

City of Mishawaka
2013 State of the City Address

“Shaping Mishawaka’s Future”
Mayor David A. Wood

Introduction

In the City of Mishawaka, 2012 began with optimism and promise but also much uncertainty. National presidential elections, economic stagnation and a federal debt crisis dominated the media. Local and state governments, including some of our neighboring communities also made headlines for their budget struggles. Many have been forced to cut services and lay-off staff, some have had to drastically raise taxes and a few cities across the country have even declared bankruptcy. Mishawaka government however, remains strong and is getting stronger. In fact, when most levels of government have retreated into a strictly reactionary mode, Mishawaka is forging ahead, strategically directing our future. When we look back and take inventory of the year, 2012 brought significant progress, transformation, and change.

The theme I want to highlight for this year’s address is “Shaping Mishawaka’s Future”.

As I indicated in last year’s State of the City address, we wanted to use 2012 as a year to create a game plan for the coming years. Although we have more work to do, there were a number of “game changing” accomplishments. This year I am using this State of the City not only to reflect on what was accomplished in 2012, but also to identify those changes that have been made in how the City does its business that will profoundly contribute to “Shaping Mishawaka’s Future”. Although my summary highlights a handful of our largest accomplishments and on-going efforts, I would encourage all interested to read the full reports provided by each City Department for a much more complete perspective.

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The State of Our City

I am pleased to report for another year that Mishawaka continues to build a community that future generations can be proud of, and that is an attractive environment to live, work, raise a family and retire in. I am also pleased to report that the current state of our City government continues to be fiscally stable, lean, and efficient. I am also proud that our City continues to:

- Maintain a welcoming business climate.
- Strive to provide world-class public services.
- Plan for the future, and not borrow from the future to pay for the present.

Although in 2012 the Presidential election, federal, state and even some local campaigns got heated and negative, Mishawaka's government continues to serve as an excellent example of civility, professionalism and cooperation. We have made strides in recent years to ever increasingly perform our duties in a bi-partisan manner, putting the Citizens of the City first, just as it should be. I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge the significant roles the Mishawaka Common Council and City Clerk play. For your past and continued efforts, I thank you.

Of course, when you have great leaders, some will get drafted and choose to pursue other challenges. The fall election brought change to Mishawaka. On behalf of the City, I want to thank Councilwoman Marsha McClure for her 13 years of dedicated service on the Common Council. Marsha and I were elected to the Council in 1999. In that time Marsha has been both a friend and a relentless advocate for the City. Now, our congratulations and well-wishes go to Marsha as she continues her calling in public service by serving all of St. Joseph County as a County Commissioner.

As is said, with one door closing, another one opens. After an extensive nomination process, including 10 rounds of caucus voting, Kate Voelker was appointed to fill out the remaining three years of Marsha's Council term representing the 4th District. Having known Kate for years, both in her service on the Historic Preservation Commission, and as the leader of RiverBend Cancer Services, I know her dedication and skills will serve the 4th District and City well.

Working to be the "Best Hometown in America"

Of course City officials and politicians try to promote the community, but in reality there can be no better way to promote the community than the remarkable accomplishments by the people that call our City home.

Mishawaka's future is bright indeed. In 2012 two special young citizens stepped onto the national stage, grabbed the spotlight, and captured our hearts. Anna Roher and Sam Schrader, both students at Mishawaka High School, serve as an inspiration for our City and region.

Anna Roher - Mishawaka High School's phenomenal Sophomore Cross Country Runner Anna Rohrer capped-off the 2012 season with The Foot Locker National Championship race in San Diego, California's Balboa Park. 5,000 meter (3.1 mile) race finishing in 17:24.9 making her the fastest female runner in the nation; and, NIC Conference Champion, setting a record and being named MVP, Sectional Champion, with a meet record 17:33.15, Regional Champion, with a meet record 17.24 Semi-State Champion with a meet record and the fastest time in State History of 17:03.9, State Champion and official State Meet record 17:13.2 then going on to win the Midwest Regional Championship with a meet record 16:54. Anna is also the first female Cross Country Runner in Indiana state history to run under the 17:00 mark.

Sam Schrader - Mishawaka High School's outstanding Senior Football Player Sam Schrader capped off the 2012 season and his high school career by being named the 2012 Gatorade Indiana Player of the year. This honor was well deserved. Sam finished his career as Mishawaka High School's All-Time Leader in Points Scored, All-Time Leader in Touchdowns Scored, All-Time Leading Rusher, and Single Season Rushing Leader. Sam quarterbacked the Mishawaka Cavemen all the way to the Class 4-A State Championship game. Although which Mishawaka lost, Sam excelled running for 190 yards in the game. Most importantly, Sam is a true leader and role model to others. He maintained a 4.09 GPA in the classroom and is a member of the Mayor's Youth Council and has volunteered locally on behalf of multiple community service initiatives in association with the National Honor society.

Marian High School Girls Soccer Team - Our congratulations also went out to the entire Marian Knights Girls Soccer Team and coaching staff who won the 2012 Class 1-A State Championship This year they beat Providence High School, a school they lost to last year, holding Providence to a scoreless game and winning 2 to 0. In the course of winning the State Championship, they also secured the titles of Sectional Champs, Regional Champs, and Semi-State Champs.

Shaping Mishawaka's Future – With Your Help!

In many respects, 2012 was a planning year for the City of Mishawaka. An integral part of all of what we do is receiving input from the citizens and businesses that we serve.

Just a year ago, I announced a planning effort called "Mishawaka 200/2033" in honor of our 200th birthday that will occur in 2033. In 2012, we used the Communicator bulletin in our utility billing to solicit broad topic input from everyone who receives a utility bill. Although response was limited, the feedback was invaluable. In 2013 we will seek the specific input school groups, elected and appointed officials, Department Heads, service organizations, and others. We will then collectively identify the goals and issues that will continue to shape the future of our City.

