

It is truly a pleasure to stand before you today in our new city hall, a symbol of progress and a testament to the bright future that lies ahead for Murray. Before we explore the state of our city, let me take a moment to reflect on the joy of the recent holiday season. Did you all enjoy the spectacular lighting display that decorated our city? It's moments like these that remind us of the warmth and unity that make Murray such a special place.

Today, I stand before you to reflect on the state of our city, acknowledging the progress we've made, the challenges we face, and the exciting vision we have for the future.

Before I dive into the heart of my address, let's take a moment to express gratitude and recognition. To the City Council, Department Heads, the Judge, our dedicated employees, and you - members of various Boards and Commissions. Your commitment to Murray is the driving force behind our success. Winston Churchill wisely said, "We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give," and your contributions shape the life of our community. Thank you.

Development

As we embrace a new year, Murray is evolving in ways both familiar and not so familiar. Murray is undergoing a remarkable change with multiple development projects that are reshaping the landscape of our

community. From Modern Display to Mercantile Towns to Murray Heights, these developments not only provide varied housing options but also contribute to the economic vitality that makes Murray thrive.

The RC Willey site, known as Mercantile Towns, is set to introduce 109 townhomes, providing new residential options for our growing population. The redevelopment of the old Highland Boy smelter site on Bullion Street is diversifying the housing market with 20 single-family homes and 54 townhomes, adding both variety and character to the area.

The vacant Bonneyview School site is undergoing a conversion with the development of 285 apartments, catering to the evolving housing needs of our community.

Meanwhile, The Vine is now leasing 130 apartments, offering modern living spaces for those seeking a dynamic urban lifestyle.

The former Kmart property is set to undergo a significant change into a residential haven, boasting 421 apartments when fully developed. Similarly, The Lofts 48 is evolving into a thriving residential community with 371 apartments, contributing to the vibrant tapestry of our city. The west side of Murray along 5300 South is witnessing the construction of 98 townhomes, further expanding the range of housing options in our community.

Most notably, these projects are not only residential but also incorporate mixed-use elements, hinting at a future where commercial spaces will serve the needs of the new residents, creating a balanced and dynamic living environment for all.

The introduction of new development marks a pivotal chapter in the revitalization of Murray. New buildings replace underutilized properties and aging, unsightly buildings, breathing fresh vitality into a once-neglected space. The transformative endeavor not only addresses the blight of neglected structures but also optimizes land use, turning previously underused areas into thriving, purposeful spaces.

An exciting development is on the horizon for the old Murray City Hall site, as we embark on a project that will breathe new life into this important space. In place of the former City Hall, our vision encompasses a modern and dynamic development that will include state-of-the-art medical office buildings, complemented by attractive townhomes that will blend aesthetics with functionality. The inclusion of diverse restaurants will create a vibrant culinary hub, fostering community engagement and providing a social focal point. As a centerpiece, a striking architectural landmark tower will rise, not only serving as a distinctive focal point but also symbolizing the city's commitment to progress and innovation. This redevelopment project is not just about replacing the old; it's about

shaping a vibrant and inclusive future for Murray, offering residents and visitors a mixture of convenience, beauty, and a sense of community.

City Projects

Preserving the cultural and architectural legacy of Murray is a core commitment. Our cherished historic structures, including the Murray Mansion and Murray Theater, occupy a special place in this endeavor. The Murray Mansion, a graceful testament to our city's past, is a priority for conservation efforts. Its enduring charm and historical significance provide a perfect location for the Murray Museum.

Similarly, the Murray Theater, with its storied past and cultural significance, stands as a focal point in our commitment to the arts and community engagement. Both structures not only tell the tale of Murray's history but also contribute to the unique character of our city. Through careful preservation and thoughtful planning, we ensure that these iconic landmarks continue to be sources of inspiration for generations to come, embodying the spirit of Murray's vibrant past and promising future.

In an effort to enhance the historic downtown area, the city is planning to sell property where the historic Murray Chapel is located. Recognizing the cultural and historical significance of Murray's historic downtown, the city is taking measures to ensure its preservation as an integral part of our heritage.

While the reimagining of these properties represents a forward-thinking approach to urban development, the commitment to preserving important structures underscores our dedication to maintaining the authenticity and charm of our historic downtown.

This year citizens will witness a significant investment in the renovation of our Public Works site, an initiative aimed at providing our dedicated city employees with state-of-the-art facilities and workspaces. These employees, who play a crucial role in maintaining the essential infrastructure that keeps Murray running smoothly, deserve a work environment that reflects the value of their contributions.

The renovation project will specifically benefit those responsible for repairing our roads, ensuring the delivery of clean drinking water, managing wastewater systems, coordinating efficient garbage collection, and safeguarding our homes from stormwater flooding. These essential services are the backbone of our community, and the commitment to upgrading the facilities underscores our dedication to both our residents and the city workforce.

The Murray Power Department is embarking on a crucial project to ensure the future reliability of our city's electrical infrastructure by rebuilding the main substation. As technology evolves and our community grows, the demand for electricity continues to rise. This proactive initiative

is a testament to our commitment to providing a dependable and resilient power supply to meet the needs of our residents and businesses.

