

MAYOR MARK W. MYERS
STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS 2025
FEBRUARY 20, 2025

Welcome again to our beautiful Greenwood Fieldhouse.

I am excited to be delivering my fourteenth State of the City address. This is my third event hosted at the Fieldhouse.

It means the world to me to see this venue filled with local business owners, community leaders and City employees. You are the backbone of our community. Nothing that we have accomplished over the past 13 years would have been possible without your guidance and support.

Thank you Christian Maslowski and the entire Aspire Team for putting this event together each year. Let's give the Aspire Team a round of applause for their efforts to make Greenwood a great place to call home.

I want to thank my family including my incredible wife, Stacie, the First Lady of Greenwood. She is my rock. I can't imagine doing this job without her support.

I am blessed to have my mom here with my 3 sisters and my brother-in-law. Our family has served Greenwood for several generations and we intend to leave it a much better place than when we arrived.

We are also fortunate to have several elected officials and several members of our boards and commissions in attendance. These folks devote many hours for nominal compensation to ensure that Greenwood stays on course and grows in ways that benefit our community. If you are a local elected official, commissioner or board member, please stand and be recognized.

We also have several City employees attending today. They work tirelessly to see that our City is safe, clean and prosperous. I am proud to work with these hard-working people. All employees please stand.

Each year, I discuss the four pillars on which our City is built. They include: Public Safety, Infrastructure, Economic Development and Quality of Life.

Let's start with Public Safety. Safe communities cause existing residents to stay, new residents to buy homes, developers to build new neighborhoods, existing businesses to expand and new businesses to relocate. I am proud to say that Greenwood is a safe community. Tens of thousands of new residents who have joined us over the past decade and hundreds of new businesses who have either expanded in Greenwood or

relocated to the City demonstrated their confidence in our public safety by investing their time, talent and money here.

Our police department has grown in both in size and quality every year. In 2025, we have funding for 82 full time officers as well as 10 full time civilian employees. In 2025, we will spend \$13,327,907 for police protection for our community.

There is a nationwide decline in applicants for careers in law enforcement which has resulted in competition for qualified recruits and efforts from understaffed departments to poach officers from other agencies.

Many of you have seen billboards and online advertising openings in departments nearby and even in cities hundreds of miles away. To address this problem, we have steadily raised both salaries and benefits each year. In 2024, our Common Council approved a 6.2% raise which brings the 2025 base pay to \$78,061. The City also contributes a sum equal to 20% of officers' base salary to fund their pensions.

We have also provided our officers with state-of-the-art training and equipment. An example of a recent technology upgrade is the Axon Virtual Reality. This virtual reality training allows officers to experience real life situations and measures their responses to each situation. We also purchased new body cameras for each officer as well as new ballistic vests and rifle rated ballistic plates for every officer. We purchased a new Harley Davidson motorcycle to assist with traffic enforcement.

2023 brought several changes to our fire department starting with a new Chief, Jayme Washel. Chief Washel introduced several new and exciting ideas to the city. My favorite is the creation of an internal academy. In the past, we required applicants to have completed training prior to being considered. This burden limited the number of applicants. In 2024, we encouraged qualified applicants with no fire training to apply and be trained while employed by the city. The results were astonishing. We had 374 applicants for 21 positions.

To reach class sizes which justified the academy, we combined our 21 trainees with trainees from Speedway and Decatur Township. The classes are being taught by veterans from all three departments as well as outside instructors.

The deep pool of applicants and intense training has produced an outstanding group of new fire fighters. 20 of the 21 new hires are set to finish the training program. The class includes 4 military veterans and 6 college graduates. They have joined us today. Please stand and be recognized.

When our 20 trainees enter service in March, we will have 82 full-time fire fighters, and plan to hire an additional 6 firefighters later this year. Now, in 2025, we have a

firefighter for every available seat on our current trucks and for the new trucks soon to be housed at our new station 95.

A large part of the fire department's budget is acquisition and maintenance of its fire engines. The price of these vehicles has roughly doubled in the past 10 years. Approximately 85% of the fire department's runs are for medical services, not fires. Since fire fighters who assist the ambulance EMT's and paramedics need to be able to respond to a fire call while assisting the ambulance call, the very large and expensive trucks had to follow the ambulances.

