

## **2019 SOTC – South Bend, IN; 03/14/2019**

### **Welcome**

Good evening. Thank you, Vice President White, for the introduction, and Pastor Patton for the invocation. Let's hear it one more time for our student performers this evening! And thank you to the staff at the Morris Performing Arts Center for helping to bring this night about.

I want to thank President Scott and members of the South Bend Common Council for being here tonight, as well as City Clerk Kareemah Fowler.

And I would like to introduce to you over twenty current and former members of the South Bend Youth Task Force, a diverse and talented group of high school students who have worked on important issues and helped me better understand what is at stake in our city's future.

And thank you to all who are joining us tonight, whether here in the audience or watching online.

### **Intro**

I address you this evening with a mix of emotions, knowing that this is my eighth and final opportunity to present the people of South Bend with an account of the state of our city. On one hand, it is difficult to accept that I will not be doing the same thing a year from now. For the better part of this decade, the City of South Bend has been the work of my life. That work has been so rewarding, so demanding, and so absorbing that it is difficult to believe it will end in a few short months. On the other hand, it is also difficult to believe that this really is my eighth State of the City address. It feels in many ways as though I just got here; as though, just yesterday, I was knocking on doors on the West Side or in Harter's Heights, introducing myself, explaining how to say my name, and promising a fresh start for the City of South Bend. The passage of time only becomes believable when I reflect on how different the last few years of this decade are from the first few—how much has changed for our community since the snowy New Year's day in 2012 when I took the oath.

In those years, streets have changed their course, structures have fallen and risen, entire departments in the city have been created or transformed, a new generation of public servants has brought their talents to help guide our community, and this small city of ours has become a living example of how the industrial Midwest can fashion a new and better life for itself: not through nostalgia or by way of impossible promises to return to the past, but by an insistence that change be made to work for us and a belief in our ability to own the future.

## **Strong, Inclusive Economy**

Perhaps the most striking set of transformations amid South Bend's comeback has to do with our economy. When I took office, our community had been hit even harder than most by the blows of the Great Recession. Some neighborhoods looked as if they had been in a recession ever since the departure of Studebaker in 1963. We were even characterized (or I should say mischaracterized) as a "dying city" in 2011, a view that is typical of the attitude of the national press toward our part of the country as it saw young people leaving and manufacturing jobs dwindling.

Yet by the time that article was published, South Bend had already demonstrated that it had the building blocks of a better future. A data economy was quietly emerging around the fiber infrastructure that lay beneath our feet. A partnership with the University of Notre Dame was yielding extraordinary results, from the highly visible Eddy Street Commons development opened in 2009 to the far less visible but even more valuable smart sewer technology collaboration that suggested a new way for cities to benefit from research and experimentation on campus.

Still, there was a crisis of confidence in our economy. By the time I took office in 2012 there were bitter debates over who should take the blame for the state's economic development arm not having done a major deal here in years, arguments over whether our region could be a good place to do business, and even earnest debates over whether the arrival of Eddy Commons would signal the death knell of any kind of restaurant scene in our downtown.

Today we have our answer for whether a community like ours can thrive in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Unemployment fell from 11.8 to 4.1 percent and, no less importantly, closed in on the national average and in some cases dipped below it, as in 2017.

Population is estimated to have grown one percent between 2012 and 2017, a modest but very meaningful number for a city that lost a quarter of its population after the 1960s. We have seen billions in investment come to our city, and over 15,000 jobs have been added in our metro area.

Much of this resurgence has happened within walking distance of where we are gathered. So swift and so welcome is this growth that we may forget how recently the LaSalle building stood empty and the JMS was in serious need of repair; how recently the idea of people living in the Hibberd building by the Gates Chevy lot would have seemed laughable, no less than that of a seven-story development rising on the East Bank or a groundbreaking on a transformed Commerce Center. Not long ago we were asking if the Chase Tower might just need to be torn down.

Walking down Main Street just a few years ago, shoulders squared a little bit against the rush of four lanes of one-way traffic evacuating the downtown at rush hour, you might have wondered aloud about whether we could ever get the Hall of Fame off the city's books and back on the tax rolls, or if any further investment in Coveleski Stadium and the South Bend Silver Hawks was worth the risk, while the broken windows of the Studebaker Assembly building loomed over that stadium and the whole downtown.

