over time as important community issues. A majority of respondents indicated that investment was adequate for all capital services listed with the exception of *local roads and streets*. For that category, a majority of respondents reported inadequate investment. *Highways, storm sewers, bridges, and high-speed internet* were reported next most often by respondents as having inadequate investment. With respect to funding preferences, respondents selected *earmarking state sales tax revenues from motor fuel purchases, removing State Police funding from the Motor Vehicle Highway Account, and exempting local governments from the state gas tax* most often as preferred mechanisms for increasing funding for local roads and streets. For funding water and wastewater infrastructure, respondents chose *cost saving measures and dedicated IDEM fine monies* most often.

Communities identify impediments to brownfield redevelopment as well as incentives that may increase local participation

More than one-third of the respondents reported *lack of funding for rehabilitation and site preparation, burdensome requirements of state/federal government assistance, concerns about liability, and lack of funding for demolition* as impediments to successful brownfield redevelopment. More than one-third of respondents also indicated that *remediation grants/loans, demolition grants/loans, building rehabilitation, site preparation funding and site acquisition funding* would be most beneficial for encouraging local brownfields activities.

Communities experienced a number of problems associated with property taxes and property tax assessment

More than three-quarters of respondents indicated that the *general negative attitudes toward property taxes, increased tax burden on older neighborhoods, complaints regarding increases in tax rates as a result of changes in property tax replacement credits, and lack of general public awareness* were problems for their communities.

Tax controls were reported most frequently to have negative local impact

A majority of respondents chose *tax controls* as one of three mandates that had the most significant impact on meeting local needs. *Welfare, adult corrections, and courts* also were identified by more than one-fifth of respondents.

Local officials would use additional local data for decisionmaking

A vast majority of respondents indicated accessing data monthly, quarterly, or annually to support local decisionmaking in a number of policy areas. About two-thirds of respondents indicated that it was likely they would use additional data if it were available.

Conclusions

Strong state and local governments are critical to the success of businesses and individuals in Indiana. In the face of changing institutional, fiscal, and economic environment, Indiana governments must develop new structures and skills to manage the provision of effective public services.

State and local elected officials in Indiana face increasingly more complex and difficult circumstances as they seek to provide public services for their citizens. Respondents continue to say that the community issues that are important for action include the health of the economy, the cost and availability of healthcare, substance abuse and crime, local roads and streets, and K-12 education. Tax controls, particularly those passed in 2004 and 2006, are increasingly identified as a mandate that has created significant hardships for local governments.

Indiana governments must develop new structures and skills to manage the changing environment. Some efforts may involve the creation of new structural options, others may be non-structural solutions, such as further embracing technology, educating and providing technical assistance to local governments about options for sharing services, and clarifying current legislation. Reform efforts such as the work of the

General Assembly's Local Government Efficiency and Financing Study Committee, the passage of HEA 1362 Local Government Reorganization (2006), and the IACIR study of interlocal agreements are critical steps in this larger effort.

Introduction

Intergovernmental Issues in Indiana (2006) is the eighth in a series of periodic surveys of elected officials designed to help the Indiana Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations (IACIR) and the Indiana General Assembly understand the issues that are important to local governments. The IACIR conducted similar surveys in 1996, 1997, 1999, 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004. The original survey was modeled after a regular survey of local elected officials conducted by the National League of Cities.

A complete description of the survey methodology appears in Appendix A. The 2006 survey included 22 questions and addressed a number of issues that were included in one or more previous surveys. The survey also addressed several “hot topics” affecting local communities in 2006, including reassessment, interlocal cooperation, brownfields, infrastructure funding, and effective data collection. Center for Urban Policy and the Environment staff, the Indiana Brownfields Program (Indiana Finance Authority), and the Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce assisted IACIR staff in developing selected questions. The questionnaire appears in Appendix B. The IACIR mailed the 2006 survey to 1,228 state and local elected officials in the summer.

This report presents the results of the 2006 survey. Survey responses are reported by topic area. With a few exceptions, the results are presented in the order they appear in the questionnaire. To account for non-responses to specific questions and questions addressed to specific officeholders, the number of responses is provided with the table or figure for each question.

Several questions gave respondents the option of writing in a specific response to *other*. In cases when these responses closely matched an option in the list provided, the response was grouped with that option. A complete list of *other* responses is provided in Appendix C. Appendix D includes a complete list of responses to the open-ended Question 22 at the end of the survey along with miscellaneous written comments. In a few cases, names and other identifiers were removed to ensure that no individual respondent is associated with a particular response.

Response Rates

The IACIR mailed 1,228 surveys to state and local elected officials, including all legislators, county council presidents, county board of commissioners presidents, mayors, and school board presidents. The survey also was mailed to one randomly-selected town council member from each town with population over 500 (according to 2005 Census estimates) and two randomly-selected township trustees from each county. Respondents had the option to complete the survey online or by mail for the first time.

The effective response rate was 36 percent (436 out of 1,224). Four (4) returned surveys were excluded from the analysis either because the respondent resigned, the respondents were not elected officials, or the survey was refused.

Question 1 asked respondents to identify the office they hold. Table 1 shows the number of surveys mailed and returned for each type of officeholder. One respondent indicated *other* and being a town clerk-treasurer; that response was coded as a town council member for the purposes of the subsequent analysis.

While the overall response rate (36 percent) was lower than in all previous surveys included in this analysis, it remains well above the typical rates that would be expected for a mail survey. As shown in Table 1 and Figure 1, mayors had the highest response rate for the 2006 survey (54 percent), and state senators had the

lowest (14 percent). With the exception of school board members, all response rates by type of officeholder were lower in 2006 than in 2004 (see Table 3). Over time, response rates by officeholder have varied.

Of the 435 respondents, 11 percent completed the survey online (Table 3). More than 10 percent of school board presidents (15 percent), town council members (14 percent), mayors (14 percent), and representatives (13 percent) used the online method to complete the survey.

Question 2 asked respondents to identify the area code in which they live. As shown in Table 4, respondents were evenly distributed across the area codes associated with northern, central, and southern Indiana. About one-third of the respondents were from each of the three geographic areas of the state.

Table 1: Response rates by office (Question 1)

| Office | Effective responses | Mailed | Undelivered or excluded | Effective return rate |
|-----------------------|---------------------|--------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Senator | 7 | 50 | | 14% |
| Representative | 24 | 100 | | 24% |
| County council member | 36 | 92 | 1 | 40% |
| County commissioner | 39 | 91 | | 43% |
| Mayor | 63 | 117 | | 54% |
| Town council member | 77 | 297 | 1 | 26% |
| Township trustee | 95 | 184 | 1 | 52% |
| School board member | 95 | 297 | 1 | 32% |
| Total | 436 | 1,228 | 4 | 36% |

Figure 1: Response rates by office (Question 1)

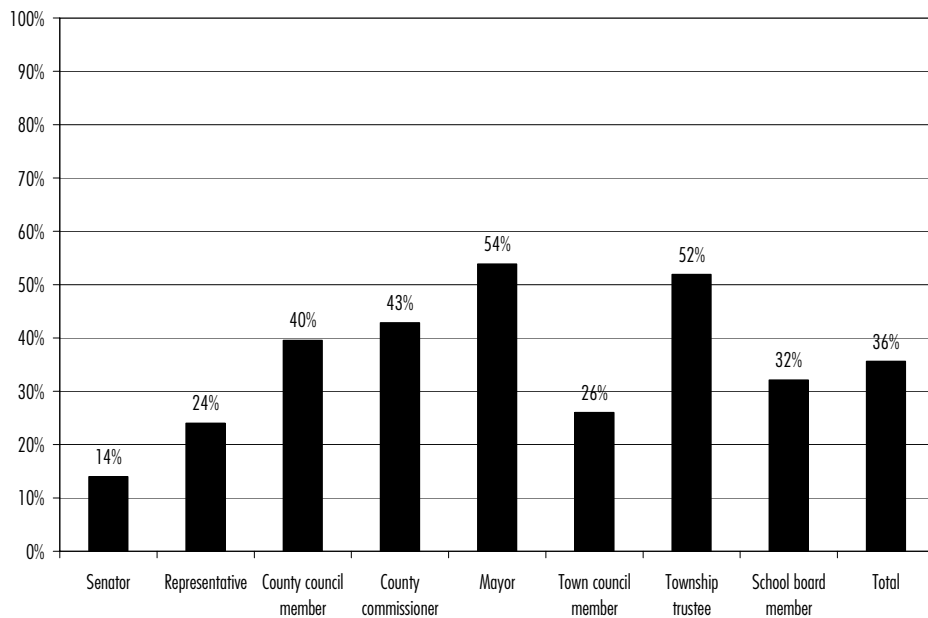


Table 2: Response rates by office by survey year (Question 1)

| Office | 2006 | 2004 | 2003 | 2002 | 2001 | 1999 |
|-----------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Senator | 14% | 29% | 40% | 32% | 30% | 46% |
| Representative | 24% | 26% | 28% | 23% | 19% | 35% |
| County council member | 40% | 49% | 64% | 54% | 52% | 61% |
| County commissioner | 43% | 44% | 53% | 41% | 51% | 60% |
| Mayor | 54% | 63% | 52% | 50% | 56% | 61% |
| Town council member | 26% | 39% | 37% | 38% | 32% | 44% |
| Township trustee | 52% | 61% | 57% | 57% | 43% | 68% |
| School board member | 32% | 28% | 44% | 34% | 47% | 45% |
| Total | 36% | 41% | 47% | 41% | 40% | 51% |

Table 3: Percentage of respondents who used the online survey method

| | By mail | | Online | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| | Number of respondents | Percent of respondents | Number of respondents | Percent of respondents |
| Senator (n=8) | 8 | 100% | 0 | 0% |
| Representative (n=24) | 21 | 88% | 3 | 13% |
| County council member (n=34) | 33 | 97% | 1 | 3% |
| County commissioner (n=41) | 38 | 93% | 3 | 7% |
| Mayor (n=66) | 57 | 86% | 9 | 14% |
| Town council member (n=74) | 64 | 86% | 10 | 14% |
| Township trustee (n=97) | 88 | 91% | 9 | 9% |
| School board member (n=91) | 77 | 85% | 14 | 15% |
| Total (n=435) | 386 | 89% | 49 | 11% |

Table 4: Geographic distribution of respondents (Question 2)

| Area code | Region | Percent of total |
|-----------|----------|------------------|
| 219 | Northern | 10% |
| 260 | Northern | 11% |
| 574 | Northern | 11% |
| 317 | Central | 9% |
| 765 | Central | 25% |
| 812 | Southern | 34% |

Local Conditions and Services

Questions 3-7 addressed local conditions and services. Question 3 queried respondents about their feelings regarding the future of their communities. Questions 4-7 addressed 57 local conditions in six general categories: health, public safety, economics, land use, local services and infrastructure, and community quality of life. Respondents were asked about the current status of each condition and change in their community during the last year. Respondents also were asked to identify the conditions that had

improved and deteriorated most over the last year, as well as the conditions most important to work on over the next two years.

The 2006 survey reflects a few changes from previous years. The list of community conditions included five conditions that had not appeared in previous surveys. Three conditions reflect the aggregation of multiple conditions listed in previous surveys. In a few cases, minor changes were made to the condition names for clarity based on comments and results on previous surveys.

Community Direction

As shown in Table 5 and Figure 2, respondents are generally optimistic about the direction their communities are heading (75 percent). This represents a slight increase in optimism from 2004 and 2003 (see Table 6). Mayors continue to be the most optimistic group of officeholders (99 percent). Township trustees reported being most pessimistic (26 percent).

Table 5: Feelings about the direction the community is heading by office (Question 3)*

| | Very optimistic | Mildly optimistic | Neither optimistic nor pessimistic | Mildly pessimistic | Very pessimistic |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Senator (n=8)** | 13% | 75% | 13% | 0% | 0% |
| Representative (n=24)** | 17% | 50% | 13% | 17% | 4% |
| County council member (n=34) | 24% | 50% | 9% | 18% | 0% |
| County commissioner (n=41) | 32% | 44% | 5% | 15% | 5% |
| Mayor (n=66) | 61% | 38% | 2% | 0% | 0% |
| Town council member (n=74) | 32% | 39% | 12% | 14% | 3% |
| Township trustee (n=95) | 18% | 44% | 12% | 20% | 6% |
| School board president (n=89) | 19% | 55% | 6% | 19% | 1% |
| Total (n=431) | 29% | 46% | 8% | 14% | 3% |

* Some of the totals may be slightly more or less than 100 percent due to rounding.

**While the cover letters that accompanied the questionnaire directed legislators to respond for the community in which they live, their responses may reflect a variety of conditions that exist across legislative districts.

Figure 2: Feelings about the general direction the community is heading (Question 3; n=431)

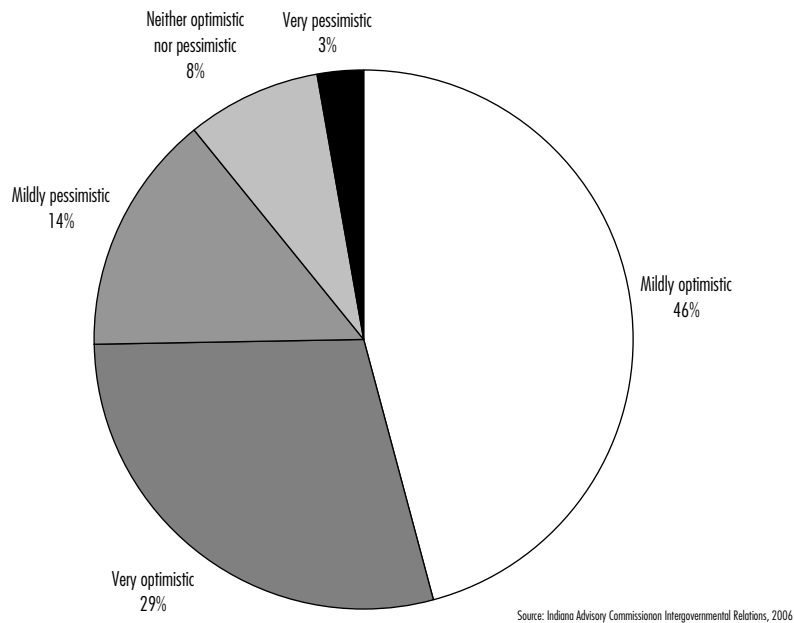


Table 6: Feelings about the general direction the community is heading by survey year

| | Very optimistic | Mildly optimistic | Neither optimistic nor pessimistic | Mildly pessimistic | Very pessimistic |
|--------------|-----------------|-------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| 2006 (n=431) | 29% | 46% | 8% | 14% | 3% |
| 2004 (n=491) | 26% | 48% | 12% | 11% | 3% |
| 2003 (n=502) | 27% | 45% | 14% | 11% | 3% |
| 2002 (n=543) | 28% | 47% | 13% | 9% | 2% |
| 2001 (n=542) | 34% | 50% | 9% | 5% | 2% |
| 1999 (n=599) | 38% | 44% | 10% | 7% | 1% |

Current Status of Conditions

Most communities appear to be stable. When asked about the current status of the 57 community conditions, a majority of respondents identified more than half of the conditions (29 of the 57) as *minor or no problem* (see Table 7). There was no condition identified as a *major problem* by a majority of respondents, whereas in 2003 and 2004, a majority of respondents did identify the *cost and availability of health services* as a *major problem*. Figure 3 shows the five conditions identified most often as *major or moderate problems* in 2006. *Drug and alcohol abuse, obesity, cost and availability of healthcare, overall economic conditions, and drug crime* were reported as a *major or moderate problem* by more than three-quarters of respondents. As Table 8 shows, with the exception of *drug crime*, a smaller proportion of officials reported these issues as problems in 2006 than in 2004.

