

2007 State of the City

President Cockrel, President Pro Tem Conyers, Members of City Council, Distinguished Guests, Citizens of Detroit.

Good evening.

I am here tonight to report to you on the State of our City.

Tonight I will discuss with you the very substantial progress we are making in positioning ourselves to create the Next Detroit. And I will tell you what we're doing in the coming year to grow this city and also what we're doing to get our citizens what they need to have a better quality of life here in Detroit.

Tonight, the state of our city is summed up by two words: growth and challenge.

I want to pause for a moment to acknowledge the loss during the past year of one of this region's outstanding leaders and a good friend of Detroit, Dearborn Mayor Michael Guido. When Mayor Guido took office in 1986 he quickly developed a strong working relationship and a personal friendship with Coleman Young that began to heal the historic racial tension between our two cities.

When I became Mayor, he reached out to me in the same spirit of cooperation and friendship. His untimely passing has left a void in southeast Michigan. We need more leaders like him if we are to move forward together. We are honored to have with us tonight his wife, Kari, and his son, Mikey. I would ask all of you to join me in letting them know, and the people of Dearborn know how much we respected and loved her husband and his father, Mike Guido.

I also want to express my gratitude tonight to the veterans in our community. I visited our VA hospital three weeks ago and I saw veterans who had served in World War II, who had served in Korea and Vietnam and the newest veterans who have served in Iraq and Afghanistan. We owe these veterans a debt of gratitude for all they have done for our neighborhoods, for our communities, for our city, our state and our country. In the midst of the debate over whether the war was justified, no one can question your valor, your commitment or your service. On behalf of the people of Detroit, "We thank you."

I don't have to tell anyone here tonight that we are having some hard times in Michigan.

The University of Michigan Economic Outlook for 2007 said, "Michigan is being battered by one of the most tenacious economic storms ever confronted by its citizenry." We are experiencing, it said, "the longest stretch of job loss in the state since the Great Depression..."

This is not a time for the faint-hearted. Even some of our longest-existing institutions are faced with, and sometimes yield to, the temptation to bail out on us.

But real Detroiters know this City is a tough city that will not only survive but prosper. They see the progress we are making to grow Detroit. And they are not only staying but making their own commitment to our future.

Our first challenge if we are to grow this city has been to get our finances in order. Just two years ago we faced a potential deficit of \$300 million. It seemed like every article about our financial condition in our beloved Detroit Free Press and Detroit News talked about Detroit going into receivership or bankruptcy.

That did not happen because we took unprecedented steps to save our city.

Yes, we closed police stations. We closed fire stations. We laid off police officers. We initiated a trash fee. We reduced our city work force by more than 25 percent. We reduced our contract spending by 25 percent. Every appointee and nonunion employee of the city took a 10 percent pay cut and cost adjustments to their health care plan. We transferred operations of the Detroit Zoo, the Detroit Historical Museum, and Eastern Market to nonprofit organizations.

The cuts reduced our potential budget deficit by half, from \$300 million to \$150 million.

Then we went to our labor unions and said, "We need you to take a 10 percent pay cut. We need you to accept the first adjustments in 23 years in deductibles and co-pays for health insurance, for prescriptions, for office visits and for ER visits."

Tonight, we've done that. With the very dedicated efforts of both our civilian employee unions and our city negotiators, we have made those adjustments. Just recently, we also were able to win similar adjustments from our

uniformed employees through an Act 312 arbitration ruling. The result is not just a one-time savings but permanent savings that will be a continuing part of our budget next year and the year after that and for years to come.

I want to thank all of the men and women of our city unions and our retirees for recognizing the situation we face, coming together with us and accepting those changes. I want to thank our entire labor relations team, led by Labor Relations Director Barbara Wise Johnson; attorney Val Colbert of our Law Department and my Chief of Staff Christine Beatty for their tireless efforts to make these changes a reality. These changes saved us an additional \$54 million on an annual basis and further reduced our budget problem from \$150 million to \$96 million.

