



2017 STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS

Presented By Mayor Stephanie A. Miner

**Persian Terrace, Marriott Syracuse Downtown
(The Historic Hotel Syracuse)**

January 12, 2017

Good evening to all. Thank you for joining me for the 2017 State of the City Address.

Thank you to Ed Riley for welcoming us here tonight to the beautiful, historic, and now very busy Hotel Syracuse.

Pastor Phil Turner of Bethany Baptist Church, thank you for that moving invocation.

And I appreciate the generous introduction from Council Majority Leader Steve Thompson. Thank you.

I also want to acknowledge our other Common Council members: Council President Van Robinson. At-Large Councilors Helen Hudson, Jean Kessner, Joe Nicoletti, and District Councilors Joe Carni, Chad Ryan, Susan Boyle, Khalid Bey, and Nader Maroun.

I would also like to recognize City Auditor Marty Masterpole, and the City Court Judges in attendance, with a special acknowledgement for newly appointed Judge Derrek Thomas.

Welcome to our Commissioners of Education, and Interim Superintendent Jaime Alicea.

I also want to acknowledge representatives from our state and federal delegations. Thank you for being here.

And to the members of the County Legislature, as well as County Comptroller Bob Antonacci, and Deputy County Executive Bill Fisher - thank you for joining us tonight.

I did a fair amount of contemplating about what I wanted to convey in my final State of the City address. We have almost a full year of work ahead of us, and much that we strive to

accomplish. And we have some exciting announcements and new initiatives that we will unveil tonight. But I do want to take some time to reflect on what we have already accomplished and what that has meant for this city we all love so dearly. I want to talk to you tonight about tough decisions, about real solutions, and, most importantly, about the potential that lies within our city, within ourselves, and within our city's children.

Since taking office as Mayor some seven years ago, I have attended both the first day of school and every high school graduation.

Attending the first day of school inevitably brings a lump to my throat. We are a poor city. More than forty-five percent of our children live in poverty and we have the highest concentration of black and Hispanic poverty of any city in the nation. And yet, that first day of school, year after year, every kindergartener I saw walked in with brand new shoes on their feet. Different faces, different backgrounds, different life circumstances – but all filled, overflowing even, with the promise and potential of a new beginning. Re-experiencing that every year through their eyes has helped clarify the job of governing this city. Many of those children's parents made tough decisions in order to get them to school in those new shoes. Those shoes are a definitive sign of the hope for their children and the belief that those of us in leadership will act to maximize their opportunities.

Since becoming Mayor, I have also attended every high school graduation, every year: Corcoran, Fowler, Nottingham, Henninger and ITC. I am proud to say that I have shaken the

hand of every graduate. Graduations are a celebration of promise and potential fulfilled, the culmination of sacrifice, hard work, and yes, tough decisions. It's also a real, tangible result that is a direct consequence of those choices.

New shoes. Graduations. The looks of pride and excitement on our students' faces. Realizing our full potential. These have been reminders for me and my administration to keep the promise and potential of those children as our guiding North Star. I have endeavored every day to guide our decision-making anchored firmly to these values.

Many of you are well acquainted with my zeal for traditional infrastructure, but I want to start tonight talking about a different kind of infrastructure: the infrastructure of opportunity.

Now a successful national program, Say Yes got its start right here in Syracuse. A collaboration of K-through-twelve, higher education, non-profit and corporate partners, Say Yes lifts up students primarily from low-income families and helps break down the academic and financial barriers to attending college. Say Yes is opportunity incarnate. It's a winner, a true game-changer for the lives it transforms, and I am proud to have supported it over the course of my career, starting during my time on the City Council. Many of you remember, maybe some of you were there, no less a booster than President Obama visited our very own Henninger High School to tout Say Yes. Since 2010, we have worked together to raise more

than \$10 million for the Say Yes to Education Endowment Fund. And to date, Say Yes has awarded over \$7.3 million in scholarships, helping more than 2,900 students attend college.

Because of ground-breaking, innovative programs like Say Yes, our graduation rates are improving. Last year the Syracuse City School District graduation rate reached an eight-year high of fifty-five percent. Though we can, and must, and will do better: we should acknowledge and celebrate this progress.

