

The results are in!

**Find out what Erie residents believe should change
to secure a better future for everyone.**

Change.org and Mayor Devlin teamed up to start a conversation that crossed boundaries:

“What would **positive change look like in Erie?”**

Get hundreds of people to share their ideas, and vote on the ideas of others.

Identify their **common interests**, despite differences on other issues.

Bring 100 people together for a conversation about those resonant issues.

Enforce sidewalk ordinances. Many properties have deteriorated sidewalks that are difficult to navigate, if not impossible, especially for the elderly, people in wheelchairs, and strollers. Some properties lack a sidewalk altogether.

I would Address the problem of run down and abandoned houses in the city.

We need good paying jobs so people can provide for their family and keep up their home.

In Stage 1, we received **86,756 votes** on

1,078 IDEAS

from **1,131 residents.**

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Fix the city's potholes, sunken patches, and broken sidewalks on school routes and downtown streets.

Access to grocery stores (not convenience stores) in the downtown, it is a food desert for seniors living downtown.

Match street cleaning to be scheduled on the day after trash day. For example right now in 16507 street cleaning car comes on Monday and on Tuesday it's trash day. The whole week they have trash on the street.

Our analysis identified three main groups of residents based on how they voted

01

Infrastructure Pragmatists

Fixing Erie's deteriorating roads, sidewalks, and basic city services comes first. They back practical transit and recycling improvements, and are skeptical of new social programs and technology-driven policy.

02

Equity Advocates

Social inclusion, affordable housing, and environmental sustainability, paired with equitable investment across Erie's neighborhoods. They want negligent property owners held accountable.

03

Fiscal Realists

A smaller group focused on lowering the tax burden on homeowners and attracting higher-paying jobs. They favor fiscal restraint and private-sector-led growth over expanded public spending.

INFRASTRUCTURE PRAGMATISTS

This group's top priority is fixing Erie's deteriorating roads, sidewalks, and basic city infrastructure. They support practical, incremental improvements to public transit and recycling while remaining skeptical of newer social programs, identity-focused initiatives, and technology-driven policy changes. Their worldview centers on reliable city services and responsible use of tax dollars for tangible, everyday needs.

MAKE OR BREAK

Elected representatives of neighborhoods in the City Limits. Perhaps utilizes census designated areas.

This group: 45%

vs Others: 85%

40% Gap

- Urgent road and pothole repair across all neighborhoods
- Practical, affordable public transit improvements
- Drug crisis addressed through enforcement and existing services
- Skepticism toward new social programs and identity initiatives
- E-waste recycling and basic environmental services

SUPPORTS

- Add trees and flower beds back along the sidewalks downtown. It looks so unattractive since they've been taken out over the past few years. 100%
- The downtown should have more places to eat and shop so people don't have to drive all the way to Millcreek to get clothes at the mall or get chipotle for example 100%
- Put attractions on the Bayfront that families can easily access and afford. 100%

OPPOSES

- Remove all bike lanes & mandate bikers to use the sidewalks 88%
- Bring in, or offer our city up for use with any company that needs an AI data center. We have the water to cool, and space for development cheap. Innovation in a historical city. Why give it all to 85%
- Incentivize electric vehicles 82%

EQUITY ADVOCATES

This group combines a strong commitment to social inclusion, affordable housing, and environmental sustainability with a focus on equitable investment across Erie’s neighborhoods. They support expanded social services, active transportation infrastructure, and holding negligent property owners accountable. They see community wellbeing and economic revitalization as deeply connected goals.

