

# 2017 - STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS

Welcome.

Let's start today by taking a moment to look around this room.

What do you see?

Too often we take our greatest asset for granted. Our people.

Yet there is so much for which we should be proud. Every day I see hardworking people – people of character and commitment – people of great faith – people who sacrifice for their families – people who genuinely care about this community – working together to make Greenwood not just succeed, but excel.

In this room, I see passion. I see dedication. I see the ability to recognize and seize the potential we have here in Greenwood.

But most of all, I see leadership.

As I stand here giving my sixth State of the City Address – highlighting the many accomplishments of 2016 and exciting plans for Greenwood's future – I must first recognize the leaders in this room. Your support, guidance and collective will to improve this community serve as both a tremendous source of PRIDE and the foundation for Greenwood's continued PROGRESS. Pride and progress.

Together, we have accomplished much. Shoulder to shoulder with you, we can all look forward to building on the incredible momentum we've all played a role in generating. Thank you.

I would also like to thank Christian Maslowski, Tom Vander Luitgaren and the entire Greater Greenwood Chamber of Commerce staff and board for hosting this event. (Step back and clap.)

The partnership between the City and Chamber grows stronger every day, with a shared vision to make Greenwood the location of choice to live, work and grow a business.

Finally, I want to recognize all Common Councilors in attendance, as well as the members of our City Boards and Commissions, department heads, city employees, and other elected officials joining us today. Please stand and be recognized. (Step back and clap.)

The progress made by Greenwood's public servants during the last five years is nothing short of extraordinary. To think about the state of our community when I first gave this speech in 2011, and the trajectory we're on now, the contrast is remarkable.

I'm the type of person who likes to get to the point, so let's go straight to finances and Greenwood's bottom line.

Just five short years ago, our financial prognosis was grim.

Today, Greenwood's fiscal position is the envy of municipalities across Indiana, with a balanced budget, cash reserves and an excellent credit rating.

- For the fifth straight year, we presented Common Council with a balanced budget.
- On New Year's Eve, 2011, our general fund balance was \$4.17 million with Rainy Day fund reserves of \$1.68 million.
- Five years later, those figures have nearly doubled with our general fund balance totaling \$8.62 million and Rainy Day reserves at \$2.65 million. In just these two core funds alone, we've added over \$5 million to the City's balance sheet.
- Similar progress and net cash gains have been realized across the City.

By making painful cuts early during my tenure and continuing to live within our means, Greenwood's balance sheet has completely transformed.

Our budgeting process and financial disclosures remain state-of-the-art. I'm proud to announce that for the third straight year, our Finance Department is being honored with a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting from the Government Finance Officers Association, one of only a handful of cities in the state that can make that statement.

Fiscal responsibility and sound management mean we can continue to keep taxes low while still investing in those things that are important to all of us – public safety, infrastructure, quality of life and economic development.

Our strong balance sheet supported several noteworthy public projects in 2016:

- With the completion of Worthsville Road from I-65 to U.S. 31, east-west travel has been vastly improved, including additional interstate connectivity.
- We finalized the sale of what will soon be the former site of Greenwood Middle School, a rare opportunity to develop 19 acres in the heart of Old Town.
- And just last month, we celebrated the opening of a completely re-imagined Greenwood Community Center, transforming the 25-year-old facility into south side's premier location for fitness, family fun and community gathering. If you haven't visited the new space, I encourage you to do so. The transformation is extraordinary.

We've always known Greenwood has a story to tell. And we've also known that we needed to do a better job of telling that story. For too long Greenwood was overlooked by too many.

No more.

This past year, we developed and launched a new, modern identity for Greenwood and explored new avenues for telling our community's story.

This new look shows Greenwood is a city of progress and a city of pride. We are a city on the move, rooted in our past but forward looking.

In today's world, successful citizen engagement requires a strong digital presence, so we completed a top-to-bottom redesign and reorganization of the City's website. With a modern layout featuring large-scale, captivating imagery, the new site showcases the best of Greenwood while at the same time making it easier for residents and businesses to interact with the City. So far, we've received very positive feedback from citizens.

Speaking of digital presence, I'm pleased to share our success with efforts to better engage citizens via social media. The City's Facebook audience more than doubled last year, allowing us to reach and engage thousands of citizens every week.

