

Introduction

It is an honor to stand before you tonight as we reflect on the state of our great city. I would like to begin by acknowledging the dedicated members of our City Council, council staff, department heads, city employees, community leaders, and of course, the residents who make Murray such a wonderful community. Your commitment and contributions have played a crucial role in shaping our city's success.

The State of the City address provides us with an opportunity to look back at the past year, celebrate our achievements, address challenges, and present a vision for the future. Together, we continue to build a stronger, better Murray, and I am excited to share with you our progress and plans.

Reflecting on the Past Year

The past year has been marked by significant achievements in infrastructure, economic growth, public safety, parks and recreation, environmental sustainability, and financial resilience.

Infrastructure and Transportation We have made substantial improvements to our city's infrastructure, ensuring safer and more efficient roadways. Major projects completed include the Vine Street overlay from State Street to 900 East, and improvements at 5300 South and College Drive intersection. Additionally, through collaboration with neighboring cities, we obtained the designation of the TRAX Quiet Zone, reducing noise pollution for residents. Numerous street, sidewalk, water, wastewater, and storm drain improvements have enhanced our community's overall quality of life.

Economic Growth Murray's economy remains strong. Sales tax revenue from businesses increased by 2%, a testament to the robust retail environment in our city. A recent business survey revealed that over 90% of respondents believe Murray meets or exceeds expectations as a place to do business. Additionally, the Van Winkle Annexation Petition was approved, and this area will officially become part of our city on July 1, 2025. I welcome the new

residents and businesses that will join us in calling Murray home. This growth underscores Murray's desirability as a commercial and residential hub.

Public Safety Ensuring the safety of our residents is a top priority. Over the past year, we have taken significant steps to enhance public safety. We created a Homeless Coordination Committee, responded to 203 active fires, and restored pulses for 13 patients in cardiac arrest. Additionally, our emergency responders reversed 73 narcotic overdoses and implemented an online reporting system for non-emergency crimes. Certified drone pilots and advancements in crime lab technology have expedited case resolution and arrests. We also welcomed a new Justice Court judge, Spencer Banks, following the retirement of Judge Paul Thompson.

Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Programs Murray's parks and recreation offerings have never been better. The Murray Amphitheater hosted three sold-out tribute concerts to ABBA, Journey, and Fleetwood Mac. The Murray Parkway Golf Course recorded nearly 80,000 rounds of golf—the highest in 12 years. Renovations to Riverview Park, including new pickleball courts, playground, picnic tables, and pavilion enhancements, have provided more opportunities for outdoor recreation. Our library expanded its study rooms due to high public demand, ensuring a welcoming space for learning and collaboration.

Environmental Sustainability We remain committed to sustainability. We purchased an all-electric vehicle for the fire department and ordered a new CNG garbage truck for servicing our parks. I also issued an Executive Order to incentivize city employees to participate in a Sustainable Transportation Program.

Financial Strength Our financial health continues to be a point of pride. Fitch Ratings upgraded our 2016 sales tax bonds to AAA, Moody's upgraded our rating to Aa1, and S&P Global Ratings upgraded our stormwater bonds to AA. These upgrades demonstrate our strong financial management and commitment to long-term fiscal responsibility.

Current State of the City

When considering the current state of the city, I can confidently state that Murray remains a thriving and independent city.

Unlike many other cities in Salt Lake County, Murray provides several municipal services without relying on the county or state. Because of its independence, Murray has full control over zoning, development, public safety, and public projects. This helps maintain a strong community identity.

Last year Murray issued 3,782 business licenses, including 526 new businesses. While fire incidents increased by 12.6% and ambulance transports rose by 6%, police calls decreased by 7% from the previous year.

Housing remains a priority, with 627 new residential units permitted, including multifamily, townhomes, and single-family homes. The Redevelopment Agency awarded a \$400,000 grant for low-income senior housing, and over 27,000 people attended library programs, emphasizing our commitment to community well-being. Trends indicate that multi-family properties experienced a stronger appreciation compared to single-family homes, reflecting growing demand in that sector.

Construction is underway for the Midvalley Express (MVX), a bus rapid transit line that will connect Murray, Taylorsville, and West Valley City. The project began in spring 2024 and is expected to be completed by fall 2026.

This past year, we started installing new LED street lighting throughout the city and will continue this effort until all fixtures are upgraded.

After many months of construction, the completion of the Murray Mansion/Museum, the Murray Armory Events Center, and Murray Theater are nearing completion.

The Public Works Department is seeking a federal grant for a new water storage tank, and three grants were awarded to the Cultural Arts Department for historic preservation and programming.

Major Challenges

Despite its strong municipal structure and economic base, Murray faces several major challenges.

Like much of Utah, housing affordability remains a concern. The median sales price for a single-family home in Murray is \$587,000, while multifamily homes average \$412,000. Although the cost for a home is lower than the Salt Lake County median, the annual income needed to afford a median-priced home in Murray is \$167,000 for single family and \$123,000 for multi-family.

As new housing and commercial projects rise, maintaining the city's historical character and local charm is an ongoing concern.

Murray is also facing growing concerns regarding its existing housing stock. Many homes are converting to rentals, especially investor-owned properties. This is changing community dynamics and increasing the number of neglected properties.

While Murray has its own police force, addressing crime and maintaining safety, especially near high-traffic areas, is a constant effort. The city must balance compassionate policies with practical approaches to address homelessness, particularly near public spaces and commercial areas.

As part of the Salt Lake Valley, Murray deals with increasing traffic, especially along major roads like State Street, 5400 S, and I-15. As a result, many of the neighborhood streets are experiencing more traffic and increasing speeds.

Vision for the Future

Looking ahead, my vision for the future and priorities include:

- Enhancing public infrastructure and transportation, including considering the allowance of private roads under certain circumstances.
- Expanding affordable housing opportunities.

- Addressing property deterioration. The city must strengthen its property maintenance codes while ensuring landlords and tenants comply without overburdening enforcement efforts.
- Investing in public safety and community services.
- Promoting economic development with key redevelopment projects along the State Street corridor and its historic downtown.
- Advancing sustainability efforts to ensure a greener future.
- Encouraging community participation at public facilities and programs.

Highlighting Key Projects

Exciting projects are on the horizon, including:

- The design and construction of a new Murray Park Pool and splash pad.
- Large-scale infrastructure improvements, including new public works facilities.
- A ribbon-cutting for the Murray Mansion/Museum in May.
- The grand opening of the Murray Theater this summer.
- Accepting reservations at the Murray Armory Events Center.
- Economic development projects such as Murray Towers and Block One.
- Installation of Automated Metering Infrastructure for water and power efficiency.
- The launch of the “Love Murray” campaign this spring to enhance community pride.

Funding for these initiatives will come from federal grants, public-private partnerships, and responsible fiscal management.

Call to Action

I encourage all residents to get involved in shaping our city's future—whether by attending community events, public forums, volunteering, or supporting local businesses.

Closing Remarks

I want to express my deepest gratitude to our city employees, first responders, and community members for their dedication and hard work. Your contributions make Murray a remarkable place to live, work, and play.

I have lived in Murray for almost four decades and spent the last three years serving as your Mayor. I love interacting with the great people of Murray who I consider my friends and neighbors. Whether you have been here for a month, a year, or a decade or more – I want you to know that all the city staff will continue to give their best efforts to ensure Murray City will thrive now and for years to come.

As we move forward, let us embrace our shared purpose and commitment to progress. Together, we will build a stronger, better Murray. Thank you, and may we continue to work hand in hand to ensure a prosperous future for our city.