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HENRY ACCENTS CITY ECONOMIC HEART WITH METRO INVESTMENT, NEIGHBORHOOD MAIN STREETS PLAN *Candidate Unveils Strategy to Strengthen the City's Urban Core*

Fort Wayne, Indiana – Standing with local business owners on historic Wells Street, Mayoral candidate Tom Henry today focused his attention on Fort Wayne's urban core with the release of his plan to "Strengthen the Heart." The strategy details recommendations to assist small businesses, enhance neighborhood commercial corridors, encourage investment and increase the city's long-term economic potential.

"As Mayor, I will promote continuous investment in our urban core with the same intensity that I pursue continuous improvement in our delivery of city services," declared Henry. "It just makes sense. Preserving value in our traditional neighborhoods heightens the value in all city neighborhoods. My 'Strengthen the Heart' plan will give our older commercial areas the tools to succeed, ensuring Fort Wayne is an economically attractive city in every corner, in all its parts."

Creating private-public partnerships, investing in older parts of the city and energizing our core neighborhoods will be the plan's fundamental goals. It will employ area-specific planning, resources and standards to foster vitality in Fort Wayne's older sections.

Henry's "Strengthen the Heart" plan concentrates efforts into three, interconnected and interdependent initiatives, as follows:

- "Neighborhood Main Street" Plans. Led by Community Development staff, work with neighborhood business and property owners to identify and prioritize all neighborhood commercial corridors. Facilitate the development and implementation of tailored "Neighborhood Main Street" plans to meet the needs of each targeted area. The private-public development plans may include organizational support, joint purchasing of services, coordination of public infrastructure improvements, resource location, marketing, and collaborative beautification and business development projects.

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HENRY *for* MAYOR

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- Traditional Building Revitalization. Create a grant program open to qualified applicants for the reuse and adaptive reuse of traditional buildings in neighborhood commercial areas. Structural and mechanical work will be the priorities. The grants are expected to range between \$25,000 and \$125,000. This environmentally friendly approach will help to promote walkability, compact design and the preservation of our architectural heritage, in addition to infill and mixed-use development, all guiding principles outlined in Plan-it Allen!
- Core City Development Standards. Break down the barriers to economic revitalization in our older neighborhoods by reassessing and crafting development standards that aid and advance investment in the urban core. Study best practices in cities with thriving older areas and prepare a set of Core City Development Standards that could become part of City Code. To support sustainability, establish a special zoning status for neighborhood commercial corridors.

“Fort Wayne’s neighborhood commercial corridors are the ‘Main Streets’ for our older residential areas.” observed Henry. “They are great places for small business growth, provide needed and convenient services, anchor our neighborhoods, can be hothouses for innovation, and add character and unique retail options to the city experience. I am committed to working side by side with local businesses to help them grow and to keep our neighborhoods strong.”

Henry’s “Strengthen the Heart” plan will utilize existing city staff to define and execute it. The Traditional Building Revitalization program will be funded from a grant pool fueled initially by Community Development Block Grant dollars. If effective, additional funds, possibly County Economic Development Income Tax resources, may be added as needed.

“Wells Street, Broadway, State Street, Anthony Boulevard, Calhoun Street, Pontiac Street, each one of Fort Wayne’s neighborhood commercial corridors evokes the unique character and heritage of the area it serves,” noted Henry. “They are the ribbons that tie Fort Wayne together. Their economic vitality makes our entire community stronger.”

Tom Henry is the Democratic candidate for Mayor of Fort Wayne. He is a successful business owner, a five-term Fort Wayne City Councilman and a nonprofit leader with deep roots in the community.

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