

Introduction

Thurgood Brooks is a community builder and organizer who believes deeply in the power of Rock Island's citizens to create positive change. He has spent his career advocating for youth, small businesses, and development in the city. Most recently, he has led a multi-racial coalition of concerned citizens fighting for racial justice and accountability through "The Resolution." Through his work as a Family Advocate at the Martin Luther King Center, football coach at Rock Island High School/QC Steamwheelers, member of the Rock Island human rights commission, member of Rock Island County NAACP and founder of a community driven organization Tut Cities Educational and Entertainment - Thurgood has been able to work with community partners, bring people together, and most importantly, not speak on behalf of communities -- rather collaborating with them. This desire is what is motivating Thurgood's run for mayor. It's time for a truly collaborative citywide effort to build Rock Island together.

The What: Building a better Rock Island requires innovative leadership focused on policies that drive our city forward. Thurgood's strategic plan centers on investing in our community members, attracting small business, and standing out as a vibrant, safe and inclusive city. In order to enrich the lives of our community members, keep them engaged in Rock Island throughout their lives, and attract people back to our community, Rock Island must be strategic to become better. Thurgood Brooks has the vision and will take the action to move Rock Island forward.

Thurgood's Strategic Vision to Build ---

A Clean & Green Economy

Healthy and Stable Communities

Attractive and Affordable Housing

Together, we will build a stronger, healthier, and more vibrant Rock Island.

Strategic

Mayor Brooks will:

- Develop guiding principles that ensure Rock Island stays on track in focusing resources on stated aims.
- Publish strategic plans on the city's website, social media so our community understands the vision and next steps for Rock Island.

- Create a revolving Mayoral Citizens Advisory Board so the Mayor can interact regularly with citizens to understand concerns and suggestions of Rock Islanders.
- Prioritize infrastructure projects within the city budget.
- Rely on evidence-based budgeting to ensure a good return on investment in dollars spent. If the return is not demonstrated, consider reducing expenditures and reallocate money to high return on investment areas.
- Increase incentives for Rock Island public employees to live in Rock Island.
- Increase incentives to bring talented and successful members back to our community.
- Update city website and technology department

Vibrant

Mayor Brooks will:

- Expand recreation and entertainment options within Rock Island
 - Movie theater,
 - Indoor recreation options in NW Rock Island (turf, batting cages, basketball courts, weight room, health/training facility, bowling, arcade, laser tag).
- Expand restaurant options throughout Rock Island, focusing on the Riverfront/District, Hilltop area and NW Rock Island.
- Attract a health foods grocery store to Rock Island.
- Create a family friendly business hub in the District.
- Develop a social justice museum centered on the history of our greater region to enhance education, attract field trips and tourism and stand out among museums in our area.
- Expand partnerships with local colleges and universities to bring resources into our community and to provide opportunities for students in higher education through scholarships, internships, and employment.
- Explore opportunities to create artistic and historical murals throughout the city.
- Explore sustainable uses for 11th street property including urban micro-farming and co-operative retail use.
- Host community gatherings and support monthly block parties at city parks throughout the city.
- Expand adult sporting leagues.
- Expand volunteer opportunities for citizens within our community.

Safe

Mayor Brooks will:

- Form a Police Community Relations Commission to collect and evaluate data on policing and issues within the community in Rock Island. This Commission will serve as a third-party entity that produces transparent and open information for our community and works with community members and law enforcement to improve community relations. The Commission will include law enforcement and a diverse group of community members to include previously convicted felons.
- Increase the use of body cameras and street cameras which both police officers and citizens report increase a sense of safety.
- Improve street lighting that utilizes energy efficient light sources.
- Offer advanced police and fire training.
- Implement the Resolution platform.
- Create a successful Life After Prison Program.
- Offer job placement support programs.
- Provide opportunities and outlets for young men to achieve and succeed within our community.

