



2015 State of the City:
"We can't do this without you, Minneapolis"

MAYOR BETSY HODGES

Thursday, April 2, 2015

Minneapolis, the question before us now is: How much genius are we going to leave on the table

My answer is: none.

We in Minneapolis are bound to each other by ties of humanity, geography, and community. Our futures are inextricably linked with one another. We have no choice but to work together to build One Minneapolis, a city where each one of us fits into the picture.

The call today is to act on that truth.

The American Swedish Institute is the perfect place to have this discussion. I thank Council Member Abdi Warsame for hosting us in his ward today. The express mission of this amazing asset of our city is to be a “gathering place for all people to share experiences around themes of culture, migration, the environment and the arts, informed by enduring links to Sweden.” Through recent exhibits that explore traditions of dress among Swedish people and Oromo people, and current endeavors that swap stories of immigration among people of Swedish, African, Latino, and Asian descent, they are bringing genius to the table from every community. I am grateful for this work and for the leadership of President Bruce Karstadt.

This space itself illustrates the genius that built Minneapolis.

In 1868, Swan Turnblad emigrated as a child from Sweden, and moved to Minneapolis just a few years later to start a career in the printing trade. At a time when Swedes were considered second-class citizens in Minneapolis, he went from owning his own printing press at age 17, to owning the largest Swedish-language newspaper outside Sweden.

With the money he earned, he built the historic Turnblad Mansion, right across the courtyard. It fulfills his vision of a place for the Swedish immigrant community to celebrate arts, culture, and language.

Fast forward, and we find that similar genius is building Minneapolis.

In 1999, Noelia and Enrique Garcia rented a commercial kitchen and started their business, La Loma Tamales. They began selling their tamales from a corner stall at the Mercado Central on Lake Street. Demand was immediate and high, and they spent two years working 16-hour days, seven days a week. After three months, they were able to hire their first employee.

Today, the Garcias own and manage a commercial kitchen, the coffee shop, a restaurant at the Mercado and a restaurant at the Midtown Global Market, and their tamales are now in supermarkets. These thriving businesses currently provide full-time jobs for nearly 40 people earning up to \$15 per hour, many of whom live in South Minneapolis and walk to work.

Their daughter Maria is with us today - thank you to you and your family.

Where would we be without that genius? Where would we be without the hard work and vision of Swan Turnblad, of the Garcias, and all the other tens of thousands of people since? We would not be the great city that we are. And the genius we have now will make us the great city of the 21st century if we are willing to do what it takes to make sure we leave none of that genius on the table.

As strong as we are, and as important as our immigration history and present are to our story, it is not accurate to say we are entirely a city of immigrants. That erases three stories that are at least as important as our immigration story.

First, we are also a city of refugees, of people who escaped war and persecution and were welcomed here. Minneapolis is known across the world as a safe harbor for refugees and we should be proud of that history.

Second, we are also a nation of people whose ancestors were brought here as slaves. As we move into a brighter future together, dismantling the shameful legacy of slavery is required to build our community and our economy.

Third, we are a nation of first peoples. The first immigrants arrived on these shores to people who were already here — not immigrants, but first peoples and first nations. Those people are still here. Those nations are still here.

All of those histories are also our strength as we move together into the future.

We add that to the long list of things about Minneapolis that we can be proud of, including having had a great 2014.

Our city remained safe, with violent and property crime remaining flat.

We were awarded the Superbowl in 2018, and the NCAA Final Four in 2019.

We have invested the resources we need to move forward on the new vision for Nicollet Mall and will be breaking ground here soon. We will also see a new vision arise on the Nicollet Hotel Block, one that includes a streetcar and our transit future.

And so much more.

We have the strengths we need to address our biggest challenges: climate change, workforce needs, public safety, community trust, and equity, to name some of them.

To meet those challenges successfully, we are going to need our **greatest** strength: our people and every bit of talent and every ounce of genius we have got. All of that genius is right here, ready to build our economic future, and our city's future. So again, the question before is: how much of that genius are we going to leave on the table?

Our current inequities mean generations of people's brainpower and talent are not being fully engaged in solving our city's most pressing problems, generations of people's creativity is not being fully tapped to move our city forward, and generations of young people haven't or won't get the education they need to build our city's future. In the face of that, why would we leave **any** genius on the table?

