



Intergovernmental Issues in Indiana: 2003 IACIR Survey

by

Jamie Palmer
Planner/Policy Analyst
Center for Urban Policy and the Environment



Center for Urban Policy and the Environment

Indiana University Purdue University—Indianapolis
School of Public and Environmental Affairs

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342 North Senate Avenue
Indianapolis, IN 46204-1708

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-----------------------------------	--

IACIR is staffed by Indiana University Center for Urban Policy and the Environment

John L. Krauss, Director
Indiana Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations
342 North Senate Avenue
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204-1708
317-261-3006 or jkrauss@iupui.edu
<http://iacir.spea.iupui.edu/>

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**Director,
Indiana Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations**
John L. Krauss

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Author
Jamie Palmer

Technical Review and Editing

John L. Krauss
Sam Nunn
Marilyn Yurk

Layout
Debbie Wyeth

Data Entry and Analysis

Michele Canon
Marci Ackerhalt
Marie DiZazzo
Nichole Like
Tracy Minger
Elizabeth Oberfell
Brian Sedaca
Ty Simmons
Richard Wise
Gina Zanin

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Indiana Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations
c/o Center for Urban Policy and the Environment, Indiana University ~ School of Public and Environmental Affairs
342 North Senate Avenue, 3rd Floor, Indianapolis, Indiana 46204
(phone) 317.261.3000 (fax) 317.261.3050
<http://iacir.spea.iupui.edu>

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Executive Summary

Intergovernmental Issues in Indiana (2003) is the sixth 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 facing local governments. The 2003 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 37 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 directions their communities are heading.

Methods and Response Rate

IACIR administered the mail survey to 1,112 officeholders in the fall of 2003, including all members of the Indiana General Assembly, county council presidents, county commission presidents, mayors, and school board presidents. The commission also surveyed a randomly-selected member of each town council for towns over 1,000 in population, and two randomly-selected township trustees from each county. The effective response rate was 47 percent.

Findings

- **Officials show decreasing optimism about the future of communities**
Fewer than three-quarters of officials reported being optimistic about the future of their communities. This represents a further decline from the three previous surveys in 1999, 2001, and 2002 (82, 84, and 75 percent, respectively).
- **Communities experiencing deepening problems**
In 2003, *cost of health services, overall economic conditions, drug abuse, unemployment, and alcohol abuse* top the list of 17 conditions chosen by a majority of officials as *major* or *moderate* problems in their communities. Fifteen of these conditions have been reported by an increasing proportion of officials in each subsequent survey since 2001.
- **Economic conditions and unemployment, cost of health services, drug abuse, and roads and streets are the most important issues for action**
While *parks and recreation, police-community relations, sewer, roads and streets, and vitality of downtown* were reported most often by officials as improved over the past year, only *high-speed internet access* was identified by more than one-quarter of officials. Officials identified similar issues as deteriorating during the last year and five years, including *overall economic conditions and unemployment, the cost of health services, poverty, drug abuse, traffic, vitality of downtown, and roads and streets*. *Economic conditions and unemployment, cost of health services, drug abuse, and roads and streets* were identified most often as issues that are important to address during the next two years.
- **Despite a worsening economy, officials are optimistic about transition to the New Economy**
Overall economic conditions and unemployment were reported frequently by officials as among the most deteriorated community conditions in the last year and five years, and as the most important issues to address during the next two years. Similarly, almost half of officials reported the employment prospects in their communities as *poor*.

Despite these conditions and reports that local economies remain dominated by *traditional industry and agriculture*, many officials (45 percent) reported optimism about their community’s ability to respond to the transition to the New Economy.

- ***Drug and alcohol abuse plague many communities***

Since 2001, *drug and alcohol abuse* have been identified as either a *major* or *moderate problem* by most officials. In 2003, 91 percent of officials reported *drug abuse* or *alcohol abuse* as a problem in their communities. *Alcohol abuse* was identified by a majority of officials as an abuse issue for all age groups. While the most prevalent types of drug abuse vary by age group, *marijuana* and *stimulants* also were reported by more than a quarter of officials as a problem across age groups.
- ***Communities struggle with reassessment***

Many counties were still struggling to complete reassessment in the fall of 2003. Officials reported a number of problematic issues in their communities. The issues most often identified as *major problems* included the potential *negative effect of reassessment on property values* and issues associated with property tax appeals. Five additional issues were identified as *major* or *moderate problems* by a majority of officials, including *assessor turnover*, *staff training*, *funding for administration*, and the *continued usefulness of tax increment financing and tax abatement*.

Few officials reported that tax disbursements were on time in their communities. Almost half of officials reported that their local government borrowed money; 70 percent said their local government relied on financial reserves. More than 30 percent used both options. School districts relied on borrowing more heavily than other types of local governments.
- ***Training for local responders and threat prevention and detection are top priorities for homeland security funding***

About one-third of officials reported increased local spending on public safety as a result of 9/11 and new homeland security concerns. Mayors (59 percent) and county commission presidents (57 percent) reported increased spending more often than other groups of officeholders. *Training for local emergency response personnel* (67 percent), *threat prevention and detection* (47 percent), *emergency equipment and apparel* (37 percent), *protecting infrastructure* (37 percent), and *coordinating regional planning efforts* (35 percent) were identified most often as the highest priority for state and federal assistance.
- ***Roads, sewers, and jails are the most needed capital investments***

More than one-quarter of officials indicated that the following capital projects are under construction in their communities: *road infrastructure* (50 percent), *sewer infrastructure* (48 percent), *elementary school(s)* (28 percent), *middle or high school(s)* (27 percent), and *water infrastructure* (27 percent). In both 2002 and 2003, officials most often identified *road infrastructure* and *sewer infrastructure* as most needed. Officials also identified *prison/jail* as among the most needed investments.
- ***Officials report outdated tools as top planning issue***

Officials reported *outdated planning tools* (52 percent), *availability of water and sewer infrastructure* (43 percent), *balance or mix of new or existing development* (40 percent), and *availability of affordable housing* (36 percent) as the top planning issues in their communities. This represents a change from the order and frequency reported for these issues in 2002.
- ***Officials prefer non-tax funding options for farmland protection***

Officials chose *Build Indiana Fund* (40 percent), *farmland protection license plate* (36 percent), and *protection by non-governmental, non-profit conservation organizations* (30 percent) most frequently as preferred funding mechanisms for farmland preservation. This is consistent with the types of funding mechanisms chosen most often to fund the preservation of open space in the 2001 survey.

- ***Cities and towns continue to annex property***

More than one-third of cities and town officials reported annexing property in 2001, 2002, and 2003 (45, 44, and 37 percent, respectively). While the proportion of cities and towns that utilize municipally-initiated annexation seems to fluctuate from year to year, the proportion using owner-initiated annexation continues to rise.

- ***Officials report success in using telecommunications and information technology to provide local government and educational services***

A majority of officials reported success in using telecommunication and information technology in three areas: *overall integration into local government* (65 percent), *improving education* (65 percent), and *improving government management and service delivery* (56 percent). Only *improving education* was identified by a majority of officials in 2001.

Despite these reported successes, many officials report not having e-mail accounts for official business (52 percent). Fewer than half of county council presidents (41 percent), school board presidents (31 percent) and township trustees (16 percent) reported having official e-mail.

Conclusion

In sum, local officials faced both economic and fiscal uncertainty in 2003. Fewer officials report being confident about the future; more officials report community problems, ranging from unemployment to health care to infrastructure to drug abuse. Effective intergovernmental relations and a stable set of fiscal resources are critical to addressing tough issues such as these successfully.

Introduction

Intergovernmental Issues in Indiana (2003) is the sixth 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. The IACIR mailed the 2003 survey to 1,112 officeholders in early fall, including all legislators, county council presidents, county board of commissioner presidents, mayors, and school board presidents, as well as one randomly-selected council member from each town with population greater than 1,000 and two randomly-selected township trustees from each county. A complete description of the methodology appears in Appendix A.

The IACIR conducted similar surveys in 1996, 1997, 1999, 2001, and 2002. The original survey was modeled after a regular survey of local elected officials conducted by the National League of Cities (NLC). The 2003 IACIR survey included 25 questions and addressed a number of issues that were included in one or more previous surveys. It also addressed several “hot topics” affecting local communities in 2003, including economic development, drug and alcohol abuse, the implementation of reassessment, homeland security, and farmland protection. The Indiana Land Resources Council (ILRC) and the Indiana Criminal Justice Institute (ICJI) assisted IACIR staff in developing selected questions. The survey instrument appears in Appendix B.

This report presents the results of the 2003 survey. To account for non-responses to specific questions and questions addressed to specific officeholders, the number of responses is provided with the table or figure for each question. Questions 1, 4-6, 11-13, and 17-21 gave respondents the option of writing in a specific response to *other*. In cases when these responses closely matched an option in the list provided, the response was grouped with that option. A complete list of *other* responses is provided in Appendix C. Appendix D includes a complete listing of responses to the open-ended question (25) at the end of the survey and other write-in comments. In a few cases, names and other identifiers were removed to ensure that no individual respondent can be associated with a particular response.

Survey Results

Survey responses are reported below by topic area. With only a few exceptions, the results are presented in the order they appear in the questionnaire.

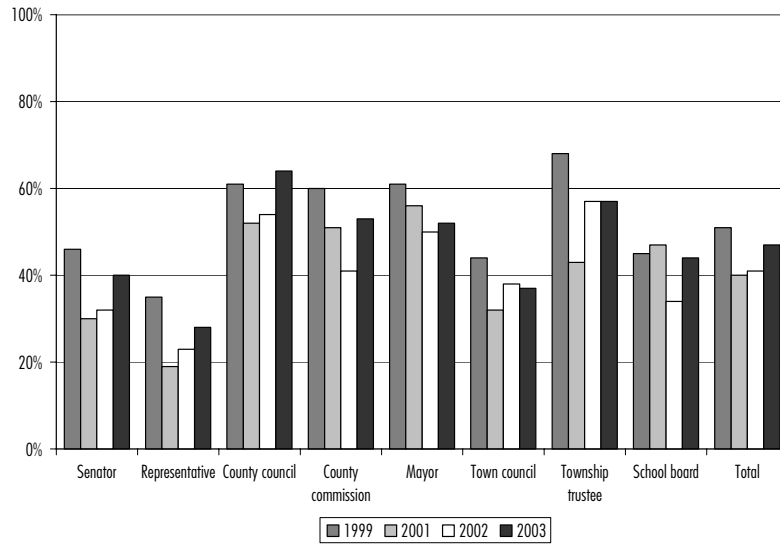
Response Rates

Of the 1,112 surveys mailed, 514 were returned. Five surveys were undeliverable despite multiple attempts to locate the appropriate officeholder. Four additional surveys were excluded because the respondent was not an elected official. The effective response rate for the survey was 47 percent (514 out of 1,103).

Question 1 addressed the office held by each respondent. Table 1 and Figure 1 shows the number of surveys sent and returned for each group. Thirty-five respondents indicated *other*. With the exception of the four respondents who were not elected officials, each of the responses was assigned to the remaining categories based on the type of local government they represent. For example, several school board members who were no longer president but remain on the school board responded. Each of these surveys was coded as *school board president*.

The overall response rate for 2003 was higher than the two previous surveys, but lower than in 1999 (see Table 2). County council presidents had the highest response rate for 2003 at 64 percent, and state representatives had the lowest at 35 percent. The 1999 response rates across offices remain the highest for the four surveys with the exception of county council presidents, who experienced the highest response rate in 2003.

Figure 1. Response rate by office by year



Source: Indiana Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, 2003

Table 1. Response rates by office (Question 1)

Office	Returned	Mailed	Undelivered or excluded	Effective return rate
Senator	20	50	0	40%
Representative	28	100	0	28%
County council president	58	90	0	64%
County commission president	48	91	0	53%
Mayor	60	116	0	52%
Town council member	70	191	4	37%
Township trustee	104	184	1	57%
School board president	126	290	4	44%
Total	514	1,112	9	47%

Table 2. Response rates by office by survey year

Office	2003	2002	2001	1999
Senator	40%	32%	30%	46%
Representative	28%	23%	19%	35%
County council president	64%	54%	52%	61%
County commission president	53%	41%	51%	60%
Mayor	52%	50%	56%	61%
Town council member	37%	38%	32%	44%
Township trustee	57%	57%	43%	68%
School board president	44%	34%	47%	45%
Total	47%	41%	40%	51%

Local Conditions and Services

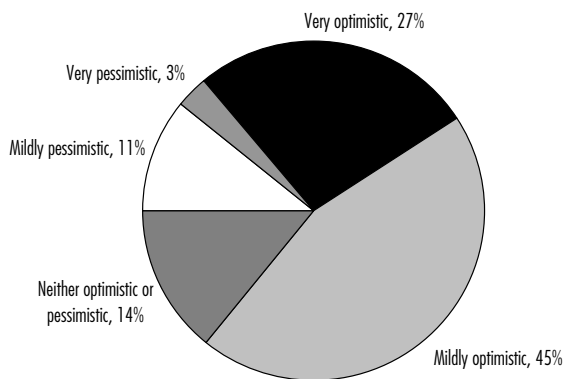
Questions 2–6 addressed local conditions and services. Question 2 queried respondents about their feelings regarding the future of their communities. As shown in Table 3 and Figure 2, respondents generally are optimistic about the future of their communities (72 percent). This result, however, represents a further decline from the three previous surveys (see Table 4). A larger proportion of respondents (28 percent) were either neutral or pessimistic than in 1999, 2001, and 2002 (18, 16, and 24 percent, respectively). As in 2001 and 2002, mayors continue to be the most optimistic group of officeholders (93 percent); township trustees continue to be the least optimistic (60 percent).