The recent acquisition of Woodstock Meadows Park and Riverview Park by the city of Murray marks a significant step towards enhancing our community spaces. Taking ownership of these parks from Salt Lake County underscores our commitment to meeting the high standards that Murray citizens have come to expect. Exciting renovations are in the pipeline to elevate these green spaces, providing residents with enhanced recreational facilities and a more enjoyable outdoor experience.

Riverview Park is set to undergo changes this year. Thanks to grant funds secured by the city, new additions such as a playground, pickleball courts, and improved lighting are on the horizon.

In another exciting development, the old National Guard Armory motor pool building is slated to open in 2024 as the Creekside Cottage in Murray Park. This adaptive reuse project is a creative solution to provide much-needed indoor community space. The repurposed armory will serve as a hub for community gatherings, events, and activities, further enriching the recreational offerings in Murray Park. As we move forward, the renovated parks and new community space will undoubtedly become cherished assets for Murray citizens for years to come. These projects are expected to be complete by year end.

Exciting times are ahead as we prepare to celebrate the upcoming centennial anniversary of Murray Park, a cherished landmark that has been at the heart of our community for a century. The park's rich history, filled with countless memories and shared experiences, will be commemorated with a series of special events and activities throughout the year.

The centennial celebration on June 15th will be a time to reflect on the evolution of Murray Park, from its early beginnings to its current status as a vibrant community hub. Residents, both old and new, will have the opportunity to engage in a variety of festivities that pay homage to the park's cultural significance and the role it has played in shaping the identity of our city.

I hope you will join us in commemorating 100 years of Murray Park – a century of shared moments, community spirit, and the enduring legacy of a space that has woven itself into the fabric of our city's identity. Here's to a century of memories and to many more to come!

Finance

While navigating economic challenges, Murray has demonstrated resilience. Despite the threat of a recession, Utah's economy stands strong, and our city's financial stability is underscored by a favorable Moody's rating. Property tax revenues flourish in a thriving housing market, while

online sales tax revenue continues to grow. Retail, medical, automobile, and housing sectors remain a testament to our economic prowess.

It is imperative to acknowledge the pressing concerns surrounding city affordability. Many of our citizens are facing challenges in making ends meet, and it is crucial to address these issues head-on. City officials are acutely aware of the financial burdens our residents are shouldering, and they are actively working towards making the city more affordable for everyone. In the face of inflationary pressures, the city is making a concerted effort to keep taxes at a minimum, recognizing the importance of easing the financial strain on our community. By prioritizing affordability and implementing strategic measures, we aim to create an environment where all residents can thrive and prosper despite economic challenges.

Challenges

Yet, with progress comes challenges. Housing costs, power instability, and sustainability are issues that demand our attention. The Downtown Plan, embodied in Block One, is a crucial initiative, as is the search for a permanent site for our library. The aging Senior Recreation Center is also on our radar, and we are actively exploring sustainable solutions.

Opportunities (Livability)

Amid challenges, opportunities abound. Murray's independence, our strategic location, and the dedication of our citizens and employees are pillars of our livability. Inclusivity, volunteerism, and respect define the fabric of our community. Education, transportation, financial stability, healthcare, recreation, and culture create a tapestry that makes Murray an ideal place to call home.

Sustainability

In terms of environmental sustainability, Murray is taking steps to reduce our carbon footprint and promote green initiatives. We are investing in renewable energy sources and implementing policies that promote sustainable practices across the city.

In a strategic move towards technological advancement and improved efficiency, both the Public Works and Power Departments have made a significant investment in the purchase and installation of smart meter technology. The implementation of smart meters represents a paradigm shift in how we monitor and manage our city's resources. These cutting-edge devices will enable real-time tracking and remote monitoring of various utilities, offering a more accurate and efficient means of collecting data on water, electricity, and other essential services. With detailed insights into consumption patterns, residents can make informed

decisions about their energy usage, identify areas for improvement, and adopt more energy-efficient practices.

The Power Department is also embarking on a important project to install energy-efficient LED bulbs for streetlights. LED technology is known for its energy efficiency, longevity, and enhanced brightness, providing improved visibility and safety on our streets.

With these efforts, the city is taking a proactive step towards creating a more sustainable urban environment.

Public Safety

In the realm of public safety, we are unwavering in our commitment to the well-being of our residents. Our police and fire departments continue to prioritize community engagement and proactive measures to ensure the safety of all. We are exploring new technologies and community policing strategies to build trust and foster a sense of security among our residents.

Community Engagement

As we navigate the complexities of the coming year, community engagement is crucial. I encourage residents to actively participate in local government, attend community events and public meetings, and contribute

to neighborhood initiatives. Your input is invaluable as we collectively shape the future of Murray.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the state of our city is strong, resilient, and filled with potential. Despite the challenges we have faced, Murray is moving forward with determination and a shared commitment to a bright future. Together, we will build on our successes, address our challenges, and create a community that thrives for generations to come.

Thank you for your time, your support, and your dedication to making Murray the best it can be. May we continue to work together, grow together, and celebrate the vibrant community that is Murray, Utah.