



# MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER

2021 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA



**GREATER  
FORT WAYNE INC.**  
METRO CHAMBER ALLIANCE

# MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER

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## BUILDING A NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED ECONOMY

At Greater Fort Wayne Inc., we work each day on behalf of our 1,300+ member businesses to build a nationally recognized economy. We do not do it alone. We work collaboratively with our community partners and government officials to create public policy that promotes business and economic growth, talent attraction and retention, and community vibrancy.

## TACKLING THE BIG ISSUES

Time after time, our community has stepped up to tackle big issues. From quality of place to a global pandemic, we collaborate to pinpoint our challenges, map a course of action, and execute to get results.

What do those results look like?

- Using CARES Act funding to help local small businesses survive the pandemic
- Providing a platform for honest and open conversation about racial justice
- Improving our quality of place to better attract and retain talent

Though the challenges may shift, our commitment to our mission does not. We'll continue working with our partners in the public and private sectors to build a nationally recognized economy in Allen County.

## THE NEXT STEPS

Though we have made significant economic strides and have seen a positive shift in our domestic migration over the last three years, the job is far from finished. To reach our goals, we must become a magnet for talent, attracting and retaining people from across the country. We can accomplish this through innovative public policy and strong, collaborative partnerships between the private and public sectors.

We work with all levels of government and advocate year-round for public policy that helps grow our community into a nationally recognized economy. Our legislative priorities focus on five areas:

- Economic & Community Development
- Transportation & Infrastructure
- Entrepreneur & Business Development
- Education & Workforce Development
- Government Efficiency

The 2021 Legislative Agenda presents GFW Inc.'s policy position statements as well as our key legislative priorities. This agenda unites and advocates with one voice on behalf of Allen County's business community, in pursuit of a nationally recognized economy.

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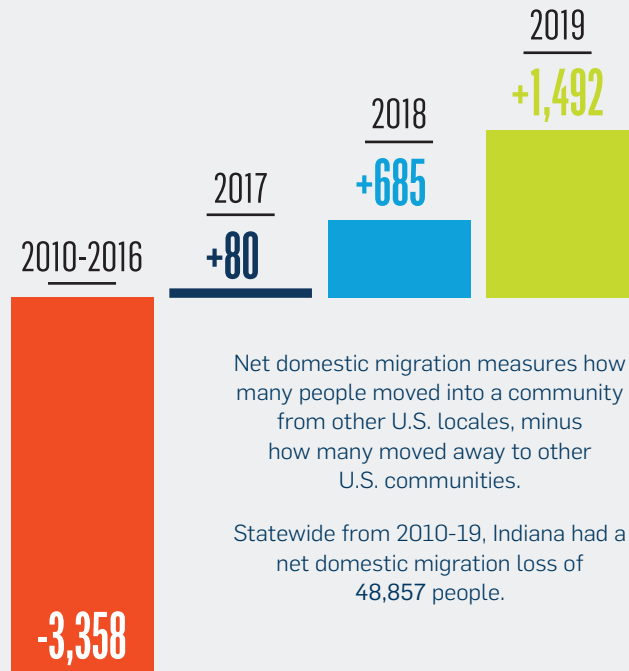
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# REVERSING THE TREND ON DOMESTIC MIGRATION IN ALLEN COUNTY



## 2010-2019 ALLEN COUNTY NET DOMESTIC MIGRATION





# THE BRADLEY BOUTIQUE HOTEL

GROUNDBREAKING **MAY 2019**

PROJECTED GRAND OPENING **SPRING 2021**



**FORT WAYNE-ALLEN COUNTY  
AIRPORT AUTHORITY**

FORT WAYNE INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT  
SMITH FIELD AIRPORT

