



Intergovernmental Issues in Indiana: 2002 IACIR Survey

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Executive Summary

Intergovernmental Issues in Indiana (2002) is the fifth in a series of periodic surveys of elected officials to help the Indiana Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations (IACIR) and the Indiana General Assembly understand the most important issues facing local governments. The 2002 survey included 25 questions and addressed a number of issues included in previous IACIR surveys, as well as a number of hot topics affecting local governments currently. The heart of the survey is a series of questions about 35 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 into how local officials feel about the direction their communities are heading.

Methods and Response Rate

IACIR administered a mail survey to 1,404 officeholders in the fall of 2002, including all members of the Indiana General Assembly, county council presidents, county commissioners, mayors, and school board presidents. The commission also surveyed a randomly selected member of each town council for towns over 500 in population, and two randomly selected township trustees from each county. Forty-one percent were returned. Response rates varied by type of officeholder. Township trustees had the highest response rate (57 percent), and state representatives had the lowest (23 percent).

Findings

- ***Officials Show Slight Decrease in Optimism about the Future of Communities***

Three-quarters of officials indicated that they were optimistic about the future direction of their communities. This represents a decrease from the three previous surveys (84 percent, 82 percent, and 86 percent).

- ***Officials Report More Problems and Fewer Improvements in Community Conditions than in Past Surveys***

Fewer community conditions were listed by a majority of respondents as stable in 2002 than in 2001 (18 of 35 conditions and 26 of 32, respectively). No more than 25 percent of respondents identified any community conditions as improved. Nine conditions were reported by a majority of officials as worsened over the last 12 months; this represents an increase from past surveys.

- ***Cost of Health Care, Economic Conditions and Unemployment, Roads and Streets, and Sewers Most Important Issues for Action***

Parks and recreation, sewers, roads and streets, the availability of health services, police-community relations, vitality of downtown, and community involvement were reported most often by officials as improved in the past year. *K-12 education* was one additional issue reported frequently as having improved over the last five years. Most often, officials identified similar issues as deteriorating over the last year and over the last five years, including the *cost of health services, overall economic conditions and unemployment, and drug and alcohol abuse*. The *cost of health services, overall economic conditions, unemployment, roads and streets, and sewers* were identified most often as important to address over the next two years.

- ***Displays of Patriotism and Church Attendance Increasing***

In the past eighteen months, Hoosiers have faced the tragedy of September 11, an economic recession, the war on terror, a number of stock market scandals, and a state budget crisis. Popular media has reported increases in political and community activities, particularly as a result of September 11. Officials report that increased civic engagement has been manifested in Indiana most frequently by *increased displays of patriotism* (93 percent) and *increased church attendance* (54 percent). At least one-quarter of officials also reported *increased volunteerism* (29 percent) and *increased interest in politics* (25 percent).

- ***Nonprofits Play Important Roles in Communities***

Six of eight types of nonprofits were reported by a majority of officials as *essential* or *very important*. Human services (90 percent) and education (97 percent) nonprofits were chosen most frequently. Despite the fact that officials reported overwhelmingly that they work with nonprofits to provide government services at least part of the time, more than half reported having conflicting goals at least some of the time.

- ***Some Counties Will Eliminate the Inventory Tax Early***

HB1001(ss) allows counties to eliminate the inventory tax prior to the statewide sunset in five years. Counties also may impose a county economic development income tax (CEDIT) to lessen the burden of early elimination of the inventory tax on homeowners. While responses about the likelihood of early elimination were mixed, almost two-fifths of officials indicated that it was at least somewhat likely. More than one-third of officials in counties that have not adopted any county option income tax indicated needing more information.

- ***Tax Increment Financing (TIF) and Urban Enterprise Zones (UEZs) Will Increase in Importance for Local Economic Development***

Recent tax restructuring is expected to limit the efficacy of a number of local economic development tools, including TIF districts and UEZs. Without the school general levy, TIF districts will generate less revenue. The elimination of the inventory tax not only eliminates the primary economic incentive available to UEZs, but also affects the operating funding available to these important economic development organizations.

Officials perceive TIF as an important tool for local economic development and predict that it will be increasingly important in the future. More than three-fifths of officials (62 percent) indicated that TIF had been somewhat or very important to their communities in the past three years and 65 percent of officials indicated that it would be important in the future. Officials also predict that UEZs will be of increasing importance for local economic development over the next three years. In light of the importance of these tools, state policymakers may wish to consider ways to increase their efficacy in the near future.

- ***Many Communities Report Contingency Plans in Light of Late Reassessment***

Tax bills in some counties are expected to be mailed late because reassessments were completed late. Almost two-thirds of officials report that their local governments will have enough in reserve to operate for a few months (40 percent) or are prepared to borrow money (24 percent). School board presidents reported overwhelmingly that they would borrow money. This may reflect, in part, their plans to address delayed disbursements from the state.

- ***Road and Sewer Infrastructure Most Needed Capital Investments***

Consistent with the community conditions identified as most important to work on over the next two years, roads (36 percent) and sewers (27 percent) were identified as the most needed capital investments. None of the remaining options for investment were chosen by more than 11 percent.

When asked about funding road projects in light of decreased state and federal funding, officials identified a variety of strategies, including the use of general funds, deferred construction and maintenance, and the use of local option income taxes.

- ***Many Communities Modify Services for Spanish Speakers***

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the number of Hispanics living in Indiana doubled between 1990 and 2000. Respondents indicated that *K-12 education, police, and courts* were the services that have been modified most often.

- ***Many Opportunities for Brownfields Redevelopment around the State***

Although the vast majority (89 percent) of officials reported having one or more brownfields in their communities, about three-quarters of officials also reported that no brownfields sites have been redeveloped over the last three years.

- ***Availability of Adequate Water and Sewer Infrastructure Is Most Challenging Planning Problem***

All groups of municipal and county officeholders chose the availability of adequate water and sewer infrastructure most often as the most pressing planning problem facing their communities. Municipal officials chose affordable housing as the next most pressing problem, while county officials chose the conversion of agricultural or environmentally sensitive land.

- ***E-Mail Use Varies Widely across Local Governments***

Only two-fifths of officials reported having e-mail accounts for government business. Among officeholders, only legislators, county commissioners, and mayors reported that a majority of officials have dedicated accounts. Organizations that communicate regularly with these officials may want to consider other forms of communication or ways to increase the availability of these resources among local governments.

Conclusion

In sum, the survey results reflect increased concern among state and local officials about an array of issues. Fewer officials say they are confident about the future, more officials believe that conditions are declining rather than improving, and their concerns span the range of issues from health care to unemployment to water and sewer service.

Introduction

Intergovernmental Issues in Indiana (2002) is the fifth 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 government. This report summarizes the results of the 2002 IACIR survey.

The 2002 survey process included development of the questionnaire, selection of the sample populations, administration of the survey, and coding. IACIR mailed the 2002 survey to 1,404 officeholders in early fall, including all legislators, county council presidents, county commissioners, mayors, and school board presidents, as well as one randomly selected council member of each town with population greater than 500 and two randomly selected township trustees from each county. A complete description of methodology appears in Appendix A.

The IACIR conducted similar surveys in 1996, 1997, 1999, and 2001. The original survey was modeled after a regular survey of local elected officials conducted by the National League of Cities (NLC). The 2002 IACIR survey included 25 questions and addressed a number of issues that were included in previous surveys. It also addressed several “hot topics” affecting local communities in 2002, including civic engagement, land use and planning, brownfields, local economic development tools, and property tax reassessment. The Indiana Land Resources Council (ILRC), the Indiana Development Finance Authority (IDFA), and the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) assisted the IACIR in developing questions. The survey instrument appears in Appendix B.

Survey Results

This report presents the results of the survey in the general order in which the questions appeared in the survey instrument. To account for non-responses to specific questions and questions addressed to specific types of officeholders, the number of responses is provided with the table or figure for each question. Questions 9, 16, 17, 18, and 22 provided respondents with the option of writing in a specific response to *other*. In cases when these responses closely matched an option within the list provided, the response was grouped with that option. A complete listing of *other* responses is provided in Appendix C. Appendix D includes the complete listing of responses to the open-ended question (25) at the end of the survey. In a few cases, names or other identifiers have been removed to ensure that no individual respondents can be associated with a particular response.

Response Rates

Of the 1,404 surveys mailed, 573 were returned. Four surveys returned were excluded from the analysis because the respondents did not hold elective office. The effective response rate for the survey was 41 percent (569 of 1,404).

Question 1 addressed the office held by each respondent. Table 1 shows the number of surveys sent and returned by each group. Thirty-two respondents indicated *other*. With the exception of the four respondents who were not elected officials, each of these responses was assigned to the remaining categories based on the type of local government they represent. For example, several school board members who were not president of the board responded. Each of these surveys was coded as *school board president*.

The response rate for 2002 (41 percent) is very similar to the response rates for 1996 and 2001 (37 percent and 40 percent, respectively), but lower than the rates achieved for the 1997 and 1999 surveys (61 percent

and 51 percent, respectively). Township trustees had the highest response rate for 2002 at 57 percent, and state representatives had the lowest at 23 percent. As shown in Table 2, response rates for each group of officeholders has varied since 1999. Consistent with a high overall response rate, all groups except township trustees experienced the highest response rates in 1999.

Table 1: Response rates by office (Question 1)

Office	Returned	Mailed	Rate	Included others (number of respondents)
Senator	16	50	32%	
Representative	23	100	23%	
County council president	49	91	54%	County council member (2)
County commissioner	112	273	41%	County commission vice president (5)
Mayor	56	113	50%	
Town council member	114	302	38%	Town council president (4)
Township trustee	105	185	57%	
School board president	98	290	34%	School board vice president (3); school board secretary (3); school board member (9); past president of school board (4); past school board member (2)
Other	4			
Total	573	1404	41%	

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

Office	1999	2001	2002
Senator	46%	30%	32%
Representative	35%	19%	23%
County council president	61%	52%	54%
County commissioner or commission president	60%	51%	41%
Mayor	61%	56%	50%
Town council president or member	44%	32%	38%
Township trustee	68%	43%	57%
School board president	45%	47%	34%
Total	51%	40%	41%

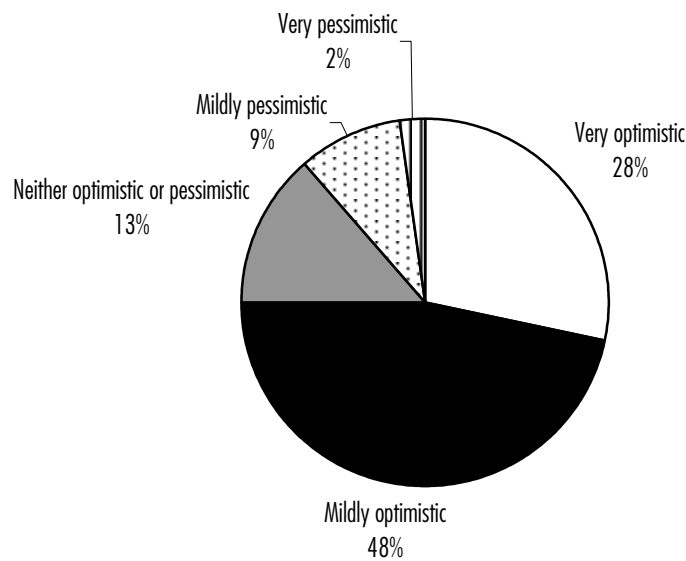
Local Conditions and Services

Questions 2–6 addressed local conditions and services. Question 2 queried respondents about their feelings regarding the future of their communities. As shown in Table 3 and Figure 1, respondents are generally optimistic about the future (75 percent). This result, however, represents a decline from the two previous surveys (see Table 4). A larger proportion (24 percent) were neutral or pessimistic than in 2001 and 1999 (16 and 18 percent, respectively). As in 2001, mayors and township trustees continue to be the most and least optimistic, respectively (96 percent and 60 percent).

Table 3: Feelings about the general direction the community is heading (Question 2)

Office	Very optimistic	Mildly Optimistic	Neither optimistic or pessimistic	Mildly pessimistic	Very pessimistic
Senator (n=15)	27%	53%	13%	7%	0%
Representative (n=22)	32%	45%	9%	14%	0%
County council president (n=46)	15%	61%	9%	7%	9%
County commissioner (n=106)	26%	53%	9%	10%	1%
Mayor (n=51)	63%	33%	4%	0%	0%
Town council member (n=112)	31%	44%	15%	8%	2%
Township trustee (n=97)	21%	39%	24%	11%	5%
School board president (n=94)	22%	51%	14%	13%	0%
Total (n=543)	28%	47%	13%	9%	2%

Figure 1: Feelings about the general direction the community is heading (Question 2; n=543)



Source: Indiana Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations 2002

Table 4: Feelings about the general direction the community is heading by survey year (Question 2)

Survey year	Very optimistic	Mildly optimistic	Neither optimistic or pessimistic	Mildly pessimistic	Very pessimistic
2002 (n=543)	28%	47%	13%	9%	2%
2001 (n=542)	34%	50%	9%	5%	2%
1999 (n=599)	38%	44%	10%	7%	1%

Questions 3-6 asked officeholders about the status of 35 community conditions in six general categories (health, public safety, economics, land use, local services, and community quality of life). Respondents were asked about the current status of the condition as a problem, change over the last year, the most improved and deteriorated conditions over the previous five years, and the most important issues to address in the next two years.

Question 3 asked respondents to identify whether each of the 35 conditions is a problem and if so, how severe. For 18 of the 35 conditions, a majority of respondents identified the condition as *minor or no problem* (see Table 5).

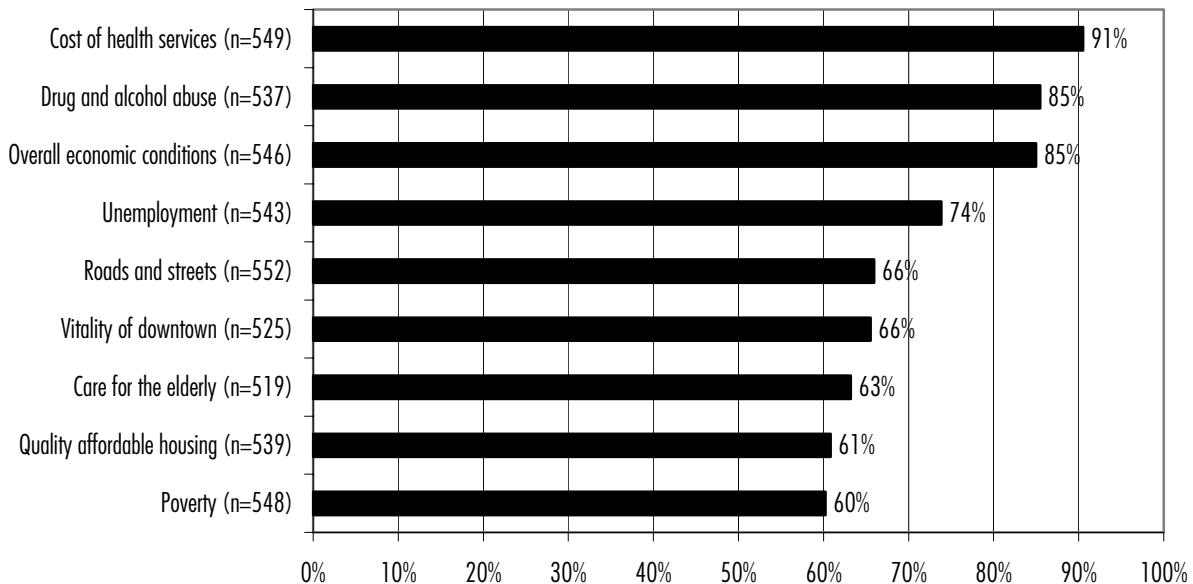
Figure 2 shows the conditions chosen most often as either a *major problem* or a *moderate problem*. *Cost of health services* was the only condition chosen by a majority of officials as a *major problem*. While the same general issues were identified by more than half of officials as problems in 2001 and 2002, a greater proportion of officials identified each as a problem in 2002. For example, *drug and alcohol abuse* was reported by 83 and 85 percent of officials as a major or moderate problem in 2001 and 2002, respectively. Similarly, *unemployment* was reported by 62 and 74 percent as a problem in 2001 and 2002, respectively. *Workforce retraining*, *sewers*, and *community involvement* were three additional conditions identified by more than half of respondents as problems in 2002.