To build on this progress, we need to understand not all students are the same and a one-size-fits-all model for education does not do justice to a culturally, economically, and intellectually diverse school system. The Syracuse City School District has recognized that challenge, and realized the potential it offers by establishing more than two dozen Career and Technical Education programs. Students in our high schools have the opportunity to learn real-world skills that equip them for life in the twenty-first century economy. Students can now take advantage of established programs, such as cosmetology, automotive technology, and Junior ROTC as well as groundbreaking new opportunities like cybersecurity, drone technology, welding, electrical trades, and even a pathway for students who want to teach in urban schools. These transformative programs are changing the way students, teachers, and parents are looking at education and launching a new course to success for our young people.

No matter the programs available to our students and their families, their achievement will be hindered if they are learning in substandard conditions. When I came into office, I

inherited the stalled Joint Schools Construction Board project, which – up until then – had done little more than a few roof repairs. When I became mayor, our school buildings, on average, were more than seven decades old. Many did not have adequate heat, no air conditioning whatsoever, and lacked the electrical infrastructure necessary to have the technology a modern school requires: smart boards, labs, WiFi, and high-speed internet.

The repairs that needed to happen were expensive, but our children could not afford to wait. We developed a plan, and, during my first term in office, the JSCB fully renovated four schools: H.W. Smith, Dr. Weeks, the Institute of Technology at Syracuse Central, and the Public Service Leadership Academy at Fowler High School. These schools are models of progress; they look and feel the way a school should, giving students a greater sense of dignity to accompany their education, in addition to being world-class facilities with the latest technology and resources. These schools also all received LEED Silver Certification from the U.S. Green Building Council, meaning these buildings will leave a legacy not only of student achievement, but of sustainability and environmental stewardship. I want to thank the members of the Joint Schools Construction Board for their dedication to this critically important effort.

The task of delivering better buildings for our students is not yet complete. While we are proud of these schools, there is much more work to be done. We are currently in the second phase of the Joint Schools Construction Board program. Projects have been selected, and we

are currently finalizing the selection of contractors to complete the work. In Phase Two, instead of full gut renovations of schools, we will be performing smaller projects in more buildings. By doing this, we will stretch our dollars further and improve the conditions for more of our students.

The JSCB program has also made strides in its commitment to local hiring. Phase One set goals of 9% minority and 6% women contracting enterprises. We exceeded those goals. We decided to raise the bar for the second phase, setting 20% MWBE contracting and hiring goals, as well as a 20% city resident hiring goal. Not only will we rebuild schools for our children to learn, we will put community members to work in a meaningful way helping all of our families thrive.

Childhood literacy is another area where we've made significant progress. Syracuse is the first locality in the state to establish an Imagination Library program. Founded by Dolly Parton, Imagination Library delivers high-quality, age-appropriate books directly to the homes of children under five.

We've also instituted fine-free library cards for all city residents under the age of eighteen thus making sure that economic barriers do not come between children and a love of reading. Our initiative forgave more than \$60,000 in outstanding fines, unblocking the library cards of nearly five-thousand children.

Say Yes. Career and Technical Education. New school buildings. Childhood literacy programs. Collectively we are assembling the infrastructure of opportunity for our children, and I want to thank the educators, parents, our School Board members and District leadership, and countless community partners who work so hard to make these efforts a reality in our city.

Investment in this infrastructure of opportunity – or any infrastructure for that matter – comes at a cost. In order to adequately fund our priorities, we've had to make tough, smart financial decisions. I made a personal commitment to make responsible fiscal decisions and that my administration would not shirk this duty as we navigated fiscal storms. As I said when I was sworn-in in 2010, we are a hearty people – we don't take the easy way out.

In the last ten years, the City's pension bills have grown by 76%, while state municipal and school aid has stagnated. Albany has not delivered on promised tax, pension or labor law reforms that would ease the burden on cash strapped cities like Syracuse. Instead, what were we encouraged to do? Borrow. So-called “pension smoothing” would have effectively kicked the can 25 years down the road. We chose not to participate in pension smoothing, and that decision is already proving to be sound. This summer, the major bond rating firms – Fitch, S&P and Moody's – all gave this City an “A” or “A1” rating with a “stable outlook,” specifically citing the rejection of pension smoothing. We paid our annual pension bill in full, and we are on course to save \$124 million over 25 years.