Because of the savings we have achieved, our current 2006-2007 budget is balanced. For the first time what we spend is lining up with what we take in. The remaining deficit of about \$96 million is carried over from previous years and we will deal with that this year.

Now, we are in a position where this mayor and this Council, working together, can change the budget conversation in Detroit forever. The budget I will present to Council on April 12 will not only cure this \$96 million carryover, but it will put us in a position where we can be out of a deficit conversation in the city of Detroit once and for all. I want thank our budget director, Pam Scales, for the excellent work she and her staff have done to help get us to this point.

I also want to acknowledge tonight the key role that City Council has played in helping make all of these changes. And I want to thank each member of Council for the constructive relationship we have developed as we work on these very difficult issues.

I particularly want to acknowledge the smooth budget process that we were able to work through last year. It wasn't a rubber-stamping of the budget. It was far from that. It was a deliberative, constructive process, complete with negotiations and debate that produced constructive agreements on how we are going to deliver basic services to our citizens. Council made some very tough decisions along the way. I believe the people of Detroit were well served by the process and I want to publicly thank Council for their actions.

We still have some unfinished business on our current budget. There are certain things that we committed to together in this budget that we still have yet to do. For instance, we said we would get \$30 million in property sales. We must get it done.

Over the next five weeks, I will avail my staff to you whenever you have questions you need answered about these proposed sales. Deputy Mayor Anthony Adams, COO Charlie Beckham and Kandia Milton will be available to talk to you and answer any questions you have about these property sales.

This moment in history has the potential to be a pivotal moment for Detroit. For the first time in my memory, there is real optimism about the future of our city. There are signs of growth and recovery throughout Detroit. These signs of growth are being recognized not only here, but around the country.

During Super Bowl week this year there were actually stories in newspapers around the country and the world saying, "They did it better in Detroit last year."

We still have fundamental problems that require our urgent attention. But as we work on those problems, we need to keep in mind the progress we are making on a number of fronts. Let me remind you of a few of them.

On the east side, the new residential neighborhood called Jefferson Village is taking shape. It covers 88 acres between East Jefferson, St. Jean, Freud and Marquette. This development, which sat dormant for three years before we took office, is the most successful project Crosswinds Development, which does business all over the State of Michigan, has anywhere, with more than 300 new single-family homes.

Our Detroit Brownfield Development Authority completed 21 projects in the city last year, most of them in neighborhoods. The authority, one of the most successful of its kind in the nation, is very instrumental in almost every project we are doing – including the resurgence of the mid-town and cultural center area.

On the east riverfront, we will break ground this year on two developments being built by Dave Bing and Dwight Belyue that will create nearly 600 new housing units along with retail and restaurants.

I first talked to you about our efforts to bring life back to the Book Cadillac Hotel in my 2003 State of the City address. It took a while to get it done. A lot of people thought we were wasting our time on this Detroit landmark. They said we had as much chance of redeveloping that old hotel as the Tigers had of making it to the World Series. They were right.

When the Book Cadillac Hotel renovation is completed in 2008, it will house a four star Westin hotel with 455 rooms. It will have 67 condos on its upper floors. All but four of those condos already have been sold, with two of them going for more than \$1 million. Imagine that – people paying over a million dollars to own a condo in downtown Detroit.

On top of that, another development team has bought the air rights on top of the parking deck being built next to the Book. They are going to build 80 upscale condominiums on top of that garage.

The whole concept of buying air rights is common in cities like New York and Chicago. But it had never been heard of here in Detroit until now.

Later this year, two of our casinos will open new 400-room hotels, reflecting a total investment of more than \$1 billion. MGM Grand already has started the process to hire and train local employees to fill more than 1,000 new jobs that will be created in their new facility. This is the largest construction project now underway in the entire state of Michigan.

In many other ways, large and small, we are making significant improvements to our city. Most of them do not generate big headlines, but each makes a big difference. For example, in the past year: We opened the first new rec centers in Detroit in 20 years when we opened the Patton and Heilman recreation centers and finished the Jayne-Lasky Family Fun Center.

