



NEWS RELEASE

State of the City

Mayor Randy McClement
Wednesday, Aug. 16, 2017

Remarks

It's been another great year in The City of Frederick! I am thrilled that you could join me here at the Frederick Municipal Airport – also known by its airport identifier of FDK. As you look around the airport you will see the improvements made over the last eight years, those under way, and those still to come!

This airport is a critical piece of infrastructure and important to our community for many reasons. You and I may not use it every day, but it is a unique amenity that helps to bring business to the Frederick area. In fact, more than 70,000 aircraft landings and takeoffs occur at FDK each year. For national corporations looking for a location near the DC/Metro area with airport access, we are one of the closest airports outside of the No Fly Zone. These corporations bring jobs and tax revenue to our City. We are working hard to make FDK the preferred corporate executive airport in the DC/metro area.

Behind me, you can see the control tower that opened five years ago to assist communications to all aircraft in the vicinity. Over the years, we've secured federal, state, and county funding to improve and grow our airport. All around us you can see the signs of progress. Last year we began the installation of a new drainage system that will ensure proper storm water management is in place for current and future development. We also commenced the second phase of an obstruction removal project that included demolishing many vacant buildings on Bucheimer Road. Both of these projects make way for future runway expansions and increasing our usable footprint of aviation property for hangars and additional airport use.

We are constantly working to find ways to bring the community out to the airport, to show them the wonderful resource we have in our city. FDK has been host to some wonderful events, like the Women's Air Race Classic, the Wings 'N Wheels community event and, recently, hosted an international delegation from China.

When we look to the future of the airport and this land, I hope to one day see the Flying Dog blimp tethered here. Last year we were thrilled to complete the sale of land adjacent to the airport to Flying Dog Brewery for the expansion and relocation of their operations to within the City limits. This

project is predicted to bring more than 100 new jobs to the City, and with their national acclaim, we look forward to the additional economic impact and tourism Flying Dog will bring.

As you may have noticed, Flying Dog is not the only brewery in Frederick. We've done a lot to promote breweries, wineries and distilleries in the City. In the last year, the City passed an ordinance that added "brewery" and "farm brewery" as conditional uses in certain zoning districts, and amended the criteria for their approval.

This year we also amended our policies to allow breweries, wineries, and distilleries to host food trucks on their property and outlined criteria for this exemption. We have heard overwhelming positive feedback about this change, and continue to work with stakeholders to amend the City's Vendor Peddler Ordinance.

Moving forward, there are still some obstacles to make it possible for these young brewing industries to survive, but those obstacles are at the state level. We will continue to work with the comptroller and lobby the state to pass legislation that will not tie the hands of these growing industries in Maryland. We will not stand idly by and watch these businesses go to other states!

For the first time the City population topped 70,000 in 2016, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. The City's unemployment rate has fallen to 3.8 percent, showing that most of our residents are employed. We continue to be a hot job center, with nearly 50,000 jobs, and we expect that the City will continue to be a favorable location for significant job growth.

The City of Frederick, through the Department of Economic Development, has worked hard to expand emerging tech industries. We've seen the fruits of this labor, with tech businesses like Yakabod, IronNet, Regent Education, Blue Pillar and TimberRock taking advantage of unique, historic spaces downtown. We will continue to market our "Hip and Historic" downtown to capture a significant portion of those jobs.

In addition to encouraging new industries, the City has also worked hard to reduce impediments and encourage sustained growth in critical existing industries like biotech, healthcare, education, manufacturing, biopharma, and tourism – including, but not limited to, key employers like AstraZeneca, Hood College, Fort Detrick, Stulz, EDCO, McCutcheons, Frederick National Labs, and Frederick Memorial Hospital.

I would be remiss if I did not mention that we continue to work as a team to move forward the long awaited Hotel and Conference Center at Carroll Creek. This project will not only be an added place to stay when visiting our great city, but it will be a benefit to the businesses in the area to finally have a place to conduct large meetings in a unique downtown setting.

Our City permits data show that local investment in both commercial and residential development is flourishing. We currently have 23 active commercial developments in the City and 20 active residential developments! Not only are more and more businesses looking to relocate to the City, but our demand for residential properties continues to grow as well. Over 500 dwelling permit applications were received by the Planning Department last year. Applications for major residential developments such as Cannon Bluff, Market Square, Homewood at Willow Ponds, Worman's Mill, and Prospect Hall comprised the majority of new dwelling unit applications.

