

2017 State of the City Address
Seattle Mayor Edward B. Murray
Feb. 21, 2017

Council President Harrell, members of the Seattle City Council, City Attorney Holmes, Presiding Judge Donahue, department directors, and the people of Seattle.

I am pleased to be here in District 5, home to Councilmember Juarez, and to be here with all of you, to deliver this special presentation of the fourth and final State of the City Address of this term as mayor.

These past three years have been quite a journey.

Over the past month, however, it is the state of our nation that has occupied much of our attention, as each passing day brings a new threat to our civic discourse, our civic values and even the rule of law.

And the state of our nation impacts the state of our city.

As the federal government's actions serve to stigmatize the Muslim community, we are taking the unprecedented step today of meeting in Idris Mosque, the oldest traditionally-built mosque west of the Mississippi.

We as a city have experienced before the shameful targeting of an entire people.

We have witnessed the expulsion of Chinese immigrants from our city.

We have had Pike Place Market and Japantown emptied out of Japanese-American workers and families.

We have seen anti-Semitism lead to violence.

We are here today for the same reason we have stood up for civil rights in our African American churches.

We are here because as a welcoming city to all, we stand in support and solidarity with the Muslim members of the Seattle community.

I want to thank Hisham Farajallah and the congregation for inviting us here today to talk about the state of the city, and this city's values.

The new president is governing as an authoritarian, driven by a vision, as described in his Inaugural Address, of "American carnage," "disaster" and "tombstones across the landscape."

It is a vision of unrelenting bleakness and fear.

But in this country and in this city, we know that this vision does not reflect the depth of the American experiment, or of our Seattle experience.

Where the president sows division and widespread mistrust, Americans and Seattleites are building unity and community.

Where the president is slamming doors and building walls, Americans and Seattleites are spreading our arms and opening our hearts.

Where the president scapegoats and discriminates, Americans and Seattleites celebrate our differences and draw strength from our diversity.

Where the president withdraws from the global effort to protect future generations, Americans and Seattleites are building alliances to fight climate change.

The next four years in this country will be a battle for the soul of America.

Already, we are seeing a surge of activism across the nation not seen for decades – with the epicenter right here in Seattle, including the 170,000 people at the historic Women's March in January – offering hope that *the people*, not the president, will have the final word.

The people, not the president, will decide who we are as a nation.

The people, not the president, will shape our path forward.

Where the president spreads darkness, Seattle will shine a light, and offer a different vision.

We will do so by being – as we have been – a city of action, harnessing our commitment to social justice to improve the lives of our people, our communities and our planet.

In direct contrast to the president's politics of polarization, we will continue to address our challenges as a city through collaboration and through the lens of equity, the driving forces of my administration.

In many ways, our challenges as a city stem from our success as a city.

Seattle is among the most attractive places to live in the country.

This, of course, has brought tremendous growth in population and dramatic changes in our economy and our demographics.

Over the past twenty years, this growth has occurred exactly where the City planned for it – in our urban villages.

But while the City planned for where we would grow, it did not plan to grow equitably and affordably.

As a result, today we are witnessing a growing gap between those who can afford to live here and those who cannot, between those who are thriving and those being displaced.

My Administration is taking a new approach.

We seek smart, well-designed, *equitable* growth.

We seek to harness the dynamism of our growing city to create vibrant, livable and affordable neighborhoods for all.

We seek to create a place where, as the city grows, our diversity can grow – a place that welcomes people of all ages, races, religions, genders, sexual orientation, national origins and incomes.

Because a city is both a place where many people live together and a powerful tool to help many people live together *better*.

Smart and equitable growth is growth designated near parks, schools and opportunities for employment, along with grocery stores, shops, restaurants and bars, art galleries, music venues and other amenities.

Our update to the Comprehensive Plan – grounded in a new commitment to equity – seeks to build upon and maximize the accessibility, walkability and *vibrancy* of our neighborhoods.

Because Seattle’s transportation infrastructure must be adequate to the scale of our growing population, we passed the largest expansion of bus service since the 1970s.

We passed Move Seattle, the largest infrastructure levy in city history, which this year will fund new greenways, bike trails, road repairs and sidewalks to schools.

And we passed Sound Transit 3, a massive investment in our long-term infrastructure that imagines and plans for our city and our region decades from now, while also making critical transit investments today across our city.