Table 3. Feelings about the general direction the community is heading in 2003 (Question 2)

	Very optimistic	Mildly optimistic	Neither optimistic or pessimistic	Mildly pessimistic	Very pessimistic
Senator (n=20)*	20%	35%	25%	20%	0%
Representative (n=28)*	21%	43%	21%	4%	11%
County council president (n=57)	25%	51%	11%	12%	2%
County commission president (n=47)	23%	51%	13%	11%	2%
Mayor (n=58)	67%	29%	2%	2%	0%
Town council member (n=69)	36%	38%	13%	12%	1%
Township trustee (n=100)	13%	47%	20%	13%	7%
School board president (n=123)	19%	52%	12%	15%	2%
Total (n=502)	27%	45%	14%	11%	3%

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

Figure 2. Feelings about the general direction the community is heading (Question 2)



Source: Indiana Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, 2003

Table 4. Feelings about the general direction the community is heading by survey year

	Very optimistic	Mildly optimistic	Neither optimistic or pessimistic	Mildly pessimistic	Very pessimistic
2003 (n=502)	27%	45%	14%	11%	3%
2002 (n=543)	28%	47%	13%	9%	2%
2001 (n=542)	34%	50%	9%	5%	2%
1999 (n=599)	38%	44%	10%	7%	1%

Questions 3–6 asked officeholders about the status of 37 community conditions¹ in six general categories: health, public safety, economics, land use, local services, and community quality of life. As in previous years, respondents were asked about the current status of the condition as a problem,² change over the last year, the most improved or deteriorated conditions over the previous five years, and the most important issues to address in the next two years.

Current Status of Conditions

Most communities appear to be stable. When asked about the current status of the 37 conditions (Question 3), a majority of respondents identified the condition as *minor or no problem* (see Table 5) for more than half of the conditions (20 of the 37). The *cost of health services* was the only condition chosen as a *major problem* by a majority of respondents. Figure 3 shows the five conditions chosen most often as either *major* or *moderate problems*.

Many of the same conditions were reported by a majority of respondents as problems in 2001, 2002, and 2003 (see Table 6). With the exception of *traffic* and *quality affordable housing*, the proportion of respondents that identified each of these as *major* or *moderate problems* has increased since 2001. *Vitality of neighborhoods* is the only condition identified by a majority of respondents in 2003 as a *major* or *moderate problem* that was not identified similarly in 2001 and 2002.

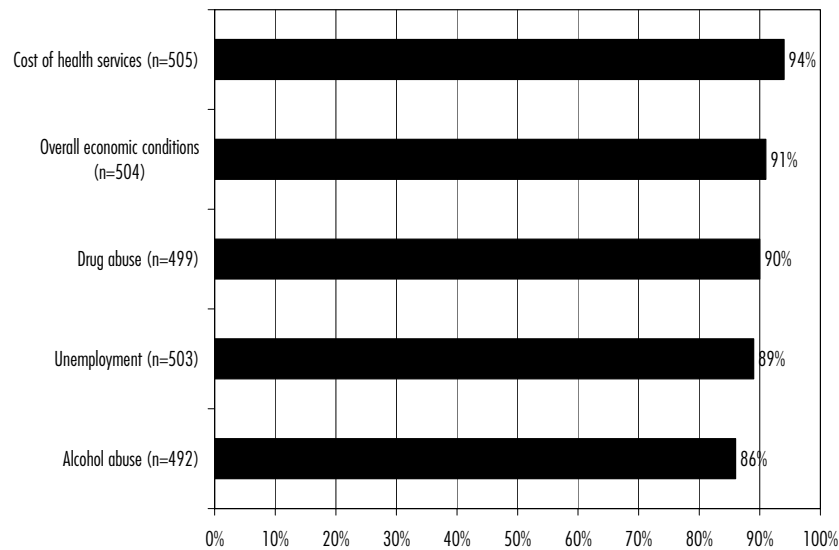
¹ Over time, the community conditions included on the survey have changed for several reasons. The number of conditions included in the survey was expanded significantly in 2001. Since then, a few conditions have been disaggregated (*cost and availability of health services* and *drug and alcohol abuse*) to allow for finer analysis. Conditions also have been added (*jail*, *youth detention facility*, and *terrorism*) or deleted (*workforce retraining* and *youth violence and crime*) because of the changing environment in which local governments operate or space limitations.

² This question was added to the survey in 2001. Earlier surveys addressed only change over the previous 12 months and not the current status of the condition.

Table 5. Current status of community conditions (Question 3)

Category	Condition	Major problem	Moderate problem	Minor or no problem
Health	Cost of health services (n=505)	60%	34%	6%
	Availability of health services (n=498)	7%	40%	53%
	Drug abuse (n=499)	39%	51%	10%
	Alcohol abuse (n=492)	23%	63%	14%
	Care for the elderly (n=485)	15%	54%	31%
Public safety	Police-community relations (n=498)	6%	24%	70%
	Violent crime (n=499)	4%	33%	63%
	Terrorism (n=497)	1%	6%	93%
	Jail (n=493)	18%	29%	53%
	Youth detention facility (n=471)	18%	32%	50%
Economics	Overall economic conditions (n=504)	42%	49%	9%
	Unemployment (n=503)	39%	50%	11%
	Workforce training (n=487)	18%	54%	29%
Land use	Quality of development (n=495)	18%	37%	45%
	Increased amount of development (n=490)	19%	33%	48%
	Quality affordable housing (n=500)	16%	42%	43%
	Open space (n=487)	10%	24%	66%
	Brownfields (n=473)	8%	26%	66%
Local services	K-12 education (n=499)	10%	24%	66%
	Drinking water (n=497)	4%	15%	81%
	Sewer (n=495)	16%	37%	47%
	Roads and streets (n=501)	15%	52%	33%
	High-speed Internet access (n=492)	11%	33%	56%
	Telephone (n=501)	4%	16%	80%
	Cellular telephone (n=498)	8%	28%	64%
	Parks and recreation (n=494)	4%	22%	74%
	Solid waste management (n=495)	7%	30%	63%
	Cable Television (n=493)	6%	23%	71%
Community quality of life	Public transportation (n=491)	15%	30%	55%
	Race-ethnic relations (n=499)	3%	23%	74%
	Air quality (n=500)	5%	23%	72%
	Water quality (n=499)	3%	18%	78%
	Traffic (n=505)	14%	39%	47%
	Poverty (n=500)	14%	57%	29%
	Vitality of neighborhoods (n=495)	9%	41%	49%
	Vitality of downtown (n=493)	26%	44%	30%
	Community involvement (n=500)	13%	44%	43%

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



Source: Indiana Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, 2003

Table 6. Major/moderate problems by survey year

Category	Condition	2003	2002	2001
Health	Cost of health services	94%	91%	
	Availability of health services	47%	46%	68%
	Drug abuse*	90%		
	Alcohol abuse)	86%	85%	84%
	Care for the elderly	69%	63%	57%
Public safety	Police-community relations	30%	31%	26%
	Violent crime	37%	33%	36%
	Youth violence and crime*	–	57%	58%
	Terrorism*	7%	–	–
	Jail*	47%	–	–
	Youth detention facility*	50%	–	–
Economics	Overall economic conditions**	91%	85%	–
	Unemployment	89%	74%	63%
	Workforce training	71%	59%	56%
	Workforce retraining	–	58%	49%
Land use	Quality of development	55%	53%	50%
	Increased amount of development	52%	51%	53%
	Quality affordable housing	57%	61%	61%
	Open space	34%	33%	37%
	Brownfields	34%	36%	32%

Table 6. Major/moderate problems by survey year (continued)

Category	Condition	2003	2002	2001
Local services	K-12 education	34%	31%	36%
	Drinking water	19%	22%	23%
	Sewer	53%	52%	46%
	Roads and streets	67%	66%	62%
	High-speed Internet access	44%	43%	27%
	Telephone	20%	23%	27%
	Cellular telephone	36%	32%	21%
	Parks and recreation	26%	25%	34%
	Solid waste management	37%	37%	29%
	Cable TV	29%	34%	38%
	Public transportation	45%	47%	29%
Community quality of life	Race-ethnic relations	26%	26%	29%
	Air quality	28%	22%	23%
	Water quality	22%	24%	24%
	Traffic	53%	56%	60%
	Poverty	71%	60%	50%
	Vitality of neighborhoods	51%	42%	43%
	Vitality of downtown	70%	66%	60%
Community involvement ^{***}	57%	54%	39%	

*See Footnote 1.

***General/Overall economic conditions* was not listed as a community condition in 2001 due to a printing error.

***This category was changed from *volunteerism* to *community involvement* in 2002.

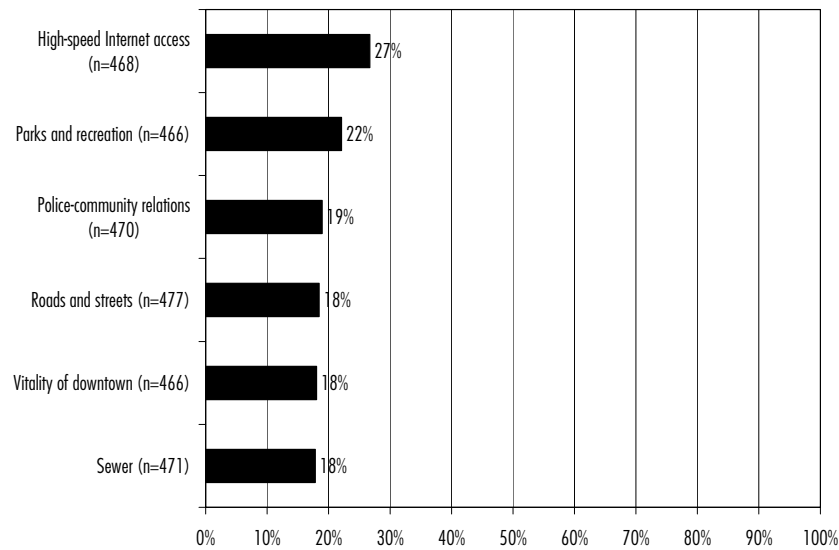
Change in Conditions Over Time

A majority of respondents reported no change during the previous 12 months for all conditions except *cost of health services*, *overall economic conditions*, and *unemployment*. Only *high-speed Internet access* was reported by more than one-quarter of respondents as improved; eight conditions were identified by more than one-quarter of respondents as worsened (see Table 7). Figures 4 and 5 show the ten conditions identified most often as improved or worsened.

Table 7. Change in local conditions during the previous 12 months (Question 3)

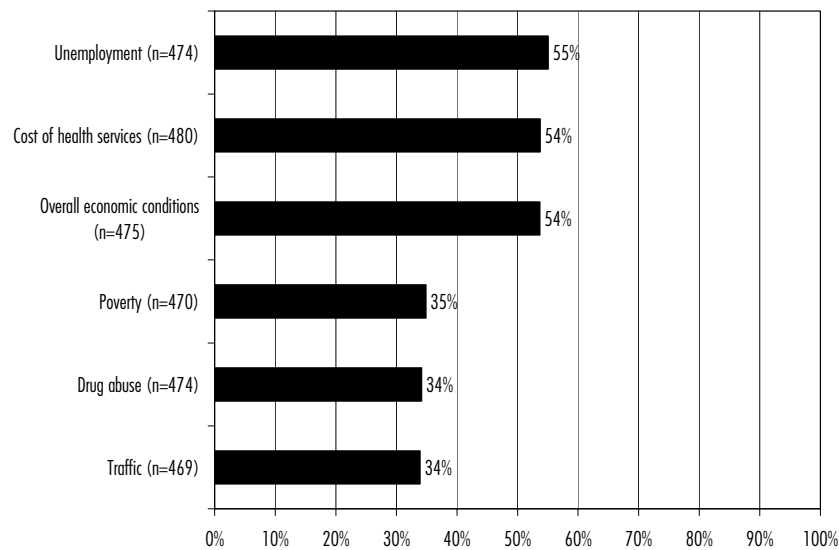
Category	Condition	Improved	Worsened	No change
Health	Cost of health services (n=480)	3%	54%	43%
	Availability of health services(n=472)	15%	9%	76%
	Drug abuse (n=474)	6%	34%	60%
	Alcohol abuse (n=463)	4%	16%	79%
	Care for the elderly (n=458)	10%	10%	80%
Public safety	Police-community relations (n=470)	19%	7%	74%
	Violent crime (n=469)	6%	9%	85%
	Terrorism (n=465)	2%	3%	95%
	Jail (n=463)	8%	20%	72%
	Youth detention facility (n=443)	5%	14%	80%
Economics	Overall economic conditions (n=475)	11%	54%	35%
	Unemployment (n=474)	7%	55%	38%
	Workforce training (n=459)	13%	14%	73%
Land use	Quality of development (n=466)	15%	14%	72%
	Increased amount of development (n=461)	13%	17%	70%
	Quality affordable housing (n=467)	11%	17%	72%
	Open space (n=460)	3%	12%	85%
	Brownfields (n=449)	4%	8%	88%
Local services	K-12 education (n=469)	17%	12%	71%
	Drinking water (n=472)	8%	6%	86%
	Sewer (n=471)	18%	18%	64%
	Roads and streets (n=477)	18%	26%	55%
	High-speed Internet access (n=468)	27%	5%	68%
	Telephone (n=472)	7%	6%	87%
	Cellular telephone (n=469)	14%	9%	78%
	Parks and recreation (n=466)	22%	6%	72%
	Solid waste management (n=466)	13%	12%	75%
	Cable television (n=462)	8%	12%	80%
Public transportation (n=463)	9%	8%	83%	
Community quality of life	Race-ethnic relations (n=470)	7%	7%	86%
	Air quality (n=467)	3%	6%	90%
	Water quality (n=466)	7%	5%	88%
	Traffic (n=469)	5%	34%	61%
	Poverty (n=470)	2%	35%	63%
	Vitality of neighborhoods (n=463)	11%	16%	73%
	Vitality of downtown (n=466)	18%	28%	54%
	Community involvement (n=474)	17%	14%	69%

Figure 4. Top five issues identified as improved during the previous 12 months (Question 3)



Source: Indiana Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, 2003

Figure 5. Top five issues identified as worsened during the previous 12 months (Question 3)



Source: Indiana Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, 2003

Table 8 provides perspective on the issues that were identified most often as *improved* or *worsened* in the previous 12 months for the current and three earlier surveys. The responses for the 1999 and 2001 surveys show the state’s changing economic conditions. In 1999, both *economic conditions* (50 percent) and *unemployment* (44 percent) were identified most frequently as improved conditions. In 2001, *unemployment* (48 percent) was identified frequently as one of the conditions most in decline.³ As a testament to the overriding importance of economic health as a community condition, only one condition was reported as

³ *General/overall economic conditions* was not listed as a community condition in 2001 due to a printing error.

improved by more than one-quarter of respondents in the two subsequent surveys (*high-speed Internet access* in 2003). The conditions identified by more than one-quarter of respondents as *worsened* have been similar since 2001.

