

**Jeffersonville State of City Address
Wednesday, March 30, 2022
Rotary Club**



**“The Next Chapter”
Mayor Mike Moore**

Good afternoon.

First, I want to thank you all for being here.

I would also like to extend my appreciation to The Rotary Club for once again allowing me to brag about this incredible city and some of our victories from the last year.

Just being here today with all of you is no small victory in itself.

Last year I delivered this address to you via ZOOM, from an empty room. We were one year into living with the uncertainty of COVID. What a roller coaster ride we have been on.

With strong leadership, creative problem solving and sometimes just sheer determination, we have managed to ride the wave and withstand every challenge the pandemic has thrown our way.

Coronavirus may never be completely gone. But together, we have made it through the uncertainties and found a way to live with COVID. I think being here together today is a good sign for what's to come.

That's why I can say with confidence, that the State of our City is hopeful. It is stronger than ever. We are eager to move on to the next chapter.

For all of the employees who are here today – or watching online – I want to thank you for your determination.

You truly put your best foot forward. I appreciate and respect you and everything you do for the City of Jeff. Your dedication is the reason we're here today as a stronger, better city than we've ever been.

Creating the best Quality of Life for Jeffersonville residents has always been one of my administration's top priorities. Succeeding in that is central to our success as a city.

We strive to build a strong local economy, safe neighborhoods and top-notch public amenities. Maintaining low tax and crime rates. Improving our infrastructure and garnering strong returns on our economic development ventures and investments ... are all moving parts in what makes up Jeffersonville's Quality of Life.

Our commitment to those things is unwavering. And I'm proud to say our Quality of Life is unparalleled by any other city around. Jeffersonville is succeeding. You can see signs of that everywhere you look.

Take a look at our neighborhoods. As Jeffersonville continues to grow and develop, it's attracting attention from more people who want to live here and raise their families here. The housing market has never been stronger. Coming off of a near-record year in 2020, when seven new subdivisions and new multi-family developments were approved in the City, 2021 brought a 15% increase in new

single family home permits issued. Another new neighborhood – Howard Yard along Market Street – has been approved already this year.

And if you take a drive through some of Jeff's most established neighborhoods, you'll notice that longstanding single, vacant lots are being developed for new single family dwellings. Keep your eye out for two new apartment complexes – Lakeside Gardens and The Jeff on 10th – as well as two senior living facilities – Vivera and Bridgepoint Gardens – to open later this year.

People are finding what they're looking for in Jeff. And it's not just new homeowners. Businesses also see the opportunities here and they're staking claim.

Even as the pandemic lingered and supply chain issues hampered industries across the board, both large and small businesses made investments in Jeff during 2021.

Nothing Bundt Cakes, Torchy's Tacos and Sally Beauty were among last year's additions to Veterans Parkway. Coffee Crossing, Taylor's Cereal Bowl Kitchen and Close Enough Cafe all found homes along Spring Street downtown, and Upland Brewing Company opened its spot along Riverside Drive. The exciting thing is that's only a glimpse of the commercial growth all across Jeffersonville in the last year. In all, 78 certificates for new businesses were issued by the city's Planning department in 2021.

Standing here today, just three months into the year, I can say that based upon inquiries to our Planning & Zoning Department from potential applicants, we expect 2022 to be another strong year.

Already, in January, we announced another major piece to the development along Veterans Parkway with the news that Academy Sports, Drakes and Green District, among others, have confirmed their plans to settle in Jeff.

A number of other large projects are under construction already and you can expect to see openings this year of the Hilton Garden Inn as well as a Baptist Health urgent care center and a Norton Health Care emergency center near Kroger on 10th Street.

And much of this growth is happening in the area where the City just a few years ago agreed to give 10% of the new tax revenue back to Greater Clark County Schools. As the area around I-265 continues to boom, our public schools will get more dollars. It's a win-win for Jeffersonville and especially, for our students and teachers.

Growth is good. But the growth must be responsible. Our planning and zoning department led by Chad Reischl last year undertook the massive job of updating our zoning code. The decades old code had become outdated and burdensome for developers.

It wasn't an easy process. We took the time to listen to residents, developers and other stakeholders to come up with zoning laws that work to meet the demand for greater density without jeopardizing the uniqueness of our community. This new code promotes growth and does not slow down Jeffersonville's development.