After securing sustainable funding for parks through the city’s first-ever Seattle Parks District, we are keeping our parks and community centers accessible by coordinating with our other key investments, including in transportation and housing.

And, after launching the most aggressive affordable housing plan in city history and doubling the Seattle Housing Levy, we are well on our way to tripling our production of affordable housing units in this city within a decade, with 5,800 units in service or in the pipeline since January 2015.

Our commitment to affordability is matched with new worker protections, backed by a new Office of Labor Standards, and our nation-leading minimum wage, which increased to 15 dollars per hour this year for most minimum wage workers in the city.

And our historic legislation to auto-enroll more than 10,000 low-income households into the Utility Discount Program, thanks to the strong support of Councilmembers Herbold and Sawant, means that we have already surpassed our goal to double enrollments by the end of 2018.

All in all, our comprehensive vision means that, as a given neighborhood in this city grows, it may see:

- ...parks and open space funded by our Parks District,
- ...additional bus service funded by our transit benefit district,
- ...new affordable housing funded by Mandatory Housing Affordability and our Housing Levy, and
- ...new sidewalks or bike lanes funded by Move Seattle...

...all coordinated into a coherent picture that reflects the needs and experiences of the people who live and work in the neighborhood.

Growth that is smart and purposeful is not just growth that is desirable and vibrant, it is also growth that is sustainable.

Being able to walk to a restaurant or a park is enjoyable and it helps reduce our carbon footprint.

We have shown how growth and environmental sustainability need not be at odds with one another.

In fact, Seattle's greenhouse emissions have fallen since 2008, even as our population and economy have grown.

Downtown Seattle has added 45,000 jobs since 2010, and 95 percent of those new commutes were absorbed by transit, walking, biking, telecommuting and shared car trips.

And because our two biggest sources of greenhouse emissions in Seattle are buildings and transportation, with the support of Councilmember O'Brien we have committed to electrifying our transportation sector and to increasing our buildings' energy efficiency.

Despite the federal government's efforts to roll back environmental progress at the national and even global level, I will continue to reach out to mayors throughout the world to lead on climate change, as I have at conferences in Mexico City, Shenzhen and the Vatican.

These are just some of the many integrated ways we have addressed the challenges Seattle faces as a growing city.

The point is this: our challenges as a city are not unique to us.

Climate change, wage stagnation, income inequality, housing affordability, infrastructure investment: our challenges as a city mirror our challenges as a country.

And our solutions are a model for the country.

The progress we have made for our people defines the daily aspirations not just of residents of Seattle, but of rural and suburban America as well.

Our record investments in infrastructure reflect the dreams of communities everywhere across America.

The posture and politics of the new president should not cause us to despair that progress is not possible: Cities in general – *and this city in particular* – can be the solution.

Together with our regional partners, we must continue down our same path.

We cannot wait. Seattle must keep moving forward.

Doing so is how we help keep alive the promise of the American project and a hopeful vision of progress, sustainability, equity and opportunity.

After all, Seattle is a model of a thriving city, in so many ways.

When I look at Seattle right now and see commuters moving across the city on our expanded light rail system.

See the new express buses on Aurora.

See the bustling evening sidewalks in Ballard, Columbia City, the Alaska Way Junction, Pioneer Square, and Pike Pine.

When I see the orange and yellow cranes in the South Lake Union skyline.

See the lines around the corner for the Seattle International Film Festival, Town Hall lectures, and shows at Neumos.

See the crowds at our weekend farmers' markets.

See the fans streaming into SoDo or Uptown to support the Mariners, the Sounders, the Seahawks, and the Storm – and hopefully some day the Sonics.

And when I see the statistics about new jobs that are powering this city's renaissance, I cannot help but feel energized by our success.

Our median household income of more than 80,000 dollars per year is at an all-time high.

We are one of the most educated cities in America, with over 66 percent of residents holding an associate's degree or above.

Our unemployment rate has been near or below 4 percent for the past year.

In fact, Seattle businesses and institutions created approximately 90,000 jobs since 2010.

And Seattle's population continues to grow at an incredible rate, with the city welcoming some 75,000 residents over the last 5 years, a 12 percent increase.

We are a welcoming city for thousands of new Americans, and, together with the other nine largest welcoming cities in America, account for one-third of the country's gross domestic product.

And, we remain among the safest cities in the country, with residential burglary down 6 percent, street robbery down 7 percent, shots fired down 13 percent, and bike thefts down 28 percent over the past year – and we will continue to build on these positive results.

