

Good evening, everyone and thank you so much for coming out tonight for my 10th state of the city.

We are honored and privileged to be joined by our Lieutenant Governor, Antonio Delgado, thank you so much.

Assembly Members Pat Fahy and John McDonald, our Deputy County Executive, Dan Lynch, our Chief City Auditor Dorcey Applrys, and our City Treasurer Darius Shahinfar. Colleen Williams, who's representing our ever-busy and always ever present Congressman Paul Tonko, and Harry Hechhouche, representing Governor Kathy Hochul.

I want to welcome the Albany Common Council, led by President Corey Ellis, President Pro Tem[pore] Kelly Kimbrough, and Majority Leader Ginnie Farrell, and the rest of the councilmembers. Thank you for being here this evening.

And before we begin, I do want to say in the context of the mission that we have in city government, it you know, that mission is for us to serve the city of Albany. It's our job to provide the services and support the build safe, healthy, and economically vibrant communities. And I do have to say that in light of the murder of Tyree Nichols, I just want to acknowledge that we are all always called upon to do better. And that when we see injustice, it is our job, to look to ourselves and to one another and say that we can do better. And I believe that Dorcey Applrys, our Chief City Auditor, actually said it the best when she issued a statement asking the question, "when will we ever experience Dr. King's dream of justice rolling down, like water, and righteousness, like a mighty stream?" But each and every one of the elected officials here and the community members here I believe, are working to ensure that we reach that dream. And that collectively, we can do that together.

I also want to acknowledge that we lost some incredible public officials and 2022 people who did amazing things for our community, as well as community leaders, who even though they never held elective office, they sure held our feet to the fire. And we are grateful for them, and they will be missed. We also lost many of our city employees and retirees, including most recently Ed Verhoff, the vice president of the firefighter's union. So, I ask you all to join me in a moment of silence as we reflect on the importance of the individuals who traveled through our city on creating that more perfect and better future for our city.

Thank you. So, in 2022 we came back. We had thought in 2021 we were coming back but you know the pandemic had a little more for us but in 2022. We came back, we had in person events including the Tulip Festival, Park Playhouse, lots of activity happening in our city.

We also built. We continue to not only see a record investment in our city, but some projects that had been stalled by the pandemic are now underway including that long-awaited new hotel at Quackenbush square. I see Discover Albany giving a shout out for that.

And we also broke ground on what will be the very first all-electric apartment building in the City. Albany is really setting a goal and really making sure that we are thinking about sustainability as we build in our city.

And we opened the Skyway finally, our long-awaited Skyway, and given the traffic counts that are happening on the sideway, the pedestrian counts, we estimate that the Skyway will see more than 2 million visits per year, think about that. 2 million visits. So, if you haven't walked it, it's a great, wonderful way for you to get some exercise at lunchtime. And by the way, Lieutenant Governor, we need all those state workers back at the office. They'll love what they're seeing down here.

We reimagined Quackenbush Square, and I want to thank all of our partners in making sure that that new reimagine space is there, and it is going to provide the opportunity for us to have wonderful, wonderful activities right near the Skyway. And new small businesses opened across the city.

And we delivered. Our workforce responded to emergencies. We repaved roads, a record number of streets as a matter of fact, and we ensured that we had safe drinking water and that we were providing the services that our residents need and expect.

And as this at this presentation in 2021, we spoke about our need to secure federal pandemic relief. Thanks to many people in this room that was secured. And then we got about the work of ensuring that we were doing all that we can to get that money out into our city.

In 2022, we formed a COVID recovery Task Force. I want to thank Jahkeen Hoke and Mike Whalen for their leadership of that group and all of you who participated.

And so, in 2023, we are going to see that money at work and it would not have happened without community members and Councilmembers and others from our city workforce who stepped up like Judith Mazza, Roslyn Jefferson, Zach Simpson, Peter Schaffeing, Marjorie Geiger, Mike Whalen, Jonathan Scherzer, and council members Sonia Frederick, as well as Alfredo Balarin, Meghan Keegan, Sergio Adams, and Gabriella Romero, and Owusu Anane. All of you stepped forward and worked to ensure that we were reviewing those applications. Our city staff did amazing work. Ann Marie Salmon, Alison Crerand, Jessica Smith, Phil Suruda. It's important that we name names because this took a tremendous amount of work. Sarah Kampf, Harry Strole, Liz Harris, you all stepped up, because we knew we had an unprecedented opportunity to make an investment in our city.