As development continues within the City, we focus on providing the infrastructure to accommodate this growth. We rely heavily on our Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance to ensure that public facilities and services, including roads, water, sewerage, and school facilities are reasonably available concurrent with new residential, commercial or industrial development so orderly and sustainable growth can occur.

We continue to look for ways to put underutilized and/or vacant residential and commercial properties back into an active state. In March of this year, I put in place the Property Revitalization Ad Hoc Committee, which is made up of nine community, business, and government representatives. Its purpose is to "provide an inclusive, long-term focus on the issues of vacant and underutilized properties and those with significant or reoccurring outstanding code violations."

I also charged this Task Force to look into ways to turn long-time empty buildings, houses and lots into productive spaces for entrepreneurs and homeowners. Through our Code Enforcement and Building Permits departments, we have reduced the number of structures on the Blighted Property List and Watch List by gaining compliance and working closely with property owners.

This year, we completed the mid-cycle update of our Comprehensive Plan. In its simplest definition, the Comp. Plan provides a guiding framework for how our City will continue to grow and what that growth will look like.

Preparing this document takes considerable effort, so staff will soon begin to conduct studies and complete research that will provide the basis for the 2020 Comprehensive Planning process, which is right around the corner. I encourage you to engage in this process, because the planning of growth in our City should involve everyone.

As a growing City, we recognize that we'll face increasing challenges to keep our community safe. The Frederick Police Department is proactively preparing to meet these challenges head-on. Chief Edward Hargis is mentoring the next generation of law enforcement leadership within FPD to ensure

they can meet the community's demands and expectations. Our agency is well structured and poised for the future.

Our police force currently consists of 146 sworn officers, 53 full- and part-time civilians, and 16 volunteers. We hire and train new recruits every year to maintain the staffing levels necessary to accommodate our growing community. We run an academy renowned in the region as one of the best, but it can take almost a year to train and get a new officer on the street. So, we've added staff incrementally to increase the authorized strength of our police force in correlation with our steadily growing population. Our 58th Police Academy graduated in April, adding eight new officers to the Department.

Our largest Academy class to date is set to begin in October, with 37 recruits from departments throughout the state. We've increased our recruitment efforts in FPD to make sure we're finding the best possible candidates with a special focus on increasing diversity within the ranks of the department.

To that end, we've reinstated Police Explorer Post #153. This program targets young adults ages 14-21 interested in law enforcement careers. It offers life-learning, encouragement, and training for the future development of Frederick police officers.

We are taking issues like the opioid epidemic, head-on. In the past year, we received two Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention Grants to hire a part-time heroin coordinator and part-time peer recovery specialist, who work in partnership with FPD and the Frederick County Health Department. We are also working with Frederick Community College to facilitate a week-long educational event in October to provide a forum for the community to discuss all types of addiction, its effects, and possible solutions. Through FPD's proactive involvement, we've implemented many of the "best practices" suggested by experts throughout the country, and it's making an impact. Year to date, overdoses in the City are down approximately 20 percent from the same time-period last year. We will continue working hard to keep this as a trend.

Focusing on outreach to our youth is one of the most critical ways for our police to be more efficient. We know that what happens in our schools during the day affects what happens on our streets at night...and vice versa. We want our officers to be in the schools, building relationships and trust with students so they know our officers are a resource for their safety.

In an effort to move this mission forward in a fiscally responsible way, we've applied for a grant to fund five school resource officers to cover high schools located within the City limits. If received, this grant will cover the majority of the salaries and benefits for the five school resource officers for three

years, with minimal City investment. Should we receive the grant, I look forward to implementing this program as soon as possible.

As our Police Department grows, so must their facilities. They are bursting at the seams in their current headquarters. A recent space needs assessment conducted over the last year and presented to the Board of Aldermen at workshop just this afternoon, identified the needs of the department and efficiencies to be gained by expanding the police facilities.

I have always been committed to finding the space our Police Department needs, and hope to begin making this a reality in the coming months. We are currently looking at the recently vacated Trinity School site, a property already owned by the City. This allows us to avoid purchasing new property and opens up several unique options for funding as well as incorporating a shared community space into the facility.

