

MAYOR TOM HENRY'S 2022 STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS

THANK YOU, STEVE, FOR THAT WARM INTRODUCTION.

YOUR CONTINUED LEADERSHIP IN OUR COMMUNITY IS VALUED AND APPRECIATED.

TO THE RESIDENTS OF FORT WAYNE, GOOD AFTERNOON.

AS WE ALL KNOW, COVID-19 CONTINUES TO IMPACT OUR DAILY LIVES.

AGAIN, THIS YEAR, FOR THE SAFETY OF THE PUBLIC, WE DECIDED TO NOT HAVE GUESTS WITH US TODAY.

I DO THOUGH HAVE MEDIA AND ESSENTIAL CITY OF FORT WAYNE STAFF MEMBERS WITH ME TO HELP BRING THIS ADDRESS TO YOU VIA TELEVISION, RADIO, NEWSPAPER, AND SOCIAL MEDIA.

MY HOPE FOR EACH RESIDENT OF OUR GREAT CITY IS THAT YOU ARE SAFE AND HEALTHY.

FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO HAVE BEEN VACCINATED AND EVEN BOOSTED, THANK YOU FOR DOING YOUR PART TO HELP US MOVE FORWARD.

FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO HAVE NOT BEEN VACCINATED, PLEASE CONSIDER DOING SO. IT WILL HELP REDUCE YOUR RISK FOR SEVERE ILLNESS, HOSPITALIZATION, AND POSSIBLE DEATH. AND, IT WILL HELP LESSEN THE HARDSHIP THAT OUR HOSPITALS FACE EACH DAY.

WE'VE LOST FAR TOO MANY LIVES TO THIS VIRUS.

I'M CONFIDENT THOUGH WE WILL BOUNCE BACK FROM COVID-19.

I ALSO WANT TO EXPRESS MY SINCERE GRATITUDE TO THE ALLEN COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, OUR LOCAL HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS, AND ESSENTIAL EMPLOYEES AT BUSINESSES ACROSS FORT WAYNE.

YOU ARE THE TRUE HEROES.

WE'VE EXPERIENCED A LOT SINCE MARCH 2020, BUT THROUGH IT ALL, I TRULY BELIEVE THE BEST IS YET TO COME FOR THE CITY OF FORT WAYNE.

WE HAD A LOT OF SUCCESSES IN 2021 AND I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO WHAT WE HAVE PLANNED FOR 2022.

FOR EXAMPLE, THE BUSINESS CLIMATE IS AS STRONG AS IT'S EVER BEEN IN

FORT WAYNE.

THERE'S NO QUESTION, THE PANDEMIC HAS IMPACTED SOME BUSINESSES, BUT WE'RE SEEING TREMENDOUS GROWTH AS WELL.

PRIVATE INVESTMENT IN LARGE AND SMALL BUSINESSES TOTALED MORE THAN 463-MILLION DOLLARS IN 2021 WITH 16 COMPANIES EXPANDING IN OR RELOCATING TO FORT WAYNE.

17-HUNDRED JOBS WERE CREATED AND 15-HUNDRED JOBS WERE RETAINED.

AMAZON, DREYER'S GRAND ICE CREAM, ACADIA HEALTHCARE, AND INTELLECTUAL TECHNOLOGY ARE JUST A FEW EXAMPLES OF HOW FORT WAYNE HAS BECOME A TRUE LIVE, WORK, AND PLAY LEADER IN THE MIDWEST AND NATIONALLY.

SPEAKING OF AMAZON, ITS FULFILLMENT CENTER ALONG U-S 30 WILL CREATE ONE-THOUSAND FULL-TIME JOBS AND IS EXPECTED TO OPEN LATER THIS YEAR.

AND, THE DREYER'S EXPANSION IS MORE THAN 145-MILLION DOLLARS AND WILL ADD OVER 150 NEW JOBS.

I WANT TO THANK OUR REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION AND REDEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT AS THEY PLAYED VITAL ROLES IN THESE UNIQUE AND COMPLEX PROJECTS.

IN ADDITION, HIGH GROWTH, INNOVATION, AND INCLUSION ARE THE KEY COMPONENTS OF THE NEW 'ALLEN COUNTY TOGETHER' PLAN THAT WILL FURTHER ASSIST OUR COLLECTIVE EFFORTS TO BE THE COMMUNITY OF CHOICE FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES.