And so, you made our job hard. But I couldn't have done it without our City Treasurer, Darius Shahinfar, without Corey Ellis, Kelly Kimbrough and Ginnie Farrell, who worked really hard on reviewing these applications together with Marisa Franchini, and our Commissioner of Administrative Services, Rachel McEneny.

And what did we do? Well, we awarded \$25 million to 35 programs and projects. 75% of that money is going to build affordable housing, affordable homeownership opportunity and provide essential access to all sorts of services, health services, mental health services in our neighborhoods of highest needs.

And the other 25% is going to go to assist small businesses that are the lifeblood of the city, and also to help our hard-hit arts and entertainment and tourism organizations.

And so, what does that mean for the state of our city? Well, it means hope. This isn't a time for us to be more hopeful than ever about our future.

You know, over the last 10 years, we've seen a billion dollars in investment in our city, but we have \$900 million in the pipeline right now. That's hope.

We built 1,500 units or renovated 1,500 units of affordable housing since 2015. Well, we have 1,500 units and of new and affordable housing in the pipeline right now.

We are going to see investment in building 100 new affordable homes in West Hill, the South End and Arbor Hill in our city. Homes that will help our residents reach that dream of homeownership for themselves and their families.

We're going to see more affordable units built thanks to the Albany Housing Authority, which is reimagining Steamboat Square. Not only rehabilitating all of the units that are there but bringing 37 new units online.

We are going to see the transformation of vacant homes. I think that when you look at what we have been able to do working together as a team to focus on our vacant houses, we are seeing tremendous momentum and investment, thanks to the Albany Community Land Trust and the Affordable Housing Partnership.

We are also going to see more affordable homes built in the South End, townhomes, the types of housing that our residents have been asking for, thanks to the Albany County Land Bank and their development partner MDG.

And we are going to be working with CARES to spend \$2 million to prevent homelessness. That means eviction prevention, it means rapid rehousing. If there is going to be an eviction, it means emergency housing, and workforce support for our families.

In addition to that, we continue to see unprecedented investment. And we've attracted more and more affordable housing developers to our city who are building quality product projects, and who are helping to transform our neighborhoods.

And we on top of that we awarded nearly \$3 million to homeowners, whether it was for down payment assistance, the ability to help people stay in their homes, to abate lead which we know is very dangerous from their homes. All of that work was done through the leadership of our Albany Community Development Agency and Faye Andrews, thank you to our Albany Community Development Agency team.

And through a grant that we received from Johns Hopkins, we embraced a program that is really working throughout this country: Love Your Block. We made 35 repairs 64 volunteers participated including the Carpenters Union, I've gotta give a shout out to our friends in labor, we couldn't have done it without them.

And while we made \$20,000 in grants, and that might not seem like a lot of money, you can do a lot with volunteers, determination, and \$20,000. But you don't have to listen to me to hear that.

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I want to thank everyone who helped make that program happen. And that is what it means to bring hope to our neighborhoods and our communities.

And we have organizations that do amazing things in our community, including Grand Street Community Arts, Trinity Alliance and the South End Children's Cafe. And I am so glad that we are able to help those organizations with significant funding to be able to spread those resources, to expand the hope that they bring to our community and to children in our community, and the incredible work that they do. Thank you so much to all three of these organizations. And stay tuned.

And, you know, those are all places of welcome. But we have a growing and incredibly valuable refugee community here in the City of Albany. And the Refugee Welcome Center helps to ensure that they have access to the help and navigation that they need. Through a grant using our ARPA funding, they are going to be able to own their community space, which will allow them to provide stability and to continue to welcome refugees across our city.

We also are providing additional funding so that the STEAM Garden on Central Avenue can continue to help small businesses grow and start and accomplish their hopes and dreams in our city.

And we are investing \$6 million through a federal grant in reimagining Central Avenue - making sure that it's walkable and safe for all of our residents in the amazing, diverse businesses along Central Avenue.

We are also investing in a West Hill Community Center, and we are in the process of site selection now - taking one of our most under resourced neighborhoods in the city and ensuring that they have a place that they can call home and be proud of.