Helping our police department grow as our community grows is critical, so they can continue their track record of keeping crime low. Part one crimes, identified as the most serious crimes, were the second lowest last year that they've been in 25 years.

Our City is safe, but our efforts are ongoing, and we will continue implementing improvements and upgrades to ensure the safety of our residents, businesses, and visitors.

Over the last year, we also made major strides in our sustainability efforts. We adopted an all-inclusive plan that provides a road map and sets short and long-term goals for the City's sustainability initiatives today and into the future.

One important element of that plan is the protection of our City's water quality. We adopted a Watershed Management Plan to encourage safe use of the land surrounding our Watershed for many recreational uses, while maintaining the primary focus of ensuring the protection of that water source. Staff and volunteers have already noted a reduction in trash in the area due to our outreach efforts. We've also been able to reroute trails in the Watershed to avoid wetlands and other critical habitats.

We established the Sustainability Committee this year, a new permanent committee formed from the ad hoc Green Initiatives Team. The mission of the committee is to advise City officials and staff on developing, maintaining, and promoting the City's commitment to the Sustainability Plan.

The committee was instrumental in the City earning the "Sustainable Maryland Re-certified" designation from the Environmental Finance Center at the University Maryland. Moving forward, the group will work to promote the benefits of the City's green initiatives. They will participate in public

outreach events like In the Street and the Spring Watershed Cleanup, and continue to focus on recycling and composting education.

Our efforts to encourage composting go beyond the Sustainability Committee. We provide low-cost compost bins to residents, and last year, we completed a pilot program to study compost volumes within the City. We're now using that data to identify options for providing residential and commercial composting.

When it comes to energy efficiency upgrades, we have a benefit not all communities have --- we own our streetlights. This allows us to control our efficiency upgrades and make improvements faster than the power company would be able to. More importantly, it gives us the ability to utilize financial incentives. We continue to complete streetlight upgrades. Just in the last year, throughout the City, we've upgraded around 500 fixtures to high-efficiency LED lights, improved the lighting at Talley Recreation Center, and installed path and lighting upgrades in Max Kehne Park and Baker Park.

In a recent study, Talley Rec Center was identified as one of the City's prime energy users, so we conducted an energy audit to better understand the high-energy consumption of the facility. The audit results will be used to guide budget allocations for repairs to increase the efficiency of that facility.

In addition to the efficiency upgrades noted previously, we made many other repairs and improvements within our Parks and Recreation system. We completed the design and construction plans for the restoration of Rock Creek, and look to complete this work along with construction in Waterford Park in the near future.

With the help and support of the Friends of Baker Park and others, last year we celebrated the completion of phase one and the reopening of our beloved Culler Lake. While the reconstruction of the fountain and improved pedestrian pathways are the most obvious, the lake's primary function is storm water management. Along with the aesthetic improvements, we also added new mechanical and biological systems to filter storm water before it enters the lake and improve water quality.

This year we also completed renovations to playgrounds at Jimmy McGee Park and Mullinix Park. We completed roof and flooring repairs, as well as fitness center renovations at Talley Rec Center, and started the repairs and restoration of the Community Bridge Mural.

With the completion of the second section of Carroll Creek Linear Park, the adoption of the Westside Regional Park Master Plan, and creation of the Westside Regional Park Task Force, we are moving forward in expanding our park system – already at an impressive 73 parks.

Moving people throughout our City efficiently and safely is another priority for this administration. This includes pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicles. Just the other day I received a note from a resident in appreciation of the efforts the City has made and continues to make to connect our City through bicycle access. In the last year, we completed the Shared Use Path connection under U.S. 15, safely connecting the path system on the west side of the city to our downtown. Soon, we'll begin installing signage along these trails as an added convenience to help users locate their destinations and further enhance the path connection between the Golden Mile and downtown. This sign program will be ongoing, with future signs installed along high-volume trails throughout the City.

We recently adopted a Complete Streets Policy that provides standards for the City as well as developers to include pedestrian and bicycle paths as part of all road improvements. We've installed a new traffic signal at North Market Street and Worman's Mill Court to allow for the additional pedestrian and vehicle traffic anticipated with the relocation of the Department of Social Services.