But for our city to grow it must do it in a smart way. This means deciding how our city will look in ten or twenty years.

To get there, our city planners are now turning their attention to revising the city's master comprehensive plan – something that hasn't been done since 2014. Every city is required by law to have one, but ours will set the standard in the region. It will be a guide for where we want to go when it comes to future development.

Again, Chad Reischl and his department will tackle this lofty mission. It's one that will focus on input from the community to see what types of development we want and more importantly, where in the city that development should be located. Without getting into the weeds, the plan will suggest future land uses. For example, are there areas that are better suited for single or multi-family homes?

Another example of what we will see in the plan is whether we should focus more on residential, commercial or industrial in a particular area.

In the end, the new comprehensive plan will work as the framework for development in Jeffersonville as we move forward. Our city must be ready for what the future brings. I look forward to presenting this plan to the City Council later this year.

And speaking of new growth, it's time for us to focus on one of the biggest development opportunities in the country that's located right here in our front yard. While the closing of Jeff Boat was a sad day for our city, it also presents us with a once in a lifetime opportunity to transform our riverfront like never before.

We now have the opportunity to redevelop nearly 78 acres of prime real estate in a major metropolitan area. It's a blank slate. The possibilities are limitless. It's a once in a lifetime chance to make a generational impact on that vacant property.

Now is the time for us to step up and work with the owners to explore the best uses for the property. The abandoned shipyard was the foundation for much of Jeffersonville's rich history as a river city. But now it could very well be the catalyst for the next decade of economic prosperity.

This massive endeavor won't happen overnight. It will take time and patience. But we hope to partner with the owner to begin a national search for a firm to prepare a master plan for development of the riverfront property to kick-start the process.

My vision is one that encompasses a public-private partnership that fuels a riverfront development that gives life and synergy that this city has never seen before. One where there's a mix of residential, commercial and public space with a focus on the Ohio River so people will take notice of what Jeff has to offer.

We know that in order to maintain Jeffersonville's status as THE place to call home for families and businesses, we have to take care of our growing responsibilities in regards to our infrastructure.

These projects are usually the most frustrating for residents because they're usually the most inconvenient. But we've seen the long-term benefits that come from making some short-term sacrifices.

Until the city stepped up to invest \$2.5 million to build Town Center Boulevard in 2014, the only thing occupying Jeffersonville's side of Veterans Parkway was tall grass and weeds. Look at it now.

You see the effects of our decision to finally take the plunge to redesign and widen the east end of 10th Street.

We created Gottbrath Parkway and Water Tower Road to help spur commercial development on both sides of Ind. 62 just east of I-265.

We KNOW investing in our infrastructure serves as a catalyst for development. We've reaped the benefits. That's why these types of projects were a priority last year and will continue to be one of our top priorities this year.

In December, we opened the Heavy Haul Road. A \$14.5 million project resulting from our partnerships with regional and federal entities to create a direct connection for heavy trucks traveling between the Port and River Ridge – which remains the epicenter for commercial and industrial growth in Jeff.

And I'm happy to update you on two projects I talked about here last year. The reconstructing and widening of Utica-Sellersburg Road from Hwy. 62 to the railroad crossing is complete. And we cleared another phase for our Charlestown Pike Enhancement Project by releasing our official design plans last December. We'll soon be acquiring right-of-way with construction to start in 2024.

In 2021, we also made significant progress on improvements to one of our longest-standing infrastructure concerns: Our sewer system.

It didn't come without a few detours and traffic headaches, but we managed to complete two major wastewater projects last year. Both projects – the first along 8th Street in the Ewing Lane area and the second along 8th street in the downtown area – were aimed at helping to reduce the city's Combined Sewer Overflows, as directed by a federal mandate with the EPA and Indiana Department of Environmental Management.

When we came into office in 2012 the City was plagued with an aging sewer system that was facing fines from the federal government.

Those two projects bring us closer to meeting the terms of the federal mandate. The ongoing Jeff Digs project is really the last piece of the puzzle. And keep in mind we're getting this done without raising sewer rates.

When I was here last year, we were only a few months into work on the city's largest-ever infrastructure project. I warned you then that even though Jeff Digs would be confined to the downtown area, it would cause disruptions and inconveniences. I asked everyone for their patience.

