

2019 fayetteville state of the city address – draft 2

Good evening citizens of our wonderful city of Fayetteville, Georgia.

It is an honor to greet you on behalf of a cohesive city council and city staff in the spirit of unity, love and peace.

As mayor of our great city, and the one you have entrusted to help guide our city during a period of unprecedented growth, I am proud to give this third State of the City address.

Greetings to those who have joined us here at Fayetteville City Hall this evening, and greetings to you who are joining us through Facebook LIVE, or watching by internet video. Whichever way you have chosen to engage with us tonight, we appreciate your interest in the City of Fayetteville.

I am very proud tonight to report that the state of the city is excellent.

By the end of 2018, the City of Fayetteville started improving the city's infrastructure by using the one-penny sales tax to design a new wastewater treatment plant.

This will ensure current residents experience reliable sewer service while providing the city with additional capacity to handle future development.

Using the same SPLOST funds, we began the design process of our new Fire Station #93, which will serve the city's growing west side, and we purchased the first of several new fire trucks and police vehicles that will benefit better public safety service delivery in our community.

Our police officers are now using upgraded body cameras and in-car cameras along with other state-of-the-art crime investigation equipment to further protect our citizens.

By the close of 2018, the City of Fayetteville improved neighborhood and police relations by expanding the work of our relatively new police CARE Unit. The acronym CARE stands for Community Activity, Resource & Education.

Our community policing efforts were enhanced tremendously this past year through dozens of public events, school visits, neighborhood watch meetings and so much more.

We improved communicating to our citizens by stepping up our social media and website engagement.

We improved our relationship with citizens by hosting town hall meetings, conducting surveys and holding other forums to hear directly from the residents.

Throughout 2018, we maintained an efficient and effective government, first by listening to you, the citizen of Fayetteville.

We listened to you when you showed up to town hall meetings.

We listened to you when you made comments at city council and planning meetings.

We listened to you when you called, e-mailed, completed a survey, posted a comment on social media or maybe even dropped by our offices for a visit.

We listened to you, and on behalf of the City, I can't thank you enough for the invaluable feedback and comments we have received over the past year.

I hope you will continue to advise us, to stand up and speak to us, and let us know your thoughts as we move forward.

The City of Fayetteville is growing, and as we grow, we will need open dialogue and communication so that every voice is heard and every possible need is met. We work for you. That's why we're here.

Development is coming to the city, however, we want quality development.

We want projects that benefit the city and help us move toward a future that ensures the viability of the city for generations to come.

We need to manage this development, and we appreciate the input of our citizens as we reach this goal.

We continued to improve efficiency and effectiveness in government by launching a program in 2018 to digitize every paper record being stored at city hall and our other city offices. We have a way to go, but with the help of our staff and several student interns, we made great headway on this project in 2018.

We improved government efficiency by launching new staff management and leadership training, by enhancing our cross-training program, and by realigning salaries and benefits to a competitive level that will help us attract and retain talented professionals to run city operations on a day-to-day basis.

We have continued to improve customer service in all areas of city operations.

I applaud our city manager, Mr. Ray Gibson, for taking the lead in encouraging our own city employees, who I believe were already performing well, to take customer service to the next level.

To enhance the city's customer service, in 2018 we launched performance management programs for our employees, we established goal-setting and tracking systems, and we studied ways to improve our community development processes.

We launched financial transparency initiatives, much of which you will see come to fruition in 2019.

We made significant progress in the areas of web site and social media engagement in 2018, and I assure you we are only getting started with these valuable forms of communication.

As we move into the future, you will experience a more frequently updated city website, you will find more city information on social media, and you will be able to see more of it live as it is happening, just like this first-ever State of the City address being broadcast on Facebook LIVE.

In 2018, we added 12 new firefighter positions and five new police officer positions to the budget, and we filled those positions, in order to ensure your safety and peace of mind.

By the close of 2018, the City of Fayetteville invested in transportation improvements by repaving 2.4 miles of much needed residential streets.

We are working with the county to develop a master path plan that will connect our neighborhoods and help bring a new vibrancy to living, working and playing in our city.

We also hired an engineering firm to study the city's roadway traffic flow to help us determine future ways to alleviate congestion.