This year we began construction on Monocacy Boulevard, which includes an adjacent 10-foot bicycle and pedestrian path to connect to the path on Monocacy Boulevard and Schifferstadt Boulevard. To improve transportation for vehicles in and around the City, we completed design for the extension of Christopher's Crossing, our next major road project set to begin when Monocacy Boulevard is complete. We've also completed full-depth reconstruction of Carroll Street and Fairview Avenue, and resurfaced Rosemont Avenue, East Church Street, Kemp Lane, and Opossumtown Pike. In total, we repaired and rebuilt roughly 3 miles of City streets this year, at a cost of approximately \$2 million.

Our Street Maintenance staff has been busy. In addition to the road repairs, patchwork, and other ongoing maintenance they perform on a daily basis, much of this staff is also part of our snow removal team. When snow arrives, we don't bring on additional outside staff to push snow. Our Snow Crew is comprised of staff that works in other departments throughout the City.

This year, the Snow Crew, in partnership with our IT staff, developed and implemented a new web-based Snow Removal Program to allow residents to watch the progress of snow removal and quickly and easily report snow-related issues. Luckily, we didn't have a very snowy winter, but we did get an opportunity to test the program and look forward to ongoing efforts to improve and adapt the "Snow app" to meet the needs of the community.

Our Public Works staff tackles projects tirelessly throughout the City each year. Some, like Monocacy Boulevard, or the demolitions here at the airport, are highly visible, making it easy for you to monitor their progress. Others are just as impactful, but not nearly as easy to see.

For example, last year Engineering and Public Works staff oversaw the update and adoption of the City's Standard Details for construction. We began construction of the Monocacy Water Treatment

Plant Improvements, and work continues for the enhanced nutrient removal upgrades at our wastewater treatment plant.

We spend a lot of time and money on water in the City. Throughout the year, we completed several water loss reduction upgrades. We also just completed the North Side water tank, which provides the necessary storage to maintain pressure and fire flow volumes in the system to the northern part of the City.

Our Planning Department completed the draft of the East Street Corridor Plan, a major part of our City's small area planning efforts. This type of planning ensures future development and improvements in this area will meet the specific vision of the residents and business owners on the East side of town.

Frederick remains a top choice for visitors and those looking for a place to live or start a business. Over 1.9 million tourists visit the City and County each year, spending in excess of \$1 million per day in our economy. Kudos to the Frederick Tourism Council and Downtown Frederick Partnership for the incredible work they do to program and drive visitors to Frederick.

Over the last year we've been named:

A Best City for New Grads

A Scenic Place

A Top 20 Most Vibrant Arts Community

A Great Place to Retire

A Delightful Downtown City

A Best City for Summer Travel

A Top City to Live in

Sky Stage, designed by Heather Clark, was recently named one of the best public art projects in the nation at the Americans for the Arts' conference

We're a newly named Runner Friendly Community

A Bronze Level Bike-friendly community

A Gold Level City for Healthy Eating and Active Living

A Sustainable Maryland Community

And, at over 37 years, we are the longest running Tree City USA in Maryland!

I know this is a lot of information. If you have questions about what I've covered today, contact my office, or join me for Talk to the Mayor Tuesday on the fourth Tuesday of every month, from 2 to 6 p.m. It's been three years since I instituted these open office hours, and the response has been incredible.

As you can see, we accomplish quite a bit in a year. None of which would be possible without the hard work and dedication of City staff. I do my best to recognize them individually for their accomplishments, but maybe we should all take more opportunities to publicly thank them for all of the work they do. As Mayor, I get to see this work on a daily basis, but because they do it without drama or conflict, it doesn't make headlines. My style is not to take credit for every accomplishment, and I don't think the Mayor, or any one person should. We do an excellent job of putting our heads down and getting the work done.

While I put a lot of importance on providing essential services ... like making sure we have clean drinking water, passable roads, and police protection. ... I also understand the need to move forward and do what is necessary to prepare the City for today and for future generations.

I hope what you've heard here today illustrates all the work the City is doing on your behalf every day to make our community a better place to live, work, and enjoy, beyond those essential services. We live in the greatest city in America!

The state of The City of Frederick is thriving!

###