

FINAL  
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State of the City Address  
Acting President of the Board, Ward 4 Alderman  
Marc Sportsman

SPEECH DATE  
March 8, 2022 – 12:00 PM  
Platte County Community Center – YMCA

Good afternoon everyone. Welcome to the third annual State of the City Address. Thank you to the Parkville Chamber of Commerce for hosting this excellent luncheon and giving me an opportunity to update you on the state of the City of Parkville.

It has been a difficult road getting through the COVID pandemic, our work and personal lives have experienced many losses. Our prayers go out to those whose lives have been so severely impacted. Our community is strong and supportive. We have weathered this storm together, and we will continue to get through these – and future – challenges together.

We will begin this address by taking a brief look back at some of the improvements we have made over the last few years. I will also report on our progress in 2021, and preview some of the exciting things to come in 2022.

On behalf of Mayor Johnston, I want to join her in thanking all of the people who serve the Parkville community. From individuals to large groups, our citizen volunteers play a large role helping and serving others. Our faith based organizations provide a spiritual uplift to people's lives and help meet people's needs in many different ways. Our community partners such as Park University, business organizations, and other entities, work together to improve Parkville. Teachers, front line public safety workers, and public service workers all provide vital services that keep our city moving. The list is endless and they are all important and play a big part in what makes Parkville great. On behalf of the citizens of Parkville, I thank you.

We would also like to thank the citizens of Parkville. You continue to support this city government. The focus on the betterment of our community has, and always will be, at the forefront of every decision, project, need, conversation, and action made by the Mayor and Board of Aldermen. We greatly appreciate this support, and hope we have delivered the level of services and quality improvements you desire and deserve.

A theme over the last few years has been change. We have experienced a lot of change and growth throughout the City. Some major highlights over the years include:

- Residential developments have increased the City's population. The city's population was around 4,000 in 2000. As of the 2020 Census, we now have more than 7,000 residents, and that does not include the Creekside Development. If we count that new development there, the population is likely already over 8,000 and growing quickly.
- We endured a couple of floods in the parks, as we always do, but we recovered.

- In transportation – MODOT, Platte County, and the City completed a major road project that greatly improved our transportation network. The Highway 45 widening project further complements our community’s easy access to all areas of the metro region. These large-scale projects don’t happen by themselves, so I want to thank all of the incredible people who played a part in seeing these projects come to fruition.
- The Passage of Proposition P – Parks Sales Tax – created a major source of funding for future park improvements, as outlined in the Parks Master Plan.
- Numerous park improvements have already occurred, including a new bridge in English Landing Park, the completion of the Riverfront trail to Riverside, Pickle ball courts, new park shelters, renovated restrooms, shade shelters in the Dog Park, and improvements to some of the city’s smaller parks.
- Commercial development and downtown redevelopment, including new street lights and way finding signage, and the Chapter 353 Redevelopment program have encouraged significant investment across the city. The Chapter 353 program is considered very successful in the region and other cities have adopted something similar and found great success emulating Parkville’s program.

These are just some of the improvements that have been implemented after first being discussed and envisioned during community planning efforts. We will continue to build on this success and collaboration in the coming years. And, if you haven’t heard, we continue to receive numerous community recognitions, including:

- Downtown Parkville being named as a Great Neighborhood by the American Planning Association
- Main Street being named the Most Charming Main Street in Missouri by USA Today
- 99.7 The Point named Parkville the best “Burb” in the metro region in 2017
- #1 top ‘most charming, beautiful city to visit’ in Missouri by Only in your State.com

These are just some of the highlights from our community over the past several years that I am very proud to share with you today. As I now turn to the current state of Parkville, let me take a few minutes to look back on the past year.

2021 was very busy for city government, and we continued the momentum and progress of previous years toward our strategic goals and vision of an exceptional quality of life in Parkville.

We made significant improvements to our parks, streets, sanitary sewer, and storm sewers. This work is part of a long-term strategy to maintain and upgrade the city's infrastructure.

Our Police Department continues to do an outstanding job of community policing and protecting our citizens. Last year, the Board prioritized the recruitment and retention of police officers. Unfortunately, we live in a time where it has been increasingly difficult to attract people to the law enforcement profession. As the department deals with new growth and change in the community, we are committed to giving our Police Department the resources they need.

Our Public Works crews maintain our streets, parks, and other critical infrastructure, and provide our citizens with the strong level of services they desire and deserve. One excellent example of this is the regular, positive comments we receive about our snow removal operations.

Like our Police Department, growth in the community has placed increased demands on staff and resources, and the city must look for ways to increase funding for staffing and services to maintain our current staffing and keep up with inflation at a time when companies are giving raises to employees. If we don't keep pace we will lose our dedicated and extremely competent staff to others.

We also have a great group of professionals working in City Hall. These dedicated public servants ensure the city continues to operate effectively and efficiently. I must admit, we were disappointed last year when voters did not support the Use Tax referendum, as it would have created funding that would help our city government meet our staffing and service needs for police, streets, and public works maintenance. Please know, the city will continue to have a dialogue with our citizens about the importance of these needs, and why additional funding is necessary. We heard you loud and clear in 2021! We will do better to outline some of the infrastructure needs in our community and hope to bring this question back to voters in the future. This could take the form of a use tax or a public safety sales tax, but the goal will always be to create a better Parkville that serves our entire community.