I am going to make that ask here again today. Please, bear with us. The work being done as part of the Jeff Digs project will revitalize and expand our sewer infrastructure and is vital in order for Jeffersonville to be compliant with federal clean water standards.

I am relieved to be able to tell you we've made significant progress on the project so far. Mild weather has blessed us with extra construction days and we are on track to have Jeff Digs finished in October.

Investing in our sewers today will position us for even more growth tomorrow. That's why I told you last year that partnering with River Ridge to expand the city's North Wastewater Treatment Facility was a big step in making that happen. Expansion of the plant is needed if Jeffersonville is going to serve the development that is knocking on the door at the bustling commerce center.

So I take great pride in the fact that with the help of River Ridge, coupled with state and federal dollars, we're on the verge of signing-off on a \$40 million expansion to the plant without raising sewer rates.

It's an impressive accomplishment that is built on cooperation and fiscal responsibility.

Fiscal responsibility remains at the forefront as we emerge from the pandemic. Two years ago there was real concern that the economic impact of COVID would hamper Jeffersonville's reputation as one of the soundest fiscal cities in the state. While we planned for the worse, I can proudly say that the City's finances have never been better.

With the help of the City Council and City Controller Heather Metcalf, we weathered the last two years without any furloughs, reduction of city services, tax hikes or major budget cuts. In fact, we ended last year with \$10 million of cash on hand with another four and a half million in our rainy-day fund. In other words, we didn't miss a beat.

We did it in part by watching the bottom line. But it also happened because Jeffersonville's economy continues to grow. The new businesses and the jobs they've brought with them have expanded our tax base without burdening the taxpayer.

Our parks and amenities have always been a priority in our administration. Whether it's greenspace, sports fields, trails or recreation and entertainment space – our parks are central to our sense of community and contribute immensely to the quality of life.

After cancelling all of 2020s events and operating under restrictions for a good part of 2021, I am beyond excited to report that city events and recreation are back in full force: The Nachand Fieldhouse, the aquatic center, the Envision Center, RiverStage ... All of our facilities are open for business.

We're investing nearly a half million dollars to give the pool at our Aquatics Center a much needed facelift. We can't wait for families to check it out this summer.

It was obvious last year – despite still operating under some restrictions - that residents were ready to be out and involved again. Our summer concert series on the RiverStage was well attended, participation in the annual 4th of July Parade and Holiday Parade was incredible and our Summer in the City summer camp for kids was sold out.

Summer Camp was so popular last year that when registrations for the 2022 camp opened a couple of weeks ago, the spots sold out in less than an hour. That's pretty darn fast! And it tells me we're doing something right. I am very proud of the City's amazing Parks and Recreation department led by Paul Northam and Amber Ridings. Their team works tirelessly to provide programs, entertainment and recreation for all residents and I want to thank them for their efforts.

And speaking of our commitment to improving the quality of life in Jeffersonville, we can't overlook the opening of the city's newest outdoor entertainment venue. The Depot located in the NoCo Arts and Cultural District is unlike any place in the Louisville area. It's a shipping container park that is vibrant, quirky and intimate.

It's the perfect backdrop for art, music, food and drinks – all in a one block area. We kicked things off in October with The Depot Days to give folks a taste of what's to come. Expect an exciting and entertaining summer at The Depot.

With that said, we have some incredible people helping to keep Jeff the best city. I am so grateful to all of the men and women who go to work every day to serve the residents. It's one of the things that makes our city special. In simple terms - I couldn't do my job without their commitment and dedication.

Last year our fire department hit a milestone when it celebrated its 150th year. Today we have a premiere fire department employing men and women that have one thing in common: They chose to be firefighters.

Their job requires them to sacrifice by running into whatever dangerous situation comes up and risking their lives to save someone else's; they show up for every shift committed to fulfilling that promise. We should never take them or their families for granted.

That sacrifice hit us especially hard in February when we lost one of our unsung heroes in the line of duty - Deputy Fire Chief Bruce DeArk. Many aren't aware that the cancer rate among firefighters is higher than it is for others because of the toxic fumes they breathe. I recall when I first heard that my friend Bruce was diagnosed with colon cancer. As a cancer survivor myself, I understood the battle he faced. But I also knew that he was up to the challenge.

For four years Bruce forged ahead in his fight while still proudly serving the department as he always did.

And along the way Bruce reminded us every day of his determination to win his battle. I was even more moved watching his fellow firefighters stand by him and his family.