Now you can make out the new facade of that building as you walk or bike along that same street, past the statue of Dr. King and Father Ted and the street trees and flowers maintained by DTSB, and cross paths with guests from one of three hotels, see diners headed to or from dozens of restaurants, or—the most striking change—run across hundreds of people who don't just work or recreate downtown, but live here. Put simply: downtown South Bend is back.

There is more where that came from, as we prepare to celebrate the opening of the Ivy at Berlin Place, begin a major office development at Jefferson and Main, and count numerous future projects underway or in planning—including a major expansion of our St. Joseph County Public Library.

And our economic development has not been confined to downtown. We recently celebrated the new Embassy Suites opening at Eddy Street Commons as the project's Phase 2 development moves completion. Our Northwest side has seen over \$90 million in City-assisted development, bringing hundreds of jobs to new industry and logistics employers. Overall, across the city since I took office, we've partnered on over \$850 million in project investment supporting over 4,000 new jobs, just including city-related economic development deals, and unemployment has fallen nearly 7 percent.

But it's not enough to celebrate the top line numbers and the averages. Our city still has many low-income residents. Income inequality and wealth inequality persist. We know that African-American households earn half that of Caucasian households, and that black and Latino homeownership is below that of white residents. It's one reason why we are investing in underserved parts of town like the West Side, where we have targeted resources on home repair, improved public facilities, enhanced our streetscapes, and recently opened the West Side Small Business Resource Center. We are working to support minority entrepreneurship as a purchaser, with leadership from our Office of Diversity and Inclusion. And with support from Accelerator for America, we are one of the first cities in the country to generate a Community Prospectus for Opportunity Zones, working to steer new investment to lower-income areas of our city.

We invest not just in places but in people. Now in its third year, our Pathways Workforce Development program has supported hundreds of South Bend residents with career training and certifications, empowering them to thrive in a changing economy. We also recognize the role that organized labor can play in providing skills training and pathways to the middle class, and were pleased to work with local labor organizations to develop a responsible bidder ordinance that ensures a fair playing field for all who compete for city business.

Meanwhile, we are becoming ever more connected with the region and the world through assets like the South Bend International Airport. As a mayor, and as a somewhat increasingly frequent user of the airport, I have been delighted to see its growth, including the qualification as an International airport and the increased routes and service. When an airline adds a route here, as most recently with the connections to Dallas and Charlotte, it is both a vote of confidence in the present economy and an engine of future growth.

It's a good thing we have more hotel rooms in our city as well as more ways of getting here. The Carter Work Project in Mishawaka and South Bend brought thousands of people to this community, as did the sold-out Garth Brooks concert at Notre Dame Stadium and the NHL Winter classic. And more opportunities to showcase our city are ahead with major events like the U.S. Men's Senior Open and the Midwest League All Star Game coming our way

South Bend has become a destination not just for event-goers and tourists but for leaders from around the country and the world, as we hosted the U.S. Conference of Mayors Task Force on Automation for a key meeting, Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti's Accelerator for America nonprofit for its inaugural gathering, visits from officials and diplomats from the United Kingdom, Argentina, France, China, Israel, Germany, and more, and tours by some of the most accomplished technology investors and founders in Silicon Valley. More than ever, South Bend is on the map.

Now, we have a once-in-a-generation chance to seize another transformative opportunity: linking Downtown Chicago with Downtown South Bend by rail for the first time since 1970 through improvements to the last miles of the South Shore line. We are awaiting results this summer from an in-depth study now underway to help us envision the possibility a link that runs downtown to downtown, even while other alternatives are still being assessed. If this proves feasible, and if we can validate previous estimates that this can be done for \$100 million or less, then we expect South Bend will see at least a 4-to-1 return on this investment. I would hope that we can achieve this goal by 2025.

## **Safe Community for Everyone**

The kind of growth we're seeing here doesn't just happen. It requires a vibrant civic life, robust quality of place, and a strong foundation of good infrastructure and public safety.

When it comes to law enforcement and crime, the city's progress over my lifetime has been dramatic. When I was a child here, it was not uncommon to see over 20 murders in a year—reflecting national trends. But sustained work across this community helped drive major reductions, most notably in gun violence.

Still, my phone lights up far, far too often with the latest report of an act of violence in our city. That's why we built a community coalition around the Group Violence Intervention, a proven strategy that relies on close engagement between social services, law enforcement, faith leaders, and the community at large. Working together we have held down the rate of group- and gang-involved shootings in this city, and I believe this program is saving lives. Our expanded street outreach team is connecting with even more at-risk individuals to provide stability and guidance. And this year we're enhancing our social media capabilities to pre-empt conflicts that start online and can lead to violence.