But for many – in fact, for thousands who are losing hope and witnessing Seattle's renewed vitality from the sidelines – our city's success is only a harsh notice that they are living in another Seattle: the "Other Seattle."

For 3,000 people living unsheltered, our streets have become a default, inadequate and dangerous place to live.

And the impact is felt by all.

The responsibility extends all the way to our federal government. To our state government. To our county government.

And to City Hall as well.

We declared a state of emergency.

We pledged that by the end of this year, we would bring 500 unsheltered families off the streets and indoors.

We budgeted 108 million dollars for homelessness services combined over the last two years, more than under any mayor in Seattle history.

These are big steps.

But as anyone can see from the dystopian scenes on the streets and the disarray on our sidewalks, and as those who are living in unsafe encampments and outside can attest themselves: This has not been enough.

Not enough for those suffering from addiction.

Not enough for those who have been victims of crimes, like the young teenage girls who have been trapped in encampments and trafficked for sex.

Not enough for the three toddlers found without parents under the Spokane Street Viaduct.

We must do more to address the dangers faced by those living in unauthorized encampments.

But we cannot spend money and expect success without having a strategic plan informed by national experts with accountability measures to make sure what we are funding is working.

We have that plan now. It is called Pathways Home. And it mandates this central tenet: Get people into housing.

It is a plan with clear and measurable action steps that reduce barriers between people and the services they need.

It represents a radical shift in our investment strategy.

The facts show that if we are going to make progress, we must provide individualized services. Does a person simply need to be reconnected with their family? Need detox and recovery services? Need mental health care? Or do they simply need housing?

Under Pathways Home, for the first time in a decade, we are rebidding all our homeless service contracts with a commitment to only invest in what works.

One of our most important new contracts follows this principle. The Navigation Center, a 24-hour, low-barrier shelter, will be opening this year.

For the individuals served by the Navigation Center, if they are suffering from addiction, have a partner or have a pet, they are welcome.

For too long, our system has been disjointed. But now, the City, the County, and providers will sit down together and customize a path to housing, person by person, family by family.

Additionally, in an unprecedented move, tomorrow, I will activate our Emergency Operations Center to help the people whose lives have been upended by this homelessness disaster.

The Emergency Operations Center – traditionally activated only during severe storms, major city events and natural disasters – will bring urgency and a laser focus to the humanitarian crisis in our city.

My director of City operations, Fred Podesta, will oversee this all-hands-on-deck collaboration across our City departments.

Our first navigation team is already on the ground to integrate the efforts of the Human Services Department, our social service agencies and the Seattle Police Department to connect unsheltered people with services, safe shelter, and housing.

We will dramatically increase the clean-up of discarded debris on our sidewalks and streets. And these efforts will follow our new, transparent protocols to ensure people's civil rights are respected.

I am activating the Emergency Operations Center because 15 months ago, I declared a State of Emergency in the hopes of a significant increase in support from the federal government.

Regrettably, little help has come.

We must face reality.

Developing a national housing and homelessness agenda is not a priority for the new president's administration.

We are the ones who must prioritize the lives of the people struggling in the Other Seattle.

We cannot wait. Seattle must keep moving forward.

This will require new investments on our part.

In fact, I believe we must double the City's spending on homelessness.

I have asked local entrepreneur and civic activist Nick Hanauer and Daniel Malone, the Executive Director of Downtown Emergency Services Center, along with Councilmembers Juarez and Bagshaw, to lead an advisory group that sends me a funding package within 14 days that achieves this goal.

This package would raise an additional 55 million dollars per year, paid for by an increase in the commercial and residential property tax – around 13 dollars per month for the median household.

Consistent with the best-practices outlined in Pathways Home, this would allow us to invest in mental health treatment, in addiction treatment and in getting more people into housing and off the streets.

This would not be my first choice. We had hoped for a vigorous partnership with the federal government, but we are on our own.

I am inviting Council to join community leaders and me to help qualify this property tax measure for the August ballot.

I believe the residents of Seattle are ready to support such a measure.

And if they do, this considerable public investment must be met with private investments.

Last month, I stood with Starbucks and Dick's to announce that a coalition of Seattle businesses, including Amazon, helped raise 4.5 million dollars for Mary's Place.

But more must be done.

Our businesses, who are reaping the rewards of our booming city, must join our new public commitment and help those who are in need.