One of the things that make a city like Syracuse fiscally vulnerable is a large amount of tax-exempt property, usually concentrated in the hands of a few large institutions. These institutions make extensive use of city services – police, fire and public works for example – yet pay no property taxes toward their support, further burdening residential taxpayers. To correct this inequity, I engaged our large, institutional, tax-exempt employers, and, in a number of cases, persuaded them to enter into voluntary Service Agreements with the City. These agreements were the first of their kind in New York State, and are rare nationally. Last year, Syracuse University renewed its 2011 service agreement with a commitment of \$7 million over five years. Crouse Hospital also entered into a voluntary agreement with the City in 2012, contributing \$50,000 annually. I have publicly urged others to join them. Difficult? Maybe. Necessary? Absolutely.

The closing of Fire Station Seven was another difficult, albeit necessary step. Controversial under any circumstances, closing a fire station during an election year is a true test of our will to do what is right, especially when it is most painful. The City saved approximately \$1 million in capital costs, and is saving more than \$1.25 million annually, while the Syracuse Fire Department's response time remains unchanged. It was difficult, yet necessary, and the savings from this decision have helped us make needed investments in the department, including new equipment, apparatus, and – even as departments elsewhere in the

state are laying off firefighters – we will be introducing a new class of 28 recruits later this month.

Just this past year, we successfully negotiated a new contract with our firefighters. In exchange for a multi-year raise, the City was able to negotiate a modest increase to employee contributions for health insurance – easing one of the largest cost drivers facing the City. But most importantly, the City won a key concession: a five-year residency requirement for new hires. When public employees live where they work, they and their families have a greater investment – both socially and economically – in the community they serve.

As we consider the City's economic future, we also took action to protect City employees who do the people's work every day. Well before New York State began the process of gradually raising its minimum wage, we unilaterally addressed the inequity felt by more than 60 of our own workers who were earning as little as \$8.75 an hour. We acted, and led the way in establishing a \$15 minimum wage for city employees. No one working for our city – working full time – should face the strains of living in poverty.

As we guard the City's financial future, I believe another endeavor worthy of our continued vigilance is ensuring that tax breaks for developers are always balanced with a commensurate public good. Put simply: If the public is giving, the public should be getting. I am proud that this issue has been central to my public service and this administration's

policies. Asking tough questions, demanding answers and holding the powerful accountable is a much rarer way of doing business than it should be. When millions of taxpayer dollars are at stake, when public officials aren't vigilant, when personal greed eclipses the public good, you end up with corruption, scandal and the further erosion of public trust. You end up with the headlines that dominated 2016.

I want to talk specifically about the unprecedented development – both downtown and in our neighborhoods – we have helped foster over the last seven years. There are some who subscribe to the philosophy that holding developers to high standards, and promoting principled economic development, stifles investment. Our experiences suggest otherwise.

Downtown is becoming a 24/7 destination and thriving neighborhood with an influx of new residents and hotel guests. 15 new businesses have opened in the last year alone. We are working to revive the long-vacant NYNEX building with an exciting mixed-use development that will consist of 120,000 square feet of commercial space, and 132 apartments. Since 2010, more than \$400 million has been invested in Downtown Syracuse, with more than \$150 million in investment currently underway. In fact, during my tenure as Mayor, the city has experienced more than \$1.5 Billion in development. I think those numbers suggest we are indeed experiencing unprecedented momentum, of which we should all be proud.

Bringing the beautiful building we are in tonight back to life has been a particularly rewarding accomplishment for many of us, and I would like to acknowledge the work of Ed

Riley. Ed, thanks to your determination and vision, future generations will be able to enjoy the rich history that their parents and grandparents did. The Hotel Syracuse is not just an architectural gem; it's also a shining example of how development is done right. Take for example the recently announced agreement to restore the adjacent Symphony Tower building. The agreement will turn the now vacant building into a new extended stay hotel for downtown. The agreement includes the forgiveness of back taxes and penalties, but in return the developer has agreed to pay the City \$1.5 million, and hire at least twenty-percent city residents and contract with at least twenty-percent minority and women owned business. It's a fair deal and it's good for the City. Ed, your hard work is creating a new future in the southern part of downtown that is a benefit to our entire community. Thank you.

