

**City of Mishawaka**  
**2020 State of the City Address**

***“Focused on the Fundamentals”***

*Mayor David A. Wood*

**Introduction**

This is the time every year when we pause, look back over the previous year and take measure of the progress we have made and the issues we continue to face. Like most years, currently we are trying to keep up with both the positive development and routine activities of City government. Like everything good that happens in the Princess City, the State of the City wouldn't happen without a team effort. Once again, I would like to thank Karl Kopec, Tim Brill, Brent Chupp, Ken Prince and our department managers for their help in compiling all this valuable information.

As Mayor, I get to share with you the best of Mishawaka, what is working well and what we need to work on. I will also share with you some of our future plans and opportunities. I continue to believe that we are at a great moment in time in the history of Mishawaka! We have challenges to be sure, but we will continue to meet those challenges head-on to continue to ensure that we thrive as a city.

So, what is the current state of our City? The overall state of our City hasn't changed for decades, and I don't get tired of repeating it...Mishawaka continues to be fundamentally **STRONG, GROWING, FINANCIALLY STABLE, and SAFE**. We continue to strive to be the most livable city in Northern Indiana. We are focused on growing Mishawaka in an orderly fashion and having each and every resident and neighborhood sharing in our prosperity and growth. I am pleased to report that for another year Mishawaka continues to build a community that our future generations can be proud of; one that is not only an attractive place in which to live, work, raise a family, and retire; but also to visit, shop, seek healthcare, and do business in.

Every year I choose a theme for the State of the City, the theme I have chosen for this year is ***“Focused on the Fundamentals”***. In this case, I was not just inspired by one event or statistic, but rather the continued passage of time that illustrates the work and efforts of our businesses, citizens and employees who continue to make Mishawaka a better place to live. Like a basketball team working on our passing skills and layups. Sometimes, these activities and statistics generated are not attention grabbing, but on the court year after year, our success is illustrated through the outcomes associated with our continued practice, dedication, discipline, and steady leadership.

As a testament to the City's leadership and the person who taught many of us “The Fundamentals”, this year's State of the City is dedicated to former Mayor Bob Beutter who passed away in January.

***In Memoriam - Mayor Robert C. Beutter (1935-2020)***

Known affectionately to many as “Mayor Bob”, Robert C. Beutter served the City of Mishawaka for most of his life including as the longest serving Mayor in the City's history, having served for

five terms from 1984 - 2003. Mayor Bob was a Mishawaka icon who leaves behind a great legacy in the Princess City.

Bob was a great family man, devoted husband and father. Bob had the talents to go anywhere and been successful. He would have made any community he lived in better, but he made a choice to never leave his beloved hometown. We are eternally grateful that he stayed. Indeed, Bob could have been many things: successful businessman, high-powered attorney, stand-up comedian, Governor, or just about anything else he set his mind to. But his calling as Mayor was much more impactful. Local government is where the proverbial rubber meets the road, and thus in my opinion he achieved the highest and best title in all politics: MAYOR of the Princess City, MAYOR of the best Hometown in America.

Bob was THE quintessential mayor, the epitome of what a mayor should be. He possessed the greatest qualification for the job; a true love and passion for the city and citizens whom he served. In his role as Mayor, he led Mishawaka from a small town to one of the fastest growing cities in the State. Though he would never claim to be a politician, he was masterful in accomplishing his agenda of providing great city services and diversifying the economy during a time of uncertainty and transition. That is because he was first and foremost, a citizen of our City. He approached the job with an expectation for great services, so he surrounded himself with a great team of public servants to provide them. Politically, he was a Republican although he got elected in a Democratic city. That is because he put city over party; fundamentally he put Mishawaka first, as it should be.



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I'll never forget the first time I met Mayor Bob. I was in my mid-20's and was attending a meeting with my grandfather who was a Uniroyal retiree. Uniroyal had closed after operating continually on site for over 100 years. The plant, in the heart of our downtown, was not only our largest employer, it was our biggest taxpayer and was engrained in the fabric of our city. The company had closed and left Mishawaka with a massive tax burden, 50+ abandoned buildings that had 1.7 million square feet under roof that was essentially as industrial wasteland. Worse, it left Mishawaka families without jobs and income. The large crowd was obviously concerned about their futures and the future of Mishawaka. It was THE pivotal moment in the last half century history of Mishawaka.

I remember the plans that were shared by Mayor Bob and future Mayor Jeff Rea to remove the buildings in the heart of the downtown then add a park and riverwalk to stimulate redevelopment. I also remember the criticism. It went something like this: "You mean to tell me we just lost our major employer and livelihoods and you want to tear down our factories and build a sidewalk?"

What are you crazy?" But Mayor Bob fundamentally knew the seriousness of the moment. He knew that Uniroyal wasn't coming back, and he was determined to move Mishawaka forward because he wasn't about to sit back, watch his hometown slowly die while he managed its decline. It was a big vision and a time for bold leadership.

I recall Mayor Bob instantly took command of the room. He quickly disarmed a contentious crowd with his legendary humor. He gained the full trust and confidence of everyone there and got the consensus he needed to proceed. Then, before he left, he made his rounds and left no hand unshaken (another Mayor Bob trait). Now, he didn't know me at the time but that made a tremendous impact on me and inspired this kid just getting started, to stay in his hometown, to love it, and help build its future.

Of course, Mayor Bob followed through on his plans in his typical showman style. He didn't just demolish the buildings, he blew them up, making national news in the process. He then moved heaven and earth to clear the site and the rest is history. Look around today. Mishawaka is thriving, Mishawaka is strong. That is only possible because of Bob Beutter's transformative leadership in Mishawaka's critical time of need.

Mayor Bob focused on the fundamentals and did them as well as anybody. Guided by values important to him—faith, family, honesty and integrity. He executed the duties of his office with dignity and honor and gained not only the confidence and support of our citizens but recognition and respect from far beyond our borders.

Long after his retirement, Mayor Bob remained a valued presence at City Hall where he served as a part-time staff attorney. Everyone greatly benefited from his steady presence. The staff valued his advice and I valued his influence on our staff. To the last days, Bob's life was instructive. As he aged, he taught us how to handle adversity head-on just the way he lived his life, with dignity, humor, and kindness.

Mayor Bob's legacy will live on. It runs deep and will last generations because of the multitudes that he touched and the future leaders he developed. Loving husband and father, loyal friend, mentor and coach to hundreds of public servants, shepherd to his flock, and a citizen who left his home, neighborhood, city and country better than he found them.

### **Mayor's Youth Advisory Council**

To me, focusing on the fundamentals is involving and preparing our future generations for leadership. One of my initiatives continues to be to educate our youth about our City and show them the value of their "hometown". I want them to see what is available for their future in our City and hope that they will return after college and continue to make Mishawaka their home. The Mayor's Youth Advisory Council is one way that my wife, Jaimi, and I give back to our City; by empowering the youth of Mishawaka to have a voice and to address issues and concerns that affect them directly, not only today, but for tomorrow as well.

The 2018-2019 Mayor's Youth Advisory Council (MYAC) is proud to have completed another successful year of community service, local government studies, education opportunities with area businesses and volunteer work for many events. This year's group consisted of 30 members. Every year one of the Youth Council's signature events is the Thanksgiving Food Drive.

Representatives from each of our high schools led the initiative and provided 80 dinners to families in need. Not only did the Youth Council collect extra food for the Mishawaka Food Pantry, with the leftover money from the Thanksgiving Food Drive, the group then decided to adopt three families for Christmas. They not only provided gifts of toys and clothes, they also provided a Christmas dinner and extra food for the families.

This year the students learned about the Engineering Department, Code Enforcement and Building, Mishawaka Parks, the Mishawaka Police and Fire Department, and were presented with unique community service and volunteer opportunities throughout the year.

In March, the students visited the Indiana Statehouse with other Youth Council members from across the State. They met with their local State Representatives, Dale Devon and Ross Deal and met State Senators, Ryan Mishler and Linda Rogers.

To finalize the year, a Mock Council Meeting took place in the Council Chambers on June 10th. With coaching from Mayor Wood, Councilman, Mike Bellovich and City Clerk, Deb Block, the students flawlessly conducted a council meeting. Roles were chosen randomly and the students played the parts of Mayor, City Clerk, Council Members, attorneys, citizens and business owners. They were given scenarios of situations similar to what the Mishawaka Council deals with in the Princess City and these students took their roles seriously. One issue that was sure to be voted down actually passed unanimously due to the presentation by one of the students. It was a lesson in Local Government that these students will never forget.

### **Mishawaka Police Department**

There is no better expression of focusing on the fundamentals in local government than keeping law and order the way that the Mishawaka Police Department does. Mishawaka's proactive approach to police work continues to keep the City of Mishawaka a safe place to live. The constant patrols, painstaking detective work, active community involvement, and attentive training are all fundamental strengths of the department. I continue to be thankful every day for the outstanding work that is performed by the Mishawaka Police Department.

#### *The Crime Rate Continued to Drop in 2019!*

There is no service provided by local government more vital than public safety. As Mayor, one of the accomplishments that I am most proud of is the fact that overall crime reporting numbers have decreased in 8 of my 10 years as mayor. Since taking office in 2010, every year except 2016 and 2018 has had a decrease in the overall crime rate.

Mishawaka's low crime rate and continued decreases in crime is even more impressive when considering our City's continued expansion and the constant influx of daily visitors to the largest retail shopping area in the region.

Crime Report Statistics – City of Mishawaka				
	2018	2019	Change	Percent
Homicide	5	0	-5	-100%
Rape	16	19	+3	+19%
Robbery	48	40	-8	-17%
Assault	829	975	+146	+18%
Burglary	248	210	-38	-15%
Larceny / Theft	2,032	1671	-361	-18%
Auto Theft	252	235	-17	-7%
Arson	15	16	+1	+7%
Totals	3445	3166	-279	-8%

I am happy to report that the overall crime rate dropped 8% between 2018 and 2019. I am also very thankful to report that no murders occurred in Mishawaka in 2019. As part of these statistics, I am also pleased to report that Larceny-Theft represented the biggest drop with an 18% decrease in 2019 compared to 2018.

In 2019 the City of Mishawaka saw a 17% decrease in robberies from 2018, from 41 to 24 reported cases. Illustrating fundamentally good police work, the Detectives assigned to robbery cases also solved 52% of these cases. The National Average for robbery clearance rates is only 25% to 30% for cities.

Police in the Community

In reporting on crime rather than police activity as a whole, we can get too caught up in the negative. In contrast, I want to continue to emphasize the incredible amount of community support given and received by the Mishawaka Police Department every year. Our officers specifically work to engage and be an active part of the community. In 2019 the Police Department participated in events including Coffee with a Cop, Chill with a Cop, National Night Out, Trunk or Treat, and our annual Christmas Tree Lighting. In addition, the City’s DARE program continues to be one of the best in the State of Indiana.

In 2019, the department had “No Shave November”. With the help of MPD officers, Veterans Affairs Police and private donations, the MPD raised over \$3,062 for Center for Hospice Care in the month of November. In the month of December, MPD officers raised and collected \$3,380 for the Ronald McDonald House Charities of Michiana. Through donations by our local Grape Road Meijer store, 28 children received a special Christmas experience at the “Christmas With A Cop” event. Children were able to ride in a police car to Meijer on Grape Road. Each child received at least \$100 in Christmas gifts purchased at the store.

To illustrate the MPD’s community involvement, each year also I try to highlight a special story.

This past year, Officer Ennis was dispatched to a welfare check on an elderly woman and learned that she liked to paint but didn’t have any painting supplies. With his own money, Officer Ennis went straight to the store and returned with painting supplies. Two days later, Officer Ennis returned to check on her, bringing some food from the MPD food pantry. When he arrived he found that she had already started on a painting for Officer Ennis!

When I refer to Mishawaka as the “Best Hometown in America”, this is just one example of what I am referring to!

### Moving Forward

As we move forward, I am confident in the abilities of the Mishawaka Police Department. The reason we have consistently low and stable crime rates is that our Police Department has always had a plain, old-fashioned hard work ethic. Mishawaka is strong because the men and women of the Mishawaka Police Department keep her safe.