We are making \$14 million in improvements to the Northwest Activity Center that will make it a full community center.

We have established a single point of entry into the health care system for senior citizens in Detroit to help them determine the best long-term care plan for themselves.

We installed new, computerized fare boxes in our DDOT buses and have improved service and schedules.

Our Health Department has made a tremendous turn around after being at a point two years ago when we were talking about closing it. That turnaround includes improving our immunization program to where we are number one in the nation, according to the Center for Disease Control.

We identified 26 neighborhoods that are receiving their first property tax cut this year as the initial Neighborhood Enterprise Zone neighborhoods. Twenty more neighborhoods will be added to that category this year.

We installed 39,000 new streetlights.

We resurfaced 88 miles of streets.

We received a \$1.1 million grant from the CDC to fight lead poisoning. We are working with Prosecutor Kym Worthy to prosecute landlords who knowingly put families in homes with lead issues.

We renegotiated leases with three downtown buildings that house city agencies and secured savings of more than \$11 million over the next four years.

We put in place new regulations governing the landlord eviction process so that landlords can no longer set trash on the front lawn of our neighborhoods and dirty up our streets.

And we've done so much more.

So you see, we've accomplished a lot in the past year.

But tonight I want to talk to you about where we go next. My administration has been looking around the country for successful strategies that have been employed both in the private and public sector to stimulate growth. We're developing strategies that will move us beyond just meeting our budget every year to a situation where we can have surplus dollars to be used for demolition, to lower taxes, to build houses, to stimulate real retail in our neighborhoods, to stimulate increases in property values.

Over the next few weeks I will be discussing these strategies for stimulating our economy with the community, with Council, with editorial boards and other leaders in this community. I do want to say tonight that our long-term strategy does not raise any taxes in the city of Detroit. Nor does it ask for any new taxes for our citizens in the City of Detroit. In fact, our long term strategy will reduce both property taxes and income taxes. That, in turn, will raise property values. We have the data that shows that property values will go up as a direct result of decreasing property taxes and income taxes.

We are developing a long-term economic stimulus plan, which will include a long-term bond initiative. After I present my budget on April 12, I will be finalizing this plan and unveiling it to our entire community.

We also will provide strong support for public safety as well as aggressive funding for business attraction, work force training and job growth in the city of Detroit.

These are the priorities of our economic stimulus plan – radically reducing crime, strengthening our work force development and training programs and fully implementing neighborhood improvement efforts through our Next Detroit Neighborhood Initiative.

The crime issue in the city of Detroit has consistently and constantly undermined any notion of recovery and revitalization or renaissance in this city for more than 40 years. No matter what we do – host the Super Bowl ... host the All-Star Game ... lead the region in new housing ... sell million dollar condos downtown ... build more housing than ever ... open three new neighborhood recreation centers ... fix streets ... fix parks ... host the Grand Prix on Belle Isle – the crime issue constantly undermines any notion of recovery all the time.

The problem of crime is not unique to Detroit. FBI statistics show that violent crime is on the rise throughout America after a decade of decline. Cincinnati recorded its deadliest year ever in 2005. Oakland, California had the highest number of homicides in more than a decade. San Diego had a 33 percent increase in homicides while Miami had a 43 percent increase and Orlando a 123 percent increase.

But the fact that other cities are having their own problems brings no comfort to us in Detroit. We have to develop new strategies to bring down crime totals in Detroit.

One of the most difficult decisions I had to make to balance our budget was the decision to lay off police officers. I am pleased to report to you tonight that all of our laid off police officers have been called back and are already serving our citizens. We also have a class of new officers in the police training academy. And I'm not stopping there.

Tonight I am especially pleased to announce that over the next 12 months we will hire 200 new police officers for the Detroit Police Department.

But bringing crime under control requires much more than increasing police staffing levels. Fortunately, I believe the command team we have assembled under the leadership of Chief Ella Bully Cummings is the best in the nation.

