



2016 State of the City:
"The Deep Truths of Minneapolis"

MAYOR BETSY HODGES

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The Deep Truths of Minneapolis

Minneapolis Mayor Betsy Hodges
State of the City Address
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"It is the hallmark of any deep truth that its negation is also a deep truth." – Niels Bohr

"The opposite of a fact is falsehood, but the opposite of one profound truth may very well be another profound truth." – Niels Bohr

Deep truths

Nobel Prize laureate and physicist Niels Bohr said this about his idea of a deep truth, a truth whose negation is also true: "The opposite of a fact is falsehood, but the opposite of one profound truth may very well be another profound truth."

One of our many undersung assets right here in Minneapolis is the public-radio program and podcast "On Being," whose offices are on Loring Park. Recently, host Krista Tippett was talking with scientist Dr. Frank Wilczek. He said this about deep truth: "You have to view the world in different ways to do it justice, and the different ways can each be very rich, can each be internally consistent, can each have its own language and rules, but they may be mutually incompatible. To do full justice to reality, you have to take both of them into account."

This is relevant in science for something like light: it is true that light is a particle. It is also true that light is a wave. But we must research separately the properties of light within each of those truths if we are to fully understand light as a whole.

Deep truth is also a useful construct when thinking about ourselves as a people.

In Minneapolis, we get to take into account two of our own complementary and deep truths:

Minneapolis is a remarkable and wonderful city,

and

Minneapolis is a city of deep challenges, particularly regarding race.

From this first set arises another set of deep truths about Minneapolis:

We come together for the common good,

and

We strain to come together as people and we are divided.

And I posit this: that our ability to come together is our greatest strength; that it is the source of the best things about our community, and that when we do come together as One Minneapolis, there is no stopping us.

Nowhere is there better evidence of this than the group assembled on stage here today. Each person sitting here on stage with me is a community leader, a person who has made a measurable, positive difference in the quality of our city. Let's thank them with our applause for all they have done for Minneapolis.

More important, each leader on stage with me here today has successfully worked to get a good outcome with people with whom they disagree, sometimes including me. Each person on stage has pledged to a brighter future for all of us. Each person was willing to be here, even though we haven't always agreed, because they share a vision for a bigger, better future for Minneapolis.

We stand here together in the midst of these dualities:

Minneapolis is a remarkable and wonderful city,

and

Minneapolis is a city of deep challenges, particularly regarding race.

And

We come together for the common good,

and

We strain to come together as people and we are divided.

These statements seem contradictory. All of them are true.

This duality? It is the state of the city.

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Public safety and gun violence

I must begin by addressing the very serious challenge we are facing in North Minneapolis right now.

Gun violence is up sharply. The intensity of this violence is shocking and entirely unacceptable, and I condemn it. No resident in any neighborhood should have to endure this kind of violence. It has no place in North Minneapolis or anywhere in our city.

To the people of North Minneapolis, especially those most affected by this gun violence, I say: I hear you and your city hears you. In response, Chief Janeé Harteau has increased police presence and focused enforcement in known hot spots in North Minneapolis.

As more officers join the force and we anticipate being at full authorized strength by mid-year, I have directed Chief Harteau to deploy the lion's share of new personnel to the Fourth Precinct and the First Precinct.

Minneapolis police officers have vitally important jobs to do all across our city, including in North Minneapolis. Chief Harteau has my support in her efforts to ensure that they are as productive and effective as possible in keeping people safe *and* in building trust.

Chief Harteau has also focused on community policing, which I have supported in my budgets. In North Minneapolis, as across the city, this has meant officers' spending more time on calls and more time getting to know people. Positive police contacts in the neighborhood are up 63 percent over last year and 231 percent over two years ago. This work of building community trust has a long-term deterrent effect on violence. The fact that we measure it at all is a sign of change in how we approach policing in Minneapolis.

Another long-term way to deter violence is to keep people out of the criminal justice system to begin with. In the past 18 months, we have increased the numbers of juveniles involved in diversion, which has led to fewer youth entering the system. City Attorney Susan Segal's office also is innovating to keep people from getting too far into the criminal justice system.