*JOKE: And since most of you have your smartphones out anyway, feel free to visit and like our page now. Go ahead and tweet, too! Let your followers know Greenwood is WORTH tweeting about.*

We've announced and detailed major City initiatives as well.

We want citizens to know they're eligible for a \$100 utility credit as part of Greenwood's "Find It, Fix It" program. And we want business owners located on Greenwood's major corridors to know the City is willing to match up to \$50,000 in exterior improvement grants through our "GROW Greenwood" initiative.

With sound leadership and an informed, engaged community, we can accomplish anything, and we'll continue to connect with citizens in the most efficient and effective ways possible.

As many of you know, I believe there are four pillars to Greenwood's success: Public Safety, Infrastructure, Quality of Life and Economic Development. Triumphs in these four areas generate community pride while providing the necessary foundation for progress.

As major cities like Indianapolis continue to drive population growth and economic development, Greenwood must compete with other communities surrounding Indy to ensure both viability and sustainability. What we do today in these four areas determines whether this city will continue to move forward or fall behind.

Central Indiana is evolving, and all of the pieces are in place for a south side resurgence.

Greenwood is a safe place to live, work and play, with great schools, friendly residents and a lower cost of living. We're accessible, but we don't have the traffic jams and congestion of other cities.

Public amenities and quality of life have seen exponential gains: Freedom Springs...Greenwood Community Center...the splash pad at City Center Park...public art installations...new dog parks, and miles and miles of trails.

Also, Greenwood's economy is strong and growing steadily, providing an ideal climate for business growth and development. We have a skilled workforce, available land for development and thriving businesses in advanced manufacturing, consulting, logistics and service industries.

Our time is now, and Greenwood is ready to lead the way. Let's look at these four pillars and the crucial role each of them plays toward creating Greenwood's competitive advantage.

### **First, we have Public Safety.**

As you know, I have a background in law enforcement and am proud to continue serving to this day as a Reserve Deputy for the Johnson County Sheriff's Office.

I believe that first and foremost, a city must be safe. Everything else is built on that foundation. We are blessed to have men and women in both our police and fire departments who are willing every day to put their lives on the line. Who serve and protect and do so with professionalism, skill, character and honor. These men and women deserve our support and appreciation.

In 2016, we took tremendous strides to improve public safety, investing in resources and technology designed to help Greenwood's finest in their daily mission to serve, protect and preserve our community.

- We hired five full-time firefighters and three additional police officers, and we did so without adding to the City's 2017 budget.
- We purchased new police vehicles to replace our aging fleet.
- We dedicated significant funds for Greenwood police officers to carry body cameras, an investment that has already paid dividends by quickly exonerating brave officers performing appropriately and admirably in the line of duty.
- With the help of a consultant, GPD is also employing a more data-driven approach to policing. The strategy uses records the department has kept since 1998 to help

investigators solve crimes and help supervisors direct how and where officers spend their time.

- This past December, we purchased a new fire engine and will soon begin working on a replacement plan for Station 93.

I'm also pleased to announce that Greenwood will soon begin a multimillion-dollar renovation of its police, courts and clerk's offices. The project will modernize our primary justice building, creating a more efficient and effective space for both citizens and City staff. Bonds for the project will be issued this year, and we anticipate construction beginning in early 2018.

And while I'm proud of these improvements, I'm also troubled by the lack of operating revenue to expand public safety proportional to Greenwood's size and continued growth. The number of police officers and firefighters in Greenwood remains significantly smaller than what best practices recommend.

This problem is not new.

I inherited a public safety force that was staffed well below state and national averages. As the city's population grows, state revenue caps have prevented us from being able to hire enough staff and decrease personnel deficits. Through federal grants and budget cuts in other areas, we've been able to take small steps, but much more is needed to create the public safety infrastructure taxpayers expect and deserve. That is why I have fought the last three years, and will continue to fight this year, for Greenwood's ability to enact a food and beverage tax to help fund public safety and allow us to address these deficits in a more meaningful way.

### **The next pillar is Infrastructure.**

From sewers and stormwater drains to roads, sidewalks and waterways, infrastructure is the most important community issue that gets the least appropriate amount of attention.

Not under my watch.

Sewers and drains are vital for growth and economic development. Roads, sidewalks and trails provide crucial access, connectivity and walkability. For Greenwood to thrive, both now and in the future, we must scale our infrastructure appropriately and invest in important public assets.