I have told the chief that I want her to take back our streets. I want the police to help the adults in this community restore order. In too many of our neighborhoods, it seems that the kids have taken over the streets. It's like if I had a situation in my own household where Jelani and Jalil woke up one day and said, "Dad, we're taking over this house today." Let me tell you – that would be a bad day for Jelani and Jalil. I have told the chief to make it a bad day for those who are disrupting the peace of our community. Under Chief Cummings' guidance the department is making revolutionary improvements to their operations.

One of the most dynamic changes is the creation of rapid response units that are being piloted in two of our districts and will soon be rolled out citywide. They are assigned strictly to respond to priority 911 calls. Their job is to receive the police run and immediately respond to the location. Under this plan, these units are strategically located to assure that any call can be responded to quickly. These are high visibility, directed patrols that will significantly improve our ability to respond quickly to emergencies.

The chief also is assigning all administrative staffs to be deployed regularly to augment patrol forces in what we classify as hot spot areas, such as gas stations, party stores, night clubs, bars and all-night restaurants.

The chief will be going out on these patrols as well. The assistant chief will be going out. All commanders, all the deputy chiefs are going on patrol. So we'll have greater visibility, greater accountability and greater oversight.

For those of you in the community who work with the Police Department day in and day out, thank you. One of the department's most successful tools for ridding our city of violent criminals is a strong community-involvement initiative called the Most Violent Persons. The department has, through assistance from the community, arrested 97 criminals on this list in the past two years.

The department has instituted internal, city-wide crime briefings on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday to closely monitor crime trends throughout the city. These briefings bring together officers from the districts, homicide, narcotics, the gang squad, sex crimes, the child abuse unit and others to assure that the department adjusts immediately to changing dynamics.

We also are deploying our Special Response Team, also known as our SWAT team, in special enforcement actions, putting them on patrol anywhere in the city where these daily reviews reveal high narcotics trafficking or a high incidence of robberies and shootings.

Traffic enforcement also will be engaged in visible patrols and they will also patrol adjacent neighborhoods.

The chief and her command staff also are going to conduct one-on-one meetings with citizens mirrored after my one-on-one meetings with the community. The first one is scheduled for April 7th. These meetings will be held on a quarterly basis with the deputy chief and two commanders working on a Saturday with their staff from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Anyone in the community that has a police concern can come in and have a one-on-one private conversation with a member of the command staff in that district. We are continuing to reconnect our Police Department to the citizens of the City of Detroit.

I want to take a minute to thank the men and women of the Detroit Police Department. They give their blood, sweat, tears and sometimes even their lives serving us. On behalf of all Detroiters, we thank God for you.

But the new officers and new tactics by themselves are not the only answer to our crime problem. One mistake we make in our community when we discuss crime is to immediately discuss police and police only. We must look at the nature of the crime we experience and develop strategies out of what we learn. And we must have a very candid conversation within this community about what we are doing to ourselves.

When you break down crime statistics, year in and year out, most of our crime is narcotics related. About 70 percent of our homicides are narcotics related.

If you are involved in narcotics, if you are involved in drug trafficking or if you are in the presence of where drugs are sold, then you are much more likely to be the victim of violent crime.

The truth is a small group of people in the City of Detroit are responsible for a large bulk of the crime. The police recently did a profile of 20 people they had arrested and determined that they were involved in 149 crimes that we know about. And we know that as a general rule of thumb in law enforcement, they have probably committed three times that many. So these 20 people probably committed well over 400 crimes in the City of Detroit.

Now, Detroit, I want to have a very serious and frank discussion with you about our children and crime.

Two weeks ago we were shocked when an 11-year-old and a 13-year-old were murdered in a house on the west side of Detroit. They were executed.

We are losing too many of our children.

Those kids were middle school students. And with a Stronger more engaged Community, they may have still been with us tonight. But they are gone.

I hope parents tonight are watching this with their children. We as parents need to talk to our children about this situation. We need to know what our children are doing, who their friends are. We need to tell them when they get involved with drugs, if they are just around drugs, if they are involved in gangs, they not only can get hurt, they can get killed.

