

CITY OF WARSAW 2015 STATE OF THE CITY

INTRO:

Good Evening

- On behalf of Clerk Treasurer Lynne Christiansen, Council Members Jeff Grose, Diane Quance, Elaine Call, Charlie Smith, Cindy dobbins, Mike Klondaris and Jerry Frush
- On behalf of the fine employees of the City of Warsaw
- ON behalf of our community partners,
- BUT MOST OF ALL ON BEHALF TO THE CITIZENS OF THE CITY OF WARSAW

I am pleased to present the 2015 State of the City of Warsaw.

We've got a lot to talk about!

As I begin the 4th year of my first term, it has been an honor to work with our elected officials as we have been guided by our strategic plan for growth mgmt., business retention, business attraction, downtown, and neighborhood revitalization.

We also understood that developing the strategy must be a consensus of our community, nurtured by transparency.

CONSENSUS involves gathering public opinion and making a decision that represents the will of the entire community.

(Pause)

Important ordinance changes that have been proposed are thoroughly debated at multiple public meetings (as many as necessary) over a period of several to many months.

“Patience in decision making allows both sides to understand each other and come to mutual consensus.”

As elected officials, we focus on what we feel is in the best interest of all 14,042 residents of our city.

Our sign ordinance, parking ordinance, comprehensive plan, and chicken ordinance are all examples of past issues that took between 6 months and 12 months to come together.

We feel like we got them right.

In 2015 we will work through that same process as we develop community consensus.

Our neighborhood preservation ordinance will be among those issues that the council will work hard to get right.

Another equally important focus of good local government is the importance of transparency. As I think all of your local elected officials will agree / the process can get quite involved/,

Yet/ the benefits of the free exchange of information are vital to the public process and fundamental to this administration.

We will continue to use print, digital media, signage, public forums, and any other means available to make information available that will facilitate the public process.

Our doors are always open and I am but a click away at mayor@warsaw.in.gov...

Meeting agendas, notes, and links to other critical information are available at www.warsaw.in.gov

The past few years it has become increasingly apparent that communities across our state are seeing their costs of providing services skyrocket yet the revenue to support those services continues to diminish and not keep up.

A Comprehensive Financial Plan was undertaken in 2014... it verified that annual increases in expenses are not being covered by likewise increases in revenues ...Revenue growth is essentially flat and the result is that reserves must be utilized. While our city's financial position is strong, changes must occur to insure our future financial security.

We know our options

- Seek opportunities for increased cost efficiencies
- Leverage funds,

- Find other sources of revenue
- Cut services.

No one wants to cut services.

Trash must be picked up, roads must be repaired and maintained, safety personnel must be equipped and prepared to handle emergencies, parks must be maintained for the benefit of our citizens, our airport must be able to accommodate safe travel for our corporate partners, Wastewater must be treated and storm water must be conveyed.

In 2014, our departments have continued to look for those cost efficiencies as they provide services to the public.

For example, in 2014, the street department implemented new methods of pavement restoration. Saving the the traditional high cost resurfacing, pavement restoration gives a 3–5 year extension to the life of the road/ and at a reduced cost that allows more road miles to be addressed.

We have no choice. Pavement restoration techniques are universally accepted and deliver quality surfaces, giving us those cost efficiencies we need.

In 2015, we will be updating our curbside pickup services with automated trucks and single bins to allow more efficiency that will improve service,

and save the city hundreds of thousands of dollars. Again/moving ahead with greater cost efficiency

PAUSE

- THE Creation of the storm-water utility
- AND the exposure of the abuse of contracted pipe relining were two significant events in 2014 that underscored the need for a full time municipal engineer...

The city made the decision to convert our part time contracted engineer to a full time employee.

We expect major cost savings to be realized as he:

- Engineers projects in-house, saving thousands of dollars in contract fees
- Provide oversight and inspection giving the city better checks and balances
- Coordinate projects amongst departments to allow shared savings, the unnecessary costs of duplication, and less “down-time for citizens”

In 2015, the local portion of the Market Street reconstruction will be one such project.