Take, for example, climate change. It is our challenge and it will require every mind fully engaged to solve it.

It is a peculiarity of the current state of affairs that the scientific method and its results, reliable and sound for centuries now, is so in doubt by so many that it must be reaffirmed publicly before any conversation can proceed. So I will state it here: **Climate change is real.**

We know our collective future depends on our ability to have a planet — and a city — that can sustain life with clean air, clean water, nourishing food, and stable weather patterns.

We know that given current conditions, we must also prepare our city and our infrastructure to withstand the changes that have already started.

We know that this has an impact on everyone: no one escapes the impact of severe and unpredictable weather, no one escapes the impacts of fouled air.

We know that we don't have a choice, none of us do.

But we are also a city with a groundbreaking Climate Action Plan, and we had great successes in 2014 with more to come in 2015.

- In 2014, the White House named us Climate Action Champions.
- We forged the nation's first-ever Clean Energy Partnership Agreement with our partners Xcel Energy and CenterPoint Energy.
- With the award of a new \$3.4 million HUD grant, we will make 280 homes lead-safe.
- The Cool Soils Partnership with the Mdewakanton Sioux and the University of Minnesota is working with urban farmers in our neighborhoods and Little Earth, now led by our former colleague Robert Lilligren, to increase locally produced food.
- The outreach kickoff for organics recycling begins this month: and even though it hasn't officially begun yet, we're already 20% of the way to our goal for sign-ups.

Today, I am very excited to announce that the process for creating the city's zero waste plan is underway. Council Members Kevin Reich, Cam Gordon, Linea Palmisano, Alondra Cano, and I convened the Policy Work Group in March to kick off a year-long planning process to move Minneapolis toward zero waste. Our goal is to come up with a plan that will help everyone who lives and works in Minneapolis recycle more and throw away less.

To turn these opportunities into successes in 2015 and beyond, we will need scientists, organizers, volunteers, and advocates.

And we will need **you**.

Right now, in 2015, we each can do something. It doesn't have to be complicated. But we all have daily opportunities to get as far down the path as possible to personal responsibility for our climate and our own choices.

In that spirit, today I am announcing the launch of the Minneapolis Climate Champs Challenge. Each month for the rest of the year — starting today — I will be inviting all of us, including myself, to take on the challenge of new behaviors and habits. We are Climate Action Champs here in Minneapolis, and this is a way for all of us to get on board.

What is the challenge? Each month I will propose a theme and some suggested steps we can all take to help us meet our climate goals here in the city. For example, this month the theme is recycling. The challenge is to increase your recycling at home, at work, and on the road. Starting today and all month long, I will share various one-time activities people can participate in, resources available to help up your game, and tips on how to make it easier to maximize your recycling. One quick action everyone can take, for example, is to go to the city's website and sign up for organics recycling at www.minneapolismn.gov/organics. I will share my progress on social media — hashtag M P L S Climate Champs on Twitter, and "Minneapolis Climate Champs Challenge" on Facebook — and invite you all to do the same. I will also write periodic updates on my blog, mayorhodes.com.

Each one of us can do something here to stop the progress of climate change. Each one of us has a gift to offer the process. Each one of us has something we can do, that we choose to do, to make sure we have a healthy planet and healthy people.

And we need each one of us to do it. You are in the picture of the solution to climate change.

We cannot leave your heart, your talent, your genius on the table.

We cannot leave anyone's genius on the table.

This includes our young people, and our youngest people.

In my State of the City address last year, I announced I would be forming the Cradle to K Cabinet, because if we are going to make sure that every bit of talent and genius our community has to offer is nurtured, it starts at the very beginning of life. Eighty percent of a child's brain development happens by the time she is three years old. What we do for our kids early on matters.

I am proud to say that a year later, the Cradle to K cabinet is moving into implementation mode. After months of work by cabinet members, subcommittee members, and cabinet co-chairs Carolyn Smallwood of Way To Grow and Peggy Flanagan of the Minnesota Children's Defense Fund, and two months of input by community members, our final recommendations will be ready in mid-May. The whole community will be invited to do whatever each of us can do to make a difference for our youngest kids.