Many organizations and individuals in our community are working hard to reach the youth and young adults involved in and affected by this violence: faith leaders, community members, advocates, neighbors, and youth workers from Youth Violence Prevention and the Youth Coordinating Board. The YCB's Youth Outreach Team is doing particularly good work: whether downtown, in our schools or parks, or at special events, youth workers are reaching our young people where they are, connecting with them in meaningful ways, and making a difference in their lives and ours.

We have seen time and time again that when community comes together, sometimes despite differences, to fight violence and lift up peace, safety, and healing, we are all safer. We at the City are continuing to identify ways to collaborate with and lift up this crucial work.

Police–community relations

It's been several tough, emotional months in Minneapolis. For all of us.

The death of Jamar Clark on November 15, and the occupation of the Fourth Precinct for 18 days after that, was hard on everyone: family members, demonstrators, neighbors, community members, police officers.

It is true that police-community relationships have been in need of transformation since long before that, especially in and for communities of color. Perhaps on no other issue are we so divided from each other.

It is also true that Minneapolis is leading the country on reforming and transforming policing and police–community relations. We have been coming together with many partners to do much work on this front.

Since I became Mayor, I have been working to get body cameras on our officers: in 2016, it will happen. As part of this work, we have sought out meaningful feedback from community about our body-cams policy, which we are taking into close consideration. We will report back to the community.

We are close to implementation on an early intervention system. An EIS is not discipline: rather, it is a tool to help officers who may be struggling to correct course before little problems become big ones.

One of the best ways to build community trust is for officers to look like the community they serve. To this end, I have funded more permanent classes of Community Service Officers. The most recent class is 61 percent people of color. I thank Chief Harteau for the time she took to interview each candidate in that class personally.

We are also significantly adding to officer training. By the end of last year, every Minneapolis police officer had received Fair and Impartial Policing training. In February, police officers began procedural-justice training to improve the interactions between officers and residents; all will complete it this year. I thank Council Member Blong Yang for partnering with me to fully fund the training and accelerate the implementation of it. By the end of this year, all patrol officers will have completed 40 hours of crisis-intervention training, which will help them de-escalate situations that involve a mental-health crisis. In addition, the Police Department is assessing policies and training around use of force to make sure that they are current and consistent with best-practice standards.

Finally, as many of you know, Minneapolis is one of only six cities in the country to participate in the groundbreaking National Initiative for Building Community Trust and Justice. The National Initiative has been on the ground for over a year in Minneapolis, working on the three pillars of reducing implicit bias, improving procedural justice, and promoting racial reconciliation. This work involves true partnership with community, and I am pleased that community leaders have embraced it and support it.

It is true that we have done and are doing much. It is also true that there is much, much more to be done, and that in order for this work to succeed, community and government must enter into true partnership. Community-based organizations and advocates have brought forward a number of intriguing proposals for building trust at which I am looking closely and on which I hope we can partner.

In the immediate aftermath of the Fourth Precinct occupation, Chief Harteau and I requested that the Department of Justice conduct an independent after-action review of the City's response to the Fourth Precinct occupation. We asked for this review because we need to know what went well and what we could have done better. We anticipate that report in the fall.

As we move forward from those 18 days and into the future of transformed police–community relationships, we can be proud that we as a people and a city are sticking with this difficult conversation around policing, community, and race: engaging with each other, challenging each other, challenging me, listening to one another carefully and respectfully. It is hard and it can be painful, but it is necessary and we will be a stronger city and a better people for it. Thank you, all of you, for being part of it.

Growth

Much of my State of the City speech last year was about the urgent need for inclusive growth, the idea that everyone must be able to contribute to and benefit from our growth and prosperity if we want to actually *have* on-going growth and prosperity. It is no less urgent this year.

It is great news to be celebrated that we are fast-growing city. The Metropolitan Council has just announced that Minneapolis' population stands at 412,517, the highest in around 40 years. This means we have added just under 30,000 residents since 2010, for nearly 8 percent growth in just six years.

The news is just as great that we are a booming city. Last year, for the fourth year in a row, the value of our building permits topped \$1 billion. This does not come from just one sector: this is a broad-based boom.

I will speak about three different components of growth: infrastructure, business, and jobs.

