OUR TEAM

MAYOR JIM BRAINARD

Senior Advisor for Governance

Jim Brainard served seven terms as the mayor of Carmel, Indiana. Under his tenure, Carmel's population grew from 25,000 residents to more than 105,000. Brainard is frequently asked to speak on city planning, climate change, redevelopment, and transportation networks. A city that consisted mainly of suburban sprawl, Carmel transformed under the Mayor's leadership into a vibrant, walkable, and sustainable city. Brainard combined smart land-use planning, pioneered the use of financial modeling to impact zoning decisions, and secured public-private partnerships to redevelop under-utilized land and create a city that is often listed as one of the best places to live, work, and play in America. Mayor Brainard was one of four republicans appointed by President Barack Obama to serve on his 2013 State, Local and Tribal Leaders Task Force on Climate Preparedness and Resilience. He currently chairs the Seaside Institute Board of Governors, serves as Vice-President of the Board of Governors of the Suzanne C. and Henry L. Lennard Institute for Livable Cities, and is a member of the Board of the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy. In 2024, he was appointed Senior Researcher Associate in the School of Architecture at the University of Notre Dame.

EDUCATION

Ohio Northern University
Ada, OH
JD, 1982

Butler University
Indianapolis, IN
BA, 1976

EXPERIENCE

Speck Dempsey
Senior Advisor for Governance,
2025 – present

University of Notre Dame
Senior Researcher,
2024 – present

City of Carmel, IN
Mayor,
1996 – 2023

State, Local, and Tribal Leaders Task Force on Climate Preparedness and Resilience
Presidential Appointee, 2013

SELECT PROJECT EXPERIENCE

Carmel City Center
Carmel, IN

Carmel Arts and Design District
Carmel, IN

Carmel Midtown Redevelopment District
Carmel, IN

Carmel Flower District
Carmel, IN

Downtown Prospect Master Plan
Prospect, KY