



# State of the City 2026

## On the Right Path: Doing the Work That Builds a Stronger Willard

FIXING FUNDAMENTALS. DELIVERING RESULTS. PREPARING FOR  
GROWTH.

# Where We Were: A Clear-Eyed Baseline

- ▶ **Three realities one year ago:**
  - ▶ Aging infrastructure limiting growth capacity
  - ▶ Financial systems needing tighter discipline
  - ▶ Processes slowing service and limiting transparency

“We are one project away from starting some real momentum.” -  
**Planning Director Mike Ruesch**

# Utilities: Unlocking Willard's Future

- ▶ **Major infrastructure investments underway:**
  - ▶ 94 Force Main Connection
    - ▶ \$5.8M total project
    - ▶ \$2.9M USEPA grant support
    - ▶ Improves reliability and unlocks long-term growth capacity
  - ▶ Meadows Trunk Line
    - ▶ \$1.7M investment
    - ▶ Connects Meadows to Springfield lift station
    - ▶ Unlocks south-side growth potential

“One of these projects will supply Willard with enough growth potential for 20+ years.” - **Public Works Director Trevor Hoffman**

# Utilities: Building Reliability from the Ground Up

- ▶ **Systematic infrastructure improvement:**

- ▶ Galvanized main replacements
- ▶ Fire hydrant replacement initiative underway
- ▶ Sewer break detection and repair program
- ▶ Water tower interior rehabilitation beginning

“We are doing all that we can within our budgetary constraints to improve the system and prepare for the future.” - **Public Works Director Trevor Hoffman**

# Utilities: Smarter Systems, Better Visibility

- ▶ **Modernizing infrastructure management:**

- ▶ Lift stations now monitored remotely
- ▶ Infrastructure mapped and digitally tracked
- ▶ Preventative maintenance programs expanded
- ▶ Reduced overtime and emergency response costs

**Impact:**

Faster response, better planning, lower long-term cost

# Streets, Stormwater, and Mobility

- ▶ **Major improvements completed and underway:**
  - ▶ Jackson Street sidewalk and waterline improvements
  - ▶ Highway 160 stormwater project underway
  - ▶ Crack-seal preservation program launched
  - ▶ Stormwater drainage improvements across the city
  - ▶ Active transportation planning

“The addition of new equipment has made a huge impact in project completion.” - **Public Works Director Trevor Hoffman**

# Public Safety: Investing in People and Capability

## ▶ Key milestones:

- ▶ ½-cent Law Enforcement Sales Tax approved
- ▶ Officer pay increased to improve retention
- ▶ Zero officer turnover for over 18 months
- ▶ Leadership development and succession planning underway

“These advances improved morale and made Willard competitive in recruiting and retention.” – **Chief Tom McClain**

# Public Safety: Modern Tools for Modern Policing

- ▶ **Missouri Blue Shield City Grant:**

- ▶ \$50,000 grant secured
- ▶ License Plate Readers installed
- ▶ Live-view cameras improving investigations

**Impact:**

Faster case resolution. Stronger public safety.

“These tools provide leads that previously would have been impossible to obtain.” – **Chief Tom McClain**

# Public Safety: Investing in the Next Generation

- ▶ **Community programs expanding:**
  - ▶ DARE program restarted
  - ▶ PAL Boxing returning
  - ▶ Camp Character community events

## **Impact:**

Building relationships, trust, and stronger community bonds.

# Finance: Stronger Foundations

▶ **Major improvements underway:**

- ▶ Conservative budgeting approach
- ▶ Spending discipline and improved forecasting
- ▶ New financial software implementation
- ▶ Eliminating costly convenience fees
- ▶ New software will help with improved public transparency

**Impact:**

Financial systems ready to support growth responsibly.

# Accountability: Performance Scorecards

- ▶ **First-ever City performance scorecards implemented:**

- ▶ Finance scorecard test drive 2025
- ▶ Utilities and Parks coming in 2026
- ▶ Public dashboards planned

**Goal:**

Measure performance. Improve performance. Share performance.

# Planning and Development: Removing Barriers

- ▶ **Major operational improvements:**
  - ▶ Fully paperless development submissions
  - ▶ Online inspection scheduling
  - ▶ Improved efficiency and turnaround times

“This has greatly increased staff efficiency and made it easier for builders and developers.” - **Planning Director Mike Ruesch**

# Planning Willard's Next Decade

- ▶ **Strategic planning efforts completed or underway:**
  - ▶ Active Transportation Plan completed
  - ▶ Economic Development Policy in development
  - ▶ Infrastructure positioned for growth

“The experience and drive of our current staff is amazing. Buckle up—2026 here we come.” - **Planning Director Mike Ruesch**

# Economic Development: Ready for Growth

- ▶ **Willard is positioned to attract new investment:**
  - ▶ Infrastructure capacity expanding
  - ▶ Development processes streamlined
  - ▶ Economic Development Task Force active
  - ▶ Commercial interest increasing

## **Message:**

We have the capacity. We have the demand.  
Now we land the business.

# What Comes Next

## ▶ **2026 Priorities:**

- ▶ Complete Meadows Trunk Line
- ▶ Complete the 94 to SGF Upgrade
- ▶ Continue to replace aging hydrants and infrastructure
- ▶ Continue stormwater and road improvements
- ▶ Implement economic development policy
- ▶ Expand and formalize public performance dashboards
- ▶ Zero-Based Budgeting (ZBB) and Priority-Based Budgeting (PBB)

# How We Measure Success

- ▶ **Key indicators:**

- ▶ Infrastructure reliability
- ▶ Financial stability
- ▶ Continued public safety strength
- ▶ Development activity
- ▶ Service responsiveness
- ▶ Public transparency