And we're reimagining Hoffman Park. The recreation center there is used by our teens, and it is a place of nurture, and we need to ensure that it reflects and that it demonstrates the young people that that use it, how valued they are. Right now, it's old and tired, it's not going to be that way for long.

And as we think about those spaces for our neighborhoods, we also to think about those spaces that welcome everyone from across the region to our city. And so, the Clinton Market Collective, after a few delays, is now fully funded. Construction is beginning and we will see it completed in 2023. A new space near the Palace Theatre where you can bring your family and enjoy food trucks before a show. Where we can have the opportunity to listen to local music, and have our entrepreneurs use that market as a place for them to start their small businesses. It'll be a new and grand welcoming to one of the busiest entryways into our city.

And we're again reimagining Clinton Avenue - reconstructing it to make it safer for pedestrians, safer for everyone who's using it. And again, that is something that you can look forward to in 2023.

We're also renovating ball fields; we're installing new trees and we are reimagining the space right out here. Park Playhouse is free theater that has existed in the city, it is like no other place that I have ever seen in the country - free, high quality, professional theater, and we are going to reimagine the space where people come and engage with that. And I want to thank the Department of General Services under the leadership of Sergio Panunzio, for partnering with these community organizations, because the funding that we had available wasn't enough. But the Department of General Services said we can do this, we can partner alongside these community organizations, and help them to transform their visions for their parks in their neighborhoods. So, thank you to Sergio and his entire team.

And that's not all. When I talk about services in our most under resourced neighborhoods, we know that it's important to be able to connect people to the resources that exist across the city. And far too often people fall between the cracks. Thanks to a really exciting program in partnership with Northern Rivers, they've launched Jump Start, and it's a way for us to provide case management short term for people who may be facing eviction, for a family that can't enroll their kids in school because they haven't been able to get their birth certificates, for somebody who lost their voucher and they're they need help navigating on how to get that housing voucher back. And with our seniors, ensuring that they have access to the health care and the resources that they need. And also, we're providing funding to help our LGBTQ BIPOC community, ensure that children, some of whom young people, when they come out who are kicked out of their homes have a place to go where they're safe and where they're going to get the resources that they need. So, we are really excited about the future.

And that brings me to optimism. I mean, when we think about what all of this can create in our city, there is a reason for us to be hugely optimistic.

Our small business support has been top-of-mind. And we are supporting our small businesses, not only through the pandemic, but now that we're coming out of the pandemic. Under the leadership of Georgette Steffens and Anthony Capece, from our Central Ave and Downtown BIDs as well as under Sarah Reginelli and her leadership at Capitalize Albany Corporation and her amazing team, I see them standing over there. We are launching small business grants totaling more than \$1.7 million in a requests. We are going to be providing grants to our small businesses and our small businesses have never been more optimistic. One would have thought that the pandemic really took a toll, but let's listen to one of our small business owners who not only was able to keep his business going, but he opened a new one.

VIDEO PLAYS

I'm optimistic because we're creating the workforce of the future. We continue to be able to serve our young people through our Summer Youth Employment Program. I want to thank Jonathan Jones and his team. It was incredibly challenging during the pandemic. But our employer stepped up, our city offices stepped up and said, we have to engage as many of these young people as possible through this pandemic, and we succeeded in doing that. We provided grants to ensure that we're able to give

people access to the certifications and the education that they need in order to achieve their hopes and dreams. The MAPP program in the South End is helping residents train for construction jobs, as well as the offshore wind manufacturing jobs that are coming to Albany. And we held our second conviction sealing clinic to ensure that residents who deserve a second chance, who paid their debt to society, have the opportunity to get their convictions sealed, and access jobs and opportunities for their futures. I want to thank our Law Department and everybody who helped to make that possible, including Jasmine Higgins.

And with our ARPA grants, our RISSE, another refugee resettlement organization, is going to be providing workforce linkages. And we also have an exciting application that was awarded to reimagine how we train the much-needed workforce that we need in our restaurant industry.

Discover Albany is going to throw a huge party, no pressure, but we are going to become the place to be for Halloween weekend, all things FALL-bany, and we're really excited about that because we have to have fun, right?