Table 8. Conditions identified as improved or worsened over the past 12 months by survey year

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

*These conditions were added to the survey in 2001; they did not appear in any form in 1999.

As shown in Table 9 and Figures 6 and 7, five conditions were reported by ten percent or more of respondents as *most improved* over the last five years. Twice as many conditions were reported as *most deteriorated* by ten or more percent of respondents.

Table 9. Conditions ranked as most improved or most deteriorated over the last five years (Questions 4 and 5)

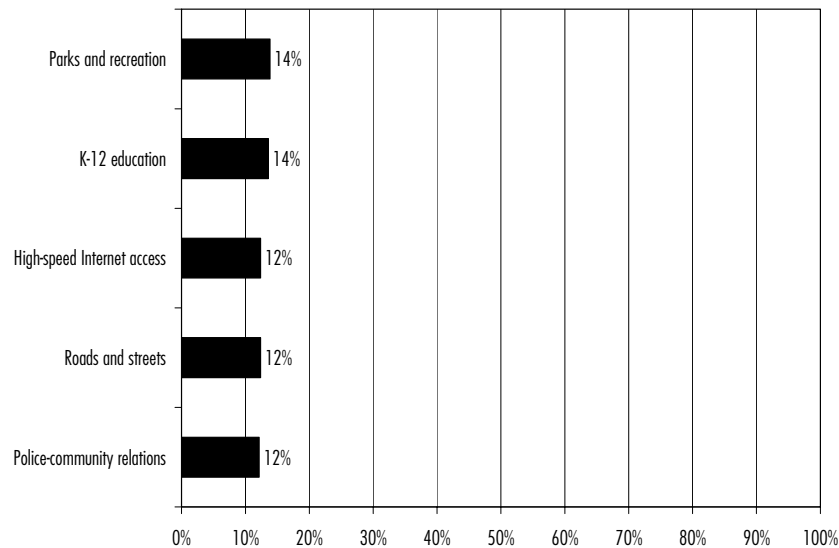
Category	Condition	Reported as one of three most improved (n=412)	Reported as one of three most deteriorated (n=457)
Health	Health*	3%	12%
	Cost of health services	1%	32%
	Availability of Health Services	10%	3%
	Drug abuse	1%	20%
	Alcohol abuse	1%	4%
	Other-drugs and alcohol*	0%	0%
	Care for the elderly	7%	3%
Public safety	Public safety*	10%	3%
	Police-community relations	12%	2%
	Violent crime	2%	1%
	Terrorism	0%	0%
	Jail	5%	5%
	Youth detention facility	2%	2%
	Other-police*	1%	0%
Economics	Economics*	2%	12%
	Overall economic conditions	4%	30%
	Unemployment	3%	25%
	Workforce training	7%	2%
	Other-economic development*	0%	0%
	Other-business relocations/closings*	0%	1%
	Other-job quality*	0%	1%
Land use	Land use*	8%	7%
	Quality of development	7%	4%
	Increased amount of development	5%	4%
	Quality affordable housing	6%	5%
	Open space	1%	2%
	Brownfields	2%	2%
	Other-development*	0%	1%
	Other-housing*	1%	0%
Local services	Local services*	9%	3%
	K-12 education	14%	5%
	Drinking water	5%	1%
	Sewer	8%	5%
	Water and sewer*	0%	1%
	Roads and streets	12%	10%
	High-speed Internet access	12%	2%
	Telephone	3%	1%
	Cellular telephone	5%	2%
	Parks and recreation	14%	0%
	Solid waste management	6%	2%
	Cable television	3%	1%
	Public transportation	3%	1%

Table 9. Conditions ranked as most improved or most deteriorated over the last five years (Questions 4 and 5) (Continued)

Category	Condition	Reported as one of three most improved (n=412)	Reported as one of three most deteriorated (n=457)
Community quality of life	Community quality of life*	7%	4%
	Race-ethnic relations	2%	2%
	Air quality	2%	2%
	Water quality	6%	3%
	Traffic	1%	14%
	Poverty	0%	9%
	Vitality of neighborhoods	2%	4%
	Vitality of downtown	8%	11%
	Community involvement	9%	4%
Other*	Other-taxes*	0%	1%
	Other-school funding	0%	0%
	Other-remaining*	6%	4%
	No change	5%	1%

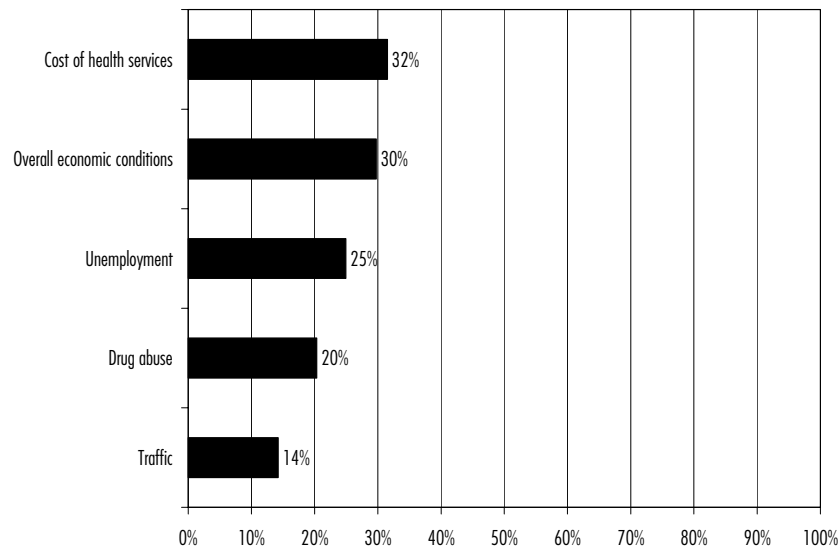
*Questions 4-6 require respondents to identify the top three conditions from the list in Question 3. In some cases, respondents identified general categories rather than specific conditions. In other cases, respondents identified conditions not listed in Question 3 or in a manner that does not allow the responses to be interpreted as one of the provided conditions. In cases where the proportion of respondents indicating one of these latter types of responses reached one percent for Questions 4, 5, or 6, they were included in the tables 9 and 11. Additional *other* responses were aggregated into *Other-remaining*.

Figure 6. Top five issues ranked as most improved over last five years (Question 4; n=412)



Source: Indiana Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, 2003

Figure 7. Top five issues ranked as most deteriorated over the last five years (Question 5; n=457)



Source: Indiana Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, 2003

Table 10 shows that the issues ranked by officials most often as the *most improved* or *deteriorated* are similar for the current and three previous surveys. Not surprisingly, the issues identified for the five-year horizon generally are similar to those chosen for the previous 12 months.⁴

For the conditions identified most often as most improved over the last five years, the proportion of officials reporting improvement has declined since 2001. *Overall economic conditions* are frequently mentioned as deteriorating and the proportion of officials who believe the economy is deteriorating continues to increase. For other conditions reported most often as deteriorating, the pattern of change is less consistent.

⁴ The percentages reported generally for Question 3 and Questions 4-6 differ because of the structure of the questions. In Question 3, all respondents answer for all 37 conditions. In Questions 4-6, respondents must choose only three conditions.

Table 10. Conditions ranked as most improved or most deteriorated over the last five years by survey year

	10% or more of respondents indicated improved	10% or more of respondents indicated deteriorated
2003	K–12 education (14%) Parks and recreation (14%) Police-community relations (12%) Roads and streets (12%) High-speed Internet access (12%)	Cost of health services (32%) Overall economic conditions (30%) Unemployment (25%) Drug abuse (20%) Traffic (14%) Health (general) (12%) Economics (general) (12%) Vitality of downtown (11%) Roads and streets (10%)
2002	Parks and recreation (18%) Availability of health services (16%) K–12 education (16%) Roads and streets (16%) Police-community relations (15%)	Cost of health services (38%) Overall economic conditions (24%) Unemployment (23%) Drug and alcohol abuse (18%) Traffic (14%) Vitality of downtown (14%) Roads and streets (12%) Sewer (10%)
2001	Parks and recreation (25%) K–12 education (24%) Police-community relations (21%) Roads and streets (17%) Sewer (15%) Internet access (11%)* Volunteerism (11%)*	Traffic (26%)* Roads and streets (23%) Cost/availability of health services (18%) Drug and alcohol abuse (18%) Unemployment (17%) Sewer (14%) Vitality of downtown (14%)* Quality affordable housing (13%) Economics (general) (11%)
1999	Economic conditions (38%) Infrastructure (30%) Community-police relations (27%) Unemployment (27%) Parks and open space (24%) Educational quality (18%) Healthcare (17%) Solid waste management (16%)	Cable TV rates (29%) Substance abuse (25%) Youth crime (25%) Affordable housing (25%) Gangs (13%) Economic conditions (12%) Infrastructure (12%)

*These conditions first appeared in 2001; they were not included in any form in 1999.

Priorities for Short-term Action

Economic health (*overall economic conditions* and *unemployment*), *the cost of health services*, *drug abuse*, and *roads and streets* were chosen most often in 2003 as the most important issues to work on during the next two years (see Table 11 and Figure 8). These issues, as well as *sewer* and *K–12 education*, have appeared consistently as most important to work on since 1999.

Table 11. Conditions ranked as most important to work on during the next two years (Question 6; n=456)

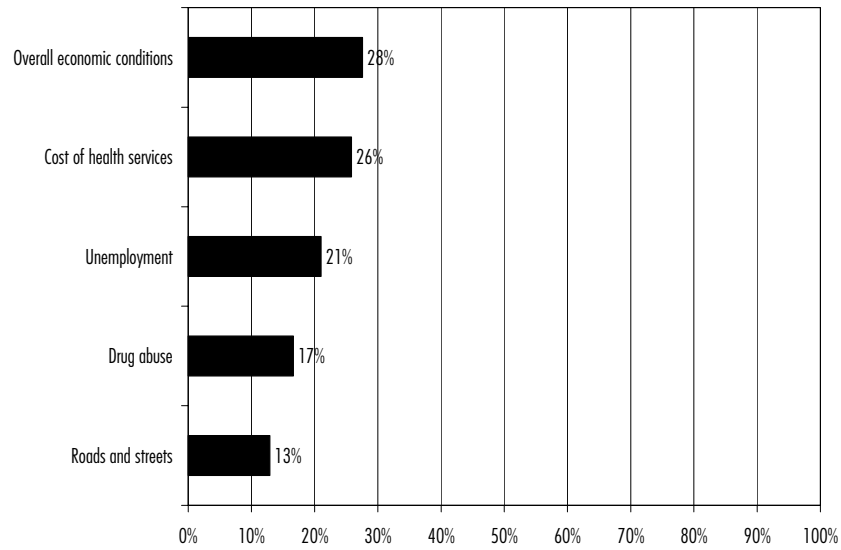
Category	Condition	Reported as one of three most important to work on
Health	Health*	12%
	Cost of health services	26%
	Availability of health services	2%
	Drug abuse	17%
	Alcohol abuse	2%
	Other-drugs and alcohol*	1%
	Care for the elderly	2%
Public safety	Public safety*	4%
	Police-community relations	1%
	Violent crime	1%
	Terrorism	0%
	Jail	7%
	Youth detention facility	2%
	Other-police*	0%
Economics	Economics*	12%
	Overall economic conditions	28%
	Unemployment	21%
	Workforce training	4%
	Other-economic development*	1%
	Other-business relocations/closings*	1%
	Other-job quality*	1%
Land use	Land use*	5%
	Quality of development	4%
	Increased amount of development	3%
	Quality affordable housing	7%
	Open space	1%
	Brownfields	1%
	Other-development*	1%
	Other-housing*	0%
Local services	Local services*	4%
	K-12 education	12%
	Drinking water	2%
	Sewer	11%
	Water and sewer*	1%
	Roads and streets	13%
	High-speed Internet access	2%
	Telephone	0%
	Cellular telephone	1%
	Parks and recreation	2%
	Solid waste management	1%
	Cable television	1%
	Public transportation	2%

Table 11. Conditions ranked as most important to work on during the next two years (Question 6; n=456) (continued)

Category	Condition	Reported as one of three most important to work on
Community quality of life	Community quality of life*	5%
	Race-ethnic relations	3%
	Air quality	2%
	Water quality	3%
	Traffic	12%
	Poverty	7%
	Vitality of neighborhoods	3%
	Vitality of downtown	9%
	Community involvement	4%
	Other	Other-taxes*
Other-school funding		1%
Other-remaining*		6%
No Change		0%

*See note for Table 9.

