



Andy Schor, Mayor

**Mayor Andy Schor's State of the City
Pattengill Academy, Lansing, MI
February 7, 2018**

Thanks Yvonne. Thanks to you and your team, and the staff of Pattengill for hosting us in this beautiful auditorium. Yvonne has already thanked so many, so I will not duplicate that effort. However, I would like to thank my wife Erin and my children Ryan and Hannah, who remind me every day that while I may be mayor, my most important jobs are as husband and dad. I am proud to have my family here with me today. Will you stand and be recognized...

Also, thank you to my city council partners for joining me here on stage as we work together to create a great future in Lansing. And I would be remiss if I didn't recognize that today is Councilmember Peter Spadafore's birthday, so thank you for spending your special day with us all here at Pattengill.

Last month during inauguration, I talked about my vision for the future of Lansing. The tremendous excitement and enthusiasm that I saw during the campaign has continued in my first few months in office.

I learned a lot during the blistering pace of the six weeks between Election Day on November 7th and inauguration on New Year's Day. I laid out a vision of economic development and jobs; infrastructure investment including roads; strong neighborhoods; and excellent education. This has resonated with our community, our residents, our visitors, and our workers.

I also know that Lansing is united. And that makes us strong and ready for the future. But before looking to the future, we must recognize the past. I am happy to say that the State of the City when we came into office has put us in position to capitalize on opportunities. Lansing has been growing in many areas, and my administration comes in ready to take advantage of the foundation built by previous Mayor Virg Bernero and other leaders that have gotten us to this point. The strength of the past has brought us here to this moment. This change that is so important for Lansing's future. And I will repeat the message of our inauguration and the motto that we have been using daily in my office and administration: **Lansing's Time is Now!**

I have been in office for 37 days, and clearly there is still much to learn. But I'm proud to say we've already accomplished a lot, and the energy that we have brought to this office in the first few weeks will continue every day that I am Mayor and serving the people of Lansing.

I have had meetings with neighborhood leaders where we have discussed ideas on how to support and boost our neighborhoods. I have pitched the assets and business potential to those that could invest in Lansing and create more jobs in our corridors and commercial areas. We are formulating plans to fix crumbling infrastructure. And I am hearing from many that want to be part of the future of Lansing.

We have also received a transition report from former Mayor David Hollister and former Councilwoman and State Representative Joan Bauer outlining many important ideas for the city that were collected during the transition. I am proud of the great diversity of opinions from so many Lansing residents and friends that weighed in as part of the necessary citizen input which is so important for this city. Thank you Mayor Hollister and Representative Bauer for your work in leading the transition.

During our transition we promised to hit the ground running, and we have done just that. On my first full official day in office, I was joined by members and friends of the Latino community in Old Town as we officially unveiled Cesar Chavez Avenue. It was a beautiful 12 degree day, and I'm touched by the many people who were concerned for my safety when advising me not to climb a ladder in the snow ever again.

From that first day we haven't stopped, and I'm excited to share with you the many great things on the horizon for Lansing.

SCHOOLS

It's appropriate that we're here in one of Lansing's beautiful school buildings to talk about the City. As Mayor, I recognize that the future of the City of Lansing is directly connected to the excellence of our schools. In order to have a successful city we MUST partner with Lansing School District in order to grow and be prosperous. As a father whose children are students in Lansing School District, and as someone passionate about Lansing, this is very personal to me.

We're grateful for the leadership of Superintendent Yvonne Camaal Canul as well as our outstanding Lansing School Board, and all the great work they have done for our children. Thanks to all of the Lansing School Board Members here with us today for all the work you do for our children here in Lansing!

During the transition it became abundantly clear that our schools and our city should work together. That's why I will be designating someone at the city to be a liaison between the City of Lansing and the Lansing School District. This individual will work with our schools to help the city to support and promote Lansing School District programs. We need to provide better customer service to all of our residents, and this includes those in our schools.

NEIGHBORHOODS

Another priority that became obvious during the campaign and transition is how we can support our residents and neighborhoods. My first executive order was to make neighborhoods a top priority by creating a Department of Neighborhoods and Citizen Engagement. This new Department places neighborhoods front and center in my administration, and will greatly improve the way we communicate with our citizens. I am excited for the work they will do, and am proud to have Andi Crawford leading this department. Andi truly loves Lansing, and lives and breathes all of our neighborhoods here in Lansing; she is a great example of someone who knows that that Lansing's time is now.

