When I took office a few weeks ago, I spoke about building a city for everyone. A city where mind, body, and spirit can thrive. I took an oath to not only defend the laws of the land, but to humbly serve the people of Salt Lake City--and this is a promise I will keep.

Tonight, I am here to ask you to join me in our effort to move our city forward in an inclusive way so we can bring prosperity, access, safety, respect, and most importantly opportunity to everyone who lives and works in this great city.

During the transition and during my first few weeks in office, my team and I have spent considerable time engaging with employees of this city, reviewing both internal and external policies, and listening to key stakeholders.

We assessed the state of our city, not with a critical eye, but with a fresh perspective.

And it is here, in the internal workings of city government, where I want to begin tonight.

I begin here because I believe the culture we foster inside City Hall, impacts how we plan, build, and communicate as a city.

And I believe, we must build a more collaborative, bottom-up, and inclusive culture in order to be more responsive to you, the people, who live and work here.

The residents of Salt Lake City have every reason to be proud of the people who work to keep this city running day-to-day. And we will be better served if city government listens more closely to our on the ground employees.

I have asked our new Human Resources Director, Julio Garcia, to work with every department and division to begin a strategic planning process. These plans will include specific elements I believe are necessary for long-term health of the Salt Lake City Corporation.

Information sharing must be a chief component of these plans. We will develop a comprehensive system to collect knowledge from employees, and evaluate our processes to ensure we incorporate this information into future plans--from how we plow our streets, to how we design them. We already have “everyday” experts, and it’s time those of us at the top listened to them.

I believe in our employees. And I believe employees like Jess Long are sincere when he wrote in my birthday card "I will never let you down".  Well Jess, I will never let you down either and together we will never let down the people of Salt Lake City.

Those of us who work for Salt Lake City must always remember the work we produce impacts the daily lives of the people we serve. And the knowledge we have gained during the course of our careers is a valuable asset. We must ensure it is easily accessed by those who will inevitably fill our shoes someday.

As part of our strategic plan, every department will be asked to develop a succession plan. This will be a process required at every level of city government. No one person, including myself, should hold all the keys to any department or division in this city.

As we develop plans for the future, we will also examine and expand the city’s current training and education opportunities. At every level, public service will be celebrated, and viewed as an enviable career opportunity. Education lies at the heart of advancement, and it is in our city’s best interest to develop a pool of qualified candidates for open positions.

Any CEO can tell you, it costs far less to keep current employees satisfied and well trained than it does to find new talent to fill their shoes. And in this endeavor, we are well served by Julio Garcia who was one of the chief architects of Salt Lake County’s recognized Employee University program, and it’s a program I know he can bring to the capital city.

One of my most important jobs is to ensure the talented individuals who run the day-to-day business of this city can realize their full potential. This is only possible if they work in an environment of respect and safety.

Our city’s harassment policies and procedures are outdated and unacceptable. Harassment in the workplace destroys morale and costs taxpayers money. Our HR team will also begin an immediate audit of the city’s existing policies and an examination of the culture surrounding harassment in the workforce. We are creating a zero tolerance atmosphere, not only reactive through consequences, but proactive through training and education.

The city of Salt Lake has employees of every gender, race, ethnicity, economic background, and sexual orientation. We will foster an even more inclusive environment, one that allows for innovation and helps our staff deliver products and services with greater appeal.

Our hiring policies must be backed with strong procedures to encourage diversity. And we don’t have to look far to find innovative hiring practices. The Salt Lake City Police Department realized years ago that they must do better. They have taken steps--and have recently doubled down on these efforts--to not only find qualified diverse individuals for their team, but to build a viable pool of candidates.

They go above and beyond our city’s standard recruiting approach, by actively promoting open positions with more than 120 organizations and businesses across the state. They also spend hundreds of hours attending local fairs and festivals, often in underserved areas. Their Explorer Program, which works with local high schools to build a school to public service pipeline, has a class of 52 young people, half of whom are from multicultural backgrounds, and more than half of whom are women.