Healthy

Mayor Brooks will:

- Expand and enhance bike and walking paths.
- Improve access to quality health care.
- Improve access to quality dental care.
- Improve access to quality mental health care.
- Improve access to healthy food.
- Improve access to exercise and recreational opportunities.
- Expand and enhance city wifi.
- Improve air quality throughout the city.
- Improve water quality and cleanliness of streams/creeks in the city.
- Expand universal preschool options for Rock Island families.
- Actively support, partner with our K-12 education system.
- Increase opportunities for healthy public discourse among members of our community.

Supporting Stable and Healthy Communities

Mayor Brooks will:

- Operate on a balanced budget.
- Expand relationships with local trades to provide education, recruitment and job opportunities.
- Explore trade school opportunities (i.e., Franklin Field project).
- Provide tax incentives for homeownership.
- Lead the charge with local/border city Mayors and City Councils to challenge the RI County Board and/or State of Illinois to consider competitive tax plans that make Rock Island more competitive with neighboring states.
- Capitalize on relationship with local trades and the State of Illinois' "Rebuild Illinois- Illinois Works Jobs Program" initiative to further diversity and grow apprenticeships for construction and building trades.

Building a Clean & Green Economy

Mayor Brooks will:

- Develop a Rock Island beautification unit comprised of community members, 16-24 year olds, Rock Island business owners, and trades professionals to train young people in the basics of home repair (painting, trim work, fence repair, grading around homes, etc.) and to deploy these young people to assist homeowners in keeping their homes and city beautiful.
- Work with grant programs to renovate homes in need.
- Tear down homes that are unsafe or uninhabitable.
- Clean up trash within the city regularly.
- Clean city streams/creeks with help from volunteers quarterly.

Green

Mayor Brooks will:

- Increase the utilization of water, wind and solar power for city operations.

- Provide incentives for home and business owners to incorporate solar power into meeting their energy needs.
- Replace outdated city vehicles with energy efficient vehicles over time.
- Increase the availability of bike lanes and walking paths.
- Increase green spaces through pocket parks and community gardens to beautify empty spaces and improve air quality where possible.
- Strategically increase urban agriculture programs to grow and sell food within our community.
- Provide incentives to builders and developers to build LEED certified buildings and homes.
- Invest in beautification and cleanliness of public parks and property.
- Train the next generation of clean energy workforce through the Future Energy Job Acts of Illinois.
- Attract green companies to Rock Island, standing out as a green city within the Quad Cities.
- Explore electric scooters and bikes.

Affordable

Mayor Brooks will:

- Work with Rock Island Housing Authority to enhance programs.
 - Offer financial education/wealth building programs to residents.
 - Offer First time home buyer education and assistance.
- Offer a first time home buyer incentive.
- Ban payday lending companies from operating in Rock Island.
- Attract a credit union and banking opportunities to low-income neighborhoods.
- Operate within the city budget to avoid tax increases.
- Provide a tax break to residents who live and work in Rock Island.
- Provide incentives to teachers, police, medical personnel, and fire fighters who live and work in Rock Island.

Attractive

Mayor Brooks will:

- Evaluate QC realtors role in attracting homeowners and businesses to Rock Island.
- Create a small business task force comprising current small business owners who work collectively to strategically map out and address relevant concerns with the City officials.

- Create a voluntary small business relief program through which small business owners can pay dues and then fund start-ups or provide emergency relief to Rock Island small businesses.
- Host Small Business Saturday in the District April-September.
- Continue to sell abandoned lots at discounted prices.
- Offer incentives for minority-owned businesses.
- Offer incentives for community action based programming.
- Offer incentives for new small business owners graduating from State schools and returning home.
- Offer incentives for businesses hiring returning citizens.
- Offer tax cuts for property owners renting to returning citizens and their families.

Our community has much to offer, but much remains to be done. Under current leadership the most recent strategic vision posted on the City of Rock Island's website is from 2010 and seems to have been abandoned mid-report. How can a City know where it is going if it doesn't have a roadmap? And a road map requires strategy and unwavering pursuit of important goals. Thurgood Brooks has the strategy, the skills and the persistence to bring about our best community yet, a better Rock Island. Let's Build Rock Island Together!