Table 7: Current status of community conditions (Question 4)

| Category | Condition | Major problem | Moderate problem | Minor or no problem | |
|---|---|-------------------------------------|------------------|---------------------|-----|
| Health | Cost and availability of health services (n=419) | 37% | 44% | 16% | |
| | Drug and alcohol abuse(n=422) | 42% | 46% | 9% | |
| | Obesity (n=419)* | 28% | 57% | 11% | |
| | Care for the elderly (n=418) | 12% | 53% | 30% | |
| Public Safety | Police/sheriff services n=414 | 5% | 24% | 67% | |
| | Police-community relations (n=414) | 5% | 19% | 71% | |
| | Fire services (n=414) | 3% | 12% | 80% | |
| | Emergency medical services (n=414) | 7% | 21% | 68% | |
| | Violent crime (n=418) | 7% | 34% | 55% | |
| | Drug crime (n=421) | 30% | 48% | 19% | |
| | Youth crime (n=417) | 14% | 54% | 28% | |
| | Family/domestic violence (n=420) | 12% | 59% | 26% | |
| | Homeland security (n=415) | 4% | 21% | 70% | |
| | Jail services (n=414) | 16% | 26% | 53% | |
| | Youth detention facilities (n=408) | 16% | 33% | 46% | |
| | Disaster response (n=411) | 6% | 26% | 62% | |
| | Economics | Overall economic conditions (n=420) | 26% | 53% | 18% |
| | | Unemployment (n=417) | 22% | 47% | 27% |
| Business attraction and retention (n=418) | | 35% | 39% | 23% | |
| Job quality (n=413) | | 26% | 46% | 23% | |
| Workforce training (n=413) | | 16% | 44% | 35% | |
| Land Use | Quality of development (n=454) | 15% | 35% | 45% | |
| | Increased amount of development (n=415) | 15% | 33% | 47% | |
| | Lack of development (n=411) | 17% | 29% | 49% | |
| | Quality of affordable housing (n=418) | 16% | 38% | 43% | |
| | Balanced mix of housing types and prices (n=416) | 13% | 38% | 45% | |
| | Balanced mix of residential and non-residential development (n=409) | 9% | 35% | 50% | |
| | Open space/green space (n=405) | 7% | 27% | 60% | |
| | Farmland conversion and loss (n=404) | 11% | 30% | 51% | |
| Local services and infrastructure | Brownfields (n=397) | 6% | 27% | 58% | |
| | K-12 education (n=397) | 9% | 25% | 60% | |
| | Drinking water (n=411) | 3% | 14% | 77% | |
| | Sanitary sewers (n=408) | 13% | 31% | 49% | |
| | Storm sewers (n=401) | 15% | 35% | 42% | |
| | Combined sewer overflows (CSOs) (n=392)* | 13% | 29% | 48% | |
| | Local roads and streets (n=413) | 19% | 46% | 30% | |
| | Bridges (n=406)* | 9% | 33% | 51% | |
| | Highways (n=406) | 11% | 37% | 46% | |
| | High-speed internet access (n=400) | 13% | 28% | 51% | |
| | Parks and recreation (n=407) | 4% | 24% | 66% | |
| | Solid waste management (n=406) | 6% | 20% | 68% | |
| | Telephone (n=411) | 2% | 13% | 80% | |
| | Cellular telephone (n=410) | 7% | 23% | 64% | |
| | Cable TV (n=409) | 5% | 18% | 71% | |
| Electric service (n=411)* | 3% | 10% | 81% | | |
| Natural gas service (n=407)* | 5% | 11% | 78% | | |
| Public transportation (n=403) | 16% | 32% | 44% | | |

Table 7: Current status of community conditions (Question 4) (continued)

| Category | Condition | Major problem | Moderate problem | Minor or no problem |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------|------------------|---------------------|
| Community quality of life | Race-ethnic relations (n=412) | 4% | 26% | 64% |
| | Air quality (n=412) | 6% | 23% | 66% |
| | Water quality (n=412) | 4% | 14% | 76% |
| | Traffic congestion (n=409) | 10% | 29% | 55% |
| | Poverty (n=412) | 19% | 47% | 29% |
| | Vitality of neighborhoods (n=411) | 11% | 42% | 42% |
| | Vitality of downtown (n=408) | 22% | 40% | 32% |
| | Arts and cultural resources (n=405) | 9% | 30% | 54% |
| | Childcare (n=411) | 7% | 35% | 52% |
| | Community involvement (n=417) | 14% | 42% | 40% |

* New conditions added in 2006 survey

Figure 3: Top five issues identified as major or moderate problems (Question 4)

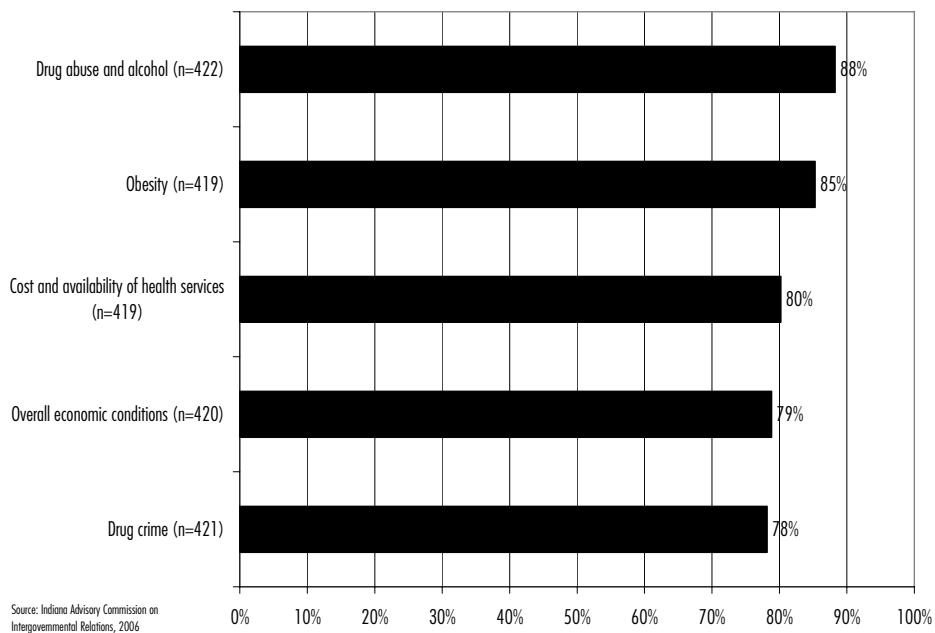


Table 8: Conditions reported as major or moderate problems by survey year** (Question 4)

| Category | Condition | 2006 | 2004 | 2003 | 2002 | 2001 | |
|-----------------------------------|--|-----------------------------|------|------|------|------|-----|
| Health | Cost of health services | 80% | 92% | 94% | 91% | 68% | |
| | Availability of health services | | 44% | 47% | 46% | | |
| | Drug abuse | 88% | 90% | 90% | 85% | 84% | |
| | Alcohol abuse | | 84% | 86% | | | |
| | Obesity* | 85% | – | – | – | – | |
| | Care for the elderly | 66% | 62% | 69% | 63% | 57% | |
| Public safety | Police/sheriff services | 29% | 24% | – | – | – | |
| | Police-community relations | 24% | 26% | 30% | 31% | 26% | |
| | Fire services | 15% | 15% | – | – | – | |
| | Emergency medical services | 28% | 30% | – | – | – | |
| | Violent crime | 41% | 38% | 37% | 33% | 36% | |
| | Drug crime* | 78% | 76% | – | – | – | |
| | Youth violence and crime | 68% | 68% | – | 57% | 58% | |
| | Family/domestic violence | 70% | 64% | – | – | – | |
| | Homeland security (Anti-terrorism) | 25% | 10% | 7% | – | – | |
| | Jail facilities | 42% | 42% | 47% | – | – | |
| | Youth detention facilities | 48% | 52% | 50% | – | – | |
| | Disaster response | 32% | 27% | – | – | – | |
| | Economics | Overall economic conditions | 79% | 83% | 91% | 85% | – |
| | | Unemployment | 69% | 79% | 89% | 74% | 63% |
| Business attraction | | 74% | 80% | – | – | – | |
| Business retention | | | 73% | – | – | – | |
| Job quality | | 72% | 76% | – | – | – | |
| Workforce training | | 60% | 64% | 71% | 59% | 56% | |
| Workforce retraining | | – | – | – | 58% | 49% | |
| Land use | Quality of development | 51% | 54% | 55% | 53% | 50% | |
| | Increased amount of development | 48% | 53% | 52% | 51% | 53% | |
| | Lack of development | 46% | 49% | – | – | – | |
| | Quality affordable housing | 54% | 57% | 57% | 61% | 61% | |
| | Mix of housing types and prices | 51% | 54% | – | – | – | |
| | Mix of residential and non-residential development | 44% | 46% | – | – | – | |
| | Opens space/green space | 33% | 36% | 34% | 33% | 37% | |
| | Farmland conversion and loss | 42% | 51% | – | – | – | |
| | Brownfields | 33% | 42% | 34% | 36% | 32% | |
| Local services and infrastructure | K-12 education | 34% | 28% | 34% | 31% | 36% | |
| | Drinking water | 17% | 23% | 19% | 22% | 23% | |
| | Sanitary sewers | 45% | 49% | 53% | 52% | 46% | |
| | Storm sewers | 50% | 58% | | | | |
| | Combined sewer overflows (CSOs)* | 42% | – | – | – | – | |
| | Local roads and streets | 65% | 64% | 67% | 66% | 62% | |
| | Bridges* | 42% | – | – | – | – | |
| | Highways | 48% | 52% | – | – | – | |
| | High-speed internet access | 41% | 46% | 44% | 43% | 27% | |
| | Telephone | 15% | 21% | 20% | 23% | 27% | |
| | Cellular telephone | 30% | 40% | 36% | 32% | 21% | |
| | Parks and recreation | 28% | 30% | 26% | 25% | 34% | |
| | Solid waste management | 26% | 33% | 37% | 37% | 29% | |

Table 8: Conditions reported as major or moderate problems by survey year** (Question 4) (continued)

| Category | Condition | 2006 | 2004 | 2003 | 2002 | 2001 |
|---|--------------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Local Services and infrastructure (continued) | Cable TV | 23% | 29% | 29% | 34% | 38% |
| | Public transportation | 49% | 46% | 45% | 47% | 29% |
| | Electric service* | 13% | – | – | – | – |
| | Natural gas service* | 16% | – | – | – | – |
| Community quality of life | Race-ethnic relations | 30% | 27% | 26% | 26% | 29% |
| | Air quality | 28% | 33% | 28% | 22% | 23% |
| | Water quality | 19% | 28% | 22% | 24% | 24% |
| | Traffic | 39% | 54% | 53% | 56% | 60% |
| | Poverty | 66% | 66% | 71% | 60% | 50% |
| | Vitality of neighborhoods | 53% | 48% | 51% | 42% | 43% |
| | Vitality of downtown | 61% | 71% | 70% | 66% | 60% |
| | Arts and cultural resources | 39% | 46% | – | – | – |
| | Childcare | 42% | 47% | – | – | – |
| | Community involvement (volunteerism) | 56% | 57% | 57% | 54% | 39% |

*New conditions added to 2006 questionnaire.

**Over time, the community conditions included in the survey have changed for a number of reasons. The number of conditions was expanded significantly in 2001 and 2004. In some cases, conditions have been disaggregated to allow finer analysis. In other cases, conditions have been modified or deleted because of the changing environment or space limitations.

Change in Conditions

With the exception of *local roads and streets* and *overall economic conditions*, a majority of the respondents reported *no change* over the past year for all conditions (see Table 9). None of the conditions was reported as improved by more than 20 percent of respondents. Figures 4 and 5 show the five issues officials identified most often as improved and as worsened over the past year, respectively. Many of the same conditions have been reported as worsened by 25 percent or more of respondents since 2001 (see Table 10).¹

Table 11 and Figures 6 and 7 show the top five issues identified as most improved and as most deteriorated over the past year, respectively. Interestingly, *overall economic conditions* was reported by 10 percent or more of respondents as both most improved and most deteriorated. This outcome shows that communities across the state face a variety of conditions on similar issues.

Comparison of results from these questions for 2006 and 2004 reveals that different issues were reported most often as most improved across the two surveys with the exception of *K-12 education* (Table 12). With respect to the most deteriorated issues, respondents reported similar issues.

Priorities for Action

Officials reported the need to address economic conditions (including *unemployment* and *business attraction and retention*), *cost and availability of health services*, *drug and alcohol abuse*, *drug crime*, *K-12 education*, and *local roads and streets* over the next two years (see Table 13 and Figure 8). These issues are consistent with those that have been identified most frequently since 1999 (see Table 14).

¹ The rather stark relative differences between the proportion of respondents in Question 4 and Questions 5–7 are a function of question structure. In Question 4, respondents provided information about all 57 conditions. In Questions 5–7, respondents chose only 3 of the 57 conditions.

Table 9: Change in local conditions since last year (Question 4)

| Category | Condition | Improved | Worsened | No change | |
|---|---|-------------------------------------|----------|-----------|-----|
| Health | Cost and availability of health services (n=388) | 9% | 26% | 54% | |
| | Drug abuse and alcohol (n=381) | 6% | 28% | 53% | |
| | Obesity (n=382) | 3% | 22% | 63% | |
| | Care for the elderly (n=375) | 7% | 10% | 69% | |
| Public Safety | Police/sheriff services (n=375) | 12% | 7% | 67% | |
| | Police-community relations (n=377) | 14% | 5% | 68% | |
| | Fire services (n=380) | 13% | 3% | 72% | |
| | Emergency medical services (n=379) | 10% | 5% | 72% | |
| | Violent crime (n=374) | 4% | 16% | 66% | |
| | Drug crime (n=381) | 7% | 31% | 50% | |
| | Youth crime (n=376) | 3% | 26% | 57% | |
| | Family/domestic violence (n=378) | 3% | 17% | 67% | |
| | Homeland security (n=376) | 7% | 4% | 75% | |
| | Jail services (n=378) | 14% | 16% | 57% | |
| | Youth detention facilities (n=376) | 6% | 10% | 70% | |
| | Disaster response (n=384) | 13% | 4% | 72% | |
| | Economics | Overall economic conditions (n=385) | 16% | 29% | 44% |
| | | Unemployment (n=383) | 11% | 24% | 53% |
| Business attraction and retention (n=382) | | 16% | 21% | 51% | |
| Job quality (n=381) | | 8% | 16% | 63% | |
| Workforce training (n=379) | | 12% | 8% | 67% | |
| Land use | Quality of development (n=379) | 9% | 12% | 66% | |
| | Increased amount of development (n=376) | 12% | 15% | 60% | |
| | Lack of development (n=375) | 7% | 11% | 67% | |
| | Quality of affordable housing (n=380) | 8% | 14% | 66% | |
| | Balanced mix of housing types and prices (n=380) | 6% | 11% | 70% | |
| | Balanced mix of residential and non-residential development (n=388) | 6% | 12% | 72% | |
| | Open space/green space (n=384) | 8% | 11% | 69% | |
| | Farmland conversion and loss (n=379) | 4% | 20% | 64% | |
| Local services and infrastructure | Brownfields (n=376) | 6% | 7% | 73% | |
| | K-12 education (n=390) | 17% | 10% | 63% | |
| | Drinking water (n=380) | 7% | 4% | 76% | |
| | Sanitary sewers (n=381) | 15% | 12% | 60% | |
| | Storm sewers (n=379) | 13% | 12% | 62% | |
| | Combined sewer overflows (CSOs) (n=378) | 12% | 8% | 67% | |
| | Local roads and streets (n=380) | 15% | 26% | 46% | |
| | Bridges (n=382) | 9% | 14% | 65% | |
| | Highways (n=381) | 12% | 15% | 61% | |
| | High-speed internet access (n=383) | 20% | 6% | 62% | |
| | Parks and recreation (n=390) | 17% | 6% | 66% | |
| | Solid waste management (n=384) | 10% | 7% | 72% | |
| | Telephone (n=385) | 5% | 3% | 81% | |
| | Cellular telephone (n=387) | 10% | 5% | 74% | |
| | Cable TV (n=387) | 6% | 6% | 77% | |
| Local services and infrastructure | Electric service (n=387) | 6% | 5% | 79% | |
| | Natural gas service (n=380) | 3% | 7% | 78% | |
| | Public transportation (n=378) | 5% | 10% | 72% | |

Table 9: Change in local conditions since last year (Question 4) (continued)

| Category | Condition | Improved | Worsened | No change |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Community quality of life | Race-ethnic relations (n=385) | 6% | 11% | 71% |
| | Air quality (n=378) | 6% | 8% | 73% |
| | Water quality (n=379) | 7% | 4% | 75% |
| | Traffic congestion (n=383) | 4% | 21% | 63% |
| | Poverty (n=387) | 2% | 29% | 58% |
| | Vitality of neighborhoods (n=386) | 5% | 20% | 64% |
| | Vitality of downtown (n=384) | 15% | 22% | 51% |
| | Arts and cultural resources (n=383) | 10% | 9% | 70% |
| | Childcare (n=386) | 7% | 9% | 73% |
| | Community involvement (n=389) | 11% | 14% | 63% |

Figure 4: Top five issues identified most often as improved during the past year (Question 4)

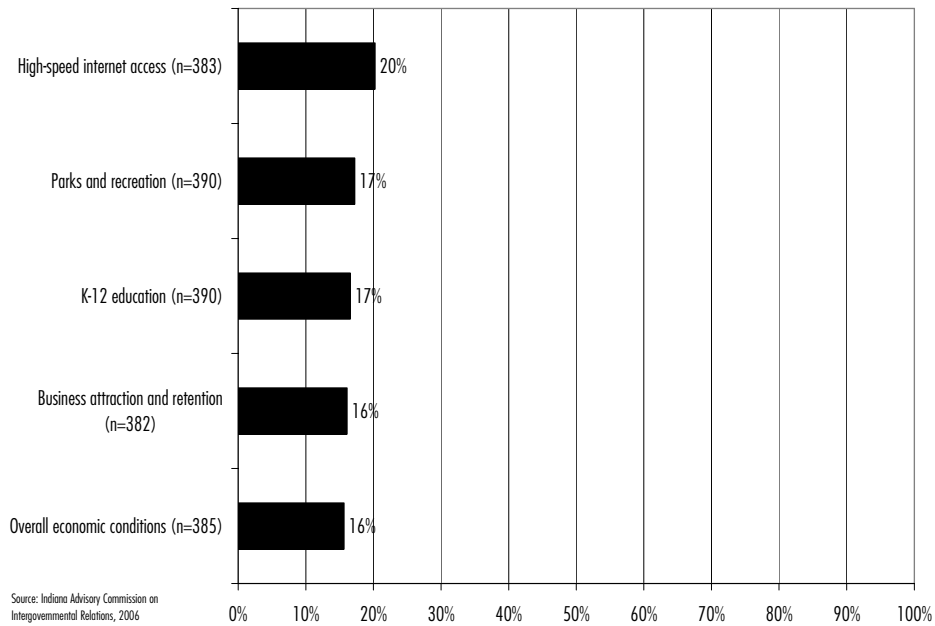


Figure 5: Top five issues identified most often as worsened during the past year (Question 4)

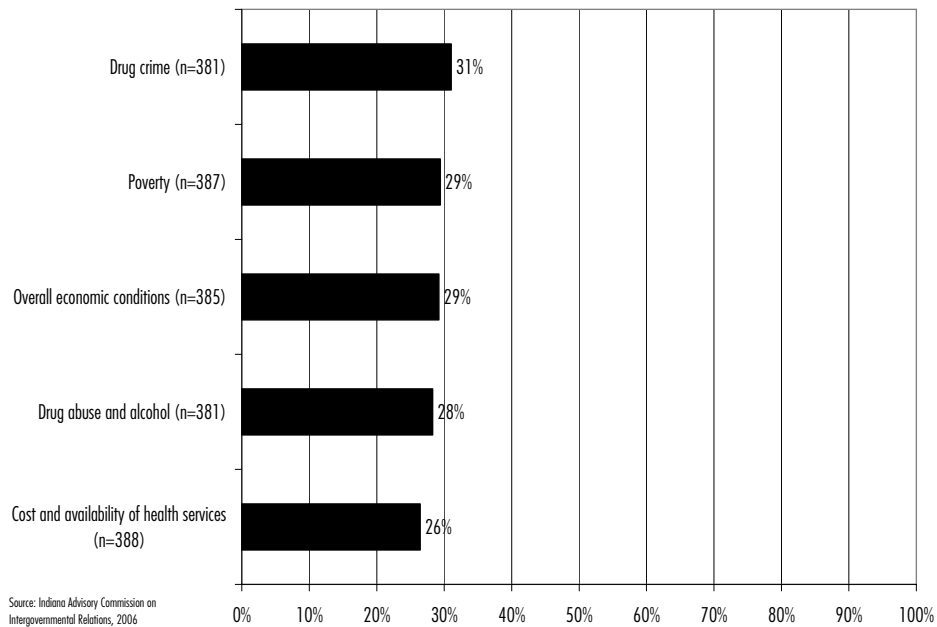


Table 10: Conditions identified as improved or worsened over the past year by survey year (Question 4)

| Survey year | 25% or more of respondents indicated improved | 25% or more of respondents indicated worsened |
|-------------|---|---|
| 2006 | | Drug crime (31%) Poverty (29%) Overall economic conditions (29%) Drug abuse and alcohol (28%) Cost and availability of health services (26%) Local roads and streets (26%) Youth crime (26%) |
| 2004 | | Cost of health services (51%) Overall economic conditions (42%) Drug abuse (42%) Unemployment (38%) Drug crime (38%) Poverty (34%) Traffic (33%) Business retention (31%) Vitality of downtown (30%) Youth crime (26%) Business attraction (26%) Farmland conversion and loss (26%) Local roads and streets (26%) |