Figure 8. Top five issues ranked as important work (Question 6; n=456)



Source: Indiana Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, 2003

Table 12. Conditions ranked as most important to work on during the next two years by survey year

	10% or more of respondents indicated as important to work on
2003 (n= 457)	Overall economic conditions (28%) Cost of health services (26%) Unemployment (21%) Drug abuse (17%) Roads and streets (13%) Health (12%) Economics (12%) K-12 education (12%) Traffic (12%) Sewer (11%)
2002 (n=476)	Cost of health services (26%) Overall economic conditions (22%) Unemployment (21%) Roads and streets (18%) Sewer (16%) Drug and alcohol abuse (13%) Poverty (11%)
2001 (n=462)	Roads and streets (27%) Sewer (20%) Traffic (18%) Unemployment (15%) K-12 education (15%) Cost/availability of health services (13%) Drug and alcohol abuse (13%) Economics (general) (12%) Vitality of downtown (11%) Land use (10%)
1999 (n=625)	Infrastructure (30%) Economic conditions (25%) Affordable housing (24%) Educational quality (23%) Youth crime (19%) Healthcare (16%) Substance abuse (16%)

Relationship Between Schools and Local Government

In 2003, almost three-quarters (73 percent) of officials reported being optimistic about the working relationship between schools and other local governments in their communities (see Table 13). This level of overall optimism is similar to the result reported in 2002, but is higher than in 1999 (69 percent) (see Table 14). Among officeholders, mayors and school board presidents reported being the most optimistic in 2003. Senators continued to be the least optimistic.

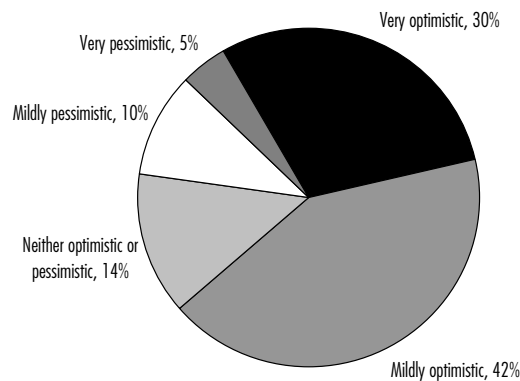
Table 13. Outlook on working relationship between local government and schools (Question 7)

	Very optimistic	Mildly optimistic	Neither optimistic or pessimistic	Mildly pessimistic	Very pessimistic
Senator (n=20)	15%	40%	20%	25%	0%
Representative (n=27)	23%	54%	8%	15%	4%
County council president (n=58)	21%	50%	7%	16%	7%
County commission president (n=47)	26%	41%	20%	7%	9%
Mayor (n=60)	67%	22%	5%	2%	5%
Town council member (n=70)	21%	50%	17%	7%	4%
Township trustee (n=101)	18%	46%	22%	12%	4%
School board president (n=124)	36%	43%	11%	9%	3%
Total (n=507)	30%	43%	14%	10%	5%

Table 14. Outlook on working relationship between local government and schools by survey year (Question 7)

	Very optimistic	Mildly optimistic	Neither optimistic or pessimistic	Mildly pessimistic	Very pessimistic
2003 (n=507)	30%	43%	14%	10%	5%
2002 (n=541)	34%	38%	16%	9%	4%
1999 (n=682)	25%	44%	19%	9%	3%

Figure 9. Outlook on working relationship between local government and schools (Question 7; n=507)



Source: Indiana Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, 2003

Local Economic Conditions

Since 2001, *overall economic conditions* and *unemployment* have been cited most often as the community conditions that deteriorated most. These two issues have also been chosen as the most important to work on during the short term. Questions 8, 9, 10, and 14 address economics and economic development more specifically.

Question 9 asked respondents to identify the primary industry sector connected with the economic well being in their communities. Not surprisingly, *traditional manufacturing* and *agriculture* were reported most often (see Table 15). None of the remaining sectors were identified by more than nine percent of respondents.

Table 15. Industry sector most connected with economic well being in community (Question 9; n=490)

Sector	Percent
Traditional manufacturing	47%
Agriculture	22%
Services (FIRE)	9%
Retail trade	7%
Hi-tech manufacturing	6%
Construction	3%
Other-gaming/tourism	2%
Transportation and logistics	1%
Wholesale trade	1%
Other-unclassified*	2%
Other-government	1%
Other-education	1%

**Other-unclassified* includes the written responses that were not provided by at least one percent of respondents.

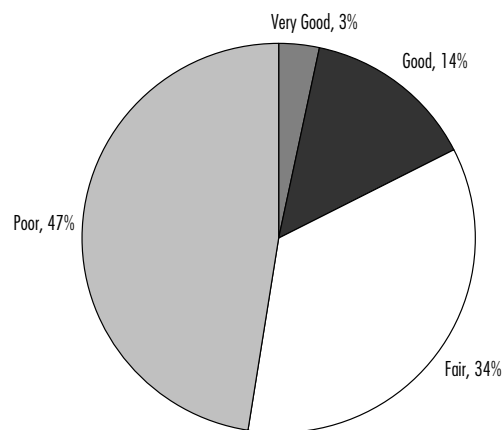
As mentioned above, *overall economic conditions* and *unemployment* were reported frequently as the most deteriorated and as the most important to work on over the next two years. Questions 8 and 10 further addressed elected officials' feelings about community employment prospects and preparedness to participate in the transition to the New Economy. Almost half of respondents reported that employment prospects are poor in their communities (see Table 16 and Figure 10). Township trustees and town council members were most pessimistic. Mayors reported poor prospects least often.

Conversely, respondents reported being more optimistic about their communities' abilities to respond to the economic transition; 45 percent said they were either *very optimistic* or *somewhat optimistic* (see Table 17). Again, mayors were the most optimistic (64 percent); state senators were least optimistic.

Table 16. Assessment of current employment prospects in the community (Question 8)

	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor
Senator (n=20)	0%	15%	40%	45%
Representative (n=27)	0%	15%	33%	52%
County council president (n=57)	7%	26%	21%	46%
County commission president (n=47)	2%	19%	36%	43%
Mayor (n=60)	5%	23%	48%	23%
Town council member (n=69)	3%	7%	32%	58%
Township trustee (n=103)	4%	6%	23%	67%
School board president (n=123)	2%	12%	46%	40%
Total (n=506)	3%	14%	35%	48%

Figure 10. Current employment prospects (Question 8; n=506)



Source: Indiana Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, 2003

Table 17. Feelings about community's ability to transition to the new economy (Question 10)

	Very optimistic	Somewhat optimistic	Neither optimistic or pessimistic	Somewhat pessimistic	Very pessimistic
Senator (n=19)	5%	32%	11%	42%	11%
Representative (n=27)	19%	37%	19%	22%	4%
County council president (n=56)	16%	41%	16%	23%	4%
County commission president (n=46)	2%	48%	28%	15%	7%
Mayor (n=58)	17%	47%	24%	10%	2%
Town council member (n=69)	6%	33%	32%	20%	9%
Township trustee (n=94)	6%	24%	36%	17%	16%
School board president (n=120)	6%	35%	25%	25%	9%
Total (n=489)	9%	36%	26%	20%	8%

Early Elimination of the Inventory Tax

Public Law 192, adopted during the 2002 Special Session, provided for the elimination of the state inventory tax in five years. In the interim, the law allows counties to impose an additional county economic development income tax (CEDIT) to eliminate the inventory tax with the county sooner than five years. The revenue from the additional CEDIT must be used to provide additional homestead credits to offset the effects of the reduced assessed value on homeowners. Counties must have acted by March 30, 2004, to take advantage of this option.

In 2002, more than one-third of county respondents indicated that their counties were *very likely* or *somewhat likely* to adopt the additional CEDIT to allow for early elimination of the inventory tax. In the 2003 survey, 23 percent of county officials reported that their counties had adopted either a new or supplemental CEDIT for this purpose. Recent data published by the Department of Local Government Finance indicates that 30 counties have adopted the inventory tax deduction (14 for 2003 payable 2004, and 16 for 2004 payable 2005) (see Table 18). While the survey indicated that some of the four counties that chose not to adopt local income taxes had considered adopting the inventory deduction, it appears that none did.

Table 18. Early elimination of the inventory tax (Question 14)

Counties adopting 2003 Payable 2004	Counties adopting 2004 Payable 2005
Adams	Allen
Cass	Bartholomew
Fayette	Benton
Floyd	Blackford
Fulton	Clark
Grant	DeKalb
Jennings	Delaware
Miami	Hendricks
Morgan	Huntington
Pulaski	Kosciusko
Scott	LaGrange
Wabash	Noble
Washington	Parke
Wells	Steuben
	Tipton
	Whitley

Source: Indiana Department of Local Government Finance (www.ai.org/dlgef/structure/budget/inv_deduct.html)

Drug and Alcohol Abuse

In 2001 and 2002, *drug and alcohol abuse* was the community condition chosen first and second most often as either a *major* or *moderate problem*, 82 and 85 percent, respectively. As a result, research staff made two modifications to the 2003 survey to flesh out the nature of this problem in Indiana communities. First, *drug and alcohol abuse* was disaggregated as a community condition into *drug abuse* and *alcohol abuse*. Second, a question was added regarding the types of substances that are abused by age group (under age 18, ages 18-34, and ages 35 and over).

In 2003, both *drug abuse* and *alcohol abuse* were reported frequently as *major* or *moderate problems* (90 and 86 percent, respectively). When aggregated as in the previous surveys, 91 percent of respondents reported that the combined condition was a *major* or a *moderate problem*. When considering only respondents who indicated that either condition was a *major problem*, respondents indicated 26, 31, and 42 percent,

respectively. When disaggregated in 2003, 40 percent of respondents identified *drug abuse* as a major problem; only 22 percent identified *alcohol abuse* similarly.

As mentioned above, Question 11 was added to flesh out more specifically the types of drug and alcohol abuse occurring in Indiana communities. As shown in Table 19, *alcohol abuse* was reported by a majority of respondents for all age groups. At least one-quarter of respondents indicated that *marijuana*, *inhalants*, *stimulants*, and *club drugs* are abused by children and teenagers in their communities. Respondents reported that an expanded list of drugs are abused by 18-34 year olds, including *marijuana*, *stimulants*, *cocaine*, *club drugs*, *opiates/narcotics*, *depressants*, and *hallucinogens*. Older adults (35 years and over) were reported most often as abusing *depressants*, *stimulants*, *marijuana*, *cocaine*, and *opiates/narcotics*.

Table 19. Substance abuse in communities where it is considered a major or moderate problem (Question 11)

Substance	Under age 18 (n=440)	Ages 18-34 (n=444)	Age 35 and over (n=428)
Alcohol	67%	78%	55%
Marijuana	56%	73%	28%
Cocaine	20%	57%	26%
Inhalants	51%	17%	3%
Club drugs	26%	42%	6%
Stimulants	38%	66%	38%
Depressants	12%	37%	42%
Opiates/Narcotics	12%	42%	26%
Hallucinogens	17%	34%	16%
Other	2%	2%	1%

Reassessment

The IACIR hosted public forums on reassessment in 2001 and 2002. Many of the issues identified during those forums were included in Question 12.

Officials identified the potential *negative effect of reassessment on residential property values* and issues associated with property tax appeals (*increased number of appeals*, *funding for local appeals process*, and *ability to bring up new issues at state appeal*) most often as *major problems* (see Table 20). Five additional issues were identified as *major or moderate problems* by a majority of officials, including *assessor turnover*, *staff training*, *funding for administration*, and the continued *usefulness of tax increment financing and tax abatement*.

It is important to note that the survey was administered in the fall of 2003 as many counties still were working to complete reassessment. The Indiana General Assembly worked during the 2003 Special Session and during the beginning of the 2004 Regular Session to address some of these issues. Because of the timing of the survey and the nature of the legislation, officials' opinions probably do not reflect these changes.

Table 20. Problems with reassessment (Question 12)

	Major problem	Moderate problem	Minor or no problem	Too soon to tell
Fairness of new rules				
Greater burden on low/fixed income owners (n=439)	28%	12%	21%	38%
Greater burden on older neighborhoods (n=433)	24%	11%	24%	41%
Negative effect on residential property values (n=407)	40%	19%	21%	20%
Communication and notice				
Public awareness of upcoming changes (n=445)	14%	27%	30%	28%
Administration				
Too little time for implementation (n=417)	13%	17%	28%	42%
Computer software and hardware (n=376)	14%	23%	30%	33%
Assessor turnover (n=353)	18%	56%	13%	12%
Staff training (n=350)	17%	45%	24%	15%
Funding (n=353)	16%	35%	25%	24%
Local fiscal matters				
Local budgeting and cash flow (n=441)	12%	15%	25%	47%
Usefulness of tax increment financing (n=349)	22%	31%	27%	19%
Usefulness of tax abatement (n=366)	19%	39%	25%	17%
Appeals process				
Increased number of appeals (n=329)	35%	19%	21%	26%
Funding for local appeals process (n=306)	34%	23%	23%	20%
Ability to bring up new issues at state appeal (n=291)	36%	24%	22%	18%
Other (n=20)	5%	95%	0%	0%

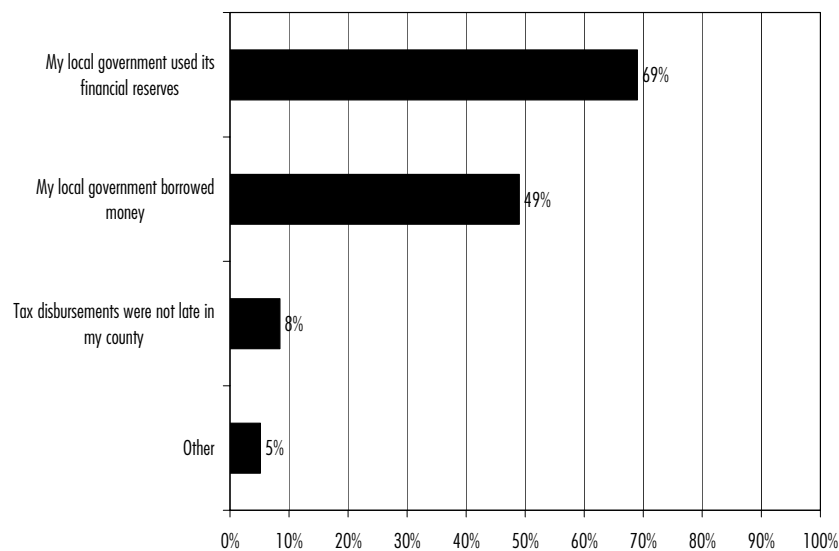
In 2002, officials were what the actions they would take to address late tax disbursements as a result of the delayed completion of reassessment. Two-fifths of officials reported that they could rely on financial reserves if disbursements were one or two months late. About one-quarter of officials predicted that their local government would have to borrow money. At that time, more than one-quarter of officials reported they had not considered what they would do in the event of late disbursement.