THE PLAN IS LED BY GREATER FORT WAYNE AND WILL SET OUR PROGRESSIVE ECONOMIC PATH OVER THE NEXT DECADE.

IT'S NO WONDER THAT WE'RE THE FASTEST-GROWING METRO IN THE GREAT LAKES REGION.

WE'RE AN AWARD-WINNING CITY, TOO.

CERTAINLY, ONE OF OUR BIGGEST ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN 2021 WAS BEING CHOSEN AS AN ALL-AMERICA CITY FOR THE 4TH TIME BY THE NATIONAL CIVIC LEAGUE.

WE'RE ALSO THE 3RD BEST RUN CITY IN THE COUNTRY, THE 2ND MOST AFFORDABLE PLACE TO LIVE IN THE COUNTRY, AND THE 7TH TOP EMERGING

HOUSING MARKET.

THESE ARE LEGITIMATE RECOGNITIONS FROM WALLETHUB, U.S. NEWS AND WORLD REPORT, THE WALL STREET JOURNAL, AND REALTOR DOT COM.

I MENTION THESE ACCOLADES BECAUSE THEY MATTER.

IT'S WHAT INDIVIDUALS, FAMILIES, AND BUSINESSES ARE LOOKING FOR WHEN SEEKING A PLACE TO LIVE, RAISE A FAMILY, START A CAREER, OR LAUNCH A BUSINESS.

THE TIME AND ENERGY WE'VE PUT INTO ENHANCING AND ADDING QUALITY OF LIFE AND QUALITY OF PLACE AMENITIES HAVE PUT US ON THE MAP.

THERE'S NO QUESTION FORT WAYNE IS ON A ROLL.

FROM ENTERTAINMENT AND HOSPITALITY OFFERINGS, TO SPORTS, THE ARTS, AND EDUCATION, WE'RE MAKING A DIFFERENCE.

SIMPLY PUT, WE'RE THE PLACE TO BE.

ENGAGEMENT, INNOVATION, AND PERFORMANCE HAVE BEEN THE THREE PILLARS OF MY ADMINISTRATION.

AND, WE'RE SEEING ALL OF THOSE AT WORK IN MAJOR INITIATIVES THAT HAVE BEEN COMPLETED OR ARE MAKING SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS.

FOR EXAMPLE, THE BRADLEY IS OPEN AS OUR NEWEST DOWNTOWN HOTEL.

THE UNIQUE STYLE AND ATMOSPHERE CREATED BY VERA BRADLEY CO-FOUNDER BARBARA BAEKGAARD AND PROVENANCE HOTELS IS SECOND TO NONE.

AND, JUST ANNOUNCED A FEW DAYS AGO, A PROJECT TO BE KNOWN AS THE PEARL WILL BE COMING TO DOWNTOWN THROUGH A PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE CITY AND SURACK ENTERPRISES.

IT'S A 50-MILLION DOLLAR MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT TO INCLUDE 35-THOUSAND SQUARE FEET OF COMMERCIAL AND EVENT SPACE, AS WELL AS NEARLY 80 HOUSING UNITS.

THE SITE IS JUST WEST OF THE BRADLEY AND SOUTH OF PERFECTION BAKERIES.

THEN, THERE'S THE ASHBERRY PROJECT THAT WILL SERVE AS THE CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS FOR STAR FINANCIAL BANK.

IT'S MOVING ALONG NICELY WITH AN OPENING SCHEDULED FOR THE FIRST QUARTER OF 2023.

THE 43-MILLION DOLLAR, SEVEN-STORY BUILDING WILL ALSO FEATURE COMMERCIAL AND RETAIL SPACE AND A PARKING GARAGE.

WE ALSO HAVE THE LUTHERAN DOWNTOWN HOSPITAL THAT OPENED A FEW MONTHS AGO.

THIS SIGNIFICANT AND MODERN INVESTMENT IS ESSENTIAL AS THE NEED FOR HEALTHCARE SERVICES CONTINUES TO BE OF UTMOST IMPORTANCE TO RESIDENTS.