Table 5: Current status of community conditions (Questions 3)

Category	Condition	Major problem	Moderate problem	Minor or no problem	
Health	Cost of health services (n=549)	54%	36%	9%	
	Availability of health services (n=534)	9%	37%	54%	
	Drug and alcohol abuse (n=537)	31%	54%	15%	
	Care for the elderly (n=519)	13%	50%	37%	
Public safety	Police-community relations (n=544)	7%	25%	69%	
	Violent crime (n=541)	3%	30%	67%	
	Youth violence and crime (n=540)	11%	47%	43%	
Economics	Overall economic conditions (n=546)	34%	51%	15%	
	Unemployment (n=543)	24%	49%	26%	
	Workforce training (n=521)	13%	45%	41%	
	Workforce retraining (n=519)	14%	43%	42%	
Land use	Quality of development (n=539)	15%	37%	47%	
	Increased amount of development (n=528)	15%	36%	49%	
	Quality affordable housing (n=539)	18%	43%	39%	
	Open space (n=522)	9%	24%	67%	
	Brownfields (n=509)	8%	28%	64%	
Local services	K-12 education (n=541)	7%	24%	69%	
	Drinking water (n=548)	4%	18%	78%	
	Sewer (n=537)	18%	34%	48%	
	Roads and streets (n=552)	19%	47%	34%	
	High-speed Internet access (n=530)	12%	31%	57%	
	Telephone (n=546)	4%	19%	77%	
	Cellular telephone (n=545)	9%	23%	68%	
	Parks and recreation (n=542)	4%	21%	75%	
	Solid waste management (n=535)	8%	30%	63%	
	Cable TV (n=536)	7%	27%	66%	
	Public transportation (n=520)	16%	31%	53%	
	Community quality of life	Race-ethnic relations (n=546)	3%	24%	74%
		Air quality (n=546)	4%	19%	78%
Water quality (n=548)		4%	20%	76%	
Traffic (n=550)		18%	38%	44%	
Poverty (n=548)		14%	46%	40%	
Vitality of neighborhoods (n=539)		6%	36%	58%	
Vitality of downtown (n=525)		24%	42%	34%	
Community involvement (n=545)*		14%	39%	46%	

* In the most recent survey, *community involvement* replaced *volunteerism* as a community condition

Figure 2: Conditions identified as major or moderate problems (Question 3)



Source: Indiana Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations 2002

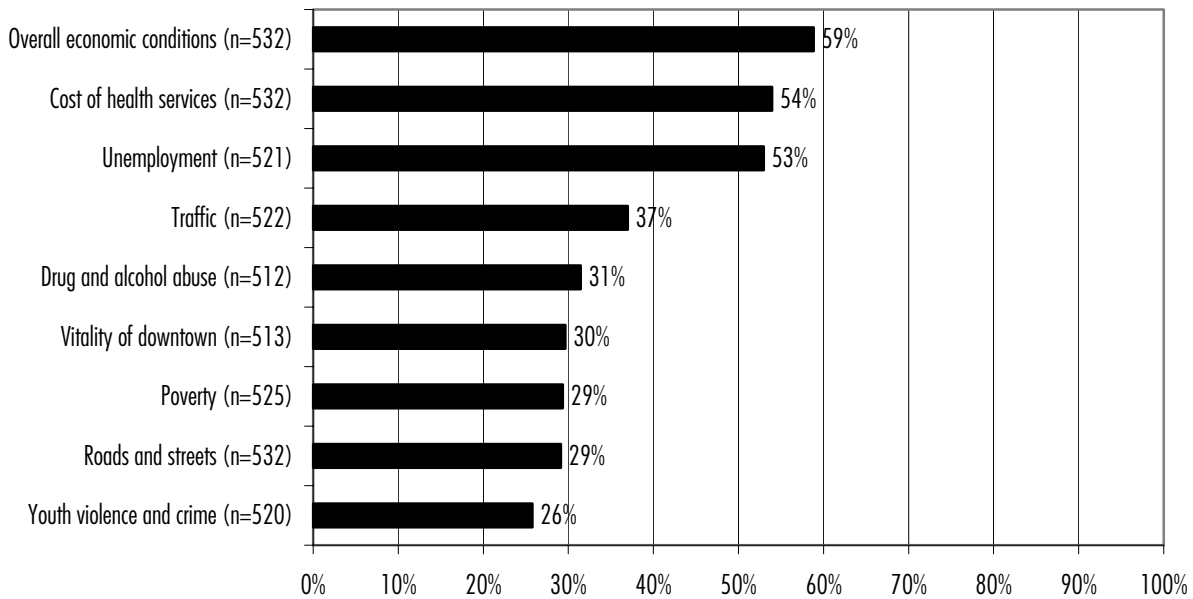
Question 3 also asked specifically whether conditions have improved, worsened, or remained unchanged over the last year (see Table 6). As in previous years, respondents reported *no change* for a strong majority of conditions. Only three conditions, *overall economic conditions* (59 percent), *cost of health services* (54 percent), and *unemployment* (53 percent), were reported by a majority of officials as *worsened*; six additional conditions were reported by between one-quarter and one-half of respondents as *worsened* (see Figure 3). None of the conditions were reported by more than 22 percent of respondents as *improved* (see Figure 4). It is important to note, however, that for six of the conditions reported as *worsened* by more than one-quarter of respondents, a majority still reported *no change*.

As in the previous discussion, many of the same conditions chosen most often as *improved* or *worsened* were chosen in both 2001 and 2002. *Availability of health services* and *vitality of downtown* were two conditions identified most often as improved in 2002 that were not chosen most frequently in 2001. *Overall economic conditions* was the only item chosen most frequently as worsened in 2002 that did not appear in 2001. *Availability of health services* and *overall economic conditions* did not appear as conditions in the 2001 survey. *Availability of health services* previously was combined with the *cost of health services*.

Table 6: Change in local conditions in the last 12 months (Question 3)

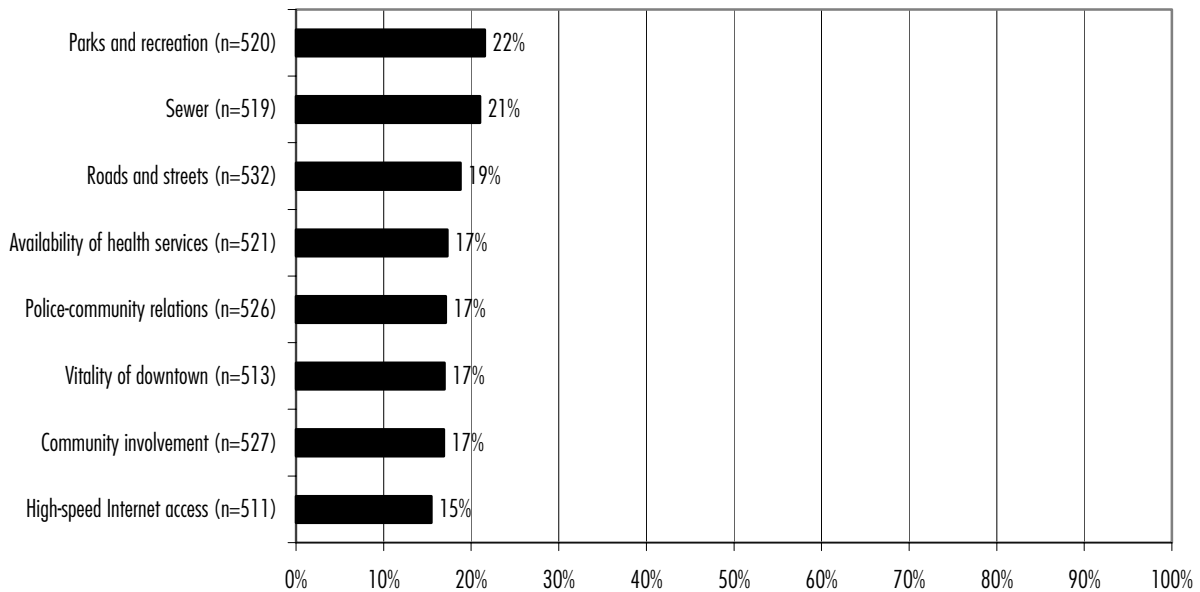
Category	Condition	Improved	Worsened	No change	
Health	Cost of health services (n=532)	4%	54%	42%	
	Availability of health services (n=521)	17%	11%	72%	
	Drug and alcohol abuse (n=512)	4%	31%	65%	
	Care for the elderly (n=509)	9%	14%	77%	
Public safety	Police-community relations (n=526)	17%	12%	71%	
	Violent crime (n=521)	5%	14%	80%	
	Youth violence and crime (n=520)	4%	26%	70%	
Economics	Overall economic conditions (n=532)	5%	59%	36%	
	Unemployment (n=521)	4%	53%	43%	
	Workforce training (n=511)	13%	15%	72%	
	Workforce retraining (n=507)	10%	15%	75%	
Land use	Quality of development (n=518)	14%	18%	68%	
	Increased amount of development (n=518)	14%	22%	63%	
	Quality affordable housing (n=521)	12%	19%	69%	
	Open space (n=503)	4%	15%	81%	
	Brownfields (n=492)	5%	11%	84%	
Local services	K-12 education (n=519)	14%	11%	75%	
	Drinking water (n=523)	10%	7%	84%	
	Sewer (n=519)	21%	18%	61%	
	Roads and streets (n=532)	19%	29%	52%	
	High-speed Internet access (n=511)	15%	7%	77%	
	Telephone (n=527)	5%	6%	89%	
	Cellular telephone (n=525)	11%	7%	82%	
	Parks and recreation (n=520)	22%	6%	73%	
	Solid waste management (n=513)	12%	13%	75%	
	Cable TV (n=513)	5%	13%	82%	
	Public transportation (n=502)	7%	12%	81%	
	Community quality of life	Race ethnic relations (n=524)	9%	7%	84%
		Air quality (n=515)	3%	7%	90%
Water quality (n=518)		8%	7%	85%	
Traffic (n=522)		5%	37%	58%	
Poverty (n=525)		2%	29%	69%	
Vitality of neighborhoods (n=518)		8%	13%	80%	
Vitality of downtown (n=513)		17%	30%	53%	
Community involvement (n=527)		17%	16%	68%	

Figure 3: Conditions worsened over the last 12 months (Question 3)



Source: Indiana Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations 2002

Figure 4: Conditions improved in the last 12 months (Question 3)



Source: Indiana Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations 2002

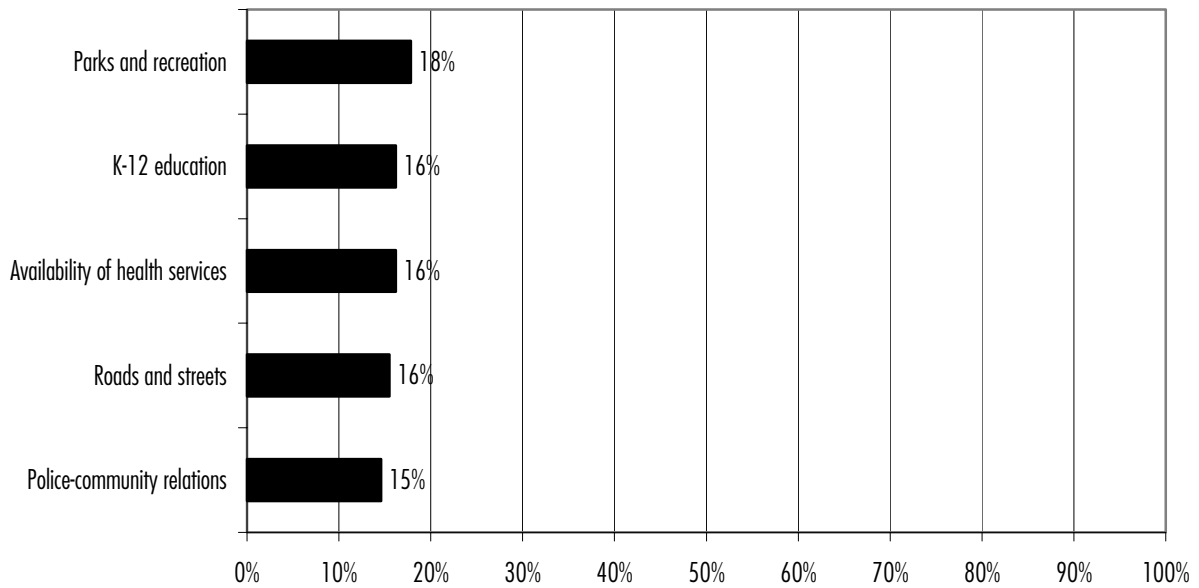
Questions 4 and 5 asked respondents to list the three conditions that had deteriorated most and the three conditions that had improved most over the last five years; Question 6 asked respondents to list the three most important issues to address in the next two years (see Table 7). As shown in Figure 5, five conditions were chosen by 15 percent or more of respondents as most improved. Similarly, four conditions were

chosen as most deteriorated (see Figure 6). Generally, these responses are similar to the conditions chosen most often as improving or worsening in the last 12 months and to the conditions chosen most often in 2001 as improving or deteriorating in the last five years. Interestingly, *K-12 education* was chosen most often as an improving condition over the last five years, but was not chosen most often as an improving condition over the last 12 months. Among conditions identified as deteriorating most over the last five years, the *cost of health care* and issues regarding the health of the economy were chosen more often in 2002 than the conditions chosen most often in 2001, such as *traffic* and *roads and streets*. The *availability of health care* was identified most often as an improving condition, while the cost was identified most often as deteriorating. In previous surveys, these two issues were combined.