With the rejuvenated Hotel Syracuse, and the Centro bus hub a constant hive of activity, the time to push downtown's success south is now. Just across Adams Street is the old Syracuse Central High School. Sometimes called the Greystone Building, Central was designed by famed Syracuse architect Archimedes Russell, and first opened in 1903. It served as a school until 1975. Efforts to revive the building in the 1980's proved unsuccessful, and estimates to reopen the building as a school exceed \$60 million dollars. It's time we gave this Syracuse classic a chance at a new future that might forge connections between Downtown and the Southside. In the coming weeks I will be asking the Board of Education to decommission the building as a school, after which the City can commence a process to challenge the development community

to come to the table with creative new ways to bring Greystone back into productive use. I want to thank Superintendent Alicea and the School Board for their willingness to explore this exciting new opportunity.

As we celebrate successes and new opportunities within our downtown and our neighborhoods, we must also focus on what connects them. The Connective Corridor, linking Syracuse University to downtown, was nearly a decade in the making, but is now complete.

A similar connective route is the Onondaga Creekwalk. Also many years under discussion, we completed the first two-point-six mile leg of this trail in 2011. Connecting downtown and Armory Square to the shore of Onondaga Lake, it has been a resounding success and a beautiful representation of the city's desired future. Currently we are in the process of designing Phase II of the Creekwalk, which will extend the trail south from Armory Square to Kirk Park on Syracuse's Southside.

There are these stories and so many more, but what's clear is that Downtown Syracuse's transformation has risen to new levels, and this bodes well for the city and the entire region.

Positive changes are evident beyond Downtown as well. One of the main vehicles helping drive positive change in our neighborhoods is the Greater Syracuse Land Bank. By foreclosing on tax-delinquent, often abandoned properties the City has worked with the Land Bank to stabilize struggling properties, reduce blight, and get properties back into the hands of

responsible property owners and back on the tax rolls. In the nearly four years since its creation, the Greater Syracuse Land Bank has become the most active in the state. Since its inception, we have conveyed more than 1,200 formerly tax delinquent properties to the Land Bank. In turn, the Land Bank has been successful in selling 400 properties, leveraging more than \$15 million in private investment, returning \$14.25 million worth of property to the tax rolls.

These numbers represent signs of hope and progress in our neighborhoods. The Land Bank's success has led to hundreds of examples in every neighborhood across the city of long-standing eyesores finally being addressed, not ignored. Like the house on the corner of Glen and Midland Avenues that was deteriorating for years, and was seen by hundreds of parents taking their children to Little League and school. Now, the house has been renovated and the property is beautiful.

For far too long, houses in our city would be abandoned and left to deteriorate – physical evidence of a sense that people just did not care or have hope in our future, and that we as leaders would do nothing to deal with this issue. The Land Bank changed that, and proved to our residents that we will fight this issue with our ideas and our tenacity. I want to thank Land Bank Executive Director Katelyn Wright, the Land Bank board of directors and Citizen Advisory Board, and all those partners who have made the Land Bank such an important community success.

The Land Bank wasn't the first organizational change we made related to improve neighborhoods. Upon taking office we immediately shrunk administrative costs, and reallocated more than \$3 million in funding toward housing rehabilitation. This streamlined office has administered funding that allowed more than 1,100 low-income homeowners to make critical repairs and helped another 1,000 city residents realize the dream of owning their own home.

Affordable housing is a basic need. And yet it remains elusive for too many of our residents. That's why, over the past seven years, we've leveraged more than \$120 million in private investment – eight dollars to every one dollar in city funds – to create more than 450 units of affordable housing with another 380 currently in development. These projects include: Syracuse Homes, Van Kueren Square, Loguen Homes, Joslyn Court III & IV, Eljay, Salina Crossing, Clinton Plaza, Harbor Street Lofts, and Butternut Crossing.

To improve quality of life and the ability to do business in our neighborhoods, we are also undertaking a comprehensive effort to modernize our zoning code. Our existing zoning code is a complex series of rules and procedures that was first written in 1922. That's right, 1922. That's the year Betty White was born. For more than a year, City staff has worked with consultants and community partners on our ReZone Syracuse initiative, the first overhaul of this antiquated code, bringing this document in line with the vision and goals laid out in the City's Comprehensive Plan: 2040. This is a once-in-a-generation project aimed at protecting

our neighborhoods, streamlining the project approval process, and creating a more predictable environment. I want to thank the many neighbors, architects, developers, planners, business people and Councilors who have committed their time in service to this important project.

