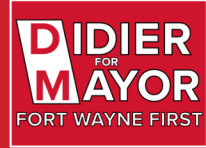


Unlocking Fort Wayne's Potential: Strengthening Local Neighborhoods



“ Empowering neighborhood leaders is critical to steering future growth and preserving unique community identities.



Why is it a problem? What will you do?

Decisions about public infrastructure investments has gradually become more concentrated downtown over the last 16 years, leaving neighborhoods out of the discussion and stifling the development of new leaders.

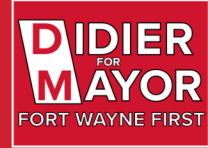
How is it different?

Over the last decade there has been a gradual erosion of neighborhood leadership capacity because Tom Henry has eliminated programs that allowed targeted neighborhood investment. As a result, public works investment decisions have become increasingly centralized. This program would put our city on track to recover from 16 years of neglecting neighborhoods.

Shifting the focus on public works investments from downtown to other parts of the city is Didier's top priority.

- Step 1: Restore city council-designated project funding to encourage development of stronger ties between neighborhood leaders and their local elected representatives.
- Step 2: Develop and implement leadership development curriculum for neighborhood leaders empowering them to be more effective advocates and develop a pipeline of future leaders.
- Step 3: Create local development challenge grants to encourage collaboration among neighborhoods and their local business districts to establish and market stronger community identities.

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How has it worked in other places?

This challenge is not unique to Fort Wayne. As Dr. Seth Kaplan proposes in his soon to be released book "Fragile Neighborhoods," the decline of the neighborhood unit across the country has contributed to many societal challenges. Kaplan argues that as neighborhoods have become more disenfranchised, community involvement has withered to the point that people lack connection and that the key to restoring that connection lies with empowering community institutions like neighborhoods.

How will it work?

While neighborhood leaders were prevalent before Henry took office, Didier has witnessed a steady decline in residents willing to step up and serve in these positions. As mayor, Didier will emphasize the importance of participating in neighborhood leadership, design recognition programs that foster healthy competition between neighborhoods, and encourage partnerships with local commercial corridors. He will implement curriculum for leadership development programs for neighborhood leaders and encourage them to seize the opportunity to steer the future of their community. Didier's administration will equip neighborhood leaders with resources to help make their vision a reality.

Expected Impact

The goal for these initiatives is for every area of Fort Wayne to have a clear idea of what they would like their corner of the city to look like a decade or two later. Active, engaged community leaders are the lifeblood of the future of Fort Wayne and we need to build an infrastructure that supports developing those leaders and provides them with tools to help move our city forward.