



Supporting Neighborhood Success

Our city's leaders should have the same goals for Indianapolis that we have for our families – build a strong foundation for success, encourage learning, offer assistance when needed, work hard, encourage unique gifts, and have every generation reach higher than the one that came before.

I often hear the phrase “World Class City.” But what does that mean and how do we get there?

Our city and county is made up of many neighborhoods, each with different strengths and challenges. We must foster involvement and innovation in every neighborhood, in all nine townships.

Officials must do more than listen when citizens reach out to government. They must deploy staff to work in neighborhoods and *ask* for input, not wait for it. We shouldn't wait for citizens to drive downtown to the City-County building when a problem has gotten out of hand. We must reach out to them wherever they gather, whether at a congregation, a barber shop, or a neighborhood association meeting or block party.

Creating the Office of Neighborhood Support

Past administrations created community outreach staff, including neighborhood liaisons. These efforts were a great start, but we need to do more. We need to support neighbors working to better their community and small business that will create local jobs.

Let's raise these past efforts to the next level by combining neighborhood and business development staff to create the department of “Neighborhood Support.” This office will provide a holistic set of services – from workers located in neighborhoods, not downtown.

Instead of trying to find the right office, the right phone number or the right form, all a resident or business owner would have to do is visit one of nine neighborhood offices or call a central number to be connected with the liaison in their neighborhood.

These neighborhood-based liaisons would:

- Help local businesses navigate everything from getting façade grants to working to improve sidewalks to assistance in becoming a certified minority/women/veteran business enterprise.
- Work with neighborhoods to help complete high priority projects. This department would offer a menu of options to support neighborhoods and, most importantly “meet neighbors in their own neighborhoods.” Service would range from helping neighborhoods without active associations to form groups to address their specific needs to tackling abandoned houses to beautification projects to support in seeking grants.
- Make finding answers and assistance easier by enhancing and promoting a website where you can click on your neighborhood and see all the city programs, non-profits and community groups offering services.

We need to bring the resources of our government to our neighborhoods, and we need to do it in person. I look forward to the opportunity to seek out neighborhood and business input, set priorities, and work together to achieve our goals.