



CITY OF RALEIGH PUBLIC AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT

News Release

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Mayor's State of the City Address

Below is the text of the State of the City address delivered by Mayor Nancy McFarlane today:

“I will start by telling you all that this is the most difficult State of the City speech I have written. I have been struggling with this during the past week. Normally, I would take this time to let everyone know just how well we are doing.

Raleigh is a very fortunate city. Our unemployment rate is 4.1 percent. We have seen job growth in technology, health care and manufacturing. 92.1 percent of our population have a high school degree or higher. 47.9 percent have a bachelor's degree or higher.

We are a growing, thriving city. We have incredible opportunities to advance the city this year. We are starting the planning process on Dix Park. We will also see major developments in construction of Union Station and the GoRaleigh bus facility at Moore Square.

Raleigh recognizes the need for a strong transit system to provide access for all and to create the backbone for future growth and development.

U.S. News and World Report just named us the 4th best place to live in the United States. And why? What do they look at?

- >Our job market
- >Affordability
- >Quality of life, which includes the quality of our education
- >Desirability
- >Net migration

Clearly we are doing something right because the number of people moving here tells us that. We have seen a great deal of change in Raleigh in recent years. We have done some great things here and we should all be proud of this great city that we have created.

Cities are a dynamic thing. They change minute- to-minute. But the definition of a city is not just when things are going great. Sometimes there is an event that challenges us. And it is not the event, but how we respond that will define the kind of city we are.

One week ago, we faced a tragedy as a community. Many lives were changed. And our community is changed. What I do know is that no matter what you are thinking or feeling about this situation, we have to use the strength of these emotions to focus on making our community better. For us to come together as a community and move forward, I believe the key is to really, really listen to each other. We talk and we talk. And that's good. But we also need to listen. Listen to the emotion behind the words.

As tragic as this is, it's important that we learn from this and build a better community. I am so proud of how we, as a community, have responded to this tragedy. I am proud of how the faith-based community stepped up and asked for calm.

When I spoke to the Bishop Darnell Dixon of Bible Way Temple, he too spoke with pride about his community --- about how they came together to march peacefully and how his church reached out and comforted those that needed comforting. And he noted that the world watched us and we responded differently than they expected. We didn't have riots or looting. Southeast Raleigh showed them who they are. The question he asked was: "What do you think of us now?" We are a community that pulls together and supports each other.

People have asked me why Raleigh did not react the same way as we have seen other communities react. Some of that speaks to just who we are. But much of that is because of the work of our police chief, Cassandra Deck-Brown. She is dedicated to building strong bonds in our community. She believes in community policing. She understands the importance of having the police in the community engaging in open conversations with citizens. She has built strong connections with our faith-based community leaders.

Our police go to work every day, knowing that they could be in harm's way, but sworn to protect and serve the community that they love. She has worked tirelessly to build those bonds of trust between her officers and the community that they protect.

So what is next?

As we wait for the SBI to conclude its investigation, we must move forward. The next steps are difficult.

There is no one answer from city council. There is no one answer from the school system. There is no one answer from social services, from housing services, from family services.

As Bishop Desmond Tutu from South Africa said, “There comes a point where we need to stop just pulling people out of the river. We need to go upstream and find out why they are falling in.”

It’s time for all of us, for everyone that has a hand in this community, to have an open and honest dialogue. What can we do to help our entire community?

When we are reciting our accolades, we want to know that we are doing all that we can to make sure that every person, every child in Raleigh has the support system that they need, to have the opportunity to be a part of our success story.

I want the world to look at Raleigh and say that we are different. We faced a tragedy together, we worked together and found ways to bridge gaps and we emerged a better community.

I know Raleigh. And I know that we have people who care. I see it every day. So let’s work harder. Let’s have the hard conversations. Let’s show the world how it’s done.

When we say Raleigh is the best place to live, work and play --- we mean for everyone.

Thank you.”