

Good morning!

It is a pleasure and honor to be here with all of you again this morning as we talk about the progress we continue to make for Clarksville. I know there are some members of the City Council here and I ask that they stand and be recognized.

I know there are also some Department Heads here and I'd like to ask them to stand and be recognized.

Experience has taught me that being Mayor requires a sometimes difficult balancing act. On one side, there are the needs of the City and all of its residents. As I've said before, there are services and programs that only government can realistically provide. On the other hand, we must continue to invest our time and the taxpayers' money in projects and programs that lay a solid foundation for growth and opportunity. These two factors are vitally and equally important. As you will see, we are working hard to give just the right amount of attention to both.

Many of our accomplishments over the past year meet both of these goals and, as you'll hear, the growth we are planning provides for continuing the excellent services we offer and builds the framework for a prosperous future.

For example, we held a ribbon-cutting ceremony last week for the District 1 Police Precinct in North Clarksville. Located very close to Minglewood Elementary School, the new Precinct is a state-of-the-art facility which houses office space, interview rooms, a fitness facility, conference rooms, and space for the equipment needed by all of the CPD personnel stationed there. This brand-new facility is the first in anyone's memory built specifically for use by CPD as a precinct. We are very excited

about this new precinct and we appreciate the partnership with Clarksville Montgomery County School System for the generous donation of the land for the building.

CPD continues to implement units for specific purposes throughout the community. The new Clergy Rapid Mobilization Team is working with area faith-based ministries to reach out to the entire community and create cohesive partnerships. The Gang Intelligence Unit works hard to properly document known gang members who are arrested and ensure that any possibility of sentencing enhancement is appropriately documented.

So what does all of this mean? Quite simply, the CPD is the best-trained and most professional and successful police department in the State of Tennessee and, as I like to say, in the entire country. This isn't just my opinion. The lowest crime stats in the state and, more importantly, the high rate of solved crimes confirm this fact.

Clarksville Fire Rescue also celebrated a ribbon cutting recently. Fire station 12 at the Industrial Park is now fully staffed and operational. Not only will this station service the businesses located in the Industrial Park but they will also provide service to calls from residents in that part of the City. In addition to this high-tech station, there are two brand new fire trucks, a massive 107 foot aerial ladder truck and a new crash rescue truck located there, all of which were recently purchased as part of our ongoing budget priority for public safety needs.

In addition to improvements at other stations around the City, the site preparation work has been completed and construction will soon be underway at Fire Station 11, located on Tylertown Road at Exit 1. The addition of Fire Stations 11 and 12 mean that

the response time for Clarksville Fire and Rescue to all parts of Clarksville will be improved, especially in those areas around Exit 1 and the Industrial Park.

In what may be the most exciting news for Clarksville homeowners, in 2015, Clarksville Fire Rescue received an ISO rating of 2 with a 1 being the highest possible rating. There is only one system in the state of Tennessee that has received a 1. We hope to be the only other one very soon and with the addition of Fire Stations 11 and 12, we believe we have a very good chance of accomplishing that goal. The reason this is important for Clarksville homeowners is that the ISO rating has direct impact on the insurance rates homeowners pay. This rating improvement will be a significant cost savings to homeowners.

The new resources we were able to provide for the police and fire departments are obviously an example of our providing the necessities for a growing city. They are also examples of planning for growth and, yes, even economic development. Any company looking to invest in any community is going to be concerned with the effectiveness of the public safety departments. We can truthfully tell anyone and everyone that Clarksville has the very best.

Another example of the connection between a strong infrastructure and economic development is the work done by our team at Clarksville Gas & Water. We were all very excited with the announcement that Google is coming to the Industrial Park. I want to thank Pat Hickey and the rest of our team for the work they did on the development agreement, making it possible for Google to have access to the water and other utility resources it needs for the data center.

We are also moving along on the redundant gas pipeline. Currently, field survey work is being done and necessary easements are being created and acquired. We anticipate that the construction work bid will be issue in late May or early June.

