To the President of the Baltimore City Council, Mr. [Bernard “Jack” Young](http://www.bizjournals.com/baltimore/search/results?q=Bernard âJackâ Young) and members of this honorable body, and guests, it is an honor and privilege to appear before you today to share with you the State of our City from my perspective and with the support of my team which includes and is not limited to, my chief of staff Tisha Edwards, Chief Operating Officer [Pete Hammen](http://www.bizjournals.com/baltimore/search/results?q=Pete Hammen), Chief of Strategic Alliances Jim Smith, Director of Communications Anthony McCarthy, Director of Government Affairs Karen Stokes and Director of External Affairs Afra Vance White.

And, a special thank you to the over 200 individuals who served on our Transition Teams.

Today marks the 100th day of my public service as Mayor of this great city.

I can tell you that this awesome experience comes with many challenges and many opportunities.

I am inspired everyday by the children and people of our city. Today, I will address five specific areas that contribute to the quality of life for all our citizens, areas that we are paying close and particular attention to:

Education and Youth Development,

Public Safety,

Economic and Workforce Development and Expansion,

Smart Cities and Effective Government,

and Healthy Communities: a Driver to our Thriving City.

Our children are the foundation for the future of our city. What we do for them at their earliest age and throughout will influence their character and choices, which is why I am a big supporter of Judy Centers, educating our children beginning at 6 weeks of age and all day Pre-K gives our children a competitive edge as they pursue their education.

Providing a quality education and life experiences, whether in the classroom, internships, job experiences, recreation with safe places to play or daily living; will determine their success or failure - for them and us failure is not an option.

Our school system faces tremendous challenges with both our public schools and public charters clamoring for the same shrinking resources. We must continue to grow our city, not just for millennials, who find it cool to live here or the baby boomers who find it convenient and exciting, but for families with children to send their children to quality public schools of their choosing.

The two fastest growing populations in Baltimore are 18-34 and 55 years of age and older. The good news for our schools is that the growth in population is at our elementary school level which is a great sign for the future of Baltimore schools. However we must address the recent decline in our school system population over the past five years, from 84,212 to 82,354 - nearly 2,000 students.

We must change the state funding formula that no longer favors Baltimore because of the wealth growth in our city and it does not address the widening poverty gap. By temporarily reducing our rainy day fund allocation, requiring stricter guidelines for police and other agency overtime, we will, with your assistance Mr. President and by leveraging the youth fund, we can provide funding to address the school system’s structural deficit.

In Annapolis last week we announced with our state delegation a $180 million, 3 year commitment to school funding with their assistance that does not include the Governor’s help to address our School’s structural deficit. I also ask everyone in Baltimore to pray that fair to good weather continues with little or no snow because we are also diverting monies from our snow reserves to our contribution to our city school deficit. I should also say to you that we are also looking at other measures that we can employ to support our schools as we currently pay for crossing guards, nurses in our schools and school employee pensions.

A special thank you to Chair Maggie McIntosh for your leadership and to my colleagues at the General Assembly who continue to be a source of inspiration as they fight everyday on behalf of the citizens of Baltimore to bring back the much needed dollars for our city.

I also want to thank in advance Governor Hogan and the President of the Senate Mike Miller, who have pledged to assist us in coming up with the additional dollars needed by our school system. I am confident we will see that help in our state budget around March 20th when the budget crosses over in the General Assembly or is sent down in a supplemental.

Our school system has been faced with closing low populated public schools while charter public schools have grown to over 30, more than in the entire state - and even though public charter schools receive more per pupil allocations - they too face funding challenges.

We must also do a better job, Mr. President, of informing the public of the great things happening with our schools including the Science Olympiad where over 300 public school children participated on the campus of Morgan State University.

Two weeks ago along with you Mr. President, I attended the School for the Arts annual event where they showcased the talents of our public school children. If you closed your eyes you could have easily thought you were at a Broadway production where over a half million dollars in private funds was raised to support that school.

What is the difference between the School for the Arts, Green Street Academy, City Neighbors and The Baltimore Design School from other schools in Baltimore?

I can tell you; these schools have a Board of Directors made up of concerned citizens who believe in quality education and are willing to provide resources through fundraising and private donations to assure those students have the very best tools, teachers and learning experiences to contribute to their students’ success.

Public Private Partnerships are essential to the success of our city and to the success of our children. Every school in Baltimore should have a Board of Directors who care about the future of our children and are willing to give of their time, talent and resources. I challenge the citizens of Baltimore to provide that same support for every school in Baltimore. Those who have and will accept this challenge are the leaders that should serve on our school board because they believe in the possibilities of our students.