Our city's safety depends on an atmosphere of trust between neighbors and officers. A resident cannot live well in our city if he or she fears being treated unfairly, and an officer can't do his or her job without the support of residents.

To help build trust, the police department has worked hard to become the most professional department in the state, with new approaches to career path development and higher-than-ever levels of professional accountability and public transparency. We have become one of the first departments to establish an online Transparency Hub, with information on everything from recruiting procedures to use of force incidents. We've implemented body cameras department-wide, and have encouraged officers to step outside the vehicles for over 7,500 foot patrols in neighborhoods and schools last year alone.

Nearly a thousand kids last year participated in the South Bend Police Athletic League, and officers built new relationships, with events from small neighborhood cookouts to a record-breaking Cops & Goblins Trick or Treat night, welcoming over 6,500 people to Four Winds Field. In this city, we recognize that public safety is a community-wide effort.

Our Fire Department responded to over 20,000 emergency calls for service last year, with a department more diverse than ever and benefiting from exceptional training resources. We continue to invest in the facilities to help them succeed, from expanding our world-class Luther J. Taylor Fire Training Center to a new Station 4 on the West Side with features to reduce cancer risk and improve health and wellness for firefighters stationed there.

On the East Side, a robust and positive community dialogue resulted in a Fire Station 9 that we look forward to opening this summer, featuring a water-facing boat truck garage to quickly respond to water rescue emergencies.

Our river rescue unit continues to be a national leader in training, and members of the swift water rescue team were deployed to North Carolina as part of the response to Hurricane Florence, helping to rescue over 160 people.

The department remains focused on prevention, with smoke alarm blitzes in different neighborhoods, to install thousands of smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms since 2012. We have attained one of the highest ratings in the state from the ISO, and

will pursue an even higher designation soon, reflecting our safer city and helping lower insurance costs for residents.

We are also developing an innovative community paramedicine program to help avoid ER visits and ambulance trips for frequent users of EMS. By serving and redirecting individuals with non-emergency needs, the program frees up 911 callers and hospital beds, while saving tax dollars and improving patient outcomes.

EMTs have also been on the front lines of coping with the opioid epidemic. Our entire city continues to work to deal with this scourge. We are participating in a lawsuit against irresponsible pharmaceutical companies, and engaging in dialogue with the clinical community about the best way forward. We've also launched a partnership with Beacon Health and Oaklawn to fund the certification of recovery coaches, who guide individuals along the path to recovery.

We also face a major public health challenge with lead exposure. City water consistently tests as high-quality and healthy—but most houses in our city were built before the 1978 ban on lead paint, and exposure from paint in homes is a major concern. After learning of high blood lead levels in children on the northwest side, we have teamed up with community partners to expand testing and remediation resources for residents. We have worked to deliver free lead testing for all primary school students in South Bend Community Schools, and have conducted three major events to date, open to all students and hosted by schools located in the highest-risk neighborhoods. This work will continue, with the next event set for Harrison Elementary next week and another at Lincoln Elementary later this spring. We urge families to take advantage of this opportunity.

Last year came the welcome news that we have secured over \$3 million in competitive grant money to remediate homes with lead risk, including \$2.3 million in federal funds. This will help us join forces with partners including the St. Joseph County Health Department, the South Bend Medical Foundation, Michiana Health Information Network, Notre Dame, the Housing Authority and others to ensure we have a proactive strategy to protect our children.

Meanwhile, we have addressed homelessness with a historic concentration of City resources and attention. In 2017 our Working Group on Chronic Homelessness brought City officials, service providers, and community stakeholders together to identify solutions. The group endorsed a housing-first approach, with two major policy recommendations: 1) expansion of permanent supportive housing units; and 2) the creation of an intake, or gateway, center as a single-point entry into services.

In keeping with these recommendations, the City has now helped to fund 32 permanent supportive housing units at Oliver Apartments, operated by South Bend Heritage, and partnered with the Center for the Homeless to add another 28 units in scattered site housing, bringing us more than halfway to the goal of 82 units recommended by the working group. We've worked with providers to fund a managed Coordinated Entry

process, which guides those experiencing homelessness to permanent supportive housing.