- Storm water utility will coordinate with the city engineer to construct and reconstruct new and existing drainage facilities as

the road is reconstructed. Drainage and flooding problems of a very longstanding nature will be addressed

- Building and plan dept. will oversee the bike/pedestrian portion of the project.
- The street department will do as much in house work as possible in preparation for the contracted construction phase of the project, and the
- City engineer and city planner will inspect and oversee the construction phase of the project.

The Market Street Reconstruction is a two phase project that when completed, will improve safety for motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians as they make their way to our downtown, into Winona Lake, to our city parks, local schools, and retail serving the neighborhood.

Major surface drainage improvements will eliminate storm water problems that have been around for a long time. New trees will replace aging trees that infiltrate storm and sewer lines, sidewalks and roadways or may hinder the expansion of traffic and parking lanes and sidewalk/pedestrian path construction. It will be a busy summer on Market Street.

In 2014 we sought and were awarded 1.8 million dollar federal road project funds for the second phase of the Market street project.

Engineering will begin in 2015.

In 2015 we will also be continuing preliminary work on the \$3M Husky Trail reconstruction project using \$2.4 M of federal funds awarded in 2013 (Leveraged funds)

The YMCA relocation and Parkview Hospital construction will necessitate resurfacing of Mariner Drive that will also occur in 2015.

Joint project with the county 300 North Bridge widening

We have also opened discussion with our county officials on the future of US 30 through our community. With the state showing interest in making that road more limited access, careful local planning is vital to meet community needs as INDOTS much larger plan unfolds.

In late 2013, we sought improvements on our north south RAILROAD crossings. We were awarded just under a million dollars to add crossing gates and improvements on Winona, Market, and Pope Streets.

Two weeks ago we were notified that INDOT and Norfolk Southern want to expand the project to include Center, Main, and Fort Wayne crossings and potentially Arthur and Lyon. While this has delayed construction, the advantage will be a more comprehensive, better-coordinated system that will drastically improve safety and shorten delay times.

- Engineering will begin this spring.
- It will be fully funded by INDOT Section 130 funds (alternate source of funding)

More Important, That discussion opened the door with INDOT and Railroad officials to initiate planning discussion on a grade separation (tunnel or overpass) in the central city to alleviate the isolation caused by a slow or stopped train. This has been a very longstanding problem of traffic flow and emergency access in our community that must be addressed.

We have initiated discussion with NS and INDOT to set up a site visit this spring to evaluate need hopefully initiate engineering and planning of this critical project.

In 2014 eight local government and public organizations pledged overwhelming support for the concept of high-speed rail in our community. A coalition of communities from Columbus, Ohio to Chicago are all engaged in the growth of local support to fund the Tier one environmental study that is an important first step of this project. 2015 should bring some news on that front.

2014 saw the installation of new City Limits and gateway signage. We also put up new signage to assist our new downtown parking ordinance changes that seem to be working quite well

Seeking to connect our downtown with Center Lake along Buffalo Street was project proposed by the Hyatt Palma Downtown Study.

A physical and economic link to downtown would include Center Lake as part of our downtown.

With the city's acquisition of the old water pumping buildings and property on North Buffalo Street,

We are in the preliminary planning process to see if the area could support a lakefront redevelopment area. This could include some limited commercial activity with denser urban housing.

2014 saw the establishment of the City of Warsaw Storm-water Utility.

A long list of citywide drainage projects begs attention. Our Storm water coordinator and city engineer have prioritized the list to balance available funds for easier fix/less expensive projects with more involved/longer term concerns.

At the top list for 2015 is

- East Market Street Improvements and

- Contracting a study of drainage problems on the south side of town.

The Wastewater Utility has maintained excellence with safe operational practices resulting in efficient “violation free” service throughout 2014, as it continues to process increasing volumes as our plant approaches 90% capacity...

Managing that growth will be addressed in the first quarter of 2015 with a plan for expansion to meet our communities ever growing needs.

Building and Plan was very busy in 2014...