One key set of recommendations in the plan is making sure every child is stably housed. Housing for families matters. It's why I included a million dollars more for family housing in the 2015 budget. Council Member John Quincy has been a tireless advocate for housing in Minneapolis since before he was on the City Council. And as the founder of the City's internal Youth Cabinet, he is making sure our entire city enterprise is focused on the needs of our youngest people. Thank you, Council Member Quincy. I look forward to working together to make sure all of our kids have safe places to call home.

One of the places this work comes together so well is in President Obama's My Brother's Keeper Challenge. Over a year ago, the President laid out a charge for our country — that the welfare of boys and young men of color is crucial to the future of our society. It six goals include preparing boys for kindergarten as well as making sure that young men of color have the educational opportunities and support they need all along the way. I applaud and appreciate the President for his forward thinking here, and for the actions he is taking to make it real in communities across the country. Saint Paul Mayor Chris Coleman and I were among the first mayors to begin working on this initiative with the White House. We have taken the President's charge to heart, convening a regional action group that is creating a plan for our cities.

I am grateful to John Turnipseed at Urban Ventures for his leadership with My Brother's Keeper. And I have to thank my guys with the BUILD Leaders Program.

Through the BUILD program, guys who have stepped some on a rough path get job training. Leaders there are trained to reach back and help the young men behind them stay off the path at all. Their work is strong and the results life-changing for all of them.

When done right, our work with 18-24 year old men creates a virtuous cycle: the babies in need of care and support are being parented by fathers who, with support of their own, will be able to provide it. Some of the parents I am talking about are the same 18- to 24-year-old men who themselves are at risk for violence and participation in illegal behavior.

Here is a challenging truth we don't often think about: some 18- to 24-year-old men of color are some of the most vulnerable people in our population. They are most at risk for being victims of violent crime. They are most at risk for participation in gangs. Many are in precarious economic situations — unemployed, potentially with a felony on their records, without college degree or job training, and without networks that can support and sustain them and their families. Income is sometimes from illegal or dangerous activity. While we look for ways to start from day one to make those outcomes better for our children, we must also start now with our young men.

I should be clear: this picture is by no means about all young men of color. Too often our stories show the worst rather than the best in our young men. We hear a lot of stories about young men who are behaving poorly, young men who commit crimes. What we don't hear are the success stories.

I remember talking to a young man who was participating in a job program — the day his daughter was born was the day he realized he wanted to provide a future for her that was more secure than the one he'd been trying to provide for himself. That day he shifted his life toward school and career rather than toward the criminal-justice system, and now he is a carpentry apprentice.

Or the young man who turned his life around because a neighbor's auntie cared enough to ask him why he was getting in trouble — and now he's on his way to community college.

We as a community need to hear these stories, too, so we get the broadest picture possible of what's happening in our community.

These are the stories that will remind us of how much genius is carried in every single brain, how much passion and compassion is in every single heart, how much possibility there is in every single life. It's time we uplift our boys and young men of color, not just "fix" them.

These are the stories that Mayor Coleman and I are collecting, to give back to you and to offer to the media. You can share your stories of success of young men and boys of color on my website.

While these are the stories we need to hear, it remains true that these young men — and girls, too — are still most at risk for involvement in the juvenile and criminal justice systems. This is another place where, with good policy and investment and the right interventions we can keep a whole lot of our genius on the table.

In 2014, we made a lot of progress with our partners in helping kids stay off the correctional-system path. Our Youth Violence Prevention effort has been reinvigorated by the addition of new co-chairs and a review of our blueprint to focus on early exposure to violence and strategies to reach 18- to 24-year-olds. We have partnered with Hennepin County to do groundbreaking work on diverting youth away from the criminal-justice system. We are one of just six cities that the National League of Cities selected to participate in an 18-month juvenile-justice reform initiative to improve juvenile diversion and police responses to curfew and truancy.

We are also working to prepare all of our young people for the jobs of the future. They need to see themselves in the picture of our workforce if they are going to succeed, and we need to see them in the picture of our workforce if we are going to succeed.