I am challenging Seattle's business community to raise 25 million dollars over the next five years focused on disruptive innovations that will get more homeless individuals and families into housing.

All of us must take action to house the thousands who live in doorways, under bridges, and in cars.

In last year's State of the City address, I identified racial disparities in educational outcomes as another great equity challenge facing this city.

While funding for basic education remains the state's responsibility, the City currently partners with Seattle Public Schools in a number of ways, including the Families & Education Levy, the Creative Advantage Arts Education program, and the Seattle Preschool Program, which, combined, serve thousands of students each year.

And I want to thank Superintendent Larry Nyland and past Board President Betty Patu for their constructive collaboration with the City – and I look forward to working with new President Sue Peters.

The reality is, the District cannot shoulder alone the burden of disparities in outcomes in Seattle Public Schools. These are all our children and it is all our responsibility.

That is why last April, with parents, teachers, higher education, business, philanthropy, and Seattle Public Schools, we held the first citywide Education Summit in over 25 years – a conversation that continues to this day.

It has been an incredibly substantive dialogue, and we have heard from more than 2,000 community voices, from all parts of Seattle, representing the full diversity of our city.

We have heard loud and clear that we must address the persistent disparities in outcomes in our public schools between white students and Black students and other historically underserved students of color.

And we have embraced a commitment with our community partners to begin *collectively* addressing these longstanding disparities and partner to support excellence for *all* of our students.

In my budget speech in September, I announced the first steps to come from the Education Summit process, including more mentoring and summer learning options.

Today, I am announcing a comprehensive vision – and the action plan to implement it.

This action plan knits together and grows the City’s continuum of education support, from early child development to K-12 to higher education.

It includes annual investments in birth-to-five programs, before- and after-school opportunities, family engagement, addressing disproportionality in discipline, summer learning, school-based mentoring, and college and career readiness.

It also includes a significant one-time expansion of the 13th Year program, championed by Chancellor of Seattle Colleges Dr. Pan and Council President Harrell, which pays for a student’s first year at any of our Seattle Colleges.

The goal of the Education Summit has always been to forge a shared vision that education partners could unite around and embrace.

To implement this vision, I am pleased to announce partnership and pledges from Casey Family Programs, Gates Foundation, Seattle Foundation, the Raikes Foundation, and the Greater Seattle Chamber of Commerce.

For the City’s part, I will be proposing to the Council a new dedicated source of revenue: a two-cents per ounce tax on sugar-sweetened beverages.

This proposed tax is expected to raise nearly 16 million dollars per year.

Other cities, including Boulder, San Francisco, Philadelphia and Oakland have passed similar policies both to fund youth services *and* to achieve positive public health impacts.

This is the right way for Seattle to do the same and fund programs important to the health and success of so many of our underserved students of color.

While these steps represent a significant addition of new resources, they are but a down payment toward our goal of closing racial disparities in education outcomes, which will require future investments.

However, these goals and our commitment to equity will be undermined if lawmakers in Olympia fail to pass a statewide funding plan for basic education that ensures that all students, no matter their zip code or background, have equal opportunities for success.

But we cannot wait. Seattle must keep moving forward.

When it comes to education in Seattle, especially early childhood education, City government will be losing one of its great champions when Tim Burgess leaves the City Council at the end of this year.

Councilmember Burgess has been a progressive leader in education, public safety, and human services, and will be long remembered for the collaborative and evidence-based approach he takes to every issue he tackles.

Councilmember Burgess, we thank you for your dedication to serving the people of Seattle, and I look forward to working with you and the rest of Council to fund our education action plan in the coming months.

Our Education Summit investments are all about recognizing the importance of young people's education to their success on their journey to adulthood.

And just as important to their success are investments in four other areas as well:

- their employment,
- their safety,
- their health, and
- their positive connections to a caring adult and to the community.

In my last budget speech, I announced the creation of a new Youth Opportunity Cabinet to coordinate and align the many City programs that invest in those five key areas for youth.

Too often, however, it is young Black men in particular who encounter the greatest barriers to their success.

In my last State of the City address, I talked about the many conversations my Innovation Team had with young Black men, and shared what they wanted to hear from the City: that they were not a problem to be fixed, that they were not the other, that they shared the same aspirations and needs as everyone else in the community.

I said at the time that “I believe when young Black men are at their best, Seattle is at its best.”