FINALLY, THE LANDING CONTINUES TO GROW AND SUCCEED WITH RESTAURANTS, COMMERCIAL AND RETAIL OFFERINGS, AND HOUSING.

IN FACT, JUST A FEW WEEKS AGO, PLANS WERE UNVEILED FOR A NEARLY 12-MILLION INVESTMENT AT THE LANDING TO HISTORICALLY PRESERVE AND RENOVATE THREE SIGNATURE BUILDINGS, ADDING NEW COMMERCIAL AND RETAIL SPACE ALONG WITH 21 NEW HOUSING UNITS.

WORK WILL BEGIN THERE LATER THIS YEAR AND IT'S EXPECTED TO GENERATE MORE THAN 100 CONSTRUCTION JOBS AND 80 FULL-TIME JOBS.

WE'VE PARTNERED WITH THE MODEL GROUP ON THIS INITIATIVE, AND THEY'VE BEEN A TRUSTED PARTNER.

WE'RE THRILLED ABOUT THIS NEXT PHASE WITH THEM.

THERE'S MORE AS INDIANAPOLIS-BASED BARRETT AND STOKELY DEVELOPMENT FIRM HAS TWO PROJECTS IN DOWNTOWN TOTALING MORE THAN 150-MILLION DOLLARS.

FIRST, THE SIX-STORY RIVERFRONT AT PROMENADE PARK DEVELOPMENT IS WELL UNDERWAY.

IN FACT, THE 900-SPACE PARKING GARAGE THERE IS SCHEDULED TO OPEN IN THE FIRST QUARTER OF THIS YEAR.

IT WILL HAVE MORE THAN 200 APARTMENTS, SEVEN TOWNHOMES, AND 45-THOUSAND SQUARE FEET OF COMMERCIAL SPACE THAT ARE EXPECTED TO BE COMPLETED BY THE END OF THIS YEAR.

IT'S AN INVESTMENT OF NEARLY 90-MILLION DOLLARS RIGHT NEXT TO PROMENADE PARK IN THE HEART OF OUR FASTEST GROWING AREA OF PUBLIC-

PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS.

AND, LAST WEEK, IT WAS ANNOUNCED THAT SWISS RE WILL BECOME AN ANCHOR TENANT AT THE RIVERFRONT AT PROMENADE PARK.

SWISS RE IS A GLOBAL RISK MANAGEMENT FIRM THAT HAS NEARLY 200 EMPLOYEES IN FORT WAYNE.

BARRETT AND STOKELY'S SECOND PROJECT IS THE LOFTS AT HEADWATERS PARK, WHICH IS PROGRESSING WITH SOIL REMOVAL AND SITE WORK UNDERWAY.

ACTUAL CONSTRUCTION ON THIS NEARLY 68-MILLION DOLLAR PROJECT IS ANTICIPATED FOR LATER THIS YEAR.

IT'S ALSO A SIX-STORY MIXED-USE BUILDING THAT WILL FEATURE 217 APARTMENTS, 15 TOWNHOMES, 12-THOUSAND SQUARE FEET OF COMMERCIAL SPACE, AND A PARKING GARAGE WITH 651 SPACES.

THAT GARAGE WILL OPEN IN THE SUMMER OF 2023 AND THE OTHER PORTIONS IN 2024.

OUR COMMITMENT TO THE RIVERS IS GOING TO CONTINUE WITH MORE PUBLIC SPACES TO COMPLEMENT THE SUCCESS OF THE PARK AND MORE PRIVATE VENTURES TO COME.

PHASE TWO OF OUR RIVERFRONT INITIATIVE WILL INCLUDE THE CREATION OF MORE TRAILS, NEW BOAT DOCKS, MORE ACTIVITY AND RECREATION AREAS, AND ANOTHER SECTION OF TREE CANOPY TRAIL WITH RIVER OVERLOOKS.

WE COULD SEE CONSTRUCTION WORK ON SOME OF THESE ELEMENTS BEGIN YET THIS YEAR.

IT'S EVIDENT THAT OUR ONCE DORMANT DOWNTOWN IS ALIVE AND WELL WITH ONE-BILLION DOLLARS OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE INVESTMENTS IN THE LAST DECADE.

IN FACT, WE ANTICIPATE ANOTHER BILLION DOLLARS IN PROJECTS OVER THE NEXT DECADE.