That is why this session, in Annapolis, I put forth Senate Bill 1012 and House Bill 562 to gain control of the appointees to our Public School Board to assure that we have individuals serving our city that understand the importance of having a strong public school system and will accept the challenge of being fiscally responsible in spending taxpayers dollars to assure equal education across the city whether you live in Druid Heights or Canton, Bolton Hill or Reservoir Hill, East Baltimore or Federal Hill, Roland Park or Moravia - Music, Art and physical education should be a part of every child’s educational experience.

I want to publicly thank Dr. Sonja Santelises, the CEO of the Baltimore City School System for being such a positive leader and a great partner. We are committed to working together to make our city schools great. I know you are up for this challenge.

Our public school system will build 23 to 26 new schools over the next few years with a billion dollars in funding secured by our State Representatives. Some of that building is already taking place.

Our public school currently has a $1.4 billion budget, while our city has a $2.6 billion operating budget to provide all city services including trash collection, permitting, fire, police, parks and recreation.

Our city schools have a structural deficit, so does our city, state and country. However the city has a AA bond rating because we have managed the revenue and obligations of our city with fiscal controls.

The dilemma for the school system is that they must determine how, with the growth of charter public schools they manage, layoff or absorb teachers, principals and administrators that are not chosen to work in those charter public schools. Structurally the system can’t accommodate both with our shrinking enrollment. Every time a charter public school chooses to hire a teacher that is not already in the public school system that is being down sized, it creates a greater structural issue for the entire public school system. So I ask the school board with its CEO to come up with a plan that will not see us grappling with this problem year after year.

Our goal is to make our schools a part of the community, centers of enrichment.

Here is where I call on the Private Sector. This year’s Youth Works program has seen our largest number ever of young people applying to work this summer, at 12,500 youth. All of these children must work. I am calling on our faith-based community, business leaders and philanthropic organizations to help us meet this goal. If we don’t employ our youth, the drug dealers will. To the church and faith community - host a Youth Sunday or take up a collection, dedicate an offering to employ our youth. For $1,500 you can provide a young person with a summer job. My administration is working towards a sustainable Youth Works program with funding at $18 million annually and Mr. President, with your assistance the help of this council and the public and private sector, we can meet that goal. We’ve asked the Business community to partner with us as we take our youth works program to another level. I’ve asked that they not just provide us with the funding but provide the young people an opportunity to work inside their companies, corporations, and organizations. This gives young people experiences outside the communities in which they live.

I’m always reminded as a former newspaper owner--covering the Miami riots, I’ve told this story several times, it was not the burnt out buildings that I remember most, It was the eleven year old boy that stood beside me, who when I looked in his bewildered big brown eyes , said, “We have no place to work now.”

Here was a young boy whose entire life was relegated to the four square block radius in which he lived. Ask yourself, as I did, how many young people today have those same thoughts?

We could not have achieved the success we have to date without the generous support of so many companies, corporations and philanthropic organizations - but Baltimore City needs more - and so I call on all of you to help us to meet this great need on behalf of our young people. And remember, many of our young people are asking to work not just because they want to, but because they have to.

Some of them are nursing drug addicted parents or are supporting single family homes and yes, some want to dream beyond what they see.

Together we can ensure their success.

Public safety is the corner stone to the growth and revitalization of our city. On the first day one of my administration I was faced with individuals, politicians, and advocates demanding that I sign a consent decree that was not on my desk. However as important as they thought it was to complete a consent decree to help reform our Police Department at the request of the department of justice and gain confidence in the police by our community, so did I, Police Commissioner Kevin Davis and my team.

Thank you City Solicitor David Ralph for leading, what would have taken most cities at least a year to complete, we were able, with 14 and 16 hour days, to complete in less than 30 days.

For example in Ferguson, with less than 50 police officers, it took 13 months and New Orleans with half the size of the police force as Baltimore - took 14 months.

In light of our latest revelations regarding Police Department corruption, I look forward to the reforms, some that are currently underway, two citizens on our trial boards are essential to building trust between the community and the Police Department. Those who will be chosen to sit on our trial board will be trained and undergo background checks. They must be able to understand the complexities of community policing and fairness in judgment of the actions of the Police Department and the community. We are reviewing best practices of Police Departments around the country that have led to successful downward trends of crime as part of the solutions we will implement.