In 2003, eight percent of officials reported that tax disbursements were on time (see Table 21 and Figure 11). The remainder reported that tax disbursements were late in their communities. Thirty-seven officials reported that reassessment still was not complete when they responded to the survey (see Appendix D). Almost half of officials reported that their local government borrowed money; 70 percent indicated that their local government relied on financial reserves. More than 30 percent used both options. As indicated in the 2002 survey, school districts relied more heavily on borrowing than other local governments. This was predicted, in part, because school districts also faced delays in state disbursements.

Table 21. Responses to delayed property tax disbursements (Question 13)

	Tax disbursements were not late in my county	My local government borrowed money	My local government used its financial reserves	My local government relied on both	Other
Senator (n=17)	24%	18%	29%	29%	0%
Representative(n=24)	13%	21%	21%	33%	13%
County council president (n=58)	5%	14%	60%	19%	2%
County commission president (n=45)	9%	13%	44%	29%	4%
Mayor (n=59)	10%	14%	42%	31%	3%
Town council member (n=66)	8%	6%	62%	20%	5%
Township trustee (n=99)	14%	10%	43%	23%	9%
School board president (n=117)	2%	35%	9%	50%	4%
Total (n=444)	8%	18%	38%	31%	5%

Figure 11. Responses to delayed property tax disbursements (Question 13)



Source: Indiana Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, 2003

Homeland Security

Indiana communities face new homeland security responsibilities in the wake of increasing constraints on fiscal resources. Questions 15-18 address whether homeland security has affected public safety spending, the quality of current and future collaboration across local governments, and funding needs. These questions are based, in part, on those used in the National League of Cities' 2002 *State of America's Cities Survey*.

Changes in spending as a result of September 11th and new homeland security concerns vary across types of officeholders (see Table 22). Overall, a little more than one-third of officials reported increased public safety spending. However, almost three-fifths of mayors (59 percent) and county commission presidents (57 percent) reported increases. Very few town council members reported increases. NLC reports that 51

and 47 percent of city officials reported increases in 2001 and 2001, respectively. Almost three-fifths (58 percent) of city official projected future increases.⁵

Table 22. Changes in local public safety spending (Question 15)

	Significantly increased	Increased	Little or no change	Decreased	Significantly decreased
Senator (n=19)	5%	37%	32%	26%	0%
Representative (n=21)	10%	38%	29%	19%	5%
County council president (n=58)	7%	34%	59%	0%	0%
County commission president (n=48)	15%	42%	42%	2%	0%
Mayor (n=56)	9%	50%	39%	2%	0%
Town council member (n=65)	0%	14%	77%	6%	3%
Township trustee (n=91)	3%	20%	64%	13%	0%
School board president (n=111)	4%	30%	55%	12%	0%
Total (n=469)	6%	30%	55%	9%	1%

Many officials are optimistic about current and future collaboration at the local level on homeland security matters. Two-thirds of officials reported current local collaboration as *excellent* or *good* (see Tables 23 and 24). With the exception of *evacuation* (71 percent), more than three-quarters of officials reported that future collaboration across security activities was *very likely* or *likely*. NLC reports that 53 percent of city officials indicated that coordination and collaboration with external partners was high.

Training for local emergency response personnel was chosen most frequently as one of the top three priorities for state and federal funding (see Table 25). *Threat prevention, emergency equipment and apparel, protecting infrastructure, and coordinating regional efforts* also were chosen as priorities by more than one-third of officials. NLC reported that city officials place the highest priority for funding on *equipment* (70 percent), *training* (62 percent) and *threat prevention* (61 percent).

Table 23. Quality of collaboration in local community (Question 16)

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Senator (n=17)	6%	53%	24%	18%
Representative (n=19)	21%	58%	11%	11%
County council president (n=57)	18%	63%	18%	2%
County commission president (n=48)	21%	46%	25%	8%
Mayor (n=53)	13%	43%	34%	9%
Town council member (n=61)	11%	52%	28%	8%
Township trustee (n=73)	7%	56%	32%	5%
School board president (n=88)	15%	47%	31%	8%
Total (n=416)	14%	52%	27%	7%

⁵ Hoene, C., Baldassare, M., & Brennan, Christiana. (2002). *Homeland Security and America's Cities*. National League of Cities: Washington, D.C.

Table 24. Likelihood of collaboration in the future (Question 17)

	Very likely	Likely	Unlikely	Very unlikely
Evacuation (n=385)	27%	54%	14%	6%
Transportation routing (n=383)	26%	57%	13%	4%
Public health facilities (n=386)	32%	57%	9%	3%
Communications capacity (n=383)	32%	53%	11%	4%
Technology systems (n=360)	23%	53%	20%	4%
Protection infrastructure (n=379)	22%	52%	22%	4%
Working with media (n=377)	26%	60%	11%	3%
Public information efforts (n=384)	28%	60%	11%	2%
Other (n=7)	29%	29%	29%	14%

Table 25. Highest priorities for future federal and state funding (Question 18; n=453)

	Percentage
Training for local emergency response personnel	62%
Threat prevention and detection	47%
Emergency equipment and apparel	37%
Protecting infrastructure	37%
Coordinating regional planning efforts	35%
Technical assistance on preparedness planning	20%
Personnel support (additional personnel and overtime)	15%
Other	2%
None	1%

Capital Investments

Officials have consistently identified infrastructure, particularly road and sewer infrastructure, as important community issues on this survey. Question 19 addresses current capital investments as well as the most urgent needs for the future.

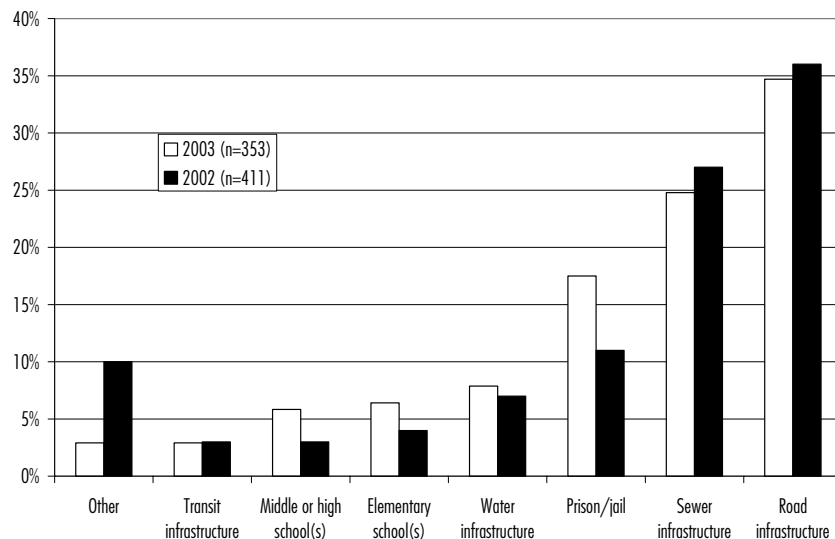
Not surprisingly, officials reported most often that *road infrastructure* and *sewer infrastructure* projects are underway (see Table 26). More than one-quarter of officials also reported that *elementary schools*, *middle or high schools*, and *water infrastructure* are under construction in their communities currently.

Road infrastructure and *sewer infrastructure* also were reported most often as needed in both the 2002 and 2003 surveys. In 2003, *prison/jail* also was reported frequently as most needed.

Table 26. Current capital investments (Question 19; n=407)

	Percentage
Road infrastructure	50%
Sewer infrastructure	48%
Elementary school(s)	28%
Middle or high school(s)	27%
Water infrastructure	27%
Prison/jail	22%
Transit infrastructure	4%
Other-courtthouse	1%
Other-juvenile detention center	1%
Other-remaining	5%

Figure 12. Most needed capital investments (Question 19; n=353)



Source: Indiana Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, 2003

Land Use and Planning

Quality of development, increased amount of development, and quality affordable housing are three land use issues that have been identified consistently by a majority of officials as problems in their communities. Question 20 queried officials about the top three planning issues facing their communities. Question 21 asks which mechanisms are most acceptable for funding farmland protection. Question 22 asks municipal officials about annexation activity in the previous three years.

Planning Problems

In 2003, *outdated planning tools, availability of water and sewer infrastructure, balance or mix of new or existing development, availability of affordable housing, and conversion of agricultural or environmentally-sensitive lands* were chosen most frequently as among the top three community planning problems for all respondents. City, town, and county officials chose the same issues except that the *urban-rural interface* ranked as the fifth rather than *land conversion*.

The order and frequency associated with each problem changed between 2002 and 2003. In 2002, the *availability of water and sewer infrastructure* was ranked most often as one of the three most pressing planning problems. In 2003, *outdated planning tools* was identified most frequently. *Outdated planning tools* and *availability of affordable housing* were reported more often in 2003 than in 2002. Conversely, *availability of water and sewer infrastructure* and *single lot development* were reported less frequently.

Table 27. Planning problems (Question 20)

	2003 (n=456)	2002 (n=385)
Outdated planning tools	52%	39%
Urban-rural interface	26%	26%
Single-lot residential development	21%	28%
Availability of affordable housing	36%	32%
Balance or mix of new or existing development	40%	39%
Location of regional facilities	12%	13%
Availability of water and sewer infrastructure	43%	55%
Conversion of agricultural or environmentally sensitive land	29%	31%
Other	7%	15%

Table 28. Planning problems by office (Question 20)

	Mayor (n=52)	Town council member (n=60)	County council president (n=53)	County commission president (n=73)	Municipal and county officials (n=238)
Outdated planning tools	42%	52%	47%	70%	54%
Urban-rural interface	38%	17%	25%	25%	26%
Single-lot residential development	12%	25%	26%	10%	18%
Availability of affordable housing	46%	33%	34%	18%	32%
Balance or mix of new or existing development	58%	42%	49%	23%	41%
Location of regional facilities	4%	10%	11%	10%	9%
Availability of water and sewer infrastructure	54%	53%	55%	38%	49%
Conversion of agricultural or environmentally sensitive land	15%	30%	23%	16%	21%
Other	13%	8%	11%	4%	9%

Funding Farmland Protection

Many communities are considering options for preserving farmland. In 2002, Indiana participated in the federal Farm and Ranchland Protection Program for the first time. This program provides funds to buy conservation easements. In 2003, the Indiana Land Resources Council's Farmland Preservation Task Force worked to develop a state farmland protection program. Not surprisingly, incentives and funding mechanisms were cause for much debate given the fiscal and economic health of the state. Question 21 addresses a variety of options used in other states to fund farmland protection.

Officials chose *Build Indiana Fund*, *farmland protection license plate*, and *protection by non-governmental, non-profit conservation organizations* most frequently. This is consistent with the types of funding mechanisms most often chosen to fund the preservation of open space in the 2001 survey.

Table 29. Funding mechanisms for farmland protection (Question 21;n=395)

	Percentage
Build Indiana Fund	43%
Farmland protection license plate	36%
Protection by non-governmental, non-profit conservation organizations	30%
Increase in "sin taxes"	26%
Agriculture conversion fee	21%
State-funded general obligation bonds	19%
State revolving loan pool	17%
Real estate transfer taxes or fees	14%
Slight increase in state sales tax	12%
Locally-funded general obligation bonds	7%
Local option sales tax (0.2 percent)	6%
Other-remaining	3%
Other-leave it to the private market	1%

Annexation

The IACIR completed a series of public forums and a research report on annexation in 1998. Significant statutory changes were passed in 1999. The IACIR continues to track statutory changes, as well as annexation activity.

Many communities (45, 44, and 37 percent of cities and towns, respectively) reported annexing property for 2001, 2002, and 2003 (see Table 30). This represents an increase over the proportions reported for the three previous years. Cities and towns continue to annex property using the two basic methods: municipally-initiated and owner-initiated. While the proportion of cities and towns that use municipally-initiated annexations seems to fluctuate from year to year, the proportion using owner-initiated annexations continues to rise (see Table 31).

Table 30. Annexations by year

Year	Cities	Year	Towns
2003 (n=53)	25 (47%)	2003 (n=54)*	15 (28 %)
2002 (n=52)	24 (46%)	2002 (n=55)*	23 (42%)
2001 (n=53)	27 (51%)	2001 (n=55)	22 (40%)
2000 (n=64)	32 (50%)	2000 (n=130)	27 (26%)
1999 (n=68)	29 (42%)	1999 (n=181)	27 (15%)
1998 (n=68)	40 (59%)	1998 (n=181)	47 (26%)

*The survey was administered to a smaller set of towns than the previous surveys.

Table 31. Method used for annexation

		Municipal-initiated	Owner-initiated	Type unknown
2003	City (n=25)	12 (48%)	22 (91%)	0 (0%)
	Town (n=15)	9 (60%)	11 (73%)	1 (7%)
	Total (n=40)	21 (53%)	33 (83%)	1 (3%)
2002	City (N=24)	14 (58%)	23 (96%)	0 (0%)
	Town (n=23)	15 (65%)	16 (70%)	0 (0%)
	Total (n=47)	29 (62%)	39 (83%)	0 (0%)
2001	City (n=27)	18 (66%)	21 (77%)	0 (0%)
	Town (n=22)	13 (53%)	17 (63%)	0 (0%)
	Total (n=49)	31 (63%)	38 (78%)	0 (0%)
2000	City (n=32)	15 (47%)	25 (78%)	0 (0%)
	Town (n=27)	12 (44%)	17 (63%)	3 (11%)
	Total (n=59)	27 (46%)	42 (71%)	3 (5%)

*Totals add to more than 100 percent because respondents were given three options: municipally-initiated, owner-initiated, or both.

Information Technology

Telecommunications and information technology (IT) have become increasingly important components of the successful implementation of economic development and other local government activities and services. Question 23 asked officials to rank their communities' success in embracing a number of these issues. Question 24 asked officials whether they have e-mail accounts for government business.