To recap, here are some of the highlights from 2021:

- First, as the Board of Aldermen has done over the past several years, we conducted an annual Strategic Planning Workshop to establish priorities as well as short-and long-term goals for the community. The city's Vision Statement, critical success factors, and action plans sets forth our goals and priorities for the year.

- Mayor Johnston initiated the Good Citizen Award Program, recognizing Parkville residents and spotlighting the good deeds of these individuals. The Aldermen, led by the mayor, felt it was important to recognize the important contributions of these individuals and thank them for their outstanding commitment to our community. In 2021, we recognized the following people:
  - Cem Yildirim – Volunteer trash pickup Riss Lake/Rt. 9/HWY 45
  - David Windsor – Neighborhood trash pickup Riss Lake
  - Dan Day – Nature Sanctuary Volunteer
  - Bruce Duffin & Pat Harris – Nature Sanctuary Volunteers
  - Ken Parrish, Stacey Slover, Melissa Walsh – Parkville Turkey Trot Organizers
  - Bianca Miller – Park Hill School District Counselor
  
- Also, one of the important tasks this past year was revising the city’s ward map to take into account all of the growth that has occurred since the last census. Parkville has grown by more than 40% since 2010, and continues to grow at a brisk pace. A balanced ward map is important to ensure all parts of the community have equal representation on the Board of Aldermen. We were able to redraw ward boundaries and now have a new Ward that serves the city’s portion of Thousand Oaks and all of the new Creekside development out west.
- Another important initiative of the Board this past year was the establishment of the Diversity and Inclusion Commission. The Commission is a standing Commission of the Board, similar to the Planning Commission, and the Community Land and Recreation Board. We are all very excited about the work of this Commission as our community continues to evolve to tell its complete history, and work toward greater equity, inclusion, and diversity for all members of our community.
- In early 2021, we adopted the Parkville 2040 Master Plan. The Plan went through an extensive public engagement process in 2020, and the adoption now provides a vision, framework, and strategy for community growth and improvement over the coming decades.

- Speaking of development, we again broke records related to building activities. This past year saw the highest number of residential permits issued – 105 single family homes, which smashed the previous record – from 2018 – of 93. We also had 24 new townhome permits issues in 2021. With all of the growth planned in Parkville, this trend is likely to continue in 2022 and beyond.
- Over the past few years, we have spoken a lot about Creekside. This \$380 million mixed use development is rapidly being built out and, in addition to becoming the home of our newest neighborhoods, is becoming an economic engine bringing investment and new families into our community. We welcome all of them! In addition, several new Creekside commercial projects completed and opened over the past year including:
  - ✓ Burger King
  - ✓ the Station II Convenience Store
  - ✓ Johnny’s Tavern Restaurant
  - ✓ Anytime Fitness
  - ✓ Ten and Two Coffee – who just had their ribbon cutting with the Chamber last week!
  - ✓ There is also a Taco Bell under construction
- The residential areas continue to be built up, and last year the Park Hill School District purchased a tract of land in Creekside for a future school that will help the school district manage the growth of its student population. As I said, there is much more growth to come, yet while we talk about new growth, redevelopment has not and will not be deferred.
- Chapter 353 Downtown Redevelopment program continues to be successful and has spurred investment in downtown properties. Last year the 115 N. Main Street project, that includes the Baker’s Table Bakery, PopCulture Gourmet Popcorn and Ice Cream, and Off the Hook BBQ, was completed and opened for business.
- Projects have been approved for 112 Main Street, which will improve the building where Café Des Amis is located, and 207 Main Street which will include a long-needed investment in the building that has been underutilized for many years.

- We are well underway on the Route 9 Corridor Project, a multi-phased plan that will transform the entire length of Route 9 from Highway 45 to the Riverside city limits. This plan includes much-improved traffic flows, turn lanes, traffic signals, sidewalks and trails, and a themed streetscape. Last year, the first leg of the project was completed, which included the 6<sup>th</sup> Street project.
- The Proposition P Parks Sales Tax, approved by voters in 2019, continues to provide critical funding for parks projects that are already making a positive impact on our community. Last year's projects included:
  - Four new pickleball courts in English Landing Park
  - Completion of a new basketball court in English Landing Park
  - Completion of Watkins Park Phase One Improvements, including a new shelter, improved sidewalks, landscaping, and erosion control
  - Completion of new Waddell Bridge lighting in English Landing Park
  - Design completion for our new entry, locational, and directional signage for the riverfront parks
  - And, public discussions are ongoing on how to address the need for new amenities and improvements in our parks.

It has been a busy year and many of the seeds planted in past years continue to sprout. I sincerely appreciate the hard work of the Board and City staff in continuing to make strong progress toward accomplishing the goals of our community.