It is said the truest moral test of government is how it responds to those who live in the shadows of society. We have fought for that same principle here in Syracuse, and there is no greater example than what we have done to fight homelessness. We have not criminalized homelessness. Instead, we have approached this challenge with compassion. As we work to serve this community, we have also focused on those who have been of service to us: our veterans. In 2010, I joined more than 800 mayors across the country in signing the “Mayors Challenge to End Veteran Homelessness.” The goal was audacious. But we got to work. We assembled stakeholders including social service agencies, nonprofits and other levels of government. We put into place a process whereby homeless vets could be identified and placed into housing within 45 days. We got them off the streets and into temporary then extended shelter. On Veterans Day 2015, the White House added Syracuse to a list of just ten other cities that effectively ended homelessness for veterans. I am incredibly proud of this accomplishment, and I thank Melissa Marrone, John Tumino and all those who have worked so hard to make it a reality.

Speaking of heroes, a recent incident demonstrates the commitment of people working for our city every day. Just last week, while supervising swimmers at the Southwest Community Center, employees Ellie Barvinchak, Christopher Black and Justin Williams – who are here with us tonight – observed a man struggling in the water. They were able to pull the man from the water and resuscitate him. He nearly didn't make, but thanks to their quick thinking, he is expected to make a full recovery.

We see success stories large and small all across our city, including in our parks. In Strathmore, we reopened the Onondaga Park Firebarn. The historic structure was originally known as Fire Station 21. Taken out of service in 1973, this long-promised project was finally completed in 2012. Since opening, it has hosted many events for local residents, including as the frequent site of the Strathmore Speakers Series.

Our parks have a grand legacy, which will be highlighted throughout this year as we celebrate the centennial of our Parks Department. We are blessed to have more than 1,000 acres of parkland serving the recreational pursuits of our entire community. Many of our parks were designed in the spirit and style of Frederick Law Olmsted, the famed landscape architect who was the designer of New York's Central Park, and these remarkable facilities have lasted the test of time. These parks have been home to generations of children who have learned to love sports and the outdoors. Over my administration, we have continued to make innovative and unique improvements to these parks, from the Kirk Park Outdoor Classroom, to the much needed

upgrades at Washington Square Park, to the recently-unveiled Challenge Course in Burnet Park.

In fact, innovation has been a watchword of my administration. Finding creative ways to solve intractable problems and update the way our local government does business has been central to our mission. In 2011 Syracuse was selected as one of the first IBM Smarter Cities, showcasing the power and potential of predictive analytics, and how it can be applied to complex challenges like vacant housing. In 2015 we began the work of the City's Innovation Team, by winning a grant from Bloomberg Philanthropies. Through the work of the i-team we have developed and piloted new technologies and data-oriented solutions for updating and improving the city's infrastructure. From leak detection on our water mains, to new technologies that automatically collect data on road conditions, to more holistic, dig-once techniques across our infrastructure systems, we have begun to see the value of injecting this sort of new thinking into fundamental public services. While these new initiatives will continue to be tested and improved, tonight we are releasing a report that details the work of the i-team over the course of its first year. Available on the City's website, this report shows how we generated new ideas and have been growing a stronger innovation culture at City Hall.

Our cutting edge work in the area of infrastructure has drawn the attention of government leaders across the country. Late last year, I spoke on a panel with the Mayor of

Flint, Michigan: Karen Weaver. While our entire nation faces a growing infrastructure crisis, nowhere is this crisis more real or urgent than in Flint. In speaking with Mayor Weaver, we agreed Flint might benefit from some of our experiences here in Syracuse. Later this month, the Innovation Team will travel to Flint to discuss infrastructure solutions that could make a difference in their community. We here in Syracuse have had the benefit of this creative work thanks to Mike Bloomberg's financial support of the i-team. I feel it is important that we, too, reflect this generosity toward a community in need. I want to acknowledge Mayor Weaver for her leadership, her courage and her desire to work together.

It is important that we continue this movement of using data and technology to support our efforts to solve city problems. The City of Syracuse has been selected to join What Works Cities, a national civic innovation collaboration launched by Bloomberg Philanthropies in 2015. What Works Cities partners with municipalities to enhance the use of data in public sector decision making.

This partnership builds on some of the work that currently exists within the City. Last year, in partnership with the University of Chicago's Eric and Wendy Schmidt Data Science for Social Good program, the Water Department and i-team worked to identify which water mains were at the greatest risk of breaking. Using data to help inform where dollars should go toward improving infrastructure is critical, and the results of the project will help the city better plan for future investments in our water system.

