



*Louisville State of the City Address*  
Mayor Craig Greenberg  
February 1, 2024

Thank you!

Welcome everyone, thanks to those watching online. Thank you to everyone with the Rotary Club of Louisville. And thanks to the wonderful performers from the West End School.

Today, I stand here more grateful than ever to be serving as your mayor.

And I'm more excited than ever about what's happening in our city, about the work we're getting done – and where we're going.

Because one thing I've learned as Mayor is that together, we can accomplish pretty much anything. And, together, we're making progress on some of our biggest challenges and creating opportunities for the future.

And the biggest reason for that is because people all across this city – people like you – dedicate their time, energy, imagination and more to make Louisville the amazing place that we love. I'm also honored to serve alongside an amazing team of dedicated public servants.

Thanks to my colleagues serving as Deputy Mayors and other members of my administration. Thanks to Metro Council and the nearly 6,000 public servants working hard every day for our city.

We are all working hard every day to make Louisville a safer, stronger and healthier city. A city that is growing, and moving in a new direction towards a brighter future.

We're working with urgency. And we're delivering results.

I'm glad to report that gun violence is down. Homicides are down. Shootings are down. Carjackings are down. I'm encouraged by the trends we're seeing, but there is much more work to be done.

Because when someone is killed by a gun, the impact travels much farther than just the path of that bullet. There's physical trauma, emotional trauma, families torn apart, and communities left hurt and mourning.

To save lives and put a stop to violence, we have to have a police department that is trusted, transparent and well trained. That means community policing where officers work with the community to prevent violent crimes. And it means that we provide our police with tools and resources that are best in class.

And that's why I'm so proud to be here today at the Summit Wellness Center.

When I took office a little over a year ago, this center was an innovative idea that needed a champion in Metro Government. I saw this as an opportunity to change the culture of city government from "no" to "yes."

This was essential for us to change the culture of our police department and make clear that my administration will embrace challenges. And we will measure success not just by studies done or plans made, but by projects completed. So together, with LMPD, the Louisville Police Foundation, donors, and other partners, we got the job done.

Now, this center is up and running – and serving as a national model. And that assessment actually comes from the U.S. Department of Justice – who we know will tell us what they really think.

Kharlton Moore is director of the DOJ's Bureau of Justice Assistance. Here's what he said about this facility.

*Video transcription: "This is incredible. It's incredible. And the thing I think is most important – it's not just the facility, that it's going to focus on the physical health, the mental health, the financial well-being. It's that-it is foundational to the organization. And this is the direction that agencies all across the country need to go. You have officers who feel like their organization cares about them, that's incredibly important. They'll be healthier mentally. They'll be healthier physically. And that will put them in a very different headspace as they go about doing incredibly difficult work."*

You heard it! Louisville is leading the way nationally.

And that is my vision for every aspect of the Louisville Metro Police Department.

For our most seasoned officers and our newest recruits. And in fact, I've gotten to meet some of our new LMPD officers. I've even joined them for training sessions. And a few of them are with us today.

They just graduated and took their oaths on December 15.

Please help me welcome officers, Dominique Durrett, Noah Lawless, and Antonio Rodriguez. I want to thank each of you – and everyone who helps protect our city – for your commitment to Louisville.

And we are looking for people to follow their example. If you want to make a difference, join LMPD – be a part of the solution. There is also another LMPD officer I'd like to thank for her dedication to our city, Chief Jacquelyn Gwinn-Villaroel. I named her permanent Chief of Police because she demonstrated – and continues to demonstrate – that she is the right person for this job.

Under her leadership, we've established the Non-Fatal Shooting Squad. And in partnership with MetroSafe and Seven Counties Services, we expanded the Crisis Call Diversion Program, which allows social workers to respond to certain 911 calls to deliver the specific care that's needed.

Last year, this team responded to nearly 2,000 calls. And that freed up our police officers for an additional 2,000 hours they could focus on preventing violent crime.

And just this week, we announced the program is expanding once again, now including hours between 10 p.m. to 2 a.m.

That's more people getting the type of help they need, and more officers focused on keeping our community safe. We've also expanded our Group Violence Intervention program, or GVI.

LMPD identifies people who are at high risk of being involved in violence as a shooter, a victim or both. We connect them with education, employment opportunities and other resources.

We lay out the legal consequences they're facing if they don't change course. They hear from people who've lost a loved one to gun violence.

Or who've been on a dangerous path but changed their own lives and now help others. People like my friend Kim Moore.

She leads Joshua Community Connectors. She works with GVI and shares her own powerful story of redemption and transformation. And she inspires a whole lot of people, including me. Kim, thank you.

And as we work to build a safer city, we're also taking urgent steps to make it stronger.

That means driving investments and creating good-paying jobs and career paths. And making sure these opportunities reach every single neighborhood, and every single person – inside the Watterson and outside the Watterson.

We made terrific progress in 2023. We attracted more than \$1 billion in new investment last year, with more than 2,300 jobs announced. This included the largest investment in West Louisville in more than 20 years!