ANOTHER MAJOR PROJECT THAT'S MAKING NOTICEABLE PROGRESS IS ELECTRIC WORKS.

THE WEST CAMPUS WILL OPEN THIS FALL WITH A VIBRANT MIX OF CREATIVE OFFICE, RETAIL, ENTERTAINMENT, DINING, HEALTHCARE, EDUCATION, AND

COMMUNITY EVENT SPACE.

IT WILL ALSO INCLUDE THE CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS FOR DO IT BEST AND THE REGION'S FIRST FOOD HALL AND PUBLIC MARKET.

PHASE TWO WORK IS BEGINNING THIS YEAR THAT WILL FEATURE HOUSING UNITS, AN EARLY CHILDHOOD LEARNING CENTER, A WELLNESS CENTER, AND COMMERCIAL SPACE.

THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE ELECTRIC WORKS CAMPUS SHOULD BE IMMENSE AND WILL CONTINUE TO SUPPORT JOB GROWTH AND QUALITY OF PLACE AMENITIES.

IT'S NO ACCIDENT THAT GOOD FISCAL STEWARDSHIP HAS PUT FORT WAYNE IN POSITION FOR OUR CURRENT SUCCESSES.

OUR BALANCED BUDGET FOR 2022 WILL HELP US MEET OUR MOST URGENT NEEDS WHILE ALSO SETTING ASIDE FUNDS TO ADDRESS ANY FUTURE FINANCIAL UNCERTAINTIES.

WE'VE BEEN ABLE TO WEATHER THE COVID-19 STORM FINANCIALLY AND HAVE SUFFICIENT CASH RESERVES TO RESPOND TO EMERGENCIES.

OUR CITY CONTROLLER AND HIS TEAM IN PARTNERSHIP WITH CITY COUNCIL AND MY OFFICE DESERVE A LOT OF CREDIT FOR MANAGING COMPLEX BUDGETS IN A WAY THAT PROTECTS TAXPAYERS AND ENSURES VITAL SERVICES CONTINUE TO BE PROVIDED IN THE MIDST OF A PANDEMIC.

I CAN ASSURE YOU THAT FORT WAYNE'S FISCAL HEALTH IS STRONG.

TIME AND TIME AGAIN, WE HEAR FROM RESIDENTS THAT IT'S CRITICAL TO INVEST RESOURCES IN OUR PARKS, NEIGHBORHOOD INFRASTRUCTURE, AND PUBLIC SAFETY.

I CAN TELL YOU WITH CONFIDENCE THAT WE'RE DOING JUST THAT AND THE BEST IS YET TO COME.

UNQUESTIONABLY, FORT WAYNE'S PARKS ARE THE VERY BEST AND WE SHOULD BE PROUD OF WHAT WE HAVE.

PARK USAGE AND PROGRAMMING CONTINUES TO GROW.

OUR PARKS SERVE AS SAFE PLACES FOR FAMILIES AND FRIENDS TO GATHER TO EXERCISE, LEARN NEW THINGS, AND EXPLORE NATURE.

IN FACT, THIS YEAR WILL SEE THE COMPLETION OF THE DESIGN FOR THE FIRST PHASE OF THE FRANKE PARK RENAISSANCE PROJECT THAT WILL INCLUDE A NEW ENTRANCE OFF OF GOSHEN AVENUE AND A NEW, GRAND PARK PAVILION.

ANOTHER HIGHLIGHT THIS YEAR WILL BE CONSTRUCTION ON FOSTER PARK PAVILION 3, WHICH FEATURES A ROOF REPLACEMENT, RENOVATIONS TO THE INTERIOR OF THE PAVILION, AND BRINGING A NEW ELECTRICAL SERVICE TO THE BUILDING.

THERE WILL ALSO BE IMPROVEMENTS AT LAKESIDE, KREAGER, MCMILLEN, SALOMON FARM, AND WEISSER PARKS.

AND, OUR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM OF PROVIDING THREE-MILLION DOLLARS IN FUNDING FOR OUR PARKS CONTINUES IN 2022.

THIS WILL BUILD UPON THE MORE THAN 100 PROJECTS COMPLETED IN 2021.