In 2019 we will continue our efforts to locate a Gateway Center to serve as a central intake point for those who are most difficult to house. Meeting this goal will require community support. It is not enough to set aside money and agree that more should be done for the homeless; a facility must be placed somewhere in particular, and when we do identify a site that can get the needed community support, we must commit to making sure that both the city as a whole, and the area around the site, end up safer and better than before.

## **Robust & Well-Planned Infrastructure**

The other key part of our city's foundation is infrastructure, from waste water to street paving.

This time of year, especially with the freeze and thaw cycles we've been through, we all have potholes on our mind. The city filled over 22,000 of them last year, and more than 365,000 since my administration began. We've paved over 140 lane miles of street and replaced nearly half a million feet of curbs and sidewalks since 2012, most recently including new sidewalks and curbs near Monroe and Studebaker schools as part of the Safe Routes to Schools program.

I'm proud of what we have been able to do with the resources we have. But I am also concerned about the sustainability of our current approach to funding infrastructure. We celebrated when the General Assembly acted in 2017 to adjust the gas tax to create more funds for paving roads. But revenues this year are down compared to last year, and we will be watching closely to see if this number rises again as we hope.

Meanwhile, in Washington, after raising hopes and expectations around a national infrastructure plan, the administration there has made it clear that local state and local governments will continue to bear most of the burden of funding our aging physical infrastructure. Right now, our staff tells me we have enough funding to pave every lane-mile of road in the city every 100 years. Unless an affordable paving material is invented that can last more than 15 years, it's going to take a new revenue model to meet our road funding needs in the long run.

Despite these limitations, we have targeted road funding to address the streets most in need of improvement—and used economic development to fund streetscape improvements that help to pay for themselves in economic growth. This included, of course, the famous Smart Streets program. It took some persuasion at the time that we sought the \$25 million in funding that made this conversion possible—but in the two short years since we delivered our reimagined downtown streets, we've seen over \$100 million in net private investment, a terrific return on our public dollar—and more

importantly, a healthier and more vibrant downtown. We will follow up this year with continued work on cross streets, and improvements to Michigan Street.

And across the City you'll soon find new wayfinding signage, which will guide residents and visitors to South Bend's key destinations.

There's another piece of infrastructure work quietly taking place—quiet being the operative word. At the urging of neighbors and Council members, we have identified funding to bring quiet zones for train horns to the West Side. We expect to complete these safety improvements soon, so that by the end of the year trains can pass through the whole city without having to automatically sound their horns.

Meanwhile, our Water Works continues to deliver billions of gallons of clean, safe drinking water every year. And many of you by now have heard me boast of the fact that our city has the “Smartest Sewers in the World,” building on work that began under Mayor Luecke. Based on this technology, we believe South Bend can meet its Clean Water Act obligations for half a billion dollars less than originally proposed—saving \$5,000 for every man, woman, and child in this city. We are in the process of negotiating our consent decree with the EPA in hopes of clearance to pursue this greener and more affordable plan.

Affordability remains a very important concern. Access to clean water and sanitation are among the most fundamental of human needs. Yet 43 percent of families in St. Joseph County have to make daily choices about which services they can afford. The City is now in the initial planning phase of creating lifeline sewer and water rates for low-income families for basic water use, to help struggling families meet their needs affordably.

In sum, we are using some of the most advanced technologies in the world, as well as making investments that amount to the largest public works project in the history of the city. And we are establishing a stormwater utility, which will help fund updates to our system and green infrastructure to keep up with extreme weather. Previously, we've been taking away dollars from our paving budget to respond to weather-related sewer updates. We shouldn't have to choose between good roads and good stormwater management.

That being said, the truth is that no city can afford to build sewer infrastructure that can comfortably handle what are supposed to be once-in-a-lifetime, historic floods on a routine basis. In a span of less than two years, the city has experienced two such flooding events, and I fear there are more where they came from. Climate change is upon us, today. This is no longer theoretical and it is not only happening in the Arctic.

We're going to make sure we're part of the solution. South Bend may be a small piece of the global puzzle, but cities around the world are increasingly coordinating our actions on climate, knowing that if our national governments fail to lead, we can still make a tremendous impact between us. That's why I have signed onto the Global



Covenant of Mayors—a commitment among thousands of cities representing hundreds of millions of people around the globe, all pledging to take action to address climate change.

Two new fire stations and Howard Park will be certified as green, high-performing buildings. We have converted 95 percent of our Solid Waste fleet to run on compressed natural gas, and most of that now comes from converting human waste to biogas—fueling our City trash trucks in a closed-loop system our team has called “poop-to-power” to make our services more efficient.