Chief Washel has implemented a rescue squad program in which 2 EMT's follow the ambulances in SUV's instead of 4 firefighters in a \$1 million engine. The savings in fuel, maintenance costs and wear and tear on the fire trucks and manpower has been substantial.

My financial team found ways to fund 2 new engines which were placed in service in 2024. The first was a new engine which is housed at station 94 on the northeast side of the City. The most recent is a tiller, which is a ladder truck that has front and rear steering. The rear steering wheels allow it to navigate tight corners without jumping curbs. You may have seen our crews practicing on downtown streets. This vehicle also has a 100-foot ladder which is needed to deal with fires on taller buildings which have been opened in the last several years.

Last year our Common Council approved a request to increase the City's levy while keeping tax rates flat, which was approved by the State. This revenue made possible a new fire station which will break ground in the spring of 2025 and will be located on the southeast corner of the City on Graham Road. Without the new funding, we could not have possibly paid for the twelve new firefighters needed to staff the house. The new facility will also include a training center which will allow our firefighters to train on actual fires without traveling outside the City. We will also make it available for training by neighboring fire departments.

The City has been particularly focused on the fire department during my tenure as mayor. When our recruits finish training in March, we will have 82 full-time fire fighters.

The department's 2025 budget is \$13,351,325 and the base pay of a fire fighter is \$77,061. The actual compensation of our firefighters is significantly higher than their base pay. The 2024 base pay was \$74,097. The City also contributes 20% of the fire fighter base pay to their pension plan.

2024 was also a busy year for infrastructure. The City invested over four million on resurfacing and rebuilding streets. Perhaps the most discussed 2024 project was the rebuilding of Market Plaza. This street is heavily traveled, and the parking lots are packed on the weekends, especially when the weather is warm. It connects the City

Center splash park to the Greenwood Public Library, Old City Park and this Fieldhouse. It is popular with pedestrians, including many moms with small children in strollers. Our planning team created a plan to make it both safer and more attractive which included a wide walkway, green spaces, and decorative lighting.

The timing of the work was dictated by the weather. Asphalt plants close in the winter, so the work had to be completed in warm weather. The utilities were long overdue for replacement, so the project was much more complicated than repaving and pouring walkways.

I find it interesting that all projects in Old Town include the discovery of hidden treasures. Our contractors found multiple sewer lines that existed on no map. We also uncovered an Artesian well. All these problems required more work and time. Indiana American Water replaced the water lines. Vectren replaced the gas lines and City contractors installed new storm drains. We worked with the local business owners to keep at least one end of the street open to avoid disrupting their businesses. The first section is complete, and it looks great. I cannot wait to see it when the grass takes hold, and the lots are filled with classic cars on Saturday evenings.

We completed mill and overlay rehabilitation on streets in Meadow Lakes, Glen Oak Commons, The Coopers, Oldefield Estates, Greenwood Commons and Meridian Oaks Commercial Subdivision. We also repaired streets and alleys in Old Town, Greenbriar, Main Street and Averitt Road. Much of this was funded by Community Crossing Matching Grants. We have many street projects scheduled for 2025.

Our sanitation department kept busy replacing broken sewer pipes and our contractors lined aging sewer pipes to extend their lives for an additional 60 years. Our crews cleaned over 33 miles of sanitary sewer pipe and inspected over 11,000 feet of pipe. Sanitation also took 2 lift stations out of service which saves the City about \$15,000 annually in utility and maintenance expenses.

Greenwood's quality of life continues to be one of our greatest strengths. Our parks and recreation facilities have enjoyed record participation and growth. The opening of Greenwood Sports Park gave the community a second splash pad and a new playground. The playing fields and amenities will allow Parks to expand leagues and community events, giving families even more opportunities to stay active and engaged.

We have heard that there are already 1,000 hotel rooms booked for this season. Freedom Springs continues to be a shining example of how a well-managed public facility can be both financially successful and popular. It welcomed nearly 90,000 visitors, maintained a strong safety record and its revenue exceeded its expenses by almost \$100,000.