Public art. The arts. The incredible USS Slater, which is the most visited local site, and I see BJ Costello over there, all run by volunteers is going to be getting the education center that it very much needs, and it's going to help us to ensure that young people have a place to go and learn about this incredible asset in the City of Albany.

Our incredible historic museums, our historic homes, are going to use this funding to help get some faceless, but really focus on ensuring that people in the neighborhood, people in the neighborhood are more connected with these incredible historic treasures.

We are going to be making improvements on the waterfront, we're going to be providing new wayfinding Downtown, we're going to be making our parking lots a little more safe, and some of this work is already done. The lot is open the Cap Rep and the tool library is open at a Historic Albany Foundation. So, thank you to everyone who is giving us such optimism.

And you know, I might be a little biased. But I have always been proud of the city. And as we've come through the pandemic, I couldn't be prouder. That's why we decided to talk about our ARPA funding as Albany for All. As you will see, there was something in there for everyone. But Albany for All, powered by pride and potential, and we have much to be proud of.

We are opening a new Department of Neighborhood and Community Services so that we can be laser-focused on both on the on the pride that exists within every neighborhood and neighborhood association across our city. And I want to thank the leadership: Faye Andrews, who I gave a shout out to, is moving to a new role as Commissioner of that Department and I know that she will do a phenomenal job because of the amazing experience that she has with the City of Albany. And I also want to introduce the new Deputy Commissioner, Elisa Kane, and the Director of the new Neighborhood Office, Sarah Kampf, who many of you know, who's worked for the city for years. But this is about ensuring that we are focused on doing all that we can for every neighborhood in our city. I always say, I never will claim stake a claim to perfection. We sometimes make mistakes. But I see a

workforce, when I look out every day, that cares, that wants to do the right thing. And I'm hopeful that this Neighborhood and Community Services [Department] will allow us to do an even better job of that. No pressure, guys.

We're building a new Lincoln Park Pool, finally. It's interesting that the Commissioner of Water and the Commissioner of Recreation sat next to each other because Lieutenant Governor, I don't know if you know this, but the existing pool leaks about half a million gallons of water a day. So, this has been an ongoing, long-standing problem. But thanks to the generous generosity of Ed Mitzen and the Business for Good, who has he has donated a million dollars, and he's committed to raising \$10 million. And thanks to Ann Marie Salmon, who worked really hard on a grant that we hope that we get, we are going to break ground and build this new pool and it will be something that we can be every bit as proud of in 2023, as when that first pool was built back in the 1920s. Thank you to everyone who helped make that possible.

And we continue to rebuild our parks. We completed a new basketball facility, which is really an amazing, wonderful facility in the South End. In 2023, we're going to renovate Krank and McCown Parks, we're going to complete phase two of Colby Park and the South End Connector. Again, this is due to a partnership, a strong partnership between our Department of General Services and our Recreation Department who really have figured out over these last few years how they can help one another ensure that we're meeting the expectations and needs of every neighborhood in our community.

And here we are. You're wondering, why are we at the lake house? I normally do this in City Hall. I've shifted it around in City Hall, sometimes we are in the Rotunda, sometimes we're up in the Chamber. But normally this is at City Hall. But this is the 75th anniversary of the Tulip Festival. This is the 150th anniversary of this incredible jewel of a park. And finally, after years of promises, this building has new bathrooms.

You know, when you're Mayor, you think that there are certain things that you get to do they're just going to be easy, right? So, I became mayor and I'm like "we need new bathrooms," right? Well, it turned out that the fountain at the Moses statue was broken. And then it turned out that you could either run the fountain or flush the toilets. But you could not do both. So, it took longer than we expected and longer than we wanted. But isn't this amazing? This place is an underutilized resource. And thanks to Sergio's leadership and the hard work of our Department of General Services, it is coming back. Every time they're in here they think of new things that they want to do. But we are also planning a new playground in partnership with the Washington Park Conservancy, so stay tuned. Yep.

And of course, our amazing City Gardener is going to provide a spectacular show here for Tulip Festival. It was amazing last year, I don't know how they're going to top it, but I hear that they are. And I also want to thank Alay Medina and her team at Cultural Affairs for all that they do to bring exciting, great, live, in-person events across our city. So, stay tuned, but you got to come to the 75th Annual Tulip Ball.