Sustainability is part of why we’ve added bike lanes and installed free electric vehicle chargers, offered solar-powered lamp posts as part of the Light up South Bend program, and supported in-home energy efficiency assessments, all while updating our codes and procedures to make it easier to go solar.

Next week, we are launching a climate action planning process, which will help us identify the best strategies for reducing emissions while supporting our community priorities. I hope to collaborate with Council to make this climate action plan an official part of our community-wide strategy by the end of the year.

## **Vibrant, Welcoming Neighborhoods**

Perhaps the best measure of the progress of our city is the condition of our neighborhoods. This has been a top priority from the start of my administration, beginning with the Vacant and Abandoned Properties Task Force. Since then we have continued to focus on neighborhood improvement in every part of the city.

Along key corridors, we’ve matched small business improvements through our Façade Matching Grant Program, from Lincoln Way West and Western Avenue to Miami Street and Mishawaka Avenue. By nurturing these corridors, we’re rewarding South Bend small business owners and unlocking future growth. This year we will expand the program to Portage/Elwood and Linden Avenue.

This work reinforces the West Side Main Streets plan that has added new streetscapes to Western Avenue. We have been working with residents to build out a plan for the Portage-Elwood neighborhood, and are currently visioning with the Near Northwest Neighborhood to enlist resident feedback and shape proposed projects for the future.

Our Neighborhood Development team has worked to help applicants through the tax sale process for vacant lots, and is collaborating with community partners like 466 Works and the NNN to develop housing in the Southeast and Near Northwest Neighborhoods, while assisting individual homeowners with housing counseling and default workouts.

I was also delighted this year to announce the new South Bend Home Repair program, which brings together three separate lines of effort on home repair and will make over \$1 million available for neighborhood upgrades. These resources will reinforce the work of our new Office of Engagement and Economic Empowerment, which exists to promote community action and dialogue on inclusion and economic mobility, taking on efforts ranging from reducing eviction rates to improving access to capital.

The City is also preparing for the upcoming 2020 Census, supporting outreach and working to strengthen the accuracy of our address database to make sure the census is fair and equitable. I am very concerned that the federal administration's proposed, untested, and legally questionable addition of a "citizenship question" to the Census will lead to an undercount in South Bend in 2020, and we are closely following the federal litigation on this issue. It's in everyone's interest for every person in this city to be counted.

The Department of Code Enforcement has continued its work keeping our neighborhoods safe and clean, not just as an enforcer but as a partner. Last year the department partnered with resident volunteers on 18 neighborhood cleanups, triple the total from 2016, while the Animal Care & Control division has tripled adoption rates in recent years.

The 1,000 days of the 1,000 houses program is behind us. We have cleared a major backlog, but the work continues for Code Enforcement on vacant and abandoned properties. From 2013-2018, we addressed 1,447 properties. Many were demolished, but the most heartening news is that 657 of these properties—almost half—have been repaired rather than torn down.

It's with a continued view to neighborhood quality of life that last week I signed into law the new Rental Safety Verification Program, or RSVP. This program will allow the City to proactively address violations in rental housing that can cause health issues and safety concerns for residents—not by adding new rules, but by empowering the City to ensure compliance with existing standards.

Starting with active code cases and areas at highest risk of lead poisoning, our purpose is to protect vulnerable tenants, stimulate reinvestment, and reduce lead exposure. I want to thank our administration team, local housing leaders, community activists, and members of the Common Council, for the collaboration that made this possible.

We are also working closely with the Housing Authority of South Bend to make sure our most vulnerable residents experience safe, quality affordable housing. This has not been an easy task given reduced resources and the recent federal government shutdown. Since I first approached the board with concerns last fall, a process of improved coordination has taken place at both the staff and leadership level from the City and Housing Authority, and I want to thank Board President Dr. Calvin and the team for their commitment to strong communication.

## Thriving Public Spaces & Culture

It's hard to believe that four years ago, there was no Department of Venues, Parks & Arts. The newly designed department has been recognized as a statewide leader in parks and facilities management, and 2019 will be a year of transformation for our shared public spaces.

The My SB Parks and Trails plan, representing the largest investment in public spaces in our City's history, is about to enter its most active year. Last year just 10 percent of the initiative's budget had been spent; by the end of this year we expect to be over 80 percent completion.

