

CITY OF GREENWOOD

MAYOR MARK W. MYERS

2019 STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS

Welcome.

Thank you for coming today, and thank you to everyone joining us online. Your dedication to Greenwood and its future continues to be the driving force behind our city's resurgence.

I'm happy to share today's event is being viewed in at least four countries around the globe. Watching with us today is my daughter who serves with the Peace Corps in Moldova. Two of my sons are tuning in as well, one with the 31st Maintenance Squad Griffins at Aviano Air Force base in Italy, and the other serving in Iraq with the United States Marine Corps Special Operations Task Force, 38 Nations, 1st Marine Raiders.

I would also like to thank Christian Maslowski, Kent DeKoninck, Valle Vista and the entire Greater Greenwood Chamber staff and board for hosting today.

The City and Chamber's strong partnership continues to produce tremendous results and promotes an environment where local businesses feel welcome and supported.

I would also like to recognize my department heads and city employees, if they would please stand. I'm so fortunate to be surrounded by such talented and committed public servants. Thank you for all you do.

Being born and raised in Greenwood and having lived here nearly my entire life, I cannot remember a more exciting time for our city.

Like many of you, my family has called Greenwood home for generations.

My grandfather was a small business owner and ran a Westinghouse appliance dealership out of a storefront adjacent to his downtown home. He also operated the projector for the silent movie theater at Polk Place Community Center while my aunts took turns playing the piano.

My mother and father were local entrepreneurs as well, owning Myers Ambulance Service, and I want to thank my mom for being here today. Like me, my father had the honor of serving our great city as mayor in the late 1970s.

Many of you share the same history and connections.

Our forefathers understood Greenwood is a special place.....and as I stand here before you to deliver my eighth report on the State of Our City, I believe those that came before us would take great PRIDE in what was built on their legacy and celebrate the PROGRESS we continue to make toward future prosperity.

PRIDE and PROGRESS, the standard on which Greenwood was built, has never been more relevant. Together, we are guiding a revitalization that will impact Greenwood for generations to come.

Let's begin, as we do every year, with city finances and Greenwood's bottom line.

After several years of conservative fiscal diligence, I'm proud to report Greenwood now owns one of Indiana's strongest balance sheets.

Once again in 2018, we presented the Common Council with a balanced budget, our seventh consecutive year.

Our fiscal house is in order and we've been able to improve city services while also maintaining one of Indiana's lowest tax rates, currently the fourth lowest in the state.

It's no coincidence that for the fifth year in a row, the finance department is being honored with a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting from the Government Finance Officers Association. Our city is one of only a handful of Hoosier municipalities to receive this recognition.

If you want to dig into the numbers, visit the city's website where we post detailed finance data as accessible and digestible as possible.

Credit for Greenwood's financial success extends to every department in the city.

Every single person in this administration shares a core belief that fiscal responsibility is not accidental. It must be woven into every decision. Every initiative. Every single project that seeks to improve our city and quality of life.

Every dollar counts. Our staff embraces this mindset, and the results prove it. With a strong balance sheet, we can properly prepare for, execute, and most importantly, pay for such projects in a responsible way.

I'm pleased to report 2018 was another productive year.

We began by announcing Greenwood as a business-focused trailblazer, revealing our city as the first municipal partner for INBiz, Indiana's groundbreaking online portal that serves as a one-stop resource for individuals starting, managing and growing their businesses.

Working side-by-side with Indiana Secretary of State Connie Lawson and her team, our efforts will transform doing business in Greenwood.

Greenwood business owners will soon be able to manage the majority of their local government interaction online. They will be the first businesses in Indiana to do so. Isn't that fantastic?

As many of you know, my administration came into office in large part because of our commitment to preserve and revitalize Old Town Greenwood. Doing so requires dynamic civic assets, attractive gathering spaces and diverse opportunities for public recreation.

Old Town must be walkable....connected....accessible and pedestrian-friendly. In 2018, we completed several projects designed to achieve those goals.