We need to help them understand that the so-called glamorous life that they see in some of these videos is not reality. We need to tell them that when you get involved in drugs and sitting in a drug house, there's no champagne, there's no pretty girls, no nice clothes. There's no bling bling. You can get killed.

My Beloved Community, I truly understand the history of African American people in this country. But we have come to a point in our community where this is no conspiracy by Outsiders doing this to us. This is us killing us. This is mostly African Americans killing African Americans. This is some family member of mine or yours killing some family member of yours or mine. And we, as a community, have to stop it now. Nobody's coming to save us. We have to stand up for ourselves and stand up now.

The Ashanti have a saying: "The ruin of a nation begins in the homes of its people." The same can be said of a city.

We have to work to repair the homes of our city. We must, as a community, step up and take this head on, together, because disorganized love cannot fight, nor ever defeat, organized crime.

No longer can we just say the police alone have this responsibility. Pastors in our communities, Stand Up! We need Churches without walls, in order to engage the neighborhoods around you. Other leaders in our communities, fathers and mothers in our communities, family members and neighbors in our communities, have to step up to this responsibility. It's not just the Mayor's problem. I fully accept my responsibility in it. But I can't do this on my own. I need, and we need an aroused, engaged and mobilized community.

Men of Detroit. I am talking to you not just as Mayor, but as a father, a husband and a fellow Detroitier. As men of Detroit, we must step up together and take a leadership role in saving our city.

The great singer Marian Anderson, in her 1956 autobiography, wrote “There are many persons ready to do what is right because in their hearts they know it is right. But they hesitate, waiting for the other fellow to make the first move—and he, in turn, waits for you. The minute a person whose word means a great deal dares to take the open-hearted and courageous way, many others follow.”

Men of Detroit, the time is now for us to take the openhearted and courageous way. It’s time for you to make the first move. It’s time for all of us to lead.

One of the most effective deterrents to crime is the availability of jobs. People who have opportunities and hope for the future are far less willing to risk their personal future by engaging in criminal activity. We must put Detroiters back to work.

This is not an unsolvable problem. That is why our Workforce Development Department is so critical to the future of this city.

This administration inherited an Employment and Training Department that had not changed in 20 years and was under federal and state investigation. We met those problems head-on, met with the FBI, met with the state investigators, and we cured those issues.

Now, under the direction of Sharon McPhail and Department Director Cynthia Bell, we are transforming the Workforce Development Department. We are developing programs that will help Detroiters in areas ranging from resume preparation to developing employable skills to finding potential jobs with growth opportunities. The department will develop programs that are personalized to each individual.

For those ready to work, job development specialists will find them jobs that have potential for growth opportunities. For those who want or need more training, we are creating career centers in the high growth job areas---health care, information technology, construction and hospitality and retail and putting those job centers where jobs are available.

The central focus of the career center is a coaching model. We’ll be assessing individuals. We’ll be giving them occupational testing and guiding them through a process that will put them on a path to a real career.

Additional centers are in the planning stages for such specialty areas as transportation and forestry. We want to help every Detroiters who wants to prepare themselves for a career, and not just a job.

The only thing this process requires of each participant is a personal commitment to be ready to learn and to prepare themselves to work. That means going to class. That means developing the skills that will make you employable. That means developing good work habits. And, yes, it means being able to pass a drug test.

All these changes will be fully implemented by the end of the year.

As we work to prepare people for work, we also are going to aggressively market our city to the rest of the world. Detroit Renaissance has stepped forward with seed money to create a business attraction office that will go out and actively market Detroit to the rest of the world. The Kresge Foundation immediately stepped forward to match the Renaissance grant. Others are preparing to follow suit. This office will allow us to get out and very aggressively call on businesses not just nationally, but around the world, to tell them about Detroit. I want to thank Doug Rothwell of Detroit Renaissance and Rip Rapson of the Kresge Foundation for their leadership in making this new office a reality.