Our selection for the President's TechHire Initiative points to just that future. We know that the jobs of the future increasingly will require skills in science, math, and technical fields including computer programming — and we know that we can't fill those jobs fast enough. Minneapolis is part of the first cohort of 20 to partner with the White House to accelerate local training and job opportunities in entry-level software positions with a focus on people of color and women. This, too, is all about making sure every ounce of genius we've got is on the table. In this case, our economy demands it.

Making sure we include **all** of our city's genius in our workforce is also why the City, in collaboration with DEED, is poised to launch a new, innovative approach to offer Minneapolis Workforce Center services at multiple partner agencies that are embedded in diverse communities, starting with the East African community.

We know it has been a challenge to reach those most affected by racial and employment disparities, including Somali and Latino immigrants. As a result, the City, in partnership with Hennepin County, is also planning to host eight job fairs this year that will be focused on connecting those most affected by those disparities with access to the occupations that are most in demand now and in the future.

We know we can do it, and we know it can work.

I appreciate the work of CPED, led by director Craig Taylor, in helping to focus our workforce development and our growth in the communities where it is most needed.

It isn't enough, though, for people to be able to **do** the jobs of the future: we also need people who will **create** the jobs of the future. Entrepreneurs of the 19th and 20th centuries, like Swan Turnblad, built Minneapolis, and entrepreneurs of the 21st century, like the Garcias and so many others, are carrying on the tradition.

Last year in the State of the City address, I announced Minneapolis Business Made Simple, a project to examine all the places where we as a city get in the way of people investing in Minneapolis. City staff, led by City Attorney Susan Segal, and I met with business owners from all across the city to listen to their stories.

To those business owners, I say: We listened, and we heard you. From those sessions and our own examination of our policies, practices, and ordinances, we have created a set of recommendations for how we as a city can change how we do **our** business that will make it easier for entrepreneurs to do **their** business. I am proud to announce today that we are ready to move ahead to create and implement a solid plan to get people's businesses operating sooner and make their relationship with the City even stronger. I will be working with colleagues on the Council, including Council Members Lisa Goodman, Lisa Bender, and Andrew Johnson, as well as City staff, to implement the Minneapolis Business Made Simple recommendations, which are also available on my website.

In other words, Minneapolis, sometimes getting our genius to the table means getting out of our own way.

It also means making sure our kids are educated. Nowhere else are we leaving more talent on the table than education, in and out of school. Education is our chance to both build our future workforce and build the future of One Minneapolis.

I have spent a lot of time talking about the fact that Minneapolis has the biggest disparities between white students and students of color in the country. It is not a point of pride for any of us.

What we can be proud of is the great work that has already begun to ensure a brighter future for all of our students. Interim Superintendent of the Minneapolis Public Schools Michael Goar, in partnership with the Minneapolis Board of Education led by Jenny Arneson, is taking up the work of creating fast, clear, achievable academic pathways for our most vulnerable schools. The Northside Achievement Zone, Generation Next, the Youth Coordinating Board, the Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board led by President Liz Wielinski and Superintendent Jane Miller, Hennepin County — who Board is now ably led by Commissioner Jan Callison — and countless other non-profits and foundations are increasingly working together to make sure our systems are seamlessly set up to support all of our young people, not to fail so many of them yet again.

The focus has been on making sure we prepare young people for the workforce, and appropriately so. Our workforce readiness is supremely important to everyone in Minneapolis, and having a job is a key way many of us engage with our community.

One Minneapolis, however, is about more than making sure everyone has a job, though it is that, and that those jobs are not predictably distributed by race or income or zip code, though it is that. It is also making sure all of us in the community are prepared to build and participate in our community.

So the question about youth is about more than grades or post secondary planning. It's also about being able to build our **common** future, to participate in **creating** our community. We need our kids to be more than workforce-ready. We need kids who are ready to build One Minneapolis. We need them ready and eager to take leadership in this community, to be future mentors and elected officials and Fringe show entrants and block leaders and parents. We need them healthy, engaged, ready to vote, to beat back the buckthorn, to join a neighborhood organization, to write the poetry that will inspire a generation.

And we need them ready and able to vote. That simple act build our community like none other, and I'm honored voting rights champion, Secretary of State Steve Simon, is here.