Using data can also help with decisions beyond water main replacement. It can help with decision making around fire safety. Recently, the fire department has taken on a project to identify properties where smoke detectors could be missing or malfunctioning. Our hope is to develop an algorithm that will help us predict which properties are most vulnerable to these problems. Installing detectors and fixing these malfunctions ensure fewer trips to unwanted alarms, and better protection for people throughout the city.

The What Works Cities partnership also helps the City begin to work more with open data, which gives the public easier access to data the City compiles. Citizens can get a better understanding of the work that is done by City departments every day. It also allows those in the community, and elsewhere, to analyze the data for themselves. In October, the City sponsored a Civic Data Hackathon, which provided data to the public and sought solutions to road infrastructure challenges. The results showed that great ideas come when people have access to data and bring new perspectives to old problems.

I also want to announce that, as our innovative infrastructure work continues, the i-team has begun to shift its focus to a new area: economic opportunity. As our community battles issues of concentrated poverty, and barriers to economic success, we believe the team can contribute to important, ongoing local efforts, including the movement that is Greater Syracuse HOPE.

I want to acknowledge the i-team, and all our civic innovation partners, for their work in strengthening Syracuse in exciting new ways.

We have also embraced innovation in the area of public safety. Our commitment to public safety has not wavered, even in the face of the tragic and shocking acts of violence that continue to plague our streets and communities across our country. In a national climate shaken by conflict between police and citizens, often fueled by racial tensions, we here in Syracuse have placed a priority on improving the relationship between our police force and the community they are sworn to protect. The big, systemic social and economic forces that contribute to these dynamics are nothing new to the American experience. But in the face of these seemingly immovable forces, our focus here at home has been on building understanding then trust. Understanding, and trust.

One step to improving this understanding is a new Civilian Police Academy. Just this week, a number of city residents attended a three-day, free event to learn police training and tactics. This program is the first of its kind in the state, and provides a limited but unique perspective into the physical and psychological challenges officers face. As a result of this program, residents will now have a better understanding of what police authority entails and what its limits are.

We've also implemented a national program called Blue Courage that helps police officers reinvigorate their commitment to policing and reinforces their sense of nobility in their profession. The program's curriculum includes de-escalation tactics, stress management, and other personal development strategies.

A number of other programs, under the umbrella of Cuse Cares, are focused on addressing violent street gangs. One such program, launched in 2013, is Truce. Truce is a partnership of law enforcement, social services agencies, and community members whose goal is reducing shootings and homicides that are a result of gang activity. Truce takes a carrot-and-stick approach to reducing gang violence, and has been featured on CNN as an effective tool.

While violent crime has been trending down in our city, we are all acutely aware of the tragedies that befell our community in the last year. 2016 was the deadliest in our city's history. With progress being made in other areas, we know we must renew our efforts to reduce murders in Syracuse. This year, the Police Department's Criminal Investigations Division has established a dedicated Homicide Task Force. This unit represents a new organizational approach for resourcing and deployment following a murder, and will ensure we have the most effective efforts to solve these terrible crimes. In fact just earlier today, we announced the arrest of three suspects in a double homicide on the city's Westside – representing some of the first arrests made under this new investigative approach.

Another effective tool for fighting crime is the use of police cameras. Since it was authorized in 2011, the program has grown to include more than 140 cameras across the city.

Tonight, I am pleased to announce the adoption of a transformative new technology that will help us curb the scourge of gun violence in Syracuse: ShotSpotter. A natural technological progression from our use of cameras, ShotSpotter is a cutting-edge gunshot location and detection service. Currently, national data suggest more than eighty-percent of shooting incidents are not reported to 911. The result is that gun crime is underreported. And when it is reported, police often lose valuable time and resources searching for evidence while perpetrators escape. By informing law enforcement in real time where gunfire is happening, ShotSpotter acts as a force multiplier – allowing for more cost-effective allocation of personnel and resources. Other localities that have embraced ShotSpotter have realized a median decrease in gunfire activity of thirty-five percent in the first two years of deployment. Over the course of this year, the Syracuse Police Department will be deploying ShotSpotter in a three-square-mile area. We believe our city will be safer as a result.