Table 7: Conditions ranked as most improved, deteriorated, or important to work on (Question 4-6)

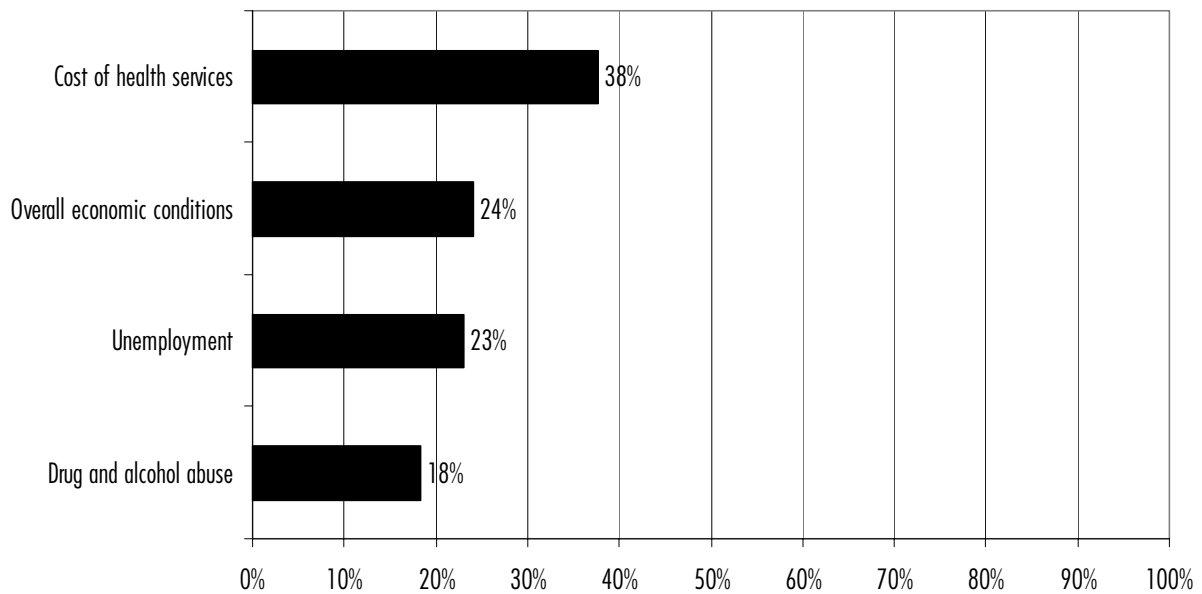
Category	Condition	Conditions deteriorated most in the last 5 years (n=485)	Conditions improved most in the last 5 years (n=432)	Conditions most important to work on over the next 2 years (n=476)
Health	Cost of health services	38%	1%	26%
	Availability of health services	3%	16%	2%
	Drug and alcohol abuse	18%	1%	13%
	Care for the elderly	3%	7%	4%
Public safety	Police-community relations	4%	15%	3%
	Violent crime	4%	3%	5%
	Youth violence and crime	8%	0%	6%
Economics	Overall economic conditions	24%	3%	22%
	Unemployment	23%	4%	21%
	Workforce training	3%	9%	5%
	Workforce retraining	1%	3%	1%
Land use	Quality of development	4%	7%	6%
	Increased amount of development	5%	8%	5%
	Quality affordable housing	9%	9%	9%
	Open space	2%	1%	1%
Local services	Brownfields	0%	1%	1%
	K-12 education	2%	16%	8%
	Drinking water	2%	5%	4%
	Sewer	10%	11%	16%
	Roads and streets	12%	16%	18%
	High-speed Internet access	1%	8%	1%
	Telephone	1%	2%	0%
	Cellular telephone	1%	5%	1%
	Parks and recreation	1%	18%	3%
	Solid waste management	2%	6%	3%
	Cable TV	2%	1%	1%
	Public transportation	1%	3%	2%
	Race-ethnic relations	2%	4%	1%
	Air quality	1%	1%	1%
Water quality	2%	6%	3%	
Community quality of life	Traffic	14%	1%	11%
	Poverty	4%	0%	3%
	Vitality of neighborhoods	4%	4%	3%
	Vitality of downtown	14%	6%	8%
	Community involvement	4%	9%	4%

Figure 5: Conditions improved most in the last five years (Question 5; n=432)



Source: Indiana Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations 2002

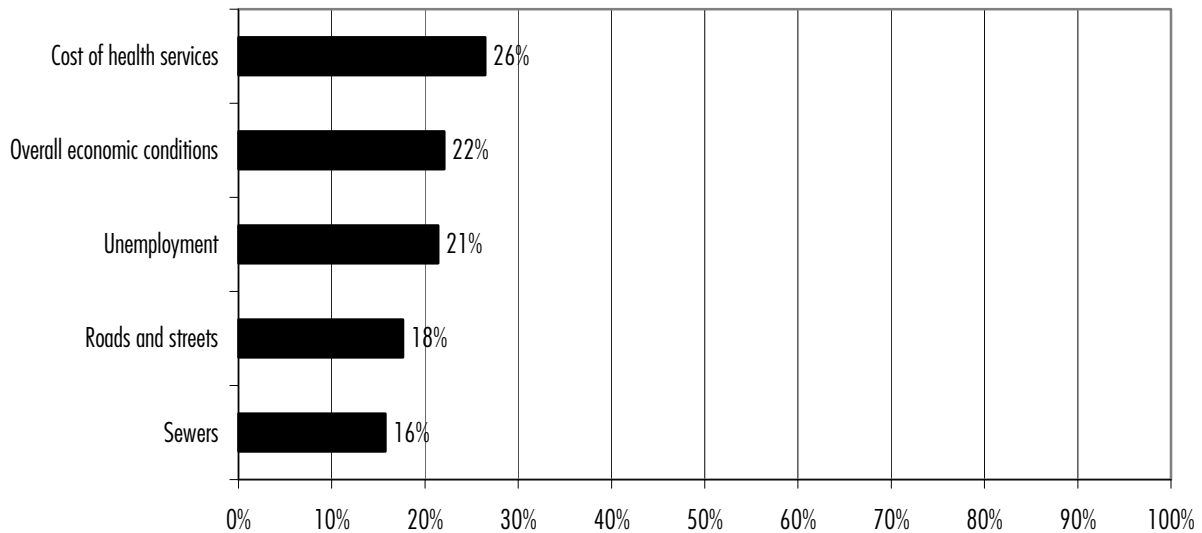
Figure 6: Conditions deteriorated most in the last five years (Question 4; n=485)



Source: Indiana Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations 2002

The five conditions listed most frequently as important to address over the next two years are identified in Figure 7. All of these conditions were chosen in the current survey by more than 25 percent of respondents as worsening over the last 12 months and by more than ten percent as being among the conditions that had deteriorated most over the last five years. *Overall economic conditions* and the *cost of health services* were not chosen most often in 2001 as one of the most important conditions to address over the next two years because both conditions did not appear in that survey. *Traffic* and *K-12 education* were conditions chosen in 2001 that were not among those chosen most often in 2002.

Figure 7: Conditions most important to address in the next two years (Question 6; n=476)



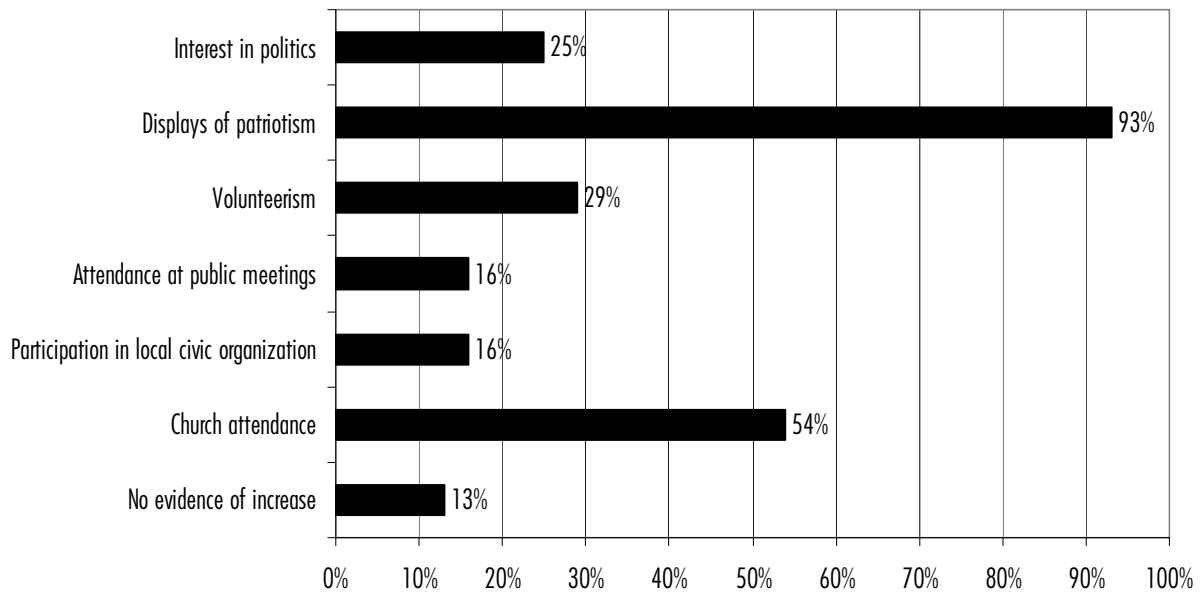
Source: Indiana Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations 2002

Civic-Mindedness and Community Involvement

Since the last IACIR survey in mid-2001, Hoosiers have faced a number of significant events, including the tragedy of September 11, an economic recession, the war on terror, a series of stock market scandals, and a state fiscal crisis. Question 7 addressed how residents in communities throughout the state have displayed increased civic-mindedness and community involvement.

Respondents were asked to indicate which listed activities had appeared to increase in their communities over the past year (see Figure 8). The responses provided most frequently were *increased displays of patriotism* (93 percent) and *increased church attendance* (54 percent). Responses to these questions were consistent among all officials.

Figure 8: Increases in civic or community involvement during the last year (Question 7; n=542)



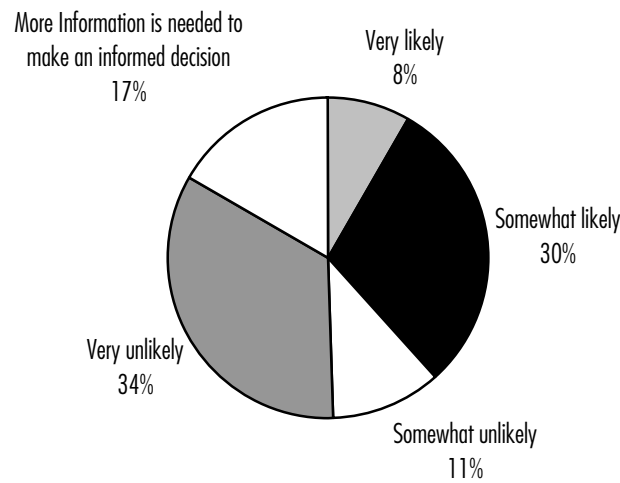
Source: Indiana Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations 2002

Elimination of the Inventory Tax

HB1001(ss) provides that the state inventory tax will be eliminated in five years. As well, it allows counties to impose an additional county economic development income tax (CEDIT) to eliminate the inventory tax within the county sooner than five years. The revenue from the additional CEDIT must be used to provide additional homestead credits that offset the effects of this reduced assessed value on homeowners.

Question 8 asked county officials to indicate the likelihood of early elimination of the inventory tax in their counties. Officials indicated that responses will vary widely across the state; about one-third of county officials indicated that early elimination was *somewhat likely* and about one-third indicated that early elimination was *very unlikely*. County council presidents were slightly more negative about early elimination, and more than one-third of officials in counties that have not adopted any county option income tax indicated that *more information is needed to make an informed decision*.

Figure 9: Likelihood of early elimination of the property tax (Question 8; n=144)



Source: Indiana Commission on Intergovernmental Relations 2002

Table 8: Likelihood of early elimination of inventory tax (Question 8)

	By office		By presence of county option income tax		Total (n=144)
	County council president (n=46)	County commissioner (n=98)	Officials in counties with one or more county option income taxes (n=133)	Officials in counties with no county option income taxes (n=11)	
Very likely	13%	6%	8%	9%	8%
Somewhat likely	28%	31%	32%	18%	30%
Somewhat unlikely	11%	11%	11%	9%	11%
Very unlikely	41%	31%	34%	27%	34%
More information is needed to make an informed decision	7%	21%	15%	36%	17%

Reassessment

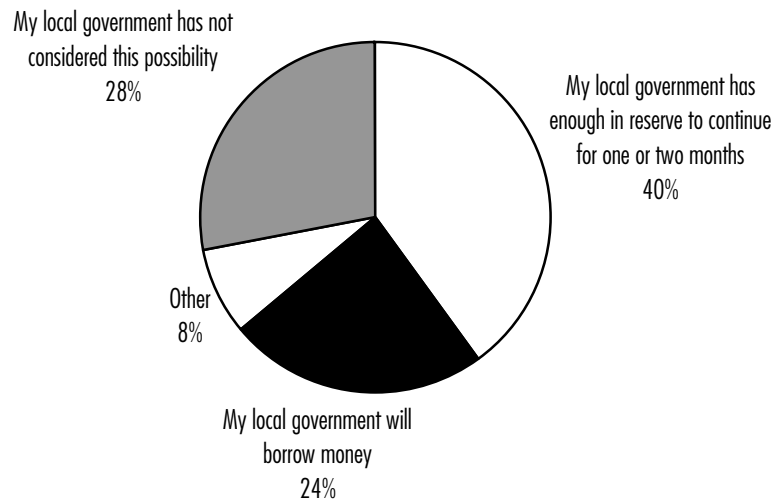
Question 9 addresses difficulties with reassessment. Because many counties will not complete their reassessments until late 2002 or early 2003, tax bill mailings may be late and tax collections and distributions to local governments may be delayed. Tax bills usually are paid in two installments, on May 10 and November 10. Local governments may need to develop contingency plans based on the projected date of completion of reassessment in their counties. Respondents were asked to choose from a list of possible local government actions that they would take if the May 10 due date for property tax payments is delayed in their county.

As shown in Table 9 and Figure 10, the most common response was *my local government has enough in reserve to continue for one or two months* (40 percent). Only county commissioners and school board presidents did not report this option most frequently. About one-quarter of officials reported *my local government will borrow money* (24 percent) and *my local government has not considered this possibility* (28 percent). School board presidents indicated overwhelmingly (72 percent) that they would borrow money. Many school districts also are facing delays in state disbursements. The responses listed as *other* are provided in Appendix C.

Table 9: Local strategies to address late reassessments (Question 9)

	My local government will borrow money	My local government has enough in reserve	My local government has not considered this possibility	Other
County Council President (n=47)	19%	45%	30%	6%
County Commissioner (n=106)	16%	37%	40%	8%
Mayor (n=22)	23%	55%	9%	14%
Town Councilor (n=52)	10%	46%	44%	0%
Township Trustee (n=58)	9%	66%	19%	7%
School Board President (n=46)	72%	7%	11%	11%
Total (n=344)	24%	40%	28%	8%

Figure 10: Local government action if delay in property tax payments (Question 9; n=344)



Source: Indiana Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations 2002

Nonprofit Organizations

Nonprofit organizations are private, incorporated organizations that are exempt from federal and state corporate taxes. Examples include the Red Cross, Boy Scouts, United Way, art museums, historical societies, and churches. These organizations play a variety of roles in Indiana communities. Faith-based organizations are assuming increasingly important roles in education and the delivery of social services. Questions 10–12 address the importance of and level of collaboration with nonprofit organizations in the respondents' communities.