And we cannot build up this next generation without each and every one of you, Minneapolis.

Today, I am calling all of us to action on behalf of our children. For us to succeed as a community, each of us has to know and act on the truth that we are **all** responsible for our children and their futures — **all** of our children, each and every one. From those babies aged zero to three to those young men aged 18-24. We need them: we need them ready to work, we need them ready to participate in our community, and we need them ready to lead. Each one of us fits into the picture of our future.

That's why today I am asking all of us adults to make a personal commitment to help our kids succeed. One way you can do this is to become a graduation coach for a Minneapolis high school student. AchieveMpls, which has partnered with the City to create the nationally-renowned STEP-UP youth-employment program, is now eager to train you as a graduation coach to mentor a Minneapolis public high school student. Whoever you are — a recent graduate, a mid-career professional, a small-business owner, a senior citizen — you can help guide our students as they prepare to consider college or career — and beyond that, to build a future that includes giving back to One Minneapolis.

Each one of us has a gift to offer the next generation, and today is a call to you to use **your** gift. If Cradle to K is about making sure we are nurturing our genius even before early education starts, graduation coaching is about believing no genius should be left on the table as a young person takes her first steps out of her high school's doors.

I am asking you to do it. You can learn more about graduation coaching and other opportunities to support our young people at achievempls.org. We are ready for you, and you are ready for our kids. Our city depends on it.

And Minneapolis, we don't just need to build the *workforce* of the future, we need to build the *workplace* of the future. The expectation that if you worked hard you could get ahead is now more myth than reality for low-income people and many people of color. Even in Minneapolis, where we are famous for our class mobility, the mobility becomes very limited when we start looking at outcomes for people of color.

This has to change. We can change it.

Wages in the American economy for low-income and middle-class workers and families have stagnated in the last 40 years. Since 2001, in Minnesota, wages have grown an average of 0.2 percent a year. As a result, the gap between low- and middle-income workers on the one hand, and the highest-paid people on the other, is the widest it's been in nearly a century. In our region, people of color and women disproportionately suffer the consequences. This structural income inequality has devastating economic effects, and devastating social and moral effects as well. It hurts all of us, no matter our income, gender, or race.

Historically, how we as Americans have built our middle class is through strong worker and workforce protections. That remains true today. In addition to making sure all of our neighbors are workforce-ready, we need to reinforce the conditions under which our labor force works.

In the broadest picture, there are two key things we need to come together to provide. First, renewed faith in, energy for, and support behind collective bargaining in the private sector. Our country's 30-year, post-war economic boom was built on the foundation of strong unions, and our economic stagnation since then is due in large part to the weakening of collective bargaining in the private sector.

Second, a broad-based minimum-wage increase — ideally national, but also statewide or regional — that goes beyond setting the *floor* for *poverty* to raising the *ceiling* on *prosperity*.

There are other powerful tools in our tool belts that can make a big difference for working people, and today we will begin to use them.

First, we here at the city are putting our policy where our values are about working families. This month, I have put on the agenda of the Executive Committee consideration of paid parental leave for all City of Minneapolis employees. If passed by the full Council, new parents — mothers, fathers, birth parents, and adoptive parents — can take up to three weeks of paid parental leave. It's important that we in the public sector demonstrate our commitment to our workers, and I appreciate Council President Barbara Johnson for her leadership here, and City Coordinator Spencer Cronk for his assistance.

It is also important that we as a community demonstrate our commitment to all of our neighbors and colleagues who work in this city, whether in the public or private sectors.

Today I am proud to announce that I, in cooperation with Council Members, advocates, and the business community, am championing a Minneapolis Working Families Agenda.

Together, we will address three key issues that our workers are facing, especially our low-income workers:

First, Fair Scheduling — Making sure that hourly employees know when their shifts are scheduled with enough time to plan, and making sure that if shifts are cancelled at the last minute, those employees are compensated.

Second, Wage Theft — When an employee works her hours, she should get paid for those hours. When an employee works overtime, that employee should get paid overtime. If employees are not fairly paid, our expectation must be that the employer be held accountable for those dollars that are, for all intents and purposes, stolen from the pockets of the people who work for them. The City can add to the toolbox of enforcement that already exists for wage theft.