First component of growth: infrastructure

It cannot be denied: Our infrastructure is the envy of many cities in the country. I met recently with a delegation from Nashville, a great city itself: to them, our parks and bikeways are a marvel.

And why not? It's true. We have the #1 parks system in the country. (That's right, you should applaud.) We are not only the #1 bike city in America, we are #18 in world — the only North American city on that list. Just look at the city rising up in front of you: the Wells Fargo towers up and open, cranes all over what used to be the dead zone of Downtown East, more construction on Hennepin Avenue that is soon to include the Nicollet Hotel Block, the Midtown Greenway flush with new housing, new hotels going up in the North Loop and Downtown East: the list goes on and on. The built environment of our city and the infrastructure that supports it are growing up and out rapidly.

I look forward to a future Minneapolis that includes things like:

The Downtown East Commons. When it opens later this year, it will be a jewel in the transformation of Downtown East. Imagine, in just a few months you'll be able to walk out of this great venue and over to the Commons to enjoy a walk, a lunch, a game of bocce, or a concert. Thanks to Council Member Jacob Frey and Council President Barbara Johnson for their partnership in turning this complex project into reality.

A beautiful new 29th St. that has been reclaimed for all users, a project that Council Member Lisa Bender has shepherded.

A wonderful example of transit-oriented development at 38th and Hiawatha, championed by Council Member Andrew Johnson.

A redesigned Nicollet Mall that will be a destination in itself.

An Upper Harbor Terminal transformed into a world-class amenity for North Minneapolis, a vision that both Council President Barbara Johnson and I share.

A University Avenue Innovation District that is a world-class jobs and research center and urban village, a vision that Council Member Cam Gordon has moved forward for years.

Just weeks ago, the City Council, the Park Board, and I collaborated to pass an historic, once-in-a-generation agreement to fund a good deal of the capital and operating needs of our city streets and bridges, and neighborhood parks, for the next 20 years, transparently and equitably.

It was neither easy nor obvious. I have long supported our parks' need for long-term capital dollars, but earlier versions of the ordinance would have met the need for parks alone and left our streets for another day. However, we had already clearly laid out the urgent need for significant long-term capital investment in streets, before the cost of repairing them became unaffordable. I stood for a global solution that included one dollar for parks for every two dollars for streets, and for sources of funding that are reliable in the long term. I'm pleased that that's the agreement that we struck. We can be very proud that we came together unanimously to accept our responsibility to restore our parks and our streets to good shape for future generations.

Many people deserve thanks for this resolution: the City Council, including my co-author John Quincy; the Park Board, and parks advocates, including Mark Andrew, who is joining me today.

Also, more needs to be done: specifically, by the State Legislature. At a time when we here in Minneapolis have come together across jurisdictions and put real dollars on the table to fund our infrastructure needs sustainably, and when even Congress can come together to pass a long-term transportation bill, there is no excuse for the State Legislature not to act, and act this year. I strongly support the efforts of Governor Mark Dayton, Senator Scott Dibble, and Representative Frank Hornstein to pass a comprehensive, long-term, sustainable roads- and transit-funding package that will allow us to meet our residents' many, diverse needs. Our city's impressive growth could be choked off if our roads decay and our transit system remains inadequate.

Second component of growth: Business

Minneapolis, we have one of the most thriving business sectors anywhere. From our Fortune 500 companies to our start-ups, from our small businesses to our not-for-profits, from our restaurants, tap and cocktail rooms to our many emerging social enterprises, we are diverse, resilient, and ever expanding.

Our business sector is not only thriving, it is community-oriented. I receive endless compliments from mayors around the country — and no small measure of jealousy — for our business community's civic-mindedness. They come together for countless acts of good for the city: like the downtown businesses and property owners that come together to invest in the Downtown Improvement District, the business support of Super Bowl LII, the NCAA Final Four, the RiverFirst initiative, or the Downtown East Commons.

It is also true that it is still too difficult to do business here.