To improve walkability and pedestrian connectivity, I'm pleased to report that in 2016:

- We added to the popular Play Pocket Trail, creating a link that now extends from the south end of Craig Park, to the Amphitheater, to the new Firefighter Play Pocket located behind Fire Station 91 on Main Street.

- Our newest addition to the trail, the Firefighter Play Pocket is located just behind Fire Station 91, and it's a case study for community collaboration at its finest. Several groups provided time and money to make this project a reality, including the Greenwood Fire Foundation, Johnson County Community Foundation, Rotary Club of Greenwood and Greenwood Parks & Recreation.
- We also extended the trail system with the completion of Worthsville Road, paving multi-use trails on the road's north and south sides.

In 2017, we'll begin an extension of Pleasant Creek Trail from Craig Park to South Meridian Street, providing connectivity between Old City Park and the Greenwood Amphitheater. The trail extension will also provide needed pedestrian access between Old City Park and the newly renovated Community Center.

Going forward, the Parks Department will also propose a new layout for trails into and around the Amphitheater, better integrating these trails into the expanded system.

And while we continue to make Greenwood a more walkable community, we must not neglect the infrastructure supporting our primary form of transportation: roads.

Roads impact so much in our community. Citizens and safe travel. Businesses and exposure to customers. Industry and access to major interstates. No public asset is more important, and in 2016, road projects were once again a primary focus.

- This September, I was pleased to celebrate the completion of Worthsville Road from U.S. 31 to I-65. The project improves access to White River Township and what will eventually be three major interstates. Worthsville Road also provides a key east-west corridor that eases traffic congestion and adds appeal for potential businesses to locate to the area.
- We made improvements to the intersection at Fry Road and State Road 135, installed a signal at Main Street and Graham Road, and completed a Full Depth Reclamation of both Graham and Collins Roads. That project came in just under \$675,000, with over \$2 million more awarded throughout the year for paving and other road rehabilitation.

Last year, I requested an Asset Management Plan for City roads and streets, and my staff delivered, completing a five-year preservation and maintenance program detailing system needs and strategies to achieve our goals.

In 2017, we will continue efforts to improve connectivity, reduce traffic and increase safety for all who travel Greenwood's roads.

- We're ramping up efforts to install emergency vehicle preemption technology into traffic signals, making it safer for both emergency personnel and citizens.
- Worthsville Road will continue its development, with reconstruction scheduled between County Road 250 and 325 east.
- We'll have our third roundabout at Smith Valley and Yorktown. Both Yorktown and Honey Creek have become heavily traveled roadways, and the new roundabout will allow safer and smoother traffic flow for residents and commuters.

We'll continue to be aggressive with paving and other repairs because we know the impact is exponential. Regular maintenance is critical.

- Already the envy of our Central Indiana neighbors during snow events, Greenwood will soon go a step further by implementing software that will allow residents to view, in real time, what roads have been plowed and roads yet to be done. There are other great elements to the software, including the ability to request a snow plow in a particular area, and we think residents will appreciate the opportunity for improved engagement.
- Greenwood's leaf and limb program continues to be extremely popular, with our Street Department working daily during the fall to make sure leaves and limbs are cleared with the utmost urgency.
- During the spring, our staff quickly responds to online requests by citizens to fill potholes. Together we are reducing the time it takes to fill each pothole and saving citizens money, time and frustration.

In order to perform this level of service, we have to keep investing in our equipment. Our focus on the City's fleet will continue in 2017, with plans for several important upgrades.

City utilities are also an essential part of Greenwood's infrastructure base.

In 2016, we announced the largest capital project in Greenwood's history, the Western Regional Interceptor Sewer.

- Stretching 10 miles across White River Township, the utility project will help eliminate backups into homes and businesses, provide much-needed relief to our entire sewer system and accommodate anticipated growth and development.
- The new interceptor will channel as much as 7 to 9 million gallons of graywater daily from the Pleasant Run Interceptor, which is currently operating at or near capacity in some areas. Relief will benefit not only those on the west side of the city but also those well into downtown and Old Town Greenwood as well.

- Our efforts will benefit the environment and overall public health and will help satisfy an important agreed order with the Indiana Department of Environmental Management.