## PROJECT GATEWAY

GROUNDBREAKING **2019**

PROJECTED COMPLETION **2022**



**Riverfront**  
FORT WAYNE

PHASE I COMPLETED **AUGUST 2019**

PROJECTED PHASE II & III COMPLETION **EARLY 2023**

# 2021 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES



## LOCAL

- Support the advancement of quality-of-place projects such as Electric Works, phases II and III of Riverfront Development, North River development, Stellar Communities projects in east Allen County, and development of Arts Campus Fort Wayne to build best-in-class amenities that attract and retain talent and businesses
- Support the development and implementation of a countywide economic development strategy

## STATE

- Support funding an environmental impact study on converting U.S. Route 30 to a limited-access highway to improve connectivity in NE Indiana
- Support initiatives that increase accessibility to high-speed internet, as access to quality broadband is critical for economic development and community connectivity
- Provide temporary business liability protection for coronavirus-related civil lawsuits for business and nonprofit entities that comply with safety standards and guidance

## FEDERAL

- Support the military presence in northeast Indiana, including maintaining a combat fighter mission for the 122nd Fighter Wing at the Fort Wayne Air National Guard Base
- Preserve and strengthen economic development programs including Historic Tax Credits, New Markets Tax Credits, and Opportunity Zones

# ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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**GFW Inc. is focused on attracting new businesses, helping existing businesses grow, and creating best-in-class amenities to attract and retain talent. We encourage creative uses of resources to improve quality of place, maintain infrastructure, and provide an environment for businesses to succeed.**

- Support the development and implementation of a countywide economic development strategy
- Support art and cultural institutions, as they are part of our community identity—attracting and retaining talent, leveraging tourist dollars, and helping sustain a positive quality of life for our residents
- Support the advancement of quality-of-place projects such as Electric Works, phases II and III of Riverfront Development, North River development, Stellar Communities projects in east Allen County, and development of Arts Campus Fort Wayne to build best-in-class amenities that attract and retain talent and businesses
- Support local revenue-enhancement opportunities to give communities the tools to adequately fund capital improvement projects
- Rejuvenate neighborhoods by incentivizing investment in distressed properties, as vibrant neighborhoods are critical to our community's growth
- Support sustainable funding for Regional Development Authorities to encourage regionalism and promote the revitalization of distressed properties, enhancing quality of place
- Modernize the Allen County Professional Sports and Convention Development Area (PSCDA) by allowing for a portion of the funding to be used for operating expenses and increasing the funding cap to support the Memorial Coliseum and the Grand Wayne Convention Center
- Maintain Indiana's economic competitiveness by preserving and strengthening economic development tools such as Tax Increment Financing (TIF), the Economic Development for a Growing Economy (EDGE) Tax Credit, the Skills Enhancement Fund (SEF), and the Redevelopment Tax Credit
- Support initiatives that increase available capital by attracting national investment and incentivizing the retention of homegrown capital within Indiana
- Preserve and strengthen federal economic development programs such as Historic Tax Credits, New Markets Tax Credits, and Opportunity Zones

# TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE



**To grow our economy, Indiana must invest in infrastructure—such as airports, roads and highways, railways, public transportation, broadband, and trails—that fuels business growth. GFW Inc. supports transportation and infrastructure projects and policies that reflect the needs of our region and strengthen the ability to do business.**

- Support funding an environmental impact study on converting U.S. Route 30 to a limited-access highway to improve connectivity in northeast Indiana
- Support the creation of the Indiana Passenger Rail Commission to promote and coordinate efforts to develop plans for modern passenger rail systems in Indiana
- Continue funding of the Public Mass Transit Fund to support the public transportation needs of workers and employers
- Support initiatives that increase accessibility to high-speed internet, as access to quality broadband is critical for economic development and community connectivity
- Support the expansion of air service and air cargo in Fort Wayne; in a global economy, it is essential for Fort Wayne International Airport (FWA) to maintain and expand air service to business destinations
- Support FWA's terminal expansion project to increase capacity
- Support the military presence in northeast Indiana, including maintaining a combat fighter mission for the 122nd Fighter Wing at the Fort Wayne Air National Guard Base