Table 10: Conditions identified as improved or worsened over the past year by survey year (Question 4) (continued)

| Survey year | 25% or more of respondents indicated improved | 25% or more of respondents indicated worsened |
|-------------|--|---|
| 2003 | High-speed internet access (27%) | Unemployment (55%) Cost of health services (54%) Overall economic conditions (54%) Poverty (35%) Drug abuse (34%) Traffic (34%) Vitality of downtown (28%) Local roads and streets (25%) |
| 2002 | | Overall economic conditions (59%) Cost of health services (54%) Unemployment (53%) Traffic (37%) Drug and alcohol abuse (31%) Vitality of downtown (30%) Local roads and streets (29%) Poverty (29%) Youth violence and crime (26%) |
| 2001 | Police-community relations (43%) Parks and recreation (40%) Amount of development (37%) Internet access (36%) K-12 education (34%) Quality of development (29%) Sewer (27%) Local roads and streets (27%) Solid waste management (27%) Volunteerism (25%) | Traffic (51%) Unemployment (48%) Local roads and streets (37%) Cost and availability of health care services (34%) Drug and alcohol abuse (34%) Vitality of downtown (32%) Youth violence and crime (29%) Quality affordable housing (26%) Open space (25%) |
| 1999* | Economic conditions (50%) Parks and open space (50%) Police-community relations (49%) Infrastructure (49%) Unemployment (44%) Educational quality (39%) Solid waste management (37%) Workforce development (34%) Vitality of neighborhoods (34%) Healthcare (32%) Corporate responsibility (28%) Affordable housing (27%) | Cable TV rates (61%) Youth crime (29%) Substance abuse (26%) |

*The number of conditions expanded significantly in 2001. Thus, readers should make comparisons with 1999 responses cautiously.

Table 11: Conditions ranked as most improved or most deteriorated during the past year (Questions 5 and 6)

| Category | Condition | Reported as one of three most improved (n=341) | Reported as one of three most deteriorated (n=361) |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|--|
| Health | Health** | 3% | 8% |
| | Cost and availability of health services | 4% | 13% |
| | Drug and alcohol abuse | 2% | 18% |
| | Obesity | 0% | 7% |
| | Care for the elderly | 2% | 2% |
| Public safety | Public safety** | 11% | 4% |
| | Police/sheriff services | 8% | 2% |
| | Police-community relations | 6% | 2% |
| | Fire services | 10% | 1% |
| | Emergency medical services | 7% | 2% |
| | Violent crime | 1% | 3% |
| | Drug crime | 3% | 14% |
| | Youth crime | 1% | 7% |
| | Family/domestic violence | 0% | 6% |
| | Homeland security (Anti-terrorism) | 2% | 0% |
| | Jail facilities | 10% | 7% |
| | Youth detention facilities | 2% | 2% |
| | Disaster response | 5% | 1% |
| Economics | Economics** | 8% | 9% |
| | Overall economic conditions | 10% | 11% |
| | Unemployment | 6% | 10% |
| | Business attraction and retention | 12% | 9% |
| | Job quality | 4% | 6% |
| | Workforce training | 2% | 2% |
| Land use | Land use** | 6% | 7% |
| | Quality of development | 4% | 1% |
| | Increased amount of development | 1% | 0% |
| | Lack of development | 0% | 4% |
| | Quality affordable housing | 6% | 4% |
| | Balanced mix of housing types and prices | 0% | 1% |
| | Balanced mix of residential and non-residential development | 2% | 0% |
| | Opens space/green space | 1% | 1% |
| | Farmland conversion and loss | 1% | 4% |
| Brownfields | 2% | 1% | |
| Local services and infrastructure | Local services and infrastructure** | 9% | 3% |
| | K-12 education | 14% | 3% |
| | Drinking water | 3% | 1% |
| | Sanitary sewers | 6% | 3% |
| | Storm sewers* | 4% | 2% |
| | Combined sewer overflows (CSOs)* | 3% | 1% |
| | Local roads and streets | 8% | 13% |
| | Bridges | 1% | 2% |
| | Highways | 2% | 3% |
| High-speed internet access | 11% | 1% | |

Table 11: Conditions ranked as most improved or most deteriorated during the past year (Questions 5 and 6) (continued)

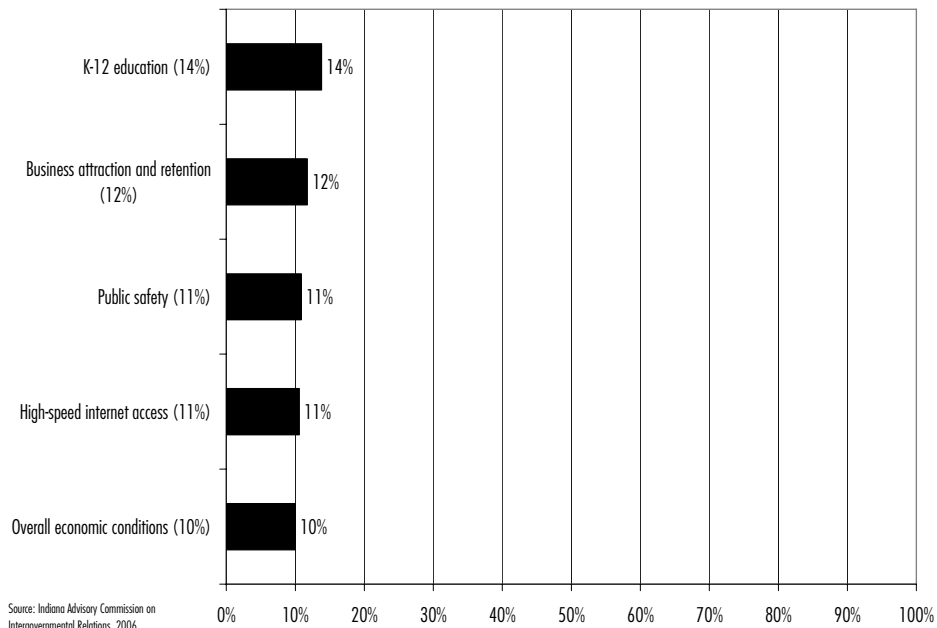
| Category | Condition | Reported as one of three most improved (n=341) | Reported as one of three most deteriorated (n=361) |
|---|-----------------------------|--|--|
| Local services and infrastructure (continued) | Parks and recreation | 9% | 1% |
| | Solid waste management | 1% | 1% |
| | Telephone | 0% | 0% |
| | Cellular telephone | 4% | 2% |
| | Cable TV | 2% | 1% |
| | Electric Service* | 1% | 1% |
| | Natural gas service* | 0% | 2% |
| | Public transportation | 2% | 2% |
| Community quality of life | Community quality of life** | 5% | 3% |
| | Race-ethnic relations | 1% | 3% |
| | Air quality | 1% | 2% |
| | Water quality | 1% | 0% |
| | Traffic congestion | 1% | 9% |
| | Poverty | 0% | 9% |
| | Vitality of neighborhoods | 1% | 6% |
| | Vitality of downtown | 7% | 8% |
| | Arts and cultural resources | 3% | 0% |
| | Childcare | 2% | 0% |
| Community involvement | 4% | 3% | |
| Other | Other*** | 9% | 12% |

*New conditions added to 2006 questionnaire.

**In some cases, respondents identified general categories rather than specific conditions.

***In other cases, respondents identified conditions not listed in Question 4 or in a manner that did not allow the responses to be interpreted as one of the provided conditions. A list of these responses is provided in Appendix C.

Figure 6: Top five issues ranked as most improved during the past year (Question 5, n=341)



Source: Indiana Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, 2006

Figure 7: Top five issues ranked as most deteriorated during the past year (Question 6, n=461)

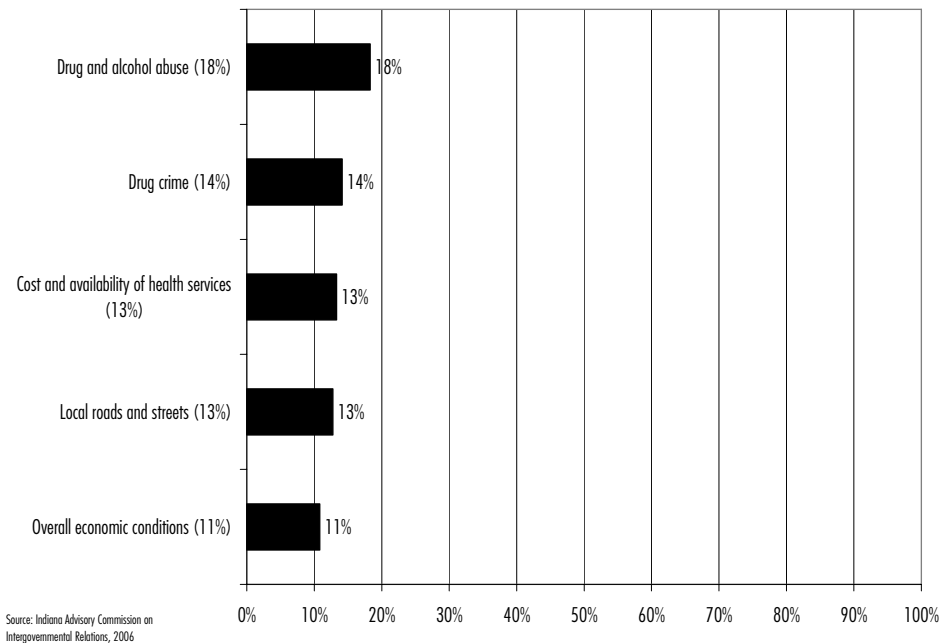


Table 12: Conditions chosen most often as most improved or most deteriorated over the last year (Questions 6 and 7)*

| Year | 10% or more of respondents indicated most improved | 10% or more of respondents indicated most deteriorated |
|------|---|--|
| 2006 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> K-12 education (14%) Business attraction and retention (12%) Public safety (11%) High-speed internet access (11%) Overall economic conditions (10%) Jail facilities (10%) Fire services (10%) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drug and alcohol abuse (18%) Drug crime (14%) Cost and availability of health services (13%) Local roads and streets (13%) Overall economic conditions (11%) Unemployment (10%) |
| 2004 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community involvement (20%) Vitality of downtown (12%) K-12 education (11%) Police/sheriff services (10%) Fire services (10%) Water quality (10%) Childcare (10%) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cost of health services (19%) Traffic (19%) Drug abuse (16%) Vitality of downtown (16%) Poverty (15%) Drug crime (10%) Unemployment (10%) Local roads and streets (10%) |

*This question was changed in 2004 to assess the most improved and deteriorated conditions over the last year, rather than over the last five years. This table is provided for consistency, but does not have comparisons over survey years prior to 2004 because of this question change.

Table 13: Conditions ranked as most important to work on during the next two years (Question 7, n=379)

| Category | Condition | Reported as one of three most important to work on (n=379) |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|
| Health | Health** | 6% |
| | Cost and availability of health services | 17% |
| | Drug and alcohol abuse | 11% |
| | Obesity* | 3% |
| | Care for the elderly | 2% |
| Public safety | Public safety** | 7% |
| | Police/sheriff services | 2% |
| | Police-community relations | 1% |
| | Fire services | 1% |
| | Emergency medical services | 2% |
| | Violent crime | 2% |
| | Drug crime | 14% |
| | Youth crime | 6% |
| | Family/domestic violence | 3% |
| | Homeland security (Anti-terrorism) | 1% |
| | Jail facilities | 2% |
| | Youth detention facilities | 0% |
| | Disaster response | 0% |
| | Economics | Economics** |
| Overall economic conditions | | 11% |
| Unemployment | | 12% |
| Business attraction and retention | | 16% |
| Job quality | | 9% |
| Workforce training | | 4% |
| Land use | Land use** | 7% |
| | Quality of development | 2% |
| | Increased amount of development | 2% |
| | Lack of development | 2% |
| | Quality affordable housing | 4% |
| | Balanced mix of housing types and prices | 1% |
| | Balanced mix of residential and non-residential development | 1% |
| | Opens space/green space | 1% |
| | Farmland conversion and loss | 3% |
| Brownfields | 1% | |
| Local services and infrastructure | Local services** | 6% |
| | K-12 education | 12% |
| | Drinking water | 1% |
| | Sanitary sewers | 5% |
| | Storm sewers* | 4% |
| | Combined sewer overflows (CSOs)* | 2% |
| | Local roads and streets | 11% |
| | Bridges | 1% |
| | Highways | 2% |
| | High-speed internet access | 1% |
| | Telephone | 0% |
| Cellular telephone | 0% | |

Table 13: Conditions ranked as most important to work on during the next two years (Question 7, n=379) (continued)

| Category | Condition | Reported as one of three most important to work on (n=379) |
|---|-----------------------------|--|
| Local services and infrastructure (continued) | Parks and recreation | 0% |
| | Solid waste management | 0% |
| | Cable TV | 0% |
| | Electric service* | 0% |
| | Natural gas service* | 0% |
| | Public transportation | 2% |
| Community quality of life | Community quality of life** | 6% |
| | Race-ethnic relations | 1% |
| | Air quality | 2% |
| | Water quality | 0% |
| | Traffic | 6% |
| | Poverty | 8% |
| | Vitality of neighborhoods | 2% |
| | Vitality of downtown | 6% |
| | Arts and cultural resources | 0% |
| | Childcare | 1% |
| | Community involvement | 4% |
| Other | Other*** | 9% |

*New conditions added to 2006 questionnaire.

**Questions 5-7 required respondents to identify the top three conditions from the list in question 4. In some cases, respondents identified general categories rather than specific conditions.

***In other cases, respondents identified conditions not listed in Question 5 or in a manner that did not allow the responses to be interpreted as one of the provided conditions.

Figure 8: Top five issues ranked as most important to work on (Question 7, n=379)

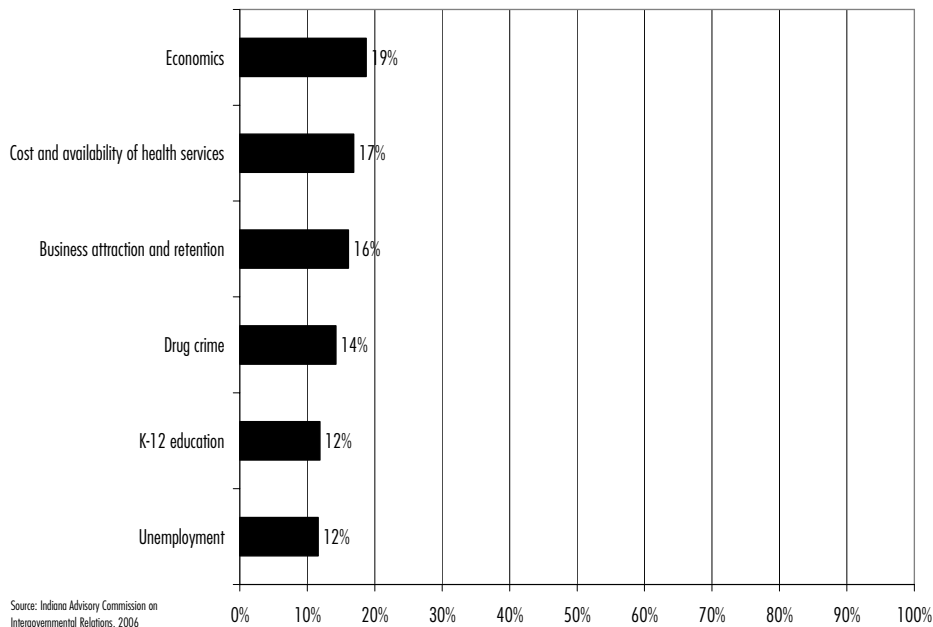


Table 14: Conditions ranked as most important to work on over the next two years by survey year

| Survey year | 10% or more of respondents indicated as most important to work on |
|---------------|--|
| 2006 (n=379) | Cost and availability of health services (17%) Business attraction and retention (16%) Economics (16%) Drug crime (14%) K-12 education (12%) Unemployment (12%) Local roads and streets (11%) Overall economic conditions (11%) Drug and alcohol abuse (11%) |
| 2004 (n=440) | Cost of health services (18%) Business attraction (16%) Vitality of downtown (16%) Drug abuse (15%) Traffic (15%) Economics (13%) Local roads and streets (12%) Poverty (12%) Unemployment (10%) Community involvement (10%) |
| 2003 (n= 457) | Overall economic conditions (28%) Cost of health services (26%) Unemployment (21%) Drug abuse (17%) Local roads and streets (13%) Health (12%) Economics (12%) K-12 education (12%) Traffic (12%) Sewer (11%) |
| 2002 (n=476) | Cost of health services (26%) Overall economic conditions (22%) Unemployment (21%) Local roads and streets (18%) Sewer (16%) Drug and alcohol abuse (13%) Poverty (11%) |
| 2001 (n=462) | Local roads and streets (27%) Sewer (20%) Traffic (18%) Unemployment (15%) K-12 education (15%) Cost/availability of health services (13%) Drug and alcohol abuse (13%) Economics (general) (12%) Vitality of downtown (11%) Land use (10%) |

Table 14: Conditions ranked as most important to work on over the next two years by survey year (continued)

| Survey year | 10% or more of respondents indicated as most important to work on |
|--------------|--|
| 1999 (n=625) | Infrastructure (30%) Economic conditions (25%) Affordable housing (24%) Educational quality (23%) Youth crime (19%) Healthcare (16%) Substance abuse (16%) |

Summary

Officials show increasing optimism about the future of communities. Three-quarters of officials reported being optimistic about the future of their communities. This represents a slight increase from 2003 and 2004, but still less optimism than in previous surveys.