In 2012, the City also sought and received input from our stakeholders; our citizens, business owners, community organizations and our youth. Major public meetings included:

- Leaving the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission
- McKinley Grade Separation
- ADA Transition Plan, City Facilities

In 2013, we will continue to look for the more feedback from the public, including but not limited to:

- Park Master Planning
- ADA Transition Plan, Public Rights-of-Way
- South Side Rail Underpass Improvements

Shaping Mishawaka's Future – Mayor's Youth Council

The 2012-13 year marks the 9th year of the Mayor's Youth Council. The total membership in the Youth Council is at an all-time high of 30. This year's Youth Council keeps making a difference in our Community. The contribution of their time, talents, energy and ideas while also being involved in many school activities is an indication of the leadership qualities that these students already possess.

In 2013, I instituted a new leadership program as part of Mayor's Youth Advisory Council. I have challenged the Youth Council to break into groups and use their leadership skills to formulate plans and budgets for projects or programs to tackle some of our most pressing issues. We have developed this leadership initiative to take advantage of the tremendous asset of youth participation. Although it will be successful even if no game changing ideas come from it, I am both enthused and optimistic about tapping into our future leaders today. Topics that will be tackled by the Youth Council include:

- Youth activities and programs through the Mishawaka Parks Department
- Sustainability and efficiency
- Trails, sidewalks and non-vehicular traffic connections
- Branding our community
- Promoting downtown

Shaping Mishawaka's Future – Finance & Debt-Free Initiative

In 2012, I announced a major new initiative at multiple public forums that I believe is critical to putting Mishawaka in the best possible financial position for the future. I believe the City should strive to be debt-free in our general fund. At a time when almost all other levels of government are managing debt and increasing their debt load exponentially, becoming debt-free will be a clear sign of our fiscal health; being debt-free is a fiscal building block for our future.

When you look at fiscal health, whether you are a country, state, or city, there are growing disparities between the haves and have nots. Those with healthy budgets tend to trend healthier, and those with a weak budget trend weaker. This only makes sense. As an individual, family, or business, what type of community do you want to live, work and invest in?

My job as Mayor is to help ensure that Mishawaka continues to trend healthier and stronger. Although Mishawaka can't control the national economy or other factors in our region, we can control our own actions and resources. Working with the Common Council, Mishawaka passed another balanced budget in 2012 that provides investment in public safety, streets, and parks, while including modest cost of living increases for our employees.

Budgets are about making choices and setting priorities. Mishawaka's success continues to be based being fiscally conservative, and not incurring long term legacy costs that could jeopardize that status in times of uncertainty.

Although right now is a time of general stability for the City's budget, there are also obstacles and clouds of uncertainty that could impact us.

Recent obstacles include:

- *Property Tax Distributions* - In 2012 we received only 90.8% of our normal biannual property tax distributions from the county which left us short 2.2 million dollars.
- *Health Insurance* - In 2012 the health insurance deposit cost increased \$1,162,536.83 and the actual claims increased \$153,148.00. Increases in our premiums for the last three years have been 7.9% for 2011, 14.2% for 2012, and 12.5% for 2013.

The city tends to be cautious in its spending and its management of the city budget so when these storms arise, we weather them through the use of conservative planning. We also take appropriate action when required. Given the federal changes that have taken place to the Health Care system, we are not sure what the market will be like, but in 2013 we are going to further investigate options.

Regarding being debt-free in the General Fund, fortunately we are at a point where some of the past debt the City has undertaken will be paid off. Debt is usually required to complete larger projects such as a new fire station, communication system or other large investments. Similar to an individual buying a house, City general fund debt is meant for long term investments. Although a case could be made for maintaining our current level of debt, I believe that the real investment in the City that needs to occur at this time is being debt-free in the general fund.

Being debt-free has the potential to safeguard against uncertain economic times, and could have a positive impact on tax rates. Working with the City Controller, I have put Mishawaka on track to be debt-free in the general fund by September of 2014. This will be the first time this has occurred for the length of our financial records which date back at least a century.

The reality is that Mishawaka, like all cities, is competing for new businesses and jobs. I believe that being debt-free is itself a calculated investment that will place the City in a favorable position not only to support our existing families and businesses, but will be an obvious indicator of our fiscal health for prospective investors. As the economy continues to improve, Mishawaka continues to be well-positioned to take advantage and build our future on our past successes.

When discussing finances, it is important to give accolades to the City Controller, Yvonne Milligan and her staff. For the 26th consecutive year the controller's office has

been recognized with the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting. The Certificate of Achievement is “the highest form of recognition in government accounting and financial reporting, and its attainment represents a significant accomplishment by a government and its management.” Again in 2011 the audit disclosed no material findings and no comments. We are now beginning our audit for 2012 and expect to have another unqualified audit.

Shaping Mishawaka’s Future – Through Collective Bargaining

In 2012, with the participation of the Common Council for Police and Fire wages, the City successfully negotiated 6 collective bargaining agreements with the labor groups representing our unionized labor force. When we started the negotiations, we did so with the single goal of better serving our citizens. The unit most fundamentally changed was the Mishawaka Fire Department. Essentially, we needed to address that consistently, about 80% of the calls we receive for service are medical related, and the fact that the Department had historically been set up for fire suppression.

To address this change, we collectively agreed to an increase in minimum manpower in the department for the first time since the 1980s. The increase, while reflective of our growing City, had a strategic goal. The increase results in a third full-time ambulance being placed in service 24/7/365. Manpower was increased from 27 people on duty daily to 29. The increase in manpower and the third ambulance in service will improve the delivery of service, and reduce the number of times the City has had to rely on adjacent Cities or Townships to handle medical transport.