This work is city-wide. We've seen new splash pads at Fremont Park, a new dog park at Rum Village, an improved entrance at the Martin Luther King Jr. Center, a volunteer-driven upgrade at Kelly Park, and more. It was especially gratifying recently to open the renovated Charles Black Center in the LaSalle Park neighborhood, an investment of millions built on the simple belief that every neighborhood in this city deserves first-rate facilities.

This year you'll see enhanced access for people with disabilities. We're re-envisioning Leeper Park with a restored Studebaker Fountain, and work is underway for a transformed Howard Park with a new community building, a new playground, event space, and an ice rink and ice trail we hope will be open for skating at Thanksgiving.

Maintaining a first-rate parks system isn't just about enjoyment—it's about equity, value, and health. That's why we've joined the 10-Minute Walk initiative, which challenges cities to ensure that all residents are within ten minutes on foot of quality green space. We're on track to reach 80 percent access by the end of 2020, unlocking benefits for thousands more South Bend residents.

Our trails have been enhanced and are increasingly interconnected. We've engaged with the neighborhood around the proposed Coal Line Trail, and have applied for multiple grants to build out more connections. New this winter, VPA unveiled Trails 365, a commitment to clear major trails of snowfall within 24 hours. And thanks to our infrastructure investment and the enthusiasm of partners like the Bike Michiana Coalition, we're now one of two Indiana cities to be designated a Silver Level Bicycle Friendly Community.

Meanwhile, the Morris hosted a record number of performances—and we'll do even more this year. Tonight you were welcomed by an improved Jon Hunt Plaza and a new marquee. Down Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard, the Century Center is seeing increased bookings thanks to hotel rooms more than doubling in our downtown, while our participation in the state-led Regional Cities program is helping to deliver a

transformed new entrance to the Potawatomi Zoo that is just the beginning of their visionary strategic plan.

Since the summer of 2015, the City has come together for a weeklong celebration of arts, culture, and entertainment. What began as SB150 has developed into Best. Week. Ever. Every neighborhood comes alive as part of this shared, award-winning experience. We're already planning for 2019, and making sure each year to again deliver the Best "Best Week Ever" Ever.

## **Well-Governed & Administered City**

Behind all of these activities and results is an extraordinary team of employees, striving to meet the city's mission—to deliver services that empower everyone to thrive—with hard work grounded in the administration's values: excellence, innovation, accountability, inclusion, and empowerment.

We strive to be a great employer for great employees. Early in this administration this meant ensuring that politically unpopular salary adjustments helped bring our pay at every level more in line with competing employers. Each year since, we have done more to make sure compensation is fair and competitive.

Realizing that a \$7.25 minimum wage is not enough to get by, we have acted to bring the minimum wage of a city employee to \$10.10 an hour, and continue to urge other area employers to do the same. I am also pleased to report that having completed our first full year of offering paid parental leave, one of the first in the state to do so, the policy was a success; 38 employees received six full weeks to get off to the right start with new children, and the city is running better than ever.

These decisions helped us earn the "Best Benefits" and "Happiest Place to Work" designations from the South Bend Tribune in 2018, and we will soon introduce new benefits to encourage volunteerism and allow employees to donate vacation time to others in need.

At a time when our nation remains the only industrialized country without mandatory family leave, and when minimum wages across the country are often too low to make a living, I want to re-state my conviction, based on our experience as an employer with a tight budget, that doing right by our people has made us more successful and cost-effective than ever.

Behind the scenes, our Department of Law has not only helped keep city liability low but also been an engine of transparency, handling over 16,000 requests for information since I took office, with not a single finding of violation of the Access to Public Records Act.

Our Office of Diversity and Inclusion has introduced a number of measures to make sure that the City of South Bend is inclusive for employees, residents, and visitors alike. Inclusive talent management is helping us to reduce barriers to employment and create a transparent promotion and retention process. We are conducting a diversity purchasing disparity study to make sure that minority and women-owned businesses in South Bend get fair opportunities to compete for city business. And we continue to work with community partners on the My Brother's Keeper Initiative, launched under President Obama and locally anchored by Beacon Medical, to tear down barriers for young men and boys of color.

While we are on the topic of inclusion, I want to express my conviction on the importance of passing real, meaningful hate crimes legislation in this state. The South Bend Common Council has expressed its support, as has Governor Holcomb, yet the State Assembly has been unable to deliver. Our community stands strong for the belief that this year should be Indiana's last as one of just five states in the union without such a law.