NEIGHBORHOODS ARE TRULY THE BACKBONE OF OUR CITY.

THAT'S WHY WE'RE GOING TO INVEST A RECORD 38.5-MILLION DOLLARS IN PUBLIC WORKS PROJECTS THIS YEAR.

WE COMPLETED NEARLY 28-MILLION DOLLARS OF IMPROVEMENTS IN 2021 AND HAVE INVESTED MORE THAN 200-MILLION DOLLARS IN NEIGHBORHOODS SINCE THE 2014 CONSTRUCTION SEASON.

STREETS, ROADS, SIDEWALKS, ALLEYS, AND BRIDGES WILL BE GIVEN PROPER ATTENTION IN ALL FOUR QUADRANTS OF OUR CITY.

THE EAST LUDWIG ROAD RELOCATION AND BLUFFTON ROAD BRIDGE IMPROVEMENTS ARE TWO MAJOR INITIATIVES FOR THIS YEAR.

YOU'LL ALSO SEE CONCRETE STREET REPAIRS IN SEVEN NEIGHBORHOODS, 16 CONCRETE ALLEY REPLACEMENTS, AND SEVEN SIDEWALK PROJECTS.

WE ALSO CONTINUE TO INVEST IN REPAIRING EXISTING SIDEWALKS THROUGHOUT OUR COMMUNITY WITH A MULTITUDE OF PROGRAMS TO MAKE IT EASIER FOR OUR RESIDENTS.

IN ADDITION, WORK ON THE FORT WAYNE VETERANS MEMORIAL BRIDGE ALONG SPY RUN AVENUE NEAR THE OLD FORT WILL COMMENCE THIS YEAR.

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH INDOT, RENOVATING THIS SIGNATURE GATEWAY WILL PROVIDE MOTORISTS AND PEDESTRIANS WITH SAFE AND INNOVATIVE WAYS TO NAVIGATE OUR CITY.

I'M ALSO GRATEFUL FOR THE OPPORTUNITY WE HAVE TO HONOR AND RECOGNIZE ALL BRANCHES OF THE MILITARY.

THE WORK WE'RE DOING IN THE PUBLIC WORKS DIVISION HELPS DEFINE OUR ABILITY TO BE RECOGNIZED AS A COMMUNITY THAT HAS A SAFE AND EFFECTIVE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM.

BUSINESSES AND FAMILIES LOOK TO THAT AS A KEY INDICATOR OF WHERE THEY WANT TO INVEST THEIR RESOURCES.

WE ALSO HAVE AN AWARD-WINNING TRAILS NETWORK CONSISTING OF NEARLY 129 MILES OF TRAILS, WITH ALMOST 98 MILES INSIDE CITY LIMITS.

THIS YEAR, WE'RE PLANNING TO CONSTRUCT ANOTHER FOUR MILES AND HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE BUCKNER PARK, HANNA STREET, SUMMIT PARK, LAKE AVENUE TRAILS AND THE URBAN TRAIL.

WE'RE ALSO IN POSITION TO HAVE 4.5 MILLION DOLLARS SET ASIDE FOR TRAILS BEGINNING THIS YEAR THROUGH 2024.

AS A RESULT, WE'LL BE ABLE TO COMPLETE PRIORITY CORRIDOR TRAILS IN EACH QUADRANT OF THE CITY.

IMPROVING WHAT IS VISIBLE IS CERTAINLY IMPORTANT, BUT WE MUST ALSO MAINTAIN WHAT WE HAVE UNDERGROUND WITH OUR WATER, SEWER, AND STORMWATER INFRASTRUCTURE.

LAST YEAR ALONE, CITY UTILITIES LED 92-MILLION DOLLARS WORTH OF UPGRADES.

THIS YEAR, OUR NEIGHBORHOODS WILL SEE 110-MILLION DOLLARS IN SYSTEM ENHANCEMENTS.

FOR EXAMPLE, WATER MAIN WORK WILL OCCUR IN SUCH AREAS AS CENTERHURST, TAMARACK, AND CRESTWOOD COLONY.

AND, STORMWATER AND DRAINAGE PROJECTS WILL TAKE PLACE IN THE LINCOLNDALE AND BLACKHAWK AREAS, AS WELL AS ALONG NORTH ANTHONY BOULEVARD, VANCE AVENUE, AND HESSEN CASSEL ROAD.