Two years ago I launched Business Made Simple in order to make it easier for anyone to start and run their business. We've made good progress in that time. As of today, we've repealed about three dozen anachronistic ordinances that got in the way of creating successful businesses in Minneapolis. One required a license to operate a jukebox — but I'm pretty sure your very own jukebox is in the phone in your pocket right now. Special thanks to Council Member Andrew Johnson for his persistent focus on stripping away these cumbersome and outdated ordinances. We've made a significant investment in our new Enterprise Land Management System that will increase the ability of City departments to review and approve requests and applications faster than ever before. We are developing a new online portal that in 2017, will allow businesses to apply for and renew permits online, submit plans electronically, and better track the approval process.

I have also challenged the City's Innovation team, funded by Bloomberg Philanthropies, to focus on how we can help increase businesses ownership in communities of color. In a city that is nearing 50 percent people of color, only 23 percent of small businesses are owned by people of color. Yet we know there is great entrepreneurial vitality in these communities that is ready to be unleashed.

In addition, CPED, led by Craig Taylor, continues to provide needed technical assistance to small and mid-size businesses, primarily ones owned by people of color through the Business Technical Assistance Program, B-TAP. Last month, CPED added the new Cooperative Technical Assistance Program, C-TAP, to our business-development toolbox. It will offer assistance to groups interested in forming new co-ops in Minneapolis.

In addition to this work to help small businesses thrive, I have convened, with the help of U.S. Bank CEO Richard Davis, what we call the Mayor's Business Leadership Roundtable, a group of leaders from some of the most well-known corporations in Minneapolis and the region, in order to make sure that I can draw on a wide range of business perspectives. I appreciate their willingness to offer their candid experience and advice. Archie Black, CEO of SPS Commerce who is with us today, is one of the members of the roundtable.

This is one aspect of One Minneapolis in practice and it is represented so well here on stage: small businesses, labor, corporations, advocates, social enterprises, and nonprofits, who in some contexts strain to come together, all contributing to the well-being, vitality, and prosperity of our city. Thank you.

Third component of growth: Jobs and employment

It is true that our vibrant, diverse economy makes Minneapolis a top big-city job market. Our unemployment rate is just 3.5 percent, far below the national average. In good news for our immigrant communities, 75 percent of foreign-born residents of the region are working, ranking us tops among competitor regions.

It is also true that we suffer from huge racial disparities in employment. The unemployment rate for African Americans in Minneapolis is higher by about factor of four. Jobs are harder to come by, and harder to keep, for low-income people, who in Minneapolis are also disproportionately people of color.

We have been warned over and over again by everyone — from racial-equity advocates to academics to corporate CEOs — that if we do not close our race-based gaps in skills and employment, our thriving economy will stall, then decline. We cannot say we do not know. We must take action, and we are.

TechHire. Patrick Chou is a Loring Park resident. He had been working in the mortgage-servicing industry when he decided to make a career change. He had wanted to learn software development for some time, and found that the 12-week, immersive, web-development course at the Software Guild, a TechHire partner, was a better fit for him than going back to college for a computer science degree. With the help of the Software Guild's employer network, Patrick will be interning with General Mills as an application developer. Patrick and another TechHire graduate, Chelsea Obey, are here with me today. Congratulations to you both! TechHire is an Obama Administration initiative to close the skills gap in the high-tech economy by training and supporting women and workers of color. It is one of the great ways we have come together as a community to transform our job market. Our investment in it is paying off: as of February, 201 graduates have been placed in full-time jobs that pay well.

Cedar–Riverside Opportunity Hub. I was pleased to work with Council Member Abdi Warsame to fund the Cedar–Riverside Opportunity Hub in this year's budget. I appreciate his commitment to closing the skills gap and seeing young men and women of color getting good jobs through career pathways and other employment programs that are geared especially to the East African community.

Earned sick and safe time. In my State of the City speech last year, I proposed a Working Families Agenda that included earned sick and safe time for workers in Minneapolis. I proposed this as a public-health measure: 42 percent of all Minneapolis workers lack access to paid time off to care for themselves or their families, and a large percentage of them are in low-wage food-service or healthcare professions. With more and more jobs opening up in the hospitality, restaurant, and healthcare sectors, this public-health crisis is likely to get worse unless we come together and lead with action. Earned sick and safe time is a jobs measure as well as a response to a public-health crisis: as I have repeatedly said, no one should have to choose between getting well and getting paid. Racial disparities are at play here, too, with low-wage workers in jobs that lack earned sick time being disproportionately people of color. These are all significant problems. For these reasons, I am pleased that the City Council is considering the adoption of an ordinance that will allow workers in many businesses to earn sick and safe time. I want to thank the Workplace Partnership Group, a