We finished the first phase of redevelopment for Madison Avenue, which includes a multi-use 12-foot wide trail for both pedestrians and bicyclists, brick crosswalks, a pedestrian signal at Euclid Avenue and a revitalized public parking lot at Broadway and Madison.

Last year, city staff worked with Greenwood's Redevelopment Commission to finalize a second round of funding for our GROW initiative. The GROW program helps local businesses expand while also providing benefits to the community as a whole, including improving downtown.

Bordering the northern edge of the former Greenwood Middle School, the new Surina Way extension sets the stage for development of both the 19-acre property and a reimagined Old City Park.

The project included a public-private partnership with Our Lady of the Greenwood Catholic Church – which created more than 150 additional downtown parking spaces. Greenwood Public Library was also an important partner in that.

We made considerable improvements to the Greenwood Amphitheater and park space surrounding the outdoor venue, which played host to another record-setting year for the city's Summer Concert Series and Movies in the Park.

Drivers are still becoming more comfortable with the new roundabout at Smith Valley and Madison, but the change has already reduced traffic delays and increased safety in and around the heavily trafficked intersection.

We completed phase-one of improvements to Emerson Avenue, one of the city's most traveled north-south corridors. These improvements have already attracted interest and will act as a catalyst for additional private investment.

City-hosted events remain extremely popular. The continued success of Freedom Festival, Just PLANE Fun at Indy South Greenwood Airport and last year's inaugural Kris Kringle Market prove once again that, if done right, they'll be well attended.

Speaking of the airport, Indy South Greenwood worked to attract more than just event attendees in 2018. This past November, we announced a new agreement with the Indiana State Police to host their Aviation Section fleet.

The lease is currently being finalized and includes a newly built hangar with office space for State Police Aviation personnel. What a tremendous source of pride for our city to serve as the home base for such a critical component of Indiana law enforcement.

Taken as a whole, Greenwood's reputation, growth and momentum have reached record levels. And yes, we should celebrate our city's recent success, but we must also continue pushing forward on all fronts.

As many of you know, I believe there are four pillars that serve as a foundation for any city. Public Safety, Infrastructure, Quality of Life, and Economic Development. If invested in properly, these pillars work together to build a thriving community.

Let's begin with Public Safety.

Before becoming Mayor, my professional experience focused primarily on law enforcement and public safety, and I'm proud to continue serving as a Reserve Deputy for the Johnson County Sheriff's Office.

I believe that first and foremost, Greenwood must be safe. Safe for our residents, safe for our growing number of visitors and safe for the businesses driving our economy.

Greenwood is blessed to have men and women in both our police and fire departments who share this conviction and are committed to doing whatever it takes to protect and serve our community. Their dedication serves as an example to us all.

To the heroes who work to keep Greenwood safe every day, thank you for everything you do and the many sacrifices you make.

In 2018, Greenwood moved forward on several initiatives designed to maintain and improve public safety.

First, I am proud to announce Greenwood Fire Department will soon receive a Class 2 public protection rating from the Insurance Services Office. ISO is a third party independent agency that evaluates the Fire Department, water department and public safety communications systems. Results rate on a national scale from one to ten, with one being the best rating.

For communities with a Class 2 rating, many insurance providers provide a discount on annual insurance premiums for both residences and businesses.

Last summer, we opened the new Greenwood Justice Center. A complete remodel of the police building at Surina Square, the Justice Center continues to house GPD headquarters and now serves as a permanent home for the Greenwood City Court, City Clerk's Office and Greenwood Probation Department. The project provides significant efficiencies for the organizations and for citizens navigating the process.

Last year, Greenwood Police began using automated vehicle tracking for all police vehicles. The advanced system allows police dispatch to know the exact location of all units at all times, contributing to officer safety and department efficiency when deploying officers to service calls.