Finally, the City's Gas & Water department received a score of 99 on their sanitary survey by the State this year. This is the 5<sup>th</sup> year in a row they've scored a 99 or 100 and no other system of our size has ever accomplished that.

The Clarksville Department of Electricity is making tremendous strides in bringing the best technology to our community. Through its redesigned and more customer friendly website to the improvements made for reliability and the installation of the fiber network, CDE continues to provide exceptional service for Clarksville residents.

Additionally, CDE plays an important role in economic development through its high-speed Internet, video and telephone services and by offering gigabit Internet speeds. Clarksville is one of only seven communities in the State of Tennessee offering fiber to both businesses and homes.

The Street Department has made significant contributions to making life easier for residents, tourists and businesses.

If you have driven down Wilma Rudolph Boulevard or Dunbar Cave Road in the last couple of months, you've probably noticed some roadwork going on at that intersection. The work to alleviate the traffic at that intersection is complete except for some minor cleanup and I can tell you from personal experience that it has improved the congestion in that area. The much-needed work at the intersection of Needmore

and Trenton Roads is in progress and we hope to have that completed in the spring of this year.

I am also very excited about the partnership we have with the State for improvements on Warfield Boulevard. We have a signed contract outlining the work to be done and the estimated costs. Based on the contract terms, the City will contribute \$1.5 million and the State will contribute more than \$15 million for this work. Three of the four phases of the project are already fully funded and we hope to begin this project as soon as the Transportation Department commits to the construction funding this year. Commissioner Schroer and I have been working diligently on this project and we are all cautiously optimistic that we will soon be able to move forward. This is the most recent in a wave of projects made possible through our partnership with TDOT.

As you may remember, this is the first budget year in a very long time we have been able to dedicate funding to build new sidewalks in the city in accordance with the sidewalk matrix ordinance. New sidewalks have already been installed along Spring Street, 1st Street, and McClure Street downtown. The installation of these sidewalks is also a step in connecting downtown with Riverside Drive to create a more walkable, cohesive downtown district.

I would be remiss if I didn't also mention the Street Department's new salt shed. Located in the north part of Clarksville, it will dramatically reduce the response time for preparing our roads and addressing any hazardous travel conditions throughout the City because the salt trucks won't have to return to downtown to reload their supplies.

When people or businesses are considering establishing their place in Clarksville, they can be assured that they will receive the very best in public safety services, utilities, excellent schools and higher education opportunities and safe roads. It only makes sense that they also want to know that Clarksville is a place where investing and doing business with the government is seamless. To that end, our partnership with the Regional Planning Commission has resulted in two significant initiatives to facilitate downtown development.

The land-use zoning district has been amended to enable apartments and townhouses to be developed in addition to traditional office and retail spaces.

The second significant initiative is the creation of the Common Design Review Board. This Board, which was created from recommendations by a Task Force I appointed, will streamline and eliminate confusion between the previous design approval organizations and will encourage more development. The new board was created through the consolidation of the Historic Zoning Commission, the Two Rivers Company Design Review Board and the Madison St. Corridor Design Review Board. The process for review and approval has also been refined so that many actions may now be approved at the staff level, including signing, landscaping, painting and basic maintenance. Not only will this new board significantly reduce the approval for routine property improvements by existing property owners and it will provide a level and predictable playing field for new investment in the downtown Clarksville area.

The Finance Department is responsible, of course, for making sure that the City is in the best possible financial shape. This year, the City of Clarksville's Finance

Department received the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for the fiscal year ending June 2014. According to the GFOA, this is the highest achievable form of recognition in the area of governmental accounting and financial reporting, and its attainment represents a significant accomplishment by a government and its management.

Thanks to our outstanding fiscal management, our bond ratings have not been adjusted when many others have been down rated. We are still rated AA and the City's outlook is stable. Our fund balance is maintained over the 20% requirement and we ended fiscal year 2015 with a fund balance of 29.7% of budgeted expenditures. We are committed to maximizing and looking for new revenue streams, our budget projections look to the future to plan for growth of our City.