Part of this change was the adoption of the three-platoon system. Previously the firefighters worked under a two platoon system with three Kelly days per shift. This created six different schedules to plan. We felt that this was not the most efficient use of our personnel.

By changing to the three-platoon system, with no Kelly days, the shift schedules are down to three. Firefighters will continue to work the same 56 hour per week schedule as in the past. All personnel were assigned to their new stations and shift assignments beginning January 3rd of 2013 coordinated with the opening of New Station #4.

Shaping Mishawaka’s Future – By Fully Auditing City Facilities and Services

It has been said that out of big problems come big opportunities. After becoming Mayor, I put a hold on building new buildings, and some significant park improvements until I had an opportunity to review and assess the situation. Our fundamental problem had in some cases been that we were trying to repair, fix, or enhance something that had outlived its functional usefulness. By taking a fresh look at what we have, and how services could be delivered has fundamentally changed how we will provide service in a number of areas. Three projects exemplify the process of how we are scrutinizing our new construction projects. These include the relocation of Central Services, the

construction of New Fire Station #4, and the master planning process for the renovation of Central Park.

Central Services Relocation

When I took office, the City was considering expending millions of dollars to address some of the storage problems at the City's Central Services Facility on Cedar Street. Given the high cost of the proposed project and the fact that it would not fully meet the needs of the City going forward, I could not support investing in the old facility. We then turned our attention to finding suitable alternatives including potentially relocating our operations elsewhere in the City.

The City's existing Central Services facilities at 500 N. Cedar St. were originally obtained by the City in 1963 at a time when the city was less than half its current size. The site currently consists of a piecemealed conglomeration of eight buildings (55,000 SF) on 5 acres of property that house a combination of the Street Department, Central Motor Pool, management services, some Park operations, and the Sewer Department.

In the past 50 years, not only has the city grown in area and population, but the size and amount of equipment that we operate has grown too. The buildings have become sub-standard in many ways. The facility sits on a former dump and the City's departments have so much equipment stored there that sections resemble a junkyard. Further, the complex is surrounded by residential neighborhoods. I am sensitive to the fact that we are a 24/7/365 operation; at times, we make a lot of noise and we are not the best neighbor. Simply put, the existing complex is not capable of providing the world-class service to our citizens that I expect. We can do better!

A few years ago, considerations were given to adding to this conglomeration by constructing two new facilities; a cold-storage barn to house vehicles on the existing site thereby eliminating outdoor storage of expensive equipment and a salt barn which would allow the city to buy and store salt safeguarding us from running out in times of high demand. In 2010, a local architect estimated the cost for construction of the two buildings combined was \$2,150,000 (est. \$75.00/S.F.). This expenditure would do nothing to address the substandard condition of the other buildings on the site. Even if we were to build new buildings and renovate old ones, the limited size of the property and location in a residential area make the complex not ideally suited to provide adequate service to our growing City.

An opportunity became available when the former Scott Brass (formally Dodge) building became available in 2012. Central Services Director, Mike Watson and I toured the building and immediately saw its potential to serve our City well. The vacant 145,000 SF industrial building sits on 11 acres at 700 S. Union St. The former industrial building is centrally located and uniquely situated to meet all of our needs now and for the foreseeable future. After performing a due diligence investigation of the property including environmental problems, the City approached the owner to purchase the building and acreage. The price the City paid was the average of two appraisals for the

land and structure; a total of \$785,000. After required renovations are complete, we expect the transformation of the building to cost just over \$2,000,000 (\$16/S.F). The building was purchased and will be renovated with existing designated capital funds over multiple budget years and no anticipated debt will be incurred in the renovation of the new facility. The City will also save money by performing some renovations in-house with our skilled staff members.

The new facilities, under one roof instead of eight, will allow us to be much more efficient in our operations, as well as give us new capabilities. The building can easily handle storage and repair of ALL the City's equipment including hundreds of vehicles ranging from our biggest fire truck to our smallest sewer robots. Several departments will be positively impacted including Central Services, Park, Fire, Police, Electric



November 2012 picture of the former Scott Brass Building

and Code Enforcement. New uses will include Fire agility training space, electrical equipment storage. Our Parks Department will also be able to centrally store and maintain equipment there that is currently spread throughout many outbuildings in multiple parks, potentially allowing for the removal of some structures in need of significant repair or replacement.

Our goal is to begin operations out of the new facility by the end of 2013. Once complete, we will then plan to begin redevelopment of the Cedar Street site by demolishing the eight buildings there including performing a significant amount of environmental remediation.

New Fire Station #4

Construction was completed on new Fire Station #4 in December of 2012. Over the past eight years the City has been preparing and making plans for replacing the previous Fire Station #4 which is a beautiful and historic Tudor revival building located at 2319 Lincolnway East that was constructed in 1929. The existing building housed just one truck that had to be custom ordered to fit inside the building. Given the relatively small single garage and how fire equipment has evolved over time, this was a significant limitation. The existing facility also had no off-street parking, and no room for needed expansion.

In 2004, based on what we believed to be the pending construction of Capital Avenue, the City contracted with DLZ planners to perform a fire district study to determine the ideal site for a new fire station based on both the existing and expected growth areas of the City. Since Capital Avenue was delayed, this study was updated in 2010 to insure that INDOT's changes to the Capital Avenue plans and six years of growth were taken into account. Based on this study, it was determined that the ideal location for the new station would be within a ½ mile radius of the intersection of Capital Avenue and 12th Street/Harrison Road.