So, let me talk though about some challenges that we continue to have in our city. We continue to have some challenges with our landlords, and thanks to the leadership of our law department and other advocates, we are now holding those bad landlords accountable. We've seen a 255% increase in the number of cases that we're bringing against landlords who don't have a valid residential occupancy permit. And we passed a law that says, you know what, you can't evict someone from an apartment that doesn't have a valid ROP. And thanks to John McDonald and our friends in the state legislature, the state thought that was a swell idea. And so, they have now codified that, and they're looking at doing it across the state. And so that's how when we work together, we can really change the trajectory for our families.

And we're holding banks that are bad landlords accountable. We have succeeded in securing hundreds of thousands of dollars from zombie property owners, and we're going to continue to do it. And again, I want to thank our Assemblymember John McDonald, our state senator Neil Breslin for supporting our efforts, because it took a change in the law for us to be able to do that, so thank you. That has resulted in a 61% decrease in the number of demolitions happening in our city, yes, I look over at our historical partners. They know how hard these are and that we don't want to demolish properties. But because we are now doing more proactive stabilizations, I want to give a shout out to, where is Rick LaJoy, and our entire codes team. Thank you.

And it took hiring Sam Wells. We didn't have a single person who worked for the city whose job it was to focus on these buildings. And so, we created that position, actually, thanks to a grant from the state. And we've continued to fund that position because we are going to, we already are making a difference. But we are going to eliminate this blight from our city. And now you all will have access to more information than you ever had with respect to blight, thanks to Rick's team. And...Val, did, I think most of the work, sorry. We are providing residents access to an online tool. So don't rent an apartment if it doesn't have an ROP and guess what, you'll be able to find that at your fingertips, you'll be able to find out whether there are outstanding code violations on that property. That's a blight to your block. I know that as Council members, this is something you've been asking for. As a matter of fact, I think you've mandated that we do it, so thank you, because we've done it.

We also cleaned 2,500 lots; we emptied 27,000 Garbage baskets. You know we want to bring pride back to our city. And I think when you hear from this Department of General Services employee that we're asking our residents for help because the pride in our city and our workforce has.

VIDEO PLAYS

See why I'm proud. So, I don't know if you guys remember, this sign was left in front of City Hall. It says, if you can't read it, "Kathy needs to fix these damn potholes." I'm not good at fixing potholes. But I did go out to talk to the crews about the hard work that they were doing. Last year, we filled 22,184 potholes. We repaved 10-plus miles of streets and rebuilt five plus miles of sidewalks. As a matter of fact, I remember that Governor Hochul was the one who said we got to get rid of these potholes. So, we're trying to do our part, please let her know that.

And in 2023, we're going to spend a record \$22 million for streets and sidewalks. That's more than we ever have that in the history of the city that we're aware of. \$22 million. I want to thank our Council members who really have advocated for these improvements. And I want to thank our Chief City Engineer for leading the charge on getting these projects done. We're investing in our history. City Hall needs a new roof. It's not sexy, but it needs to be done. It's going to cost about \$15 million. If anyone wants to have a roof named after them, come see me afterwards. But in all seriousness, I want to thank our Senator Schumer, Senator Gillibrand, and Congressman Tonko for helping to secure some of the funding that we need to do this, as well as Governor Hochul and ESD. They're going to be kicking in a little bit of money too, but we still need a little bit more.

And we're rebuilding our urban forest, we now have a plan. We have a City Forester, Jay Levine, who is passionate about trees. All I'm gonna say about this is if you want to have a really fun night, and this is totally serious, invite Jay to do a Tree Town Hall. Some of the Council members here have taken advantage of it, and I see you nodding, and it's great. It's a great opportunity to engage every neighborhood in really focusing on what it means for us to take care of and build our urban forest.

And in Albany, we care about this stuff, we have 700-plus backyard composting participants. I'm one of them, and the compost works really well.

And we more than doubled our investment in water infrastructure. So, let me just say what that means right? From 2014 until today, we've invested \$127 million in water and sewer infrastructure under the leadership of Joe Coffey. In the prior [25] year period, it was about \$60 million. So more than double. We care about our future; we care about sustainability. And we demonstrate that with where and how we spend our valuable dollars. And we have clean water. We're cleaning the Hudson River, which is critically important to those in this room who are advocating for bringing us closer to the River to talk about 787 in a minute. But those who want us to go closer to the River, we need to make sure that river is clean before we get closer to it. And we're doing that.

