



# DOWNTOWN VISION

## INTRODUCTION

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## A VISION FOR INDIANAPOLIS' DOWNTOWN

### INTRODUCTION

Indianapolis is struggling to get back on its feet after the COVID-19 pandemic. People are not returning to our city. We are significantly lagging in a return to vitality when compared to other cities across the United States. (1) The current administration believes that by entering the hotel business, we can jump-start our economic lagging. We do not return to our historic reputation of being an economically strong city by building government-funded hotels. We become an economically sound city by having a vision for our city and our people. Joe Hogsett has had no vision for Indianapolis.

Mayor Hogsett has had eight years to accomplish his stated goals, and according to him, "Eight years is long enough to accomplish what you want to accomplish" (2). We have seen what Mayor Hogsett has been able to achieve, and the result has been a significant lack of GDP growth in Indianapolis (3). Our city and downtown have gone from a bustling epicenter of action and hope to a place where our citizens no longer feel safe and our businesses vacate their leases and buildings. What we need is a change and a vision backed by a competent leader who can act on that plan. With vision and action Indianapolis can compete on the national level once again.

As mayor, I believe the city's focus needs to be on its people and building a city where those people want to live. Indianapolis needs to be a city that is welcoming and attracts talented individuals. People no longer chase opportunity and then live where the opportunity exists. Instead, people are looking for beautiful places to live and discovering the opportunities that exist there. Improving the quality of life for our citizens needs to be the mayor's focus and the mayor needs a vision to do so.

Indy is a sports city; that is part of our identity and will continue to be. So is our status as a great convention city. But now is not the time to be complacent. As we continue to be outmatched by the cities that surround us and our peer cities in other states, now is the time for a reinvigorated vision that will carry us into the next 40 years. We cannot wait another four years. Now is the time for change and now is the time for a new vision to carry us forward, not one that will keep us stagnant and result in us falling further behind.

1. [Downtown Recovery Rankings](#)
2. [Hogsett Says Term Limits For Indianapolis Mayor Should Be Restored](#)
3. [Making the Indianapolis workforce more competitive](#)



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INDIANA UNIVERSITY INDIANAPOLIS &  
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## INDIANA UNIVERSITY INDIANAPOLIS & PURDUE UNIVERSITY IN INDIANAPOLIS

Beginning July 1, 2024, IUPUI will officially be split into Indiana University Indianapolis and Purdue University Indianapolis. Indianapolis has an unprecedented opportunity to maximize on this development. The split will put TWO research 1 universities right here in downtown Indy, opening doors to significant development opportunities. With a growing student population, downtown Indianapolis will need to provide housing, dining, groceries, coffee shops and entertainment venues. As mayor, I will lead the creation of vibrant spaces, not only for students, but also to attract more talented, skilled workers to downtown. Mayor Hogsett has been notably absent from the IUPUI split conversation, because he has no vision for this project and fails to see the potential this recent development can have on Indianapolis and Marion County as a whole. I am on the IUPUI Board of Advisors and a graduate of both IU and Purdue. I have the relationships to capitalize on this opportunity for our city.

With IU and Purdue campuses in downtown Indianapolis, we have the opportunity to be at the center of two nationally-recognized universities. A tech corridor will stretch from Lafayette to Bloomington with Indianapolis at its center. As your mayor, I pledge to prioritize this issue and collaborate with our universities, business community and skilled local developers. Exciting and innovative development ideas exist. We have an incredible opportunity to expand higher education for residents of Indianapolis, retain top-level talent and bolster our skilled workforce. We need a mayor to champion and realize these incredible opportunities, and I promise to take the lead towards a brighter future for Indianapolis.



# DOWNTOWN VISION

## VACANT SPACE

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### VACANT SPACE

We're facing a pressing issue with numerous vacant buildings in our city, particularly in our downtown commercial spaces (5). Mayor Hogsett's approach has been either to neglect the issue or attribute the problem solely to COVID. COVID is no longer an excuse for Mayor Hogsett; he also has no track record of ever dealing with this issue even before COVID. Unlike Mayor Hogsett, I come from a real estate background and I understand how to build and repurpose commercial properties, one of the biggest issues affecting cities in the U.S.