After a thorough review of properties in this target area, in August of 2011 the City was able to purchase approximately 8 acres from the Lang Family, immediately west of Hums Park. The City chose this site primarily because it was located in the ideal location for response times. At the same time, this specific site was chosen over others in part because it afforded the City an opportunity to provide a four-way intersection at Bennington Drive and Harrison Road. Bennington Drive was extended south to serve the new Fire Station and will end in a temporary cul-de-sac until the adjacent farm field is annexed and developed over time. The importance of this re-alignment was that it allowed for the installation of a traffic signal. The controlled intersection now assists the crossing guard helping children crossing the street from Reverewood to Hums School, and provides better access to the park.

The replacement fire station is a 14,500 square foot single-story building with three garage bays for fire trucks and/or EMS vehicles. An important component of the City's service model, as mentioned previously, was to be able to house an ambulance at this location. As our population ages and run volumes increase, the ability to house and run ambulances from fire stations was critical to our new model of service.



January 2013 Photograph of New Fire Station #4

The building houses a training room that will be used for official neighborhood/public meetings. The parking lot, since it includes parking for the training/community room, is also able to serve as overflow parking for peak park usage as well. Emergency vehicles have a direct access point off of Harrison Road. Staff and guest vehicles enter via access drives located off of the extension of Bennington Road.

Now that the new station is complete, and relocation has occurred, the existing fire station on Lincolnway will be declared surplus in 2013 and will be sold through a public bidding process. So, not only does the City have a new fire station to improve service and serve generations to come, some lucky bidder will be able to reuse this historic building as a very special new home or office.

Park Facilities Evaluation - Central Park Master Plan

When I took office, the City was in the process of making significant changes to Central Park, including a complete overhaul of the play equipment. The City also purchased and demolished 2 vacant and blighted commercial structures along Cedar St. in 2011 to provide for a new road access to the park. Even though we had already purchased a large play structure for the park, I asked city staff to take a step back at the end of 2012 and analyze the park as a whole, not just the specific elements deemed in need of improvement. Too many of our parks have evolved based on a piecemeal approach to trying to program a large variety of facilities or activities into a space, without regard to what it might best be used for, or with regard to how it is used by the surrounding neighborhood.

Central Park is a prime example. The existing softball field, although infrequently occupied, is essentially only used for league practice. The field was created at a time when the park was privately held, and used for the factory company picnics. The large factories are obviously now gone from the downtown, and the softball field remains and has been improved over time but it is too small to host league play.

Now of course, most people who play in leagues get in their cars and drive to the two or three parks that do in fact host league softball play. Although fields are an important component of the City's park system, does this require riverfront property? Is the activity well used by the surrounding neighborhood? Does the use compliment and contribute to other uses located along the Riverwalk?

When we determined that the historic use of a portion of this property as a softball field may not be the best use for the site, we asked our local landscape architectural firm, Lehman and Lehman to study the park and develop a master plan. Not surprisingly, the draft plan they developed, which will be evaluated and considered by the City Park Board, did not include the softball field. Among other changes, Lehman and Lehman suggested that a significant number of pavilions be added to reflect the regional attraction of the proposed play space, as well as what is deemed as an overall park system deficiency. I am looking forward to seeing the plans refined and come to fruition in the coming year.

Main Street Phase VI – Ardennes to Day Road

In 2012 the City completed the widening of Main Street between Ardennes and Day Road to provide a full five lane section. At its completion in November of 2012, Main Street is now 5 lanes from First Street in our historic Downtown all the way to State Road 23. This 5.5 million dollar section that included just 0.77 miles of roadway occurred in the heart of a very dense commercial and multi-family residential area. The project included major utility relocation, ornamental lighting, traffic signal replacement, storm water management, and some sanitary sewer reconstruction. All of this work was accomplished while still keeping at least two lanes of traffic moving through the corridor for most of the project.

First and Hill Street Improvements/Downtown

As part of the Mishawaka Main Junior High Apartment renovation, the City made a commitment to improve the Hill Street corridor which hadn't seen investment in decades, going back to a time when Uniroyal was still open and in operation. In addition to providing needed utility connections to the apartment project, the City looked at the project comprehensively, including the surrounding streets. The project evolved and in 2012, portions Hill Street, First Street, and West Street in the vicinity of the apartment project had either been completely reconstructed or significantly improved. Improvements included adding landscaping, decorative street lighting, and installing ADA compliant sidewalk ramps at intersections. As the project neared completion, we recruited the help of Mishawaka Utilities Electric Division to upgrade ornamental lighting along Lincolnway and extending our Downtown banners from Mill street west to Center Street. We also continue to work to place as many utilities as possible underground. Although it is sometimes difficult to work with outside utility companies, we are making progress on transforming this formerly industrial area into a mixed use pedestrian friendly destination.

Significant Projects Moving Forward in 2013

One of the most anticipated parts of the State of the City is the identification of new projects or priorities for 2013. This year I will share my thoughts on four of our larger initiatives.

Church Street/Union Underpass

The next logical section of the Main Street widening initiative included extending 5 lanes from First Street to at least Fourth Street in Downtown. However, with the acquisition of the former Scott Brass facility and the pending relocation of the City's Central Services, we felt that the project needed to be expanded to at least 8th Street to allow for safe left turn movements that will not impede through traffic. The City is in the initial design phase and we are planning to meet with impacted business owners and the public in the coming weeks. As with all of our

projects of this magnitude, we will not only address the functional movement of traffic, but also the aesthetics of an area in need of improvement. The Main Street corridor (including its various name changes) projects an image and first impression of our City. The Norfolk Southern underpass has been in need of attention for years. This project will dramatically improve the corridor.



Preliminary Plan of Church/Union Underpass Improvements

Bremen Highway South Gateway

Although this project dates back to 2010 when Abonmarch Consultants were selected to prepare a conceptual study of Bremen Highway between the US 20 By-pass and Ireland Road, 2012 saw the completion of the plan. The project is anticipated to be bid in the Spring of 2013 and is expected to be completed in one construction season. Since Bremen Highway is part of the Main Street Corridor project, the City will look to expand this section of roadway to five lanes, two travel lanes in each direction with a left-turn lane. This project is also timely since McDonald's has filed a request for rezoning one of the Meijer out-lots for a new restaurant. If the rezoning is approved, we anticipate that there is a potential for the restaurant and road to be completed about the same time.