GPD is also preparing to launch crime mapping software, arming officers with valuable insight into previously unknown data. The software provides options for analyzing criminal activity patterns and geographic footprints.

In 2018, we announced the relocation of Greenwood Fire Station 93, and today I am pleased to unveil the station's design publicly.

Fire Station 93 will be located in Freedom Park on land purchased last year. The addition will shorten response times and improve department operations.

Our next pillar is Infrastructure.

For too long, Greenwood allowed its infrastructure to remain stagnant and deteriorate.

Not any more

In Greenwood, we pave and plow our roads. We give our civil servants the tools and technology they need to get the job done. When stormwater issues threaten our quality of life, we establish our own utility and fix the problem ourselves.

Last year, several departments sought to improve efficiency and create future savings through important technology investments, with more planned for 2019.

In 2018, our Street Department launched Greenwood's first interactive trash map. The Finance Department implemented KRONOS to digitize employee time reporting and will soon transition to new accounting and payroll software.

In the Stormwater department, staff are now using Cityworks software to maximize resources and minimize per-project expenses.

Efforts to reduce administrative costs are working. Perhaps the best indicator of our success is the elimination of all service fees for any customer payments to City-owned utilities.

And while technology is certainly our future, we must not forget Greenwood's current infrastructure needs.

With regard to transportation, that need is roads.

In 2018, we completed construction on Stop 18 Road just west of U.S. 31. We rebuilt Horton Street, Commission Road and Stonegate Road and finished full depth reclamations on portions of Honey Creek Road and Emerson Avenue.

We're making progress on Worthsville Road as well, the latest section of which includes multi-use paths connecting to our trail system, providing access to the Central Nine Career Center campus and land designated for the new Grassy Creek Park.

Later this year, we expect to complete our efforts to improve, modernize and increase safety at school zone crossings. Announced in 2018 and long overdue, I consider this to be one of Greenwood's most important future projects.

The safety and wellbeing of our children should never be overlooked. With this project, we're dedicating appropriate resources to keep kids safe.

Our administration is constantly studying best practices for traffic safety, across the country and around the world. Last year, I learned about an initiative called Vision Zero.

It's a strategy to eliminate traffic fatalities and severe injuries, while increasing safe, healthy and equitable mobility. We have a video on the initiative looping in the welcome area, and I encourage you to check it out.

Our city's Waste Management Department continues to stand out for its innovation and exceptional service to both citizens and local businesses.

In 2018, we completed the full modernization of trash services, transitioning to fully standardized containers required for automatic pickup. The improvements follow our modernization of Greenwood's recycling program, which led to several thousand more participating households and a 50 percent increase in recycling tonnage in 2018.

Our extremely popular leaf and limb program remains the envy of other communities, and Waste Management staff has plans to increase capacity and efficiency.

Many of you have likely heard about Greenwood's plans to build a new Department of Public Works building. Serving as an addition to the current DPW building on South Washington Street, the new 50,000 square-foot facility will allow many of our infrastructure-focused departments be even more efficient, while also extending life cycles for city equipment and vehicles.

And today, I am pleased to offer you the first look at design plans for the new building. Construction begins this spring and we expect completion by year-end.

My favorite part of the entire project?

Greenwood is paying for construction of the DPW building with cash on hand and will not have to issue a single dollar of debt for the project.

This is what our city can achieve with a strong financial position.

Let's move on to our city's most important natural resource: water.

Created just six years ago, Greenwood's Stormwater Department is already one of the premier MS4 Programs in the state. The Department's Testing Lab and Nature Center – opened in 2017 – has quickly become an important resource for water and environmental education.

The amount accomplished by Stormwater staff at the facility – and the recognition it's received in such short period of time – is truly remarkable.

Turning to Greenwood's Sanitation Department, *typically I'm not the type of person to get excited about sanitary sewers.*

But I'm confident you'll join me, *or at least judge me less harshly*, after announcing Greenwood has officially begun installation of the Western Regional Interceptor, the largest public works project in our city's history.