As we embark on 2022, there are many exciting projects planned for the community. I would like to preview some of the things to look forward to:

- First, citizens will see a change at City Hall. The Mayor, myself and 2 members of the Board of Aldermen, who have the longest tenure in city government, are not seeking re-election. Combined with Mayor Johnston's tenure, there is more than 69 years of city experience leaving the board in April.
- We are also seeing a change in the position of City Administrator. Joe Parente retired on March 1<sup>st</sup> and Alexa Barton has come on board as the new City Administrator. Joe and Alexa are both experienced professionals in local government, and we are very fortunate to have had Joe manage our operations for the last 5 years. There is no question that everything Joe has contributed to our City, will be missed. The good

news is that we are equally fortunate to have Alexa serve as our next City Administrator. She brings more than 20 years of experience and successful City management with her to City Hall. The staff at City Hall have all been key contributors to much of the progress made in our community over the past many years. They provide steady guidance and solid leadership for our community. We thank them for their service and commitment to the citizens of Parkville.

- By early summer, we will see the completion of the Route 9, 45 Highway to Lakeview Drive Project. We will also initiate the next phase of the project, the section to the south of the 6<sup>th</sup> Street project, through the downtown triangle, to the Fire Station. Grant applications and preliminary design work begin this year, as we hope to secure funding commitments from our state and federal partners.
- More park projects including the completion of Pocket Park Safety Improvements, Watkins Park Phase 2, the improved roundabout landscaping project in English Landing Park, and, hopefully, a plan to address future needs, whether that is for youth sports fields or improved wetlands in the parks, these projects will be sensitive to the needs of the residents and the environment. As all of these park projects evolve, we expect to have a new Park Director help lead these endeavors. This new position should be in place by this summer.
- There are two new fast-food restaurants planned on Highway 45 with a Dairy Queen west of the Phillips 66 Station, a Scooters Coffee in the Commons, and we continue to talk to representatives of Whataburger to come to Highway 45 in Apex Plaza.
- It is expected to be a busy year in Parkville as we see more development and retail growth at Creekside, with a Bubbles Liquor Store, a new Pickle ball themed restaurant, and a new Wells Bank joining the new Taco Bell.
- The Creekside Baseball Park continues to be a major driver of business investment and bringing people into our community. Last year, close to a million people went through the park gates. The first Creekside Hotel is expected to open, with plans for additional hotels to be added in the coming years to accommodate visitors to our community.
- We will also see the completion of the Creekside Town Center buildings off of Brink Meyer Road, with retail, luxury residential, and open space amenities.

- And we are excited about the completion of the Capital Electric headquarters – hundreds of jobs based out of the new facility.
- KC Cattle Company’s headquarters will be built on Highway 45 and will include a specialty meat and foods retail store, a packaging plant for its distribution business – there are plans for a future restaurant, too!
- We also have new residential developments planned for the community.
  - The Village on the Green development, along the south side of Highway 45 adjacent to the National’s Deuce Golf Course, will fill in undeveloped land with luxury attached and cluster residential units.
  - The Platte 38 residential development off of Crooked Road will be adjacent to the National, and provide a similar housing product that exists in the Limestone area of the National.
  - Lastly, The Sanctuary at Riss Lake will offer luxury residential that will include single-family, attached units that are in high demand in our region and our community.

These are just some of the things to look forward to in 2022, and we are excited for the progress to continue! This growth demonstrates what we already know – Parkville is a highly desirable community to live, work, play, eat & shop!

As I conclude this State of the City address, I would like to again say a few words about what makes Parkville great. First and foremost, it is the people of Parkville that make our community such a wonderful community. It is our home and we are proud to live here. We live in outstanding neighborhoods, support our local businesses, and send our children to our wonderful schools. Our residents participate in the community and are part of the fabric that makes Parkville what it is.

Parkville is a beautiful community. We all know about the natural vistas and the bluffs, heavily wooded areas, a charming downtown, a historic University campus, our outstanding parks and nature sanctuaries, and a scenic riverfront. The quality of life is very good here.

Our business community is strong and we will continue to support them. We also thank the many community partners and organizations who share a common goal of making Parkville great.

From those of us leaving office, we would like to thank our citizens for your continued support. Parkville is a wonderful community, with wonderful people, and we are proud to serve you.

As I wrap up the State of the City Address, I would like to say the state of the city continues to be strong. I hope you are excited about some of the big plans we have for 2022, and I hope you are pleased with the progress made last year, as well as the progress made over the last few years.

In closing, I would like to thank the Parkville Area Chamber of Commerce for hosting this State of the City Address and everything you do for our business community and your support for community organizations.

I again thank Mayor Johnston, my fellow Aldermen and city staff for their hard work and commitment to making Parkville a better place. We are committed to providing quality services for our residents, and continue to seek ways to improve Parkville every day. The former Prime Minister of Great Britain Margaret Thatcher once said, "In politics, if you want anything said, ask a man. If you want anything done, ask a woman. Nan Johnston has worked tirelessly over the past few years as an Alderman and your Mayor. Because of her dedication, work ethic and sacrifice, much was accomplished and Parkville is a better place because of it. Thank you Mayor Johnston for all you have done for our community.

And thank you all for listening. Thank you!