diverse group that the City Council and I appointed to listen to stakeholders and offer recommendations to us. Collectively, they invested thousands of hours to engage a wide range of businesses, economic sectors, non-profits, and workers. More than 500 people attended their many listening sessions and provided invaluable perspective, feedback, and advice: many workers told stories of pain and hardship, and many business owners offered practical solutions. I appreciate them all. I particularly would like to thank my appointees to the group: Jim Rowader of Target Corporation and Liz Doyle of TakeAction Minnesota, both of whom served as co-chairs, and Danny Schwartzman of Common Roots Café, all of whom are here on stage with me today. I would also like to thank U.S. Labor Secretary Tom Pérez for his and the Obama Administration's support.

Here again, people from different backgrounds and sectors who do not always agree have come together to take a stand for the health of the public and to transform the workplaces of tens of thousands of low-wage workers.

I know that this measure would prove an adjustment or a challenge for many in the business community. I hear that and appreciate it, which is why a year-long runway before enforcement is proposed. I am confident that Minneapolis' experience of this policy will be as positive as that of other cities and states. We at the City will do everything we can to help the transition be successful for everyone.

Children and Youth

One of the best parts of being Mayor is that I get to meet and be inspired by the amazing youth of our city. I'd like to introduce you to one such young man.

I met Payton Bowyer just three weeks ago at South High, where Superintendent Michael Goar and I co-hosted Minneapolis' first College Signing Day, an event launched by First Lady Michelle Obama. The event is meant to celebrate all our youth for choosing the college that they will attend, not just star athletes. There, Payton told me his story.

When he was just four years old, his family moved him and his brother from Chicago to Minneapolis to seek a better, safer life. His family had struggled with homelessness for most of his life until then. Payton struggled a lot when he was younger, until he connected with the Boys and Girls Club, where staff invested in his success and inspired him always to drive for excellence.

This fall, he will attend University of Northwestern – Saint Paul on a full scholarship to pursue a degree in youth ministry. He told me that he wants to be able to change lives the way that staff at the Boys and Girls Club, along with pastors, teachers, and coaches, changed his.

He is here today with South High Principal Ray Aponte and his mentor from the Boys and Girls Club, Stephanie Siegel. Congratulations, Payton. We are all so proud of you.

Stories like Payton's remind us that we need to hear more positive stories of boys and young men of color in the media: I highlighted this need in my State of the City speech last year, when I encouraged all of us to share these stories, and I encourage us again to do so. I know firsthand the level of genius these boys and young men of color offer our city. As I said in last year's State of the City, we cannot afford to leave any genius on the table.

Another place that we get to lift up boys and young men of color and transform employment and opportunity for them is in our groundbreaking BUILD Leaders program. BUILD Leaders is an innovative, community-based, job-training program for youth of color who are facing the most systemic barriers to educational and economic opportunities. Our \$362,000 ongoing investment in it is supporting cohorts in South Minneapolis at the American Indian OIC and Little Earth, and in North Minneapolis at EMERGE. I am very excited about the transformative potential of this approach. Please join me in saluting my friend Isaiah Hudson, one of our BUILD Leaders, who is here today.

Young men like Payton and Isaiah, who face long odds and have shown they can succeed, are sometimes called opportunity youth. So I say to everyone in this room: hire an opportunity youth. We know that our region is poised to run out of workers: we may be 100,000 short in five years, and nearly 200,000 short by 2030. Attracting workers from other states is a fine, albeit expensive, strategy, but when we have youth here who are ready to succeed but have not yet had the opportunities to do so, let us include them in our growth and prosperity. Or more accurately, we will not have growth and prosperity without them.

Our youngest residents are just as important. Securing their futures is the work of my Cradle to K cabinet.

I formed the Cabinet to develop a plan not only to eliminate, but to prevent, racial disparities from before birth to age 3. Last summer, the Cabinet released its final recommendations. I thank Cradle to K Cabinet chair Carolyn Smallwood and then-co-chair, now-State Representative Peggy Flanagan for leading this groundbreaking work. I am pleased to report progress on all three recommendations.