I have also issued a call-to-action to get community members to partner with me to develop workable solutions that brings the community into the action. We’ve held two meetings and I shared a film, “Walking While Black” with this group, they have demanded more programs for our youth and jobs for the unemployed. Some were not aware of the programs already being provided as we share information with them. Others have also taken on the challenge of mentoring our youth, walking with our police and volunteering in summer leagues and numerous programs we currently offer young people. Their actions and interaction have made me proud.

Thank you to all of you who are currently at the table helping us meet the challenges of an unacceptable crime rate.

There IS good news.

Last January we only had 46 individuals who applied to be Baltimore City police officers. This year in that same period, we had 157 people apply to wear the blue uniform including my friend Atiba, who I met last year campaigning, who wanted to make sure I got safely to my destination and back to my car.

When I asked Atiba what his goal in life was, he replied, “I’m a barber by day, a security guard at night and a promoter on the weekend. But there is nothing I would like more than to become a Baltimore City police officer.”

Today Atiba is one of the 87 individuals currently in our Police Academy. I would also like to congratulate my neighbor Drake Winkey, who I’ve watched grow-up since he was 10 years old as he lived directly across the street from me. He is now 26 and a graduate of the University of Maryland Eastern Shore. Drake, too, had a dream of becoming a Baltimore City police officer. Last week I received the news that Drake had passed all his tests and is now preparing to enter the Baltimore Police Academy. I and the citizens of Baltimore look forward to both of these young men’s service to our city.

For a number of years our Police Department has incurred a growing overtime budget, reaching last year over $40 million, which included the cost of covering the unrest following the death of Freddie Gray.

While we are improving our tools of accountability, right sizing the Police Department, removing police officers from civilian jobs and increasing our street patrols, I have called for a forensic audit of police overtime and our police budget. Having the right number of police officers for our force is important for public safety, however we must structure our Police Department in a manner that curbs overtime while protecting our citizens.

Getting guns off our streets and smoke detectors in every home in Baltimore are high priorities. Senate Bill 826 will help us get those guns off our streets. Thank you Commissioner Kevin Davis for leading that effort in Annapolis and Chief Niles Ford for having the Fire Department canvas our neighborhoods, along with some of our City Council members, to install smoke detectors in citizens homes. Dialing 311 will get anyone in our city a smoke detector. Remember 311 - get one. We cannot have another tragedy like the families we’ve had die in fires in our city, babies whose lives had yet to be lived.

I look forward to restructuring our Mayor’s Office of Criminal Justice, strengthening our Civilian Review Board, led by our Director of Civil Rights and Wage Enforcement - Jill Carter- and further selecting an independent monitor for our consent decree.

But let me be clear, even if we were to add 1,000 new police officers to our streets to patrol daily that would not solve our crime problem. Crime is symptomatic of the many problems facing our city today -unemployment, drug addiction, mental illness, hopelessness and homelessness. But because we are a resilient city we can overcome and tackle all of these issues and problems head on, together.

Our citizens need stable employment and healthy economic growth. Government does two things: it provides services and opportunities. The services that you as taxpayers expect, pay for and deserve are trash pickup, police protection, fire services, snow removal, and more.

It is the economic opportunities provided by City Government that are most concerning to me. The lack of diversity and inclusion in both job opportunities with the city and business opportunities created by the city, whether it is through our federal mandate to fix our water pipes and aging infrastructure which will result in billions of dollars in contracts over the next decade, or the rebuilding of city neighborhoods and communities; our administration is working to bring much needed change that will stimulate economic opportunity for our diverse population.

I will never forget my first day at my Pre-Board of Estimates meeting where I was told that pages 1-21 are routine, and I replied, “I’m new, nothing is routine,” and as I do today, and will continue to do, went through every contract that is issued by our various departments where language, such as “no way to intersect” and “no MBE/WBE required”, seem to be rather routine responses. I have directed my department heads - DPW, Housing, Transportation, Purchasing, Recreation And Parks and others - that spend millions of dollars to find ways, whether we unbundle or segment contracts to include people of color and minority classes in those opportunities.

We are restructuring our minority and women business ownership office to create better collaboration with city agencies that should result in growth and expansion of minority and women-owned businesses in our city.

I have begun regular roundtable discussions with our anchor institutions including our hospitals and colleges and universities, on how we collaborate to support them and they support us, not just as government, but as a city.

How do we keep those young people who graduate from their institutions living and working in our city and how do we expand opportunities for their employees to live near where they work?