Fir-Capital Connector

As mentioned in last year's State of the City report, one of the higher priority projects from an economic development perspective is the Fir-Capital Connector project. When complete, this three-quarter mile road will provide a more direct connection between the Indiana Toll Road and the northern Mishawaka consolidated retail area, which includes medical facilities, restaurants, hotels, car dealerships, and other uses that draw customers from a wide region. Since the connector dissects now-vacant property, it also has the added benefit of opening up approximately 240 acres of property for new development that would likely occur over many years. In 2012, significant progress was made including multiple meetings with the multiple property owners who have proposed donating the right-of-way to allow for the road's construction. The meetings have allowed the City to finalize the alignment of the roadway. The roadway itself will be a parkway similar to Edison Lakes and Holy Cross Parkways. The lighting, landscaping, and appurtenances are intended to be of a gateway quality, enhancing the image of the community. Although the construction engineering needs to be finalized, we are still hopeful that the project can be bid and construction started in 2013.

McKinley Avenue Grade Separation

In 2012, the City, in partnership with St. Joseph County, contracted with DLZ to study the feasibility of constructing a grade separation at McKinley Avenue and the Grand Trunk Western Railroad track. The purpose of the study was to consider two grade separation options: an overpass and an underpass. Currently, the section of McKinley Avenue east of Division Street is a two-lane asphalt roadway with 12-foot lanes and paved shoulders varying from 8 feet to 12 feet. This area serves as a bottleneck for traffic, not just because of the rail crossing, but because this is the last section of two-lane width within the City of Mishawaka and the County heading east to the county line.

The City and County jointly presented the findings of this study to the public and interested property owners in the summer of 2012. In the coming year, the City's hope is that an agreement can be reached with St. Joseph County that would allow the project to proceed. The County does not appear to be in a financial position to fulfill their statutory obligation for the bridge portion of the project. As was the case with the Main Street Underpass, if the project is to move forward, it will likely require the City to fund all the initial expenses, and then be reimbursed by the County over time.

Shaping Mishawaka's Future – Redevelopment is a Priority

With the continued sluggish economy, and the fact that St. Joseph County as a whole continues to grow at a very slow pace, redevelopment efforts to improve existing neighborhoods, corridors, and business districts continue to be a high priority.

Development Activity

A total of 28 new single-family permits were issued in 2012. This is slightly higher than the 22 new homes constructed in both 2011 and 2010, but down from the 32 constructed in 2009 and 47 in 2008. A bright spot is that there were 10 new commercial buildings that started constructed in 2012. This is a significant increase compared to the 4 new commercial buildings started in 2011. In comparison, 9 were started in 2010 and 8 in 2009. The good news is that the market appears to be stable and growing again.

First Time Homebuyer Program

Since its inception in 2004, the City's First Time Homebuyer Program, with funding from HOME grants awarded by the St. Joseph County Housing Consortium, has built a total of twenty-eight (28) homes for moderate income homebuyers. In 2012 we began construction at 126 W 10th Street, 2604 Milburn, and contracted for builds at 519 W. 6th Street and 426 W 9th. Construction should be complete by April of 2013. One of our challenges is that although we have had many inquiries regarding the First Time Homebuyer Program, the vast majority simply do not qualify. As of the end of 2012 we only have 2 qualified applicants going into 2013. The lack of qualified applicants, along with the limitations imposed using Federal funds force changes to the program and may lead to a need to build working relationships with other qualified agencies like Habitat for Humanity.

Habitat for Humanity

In 2012, the Community Development Department continued its collaboration with Habitat for Humanity to provide quality, affordable housing to low-income families. Utilizing CDBG, NSP1, NSP3, and CDBG-R funds, the department partially subsidized the construction of 5 builds: 616 E. Battell, 550 W 6th Street, 511 W 6th Street, 513 S. Taylor (now 802 W.7th), and 203 W. 11th.

In May of 2012, the Redevelopment Commission also entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with Habitat for Humanity of St. Joseph County to facilitate the rehabilitation of the former Frank's Nursery Building located at 5225 North Grape Road. Habitat acquired the property with the intent of creating a Re-Store that over time will generate funds used for future single-family residential building projects.

As a City we viewed the agreement as beneficial, not only from a rehabilitation of a commercial building perspective, but also felt the residual properties that were acquired as part of the Main Street underpass project could be future Habitat home sites.

Spot Blight Elimination

The City continues to work to maintain the high quality of life in Mishawaka neighborhoods by eliminating vacant, deteriorating properties. In most cases, new First Time Homebuyer or Habitat for Humanity homes are constructed on the cleared lots. In 2012, the City acquired and/or demolished blighted structures at 511 W. 6th St, 426 W. 9th, 502 W. 6th, 407 S. West, and 422 E. Grove. Most notable is the property at 502 W. 6th Street, formerly Squad's 2nd Precinct. We were able to purchase the deteriorated building and 2 adjacent lots for \$15,000.

Downtown Business growth

In 2012, significant investment took place in and around Historic Downtown Mishawaka. Downtown space was renovated and occupied in 2012. The former Beanery coffee shop was transformed into Stevie's Unique Treats. The former Noble Romans Pizza was transformed into Zing Japanese Fusion. The Ironworks Commercial Building located at the intersection of Ironworks Drive and Mill Street, adjacent to Robert C. Beutter Riverfront Park, received its first tenants after years of vacancy. Umbaugh Financial Consultants and Afdent Family Dentistry both leased office space in this building in 2012.