In 2003, a majority of officials reported success in using telecommunication and information technology in three areas: *overall integration into local government*, *improving government management and service delivery*, and *improving education* (see Table 32). While the same issues were identified in 1999, only *improving education* was identified by a majority of officials in 2001. With the exception of *working with the telecommunications industry* in 2001, fewer officials reported being unsuccessful in all areas in 2003 than in 1999 or 2001.

Table 32. Success in integrating telecommunications and information technology (Question 23)

	Very successful	Somewhat successful	Neither successful or unsuccessful	Mostly unsuccessful	Not successful
Overall integration of IT into local government (n=394)	12%	53%	18%	11%	7%
Using IT to improve government management and service delivery (n=392)	8%	48%	24%	12%	7%
Using IT to connect citizens with government (n=392)	7%	33%	35%	14%	10%
Creating IT infrastructure to improve economic development (n=388)	8%	27%	38%	15%	12%
Using IT to promote equity in access to information (n=388)	6%	33%	38%	13%	9%
Using IT to improve education (n=386)	19%	46%	20%	10%	5%
Using IT to improve public safety (n=386)*	6%	39%	38%	11%	6%
Using IT skills in the workforce (n=383)	6%	36%	39%	11%	7%
Working with the telecommunications industry (n=380)	5%	31%	43%	13%	9%

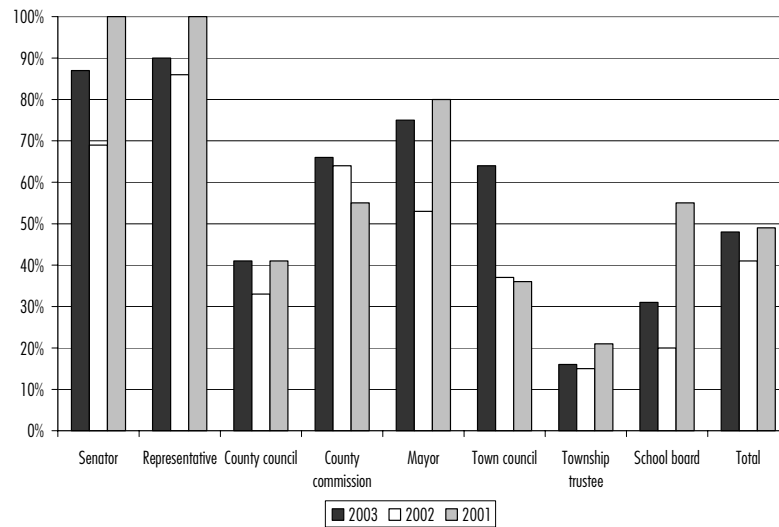
*This category was added to the 2003 survey; it did not appear previously.

E-mail is an ever-present component of information technology. In 2003, a majority of state representatives, state senators, mayors, county commission presidents, and town council members reported having e-mail (see Table 33). Only county commission presidents and town council members reported a higher proportion of e-mail accounts than in 2001 and 2002. The change for town officials can be explained in part by the decision to administer the survey only to officials in towns with 1,000 or more residents.

Table 33. Officials with e-mail accounts by year

	2003	2002	2001
Senator	87%	69%	100%
Representative	90%	86%	100%
County council presidents	41%	33%	41%
County commission president	66%	64%	55%
Mayor	75%	53%	80%
Town council member	64%	37%	36%
Township trustee	16%	15%	21%
School board president	31%	20%	55%
Total	48%	41%	49%

Figure 13. Officials with e-mail accounts by year.



Source: Indiana Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, 2003

Other Issues

Question 25 allowed officials to make additional comments about intergovernmental issues in Indiana. Many respondents also wrote in responses to a number of other questions. The complete set of these comments is provided in Appendix D.

While the issues addressed using this forum varied widely, a number of issues were mentioned several times including reassessment and property taxes, unfunded mandates, limited local fiscal resources, and rising health care costs for local government employees.

Conclusions

The 2003 survey results reflect deep concerns about Indiana's economy and its effect on local communities. Officials are less confident about the future and face a number of deepening community problems than reported in previous surveys. *Overall economic conditions, unemployment, the cost of health services, and drug abuse* were reported most often as current community problems, as deteriorated conditions over the last year and five years, and as important to work on in the short term.

Local governments continue to face significant fiscal uncertainty in the future as a result of property tax reassessment and tax restructuring. Many counties were forced to use fiscal reserves or borrowing to address late tax disbursements resulting from delayed completion of reassessment in their counties. Officials also expressed concerns about the effects reassessment will have on property values, property tax appeals, assessor turnover, staff training, funding for the administration of reassessment, and the usefulness of local economic development tools such as tax increment financing and tax abatement.

Local officials continue to express concerns about road and sewer infrastructure. Since 1999, these community conditions have been identified frequently as most important to work on in the short term. When asked specifically about the most needed capital improvements, road and sewer infrastructure were both identified by more than one-quarter of respondents. While local officials may consider these

investments important for a number of reasons, research shows that they are correlated with effective economic development.

In sum, state and local governments continue to face a changing institutional and economic environment. Good intergovernmental relations between the local, state, and federal levels of government will be critical to ongoing success. Also important will be the ability to maintain a consistent set of financial resources to support the provision of public services.

Appendix A

Survey Methodology

Survey 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 five previous questionnaires as a basis. A few questions have been repeated consistently to allow regular comparisons over time. The 2003 questionnaire also reprised a number of additional questions that have appeared one or more times in the past. Commission staff consulted IACIR members, the Indiana Land Resources Council, and the Indiana Criminal Justice Institute regarding current issues for the 2003 survey. The questionnaire is provided in Appendix B.

Selection of Sample Populations

The survey was administered to 1,113 officeholders. The sample population included all members of the Indiana General Assembly, mayors, county council presidents, county boards of commissioners presidents, and school board presidents. The sample also included a randomly-selected member of each town council for towns with a 2000 population of 1,000 or more persons and two randomly-selected township trustees from each county. Names and addresses of legislators and school board presidents were obtained using printed directories or lists provided by the Indiana Association of Cities and Towns, the Association of Indiana Counties, and the Indiana Township Association.

Administration of the Survey

IACIR staff administered the survey by mail generally according to the procedures recommended by Dillman.⁶ Cover letters explaining the purpose of the survey, the questionnaires, and business reply envelopes were sent on September 15, 2003. Follow-up postcards were sent on September 22, 2003. All officials who had not responded were sent a letter and replacement questionnaire on October 14, 2003. A second follow-up postcard was sent to all non-respondents on November 11, 2003.

Coding and Analysis

Respondents returned all questionnaires to the Center for Urban Policy and the Environment, staff to the IACIR. Surveys received by December 5, 2003, were coded using Access software and checked for accuracy. Staff completed all analyses using statistical routines in SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences).

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 in provided with the table or figure for each question.

⁶ Dillman, D. (1999). *Mail and Internet telephone surveys: the tailored design method*. New York: Wiley.

Appendix B Questionnaire



INTERGOVERNMENTAL ISSUES IN INDIANA 2003

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 elected 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 have changed in your community during the last 12 months. -

CONDITION	CURRENT STATUS OF CONDITION			CHANGE IN CONDITION SINCE LAST YEAR		
	Major Problem	Moderate Problem	Minor or No Problem	Improved	Worsened	No Change
HEALTH						
Cost of health services	2	1	0	2	1	0
Availability of health services	2	1	0	2	1	0
Drug abuse	2	1	0	2	1	0
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
Terrorism	2	1	0	2	1	0
Jail	2	1	0	2	1	0
Youth detention facility	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
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 conditions listed in question 3, which three deteriorated most in your community during the past five years?

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

5. Of the 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 conditions listed in questions 3 and 4, which three will be the most important to address during the next two years?

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

7. How do you feel about the ability of local government and schools in your area to work together to address local needs? -

- Very optimistic
- Somewhat optimistic
- Neither optimistic nor pessimistic
- Somewhat pessimistic
- Very pessimistic

8. Assume that a good friend has just called to inquire about the prospects of a young person finding a job and beginning a career in your community. How would you describe current employment opportunities in your community to the prospective newcomer? -

- Very good
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

9. In your opinion, which industry sector is connected most with the economic well being of your community? (Check only one.)

- Traditional manufacturing
- Hi-tech manufacturing
- Services including finance, insurance, and real estate
- Wholesale trade
- Retail trade
- Transportation and logistics
- Information technology
- Construction
- Agriculture
- Other (specify) _____

10. How do you feel about your community's ability to transition from the current economic base to the new economy?

- Very optimistic
- Somewhat optimistic
- Neither optimistic nor pessimistic
- Somewhat pessimistic
- Very pessimistic
- Don't know

11. Drug and alcohol abuse has been identified consistently on previous IACIR surveys as a major problem for many communities. Please indicate the types of abuse that you believe exist in each age group within your community .

SUBSTANCE	AGE GROUP		
	<u>Under age 18</u>	<u>Age 18-34</u>	<u>Age 35+</u>
Alcohol	_____	_____	_____
Marijuana/Hashish	_____	_____	_____
Cocaine (<i>Powder and Rock/Crack</i>)	_____	_____	_____
Inhalants (<i>Paint Thinner, Aerosols, etc.</i>)	_____	_____	_____
Club drugs (<i>Ecstasy, GHB, Rohypnol</i>)	_____	_____	_____
Stimulants (<i>Amphetamine, Methamphetamine, Dexedrine, etc.</i>)	_____	_____	_____
Central nervous system depressants (<i>Barbiturates, Valium, Xanax, etc.</i>)	_____	_____	_____
Opiates/Narcotics (<i>Heroin, Codeine, Oxycontin, etc.</i>)	_____	_____	_____
Hallucinogens (<i>LSD, PCP, Mescaline, etc.</i>)	_____	_____	_____
Other (<i>specify</i>) _____	_____	_____	_____
Don't know/No opinion	_____	_____	_____

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

Counties are now sending out tax bills based on the new assessments. Please indicate the extent to which each of the following issues have been a problem in your community.

	<u>Major Problem</u>	<u>Moderate Problem</u>	<u>Minor or No Problem</u>	<u>To Soon to Tell</u>	<u>Don't Know/No Opinion</u>
FAIRNESS OF NEW RULES					
Greater burden on low/fixed income owners	4	3	2	1	0
Greater burden on older neighborhoods	4	3	2	1	0
Negative effect on residential property values	4	3	2	1	0
COMMUNICATION AND NOTICE					
Public awareness of upcoming changes	4	3	2	1	0
ADMINISTRATION					
Too little time for implementation	4	3	2	1	0
Computer software and hardware	4	3	2	1	0
Assessor turnover	4	3	2	1	0
Staff training	4	3	2	1	0
Funding	4	3	2	1	0
LOCAL FISCAL MATTERS					
Local budgeting and cash flow	4	3	2	1	0
Usefulness of tax increment financing	4	3	2	1	0
Usefulness of tax abatement	4	3	2	1	0
APPEALS PROCESS					
Increased number of appeals	4	3	2	1	0
Funding for local appeals process	4	3	2	1	0
Ability to bring up new issues at state appeal	4	3	2	1	0
OTHER (specify) _____	4	3	2	1	0

13. Implementation issues have delayed the completion of reassessment, mailing of tax bills, and disbursement of property tax proceeds in many counties. How has your local government responded to the delayed availability of property tax funds?

- Tax disbursements were not late in my county
- My local government borrowed money
- My local government used its financial reserves
- My local government relied on both its financial reserves and borrowed funds.
- Other (specify) _____

14. FOR COUNTY OFFICIALS ONLY: In 2002, the Indiana General Assembly passed legislation that eliminates the state inventory tax completely in five years and 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
- County Adjusted Gross Income Tax
- County Economic Development Income Tax
- My county has not adopted any county income taxes

b. Please indicate one of the following for your county (or your county tax council):

- Our county (or county tax council) has adopted a new CEDIT tax in order to eliminate the inventory tax early
- Our county (or county tax council) has adopted an additional CEDIT tax in order to eliminate the inventory tax
- Our county (or county tax council) has considered early elimination of the property tax but has not acted
- Our county (or county tax council) has not considered early elimination of the inventory tax
- Not applicable/don't know

15. State and local officials continue to be concerned about the threat of terrorist attacks in the aftermath of September 11. Indiana’s communities are taking on new homeland security responsibilities at a time when fiscal resources are stressed by the struggling economy .

What was the impact of September 11 on spending on public safety and security for your local government?

- Significantly increased
- Increased
- Little or no change
- Significantly decreased
- Decreased
- Don’t know

16. With respect to homeland security, how would you rate collaboration and coordination across levels of government, agencies, and other organizations in your county and surrounding counties?

- Excellent
- Good
- Fair
- Poor
- Don’t know

17. To improve response in the event of a terrorist attack, what is the likelihood of increased collaboration and coordination across levels of government, agencies, and other organizations in the following activities? (Circle numbers.)

<u>Activities</u>	<u>Very Likely</u>	<u>Likely</u>	<u>Unlikely</u>	<u>Very Unlikely</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
Evacuation	4	3	2	1	0
Transportation routing	4	3	2	1	0
Public health facilities	4	3	2	1	0
Communications capacity	4	3	2	1	0
Technology systems	4	3	2	1	0
Protecting infrastructure	4	3	2	1	0
Working with media	4	3	2	1	0
Public information efforts	4	3	2	1	0
Other (specify) _____	4	3	2	1	0

18. What should be the highest priorities for future federal and state funding to support local homeland security? (Check three.)

- Threat prevention and detection
- Emergency equipment and apparel
- Protecting infrastructure
- Training for local emergency response personnel
- Technical assistance on preparedness planning
- Personnel support (additional personnel and overtime)
- Coordinating regional planning efforts
- Other (specify) _____

19. Please indicate (a) the types of capital projects that are currently underway in your community and (b) the one additional capital investment that is needed most.