How do we share job and business opportunities with our communities that result from their institutions?

And how do we make sure that the students who attend their institutions become ambassadors for our city? And how do we keep them safe in our city?

Those meetings have been thoughtful and participatory. No other city can compete with the number of colleges and universities that exist in our city. First class institutions of higher learning - Johns Hopkins, Morgan, Loyola, University Of Maryland, Coppin State University, University of Baltimore, College of Notre Dame, and Baltimore City Community College. I reminded them that the reason I am a Baltimorean today is because I came here to attend Morgan State University, became a cheerleader and was recruited on my campus by every bank and insurance company in Baltimore. I left Morgan with a Master’s Degree in business and 8 of the eleven jobs I had interviewed for. I raised the question - are we doing that today? But we as a city must lead by example.

For the first time this fall our office of human resources, thank you Director Mary Talley, will host a jobs fair that will be promoted and advertised through our own Charm TV Channel 25 on Comcast Cable and other media. Our event will invite the citizens of Baltimore to apply for openings with city government and we will ask contractors, companies and corporations to join us at this event to offer employment and training to Baltimore residents.

Today we have 76,000 people unemployed in our city included in those numbers are the 10,000 (ex-offenders) that I refer to as returning citizens that come home to Baltimore every year looking to be housed, looking to be fed, looking to be trained, and looking to work.

I want to thank Joe Jones of The Center For Urban Families, Jump Start, Living Classrooms, Maryland Center For Adult Training and the many programs that take on this challenge every day with the help of our Office Of Employment Development led by Jason-Perkins Cohen and the State Office of Labor Licensing And Regulation under the direction of Secretary Kelly M. Schulz.

But we must do more.

Again, when I was campaigning last year, I woke up one morning at 4:30 a.m. after having digested the study by the neighborhood indicators alliance, a research arm of the University of Baltimore that identifies the conditions of our neighborhoods and reports where unemployment is at its highest. The Old Town Mall area was identified as the number one unemployed area in our city. My thought was how do I get our people who are unemployed working? In today’s age of technology, can’t we download job and training opportunities and go out on mobile units to those neighborhoods instead of waiting for people who are depressed, have lost hope and don’t believe we care about their condition and share with them the opportunities available to them and get them working.

For me at 4:30 a.m. It seemed like a great idea. But I waited until 7:30 a.m… To call up a corporate executive to share my idea and he started to chuckle. My first thought was maybe it’s not such a great idea. He responded quickly and said i’m not laughing because it’s not a good idea, I’m laughing because I just funded a similar mobile unit for our Enoch Pratt Central Library System. On any given day you can walk into our libraries and see people doing their job searches. What he also said is that I’m not sure their concept is as broad as yours. I explained that I wanted to be able to set goals and measure the success of these units.

Thank you for answering that call, Calvin Butler, CEO of The Baltimore Gas And Electric Company. My goal is to have seven such units moving around the city daily with a goal of employing 10 people per day on each unit- that’s 70 people – 350 a week -18,000 people a year and in four years over 70,000 people put to work. For this to be successful we will need to partner city services with philanthropic and business support. If we achieve 25% of that goal - between jobs, training and services - we can change the trajectory of our city. Each unit costs $350,000. I want you know today that we have a commitment for three of those units.

The library will roll out their unit this April and we will partner with them to enhance their efforts.

As we restructure the Baltimore Development Corporation, I want to thank Bill Cole, its Executive Director, who has set at the table with the Transition Committee making suggestions as to how to make the organization more effective, attract companies looking to relocate and moving our city towards a more inclusive vision and not just developer driven.

A new restructured BDC will provide opportunity to invest in local entrepreneurship and expand second and third locations for businesses that are doing well in other parts of our city and enhance other neighborhoods in our city, like Mustang Alley, a dining and bowling alley – improving much needed entertainment and sit down restaurants that are almost non-existent in West and East Baltimore. As well as investing in Baltimoreans who have the capacity to participate in the opportunities to rebuild Baltimore. What programs should be expanded and what tax incentives should be offered? We look forward to that reorganization.

Our Inner Harbor is a beacon of pride for our city. When you build an apartment building downtown, it is quickly occupied before we can complete it. Tourists flock to our city each year and vendors who sell conferences and conventions are racing to greet me to ask us to expand our convention center so they can bring the bigger conferences and conventions to Baltimore - and we want them.