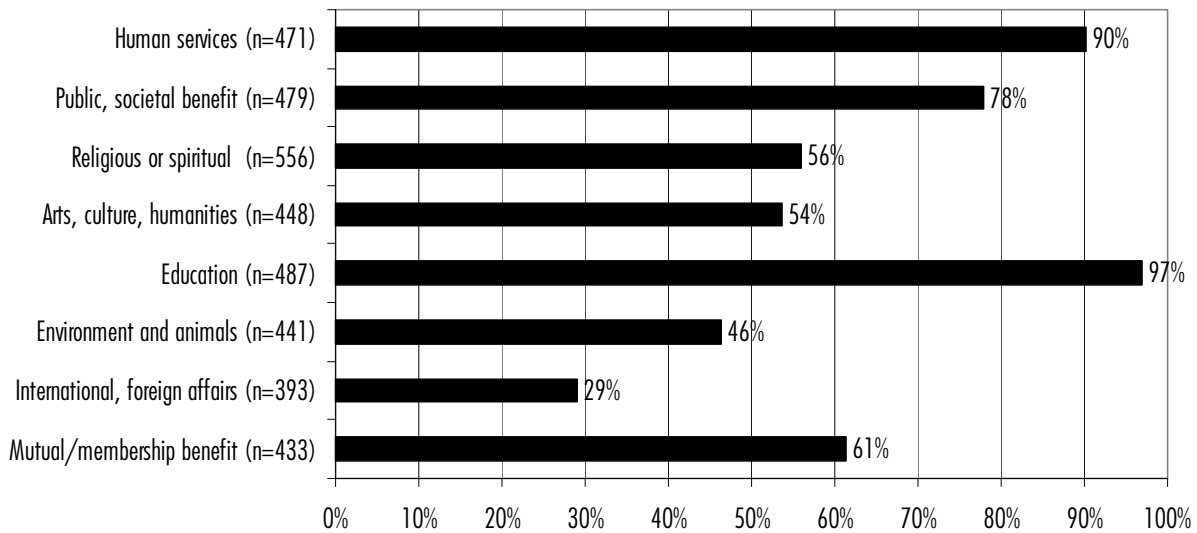
Question 10 asked respondents to rate the importance of the eight types of nonprofit organizations for their communities, considering organizations that are located in or serve their respective communities (see Table 10).

Table 10: Importance of local nonprofit organizations (Question 10)

	Essential	Very important	Not very important	Creates or makes problems worse	Irrelevant
Human services (employment, crime/safety, housing, recreation, youth, family, elderly) (n=471)	39%	51%	7%	0%	2%
Public, societal benefit (neighborhood groups, civil rights, Kiwanis, United Way, foundations) (n=479)	21%	57%	16%	0%	5%
Religious or spiritual (worship, promotion of religion) (n=556)	12%	44%	39%	2%	4%
Arts, culture, humanities (n=448)	10%	44%	34%	1%	11%
Education (n=487)	75%	22%	2%	0%	1%
Environment and animals (humane societies, zoos, sanctuaries) (n=441)	6%	40%	37%	3%	14%
International, foreign affairs (n=393)	8%	21%	43%	1%	27%
Mutual/membership benefit (group insurance, pension, and benefit plans, cemetery companies) (n=433)	22%	40%	24%	2%	12%

As shown in Figure 11, all types of nonprofit organizations except *environment and animals* and *international, foreign affairs* were viewed by a majority of officials as *essential* or *very important* in their communities. Among types of organizations, *environment and animals* and *international, foreign affairs* were chosen most frequently as irrelevant to local communities. Responses were similar among all groups of officeholders.

Figure 11: Types of nonprofit organizations rated as essential or very important (Question 10)



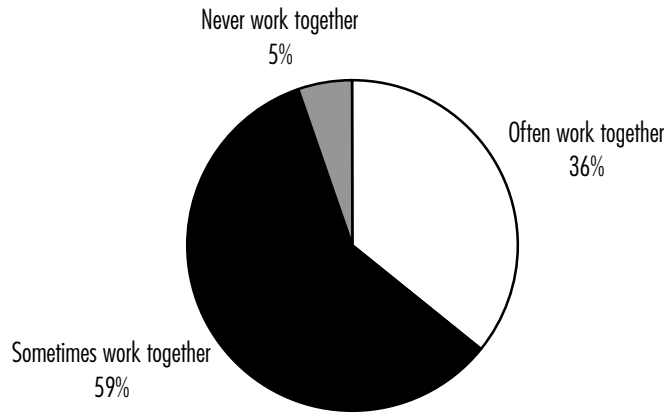
Source: Indiana Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations 2002

Questions 11 and 12 asked respondents to indicate how often their local governments collaborate with nonprofit organizations when providing government programs and services and how often they find themselves in conflict with nonprofit organizations. Officials reported overwhelmingly (95 percent) that they work with nonprofit organizations to provide government services at least some of the time (see Table 11 and Figure 12). Mayors (55 percent) and township trustees (44 percent) reported most that they often work with nonprofit organizations. More than half of officials reported their local governments' goals and activities conflict with those of nonprofits some of the time (see Table 12 and Figure 13).

Table 11: Cooperation with nonprofits in providing local services (Question 11)

	Often work together	Sometimes work together	Never work together
Senator (n=12)	17%	83%	0%
Representative (n=17)	41%	53%	6%
County council president (n=45)	24%	71%	4%
County commissioner (n=102)	31%	68%	1%
Mayor (n=44)	55%	45%	0%
Town council member (n=93)	34%	56%	10%
Township trustee (n=82)	44%	44%	12%
School board president (n=74)	32%	65%	3%
Total (n=469)	36%	59%	5%

Figure 12: Cooperation with nonprofits in providing government services (Question 11; n=469)

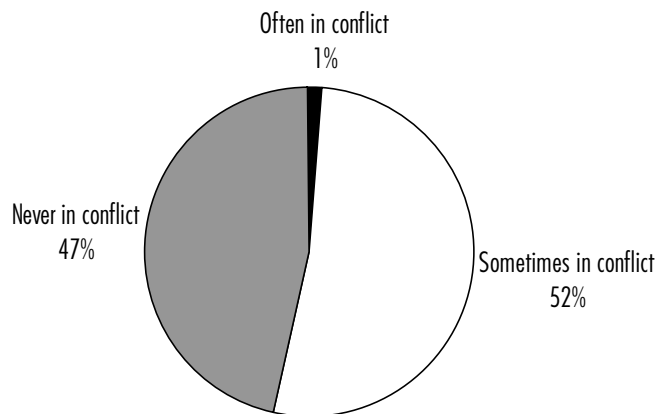


Source: Indiana Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations 2002

Table 12: Conflict between goals and activities of nonprofits and local governments (Question 12)

	Often in conflict	Sometimes in conflict	Never in conflict
Senator (n=9)	0%	89%	11%
Representative (n=13)	8%	62%	31%
County council president (n=42)	2%	57%	40%
County commissioner (n=87)	2%	64%	33%
Mayor (n=41)	0%	49%	51%
Town council member (n=92)	1%	42%	57%
Township trustee (n=74)	1%	23%	76%
School board president (n=66)	0%	73%	27%
Total (n=424)	1%	52%	47%

Figure 13: Conflict between goals and activities of nonprofits and local governments (Question 12)



Source: Indiana Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations 2002

Brownfields

The redevelopment of brownfields often is cited as one of the important issues in debates about growth management. Questions 13-16 addressed brownfields and were developed in cooperation with the Indiana Development Finance Authority (IDFA) and the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM). Questions about brownfields also appeared in the 2001 survey.

Question 13 asked specifically about officials' understanding of the concept of brownfields and available solutions. While the responses were limited to municipal and county officials in 2001, the 2002 survey asked all officials to respond to this question.

As shown in Table 13, legislators, mayors, and county commissioners reported having the most knowledge and experience with brownfields. Not surprisingly, township trustees and school board presidents reported having no knowledge about brownfields most often. Municipal and county officials reported having less familiarity and experience in 2002 than in the previous survey.

Table 13: Officials' knowledge and experience with brownfields (Question 13)

	I have no knowledge	I understand only the basic issue	I understand the issue and available solutions	I have participated in the redevelopment of a brownfield in my community
Senator (n=13)	8%	23%	62%	8%
Representative (n=20)	0%	40%	50%	10%
County council president (n=48)	23%	56%	21%	0%
County commissioner (n=110)	7%	57%	25%	11%
Mayor (n=42)	2%	21%	48%	29%
Town council member (n=103)	29%	47%	21%	3%
Township trustee (n=93)	65%	29%	4%	2%
School board president (n=80)	39%	43%	15%	4%
Total (n=509)	28%	43%	22%	7%

The Indiana Development Finance Authority is currently pursuing funding to allow a number of communities to develop a GIS-based inventory of brownfield properties. Question 14 asked municipal and county officials to identify the number of brownfield properties within their communities. A majority of officials in each group indicated that their community has between one and ten brownfield properties (see Table 14). The numeric categories were slightly different in 2001, but the results were similar.

Table 14: Estimated number of brownfields (Question 14)

	County council president (n=48)	County commissioner (n=110)	Mayor (n=51)	Town council member (n=97)	Total (n=306)
0 sites	3 (6%)	5 (5%)	7 (14%)	20 (21%)	35 (11%)
1-10 sites	29 (60%)	56 (51%)	33 (65%)	69 (71%)	187 (61%)
11-25 sites	9 (19%)	26 (24%)	7 (14%)	3 (3%)	45 (15%)
26-50 sites	2 (4%)	13 (12%)	3 (6%)	0 (0%)	18 (6%)
51-100 sites	1 (2%)	1 (1%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (1%)
Over 100	0 (0%)	2 (2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (1%)
Don't know	4 (8%)	7 (6%)	1 (2%)	5 (5%)	17 (6%)

Questions 15 and 16 asked respondents how many brownfield sites have been redeveloped successfully into productive properties in the last three years and what types of organizations participated in those efforts. Almost three-fifths of officials reported that their communities had not redeveloped successfully any brownfield properties in the last three years (see Table 15). The remaining officials reported most often the redevelopment of one to five sites (38 percent). All told, officials identified up to 216 sites that have been redeveloped in the past three years. County officials and mayors reported most often that local governments participated in redevelopment projects (see Table 16). Town council members reported most often that private developers participated in redevelopment projects. More than two-fifths of officials reported that projects in their communities' projects were undertaken by organizations in two or more categories. The responses listed by respondents answering *other* are provided in Appendix C.

Table 15: Estimated number of redeveloped brownfields sites in the last three years (Question 15)

	0 sites	1-5 sites	6-10 sites	11-15 sites	Total sites
County council president (n=33)	20 (61%)	11 (33%)	0 (0%)	2 (6%)	59
County commissioner (n=61)	31 (51%)	27 (44%)	3 (5%)	0 (0%)	77
Mayor (n=38)	47 (53%)	18 (47%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	45
Town council member (n=67)	47 (70%)	20 (30%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	35
Total (n=199)	118 (59%)	76 (38%)	3 (2%)	2 (1%)	216

Table 16: Organizations participating in brownfield redevelopment (Question 16)*

	Local government	Private developer	Community organization/nonprofit	Other
County council president (n=18)	72%	61%	39%	11%
County commissioner (n=34)	68%	68%	15%	6%
Mayor (n=22)	82%	45%	23%	9%
Town council member (n=24)	46%	50%	21%	4%
Total (n=98)	66%	57%	22%	7%

*Participation totals to more than 100 percent because respondents were asked to choose all types of organizations involved in brownfields redevelopment.

Capital Investments

Question 17 asked officials to indicate the one capital investment that is needed most in their communities. More than one-third and more than one-quarter of respondents reported that road infrastructure and sewer infrastructure, respectively, were the capital investments needed most in their communities (see Table 17). The capital need selected next most often was jail/prison (11 percent). Among officeholders, all groups except town council members reported road infrastructure as the most needed capital investment. Town council members chose sewer infrastructure most often. *Other* responses are listed in Appendix C.

Road and Street Funding

Budget decisions at the national and state levels likely will reduce significantly the availability of intergovernmental transfers to fund road projects in the next few years. Question 18 asked municipal and county officials to indicate how they plan to address their communities' needs for street and road construction and maintenance over the next three years.

Respondents indicated that they will pursue a number of funding options for road projects over the next three years (see Table 18). Each of the options except the *use of tax increment financing* and the *use of debt* was chosen by at least one-quarter of officials. The relative order of options chosen by respondents varied by type of officeholder. County council presidents and county commissioners most often chose deferring projects and the use of local option income tax funds, respectively. Mayors and town council members chose using general funds most frequently. *Other* responses appear in Appendix C.

Table 17: Capital investments needed most in the community (Question 17)

	Senator (n=9)	Representative (n=10)	County council president (n=43)	County commissioner (n=100)	Mayor (n=43)	Town council member (n=90)	Township trustee (n=57)	School board president (n=59)	Total (n=411)
Jail/Prison	33%	0%	19%	20%	2%	4%	5%	8%	11%
Elementary school(s)	0%	0%	7%	0%	2%	2%	4%	15%	4%
Middle or high school(s)	0%	10%	0%	1%	0%	1%	4%	10%	3%
Road infrastructure	56%	50%	42%	38%	40%	26%	35%	34%	36%
Water infrastructure	0%	0%	2%	1%	5%	22%	9%	2%	7%
Sewer infrastructure	11%	40%	23%	29%	35%	33%	25%	12%	27%
Transit infrastructure	0%	0%	2%	0%	2%	3%	7%	7%	3%
Other	0%	0%	5%	11%	14%	8%	12%	12%	10%

Table 18: Choice of funding tools for road projects over the next three years (Question 18)

	County council president (n=46)	County commissioner (n=106)	Mayor (n=49)	Town council member (n=93)	All county and municipal officials (n=296)
Use general funds	25%	19%	61%	56%	39%
Use local option income tax funds (COIT/CAGIT/CEDIT)	50%	51%	39%	32%	43%
Use wheel tax funds	46%	33%	12%	25%	29%
Use tax increment financing (TIF)	13%	16%	22%	12%	15%
Apply for Build Indiana funds	35%	38%	39%	39%	38%
Apply for federal grant funds such as TEA-21	29%	39%	47%	31%	36%
Use debt (bonding)	8%	8%	16%	17%	12%
Defer a portion or all construction and maintenance	54%	47%	49%	35%	45%
Postpone or forego other planned community projects	15%	30%	18%	30%	26%
Other	13%	7%	16%	4%	8%

Local Services for Spanish Speakers

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the number of Hispanics living in Indiana more than doubled between 1990 and 2000 (98,788 to 214,536). Question 19 asked respondents to indicate whether changes have been made in a selection of local services to address the needs of Spanish speakers. Table 19 indicates that many local governments across Indiana have modified local services. *K-12 education, police and courts* were identified most often by all respondents. The variability in proportions across groups of officeholders may indicate that a variety of circumstances and responses exist in Indiana communities. It also may indicate that local officials only answered for their local government or that they may not be aware of the intricacies of services provided by other local governments. For example, four-fifths of school board presidents indicated that K-12 education services have been modified in their communities, while only 57 percent of all respondents indicated these modifications.