The health of the economy, *cost and availability of healthcare*, substance abuse and drug crime, *K-12 education*, and *local roads and streets* remain the most pressing issues for many communities. While *high speed internet access*, *parks and recreation*, *K-12 education*, *business attraction and retention*, *public safety*, and *overall economic conditions* were chosen most often as improved or as most improved over the last year, no condition was chosen by more than one-fifth of respondents. Officials identified similar issues most often as worsening, most deteriorated, and most important to work on, including economics (*overall economic conditions*, *business attraction and retention*, *unemployment and poverty*), *cost and availability of health services*, *drug and alcohol abuse*, *drug crime*, *traffic*, and *vitality of downtown*. Although listed for the last several years as improving, *K-12 education* also appeared as one of the most important issues to work on over the next two years.

Intergovernmental Cooperation

The IACIR has long been interested in studying the structural options available to make local governments more effective. One of the options for making local government services more effective and efficient are interlocal agreements.

During the 2006 legislative session, the Indiana General Assembly passed HEA 1362 Local Government Reorganization (Public Law 186-2006), enabling legislation to allow the consolidation of local governments and their services. Following the legislative session, IACIR staff members were approached by the Office of the Governor about conducting a study of the Interlocal Cooperation statute (IC 36-1-7) to identify options for increasing the use of the long-standing tool and potential incentives to encourage its use. In mid-2006, the IACIR agreed to add the study to its annual work program. Questions 9-11 were included in the 2006 survey to provide information about the use of collaborative arrangements and to inform the study. The report is expected to be released in March 2007.

Question 9 asked the respondents to characterize the working relationship between their local governments and other local governments within their county. With the exception of special districts, almost two-thirds or more of respondents reported they had a positive relationship with other types of local governments (Table 15). Slightly more than one-third (36 percent) of respondents reported positive relationships with special districts; more than one-quarter of respondents reported having *neither a positive nor negative* relationship. Question 10 asked about the number of instances of cooperation between local

governments that have occurred in the respondent's county over the past year. Table 16 shows that a large majority of respondents (88 percent) indicated having engaged in some type of collaborative effort over the last year. The largest proportion of respondents reported 1-3 instances (46 percent).

Table 15: Characterization of working relationships between local governments (Question 9)

| Relationship with: | Within county | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------|-------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| | Very Positive | Somewhat Positive | Neither Positive nor Negative | Somewhat Negative | Very Negative | No Relationship |
| County government (n=412) | 32% | 39% | 15% | 10% | 3% | 1% |
| City and town government (n=412) | 28% | 42% | 15% | 10% | 2% | 3% |
| Township governments (n=413) | 34% | 30% | 24% | 7% | 1% | 4% |
| School districts (n=405) | 34% | 33% | 19% | 7% | 1% | 4% |
| Special districts (n=303) | 14% | 22% | 26% | 2% | 1% | 7% |

Table 16: Instances of cooperation between local governments by respondent's office in the past year (Question 10, n=370)

| Office | No instances | | 1-3 instances | | 4-7 instances | | More than 7 instances | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|------------|---------------------|------------|---------------------|------------|-----------------------|------------|
| | Number of Responses | Percentage | Number of Responses | Percentage | Number of Responses | Percentage | Number of Responses | Percentage |
| Senator (n=7) | 1 | 14% | 3 | 43% | 1 | 14% | 2 | 29% |
| Representative (n=18) | 1 | 6% | 10 | 56% | 2 | 11% | 5 | 28% |
| County council member (n=31) | 5 | 16% | 16 | 52% | 5 | 16% | 5 | 16% |
| County commissioner (n=39) | 0 | 0% | 14 | 36% | 16 | 41% | 9 | 23% |
| Mayor (n=63) | 2 | 3% | 23 | 37% | 14 | 22% | 24 | 38% |
| Town council member (n=58) | 8 | 14% | 33 | 57% | 12 | 21% | 5 | 9% |
| Township trustee (n=78) | 18 | 23% | 35 | 45% | 14 | 18% | 11 | 14% |
| School board president (n=75) | 9 | 12% | 38 | 51% | 18 | 24% | 10 | 13% |
| Total respondents/percentages | 44 | 12% | 172 | 46% | 82 | 22% | 72 | 19% |

Question 11 queried respondents about intergovernmental service provision in their communities. As shown in Table 17, more than one-quarter of respondents reported receiving services from other governments in 11 categories. Respondents reported most often receiving services from other local governments for *juvenile detention* (68 percent), *jail* (52 percent), *property assessment* (45 percent), *emergency dispatch* (40 percent), *public schools* (37 percent), and *emergency medical services* (37 percent). *Economic development* was the most reported service by respondents (13 percent) as a service provided to other local governments. This service was followed by *emergency medical services* (12 percent), *emergency dispatch* (12 percent), *public schools* (11 percent), *juvenile detention* (11 percent), and *local roads and streets* (10 percent).

The relative percentages reported in 2006 were higher than in 2004. The reader is cautioned to interpret the responses to this question carefully as respondents were not offered the option to indicate that they do not provide a service directly. As such, they may have indicated getting a service from other governments because they do not provide that service directly. Thus, the responses may overestimate significantly the number of collaborative relationships.

Table 17: Interlocal service provision among local governments (Question 11)

| | Within the jurisdiction of my local government, this service is provided solely by my local government | My local government provides service mostly to other local governments | My local government receives service mostly from other local governments |
|------------------------------------|--|--|--|
| Jail (n=373) | 39% | 9% | 52% |
| Juvenile detention (n=360) | 21% | 11% | 68% |
| Local roads and streets (n=365) | 69% | 10% | 21% |
| Parks and recreation (n=365) | 69% | 8% | 22% |
| Drinking water utility (n=349) | 59% | 9% | 32% |
| Solid waste services (n=355)* | 55% | 10% | 35% |
| Sewer utility (n=356) | 64% | 8% | 27% |
| Police services (n=371) | 70% | 9% | 20% |
| Fire services (n=372) | 68% | 9% | 23% |
| Emergency medical services (n=369) | 51% | 12% | 37% |
| Emergency dispatch (n=361) | 48% | 12% | 40% |
| Planning/Plan commission (n=362) | 58% | 10% | 32% |
| Economic development (n=353) | 52% | 13% | 35% |
| Public schools (n=365)* | 52% | 11% | 37% |
| Property assessment (n=365)* | 45% | 9% | 45% |
| Purchasing (n=353) | 78% | 7% | 15% |
| Office space/location (n=339) | 80% | 6% | 14% |
| Other (n=10)** | 100% | 0% | 0% |

*New conditions added to 2006 questionnaire.

**Other services are listed in Appendix C.

Investment in Infrastructure

Infrastructure investment, particularly for water infrastructure and local roads and streets have been identified consistently over time as important community issues by the members of the IACIR and the survey respondents. The IACIR has done work specifically on water infrastructure funding since 2003. In 2006, the commission staff also were approached by the Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce about infrastructure issues; a few minor adjustments were made to survey questions to accommodate those specific interests.

Question 12a queried respondents about whether their communities use a capital improvements plan to guide the construction of public infrastructure. As shown in Table 18, less than 50 percent of respondents indicated using a capital improvements plan to guide construction. Question 12b asked what infrastructure elements are included in the plan. Table 19 shows that the element most frequently reported by respondents answering this question is *local roads and streets* (72 percent), followed by *sanitary water* (60 percent), *storm water* (53 percent), and *drinking water* (45 percent).

Table 18: Number of respondents who use a capital improvements plan to guide the construction of public infrastructure (Question 12a, n=408)

| | Number of respondents | Percentage |
|------------|-----------------------|------------|
| Yes | 187 | 46% |
| No | 145 | 36% |
| Don't know | 76 | 19% |

Table 19: Infrastructure elements included in respondent's community's capital improvements plan (Question 12b, n=187)

| Infrastructure | Percentage |
|---------------------------------|------------|
| Public school facilities | 36% |
| Drinking water | 45% |
| Sanitary water | 60% |
| Storm water | 53% |
| Combined sewer overflows (CSOs) | 36% |
| Local roads and streets | 72% |
| Bridges | 33% |
| Other* | 14% |

*Other services listed in Appendix C

Question 13 queried respondents about the adequacy of investments, through public or private sources, in a number of public services. A majority of respondents indicated that investment was adequate for all services with the exception of *local roads and streets* (54 percent of the respondents reported *not enough investment*) (see Table 20). *Highways* (44 percent), *storm sewers* (39 percent), *bridges* (34 percent), and *high-speed internet* (34 percent) were reported next most often by respondents as having inadequate investment. Nearly one-quarter of the respondents reported *local public school facilities* (24 percent) as having too much investment. Clearly communities across the state face varied circumstances regarding the relative adequacy of investment in various types of infrastructure.

Table 20: Adequacy of local investment in infrastructure (Question 13)

| | Too much investment | Adequate investment | Not enough investment |
|--|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Local public school facilities (n=394) | 24% | 59% | 16% |
| Highways (n=394) | 2% | 54% | 44% |
| Local roads and streets (n=400) | 1% | 46% | 54% |
| Bridges (n=381) | 1% | 65% | 34% |
| Drinking water (n=388) | 1% | 81% | 18% |
| Sanitary sewers (n=382) | 2% | 68% | 30% |
| Storm sewers (n=379) | 2% | 58% | 39% |
| Telephone (n=378) | 4% | 88% | 8% |
| Cellular phone (n=381) | 4% | 76% | 19% |
| High-speed internet (n=380) | 3% | 63% | 34% |
| Electricity (n=381) | 2% | 89% | 8% |
| Natural gas (n=375) | 3% | 89% | 8% |

In 2003, the IACIR published a report regarding funding needs and options for water and wastewater infrastructure. Updated 20-year need estimates from 2006 indicate a financial need of \$16.4-18.1 billion for drinking water, sanitary sewers, combined sewer overflows (CSOs), stormwater, and septic systems. Question 14 asked the respondents to rank their top three options for providing increased regular funding for the construction of water and wastewater infrastructure. Table 21 shows that the most frequently chosen option is to *adopt cost saving measures* (50 percent), followed by *dedicate IDEM fine monies* (44 percent), *adopt or increase local option taxes* (23 percent), and *increase local infrastructure permit fees* (22 percent).

Question 15 asked respondents to rank the top three options for providing increased regular funding for local roads and streets. Nearly three-quarters of the respondents chose to earmark state sales tax revenue from motor fuel purchases be used (74 percent) (Table 22). More than half of the respondents would like to remove Indiana State Police funding from fuel purchases (51 percent).

Table 21: Option preference for funding water and wastewater infrastructure (Question 14; n=311)

| Option | Percentage |
|---|------------|
| Increase state infrastructure fees | 16% |
| Impose a state surcharge on local sanitary sewer bills | 9% |
| Impose a state surcharge on local building permits | 14% |
| Impose a state surcharge on septic installation and repair permits | 14% |
| Adopt a state public utility (or utility gross receipts) tax | 10% |
| Dedicate IDEM fine monies | 44% |
| Adopt state selective sales taxes on products such as newspapers or bottled water | 17% |
| Adopt a state environmental impact tax on properties not serviced by a centralized wastewater system or community decentralized systems | 19% |
| Increase local infrastructure permit fees | 22% |
| Increase local utility bills | 17% |
| Adopt or increase local option taxes, such as income and food and beverage | 23% |
| Adopt cost saving measures such as regular permitting of decentralized treatment systems, adopting full-cost pricing for utilities, and allowing utilities to set aside monies for planned future maintenance and rehabilitation. | 50% |
| Utilize Build Indiana Fund | 1% |
| Other* | 8% |

*Other options listed in Appendix C.

Table 22: Option preference for providing increased funding for local roads and streets (Question 15; n=338)

| Option | Percentage |
|---|------------|
| Adopt mileage-based user fees | 24% |
| Remove Indiana State Police funding from motor fuel purchases for road infrastructure | 51% |
| Earmark state sales tax revenue from motor fuel purchases for road | 74% |
| Expand local bonding capacity | 22% |
| Increase state gasoline tax rate | 23% |
| Allow the adoption of a local option gas tax | 23% |
| Exempt local governments from the state gas tax | 41% |
| Use Major Moves money | 1% |
| Use wheel tax | 1% |
| Other* | 7% |

*Other options listed in Appendix C.

Brownfields

The redevelopment of brownfields often is cited as one of the important issues in debates about growth management and has received increasing attention in many Indiana communities. Brownfields are defined as “abandoned or underutilized commercial or industrial property, upon which development is difficult due to the perception or actual existence of environmental contamination.” Many different types of properties can be classified as brownfields, including abandoned gas stations, old foundry sites, former industrial facilities, vacant school buildings, underutilized downtown structures, former hospitals, previous farm cooperative locations, abandoned methamphetamine labs, and vacant land.

Questions 16a and 16b were developed in cooperation with the Indiana Brownfields Program of the Indiana Finance Authority (IFA). Question 16a asks respondents about the three most significant barriers to successful brownfields redevelopment. More than one-third of the respondents reported *lack of funding for rehabilitation and site preparation* (39 percent), *burdensome requirements of state/federal government assistance* (37 percent), *concerns about liability* (35 percent), and *lack of funding for demolition* (34 percent)(see Table 23). Very few (4 percent) respondents reported *opposition from public/community* as a barrier to successful brownfields redevelopment.

Question 16b asked respondents to indicate which three redevelopment incentives would be beneficial to local brownfield redevelopment efforts. Respondents indicated most frequently that *remediation grants/loans* would be most beneficial incentives (39 percent) (Table 24). More than one-third of respondents also indicated that *demolition grants/loans* (38 percent), *building rehabilitation, site preparation funding* (36 percent), and *site acquisition funding* (35 percent) would be most beneficial.

Table 23: Barriers to successful brownfields redevelopment (Question 16a, n=195)

| Barrier | Percentage |
|---|------------|
| Lack of staff to coordinate projects and apply for federal and state assistance | 28% |
| Lack of funding for assessment and remediation | 32% |
| Lack of funding for demolition | 34% |
| Lack of funding for rehabilitation and site preparation | 39% |
| Concerns about liability | 35% |
| Opposition from public/community | 4% |
| Lack of knowledge regarding brownfields redevelopment issues | 27% |
| Lack of timeliness of state/federal government assistance | 14% |
| Burdensome requirements of state/federal government assistance | 37% |
| Lack of interest | 20% |
| Not supported by current local economic development climate | 12% |
| Other* | 7% |

*Other barriers listed in Appendix C.

Table 24: Most beneficial brownfields redevelopment incentives (Question 16b, n=193)

| Incentives | Percentage |
|--|------------|
| Remediation grant/loans | 39% |
| Demolition grants/loans | 38% |
| Building rehabilitation, site preparation funding | 36% |
| Site acquisition funding | 35% |
| Assessment grants/loans | 31% |
| Infrastructure funding | 29% |
| One-on-one grant writing and/or technical assistance | 25% |
| Direct funding to developers/non-profits | 20% |
| Environmental liability assistance | 18% |
| Environmental insurance | 13% |
| Other* | 1% |

*Other incentives listed in Appendix C.

Property Tax Assessment

In 2001 and 2002, the IACIR held forums regarding the implementation of property tax reassessment at which participants identified many issues concerning fairness of the new system, communication and notice to taxpayers, administration, state and local fiscal matters, and appeals processes. The IACIR survey has included questions on property tax assessment since then. Question 17 asked respondents to indicate the extent to which each issue presented has been a problem since the completion of the most recent reassessment. Only *general negative attitudes toward property taxes* was reported by a majority of respondents as a *major problem*. Eighteen of 22 issues were reported by a majority of respondents as a *major* or *moderate problem* (see Table 25). The problems cited by more than three-quarters of respondents as a *major* or *moderate problem* were the *general negative attitudes toward property taxes* (88 percent), *burden on older neighborhoods* (79 percent), *complaints regarding increase in tax rates as a result of changes in property tax replacement credits (PTRC)* (79 percent), and *lack of general public awareness* (76 percent) as being a problem.

For comparison, the 2004 responses are included in Table 26. 2003 responses are not included for comparison because the timing of that survey was such that many counties had not completed reassessment and as such indicated that it was *too soon to tell* whether particular issues would be problems and the relative intensity

For issues that span both surveys, most issues were reported by an equal or smaller percentage of respondents as a *major* or *moderate problem* (Table 25). Only the *lack of training* and the *lack of funding* for the administration, and *lack of general public awareness* of assessment were identified by a greater percentage of respondents in 2006 than in 2004. This result likely is in part because some of the immediate concerns associated with the difficult timing of reassessment and implementation under new rules have passed.

Table 25: Problems with reassessment (Question 17)

| Issue | Major problem | Moderate problem | Minor or no problem |
|--|---------------|------------------|---------------------|
| Fairness of new rules | | | |
| Burden on low/fixe income neighborhoods (n=318) | 38% | 36% | 26% |
| Burden on older neighborhoods (n=323) | 39% | 40% | 21% |
| Burden on agricultural land owners (n=293) | 25% | 36% | 39% |
| Negative effect on residential property values (n=300) | 22% | 33% | 46% |
| Inequity of assessments within counties (n=286) | 34% | 33% | 33% |
| Inequity of assessments among counties (n=262) | 35% | 36% | 29% |
| Administration | | | |
| Disregard for state rules (n=221) | 11% | 28% | 61% |
| Computer software and hardware problems (n=254) | 26% | 37% | 37% |
| Lack of training (n=264) | 23% | 41% | 36% |
| Lack of funding (n=251) | 27% | 37% | 36% |
| Lack of access to regular sales data (n=211) | 11% | 44% | 45% |
| Sales chasing (changing an assessment after a subsequent sale to improve assessment results (n=188) | 14% | 38% | 48% |
| Appeals process | | | |
| Increased number of appeals (n=228) | 24% | 39% | 37% |
| Lack of funding of local appeals process (n=196) | 17% | 28% | 55% |
| Ability to bring up new issues at state appeal (n=177) | 17% | 38% | 45% |
| Local fiscal matters | | | |
| Reduced usefulness of tax increment financing (n=223) | 17% | 30% | 52% |
| Reduced usefulness of tax abatement (n=243) | 17% | 26% | 57% |
| Public relations | | | |
| Lack of general public awareness (n=321) | 39% | 37% | 24% |
| General negative attitudes toward property taxes (n=345) | 56% | 32% | 12% |
| Complaints regarding increases in tax rates as a result of changes in property tax replacement credits (PTRC) (n=311) | 43% | 36% | 21% |
| Complaints regarding increases in tax rates as a result of increased capital expenditures by local governments (n=317) | 37% | 31% | 32% |
| Other (n=36)* | 94% | 6% | 0% |

* Other issues listed in Appendix C.