Welcome to Baltimore. Al Hutchinson, Chief Executive Officer of Visit Baltimore.

Building a larger Convention Center will depend on the investment of our private sector because our tax dollars have to expand beyond our downtown neighborhoods and into neighborhoods like Park Heights, where the future of the Preakness revolves around our ability to attract $300 million dollars in investment to the track. A renovated track can increase employment and economic development in that community and similar communities like East Baltimore, Northwood And North Avenue.

I’m grateful to Ron Daniels and Johns Hopkins for their continued investment in East Baltimore where they’ve extended their commitment to employees of Hopkins at $35,000 each to live where they work. And to Dr. David Wilson and his one mile commitment to increase investments in Northwood and the communities surrounding the college and The University of Maryland in the expansion of their Bio Tech Park increasing investment in the neighboring communities. As important as it is to provide TIFS for downtown development, that same economic access is needed for the neighborhoods of Old Town Mall, And East and West Baltimore.

When I attend the international shopping center conference in Las Vegas this year, I will go focused, to lure supermarkets to food desserts, sit down restaurants, movie theaters and entertainment and attract venues to neighborhoods like liberty heights where we located a ShopRite Supermarket but did not develop the retail corridor around it.

While the City’s, philanthropic and non-profit communities are working to help returning citizens become employed like Kirby Fowler, President of the Downtown Partnership, I ask our business and corporate community to give our returning citizens an opportunity to train and work with your companies. As Kirby has been heard saying, our returning citizens can become your best employees. Jobs are being created in and around Baltimore and we must make sure Baltimore citizens can get to those jobs and have the skills to enter some of the emerging industries. Getting Baltimoreans working, creating a more diverse and inclusive economy and economic opportunity is not a simple solution. It takes all of us working together to support this goal.

Economic growth needs government to be smart, supporting advances in technology and providing access to broadband are all necessary for sustainable growth. In an age of ever-changing demand and rapid technology growth, government must be more nimble to respond to citizens and business needs.

Early in my Administration we learned that our permitting process was outdated. It required several visits Downtown and too much waiting to wade through the cumbersome process. I want to thank [Pete Hammen](http://www.bizjournals.com/baltimore/search/results?q=Pete Hammen) and Acting Housing Commissioner Michael Braverman and his team who answered my request to streamline line the process and make it available on line. E-permits/on line permitting is in operation today and cuts down on the hours and days that developers have had to invest in trying to do work in our communities. We are also working to reform our entire procurement process to become more inclusive and diverse.

Measuring our progress is essential in ensuring an effective government. Which is why I’m so proud to announce that we are a Bloomberg Philanthropies City, which through Bloomberg Philanthropies we will receive a half million dollars ($500,000), a year for three years to increase innovation and to bring the latest technology and transparency and measurement tools to City government while identifying the best and the brightest to lead those efforts in our city to improve government services. We are engaged in the conversations with Amtrak and other transportation modes including our own circulator to eliminate the gaps in transportation needs for the citizens of Baltimore to get to and from employment opportunities.

Smart cities are bright, walkable cities, where people feel safe to walk to neighborhood venues to shop or be entertained. Our goal working with our city councilpersons is to provide 6,000 new lights in neighborhoods throughout the city over the next few years. We will pilot this project in two neighborhoods, Penn-North and Charles Street.

We are committed to implementing the new zoning code which takes effect this June. Just this morning I was on Capitol Hill before Congress asking for investment in our infrastructure which, again, will increase employment and business opportunities in our city.

A smart city is inclusive of its residents so I wanted to take a moment to thank the nearly 1,000 people who went on line as we opened the appointment process for 700 positions -to citizens in Baltimore to serve on boards and commissions that help run city government.

Healthy communities lead to a thriving city. Baltimore is a city of neighborhoods, which have shaped its history, character and culture. But a neighborhood is only as healthy as its residents. I was so proud to join our health commissioner Dr. Leana Wen, who through her collaborations we were able to present the 1,000 th pair of eye glasses to a student in of our school system. Vision for Baltimore, a program that changes the lives of so many students in our public school system whose parents were unable to provide eye exams or glasses for them. Eye glasses moved them from children who had been identified as children with a learning disability to children who are excited about reading and doing their homework.

Every new Mayor should build on the progress of previous Mayors. I was proud to lift the shovel for the $430 million redevelopment of the Poppleton Neighborhood, awarding $27 million dollars in TIGER grants that will improve North Avenue from Hilton to Milton, and the Jones Fall Trail will enter phase 5 to support the bridge over Northern Parkway Project.