Cadet Amy Novoa, who is here tonight, is a graduate of West High School and the Explorer program. As a member of the 2016 police academy class, Amy will be joining our force in full this year. Thank you for your hard work Amy, we look forward to having you on our team.

With growing enrollment—including those who presented the flags earlier tonight—I am confident this program will produce more diverse and qualified candidates for our police force.

Across city government, we must think outside the box in recruiting and retaining diverse candidates. We will be expanding on programs like Explorer and others in city government. We will use tools like the Mayor’s Office of Diversity and Human Rights, and the Office of Community Relations and Empowerment to work collectively to ensure our city’s workforce looks like the people we serve.

Addressing our city’s hiring practices is a first step to bringing our shared value of inclusion to city government. We cannot succeed in our goal by simply including diverse people at the table. We must empower these voices to lead the conversation.

One of my first decisions after being elected was to not only reappoint Yolanda Francisco-Nez, the head of the Office of Diversity and Human Rights, but to expand her role in my administration. Yolanda will be serving as a key advisor to ensure increased equity in city government, economic development, and education policies.

And in every way, we must bring our values to the table.

To move forward, we must organize our city’s day-to-day operations with the vision and values we all share. Protecting the environment for future generations is a responsibility I know the people of Salt Lake City take seriously.

As I have said before, there is nothing more important than the air we breathe. And working to clear our skies is a top priority of my administration.

At the city level, I will begin by taking steps to create a new Department of Sustainability with air quality as its primary goal.

This elevation from a division to a department, Sustainability on equal footing--both real and perceived--with every other function of city government. Vicki Bennett, who currently runs the Division of Sustainability will be a core member of my cabinet and have the full backing of this office to grow and implement programs and policies across Salt Lake City.

Today, there is proposed state legislation that would update Utah’s building codes. This is a first critical step in helping to reduce the second highest contributor to air pollution, our homes and buildings. These codes have not been updated in years. Failure to act this session will allow the cause of up to 30% of our air pollution to go unchecked for years.

Our policy team, led by our Deputy Chief of Staff, David Litvack and Lynn Pace, will lead the lobbying effort to secure support from our state legislators to take this simple action this year. And I will continue to reach out to my fellow elected officials, business and industry to join us in this effort. Our poor air quality is a health crisis and will become a major impediment in Utah’s economy if we do not work collaboratively to make a real difference today.

We have another key opportunity before us with the contract we negotiate every 20 years with an energy provider for this city. This agreement is up for renewal this month. I understand the negotiations were slowed due to the election and both parties were waiting to proceed in the direction of a new administration.

Let me be clear, I stand shoulder to shoulder with the previous administration. Salt Lake City’s request for a commitment from our energy provider to increase the use of renewable energy is achievable and sound policy to combat the effects of climate change.

We have set a goal--in line with the values of city residents -- to have at least 50% of our municipal energy needs met by renewables such as solar, wind, and geothermal sources by 2020. And I commit to go further. Salt Lake City will join our neighbors in Park City and pledge to make our city’s utility sources carbon free by 2032.

We are all in this together and we will work with our energy provider to find ways to achieve these goals.

And being in this together means, we all must do our part.

I’m a working mom, I get it, sometimes what we are being asked to do simply won’t work with the demands of our lives. But, for the sake of our children, we can drive in a cold car for 5 minutes rather than let it warm up in our driveways.

We have a current ordinance requiring drivers to limit idling to 2 minutes. Frankly, if you’re parked, you shouldn’t be idling at all. Last month the police department discovered 600 unattended, idling vehicles in one 2.5 hour span. These vehicles were spewing pollution into our skies, not to mention putting children, who were left inside of them, at great risk of kidnapping and every vehicle at risk of theft.

We as a city can also do more to help you the people do your part, and in the process we can help you do more with your day.

Many years ago, our city installed a system of coordinated traffic lights. Fully realized, this system would reduce travel times by up to 30%, reduce emissions by up to 15% and make transit and walking more efficient. We were told this system required recalibration at least every 3 years. We have not kept up with this maintenance.