Today, I am announcing a new focus on improving the life outcomes of Seattle’s young black men age 14 to 24, which we are calling “Our Best: Seattle’s Commitment to Young Black Men.”

Our Best draws a bright line under those left out of society and removed from enjoying the landscape of opportunities in our very resource- and opportunity-rich city.

It seeks to support them to be engaged and empowered in the city in a way that recognizes and honors their expertise, contributions and insight.

Through our Youth Opportunity Initiative, the City is already committed to several strategies to support Black males to be their best for themselves, their families and their community, including Career Bridge, the Zero Detention Program, My Brother’s Keeper and more.

Today, we are launching a new addition to these focused strategies: a robust new mentoring recruiting and training campaign.

Mentoring has been shown to improve emotional well-being, high-school graduation rates, college enrollment, and other positive long-term outcomes.

In Seattle, there are not enough Black men mentors, leaving many mentor programs ill-equipped to support young Black men in culturally responsive ways.

And, there is significant interest among local organizations to recruit more.

Our goal with this new commitment of the Our Best program is to double the number of black men mentors.

Additionally, we will convene an Advisory Council to advise me and City leaders on a long-term strategy to support young Black male achievement.

I am also creating a new special advisor to the Mayor focused on Black male achievement to work full time across departments, with the Advisory Council and with the many community leaders who have answered this call long before us.

Our Best is all of ours. And the fight for young Black men is a fight for Seattle, and our region.

As we focus on supporting the potential and achievement of young Black men, we must also continue to address the barriers of institutional racism.

The collision between Seattle's progressive policies and the agenda of the new administration in our nation's capital threatens one of the most important issues this community has worked on during the last three years: police accountability.

When I took office in 2014, Seattle was under a consent decree.

In December 2010, after a series of tragedies such as the shooting death of Native American wood carver John T. Williams, Seattle's civil rights community appealed to the Obama Administration for help.

Those bold leaders deserve our thanks for waking this city up.

The Justice Department's investigation found a pattern of excessive use of force in violation of the Constitution. They also raised concerns about discriminatory policing.

When I took office, I pledged to address this local failure by collaborating with our federal partners to meet the requirements of the consent decree and ensure that Seattle's police practices are not only constitutional, but live up to our community's expectations.

I worked in concert with the federal judge, the City Council, the City Attorney, the federal monitor, the Community Police Commission, and Chief Kathleen O'Toole, to achieve this necessary goal.

Thanks to our collaborative efforts, we are now well on our way to a new era of growing positive relationships between the community and the police.

The court-appointed federal monitor has already found the Seattle Police Department in initial compliance on the key consent decree metrics around training, supervision, and use of force, including officer-involved shootings.

U.S. District Court Judge James Robart, who is overseeing the entire process, has praised our work to date.

And I would like to give a word of thanks of my own to the men and women of the Seattle Police Department. They have been a partner in these important efforts.

The data speaks for itself. In more than 9,000 crisis responses in 2015, only 1.6 percent involved any reportable use of force. And only four tenths of one percent involved anything greater than lowest-level use of force.

Our progress is remarkable. And it builds trust.

These numbers also show that our officers have not merely accepted reform. From anti-bias police training, to de-escalation training, to body cameras, Seattle's officers have embraced change.

I believe compliance with the official consent decree is not enough. We must comply with Seattle's values.

Last month, with broad Council support, with the federal judge's initial stamp of approval, and with local civil rights leaders and the Community Police Commission standing beside me, I sent landmark legislation to Council to not only fulfil the key requirements of the consent decree, but to establish civilian oversight of the Seattle Police Department as the premier model of accountability in the country.

This legislation would, for the first time in Seattle history, give civilians an independent, formal, and permanent role in police accountability, complete with subpoena power and the legal authority to review any police policy or practice.

Thanks to the leadership of Councilmember González, this legislation is already moving forward in her committee.

We are too far along. The reactionary undertow in our nation's capital will not pull us away from justice.

And we are not waiting. Seattle must keep moving forward.

In reviewing our police accountability legislation, Judge Robart proclaimed: "Black Lives Matter."

And the City of Seattle agrees.

Make no mistake, that succinct mission statement, that basic concept, that aspiration to ensure justice for communities of color is the guiding principle of the work we have done together on police reform.

Our collaborative efforts are helping us tackle another major issue as well – an issue that threatens to undermine the very principle I have been coming back to again and again this morning: inclusiveness.