- Oversaw Phase 1 of the Warsaw Tech Park construction with substantial completion of both the road extension into the park and the 62,000 sq. foot Shell Building
- Market Street Local Phase engineering
- Market Street Federal Phase application and award
- Completed the Warsaw Comprehensive Plan
- Completed the Market Street Neighborhood Plan
- Husky Trail Pre-construction engineering, environ, ROW
- 557 permits 316 violation letters (citizen complaints) 36 code hearings

For 2015

- Neighborhood Preservation and Rental Registration/
- Tech Park Complete Phase 1/ribbon cutting this spring/
- Phase 2 engineering lift station
- Bid for Husky trail
- Evaluate Wastewater Capacity issues

Parks Department

- Keeping up with equipment and facilities repair and replacement from park comp plan
- 2015 will bring more cost saving associated with installation of LED lighting, Nye Youth cabin improvements. 10 of 12 improvement projects will be done in house to save as well
- RIDE WALK Committee completed a collaborative project on Winona Avenue with the Town of Winona Lake...
 - The walking path was marked and widened along with cycling paths which now allows access from Smith Street and the Fairgrounds in 2014

- In 2015 will use all allocated funds (100% of it from cigarette tax money) along with donated funds to build the Market Street bike pedestrian path...We are thankful to the K21 Foundation, Orthoworx, Dane and Mary Louise Miller, and the KC VELO CLUB foundation for their generous support of this important trail project

Downtown Warsaw has never seen anything like the Walk-N Wander sculpture exhibit

It began with the June First Friday honoring the WW2 survivors from our county on a beautiful evening resplendent with military honors and patriotic music...W&W brought thousands of curiosity seekers downtown to view 16 lifelike sculptures throughout the downtown... in early September they were shipped home, leaving a lot of new friends behind

The future of public art has never looked better as the committee, started by Michelle Bormet, looks to new ideas to enhance our community!

The skies of our community were also alive this summer as the second annual Air Show drew some would estimate upwards of 10,000 spectators... the event was expanded to two days and under the

direction of airman Al Hoover and with a special guest appearance by Dr. Paul Grossnickle, the activities included biplanes, candy bombers, fighter planes, helicopters, hot air balloons, you name it ... it was a great family event.

The 2015 show is scheduled for August and is in the works!

First Fridays and Farmers market will continue as regular fare downtown in 2015.

- The new WCDC/Kosciusko Chamber of Commerce collaboration will focus on retail and residential opportunities through expanded marketing efforts
- Our downtown continues to attract retail, professional, and food and beverage uses
- Our downtown focus seeks to create more opportunities to enhance residential space.

(Pause)

Turning to the WWTFD... 2014 saw the cities ISO fire rating confirmed again at a 4... this keeps our community protected by a fire service in the top 10% of the nation. Most notably due to the hard work of our Chief and his staff of dedicated professional...

The addition of Wayne Township with the formation of the fire territory created an inevitable need for a third station. The site has been chosen and improved to facilitate the new station.

Chief Brubaker and the Fire Territory Board are working hard to develop a plan for a third emergency services station to be built on the south edge of town...

In 2014 our law enforcement continued to fight the problem of drug abuse in our community at full throttle. We doubled our staff of drug investigators in 2014. Meth continues to dominate their work but resurgence in heroin incidents has our investigators dealing with a new problem

I'd like to pass along one final thank you to Michelle Bormet, who retired this year who served the city well as Admin to three mayors...

Slide "Warsaw will be a vibrant, compassionate, & sustainable community that embraces its rich heritage and the unique and innovative nature of its citizens and businesses, as well as its distinctive natural amenities and community spirit, resulting in successful community development, a diverse economy, and an exceptional quality of life."

In closing, I will simply say that the city of Warsaw with that planning and vision continues to meet the challenges that face cities and towns all across America.

(discuss pop growth 3.5% since 2010 census higher than anyone)

“No one is exempt from change.

We manage change with respect to our heritage”

I am also thankful for the resources this community offers and the will to move forward.

Most important, however, our community utilizes those resources/ and desire

- With conservative foresight
- And strength it draws from community collaboration.

No mayor could ask for anything more than that!

Thank you Warsaw and goodnight.