Table 26: Problems with reassessment ranked as major or moderate by survey year (Question 17)

| | 2006 | 2004 |
|--|------|------|
| Fairness of new rules | | |
| Burden on low/fixe income neighborhoods | 74% | 74% |
| Burden on older neighborhoods | 79% | 83% |
| Burden on agricultural land owners | 61% | 71% |
| Negative effect on residential property values | 54% | 57% |
| Inequity of assessments within counties | 67% | 70% |
| Inequity of assessments among counties | 71% | 75% |
| Administration | | |
| Disregard for state rules | 39% | |
| Too little time for implementation | | 77% |
| Lack of required computer software and hardware | | 66% |
| Computer software and hardware problems | 63% | |
| Assessor turnover | | 34% |
| Lack of training | 64% | 59% |
| Lack of funding | 64% | 59% |
| Lack of access to regular sales data | 55% | |
| Sales chasing (changing an assessment after a subsequent sale to improve assessment results) | 52% | |
| Local Fiscal Matters | | |
| Inability to complete local budgeting | | 68% |
| Insufficient cash flow | | 76% |
| Reduced usefulness of tax increment financing | 48% | 57% |
| Reduced usefulness of tax abatement | 43% | 47% |
| Appeals Process | | |
| Increased number of appeals | 63% | 70% |
| Lack of funding of local appeals process | 45% | 54% |
| Ability to bring up new issues at state appeal | 55% | 58% |
| Public relations | | |
| Lack of general public awareness | 76% | 74% |
| General negative attitudes toward property taxes | 88% | |
| Complaints regarding increases in tax rates as a result of changes in property tax replacement credits (PTRC) | 79% | |
| Complaints regarding increases in tax rates as a result of increased capital expenditures by local governments | 68% | |

Over the last 25 years, a number of task forces have considered the administrative structure for conducting property tax assessment in Indiana. The respondents were asked to choose an administrative structure that would yield the best assessment results in their opinion. One quarter of respondents chose the current arrangement, *elected township assessors and trustee assessors have the primary responsibility for property assessment with assessed values submitted to and certified by the elected county assessor*. Three quarters of respondents chose other options. The new options chosen most frequently were *elected county assessor has the primary responsibility for property tax assessment with the support of township assessors and trustee assessors* (26 percent) and *elected county assessor has primary responsibility for property assessment with the support of county staff* (19 percent) (Table 27).

Table 27: Administrative structures to achieve the best assessment results (Question 18, n=373)

| Structure | Percentage |
|--|------------|
| Elected county assessor has the primary responsibility for property assessment with the support of township assessors and trustee assessors | 26% |
| Elected township assessors and trustee assessors have the primary responsibility for property assessment with assessed values submitted to and certified by the elected county assessor (current system) | 25% |
| Elected county assessor has primary responsibility for property assessment with the support of county staff | 19% |
| County board of assessors made up of elected county and township assessors has primary responsibility for property assessment with the support of county staff | 12% |
| Elected county executive has the primary responsibility for property assessment completed by a non-elected county assessor and staff | 9% |
| Indiana Department of Local Government Finance has the primary responsibility for property assessment with data collection support from elected county assessor. | 8% |
| Other* | 2% |

*Other structures listed in Appendix C.

In Question 19, county and township officials were queried which assessment services have been provided by contract to your township or county for the most recent reassessment. More than one-third of respondents reported using contracted services for all services except agricultural property appraisal/assessment (25 percent) and utilities property appraisal/assessment (16 percent) (see Table 28). *Computer hardware and software* (41 percent), *commercial property appraisal/assessment* (38 percent), and *Mapping/GIS* services (37 percent) were reported most frequently as being provided by contract.

Table 28: Assessment services provided by contract (Question 19, n=170)

| Service | Percentage |
|--|------------|
| Mapping/GIS | 37% |
| Data collection | 35% |
| Computer hardware and software | 41% |
| Residential property appraisal/assessment | 33% |
| Commercial property appraisal/assessment | 38% |
| Industrial property appraisal/assessment | 32% |
| Agricultural property appraisal/assessment | 25% |
| Utilities property appraisal/ assessment | 16% |
| Regular Assessment | 31% |
| Other* | 2% |

*Other services listed in Appendix C.

State and Federal Mandates

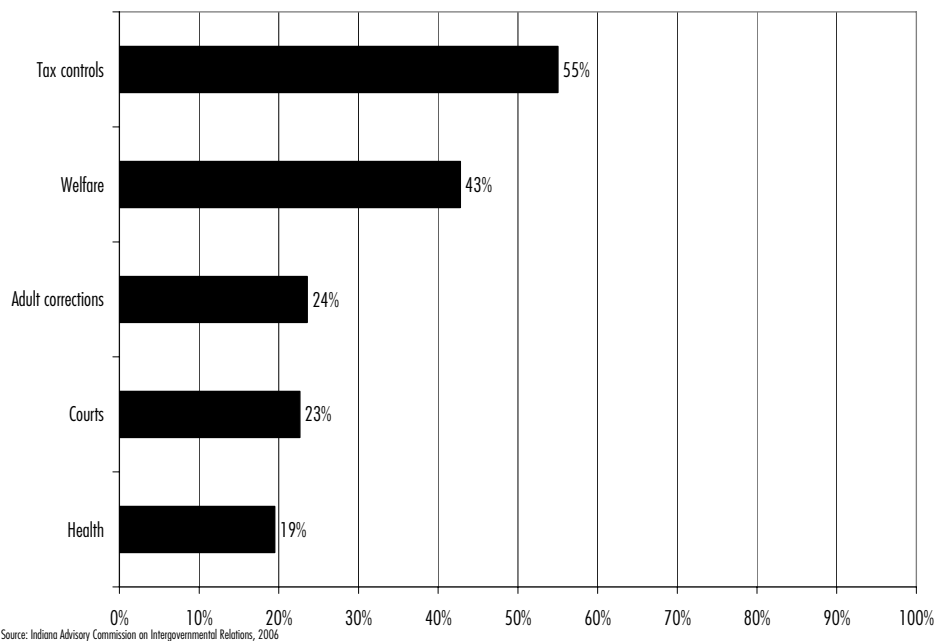
Question 20 addressed state and federal mandates, and how they affect local governments' abilities to meet community needs. The question in 1999 distinguished between federal and state mandates and included broader categories than in 2004 and 2006.

Similar to responses from 2004, respondents chose *tax controls* (55 percent) and *welfare* (43 percent) most frequently as having the most significant impact on local governments' abilities to meet local needs. *Adult corrections* (24 percent), *courts* (23 percent), and *health* (19 percent) rounded out the top five most significant mandates in 2006 (see Table 29 and Figure 9). *Courts* replaced *water quality* as among the top five mandates in 2006.

Table 29: State and federal mandates with most significant local impact by year (Question 20, n=318)

| Mandate | 2006 Percentage | 2004 Percentage |
|---|-----------------|-----------------|
| Adult corrections | 24% | 21% |
| Juvenile corrections | 18% | 18% |
| Pensions | 15% | 9% |
| Tax controls | 55% | 64% |
| Welfare | 43% | 41% |
| Courts | 23% | 19% |
| Elections reform | 8% | 29% |
| Health | 19% | 29% |
| Water quality | 17% | 13% |
| Air quality | 6% | 19% |
| Solid waste | 12% | 8% |
| Health and safety (OSHA) | 8% | 13% |
| American Disabilities Act (ADA) | 12% | 5% |
| Other-public education/No Child Left Behind Act | 4% | 3% |

Figure 9: Top five state and federal mandates with significant local impact (Question 20, n=318)



Information for Indiana (IFI)

Information for Indiana (IFI) is a collaborative project launched by Governor Mitch Daniels in July 2005. It brings together government, university, and private resources in an effort to build a solid foundation of data and analysis for informed decision-making statewide. The objective of IFI is to work with internal and external partners to assess, improve, and coordinate the collection, management, dissemination, and analysis of vital data for Indiana. Question 21a asked how often respondents consult information about local conditions and/or comparisons to other jurisdictions to make decisions. Table 30 shows that elected officials use information at varied intervals to make decisions. While few reported accessing information daily or weekly, a vast majority indicated accessing information either monthly, quarterly, or annually to assist in decisionmaking.

Table 30: Frequency of information consultation about local conditions (Question 21a)

| | Daily | Weekly | Monthly | Quarterly | Annually |
|---|-------|--------|---------|-----------|----------|
| Community development (n=216) | 6% | 11% | 30% | 24% | 30% |
| Education (n=192) | 7% | 17% | 28% | 22% | 28% |
| Economic development (n=220) | 8% | 15% | 31% | 25% | 22% |
| Public safety (n=219) | 7% | 14% | 28% | 30% | 21% |
| Human services (n=202) | 7% | 15% | 26% | 26% | 26% |
| Workforce development (n=186) | 4% | 10% | 24% | 34% | 29% |
| Public health (n=174) | 4% | 8% | 30% | 26% | 31% |
| Transportation and public works (n=179) | 9% | 11% | 26% | 26% | 29% |
| Other (n=2)* | 100% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% |

*Other conditions listed in Appendix C.

Question 21b asked how likely the respondent would be to utilize additional local data and comparisons to other jurisdictions to support decision-making if they were available. Table 31 shows that most respondents, more than three-fifths, were *very likely* or *somewhat likely* to use additional local data regarding any of the policy areas suggested. The policy areas chosen most frequently by respondents were *economic development* (82 percent), *community development* (75 percent), *education* (73 percent), *public safety* (71 percent), and *workforce development* (68 percent).

Table 31: Use of additional local data and comparisons (Question 21b)

| | Very Likely | Somewhat Likely | Neither Likely or Unlikely | Somewhat Unlikely | Very Unlikely |
|---|-------------|-----------------|----------------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| Community development (n=284) | 38% | 37% | 13% | 5% | 7% |
| Education (n=268) | 47% | 26% | 16% | 4% | 8% |
| Economic development (n=288) | 51% | 31% | 8% | 4% | 7% |
| Public safety (n=299) | 37% | 34% | 16% | 7% | 5% |
| Human services (n=287) | 31% | 34% | 20% | 9% | 6% |
| Workforce development (n=277) | 34% | 34% | 18% | 6% | 8% |
| Public health (n=271) | 33% | 32% | 21% | 7% | 7% |
| Transportation and public works (n=271) | 31% | 31% | 23% | 7% | 8% |
| Other (n=2)* | 100% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% |

*Other uses listed in Appendix C.

Information Technology

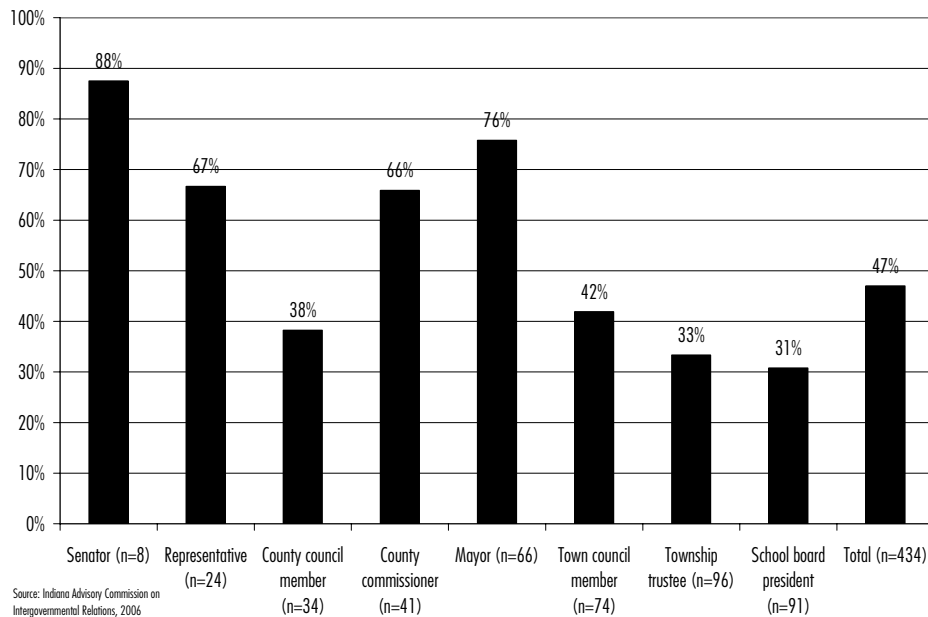
Telecommunications and information technology (IT) have become increasingly important components of the successful implementation of economic development and other local government activities and services. E-mail is an ever-present component of information technology. Question 8 asked officials about whether they have e-mail accounts for official government business.

In 2006, a majority of state senators, state representatives, mayors, and county commissioners reported having e-mail accounts for government business, although the percentages were lower than in 2004 for all these categories except county commissioners (see Table 32 and Figure 10). While less than a majority, respondents holding the remaining types of office report a higher percentage of use in 2006 than in 2004. The variation from year to year among particular categories of officeholders may reflect significant variation among and within local elected bodies regarding the provision of e-mail specifically for government business.

Table 32: Officials with e-mail accounts by survey year (Question 8)

| | 2006 | 2004 | 2003 | 2002 | 2001 |
|-----------------------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Senator | 88% | 92% | 87% | 69% | 100% |
| Representative | 67% | 88% | 90% | 86% | 100% |
| County council member | 38% | 20% | 41% | 33% | 41% |
| County commissioner | 66% | 50% | 66% | 64% | 55% |
| Mayor | 76% | 83% | 75% | 53% | 80% |
| Town council member | 42% | 32% | 64% | 37% | 36% |
| Township trustee | 33% | 19% | 16% | 15% | 21% |
| School board member | 31% | 25% | 31% | 20% | 55% |
| Total | 47% | 41% | 48% | 41% | 49% |

Figure 10: Officials with e-mail accounts (Question 8)



Other Issues

Question 22 allowed officials to comment about issues facing state and local government in Indiana. Many respondents also wrote in responses to a number of other questions. The complete set of these comments is provided in Appendix D.

While the issues addressed in this forum varied widely, a number of issues were mentioned several times, including unfunded mandates, limited local fiscal resources and funding options, tax controls including SEA 1-2003 and the 2 percent Circuit Breaker passed in 2006, and funding for local roads and streets. Several respondents also referred to the excessive length of the survey and the limited applicability of some questions to particular types of local governments.

Conclusions

Effective state and local governments are important to the success of individuals and businesses in Indiana. State and local elected officials in Indiana face increasingly more complex and difficult circumstances as they seek to provide public services for their citizens. Respondents continue to identify the health of the economy, the cost of healthcare, substance abuse and crime, local roads and streets, and K-12 education as important community issues. Tax controls, particularly those passed in Senate Enrolled Act 1 (2004) and the 2-percent circuit breaker (2006), are increasingly identified as a mandate that creates significant hardships for local governments. A number of efforts at fiscal reform have been proposed over time.

The changing institutional and fiscal environment warrants creative thinking. At a time of such change, it is rational to consider whether government structures are effective. Reform efforts such as the work of the General Assembly's Local Government Efficiency and Financing Study Committee, the passage of HEA 1362 Local Government Reorganization (2006), and the IACIR study of interlocal agreements are critical to positioning local governments and their citizens for a positive future. These efforts must build on current efforts by local governments across the state, including the current widespread of interlocal arrangements for the provision of particularly types of public services.

Efforts such as these are likely to be most effective in the context of our goals for Indiana and its communities. How can we address the problems identified by local officials? How can we ensure strong performance of critical government functions, such as investments in infrastructure, quality education, and safe neighborhoods? How can we create opportunities and reduce transaction costs for individuals, businesses, and nonprofits?

Success is likely to take long-term political and popular support and a sustained effort over many years or even decades. While it is common to focus on consolidation, effective reform may take many guises. Some reforms clearly will require changes to the state constitution or major legislation. Others may be non-structural solutions, such as further embracing technology, educating and providing technical assistance to local governments about options for sharing services, and clarifying current legislation.

In sum, strong state and local governments are critical to the success of businesses and individuals in Indiana. In the face of changing institutional, fiscal, and economic environment, Indiana governments must develop new structures and skills to manage the provision of effective public services.

Appendix A

Survey Methodology

Survey Methodology

The survey process involved four steps: developing the survey, selecting the sample population, administering the survey, and coding and analyzing the results.

Questionnaire Development

The 2006 questionnaire was modeled after seven previous surveys. Some questions have been repeated consistently to allow comparisons over time. The 2006 questionnaire also reprised a number of questions that have appeared one or more times in the past. Commission staff consulted IACIR members, Center for Urban Policy and the Environment staff, the Indiana Brownfields Program (Indiana Finance Authority), and the Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce regarding current issues for the 2006 survey. The questionnaire is provided in Appendix B.

Selection of Sample Populations

IACIR administered 1,228 surveys to officeholders. The sample population included all members of the Indiana General Assembly, mayors, county council presidents, county board of commissioners presidents, and school board presidents. The sample also included a randomly-selected member of each town council for towns with a 2005 population of 500 or more persons and two randomly-selected township trustees from each county. Names and addresses of officials were obtained using printed directories or lists provided by the Indiana Association of Cities and Towns, the Association of Indiana Counties, and the Indiana Township Association.