TYPE OF INFRASTRUCTURE	CAPITAL PROJECT UNDERWAY <i>(Choose all that apply)</i>	CAPITAL INVESTMENT NEEDED MOST <i>(Choose one)</i>
Prison/jail	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Elementary school(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Middle or high school(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Road infrastructure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Water infrastructure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sewer infrastructure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Transit infrastructure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (specify) _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

20. 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) _____

21. Many communities are considering options for preserving farmland. In addition, a number of statewide efforts in Indiana have been focused on the preservation of farmland. In 2002, Indiana participated in the federal Farm and Ranchland Protection Program. This program provides funds to buy conservation easements and requires a non-federal match of 50 percent (25 percent of which can be in-kind resources). A task force of the Indiana Land Resources Council is working on a proposal for a state farmland protection program.

In other states, various options are used to fund farmland protection programs. A list of potential funding options is provided below. Please check those that you think would be supported by a majority of your constituents. (Choose all that apply.)

- Locally funded general obligation bonds
- State funded general obligation bonds
- State revolving loan pool
- Real estate transfer taxes or fees
- Agriculture conversion fee
- Local option sales tax (0.2 percent)
- Slight increase in state sales tax
- Increase in "sin taxes"
- Farmland protection license plate
- Build Indiana Fund
- Protection by non-governmental, non-profit conservation organizations
- Other (specify) _____

22a. MUNICIPAL OFFICIALS ONLY: Please indicate whether your municipality passed local legislation to annex territory in 2001, 2002, and 2003. (Check response for each year.)

	<u>Annexed Territory?</u>	
2001	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
2002	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
2003	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

b. If your community annexed property in 2001, 2002, or 2003, please indicate whether they were initiated by your municipality or property owners. (Circle number.)

ANNEXATION(S) INITIATED BY:

	<u>Municipality</u>	<u>Both Municipality and Property Owners</u>	<u>Property Owners</u>
2001	1	2	3
2002	1	2	3
2003	1	2	3

23. When it comes to computers and telecommunications—also known as information technology (IT)—how successful do you feel your community has been in each of the following?

	<u>Not Successful</u>	<u>Mostly Unsuccessful</u>	<u>Neither Successful or Unsuccessful</u>	<u>Somewhat Successful</u>	<u>Very Successful</u>
Overall integration of IT into local government	1	2	3	4	5
Using IT to improve government management and service deliveries	1	2	3	4	5
Using IT to connect citizens with government	1	2	3	4	5
Creating IT infrastructure to improve economic development	1	2	3	4	5
Using IT to promote equity in access to information	1	2	3	4	5
Using IT to improve education	1	2	3	4	5
Using IT to improve public safety	1	2	3	4	5
Ensuring IT skills in the workforce	1	2	3	4	5
Working with the telecommunications industry	1	2	3	4	5

24. Do you have an email 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:

Jamie Palmer

317-261-3046

E-mail: jlpalmer@iupui.edu

Fax: 317-261-3050

Indiana Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations

342 North Senate Avenue, 3rd floor

Indianapolis, IN 46240-1708

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

Appendix C

Other Responses

Other Responses

Questions 1, 4-6, 11-13, and 17-21 offered the opportunity to identify *other* responses. *Other* responses that were reported by at least one percent of respondents are generally reported separately in the previous analyses.

Other responses to “What elective office do you hold?” (Question 1)

- Town council president (5)
- Former school board president (5)
- School board member (4)
- Appointed member of school board (2)
- County council member
- County commissioner
- County council vice president
- School board secretary
- School board vice president
- Trustee-assessor

Other responses to “Of the conditions listed in question 3, which three deteriorated most in your community during the past five years?”(Question 4)

- Health-general (56)
- Economics-general (54)
- Land use-general (32)
- Community quality of life-general (18)
- Public safety-general (17)
- Local services-general(12)
- None (6)
- Business closing/relocation (4)
- Job quality (4)
- Property taxes/reassessment (3)
- Local government finances(3)
- Water and sewer (3)
- Education funding (2)
- Drugs and alcohol abuse (2)
- EMS services due to bridge construction and detour
- Police
- Economic development
- State police
- Community development
- Water management - sewer/storm water
- Unemployment and underemployment
- Family and children services cost have increased
- Cost of living
- Minor crime - drug and alcohol
- Open buildings

- Lost farm land to development
- Real estate–sudden high turnover in residential
- Dealing with ISTA
- Land use – Indiana Land Bank
- CATV pricing
- Community not looking to future
- Power failures
- Structure of county government
- Access to government funds for blighted areas

Other Responses to “Of the conditions listed in question 3, which three improved most in your community during the past five years?”(Question 5)

- Public safety–general (43)
- Local services–general(36)
- Land use–general (33)
- Community quality of life–general (30)
- None (23)
- Health–general (20)
- Economics–general (7)
- Police (4)
- Housing (4)
- Water (2)
- Development (2)
- Neighborhood communities (2)
- Crime rate
- Sidewalks
- [Our community] has no ID
- Local government
- Grant for town
- Community development
- New senior center
- Lighting downtown
- Better land management
- Homeland security and other public safety
- Economy for schools beginning to improve
- HUD senior housing
- Transportation
- Production home builders follow our plans
- Remaining public safety issues
- Public utilities
- Communications – DSL access, better 911, GIS
- Commercial development
- Law enforcement facilities

Other Responses to "Of the conditions listed in question 3, which three will be the most appropriate to address during the next two years?"(Question 6)

- Health-general (54)
- Economics-general (54)
- Community quality of life-general (23)
- Land use-general (21)
- Local services-general(19)
- Public safety-general (17)
- Development (5)
- Drugs and alcohol (5)
- Water and sewer (4)
- Property taxes/reassessment (4)
- Job quality (4)
- Infrastructure (3)
- Economic development (3)
- Educational funding (3)
- Crime rate (2)
- Business closing/relocation (3)
- School building space-schools cannot keep up with development (2)
- None (2)
- Police
- Housing
- Water
- Water quality and infrastructure
- State mandates without funding e.g., voting machines, minimum salaries
- Stormwater
- Quality and amount of development
- Health department changing septic tank rules
- Cohesive planning between city and state
- Stormwater drainage
- Jail and youth detention
- Integration of Hispanic population into public schools and into the mainstream of the community
- Cost of living
- Local funding
- Mental health services
- Dealing with ISTA
- Environment
- "Educare"
- Clean up of air & water
- Boys/Girls Dept. of Corrections funding

Other Responses to "In your opinion, which industry sector is connected most with the economic well being of your community?" (Question 9)

- Gaming (6)
- Manufactured housing/RV's and supporting services (4)
- Research (2)
- Federal government - NWSC Crane (2)
- Steel industry (2)
- We are becoming a bedroom community (3)
- Tourism (2)
- None (2)
- Healthcare manufacturing (2)
- Education – universities (2)
- Health care (2)
- Tie between information technology and construction
- Traditional manufacturing and retail trade
- Best jobs are government due to benefits and security
- Quality of life - schools, parks, trails, cultural opportunities, housing, good planning
- Auto plant
- State hospital
- Education K–12
- Combination of many above
- Traditional manufacturing, service including finance, insurance & real estate, retail trade and agriculture
- Marked both traditional manufacturing and agriculture
- Traditional manufacturing, railroad, and Walmart
- All of these miss the mark.

Other responses to "Please indicate the types of [drug and alcohol] abuse that you believe exist in each age group within your community." (Question 11)**Under age 18**

- Tobacco (3)

Age 18-34

- Tobacco (3)

Age 35+

- Tobacco (3)

Other responses to “Please indicate the extent to which each of the following [reassessment] issues have been a problem in your community?” (Question 12)

- Increased burden on agricultural land (3)
- Communication and cooperation
- Disregard for the correct implementation of state law
- Failure to really reform and shift burden from property tax; lack of fiscal home rule
- Lack of assessor turnover
- Lack of specific data on impact
- Lake property issue
- Land values
- Local government blamed for increase in taxes
- Major problem with shift from industry to homeowners
- New system isn't accountable
- Reassessment costs too high; burden placed on already over-taxed citizens
- Too large a burden on industry
- Uncertainty

Other responses to “How has your local government responded to the delayed availability of property tax funds?” (Question 13)

- Provisional bills (5)
- No problems (4)
- Don't know (3)
- Budget freeze/limit spending (2)
- I feel this was not handled properly
- Collected first installment same as last year
- No disbursements except for CVET and Cshares with license excise
- No impact yet
- No one seems to know what to do
- Offered advancements
- Variety within my district
- Only a month late
- Tax disbursements were not late enough in my county to matter
- We had no funds for 14 months
- Used other funds
- State government has postponed the tax problem for eight year; local government is now planning for it
- Borrowed money from the sewer fund to cover the general fund

Other Responses to “To improve response in the event of a terrorist attack, what is the likelihood of increased collaboration and coordination across levels of government agencies, and other organizations in the following activities? (Question 17)

- Closing freedom houses
- Sheriff’s department
- Working with schools

Other responses to “What should be the highest priorities for future federal and state funding to support local homeland security?” (Question 18)

- Do nothing and save tax dollars (5)
- Illegal alien detection and prosecution
- New type of organization directly under the commissioner
- Military
- Money
- Communications: sirens, TV, radio, etc.
- Educate population on individual actions
- Project Hoosier Safe-T equipment funding
- Threat prevention and detection and emergency equipment and apparel – tied

Other responses to “Please indicate (a) the types of capital project underway in your community and (b) the one additional capital investment that is most needed.” (Question 19)

Improvements Underway

- Courthouse renovation or annex (6)
- Juvenile detention center (3)
- Drainage/stormwater (3)
- Acquisition, demolition, and environmental remediation of industrial brownfields
- Parks
- Fiberoptics
- GIS
- Hospital
- Library moving
- Senior housing
- Sports facilities
- Maximum security unit in state hospital
- Trails and sidewalks
- University buildings
- Work release center
- Youth recreational facilities
- None underway as of now
- All schools recently updated; jail-school (closed) converted to jail and updated as needed
- Don’t know

Improvements Needed

- Courthouse renovation (2)
- Fiberoptics
- K–12 schools
- Recreation center
- Stormwater
- Youth detention facility
- Sewer infrastructure–C.S.O.
- Traffic/other roads/ [local] bypass

**Other responses to “Which of the following are the greatest planning challenges in your community?”
(Question 20)**

- Business attraction/retention (3)
- Fill empty buildings and plants (2)
- Roads (2)
- Stormwater mandates (2)
- Consolidate elementary schools
- Economic development
- Getting government owned land back into production or paying tax
- GIS mapping
- Hoosier Heartland Highway
- Impact fee rules
- Implementing economic development plan
- Lack of collaboration on planning between county and other local units of government
- Maintaining solid 2-parent homes in the community
- Jobs
- We don’t have planning and zoning
- Outdated structure of county government
- Need for additional funding sources to take care of bridges; raise gasoline tax to help with road needs
- Tax structure that promotes urban development outside of city boundaries
- Traffic
- Job training for decent-waged jobs
- Marketing our town to outside businesses and homeowners
- Protect farmland
- Senior housing
- Funding for state
- Transportation corridors
- Unemployment; economic development
- Availability of sewer infrastructure
- Employment, community development, families, education, reasons to live in the county, Hope!
- None of the above

Other Responses to “Please check those [funding options for farmland protection] that you think would be supported by a majority of your constituents.” (Question 21)

- Don’t know; need more information (7)
- Let the market work (6)
- Not needed/wanted (6)
- None (3)
- Use Heritage Trust license plate also
- Federal funding
- Fiscal planning and home rule
- Low property taxes on agriculture
- No new taxes; use disincentives to control the breakup of farms
- State funds 100% of public education
- Stricter regulations on strip mining
- Take inventory tax off and add sales tax
- Tax farmland conversion retroactively at commercial rates
- Zoning restrictions
- Do away with inheritance tax
- Increase in “sin taxes” (maybe)

Appendix D

Additional Comments

Additional Comments

Question 25 provided respondents with an open-ended opportunity to identify additional issues or problems facing local government. Many respondents also wrote comments in the margins for other questions.

Question 3. Current problems/change over one year

- Land Use? There is none, unfortunately
- Health services are available if you have money or insurance
- Health—we have no renal services
- I graded land use and open space as a problem and as worsened because of the amount of land the government owns in our county and has done nothing with to help raise any revenue for county or state
- I'm newly appointed, wasn't on board last year
- Jail—only problem is cost of medical care for inmates and lawyers
- Lack of funding for K–12 education is a major problem, both in the last year and currently
- Sheriff is a major problem
- Vitality of downtown—no problem unless you're living in the past
- We have no poverty that I know of
- We have solid waste management only in one addition
- Workforce training is irrelevant

Question 4. Most deteriorated conditions

- Pretty much status quo. Like most areas, we need more jobs that pay decent wages.
- The unemployment and poor economy of our downtown is due to the shutting down of a steel mill

Question 7. Working relationship between local government and schools

- Good interaction between government and post-secondary/higher education; Minimal interaction/collaboration between government and K–12.
- Somewhat pessimistic—very territorial
- Very pessimistic—no communications

Question 8. Community job prospects

- Prospects for a job are fair, prospects for career are questionable
- 3% unemployment
- Very good, if you would like to work at Walmart or fast foods prospects are good.
- Depends on level of entry: low—service, high academics—good, and others—just fair.
- Job start up—yes; Current—poor
- I don't know

Question 9. Dominant economic sector

- The distinction between traditional and hi-tech manufacturing is somewhat arbitrary
- Traditional manufacturing is declining traumatically
- Our community is completely residential; no businesses
- We only have two retail businesses in community: liquor, pizza
- All depends if the riverboat is voted in, as the factories are not coming back.

Question 10. Ability to transition to new economy

- What is your definition of the new economy?