Table 19: Community services modified for Spanish speakers (Question 19)

	County officials (n=116)	Mayor (n=36)	Town council member (n=47)	Township trustee (n=36)	School board president (n=52)	All officials including legislators (n=307)
Housing and community development	34%	31%	23%	28%	42%	33%
Police	53%	67%	55%	36%	56%	54%
Courts	64%	39%	23%	36%	37%	47%
Small business development	11%	11%	4%	6%	15%	10%
K-12 education	49%	53%	53%	47%	81%	57%
Recreation	5%	11%	13%	3%	17%	9%
Employment services	37%	28%	26%	44%	33%	35%
Health care services	34%	36%	28%	31%	38%	34%
Public transportation	4%	14%	6%	6%	6%	7%
Child care services	16%	14%	9%	22%	13%	15%
Voter services	26%	25%	19%	25%	8%	22%

Land Use and Planning

Land use issues continue to be of concern to citizens in Indiana and around the nation. For the second year, the Indiana Land Resources Council (ILRC) has contributed questions to the survey. Questions 20-22 address land use issues. Question 20 asked respondents to indicate how frequently elected and appointed officials refer to the comprehensive plan when making decisions on development petitions. Overall, respondents reported that more than half of plan commissions and boards of zoning appeals (BZA) frequently use comprehensive plans in decision making (see Table 20) and that three-quarters of plan commissions and BZAs use comprehensive plans at least sometimes. Respondents also reported more than three-quarters of legislative bodies refer to their comprehensive plan at least sometimes.

Table 20: Use of comprehensive plan by local officials (Question 20)

	County council president	County commissioner	Mayors	Town council member	Municipal and county officials
Plan Commission					
Frequently	53%	63%	68%	51%	59%
Sometimes	20%	17%	20%	26%	21%
Never	9%	6%	2%	6%	6%
Don't know/not applicable	18%	14%	10%	17%	15%
BZA					
Frequently	47%	62%	63%	47%	55%
Sometimes	27%	15%	25%	24%	22%
Never	7%	8%	2%	8%	7%
Don't know/not applicable	20%	15%	10%	20%	17%
Legislative Body					
Frequently	33%	49%	39%	42%	43%
Sometimes	28%	28%	45%	33%	33%
Never	21%	9%	4%	8%	9%
Don't know/not applicable	18%	15%	12%	17%	15%

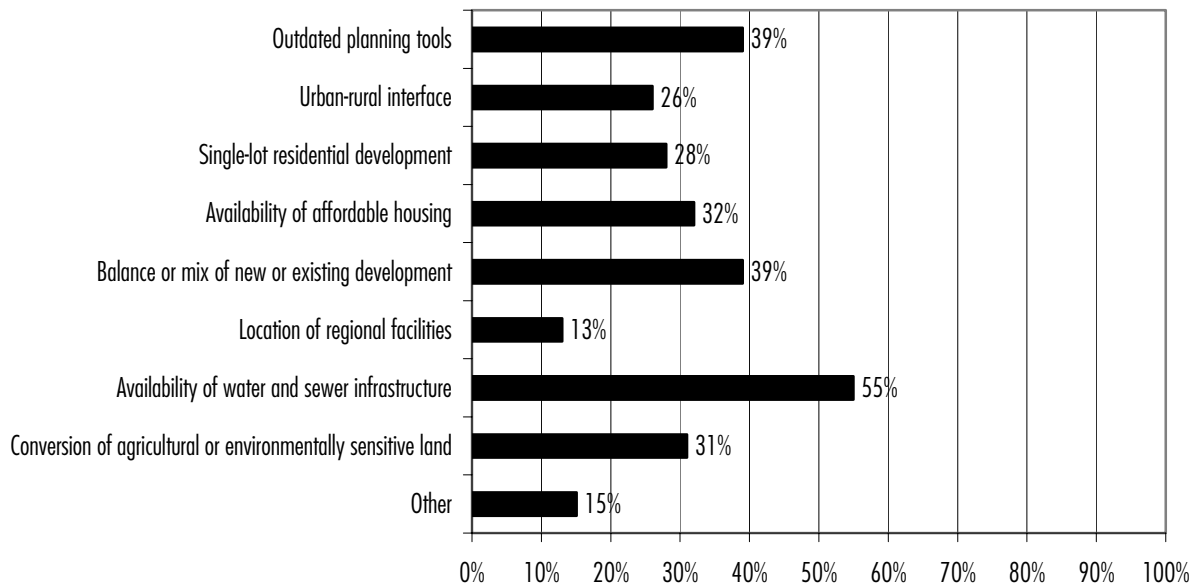
The Indiana Geographic Information System Initiative (INGISI) currently is working to develop common standards for local governments that implement geographic information systems (GIS). The ILRC has contracted for a more complete inventory of local government GIS systems in the state. This inventory is expected to be completed by mid-2003. Question 21 asked officials about the status of GIS in each local government. County council presidents, county commissioners, and mayors reported most often having the most knowledge about GIS activities (see Table 21). These three groups of officeholders also indicated having implemented or considering implementing GIS most often.

Table 21: Status of GIS in local governments (Question 21)

	Our local government has implemented GIS	Our local government is considering purchasing a GIS system	Our local government does not have a GIS system and is not considering one	Don't know
County council presidents	40%	29%	19%	13%
County commissioners	59%	31%	6%	4%
Mayor	43%	27%	20%	10%
Town council presidents	12%	5%	33%	50%
Township trustees	12%	6%	21%	61%
School board presidents	9%	5%	2%	84%
All local officials	30%	17%	17%	35%

In Question 22, officials were asked to rank the three greatest planning challenges in their communities. The responses provided most frequently as first, second, or third choice are shown in Table 22. *Availability of water and sewer infrastructure* was chosen most often by all groups of officials representing governments that have local planning authority. Responses for this subset of officials varied on other issues. For example, mayors and town council members identified *availability of affordable housing* as one of the most challenging issues (53 and 37 percent, respectively), while county council presidents and county commissioners identified *conversion of agricultural or other environmentally sensitive lands* (42 and 41 percent, respectively). *Outdated planning tools* and *balance or mix of new or existing development* were chosen as among the most challenging by three out of four groups of officials. A complete listing of *other* responses appears in Appendix C.

Figure 14: Planning problems rated among top three (Question 22; n=385)



Source: Indiana Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations 2002

Table 22: Three most challenging planning issues (Question 22)

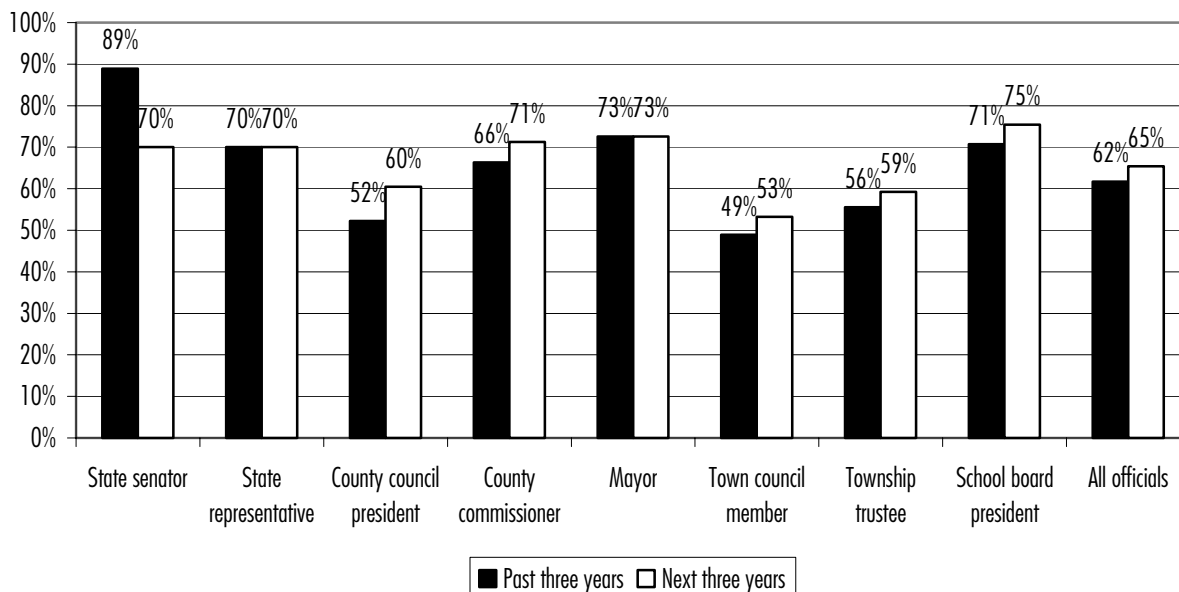
	Mayor (n=49)	Town council member (n=91)	County council president (n=43)	County commissioner (n=102)	Municipal and county officials (n=385)
Outdated planning tools	22%	34%	44%	48%	39%
Urban-rural interface	35%	21%	33%	25%	26%
Single-lot residential development	18%	32%	35%	27%	28%
Availability of affordable housing	53%	37%	23%	22%	32%
Balance or mix of new or existing development	49%	41%	33%	36%	39%
Location of regional facilities	14%	8%	14%	16%	13%
Availability of water and sewer infrastructure	53%	53%	49%	60%	55%
Conversion of agricultural or environmentally sensitive land	18%	21%	42%	41%	31%
Other	16%	15%	9%	17%	15%

Local Economic Development Tools

In late 2002, the IACIR hosted a series of forums that included brief discussions about how to address the decreased efficacy of economic development tools, such as tax increment financing (TIF) and urban enterprise zones (UEZs), that will occur as a result of the replacement of the local general fund levy for schools and the elimination of the inventory tax. Question 23 asked officials to indicate the relative importance of TIFs and UEZs in each community's economic development strategy over the past three years and to forecast the importance of these tools in the next three years.

Officials perceive TIF as an important tool for local economic development and predict that it will be increasingly important in the future. More than three-fifths of officials (62 percent) indicated that TIF has been somewhat or very important to their communities in the past three years (see Figure 15 and Table 23). A majority of each officeholder group, except town council members indicated that TIFs had been important. Sixty-five percent of officials and more than 50 percent in each officeholder group predicted that TIF would be important in the future. UEZs are not as widely used or considered as important an economic development tool as TIFs, in part, because UEZs apply to fewer jurisdictions as the result of stricter economic conditions requirements. Fewer than two-fifths of officials (37 percent) indicated that UEZs had been important to their economic development strategy in the previous three years (see Figure 16 and Table 24). Senators and representatives were the only groups for which 50 percent or more (75 and 50 percent, respectively) indicated UEZs as an important tool. A slightly higher percentage of officials (42 percent), however, identified UEZs as an important tool for the future.

Figure 15: Officials identifying tax increment financing (TIF) as an important local economic development tool (Question 23)

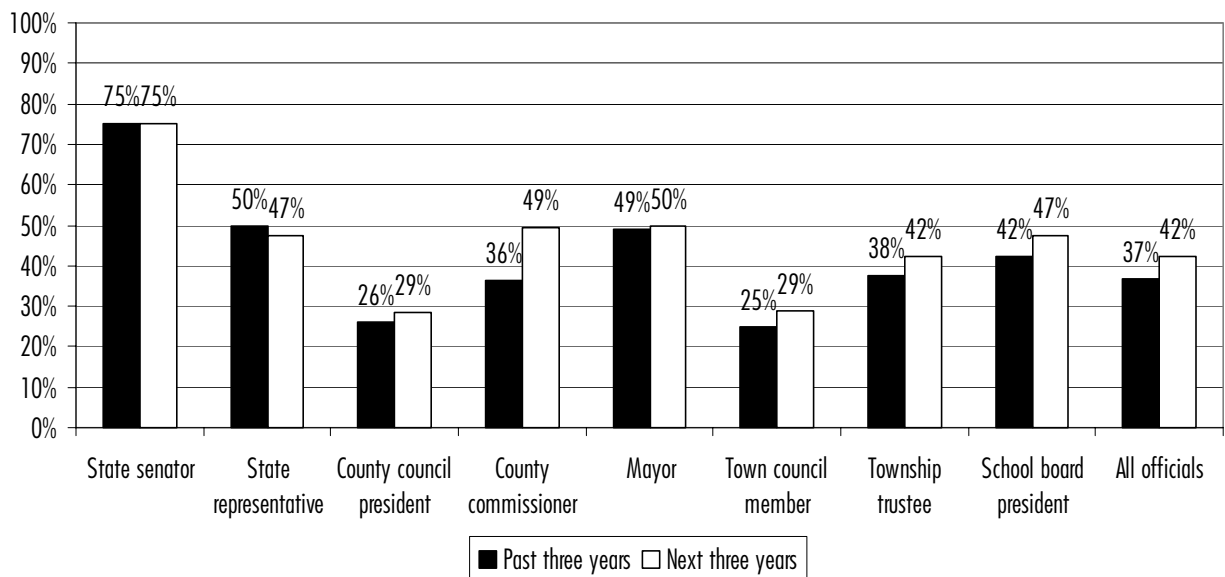


Source: Indiana Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations 2002

Table 23: Importance of tax increment financing (TIF) as an economic development tool (Question 23)

Past three years					
	Not Important at All	Somewhat Important	Neither Important or Unimportant	Somewhat Important	Very Important
State senator (n=9)	0%	0%	11%	44%	44%
State representative (n=20)	5%	0%	25%	25%	45%
County council president (n=44)	23%	7%	18%	34%	18%
County commissioner (n=101)	17%	4%	13%	39%	28%
Mayor (n=51)	8%	12%	8%	31%	41%
Town council member (n=94)	26%	10%	16%	18%	31%
Township trustee (n=54)	24%	2%	19%	30%	26%
School board president (n=58)	22%	0%	7%	43%	28%
All officials (n=431)	19%	5%	14%	32%	30%
Next three years					
	Not Important at All	Somewhat Important	Neither Important or Unimportant	Somewhat Important	Very Important
State senator (n=10)	10%	0%	20%	40%	30%
State representative (n=20)	5%	10%	15%	35%	35%
County council president (n=43)	9%	12%	19%	40%	21%
County commissioner (n=101)	14%	3%	12%	41%	31%
Mayor (n=51)	10%	4%	14%	18%	55%
Town council member (n=92)	21%	9%	17%	21%	33%
Township trustee (n=54)	22%	7%	11%	28%	31%
School board president (n=57)	18%	2%	5%	53%	23%
All officials (n=428)	15%	6%	13%	33%	32%

Figure 16: Importance of urban enterprise zones (UEZs) as a local economic development tool (Question 23)