We're also working hard to preserve and maintain the current system.

- During the past two years, we've rehabbed nearly 20,000 feet of sewer pipe, 85 manholes and more than 300 sewer laterals. The multiyear process will continue through 2017.
- Greenwood's "Find It, Fix It" initiative will also continue, with a new, \$100 bill credit being offered in 2017 for citizens providing proof of compliance for home connections to the City's sewer system.

Constantly monitoring utility operations for improvement, my staff and I are always working to identify ongoing opportunities for efficiency and cost savings.

- More than 5,000 sanitation account customers, or roughly 25%, are now utilizing Citizens Access, an online software allowing customers to quickly and conveniently pay their utility bills via debit, credit and e-check with no fees.
- This same functionality is now available to Stormwater customers.
- In a move that benefits the environment WHILE saving money, last year Greenwood began printing all utility bills on recycled paper. The move is saving ratepayers roughly \$6,000 per year.

As I stand here today, it's hard to imagine that I inherited a City without a Stormwater Utility.

- Each day our Stormwater program is improving our community and our environment.
- Thanks to the Utility, Greenwood is able to have two state-of-the-art street sweepers working each day to keep pollutants off of roads and out of our streams. We're also cleaning and fixing miles of underground stormwater pipes, untouched since their installation.
- Last year, Stormwater staff took the lead on creating an award-winning rain trail on Fry Road. The new trail improves drainage, water quality and pedestrian access.

2017 will be another busy year, with the completion of Greenwood's Nature Center and construction of a two-stage ditch along Honey Creek Road. The ditch helps solve drainage issues in the Cobblestone subdivision, and the project design is supported by the Nature Conservancy for its positive environmental impacts.



Projects like these impact us all. Infrastructure touches all areas of our community, and it's a major area of focus for my administration.

**Our third pillar, Quality of Life, speaks to our aspirations as a community.**

I have to start with the new Greenwood Community Center and its remarkable transformation.

The new Community Center represents everything we're doing to positively impact the quality of life in Greenwood.

We completely reimagined the entire space and its function as a hub for community gathering and activity. The new Center features two innovative and distinctive zones.

- "Kid City" is designed to be the south side's leading interactive play zone for children and families. A two-story Luckey Climber, wall-sized Lite Brite and musical playground are just a few of the many art and STEM-inspired play opportunities.
- "The Gym" was built to accommodate both the high-level athlete and your average health-conscious citizen. Featuring a modern setting, state-of-the-art equipment and a diverse offering of fitness classes, "The Gym" will become a driver for improved community health and wellness.

The new Community Center is accessible to all, with a number of rentable spaces for birthday parties, business meetings and other community events. It's one of our greatest achievements to date, and I encourage everyone to stop by if you haven't already.

When I speak to other leaders around the country, I can now proudly list the many public amenities Greenwood has available for potential residents and businesses:

- Freedom Springs, our exceptional aquatic park, which had another successful year. This past summer, Freedom Springs hosted more than 90,000 visitors, finishing close to a quarter million dollars in the black.
- City Center Park, with handicap-accessible playground equipment and Johnson County's only splash pad.
- Our free summer concert series at Greenwood Amphitheater, showcasing musical acts for all tastes and ages.
- 271 acres of recreational land spread across 14 different parks.
- Four distinctive play pockets, all connected via one trail.

- A vast network of multi-use trails.

And if you think we're slowing down, you haven't been paying attention.

- Building on the success of our Summer Concert Series, I'm pleased to announce a free Summer Movie Series beginning this year. Stay tuned for date and movie announcements.
- Westside Park is receiving a major facelift as we reorganize the property to maximize the existing square footage. Doing so allows us to add more amenities, including a new dog park and shelter house.

These amenities are important for many reasons.

Research shows a high quality of life leads to community success and growth, attracting an educated workforce and the companies seeking to locate amongst such talent.

### **Which brings us to our final pillar, Economic Development.**

Greenwood is tackling development from all angles, providing strategic public support to drive game-changing private investment.