MAKE OR BREAK

Incentivize electric vehicles

This group: 73%

vs Others: 12%

60% Gap

- Affordable housing and support for homeless residents
- Bike lanes, active transportation, and green infrastructure
- Narcan access and harm reduction programs
- Crackdown on negligent and absentee landlords
- Equitable investment in east and west side neighborhoods

SUPPORTS

- | | |
|--|------|
| We need to focus on improving education and creating more opportunities for young people here at home. One change I'd like to see is addressing overcrowding at Erie High by splitting students into | 100% |
| Cracking down on the amount of EMPTY houses/properties downtown, considering the tax breaks the property owners receive on them as well as the number of people with nowhere to live. And these prop | 100% |
| We need better air transportation! Businesses need easier access to Erie. More direct flights to more cities! | 100% |

OPPOSES

- | | |
|--|-----|
| If you want "pretty," "green spaces," go somewhere else. The city is the city and tax dollars shouldn't be spent on aesthetics. | 86% |
| Erie schools should be using more AI Technologies and programing to keep the students up to date with education. Teach the students how to be critical thinkers. | 72% |
| There is an Aquarium in Niagara Falls we don't need another. Rather an Omni Max theater showing different films. | 64% |

FISCAL REALISTS

This smaller group is primarily concerned with reducing the tax burden on homeowners and attracting higher-paying employment to Erie. They strongly oppose reallocating police funding, expanding social services, and most progressive policy proposals, preferring enforcement of existing laws around panhandling and encampments. Their vision for Erie's future centers on fiscal restraint and private-sector-led economic growth.

MAKE OR BREAK

Fund additional community programs to intervene with at-risk youth before they enter the juvenile justice system.

This group: 25%

vs Others: 98%

73% Gap

Lower property taxes for resident homeowners

Attract white-collar jobs and career opportunities

Road repair as a core government responsibility

Enforce existing laws on panhandling and encampments

Skepticism toward expanded public spending on social programs

SUPPORTS

Develop and promote initiatives to bring white collar careers to Erie to provide residents with gainful employment opportunities 96%

Roads are in desperate need of repair. All the small square patches from removing goosenecks on homes have sunk and hitting them is like hitting a curb. The manhole covers seem to all be directly 95%

More places to recycle e-waste and other hard to dispose of products. this could be as simple as drop off areas or a centralized location. 88%

OPPOSES

Distribute wall-mounted Emergency Narcan kits to all public buildings, schools, and community centers. 97%

Upzone the whole city, why are we building mcmansions in city limits when I spend literally 70% of my income on rent. 85%

Forgivable loans: for landlords only. \$25,000 rehab loan. Owner keeps the property maintained and occupied for 5 years. 20% forgiven annually. After 5 years, balance becomes zero. Discourage flipping 82%

Unifying Ideas

These are the ideas all Erie residents agreed on, ordered by how important voters indicated they were.*

Bring back Sunday bus service. The world doesn't stop just because it is Sunday.

(17.74 Importance Score)**

#1

Ideas listed meet a minimum threshold of agreement among the entire Erie community.

**Importance Scores are a standardized measure of the strength of voters' agreement with a goal.

2. Dedication to prioritizing small business owners over big chains—we need to cultivate more places like Bello's or Larry's Central Market, not places like Dollar General. **(13.93)**
3. Eliminate gambling machines and the sale of drug paraphernalia from neighborhood "corner stores." **(13.38)**
4. Canadian cities just across the lake plow the snow on sidewalks as well as streets. They have a machine that grabs the snow and shoots it into a truck that rides alongside. **(13.24)**
5. A large portion of property throughout the city is not being taxed which puts a huge burden on middle and low income residents. **(13.22)**
6. Meaningful culture and development on the waterfront. This can't just be a bunch of hotels - it needs to be for the people. **(12.98)**
7. Open all the records to see where our taxes are going and allow a tax to be enforced on all the tax exempt properties **(12.58)**
8. Keep our city cleaner. **(12.22)**
9. Parents/guardians should be held accountable for their children when they misbehave (fighting, missing school, theft). Providing more resources and entertainment to keep these kids active and engaged in their communities. **(11.86)**

This enables us to identify the issues that all groups care most about

01

Affordable Rental Housing for Residents

"Quit letting corporations buy these homes and then sky rocket the rent. People are leaving Erie and moving to Meadville and other smaller towns because they can't afford housing here."