We will not be a city for working and middle class families – a city for teachers, for artists, for health care workers, for restaurant workers – if we do not make sure all of us can afford to live here.

Right now, we know that too many people who want to live in Seattle, cannot afford to. And too many people who live here now, cannot afford to stay.

Last month, Mercy Othello Plaza, a new affordable housing development near the Othello light rail station, received nearly 2,100 applications in a lottery for just 108 available units.

The choice to live in Seattle should not be decided by a lottery.

We need to build more housing. And we need to build more affordable housing.

All over the city.

Housing connected to transit – that connects people to jobs, connects people to schools, connects people to one another – fits into our holistic strategy for sustainability.

Growth is not the question – growth is here. On average, 67 new people are moving here every day.

If we do not build more housing, we have seen what happens: more and more people compete for the same homes and prices go up, creating an invisible wall around our neighborhoods and locking people out.

Allowing more housing will break down that wall, will create more affordability, more sustainability, and more equity.

We cannot be a city where people protest the exclusionary agenda coming from Washington, D.C., while at the same time keeping a zoning code in place that does not allow us to build the affordable housing we need.

But we have shown we are a welcoming city. A city that breaks down walls.

Social justice groups, housing non-profits, labor, environmental groups and developers came together in an unprecedented show of cooperation, and broke through 20 years of inaction, to establish a Mandatory Housing Affordability plan that will, for the first time in Seattle history, require new developments to contribute to affordable housing.

To make the plan work, we are proposing zoning changes in our urban villages and along transit corridors throughout the city.

This afternoon, under the leadership of Councilmember Johnson, it is my hope the Council will vote to approve a rezone of the University District, making it the first community in our city to put the Mandatory Housing Affordability program in place.

And, as that community grows in the future, it will grow affordably.

Let me reiterate, we have grown, but we have not grown affordably.

There is no other plan to grow affordably.

We cannot repeat the pattern of recent years.

We cannot wait. Seattle must keep moving forward.

Remaining open to all is a fundamental value of this city.

Seattle is a great American city *because* of immigrants and refugees.

In today's atmosphere of uncertainty and fear, let me reaffirm my commitment that we will remain a welcoming city for all.

To build on the actions we have taken to support Seattle immigrants and refugees, under my direction, along with City Attorney Pete Holmes, in response to the Administration's actions and rhetoric regarding immigrants and refugees, today Seattle will send a series of Freedom of Information Requests to multiple federal agencies, including the Department of Homeland Security.

The City must be able to provide accurate information to immigrants and refugees and their families living in Seattle.

We will seek to determine the Administration's definition of "sanctuary cities" and the enforcement actions the federal government may take against us.

We will also seek detailed information about this Administration's changes to travel and immigration policy including the DACA program.

We believe that the rule of law is on our side, and we will take legal action if the federal government does not answer our requests in a timely manner.

Additionally, I will be convening a summit of mayors from across the region to explore and share ways that together we can ensure that our cities are safe and welcoming sanctuaries for all.

And we will continue to reach out beyond our borders.

Seattle has established relationships to promote international friendship during difficult times in the past.

Our first and oldest sister city relationship with Kobe, Japan was started just after the normalization of relations in the 1950s.

We started our relationship with Tashkent, Uzbekistan, creating the first U.S. sister city relationship with the Soviet Union, in 1973 during the height of the Cold War.

At this time, when Mexico and Mexicans are being denigrated, I ask Council to affirm our new relationship with Mexico, and establish a new sister city relationship with Mexico City.

When the diplomacy of our elected leaders fail, citizen diplomacy can be a powerful corrective.

I began this speech expressing my hope in the power of the people, and it is how I will conclude it.

On the day before the Inauguration, I was in our nation's capital.

In the late afternoon, Michael and I found ourselves standing at the Lincoln Memorial under the slanting northeast winter sunlight, feeling the weight of the history that is enshrined there, and reflecting upon the fear and disappointment of the election.

And I read engraved in the marble, the conclusion of the Gettysburg Address:

That from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion--that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain, that this nation under God shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth.

I was struck by how Lincoln's words apply to so many more Americans. Not just those who fought and sacrificed in the civil war, but those in the 20th century and today who fought and sacrificed for civil rights, for a woman's right to vote and choose, for LGBTQ rights, for the rights of immigrants and labor.

Their work is not in vain.

It resounds in the City's commitment to equity.

Our work is bound with theirs.

The indivisible common thread: justice for all.