



**CITY OF SOUTH BEND**  
**PETE BUTTIGIEG, MAYOR**  
**OFFICE OF THE MAYOR**

**MAYOR PETE BUTTIGIEG STATE OF THE CITY OF SOUTH BEND**

**A. Welcome / Introduction**

First, I'd like to thank our hosts at the Kroc Center for making this beautiful space available to us. And I want to thank all in attendance for this evening's opportunity to provide a progress report and a statement of vision as this new administration works to deliver a fresh start in South Bend.

- I want to give you an update on how we are actively laying groundwork for South Bend's comeback, and share key elements of the vision that will guide this administration's approach to the future.
- We are just over 100 days into the life of this administration, and already there is a great deal of news to report. But this is only the very beginning of our work.
- As mayor, my most important job is to define and communicate a vision for how our city can be safe, prosperous, well-educated, well-connected, and well-served by government. Those five themes—safety, prosperity, education, connectedness, and efficient service—guided my campaign and continue to guide this administration.
- Tonight, the state of our city is hopeful. No one can ignore the challenges before us as we move into the future. But no one can deny that this community is rallying as never before to seize the opportunities at hand.
- South Bend has very good timing right now. We are in a unique window of opportunity to come together and do business in a new way. It's already starting to happen, and all of us are responsible for keeping up that momentum.



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### **B. Where we are / The KROC Center**

- One of the surest signs of South Bend's momentum is the place where we gather tonight. Here, where downtown meets the West Side, we can see what public-private partnership physically looks like.
- This facility represents a \$64 million investment in our community, built in partnership with the Salvation Army, the city, state, and countless private partners.
- Opened in January, the Kroc Center is already serving thousands in our community, and has a generous scholarship program covering up to 75% of the cost of membership to ensure that a low income is no obstacle to being able to take advantage of the fitness, arts, faith, and education programming here.
- Even the way this facility was built is an example for partnerships going forward: empowering women- and minority-owned businesses through concrete and achievable goals as part of the subcontracting process to build this amazing structure.
- Tonight we are close to a number of other bright spots in the coming rebirth of the downtown area.
- We are a six minute walk from the new and improved Coveleski Stadium.
- From there, it's a couple minute's walk North to the doorstep of a new Veterans Affairs Clinic, which will have its Grand Opening in a few weeks.
- And if you head in the other direction, a three or four minute walk South will bring you to the looming tower of an empty Studebaker factory that may soon see



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new life as one of the most technologically advanced and imaginative mixed-use buildings in the country.

- I'll have more to say in a moment about these examples of progress that are setting the tone for South Bend's forward motion.

### **C. Updates from around city government**

- As I begin describing to you some of the activities that have been taking place around city government and the community, let's pause to give credit where credit is due—many of the things I will describe were set in motion before I took office. The credit for our progress belongs to many people, including community organizations, the private sector, and the prior administration.
- It also represents the efforts of over a thousand city employees, very few of whom are ever in the spotlight. I would like for every city employee to stand and be recognized for the hard work they do.
- And what I am about to share represents just a small sample of the activities that have been underway throughout our local government in an effort to make this the best possible community.

#### **1. Mayor's team**

- The first order of business in getting the new administration up and running was to organize an office staff for the 14<sup>th</sup> floor.
- In these frugal times, my office accounts for less than one half of one percent of overall city spending, yet the team I have assembled does an amazing amount of work, from resolving citizen concerns to organizing our relationship to the press.



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- We have redefined roles and re-configured the office for maximum efficiency, and this group of people works long hours, day in day out, to serve the community and solve problems.

### **2. Economic Development / Physical Feel (images / layouts)**

- We all agreed in last year's election that getting more jobs in this community is crucial.
- Already, there is great momentum as we work to prepare for our economic comeback. First, as I said a moment ago, we see terrific progress downtown.
- In January, I approved an investment to create a Veteran's Affairs clinic in the heart of our city, at the old Gates Toyota site near Coveleski stadium. Building at light speed, this clinic will be treating patients in less than a month. It adds up to 100 jobs to the downtown area, and will bring at least 50,000 patients a year and their families to a part of town that has been too quiet for too long. Best of all, we did it in a way that will actually save taxpayer money compared to the original plan for the site.
- Meanwhile, the Redevelopment Commission just yesterday approved investments in state-of-the-art power infrastructure and building renovation that will continue to build on the fiber optic infrastructure around Union Station. This project not only helps us cultivate high-tech jobs, but it also gives us the chance to rehabilitate the largest remaining Studebaker building, an underused assembly building of



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nearly a million square feet, and turn it into the hub of a Renaissance District full of mixed uses for people to live, work, and play.