Question 11. Drug and alcohol abuse

- Age 35+ substance passed down parent to child
- I'd suggest that abuse (use) of all of these exists somewhere in my district to a greater or lesser extent
- Not a serious problem
- There are drugs in our community, but I don't consider any of these as major problems
- Next time use a code of 1-10 with 10 being major problem

Question 12. Reassessment issues

- Bills not sent in [our county]; can't answer (37)
 - Major Problem! Tax bills have not been sent since new assessments have not been completed. What are schools supposed to do? We have already borrowed money since we did not get our spring installment and December looks more doubtful all the time.
 - Tax bills are yet to be sent in [our county], so residents have not made accusations as yet, nor have they agreed with the new assessments. Many have had discussion, but only discussion at coffee shops.
 - Really don't know – Still waiting for it to happen!!! State was not prepared for this!! Needed measures in place to keep funding process in place for schools and local government
 - Our reassessment is not complete. Held up in court.
 - Tax bills have not been sent yet in [our county]. This is a major problem, poor county services.
 - We are still waiting for our assessments to go out and still do not have tax rates. If the entire year's taxes are due in one payment, it will be a hardship on the taxpayer.
 - We have not received tax bills using the new assessment figures. Citizens are concerned that there will be major increases in taxes
 - Who knows! Most counties have not sent out tax statements. The State has not "certified" most 2003 budgets. The problems are in Indianapolis, not at the local level.
- Home rule in fiscal matters (2)
- Need stable school funding (2)
- Administration – Assessor is problem
- Appeals process is better now; we gave them extra money
- DLGF is changing rules during process for each county
- Funding for local schools has caused increase in financial burden due to need for borrowing thus high interest rate costs
- I have only three constituents who complained regarding reassessment.
- Local fiscal matters controlled [our county]
- I feel that the rich get richer and they keep taking from the poor and elderly. It is hard to make a go of things.
- People with no ability to pay wind up paying the greatest increase. For example: No tax relief for rented property and therefore owners pass the added cost onto the renters who can't afford the rent already. If they could, they would buy and not be renting! Reassessment every four years is ridiculous. Every 10 years is more realistic and assessor doing their job annually and it would never be needed.
- Reassessment cost too high and burden on already over-taxed citizens
- The cost of administration and the effect of local fiscal matters are bad for future

- The old tax system should have been maintained until the new system was completely in place! This put a burden on all local government units.
- The system will work well if state legislators resist pander-oriented changes. It's time to stop whining and actually lead. These changes were long overdue.
- There has been plenty of communication and notice; the problem is getting people to read it
- What a mess. No leadership. No plan. Why should we trust them to spend the money if they can't even get a plan to collect it?
- I can't understand why lots of homeowners' taxes were dropped and all rentals were increased. This only creates rent to all to be increased.
- Reassessment is still a monumental battle with apartment owners and older homes with the elderly taking a hit. Also, many counties are still not in. This is unfair to those who must pay more.
- Reassessment needs to be improved. Need to replace the fair market value; lots of problems with it.
- The new system is very unfair. Here it is almost in October and our tax statements are probably 30 days away from being sent out. Elected local officials will get the blame for something that is out of our control. The state needs to look at a bigger sales tax to take place of property tax.
- Unsatisfactory local government job done with reassessment, etc. length of time & cost unacceptable
- It is likely that because of the above there will be one township's tax bills that won't get mailed. There will probably be several sales because of the inability to pay the higher taxes

Question 14. Early elimination of the inventory tax

- Tax council passed wheel tax and special county option income tax for jail/corrections construction
- Our County Economic Development Income Tax funds the county library
- Our county has considered early elimination of the property tax but has not acted: defeated by 3 to 3 tie by county council
- Our county has done nothing in this area!
- Suggestion: should have left things just like they were

Question 16. Current homeland security coordination

- More training is necessary but expensive
- We have a good emergency preparedness director
- We have good collaboration locally; poor collaboration with surrounding area

Question 17. Future homeland security coordination

- Don't know
- In [our county], we have different frequencies and equipment capabilities with each area of public safety responder; police, fire, EMS, local, and county.
- Not sure about feasibility of technology systems
- Poor question-too difficult to assess

Question 20. Planning challenges

- Don't know
- We have no zoning but excellent school and law officials

Question 21. Funding for farmland protection

- Don't need any more taxes on citizens (2)

- Don't know answer to any of these options
- Need more information to answer these questions
- Not Build Indiana Fund – this fund has been misused
- Slight increase in state sales tax—absolutely not, poor wind up paying largest percentage of income
- Protection by non-governmental, non-profit conservation organizations is uncontrollable
- Purchase of development rights

Question 22. Annexation

- Don't know/not certain (3)
- We cannot annex

Question 23. Success with telecommunications and information technology

- Don't know
- Working on this!
- Working with the telecommunications industry is problematic—"their way or highway"

Question 25. Open-ended comments

- Unfunded mandates (12)
 - Counties need a way to pay their ever increasing costs: health insurance, boys and girls school, utilities, computers, wages, jails, work release, more public defenders, and more prosecutors.
 - I continue to be concerned about unfunded mandates. Too often government creates an agency and gives it the power to impose requirements on a community that need funding which in effect gives the agency the power to tax. I'm not sure why I answer these—nothing good seems to happen as a result.
 - I feel all counties would be financially better off if the state would stop coming up with so many changes that aren't really benefiting the counties, just seem to be more of a financial burden. The old saying, if it's not broken don't fix it. That is a motto the state needs to have.
 - The state is not helpful to counties; state often dictates without considering the small counties that do not have finances to carry out their order.
 - The state legislators need to look at impacts that affect local government closer. Several bills passed have put unfunded mandates on county government; probation officers' mandated salary is one example, recent reassessment is another example.
 - There is a financial crisis in many of the counties. The state legislature has placed any limits and demands on the counties, but does not see the problems or address any solutions. I have personally talked with Senator Bob Garton and Speaker Pat Bauer, and I do not believe they have a clue the financial problems many counties are having. What will it take to wake up the State legislature or Governor's office?
 - These are just my opinions. I am really discouraged by the number of unfunded mandates that are handed down, and at the lack of both state and federal funding to support the counties knowing that the biggest percentage of the counties are pretty well broke.
 - State and federal mandates such as, no child left behind and school improvement (PL 221), need state funding. Local boards need control over the budget and curriculum instead of being totally state controlled.
 - State government's lack of interest in assisting county governments in easing revenue burdens and constant unfunded mandates sent down to county governments makes governing at the county level very difficult.
 - State must stop mandates to local government.
 - The juveniles and jail are going to be issues for [our county]. The state needs to revamp the whole criminal justice system. Alternatives must be required instead of putting many people

- in prison. The system is eating-up resources. The juvenile center in [our county] is requesting the following: intake and assessment, diversion, extended day school, day reporting, day treatments, functional family therapy, intensive wrap around program, and multi-faceted strategies.
- We have to get an electronic voting system that we neither need or want. It will cost us over \$100,000 per year. It is mandated and there are no figures as to how much or when any federal or state funds will be available
 - Eliminate property taxes (4)
 - Eliminate property tax; have a 10% sales tax
 - Elimination of property taxes
 - Property taxes are unfair. They should be called penalty taxes. This tax penalizes anybody that tries to improve their quality of life. Income or sales tax or a combination of both is moral and fair.
 - Property tax is a very serious problem. I would like to see sales tax increased in order to eliminate property taxes.
 - Limited local government resources (3)
 - Indiana's local government funding? We cut 18 jobs-ouch!
 - Small communities have a difficult time making ends meet because of small tax bases. Assessments make any improvements problematic. My community has many older retired people on fixed incomes and really cannot afford high
 - Very bluntly: I am sick and tired of the Governor's office and Legislature going back on their word and it looks as if they are about to do it again on property taxes. They cap our spending or lower it but increase state spending and do not return local money promised to be returned. er tax rates.
 - Rising insurance costs (3)
 - Increasing health insurance and increase of overall insurance casts a major concern for school corporations attempting to raise academic standards.
 - Health insurance costs are number one concern
 - County needs to allow trustees to get health insurance with their agent – not pay for it, but allow them to be included. They don't consider trustees part of county except when commissioners act as judges to hear poor relief cases appealed to them. We are like a step-child!
 - Balancing state owned land and local tax base (2)
 - Problem: State acquisition of land within county. Takes tax revenue and increase burden to remaining property taxpayers. Land should be sold back to residents!
 - The State owns too many acres of land in our county! It hurts our tax base.
 - Many questions don't apply to rural places (2)
 - Seems to be a disconnect between southwest Indiana concerns and those in northern and central Indiana. Perception is there whether real or just perceived.
 - Our county] passed a stormwater ordinance to collect a fee from all county residents including [the municipalities]. This was illegal because state law says there is supposed to be an inter-local agreement to collect any money from one governmental body to another. We have no agreement and yet [the county] is collecting a fee for stormwater. No money has been spent in our areas as of yet. There is also no accounting of how much was collected or where the money is going. We, in the [municipalities] would like to know how much has been collected and when will we get it to improve the drainage in our cities.
 - Also expanded educational programs are needed.
 - Constituents have been complaining about workers claiming 9 dependents on their W-4. Little or no state or local tax is then withheld and the worker never files-pays little or no tax. This could cover 3-5,000 workers in Elkhart County. Lots and lots of revenue is lost.

- Don't overspend, cut waste, live within our means, and don't rely on gambling to fund our state or local government. It won't happen, but cut out politics and do what's best for all taxpayers.
- Drugs, crime, & jobs—brings critical mass to problems that bear on the entire community—schools—everyone. Healthcare and insurance is an ongoing issue for all aspects of industry and local government.
- Education—education—education
- Elected officials are poorly trained, when replaced a huge problem comes up. Need to take a look at removing some critical positions from elected officials.
- Get rid of the other 40% of school general fund
- I am very concerned about the consolidating and declining state of agriculture. I am very concerned with the anti-development and over-protective attitudes of some of the farm community. I am very concerned with the increasing average age in our community and lack of available work and housing for our youth.
- I believe that when the state legislature allows for a local taxing option, if the (a) local unit of government wishes to use that tax, they should not have to go back to the state legislature for permission.
- I strongly feel that our municipality and many others need assistance in senior housing and sanitary and storm sewer needs
- I think the state government needs to mandate how much school systems can pay for a teacher's health insurance
- I would like to see personal property assessment eliminated and have tax only on real estate. Personal property assessment relies on honesty of taxpayers. Some are very honest. Some are not. It's not a fair tax.
- Indiana continues a tax system and government services system that allows rural residents outside city limits to pay less than their obligation and share of taxes and funding local government. Urban areas are funding rural services and this drains investment capital. County government is not the place to center power.
- Misuse of fund in local government.
- My biggest challenge as a school board member is constantly battling the teacher's union. The union is so strong and most of their strength is used to protect the employment of poor teachers. When budget cuts forced us to RIF teachers, it was the younger, enthusiastic teachers who had to go. The horrible teachers were able to stay because of seniority. It just isn't right. Something needs to change at the state level. The union needs to lose its power.
- Need a direct route to Indianapolis so we can visit our state government without staying overnight.
- Our biggest problem comes in the form of county government and the county seat (city) government attempting to take over everything. On the outside everything looks good, but behind the scenes, much is happening. We (our city and people) like our community and our independence.
- Our biggest worry is that local and county government don't have anyone to actually help evaluate our government and its function and services.
- Our town is meeting much difficulty with IDEM regarding a sewer ban. We have literally spent hundreds of thousands of dollars to correct our problems. We cannot grow, therefore, we have no new tax base and it is making affordable housing more difficult.
- Please fire every person at IDEM and start over!
- Roads and bridges; water and sewers: everyone travels our roads, including school buses and our children. We need to put more time and efforts in our planning for better roads and safe bridges in our county and state.
- Role of township trustees—needed or not?

- Rural counties suffer as political power resides with urban areas and focus is on those in the major metro areas of the state. Focus is also on re-election rather than doing what is right for ALL CITIZENS of this state!
- The property tax issues along with loss of jobs are causing significant issues. This may be the nail-in-the-coffin for our community.
- [Our municipality's] water supply back up is a [local reservoir] that is in bad need of repair and nothing is being done! We need 2 cents added to the gas tax going to county roads.
- These questions really do not apply to my area and our school district takes in part of 2 counties.
- We are a [local community] of 1,500. No businesses; landlocked; majority of budget goes towards police protection. Need sewer treatment facility update (\$2.5 million).
- We need employment opportunities and pay that would support a family.
- We need more funding for schools.
- We need smaller state government. We have too many worthless people on payroll that eat up funds for legitimate programs. We are taxed way too much. Government should not be self-perpetuating.
- Welfare funding
- Why do you people keep upsetting the general public to only satisfy a few heavy lobbyists?.
- Workforce training—train unemployed for jobs that do not exist
- Municipalities have been granted too much authority for overlapping TIF districts. Schools should have veto authority in TIF districts.
- These questions and responses are very ambiguous, for example, I could mean the problem is too much. You could interpret as not enough.
- I find your survey interesting however I am a bit skeptical. Is the expense worth the effort? Have any of the problems or concerns revealed by the IACIR been resolved through this exercise?

Also, I think your survey failed to address a huge problem—local school finance is unnecessarily complicated. If I cannot explain the financial operation of our schools to a sixth grader in less than two minutes something is wrong. Attempting to explain the funding formula, various accounts, assessed evaluation, frozen levies, capped funds, etc.—is impossible! I don't think our founding fathers ever dreamed we would evolve our government to a complicated octopus that is impossible for the average citizen to understand. How does the legislature expect local government officials to oversee an activity that is so complicated that one needs a PhD in accounting, law and education to properly understand the enterprise. Our entangled regulations are counter-productive to good governance.

The best thing the legislature could do for Indiana is to sunset and consolidate much of our Indiana code. Local governments would be happy. Taxpayers would be happy. Businesses looking to relocate to Indiana would look favorably at our state because of simple and straightforward government.

I challenge the IACIR to light a fire under the legislature in Indiana to set the standard for the United States with a streamlined and efficient government. As Thomas Jefferson once said, "That government is best which governs the least."



342 North Senate Avenue
Indianapolis, IN 46204-1708
ph. 317/261-3000
fax 317/261-3050
jkrauss@iupui.edu