### **Mishawaka Fire Department**

A fundamental service provided by any City is responding to the public in times of crisis. The Mishawaka Fire Department (MFD) continues to focus on providing exemplary service. Statistically, the department had another record setting year as the Department responded to 8,330 calls for service. This is 321 more calls than were received in 2018. In comparison, the Department responded to 8,009 calls for service in 2018. Overall, calls have increased by 31% since 2014.

Fire Department Calls for Service		
Year	Calls	Yearly Change
2019	8,330	+321
2018	8,009	+577
2017	7,432	+231
2016	7,201	+486
2015	6,715	+362
2014	6,353	-72
2013	6,425	---

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The greatest number of calls for service continued to be for emergency medical services (EMS). Our ambulances and fire trucks responded to 6,136 calls that required EMS response in 2019. This is a 4% increase over the 5,908 calls that required EMS response in 2018.

In comparison, the MFD had only 154 calls that involved a commercial, residential, apartment or other type of fire. This is down 2.5% from the 158 calls received in 2018. The remaining 2,040 calls included any requests by the public involving investigations, gas leaks, citizen assists, and a variety of other types of responses. As a result of the increase in calls, collections were also up slightly for ambulance billing making 2019 the largest revenue year for the department. The City collected \$1,590,208 in fees for services provided.

### Fire Prevention

Focusing on the fundamentals is trying to prevent fires and the devastating consequences of them. Our Mishawaka Fire Prevention Bureau is responsible for inspecting buildings, new and existing, to ensure the safe occupancy of the people who work in and visit them. In 2019, the Fire Prevention Bureau performed over 1,850 fire inspections of buildings in the City. Fire Investigators from the Bureau were called out 70 times to investigate commercial, residential, apartment and vehicle fires in 2019.

### Health and Safety

In January 2019 the fire department took delivery of brand-new sets of turnout gear, 115 in total, for every firefighter and implemented a replacement program that will buy new sets every 5 years. NFPA standards state all gear must be replaced after 10 years. As the program builds it will allow each firefighter to have 2 full sets of gear. This allows our Firefighters to change into a fresh set after a fire while immediately cleaning the dirty set of all the contaminants that pose a risk to the firefighter's health well after the fire has ended.

### New Fire Equipment

As our current fleet of apparatus ages, we need to be vigilant in maintaining and replacing our trucks in the most cost-effective manner. We took delivery of a new aerial in 2019, a new 100ft Sutphen Ladder truck in May in 2019 and this aerial now runs out of our Station 3 on Douglas Road as Ladder 3. This purchase allowed us to move the previous aerial to reserve status and decommission a ladder truck that was over 27 years old. We also sent a medium-duty ambulance to be re-chassis'd for delivery in early 2020.

As dollars get tighter and tighter, we continue to improve the efficiency of the preventative maintenance program for our fleet. Every attempt is made to maximize the longevity of our vehicles and utilize both the resources of the City's Motor Pool as well as contracting out some of the more specialized fire apparatus maintenance.

### Equipment for Changing Times

Another significant equipment addition in 2019 was made possible by the hard work of Firefighter Jessica Hostetler. Firefighter Hostetler applied for a grant from Firehouse Subs Public Safety Foundation, Inc for 40 tactical bullet proof vests. The Mishawaka Fire Department was awarded this grant for \$18,720 and it enabled us to place a vest on every frontline seat in our fleet. With an ever-changing society, we must continually evolve and be in the forefront of safety to better protect our members so they can accomplish the goal of assisting our citizens in their times of need.

### Part of the Community

Our MFD does more than fight fires and serve as our first responders. They are stewards of our community.

The Mishawaka Fire Department continued to give back to the community in 2019. The department goes into people's homes daily and sees those in need. The MFD Needy Family Fund is spearheaded by Firefighter Nicola DeCicco and raised \$3,344 this year and distributed funds to seven families with thirty-four children in their time of need.

Our firefighters take on cancer every year with their Breast Cancer, Guardians of the Ribbon, Awareness campaign. For the 7th year, the fire department sold limited edition t-shirts that benefited Honor Flight of Northeast Indiana. Our firefighters through other functions, such as their annual golf outing, continue to fund and distribute two \$1000 college scholarships for local students from the City.

The Fire Department also performs, at no extra cost to the citizens, many hours of public service and education. Some of the many examples of additional public services provided are fire extinguisher training and demonstrations, smoke detector installations, car seat inspections and installations, Survive Alive, Little Red, Fitness with a First Responder, MDA Fill the Boot, and on Veterans Day firefighters place flags on the grave sites of our military veterans. The members of the Mishawaka Fire Department performed countless man-hours of public service to its community in 2019, interacting with close to 7,570 adults and children.

## **City Finances**

Focusing on the fundamentals associated with the management of finances very simply represents the difference between cities that are thriving and struggling. To thrive as a City requires that we have adequate funding and that the money is managed wisely. In 2019, Mishawaka passed another balanced budget for 2020 that provides investment in public safety, streets, and parks, while including well deserved raises for our employees. Budgets are about making choices and setting priorities. Mishawaka's success continues to be based on being fiscally conservative and not incurring long-term legacy costs that could jeopardize our stability in times of uncertainty. Our strong financial management is in large part due to the ongoing efforts of our Controller, Rebecca Miller and her staff.

### General Fund

Even with losing \$5.8 million to property tax caps in 2019, the General Fund's balance increased by \$3.86 million. Much of this increase is due to conservative budgeting and spending. Growing the General Fund balance, the equivalent of having cash in a checking account, continues to be a priority in 2020 and beyond, given the ongoing uncertainties associated with the full implementation of the tax caps.

### Property Tax Caps

In 2019, we continued to build cash balances to weather the fiscal cliff in 2020 when property tax caps lower from 1.5% / 2.5% / 3.5% to 1% / 2% / 3%. In 2020 our property tax revenue will be reduced an estimated additional \$2.4 million. In 2023, our loss of property tax is estimated to be \$10.0 million.

Finding revenue and/or cutting millions and millions of dollars from our budget is truly a challenge. Shifting expenses to non-property tax funds and conservative budgeting are just a couple strategies we are employing to prepare to mitigate the losses.

As a whole, the City continues to strive to keep budgets flat and payroll costs reasonable. We review health insurance plans annually for savings and cost reductions. We continue to engage the Common Council in the budget process and stay up-to-date on any legislative changes that would affect our fiscal health.

As costs and debt grows for all taxing entities who are sharing out of the same capped percentage of revenue, and assessed valuation doesn't keep pace, these losses will be ever increasing. The current financial model for funding local government in St. Joseph County continues to be in need of serious repair.

There is no better illustration of this than the funding of the St. Joseph County 911 call center. The citizens of Mishawaka pay a larger percentage than they should, yet some residents of the county pay little if anything for the same access to the mission critical service. The Executive Board of the center, of which I am a part of, recommended a new funding model to distribute the costs equally throughout the entire county using existing Local Income Tax (LIT) funds. This model was chosen because it would not impact school funding.

Although there was a lot of publicity on the potential cut to library's tax revenue, I don't feel that adequate attention was given to the higher burden Mishawaka citizens continue to pay. If the recommended plan were approved by the tax council, consisting of the Mishawaka, South Bend, and St. Joseph County councils, Mishawaka would have more funding for vital public safety needs such as police cars and fire station #2 replacement.

I remain hopeful that a more equitable solution can be reached in 2020 between St. Joseph County and the City of South Bend and I call on the Mishawaka Common Council to adopt the recommended plan or some other reasonable option. For my part, I will support any reasonable equitable option that the tax council approves.

#### Employee Raises

Focusing on the fundamentals means recognizing that our employees are the life blood of the City. Although, many of our surrounding communities have decided to have employees bear a portion of the circuit breaker revenue losses by going for years without providing wage increases, during my tenure Mishawaka continues to provide an annual cost of living increase for employees. In 2019 for 2020, the City provided a larger than normal cost of living adjustment. Firefighters received a 3.5% increase, and police received a 5.2% increase plus the ability to have an additional 1% from a match on deferred compensation retirement savings. All other employees received a 3% increase. Each year we analyze the City budget closely to determine what can be afforded.

#### Employee Healthcare Costs

The City's self-funded health plan finished 2019 \$1.9 million under budget. Significantly fewer employees and their family members experienced catastrophic illnesses than the prior year. Medical and prescription drug claims were 9% lower than the prior year. We believe this is at least partially due to the many proactive initiatives that have been taken to help employees improve their health and health care choices. Also, with the employee clinic at 85% utilization, the City has realized savings through early detection and cost-effective management of chronic conditions. As time goes on, the City will continue to seek innovative ways to lower employee health care costs while improving access to high quality medical care.

#### Assessed Valuation

As I reported in past years, in 2007 the assessed valuation of the City reached a peak of \$1.75 billion. Since then, following the Great Recession, the Princess City has weathered an overall lower assessed valuation. In fact, as of 2019 the City assessed valuation remains 18% lower than our peak in 2007 despite **over a billion dollars** in construction activity since that time.

Assessed Value History				
2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
\$1,372,100,311 +5.28%	\$1,341,719,802 -2.21%	\$1,391,035,674 +3.68%	\$1,409,003,003 +1.30%	\$1,443,063,119 +2.4%

The City continues to work with the Penn Township Assessor to analyze and make recommendations on realistic updates to processes that we believe will help provide more accurate, fair, and consistent valuations. I am pleased to report that the assessed valuation increased again for the third consecutive year in 2019 but only from \$1,409 billion to \$1,443 billion. This small 34-million-dollar increase is concerning since there continues to be both significant construction activity and a robust housing market where home market values are significantly higher than what they had been even a few years ago.

### **City Clerk and Common Council – The Legislative Business of the City**

Building a better community involves all aspects of City government. Beyond their legislative duties, the City Clerk and Common Council are vitally important to the business of the City and routinely are the point of contact with our citizens, serving as both advocates and sources of knowledge.

#### Legislative Business

During 2019 the City Clerk Block’s Office and Mishawaka Common Council handled the legislative business of the City which included 32 resolutions, 39 ordinances, 2 annexations, 2 alley vacations, and 4 resolutions honoring schools or individuals.

#### Public Access

Focusing on the fundamentals includes reaching out to our citizens in many different ways. In Mishawaka we make every effort to keep our citizens informed. Since 2015 Clerk Block has worked with Nicholas Ramirez, Jr., the Coordinator for Michiana Access TV, to have Council meetings recorded and shown on the WNIT Public Access Channel at 9:00 AM the Wednesday following the meetings.

#### Government Is Here to Serve

As I have said on many occasions, but bears repeating here, I believe that one of the reasons that Mishawaka stands apart from most other communities (or other levels of government for that matter) is the quality of our elected officials. Mishawaka elected officials have historically, with few exceptions, placed the best interests of the City above their own interests or party politics. I think this cooperation is a direct reflection of the community we represent and the wisdom of the voters who put us in office.

Although there were issues in 2019, which included the only veto I have issued in my 10 years as mayor regarding a salary ordinance that is in conflict with a binding collective bargaining agreement, I am hopeful that this issue was only a bump in the road. For my part, I will do what I can to continue to make sure my administration openly works and communicates with the Council

in 2020 and beyond. I also would like to thank the Common Council and Clerk Block for their continued dedicated service to the City.

### City-wide Election

Every four years there is a city-wide election in Mishawaka where all 11 elected positions are on the ballot. In 2019 there were five uncontested positions that included, Mayor, City Clerk, the 1st District Council seat, the 4th District Council seat, and the 6th District Council Seat. Following the 2019 election there were two seats that changed hands on the Common Council. I would like to welcome Tony Hazen as the new third district councilman and Maggie DeMaegd as our new councilwoman at-large.

