



What's Next? City Must Turn its Attention to Neighborhoods

March 6, 2011

Beginning with the February 6th edition, the Indianapolis Star kicked off a year-long series focused on thinking about what's next for our city. That day's paper saw the publication of the story "Beyond the Big Game: Trying to Build on our Sports Success," which provided a bright spotlight on what our city has done to revitalize downtown - leveraging our professional and amateur sports tradition, increasing entertainment options, and highlighting our convention facilities. Our elected leaders, civic groups, business community, and residents joined forces to create a vibrant downtown, and their success is unquestioned.

However, the story also pointed out that our neighborhoods have not shared in that success, and I think it is fair to argue that our success downtown has taken our civic focus away from our neighborhoods – the most essential building blocks of a vibrant city. Our success downtown can, and must, be replicated in neighborhoods around our city, but it will take the same focused attention, collaboration, commitment, and shared vision to expand the revitalization throughout our city, block by block, neighborhood by neighborhood.

There are a great many exciting organic efforts under way already - last weekend's forum held by the Lafayette Square Area Coalition highlighting their International Marketplace is a prime example - and we have to make sure we continue to nurture the seeds that will create thriving neighborhoods in every corner of Marion County. Each neighborhood has its own character and priorities – and I believe it is up to our city's leaders to listen carefully to the priorities of each neighborhood and provide the framework that will support their efforts.

As the former President of the Butler-Tarkington Neighborhood Association, I know that it takes hard work to improve neighborhoods and that our city must support, encourage, and develop these efforts. For our city to truly be "world class" we must celebrate our neighborhood successes in the same way we celebrate our success downtown.

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