Source: Indiana Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations 2002

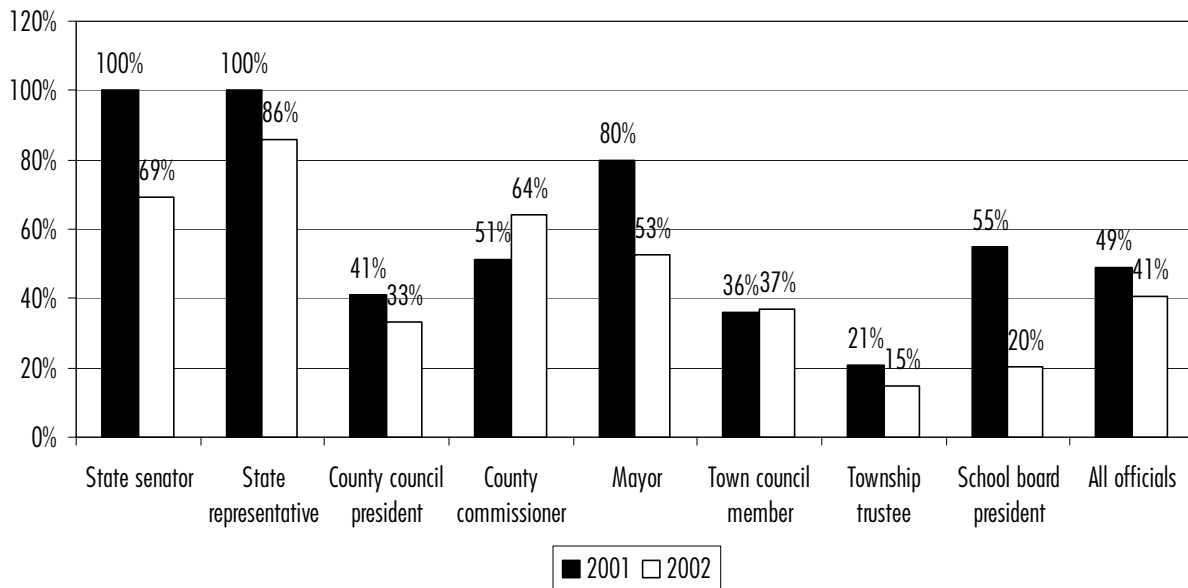
Table 24: Importance of urban enterprise zones (UEZs) as an economic development tool (Question 23)

Past three years					
	Not important at all	Somewhat important	Neither important or unimportant	Somewhat important	Very important
State senator (n=8)	13%	0%	13%	38%	38%
State representative (n=20)	20%	0%	30%	25%	25%
County council president (n=42)	38%	2%	33%	21%	5%
County commissioner (n=96)	29%	8%	26%	29%	7%
Mayor (n=49)	33%	4%	14%	35%	14%
Town council member (n=89)	40%	7%	28%	12%	12%
Township trustee (n=53)	28%	6%	28%	23%	15%
School board president (n=57)	40%	2%	16%	30%	12%
All officials (n=414)	34%	5%	25%	25%	12%
Next three years					
	Not important at all	Somewhat important	Neither important or unimportant	Somewhat important	Very important
State senator (n=8)	13%	0%	13%	38%	38%
State representative (n=19)	21%	11%	21%	26%	21%
County council president (n=42)	21%	7%	43%	17%	12%
County commissioner (n=93)	26%	5%	19%	32%	17%
Mayor (n=50)	26%	4%	20%	24%	26%
Town council member (n=87)	32%	5%	34%	17%	11%
Township trustee (n=52)	29%	6%	23%	31%	12%
School board president (n=55)	31%	7%	15%	31%	16%
All officials (n=406)	27%	6%	25%	26%	16%

E-Mail Communications

Question 24 asked officials whether they have an e-mail account for government business. State representatives (86 percent), state senators (69 percent), and county commissioners (64 percent) reported having this resource most often (see Figure 17). Only a very small proportion of township trustees (15 percent) and school board presidents (20 percent) reported having e-mail accounts for government business. All groups, except county commissioners and town council members, reported less availability of e-mail in 2002 than in 2001. This change likely indicates that the use of e-mail varies widely among and within local governments.

Figure 17: Officials with e-mail accounts (Question 24; n=478)



Source: Indiana Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations

Other Issues

Question 25 allowed officials to make additional comments about intergovernmental issues in Indiana. Several respondents wrote in responses to a number of other questions. The complete set of these comments is provided in Appendix D. Unless comments indicate a specific question, they were provided in response to Question 25.

While the issues addressed in this form varied widely, a number of issues were mentioned several times, including a growing number of unfunded mandates, the need for fiscal flexibility and more financial resources generally, and concerns about the distribution of Build Indiana and other gambling funds.

Conclusions

The 2002 survey results reflect increased concern among local officials about an array of broad issues including recession, unemployment, and the rising costs of health care. Fewer officials say they are confident about the future, and more officials believe that conditions are stable or declining rather than improving. Analyses of the trends in survey responses over time show increasing concern about broad economic concerns and somewhat less concern over infrastructure and other bread and butter issues that historically have been the focus of much of local and state government (see Table 25).

In 2002, for example, respondents identified the *cost of health services* and *overall economic conditions* as a current problem. Along with unemployment, respondents identified the *cost of health services* and *overall economic conditions* as the top three conditions that had deteriorated most in both the previous year and the previous five years, and as the top three conditions most important to work on during the next two years. In 2001, in response to the same questions, respondents expressed concern about a larger set of narrower issues, such as *roads and streets*, *traffic*, *sewers*, and *drug and alcohol abuse*. Similarly, in 1999, respondents were concerned about narrower issues: *infrastructure*, *affordable housing*, *cable TV rates*, and *youth crime*. This consistency in responses across questions was new in 2002, and it may reflect deep, pervasive concerns about the state of the nation's economy and the uncertainty associated with the war on terrorism.

Although the 2002 survey can be distinguished from previous surveys by the greater focus of respondents on broad issues that confront the nation as a whole, several issues have been identified consistently since 1999 (see Table 25). These issues include the economy and employment, health care, road and sewer infrastructure, drug and alcohol abuse, affordable housing, and K-12 education. Concern about the economy has waxed and waned over time. In 1999, officials chose economic conditions among the issues most important to work on at a time when they also identified the economy as having improved in the previous five years. In 2001, unemployment was identified most frequently as one of the most deteriorated conditions in the previous year. In 2002, officials again indicated that economic conditions and unemployment were deteriorating and were among the most important issues to work on in the short term.

Also since 1999, local officials have consistently expressed concerns about road and street and sewer infrastructure. Officials' responses indicate a variety of circumstances experienced by Indiana communities with respect to the condition of infrastructure, particularly roads and streets. In 2002, some officials perceived that their roads and streets had improved over the previous year (19 percent), while others perceived that they were declining (29 percent). Despite the variation, officials continue to identify roads and streets and sewer infrastructure as most important to work on. When asked specifically about capital improvements in the current survey, officials chose roads and sewer infrastructure as the most needed capital improvements in their communities (36 and 27 percent, respectively). Similarly, the availability of adequate water and sewer infrastructure was identified by all groups of officeholders as the most important planning problem facing their communities.

Like state and local governments across the nation, elected officials in Indiana face increasingly more complex institutional arrangements as they seek to provide public services for their citizens. Significant national attention has been given to the role of faith-based organizations in providing education and social services. Consistent with this changing environment, nonprofit organizations in Indiana have assumed an increasing role in providing public programming. In 2002, elected officials reported overwhelmingly (95 percent) that they work with nonprofit organizations to provide government services at least some of the time and that many types of nonprofit organizations are *essential* or *very important* to their communities. Brownfields redevelopment is one example from the survey of shared roles and responsibilities. About two-fifths of officials reported that their local governments' redevelopment activities were shared by

private sector or nonprofit organizations. Nonprofits have recently been granted the ability to apply directly for federal brownfields funding.

Shifts in relationships and responsibilities, however, can create conflict. More than half of officials reported their their local governments' goals and activities conflict with those of nonprofits at least some of the time.

Local governments face significant fiscal and economic uncertainty in the near future as a result of property tax reassessment, tax restructuring, and budget shortfalls. As suggested by the survey, many local governments are planning for potential delays in property tax disbursement in the coming year. Some respondents confirm that they have funding reserves; others indicate that they will manage by borrowing funds to cover the anticipated shortfalls.

Local officials also face reduced efficacy of current local economic development tools (tax increment financing, tax abatement, and urban enterprise zones) as a result of tax restructuring. Many county officials are considering whether to repeal the inventory tax early and raise their local county economic development income taxes. Communities also are looking for creative ways to fund roads and streets in light of reduced state and federal intergovernmental transfers.

In sum, state and local governments face a changing institutional and economic environment. In light of these changes, Indiana governments must develop new skills to manage changing intergovernmental arrangements as well as relationships with nongovernmental partners. Also important will be the ability to maintain a consistent set of financial resources to support the provision of public services.

Table 25: Community conditions chosen most often as improving, deteriorating, or as important to work on by survey year

	Major or moderate problem	Improved over the last year	Deteriorated over the last year	Most improved over the last 5 years	Most deteriorated over the Last 5 years	Most Important to work on over the next two years
2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost of health services (91%) • Drug and alcohol abuse (85%) • Overall economic conditions (85%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parks and recreation (22%) • Sewer (21%) • Roads and streets (19%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall economic conditions (59%) • Cost of health services (54%) • Unemployment (53%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parks and recreation (18%) • K-12 education (16%) • Availability of health services (16%) • Roads and streets (16%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost of health services (38%) • Overall economic conditions (24%) • Unemployment (23%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost of health services (26%) • Overall economic conditions (22%) • Unemployment (21%)
2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drug and alcohol abuse (83%) • Cost/availability of health services (68%) • Unemployment (62%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police-community relations (43%) • Parks and recreation (40%) • Amount of development (37%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traffic (51%) • Unemployment (48%) • Roads and streets (37%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parks and recreation (25%) • K-12 education (24%) • Police-community relations (21%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traffic (26%) • Roads and streets (23%) • Drug and alcohol abuse (18%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roads and streets (27%) • Sewer (20%) • Traffic (18%)
1999*		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic conditions (50%) • Parks and open space (50%) • Police-community relations (49%) • Infrastructure (49%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cable TV rates (61%) • Youth crime (29%) • Substance abuse (26%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic conditions (38%) • Infrastructure (30%) • Unemployment (27%) • Police-community relations (27%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cable TV rates (29%) • Substance abuse (25%) • Youth crime (25%) • Affordable housing (25%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure (30%) • Economic conditions (25%) • Affordable housing (24%)

* The question regarding the current status of conditions as problems first appeared in the 2001 survey.

Appendix A

Complete Methodology

Complete Methodology

The survey process included four steps: development of the questionnaire, selection of sample populations, administration of the survey, and coding and analysis of the results.

Questionnaire Development

The questionnaire was developed using the four previous questionnaires as a basis. A few questions were repeated to allow comparisons over time. Commission staff consulted with IACIR members, the Indiana Land Resources Council, the Indiana Development Finance Authority, and the Indiana Department of Environmental Management regarding current issues for inclusion in the 2002 survey. The survey instrument is provided in Appendix B.

Selection of Sample Populations

The survey was administered to 1,404 officeholders. The sample population included all members of the Indiana General Assembly, mayors, county council presidents, county commissioners, and school board presidents. The sample also included a member of each town council for towns with a population of 500 or more persons and two randomly selected township trustees from each county. Names and addresses of the various officeholders were obtained using printed directories (legislators and school board presidents) 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 according to procedures recommended by Dillman.¹ Cover letters explaining the purpose of the survey, the questionnaires, and business reply envelopes were sent on September 9, 2002. Follow-up postcards were sent on September 16, 2002. All officials who had not responded were sent a letter and replacement questionnaire on October 7, 2002.

Coding and Analysis

Respondents returned all questionnaires to the Center for Urban Policy and the Environment, staff to the IACIR. Surveys received by mid-December were coded in SPSS® (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) and checked for accuracy. Staff completed all analyses using statistical routines in this program.

Some respondents chose to answer only a portion of the survey questions. In order to account for non-responses to particular questions and questions addressed to specific types of officeholders, the number of responses is provided with the table or figure for each questions.

¹ Dillman, Don A. (1999). *Mail and Internet telephone surveys: the tailored design method*. New York: Wiley.

Appendix B

Survey Questionnaire



INTERGOVERNMENTAL ISSUES IN INDIANA 2002

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 relationship between governments in the state. The IACIR seeks your opinions on the issues presented in the survey. Please feel free to consult others within your local government if you are unsure about the correct response to particular questions.

1. What office do you hold?
 - Senator
 - Representative
 - County Council President
 - County Commission President
 - Mayor
 - Town Councilor
 - Township Trustee
 - School Board President
 - Other (specify) _____
2. 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

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

CONDITION	CURRENT STATUS OF CONDITION			CHANGE IN CONDITION SINCE LAST YEAR		
	<u>Major Problem</u>	<u>Moderate Problem</u>	<u>Minor or No Problem</u>	<u>Improved</u>	<u>Worsened</u>	<u>No Change</u>
HEALTH						
Cost of Health Services	2	1	0	2	1	0
Availability of Health Services	2	1	0	2	1	0
Drug and Alcohol Abuse	2	1	0	2	1	0
Care for the Elderly	2	1	0	2	1	0
PUBLIC SAFETY						
Police-Community Relations	2	1	0	2	1	0
Violent Crime	2	1	0	2	1	0
Youth Violence and Crime	2	1	0	2	1	0
ECONOMICS						
Overall Economic Conditions	2	1	0	2	1	0
Unemployment	2	1	0	2	1	0
Workforce Training	2	1	0	2	1	0
Workforce Retraining	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
Quality Affordable Housing	2	1	0	2	1	0
Open space	2	1	0	2	1	0
Brownfields	2	1	0	2	1	0

CONDITION	CURRENT STATUS OF CONDITION			CHANGE IN CONDITION SINCE LAST YEAR		
	<u>Major Problem</u>	<u>Moderate Problem</u>	<u>Minor or No Problem</u>	<u>Improved</u>	<u>Worsened</u>	<u>No Change</u>
LOCAL SERVICES						
K-12 Education	2	1	0	2	1	0
Drinking Water	2	1	0	2	1	0
Sewer	2	1	0	2	1	0
Roads and Streets	2	1	0	2	1	0
High-speed Internet Access	2	1	0	2	1	0
Telephone	2	1	0	2	1	0
Cellular Telephone	2	1	0	2	1	0
Parks and Recreation	2	1	0	2	1	0
Solid Waste Management	2	1	0	2	1	0
Cable TV	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	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
Community Involvement	2	1	0	2	1	0

4. Of the specific conditions listed in question 3, which three deteriorated most in your community during the past five years?
- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
5. Of the specific conditions listed in question 3, which three have improved the most in your community during the past five years?
- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
6. Of the specific conditions listed in question 3, which three will be the most important to address during the next two years?
- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
7. Since the last IACIR survey in mid-2001, Hoosiers have faced a number of significant events, including the tragedy of September 11, an economic recession, a war, a series of stock market scandals, and a state fiscal crisis. In response to these events, how have residents in your community displayed increased civic-mindedness or community involvement? Check all that apply .
- Increased interest in politics
 - Increased displays of patriotism
 - Increased volunteerism
 - Increased attendance at public meetings
 - Increased participation in local civic organizations
 - Increased church attendance
 - No evidence of increased civic-mindedness or community involvement

8. FOR COUNTY OFFICIALS ONL Y: HB 1001 (ss) provides that the state inventory tax will be eliminated in five years. It also allows counties to impose an additional county economic development income tax (CEDIT) in order to eliminate the inventory tax within the county sooner than five years. The revenue from the additional CEDIT must be used to provide additional homestead credits that offset the effects of this reduced assessed value on homeowners.

a. Please indicate which county income taxes your county has adopted.