The following are your elected officials who began serving you with a four-year term on January 1, 2020:

- Mayor – David A. Wood “Mayor Dave” – I have served the citizens of Mishawaka since 2000, first as a Council member then as Mayor since September of 2010.
- City Clerk – Deborah S. (Ladyga) Block, IAMC, MMC has been the Mishawaka Clerk since 1994 making her Mishawaka’s longest serving elected official. She served as Chief Deputy City Clerk from 1979 to 1986.
- 1<sup>st</sup> District Councilman – Dale “Woody” Emmons, starting his 5th term
- 2<sup>nd</sup> District Councilman – Mike Bellovich starting, his 3rd full, four-year term
- 3<sup>rd</sup> District Councilman – Anthony “Tony” Hazen, starting his 1st term
- 4<sup>th</sup> District Councilwoman – Kate Voelker, starting her 2nd full, four-year term
- 5<sup>th</sup> District Councilman – Mike Compton, starting his 4th term
- 6<sup>th</sup> District Councilman – Ron Banicki, starting his 5th term
- Councilwoman At Large – Maggie DeMaegd, starting her 1st term
- Councilman At Large – Gregg Hixenbaugh, starting his 1st full, four-year term after replacing Councilman Roggeman in 2018 (he also served three previous terms 1999 – 2011)
- Councilman At Large – Matt Mammolenti, starting his 3rd term

Congratulations to these incumbents and newly elected public officials who will be serving you for the next four years. I’d also like to acknowledge and thank Bryan Tanner, Councilman at Large (2016 – 2019) and Stacy Petko-Reisdorf, Councilwoman 3rd District (2018 – 2019) for their service to Mishawaka.

### **Central Services**

One illustration of how focused a community is on its fundamentals is how it cares for streets and other public property. When I am traveling throughout the state, I always make a point to review the condition and appearance of other cities. Like all cities, Mishawaka is limited by a very fixed amount of resources, and unlike the new edge cities around Indianapolis, our City infrastructure dates back to 1833. In my travels I always believe that Mishawaka compares favorably to every other city that I visit. This is due to the dedicated employees of our Central Services Department.

It is the responsibility of the Central Services Department to maintain all green areas of city-owned properties, consisting of nearly 700 acres. They also maintain 330 lane miles of roadway. During the winter months, in addition to the streets, they remove nearly 19 miles of snow on all city-

owned sidewalks. These areas include the Riverwalk, all City owned lots, utility business office, City Hall, sidewalks on all bridges and all other walkways adjacent to city-owned property. It is also the responsibility of the Central Services Facilities Maintenance Department to service and maintain over 300,000 square feet of city-owned buildings.

Some notable statistics include:

**Street Sweeping:** The City sweeps streets 9 months out of the year. A complete cycle is made throughout the city every nine to eleven days, and in 2019 we removed 5,819 cubic yards of debris from City streets.

**Leaf Pick-Up:** Differentiating ourselves from other local communities, and depending on how soon snow arrives, the City offers pick-up opportunities up to seven times over the course of the year. During the 2019 season, we removed 11,550 cubic yards of leaves from residential homes.

### Doing More Year After Year

The Mishawaka Traffic Department completed 1,605 tasks in 2019. This is 466 more tasks than were completed in 2018. These tasks consisted of sign repairs, new installations, inspections, field data collection and manufacturing of signs. The Traffic Department is also responsible for the pavement markings applied to the road surfaces.

### Fleet Maintenance

To provide services requires the City to have a fleet of vehicles and equipment that needs to be maintained. The Fleet Maintenance Division is responsible for the maintenance, repairs and fueling of all City of Mishawaka and Mishawaka Utilities vehicles. These services range from oil changes to engine rebuilds. In 2019, Fleet Maintenance recorded 1,110 repairs at a cost of 362 thousand dollars. The City of Mishawaka also used approximately 194 thousand gallons of unleaded gas and 96 thousand gallons of diesel fuel with a total fuel cost of 525 thousand dollars.

### **Building and New Construction**

The bottom line is construction is a fundamental element to any city. Although construction goes up and down with the economy, the outcome of focusing on the fundamentals is steady long-term growth and development. Construction needs to be not just in the form of new buildings and uses, but to be truly successful, we also need to have continued reinvestment in older areas and buildings. I am pleased to report that Mishawaka continues to have this combination of investment and remains a thriving community.

### Construction Activity Drops After 5 Consecutive Years of Double-Digit Percentage Growth

**From 2013 to 2018 the City experienced five straight years of double-digit percentage growth from year to year.** In 2019, the 79.7 million total estimated construction cost fell back to a level consistent with dollar growth levels we had in 2014 and 2015 and is relatively consistent with the City's 10-year average.

In 2019, the City continued to see significant new construction as permits were issued for **58 new single-family homes**. This is two more than the 56 home permits that were issued in 2018. As indicated in previous reports, this is still significantly lower than the number of single family starts

that occurred prior to 2007, but our continued modest single-family housing growth is still significant. This single-family growth combined with the continued growth of apartments and other housing opportunities, provides for a healthy and diverse housing market in the City.

### **Continued Commercial Growth**

In 2019, commercial permits were issued with an estimated construction cost of 62.7 million dollars. It is important to note that this number can fluctuate significantly from year to year based on the timing of when permits are pulled for a few large projects. By the numbers, 9 new commercial building permits were pulled for new free-standing buildings in 2019 compared to 15 in 2018. The single largest permit was for the Hellenic Senior Living Center at 1540 South Logan Street. This project had a 17.5 million dollar estimated construction cost.

Construction in 2019 continued to come from many different projects and illustrates the solid economy of the region. A significant development that continues to grow is the Grandview Planned Unit Development located north-west of the intersection of SR 23 and Gumwood Road. The owner of the property, Great Lakes Capital, pulled permits for significant additions in 2019 including adding new buildings with apartments and lower level commercial space to the existing apartment complex on the development site that began construction in 2016.

Mishawaka continues to reap the benefits of our geographic location being centered in the South Bend-Elkhart region. The City has promoted our development with long-term strategic decision making such as the continued investments being made downtown, the extension of infrastructure to the Exit 83 interchange of the Indiana Toll Road, the creation of a medical hub with the relocation of the St. Joseph Regional Medical Center, the construction of the VA Clinic, and now the Beacon Health System expansion on Beacon Parkway. The long-term forecast for new construction remains promising!

### ***More Medical Facilities Continue to Be Built In Mishawaka***

Quality healthcare is a fundamental part of any community. In Mishawaka, we are served well by being the ideal service location for the greater region.

As identified last year, Vibra Hospital and Beacon Granger Hospital were two of the larger project permits that were issued in 2018. In 2019, Vibra Hospital which is an acute long-term care facility neared completion. It is intended to provide long-term care that traditional hospitals are not designed for.

Beacon's Granger Hospital in Mishawaka is a small hospital concept that opened in the fall of 2019. The hospital has only 8 in-patient beds and was built to handle the traditional emergency room visit, the vast majority of which do not require an overnight stay. Although it is a fully equipped hospital, including operating facilities, it also has an ambulance on site to allow for the transfer of patients who require more specialized treatment available in larger hospitals.

Beacon continued to grow on the north side of Mishawaka in 2019 with the construction of a 12.1-million-dollar administrative building at 3245 Beacon Parkway, just south of their Health and Wellness facility on Beacon Parkway adjacent to the Indiana Toll Road. We are proud that Beacon has chosen this site to consolidate their operations in Mishawaka and they have been a great partner with the City. As part of this project Beacon built a walking path that surrounds the campus.

Rather than wait for the City to install a multi-use path on Beacon Parkway, they decided to undertake the expense along the frontage of their campus and install the public walk. This walk installation was completed at the end of 2019.

In 2019, the Center for Hospice Campus completed the Ernestine M. Raclin House care facility that began construction in 2018. This 12-bed facility was an additional 10-million-dollar investment in the campus. The Center for Hospice Care continues to be an integral partner in the City's vision of growing and diversifying the central part of the City.

### Reinvestment

Remodels and continued investments in existing facilities continued to be a trend in 2019. Some of the larger investments in 2019 included: Target started a 4-million-dollar remodel of their existing store located at the intersection of Main Street and University Drive. Costco on University drive performed a 1.6-million-dollar upgrade that including adding additional fueling pumps. Chick-fil-A completed a 1.5-million-dollar renovation to their Main Street restaurant north of Douglas Road.

### **Downtown Development**

We are seeing the benefits of decades of focusing on the fundamentals regarding the redevelopment of our historic downtown. Mishawaka has consistently been reinvesting in the cultural heart of our City and promoting our greatest natural resource, the St. Joseph River.

### Regional Cities Initiative/Flaherty and Collins

In 2016, the Regional Development Authority, as part of then Governor Pence's Regional City initiative to stop brain drain in the state, awarded Flaherty and Collins just over 5 million dollars to assist in building a new 233-unit high amenity mixed-use apartment building "The Mill" on the site of the former Uniroyal Complex south of Beutter Park in downtown Mishawaka.

In 2017, the City issued a Tax Increment Financing Bond for close to 11 million dollars to assist in funding the City's contribution to the project. The public infrastructure included in the project included a public parking garage that provides the public the ability to park for up to three hours for free. In addition, Ironworks Avenue was extended with on-street angled parking, and Hill Street, north of Front Street, was converted into a two-aisle parking area similar to Mill Street north of Front Street. We are excited that after 20 years, 4 acres of the former Uniroyal complex was made productive again and that it is now generating over a half-million dollars a year in local property taxes. The developer broke ground in late 2017 and the building, which is roughly 450,000 square feet, encompassing two city blocks, was estimated to take approximately two years to build is now substantially complete!

Currently, the building already has 60 residential units leased, one commercial tenant, the Kalon Salon, with another tenant, Jack's Donuts signed. Flaherty and Collins expects that full occupancy will take approximately one year.

### More 2019 Downtown Activity

In addition to the Mill at Ironworks Plaza, the City continued to see development interest and reinvestment in other parts of the downtown as well. Chicory Café bought the former Knights of Columbus building and remodeled it into a thriving restaurant and event facility. The outside dining and mural is exactly the type of place making redevelopment the City would like to continue to see in our downtown!



*Chicory Café renovation – Outside Patio*

In 2019, the City also continued development agreements with multiple developers interested in constructing significant projects downtown.

### Front Street Opportunity Fund LLC.

In 2018, the City Redevelopment Commission approved a development agreement with Front Street Opportunity Fund LLC. This is for the development of a mixed use commercial and residential building located on the block at the southwest corner of Front Street and Spring Street. In 2019, at the request of the City, the developer worked on a modified design to allow for the widening of Hill Street. The City desires to widen Hill Street to provide for more on-street public parking. The Developer also has a desire to add more units. We expect that a revised development agreement will be presented to the Redevelopment Commission in 2020, and that construction will start on the project in 2021.

### Barak Group Boutique Hotel

In 2018, the City continued a development agreement with the Barak Group concerning their interest in building a boutique hotel on the island property north of the City Police Station that used to house the former Uniroyal Power Plant and coal yard. The developer continued to work on refining plans in 2019. To move the project forward, the City is required, per our development agreement, to pipe the western portion of the former mill race that provides the water supply for Beutter Park before turning the site over to the developer for construction. In 2019, through our consultant, Lawson Fisher Associates of South Bend, the City had multiple meetings with the

regulatory authorities concerning the piping of the raceway. From a regulatory perspective, the raceway, although manmade, was determined to be an integral waterbody to the St. Joseph River and is permitted like it is a natural waterbody. As such, there is an extensive amount of work needed to be accomplished, as well as compensatory mitigation required, to allow for the piping of the raceway. The City plans on bidding this work in late spring of 2020 with a goal of being completed and out of the way of the developer who now plans to begin construction in 2021. The City has viewed this piping project as essential to make the property viable for redevelopment, regardless of the use that is ultimately constructed.

### Riverwalk Apartments

The principals involved in the Riverwalk Apartment project have met with the staff in 2019 and have indicated that they would still like to proceed with a reconceived project in 2020. Specifically, the developer currently desires to change the intended use from apartments to a condominium project. They believe that condominiums will be the more successful given current market demands. This project is located on a triangular shaped property south of Mishawaka Avenue, just west of where Sarah Street ends on the north side of the river. We expect that a new development agreement will be submitted in early 2020 that would allow for the change in use and updated project timelines if approved.