In late fall of 2016, the Syracuse Police Department purchased 15 body cameras as part of a pilot program that will be rolled out in the first quarter of this year. The body cameras were purchased with funds secured through a Justice Assistance Grant. The body cameras will be deployed to select personnel, and those officers will be required to record all official police contact and interactions with citizens. The video can be used for evidentiary purposes,

evaluations of use of force, and, if warranted, disciplinary purposes. This data will be evaluated, and compared against data from officers who do not wear body cameras prior to a Department-wide deployment. The goal of the pilot program is to continue to build trust and transparency between the police department and the public they serve.

As we take steps to foster this higher level of understanding in our community, it is important we remember that we are, and always have been, a city of immigrants. Whether it was great-grandparents from Ireland, Italy or Germany, or today's new arrivals from Vietnam, Burma or The Sudan; Syracuse, like America, draws much of its strength from its diversity. Take for example a family of immigrants from Burma, who spent twenty years in a refugee camp in Thailand. Tragically, they lost a child there due to lack of adequate health care. But in 2008, they settled in Syracuse. In 2013, they became American citizens. And because they love this country so much, they named their infant son Abraham Lincoln. Recently, a human rights advocate reached out to me who had worked in a refugee camp, literally on the other side of the world. The camp was populated by the Rohingya people. According to the United Nations, the Rohingya are subject to human rights violations that could be termed "crimes against humanity." This advocate told me that he repeatedly heard from the camp's population about a place called "Syracuse" that was welcoming for those seeking a safe haven. Indeed, we are that haven for them and for others.

Sadly, for immigrants today, America is filled with uncertainty and trepidation. I want to take this opportunity to erase some of that uncertainty, and some of that fear, for our neighbors who happen to be immigrants. To that end, I promise you that so long as I am Mayor, the resources of this City, including the Syracuse Police Department, will not be used to help enforce federal anti-immigrant policies. As long as I am Mayor, Syracuse will be a sanctuary city for vulnerable families who had the misfortune of being born in a war-torn corner of our world. Syracuse has been, and always will be, a place that bids you welcome.

We support and welcome immigrants. We do so not only because it's a moral imperative. We do so to honor our history. We do so because today's refugees are building stronger neighborhoods. We do so because today's refugees have children who are tomorrow's doctors, engineers and mayors. We do so because immigrants make Syracuse stronger.

The work I have discussed tonight – the work of the last seven years – I can't, and don't, do any of this alone. It has been a singular honor to lead a city that can boast of such a talented, professional workforce. A workforce whose leadership structure has changed to better reflect the people we serve. More frequently of late, I am asked what accomplishment I am most proud of during my term as Mayor. It's an easy answer – one I am reminded of every day – the people I have been able to attract and maintain on our team and in our leadership. They have come from vastly different backgrounds, races, and experiences, but each of them has

demonstrated interminable passion and integrity toward public service and the people of our community. To our leadership team in the Mayor's Office, the heads of each of our departments, to the talented women and men who serve our city each and every day: you have my gratitude.

I began tonight talking about new shoes on the first day of school. To me, they symbolize a belief in the promise the future holds. When I started this journey, I spoke of renewing the promise of Syracuse. That concept isn't always easy to define, and even when we can name our desired vision, it certainly isn't easy to reach. In the last seven years I have seen that promise again and again. With each success. Young people dealt a tough hand who make their way to college and achieve their full potential; community projects that seemed perpetually stuck come to fruition; places like this – thought lost – lifted up again to thrive in an exciting new era. I have seen this promise in how we endure in difficult times. Acts of violence; struggling schools and neighborhoods; loss of faith in public institutions and the political process.

Ultimately, renewing Syracuse's promise isn't something accomplished by any politician, or any one person. It is something we do together. It is a promise renewed inside each of us first, when we believe in our community. When we believe the future really can be better than the past. When we believe our neighbors – no matter their background, no matter their station in life – are connected to us in perhaps intangible, but profound and inextricable ways.

Syracuse's promise isn't something that can be put on a billboard, or in a press release, or on the front page of the newspaper. A community's promise isn't a promise made in words – not by politicians, or developers, or anyone else. A community's promise is something that we understand when we shake off the baggage of past cynicism and doubt. It is something we must believe; then we must build – together.

The last seven years have shown us all: this promise can be reached, and that brighter future is there for us to create. Reaching Syracuse's promise and potential requires a renewed sense of vision, leadership and sense of civic responsibility. Real results require tough decisions. Let us resolve to meet our challenges head-on, continue to make the tough choices, and embrace the promise within this city and within us all.

Thank you and goodnight.