Center for Hospice

Transforming the landscape of the downtown, and along the river, the Center for Hospice and Palliative Care started construction of their campus just east of Central Park in 2012. The plan includes the phased construction of a new hospice house, community bereavement center, palliative care center, and administrative/support services. The total quantity of new construction proposed by the Center for Hospice is approximately 40,000 square feet. The administrative portion is currently under construction and is scheduled to be complete and occupied by the summer of 2013. The remaining structures will be built as funding becomes available over time.



Site Plan of the Center for Hospice Campus- Riverwalk connection to Madison Street

Mishawaka Riverwalk Expansion

As part of the agreement with Center for Hospice, the Riverwalk will be extended from Central Park through to Madison Street in 2013. The City is also working with the Indiana Department of Natural Resources to improve the access and appearance of the fish ladder located adjacent to the downtown dam. As part of the renovation, a sculpture titled “Circle of Life” by local sculptor Robert Kuntz will be placed on the deck area adjacent to the ladder.

Given the high use of the Riverwalk and some of the incidental vandalism that has occurred in the Parks, in 2012 the Planning Department worked on the plans and specifications for a camera and call-box system that will place 27 surveillance cameras and a handful of call boxes along the Riverwalk. Mishawaka Utilities Electric Division installed the poles and provided electric service in 2012. We expect the cameras, including the software operating system, to be bid and installed in 2013.

Cedar St. Corridor

The City’s relocation of our Central Services Department from Cedar Street to the former Scott Brass building on Union Street makes a lot of sense and will provide for a better, more efficient delivery of services for the foreseeable future. Of course, at the same time this has created another challenge and opportunity for the City. The Cedar Street site, in addition to having a negative impact on adjacent residences because of the high intensity nature of the operation, has a number of environmental issues that need to be addressed

by the City. Our goal is to work toward cleaning the site and identifying a new end-use for the property that will ultimately be compatible with, and improve the surrounding area. The City was able to enter into a purchase agreement to buy a blighted building at 523 North Cedar Street. This purchase will allow for the demolition of this structure, and will likely change the use to residential, continuing to improve the Cedar Street corridor.



Mishawaka Main Junior High Apartments

As has been part of the State of the City for years, the conversion of the former Main Junior High School/Mishawaka Furniture store into senior apartments has been one of our recent major initiatives. In December of 2012 the occupancy permit was issued signifying that tenants can now occupy the building. Ziolkowski Construction from South Bend is completing punch list items and the resulting total construction cost for the project was 7.6 Million dollars. Roughly five million dollars of the cost was funded through tax credits and grants, with the remaining funding coming from the Northwest TIF district.

The rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of this historically significant building originally constructed in 1910 is now complete. This property was the site of the first Mishawaka High School, which was once located in the adjacent parking lot immediately to the north. This building was constructed as a replacement and was the second official high school for the City between 1910 and 1924.

Once the current high school was completed in 1924, this building served as “Mishawaka Main Junior High” for approximately 50 years until being sold to the Mishawaka Furniture Store in the 1970’s. The property was purchased by the City of Mishawaka in 2009 for this adaptive re-use project. The project was envisioned to complement the surrounding neighborhood by creating a residential use out of the then blighted commercial building.

This masonry prairie-style building has been a landmark in the downtown for over 100 years and now has a new life that will allow it to continue to be an important example of civic architecture in our community for the foreseeable future

Upon completion of the construction, the building was deeded to the Community Development Corporation of Mishawaka and is managed and operated by the Mishawaka Housing Authority.



The ribbon cutting of Main Junior High Apartments , December 2012

Shaping Mishawaka’s Future – Through the Delivery of Services

As I have reiterated on many occasions, I have always felt that Mishawaka does things a little differently than other communities. Being Mayor, I know that Mishawaka services are not only exceptional for a City of our size, but in many cases they are award-winning and are an example of how a City should be run. The following are some of the important statistics or milestones from 2012:

Fire Services

The importance of emergency services and fire protection are apparent on a personal level to every citizen served by an ambulance, when a quick response is made to a kitchen grease fire, or when a business owner is contacted about the false alarm that has occurred at their property. Thankfully, it is a rare occasion when an event happens that warrants region-wide attention, illustrating why it is necessary to spend millions of dollars on facilities, equipment, and training. On February 11, 2013, the Mishawaka Fire Department responded to a fire at the RMG Foundry (formerly Dodge Manufacturing) on Union Street. This was the largest fire in memory for veterans who have served more than thirty years in the Department. Mishawaka was assisted by South Bend, Penn Township, and Clay Township in responding to the event. Despite 30 mile per hour sustained winds, three-fourths of the 400,000 square foot complex was saved. Fighting the fire required over 3.5 million gallons of water. The approximately 100,000 square feet

of building that burned contained hundreds of boats and cars that were being stored in the former manufacturing facility. Thankfully, no one was injured.

Having been on scene myself and witnessing the response and efforts, I couldn't be more proud of the professionalism, courage, and dedication of our firefighters. I also want to thank our neighboring departments who provided mutual aid assistance.

As has been reported earlier, beginning in January of 2013 the Fire Department now operates ambulances at its Union Street, Normain Heights, and Douglas Road stations. This change furthers our goal of placing an ambulance in every station to improve emergency response time and increase the level of service. This is particularly important given that the total run volume for the Fire Department, including fire and EMS increased this year to 6,271 from 6,011 in 2011. This averages 522 runs per month or roughly 17 runs per day. Medical runs have a minimum of one hour turnaround time and are 83% of the total call volume. The total EMS runs in 2012 were 4,877, slightly higher than the 4,804 that occurred in 2011. Adding a third ambulance will allow us to decrease our dependence on adjacent cities or townships. Given our aging population, we expect the number of ambulance runs to continue to increase.