Administration of Survey

IACIR staff administered the survey by mail generally according to the procedures recommended by Dillman.² Cover letters explaining the purpose of the survey, the questionnaires, and business reply envelopes were sent on July 17, 2006, and were followed by reminder postcards sent on July 24, 2006. Officials who did not respond were sent another letter and replacement questionnaire on August 14, 2006.

This year, respondents were given the option to complete the survey online. An electronic version of the questionnaire was posted on SurveyMonkey.com. Respondents were required to enter the survey number provided on the back of the printed survey.

Coding and Analysis

Respondents returned questionnaires to the Center for Urban Policy and the Environment, the office location for IACIR staff. Surveys received by December 4, 2006, were coded using SurveyMonkey.com. Staff completed all analyses using statistical procedures in SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences).

Some respondents answered only a portion of the survey questions. To account for non-respondents of particular questions and questions addressed to specific types of officeholders, the number of responses is provided in the table or figure for each question.

² Dillman, D. (1999). *Mail and Internet telephone surveys: The tailored design method*. New York: Wiley.

Appendix B Questionnaire



Intergovernmental Issues in Indiana 2006

**A Survey
Administered by
the Indiana Advisory
Commission on
Intergovernmental
Relations**



PLEASE BEGIN HERE 

This survey is administered by the Indiana Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations (IACIR) on a periodic basis to gather information on current issues affecting the relationships between governments in the state. The IACIR seeks your opinions on the issues presented in the survey. The survey must be completed by a person holding elective office. Legislators should respond for their community of residence. Please feel free to consult others within your local government if you are unsure about the correct response to particular questions.

This year, respondents have the option to complete the survey online at www.iacir.spea.iupui.edu or to return the printed questionnaire in the enclosed postage paid envelope. Online participants will need the identification number printed on the back of the questionnaire in the lower right-hand corner.

1

What elected office do you hold?

- Senator
- Representative
- County council president
- County commission president
- Mayor
- Town councilor
- Township trustee or trustee-assessor
- School board president
- Other (*specify*) _____

2

What is the telephone area code for your local government?

___ ___ ___ Telephone area code

3

How do you feel about the general direction in which your community is heading?

- Very optimistic
- Mildly optimistic
- Neither optimistic nor pessimistic
- Mildly pessimistic
- Very pessimistic

4

For the following conditions, please indicate (a) the extent to which each is currently a problem in your community, if at all; and (b) how each of the following conditions has changed in your community during the last 12 months. *Circle the appropriate number.*

| CONDITION | (A) CURRENT STATUS OF CONDITION | | | (B) CHANGE IN CONDITION SINCE LAST YEAR | | |
|--|---------------------------------|------------------|---------------------|---|----------|-----------|
| | Major Problem | Moderate Problem | Minor or No Problem | Improved | Worsened | No Change |
| HEALTH | | | | | | |
| Cost and availability of health services | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Drug and alcohol abuse | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Obesity | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Care for the elderly | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| PUBLIC SAFETY | | | | | | |
| Police/sheriff services | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Police-community relations | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Fire services | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Emergency medical services | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Violent crime | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Drug crime | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Youth crime | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Family/domestic violence | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Homeland security | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Jail facilities | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Youth detention facilities | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Disaster response | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| ECONOMICS | | | | | | |
| Overall economic conditions | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Unemployment | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Business attraction and retention | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Job quality | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Workforce training | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| LAND USE | | | | | | |
| Quality of development | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Increased amount of development | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Lack of development | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Quality affordable housing | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Balanced mix of housing types and prices | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 |

| CONDITION | (A) CURRENT STATUS OF CONDITION | | | (B) CHANGE IN CONDITION SINCE LAST YEAR | | |
|---|---------------------------------|------------------|---------------------|---|----------|-----------|
| | Major Problem | Moderate Problem | Minor or No Problem | Improved | Worsened | No Change |
| LAND USE (Continued) | | | | | | |
| Balanced mix of residential and non-residential development | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Open space/green space | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Farmland conversion and loss | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Brownfields | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| LOCAL SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE | | | | | | |
| K-12 education | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Drinking water | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Sanitary sewers | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Storm sewers | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Combined sewer overflows (CSOs) | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Local roads and streets | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Bridges | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Highways | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| High-speed internet access | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Parks and recreation | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Solid waste management | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Telephone | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Cellular telephone | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Cable TV | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Electric service | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Natural gas service | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Public transportation | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| COMMUNITY QUALITY OF LIFE | | | | | | |
| Race-ethnic relations | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Air quality | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Water quality | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Traffic congestion | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Poverty | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Vitality of neighborhoods | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Vitality of downtown | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Arts and cultural resources | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Childcare | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Community involvement | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 |

PLEASE CONTINUE 

5

Of the conditions listed in question 4, which three have improved most in your community during the PAST YEAR?

6

Of the conditions listed in question 4, which three have deteriorated most in your community during the PAST YEAR?

7

Of the conditions listed in question 4, which three are the most important to address during the NEXT TWO YEARS?

8

Do you have an email account for government business?

- Yes
- No

9

How would you characterize the working relationship between your local government and other local governments within your county?

| | <u>Very Positive</u> | <u>Somewhat Positive</u> | <u>Neither Positive Nor Negative</u> | <u>Somewhat Negative</u> | <u>Very Negative</u> | <u>No Relationship</u> | <u>Not Applicable</u> |
|---------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| County government | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 9 |
| City and town governments | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 9 |
| Township governments | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 9 |
| School districts | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 9 |
| Special districts | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 9 |

10

Many communities engage in both formal and informal cooperative efforts, including memorandums of understanding (MOUs), interlocal agreements, task forces, joint meetings, resource sharing, etc. How many instances of cooperation between your local government and other local governments have occurred in your county over the last year? *Please consider both new and ongoing efforts in your response.*

- No instances
- 1-3 instances
- 4-7 instances
- More than 7 instances
- Don't know

11

How would you characterize the working relationship between your local government and other local governments within your county?

| | Within the jurisdiction of my local government, this service is provided solely by my local <u>government</u> | Service provided My local government PROVIDES service mostly to other local government(s) | My local government RECEIVES service mostly from another local government(s) |
|----------------------------|---|---|--|
| Jail | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Juvenile detention | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Roads and streets | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Parks and recreation | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Drinking water utility | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Solid waste services | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Sewer utility | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Police services | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Fire services | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Emergency medical services | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Emergency dispatch | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Planning/plan commission | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Economic development | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Public schools | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Property assessment | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Purchasing | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Office space/location | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Other (specify) _____ | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Other (specify) _____ | 3 | 2 | 1 |

12^a

Does your community use a capital improvements plan to guide the construction of public infrastructure in your community?

- Yes
- No → Skip to Question 13
- Don't know → Skip to Question 13

12^b

What infrastructure elements are included in the plan?

- Public school facilities
- Drinking water
- Sanitary sewer
- Storm sewer
- Combined sewer overflows (CSOs)
- Roads and streets
- Bridges
- Other (*specify*) _____
- Other (*specify*) _____

13

Do you think your community, through public or private sources, over invests, adequately invests, or under invests in the types of infrastructure listed below?

| | <u>Too Much Investment</u> | <u>Adequate Investment</u> | <u>Not Enough Investment</u> |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| Local public schools facilities | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Highways | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Local roads and streets | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Bridges | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Drinking water | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Sanitary sewers | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Storm sewers | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Telephone | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Cellular phone | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| High-speed internet | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Electricity | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Natural gas | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Other (<i>specify</i>) _____ | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Other (<i>specify</i>) _____ | 3 | 2 | 1 |

PLEASE CONTINUE 

14

In 2003 and 2006, the IACIR published reports regarding funding needs and options for water and wastewater infrastructure. The most recent report estimates that there is a 20-year need of \$16.4-\$18.1 billion for drinking water, sanitary sewers, combined sewer overflows (CSOs), stormwater, and septic systems.

Please rank the top three options for providing increased regular funding for the construction of water and wastewater infrastructure. *Mark preferred options with 1 through 3 with 1 being the most preferred.*

- Increase state infrastructure fees
- Impose a state surcharge on local sanitary sewer bills
- Impose a state surcharge on local building permits
- Impose a state surcharge on septic installation and repair permits
- Adopt a state public utility (or utility gross receipts) tax
- Dedicate IDEM fine monies
- Adopt state selective sales taxes on products such as newspapers or bottled water
- Adopt a state environmental impact tax on properties not serviced by a centralized wastewater systems or community decentralized systems
- Increase local infrastructure permit fees
- Increase local utility bills
- Adopt or increase local option taxes, such as income and food and beverage
- Adopt cost saving measures such as regular permitting of decentralized treatment systems, adopting full-cost pricing for utilities, and allowing utilities to set aside monies for planned future maintenance and rehabilitation
- Other (*specify*) _____

15

Please rank the top three options for providing increased regular funding for local roads and streets. *Mark preferred options with 1 through 3 with 1 being the most preferred.*

- Adopt mileage-based user fees
- Remove Indiana State Police funding from the Motor Vehicle Highway Account
- Earmark state sales tax revenue from motor fuel purchases for road infrastructure
- Expand local bonding capacity
- Increase state gasoline tax rate
- Allow the adoption of a local option gas tax
- Exempt local governments from the state gas tax
- Other (*specify*) _____

16^a

FOR MUNICIPAL AND COUNTY OFFICIALS ONLY: A brownfield is an abandoned or underutilized property where redevelopment is complicated due to actual or potential environmental contamination. The Indiana Brownfields Program, housed within the Indiana Finance Authority, works in partnership with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and other Indiana agencies to assist communities in making productive use of their brownfield properties.

In your opinion, what are the three most significant barriers to successful brownfields redevelopment by your local government? *Mark the most significant barriers with 1 through 3 with 1 being the most significant.*

- Lack of staff to coordinate projects and apply for federal and state assistance
- Lack of funding for assessment and remediation
- Lack of funding for demolition
- Lack of funding for rehabilitation and site preparation
- Concerns about liability
- Opposition from public/community
- Lack of knowledge regarding brownfields redevelopment issues
- Lack of timeliness of state/federal government assistance
- Burdensome requirements of state/federal government assistance
- Lack of interest
- Not supported by current local economic development climate
- Other (*specify*) _____

16^b

In your opinion, which three brownfields redevelopment incentives are most beneficial to you in your efforts to redevelop brownfields? *Mark preferred options with 1 through 3 with 1 being the most preferred.*

- Assessment grants/loans
- Remediation grant/loans
- Demolition grants/loans
- Environmental insurance
- Infrastructure funding
- Building rehabilitation, site preparation funding
- Site acquisition funding
- Direct funding to developers/non-profits
- Environmental liability assistance
- One-on-one grant writing and/or technical assistance
- Other (*specify*) _____

PLEASE CONTINUE ►

17

In 2001 and 2002, the IACIR held forums regarding the implementation of property tax reassessment at which participants identified many issues concerning fairness of the new system, communication and notice to taxpayers, administration, state and local fiscal matters, and appeals processes.

Based on the experiences in your community and county, please indicate the extent to which each of the following issues has been a problem since the completion of the most recent reassessment (assess 2002, pay 2003).

| | <u>Major Problem</u> | <u>Moderate Problem</u> | <u>Minor or No Problem</u> | <u>Don't Know/ No Opinion</u> |
|---|----------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| FAIRNESS OF NEW RULES | | | | |
| Burden on low/fixd income neighborhoods | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Burden on older neighborhoods | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Burden on agricultural land owners | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Negative effect on residential property values | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Inequity of assessments within counties | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Inequity of assessments among counties | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| ADMINISTRATION | | | | |
| Disregard for state rules | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Computer software and hardware problems | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Lack of training | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Lack of funding | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Lack of access to regular sales data | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Sales chasing (changing an assessment after a subsequent sale to improve assessment results) | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| APPEALS PROCESS | | | | |
| Increased number of appeals | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Lack of funding of local appeals process | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Ability to bring up new issues at state appeal | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| LOCAL FISCAL MATTERS | | | | |
| Reduced usefulness of tax increment financing | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Reduced usefulness of tax abatement | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| PUBLIC RELATIONS | | | | |
| Lack of general public awareness | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| General negative attitudes toward property taxes | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Complaints regarding increases in tax rates as a result of changes in property tax replacement credits (PTRC) | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Complaints regarding increases in tax rates as a results of increased capital expenditures by local governments | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| OTHER | | | | |
| Other (<i>specify</i>) _____ | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Other (<i>specify</i>) _____ | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |

18

Over the last 25 years, a number of task forces have considered the administrative structure for conducting property tax assessment in Indiana. In your opinion, indicate which of the following administrative structures would yield the best assessment results in your county. *Please read the options carefully and select only one response.*

- Elected township assessors and trustee assessors have primary responsibility for property assessment with assessed values submitted to and certified by the elected county assessor (current system)
- Elected county assessor has primary responsibility for property assessment with the support of township assessors and trustee assessors
- Elected county assessor has primary responsibility for property assessment with the support of county staff
- County board of assessors made up of elected county and township assessors has primary responsibility for property assessment with the support of county staff
- Elected county executive has primary responsibility for property assessment completed by a non-elected county assessor and staff
- Indiana Department of Local Government Finance has primary responsibility for property assessment with data collection support from elected county assessor
- Other (*specify*) _____

19

COUNTY AND TOWNSHIP OFFICIALS ONLY: Which assessment services have been provided by contract to your township or county for the most recent reassessment (assess 2002, pay 2003) and subsequently? *Check all that apply.*

- Mapping/GIS
- Data collection
- Computer hardware and software
- Residential property appraisal/assessment
- Commercial property appraisal/assessment
- Industrial property appraisal/assessment
- Agricultural property appraisal/assessment
- Utilities property appraisal/assessment
- Regular reassessment
- Other (*specify*) _____

PLEASE CONTINUE 

20

Which state or federal mandates have the greatest effect on your local government's ability to meet the needs of your community? *Mark most significant options with 1 through 3 with 1 having the greatest impact.*

- Adult corrections
- Juvenile corrections
- Pensions
- Tax controls
- Welfare
- Courts
- Elections reform
- Health
- Water quality
- Air quality
- Solid waste
- Health and safety (OSHA)
- American Disabilities Act (ADA)
- Other (*specify*) _____
- Other (*specify*) _____

21^a

Information for Indiana (IFI) is a collaborative project launched by Governor Mitch Daniels in July 2005. It brings together government, university, and private resources in an effort to build a solid foundation of data and analysis for informed decision-making statewide. The objective of IFI is to work with internal and external partners to assess, improve, and coordinate the collection, management, dissemination, and analysis of vital data for Indiana.

How often do you consult information about local conditions and/or comparisons to other jurisdictions to make decisions in the following policy areas? *Circle the appropriate number.*

| | Annually | Quarterly | Monthly | Weekly | Daily | Do Not Make Decisions in This Policy Area/ Don't Know |
|---------------------------------|----------|-----------|---------|--------|-------|---|
| Community development | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Education | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Economic development | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Public safety | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Human services | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Workforce development | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Public health | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Transportation and public works | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Other (<i>specify</i>) _____ | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Other (<i>specify</i>) _____ | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |

21^b

How likely would you be to utilize additional local data and comparisons to other jurisdictions to support decision-making if they were available in the following policy areas? *Circle the appropriate number.*

| | Very Likely | Somewhat Likely | Neither Likely or Unlikely | Somewhat Unlikely | Very Unlikely | Do Not Make Decisions in This Policy Area |
|---------------------------------|-------------|-----------------|----------------------------|-------------------|---------------|---|
| Community development | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Education | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Economic development | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Public safety | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Human services | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Workforce development | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Public health | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Transportation and public works | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Other (<i>specify</i>) _____ | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Other (<i>specify</i>) _____ | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |

PLEASE CONTINUE ►

22

Please use this space or attach additional pages to make any other comments about the issues affecting your local government and intergovernmental relations in Indiana.

Your participation in this survey is greatly appreciated.
If you have any questions or comments, please contact:

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Indiana Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations
342 N. Senate Avenue, 3rd Floor
Indianapolis, IN 46204-1708
317/261-3046
317/261-3050 (fax)
jlpalmer@iupui.edu

Please complete the questionnaire online at www.iccir.spea.iupui.edu or return the completed questionnaire in the enclosed postage paid envelope.

Appendix C

Other Responses

Other Responses

Questions 1, 11, 12b, 13, 14, 15, 16a, 16b, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21a, and 21b allowed officials to identify responses not included in the survey. Questions 5, 6, and 7 were open-ended questions and in some cases, respondents identified conditions not listed in question 4 or in a manner that did not allow the responses to be interpreted as one of the provided conditions. These responses are also listed here.