- County Option Income Tax (COIT)
- County Adjusted Gross Income Tax (CAGIT)
- County Economic Development Income Tax (CEDIT)
- My county has not adopted any county income taxes.

b. How likely do you think it is that your county (or your county tax council) will adopt a new or additional CEDIT tax in order to eliminate the inventory tax in your county?

- Very likely
- Somewhat likely
- Somewhat unlikely
- Very unlikely
- More information is needed to make an informed decision
- Not applicable/don't know

9. Many counties will not complete their reassessments until late in 2002 or early 2003. This may cause tax bills to be mailed late and tax collections and distributions to local governments to be delayed. Tax bills usually are paid in two installments, May 10 and November 10. Local governments may need to develop contingency plans based on the projected date of completion of reassessment in their counties.

If the May 10 due date for property tax payments is moved back in your county, what action will your local government take?

- My local government will borrow money.
- My local government has enough in reserve to continue for one or two months.
- My local government has not considered this possibility.
- Other (specify) _____

10. Nonprofit organizations are private, incorporated organizations that are exempt from federal and state corporate taxes. Examples include Red Cross, Boy Scouts, United Way, art museums, historical societies, and churches. These organizations play a variety of roles in Indiana communities.

Please rate the importance of the following types of nonprofit organizations for your community. Consider organizations that are located in your community or serve your community.

	<u>Essential</u>	<u>Very Important</u>	<u>Not Very Important</u>	<u>Irrelevant</u>	<u>Creates or Makes Problems Worse</u>	<u>Not Applicable/ Don't know</u>
Human Services <i>(employment, crime/safety, housing, recreation, youth, family, elderly)</i>	5	4	3	2	1	0
Public, Societal Benefit <i>(neighborhood groups, civil rights, Kiwanis, United Way, foundations)</i>	5	4	3	2	1	0
Religious or Spiritual <i>(worship, promotion of religion)</i>	5	4	3	2	1	0
Arts, Culture, and Humanities	5	4	3	2	1	0
Education	5	4	3	2	1	0
Environment and Animals <i>(humane societies, zoos, sanctuaries)</i>	5	4	3	2	1	0
International, Foreign Affairs	5	4	3	2	1	0
Mutual/Membership Benefit <i>(group insurance, pension, and benefit plans; cemetery companies)</i>	5	4	3	2	1	0

11. When providing government programs and services, how often does your local government collaborate with nonprofit organizations? -
- Often work together
 - Sometimes work together
 - Never work together
 - Don't know
12. How often does your local government find itself in conflict with the goals and activities of nonprofit organizations located in or serving your community? -
- Often in conflict
 - Sometimes in conflict
 - Never in conflict
 - Don't know
13. Brownfields have received increasing attention at all levels of government. Please indicate your level of understanding of the issue and the available solutions.
- I have no knowledge
 - I understand the basic issue only.
 - I understand the issue and available solutions.
 - I have participated in the redevelopment of a brownfield in my community.
14. FOR MUNICIPAL AND COUNTY OFFICIALS ONLY: 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, and vacant land. Based on the above definition and examples, please estimate the number of brownfield sites that you have in your political jurisdiction. -
- 0
 - Between 1 and 10
 - Between 11 and 25
 - Between 26 and 50
 - Between 51 and 100
 - Over 100
 - Don't know

15. FOR MUNICIPAL AND COUNTY OFFICIALS ONLY: Please estimate the number of brownfield sites that have been successfully redeveloped into productive properties in your political subdivision in the past three years_____.

IF RESPONSE IS "0" OR "UNKNOWN", SKIP TO QUESTION 17.

16. FOR MUNICIPAL AND COUNTY OFFICIALS ONLY: For the brownfield projects indicated in Question 15, which of the following played a role(s) in the local redevelopment process. Check all that apply .

- Local government
- Private developer
- Community organization/Not-for-profit
- Other (specify) _____

17. Please indicate which one capital investment is needed most in your community .

- Jail/Prison
- Elementary school(s)
- Middle or high school(s)
- Road infrastructure
- Water infrastructure
- Sewer infrastructure
- Transit infrastructure
- Other (specify) _____

18. FOR MUNICIPAL AND COUNTY OFFICIALS ONLY: Budget decisions at the national and state levels will reduce significantly the availability of intergovernmental transfers to fund road projects in the next few years. How do you plan to address your community's needs for street and road construction and maintenance over the next three years? Check all that apply .

- Use local general funds
- Use local option income tax funds (COIT/CAGIT/CEDIT)
- Use wheel tax funds
- Use tax increment financing (TIF)
- Apply for Build Indiana funds
- Apply for federal grant funds such as TEA-21
- Use debt (bonding)
- Defer a portion or all construction and maintenance
- Postpone or forgo other planned community projects
- Other (specify) _____

19. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the number of Hispanics living in Indiana more than doubled between 1990 and 2000 (98,788 to 214,536). In light of the changing demographics in the state, which community services have been modified to address the needs of Spanish speakers? Check all that apply .

- Housing and community development
- Police
- Courts
- Small business development
- K-12 education
- Recreation
- Employment services
- Health care services
- Public transportation
- Child care services
- Voter services

20. FOR MUNICIPAL AND COUNTY OFFICIALS ONLY: Please indicate how often the following elected and appointed officials refer to the comprehensive plan when making decisions on development petitions.

	Frequently refer to <u>plan</u>	Sometimes refer to <u>plan</u>	Never refer to <u>plan</u>	Not Applicable/ <u>Don't know</u>
Plan Commission	3	2	1	0
Board of Zoning Appeals	3	2	1	0
Local legislative body	3	2	1	0

21. The Indiana Geographic Information System Initiative (INGISI) is currently working to develop common standards for local governments that implement a Geographic Information System (GIS).

What is the current status of GIS in your local government?

- Our local government has implemented GIS.
- Our local government is considering purchasing a GIS system.
- Our local government does not have a GIS and is not considering purchasing one.
- Don't know

22. Which of the following are the greatest planning challenges in your community?
Please rank the top 3 challenges—1 being the most challenging.

- ___ Outdated planning tools (comprehensive plan, zoning ordinance, or subdivision regulations)
- ___ Urban-rural interface
- ___ Single-lot residential development
- ___ Availability of affordable housing
- ___ Balance or mix of new or existing development
- ___ Location of regional facilities such as power plants, landfills, etc.
- ___ Availability of water and sewer infrastructure
- ___ Conversion of agricultural or environmentally sensitive land
- ___ Other (specify) _____

23. Changes adopted by the Indiana General Assembly recently regarding the replacement of property taxes for schools and the elimination of the inventory tax will affect the utility of selected local economic development tools.

a. Please indicate the relative importance of the following tools in your community's economic development strategy over the last three years.

	<u>Very important</u>	<u>Somewhat important</u>	<u>Neither important nor unimportant</u>	<u>Somewhat unimportant</u>	<u>Not important at all</u>
Urban Enterprise Zones	5	4	3	2	1
Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Districts	5	4	3	2	1

b. Please forecast the importance of these tools to your community's economic development strategy for the next three years.

	<u>Very important</u>	<u>Somewhat important</u>	<u>Neither important nor unimportant</u>	<u>Somewhat unimportant</u>	<u>Not important at all</u>
Urban Enterprise Zones	5	4	3	2	1
Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Districts	5	4	3	2	1

24. Do you have an e-mail account for government business?

Yes

No

25. Please use this space or attach additional pages to make any other comments about issues affecting intergovernmental relations in Indiana.



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

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Please return the completed questionnaire in the enclosed postage-paid envelope.

Appendix C
Other Responses

Other Responses

Questions 9, 16, 17, 18, and 22 offered respondents the opportunity to identify *other* responses.

Other responses to “If the May 10 due date for property tax payments is moved back in your county, what action will your local government take?” (Question 9)

- Unsure (8)
- Will mail our tax statements on time (4)
- Reassessment delay is caused by state actions—state should be responsible for all funding shortfalls (2)
- Will borrow money and cut expenditures
- Will be a total hardship to all counties
- We may have enough in reserve. We will review interim financing options post election and have alternative plans in place.
- We have some funding in reserve, but I don't know how long we can get by with it
- We can also borrow from community development fund within our city and pay back with no interest
- Shut down
- School will sell tax anticipation warrants
- School corporations may also need to borrow money
- Public has not been warned
- Paying the school districts late with interest costs would be a huge fiscal disaster. Where was Governor when we needed some leadership?
- It would be up to the county
- Have the county give a 75% of estimate and/or 75% of last year's tax
- Go bankrupt
- Borrow riverboat funds
- Borrow from utilities
- Borrow and reserve

Other responses to “FOR MUNICIPAL AND COUNTY OFFICIALS ONLY: For the brownfield projects indicated in Question 15, which of the following played a role(s) in the local redevelopment process.” (Question 16)

- State/IDEM (3)
- Federal Governmentt (IDEA/EPA) (2)
- School board
- Movement of town business area
- Local growth council
- Donors (citizen/corporate)
- The owners

Other responses to “Please indicate which one capital investment is needed most in your community.” (Question 17)

- Juvenile justice facility (4)
- Stormwater Drainage (3)

- High-speed Internet (3)
- Fire departments (3)
- Work-release/Minimum Security Facility
- We need better access to I-65
- Too many empty buildings and houses
- Senior citizen/handicapped housing
- Rural area
- Residential and commercial rehabilitation
- Old buildings tore down
- New fire and police building
- More space for county workers/agencies
- New community center
- Incentives to use old buildings through tax structure
- Housing developments
- Handicap accessibility on sidewalks
- Grocery store
- Government building
- Economic development
- Drainage/rerouting of groundwater
- Downtown revitalization
- Develop retail community
- Bridge
- Better planning (joining of county, local, municipal)
- Beach erosion and emergency exit
- Attracting business to community

Other responses to “How do you plan to address your community’s needs for street and road construction and maintenance over the next three years?” (Question 18)

- Use riverboat money, if necessary (8)
- Use of regular local road and street funds from state gasoline tax (4)
- Will do work with our own staff (2)
- Will only spend what the state gives us
- We have set aside funds for construction
- Motor vehicle highway funds
- Street programs may be out
- Lobby for a gas tax increase of 8-10 cents
- Let them fall apart
- How can we do anything without funding? We are a very poor county struggling now!
- Had hoped to use riverboat revenue sharing but state has tied our hands in usage
- Food & beverage tax
- Distressed road fund
- Would prefer a local option to increase revenue
- Attempt to pass a wheel tax
- Does not apply

“Other” responses to “Which of the following are the greatest planning challenges in your community?” (Question 22)

- Traffic planning (3)
- Economic development (3)
- Industrial development (3)
- Downtown decay or redevelopment (2)
- World class education system (2)
- Resistance of community (2)
- New roads and improvement of existing roads (3)
- Educational facilities (2)
- Building jail (2)
- Brownfields development and usage, especially industrial facilities (2)
- Too much residential growth without light industrial to balance residential property tax burden
- Telecommunications
- State law interference
- Retaining industrial property
- Retail community
- Public transportation
- Our community of 450 people has no challenges as we are not going to grow or change
- No problem
- No plan
- New highway area land use
- Money for road repair and maintenance
- Median housing cost is 145K to 250K
- Tax-exempt government land
- Fire protection
- Cost of health services
- Beach erosion and emergency exit
- Stormwater
- Lack of progressive planning tools
- Educating public on new planning ordinance
- Clean abandoned property
- Agreement among residents as to pace of development and cost for services
- Working with home-based occupations
- Viable industrial or business base
- Tax system that rewards sprawl
- Sprawl permitted under state law
- Retaining present businesses
- More community interest in leadership positions
- Loss of farmland to modular homes that are then abandoned
- Legal drain reconstruction
- Lack of workforce
- Desire of current residents to keep others out!
- Community input and consensus
- Clean up small towns
- Amish expansion
- Aesthetics of development

Appendix D
Additional Comments
(Question 25)

Additional Comments (Question 25)

Office	Comment
Representative	I don't always like the phrasing of the choices in the survey. It seems to be difficult to design a survey to produce meaningful data. Now units of local government renew unfunded mandated action or even mandated action by the state or federal government.
Representative	How do we make up educational funding lost by losing the school levy of 60% off the property tax roles? What type of incentives for the future should be used by Urban Enterprise Zones to encourage downtown investment and recruitment and retention of businesses in inner-city areas? How do we handle reassessment rules for new assessors and make sure the easiest methods are used to assess for experienced assessors?
Representative	Question 14: Underutilized properties should not be defined as a brownfield; it diminishes the importance.
County council president	The state should not mandate counties to fund certain projects that the counties cannot afford!
County council president	State regulations mandating wage increases are funded by counties. State is indifferent to help county government fund its projects and expenses
County council president	Legislature makes too many mandates of local government with no monies to pay for the mandates. Far too many restrictions placed on local governments - wage scale for new projects too restrictive.
County council president	Lack of municipal ability to annex and desire to annex only commercial and industrial projects has frozen population growth in the cities. Growth near one of our communities is in the county where it is cheaper to buy, build, and live. This dynamic continues and cities get weaker financially while being required to provide more services to a population growing less affluent. The result is weaker cities, counties that are expected to provide municipal services by their citizens and a slow loss of white and gold collar jobs from Indiana. The kids and the wealthy are leaving.
County council president	Please work on state passing unfunded mandates. Thank you. We are tired of cost dumping onto local government.
County council president	May not be the time or place but as will be evidenced by your survey, the economy of our state is one of the most important issues facing our future welfare of our citizens. Those in power should consider that fiscally healthy local governments affect our total economy. Simply put, vested interests or personal indebtedness (paybacks) should take a backseat to the needs as best fits the majority of our citizens (i.e. the I-69 route should be heavily weighted for its cost factor - environmental factor and what best fits the needs and wants of the majority of those affected. For Indiana to subsidize the costs at this time is ludicrous.
County council president	Very disgusted with repeal of inventory tax.
County council president	The state government officials who hold elected office should be replaced. The reassessment is a mess. Stop! The state roads and bridges are inadequate to handle the traffic (i.e., I-80-94)! The emission control effort should be all inclusive or not at all. Stop legislators from spending state money to bail out Marion County.
County council president	We are very poor. The state tax structure in '72 was at a level that makes us struggle to meet even mandates! We will not have enough money to get through 2002 and cannot fund a 2003 budget to meet our needs. Yet we get things like reassessment, which delays funding and causes us sleepless nights and angry citizens. We need government relief!
County council president	Too many items or things mandated for budget. Local council should have more say or vote in how to spend money. Property tax too high. Couples over 80-85 at home should have help on taxes. Insurance for health takes 2/3 of income from teachers' retirement.
County council president	Question 8: The state hasn't helped at all. It makes individuals pay. Not clear on how money can be used.
County council president	Question 20: Have no plans in land use at this time.
County commissioner	Counties are losing autonomy to Indianapolis because of growing dependency on water from Indianapolis coupled with too rapid housing development without concurrent commercial development. Voters are turned off - they see such low personal character in elected officials, and examples of ethical behavior, especially in financial conflicts of interest, they are disgusted.