The Interceptor is desperately needed to alleviate the current sewer system, which is already burdened and cannot accommodate the city's future growth and development. It will provide much-needed relief to the Pleasant Run Interceptor, channeling as much as 9 million gallons of wastewater daily.

Earlier I spoke about fiscal responsibility being woven into every project our administration approaches, and the financing on this project illustrates that point.

Our team identified, and utilized the State's Revolving Fund to finance the \$24.7 million first phase. The decision resulted in sizeable interest benefits and will save Sanitation customers more than \$13 million as a result.

That should get everyone excited about sanitary sewers.

The Sanitation Department also completed the third phase of repairing manholes and relining or rebuilding sanitary sewer lines throughout Old Town. We are now 85 percent of the way there and will finish the job this year.

Our third pillar, Quality of Life, continues to be the true driver of Greenwood's resurgence.

The quality of life we offer our citizens is a reflection of what kind of city we want to be. Since day one, we've made it clear that quality of life is a top priority.

We believe in families bonding over Lego tables at Kid City. We believe in offering active seniors a diverse and expanding trail system. We believe in free concerts on Saturdays in the summer with a couple thousand of your closest friends.

Our Parks and Recreation Department is incredible. We've accomplished so much during the last seven years.

Freedom Springs continues to exceed expectations and welcomed more than 108,000 visitors last year, our third consecutive year of record attendance. And just as impressive, membership increased more than 65 percent, surpassing 2,200 in 2018.

The combined result led to another record year for revenue at the pool, and I am pleased to announce today that for the first time, Freedom Springs eclipsed \$1 million in annual revenue.

Freedom Springs' success allows the Parks Department to continue reinvesting in the facility and plan for future additions like last year's new drop slide.

While the old city pool lost more than \$80,000 annually, Freedom Springs has operated in the black since day one. And in three years, the facility has generated a combined

surplus of more than \$750,000. That's three-quarters of a million dollars back into our Parks system.

The reimagined Greenwood Community Center followed suit with a record year of its own, hosting more than 122,000 visitors in 2018, up more than 20,000 from 2017.

In our ongoing quest to add more greenspace, last year the Parks Department acquired more than 30 acres of land next to Worthsville Road. I mentioned Freedom Park's growth earlier, which adds another 40 acres of greenspace.

The Parks Department recently introduced Adopt a Spot, to engage the local business community with efforts to help beautify Greenwood.

And as luck would have it, I'm speaking to a room filled with members of our local business community right now.

So, I'm asking you to visit the city's website and consider adopting and beautifying your own piece of Greenwood. More than just a civic benefit, the program serves as a marketing tool demonstrating to customers your business's ongoing commitment to our city.

As usual, we have no plans to tap the brakes on quality of life improvements in 2019.

This year, we begin construction on a new downtown fieldhouse, a repurpose of the former gymnasium at Greenwood Middle School, that will serve as the public anchor for the 19-acre property's redevelopment. Interior plans for the facility are still being determined, and we look forward to announcing details soon.

In 2018, we began planning for a new event lawn at Craig Park and plan to complete the project this summer. We plan to add new trails as well, including on the north side of Freedom Park, extending from Averitt Road to Freedom Springs, and a multi-use trail connecting Northwest Park and Northwest Park Annex.

Finally, I'm pleased to announce that later this year, the Parks Department will open its first rental hall. Purchased in 2018, the department is converting the former Hampton House on Fry Road and will offer the space for a variety of events.

Our fourth pillar is Economic Development.

Before we dive in, I think it's important to highlight the fundamental connection between our final two pillars, economic development and quality of life.

Economic development is highly competitive. As we saw with Amazon's HQ2 process, an available and skilled workforce is often the decision driver for businesses planning to expand or relocate.

Cities courted past generations by incentivizing companies to set up shop in their community and offer as many jobs as possible. People mostly followed opportunity.

Find a job, and off you go to your new home.