In 2022, 439 full lead services were replaced. We gave grants for some of those. As many of you know, I joined our Vice President at the White House and a group of mayors and other leaders from across the country to get the lead out, and to commit to getting the lead out. The goal is 2030, we had initially set a goal of 2014. We accelerated that to 2034. I'm looking at Joe and I begged for a lot of money when I was down there, so we're hopeful that we'll be able to get the resources that we need, because our children deserve to be safe. No one should have lead in their water, and it's heartbreaking to see the challenges that have been created for families, and particularly disproportionately for Black and brown communities. We know how to get the lead out and we're committed to doing it. We also have expanded EV access, we converted our streetlights, we have to reach our goal under our Climate Act Plan, which calls for 40% reduction in 1990 emissions by 2030, and we are focused on an EV fleet, we're focused on EV chargers, and without the partnerships that we have in state government, we won't be able to get there. But we know that this commitment exists across the state in 2023, we will obtain most of the city's electricity from renewable sources.

So let me talk about the folks that work really hard to keep us safe as we advance and see all of this great investment in our city. They responded to 100,000 calls for emergency service last year. 100,000

calls. That's why the very first ARPA purchase that we made was a second set of turnout here for our firefighters. Because when they are going from call to call to call, if their gear becomes contaminated, they need to be able to immediately put on your new gear, I want to give a shout out to Joe [Gregory], who led the charge for that. But also, this was done because of the advocacy of union president Rob Mengel, as well as Ed Verhoff who I mentioned. So, thank you for making us do the right thing here.

And we're implementing police reform. It's policing reform, right? We have to think differently about how we deliver public safety to our community, and we have to do it with our community. So, thanks to everyone who participated in our policing reform collaborative, we now have a roadmap. And I want to give a shout out to Chief Hawkins and his entire command staff who are laser focused on delivering on these reforms. Just this year, we were able to rewrite the general orders, and that was something that was demanded by the policing reform collaborative. But none of that would have really been as impactful as it has been without the leadership of our Chief City Auditor Dorcey Appllys who insisted that we do a racial bias audit. That has provided us with the playbook and the baseline from which we have to grow and measure and do more as we go forward. And I also delivered on another demand that was in the policing reform collaborative, and that was to hire a Public Safety Commissioner. And I want to thank former City Court Judge Gary Stiglmeier for stepping forward and being willing to take on that very important role and responsibility.

Our police department removed a record 147 illegal guns from our streets in 2022. Most of those guns came from outside of our state, which is why it is so important that we saw the state make unprecedented investments in the largest Crime Analysis Center in the state, which is housed right here in the City of Albany. And I want to thank the state for being incredible partners in ensuring that we have real time access to the data that we need, so that when there's a shooting in the city, when we find a shell casing, we are able to connect the dots, make arrests, and ensure that our residents are safe from gun violence. Thank you to everyone for their leadership.

And so, we're going to continue to make investments. We are building a new 911 dispatch center, building on the investments that were made with the Crime Analysis Center, because our 911 dispatchers are that frontline that helped get us where we need to go and where we need to be.

We also are on the cutting edge with respect to reimagining policing in our community. We were the third city in the country to adopt Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion. And in 2022, we experienced our 300th diversion. That's 300 unique individuals who because of poverty, homelessness, or mental health issues needed help, not a jail cell – and we were able to provide that. I want to thank Senator Breslin and Assemblymembers Fahy and McDonald for providing a \$300,000 grant to help fund those efforts. And our County Executive. The County is a partner in this, and they secured a \$1.26 million grant for us to be able to do this important work. It's transforming lives.

And policing has changed. We and cities across the country have to reimagine how we hire individuals to perform public safety. It doesn't all necessarily need to be a sworn officer with a gun. So, our Police Chief who is on the cutting edge and innovative is going to be launching a new auxiliary police program this summer, he is going to be hiring civilian, non-sworn employees to assist with parades and festivals and parks and green spaces. And this will help to mitigate some of the staffing shortages we have. But

it will also provide us with a pool of individuals who may then be interested in becoming sworn officers. And so, I want to thank again Council members who really brought this forward to us made this request and we are delivering on the great ideas that you have brought forward to us so more to come.

