

THE CITY OF ZACHARY – MAYOR’S ANNUAL MESSAGE

STATE OF THE CITY 2020

Zachary has grown exponentially over the last ten years, primarily because of its highly performing public school system, low crime and a community comprised of 18,000 citizens with strong family and traditional core values. In 2019, new construction permits increased to 200 residential home permits in our city. Since taking office as Mayor in 2011, over 1,500 homes have been built as well as numerous commercial businesses who now call Zachary home. The numbers are in and Zachary’s economy continues to thrive.

As a new decade is ushered in, 2020 promises to undertake a massive downtown revitalization effort in the City of Zachary. The City of Zachary has contracted with Downtown Strategies, a company specializing in helping boost economic vitality in downtowns throughout the Southeast. More and more attention is being paid to downtowns across the country as citizens seek to preserve the historic quality of their cities and choose to “shop, play and live” in downtown areas. This trend has emerged in many communities, with efforts yielding incredible returns. Downtown revitalization is an investment for your community. A thriving downtown enhances tourism, quality of life, and bolsters your community’s culture and values.

The City recently prioritized community events in the Downtown area and now operates a successful weekly Farmer’s Market with over 50 vendors and live music at the Gazebo, Movies on the Lawn, and children’s events held at the cities’ new greenspace, HugYourPeople Community Park. There is increasing interest from community members to spend more time downtown with their families, and new retailers. Restaurants have opened their doors offering entertainment options to fulfill the experience they’re seeking. The energy and activities continue to rise with new and innovative ideas and events in our city. With its new vision, Downtown Zachary has the potential to be a true destination for residents and visitors.

Plans are underway to redevelop Main Street near downtown allowing traffic calming measures at main intersections encouraging walkability. This is an integral part of keeping Main Street thriving, by improving street connectivity and allowing everyone to reach community focal points whether by bike, foot or public transportation. A project is now underway to install marked crosswalks near City Hall, creating a pedestrian-friendly downtown.

You will soon see the City incorporate enhanced streetscape elements into redesigned boulevard and other areas of Downtown to improve pedestrian experience. The City has partnered with Entergy and will soon replace 20 streetlights with decorative, shorter lighting in downtown from Hwy. 19 to E. Central Avenue, as part of Phase I. New improved street lighting is a key organizing streetscape element that defines nighttime visual environment in urban settings. The new ornate light posts will also create a defining visual characteristic during daylight hours.

On the minds of many in our community is where development happens, and how it will appear. Whether one views growth as good or not, we all agree that it must be well-planned. In order for this to happen, the City has been in the process of rewriting the UDC, Unified Development Code, which governs planning and zoning matters. Several public meetings have been held for citizen input. Villavaso and Associates, a professional planning firm has been assisting the city

with changes to the outdated document. Once completed, the new Unified Development Code will modernize existing regulations, including zoning and subdivision regulations, along with other desired city regulations, such as design guidelines, sign guidelines, and floodplain and stormwater management.

The City of Zachary began the construction of a 500,000 gallon water tower near the Zachary Youth Park on Mount Pleasant Road. This new fixture will support demands from the city's ever-growing population and supplement the demands placed on the existing water system. This will be the third tower that the City of Zachary has. The additional water tower will increase water pressure, which in turn should enhance the city's fire rating. The project cost \$1.6 million and was funded by state capital outlay funds.

The City of Zachary recognizes the need to reinvest in the community and has invested over 4 million dollars in sewer improvements since 2017. The sewer improvements have allowed Zachary's managed growth and smart community development.

With public safety a top priority, The Zachary City Council approved the construction of a new fire substation on a 2-acre site on Main Street west of Plank Road at the cost of 2 million dollars. The station is currently under construction and should be completed in 2020. The substation is ideal for improving response times in growth areas of the city and will aide in maintaining the existing fire rating. In addition, the council has moved forward with approving the purchase of land for a new police headquarters. The 21-acre parcel is located on Montegudo Boulevard. The final cost will be approximately \$525,000. Funding for the construction of the new building will be determined at a later date.

In January, the City of Zachary welcomed District 2 Council Member, Donald Morgan, who filled the seat of Brandon Noel who moved out of his district. He will serve until the seat is filled in the November 2020 election.

The City is fortunate to have a wonderful team of leadership officials who continue to make steady progress in our city. It has been my pleasure working alongside each of these members who have a passion for this community, as do I.

David Amrhein, Mayor, City of Zachary