As you may know, we have a new person on the Finance team who is responsible for applying for grants. We've had a great deal of success with our grant program. In 2014, of the 11 grants we applied for, 7 were funded. That's a 64% success rate and it equaled over 3 million dollars for the City. For 2015, we have increased the number of grants applied for and many of them are still pending. I view these grants not only as a way to maximize the taxpayers' money but as a way to enhance their lives and the community.

One of the main recipients of federal and state grant money over the past year has been Clarksville Transit. CTS continues to provide transportation options throughout the City for citizens of all ages and abilities. This year, we received almost 6

million dollars in federal and state grants to purchase new hybrid buses and lift-equipped paratransit vehicles.

These grant funds are essential as almost 726,000 people rode CTS buses last year and with the new Seniors Ride Free program our senior ridership has increased by 90%. The very popular commuter service has also grown and there are now 3 buses each morning and afternoon that help people commute between Clarksville and Nashville. In the last year, more than 55,000 people accessed this service.

I am very happy to announce that the work on the Riverbank Stabilization project is about to get underway. Weather permitting, of course, you will see the actual work begin shortly and we anticipate it to be completed by end of summer. I believe this is critical for Riverside Drive and continued development in that area. Again, I want to thank the Corps of Engineers for their hard work and the multi-million dollar grant that is making that work possible.

Maximizing our resources and making the most of every dollar funded by taxpayers is also possible by working together. This has been a year of Departmental cooperation and collaboration. Our Department Heads have proven time and again that they are willing to help whenever and wherever they can.

This year enhancements were made to the playground at Edith Pettus Park as the result of a collaborative effort between the Office of Housing and Community Development and the Parks and Recreation Department.

As another example, the Street Department has played a very important role in helping to expand our greenway system. And, in case you haven't checked it out lately,

I encourage you to visit the greenway. In recognition of the Heritage Park Greenway Connection, which connects Heritage Park to the 101<sup>st</sup> pedestrian overpass and provides the ability to travel almost 11 miles in one direction, the City received a Four Star Award from the Tennessee Recreation and Parks Association.

The City, through the Parks and Recreation Department, also partners with community partners to expand the learning and healthy lifestyle options throughout the City. Outdoor fitness equipment has been installed at the Mary's Oak Trailhead thanks to a project with students from Clarksville Academy. We anticipate the new splash pad and inclusive playground to be ready to go by summer at Heritage Park. The Clarksville Rotary Clubs were instrumental in bringing this project to fruition. Orgain Supply, renowned local artist Mike Andrews and local high-school students worked together to present the City with its newest public art addition, "Forged in Fire," located along the Upland Trail.

Tomorrow we will hold a ribbon cutting for the newest option, B-Cycles. These bicycles, which can be rented for use, will start with two kiosks at McGregor and Liberty Park. As the program succeeds, we will certainly consider adding kiosks throughout the City. The technology is easy to use and we believe this is just one more excellent opportunity for residents and visitors alike to enjoy Clarksville.

I've talked a lot about partnerships and collaboration and one of the most long-lasting relationships the City of Clarksville has is with our military family at Fort Campbell. Bill Harpel, our Veterans and Military Liaison, is working on several projects directed at providing assistance to our military families.

Along with the Office of Housing and Community Development, Bill is working with a group of organizations working to decrease, and hopefully eliminate, homelessness among our Veteran population.

The Shadow Project bridges the gap between military and civilian employment in our community. This project offers transitioning service members the opportunity to shadow and learn from experts in a career field they plan to pursue. By working with members of my administration, service members have the opportunity to receive on-the-job training, networking and soft skills training to better prepare themselves for employment in the civilian sector.

Our commitment to helping our Veterans also extends to our own hiring practices. My administration is committed to offering opportunities to our Veterans whenever possible and we are finding incredibly gifted employees in the ranks of those retiring from service. I want to introduce you to one of our newest team members.

Jenna Perminas, if you would please stand up? Jenna is a former soldier and her husband is still serving in the Army. You may recognize her if you watch the Tennessee Titans play as she and her husband were honored during one of the Titans games. They are one of the few couples in the country who have both received a Purple Heart. She has now joined our Human Resources Department and we are so proud to have her. Thank you and your husband for your service.