The City-County Building is one of these spaces. We must revitalize the City-County Building. Utilizing this prime property and city asset is a small part of getting people back to our city's downtown.

The issue of the City-County Building's low occupancy has far-reaching consequences. For instance, the recent announcement of City Market operating at half-capacity and closing for renovations has devastated local business owners struggling to stay afloat. City Market vendors want to know what the game plan is but have received little to no information from the city (6). As Mayor, I will guide City Market through this renovation ensuring merchants are kept up to date. A Shreve administration will ensure one of our city's most historic venues comes back stronger, ready to serve a thriving downtown community and one way to do that is by bringing people back to the City-County Building.

We need to retain the talent Indianapolis currently has while attracting new talented individuals to live in our city. If our goal is to expand Indianapolis' population, and with the split of IUPUI into IU Indianapolis and Purdue Indianapolis, we can expect the demand for housing to rise. What we know now is that Indianapolis has low housing stock and an abundance of abandoned office space (7). Indy can do more to create a balanced mix of land use that addresses our current and future needs. Work from home culture has changed the landscape and fewer workers are returning to the office. The need for traditional working space has decreased, but the need for affordable and attainable housing has increased. Indianapolis can reenter the competitive mix by having more affordable, attainable and diversified housing options. In my eyes, the solution is to use the abandoned office space and transform it to diversified housing options, whether it be apartments, condominiums, shared living space, etc. We can incentivize those investors that see this same opportunity and engage them in a way that allows for the easy transition of office space to attractive and diversified living options for skilled workers.

We must repurpose underutilized properties now, converting them into housing and attractive multi-amenity office space. And to accomplish that, we need a leader who acknowledges the issue rather than covers it up with campaign ads.

5. [Downtown office space at crossroads, local broker says – Indianapolis Business Journal](#)

6. [Indianapolis City Market to close for renovations next year, reopen with private management](#)

7. [Indianapolis Metro Area Housing Shortage: Homeownership Out of Reach for Millions of Hoosiers – Build Indiana Roots; Downtown office space occupancy slump continues after pandemic](#)



# DOWNTOWN VISION

## HELIPORT & CONNECTIVITY

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### HELIPORT

This spring, the Indianapolis Airport Authority requested to decommission the Indianapolis Downtown Heliport, an ask that is counter to the wishes of prominent Indy business owners. This request is misguided and the responsibility lies with the mayor. Under my leadership, I'll strongly advocate for the heliport to stay open and lead a charge to expand the city's valuable resources, not eliminate them.

The heliport is crucial for its critical emergency response. It also offers a vital transportation service for the research and business that will come with IU Indianapolis and Purdue Indianapolis, the LEAP District and other key connectors throughout the state. The heliport will facilitate seamless travel for the tech community between Lafayette and Indy as well as Indy and Bloomington. In addition, selling the heliport land would be irreversible. Mayor Hogsett should be fighting hard to keep the heliport open and promote its utilization for further business development. The fact that he isn't and fails to see its importance for the city as a whole, reflects his lack of vision and his limited understanding of Indianapolis' economic potential. We should be expanding our city's connections, not cutting them off.

### CONNECTIVITY

We need to make it easier to get around Indianapolis, not harder. A major factor for a skilled workforce in determining where they want to live is how connected they are to their city. I believe in increasing connectivity between Indianapolis neighborhoods and in and around downtown. My vision for Indianapolis includes connections throughout our city that allow for multiple modes of transportation that are safe and reliable.

As it currently stands, Indianapolis is ranked as the sixth most dangerous city for pedestrians (9). A city that is not safe to travel by foot will not be attractive to current and new talent. In response, a Shreve administration will take this issue more seriously than Mayor Hogsett. The city blames the issue on an increase in reckless driving since COVID (10). How much longer must we attribute a lack of effort and inaction to COVID? Instead of blaming the past for our current and future problems, I will address pedestrian safety by increasing safe crosswalks for pedestrians and ensuring our traffic laws are enforced. Furthermore, I will maintain our city's sidewalks and bike lanes, so pedestrians and cyclists will not be forced to venture into the street. These are simple fixes to not only issues in public safety, but to create a more vibrant downtown appealing to current and future residents.