Andi and her team will be in the community, working directly with many of you as we build citizen capacity in Lansing. She will continue and enhance many of our important neighborhood and citizen programs. One such program is Walking Wednesdays, which are weekly walking tours in neighborhoods throughout the city. I have participated in a few of these, and they are great ways to see and showcase our neighborhoods.

We will also continue important neighborhood programs like Neighborhoods in Bloom and Block-by-Block which beautify and revitalize our neighborhoods, our annual LOVE Lansing celebration, our senior fair and other community service events, and our monthly neighborhood roundtables.

Additionally, the Department will host quarterly housing and neighborhood resource summits, bringing important city resources and information sharing into our neighborhoods. Thank you again to the Lansing School District, who will be hosting these important community events. The first summit of 2018 will be held in the 4th ward, which covers much of the western part of Lansing, next Tuesday, February 13, at Willow School.

In the fall of 2018 we will be launching our citizen's academy, a program that will engage citizens to learn more about how the City of Lansing operates. The Academy will focus on exploring many facets of city government.

The Neighborhood team will also be creating a new program called Serve Lansing, a citywide community service plan. Serve Lansing will increase citizen engagement and connect our residents, increase volunteer opportunities through large scale neighborhood cleanups and focus on strengthening neighborhoods through emergency preparedness and response. But we won't do this alone. We will be joined by our Serve Lansing committee partners, which I am proud to announce are: Michigan State University, the United Way, the Lansing Board of Water and Light, and the Red Cross.

We also must continue to help our own residents to become economically sound. We will continue the excellent work done by our Office of Financial Empowerment, which is a nationally recognized program here in Lansing that helps citizens save money for the future. This program will be moved into our Department of Neighborhoods and Citizen Engagement. Lansing participants in this program that successfully decreased their debt did so by a total of nearly 2.5 million dollars in a two year span. Lansing participants who increased savings did so by more than 250,000 dollars. Financial empowerment is the first step toward economic independence. We will continue to support this program because economic development begins at home.

These and other exciting efforts are just the beginning of what our new Neighborhoods and Citizen Engagement department can do, and I am excited to see what else they come up with. Thanks Andi and the team. We are expecting great things for our Lansing neighborhoods!

While we are helping our neighborhoods, we can't forget that we need to attract and retain talent to these neighborhoods and to our commercial areas. We must have excellent quality of life, fun things to do, retail and businesses where people can shop, and great entertainment options.

Having a teen and a pre-teen, I know what it is like when children are stuck in the house with nothing to do. Luckily, here in Lansing we have options. One jewel here in Lansing is Impression 5. I am so excited about all the upgrades and new exhibits that they have accomplished. If you haven't been to I-5 recently, then go there. I don't care if you are 5 or 50. This is a wonderful hands-on place to learn. Thanks to the I-5 executive director, Erik Larson, for his hard work. I also must compliment their Board, under the leadership of past president Noah Smith as well as new president Erin Schor (yes, that's a shameless plug for my wonderful wife!).

I am also excited to announce we are adding to the many things for our youth to do by launching a new "Midnight Basketball" program for this coming summer. Midnight basketball is a nationally proven concept that lifts youth through a structured athletic environment that emphasizes team work, camaraderie, discipline, interpersonal skills, and attention to educational enrichment. As part of this effort, we will have wraparound services to assist families that participate. These services have been shown nationally to make this midnight basketball concept even more successful. Kids will have something to do, and not get in trouble. And we are able to assist the families as well.

The Mayor's Office of Community and Faith Based initiatives will connect with our community, faith institutions, businesses, and educational partners to provide safe, structured environments for our youth during the summer hours of 8:00 pm until midnight. These venues will be a welcome alternative for many at-risk youth and will offer a positive way to counteract many possible negative influences and challenges that could present themselves to youth in Lansing during summer months.

I am excited that Lansing will provide for these activities to help our youth to be positive members of society, and I look forward to shooting some hoops with our kids here in Lansing!

ARTS AND CULTURE

Lansing has a wealth of talented artists and performers; we're a very cultured city. We should do more to showcase the incredible talents and creativity of those here in Lansing. We need to capitalize on the resources that we have, and maximize the value that they can bring to our community. So, I am now officially announcing what may be the worst kept secret in Lansing thanks to my friends at the Lansing City Pulse. I am announcing that we will be establishing a blue-ribbon commission on arts and culture here in the City of Lansing.