- On Monday, the Silver Hawks started the new season at Coveleski Stadium in a terrific opening day that drew over 4,000 fans. The new owner, Andrew Berlin, invested millions of dollars of his own money in the stadium and the team, and now we have a new destination downtown where families can spend time and enjoy the season.
- These developments, along with this Kroc Center, are all taking place in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> City Council Districts; areas that have felt left out of economic progress for too long. We have much work to do in ensuring that economic growth reaches all sectors of the community, but what a great start we have in these downtown developments.
- Meanwhile, East of the River, a successful development of townhouses is proving that people once again want to live in the heart of the city—and shows that South Bend is learning how to treat our waterway as an asset again, to turn and face our beautiful river.
- And later this year, South Bend will have a downtown high school open again for the first time since 1968. This facility will draw families from around the area into the heart of our city, and I hope that the retail community seeks new ways to give people places to visit in the area around the high school.
- These are just a few of the developments made possible with support from the city's Community and Economic Development Department. Under the management of division heads Don Inks and Pam Meyer, employees continue the day-to-day work of strengthening our neighborhoods and



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economy, even while we undertake a wholesale strategic review of the department.

- i. Last year 109 houses received home repairs and 52 demolitions made way for new housing. Loans and tax abatements brought about \$33 million in new investment, with business expansions including McCormick Industries, Schafer Gear, Tire Rack, Ziolkowski Construction, and GVW Tire in the West Side Airport area alone.
  - ii. Meanwhile, we're finding new ways to cut red tape so that potential employers have an easier time working with us. As a first step, we have cut unnecessary duplication in the reporting requirements for tax abatements, a small but important move to help employers spend less time on paperwork and more on creating value and jobs.
- Serious community and economic development means we also need to get serious about poverty. There have never been easy solutions, but we can and will do more.
  - I was glad for the opportunity to work with advocates for transit-dependent residents when TRANSPO faced difficult cuts. And while TRANSPO was not able to avoid cuts entirely or to find a solution that could please everybody, we made a lot of people better off when we intervened to slow down the process and mitigate the effect on the people who would be impacted the most.



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- Our office has also had constructive sessions with community leaders and banks to help people get a leg up in this economy with better access to banking services and less reliance on predatory lenders.
- It's all part of a commitment to evaluate all major decisions with a view toward how they impact poverty in our community.

### **2. PUBLIC SAFETY**

- There is, of course, much more to being a prosperous community than economic policy. Without safe streets and homes, there is no economic development, no quality of life.
- The business of police and fire has changed a great deal in recent years, as new techniques allow us to make proactive, targeted decisions. The last twenty years have brought a fundamental paradigm shift in the way public safety is managed, and South Bend is ready to keep up with the times.
- Chief Steven Cox of the South Bend Fire Department has been hard at work since the retirement in February of Chief Howard Buchanon after 38 years of dedicated and distinguished service.
- The department is adapting its strategic approach, while continuing to address its day-to-day lifesaving work.
- Last year the department handled over 200 fires, and over 14,000 life-saving EMS calls.
- The department not only puts out fires but prevents them, carrying out nearly 3,000 inspections last year and reaching out to 5,500 citizens with fire safety training.



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- And earlier this year, a team of fire fighters and police led by assistant chief Jim Lopez went to Southern Indiana to help communities cope with the impact of devastating tornadoes, taking charge of a regional recovery team and returning with valuable experience in disaster management and preparedness.
- There has also, of course, been change in the Police Department. I'll have more to say about that later this evening, but let me begin by reporting that interim Chief Chuck Hurley has thrown himself into his new job, drawing on a lifetime of military, police, and private security work, and he will serve our community well until a permanent chief is named.
- Former Chief Boykins is providing his support to ensure a smooth transition. Going forward, he will continue the important community policing work that has earned him respect over the years.
- The day after I made my decision concerning Police leadership, I appeared at each roll call of officers—6 am, 2pm, and 10pm—to remind them that we are all counting on them to continue their good work.
- Our police department handled more than 67,000 calls last year, and made over 3,000 arrests. Their work is critical to the progress of our community.
- I will listen closely to the concerns of the community as we work to make sure the police department gets good leadership and sound strategy going forward.