As our city grows, we recognize that we must be intentional and proactive in managing the growth that is happening, whether we like it or not. We have committed ourselves to ensuring smart growth that gives rise to walkability, vibrancy, which are key elements of a successful city.

In 2017, we refined and publicized the vision we had for our great city, but a vision can only become reality with action.

We now want to capitalize on our assets and make Fayetteville a model city for progressive development. We want to be intentional with development policies that will stimulate pride in our city. This begins with welcoming developers who want to be long term and integral partners in our community.

We want to effectively guide our city through a period of progressive and sustainable managed growth.

The state of our city is excellent!

We are seeking to ensure that the children of tomorrow will not “ask about what we said but benefit more from what we did.”

Again, in 2017 you the Fayetteville citizens approved a one-cent special local option sales tax and along with the approved 1.75 millage rate increase, we now have the funds and resources to improve areas that need improvement.

Our most exciting venture is the plan for a new city center complex that will not only provide a much needed city hall, but also a city center that will provide amenities for the community’s use and enjoyment.

In 2018, we continued cooperation, coordination, and support of the creative mixed-use development known as Pinewood Forest.

In 2018, there was groundbreaking for the expansion of the Georgia Military College campus.

We broke ground on the Cool Runnings refrigeration manufacturing headquarters, which will be located on Highway 85 North.

The Heartis senior living center opened and now has senior independent, assisted, and memory care living facilities.

The 62-year and older Hearthside housing apartments for seniors are nearing completion and should be opened in the spring of 2019.

The foundation is being laid for the mixed-use retail and housing community Hwy. 85.

The City staff has begun a complete rewrite of our Unified Development Ordinances that will give clear direction of the type of construction we want in the city and will ensure it aligns with our Future Land Use Plan.

We recently completed a revision of our City's Comprehensive Plan that involved input from more than 550 citizens who told us that they wanted a vibrant, walkable, engaging downtown.

In 2019, we intend to expand citizen engagement in some decision-making opportunities by developing steering committees.

We are continuing to promote pride in our city by renewed focus on city cleanliness and beautification. We solicit greater support from local businesses and citizens in helping "Keep Fayetteville Clean".

We seek to make the vision of Fayetteville becoming a premiere city a short-term reality.

We seek to be a city where citizens are willing to trust and work with their elected officials and city staff to create a new productive and exciting future for Fayetteville.

We seek to serve as a unified city council with a philosophy of effectively managing the population growth while improving the quality of life.

We want to create an atmosphere where every citizen and every business can thrive and be successful.

We have visited nearby cities that have accomplished great things in their downtown redevelopment, and although we can't nor want to emulate nor mimic what they have accomplished, we see opportunities to borrow "best practices" as we seek to revitalize our downtown.

We have learned that the heart of any city is the downtown, especially when it contributes to the quality of life for its citizens.

As we seek to achieve this major objective, we hope to create community cohesion through transparency and citizen engagement.

We must seek to balance the various needs and desires of the community while applying a creative approach to the housing, recreation, and entertainment needs of our citizens.

We hope to provide and create a range of housing choices because we do not deal with a one-size-fits-all housing need.

We must have continuity of purpose in doing what is best to move our city forward.

We must make decisions based upon what is best for the majority of our community.

We hope to gain the citizen support in building a city where we treasure the past but not allow it to limit our future.

We want to become a city where we not only embrace our diversity, but where we also effectively use it as a foundation to build a community where everyone who wants to contribute positively to our growth and success is welcomed.

Although we know the adage that says “you can’t please all the people all the time” is a truism, this council continues to work diligently and cooperatively to do what is best for our city.

Our priorities are (1) focus on public safety, (2) improve quality of life, and (3) to attract businesses that will create middle to upper income jobs.

We will continue working with our stakeholders such as the Fayette Chamber of Commerce, the Fayette County Development Authority, Piedmont Fayette Hospital, the Fayette County Board of Education, and

other local and regional organizations and businesses as we seek to maintain high standards of living and property value for all citizens.

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for participating in this third annual Fayetteville State of the City address, and thank you again for the privilege of allowing me serving as your mayor.

On behalf of the Fayetteville City Council and the city staff, thank you for trusting us to lead your government.

May God continue to bless Fayetteville, our state, and our nation,

Thank you!