Stellar Snacks made a \$137 million commitment and is creating more than 350 full-time jobs.

Investments like these don't just happen. They're the product of hard work and a proactive strategy.

When I became Mayor, it had been almost a decade since Louisville had put together a comprehensive economic strategy. And we needed a new one.

So we listened to 80 stakeholders and members of the public from all across Louisville. Folks from business and labor, education, nonprofits and government officials.

Their feedback helped us create *Growing Louisville Together* – the economic development action plan we released in December.

These are the 4-priorities that will guide our efforts going forward:  
Investing in places and people.

Supporting entrepreneurs and building access to capital.

And telling our city's story – to people here and across the world – about who we are and what we offer.

We're implementing actions from the Growing Louisville Together plan now.

Including working with the governor and the state legislature to improve state incentives to increase capital investment. And we're being strategic about growing our economy the right way.

That means looking at every decision through the lenses of equity and sustainability.

Last year, I elevated the city's Office of Equity and Office of Sustainability into the Mayor's Office itself, because these are priorities that must factor into all our decisions.

On the equity side, we have to do more to support all of our entrepreneurs, and in particular our entrepreneurs of color.

Today is the first day of Black History Month, and we know that too often in our history, government and other institutions deliberately blocked the process of Black Louisvillians gaining access to capital to start a business or even buy a home.

Redlining has been banned, but we still feel its impact every day.

Today, our city has a Black population of about 23 percent. But only 2.4 percent of our business owners are Black. That's unacceptable.

We need to support and encourage more entrepreneurs like Chef Ashlee Northington, of Happy Belly Bistro – who catered our delicious lunch today.

Ashlee, thank you!

And with sustainability, we reject the outdated notion that it's somehow necessary to choose between a healthy economy and a healthy environment. We can have both.

That's why Louisville Metro Government is committed to investing in clean, renewable energy to meet our goal of 100 percent clean electricity by 2030.

And this year, we're focusing on developing green businesses, green jobs, and green finance. Let's make Louisville a destination of choice for climate innovators everywhere.

We already have a great example of climate innovation at the Christina Lee Brown Envirome Institute at the University of Louisville.

The institute received national recognition this week in the Washington Post for its groundbreaking work with the Green Heart Project. Congratulations!

Let's build on that success and create a healthier economy and a healthier environment at the same time.

Of course, the overall work of becoming a healthier city takes many forms. And all this work overlaps. Take parks, for example.

I love our parks. As a dad, a runner and a Louisvillian, I know how important our parks are. Our families rely on them. And our economy does too.

Today, most people can live and work anywhere they want. And they're looking for community assets like great parks. Places where their kids can enjoy a playground.

Where they can kayak down a creek, bike on amazing trails and just get outside and connect with nature and with each other. Parks improve our health, our quality of life and support our public safety work. Our community centers, which are operated by Louisville Parks, provide safe, supervised places for young people to go after school.

That's why we're investing in these spaces. We're delivering more free wi-fi to our parks. Investing in more lights and security cameras.

Just last year we even opened a new park, named for a Louisville hero. The Alberta O. Jones Park in the California neighborhood.

It's an incredible park. The kind of investment this neighborhood deserved, and now our families can enjoy. I am grateful to our partners in the Parks Alliance of Louisville for making that possible. I'm also grateful to Olmsted Parks Conservancy for leading the way on the Elliot Park transformation. And I'm incredibly grateful to every one of our Louisville Parks and Recreation team members for all they do to care for these spaces we love and depend on.

And because our parks mean so much to Louisville, when the opportunity came up to redirect \$20 million of American Rescue Plan funding, I proposed to Metro Council that money go toward our parks, community centers and libraries. And Metro Council agreed.

Soon we will:

Re-open the Parkland library – after nearly 40 years.

Re-open the renovated Portland Library.

And open the brand-new Fern Creek library!

We're also doing renovations at our Main Library.

And next week, we'll begin the renovation of the Algonquin Park swimming pool – and our goal is to make it the finest public pool in the city.

And we expect all this work and more to be done in the next 18 months!

I'm really looking forward to all of these projects.

Creating and maintaining high-quality community spaces is essential for people in every part of our city. But, of course, in order for folks to really be part of our city, we need to make sure they have a place to call home.

To do that, we need quality and affordable housing in every neighborhood – not just other peoples' neighborhoods. Every neighborhood in Louisville.

Housing costs have been rising faster than wages, and that's a serious concern. No one should have to pay more than 30 percent of their income to have a stable, secure place to call home. Housing is the foundation for families. It affects our ability to attract and keep talent. And it impacts public safety, education and more.

That's why we worked with community partners to create the My Louisville Home plan.

This is an ambitious and first-of-its-kind strategy to create and preserve 15,000 affordable homes across Louisville.

We're taking action – like working to make the Affordable Housing Trust Fund a permanent revolving loan fund.