Meanwhile, our fiscal team has helped the City to make the best use of taxpayer dollars. Unlike the federal government, the City does not get to print money, nor can we afford to spend without limits. Budget season always forces us to make tough decisions, and I want to thank the Common Council under the leadership of President Tim Scott and Personnel and Finance Committee chairperson Karen White, for their work with our Administration and Finance team to deliver a 2019 budget process that was the smoothest yet.

We are good at budgeting: Our city received multiple awards for our budget presentation and process from the Government Finance Officers Association. And we continue to have the rare distinction of a AA bond rating, independently confirmation that we are one of the most fiscally sound cities in the state.

The state has thrown another challenge at us in the form of the so-called 2020 "fiscal curb," which will entail a . But we've have been preparing for this for years by identifying efficiencies and controlling costs, and we will continue to collaborate on tough choices this budget season to ensure the 2020 budget is responsive and responsible.

### **Empower All Residents With Education, Mobility, & Technology**

One of the most remarkable achievements of the city in this decade has been its arrival as a national leader in the field of civic innovation. We started with the basics like the creation of a 311 center. Today it's hard to picture our city without 311, but eight years ago it was just a campaign promise. Now, the representatives there have handled roughly 850,000 calls on everything from filling potholes to picking up Christmas trees. More recently 311 has partnered with Vets' Community Connections to connect

veterans to available resources. And we've placed the same information the 311 representatives use online, on a re-designed website, so residents can get questions answered any time.

Our 311 system and website stand alongside lower-tech methods for collecting feedback, like the Mayor's Night Out events that have led to hundreds of in-person meetings for residents with me and department heads, all with the goal of better service.

Internally, the SB Stat process for identifying performance improvements, has found efficiencies in the Fire, Police, Public Works, and Parks departments. In the spirit of transparency, we now publish SB Stat presentations on our website, so that you can see the same information that comes to me in these targeted and effective meetings.

From equipment investments like iPads in the field helping us optimize leaf pickup, to investments in our people through the SB Academy training process for building technical skills, we are ensuring that this community has top talent and technology at the service of residents.

Here, too, we are mindful of equity, because the "digital divide" threatens to reinforce inequality in the new economy. That's why, in 2016, we introduced free WiFi downtown, and are equipping community centers and Housing Authority properties with Internet access.

## **Partnerships**

I am proud of our administration team. But we could do nothing without the partnerships that drive our city. We have worked with federal partners from law enforcement to environmental protection. We have moved past old suspicions between South Bend and Indianapolis to mobilize state partnerships in economic development to benefit our city. We have collaborated with our colleges and universities on initiatives from the Bowman Creek Educational Ecosystem to legal aid for those most in need. We have teamed up with the county on matters from public safety to public health. And we have done everything we can to support our South Bend Community Schools.

One of the most rewarding developments in my time in office has been the growing partnership with the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians. We are proud of the recognition that finally came to Pokagon sovereign land within our city limits. History will record that when federally-recognized Indian Country first came to Indiana, it was here in South Bend. Now, we have begun collecting the first installments of millions of dollars in benefits negotiated with the Four Winds Casino to support everything from parks and recreation to childhood development, and we expect our partnership with this area's original residents to continue and bear fruit for generations to come.

As South Bend's national reputation has grown, so has our ability to attract support from national philanthropic partners. Tonight I want to highlight two such partnerships.

The first helps show how we can respond to the accelerating pace of change in the nature of work. As chairman of the U.S. Conference of Mayors Task force on Automation, I have seen cities grappling with the question of how to prepare workers for a future in which my generation will change careers more often than my parents changed job titles. One thing we know is that skills will become more important than ever.

Last spring we announced a partnership with the Drucker Institute to establish a Center for Lifelong Learning, the first of its kind. Financed by the philanthropic arms of Google and Walmart, this will lead to a platform for our residents to develop their personal, professional and technical skills as they adapt to the workforce of the future. The initial commitment of \$500,000 has helped us to do early design work on a platform for early learning that could be a national model, and we are working to scale this up with even more private support.

The second collaboration has to do with transportation, and the trap of being a low-income worker who lacks reliable transportation to work. With this problem in mind, we entered the Bloomberg Mayor's challenge, competing with over 320 cities from around the world. Last fall we were announced as one of nine winners of a \$1 million grant to fund our proposed solution, based on the success of our pilot.

