

Fort Wayne Collaborates to Implement Tactical Urbanism Demonstration Projects

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SUMMARY

The City of Fort Wayne's Traffic Engineering Department and the Northside Neighborhood partnered with the Active Transportation Coalition of Allen County and Purdue Extension to create two community inspired short-term demonstration projects for slowing traffic near Forrest Park Elementary and Lakeside Park.

These Tactical Urbanism Demonstration Projects were funded by the Indiana Department of Health using low-cost materials and local volunteers to reshape streets and improve pedestrian crossings so residents may walk and bike to destinations without fear of fast moving cars.

The short-term demonstration projects quickly identified opportunities to make long-term investments in infrastructure that will improve pedestrian safety for decades to come.



CHALLENGE

Fort Wayne, like most communities in Indiana, has a big problem with cars traveling too fast. Drivers will travel as fast as the roadway allows them to, regardless of the posted speed limit. High speed traffic has a chilling effect on community walkability and decreases the safety of walking and bicycling within a neighborhood.

But change is hard and designing safer streets is complicated, expensive and time consuming. Communities need a cost effective way to try new approaches to calm traffic, making it safer and easier to actively travel to everyday destinations.

YOUR INVOLVEMENT IS KEY

For more information about the tactical urbanism grant program, visit DNPA's website at www.in.gov/health/dnpa.

"Since our Tactical Urbanism experiments, neighborhood leaders have worked with Traffic Engineering to identify opportunities for longer term changes and for ways to carry momentum from this project to other neighborhoods. What was learned has been invaluable because it offered a community driven approach to testing ideas without costing a lot of money or changing streets permanently."

-City of Fort Wayne

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SOLUTION

In recent years, a unique, community driven approach for redesigning streets and public places has emerged. It's called tactical urbanism and it provides a new way to envision and implement changes to streets and public places that support walking and bicycling. The approach uses low-cost, short-term demonstration projects that volunteers and neighborhood residents can use to test various ideas for making streets safer for all users. The lessons learned from these projects can be relayed to engineers and public officials to help plan and implement long-term changes.

Thanks to a grant from IDOH, the Northside Neighborhood in Fort Wayne used a community driven tactical urbanism approach to experiment with various designs at a troublesome intersection near Lakeside Park. Pedestrians felt unsafe crossing the busy street to the park because vehicles drove too fast along the neighborhood streets. The project included a mini-traffic circle, decreased/modified road widths, and artistic crosswalks. The improvements were a success with the surrounding neighbors and vehicle speed decreased dramatically.

RESULTS

The City of Fort Wayne's Traffic Engineering Department was involved from the beginning of the Tactical Urbanism demonstration project and was able to incorporate what they learned into long term improvement plans that are slated to be completed during the year following the project.

The community was actively involved in the planning and construction of the demonstration project. Residents became invested in the changes and are excited to see the long term improvements implemented in their neighborhood. The city and neighborhood are now working collaboratively to find solutions to tough traffic safety problems thanks to the lessons learned from the tactical urbanism demonstration projects.

FUNDING

This project is supported by the Indiana Department of Health, Division of Nutrition and Physical Activity, in collaboration with Maternal and Child Health Title V funding.

SUSTAINING SUCCESS

The city now uses a tactical urbanism approach to test traffic safety improvements in other neighborhoods. This is a direct result of building upon the achievements of the Northside Neighborhood's traffic calming demonstration project.

The city is also creating a program that will help residents plan their own tactical urbanism projects with the assistance of city staff and community volunteers utilizing a lending library of materials for their project.

The process of making streets and sidewalks safer is becoming more collaborative in Fort Wayne. Neighborhood associations are working alongside city officials to find solutions to big problems and residents feel empowered to make their community safe and accessible for all.



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All Photos by Nathan Miller