Recently Mr. President, you and I joined the Governor in the 1700 block of North Chester and Madison along with community leaders including the Rev. Donte Hickman and other ministers, to knock down dilapidated buildings as a part of PROJECT CORE to make way for more community development in that area.

The James Mosher Field with the assistance of the Ripken Foundation represents $1.2 million of investment that should be completed this spring in time for us to say, play ball!

Earlier this year we stood with local artists and declared that we will work to help them to find safe places for them to continue their work.

We are expanding Clean Corp to help beautify our neighborhoods, plant more trees, and clean up our streets to create more healthy environments for us all.

We just launched a Green and Healthy Homes Asthma Initiative. Thank you Ruth Ann Norton for leading this effort with our housing authority to make the housing we make available to the public healthier.

We recognize that there are communities that have not had access to funding opportunities or who have community development corporations that have yet to develop their capacity to expand their footprint in their communities or to eliminate the number of boarded up houses that exist in their neighborhoods.

We will help those emerging community development corporations to develop their capacity.

It is no longer acceptable for developers to just come into neighborhoods and define the problems of those neighborhoods and implement solutions that are not inclusive of the individuals who live there.

We will help those communities develop their capacity and philanthropic communities to develop relationships with them so they can do the work and employ individuals in those neighborhoods. So, we look forward to announcing our conference on capacity building inside communities where philanthropic organizations and agencies will learn about each other and develop inclusive partnerships.

I cannot leave this conversation with you without addressing homelessness in our city. As I sat down with a group of developers I said to them that we are obligated to address homelessness.

I informed them that homelessness is not just a problem for those that are homeless; it is a problem for all of us. It is a health hazard when they have no other choice but to relieve themselves on our streets. I asked them to think about homelessness as I would think of myself if I found myself in that state. What would I want done for me because only by the grace of God it could be any of us.

I said to them I would want a place I could go to different from a shelter where I have to share space with more than a dozen people or take a shower under that same condition. I would want a place where I could come and shut my door, lay down my head, get up in the morning, take a shower, sit up and begin to think about how I face the day ahead. In the middle of that facility I would want a cafeteria where they can be provided three meals a day, as I was sketching out my concept, I continued in one corner I want to be able to provide mental health services, in another area, drug treatment, in another, job and job training services along with babysitting services.

As I finished my sketch, they replied let us help you. We will provide an architect to prepare the architectural drawings, we will build such a facility expandable for at least 100 people and we will help you measure its success. Bill Cole has already identified 2 possible locations and others have chipped in on other possible locations. With the 3,000 people who are homeless we need a long-term plan and the united way, Associated Catholic Charities, The Episcopal Church, Healthcare For The Homeless and so many others are engaged in this work. This is one of my number one priorities and we will get this done.

Our city faces many challenges, whether it is aging infrastructure, the digital divide, high concentrations of opioid treatment centers, more than any other jurisdiction in the state, and despite a 98% reduction in lead paint poisoning of our children, still nearly 1,000 continue to be poisoned every year, restoring and strengthening public trust in our Police Department, an unacceptable crime rate, lack of basic needs in our city schools including air conditioning; I remain optimistic about our ability to address these challenges.

Resources are limited, that is why I’m calling on all of us to work together.

While we have reserves to help fund our school system it is not a practice that the City can sustain.

Having a “AA” bond rating allows us to go to the bond market to provide capital for neighborhood development and revitalization. We must create incentives for people to move into our city so that we can reduce our property taxes.

We must always be prepared for emergencies that our city might encounter and be in a position to expand and grow economic opportunities and job creation.

We are researching the establishment of a Redevelopment Authority and the concept of providing housing and ownership opportunities with a lower property tax model to eliminate the number of boarded up houses in our city while increasing homeownership and building on Vacants To Values by accelerating its mission and creating a Renters Tax Credit Program while expanding affordable home ownership programs in our city.

I want to thank our economic groups; The Greater Baltimore Committee, The Economic Alliance of Greater Baltimore and others that are working with us to promote a positive image of Baltimore not just to our tourists, but to Baltimoreans being led by Sandy Hillman and others.

Again I ask all of Baltimore to join our solutions summit, youth summit, volunteer to support our schools, mentor our children, serve on volunteer boards and commissions, create jobs, partner in business with communities of color and women, participate on local school boards and cheer with me for the success of Baltimore as we work towards moving our city forward…TOGETHER!