



6100 Southport Road
Portage, Indiana 46368
(219) 763-6060
www.nirpc.or

NEWS FROM NIRPC - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - November 25, 2020

Contact: Ty Warner, NIRPC Executive Director, 219-254-2524; twarner@nirpc.org

Pandemic Accelerates Impacts of Online Shopping in Northwest Indiana

A new NIRPC report finds the proliferation of e-commerce opens new opportunities for Northwest Indiana, even as the COVID-19 pandemic accelerates online shopping trends.

With the COVID-19 pandemic driving the region's residents to online shopping, the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC) has released a new report on the impacts of e-commerce on Northwest Indiana. The report, "*E-commerce in Northwest Indiana*," examines changing trends in the region accentuated by the new economic and travel patterns associated with the 2020 coronavirus pandemic. Consumer trends have emerged, allowing planners to forecast land use and economic development needs. The report provides recommendations to help businesses and municipalities adapt, allocate resources to these changing economic needs, and plan land use and zoning for development of distribution facilities and increased freight traffic.

The report, "*E-Commerce in Northwest Indiana*," finds slumps in retail, increases in freight traffic, and new economic opportunities. Among report findings and recommendations, NIRPC planners found a 12% decline in shopping trips in Northwest Indiana between 2008 and 2018, the closure of nearly 28% of consumer electronics stores, and growth of nearly 40% in urban freight delivery. City streets and highway traffic are particularly impacted. Transportation and warehousing make up 17.6% of the economy in Northwest Indiana – a higher percentage than Indianapolis – with warehousing and storage employment increasing 50% in just two years. After analyzing the data, planners identified areas in the Northwest Indiana region that were best suited for development for e-commerce-related business activity, based on proximity to municipalities, major highways, and other factors.

“The rapid growth of online shopping has created shifts in the way we live, and our shopping patterns are continuing to change. This has had a significant impact on our retail sector and will have long-term implications for the way we use our land and highways,” said NIRPC Executive Director Ty Warner. “The pandemic has only accelerated what was already a growing trend in Northwest Indiana. Municipalities and counties can use these insights to make critical decisions for their communities, considering the best strategies for economic growth and quality-of-life.”

The report was approved by the NIRPC commission on November 19, 2020.

NIRPC is the Metropolitan Planning Organization and Council of Governments for Lake, Porter, and LaPorte Counties in Northwest Indiana. Working collaboratively across the region, NIRPC coordinates regional comprehensive planning and programming for transportation, economic development, and environmental policy.

Read the full report:

<https://www.nirpc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/E-Commerce-in-NWI.pdf>

For more information, please contact Ty Warner AICP, NIRPC Executive Director, at twarner@nirpc.org or (219) 254-2524.

###