The first recommendation is that all children will have a healthy start that will prepare them for successful early education and literacy. To address it, we are targeting the “Word Gap.” Research shows that by age 4, children from middle- and high-income families hear 30 million more words than children from low-income families. I am very pleased that the Clinton Foundation is supporting and partnering with us to launch our “Talking is Teaching: Talk, Read, Sing” initiative this summer. “Talking is Teaching” is a public-awareness campaign designed to get parents and caregivers talking, reading, and singing to very young children.

All of us can participate. We instinctively already talk and sing to babies and small children, all of them. Now science has told us that by doing so we can make our kids smarter.

The Cabinet’s second recommendation is that all children will be stably housed. I am proud to have worked with the City Council and housing advocates to invest \$1 million for large affordable units for extremely low-income families experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness. Thank you to Council Member Goodman for helping make sure this investment is positioned well to get the results we need.

The third recommendation is that children have continued access to high-quality, early-childhood education. To that point, allow me to acknowledge Chad Dunkley, CEO of New Horizon Academy, who joins me on stage today. New Horizon operates three facilities in Minneapolis, all nationally accredited and rated four stars by Parent Aware. Last November, I toured their newest facility on Penn Avenue North. I got to see firsthand what child development centered care looks like: it has all the attention and love you expect, and it has a focus on words and learning and singing at every age. It was fun to see.

Our city’s deep truths — that we are awesome and we are challenged, that we come together for the common good and strain to come together through our divisions — are nowhere more evident than in the lives and prospects of our children and youth. It is an inspiration to me to watch our city put aside our adult divisions and fears and come together to support our children and youth.

And I must take a moment to acknowledge especially our trans youth and, frankly, all of our trans Minneapolitans.

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And I must take a moment to acknowledge especially our trans youth and, frankly, all of our trans Minneapolitans. There are politicians right now who seem to take perverse delight in finding false pretexts for discriminating against you. I am disgusted by it. Those are not Minneapolis values.

Rather, in Minneapolis, we started the Trans Issues Work Group in 2014. It has been quietly leading the country in building City-led work that seeks to confront the discrimination that the community faces, and tackle topics like healthcare and employment. This year, we will be holding the third annual Trans Equity Summit.

Thank you to our community partners in this work: Roxanne Anderson of the Minnesota Transgender Health Coalition, Andrea Jenkins, trans oral historian at the University of Minnesota, here with me today, and Phil Duran of Outfront Minnesota. And thank you, Council Vice President Elizabeth Glidden, for your ongoing leadership in this work.

To lift a powerful line directly from Attorney General Loretta Lynch: “We see you, we stand with you, and we will do everything we can to protect you.”

And to our Muslim young people - to all our Muslim brothers and sisters. For some people in this country right now, questioning your humanity is a pastime. Not in Minneapolis. Here in Minneapolis, we know you are a strong, valuable part of our community. We know we aren't great without you. And we know Islamophobia is wrong - we will not stand for it, and we will stand with and for you.

Coming together in the Promise Zone

Nearly everything that I have talked about up until now related to youth, growth, and safety comes together in our Promise Zone, a group of nine neighborhoods in North Minneapolis. The Promise Zone is a 10-year commitment from the federal government to help align public, private, and nonprofit efforts in high-poverty and high-opportunity neighborhoods by providing preference for federal funding, as well as staff assistance. I thank HUD Secretary Julián Castro for all the support he has provided for our Promise Zone.

In our first year of full operation, we have already brought in \$3.8 million in federal grants due to the Promise Zone designation, and are tracking \$11 million in applications for federal funding.

The Promise Zone is designed to be a marathon, not a sprint. I am hopeful that the next White House Administration will continue and expand upon the Promise Zone. We look forward to the next nine years of this work.

Climate change, sustainability, and resiliency

2015 was the hottest year on record since record-keeping began more than 115 years ago — and 2010, 2013 and 2014 are all in the top five with 2015. As climate change continues, our city will feel its effects more keenly than most other cities: our summers and winters will be warmer, heavy rains will happen more frequently and be more intense, and allergy season will last longer. The Weather Channel ranked Minneapolis second among American cities likely to feel the greatest impact of climate change — after only New Orleans.