Sometimes the levels of service we provide are just estimated and left up for interpretation. Other times, they are measured and compared to other municipalities. In the Fall of 2012 the Fire Department received the results of the latest audit from the Insurance Services Office. This office sets insurance rates for homeowners and businesses alike. The results are used by the insurance industry to determine rates for policy holders. The survey takes into account several factors, including fire department response capabilities, water supply, dispatch capability, etc. The end result was an improvement in the City of Mishawaka's rating from 72.25% to 78.65%. We are continuously striving to improve our rating. We are one of 45 Class 3 rated cities in the State of Indiana. There is only one Class 2 city in the State, and an improvement of 1.35% will get us there.

Crime Statistics

Although crime is unacceptable at any level, it is a reality for every City. In the City of Mishawaka, our primary goal is to continue to decrease crime levels. I am pleased to report that in 2012 there was a drop in the number of robberies, burglaries, larcenies, and cases of arson from 2011. Unfortunately there were three murders in the City, and 21 cases of rape, both increases from last year. Violent crimes are particularly disturbing, but I am comforted by the excellent Police work that continues to be performed by our Department in partnership with other local law enforcement agencies. All three of the murders were solved. A good example of their work is the case of Lois Hickey. The 84 year old was murdered in her

I think the underlying message is a good one. If you commit a crime in Mishawaka, our local law enforcement will go to the other side of the world to find you

home on East Donaldson in December of 2011. In 2012, the man accused of the murder (a former neighbor), fled the country after being questioned by the Mishawaka Police Department. Since the United States did not have an extradition agreement with Sierra Leone, the prosecutor's office worked to extradite the suspect using a third party agreement with Great Britain. Ultimately he was located and was extradited from Sierra Leone, Africa and was booked into the St. Joseph County jail. Investigators said the key to solving this case was in DNA evidence. I think the underlying message is a good one. If you commit a crime in Mishawaka, our local law enforcement will go to the other side of the world to find you. In addition to our own Police Department, I want to extend my thanks to the St. Joseph County Prosecutor's Office for their exemplary efforts and cooperation.

Police Services

I think the average citizen probably couldn't make an educated guess on how many calls our police department receives. We received 41,962 police calls in 2012! The good news is that it is actually a decrease of over three thousand calls when compared to 2011. There are 105 Police Officers and 24 Civilian Support Staff in the Department. In addition to enforcing the law, protecting property and reducing civil disorder, our Police Department

We received 41,962 police calls in 2012! goes above and beyond, including the award winning *Click it or Ticket* program, as well as, the proactive education of our *D.A.R.E.* program. I am personally very proud of the high level of police service provided to our citizens on a daily basis. I would encourage you to read the Police Department's annual report that details some of the high profile cases that were solved in 2012. The City of Mishawaka is much safer as a result of their efforts!

Police Software

The Department has recently purchased a computer software system called CrimeNet.com. This new system will enable all department personnel to visually track crime on a timely basis as it occurs. Each individual officer will have access to crime maps, crime statistic graphs and data. This will enable them to chart the so called hot spots geographically and also the time of day and days of the week when crime events are most prevalent. There is also a community element attached to the new system where civilians can track crime in their own area or surrounding community. The department continues to work in our neighborhoods through the efforts of the Community Relations Unit and the Street Crimes Unit. This new software should allow the Mishawaka Police Department to do more proactive modeling, which in turn will help to prevent crime.

Cityworks

On April 1st, the City will be rolling out a much anticipated new IT initiative that has the potential to impact every department and revolutionize how the City manages its assets and initiates work orders. The software is called Cityworks. Cityworks will incorporate

our existing Geographic Information System (GIS). Our mapping system includes layers of our electric, water, sewer infrastructure, and countless other pieces of information that can be tied to addresses or locations.

With Cityworks, we will have the ability to submit and track our work order history from not only our infrastructure, but from any of the thousands of assets the city owns or maintains that is in our GIS database. Ninety-five percent of our work orders processed will be tied to our GIS map. Tying work orders to a map gives us the ability to see trouble spots, and where a lot of our efforts are focused. It makes it much easier to analyze data in a geographical way when you can see it, rather than just looking at it on tables full of data.

Cityworks will assist our staff in planning projects that involve multiple City Departments. Every Department will have access to the Cityworks system, and have the tools to know what each Department is planning, for any type of work, and on any given day. This will be a valuable communication tool to make our operation more seamless.

We believe that the real return on our investment will be once the system has been in place for awhile when we will be able to analyze every work order that is issued and then better track cost and efficiency. We will be able to monitor how many work orders are being processed at any time, and make sure they are being done on a timely basis.

Along with the work orders, Cityworks will give us the tools to receive and submit requests. These requests may come from residents calling about a pothole, or a report of a Code violation, or graffiti at a City park. All of our call-takers throughout the City can take the call and submit an electronic request to the specific Department. Once this process has been initiated, the Supervisors can issue the work order. The caller will have the option to leave an email address and receive notification that the request has been submitted. They will also receive a notification that their request has been completed. We want to make sure that the citizens of Mishawaka get great and timely service and this will help up in addressing their concerns. It will also help us be more conscious of doing it in a timely manner.

This type of system is typically found only in larger cities and I'm excited that Mishawaka will be able to reap the benefit of its installation

The request portion will also be used to communicate between our own Departments. Any employee that sees an issue that needs to be addressed, even if they're from another Department, can submit a request for service. With a request you can submit an actual X, Y coordinate of the location. This gives everyone total communication, and more eyes on the trouble spots.

We have a state-of-the-art GIS and now we'll have a work order management system that will be state-of-the-art. The system will give us the ability to more fully utilize the information that we are already collecting and placing it into one convenient and

accessible location. This type of system is typically found only in larger cities and I'm excited that Mishawaka will be able to reap the benefit of its installation. The final stages of the rollout in 2014 this software suite will allow for citizen web interaction with City departments.