### **Parks and Recreation**

Focusing on the fundamentals means elevating our quality of life by providing quality parks with a variety of recreational opportunities. Every day, the City of Mishawaka Parks Department provides opportunities and plays a vital role in enhancing the lives of the people living in our community. In the last year the Park Department continued to program activities and special events to provide opportunities for all ages and abilities. In fact, the parks department pushed the envelope from having 36 events in 2018 to over 50 events in 2019. Some of the highlights from 2019 included:

- *Easter Egg Hunt* was a huge success – for the second year in a row a helicopter dropped thousands of pieces of candy over a field filled with 30,000 eggs.
- At *Kids to Parks Day*, the City was able to help provide fun and free food for over 700 children, thanks to partnerships with local organizations and churches
- *Independence Day Celebration* with July 4th Fireworks
- The *80's Color Run* continues to be one of our most popular events – with people of all ages getting dressed in their best 80's gear to walk and run through bursts of color.
- We introduced new events that will continue into 2020: *Tent the Island*, *Wags of Welcome*, and *Slide the Hill*.
- Youth Basketball, Soccer and Volleyball reached maximum participation in 2019.
- Our *Summer Concert Series* was as popular as ever. The City provided free family friendly entertainment three nights a week for the majority of the summer. Mondays were at Battell, Wednesdays at Eberhart, and Thursdays at Central Park.
- Eberhart-Petro Golf Course generated nearly 18,000 rounds golf in 2019, increasing from the previous season by 2,000 rounds.
- The *Big Explorer's Summer Camp* experienced a record-breaking year in both attendance and revenue. Each themed week was at capacity. This program provided

quality care, creative programming, lunch, and entertainment at an incredibly affordable rate.

- The Merrifield pool hosted the *7th Annual Blazin' Buffalo Swim Invitation*. The City had multiple new special events throughout the season, including *Neon Glow Swims*, *Dive-In Movie*, and the *21 & Over Beach Bash*.
- The *Halloween Spooktacular* created big scares for a good cause. For the third year in a row, the Haunted House was a food drive benefiting the Mishawaka Food Pantry. Around 3,000 community members stopped by over the course of two weekends!

### *Mishawaka Farmers Market*

In 2019, the City introduced the Mishawaka Farmers Market at Central Park. The Market ran from May to September on Sundays from 11am – 3pm. This was a popular program not only for vendors, but the citizens of Mishawaka. At the end of the season, 40 rotating vendors were participating including local farmers, crafters, bakers, and free cooking classes. The success of the market inspired us to extend the season to 20 weeks in 2020. The Farmers Market is quickly growing into a Mishawaka staple!

### *Continued Investment in Parks*

In Mishawaka, focusing on the fundamentals also means that we are constantly reinvesting in our park system. The Mishawaka Parks and Recreation Department celebrated ribbon cuttings at four new amenities in 2019; Mary Gibbard Park, Central Park Stage, Mishawaka Education Foundation Community Greenhouse, and Veterans Plaza at Battell Park.

- *Mary Gibbard Park*

The newly renovated Mary Gibbard Park is a project that was designed by the students at LaSalle Elementary. The park features a new playground with a number of inclusive amenities for children of all abilities, as well as a new restroom building, BMX bike course, splash pad, pavilion, born learners walking trail, and open play area. By allowing the youth to have a voice in the park design, it not only brought new energy to the neighborhood, but provided them with a sense of ownership of the park.

- *Central Park Stage*

In 2019, our \$800,000 stage project that started in 2018 in Central Park was completed. The stage is located at the south side of the looped walk surrounding the event lawn on the west side of the park. The project was successful in that the artists performing on this stage have expressed a preference for this venue over any other in the City. Attendance in the summer of 2019 was great and the only real complaint we have received was the lack of shade. Unfortunately, given the southward facing slope, it will be many years before the trees that have been planted will provide any real shade to the area. Bring your hats and umbrellas in 2020!

- *Community Greenhouse*

The Mishawaka Education Foundation Community Greenhouse was one of our highlights of 2019. This project was made possible by the hard work of the Landscape

Department Staff, Mishawaka High School Landscape & Gardening Club, and financial contributions from over 77 patrons from across Mishawaka. This project stands out due to the involvement of our dedicated students in the Club that helped plan, fundraise, and construct the building, which opened in October. Surrounding the building are beautiful pollinator gardens, a community vegetable garden, a small fruit tree orchard, several raised garden beds and a picnic area. This building allows the Parks Department to host our amazing Landscape & Gardening Club in a true greenhouse where we can expand the involvement of our students in educational and park stewardship activities. Plants and produce from the greenhouse will make their way to our Farmers Market, where students will help run a booth to support our club activities.

- *Battell Park – Veterans Plaza*

As part of the City’s phased implementation of the Battell Park master plan, in 2019 the City created Veterans Plaza. The project included relocating and restoring the Civil War Monument and creating a gathering place with a flag array honoring each branch of the military. Although long term the plan is to build a memorial walkway, funding limitations narrowed the scope to just the monument restoration and creation of the plaza. The project started in the spring of 2019 and was substantially complete by Veteran’s Day with the exception of the monument which requires almost a year to restore. Our Veterans Day event was well attended despite inclement weather where we opened a time capsule that had been placed in the base of the monument. Our plan is to be able to fully dedicate the newly restored monument and plaza on Memorial Day in 2020.



*Veteran’s Plaza at Battell Park – March, 2020*

### Crawford Park Master Plan

In 2019, the City contracted with DLZ to develop a master plan for Crawford Park. The impetus for this initiative was the planned combined sewer overflow separation improvements that required the center of the park to be torn up and required the demolition of certain existing park improvements like the Lion's Pavilion.

Focusing on the fundamentals of how to plan for improvements to a neighborhood park, we sought the direct involvement of our citizens. The City sent hundreds of notices out to the adjacent neighborhood along with a copy of the plan, inviting everyone to a public meeting for input in October of 2019.

Key components of the draft master plan included:

- Establishing a unique identity for the park unlike any other in the City. Thematically creating a "Nature Park" that would include man made constructed wetlands.
- Moves major park elements like play equipment out of the floodplain.
- Creates an active play area that would include nature themed equipment and a water element for smaller children in the area of the current splashpad. The playground will feature inclusive components for children of any ability.
- Establishes a neighborhood lawn area for open play and special events like a movie or concert.
- Build a new restroom building adjacent to the play area that would also be convenient for visitors to the Shiojiri Niwa Japanese Garden across the street.
- Adds multiple sidewalks and board walks in the park to improve handicapped accessibility to equipment/restrooms

Our meeting was well attended, and I am pleased to report that we now have a revised master plan that incorporated many of the suggestions we received at that meeting including adding basketball back to the park.

Given the cost of improvements, implementation will likely occur in phases as funding becomes available. This spring the City will send an updated plan out to the neighborhood for a final review and comment.



## **Mishawaka Riverwalk**

The Mishawaka Riverwalk continues to be the cornerstone for many of the City's redevelopment efforts. It connects neighborhoods and parks by taking advantage of the City's greatest natural resource - the St. Joseph River. The Mishawaka Riverwalk also adds value to existing homes and neighborhoods and will undoubtedly be a source of pride for Mishawaka's citizens for generations to come.

### Riverwalk - Race Street to Cedar Street Bridge

In 2018 we worked with our consultant DLZ to apply to receive federal funding for the widening of the Cedar Street Bridge to accommodate a wider protected walkway on the west side of the bridge. We received word that the funding for this close to four-million-dollar project was approved with estimated construction starting in 2024. In 2018, the City also began negotiating with property owners on the south side of the river between Race Street and Cedar Street on the south side of the river. A total of eight additional parcels are required to make this connection.

Over the course of 2019, the City was able to obtain four of the properties. Acquisition of the additional four properties is in process and is expected to be completed in 2020. Construction of this phase could begin as soon as 2021 and is dependent on the prioritization of available funding.

### Cedar Street Bridge Widening

The City, with the permission of St. Joseph County who owns and maintains the bridge, is working on plans to widen the Cedar Street Bridge over the St. Joseph River. The bridge widening will allow for the expansion of the Riverwalk across Cedar Street and will serve as a connection between the Riverwalk on the north side of the river with the proposed Riverwalk along the south side of the river. In addition to the widening, the work on the bridge will include replacement of the bridge rails. The bridge lighting will be replaced with ornamental lighting. The construction portion of project was selected to be a Federal Aid project where 80% will be funded with federal funds. Currently bidding for construction is scheduled for October 2023 with an estimated total construction cost of \$4.3 million.

## **Protecting Neighborhoods - Code Enforcement**

Focused on the fundamentals means the City is staying on top of problem conditions and properties. Mishawaka has always been known for its clean and well-kept neighborhoods and neighborhood stability remains a top priority. It is well known that vacant or blighted structures can become a haven for criminal activity and other undesirable issues. Code Enforcement's quick and remedial action taken on a daily basis for these types of problem conditions and properties helps prevent the deterioration of neighborhoods. Code not only works to address blighted properties, but also addresses tall grass, snow removal, inoperable vehicles, trash, animal issues, and other general nuisance issues. Many neighborhoods in cities across our region continue to deteriorate while Mishawaka's neighborhoods continue to thrive. This can be attributed not only to the hard work, diligence, and dedication exhibited by the staff in Code, but also to the great relationship Code maintains with homeowners, property managers and businesses in Mishawaka.

Code opened over 4,000 cases in 2019. On these cases, code officers conducted over 16,000 follow-ups and brought into compliance 3,925 nuisance cases and 240 substandard cases.

### Teamwork

The Code Department works in close collaboration with the Police Department and our Legal Department. This collaboration has had a great success rate with properties that have been deemed a Public Nuisance. Although there are not many of these in Mishawaka, these properties are by far the most detrimental to the health of a neighborhood. I am pleased to report that with properties that have a landlord/property manager an almost 100 percent eviction rate has been achieved. In the last two years there have been 32 public nuisance letters sent out.

### **Community Development**

In Mishawaka, our Community Development staff's primary function is to administer grants from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). As a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) entitlement community, the City of Mishawaka receives annual grants from HUD to provide decent housing, a suitable living environment and expanded economic opportunities for low to moderate income residents. In 2019 we were granted \$465,290 to focus on those directives.

In 2019, a portion of CDBG funding was utilized for public infrastructure including curb, sidewalk, drive approaches, and ADA ramp replacement.

A little over 71 thousand dollars of CDBG funds were used in 2019 to provide grants to the YWCA Domestic Violence Program, the REAL Services Adult Guardianship Program, the Boys and Girls Club, and the Mishawaka Food Pantry.

The City of Mishawaka is a member of the St. Joseph County Housing Consortium along with the City of South Bend and St. Joseph County. The St. Joseph County Housing Consortium receives the allocation of federal HOME Funding for all of the County. A majority of HOME funding that is projected for Program Year 2020 will fund a project proposed by South Bend Heritage Foundation which entails construction of 1 new multi-unit permanent supportive housing structure in South Bend to assist 18-20 chronically homeless individuals in St. Joseph County.

### Summer of Service and Student Weekend

Being part of a community fundamentally means partnering with local volunteers to make a difference. In 2019, through the use of CDBG funds, materials were provided for both our Summer of Service and Student Weekend projects. The City partnered with volunteers to perform scraping, painting, replacement of siding and light repairs for low income applicants. These are individuals who typically are not able to make repairs on their own and have issues with the exterior of their homes that do not meet code enforcement standards. The two homes repaired in 2019 included 548 West Fourth Street and 319 West Seventh Street.

The Summer of Service Student Weekend encourages youth volunteers to connect with the community, beautify the city, and touch the lives of Mishawaka residents. In 2019 students worked on City beautification projects such as placing mulch, brush removal, and weed removal clean up. Students also worked on the municipal lot on the corner of Third and Mill. The lot is shared with County Services, the St. Joseph Church, and the downtown area.