Other responses to "What elected office do you hold?" (Question 1)

- Town clerk treasurer

Other responses to "Of the conditions listed in question 4, which three have improved most in your community during the past year?" (Question 5)

- Added law enforcement
- Baseball fields improved for our kids
- Childcare in schools and boys & girls' club
- Choices for elderly
- Citizen Vision Process
- City sewer (one in particular)
- City-county relations
- Community concern of downtown area
- Drugs
- DSL
- Gorge Area-Starr Gennett-Cardinal Greenway
- Housing (elderly)
- Job creation
- Land development
- Madison Avenue south of Troy
- Medicare Plan D, drug programs
- New construction
- Police/fire services
- Public transportation for elderly
- Stop parallel road
- Water treatment facility
- Wellness policy in schools
- Residential construction
- Stop parallel road

Other responses to "Of the conditions listed in question 4, which three have deteriorated most in your community during the past year?" (Question 6)

- Business
- Business (factories)
- Child abuse
- Crime
- Depopulation, home abandonment
- Development
- Domestic violence/home invasions/break-ins

- Drugs
- Energy cost
- Enrollment pressure on schools
- General moral character
- Housing
- Housing development
- Land use CAFOs
- Land use/no zoning
- Local dam
- Loss of inventory
- Medical insurance costs
- No help on economic development from state
- No trails or bike or pedestrian paths
- Property taxes
- Resources
- Safety
- Services due to budget
- Use of Green Space for retail when we have empty retail space
- Water
- Welfare

Other responses to “Of the conditions listed in question 4, which three are most important to address during the next two years?” (Question 7)

- All crime
- Community development
- Consider deconsolidation of our local schools to bring back job opportunities and better education in our small towns
- Consumer debt
- Cost of fuel
- Crime
- Development
- Energy cost
- Fuel
- Government funding equity
- Illegal immigration
- Income
- Insurance costs
- Land development
- Land use/zoning
- Local dam
- Neighborhoods
- Property taxes
- Roads and highways
- Tax relief
- Water
- Water/sewage
- Funding for schools: too many free and reduced lunch recipients

- Housing
- Welfare

Other responses to "How would you characterize the working relationship between your local government and other local governments within your county?" (Question 11)

- Poor relief (3)
- Township assistance (2)
- Care of cemeteries (2)
- Within the jurisdiction of my local government, this service is provided solely by my local government
- Library
- Natural gas utility
- Public transit

Other responses to "What infrastructure elements are included in the plan?" (Question 12b)

- Municipal buildings (5)
- Parks (5)
- Airport
- Arts facilities
- County government expansion
- Downtown
- Economic development
- Electric and gas
- Equipment-fire and police departments
- Equipment/vehicles
- Library
- Open space
- Public transit
- Recreation facilities
- Sidewalks
- Trails
- Transportation for seniors

Other responses to "Do you think you community, through public or private sources, over invests, adequately invests, or under invests in the types of infrastructure listed below?" (Question 13)

- Geographic Information Systems
- Drainage
- Poor Relief
- Township Asst
- Emergency Medical Service
- Weed control
- Air quality
- Public access for infrastructure information
- Taxpayer prospectus on investments

Other responses to "Please rank the top three options for providing increased regular funding for the construction of water and wastewater infrastructure." (Question 14)

- Consolidate local government and schools and use the savings for this.
- Create a construction and maintenance assessment locally
- Create funding same on state level for CSOs
- Cut costs
- Cut wasteful spending and we could have enough.
- Dedicate existing NPDES permit fees
- Do not increase taxes
- Don't deal with
- EPA funds
- Find some waste and then cut spending
- Fiscal home rule for local government
- For small towns (5000<) allow property tax funds to supplement utilities.
- Force a re-analyzation of this # [question]
- Income tax
- Learn to budget available funds (should be #1, but we live in a real world)
- Provide incentives to create regional or area wastewater plants to serve multiple rural communities.
- Raise your sales tax so everyone has to pay not just property owners or tobacco users.
- Rate payers have had enough; the fed needs to step-up, billions to other countries--the help is needed at home.
- Reduce cost increasing items such as common construction wage and mandates of expensive treatment options
- Reduce the need for more funding by reevaluation of IDEM mandates, bringing them to a more reasonable standard for individual communities
- Tax convenience packaging--apply to solid waste disposal
- There are too many taxes of all types on middle class people of Indiana
- User fee increases
- Utilize tobacco tax money
- Via income tax or property tax
- We are building new plant wastewater

Other responses to "Please rank the top three options for providing increased regular funding for local roads and streets." (Question 15)

- Allow additional funding through Major Moves.
- Allow local government control of financing
- Better use of money spent
- Change funding form to include pick-ups, SUVs & farm
- Control urban sprawl
- Count pick ups as a 'vehicle'
- Cut costs
- Do not build new terrain I-69
- Fair distribution of lease money on toll road
- Gambling proceeds
- Local option on wheel tax
- Lower the cost of paving materials through domestic oil rather than foreign; increase drilling in USA
- Mandatory wheel tax
- New formula
- No more using gas tax money for trails
- No new taxes
- Pay the counties the money you owe us.
- Pickups in road count.
- Quit being a lender state!
- Raise your sales tax so everyone has to pay not just property owners and tobacco users.
- Same as [Question] #14. The problem with government is they have the ability to create more revenue as needed. Therefore, reducing costs (like business does) is not thought of.
- Stop being a donor state
- These plans car owners cannot afford when they have to drive to other towns to work
- Use of gaming taxes

Other responses to "In your opinion, what are three most significant barriers to successful brownfields redevelopment by your local government." (Question 16a)

- Complication in cleaning up site and cost
- Eminent domain laws
- Overstatement of real problems. Many brownfields should not be classified as such.
- Special interests of developers
- Tied to redevelopment and not mitigation only efforts.
- IDEM is a broken agency & might have not fixed it. In some ways its worse.
- Proof of ownership of property
- Wasteful regulations

Other responses to "In your opinion, which three brownfields redevelopment incentives are most beneficial to you in your efforts to redevelop brownfields?" (Question 16b)

- Hold those who polluted land accountable

Other responses to "Based on the experiences in your community and county, please indicate the extent to which each of the following issues has been a problem since the completion of the most recent reassessment." (Question 17)

- Two percent cap HB 1001
- Bethlehem Steel Company is not paying taxes
- Building cost complaints
- Increased tax rate
- Increase spending of school systems
- Changes in assessment rules
- Changes late via state legislature
- Circuit breaker
- County assessor determining rules not following state laws
- Education
- Farm ground not fair market value
- Farmland assessed unfairly
- General unfairness of process and arrogance of officials involved
- I think we should increase sales tax so it is fair for all people of Indiana
- Inability to get accurate projections of AV so advertised tax rates are reasonable otherwise overall complexity for what reason?
- Increased role of township assessors in the appeals process
- Lack of funds
- Landlords hit the hardest
- Local government has no income options.
- New state law
- Removal of personal property
- Schools
- State needs to not change anything for five years, we are changing rules before the last changes are into place
- Taxes on rental property
- Taxing real estate is a system that makes no sense in today's world.
- Too many credits (PTRC)
- Unfunded state requirements upon Assessors
- Upper income home owners (not paying adequate property tax)
- Inability for taxpayers to challenge building projects
- Increased workload for assessors
- Local income
- Longtime property owners hurt
- Supportive, knowledgeable resource available in local
- Under assessment of commercial/industrial properties
- Increase of commercial property and rental property taxes
- School rate

Other responses to "In your opinion, indicate which of the following administrative structures would yield the best assessment results in your county." (Question 18)

- Do away with property exemptions. Too many exemptions shift the tax burden.
- Eliminate property taxes and adjust others as required. There is an overhead for each type of tax. We need to reduce the number of taxing sources to save the associated overhead.
- Elected county assessor with the support of county realtors.
- Hire non-elected party to conduct a non-partisan assessment (elected officials is not an efficient way to do business).
- Independent appraisers without political interests.
- Do away with property, go to sales tax. Would eliminate unfair assessment. All people would be responsible for payments.
- Replace system with statewide sales tax. Property tax is fatally flawed!
- Do away with property tax; replace with sales tax.

Other responses to "Which assessment services have been provided by contract to your township or county for the most recent reassessment (assess 2002, pay 2003) and subsequently?" (Question 19)

- Equalization
- Trending
- Trending, data review, sales disclosure evaluation with property cards

Other responses to "How often do you consult information about local conditions and/or comparisons to other jurisdictions to make decisions in the following policy areas?" (Question 21a)

- Parks
- Broadband

Other responses to "How likely would you be to utilize additional local data and comparisons to other jurisdictions to support decision-making if they were available in the following policy areas?" (Question 21b)

- Utilities
- Welfare/poor

Appendix D

Additional Comments

Additional Comments

The final survey question provided an opportunity for officials to make any additional comments. These comments and comments written in the margins throughout the survey are transcribed below. Comments provided for any question but Question 22 are preceded with the appropriate question number. Responses have been edited in cases where a particular elected official potentially could be identified.

Table D1: Additional comments by respondent (Question 22)

| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| County commission president | 1. We need more funding for county roads. 2. Homeland security is not listening to local officials. 3. Too many book smarts; not enough common sense people |
| County commission president | Question 10: Committee formed to review areas in which all units are working together, i.e., fuel purchasing. |
| County commission president | Question 21b: Need best practices from other Indiana counties. Also a library of all current ordinances, so we could review what all counties are doing. |
| County commission president | Question 14: Get rid of IDEM |
| County commission president | Question 16b: Don't know! State legislature and departments don't listen to state (local) elected officials associations: AIC, AICE, Auditors, Treasurers, Assessors, Clerks, etc. |
| County commission president | Relieve property taxes with a mix is sales tax and income tax now! |
| County commission president | Question 4: Fire services — Volunteer funding; Homeland security — 3 directors in 18 months; Youth detention facilities — new facility; Drinking water — wells |
| County commission president | Question 11: Fire services — volunteer |
| County commission president | Questions 16a and b: Brownfield in our county, no problems. |
| County commission president | Question 17: No tax increment financing. None in [our county] with respect to reduced usefulness of tax abatement. |
| County commission president | Question 8: County auditor. |
| County commission president | Question 14: More of a city than county government issue. |
| County commission president | Courts should be administered and financed by the State and removed from local property taxes. Consolidation issues were made more complicated by HB-1362. Some portions of this survey were left incomplete due to lack of available information. |
| County commission president | Unable to access website 1-2 hours, still could not access |
| County commission president | Question 6: In regards to race, ethnic relations deteriorating, non-English speaking creates some communication problems. |
| County commission president | Question 8: Yes, I have an email account for government business, but it is somewhat limited-not full service. |
| County commission president | Question 16a: Not aware of this within our jurisdiction. |
| County commission president | Approximately 70% of our property tax collections go to fund schools. Local communities, local roads, county governments, in general, are under funded. To be competitive in economic development, we have to provide the needed infrastructure. |
| County commission president | Tax revenues for local streets and roads have shrunk the past 7 years. More financial burden placed on local governments without the revenue the state had allocated. Too much tax goes to school. Local governments' hands tied for needed projects to address jail overcrowding, juveniles, and repair. Thank you. |
| County commission president | The frozen tax levy is a major problem! Unable to make use of new assessed value on new growth to provide services the new growth requires or needs. |
| County council president | Question 17: Not knowledgeable enough to comment. Reassessment not fair as it is based on assessors opinion |
| County council president | Lack of funding for budgets. |
| County council president | Lack of funding for our local government. No raises for employees-2004, 2005, 2006. No budget for capital outlays. State and federal land is a [large percentage] of county; We service it but receive no funding to do so. |
| County council president | Question 5: None due to lack of funding. |
| County council president | Our primary concern is the lack of funding to keep up with the inflationary pressures on our budget. Health care for employees, adequate funding for public safety and rapid increases in energy costs are adding tremendous pressure to an already meager revenue stream. |
| County council president | Question 5: We have excellent hospital facilities. |
| County council president | Question 11: There is an overlapping of many services. I don't believe Question 11 is properly stated. |

Table D1: Additional comments by respondent (Question 22) (continued)

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| County council president | 16a: We don't have many problems and they seem to have been surmounted. |
| County council president | I have been a business person all of my life and ran for office to help make some changes...well, changes in government are hard to make. We have so much waste and lack of accountability, but having an impact in my position is difficult...I do it one step at a time, but we need bigger, bolder reform. |
| County council president | Local county governments' hands are tied from state law, oversight, and local government finance with regards to funding. We have no way to pay all the demands at the local level. Help!! |
| County council president | Local governments need more flexibility on taxing. Property tax levy limits reduce flexibility to make improvement to infrastructure and economic development. We need to be able to raise revenues through non-property tax related revenues (i.e., CAGIT or EDIT with flexibility) |
| County council president | Our County Council is concerned about mandates that are passed by the Legislature with no funding available or help in any way. Taxpayers are not very happy about all this as well as county officials!! |
| County council president | Please make this survey much shorter in the future. Much too much detail. |
| County council president | Question 14. Don't agree with statement. |
| County council president | Question 17: Most based on who you are! Too many appeals that are granted at the state levels even when guidelines are met by assessors' offices. Make them look stupid. |
| County council president | Question 5: Aside from emergency medical services, I cannot say any have improved. |
| County council president | Question 18: I really am not sure any of the above is working or will work. |
| County council president | Our funding has been cut extremely. This has really been tough on county government. I disagree with taxing one unit (tobacco). Why not up sales tax? That way everyone pays a portion not just a few people. People feel they are punished for owning their own homes (property tax). |
| County council president | State statutes, guidelines, etc. are obsolete and a patchwork of Band-Aids resulting in no cohesive focus. |
| County council president | This is a very poorly designed survey-some areas are hard to understand what you are getting at. |
| County council president | To whom it may concern: The biggest problem local governments face is the continued shift from unfunded mandates to local units of government from the state. Property tax replacement credits notwithstanding, changes in business assessment, limits on levy growth, and cuts in the Motor Vehicle Account distribution have impacted us greatly. |
| Mayor | Question 11. Any not circled paid for by intergovernmental or entities through signed agreements. |
| Mayor | Question 12a. We use CEDIT funds |
| Mayor | Question 11: Drinking water utility is not applicable, they have wells. |
| Mayor | Question 12b: We have our own police and take care of our streets. [The townships] provide the rest. |
| Mayor | Question 14: I don't really like any of these options. |
| Mayor | Unigov doesn't work. The little guy is shoved out of the way, ignored or bullied. Each community has a right to exist as it wishes. |
| Mayor | Question 14: Really, don't send money through the state. We don't trust the legislature. |
| Mayor | Question 16b: Not a big problem here. Never asked for assistance. |
| Mayor | Question 18: Eliminate trustee level of government. |
| Mayor | Question 20: Water quality-CSO [combined sewer overflow] issues. |
| Mayor | Question 20: Tax controls: bad. |
| Mayor | I appreciate your efforts! Thank you! |
| Mayor | Question 20: Circuit Breaker will take a large toll on schools and cities. |
| Mayor | Hard to make any comments at this time as our primary elections removed the old elected officials. In January 2007, we will have many new officials. Good or bad? Only time will tell. |
| Mayor | Local government needs tools to make them more efficient and effective with financing. Hometown Matters would give local governments the ability to control and finance local efforts while giving property tax relief to those who do not like the current climate of taxation. |
| Mayor | Question 6: In regards to the cost of energy being the second most deteriorated condition, it is caused by oil and gas companies excess profits and lying to governments who support them. |
| Mayor | Question 7: Another excess in profits: President Bush's economics steal from the poor and give to the rich. |
| Mayor | Question 13: Too much profit for electric and natural gas companies. Excessive salaries paid to top-level executives is the same as stealing. |

Table D1: Additional comments by respondent (Question 22) (continued)

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Mayor | Question 14: a) To increase state infrastructure fees, impose a state surcharge on local sanitary sewer bills, impose a state surcharge on local building permits, impose a state surcharge on septic installation and repair permits, or adopt a state public utility (or utility gross receipts) tax costs local residents with very little return. Money gets caught up in political expenses. b) Regulations are created with no funding. |
| Mayor | State government is making counties fight each other in forms of local taxation. Small cities cannot compete and need to attract more business to their area, not tax them more. Cannot fight counties and cities that have all the riverboats and gambling revenue. |
| Mayor | The move toward centralization and regionalism of services and responsibilities must be approached with more care. Some has been by necessity, but I fear that just as some individual citizens on the welfare system become lethargic, without will to create, innovate and work, a city can develop a similar syndrome. Let the other unit of government do it: can cause a small town to lose identity, autonomy and pride, as they delegate responsibilities and services to another unit. Home Rule is more and more difficult to execute as outside mandates dampen the spirit of community. |
| Mayor | The two worse things that have affected local government in the last three years are Senate Bill 1 from 2003 and the 2% Circuit Breaker voted into place in 2006. Revenue keeps getting reduced to the local governments by our legislature. However, our costs for our services keep going up. This will not work. The citizens of my community expect certain services and they expect them to be done at a certain quality. |
| Representative | I have found that relationships between local elected officials and state elected officials are often politically tinged and based on personality. In some cities and towns I have excellent relationships, while in others it is non-existent. |
| Representative | I just made a second attempt at completing your survey and have hit a brick wall again. The survey is geared towards someone who is on a town council, for instance, and heavily involved with a specific local unit of government. It doesn't fit [my district]. I [have areas] where storm water and waste water mixing is a real problem and [others] where it is not. I have both [a struggling school system] and top ranking school systems. These contrasts are everywhere and that renders this survey inappropriate in my house district. Let me know if my appraisal is wrong. |
| Representative | Local governments need methods of FUNDING. They are now being squeezed economically at the expense of education and other local services. This state needs to stay up with new methods of funding. |
| Representative | Question 4: Natural gas service cost keeps rising. |
| Representative | Question 6: K-12 funding deteriorated. |
| Representative | Question 7: K-12 funding important to address. |
| Representative | Question 11: Bad question. |
| Representative | Question 5: I have not seen much improvement in the past year. |
| Representative | The survey is too long. |
| School board president | Question 11: Office space/location-not applicable. |
| School board president | Local government organization is fatally flawed. There are too many units. Taxation is overly complex and hides the true rate of taxation. Elected officials continue to add to the mission of government without regard to the cost or the authorization to take on a new mission. Things are even worse at the state level. The governor and the legislature do not respond to the peoples wishes. What little leadership comes from Indianapolis seems to be counterproductive and partisan. Both major political parties are bereft of ideas. |
| School board president | Question 13: I think telephone, cellular phone, and high speed internet are not public duties. |
| School board president | Question 18: Use of computers to streamline system. |
| School board president | I would just like accurate data from other local governments. As a school board, we must share our tax rate projections with the community and make long term plans on staffing, programs, etc. so we are not jerking our students around as funds ebb and flow. It is absolutely ridiculous that our county auditor cannot give a reasonable projection on A.V. His certified value: does not include trending for residential properties or removal of business inventory. Our projected tax rate will be a case of garbage in, garbage out. It makes the school corporation look like fools. He cannot provide us information on the number of properties exceeding 2% A.V. for Circuit Breaker ruling. How are we supposed to plan and provide reasonable information to our community and students? |
| School board president | Question 6. Highway 350. |
| School board president | Question 14. Not applicable here in [our town], in our school boards opinion. We have new water and wastewater infrastructure. |

Table D1: Additional comments by respondent (Question 22) (continued)