Today's dynamic is reversed as people are now deciding where to move before securing a job. They're evaluating quality of life and what experiences a city offers.

Find a home, and off you go to your new job.

To compete in this new economic development era, Greenwood must offer current and future generations an attractive and opportunity-filled community.

We must demonstrate that we understand the changing needs between a young professional looking for their first apartment, a new family searching for a safe place to raise their kids, and a retired couple wanting to downsize and spend their weekends walking around Old Town before meeting friends at Vino Villa.

I'm pleased to report our strategy is generating meaningful returns.

Last year, Greenwood welcomed one of the world's most valuable companies as its newest corporate citizen as Amazon announced a new \$80 million operations hub. The investment is expected to bring with it more than 1,200 new jobs.

And while Amazon announced its investment last year, another Fortune 500 company celebrated 2018 by opening its new Greenwood fulfillment center. Pitney Bowes has its 450,000 square-foot fulfillment center up and running with plans to hire up to 300 people.

Other noteworthy projects include Franciscan Health's new, state-of-the-art health care facility and a \$20 million apartment complex planned by The Garrett Companies, Greenwood's latest hometown success story which ranked 10th on the Inc. 5000 list of America's fastest growing companies.

Quality of life and economic development are more interconnected than ever, and upcoming projects will continue Greenwood's momentum in both areas.

Design continues for the remaining phases of Madison Avenue's transformation, which will eventually extend north to Fry Road. Due to the overwhelmingly positive feedback from citizens, we're now studying options to accelerate the construction schedule.

In 2019, we'll begin the streetscape work at Madison and Main Street. The project includes widened sidewalks, which residents have long sought to improve Old Town's walkability and pedestrian safety.

And if you haven't noticed, we began installing new wayfinding and street signs and will continue to do so throughout this year. The signs incorporate the city's new identity and have been strategically located to maximize placemaking.

We also continue our work with Common Councilors and appropriate City Boards to overhaul Greenwood's zoning code. We have quite a bit of work to do, but I believe there will be consensus on new standards soon.

Before we finish, I have one more surprise.

Two years ago during this same address, I announced the city's agreement to purchase the former Greenwood Middle School property, a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to develop 19 acres in the heart of Old Town.

Our administration offered a vision for the future and highlighted a list of projects that would lay the groundwork to get there. I'm proud to say we've already completed many of the projects discussed that day, and I am pleased to unveil our most recent milestone.

Old City Park, one of Greenwood's most historic public spaces, will soon undergo a dramatic transformation, and it is my pleasure to offer you a first look at the final design.

The visual and recreational centerpiece is a 20-foot cube tower custom designed by an internationally renowned playground manufacturer. The play tower will be the first of its kind in Indiana, and one of only three in the country.

We're also building a custom climbing wall and custom climbing net for younger children.

The reimagined Old City Park will have pipe slides, spinners, ping pong tables and extensive open space for non-structured developmental play. We'll even have a few urban porch swings for mom and dad to relax while the kids have fun.

It will be an amazing experience for Greenwood's youngest citizens, but the new park will have something for all ages.

An 18-foot wide promenade will run adjacent to Pleasant Creek, seamlessly integrating into the creek's natural landscape. We're restoring shelter space, adding bocce ball courts, installing a fitness circuit and building a new pedestrian bridge.

Old City Park will once again become a central cornerstone of Old Town, with connectivity to the Greenwood Amphitheater and Craig Park, the former middle school property, Greenwood Public Library, the new Madison Avenue trail and more.

Like many of the projects I've discussed today, the reimagined park will impact Greenwood citizens for decades to come. It will serve as an example for future generations of what's possible for our great city.

When your grandchildren ask about this time, you can proudly say we were doing the work to cultivate their future.

They will take PRIDE in Greenwood's past and honor previous generations, just as we have done by making continued PROGRESS toward an even brighter future.

PRIDE and PROGRESS.

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

Thank you.