In the past year, we've had the opportunity to celebrate several new projects:

- German-based Wurth Service Supply is building its new North American headquarters right next to the ULTA Distribution Center, investing \$11.5 million to construct and equip a 230,000-square-foot facility in Southpoint Business Park.
- Oaken Barrel, a Greenwood staple and Indiana craft beer pioneer, will soon revamp its building and the entire shopping center surrounding it, spending more than \$2 million to create a more attractive setting along one of the community's most traveled corridors.
- We finalized an agreement to sell the Polk Building, former home to city offices, and soon after joined Cornerstone Autism Center to announce the organization's major expansion as the building's new primary tenant.
- Greenwood recently welcomed a new Kroger, another example of our city's ability to attract major national retailers.
- And then there are Greenwood's inspiring entrepreneurs. Without these risk takers, there would be no Bay Horse Inn...no Vino Villa...no Revery.

More deals are in the works, with 2017 shaping up to be a transformative year for commercial development throughout Greenwood.

Thinking about economic drivers, one community asset we do not talk about enough is our Airport. In 2016, Indy South Greenwood Airport thrived.

The new name reflects a strategy to define the airport nationally, competing on the same level with similar airports surrounding Indianapolis.

We also restructured operations, eliminating landing fees and implementing a contract jet fuel program.

This past December, we completed the second phase of capital improvements earmarked during my administration. The projects included investment from three separate City boards:

- The Redevelopment Commission funded a visual transformation of the Airport's north end. The work included demolition of old hangars, new landscaping and fencing, and improved signage.
- With an improved financial position, the Board of Aviation Commissioners invested \$100,000 in repairing two rows of open t-hangars. This investment ensures the Airport will continue to provide a variety of hangar rental options that meet the diverse needs of all pilots.
- Finally, the Stormwater Board provided matching funds to design and build an innovative underground water detention facility, significantly reducing runoff.

When multiple boards and commissions are willing to combine their funds and cooperate to win federal grants and propel capital investment in Greenwood, we're sending a strong message as to how this city operates.

The best part: Our efforts are working.

By July 2016, we had already matched jet fuel sales for all of 2015. We're also seeing increased traffic from transient jets and turbines, and we expect an even better 2017.

Finally, any discussion of economic development has to include Old Town Greenwood, the core of our great city and home to a blossoming arts, culture and dining scene. Old Town's continued resurgence is defining Greenwood culture and our unique, local identity.

We're nearly finished with exterior renovations to more than 20 downtown commercial exteriors, historically inspired by original facades dating back more than 100 years. Once complete, the historic business district will be ripe for private investment and new enterprise.

Building on the success of our downtown façade program, we launched the G.R.O.W. Greenwood initiative. Established in July, the matching grant program is designed to generate and further accelerate private investment along key city corridors.

Our most recent announcement for Old Town carries with it the greatest opportunity for transformative development in Greenwood. Late last year, the City finalized an agreement to purchase what will soon be the former Greenwood Middle School property.

The potential for these 19 acres is off the charts and as I've said before, we plan to tap into every last bit, which brings me to today's final, and most exciting announcement.

Today we're releasing plans for the development's first project, an extensive effort that will create additional downtown green space, connectivity and parking.

The focus is Old City Park, which has such a storied history, it was already called Old City Park before many of us in this room were born.

During last year's State of the City, I said my goal was for families to be able to safely walk and bike between the Splash Pad at City Center Park and the Gazebo at Children's Garden Park.

Well, we'll soon be two-thirds of the way there.

Machledt Drive will be replaced with a multi-use trail providing a pedestrian path from Madison Avenue to Mrs Curl and the planned expansion of Pleasant Creek Trail to Meridian Street.

The old maintenance building previously used by our Parks Department will be demolished, with a new parking lot taking its place. We're also building a new road connecting Surina Way to Market Plaza and replacing a century-old sewer.

Together, these changes will completely repurpose Old City Park and set the stage for the transformative redevelopment of the Middle School property.

I look forward to sharing more details in the near future as this is only the beginning for this opportunity-rich property. LINE ABOUT VISUALS – MAYOR ADDED TO HIS VERSION.

The south side is finally experiencing a resurgence, and I'm proud to report Greenwood is leading the way. To reach our ultimate goals, we must continue to hone our City's unique, authentic identity and cultivate an environment attractive to both commercial investors and a professional, skilled workforce.

It's year six. Let's get to work.

Thank you.

ONE STEP BACK FROM THE PODIUM. AUDIENCE CLAPS.

Thank you.

BEGIN SHAKING HANDS WITH THE AUDIENCE.