AND, WE CAN'T FORGET ABOUT THE LARGEST INVESTMENT IN FORT WAYNE'S HISTORY WITH THE CONTINUATION OF THE DEEP ROCK TUNNEL PROJECT THAT WILL HELP PROTECT OUR RIVERS, NEIGHBORHOODS, AND QUALITY OF LIFE FOR GENERATIONS TO COME.

CITY UTILITIES IS ALSO LEADING THE WAY IN ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES AND

ENERGY EFFICIENCIES AND BY EQUIPPING AND TRAINING FUTURE PROFESSIONALS THROUGH OUR PROACTIVE EDUCATION AND INTERNSHIP PROGRAMS.

CITY GOVERNMENT MUST BE HITTING ON ALL CYLINDERS TO MAKE THE MOST DIFFERENCE FOR RESIDENTS, NEIGHBORHOODS, AND BUSINESSES.

A GOOD EXAMPLE IS PUBLIC SAFETY.

THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS FROM LAST YEAR AND THE GOALS FOR THIS YEAR DEMONSTRATE HOW SERIOUSLY WE TAKE OUR WORK TO PROTECT THE PUBLIC AS A TOP PRIORITY OF MY ADMINISTRATION.

OVERALL CRIME IS DOWN SIX PERCENT AND VIOLENT CRIME IS DOWN NEARLY 37-PERCENT.

THE FORT WAYNE POLICE DEPARTMENT HAS ADDED 100 BODY CAMERAS, AND THIS YEAR'S RECRUIT CLASS WILL BRING OUR STAFFING LEVEL UP TO 485 OFFICERS.

OUR OFFICERS RESPONDED TO 140-THOUSAND CALLS FOR SERVICE IN 2021 AND WERE ABLE TO TAKE 850 FIREARMS OFF THE STREET THAT HAD BEEN OBTAINED ILLEGALLY.

ANOTHER MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENT IN 2021 WAS THE ADDITION OF TWO SOCIAL WORKERS TO THE POLICE DEPARTMENT.

DARCY ROBINS AND SAMANTHA TAYLOR ARE FOCUSING ON COMMUNITY OUTREACH, BUILDING CONNECTIONS, AND BEING PART OF THE HOPE AND RECOVERY TEAM TO GET HELP FOR PEOPLE GOING THROUGH PROBLEMS WITH DRUGS.

OUR FIRE DIVISION IS ALSO COMMITTED TO PROTECTING ALL OF US.

LAST YEAR, THEY RESPONDED TO MORE THAN 27-THOUSAND CALLS FOR SERVICE.

AND, WE ADDED 14 NEW RECRUITS IN 2021, WHO WILL OBTAIN AN ADVANCED LIFE SUPPORT CERTIFICATION WITHIN THEIR FIRST TWO YEARS ON THE DEPARTMENT.

THIS YEAR, THE FIRE DEPARTMENT WILL BREAK GROUND ON A NEW FIRE STATION 14 AT REED ROAD AND STATE BOULEVARD.

AND, THEY WILL HAVE AT LEAST 24 RECRUITS BEGIN TRAINING AS PART OF THE

94TH RECRUIT CLASS.

OVER A MILLION DOLLARS IN GRANT FUNDING WILL ASSIST OUR FIREFIGHTERS THIS YEAR WITH NEW RADIOS, RESCUE TOOLS, AND TRAINING.

AND, TWO NEW FIRE ENGINES WILL BE PUT INTO SERVICE THIS YEAR.

IT'S VITAL THAT RESIDENTS, BUSINESSES, AND VISITORS FEEL SAFE IN OUR COMMUNITY.

THE COLLECTIVE WORK WE'RE DOING SHOULD PROVIDE COMFORT THAT FORT WAYNE IS A SAFE CITY THAT'S MOVING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION.

ANIMAL CARE AND CONTROL IS ALSO PART OF OUR PUBLIC SAFETY TEAM AND THEIR INNOVATIVE APPROACHES MAKE FORT WAYNE A NATIONALLY-RECOGNIZED LEADER IN CARING FOR PETS.