### Curb and Sidewalk – Community Development Block Grant

The Department of Redevelopment received a 2019 Federal Grant for curb and sidewalk improvements within the low to moderate income census tracts. With these funds, the Engineering Department bid the project to replace 3,960 linear feet of curb and sidewalk to meet the current ADA standards and install new handicap ramps. The improvements began in the fall of 2019 and will be completed in the spring of 2020. The improvement area is along Third Street from Byrkit Avenue to the first alley east of Virgil Street and Virgil Street from Fourth Street to Third Street. The estimated cost is \$281,000.

### **Public Infrastructure Projects**

As a city, we have roads, sewer, water, storm water and a lot of other infrastructure, some of which is over 100 years old. Being focused on the fundamentals means we must constantly maintain, improve, and add on to that infrastructure. Our Engineering Department does a masterful job of organizing our design consultants and contractors to make sure that we spend money wisely on capital improvements and that they are designed and built with the future in mind.

In 2019 projects under construction were funded with Long Term Control, Tax Increment Financing, Cumulative Sewer, Redevelopment CDBG, Local Road and Street, Sewer Maintenance, and INDOT/Federal Highway Funds. Construction completed in 2019 totaled approximately \$12.4 million. Some of the significant projects worked on in 2019 included:

#### Douglas Road Phase II, Including Veterans Parkway and Northeast Wellfield Utility Access

The City's annexation, subsequent acquisition of the Juday Creek Golf Course, and plans for the proposed Northeast Wellfield emphasized the need for improvements to Douglas Road from the existing County two-lane configuration. Due to the magnitude of utility coordination, a phased approach to the project was necessary. Douglas Road improvements included a five-lane concrete street with two travel lanes in each direction, a center left turn lane, concrete curb and sidewalk, street lighting, and multiple buried utility corridor conduits. Veterans Parkway, includes one lane in each direction and protected left turn lanes incorporated with landscaped islands, a bridge over Juday Creek, water main, stormwater management, street lighting, gravity sanitary sewer main, and associated forcemain for future lift station. At the close of 2019, the improvements to Douglas Road and Veterans Parkway were substantially complete. Final completion is anticipated late spring of 2020 with a total City investment of \$6.5 million.

#### Fourth Street Improvements – Phase II

As a continuing effort to reduce combined sewer overflow (CSO), Fourth Street from Laurel Street to Merrifield Avenue was fully reconstructed in 2018. Construction in 2019 included replacement of water services and sanitary laterals, replacement of selected curb, and rehabilitation of pavement on Laurel Street between Third Street and Lincolnway and on Third Street from Laurel Street to Cedar Street. The total City investment was \$1.1 million.

#### Elmwood Avenue Realignment

The City partnered with the developer of the parcels on the west side of Bremen Highway which allowed the reconfiguration of Elmwood Avenue to utilize the existing traffic signal at Bremen

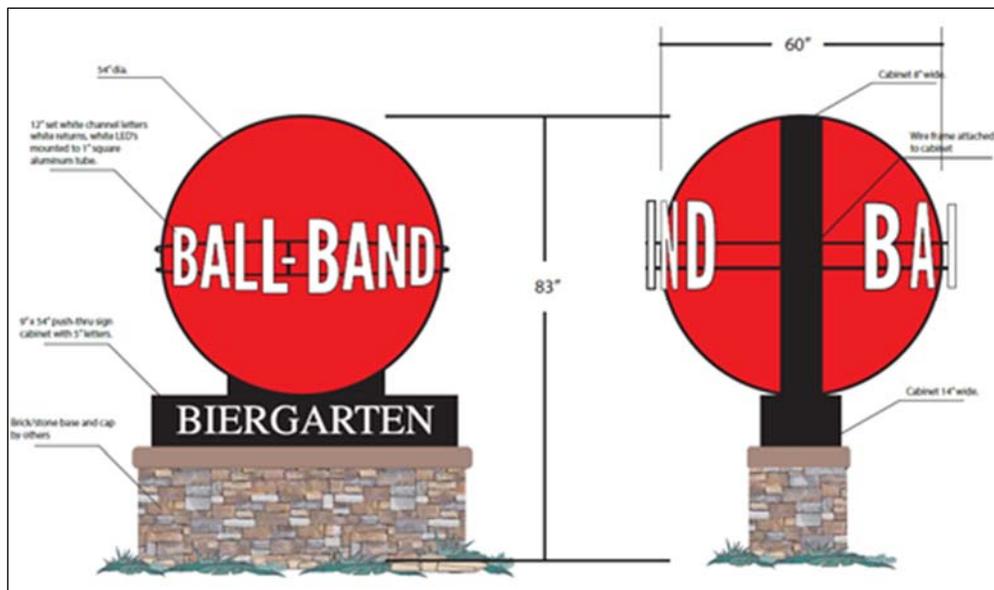
Highway and Meijer Drive. The developer committed to granting the required right of way and sharing in the construction costs. Therefore, the City commenced with construction of the realignment including utility extensions, storm sewer, full depth asphalt pavement, concrete curb and gutter, an added right turn lane on Bremen Highway, street lighting, and upgrading the existing traffic signal. Construction was complete in 2019 with a total project cost of \$900,000. Since these improvements have been completed, new interest has already been expressed in further commercial development along Bremen Highway.

Twelfth Street, Phase II (Campbell Street to Downey Avenue)

One of the City’s long anticipated projects to be completed has been the widening of 12th Street. I am pleased to report that this project was substantially completed in 2019! Construction was originally scheduled to start in August 2018; however, due to utility relocations, construction was delayed until April 2019. The project widened Twelfth Street from two lanes to three lanes which includes a continuous center left turn lane from roughly Downy Avenue to Campbell Street. The street was reconstructed along with curb and gutter, storm sewer, traffic signal, sidewalks, and street lighting. The street was fully opened to traffic by Thanksgiving Day 2019. There are a few final clean-up components to be completed in early 2020 while open to traffic. The Twelfth Street construction was funded through the Federal Aid Program where 80% is funded by INDOT/FHWA and the remaining 20% is funded by a local match from the City. The estimated total investment is \$6.1 million where the City’s match was \$1.2 million.

Ironworks Plaza Improvements

In 2019, the City completed two phases of the design of Ironworks Plaza and started construction on significant infrastructure improvements and the Picnic Area/Beer Garden/Picnic Space. I am excited to report that the Picnic area has now been branded as the “Ball-Band Biergarten” in homage to the great industrial presence that used to exist on this site. The branding is not only cool, with a 3 – foot diameter round red ball, but it will serve as a reminder for future generations of what used to be on this site.



Sign Rendering – US Signcrafters

As identified in last year's report, in August of 2017, the City applied to the Regional Development Authority to fund a second Regional Cities project in Mishawaka. Although over a million dollars was being requested, \$112,000 was ultimately awarded to the City.

Given the high cost of this signature project, the City has phased the construction. Right now, the City envisions four total phases for the project. The first two phases are currently under construction. The first phase includes the extension of the Hill Street parking area, underground utilities, and shore improvements adjacent to the cable stayed pedestrian bridge. The cost of these improvements are roughly 5 million dollars. The second phase includes the proposed beer garden/picnic area (Biergarten) at a cost of roughly 2 million dollars. This area has space for a few hundred people and contains a public restroom/concession building.

The first and second phases will be completed by Memorial Day 2020. Our intent is to have a christening event to open the space to the public honoring and celebrating the life of former Mayor Bob Beutter who passed away in January. May, Bob's wife, indicated that one of the first public campaign events they held was a root beer social. We could think of no better way to open the Biergarten than having a root beer social to celebrate Mayor Bob.

Depending on the availability of funds, the City will proceed with the next phase in late 2020 with lighting the cable stayed bridge cables. The last phase includes the café, rink, and event space which by itself is likely to exceed 14 million dollars. Right now, the City's plan is to limit expenditures and save tax increment financing dollars to minimize or eliminate any need for having to finance the project. Based on the size and large cost of this project, the number and size of other tax increment financed projects will be reduced in the coming years. Our current estimate is that this project will begin in late 2022 and will open for the 2023 skating season.

#### Community Crossings Grant

The State of Indiana conceived the Community Crossings Grant program in 2016 to help address maintenance issues with roadways throughout the State. The City was awarded a \$572,850 matching grant, which the City utilized during the 2019 construction season to repair curb and patch, mill, and overlay Grape Road from McKinley Avenue to Edison Road and Edison Lakes Parkway from Main Street to Main Street. The streets were milled 2 inches and resurfaced with full depth patching as required throughout the project limits. New pavement markings were placed and a pedestrian crossing was installed at Grape Road and Catalpa Drive. This project was completed in 2019 with a total City investment of \$1.1 million.

In conjunction with this project, a new multi-use 8-foot path was installed along the west side of Grape Road between McKinley Avenue and Imus Drive. Completion of this path is anticipated in early 2020. The path was funded by TIF with a total City investment of \$400,000.

In October 2019, the City was awarded an additional \$427,150 Community Crossings Matching Grant for the 2020 construction season. In 2020 this grant will fund repaving Grape Road from Indian Ridge Boulevard to State Road 23 and University Drive from Grape Road to Main Street.

#### Summer Street Paving Program

With the completion of the City's pavement rating system, every year the Engineering Department and Street Department coordinate activity to address our streets that have the greatest need. In

2019 the City invested 923 thousand dollars for 26,000 linear feet of street milling on 32 different streets. Work varied based on needs and included resurfacing, replacement of handicap ramps, and pavement markings.

### Alley Paving Program

Having been in existence since 1833, Mishawaka has many traditional neighborhoods that are served by alleys, many were created as dirt and gravel paths before the automobile even existed. The 2019 alley paving program surfaced 2,960 linear feet of alleys for an investment of \$75,000. The residents along the alley benefit from this work because of the reduction of the dirt and dust generated by traffic. The Street Department also benefits by not having to grade or apply dust palliative to the paved alley for many years. There are approximately 48.5 total miles of alley that are open to the public, and a significant number of these have been paved by this program. In 2019 ten alleys were surfaced with this program.

### Curb and Sidewalk Program

Instituted in 1986, this program encourages single-family homeowners to repair or replace deteriorated public curb and sidewalks adjacent to their property and provides for a 50/50 split of the repair cost of curbs, sidewalks, and drive approaches between the homeowner and the City. Since the beginning of this program, the cost for reconstruction of over 23 miles of new curb and sidewalk has been shared by the City and its residents. Additionally, several areas of sidewalk and curb were replaced due to drainage issues, trip hazards, or damages. In 2019 a total of \$308,000 was invested in neighborhoods on curb and sidewalk improvements as part of the program.

### Lincolnway S.R. 933 Restriping

In 2018, the City asked for a partnership with INDOT to restripe Lincolnway to provide for a uniform three lane road section between Capital Avenue and Logan Street. This project was envisioned because even though it is a State Road that is maintained by INDOT, Lincolnway was one of the roads the City had received the most complaints about. Lincolnway is truly a Historic Roadway that has evolved over time and existed in part before the automobile. The road passes through the historic downtown, neighborhoods, and past the Historic Mishawaka High School. Mishawaka Schools remain a “walk on” school district which results in many of the students being driven or using Lincolnway as a walking corridor.

This historic development and changes in the corridor over time have resulted in road width changes as frequently as block to block. At points, many drivers had previously used it as a four-lane roadway even though it had been designed for only two lanes. The City contracted with the Troyer Group to prepare plans to restripe the roadway to create a three-lane section (one travel lane in either direction and a center turn lane).

I am pleased to report that in 2019, INDOT completed the resurfacing project and implemented the striping as requested by the City. Although the lane widths vary, the same three lane section now exists between Capital Avenue and Logan Street. We believe that the striping plan has significantly improved traffic flow and safety through the corridor. Overall, the City spent approximately \$100,000 to prepare the plans, pay INDOT for the additional striping, and install two radar speed limit signs in residential areas of the project. We can think of no bigger bang for the buck project that the City has undertaken in the last decade! We are very appreciative of this

partnership with INDOT and I want to thank them again for their willingness to work with the City on this project.

## **Infrastructure Planning**

Being focused on the fundamentals means that the improvements to our City do not happen by accident. The City continues to constantly plan for future improvements. The following projects are currently under design or are currently being studied by the City.