Our talented people in the transportation department, have done their best to maintain this system despite a lack of funding. They have made adjustments based on public feedback, but what they need is a financial commitment to this piece of city infrastructure.

I commit to them that I will explore our options for funding this endeavor when it crosses my desk.

Like so much of our city’s infrastructure, this is a system that must be maintained.

Even with better traffic lights, I am confident that if individuals who live and work in this city could get around better on public transportation, they would do it. We will explore ways to create a stronger intra-city bus system. We are about to launch the second stage of our city’s transit master plan. In this stage we ask the community to prioritize its needs. What we already know from stage one is that the city is grossly being underserved.

I am open to new ideas to better serve this community when it comes to bus service. And I am open to new partners when it comes to reaching that goal. Those partners can include the University of Utah, private bus companies, and UTA.

This is a discussion I am prioritizing and must result in a productive plan as it is a major pathway to clearing our air.

Just as our air quality, our roads, and our transportation systems are part of our city’s day-to-day needs, so is our water and sewer system. We are blessed with some of the cleanest water in the country, flowing directly from our mountains to our faucets.

I have complete confidence in the talented people who are currently working for the Department of Public Utilities. City residents should know they are in safe hands because of the teams of engineers and maintenance personnel who are in place, and those teams will continue to provide a high level of competence as we move forward.

And you have, with this administration, a continuing commitment to strongly protect the watershed and to preserve this valuable asset for the people of Salt Lake City.

Those in leadership roles with this city, must first and foremost strong and respectful managers. Serving the people begins by serving the employees who keep Salt Lake City running.

While our employees can keep our city operating day-to-day, we need vision to keep our economy growing. Salt Lake City must develop an economic identity a city-wide economic strategic plan to stay competitive in the nation, the state, and along the Wasatch Front.

To assist with this, I will elevate the division of economic development to a department level and launch a nationwide search for a director who can work with all stakeholders to build a stronger economy.

Nearby cities have already successfully developed identities to lure business to their areas. “Silicon Slopes” to the south and “Outdoor Ogden” to our north are prime examples--not just of missed opportunity--but how we can move forward.

The strong Economic Development Director we put in place will be charged with aligning Salt Lake City’s tremendous economic tools:

* Our portfolio of three airports. The International Airport alone drives over $1 billion of economic activity into our state.
* The Redevelopment Agency of Salt Lake City, which has incredible power to help guide development.
* The arts & culture community, which has sought a place in this discussion for some time.
* And of course, our world class colleges and universities, which are already generating the brightest minds and bringing incredible talent to our city.

Our new Economic Development Department will also be better suited to forge lasting partnerships with state resources like the Governor’s Office of Economic Development, EDCUtah, and the World Trade Center Utah.

I look forward to working with the Council on developing a strong strategic plan for our local economy and focusing my administration on leading the way.

As we look forward, we cannot lose sight of our current businesses and innovative people across our city who need our help to succeed.

To better serve these customers, we will engage in an audit of our city’s existing planning and business ordinances and recommend changes to the Council. Some of our city ordinances were adopted for a single, unique project completed years ago, but they remain on the books. This creates confusion and project delays.

If we work together to develop an economic identity and streamline processes, I believe we can bring significant opportunity to our entire city. We will continue to develop our beautiful Downtown, but just as importantly, we will cultivate lively business centers in other communities that keep waiting for the attention they deserve -- Rose Park. Poplar Grove. North Temple. Liberty Wells. And right here. In Glendale.

Having just won a contentious race, I know everyone in this room does not see eye to eye on every issue. But I am confident we all care enough to put aside our differences and do what is best for Salt Lake City. And if anything should draw us together it is our commitment to bring lasting solutions to our homeless crisis.

Never before have we had so many of the right players at the table. We are ready to push hard for legislation in the next 45 days that will provide the funding we need to start a truly compassionate and state wide solution. I stand committed to directing the homeless population into resource centers that address the distinct needs of the identified groups in this population and so I will be on Capitol Hill this session working to convince my former colleagues to make this a reality.