We are also investing a million dollars and expanding our speed hump pilot program. This is working. I'm hopeful that we can get people to change their habits because it's also really expensive. But on the streets where we have installed speed humps, speeding dropped to less than 3% of the vehicles on those streets speeding. This is another initiative that was led by the Council, and I want to thank them for continuing to ensure that we are approaching this in a fair and equitable way across our city.

We are also reimagining how traffic travels through this park. We completed the Washington Park area traffic study. Now we just have to find funding, but as you have seen, I am always optimistic because I think when you have great ideas, and when you have a plan, you're able to find the funding to make it happen.

We are also attracting and retaining the public servants that we need in order to be able to do this really important work. We were one of the first cities in the state to do a comprehensive pay study. I want to give a shout out to Rachel McEneny, and Ann Marie [Salmon], and Tatianna Diaz, and Diane Moore, Gideon Grande, our new budget director.... so, we could pay people and our workforce and the salaries that they deserve.

And I'm just gonna end by saying that not I'm not ending. I'm gonna go through some very quick slides here. But you know, you talk about pride. Did you know that? ALB Vodka from Albany Distilling started right here in the City of Albany is now the house vodka at Madison Square Garden. Do you know? Who knew? So, there is great things happening in 2023.

Some of these are going to be happening during the course of the year, we're gonna see the benefits of them and 2024 and [20]25. We're building a nation's first offshore wind turbine tower manufacturing facility. We're imagining a new future for '60s era towers that are now obsolete and that could provide the opportunity to create jobs and opportunities in the South End.

We are transforming the Central Warehouse again, thanks to Governor Hochul, Empire State Development, Redburn Development, Columbia Development, Capitalize Albany Corporation, and Albany County. We finally figured it out. And we look forward to this transformation.

We are reimagining 787, whether it means bringing the river into the City, building a park over 787, taking 787 down, but \$5 million under Pat [Fahy]'s leadership has been acquired to be able to really get serious about thinking about our relationship with the Hudson River.

And I think we're finally pretty much out of court with respect to Liberty Park. I know I've been talking about this in every state of the city. But I continue to believe that this parking lot district is going to become the next big thing in the City of Albany. I want to thank CDTA and the Parking Authority and Capitalize Albany for coming up with a wonderful idea for a transit center for that location, more to come.

And we have incredible partners in higher education. The Center for Biopharmaceutical Education and Training is now open at a building that's had some challenges in the past, but I want to thank the Pharmacy College for taking the lead in reimagining that building.

I want to thank our partners at the College of Saint Rose and Russel Sage – whenever we need them, they are there for us. In Albany, we have amazing partnerships. And we want to ensure that we're creating the opportunities so that their students want to stay here, grow here, start businesses here and be part of our community.

Wadsworth Lab. Again, Pat's giving me a thumbs-up, but Wadsworth Lab is slated to break ground, we hope, very soon, which will again, take these labs, consolidate them and create more jobs in the City of Albany. And yay, we're re-merging CNSE and UAlbany. And for those who don't realize what a big deal this is, it is a big deal. It's a really, really big deal. Just like you might not realize that the chip fab manufacturing facility being built outside of Syracuse is a big deal for Albany. It's a big, big deal. These are all getting national attention. When I'm at the US Conference of Mayors, I have mayors asking me, how are you doing this? How are you getting win upon win upon win. It takes incredible leadership at the state level with a phenomenal governor who's just relentless at us things done? It takes leadership at the federal level. And we're fortunate to have the leader of the Senate as our senator. So yes, that helps. And then we have great, great representation at the state level. So that's how we get this done.

We're preparing to welcome the cannabis industry. Stay tuned. There's a survey out there. If you have opinions about this, please go onto our city website and let us know about those. But you know, everyone's noticing this is a great place to live. We're the number one place to live in New York State. Yes, that's a big deal.

We're a great place for immigrants which we need. We would have had a net loss of population if it were not for immigrants coming to our community. And we are a great place for young professionals.

This is our city. This is who we are. And as I look around this room, and I see our former Assemblymember Jack McEneny, who is a city historian, and I hope that as you look at what we've been able to accomplish, you are seeing that we are writing history right now. And we are making history right now. And we are creating a city that is truly an Albany for all power, my pride and potential.

Thank you very much.