We will look to our tremendous creative sector to come together and make recommendations on how we can ensure art and culture and entertainment are an integral part of our community. Our region has great venues for arts and performances, including band shells, theaters, and even the Wharton Center. Lansing can and should add to this art culture that already provides for millions of dollars in

revenue for our region, and attracts those looking for a creative and fun experience when they decide where to live and work.

RIVERFRONT

We have so many great partners in the City of Lansing. One of the priorities that I outlined in my vision document, which was also in the transition report we received, was to boost the use and look of our riverfront. Riverfront development increases economic activity and development in many communities in Michigan and throughout the world.

Today, I'm excited to announce the City of Lansing is partnering with the Capital Region Community Foundation to update and upgrade our downtown riverfront, and make it into a place where everyone will want to enjoy spending some time.

There will be several new projects announced and worked on over the next few months along the downtown riverfront. This effort will make Lansing a more vibrant city, and a great place for recreation for residents and visitors. The Community Foundation is leading the way by granting up to one million dollars to match contributions from businesses, organizations and individuals toward these projects.

It will activate our downtown riverfront with projects including new kayak launches, boat docking, a riverbank classroom near Impression 5, a lighted forest, fireplaces, and both new and improved parks and fishing areas.

I look forward to kicking off the first projects this spring along the river near the Lansing City Market, and will invite everyone to join us to make Lansing a city that cherishes and shows off its riverfront!

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Part of what makes all of these great projects possible is continuing to focus city government on development. As part of the restructuring of city government, we are prioritizing growing jobs and development in Lansing. To accomplish this, I have created a new Department of Economic Development and Planning.

By realigning our departments and focusing on economic development, we will build our city according to our community's vision, and make job creation easier. We can be strategic and target those neighborhoods, corridors, and commercial areas in our city that need the most attention.

In its first month, this new Department and its director, Brian McGrain, is already focusing on myriad projects that will change the way our city looks and operates. We look forward to announcing many initiatives and development projects as we move closer to the summer.

Also as part of the economic development effort, we must work to support our small businesses as we grow our downtown, our commercial areas, and our corridors. I am pleased to announce a new partnership with the Lansing Economic Area Partnership, or LEAP, that will provide small business financing to entrepreneurs in Lansing and throughout the region.

This new program, called Fund Lansing, will utilize the global online crowd-lending platform Kiva in order to leverage more funding for startup businesses. By using the proven Kiva method, more people in the region will have access to zero interest loans of up to \$10,000 to achieve their dreams of owning their own business.

The Kiva website also provides local applicants exposure to hundreds of thousands of investors around the world who will now have the opportunity to invest *here*, in Lansing. With LEAP's help, the City of Lansing will take Fund Lansing a step further to provide additional support to Lansing-based entrepreneurs. For qualified small businesses in the City of Lansing, we will match the loan funds raised by Kiva, *dollar for dollar*.

This enhancement to Fund Lansing will make it much easier and faster for Lansing-based entrepreneurs to reach their total funding goals. Overall, Fund Lansing will fill a big need for local entrepreneurs who wish to start or expand a business, but can't get financing through traditional lending sources. The City is excited to be a leading partner in this initiative, and I'm excited to help bring more entrepreneurs and small business to our commercial areas and neighborhood corridors!

INFRASTRUCTURE

Throughout the summer and fall, as I talked to people at doors and events, the poor condition of our roads was the most common theme that I heard. Fixing our roads and sidewalks is a top priority, and during the campaign I committed to go neighborhood-by-neighborhood to craft a plan to repair priority roads.

So, I will be starting my "Road Map Neighborhood Tour" in early March to talk to residents in our neighborhoods about their roads. And I will be inviting my City Council colleagues to join me in this effort. Together, we have to prioritize where our money goes when fixing roads. We currently spend over 5 million dollars on road projects each year, yet we need to spend close to 25 million annually just to maintain our streets in their current condition. We clearly have a finite amount of funding, and we need to be strategic about how we allocate scarce resources.

How did I get those numbers? Well...one of my first meetings when I stepped foot in city hall was with the city's new Department of Public Service Director, Andy Kilpatrick. He will be traveling with me neighborhood-to-neighborhood, including his own neighborhood in Lansing, as we work on the priority fixes of the city.