I must say that it's virtually impossible to tell you of every success, every accomplishment or every award our employees are given. What I can tell you, what I can assure you is, that everything we undertake is measured against the two sides of

the balancing act I talked about earlier. Every program or initiative that we begin receives a “yes” answer to one of these questions: is this necessary for the citizens of Clarksville? Will the citizens of Clarksville support this as a means to build a strong foundation for future prosperity? I cannot justify spending other people’s money without knowing the best, most efficient and most effective way to move forward.

Before I conclude this morning, I want to bring you up-to-date on a couple of the major projects we continue to actively work on. You may have heard a bit lately about the proposed Athletic Complex. The experts who are conducting our feasibility study to help us determine the best location have recommended geotechnical and appraisal work on the two sites they are looking at: Tinytown Road and Rossvie Road. Now, some of you may be asking why do the work on both locations? To me, it’s the governmental equivalent of measure twice, cut once. I don’t believe that we are doing the taxpayers any favors by pre-determining which location is best without expert involvement. And I think it would be incredibly unwise to spend a lot of money, taxpayer money, on one site only to discover that it is not feasible. Their initial work brought us two these to possible sites. The work we are doing now will narrow those possibilities down to the best site.

We have used the same process for determining whether the Clarksville Performing Arts and Conference Center is feasible. We are now in the last phase of the work being conducted by our consultants on this study as well. As you probably know, their initial cost estimate is around 38 million dollars. They are now working on a plan to help us determine how to fund that amount and they are considering all potential avenues, not just borrowing the entire amount, to pay for the Center. I have always said

that this must be a public-private endeavor if it is to work and I believe that is still true. This last phase of the study will determine whether that private interest and investment is a real possibility.

You may have also noticed that we are installing LED lights along Peachers Mill Road, 101<sup>st</sup> Parkway, Wilma Rudolph, Highway 48/13 and various downtown streets. We've already replaced 2,100 of the 2,580 lights scheduled for replacement. This is an important program for us as we estimate the annual savings will be \$ 174,000 and the total project cost will be paid back at the end of 7 years.

If you've been on the Upland Trail lately behind the CPD Headquarters, you've seen the work we are doing to extend the trail into downtown. This is another way we are bridging the accessibility between downtown and Riverside Drive.

Exciting news this week when we announced that you will soon be able to renew or replace your driver's license or state i.d. card in City Hall. All of the technology needed – the computers, connection to the Department of Safety and Homeland Security, the paper we use for temporary documents – will be provided by the State. According to the State's estimations of the number of transactions we expect to handle, we will receive about \$30,500 in revenue the first year. The state is also proposing a revised fee which would increase our revenue stream to over \$75,000 if approved by the Legislature. Importantly, we are going to do this work in partnership with the State without any changes to our physical or employee structure.

I also want to invite you to access the City's website often and it's easy to do. When we redesigned the site a few years ago, we intentionally created it to be fully

optimized for mobile devices. What that means is that you can easily install a shortcut on your phones screen that looks, and responds, much like an app. The difference is that everything on our website, including live streaming of city council meetings and the ability to report a pothole or pay your taxes, can be done right from your phone. To get the simple directions to install the shortcut, log on to the website at [cityofclarksville.com](http://cityofclarksville.com) and look for the link on the left side of the home page.

I have given you a lot of information in a short time. Some things have been left out because of time. But, I hope you now realize how much we have been able to accomplish because we worked together.

When I was growing up, I used to listen to a great American philosopher on the radio. Some of you might have listened to him, too. His name was Casey Kasem and he hosted the American Top 40 every week. At the end of his show, he always encouraged his listeners to “keep your feet on the ground and keep reaching for the stars.”

That’s what we do on a government level. We provide the essentials, the things only governments can do like good, safe roads and well-trained public safety personnel as we also encourage our citizens to grow and prosper. We provide reliable utilities and invite new businesses to invest in our community. We hold each other accountable as we partner together to plan and build for the future and reach for the stars.

Thank you for being here today. I appreciate all you do for the City of Clarksville.