We'll continue working with the state legislature and Metro Council on necessary updates to state laws and zoning ordinances.

And our work to create more affordable housing also supports the work we're doing to address homelessness. We're making progress there, as well.

Our Community Care Campus is taking shape. This campus is another innovative plan.

It will provide transitional shelter, connection to community services, and more, with a focus on families experiencing homelessness.

Volunteers of America will be our operating partner in the Community Care Campus, and we expect construction to begin later this year and open the doors in 2025.

And if we can accelerate that timeline – or any timeline – we will.

We are moving with urgency to deliver for the people of Louisville in the biggest and most meaningful ways.

And one of the efforts I'm most excited about will take a lot of time, resources and energy – still, it's absolutely worth it. Because the work we're doing in this area will create a brighter future for our city, boost our economy and strengthen our workforce.

It will also benefit public safety, our education system and support our kids. We can do all this by providing free, high-quality pre-K for every 3- and 4-year-old in Louisville.

Research shows that children who attend high-quality preschool are more likely to graduate from high school, earn more money and live longer, healthier lives.

They are also 70 percent less likely to be arrested for violent crimes.

Expanding pre-K strengthens our economy by making it easier for parents of children in preschool to rejoin our workforce.

To make all this happen, our new Office of Philanthropy has been working with local experts in childhood education: Our Early Learning Action Group.

We'll announce the first steps in our long-term plan to achieve this goal in the next few weeks. And I'm excited because, even though I've only been in office for a year, sometimes people already ask me, "What do you want your legacy to be?"

That answer is easy – even though it's something that won't happen for 15 or 20 years. That's when I envision the first group of students who all started off in our free pre-K program will graduate from high school.

And I expect them to be the highest-achieving graduating class in the history of our city.

At least – until the next year’s class graduates. And the next. And the next.

That’s the legacy I want to create for the people of our city.

That’s what universal pre-K can do.

And when we make that happen – one reason will be because the members of the Mayor’s Early Learning Action Group stepped up and volunteered their time and energy.

Just like the stakeholders who helped us develop the Growing Louisville Together economic plan.

Just like the hundreds of people who serve on our boards and commissions.

One of the ways we’re blessed is that so many people in Louisville really love Louisville. And believe in it.

And will work together to make it an even better place to call home. Like you all.

I want to thank each and every one of you and every volunteer in our city for your devotion to our city. And I want to give a special shout-out and thank-you to the person, I confess, is my favorite volunteer, my wife, Rachel.

And thanks to Rachel for launching Y.A.L.L. – Youth Ambassadors Leading Louisville – which provides volunteer opportunities for high school students at our city-sponsored events.

I know there are a lot of people around the city who are asking right now, “How can I help?”

We hear you. And we’ve made it simple to take that first step.

In partnership with Metro United Way, today, we are launching an online portal where you can sign up for volunteer opportunities throughout the city all year long.

It’s at [LouisvilleKy.gov/Volunteer](http://LouisvilleKy.gov/Volunteer). Please, check out this portal. We need you.

We need your time and energy. Your experience and perspective.

So – again – join us. Be a part of the solution.

We have a big, ambitious agenda for every part of Louisville. And with your help, we can do all that and more.

We’re investing in parks, libraries, housing, infrastructure and more from Fairdale to Eastwood, from Okolona to Clifton, from Fern Creek to Shawnee and everywhere in between – including



the neighborhood that connects every part of our city, because it's the heart of our city, and that's downtown.

Folks, our downtown is beautiful, vibrant and full of life. We've had openings of new hotels, entertainment venues and restaurants in the last year. Visitors come through day after day and have a great experience.

And this will be another great year for tourism, maybe the best ever with Derby 150, the PGA Championship, Bourbon and Beyond, Louder Than Life and much more.

And of course, the downtown economy benefits everyone in Louisville.

That's why we're expanding Waterfront Park.

Why we've invested in fixing streetlights and cleaning up streets and sidewalks.

We've hired more Downtown Ambassadors.

We also strongly support the University of Louisville's \$280 million request for state funding for its new Health Sciences Simulation and Collaboration Hub.

This is a fantastic project that will help us transform the LouMed district into an engine for job creation, talent attraction, workforce development and more.

Just yesterday, we kicked off an exciting project that reimagines 4<sup>th</sup> Street, from Main to Liberty. And we have big plans for the Belvedere.

Because the Belvedere could be so much more. I want to create an iconic, world-class public space right on the river. A destination that attracts people year-round – people who live in Louisville and people from all over the world.

We're working with an international design firm called Heatherwick. You may have seen some of their work in cities around the world. So look at those images and think about creating something powerful and bold and iconic. A symbol of Louisville.

Something that represents our city's new direction.

As we move forward, let's continue to talk and listen to each other.

And together, we will continue to get the world's attention for all the right reasons.

Friends, let's think big. Let's be bold. Let's take some risks.

The state of Louisville is strong – let's make it stronger, and safer and healthier for everyone in this city we all love.

Thank you all.

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