County commissioner	A small community/county such as ours, does not receive enough funds for roads. Gasoline tax increase was not near enough for local roads and streets funding. We may have as many miles of roads to care for as larger counties, but not near the revenue! Being a rural county, if pickup trucks were counted the same as cars it would help our county a great deal! Being a small rural county, so many of these questions do not pertain to us!
County commissioner	Having been in county government budgeting process for the past twelve years, I have noticed it has been more difficult each year to fund budgets with a frozen levee. The legislature keeps adding costs to counties and do not provide the means for paying the additional costs. We recently adopted the CEDIT tax to do county road improvements and this year had to shift many county general expenses to CEDIT funds which took away from road improvements that should be done.
County commissioner	Of course, funding is probably the major issue facing all counties. With state and federal cuts, mandates, etc., it's a continuing struggle to provide a quality of life government officials would like for the citizens. We currently need a new jail - like many other counties - and are scrambling to find the funds necessary in order to comply w/ DOC regulations. City/county/state government entities should be able to work together more than they do. That's an on going issue in our area as well as others. Finally, a little more education for those holding offices should be available or, maybe even required to avoid apathy of some officials.
County commissioner	Reassessment should have been extended to avoid the financing burdens that might be placed on local governments. Need more economic development tools.
County commissioner	The Legislature passed law to distribute lottery money to county governments that don't have a riverboat. Then they put restrictions on what we can spend it on. I think we are smart enough to spend our money as we see fit! Every person I talk to wants to know, what the hell happened to a 2 billion dollar surplus! Every small town in our county has to spend all their money on IDEM mandates on sewer and water. People can't keep paying for higher and higher sewage and water bills! Any new law that is passed should be offset by taking two off the books! They have given police too much power. We are close to a police state!
County commissioner	We need an educated work force and managerial pool to attract business development - both new and expanding.
County commissioner	Too many mandates with no funding. Our county is seriously hurting financially, at the government level. We are to the point of having to lay off employees in all offices and some of these offices are already understaffed!!
County commissioner	One of the very major items facing local government is the costs of the legal system - yet you totally ignore the subject. Why?
County commissioner	We, as agents of the people, allow too many agencies to be created that have overlapping responsibilities. This problem creates a drain on our limited finances by funneling too much money into management of same overlapping agencies and not enough money is left for ACTUAL PRODUCTIVE RESULTS. An extreme waste of time and resources. We all pat ourselves on the back and say we are "doing good" and this justifies our need for more of that tax money (whether it be direct from the coffers or in the form of grants or endowments (which are created by tax deductible donations = lost taxes). All are a further drain and enlarging circle.
County commissioner	The main thing that would be the most beneficial to my county is the legislature's changing of the current 5% growth cap on our budget. Our county has been growing at over the 5% level for YEARS. This state statute needs to be changed!
County commissioner	State regulations on such things as the common wages hearings that counties and rural areas have to administer for any public project over \$150,000 is just one of the stupid practices. With the state definition of common wage we are told we can't use average wages of our independent contractors which is all we have in small rural communities, so we end up wasting tax money on the wage hearing plus \$10 to \$15 more per hour because we can't adopt our local average wage, on a \$300,000 project it costs us an extra \$20,000 to \$30,000 of the money.
County commissioner	The state mandating things for the local level to handle and no funds to back it up.
County commissioner	I think the greatest problem is the uncertain tax structure. This must be resolved soon! Reassessment costs too much; it should happen less often!
County commissioner	We need road funding, jobs, 2-year junior college. Keep the rest. NO MORE RULES AND REGULATIONS.

County commissioner	H.B. 1001 included riverboat revenue sharing dollars for Indiana municipalities without a riverboat. For my county this will mean more than \$100,000. That was good news until the details emerged. Counties, cities, and towns can only spend it for: property tax relief, water, sewer, and police/fire pensions. We don't operate water or sewer utilities and we have volunteer fire departments. It was very arrogant of the Indiana General Assembly to dictate the uses of the money. We need it for roadwork. This legislation needs to be revisited for the good of Indiana residents.
County commissioner	I believe that the biggest fiscal challenges for county governments across the state are in the areas of criminal justice, public safety and emergency services. Funding for courts, jails, probation, corrections, dispatch, and ambulance services (HINS), delinquents, and animal control are subject to rates at inflation far beyond the Consumer Price Index (CPI). We are presently undergoing a disintegration of services in these areas and have no funding mechanisms to address it.
County commissioner	Road Repair is very, very important.
County commissioner	Question 3: Did not mention animal control. Major public health problem.
County commissioner	Question 9: We may have enough in reserve. We will review interim financing options post election and have alternative plans in place.
County commissioner	Question 10: Animals are important but when you look at them beside human needs, they shouldn't be equal.
County commissioner	Question 19: The official language of the U.S. is English.
County commissioner	Reducing taxes at the state level and allowing for mandating increased local taxes is not the way to run the railroad!
County commissioner	Our biggest issues: 1. Old bridges slated for replacement that have gotten the attention of a preservation group. 2. Addition to jail for administration and 911. 3. Sewers for small communities. 4. Build Hoosier Heartland to bring more economic growth to county. 5. Increase of drug problem.
County commissioner	Question 3: Workforce training is a joke. Work ethic is the problem. Train workers after they have demonstrated the ability to show up willing to go to work for 6 months.
County commissioner	Question 10: YOU, "the state" have all but eliminated funding for services NOW provided by these organizations
County commissioner	Question 18: If you are starting NOW, you are too late!
County commissioner	Question 20: No plan at this time!
Mayor	Structure of local government, especially county government needs to model city/town government . . . More streamlined. One commissioner (Executive or Mayor of County). Three to five Councilors (legislative body). Mayors of third-class cities need the ability to appoint a controller just as 2nd class cities do. Regional consolidation of cities, towns and counties need to become possible through common fiscal analysis models to save the taxpayers money and eliminate duplication. 911, 311, 211 systems could assist with this.
Mayor	The large amount of tax-exempt property in our small community. Currently that amounts to \$50M. Our two largest employers pay no property taxes and our two largest apartment complexes were given tax-exempt status by the county and state. The owners entered into a PILOT (payment in lieu of taxes) and over 3 years have made one payment and yet, the city provides them the same services as those who do pay taxes. In addition, the state has granted tax-exempt status to at least 2 companies without checking with the city or schools to see what impact that would have. Revenues continue to dwindle as our costs to provide basic services increase and the tax limitations increase. If all of this doesn't stop we could be "out of business" as an independent municipality. And I have serious concerns about the re-assessment. I could write a book, but I hope this gives some idea of our situation.
Mayor	All government would operate more exactly if all politicians would, after elections, stop their political posturing and work in the best interest of the people they serve. Of course, this is only make-believe and will not happen.
Mayor	Most medium to small communities across Indiana are struggling to survive. It is very important to our economy that they do. Local officials must do all they can with available monies and manpower and depend on state and federal dollars only when it is essential. We have had to depend on local CEDIT tax dollars, TIF, state grants for downtown work and federal dollars for roadwork.

Mayor	IDEM is out of control!
Mayor	Question 19: The Spanish-speaking people need to learn to speak English. If this is done, other programs would need little or no change. If I went to Mexico, I would learn Spanish and not expect Mexico to change for me!
Mayor	Question 19: Our school system teaches English; this seems to work very well for our community.
Mayor	Question 6: We need a cross county highway NOW!
Mayor	Without state attention to economic development, we in Indiana cannot compete. Located near Michigan's Renaissance zone and Illinois's aggressive retention programs, we need more tools; we need tools that can be put on the table quickly (EDGE is difficult to use). Economic development work will help solve some of the other problems we experience.
Mayor	Question 22: We don't have any place to grow
Town council member	Our county needs I-69.
Town council member	The following applies to our county and our biggest municipality: 1) We are in a grow or die situation (towns, schools, etc.); 2) As we are dependent on agriculture, we are hurting as farms expand and number of farmers decline (probably less than 25 farm-only families in county); 3) Population has declined since 1970 . . . has most likely bottomed in past 10 years, as minute increase have started in the last 5 years; 4) Economy must find another base to replace agriculture; 5) This requires investment, which means higher taxes, which increases cost of living, which of course reduces the incentive to move to our biggest town; 6) We need population to increase, but to make it an attractive place to live, a viable business district and improved infrastructure are needed.
Town council member	Each year, it seems, that local governments are asked to "do more with less." From my perspective, state officials appear to make decisions in a vacuum. It is us (locally elected officials) who are on the firing line . . . Trying to improve and protect our communities with less funding. User fees are a "hard sell."
Town council member	It would be great to receive our tax dollars for the general budget in a much more timely fashion than after it has already been spent.
Town council member	We are a very rural farm community and have a single exit over a very high activity set of railroad tracks. We are also surrounded by national park land and Lake Michigan. Efforts to develop a plan to eliminate beach erosion due to industrial emissions into Lake Michigan have been thwarted by racial attitudes and unfounded fears. There has been an unwillingness to work with federal and state governments to provide increased beach access for public use partly due to the racial issues and partly because those parties who agreed to mitigate the erosion issues when the industries encroached on the lake, have failed or not done so since the 1970's. The emergency exit to the west of our town is eroded by the same sediment.
Town council member	Cooperation and communication needs to improve between officials of municipal governments and county officials. Evidence is very well documented that we are not planning with the same goals and objectives. Politics seems to hinder enlightened land use practices and sound economic development initiatives.
Town council member	A lot of this survey doesn't pertain to our small town. I think we need less government not more!
Town council member	Question 18: Won't get Build Indiana Funds so there is no use to apply; our town was awarded a grant we never received.
Town council member	Question 19: They should learn English!
Town council member	Question 19: None; let them speak English it is "our" language!
Town council member	Question 21: Our county government has a GIS system that includes our two largest municipalities
Town council member	Very, very few of these questions have any relevance to a town our size, and those that do - well I don't know the answer to. I work a full-time job and have a teenager. I am on the town Board because no other sensible person has volunteered for the job in the 12 years I've been on the Board.
Township trustee	We need government support for the few good jobs we have. Need glass factories to pick up production. Redo trade policies! Economic help for poor rural areas.

Township trustee	Unfortunately, the people making the laws under which we operate have little practical knowledge of what really goes on in the day to day operation. For instance, after delaying sending out personal property reassessment forms in March because the Legislature might change them at the last minute, no changes were made and forms sent out. Then after the taxpayers completed and returned their assessments in May, in July the Legislature changed the personal property assessment forms retroactively to March. This caused duplication of effort and waste of tax dollars.
Township trustee	I feel that many adverse problems will arise over TIF districts as taxes from that area are needed for other governmental needs rather than just enticement for business.
Township trustee	Rural areas are affected by few of the issues in this survey.
Township trustee	Farmland preservation measures must be placed high on priority with the Governor, on down to county planning commissions and commissioners. In Madison County they all want cheap housing in rural areas, not adjacent to existing towns, for out-of-county workers to live. We have a real mess and not one of above mentioned care! Check it out, I'm not alone.
Township trustee	If the state doesn't simplify the materials they put out to the counties and townships, become more consistent and timely with their material, it will become increasingly hard to find people to fill the office of Trustee/Assessor. Our term ends 12-31-02. No one has registered to run for the office.
Township trustee	We are a small rural farming community and very little of this survey has anything to do with us. The policing and infrastructure are conducted at the county level.
Township trustee	Question 22: We do very well without government planning!
Township trustee	Question 7: My township has always been outstanding as to civic-mindedness and all the items on the list.
Township trustee	Question 17: Doesn't apply to my township.
Township trustee	Question 19: More done on township level.
Township trustee	We are in a rural area. We are growing new homes because of our proximity to another local community. We have inadequate roads for this growth. Also, we can't get water in most areas - the cost is so expensive to homeowners.
Township trustee	Did you know that thanks to HB1001(ss) township assessors had to go back through their personal property books for no additional pay. That was a big burden on some township assessors. Did the General Assembly get paid for the special session? Who didn't inform the Governor that he should not sign the bill for personal property tax credit? But it should have been personal property inventor tax credit. If it had been looked at closely, the State would still have a surplus of funds.
Township trustee	1. We are seeing more working poor. We have single mothers working two jobs who have problems if a child has any extra expense (even graduation). 2. People who had been in jobs for 30+ years are losing theirs due to factory cutbacks of higher paid personnel, etc. 3. Small businesses going under due to economy. 4. Health care (prescriptions costing so much they can't afford it). This winter will be tough. We are a small farming community in an otherwise affluent county and seeing these struggles!
Township trustee	As trustee of the best township in the State, I believe our secret to getting along is the fact that the elected officials are interested in solving problems and not putting up their own little kingdoms.
School board president	The budget cuts, reassessment, and a dreadful error in our county tax statements are extremely critical to all government agencies - especially our school corporation.
School board president	Health care issues that have been part of negotiated labor packages for 2 or 3 decades are now causing many local government entities great hardships due to triple digit increases from the times they were first implemented.
School board president	School funding needs to be more than campaign talk.
School board president	State government appears to me to be incompetent and barely functional. The education funding formula for K-12 education is not equitable statewide, and the "solution" to the budget problem by delaying the promised payments to school corporations is ridiculous. And shifting more of the funding burden (See #23 above) to the state puts the schools at a greater exposure to similar decisions. I am appalled and disheartened with the "leadership" in this state.

School board president	The big problem in Indiana is the state mandating programs down to the local level then not funding the mandate! How can our school board be efficient with the total inefficiency of our state? We are attempting to establish a budget for 2003 with absolutely no state figures to rely on! Both IDEM and EPA are totally out of hand. It's not really the environment; it's "I've got to make my job look important." These two departments are destroying small businesses in Indiana under the guise of environmental concern!
School board president	Politicians using education for their "political stump" and then doing nothing to fund the words! Local government not having foresight or vision in facing the demands created in a growing community (local town board attempts to control growth by limiting the capacities of local utilities).
School board president	I have not seen any place personally where I thought that TIF districts were anything but disappointments to communities in the long run. What it does do is make school tax rates only go higher to make up for what they should be getting. That now goes to abate rents. When taxes go up and abatements run out, so do the businesses to a better place down the road where they can do the same thing over again. We get kids to educate and developments that go along with these TIF districts creations. The only thing gained is political numbers. Expenses outnumber the benefits by far. TIF districts are not assets! They're liabilities in the long run!
School board president	Most of this, as best I could tell, has little or nothing to do with the operation of schools other than its fiscal impact. I do not feel my expertise lends itself to this survey. The General Assembly and the Department of Education should cease mandatory unfunded programs. The State of Indiana should fully fund the programs it currently has mandated for Education rather than demanding more while at the same time reducing funds.
School board president	Need more funding for schools.
School board president	The cost of health insurance is really hurting small business in America. Our premiums have gone up 15% (min.) to 30% annually for almost 12 years. At the same time we have allowed more imports especially from China and undeveloped countries. This has forced us to "hold" our pricing for the last 8 years while trying to increase wages for our 105 employees. If we competed on an even playing field then I wouldn't complain. But we don't - Clear Air Act, OSHA, Workers Comp., etc. Minimum wage doesn't even come into play that much because of domestic competition for employees - which is fine.
School board president	Question 4: You can not add cost to elements risk. Get legal out of health care.
School board president	Question 23: I don't like TIF; it has been important but should not have been used
School board president	Indiana schools need money in order to operate and provide quality education to Indiana's young people. Please help our schools.
School board president	Question 19: Would prefer to see schools offer night/day classes to teach English - It would help Hispanics (and others) more in the long run



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