

ABOUT THE PROJECT

This brief is one in a series about opportunities arising from the development of the Indiana Toll Road. Research was conducted by the Center for Business and Economic Research at Ball State University in conjunction with Building Better Communities at Ball State.

SECTOR **TRANSPORTATION** ACTIVITY **COMMUTING**

Indiana Toll Road Commuting Corridor



ABOUT THE AUTHORS

CENTER FOR BUSINESS & ECONOMIC RESEARCH

The Center for Business and Economic Research is an award-winning economic policy and forecasting research center housed within Ball State University's Miller College of Business. CBER research encompasses health care, public finance, regional economics, transportation and energy sector studies.

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Building Better Communities provides comprehensive services to partners across Indiana by connecting them with Ball State University's expertise and resources. BBC offers practical solutions to local challenges and assists with community, economic, and business development.

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The proliferation of surface transportation options throughout the Indiana Toll Road Corridor provides uncommon opportunities for the importation of wage and salary income from greater Chicago to the Corridor. Many prosperous communities in the Midwest have become so by effectively capitalizing on this strategy. For example, Hamilton County, Indiana, the wealthiest of Indiana's 92 counties, exports over half of its workforce to locations outside the county. In Hamilton County's case – like many other suburban locations – the economic result is higher resident income. Higher incomes correlate with higher educational attainment and higher tax receipts per capita. Higher income areas also tend to be more attentive to community and public services including amenities such as park and recreation, cultural opportunities, and protection of natural resources.

While other income importation opportunities may exist, many opportunities lie within the Corridor's proximity to Chicago. Chicago

is an international city with a metropolitan population and gross economic product larger than most U.S. states. It is home to multiple headquarters operations, technology firms, professional and technical service firms, entrepreneurial opportunities, artistic endeavors, and well-respected institutions of higher education. Chicagoland residents' average income and educational levels well exceed national averages.¹

The Indiana Toll Road, the Chicago South Shore and South Bend Railroad commuter line, as well as US 30, US 20, US 12, I-94, and other existing transportation links to Chicagoland offer the Indiana Toll Road Corridor an opportunity to improve a number of its economic conditions by attracting more Chicagoland employees and business owners to live in the Corridor.

¹ For example, per capita personal income and average wage per job as well as percent of population with high school and higher education degrees.