# ENTREPRENEUR & BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

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**Entrepreneurs are the core drivers of new, emerging growth businesses. Their ingenuity is the basis for a growing economy in which businesses can become national industry leaders. GFW Inc. supports programs that promote entrepreneurship, accelerate the growth of innovative business, and enhance the development of early-stage industries.**

- Address the local shortage of Class-A office space and industrial sites
- Strengthen state and local resources for initiatives that promote innovation and entrepreneurship
- Maximize the ability of certified technology parks (such as the NIIC) to provide resources for entrepreneurs and startup companies
- Support initiatives to make Indiana a national destination for the development of autonomous vehicles, including leveraging our assets for testing facilities
- Provide temporary business liability protection for coronavirus-related civil lawsuits for business and nonprofit entities that comply with safety standards and guidance



# EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

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**Access to a diverse and talented workforce is critical to business growth. GFW Inc. supports education and workforce policies that prepare students to be college- or career-ready, provide advanced training for current employees, and promote collaboration among educational institutions and businesses.**

- Support legislative initiatives to expand access to early-childhood education
- Align K-12 academic accountability standards with the needs of the community
- Support unique STEAM educational opportunities to allow students to connect classroom education to real-world applications
- Support Purdue Fort Wayne's \$2-million request for academic investment in faculty in three strategic areas of workforce need for the business community, aligned with the region's target industries
- Support Ivy Tech's capital request of \$24 million to renovate Harshman Hall, creating a center focused on student support services
- Encourage initiatives that support the availability of additional workforce housing throughout the region
- Support workforce initiatives such as MadeByMe that connect educators and businesses to highlight the opportunities of skilled-trades careers to students
- Support the Employing People with Disabilities Initiative which helps open pathways to employment by removing barriers for people with disabilities and connecting qualified applicants with ready-to-hire companies
- Support workforce-development initiatives including Skill-Link that provide training and education that aligns with the needs of employers
- Continue to fund the Next Level Jobs Employer Training Grant program that reimburses employers who train, hire, and retain new or current employees
- Advocate for policies that cultivate diverse talent and leadership, and address equality, inclusion, and equity through education, economic development, and employment
- Make Indiana the state of choice for retiring military veterans

# GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY

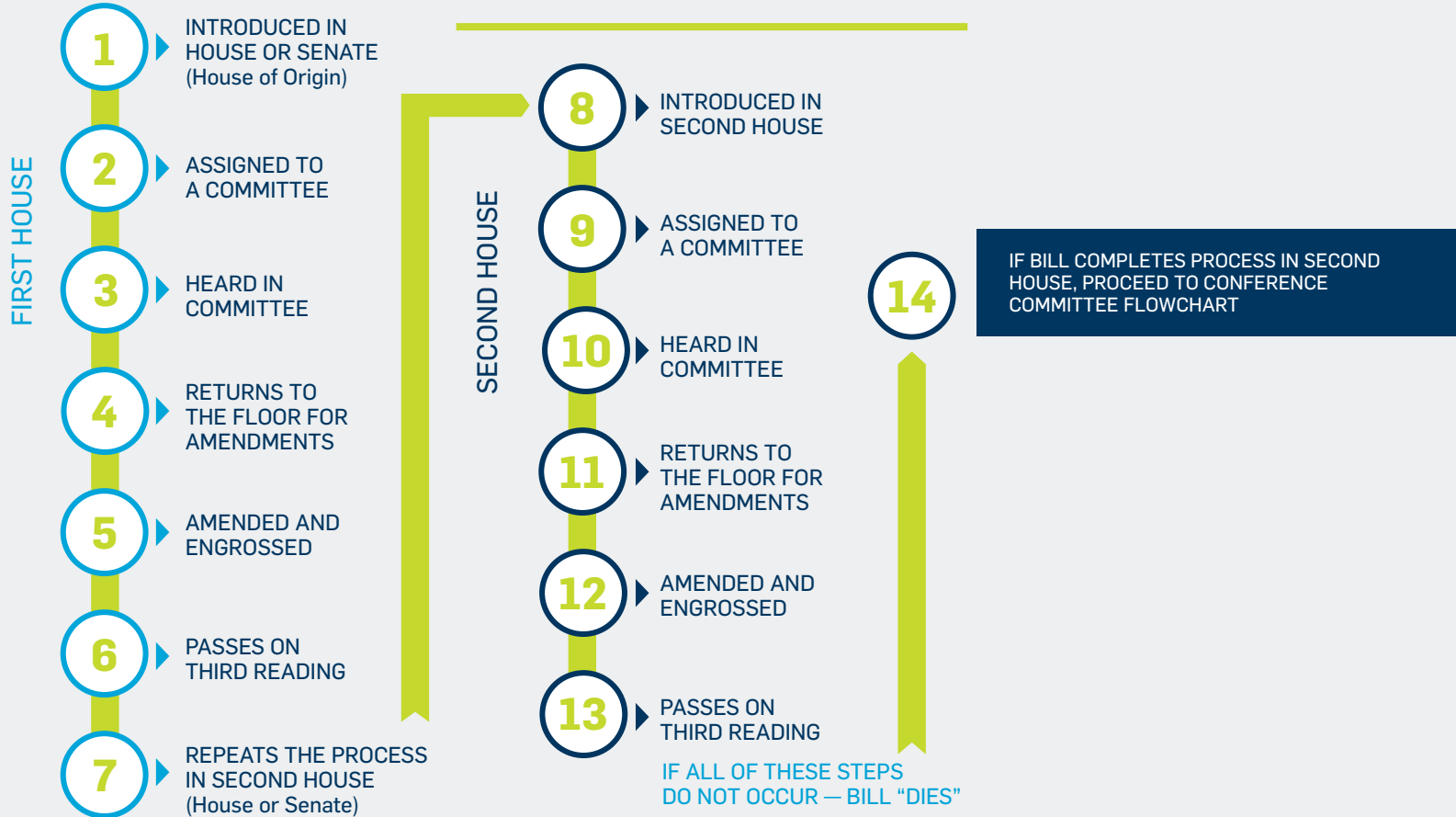
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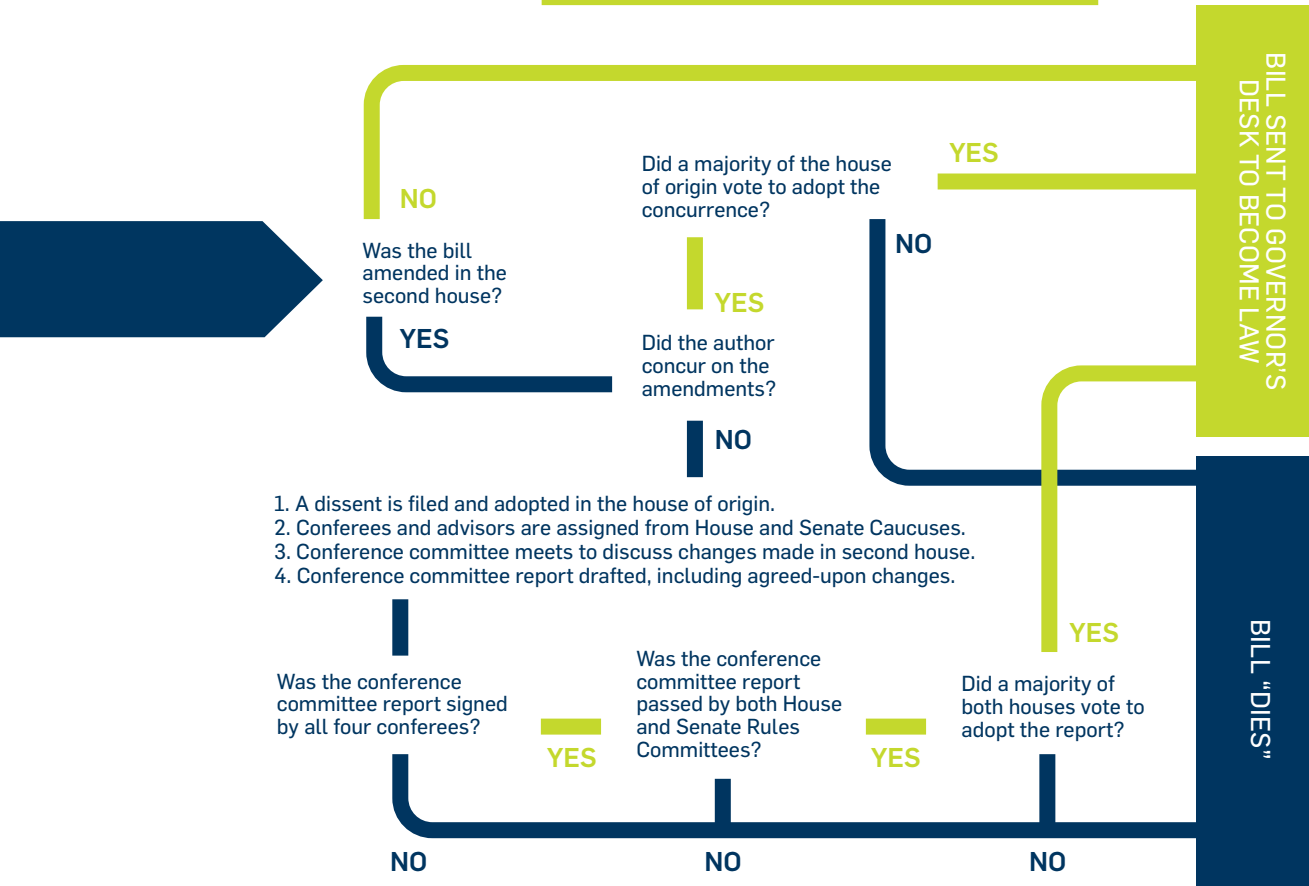
**Government can create a premier business environment by minimizing unnecessary regulations and providing efficient, high-quality services. GFW Inc. will continue to collaborate with our government officials at all levels to move our community forward.**