And finally, Earned Sick and Safe Time — Every year in the United States, workplaces lose \$250 billion in productivity due to illness — but 72% of that amount, or \$180 billion, is because people come to work sick instead of staying home. And research shows that on average, one sick employee on the job will create one more sick employee. And productivity losses multiply.

We also know that here in Minneapolis, 42% of workers lack access to earned sick and safe time. And once again, racial disparities are at work. For example, 63% of white workers have earned sick and safe time, while only 32% of Latino workers do.

A report released this week by the Minnesota Department of Health also shows that 79% of workers in the food-preparation and -serving sector lack paid sick time — and that from 2004-13, there were nearly 3,000 cases of food-borne illnesses that were traced to 200 food workers on the job who were ill or had recently been ill. Think about that for a second.

Right now, employees who are not able to earn sick time means they have to choose between getting paid or getting well. We as a community are creating an incentive for people to expose their colleagues and the public to illness. Together we need to provide an alternative incentive structure so that sick people can get well and well people can stay well.

We also know that incentives are good business: research shows that paid sick and safe time has a positive effect on business profits and employer reputation, that jobs have grown in the sectors where it has been applied, and that there has been little effect on costs.

I am grateful to Council President Johnson and Vice President Elizabeth Glidden for their work here. Council Member Bender, building on the work of Council Member Andrew Johnson, has already called together a group of stakeholders to start the next phase of implementation of this work.

President Obama himself has been a champion of paid parental leave and paid sick time, and our work has earned the attention of the White House and the U.S. Department of Labor. I am honored to announce that Secretary of Labor Tom Pérez will be returning to Minneapolis in May to engage with us about our workforce and workplace protections. Congressman Keith Ellison has also been very helpful and supportive on moving this agenda.

I also want to thank leaders at the State Capitol. Minneapolis Representative and DFL House Leader Paul Thissen is the lead author on the Working Parents bill that includes earned sick and safe time and fair scheduling, and many members of the Minneapolis delegation support these efforts. I also very much appreciate Governor Dayton's support for our working families.

We are building the workforce of the future. We are going to build the workplace of the future. And right now we are building the city of the future. Look around you, cranes are everywhere: In 2014 we issued over \$2 billion worth of building permits, a milestone this city had never seen before. Downtown in particular is thriving, with Downtown East a forest of cranes from which our beautiful new Commons will soon emerge. I know Council Member Jacob Frey is as excited as I am to see this progress, and is working hard to make it real.

But all across Minneapolis, things are happening:

- Olu's Center received technical assistance from MEDA through the City's BTAP program to pursue an expansion in North Minneapolis.
- LifeSource moved 125 jobs to the Minneapolis riverfront, investing nearly \$18 million in a new building, with City financing.
- Seward Friendship Coop broke ground on East 38th Street, bringing jobs and healthy food choices to a food desert.
- The Northeast Investment Cooperative bought and renovated two buildings on Central Avenue, leasing them to a bike shop, a German bakery, and the state's first cooperative brewery.

We are booming and we are growing. At the heart of our success lies our public investment in the public good, building the city people choose to invest in. And the heart of those public investments? Transit and transportation.

When I was with mayors from around the country last week talking about transit and transportation, they were all very clear: If they have transit, they want more. If they don't have transit, they know to stay competitive they will need it. If they have bike infrastructure, they want more. If they don't, they know to stay competitive they will need it. Because people increasingly choose to live in cities, and they want to live here without a car. For us to be competitive, we need to invest in all of our transit and transportation infrastructure. My colleagues and I know that transit is about mobility, but it's also about development and population growth. I know the leadership at the Metropolitan Council recognizes this. Our partners in business recognize this as well: the Minneapolis Regional Chamber of Commerce, the Downtown Council, Greater MSP, and the Itasca Project all have transit as key priorities, and the partnership is strong.

Transit-oriented development is important. It helps drive development where we want it. It improves affordability, because people can live without the expense of a car. Affordable housing along our transit corridors means we can have mixed-income neighborhoods throughout the city. Transit and the development it brings create an upward spiral of growth and more development.