✓ 92% bridge

"Too many homes are being bought by investors who then charge astronomical rents, and many are delinquent on taxes and other bills. Need stiffer penalties against these slum lords."

✓ 77% bridge

"Every Erie rental should have a visible inspection card on the front door showing the last city inspection date and the landlord's repair contact, like a restaurant grade."

✓ 75% bridge

02

Clear Rules for E-Bikes and Mini Bikes

"Crack down on motor bike and e-bikes that completely ignore common and safe riding on the streets. Speeds, ignoring lights and signs, basically not giving a crap how reckless they are."

✓ 97% bridge

"Develop a cohesive plan for electric bikes mini bikes. We have them on the right side of the street the left side in traffic on sidewalks with no helmets and no liability insurance."

✓ 89% bridge

"Make bikes and e-bikes to have mandatory a light on when dark"

✓ 81% bridge

03

A Vibrant, Walkable Downtown

"Stop building so many new hotels downtown and on the bayfront and create actual attractions we have more than enough hotels."

✓ 100% bridge

"You want people to come downtown then there should be more than just eating & drinking. People would spend more time/more money. We need retail stores i.e., clothing, shoes, tourist items."

✓ 80% bridge

"Make the downtown Marketplace the centerpiece of a seasonal autumn festival with local vendors, farmers, and bayfront music and crafts."

✓ 73% bridge

✓ % shows cross-group bridging score

This enables us to identify the issues that all groups care most about

04

Limiting the Reach of Skill Games

"Eliminate gambling machines and the sale of drug paraphernalia from neighborhood 'corner stores.'"

✓ 91% bridge

"I'd like to see less bars, less 'skill games'/gambling establishments and less vape shops."

✓ 81% bridge

"PA legislature: STOP STALLING..Tax and regulate games of skill!"

✓ 73% bridge

05

Protecting Lake Erie's Ecosystem and Fisheries

"Ban the dumping of PFAS and toxic waste into our waterways. Hold companies to standards set in 2024 for four PFAS compounds: PFHxS, PFNA, PFBS, and HFPO-DA (GenX)."

✓ 69% bridge

"Pass a law preventing drilling or deforestation of Presque Isle and other nearby parks like the Erie Bluffs, Wintergreen Gorge, Asbury Woods, etc."

✓ 69% bridge

"Make sure that there is a system (it can be as easy as rocks and simple organic materials) that the storm water run of is filtered free of toxins. Clean water is good water."

✓ 67% bridge

06

Safer Neighborhoods Across the City

"Have police walk beats throughout the city, especially around Perry Square and subsidized housing complexes"

✓ 91% bridge

"We need to do more about the crime in the city and it's not just the east side of town even on the West Side there's a lot of neighborhoods where it's really not safe to walk at 10:00 at night"

✓ 89% bridge

"Police station in the high crime neighborhoods. Provide more frequent patrols during peak times disturbances take place. Families should feel safe letting their children outside to play."

✓ 86% bridge

✓ % shows cross-group bridging score

Of everything we heard,

Affordable Rental Housing

emerged as the topic to talk about next.

- **RELEVANT**

Roughly 45% of Erie households rent. Rents outpacing wages, corporate landlords, and negligent owners drew engagement from all three opinion groups – making it a clear point of shared interest.

- **ACTIONABLE**

Rental registration and licensing, inspection standards, property-maintenance code enforcement, fines, and the Erie Land Bank are all levers the city holds directly.

- **COMPLEX**

Real trade-offs exist between housing quality and affordability. Tougher inspections raise standards, but landlords say they would pass the fees on as higher rent. And the most-voted idea – rent control – is not an option for Pennsylvania cities, so the conversation be on levers Erie holds.

NEXT UP:

Erie Civic Dialogue

**We'll gather a sample of residents from all over the city to talk about the chosen topic,
[Affordable Rental Housing in Erie.](#)**

If you are interested in participating in the live dialogue, sign up at ideasforchange.org/erie.