### *Cedar Street from Mishawaka Avenue to Edgewater Drive*

Cedar Street is a continuation of the Mishawaka Avenue area projects, which the design progressed to 95% complete in 2016. The project has been impacted by the adjacent Cedar Street Central Service Facility rehabilitation. The City facility was demolished in 2017, and in 2019 the brown field requirements and associated process has slowed. The Cedar Street project may be programmed for construction once the rehabilitation has progressed or earlier if the budget permits. The project will include sewer separation, street reconstruction, concrete curb, sidewalk, and digital solar speed signs with an estimated City investment of \$1.35 million.

### *Twelfth Street, Phase III (Dodge Avenue to Campbell Street)*

Just as Twelfth Street Phases I and II were selected to receive 80% federal highway funds for construction and construction observation, Phase III was also selected in 2018 as a viable project. The project engineering commenced in summer 2018 with survey work, and design was well underway throughout 2019. Like Phase II, this project includes a widened Twelfth Street from its present two lanes to three lanes, includes a continuous center left turn lane, new storm sewer, concrete curb and gutters, and 8-foot multi-use pathway. The federal process also requires deliberate design, environmental study, and right of way acquisition milestones that will span until 2024 or 2025 when the start of construction has been programmed. The total investment for construction is estimated to be \$7.8 million.

### *Bendix Pond / Beiger Street / Byrkit Avenue Storm Drainage Study*

A storm drainage study for the area bounded by Byrkit Avenue, Twelfth Street, Downey Avenue, and the Norfolk Southern railroad, which includes Bendix Pond and its outfall system, Beiger Street, and Byrkit Avenue, was substantially complete in 2019. Bendix Pond receives water from the Laing Ditch watershed and outlets into the Roosevelt Avenue storm sewer, which discharges into the St. Joseph River. During extreme wet weather events, water surface elevations within Bendix Pond can cause flooding of the adjacent properties. The study evaluated options for drainage improvements to address the stormwater needs of the area. At the close of 2019, the study identified a promising and economic option to provide conveyance of Bendix Pond overflow and Beiger Street storm drainage to the converted Byrkit Avenue storm sewer. The study recommendations will be finalized in 2020.

### *Partial Raceway Reconstruction and Main Street Widening*

To facilitate the development of the island between the St. Joseph River and the River Race formerly used for industry, a plan is being developed to bring utilities to the island. To create additional land for development, a portion of the River Race will be enclosed. The project will

include development of a water feature utilizing the River Race. The Riverwalk will continue to travel along the island. Main Street will be widened as part of the master plan for downtown traffic flow allowing an added left turn lane at the intersection of Main Street and Front Street to accommodate vehicular access to the island.

#### Traffic Signal Interconnect Study (Main/Church Street from Fourth Street to Broadway)

In conjunction with the raceway reconstruction and associated redevelopment of the island, the new developments in the central business district west of Main Street, and the continued interest of the area shown by developers, a traffic study that included generating a computer traffic model of the City system was conducted during 2019 for the Main/Church Street corridor. Consideration was given to two scenarios with the goal of successfully moving the north-south through traffic while still allowing the local traffic to exit/enter the corridor safely. However, with the proposed repurposed use of the Liberty Mutual building, the area being considered has been expanded, and this additional consideration is now being studied with an anticipated completion in 2020.

#### Various Sites in Downtown Mishawaka

There are proposed parking improvements on First Street and Hill Street, which are components of a master plan to create a vibrant downtown district in Mishawaka. With the formerly vacant properties being transformed into residential and commercial space, downtown parking is at a premium. These street improvement projects take steps to create additional public parking around these developments. Parking on First Street from West Street to Hill Street will increase from 13 to 34 spaces. Parking on Hill Street from First Street to Front Street will increase from 28 to 50 spaces. Both sections are planned to increase the number of designated ADA parking spaces as well as address the existing sidewalk ramps at those intersections. In particular, the Hill Street improvements will carry the streetscape theme present on Hill Street to the north. The widened walkways, lighting, and boulevard-feel will serve residents, business owners, and downtown visitors alike.

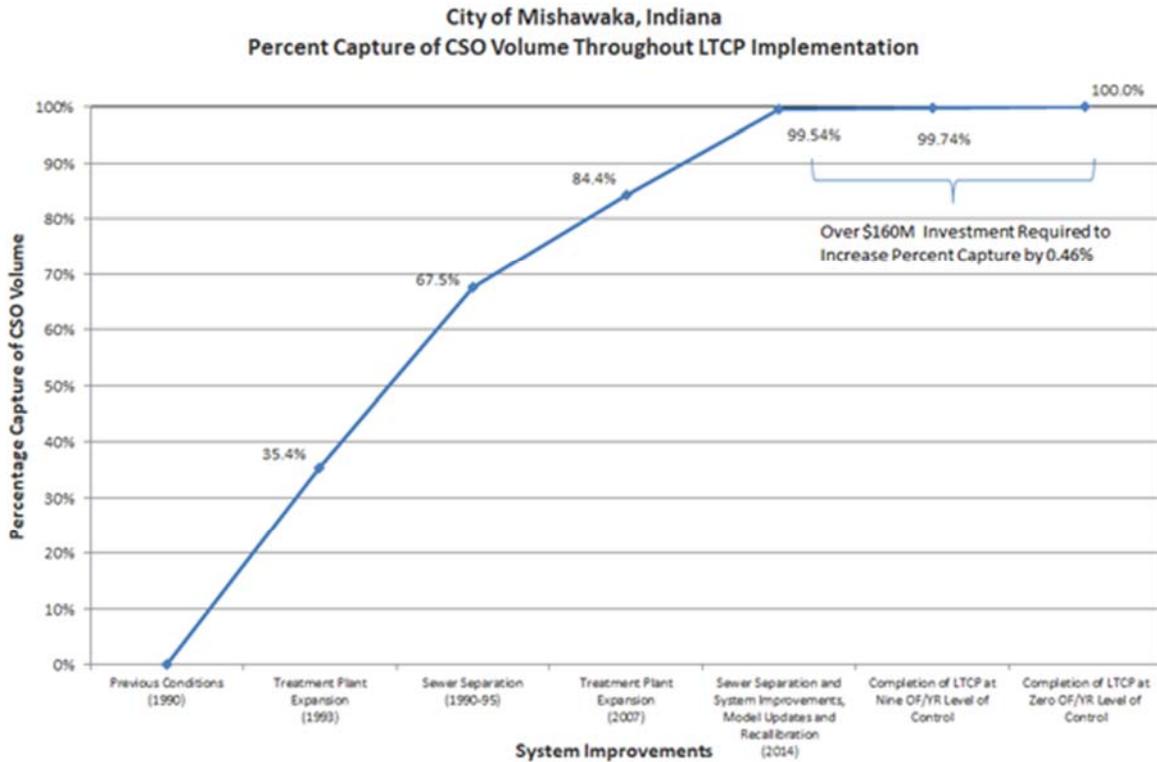
#### **Wastewater Long Term Control Plan (LTCP)**

**As I have reported in previous State of the City Addresses, the single greatest issue facing the City is the renegotiation and implementation of a new long-term control plan that addresses the ongoing separation of our combined sewers.** Ultimately, our plan has to work for both our ratepayers and the environment. Like many other Indiana communities, Mishawaka was developed with a combined sewer system (CSS). During large storms the CSS, which carries both sewage and storm water, can become overloaded resulting in discharges of raw sewage into the St. Joseph River. The Clean Water Act (CWA) requires cities with combined sewer systems to develop long-term control plans to reduce or eliminate discharges of combined sewage. Mishawaka's LTCP was entered into a federal consent decree in May of 2014.

Over the last 30 years, Mishawaka has reduced its combined sewer overflows from 314 million gallons to 4.1 million gallons in a typical year. This is a 98.7% reduction in CSO volume from the baseline year of 1990 and represents capture and treatment of 99.54% of wet weather flow. Studies have shown that eliminating the remaining 1.3% of Mishawaka's CSO volume would result in **no measurable improvement** in river water quality. The cost to remove the last 1.3% which is

currently estimated at over 160 million dollars can simply not be justified. *A rate increase of that magnitude would be financially crippling relative to the modest means of many of our citizens!*

Mishawaka continues to be engaged in ongoing discussions with EPA, the State of Indiana, and the Department of Justice to modify our consent decree and negotiate an affordable, justifiable endpoint that will protect the environment while not oppressively burdening the citizens of Mishawaka.



By the numbers, our impressive reduction in CSO volume already places Mishawaka well ahead of most Indiana CSO communities. Although each community is judged based on their own unique circumstances, I think it is important to benchmark Mishawaka. In comparison, our neighboring cities approved consent decrees allows Elkhart total annual discharge of 44.9 million gallons, and South Bend total annual discharge of 47.55 million gallons. In comparison, our current 4.1 million gallons of overflow in a typical year is less than one-tenth of our neighbors approved discharges. In fact, South Bend is also currently renegotiating because of the severe impact meeting their current LTCP requirements will have on their rates, even with legally being able to discharge over 10 times what Mishawaka currently does.

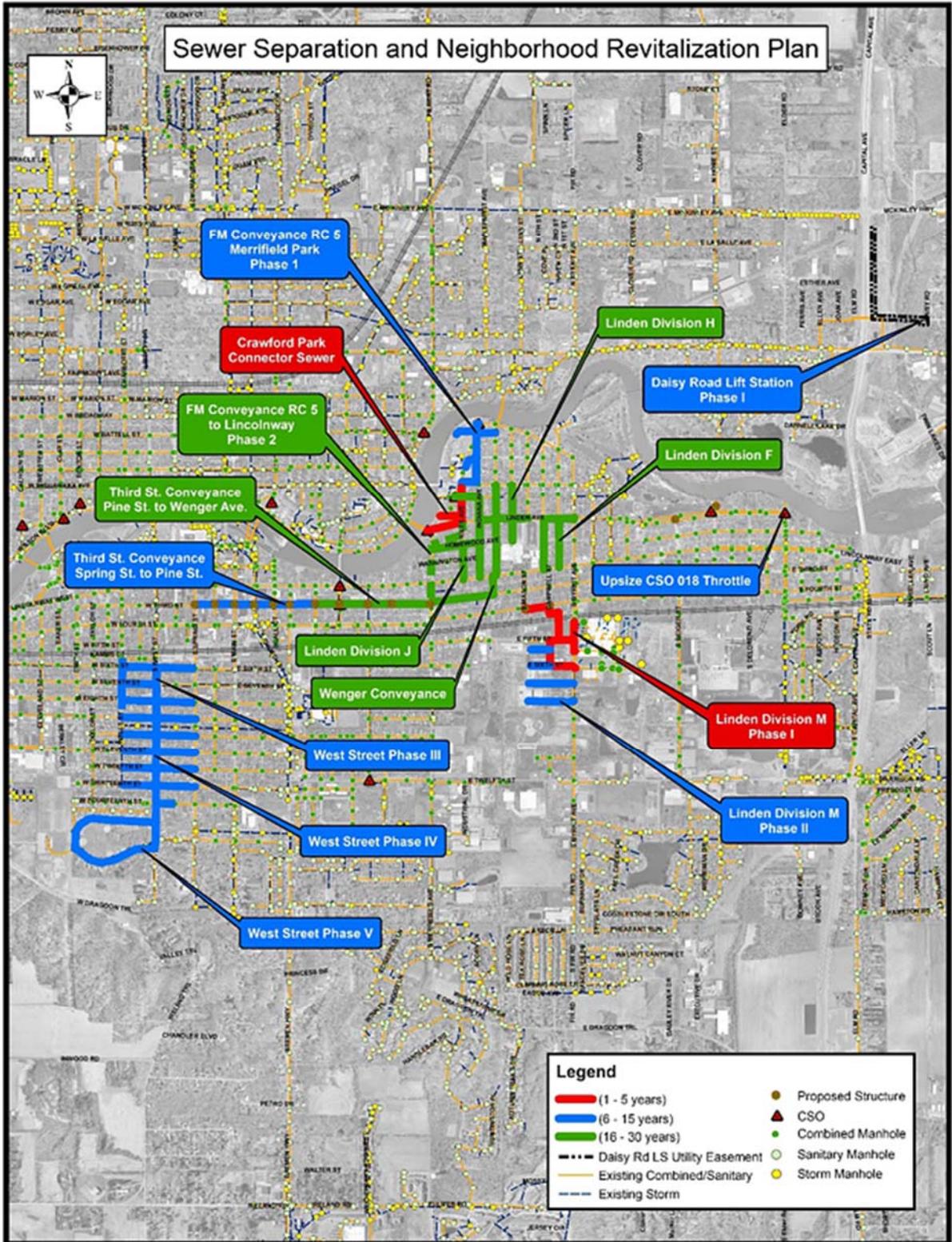
In parallel to our renegotiation, I have directed that the City continue in good faith to move forward on LTCP projects that do not require the deep storage and conveyance tunnel to be viable.