I stand committed to a plan that disperses the homeless population, addresses the distinct needs of the population and prioritizes treatment and prevention.

But, in 45 days when the legislative session ends, it will be March. The weather will be warming, the temporary shelters for the homeless will be closing and, even if we have new money in hand, Salt Lake City will once again be facing an influx of homeless people from around the state. We will, like always, care for them.

But to relieve some of the pressure, we also need to work collaboratively--as we have on a long-term plan--to address short-term needs. In the next few weeks, I will bring together partners like the Downtown Alliance, the police department, and local businesses to discuss how to better utilize the tools we currently have to help the homeless and keep our businesses viable.

Our first step will be to expand programs which give the homeless a daily employment opportunity. The Downtown Alliance operates the Clean Team, a similar street-to-work program that has recently been hailed in Albuquerque. My administration has spoken with Jason Mathis and by working together, we believe, we can expand these programs in the short-term with a public-private partnership.

We know by getting the homeless off the street, we can deliver services more efficiently, identify the drug dealers and minimize their criminal operations. We must work together to find ways to increase day shelter services for the homeless. The police are willing to do their part by coordinating better security for these spaces, so our partners can feel confident and safe in expanding operations.

There is no simple fix, but there are things we can do before the weather warms to help ease the situation around the Rio Grande area and we must begin taking steps today.

In the long and short term, we cannot address this crisis without also addressing crime. And regardless of where you live, drugs are driving the majority of crime in your neighborhood.

We have already stepped up our narcotic enforcement with a 3-pronged approach. Our police are working with other law enforcement agencies to crack down on this problem at the street level, the supply level, and the import level.

On the campaign trail I spoke about the need to coordinate our efforts in fighting crime, especially the drug trafficking, with other agencies. Chief Brown indicated to me that his teams simply needed to be allowed to work with other agencies---Chief Brown not only has that permission from me now, it is my expectation.

We also have great data available to us as part of a Comp Stat model. This report shows daily spikes in crimes by type and location, allowing the police to quickly adjust presence. As we add stronger enforcement to Rio Grande and Pioneer Park areas, I will not allow crime to simply be diverted to other parts of our city.

We will step up our efforts and quickly identify and rapidly deploy our resources around the city--including the bike squads, which are creating a deterring effect on crime. We will also explore area specific tools, like ATVs that can patrol the Jordan River and the Foothill Areas.

I am also committed to expanding programs like the HOST Social Work program. This program embeds social workers with the police force so we can better get services, including drug treatment, to those who need it. Councilman Stan Penfold is the true champion of this program. As we begin implementation I look forward to working with him to find ways to support this endeavor.

When it comes to security and helping those in need, we must not be afraid of change. Public safety is job number one.

I have already spoken with Chief Brown, Fire Chief Dale, and 911 Director Scott Frietag about building cultures of respect within their respective departments and working openly to address issues we face.

I have identified one critical area in which they will need to work together quickly. For years, our hard working 911 dispatchers have been on mandatory overtime. I have spoken one-on-one with dispatchers, and they are stressed and tired, but their hopes are high and they are committed more than ever before to protect the people of Salt Lake City.

I have given our public safety leaders 90-days to deliver a draft plan to address this situation. They must put aside differences and find a solution to move forward one that will keep the public safe and bring relief to our first responders.

Any discussion on public safety must include a discussion on public trust. I trust our city’s police force. I know they are dedicated and well trained professionals, committed to a career that often puts their lives in danger--something tragically driven home last week with the killing of Officer Doug Barney. I share my sincerest condolences with his family and my former colleagues at the Office of Sheriff and Unified Police Department.

What makes our police force extraordinary is their willingness to listen, learn, and adjust so they can better serve our community.