We are doing everything we can as a city to make sure that we are part of the solution — and that we are resilient to whatever change may come.

For example, we have now completed the first full year of our Clean Energy Partnership with Xcel Energy and CenterPoint Energy; appointed a community-led Energy Vision Advisory Committee; and adopted a work plan and metrics to move in concert with the utilities toward the City's climate goals. We will also soon launch a pilot to help more residents benefit from utility energy-efficiency programs — especially renters, low-income families, and communities of color.

Climate change is not our only risk. Air pollution is one of many components of the cumulative health impacts that disproportionately affect communities of color and lower-income neighborhoods. In some zip codes in Minneapolis, the hospitalization rates for children with asthma are four times higher than the statewide rate.

Minneapolis is a leader in addressing air pollution. We conducted a neighborhood-level air-quality study so we can better understand our air-quality challenges.

Finally, we are moving forward on our commitment to Zero waste. I thank Council Members Kevin Reich, Cam Gordon, Alondra Cano, and Linea Palmisano for their ongoing work to help us craft a Zero Waste plan. We are already making great progress. The rollout of the residential curbside organics recycling programs will be completed early this summer. As of yesterday, 37,000 households, including mine — or 35 percent of the city — have signed up for the service. This program, along with our single-sort recycling, once again makes us the envy of our neighbors.

Coming together through the arts

Minneapolis has, bar none, the best arts scene anywhere — I mean *anywhere* — and we come together through the arts in unique and powerful ways.

If I started a litany of the Minneapolis artists, arts organizations, and spaces that enrich us, we would never leave here. That said, I am going to take the risk of mentioning at least one: our hosts today, the MacPhail Center for Music. MacPhail, born and headquartered right here in Minneapolis, is the largest community music center in the country, with 14,500 students. Founded by Minneapolis resident William MacPhail in 1907, the Center teaches students ranging from 6 weeks old to over 100 years old. More than half of those students participate in programs supported by financial assistance and program subsidy.

Please join me once again in thanking CEO Kyle Carpenter and the entire MacPhail family for welcoming us today. And thank you to my friend, Timothy De Prey, for his beautiful piano playing.

The arts make us stronger as a people: they are where the best of us as human beings shows up. They also make our economy stronger: our just-released Minneapolis Creative Index shows that creative sales pumped \$4.5 billion into our economy in 2015. Creative jobs are 5 percent of all jobs in our city. Our arts scene is one of the most vigorous in the country: Minneapolis ranks 6th in the country in creative vitality, with a score 3.6 times higher than the national average.

It is also true that artists and arts organizations in our neighborhoods and communities are sometimes struggling, especially in communities of color. We can acknowledge and be grateful for the incredible artistic and musical institutions that we have, and recognize that not all artists are benefitting equally or equitably.

We recently suffered a big loss in our community with the tragic death of Kirk Washington. Kirk was a gifted poet who co-authored the One Minneapolis group poem that was written for and performed at my inaugural. He also served Minneapolis as a member of our Energy Vision Advisory Committee. He was passionate about our city, our people, our challenges, and our strengths, and about making art out of all of it. His passing leaves a hole in the life of Minneapolis.

Kirk's wife, Aster Nebro — a City of Minneapolis employee in Business Licensing — and their two daughters, Azalea Washington and Keah Spurgeon, are with us today. Please join me in honoring them and Kirk's life.

It is wonderful that our creative economy is so strong and growing. It is a testament to who and what Minneapolis is that one of the most elemental ways human beings have of coming together as people is something in which we excel so much. We sometimes do strain to come together — but when we do it, we do it beautifully.

For me personally, experience of the arts is a daily flow and habit in my life. I read poetry every morning and every evening. I listen to music throughout the day. I read novels, mostly written for young adults; for that matter, I have written a young adult novel. I am on the board of Mia, and when I go to meetings I take an extra 20 minutes to walk through a gallery or two. When I bike or walk or drive down our streets in Minneapolis, I appreciate the beautiful murals our artists have painted in so many places.