Our solution is based on the concept of transportation-as-a-benefit. The City partnered with local employers to arrange for rideshare as a backup option to get employees to work. Over 80 percent of employees said this led them to work more hours and bring home more earnings, and employers in the pilot showed openness to helping fund this as a benefit in the future.

This innovative approach gained attention from around the world, with South Bend officials invited to address leaders of governments as far away as Paris and Dubai. Any place with low density and lower-income workers stands to benefit from this approach. Over the coming months, we'll use the \$1 million grant award to scale up the program, attracting new employers and expanding job security for workers. We believe this will be an excellent complement to the services of Transpo, which is seeing strong progress under its new leadership, and we look forward to the results.

## **Next mayor**

Speaking of transformation and change, I must acknowledge the political process now underway to decide on the city officials who will take office next year. A year from now, this speech will be given by a new mayor, leading a new administration, with a different style, different strengths, and perhaps different priorities. This is the most natural and

healthy feature of our democratic system: its ability to balance continuity and change. The new mayor and Council will face no shortage of challenges: addressing land use on vacant lots that used to hold collapsing houses but are not yet ready for new construction. Ensuring our level of violent crime does not go back to prior levels, and driving it down even further. Further closing the gap on income and employment relative to the rest of the nation, and doing so in a way that reduces the persistent and glaring racial inequity in our society and our city. Connecting us to a region and a world that is becoming more dynamic and demanding at a time when connectivity is key. Partnering with others, from businesses to universities, to bring about results that make us all better off. Leading us in celebrating what is best in our city, and holding us together whenever we face the worst of what our times can throw at us.

The work of a mayor—the speaking and the listening, the hiring and the firing, the building and redesigning, inventing and implementing, celebrating and mourning—it's a daunting task for the most confident person. But it can be done well, through teamwork and commitment, and a readiness to put policy ahead of politics. The next mayor will have the benefit of leading a growing city, a rejuvenated city, a city headed in the right direction—benefiting from the work of these eight years just as I stand on the shoulders of those who have come before.

## **Conclusion**

You hear a lot of numbers from me—in this speech and in general—because I believe in carefully measuring our outcomes, watching what works and what doesn't based on hard data, adjusting our approach as we go. But the truth is that the single thing I am proudest of in this city over the last seven years and change isn't something I can put into numbers. It's the simple fact that this city believes in itself again. I'm under no illusion that I alone should take the credit for that. It is a reflection of the dynamism of our neighborhoods, the passion of our advocates, the urgency of our leaders in every sector, the legacy of those who came before me. But I also do believe we helped. I believe that the combination of careful listening and bold action, deep tradition and original thinking, that characterize the women and men of this administration, have helped to bend the trajectory of this city and cement the status of these years as South Bend's comeback decade. And I am thankful to have played a part in that. From running for office in the first place—which is itself an act of hope—to serving every day, I have sought to live out the values of this city and call fellow residents to be our very best. And you have called me to be more than I used to be, time and again.

I'm not done serving this city yet. But since this is my last State of the City address, I want to take this opportunity to thank you for giving me this chance to serve. I love this city. I love South Bend... enough to move home when not everyone understood why. Enough to write a book about this city. Enough to give over the better part of my thirties to leading it.



More people should hear our story. When I go on the road, I talk about our experience as a metaphor for what needs to happen in our country. America needs to find ways, as South Bend has, to embrace our future without fear and adapt to change so that it works for all of us. America needs to seek greatness, not by dredging it up from some impossible “again,” but by looking squarely to the future, just as our forebears did. Like our city, this country needs to use technology and innovation in a fashion that is true to our history and tradition, but fearless and original, to make everyone better off.

I love our hometown. I love walks and runs along our river, block parties in our neighborhoods, ball games and meals out in our downtown, and public art in our parks. I love the seasons—all four of them. When I look out the window of the fourteenth floor and see the setting sun glinting off the frozen railroad tracks on the west side on a winter afternoon, or when I smell the moist summer air in our backyard as Chasten and I fire up the barbeque grill on a hot July evening, I think of how lucky I am to live in this city of ours, this extraordinary community of a hundred thousand souls first known to the Potawatomi as “Ribbon Town”; this river town, this factory town and university town, this green and gray city, full of people generous and bold and committed and gentle. For as long as I am your mayor, I will serve this city to the best of my ability. And for as long as I live, this will be home.

Thank you.