A city is only as strong as its neighborhoods.

That is why I have launched my Next Detroit Neighborhood Initiative (NDNI). The Next Detroit Neighborhood Initiative, which will be lead by Anika Goss-Foster, is a five-year strategy focusing on the rejuvenation of Detroit neighborhoods. It will concentrate on improving such basic quality of life issues as cleanliness, safety and beautification through growth and development strategies. It is the biggest neighborhood initiative that Detroit has ever seen.

We have started out by targeting our resources to six neighborhoods because we cannot do all 139 square miles of this city at once. The six neighborhoods are all across this city. They include two stable neighborhoods we will work to reinforce and keep strong ... two neighborhoods that are still strong but need some revitalization ... and two struggling neighborhoods we need to redevelop.

As we have begun this process we have found that people in each neighborhood are really excited because they’re actually part of the process. The truth is that they must be involved for this to work. Just as a city is only as strong as

its neighborhoods, our neighborhoods are only as strong as the people who live there and who are willing to get actively involved.

When I was growing up, if there was trash on our street, my mother never told us to call Coleman Young's office to get it cleaned up. She sent us out to clean it up. That's the attitude of ownership and personal responsibility we need in all of our neighborhoods.

Each of the six neighborhoods in our initiative is developing its own individual work plan, with plans due to be submitted to my office March 30th. We'll roll out the final plan for each neighborhood the first week in May and begin work immediately.

Critical support is coming from philanthropic and nongovernmental agencies who have teamed up to fund part of the hundreds of millions of dollars needed to support the initiative. The Skillman Foundation ... the Detroit Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) ... the Knight Foundation ... the Kresge Foundation ... the Community Foundation for Southeastern Michigan ... and Governor Jennifer Granholm's Cities of Promise initiative all are involved in making this initiative a success.

One of the fundamental needs of our neighborhoods is the need for retail establishments. For too long, Detroiters have had to drive to the suburbs to do most of their shopping. We have begun working with the Brookings Institution Social Compact to identify untapped and undercounted purchasing power in Detroit's neighborhoods. We know Detroiters can shop with the best of them. And we deserve to have the best retail right here in our neighborhoods.

The Social Compact has developed a very innovative way to identify unrecognized economic resources in a community. They count things like utility bills and credit card receipts – things that the Census does not count but which give a much more accurate picture of purchasing power – to show that there is a lot more economic clout in urban communities than is often recognized.

The Social Compact has worked in more than 100 different cities around this nation -- cities such as Washington, Baltimore, Oakland and Chicago -- to identify these unrecognized economic resources. And they have been very successful in convincing retailers who once said "no" to a community to actually change their decision and locate in that community. They will work with us over the three years to identify the true economic resources to be found in Detroit, starting with the six neighborhoods in the Next Detroit Neighborhood Initiative.

This administration has other initiatives underway to meet our future needs on issues like rapid transit to alleviate traffic congestion and attract millions of dollars of new investment into our city.

We're also prepared to work with the Governor on initiatives she announced in her State of the State Message. For instance, she said MSHDA is preparing to tear down 5,000 blighted homes in cities around the state. Governor, we have some abandoned homes here in Detroit and we're planning to get our fair share of those funds.

The Governor said she wants to create five new high schools for nursing. We have two sites here in Detroit ready to go.

We're going to challenge the Governor, in a very friendly and very supportive way, to focus on Detroit.

Because there is no State recovery without Detroit being the focal point of that recovery.

For years the notion has been that Detroit was dragging down the rest of the State. The enlightened people in this Country and State know different. We've come to a point in history where, if Michigan is to Prosper, it's really Detroit's responsibility to put the State on its back and carry us both to Prosperity. We need support to be able to do that.

Let me be clear, there can never be a meaningful, effective or operational plan for the recovery of our State if Detroit is not at the Core of that plan. The History of the Economy of Our State reinforces this fact.

So we look forward to partnering with the governor this year.

