City's first Community Development Summit to yield renewed vision for strong neighborhoods

INDIANAPOLIS – Hundreds of residents, community leaders, business owners and neighborhood representatives will come together to initiate a renewed vision for strengthening Indianapolis neighborhoods during the city’s first-ever Community Development Summit, Mayor Bart Peterson said today.

When: Saturday, October 9
8 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Where: Indiana Government Center South
402 W. Washington St.

The Community Development Summit will focus on prioritizing goals for future neighborhood revitalization efforts and result in a more comprehensive approach to community development in Indianapolis.

“Strong community partnerships have been at the heart of our city’s many successful community development efforts, which have breathed new life into neighborhoods across Indianapolis,” said Mayor Peterson. “This summit affords us the opportunity to build on this network of partnerships and ensure all neighborhoods have access to the tools and resources necessary to improve their quality of life.”

The Mayor stated that neighborhood groups and community development corporations are performing great work within their specific service areas to lift up local neighborhoods. He believes, however, that the summit can lead to a more comprehensive approach to community development that can benefit areas that may not yet have a solid foundation of neighborhood partnerships in place.

The Community Development Summit will engage participants in a dialogue that addresses three core questions:

✓ What makes a healthy neighborhood?
✓ What are the barriers to achieving healthy neighborhoods?
✓ What are the strategies for obtaining healthy neighborhoods?

Following the summit, a group of civic leaders will study the issues and priorities identified from these core questions, develop a consensus vision for a countywide approach to building stronger, healthier neighborhoods and create an agenda for continuing a dialogue about these issues.

The Mayor pointed to several community development success stories that will be used as building blocks for ideas during the summit:

✓ Fall Creek Place – the once troubled near northside neighborhood being revitalized through a community partnership resulting in hundreds of new affordable and market rate homeownership opportunities;
The Earned Income Tax Credit Program – a countywide effort to increase awareness and utilization of this federal tax credit that many working families have historically missed out on claiming;

Southwestway Park – residents and community leaders worked diligently to secure contributions from businesses and individuals throughout Decatur Township to purchase more than 100 acres to add to the existing park; and

The Commercial Corridor Initiative – a public/private partnership aimed at spurring a return of commercial investment and economic growth in targeted urban corridors.

The Community Development Summit is co-hosted by the City of Indianapolis and the Indianapolis Coalition for Neighborhood Development. Other sponsors include the Local Initiatives Support Corporation, the Indianapolis Neighborhood Housing Partnership, Bank One, Fannie Mae and Irwin Mortgage.

The Mayor outlined the need for the Community Development Summit and other key initiatives to build healthy neighborhoods in The Peterson Plan II, his second detailed vision for Indianapolis released last year during his reelection bid.