While people want a plan moving forward, they also want to know where road dollars have been allocated in the past. I have said that we will be transparent in showing that your money is really going to work, and I will keep that promise. So, we will be posting a comprehensive list of the roads that have been fixed, and the cost of those fixes, on the City of Lansing website. I am also proud to announce that in the coming year, we will dedicate all of the dollars raised through Lansing's dedicated road millage only towards road projects and fixing roads. We can't fix every road in the city today, but we can inform our citizens of the work we're doing so you know that we're working hard for you as we continue to fix our aging infrastructure.

Additionally, we are not just going to be transparent on fixing roads. Now that it is winter, I still hear about potholes, but I also hear a lot about snowplows. People want to know if and when their streets are getting plowed. This month GPS based Automatic Vehicle location technology was installed on all the City's plow and salt trucks. With this in place, citizens will be able to check online when their street was plowed. Our goal is to expand this program to all city vehicles, including code enforcement and building safety vehicles.

PUBLIC SAFETY

While talking to residents last summer, I also know that citizens are very concerned about public safety in Lansing. The Lansing Police and Fire Departments work hard to keep us safe every day, and that hard work has resulted in violent crime being down 13 percent in our community in the last two years.

But while crime is down overall, we, like too many communities across the nation, are confronted with a significant opioid crisis. Our police officers and paramedics are responding every day to emergencies as a result of opioid use and overdoses.

The use of Narcan, the only FDA-approved treatment for an opioid overdose, has nearly doubled by our first responders since 2015. In the 37 days of this calendar year our city has already seen 20 heroin overdoses and four fatalities. Our first responders are handling this threat every single day, and we are grateful to their heroic efforts in combating this tragic epidemic.

I have also heard many requests from residents for police patrols for speeders, concerns about home invasions, requests for cars parked illegally to be ticketed, fireworks complaints, and many, many other issues that would require law enforcement to be everywhere at the same time. While we always encourage people to call the police when there are problems in the neighborhood, we will now offer a new tool for citizens to receive assistance. We will be launching a new smart phone app that can be used to report crime. It is called MobilePD and will be available to Lansing residents next month. We know that not everyone will utilize an app on their phone to report crime, and we will still have 911 and non-emergency phone response, but this is another tool in the toolbox for residents to request assistance from our police. It is also complimentary to our Lansing Connect website and app which allows citizens to report code violations, streetlights that are out, and other city services where people need assistance.

These efforts are all part of the smart city tools that Lansing can utilize to ensure residents are safe.

METRICS AND CUSTOMER SERVICE

Now that we have been in office for a month, it's important to evaluate what the city is doing and how we do it. Metrics are very important to ensuring a successful city. I had a chance recently to hear Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti talk about how he uses metrics for better governance and to ensure a bright future in LA. He told us that metrics are not sexy to the public, but they work to ensure a bright future and great city.

As part the US Conference of Mayors, I learned that one of their common themes is good Mayors borrow from other Mayors, but great Mayors steal from other Mayors. So, I will be stealing these ideas from Mayor Garcetti – with his permission of course – to ensure that we are doing the best for our citizens.

But this isn't just happening on the west coast. I would like to acknowledge Kalamazoo Mayor Bobby Hopewell for the work he is doing in Kalamazoo. Imagine Kalamazoo 2025 is an innovative community engagement plan that has created a strategic vision for the City. Mayor Hopewell, thank you for all you are doing, and know that we plan to steal your ideas and use them here in Lansing to copy the success of Kalamazoo! Mayor Hopewell is here with us and I would ask him to stand so he can be recognized.

Like metrics, customer service isn't sexy, but it's critical. There is nothing more frustrating than calling or emailing the city and not receiving a response, or being redirected to many different places. In my legislative office, we always had one person who would receive concerns and complaints about state government, then get an answer for the constituent.

So, as promised during the campaign, we are bringing that concept of response to the City of Lansing through the creation of a Citizen Advocate - an individual housed in my office whose job will be to work with our residents, our visitors, and our businesses to ensure there is efficient and effective response time and customer service in the City of Lansing.

We won't guarantee that you will always like the answer – after all, people still have to pay their taxes – but we will ensure that you get a fast and complete answer to your question or concern. We will help get through the red tape of city government and improve communication with our residents.

