

## State of the City Address 2025

Mayor Daniel J. Mahoney

Theme: Building on Progress, Protecting Our Future

Good Evening!

My name is Daniel J. Mahoney and I know exactly what your thinking right now... what the hell was City Council thinking messing around with the parking in downtown... don't worry... we will get to that story next Wednesday at City Hall at our special meeting at 7pm.

And yes, my middle name is Jermaine...

I want to start by giving honor to God for grace, guidance, the heart to serve, and patience.

To my wife Semaj—my best friend, counselor, and constant support—thank you for walking with me every step of the way.

To my daughters—Calvena, Sophia, Olivia, Cecilia, and Ila—your growth continues to drive me to strive to make the world a better place, you 5 are my “why.” My sacrifices today are so you can reap the rewards of tomorrow.

To my parents, siblings, family, and friends—thank you for keeping me grounded. And to the people of Jackson—thank you for the honor of serving as your mayor.

Let's also give a hand to our city council members, clergy, community leaders, and all our residents who are watching here and online. I see you, and I'm grateful for each and every one of you. It is truly a pleasure to serve with you all.

Tyshon and the rest of our Youth Council, thank you all for being here and for sharing your vision, your words and expressing your needs. You all have a very bright future.

Mr. Willis thank you for the kind introduction, I will be honest, I wasn't sure I needed to show up tonight in a 3 piece suit or a jogging suit.

Over the past three years, we've been on a journey together.

- In 2022, I told you Jackson was in a Renaissance—a time of rebuilding and renewal.
- In 2023, I declared we had entered a Reformation—reforming our institutions, our processes, and our policies for the better.
- And in 2024, I said we were Resilient and Ready—ready to meet challenges head-on and bounce back stronger than ever.

Now, in 2025, I stand before you with pride and purpose to say:

While the country may be in Regression, Jackson is building on progress, and we are protecting our future.

### **Public Safety: Safer Streets equal Stronger Communities**

Let's start with public safety—because everyone deserves to feel safe in their home, on their street, and in their neighborhood.

- Group Violence Intervention strategy, The Summit to Reduce Violence, the men and women in our police department and our partnerships with other law enforcement agencies like our Sheriffs Department, Blackman Township and State Police post continue to pay dividend toward our collective goal of reducing violence in Jackson.
- In 2024 we had one of the lowest violent crime rates in almost a decade. We had less reported shootings, less shooting victims and less homicides.
- While this benchmark is worth celebrating, we still have more work to do. Our goal is to have zero homicides. And with the foundation left by Chief Hitt and the new leadership of Chief Simpson I am positive that we will achieve that goal. But your support is critical. So, I urge you to join us at the 2025 Summit to Reduce Violence April 23rd at the American 1 Event Center.

### **Housing: We are Building Homes, Building Opportunity**

Housing is not just about shelter—it's about stability, dignity, and opportunity.

- Through the 100 Homes Project, we're building 100 new homes on city-owned lots, with \$2.5 million in down payment assistance.

- Today, we have hundreds of applicants, over 50 approved buyers, and 40 homes under construction.

- not only are we helping remove the barriers for home ownership but we also now have a program that helps current homeowners rehab their homes

We know not everyone is ready for homeownership. That's why council supported:

- The Blackstone Apartments that are almost finished, a \$13 million project with over 40 affordable units and retail space.

- The Greenwood Apartments project is almost finished as well, offering more housing options for working families.

And yes—The Hayes Hotel redevelopment is still happening—a \$30 million investment in downtown Jackson. Despite some issues with our previous developer, we were able to pivot to a different developer and the building has officially been sold. We look forward **to their commitment to our community and the vision they have for the Hayes.**

With the pipeline of applicants for the 100 homes project our goal to reach 100 approved buyers will be reached in the next 12 months, and we will be looking for funding to begin **a second phase of the program.**

We have 2 additional multiunit developments in the works for the downtown area, more developers interested in building additional single-family homes on the East side and the South side of town and we will continue to push to rebuild our neighborhoods **one block at a time.**

### **Economic Development: Economic Growth for All**

We've seen Jackson businesses thrive and new ones emerge. From supporting small businesses looking to grow to attracting larger chains we look forward to welcoming new businesses to our community and continuing to stive to remove barrierless and stigma **surrounding doing business in the City of Jackson.**

- We launched Fix 36 to make it easier to do business in Jackson—cutting red tape, streamlining processes, and helping entrepreneurs succeed.