In 2019, I also directed our staff and consultants to develop a further refined plan that concentrates more on reconstruction and separation rather than storage: ***“The Sewer Separation and Neighborhood Revitalization Plan”***.

Although we are still in renegotiation and need to honor that process, the point of this revised plan is to concentrate on more sustainable neighborhood improvements as part of a long-term solution that provides for continual improvements and reductions in overflow volumes.

This emphasis just mimics some of our already implemented phases of the Long-Term Control Plan. In previous years, in certain areas the City removed entire streets to install separate sanitary and storm lines. As part of that removal and replacement, lead water services were replaced, and the neighborhood ended up with brand new streets and sidewalks. From a river water quality perspective, separation better ensures a long-term reduction in Combined Sewer Overflows because it helps remove the unpredictable nature of storms and ice melt from the sanitary system. The downside is that this process is extremely expensive and only a block or two can be done in any given year with our current utility rates. This means that even if we are able to fully implement this plan, getting to zero overflows would not occur in our lifetime, but with an ongoing yearly commitment, we would eventually get there with a much better sustainable system. My ultimate goal is to save the City and our ratepayers many millions of dollars and to still improve our wastewater collection and treatment system and the environment in practical, meaningful ways.

We have developed a great negotiation strategy with our team of experts. We are reasonably optimistic that some good ol' Princess City common sense will prevail. We expect negotiations will continue well into 2020 and perhaps beyond.



### Rose Park Master Plan

The neighborhood sewer separation improvements planned along with the continued deterioration of elements in Rose Park, combined with the decreased use of baseball and softball fields, warrants that we start planning for what this park is going to be to best serve future generations. Similar to the planning process that was done for Crawford Park, the City will be contracting with the Troyer Group to develop a master plan for Rose Park.

Fundamental to this process will be the direct involvement of our citizens. The process will start in the summer of 2020 and we will look to hold a public meeting in the fall of 2020 to obtain feedback on a draft master plan. The master plan is important to develop at this time even though the sewer improvements may be five or more years away because of the deterioration and change in use that has occurred in the park. We are planning to phase some improvements sooner that are desperately needed like replacing or renovating the restroom building. The master plan will help ensure that our phased improvements work with the overall vision for the park.

### **Long-Term Control Plan Construction**

#### Linden Area – Long Term Control Plan

The Linden Area sewer separation is an element of the original Long Term Control Plan (LTCP), which includes the area south of the St. Joseph River roughly bounded by Merrifield Avenue, Fourth Street, and Roosevelt Avenue. The recommended plan consists of three main components: rehabilitating the existing combined sewer system to act as a separated sanitary sewer system, constructing a new separate storm sewer system including a new storm outfall to the St. Joseph River, and converting the existing combined sewers in parts of Byrkit Avenue, Indiana Avenue, and Joseph Street to storm sewers.

The first of the Linden Area construction projects began in 2016 with additional projects occurring every year since. A storm outlet for the anticipated improvements from the second phase of Twelfth Street, from Downey Avenue to Campbell Street, was constructed in 2019.

The next series of projects were designed throughout 2019 as Twelfth Street Phase II was being constructed. Due to the extensive area, the project will be divided into multiple phases. The first construction phase will be bid in March 2020 and will extend north under the railroad from Fifth Street and connect to the sanitary sewer at Mason Street and Fourth Street. The second section of Phase I will be bid in summer 2020 and will include Fifth Street, Byrkit Avenue, Campbell Street, and Sixth Street.

#### Crawford Park Connector Sewer

The Linden Area Study also identified significant deficiencies in the conveyance system between Niles Avenue and the combined sewer overflow in Crawford Park. Construction commenced in October 2019 starting with the replacement of the existing combined sewer outfall at the river. The construction will continue into 2020 with the installation of 450 feet of new 72-inch sanitary sewer within Crawford Park, rerouting of the existing 48-inch sanitary sewer, and installing two concrete diversion structures. The project also includes the milling and resurfacing of Niles Avenue between Mishawaka Avenue and Lincolnway East. Project completion is anticipated for fall 2020 with an estimated City investment of \$3.7 million.

## **Mishawaka Utilities Wastewater Division**

One of the truly essential predominantly unseen fundamental services of our city is provided by Mishawaka Utilities Wastewater Division. Every day the Wastewater Division protects public health and the water environment of the community and provides efficient service at a reasonable cost. Mishawaka's wastewater treatment plant has a design capacity of 20 million gallons per day (MGD) and is one of the largest and most complex treatment facilities in the state. The treatment facility operates 24 hours per day, 365 days a year. The twenty-five employees of the Wastewater Division have over 444 years of combined wastewater experience. Seven members of the staff hold Indiana's highest level of professional operator certification. Speaking at the "BusinessH2O Water Innovation Summit" in September, the EPA's assistant administrator for water, David Ross, referred to those who clean our country's water and wastewater as "silent, everyday unsung heroes." I just wanted to take this opportunity to "sing" our Wastewater Division's praises. What our Wastewater Division does is as critical as any service that is provided by the City.

## **Mishawaka Utilities Water Division**

I continue to say that one of the fundamentals of a thriving community is represented by what our citizens are able to take for granted. Due to the hard work of the Mishawaka Utilities Water Division, a constantly available supply of clean water is on that list. In 2019, we treated 2.508 billion gallons of water for a daily average of 6.87 million gallons. Our employees worked 1,384 hours of overtime as we have people on call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to monitor and repair distribution system and treatment facility issues. Every day, 365 days a year, our Water Quality Staff collects samples, tests the samples and adjusts the treatment plants accordingly to provide water that meets and exceeds the standards set by the Environmental Protection Agency and the Indiana Department of Environmental Management. This group performed 21,600 tests in 2019 to ensure Mishawaka has a continually safe supply of water.

### *New Ireland Trail Reservoir*

At the end of 2019 our new 2-million-gallon concrete reservoir on Ireland Trail was completed. This concrete tank designed by DLZ and constructed by HRP Construction is so substantive that I envision a future Mayor will be writing about this engineering marvel 100 years from now. With a floor and walls two feet thick and a roof eighteen inches thick a total of 2,900 cubic yards of concrete were used. The weight of that concrete is 11.7 million pounds. For structural integrity, 50 miles of rebar were used in the concrete; that is about 10 miles greater than the perimeter of Mishawaka.

Once the new tank was completed, on December 10th, 2019 after ninety years in service, our 3-million-gallon reservoir which is adjacent to the new one, affectionately known as Mabel's, so named for the former caretaker of the site, went offline.

For reference, ninety plus years ago in 1929 a loaf of bread was 9 cents, a gallon of gas a quarter, and a new car \$643.00. The stock market crashed that year, and it was the beginning of the great depression. Since that time and a lot of history, it has served Mishawaka citizens without fail, and now the old 3-million-gallon reservoir has been drained and cleaned and will be rehabilitated over the coming months and put back in service to continue to serve our city. It was found in remarkably good condition and was an engineering marvel of its time. It will function in unity with the new 2-

million-gallon reservoir to give us 5 million gallons in storage in this location, and importantly, add redundancy to maintain pressure and supply our other pressure districts. The rehabilitation project should be complete by early fall.

### **Mishawaka Utilities Electric Division**

The Mishawaka Utilities Electric Division (MUE) is the second largest municipally owned electric utility in Indiana, providing service to over 27 thousand customers. We have 11 substations located throughout the city. Our 48-person staff, engineer, construct and maintain the distribution system, consisting of nearly 127 miles of overhead, 176 miles of underground distribution lines, and seven miles of transmission lines. We are members of the Indiana Municipal Electric Association and our apprenticeship program produces lineworkers are recognized worldwide with our linemen commonly finishing in the top ten in competitions both nationally and globally.

There were 19 unplanned circuit outages in 2019, with a cumulative outage time of 19 hours. In comparison, there were 10 unplanned circuit outages in 2018, with a cumulative outage time of 19 hours. The number of unplanned outages increased but limiting the total outage time to 19 hours is impressive! In neighboring jurisdictions, it is not uncommon for storms to cause outages that last for days from a single storm.

#### Purchase Power Agreement

Significantly, in 2019 the Utility Board signed a new amendment to the purchase power agreement with Wolverine Power Cooperative that was signed in 2018. This extends the agreement to 10-years which will allow Mishawaka Utilities to maintain the lowest residential electric rates in the area. The savings will also allow us to make major improvements and upgrades to our system and issue a utility bond for the utilities participation in the new combined City Municipal Services building project that includes the replacement of the Mishawaka Utilities Business Office. Depending on transmission cost increases and the timing of our capital improvements, this may even allow for a small reduction in our already low rates!

#### 12-Kilovolt Upgrades

In 2019, Mishawaka Utilities Electric Division continued to move forward with the process of designing/upgrading our existing outdated 4-kilovolt (kv) system to an all new 12kv system with Spectrum Engineering Corporation. These improvements are necessary because of the outdated 4kv system where even replacement parts are getting harder to find. These upgrades will allow us to provide more reliable power and keep up with today's ever-increasing electrical demands. In 2020, the Union Substation will be the first of eight substations to be upgraded, with the others to follow over the years to come.

### **Coming in 2020**

Every year one of my privileges as Mayor is to highlight just a few of our special projects that are coming in the near future. 2020 and beyond does not disappoint!

### Neighborhood Park Improvements

As I mentioned, one of our fundamental practices is to constantly reinvest in our park system. In 2020 the City will be undertaking neighborhood park improvements in three parks, Twin Branch Park, Temple Park, and Hums Park.

In 2019 the City quoted a project to replace the restrooms in Twin Branch Park. Even though it was a simple two stall restroom building, our low quote was \$240,000 with others being over \$300,000. After rejecting the quotes because of the high cost, we re-evaluated the project to come up with better options. We think we found a solution that saves over \$100,000. We are currently working with a prefabricated concrete building manufacturer and believe that these prefabricated structures made of reinforced concrete slabs is the way to economically replace our neighborhood restroom buildings over time. We are working to replace the restrooms in both Twin Branch and Temple Parks in 2020.

Also in Twin Branch Park, after multiple upgrades over the last 5 years, the City plans to fully implement the master plan for the Park in 2020. We are using the Patronicity matching grant program to fund the City's first pickle ball court. Other planned improvements include new walks, basketball, a new small pavilion adjacent to the splashpad, and repairs to the existing large Lion's Club pavilion.

I am also excited to report that we are working with the Mayor's Youth Council to implement teen-oriented improvements to Hums Park. Our plan is to have the Youth Council work with our Department Heads to design, specify and build these improvements within a specified budget. Have you ever played ping-pong on an outside table made of concrete? You just might be able to at the end of this year!

### Juday Creek Wellfield, University Park Pressure District

Being focused on the fundamentals means that we know when it is time to invest in infrastructure, particularly in areas that are growing. In 2019, our design continued for a new well field to be constructed at the Juday Creek Golf Course and a treatment plant to be built on the adjoining property. Currently, our design is at 90% complete with projected bidding by early summer. This is the first building project to occur off of the recently completed Veterans Parkway.



*DLZ rendering of proposed Juday Creek Water Treatment Plant*

Our consultant DLZ has done a masterful job of aesthetically fitting a utility building into what will likely be a higher density modern corporate park along Douglas Road. The proposed building design is both contemporary and rural to fit in without being overly embellished.