Our citizen advocate will join my office at the end of the month, but I would like to introduce you all to Mark Lawrence. Mark has spent more than a decade in the Michigan legislature working from within government to reach positive outcomes for taxpayers. He has tremendous experience collaborating with others to achieve results, and I am excited to utilize his experience for those in Lansing. Mark is here with us today with his family, although his wife Gabrielle is unable to be here due to a work conflict. But if her name sounds familiar, it's because she serves our children as a Lansing School Board member. Mark, please stand so everyone knows who you are and who to contact when they have issues!

INTER-FAITH AND DIVERSITY

In my inaugural speech, in addition to talking about excitement, I talked about unity and how the Lansing community is unified towards our positive future. We reject the divisiveness that we have seen throughout the nation. Now, more than ever, we need to come together as a community and as a region to heal and end the divisiveness.

But, while we are positive about Lansing and our future, we must recognize that the last few weeks and months here have been a trying time for our region and have shed light on the potential for evil that we could all face.

And we haven't experienced this in a vacuum...it has been felt and witnessed throughout the nation and world. My heart goes out to the victims of the heinous crimes perpetrated by Larry Nasser, some of whom I know personally, and we must be ever vigilant to not let anything like that ever happen again.

To ensure this, we must engage the help of everyone who shapes the fabric of Lansing. As I mentioned at our annual Martin Luther King Jr. holiday luncheon, I will be creating a Diversity Commission to celebrate the great diversity that we display every day here in Lansing, and to find ways to work the issues that may divide us. Also, I'll be creating an Inter-Faith Advisory Council, organized by the Lansing Office of Faith Based and Community Initiatives, as a source of input and collaboration with the faith community regarding social challenges, quality of life, and ensuring that Lansing is a welcoming city to all.

REGIONAL SUMMIT

As we think about the future of Lansing, we need to recognize that it is closely intertwined with the futures of many of our neighbors. We need to think regionally as we grow, provide services, and advance the Greater Lansing region.

Many have asked me how we can get everyone together regionally to work off of the same page. I have spoken with some of our regional partners already, but would like to bring everyone together to discuss many of these important issues.

I am excited to share that we are now organizing a regional summit for later this year. Michigan State University has agreed to convene this summit and to provide a place to meet, in addition to other resources, so that this discussion can be successful for all of us in the Lansing region.

FINANCIAL HEALTH TEAM

And, while we are looking at what we can do for the city in the next few years, we also must look long-term. We need to ensure that the City is on solid financial ground in the future so that our children will have the city services that they need and deserve. That's why I am announcing that we are rebooting our Lansing financial health team. This important resource, originally put together by Mayor Bernero in 2012, provides necessary experience and is a critical resource to address our future financial challenges.

The City of Lansing faces 680 million dollars in future unfunded pension and health care costs according to the latest report. While this bill doesn't come due for a number of years, we need solutions now. While this won't be easy, it will take partnerships, vision, and innovation to address these challenges.

We want to take care of those that have helped the city in the past, but we also must ensure we can help the city in the future. We will engage many partners, whether current or past workers, the business community, neighborhood leaders, financial experts, or others to help provide solutions. I am charging the FHT to come up with specific recommendations and the accompanying potential cost savings in the next six months. Their work won't end there, and I value their input on future growth and partnerships, but we need to start working on solutions as soon as possible.

I am also excited that we are not doing this alone. There are others in the greater Lansing area who value the importance of a successful Lansing to our regional economy. Again, Michigan State University

has committed aid and resources to the City of Lansing towards updating the original report from 2013. This will help us determine and address the options and magnitude of our fiscal challenges. Additionally, MSU is committing student resources to help us grapple with this important challenge. I thank MSU for their continued willingness to assist Lansing. Go Green!

WRAP UP

As you know there is tremendous excitement in Lansing, and we have lots of work to do. My staff and I are extremely busy, and that won't stop. We love our jobs and we love this city.

We are in week six and have no plans to slow down.

The pieces are in place. We are united and moving together in a positive manner. We are ready to grow. We are ready to thrive. We are in concert with our neighbors in support of this great region. I am happy to report to you that the State of the City is in a good place, and we have plans to do so much more.

I greatly appreciate the work of my staff in the Mayor's office, Department heads, and every city employee that is doing the job to make Lansing a great place to live, work, visit, and do business. I thank all of them for the work so far, and the work they will do. Our future is truly bright in the City of Lansing.

Thank you for joining me here today, thank you for all that you're willing to do to help Lansing succeed and thrive in the future, and thank you for your support of our wonderful city!

So I have said it before, and you will hear it again and again...

Lansing's time is now!