However, **development-oriented transit** is also important. If transit drives so much investment in business, housing, and public amenities, then how we structure it has consequences vital to Minneapolis and our people. We have to make sure our transit goes **where** it is needed and **how** it is needed.

It's why we have prioritized reopening Nicollet Avenue where the K-Mart currently blocks it. It's why we've designated Central Avenue and West Broadway for a modern streetcar, to capture the huge potential for development there. It's also why I fought so hard for pedestrian connections to Southwest light rail. And on Bottineau light rail, it's why Olson Memorial Highway must be more than a fast ride out of the city. It must be reimagined as a pedestrian- and transit-friendly catalyst for new housing, job growth, and economic development.

To build the transit system that we need, we need new revenue. Minneapolis stands firmly with Senator Scott Dibble and with the State Senate in support of a balanced transportation package which includes new revenue for both roads and transit. And that new transit revenue should directly benefit all Minneapolis neighborhoods. Minneapolis transit riders are by far Metro Transit's best customers, because we generate more revenue per mile than anywhere else in the region. We must not be overlooked, underserved or passed by. We will ask our legislators to stand with Senator Dibble and only support a transportation bill that equitably serves the whole region.

Another crucial investment in our city's future is the investment we make in public safety. Council Member Blong Yang, chair of the Public Safety Committee, is the first to tell us how important safety is to our goals of growth and prosperity for all of Minneapolis.

We are a safe city.

In 2014, the Minneapolis Fire Department responded to more than 40,000 calls for service, an increase of over 6% in one year. The department is innovating: for example, firefighters are piloting home welfare and safety visits in an effort to reduce hospital readmission rates. The department is planning the second year of the EMT pathways program at Roosevelt High School. And firefighters are actively recruiting young men or women ages 15-21 for our Fire Explorer program. I thank Chief Fruetel for continuing to look for new, sustainable service-delivery models that meet the needs of our changing city.

And 911 continues to serve residents well. City employees in the department led by Heather Hunt answered 565,000 calls in 2014. And with the new resources that the City Council and I invested in the department this year, the average response time has already fallen from 6.7 seconds in 2014 to 5.6 seconds in 2015 so far. And the new call-handling system that will go live in mid-May will allow for faster delivery of calls through the system.

Last year, violent crime stayed at low levels rivaling those of 30 years ago, while levels of property crime are nearly as low as those of the early 1960s. Thank you to Chief Janeé Harteau and the officers of the MPD for these great results.

We made other progress in policing in 2014 as well.

We are hiring to reach our authorized strength of 860 officers, and we are staying focused on making sure the force reflects the communities we serve. More officers mean more officers on the ground, able to spend more time building relationships with the people of Minneapolis.

Minneapolis has been part of the difficult national conversation about police and community engagement. When those questions were raised here, I am grateful that our chief joined me for three forums in the community, and instituted her monthly “Chats with the Chief.” And just weeks ago, we were named one of six cities in the Office of Justice Program’s National Initiative on Building Community Trust and Justice. We are moving forward on our body cam pilot, and on the recommendations from the Department of Justice to create an effective system to identify and help officers at the first sign of trouble. We are making progress on all fronts, and while we have a way to go, we are committed to the work.

We are engaged in this city in a profound conversation about the kind of practices, relationships, and outcomes that we want as a community from policing. While the conversation is often challenging, it is the right one to be having. I am grateful to everyone that in Minneapolis, we have made an effort to listen to each other respectfully. My thanks especially go to community members for insisting that we not flinch from looking our challenges in the eye, and for holding us to the highest standards. My thanks also especially go to our officers, who work long hours under often stressful conditions while keeping crime down and building relationships in the community.

At the beginning of this speech I talked about addressing climate change as foundational to our success as a city. Today, I invite us all to view our city’s gaps between white people and people of color in the same framework, to consider that our current level of inequity jeopardizes our common future and prosperity.

Our common future depends on our ability to sustain a strong economy and strong community. Our common future depends on having a population that is healthy, housed, educated, and contributing to the economy. Our common future depends on no life outcomes being determined by race, class, or zip code. Our common future depends on all of our genius being on the table.

