

DEMOCRACY STILL WORKS HERE

Human-scale democracy in a time of upheaval



Has public service changed your sense of personal safety?

A

Never

B

I have occasionally felt threatened or unsafe

C

I have personally received a threat or threatening behavior

D

I and/or my family have changed routines or taken security precautions

Compared with five years ago, how has the tone changed?

- A** More civil and constructive
- B** About the same
- C** More contentious
- D** Much more contentious and personal

Think about one of the most important things your community accomplished in the last few years. What was most responsible for making it happen?

A

Strong local leadership

B

Residents and community participation

C

Partnerships among government, business, nonprofits, and other organizations

D

State or federal policy and resources

THIS IS A HARD TIME TO BE A LOCAL LEADER.

Leadership isn't matching the temperature of the room.
Leadership is changing it.

Listen • Tell the truth • Refuse to dehumanize • Make disagreement productive

Human-scale democracy

Proximity changes the nature of public leadership.

ACCESS

People can reach you.

ACCOUNTABILITY

You live with the consequences.

EMPATHY

You see one another again.

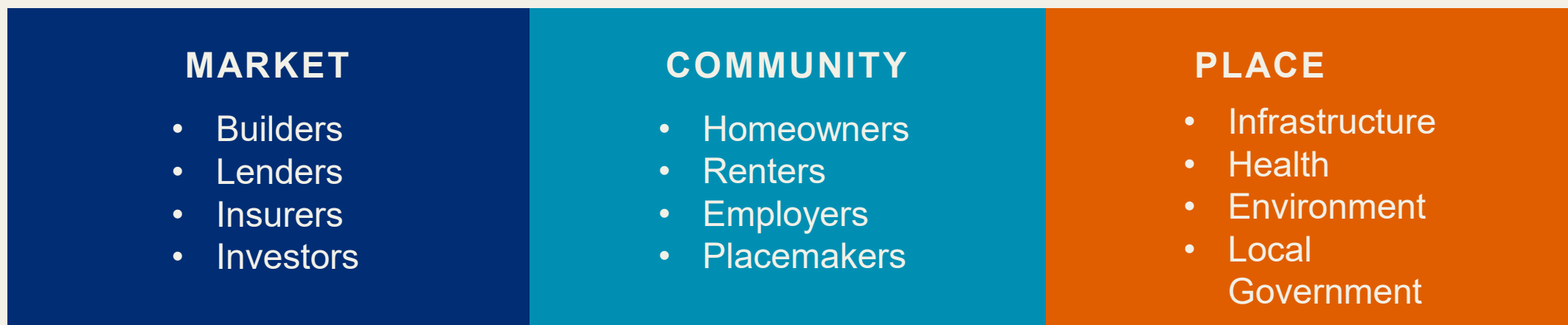
RESULTS

The problem still has to be solved.

Washington can survive on argument. Communities have to survive on results.

Complex problems do not have one-lever solutions.

Housing is an ecosystem — not a zoning code.



Local government is where these forces finally meet — in a real place, with real people and real consequences.

This is what democracy looks like when it works.

Four communities. Four different answers.



BERRIEN SPRINGS

ASK THE CHILDREN

- Voice
- Listening
- Change



STERLING HEIGHTS

CREATE PLACES TO MEET

Shared space
builds connection



BUCHANAN

BET ON YOUR FUTURE

Rebuild the place
you believe in



ROCHESTER

COULD WE TRY THAT HERE?

- Experiment
- Coalition
- Action

Local government works because communities are allowed to be different.

Partnership without control

Proximity changes the nature of public leadership.

NOT THIS

“We have decided what every community should do.”

THIS

“You understand your community.
How can we help you succeed?”

Resources matter. Partnership matters. Local knowledge matters.

People need evidence that democracy works.



WE CAN STILL

Make decisions together. Solve problems together. Build things together.

**YOU HAVE ACCEPTED
RESPONSIBILITY FOR**

A PLACE.

Not an ideology. Not a political party. Not an argument on social media.

Maybe democracy is rebuilt from the ground up.

Community by community. Conversation by conversation. Decision by decision.

DEMOCRACY HAPPENS HERE.

And every single day, you are making it work.