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| School board president | Our city government is allowing thousands of new homes to be built yearly but when the school system needs to expand the mayor is against the school. Two of our county officials are also against the school along with the state senator and state representative, but none of these elected officials are against the adjoining school systems expansion plans even though they are still in the elected officials' districts. The only reason the elected officials mentioned are fighting the [school system] is because they live in this particular school district. It would be better for [our city] if these officials lived somewhere else so they wouldn't use their positions to try to control the schools expansion. Why are they involved in the other schools in their district? Self-fulfilling legislation should not be tolerated. |
| School board president | Funding to local schools needs to be a priority! City sewage and water issues exist. |
| School board president | Highway 350 needs addition of lights by schools. |
| School board president | Question 6. Highway 50. |
| School board president | Question 6: Also put Unemployment. |
| School board president | Question 7. Also drug abuse. |
| School board president | Question 7: We are desperate for jobs. |
| School board president | Question 7: Traffic congestion-related to improvements being made. |
| School board president | Question 8: Don't legislate on obesity. |
| School board president | Question 13: For 2 years consecutively, [our county] has delayed funds to schools causing most all public schools to borrow operating funds. |
| School board president | Question 17: [Our county] always blames it on the computer system. Strange, I don't hear that from [our neighboring county]. |
| School board president | Question 20: Schools are told what to provide to their students and receive inadequate funding from the state to comply. I'm waiting to see what happens when all day kindergarten is adopted. |
| School board president | Economic development is a key in our county. New business = new jobs = new homes = increased assessment value! |
| School board president | If my man Mitch wants all day kindergarten it needs to come from state funds! Not local. We will have to build more classrooms at the costs of local taxpayers. Kids need to be kids for one year! |
| School board president | If the trends continue, poorer counties will have more financial burden shifted to them to fund education. Communities [with more money] will do fine as they have much local revenue. Poorer counties will DIE if the state keeps shifting funding to the counties. |
| School board president | Less government control, more local input. |
| School board president | My hopes are that we get a new Governor and Congressman, who will surely help. |
| School board president | One school district is totally rural. We have really been pinched since the state has discounted transportation funding and allowed us to fund it locally. We worked hard in the past to get state funding and need to have it restored! |
| School board president | Property taxes are killing us. Medical insurance costs are sky-rocketing out of control. It is getting to the point where people have to make really tough decisions on whether or not to have any. |
| School board president | The state of Indiana (presently) places education too low on its list of priorities. |
| School board president | Question 15: Do not like any of above options. |
| School board president | Question 17: New capital expenditures for [Local jail]. |
| School board president | Question 18: "inconsistency" written after first and second option. |
| School board president | Question 5: K-12 education improved because focused on achievement. An issue that is difficult to address yet it has potential for efficiency and effectiveness is the number of school systems in our county. There is a cordial relationship among the five districts but is that the best for taxpayers and students. Should there be a more formal relationship? |
| School board president | Question 5: In regards to business attraction and retention, there has been a slight improvement. |
| School board president | Question 7: In regards to K-12 education, the most important thing to address is funding. |
| School board president | Question 12a: Some agencies do, and some do not. |
| School board president | Question 5: regarding improved drug crime, prevention has improved. |
| School board president | Question 6: Deteriorated Drug crime — there is more of it. |
| School board president | Question 6: Regarding jail facilities, they have deteriorated because of overcrowding. |
| School board president | Question 9: They're all my local governments (city/township/county) unless another town. |
| School board president | Question 11: How would I know except as gossip? |

Table D1: Additional comments by respondent (Question 22) (continued)

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| School board president | Question 12a: Sort of. Question 12b: Not under local governments, the community would include this (public school facilities). |
| School board president | Question 13: Purely opinion. |
| School board president | Question 14: Not in our (school's) area of expertise. Are all these legal/allowed? Why not call infrastructure fees taxes? |
| School board president | Question 15: Not a school decision. |
| School board president | Question 16a: Three most significant barriers 1) \$, 2) \$, 3) \$. |
| School board president | When I first received the attached questionnaire, I immediately took pencil in hand to complete the task, expecting to edit it in ink, and return it immediately. Two hours of effort took me to page 7. Ultimately, I consulted three previous School Board presidents and the Superintendent to help. None of the presidents had seen such a questionnaire in their tenure. After I expressed my deep frustration to the superintendent, he suggested I had spent more than enough time and effort to simply return to you what I had done. Who do you mean by you? By community? By local government? By major problem as opposed to moderate? A poor road on my doorstep is major. Perhaps part of my problem with words is my experience in teaching English for 25 years. So, herewith... My background in city involvement is in areas of neighborhood organization, inner-city low-income housing, flood mitigation studies, regular attendance at City Council meetings, and regular interaction with the Mayor, City Council persons, and County Commissioners. I am probably the most prepared Board member, with 14 years experience and the listed city interactions, to answer your questions. I am not indecisive, yet I found most of those questions extremely difficult to respond to, especially as I felt my own opinion was not applicable, and I refuse ever to speak for the Board unless directed to do so by the Board. I did address my frustration to you by phone; only to be told to do what I could and write don't know whenever I needed to. I have given this matter hours of consideration. All in all, I think it is inappropriate for any School Board to be expected to respond to this request. |
| School board president | We are a very small town that deals mainly with the issues of extreme poverty that includes the issues of education, housing and drugs (crime and child abuse/neglect). All the talk about No Child Left Behind makes no sense when funds are cut for child welfare programs and education. We struggle with employment, yet workforce development services were just recently cut drastically. Government decisions are compounding the effects of the problems we already have. |
| School board president | You need to adjust your survey tables so that the headings can be viewed without scrolling up and down. This made responding to question #4 very difficult. |
| Senator | Question 13: Local roads and streets — Barely |
| Senator | Question 5: Drug use through the efforts of the multi-force drug unit. |
| Senator | Question 6: Unemployment [One area] is losing about 260 jobs because of a plant closing. |
| Senator | Question 15: This is all about increasing taxes. |
| Senator | Question 16b: More money is the aim here. |
| Senator | Question 11: Very confusing. Needs improvement in understanding. |
| Senator | Question 5: Will complete new facility next year with provided CAGIT income tax to pay. |
| Senator | Question 6: Need new and expanded education facility. |
| Town council member | Question 16a and b: Not applicable with our small town. |
| Town council member | We are a small community; land locked; only two businesses and one real estate office. Need money for roads and streets. |
| Town council member | I think government needs to get a firm handle on spending. Our local government (civil town) is penalized by grant reviewers, banks, private funding options because we are financially/fiscally responsible. As such, we make/save too much to qualify for program assistance, but fall far short of funding our own projects. It seems the more financial peril you are in, the more assistance from the state/federal governments you qualify for. Reward those who are competent and responsible and hold those who are not accountable. Accountability is the key to successful municipal management at any level. |
| Town council member | Question 6. IDEM is allowing another city to control our residential development. |
| Town council member | Question 11. We have our own wastewater system BUT pump our collection to the plant operated by another city. |
| Town council member | Question 16b. We currently have no brownfields. |
| Town council member | Question 17: Complaints regarding increases...The state didn't let this happen. Public does not know impact! |
| Town council member | Question 20. Tax controls (State) |

Table D1: Additional comments by respondent (Question 22) (continued)

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Town council member | Question 9. In reference to city and town governments: This really should be separate. Some towns have great working relations with other towns but not cities. |
| Town council member | After serving as a council member for almost 12 years, I am completely discouraged. Smaller communities, the heart and soul of our state, cannot continue to meet the necessary demands of the public, when that same public does not have the monetary ability to support all that is needed. Where does it or will it come from? Certainly not state government! Who also does not have the ability to support itself! |
| Town council member | Each year we make out a town budget and I have been involved in eight budget sessions. For the last two years they have gotten worse because the state cuts us twice a year. We are such a small town and it's hard to do. Things go up on us too. We have increases on all utilities, etc. Please don't cut small town budgets or you will not have any left. |
| Town council member | Question 7: Our sewer is run by [the local waste district], but it is for the entire [township]. The town doesn't run it, but five of our members are on the board. We have nine members. The building is located in [a nearby small city]. |
| Town council member | Question 11: Our fire department is operated by town and township money. Our fire department does a great job! They provide medical services, too! |
| Town council member | I am very concerned about a negative impact of the 2% Circuit Breaker tax credit. I fear it will have a significant negative impact on local municipalities. I would really like to see some serious analysis of township government structures and opportunities for increased efficiencies/reallocation options for township funds. The township structure appears to be highly inefficient and outdated. We need to simplify and streamline in order to assure continued services to the people we are elected to serve. |
| Town council member | Question 14: No preferred options. |
| Town council member | Question 11: Fire services provided both by local government and from another local government. |
| Town council member | Question 6: Lack of funds. |
| Town council member | Question 11: Regarding roads and streets-cooperation agreement on outlying roads with county, regarding parks and recreation, agreement with township; re: drinking water utility-independent company; regarding solid waste services, agreement with (another city); regarding fire services-agreement w/township. |
| Town council member | Question 13: Drinking water from a private source. |
| Town council member | Question 7: Sanitary sewers in lake areas. |
| Town council member | Question 4: K-12 education is a major problem; Public transportation is too expensive. |
| Town council member | Question 6: Education has deteriorated; the answer is not more money. . |
| Town council member | Question 7: Address Education!!! And Consumer debt. 1. Reduce taxes. 2. Reduce size of government. 3. Build Rainy Day Fund should be a requirement for every. |
| Town council member | Removal of BMV office in city. Requesting information from IDEM and then being fined for their activity. State Highway Commission being unavailable or no answer on highway problems. |
| Town council member | Small towns are dying because of the Walmart-a-zation of America. Big business is killing mom & pop business. It just won't stop, and it is killing the small town life. |
| Town council member | The biggest issue for my community is finding a way to stretch the tax base we have of a 525 population to become capable of maintaining an infrastructure to support the 25-30,000 visitors we have each week throughout the spring, summer and fall. It is our opinion that a 1% local option sales tax would relieve the burden of providing that by the residents and place the fees for services more fairly on those that are creating the need. A 1% sales tax option would not halt the tourism dollars but would allow for my town to better serve them as well as the businesses and residents of our town. I believe in a few short years we would have the ability to reduce property tax bases as well with this plan. |
| Town council member | There needs to be laws and ordinances protecting property owners from people that neglect their yards; high weeds, old cars without motors; and unsightly old sheds and unsafe buildings. These laws must have a community official that sees that they are followed for the pride of any town in Indiana. |
| Town council member | In small towns, the town council needs more control over clerk/treasurer. |
| Township trustee or trustee-assessor | Question 18: As a township trustee, I am biased; although with community support |
| Township trustee or trustee-assessor | Question 14: Charges too high already. |

Table D1: Additional comments by respondent (Question 22) (continued)

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Township trustee or trustee-assessor | Federal government mandates money-state government mandates money-local government mandates money-local citizen money. |
| Township trustee or trustee-assessor | Question 20: Senate Bill !!! |
| Township trustee or trustee-assessor | We can network to make good fiscal decisions. But, the state legislators and the governor are so uneducated about the budgetary process that their actions are prior to weighing the impact or caring about the problems that they have created!! |
| Township trustee or trustee-assessor | I do not feel that [my township] and [county] get any attention for items listed in this book. Most officials do not know what a township trustee/assessor does or how much salary they receive. Most attention goes to cities with high populations. |
| Township trustee or trustee-assessor | Consolidate some. But keep township trustees. |
| Township trustee or trustee-assessor | Question 4: Don't have public transportation. |
| Township trustee or trustee-assessor | Question 13: Monopoly for electricity and natural gas. Duke Energy electric and Vectren gas. |
| Township trustee or trustee-assessor | Question 4: Satellite TV. |
| Township trustee or trustee-assessor | Question 11: emergency medical services are shared between 3 and 2. |
| Township trustee or trustee-assessor | Question 4: No public transportation. |
| Township trustee or trustee-assessor | Question 17: Our county is extremely rural and impoverished. Some people in my township had to choose between paying their property taxes and food. Many lost their homes or abandoned them. The soil quality is poor; there is a lack of potable water. |
| Township trustee or trustee-assessor | As stated in Question 17 this county is very rural with a population spread out in every direction. Many people drive long distances to seek employment and go to their jobs. The increase in gas prices has taken a terrible toll on the working poor. I spend many hours per week obtaining food for families who cannot make ends meet although both parents work. The property tax reassessment was disastrous here. Sometimes the taxes were higher than the land was worth. The elderly as well as the poor have suffered. The average home owner is not fixing up his home. Too expensive. |
| Township trustee or trustee-assessor | Question 4: No zoning or land use planning. No sanitary sewers or storm sewers. Highway congestion. No high-speed internet access. Satellite TV only. No natural gas service or public transportation. |
| Township trustee or trustee-assessor | Question 14: Do not impose a state surcharge on septic installation and repair permits. |
| Township trustee or trustee-assessor | Question 17: Changes may cause work to be redone with regards to changes late via state legislature. |
| Township trustee or trustee-assessor | Question 18: Interesting with regards to county board of assessors made up of elected county and township assessors has primary responsibility for property assessment with the support of county staff option. |
| Township trustee or trustee-assessor | Question 21b: Especially public safety and human services. |
| Township trustee or trustee-assessor | Pretty complete survey. Many issues compared: Such as without zoning we have roads (secondary) connecting with primary roads at dangerous locations. Mobile home parks with inadequate septic systems. Substandard housing some may be built without septic at all (I have 2 units identified) etc., etc. Meth is a major, major issue. Police protection is not adequate-in this rural area. |
| Township trustee or trustee-assessor | Question 5: Bridges. A lot of bridge work has been going on in the community. |
| Township trustee or trustee-assessor | Question 19: I am not an assessor. |
| Township trustee or trustee-assessor | Question 7: Also workforce training |

Table D1: Additional comments by respondent (Question 22) (continued)

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| Township trustee or trustee-assessor | As Township Trustee, my principle responsibility is to provide township assistance, formerly labeled poor relief, to needy residents of the township. That being the case, I have no, or extremely limited, responsibility for most of the issues listed in the survey. For example, [my township] maintains an active Emergency Medical Services unit. We also do some job training and seek jobs for those physically able to provide in-kind services of labor for financial services received. That is no to say I have no interest in the other issues-I am just not responsible for them. But I am concerned about the abysmal quality of education in our community. The [local community school corporation], which is within [our township] but a separate entity, is currently the only system under probation by the state. I am concerned about that because I know a weak educational system is not conducive to churning out productive workers; therefore very unattractive to economic development. I am concerned about crime, drug use, and health issues. They all impact township services. Economic development is not an easy thing to achieve, especially for local governments. Sometimes private enterprise is way ahead of us. But that is the key to pulling any community upwards. My selections in the survey might seem overly pessimistic, but it's a true perspective of the problems. They also reflect the fact that as township trustee, I have very little to do with them. |
| Township trustee or trustee-assessor | Help stop Indy Works! |
| Township trustee or trustee-assessor | I am very disappointed in how our government is run at this time. Schools and education should be our top priority, but yet we are letting teachers go and making our class rooms fuller. But yet we have added extra sales tax to keep the Colts here, but education is low on money. You should use this extra sales tax money for the education system not SPORTS. Those athletes are paid too much. Who really needs millions to live on? If they want a new dome they can pay for it. I'm very disappointed with Mitch and he will not receive another vote from me. |
| Township trustee or trustee-assessor | I believe personal property taxes should be abolished. I believe millions could be saved by having the country take care of trustee work by having one trustee with a staff. |
| Township trustee or trustee-assessor | It seems that when funding is needed for a project, the smaller communities are left out and do not have the same advantage in attaining funding as the larger communities. |
| Township trustee or trustee-assessor | Most of these issues do not apply to my area. We are approximately 14 miles from city limits, 22 miles from county government, local jail, etc. |
| Township trustee or trustee-assessor | My township is mostly farming. Have very little development. Most of this does not pertain to my township. |
| Township trustee or trustee-assessor | Need more help from the state to meet the needed money to support volunteer fire departments. The tax board cuts our budget each year. |
| Township trustee or trustee-assessor | Question 15. Answers weren't ranked, so could not enter, however, other specified Volunteer Fire Departments. |
| Township trustee or trustee-assessor | Property taxes are a hardship for farmers and new and old homeowners. I would like to see sales tax go up a little and taxes at least stay the same or go down a little. We have had so many homes go up for sale (especially older homes) with the new changes. I do believe actual value is fairer than the old way because it makes it more equal for us all. |
| Township trustee or trustee-assessor | Question 10: In regards to 1-3 instances, public safety-Parks Board. |
| Township trustee or trustee-assessor | Survey too long. Hasn't time to complete. |
| Township trustee or trustee-assessor | Question 11: Fire services provided by contract with city. |
| Township trustee or trustee-assessor | Question 13: The "your community" portion of the question is not applicable since it is the country mostly. |
| Township trustee or trustee-assessor | Question 15: Aside from adopt mileage-based user fees, none are acceptable. |
| Township trustee or trustee-assessor | Question 16a: Too costly. |

Table D1: Additional comments by respondent (Question 22) (continued)

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| Township trustee or trustee-assessor | Families are struggling with high fuel costs just to get to jobs that don't pay good wages. Utilities are ridiculous and reconnect fees are unreasonable for poor people who struggle just to pay their bills. It takes 2 or 3 incomes to keep up. Rent is out-of-site for poor people. |
| Township trustee or trustee-assessor | Everything besides adopt cost saving measures such as regular permitting of decentralized treatment systems, adopting full-cost pricing for utilities, and allowing utilities to set aside monies for planned future maintenance and rehabilitation and dedicate IDEM fine monies is a tax increase. Why would I want that? |
| Township trustee or trustee-assessor | This township is a completely rural township. Items that effect most townships have no effect here. Many items in this questionnaire I have no knowledge of. |
| Township trustee or trustee-assessor | Question 5: [Our water tower] has improved. |
| Township trustee or trustee-assessor | Question 6: There are new roads with no markings. At the jail at the county level, the air conditioner is not big enough for the facility. |
| Township trustee or trustee-assessor | Question 7: Must address the need for youth activities to keep youth active. |
| Township trustee or trustee-assessor | There is a lack of funding for local jails and courts. It is very hard to get funding to create a local state park or youth development center for you to go to for positive responses to keep our youth active and in a supervised place. Also, there is a very big need for sewer services in (our area). |
| Township trustee or trustee-assessor | Question 6: Crime of a violent nature is predominantly due to drug abuse. For years now, we have been told township trustees will be eliminated. I personally feel it is a thankless job and after eight years I am getting out. I have attended all continuing education classes and taken my Level I and attended classes for Level II. For knowledge required, the pay is substandard and I feel we get no recognition. Taxpayers respect us, but not government. |
| Township trustee or trustee-assessor | The current Governor and Lt. Governor have this State of Indiana in a total mess. The legislators should also take note of everything that's wrong, including the gaming commission. |



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