AN EXPANDED FOSTER PROGRAM, MORE EDUCATIONAL OPTIONS FOR CHILDREN, AND RECORD ADOPTIONS IN 2021 SHOW WHY BEING A PET-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY IS IMPORTANT.

BEING A SAFE CITY INCREASES OUR ABILITY TO SHINE IN THE ONGOING DEVELOPMENT OF OUR COMMUNITY AS WELL.

THE FIRST SINGLE FAMILY HOUSING ADDITION IN SOUTHEAST FORT WAYNE IN 30 YEARS IS COMING TO FRUITION.

ROOSEVELT RESERVE NEAR TILLMAN AND HESSEN CASSEL ROADS WILL HAVE MARKET RATE HOUSING WITH 263 LOTS ON 126 ACRES OF LAND.

AND, WE'RE WORKING TO BRING A FULL-SERVICE GROCERY STORE TO SOUTHEAST FORT WAYNE TO PROVIDE HEALTHY FOOD OPTIONS IN AN AREA THAT'S CURRENTLY DEFINED AS A FOOD DESERT.

WE HOPE TO BE IN POSITION TO HAVE A LOCATION ANNOUNCED SOON AND POSSIBLE CONSTRUCTION AND OPENING IN THE NEXT YEAR.

OUR FOCUS ON PEOPLE EXTENDS TO OUR CULTURAL OFFERINGS TOO, AND I'M PROUD OF OUR COMMUNITY'S SUPPORT AND APPRECIATION FOR THE ARTS.

RECENTLY, IN FACT, THREE-MILLION DOLLARS IN LEGACY FUNDING WAS SET ASIDE TO ASSIST WITH PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS TO THE ARTS UNITED CENTER.

IT'S A SIGNIFICANT PIECE IN OUR OVERALL PLAN TO EXPAND AND ENHANCE PROGRAMMING IN FORT WAYNE THROUGH PRIVATE AND PUBLIC FUNDING.

INVESTING IN THESE AREAS MAKES OUR COMMUNITY AND REGION STRONGER AND MORE VIABLE IN A GLOBAL AND COMPETITIVE ECONOMY.

SO FAR TODAY, I'VE SHARED WITH YOU MANY SUCCESS STORIES AND WHERE WE'RE HEADED AS A CITY.

I DO RECOGNIZE, THOUGH, WE HAVE SIGNIFICANT CHALLENGES IN OUR COMMUNITY.

THERE'S NO QUESTION THAT GARBAGE AND RECYCLING COLLECTION IS ONE OF THOSE.

IT HASN'T MET YOUR STANDARDS, AND I TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THAT.

WE OWE IT TO YOU TO PROVIDE THE VERY BEST CUSTOMER SERVICE POSSIBLE.

DESPITE THE ROUGH TIMES THAT WE'VE HAD WITH SOLID WASTE SERVICES, I'M OPTIMISTIC ABOUT WHERE WE'RE HEADED.

WE'RE CLOSE TO AN AGREEMENT IN RED RIVER'S BANKRUPTCY PROCEEDINGS.

AN AGREEMENT THAT WILL ULTIMATELY ALLOW THE NECESSARY TIME TO HIRE A NEW CONTRACTOR AND HAVE THEM ON BOARD THIS SUMMER.

WE'RE ALSO WORKING WITH THE STATE LEGISLATURE TO CHANGE THE LAW THAT MANDATES OUR CURRENT TRASH BIDDING PROCESS.

CONFRONTING THESE CHALLENGES AND LEARNING FROM THEM WILL HELP US ADVANCE AS A CITY.

BETTER DAYS ARE AHEAD.

YOU KNOW, ONE OF THE THINGS WE SHOULD BE MOST PROUD OF AS A COMMUNITY IS HOW WE CARE ABOUT ONE ANOTHER.

WE LOOK OUT FOR EACH OTHER THROUGH COMPASSIONATE AND MEANINGFUL ACTIONS. WE'RE A PEOPLE-FOCUSED COMMUNITY.

FOR EXAMPLE, A RECENT HIGH-TRUST PARTNERSHIP HAS BEEN DEVELOPED WITH CATHOLIC CHARITIES.

UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF DAN FLORIN AND HIS OUTSTANDING STAFF, WE'VE BEEN ABLE TO ESTABLISH A FORT WAYNE COMMUNITY IDENTIFICATION CARD PROGRAM.