The Greenwood Community Center and Fieldhouse are cornerstones for recreation and fitness in Greenwood, with membership and participation seeing significant increases. From expanded youth programs, new archery and pickleball leagues, 16 new pickleball courts in Freedom Park, and unique events like the Taylor Swift Eras Tour (Greenwood Parks Version), we are continuously offering diverse and exciting ways for residents to connect.

In 2024, we also strengthened our commitment to community engagement by hosting a record number of events from concerts and holiday celebrations to new travel opportunities that took residents as far as Ireland and the Danube River. The success of these programs shows that Greenwood is not just a place to live—it's a place to experience life to the fullest.

As we look ahead, our focus remains on continuous improvement. We plan to enhance our recreational offerings, expand sports programming at Greenwood Sports Park, introduce a Fall Festival at the Amphitheater, and invest in facility upgrades to ensure our parks and community spaces remain top-tier destinations.

A strong local economy is the backbone of a thriving city. Greenwood continues to attract businesses, create jobs, and drive investment—all while maintaining fiscal responsibility.

Despite economic challenges nationwide, our tax rate has remained both low and flat. In 2013, the City tax rate was \$0.6962 per \$100 of assessed value. In 2025, it is \$0.6957 per \$100 of assessed value. We have actually managed to lower our tax rate while adding police officers, firefighters, and other staff necessary to support the services our residents count on us to provide. Our rate is one of the lowest in the state – the absolute lowest for any community with over 20,000 residents.

Our spending per resident is among the lowest in the state and our number of employees is among the lowest in the state. Our focus on keeping tax rates stable is the best way for the City to help ensure financial predictability for our residents and businesses.

I am proud of our ability to invest in growth without burdening taxpayers. We have made our operations more efficient, utilized more cost-effective financing and secured grants to support key initiatives. Our infrastructure investments, including the Main Street Streetscape Project and upcoming traffic improvements, are positioning Greenwood for sustained success while our tax rate remains the same.

The Indy South Greenwood Airport continues to win awards and is the envy of the region. In 2024, we completed key phases of the Apron Expansion Project, introduced new workforce development programs, and hosted a successful Airport Day with thousands in attendance. Plans for 2025 include continued infrastructure improvements

and expanded partnerships with local educational institutions to support aviation training.

Commercial growth remains strong. Last year we announced the groundbreaking for the Endress+Hauser Innovation Center and George E. Booth Company Headquarters. The project includes a 109,000 square foot commercial office and light industrial facility which will create 190 engineering, legal, human resources and other professional jobs over the next 10 years. The average salary for the facility will be over \$80,000.

Endress+Hauser will spend over \$50.9 million to complete it. I am happy to report that construction is underway. The walls and roof are complete, and the contractors are well into interior finishing.

Greenwood has also enjoyed the addition of several new retail and dining establishments. Simon has recently announced the addition of Panda Express, PF Changs and Verde restaurants to enhance the Mall experience.

The City has grown by 12,600 residents or 23% over the past decade and the demand for housing remains high. We are meeting that demand responsibly with new single-family developments, aged restricted senior housing, and market rate apartment communities that offer diverse options for residents.

If you look at these 2 slides you can see the areas where we are currently building homes and multifamily communities. In total we have over 500 homes currently under construction along with many more multifamily complexes.

In October of 2024, I attended the Grand Opening of The Madison which is the luxury apartment development which shares the old middle school site with the Fieldhouse. The facility is home to many new young residents who we expect to contribute significantly to our community.

Greenwood remains committed to smart, responsible, and sustainable growth. Whether it's attracting new businesses, improving our infrastructure, or enhancing City services, we will continue to make decisions that ensure a prosperous future for all who call Greenwood home.

In closing, I want to take a moment to express my gratitude to each of you for your continued support and for the role you play in making Greenwood the community it is today. As we look ahead to 2025 and beyond, the road to continued success is paved by our shared dedication to growth, innovation, and unity. Together, we will build a city that offers a high quality of life, fosters economic opportunity, and provides safety and security for all who live here

We have made tremendous strides, but there is still much to do. With the incredible teamwork, passion, and resilience of our residents, businesses, and partners, I am confident that we will continue to rise to every challenge and seize every opportunity.

The future of Greenwood is bright, and it is an honor to work alongside each of you to make it even better.

It is year 14 folks, and we still have much to do, so let's get back to work!

Thank you!

Mark W. Myers