No one escapes the impact of an undereducated workforce. No one escapes the impact of resources poured into social services for preventable conditions. No one escapes mistrust in our institutions of public safety. All of us will prosper when all of us have the opportunity to prosper.

We can leave no genius on the table.

Equity is the future. But we cannot forget we are still facing issues of basic equality, and if they are not addressed our city cannot be One Minneapolis.

Recently, a person very dear to me let me know she was a transgender woman. My first response? Congratulations, and how great! The ability to know who she is and live as herself is a wonderful thing and worthy of celebration.

Now all of us must work together to make that truth real everywhere she goes.

Last year saw history made in our state and in the city of Minneapolis. I was so proud of the Minnesota state high school league when they voted overwhelmingly in December to make sure transgender athletes could play and participate as their lived gender. We at the city convened the first Transgender Issues Work Group, tasked with examining and recommending policy for the City enterprise and the city as a whole. They also hosted the city’s first-ever Trans Summit, bringing together community members, community organizations, City departments, and overall community resources to take the next steps toward community-generated policy change. I was proud to be part of it. Much love and credit to Andrea Jenkins, whose dedication and activism made it possible; I wish her well in her new role as the new and first ever oral historian for the Transgender Project at the University of Minnesota Libraries.

The 2015 horizon is bright as the next generation of city policy begins to take shape. This work is needed. Transgender people experience some of the worst levels of violent crime, hate crime, discrimination in the workplace and in public, stereotypes, and ignorance of any group in this country or in the world. Here in Minnesota, 77% of transgender people report experiencing harassment on the job. 27% of transgender kids in school report being assaulted. Most damning, 43% of the trans people surveyed reported attempting suicide compared to 1.6% of the general population.

What can any one of us do in the face of this data? In our interactions with transgender people — frankly, as in our interactions with anyone — we must start with love and celebration. We must start with the knowledge that being who you are in this world is to be celebrated. We must follow that with the commitment to making each one of us safe as we walk through the world as ourselves. And we must follow that with policies that support it.

Everyone in our city can learn from the courage that our transgender friends display every day. To my transgender friends, I want to thank you for your investment in Minneapolis, our community, and our people. The best way I can thank you is by persisting in my commitment to making sure that **all** of us know that **all** of us need to be in the picture of this city for us to succeed, including and especially you.

Because we can't do this without you, Minneapolis. Everyone must be in this picture or we will not be One Minneapolis. Too often when we talk about equity or economic justice, we white people do not see ourselves in the picture. We feel like it's all well and good for other people to do better, but not at our expense and it won't benefit us.

The truth of the matter is, racial inequity is at white people's expense right now, right at this moment, and eliminating it will benefit us, too. We are in the picture, not just as beneficent dolers out of opportunity and largesse, but as recipients of a better economy, a stronger community for our kids, and a more tranquil conscience, which is agitated knowing that our current success has a giant asterisk next to it.

Knowing that, the answer to today's question is an easy one for all of us. How much genius do we want to leave on the table? How much are we willing to sacrifice our future prosperity because we struggle to muster the courage to head into a future that is thus far uncharted?

None. None at all.

No one has gotten this fully right so far, but we have made strides. We have far to go, but there are guideposts.

Each of us, each one of us, has a gift to offer this community. We have an hour to read to a classroom. We have hands that can create a mural that inspires. We know how to build a website. We have the determination to open a new business. We show kindness to a neighbor on the train. We serve on a city board. We tell our stories — of success, of failure, of what needs to change for you to be part of One Minneapolis. We hire a STEP-UP intern. We recycle. We are a graduation coach for a high school student. We cast our votes. And yes, we organize people to lobby the mayor about... anything that matters.

As the poem that we heard earlier by Swedish poet Tomas Tranströmer says, "Every person is a half-open door / leading to a room for everyone." This means that we all can create openings for each other; we all have a gift to offer each other in the "half-finished heaven" — which is the title of the poem — that is our life together.

This is **your** invitation to use that gift in service of One Minneapolis. **You** fit in this picture. Without you, this picture is incomplete.

The state of our city? We are one city. We are One Minneapolis. Let us resolve in 2015 every day to match our behavior with that truth.