And under the leadership of Chief Shawn Grant and Deputy Chief Jason Sharp, our fire department is looking to the future as well. As River Ridge continues to develop, it's time for us take a hard look at ways to expand our fire protection to better serve those businesses located there. The best way to make this happen is to work with River Ridge to look at funding mechanisms for a new fire station at the commerce center along with equipment and personnel.

The residents of Jeffersonville shouldn't have to foot the bill for this added fire protection. Our endeavors to expand the wastewater treatment plant have proven that team work can get things done. With that said, I'm hopeful that by working with local and state leaders we will now find a creative and fair way to allow the businesses in River Ridge to help share in the responsibility of providing better fire response for those living and working East of I-265.

Our commitment to public safety was again at the forefront this past year as our police department faced some new and challenging times. I have never been so proud of Chief Kenny Kavanaugh and his department as they worked tirelessly to keep our neighborhoods safe.

Chief Kavanaugh's on-going commitment for 21st century policing was on display recently when he announced the installation of thirty cameras around the city to help reduce crime. The cameras will take photos of license plates in a system connected to an FBI wanted database. If a camera takes a photo of a license plate associated with a wanted person, it can immediately alert the police. This new cutting-edge technology will make a difference in fighting crime.

These automated license plate readers are just the latest example of my administration along with the City Council giving the police the tools and resources so Jeffersonville remains safe for everyone. We've also invested in cutting-edge training so our department is ready for today's ever increasing demands on law enforcement.

I'd like to also take a moment to recognize Assistant Police Chief Scott McVoy for graduating from the FBI National Academy earlier this month. He became one of only three officers in our city's history to successfully complete the 11-week program at the FBI campus in Quantico, Virginia. Scott's achievement is even more impressive considering less than one percent of U.S. Law Enforcement Officers have the chance to attend the training offered by the FBI. His training will provide long-term resources and experience for Jeffersonville.

We're also keeping pace by putting more police officers on the street when we swore-in nine officers in December bringing the total number in our department to ninety-two. I take a lot of pride in the fact that in these challenging times, that men and women want to join our police department.

It reinforces our promise to the people of Jeffersonville: You're going to be safe.

As we close I'd be remiss if I didn't take a moment to acknowledge the passing of former City Councilwoman Barbara Wilson. As the second woman to serve on the

Council, Barbara served Jeffersonville with a lot of pride. Her thumbprint is on much of what took place in the city during her nearly 20- year tenure.

It's the mark left on Jeffersonville by the hands and minds of Barbara, Bruce and so many others like them who devoted their lives to our city. That makes me more optimistic than ever about our future. Because not only did they make Jeff better while they were here, they made it better for everyone who will come after them.

That's why, when I look at our next generation, I'm even more hopeful for our future. As a father, I realize Jeffersonville's future begins and ends with our youth. We have so many kids in our hometown that make us proud.

One example is Jeff High Senior Ben Broady who landed a scholarship worth \$250,000. Ben will attend Berklee College of Music in Boston and his tuition will be covered for all four years. I can't wait to see what's next for him and other high school grads who embark on the world.

I'm also looking forward to seeing what's next for Jeffersonville. Just look at what we've done in these trying times since we first heard the word COVID. I'm not naïve enough to think that we've seen the last of masks and social distancing. But I hope that's behind us. No matter what though, I'm more confident than ever that Jeffersonville's better days are still to come.

I get emotional every time I think about growing up as kid in Oak Park idolizing Jeff High basketball legend Mike Flynn. I never dreamed Jeffersonville would be the city others envy. One where people gather in downtown to enjoy a meal or enjoy a concert on the Ohio River. A city that in the last ten years accounts for 98% of all of the new jobs coming to Clark County.

So, what's next for Jeffersonville? It's simple. We're going to do what we've done since the very first day I came into the Mayor's office – work tirelessly to help our city reach its greatest potential. And it's happening. We're not that same small river city trying to find its way.

Instead, we're a city where people want to live, work and raise a family.

If our future was a book, it wouldn't be called "The Little City That Could." It would be called "The Little City That Did." We're still writing the next chapter, but I can already tell you it's going to be a page-turner. It might even have a few more plot twists. For certain, it will be a story of adventure and all of the great things yet to come as we continue to work toward Jeffersonville's happily ever after.

Thank you!