As part of the development of the wellfield, a new 1.5-million-gallon elevated tank is planned be constructed at the site of the current Gumwood Wellfield. This tank will increase storage and pressure in the University Park pressure district. We are hoping to break ground in August for both of these projects. It will take between eighteen months and two years to complete this work.

### *Liberty Mutual Office Building - New City Municipal Services Building*

I saved the largest news from a City perspective for the end. Being focused on the fundamentals means that one of the things the City of Mishawaka does as well as any other City is that we catch the balls that are thrown at us.

In 2019, we got to “play catch” with insurance giant Liberty Mutual. In 2019, Liberty Mutual contacted the City after announcing the closure of their large call center facility located in downtown Mishawaka at 100 Lincolnway West. This led ultimately to the City’s purchase of their building and adjacent properties.

The issue that drove the City’s purchase of the building is that the City currently has three buildings that need significant work or replacement in the coming years.

The first is the Mishawaka Utilities Business Office located at 126 North Church Street. This building that was constructed in the 1950s has needed to be replaced for over 10 years. The building is not ADA accessible. It has no elevator which makes the basement and second floor difficult to use without adequate public access. It doesn’t have enough lobby space and there is no room to grow with the times. The second floor has a very low ceiling height, has inoperable restrooms, and is minimally being used for storage. The building has had water leakage issues and has just been repaired as minimally necessary to keep it in operation. We have essentially just been waiting for the right opportunity to replace it. Ideally, my goal was always to combine it with the replacement of City Hall.

Second, our existing City Hall located at 600 East Third Street was created from a conversion of the former Bingham Elementary School in the mid-1980s. Although the building has served us well, we have continually struggled with being located in a residential neighborhood and operating in former classrooms. As some Departments have grown, some have way too little space, others have more than enough. With the block walls of the building it is extremely cost prohibitive to modify the classrooms for small changes, the results are that smaller departments such as the Building Department have moved three times in the last 15 years in an effort to gain and redistribute space to other departments. There are also frequent occasions when the Council Chambers and Board of Works room do not have enough room for the public where it is standing room only and we have people outside waiting in the hallway.

Lastly, the Police Station which was constructed in the mid-1990s is a beautiful facility but it has a number of systems that are reaching the end-of-life after close to 25 years of service. The roof and HVAC system need replacement. The bigger issues with the Police Station are associated with our continued growth of the department and changing needs of the force. When the facility was constructed it was before much of our wireless capability including having laptops in cars for

reporting. We also continue to have a greater percentage of female officers which are changing the locker room and restroom needs. With laptops in cars, there is less of a need for desks. There is a much greater need to have a training room on-site. Right now, the roll call room serves a dual purpose. There is also a greater need for evidence storage and for specialized vehicles (motorcycles and ATVs) which were not planned for when the building was constructed.

So, we knew we had an overall need for these three facilities, but last year at this time, other than maintenance items, we were not in a rush and we were not considering the necessary replacement or additions for a few years given other funding priorities.

This changed when the Liberty Mutual building became available. The City was contacted by Liberty Mutual following their announcement that they were converting the call center jobs located at the facility to work at home positions and would be vacating the building. The City had previously attempted to work with Liberty Mutual to acquire two small parking areas they own south of First Street for years, so upon hearing the announcement, we wanted to pursue those acquisitions. We then were asked by Liberty Mutual to consider the purchase of the whole facility.

Before we were willing to even identify an interest, we hired Alliance Architects of South Bend to evaluate our existing buildings and need independent of the Liberty Mutual building. Once our needs were identified, we then had them perform a conceptual layout of the Liberty Mutual building to determine if it would in turn meet the City needs. Our basic goals in considering the project were as follows:

- **Facilities need to better serve the public!**
- Must be consistent with or accelerate our continued redevelopment efforts.
- Bring the City up to date regarding technology.
- Any solution must provide for some flexibility to allow for growth and changes over time
- Create a long-term solution
- Be as efficient as possible on expenditures

Upon the conclusion of our studies and investigations, we concluded that if acquired and renovated, the building would provide a unique opportunity to better serve the public by not only combining three separate buildings into one for efficiency, but it would also better serve the public simply by its central location. It is directly across the street from the County Services building and a block away from the public library in the heart of our historic downtown. It also has the ability to open up hundreds of formerly private parking spaces up for public use which is becoming increasingly more critical as we redevelop and bring new events and activities downtown.

Since it was built as a national call center with large open spaces for cubicles, incorporating technology could be easily addressed in the building's renovation. At over 90,000 square feet, the architects estimate that the building is about 5% larger than what is currently needed by the City allowing some room for growth over time. The building has a steel structure and masonry exterior. Once windows, HVAC, and roofs are replaced, the building has the ability to be set up to serve the City for decades to come without significant capital expenditures. The last issue, and one of the most important was the cost. As part of the architect's evaluation, the cost estimates for completing the renovation ranged from 14-20 million dollars. When considering the acquisition costs, the overall project cost started competing with new construction. The City then contracted

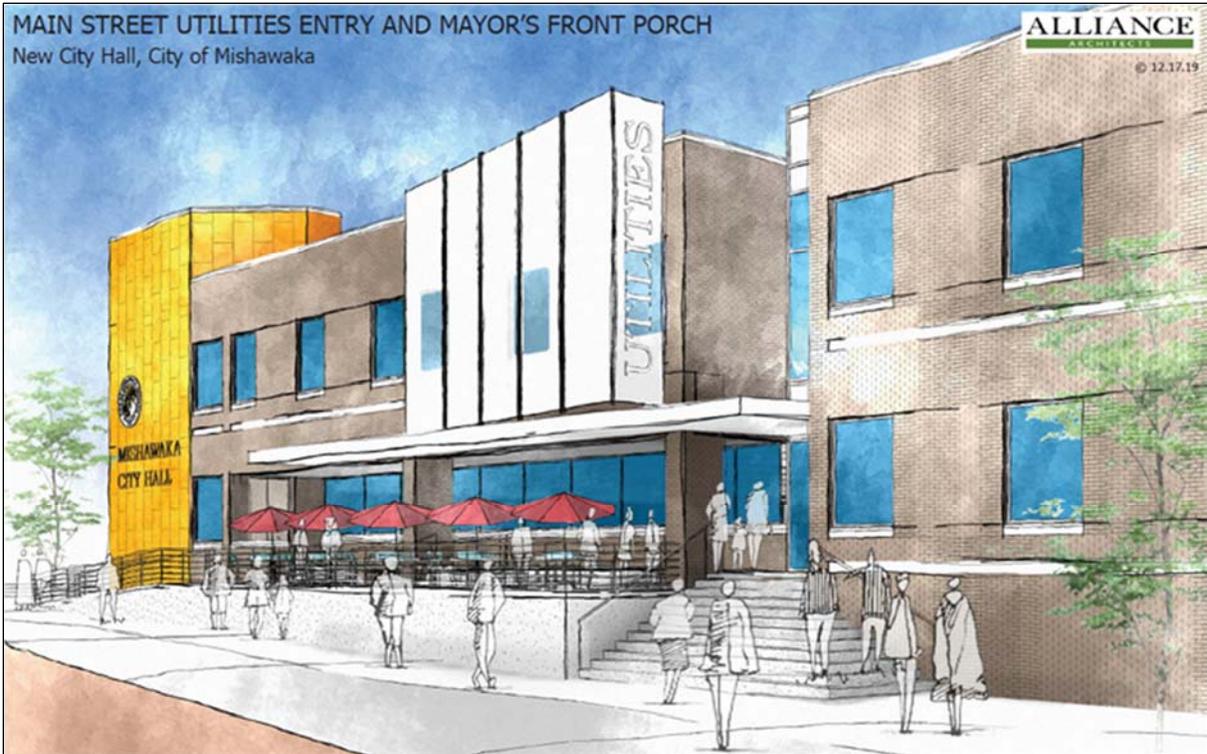
with NAI Cressy to negotiate the purchase price of the building. The acquisition price agreed to by Liberty Mutual was 2.35 million dollars, well below the appraised value which is just over 5 million dollars. With this revised purchase price, we felt that our established goals were met and we decided to move forward with the acquisition.

As part of the process, the City Council agreed that the purchase was in the best interest of the City, but also requested that the administration market the building for a brief period of time to see if any other large user would be interested in the building to bring more jobs to the City. Although it is unlikely that another large user will be interested, the building has been marketed by NAI Cressy since mid-January when the City acquired the building with no significant interest being expressed to date. If no real interest is received by mid-April we will stop our marketing efforts as we continue to spend more and more funds on the redesign of the building.

I am pleased to share with you the concept architectural images prepared by Alliance Architects of what the structure might look like when the renovation takes place. Better integrating our new facilities into the fabric of our downtown is a fundamental priority. The building will have three distinct public access points, one for City Hall, one for the Mishawaka Utilities Business Office, and one for the Police Department. The concept includes a storefront for the Mishawaka Utilities Business office on Main Street along with a “porch” where my hope is that in good weather I can hold office hours and drink some lemonade with our citizens! These are only concepts that will continue to be refined in the coming months. This time next year we plan to be under construction. At that time, I will have much more refined images to share!



*Alliance Architects rendering of the new City Hall Entrance on Lincolnway West*



*Alliance Architects rendering of the new Mishawaka Utilities Business Office Entrance and porch on Main Street*



*Alliance Architects rendering of the new Police Station Entrance south of First Street*

To close this report, I want to promote the Habitat for Humanity Work Project that will occur here in Mishawaka again in 2020 that will expand on the 2018 Carter Work Build. Since the first 23 homes were built, there have been some exciting developments in this Habitat project.



First, the previous owner of the Carter Work Build property saw the impact that the project had on our community and decided to DONATE the remaining residential subdivision property to Habitat that will accommodate about 40 additional homes. The only stipulation was that Habitat install a small, private park somewhere on the property. What a blessing indeed!

It did not stop there. Jim Williams, CEO of Habitat for Humanity of St. Joseph County received an unsolicited message from an anonymous individual congratulating the community on the success of the project and inquiring about future plans. Jim mentioned the recently donated property and indicated that it would take approximately 2.7 million dollars to complete a phase II to add another 40 home sites on the recently donated land, including all infrastructure costs. Fundraising was set to begin immediately. When this individual heard that, the anonymous donor said; "I will tell you what, if you keep my name anonymous, I am more than happy to DONATE the money for one third of this project; a donation of \$900,000.00."

With this great news, in 2019 the City stepped in and built portions of the additional infrastructure necessary for the new homes including streets and water lines to prepare for the 2020 build.



*Crew working on prepping a home for the 2020 Cost of Home Build, March 2020*

As I have said before, the Partner Families are the reason we build. Once completed over the next few years, the Fields at Highland subdivision will contain about 80 new, homeowner occupied homes on property that was previously unproductive and underutilized. This neighborhood is already full of life with scores of kids growing up in a stable environment and calling the Princess City home. I don't think I will ever be prouder of a project in my entire life as I am of this one. Please join us in continuing to build a better Mishawaka with Habitat for Humanity and volunteer for the 2020 community build. To volunteer visit: [www.hfhsjc.org/volunteer](http://www.hfhsjc.org/volunteer).

## **CONCLUSION**

Although my summary highlighted some of our accomplishments and ongoing efforts, I would encourage everyone interested to read the full reports provided by each City Department for a much more complete perspective. Again this year, to save paper and printing costs, those reports are only available online at the City's website. Yearly, I am pleasantly surprised by what our Departments are able to accomplish, and I think if you take the time to read them, you will be as well.

### **Thank you**

Personally, I want to thank all of Mishawaka for providing me the opportunity to continue to serve. I am humbled by the trust that has been placed in me. My service as Mayor continues to be the honor of my lifetime. I love Mishawaka and look at its citizens as part of an extended family. It is also my privilege to work shoulder-to-shoulder with the finest public servants anywhere. Together, we will continue to work to make decisions today with an eye toward future generations. I believe greatness continues to lie ahead of us! May God continue to bless you, our citizens, and our great City of Mishawaka!