Mishawaka Utilities IURC Exit

In early 2012 Mishawaka began evaluating the benefits of withdrawing from the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission (IURC) and its oversight of our Water and Electric Utility rate setting processes. Our evaluation revealed that operating under the jurisdiction of the IURC adds considerable time and expense to local efforts to adjust and re-structure rates. Withdrawal from IURC oversight would keep decisions on rates at the local level, subject to approval by the City Council. When we started the process we were committed to fully engaging the City Council and our rate payers. Multiple meetings were held to provide the council and citizens with sufficient information to make a well informed decision regarding withdrawal from IURC oversight. Our primary goal was to make sure we presented sufficient information so a well informed decision could be made. To that end, the City made a point to go above and beyond what was minimally required to better inform the public and interact with the public, who by enlarge had a lot of questions.

Following the public hearings, Council vote, and public comment period, our withdrawal from IURC jurisdiction for the Water Utility is now complete. We intend to submit new Water rates to the Utility Board and Common Council in early 2013. The Water rates will be lower than the original increase sought while the Utility was still under IURC jurisdiction. This reduced increase acknowledges the savings realized by not having to incur the added expense of going through the IURC approval process.

In regards to Electric, while our intentions were good in going through the same process as we did for water rates, we unexpectedly find ourselves still under the Commission's jurisdiction as the result of an honest mistake. The process we utilized to exit the IURC's jurisdiction applies to third class cities, but does not apply to second class cities for municipal electric utilities, of which there are three.

In this case, we feel that the statute is not consistent, or fair, to all second class cities. Our effort to remedy this situation is to request State legislative action in the form of a validation statute in the 2013 legislative session. We have requested the support and guidance of our local State Representatives including Dale DeVon to resolve this matter. When appropriate, we will request similar support and guidance from our local State Senators. If this validation statute is approved, both Electric and Water rates will be controlled at the local level.

Combined Sewer Overflows / Consent Decree Long Term Control Plan

The Mishawaka Wastewater Treatment Plant marked its 60th anniversary of operation on April 18, 2012. It is hard to imagine that only 60 years ago all the sewage from homes,

businesses, and industries flowed directly into the river without treatment. Things have certainly changed. Mishawaka today enjoys a modern, state-of-the-art treatment facility that is recognized as one of the best in the state. A river that was once used as a sewer is now a valuable asset to our community, fostering development in our Downtown.

Although the wastewater treatment plant has been upgraded and expanded to keep pace with growth in the community and ever more stringent environmental regulations, there are parts of the sewer system that date back to the early 1900's. These remaining older sewers carry both sanitary sewage and stormwater runoff in the same pipe and need to be addressed to minimize combined sewer overflows (CSOs). During heavy rainstorms, when the capacity of the sewer system and treatment plant is exceeded, combined sewer overflows can discharge a mixture of stormwater runoff and wastewater directly into the river without treatment. CSOs were constructed to prevent basement backups and street flooding. Mishawaka is one of 90 communities in Indiana with combined sewer overflows. There are around 850 CSO communities nationwide.

Final approval of Mishawaka's LTCP and signing of the consent decree is expected in 2013. The plan is estimated to cost between \$140 and \$160 million and take 20 years to fully complete. The decree will require that the LTCP be implemented according to schedule and that it meet the goal of zero overflows.

Code Enforcement

Continued implementation of our Code Enforcement Department's Top 100 Program is a reason why you won't see many substandard buildings in Mishawaka. This yearly initiative begins in the winter months of the previous year where code officers scour their areas in search of the houses, garages, or commercial buildings that need the most attention. In the following spring when the weather begins to warm up we begin contacting the property owners in question and point out the issues to them. In 2012 we were able to bring 91% of these structures into compliance which is fantastic! The Top 100 program has played a huge role in the great overall appearance of Mishawaka. Code is now in the seventh year of the Top 100 Program and over 600 sub-standard structures have been brought into compliance.

Sidewalks/ADA Transition Plan

As we reported last year, in 2011 the City of Mishawaka completed the self-evaluation of all City facilities outside of the public right-of-way (ROW), including programs and procedures, and prepared a Transition Plan that outlines the necessary steps to be fully compliant with the requirements of Title II of the ADA.

It is the goal of the City to make facilities for all services, programs and activities fully accessible within 30 years. However, this will be largely dependent on a number of economic factors and future changes to the ADA Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG) or other unforeseen requirements that would necessitate additional improvements to City facilities.

Throughout 2012, the City completed another part of the assessment, specifically the self-evaluation of the public right-of-way portion, including approximately 1,300 intersections, ranking condition and design of handicap ramps, and completed a separate self-evaluation and transition plan regarding the public right-of-way infrastructure. The 2012 Transition Plan for City infrastructure within the public right-of-way is now available for public comment. I would encourage all of those interested to review the evaluation and make comments. Hearing from those with problems or difficulties will be particularly helpful in identifying the highest priorities relative to funding.

The actual implementation schedule, budgeting, and prioritization is up to the administration and is likely to be impacted by complaints (specifically, impacted citizens with the greatest need), new regulations and requirements, and availability of funding. A draft report to the City Common Council will be presented for approval and adoption in March of 2013.

Conclusion – Thank You

Again, I want to thank all of Mishawaka for providing me the opportunity to serve. I continue to be humbled by the trust that has been placed in me and it continues to be the honor of my lifetime to serve the City I love and the citizens that I consider 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 improvements that we all can be proud of, seizing opportunities for today and for future generations, making our contribution to the City that strives to be the “best hometown in America”. May God continue to bless you and our great City of Mishawaka.

City of Mishawaka State of the City Address

Departmental Reports for 2012