Connectivity in Indianapolis is also lacking for those traveling by car. We need to readdress our current transportation planning and convert one-way streets into two-way streets where possible. This would not only increase traffic flow and allow for easier travel throughout downtown, but also improve safety, walkability and support for local businesses (11). The city finally announced this summer that they would be taking steps to address this issue (12).

9. [New study ranks Indy in top 10 for most dangerous cities for pedestrians](#)

10. *Id.*

11. [Cities benefit from restoring two-way traffic | CNU](#)

12. [Construction project to convert 8 Indy roads from one-way to two-way](#)



# DOWNTOWN VISION

## CONNECTIVITY (CONTINUED) & AGGRESSIVE PANHANDLING

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### CONNECTIVITY (CONTINUED)

Unfortunately, it has taken Mayor Hogsett two terms to address traffic issues that have plagued this city his entire administration. As mayor, I will begin my administration by improving connectivity and ensuring our streets are safe for travel.

Mayor Hogsett's recent decision to close Monument Circle to vehicular traffic has reduced this city's connectivity and has had damaging impacts on businesses there. The circle is one of our city's many historical landmarks. Mayor Hogsett claims he closed the circle in order to make our city's streets safer. What he fails to realize is that constructing a temporary park on the circle does not improve public safety; we do not make our streets safer by eliminating streets entirely and making it more burdensome to get around downtown.

An attractive city is an accessible city, and that includes keeping Monument Circle open. Once Spark concludes in October, it's time to remove the astroturf and reopen the circle. I stand alongside business leaders who share this view – opening the circle to vehicular traffic will enhance accessibility to the symphony, the Columbia Club and other retail establishments on the circle and improve visibility for our local businesses.

### AGGRESSIVE PANHANDLING

To create a thriving downtown, we absolutely must address the problem of aggressive panhandling. It is common sense that guests and citizens alike should be able to feel safe in our downtown and have the expectation of not being accosted for money.

It is longstanding best practice and the advice of leaders on homelessness policy that contributions to panhandlers is unhelpful to individuals and counter to effective policy in addressing homelessness. It is well known that many, if not most, of these folks are dealing with serious mental health issues or drug addiction, or both, and that donations to organizations tasked with addressing these issues are the most helpful (13). All points of view land in the same place: permissiveness on panhandling should be eliminated.

The truth is the Hogsett administration provided tepid support to previous efforts to contain this problem and has zero enthusiasm or interest in solving what common sense tells us is the real problem. A Shreve administration will renew efforts to solve the panhandling problem in a way that will withstand judicial scrutiny and will double down on support for government and charitable programs that address the real causes of homelessness by providing shelter, affordable housing and sustenance to both the truly unsheltered *and* the mentally ill.

13. New city effort discourages giving to panhandlers, but does it work?



# DOWNTOWN VISION

## BEAUTIFICATION & CONCLUSION

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### BEAUTIFICATION

We need to make our downtown beautiful again. It needs to be welcoming to visitors the way it was when we hosted the Super Bowl a decade ago. Indianapolis took center stage then and the splendor of our city was on full display. But downtown Indianapolis today is a shadow of the downtown of 2012.

It doesn't have to be this way. We've already established we have too many vacant buildings, which is why I propose offering small grants to property owners who seek to improve the facades of vacant buildings or the buildings themselves.

### CONCLUSION

Indianapolis is currently falling short of its full potential. We are lagging behind peer cities like Columbus or Nashville. We need the dynamism we, as a city, once felt. The potential for an energetic, strong city is right in front of us; we simply need the right leadership to make it happen.

We have a moral obligation to reduce the bloodshed in our streets. Our ongoing public safety crisis is destroying families and neighborhoods, and addressing this crisis is my top priority. Indianapolis will never realize its full potential without safer streets.

Many of us have lost faith in Joe Hogsett's capacity to lead our city toward economic growth. He's run out of ideas, he hasn't been creative in finding solutions and he is not prepared to take this city to its next chapter. Our progress since 2016 has been lackluster and uninspiring. It's time to achieve excellence and capitalize on our city's true potential.