



ABOVE: CITY HALL  
*PHOTO COURTESY OF NANCY HECK, CITY  
OF CARMEL*

PAGE RIGHT: ANNUAL  
FOURTH OF JULY CARMELFEST  
PARADE TRAVELS DOWN MAIN  
STREET.



# INTRODUCTION

## TAKING OUR FUTURE IN HAND

ONCE A SMALL QUAKER TOWN, CARMEL, INDIANA, is now a city of more than 80,000 people and growing. What has set Carmel apart from most other communities surrounding major cities in the United States has been its focus on creating a more walkable, traditional city instead of the typical sprawling suburb.

Rather than ignore the problems of sprawl, we've chosen to tackle them directly. We've managed to create a walkable downtown district where condominiums and apartments sit above shops and restaurants. Instead of four-lane roads choked with cars barreling through the city, we've instituted roundabout intersections that keep traffic flowing at a smooth, safe, steady pace. Rows of Georgian townhomes overlook a long reflecting pool and veteran's memorial where families come to

honor their friends, relatives and fellow citizens. Across the street stands an elegant landmark, the Palladium concert hall, where we celebrate the place of the arts in our community. Our rail-to-trails project, the Monon Greenway, provides a pedestrian and cycling path right through the center of town, connecting many of the city's amenities including the Clay Terrace shopping area, the Arts & Design District and one of the best high schools in the state. Further along the Monon Trail is the Monon Community Center, a state-of-the-art fitness and recreation facility, which itself is built on 161 acres of trails, natural wetlands, lagoons and boardwalks.

These many assets are among the reasons that our city has one of the most dynamic business sectors in the state of Indiana, and is home to a number of corporate headquarters, in addition to a burgeoning number of medium and small



size companies. While enjoying the recognition of being one of the fastest growing cities in the country, we've chosen to plan for the future responsibly, imagining the kind of community we aspire to be. I believe that Carmel demonstrates that an American city can be competitive, beautiful and a joy in which to live.

## THE LONGEST JOURNEYS

THE FIRST SMART STEP IN ADDRESSING THE NUMEROUS PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED with a growing city is an often neglected one: it is to look at our history and understand how we got where we are today. If we don't - so the saying goes - we risk repeating the mistakes of the past. When a city planner looks at a congested highway and the only solution he can come up with is to build another highway or widen the existing one, he ignores



PAGE LEFT: "CONFIRMING PREDICTIONS," BY SCULPTOR J. SEWARD JOHNSON

LEFT: DINERS ENJOYING THE SPRING WEATHER ON MAIN STREET.  
PHOTO COURTESY OF NANCY HECK, CITY OF CARMEL

the history of the problem, because we now know that simply building wider roads leads to more traffic, not less.

During my first election campaign, I talked with thousands of potential voters about their hopes and dreams for the place they had decided to raise their families and spend their lives. In these conversations, I began to hear a similar refrain, "We like going out to eat or to the theater and walking around in downtown Indianapolis, but it's so far that it's a hassle to drive down, find parking and drive back late at night." "I wish we could go out for a dinner and a show in Carmel." "What can we do to renovate the Old Town area?" The people of Carmel wanted a downtown. They wanted to have walkable streets that led somewhere besides another residential

cul-de-sac. Moreover, they wanted a feeling of community... they were longing for a better planned traditional city.

The aspirations of the people of Carmel will not surprise anyone familiar with the American suburbs: isolated clusters of houses and shopping malls without a connection to each other as a whole. People want their neighborhoods to be more than places where they go to eat and sleep. They want their neighborhoods to be more interactive with the community they comprise.

If creating walkable streets and areas that allow people to come together and interact is important to civic life, and if fostering a sense of community is something we aspire to, then why do so many cities fail to do so? It wasn't always like this. American cities used to be built to accommodate a more intimate, pedestrian lifestyle. For all our progress in the past century,

RIGHT: THE CITY OF CARMEL AND THE CARMEL ARTS COUNCIL PRESENTS "HOLIDAY ON THE SQUARE," WHICH INCLUDES MUSIC, FOOD, ARTISTS, PERFORMERS, THE LIGHTING OF THE SQUARE AND PHOTOS WITH SANTA. THE VIEW IS OF TOWN SQUARE FROM ATOP CITY HALL.

PAGE RIGHT: IAN MAHONEY OF CARMEL WAITS FOR A BITE DURING A FAMILY FISHING DERBY AT WEST PARK IN CARMEL.



we remain aware that something vital is missing from the daily life of our suburbs. In order to make our communities better we need to study the recent history of our cities.

## COAL POWER AND GASOLINE

**T**HE BIGGEST TURNING POINT IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE AMERICAN CITY was the introduction of the automobile. For better and for worse, cars have changed the way we live, how we live and where we live. Until after WWII, most Americans didn't own cars and didn't drive. Although the automobile was already being mass produced at the beginning of the 20th century, most Americans didn't own a car until after WWII.