- Support the continued implementation of efficient and effective local permitting procedures
- Encourage efforts to diversify key revenue sources that finance local government
- Support legislation to expand voluntary efficiencies for local government units
- Oppose overreaching administrative rule-making that unduly burdens small businesses
- Encourage flexibility in future pandemic-related state and federal funding to meet the needs of business
- Support expanding access to healthcare through the utilization of telemedicine and virtual healthcare by extending telehealth waivers granted during the public health emergency
- Address the increasing cost of healthcare benefits for employers
- Support the permanent repeal of the federal medical device excise tax

# HOW A STATE BILL BECOMES A LAW



# CONFERENCE COMMITTEE FLOWCHART



# HOW A CITY COUNCIL BILL BECOMES A LAW

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Ordinances and resolutions are formally introduced with First Reading on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month during City Council's Regular Sessions; those bills move into committees for further discussion.

A bill that has been introduced is given its Second Reading during the Council's committee meeting the following week, where it is discussed and given one of the following preliminary actions:

- Do Pass / Do Not Pass
- No Recommendation
- Held or Tabled

A bill with a "Do Pass," "Do Not Pass," or "No Recommendation" action moves to Regular Session either that Tuesday, the following Tuesday, or as designated, where it receives its Third Reading and is given Final Action.

Bills that have been given Final Action by City Council will either go to the Mayor for signature, or "die."

A vetoed bill must receive at least six votes by City Council to be overridden.

A "Held" or "Tabled" bill returns for Committee Session discussion when specified by Council.

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To find out who your elected officials are at the local, state, and federal level, visit:  
[www.in.gov/sos/elections](http://www.in.gov/sos/elections)

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*Greater Fort Wayne Inc. is a nonprofit membership organization serving the business community in Fort Wayne and Allen County, Indiana. Policies and positions expressed in this document do not represent those of any elected officials or government entities, and do not represent endorsement, recommendation or favoring by any such officials or entities.*