Lastly tonight, I want to discuss an issue that people keep raising with me as I go around this city – the issue of education.

Education in the city of Detroit cannot continue to be looked at as the Detroit Public Schools only. Our children attend charter schools. Our children attend private schools. Our children attend parochial schools. Our children attend inner ring suburban schools. There is even an emerging home school base growing in our city.

So many times when we start to talk about education in this city the focus immediately goes to who's running the Detroit Public School System. That should not be our first, or second, or third consideration.

We need to be smarter about education in Detroit. If we get smarter about education then we can start to understand where the problems are. And then we can find solutions to those problems. And we can start to lift up those places that are doing well in our city and make those places a viable option for parents and children.

A couple of years ago I spoke at Northwestern High School's graduation. Their graduating class had earned literally hundreds of thousands of dollars in scholarships. It reminded me that there are thousands of good kids in our school system, thousands of good kids who just want to learn. We have dynamic schools with dynamic children who are there to learn. Each year we send kids to universities throughout this state as well as to Stanford, to Yale, to Harvard, to Howard and, yes, to the Florida A&M University.

Too often, it's the adults who get in the way of our children learning. Adults get in the way of excellence for our schools. Adults get bogged down in arguments that put our children in peril. Adults get bogged down in personalities at the bargaining table. Adults spend too much time worrying about their own pork chop rather than our children. Adults constantly shift teachers around, sometimes in the middle of the year, destroying the morale of the good schools and damaging those schools. Adults refuse to consider new approaches to education, clinging to a model that is over 100 years old.

The children of our community have to wonder at times whether the adults in this community are truly looking out for their best interests.

The people of this community decided in 2004 they don't want me in charge of education. I support the people's decision. I support our elected school board and want them to make good decisions for our children.

The board has chosen a new superintendent. It's time for us to stop the dissension and fighting with one another. It's time for us to move on and give her our full support. I open my arms to Dr. Connie Calloway and welcome her to the City of Detroit. She is with us here tonight. Let's show her a real Detroit welcome and some Real Detroit Love.

It's time for us to walk together, focused on our children, doing all we can to provide them the best education possible.

But the children of this community are my responsibility as well.

That's why I want to make sure that our children are safe going to and from school. And I want to make sure they are safe while they are in school. I want to do that because they deserve and need a safe environment where they can learn. Because public safety is my responsibility.

As a result, I've asked the chief to approach the school system to get an agreement that would deploy the Gang Squad to the schools to provide security. As soon as the agreement is signed between the school system and the City of Detroit, I will deploy Gang Squad. I will let this community know when that agreement is signed.

We also are going to increase our focus on helping the school system enforce truancy laws. There is a direct nexus between being out of school and committing crimes. If 13 and 14 and 15 year-olds are out of school for days on end not learning, nothing good can come of that.

I have outlined for you tonight an overview of the tremendous progress we are making as a city ... the major obstacles that are standing in our way as we move forward ... and what we are doing to overcome these obstacles.

As I close tonight, let me be clear that I understand that many of our people are having hard times. I want you to know that we are working to assure that there are opportunities for those who are ready to put in the effort needed to take advantage of those opportunities.

My Detroit family, thank you for the trust you have put in me. I will continue to have the discipline, courage and devotion that befit this time in our city's history.

As your mayor I pledge that I will continue to seek every available resource for our city. You can expect that of me and everyone in my administration that works for you. But if we are to return to the Detroit that you remember, then we all must work together to reclaim our city and our swagger and our sense of pride. Reclaim your family. Reclaim your church. Reclaim your neighborhood. Reclaim your school. And we will have, once again, the city that God intended for us to have.

Detroit, it's up to us.

None of us can do it alone.

Together, we can grow this city.

Together, we can take back our streets.

Together, we can rebuild our communities and our neighborhoods.

Together, we can put Detroiters back to work.

Together, with God's help, we will realize our full potential as one of the world's great cities.

Together, we can.

That's My Detroit! That's Your Detroit! That's Our Detroit!

Good night and God Bless.