- We extended the schedule for the Downtown Social District and are elated to launch the Community Kitchens right here in the City Center to support local food entrepreneurs which you will all be able to see in just a few minutes.

Revitalizing the South Side:

- The MLK Corridor Improvement Authority has awarded over \$1 million in grants to corridor businesses
- The secured RAISE Grant to fully reconstruct MLK Drive—from underground infrastructure to sidewalks to streetscapes, this will be a 2-year project that will start this year.
- As you heard from our First ward Council person our tireless efforts to bring a grocery store to the South Side are beginning to pay dividends—because every neighborhood deserves access to fresh food. A location has been identified, we are working with Consumers Energy to purchase and remediate the property, and we are working have a **developer interested in working with the MLK CIA to see the project through.**
- With our efforts for revitalizing the South Side take shape we are in the beginning phases of reimagining Jackson's East Side.

### **Neighborhoods and Infrastructure: Investing Where It Matters**

- We've renovated the Boos Center, MLK Equality Trail, Optimus Park, and the Ella Sharp mini golf.
- In 2025, we'll focus on neighborhood parks like Workers Memorial, Exchange, and Rotary Park—because safe, walkable, green spaces in every neighborhood make a city livable.
- We're pushing forward with road improvements and exploring funding alternatives that don't rely on assessments. We recently received another RAISE grant for the **reconstruction of E Washington and part of Elm St.**

Speaking of roads - over the next year I plan to create a committee to work to develop a plan to address fixing our crumbling roads. We cannot afford to wait for the state to fix the problem for us and at the current rate it would take 150 years before we could fix every road in our city. And so we need to evaluate what direction we want to take to address this problem. I'm not saying the solution will be easy and I'm not promising **everyone will like it. There are only so many options we can consider.**

We all know the newest industry in Jackson is the Marijuana business. I would love to see a Pot for Potholes program that would dedicate the tax revenue generated from marijuana sales be added to not replace, but added to the dollars we spend on filling potholes.

### **DEI: Living Our Values**

In Jackson, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion are more than buzzwords—they're core values.

- We continue to celebrate our rich cultural heritage—from Juneteenth to Pride, Asian American Heritage Month, Hispanic Heritage Festival, and Native American Heritage Month.
- We don't just say "everyone belongs"—we show it. Through our actions, our policies, and our commitment to equity for all.

- Just 5 years ago the entire world cried out against the injustices against black and brown citizens and thus was born the financial gain of institutions for supporting working towards Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. Now today, Diversity is dirty, Equity is unethical, **and Inclusion is considered intrusion.**

And with federal and state dollars being threatened as leverage for the demolition of DEI Jackson stands at a crossroads. A pivotal moment where we must decide who we want to be as a city and as a community. Federal decisions are shaping the landscape in ways that will have a direct impact on our ability to grow, support our residents, and uphold the values we hold dear.

These changes challenge the progress we've made in ensuring that every resident, regardless of background, has access to the same opportunities and resources.

Elections have consequences. These consequences include the level funding we receive, the policies that shape our neighborhoods, and the protections that ensure fairness in housing, employment, and education and our ability to age in place comfortably.

As a city, as we consider how we respond to these federal changes, we must ask ourselves: Are we moving forward toward progress, inclusion, and opportunity, or are we turning back the clock on the rights and advancements our residents have fought for? Jackson must stand firm in its commitment to growth, fairness, and a future that works for everyone. The time is now to decide who we truly want to be.

### **Closing: Together, We Build a Better Jackson**

Tonight, we've celebrated how far we've come—but let me be clear:

We're just getting started.

Together, we are building a city with safe, vibrant, walkable neighborhoods, a thriving economy, well-maintained infrastructure, and a local government that serves the people.

Thank you, Jackson. Let's keep building, let's keep protecting, and let's keep moving Jackson forward, together.