IT'S A PROACTIVE EFFORT TO RECOGNIZE ALL CITIZENS IN OUR COMMUNITY THROUGH DIVERSITY, INCLUSION, AND RESPECT.

AS OF MID-JANUARY, NEARLY 14-HUNDRED CARDS HAVE BEEN ISSUED.

IT'S HELPING POPULATIONS HERE THAT HAVE CHALLENGES OBTAINING OTHER FORMS OF PHOTO IDENTIFICATION TO COMPLETE IMPORTANT TASKS SUCH AS CITY SERVICES AND BANKING TO NAME A FEW.

IN ADDITION, CATHOLIC CHARITIES LED THE WAY IN RESETTLING NEARLY 90 REFUGEES FROM AFGHANISTAN TO FORT WAYNE.

THE PROCESS IS A DETAILED AND ORGANIZED PROCEDURE, ONE WITH PROPER VETTING PROTOCOLS.

WE'RE INVESTING IN LIVES AND I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO POSITIVE OUTCOMES.

I'M ALSO A BIG PROPONENT OF CELEBRATING DIVERSITY AND LOOKING FOR WAYS TO GROW AND LEARN NEW THINGS ABOUT OUR CITIZENS AND HOW WE CAN INCORPORATE THAT INTO MAKING FORT WAYNE MORE OPEN TO CHANGE AND IDEA GENERATION.

THAT'S WHY I'M SO ENCOURAGED BY THE UNITED FRONT INITIATIVE.

IT'S BROUGHT MORE THAN 8-THOUSAND PEOPLE AND OVER 200 ORGANIZATIONS TOGETHER TO HAVE HARD DISCUSSIONS, INCREASE KNOWLEDGE ABOUT CULTURES, AND IMPLEMENT BEST PRACTICES IN THE AREAS OF RACIAL HEALING, EQUITY, EDUCATION, AND ORGANIZATIONAL TRANSFORMATION.

I CAN'T SAY ENOUGH ABOUT DOCTOR PASCAL LOSAMBE AND THE UNITED FRONT TEAM WHO ARE LEADING THE CHARGE WITH INNOVATIVE PROGRAMMING.

I ADMIRE THEIR LEADERSHIP, COMMITMENT, AND COURAGE AS THEY ARE PUSHING US TO BE A BETTER COMMUNITY.

TRULY, WE'RE STRONGER WHEN WE'RE CONNECTED AND WORKING TOGETHER TO REACH A COMMON GOAL OF UNDERSTANDING AND UNITY.

THERE'S NO QUESTION, FORT WAYNE HAS COME A LONG WAY.

THE STATE OF OUR CITY IS STRONG WITH NO END IN SIGHT AS THE POSITIVE MOMENTUM CONTINUES AND NEW INVESTMENTS KEEP COMING.

WE CAN'T SLOW DOWN AND FALL BEHIND.

WE'VE WORKED TOO HARD TO EARN OUR POSITION AS A LEADER AND
EXAMPLE FOR OTHERS TO FOLLOW.

CITIES ACROSS THE COUNTRY ARE LOOKING TO US FOR GUIDANCE.

WE'RE A CITY LIKE NO OTHER.

AS A FAN OF ROBERT FROST'S POEM, THE ROAD NOT TAKEN, I'M REMINDED
THAT AS A COMMUNITY, CHOICES HAVE NOW BEEN MADE THAT HAVE SET THE
COURSE FOR OUR COMMUNITY'S FUTURE.

INSTEAD OF TAKING THE PATH THAT WAS WELL TRAVELED, THOUGH, AND
PERHAPS EASIER, WE'VE TAKEN THE ROAD LESS TRAVELED.

AND, IT HAS MADE ALL THE DIFFERENCE.

WE'VE SUCCESSFULLY SET OURSELVES APART FROM THE REST.

WE'VE TAKEN RISKS AND BENEFITTED.

THERE'S NO QUESTION IT'S A GREAT TIME TO BE PART OF WHAT WE'RE
BUILDING IN FORT WAYNE.

TRULY, THE BEST IS YET TO COME.

GOD BLESS YOU AND GOD BLESS THE CITY OF FORT WAYNE.

THANK YOU.