And I make sure to find ways to laugh: laughing is a requirement for happiness, and as an art form, comedy helps us jump over dividing lines faster than almost anything else.

Stand-up comedy is itself an under-sung art form. Here in Minneapolis, Acme Comedy Company is an under-sung arts gem. In the last 25 years, Louis Lee has created a venue that treats comedians as artists rather than product, artists who are doing good and interesting work and help expand our notion of what comedy is. Usually when I buy tickets to go to Acme, I don't even ask who the headliner is. I just show up knowing I will see some good and interesting and very funny work. I have never been disappointed.

I asked comedian Cameron Esposito —her special “Marriage Material” is now streaming online— what she thinks about Acme. Here's what she said: “As a city, Minneapolis has an open-minded nature that is hard to beat. Not that everyone has experienced all things, but that folks seem open to learning, changing and connecting as a unit. That's what Acme offers a comic: the close seating, the audience facing one another and surrounding the stage on three sides. It's a feeling of unity and being in it together to muddle through life that makes that place a special venue for stand-up.”

That feeling of being in it together to muddle through life: exactly. Comedy is great at that, and Acme Comedy Company is especially great at it. Minneapolis is great at it, too.

I will say, though, that the best part about comedy is that it is funny.

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Today I have been talking about the deep truth of Minneapolis: that we are a remarkable and amazing city, and that we are a city of deep divisions. I have been talking about the truth that we are strong when we come together, and the truth that even so we struggle to come together. I have been talking, again, about One Minneapolis — that to which we aspire, and that which, when we head toward it, makes all our other aspirations possible.

I talk about these things often. I am guessing no one is surprised by the theme.

The history of race would have us white folks believe that the issues we face as a city — disparities in education and employment, rifts between the police and the community, opportunity for young people — are issues of and about people of color. The history of race often leaves us white people thinking that this isn't about us.

As a result, when I speak about it — today, or any other day — it is a challenge to speak of it in a way where we white people can see we are in this picture, that this is about us, too.

It *is* about us. Race and racism is a system that we are part of, like it or not. To carry on in the face of a world set up so differently for us than for people of color, at some level we have had to shut down our awareness of that difference. As a result we are less present to our own humanness, we are less connected to the real web of interconnections that bind us all to each other, and we are diminished as a result. The price of our continued participation will be our children's futures, and their children's futures.

Is there a deep truth here? Perhaps. The deep truth is, we must be fully dedicated to our neighbor's humanity in order for us to achieve our full success. The negation of that truth is also true: we must be fully dedicated to the fullness of our own humanity in order for us to achieve our full success. The end point of that is One Minneapolis, and we are in that picture.

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Minneapolis, it is profoundly true that we are a great, wonderful city. It is also profoundly true that we are a city with many challenges, especially regarding race.

The deep truth, Minneapolis, is that we are divided and strain to come together. The deep truth is also that we come together for the common good. But what is the ground on which we come together? How do we do it through the division and strain?

In the poem printed on your program, the wonderful poet Elizabeth Alexander, who read at President Obama's first inaugural, asks a simple question: "Are we not of interest to each other?" (Gratitude and respect to another artistic gem of Minneapolis, Graywolf Press, for their kind permission to share this poem with you today.)

Are we not of interest to each other? I submit that fundamentally, we are. That fundamentally, to be human is to be curious about each other's humanity, to share openly the depth and complexity of our full humanity with one another. That exploration is what we all recover when we seek, even a little bit, to create an equitable city.

I submit that in this amazing city of great challenges, we have everything and we are everyone that we need to come together through the strain of doing so. We have everything and we are everyone we need to hold our profound truths in deeply creative tension. We have everything and we are everyone we need to undertake the work of transformation. Looking at and moving out from this stage we can see that it's true.

When we acknowledge our profound truths, when we come together through the strain of doing so, when we encounter each other's humanity, and show true interest in each other — in that moment, we are able to take what Kirk Washington called at my inaugural "a unified breath that electrocutes fear and misunderstanding."

Let us show interest in each other. Let us come together. Let us take that unified breath. Let us do the good, hard, and necessary work, together, to transform Minneapolis into One Minneapolis. We have everything and we are everyone that we need. That is our profound truth.