Over the last few weeks, I have engaged in conversations with Police Chief Brown and City Attorney Margaret Plane, to strengthen the public accountability of the Salt Lake City Police Department. We have begun to explore ways to provide independent counsel to the Police Civilian Review Board, which provides civilian oversight regarding excessive use of force and other complaints.

We also have strengthened the existing Use of Force policy, to better ensure that all evidence, including video, audio, photos, and written records relating to a use of force incident are properly collected and maintained for review by the District Attorney’s Office.

Our Police Officers are not afraid of fair and just scrutiny. They are not afraid of change at any time, even the worst of times, like today, on the heels of a fallen officer's funeral.

We take these steps because of a commitment to justice, respect, and safety. I hope, in the future, when incidents occur between the police and the public, we come together to find real solutions and foster conversations of trust. We are in this together.

Tonight, we have come here to discuss our future and in that nothing is more important than education, it is the key to our success. Education is the key to prosperity. Education is the key to equality. And education is the key to opportunity.

My goal as mayor, is to focus on the fundamentals every day. And there is nothing more fundamental than ensuring all of our students from pre-school to high school have access to a quality education.

My office, has already engaged with the Salt Lake City School Board. We have been at every meeting since taking office, and have worked with members of the board to secure a seat at the table--for which I am grateful.

In the coming weeks, the Board will begin the public portion of the superintendent selection process. It is my intention to ensure the voices of the people are heard.

The Board will be hosting 1-hour town hall meetings beginning mid-February and we will do all we can to empower as many diverse voices as possible in these meetings. Those who do not have an opportunity to speak will be encouraged to get their messages to my office, so we can share relay them using our seat on the school board--a seat that truly belongs to you the people.

We know, like our city, the students we serve in our schools, have diverse needs. In this school--Mountain View Elementary--students come from families speaking 31 different languages.

My key focus in the superintendent selection process is to ensure we consider and choose an individual who has the skills and knowledge to promote equity and inclusion in our schools, so our diverse student population can thrive and achieve academic success.

We will also work to break down barriers to education where our city plays a direct role. I have engaged Chief Brown in discussions regarding ways to end the school-to-prison pipeline.

Moving forward our city’s police force and school safety officers will not be used to enforce school and administrative code. The officers in our schools are there to protect, not to ensure attendance, take away cell phones, or handle disruptive students. And they are certainly not there to make arrests.

Today, we are on track. The department has been provided independent baseline data on the disproportionate minority contact rate and I have spoken with them about creating a robust measuring system that would track our future progress and hold us all accountable.

We must commit to lives of public service for the right reasons. And when it’s all said and done, the right reason is to build a better future for the next generation. Every day we can lay that groundwork.

On Martin Luther King Jr. Day my family and I volunteered at the Utah Food Bank with YouthCity--a city run program that mentors and gives young people opportunities to make a positive impact in their communities. There I met Junior, a young man from right here in Glendale. Junior utilizes YouthCity every day and says it helps keep him on track.

While skiing for my birthday two weeks ago, I met Elizabeth, a sixth grader from Hawthorne Elementary on our first chair lift ride. We ended up spending the day together discussing air quality, national politics, and education. She told me her parents are immigrants, and she knew at a young age that she had to work hard to achieve her dreams.

Elizabeth is bright and engaging and asked me questions all day. Junior is committed to his community, focused on building a better life, and kept my fiancée', on her toes while we worked the food assembly line together.

From creating mentoring opportunities to investing in YouthCity, we will do what we must to grow the positive energy of young people like Junior and Elizabeth and bring that energy to City Hall.

From working for strong legislation to clear our air, to developing economic opportunities that give kids like Junior and Elizabeth a viable future, we will do it.

And we will work for the Junior’s and Elizabeth’s who are hidden in plain sight amongst our homeless population. And we will do all we can to bring stability to their lives.

I believe every decision we make has a ripple effect, some bigger than others. I believe in the power of collaboration and working in a hands together fashion.

I believe in the people, and I believe, because of you, the State of our City is strong and we will only get better.

Thank you for listening.

Have a good night.