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- We must preserve the gains in trust between the community and police officers that were achieved in recent years, achievements that are in no way diminished by the change in leadership.
- We will come out of this process with a stronger, community-oriented, and more effectively managed police force than ever.

### **3. Code Enforcement**

- Safety and economic vitality in our neighborhoods depends on the enforcement of all the rules we agree to as a community, not just criminal but also municipal codes.
- Led by Catherine Toppel, our code enforcement department carries out difficult and often thankless work, focusing on the safety and suitability of our many structures and properties.
- Last year this department held over 1,000 hearings, they conducted over 20,000 environmental inspections, and cleared 44 abandoned vehicles.
- Since 2007, the department has now demolished over 500 abandoned homes.
- In May, we will open a new animal control shelter which will help reduce the euthanasia of healthy and adoptable pets. Council member Valerie Schey continues to provide leadership in this area, and I have committed to her that we will work together on a Mayor's Alliance to address euthanasia rates in our community.
- Lastly, I want to point out that the partnership between solid waste and code enforcement to manage an illegal dumping crew has resulted in the removal of over two million pounds of trash. I want to thank the



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city council for renewing funds for this important priority, and I am calling on citizens to report illegal dumping so that we can prevent this proactively as well as clean it up.

#### 4. Bldg

- Speaking of codes.... Often I am asked whether we can look at integrating functions of county and city government. One area where we already do this is our consolidated county-city building department, led by Chuck Bulot. This group works daily to ensure safety in our buildings, and is now initiating the use of a new, fairer and more efficient fee system for handling licensing and related needs.

#### 5. Parks and Morris

- Economic growth also depends on quality of life. When Parks and Recreation officials from around the state chose South Bend for their conference this year, I addressed them and I reminded them that they, too, are economic development professionals.
- Last year, our parks department brought hundreds of thousands of visitors to our zoo, our public golf courses, our stadium, our recreation centers, and special events like the Blues and Ribs Fest and Daddy-Daughter Dance.
- The parks department was even recognized as the Agency of Year by the Indiana Parks and Recreation Association, and Director Phil St. Clair has an ambitious plan to raise attendance by 5% for 2012.
- Already, with the nice weather, we have been seeing exceptionally high attendance at our golf courses and at Potawatomi Zoo.



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- Meanwhile, the Morris Civic auditorium was again recognized as a top 100 venue in the world by Pollstar magazine, selling 95,000 tickets last year for 74 performances.
- Director Dennis Andres has continued to proactively develop and market the Morris, while also ensuring that the spectacular Palais Royale continues to grow and draw business to heart of our city.

### 6. Public works

- And while the Morris enhances our quality of life with performances on-stage, our public works department makes us all better off from behind the scenes.
- Gary Gilot, widely regarded as one of America's best public works directors, continues to advise the city after retiring at the end of last year, while a new city engineer, Mike Mecham, joins us with years of experience in public works and engineering.
- When the city got an unexpected break in snowfall, workers didn't sit on their hands. They took advantage of the chance to do extra projects like supplemental street cleaning and an early start to the yard waste pickup program.
- Last year the department swept 11,873 lane miles of streets, picked up 65,000 cubic yards of leaves, and cleaned 600,000 linear feet of sewer.
- Our solid waste team collected 27,800 tons of waste, and partnered with the adopt-a-block program to clean over 100 blocks of major debris.
- The more I engage in government, the more I admire our quiet public servants in the Water Works and Waste Water departments. No one



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has ever called our office to celebrate the fact that their toilets are flushing properly or that their faucets put out clean, safe drinking water, but last year we provided and processed 5.7 billion gallons of it.

- One of the most innovative corners of city government is our excellent Energy Office, which exists in order to make our city government more sustainable—and more responsible with taxpayer dollars—by better managing our use of energy. By retrofitting the Parks Maintenance building, the King Center, the Charles Black gymnasium, and Fire Station 6, this office is already saving taxpayers tens of thousands of dollars in lighting bills, and they're just getting warmed up.
- Just before I took office, South Bend signed a consent decree with the Federal Government ordering the largest public works project in the history of our city.
- We are one of many Midwestern communities required to change our sewer system to prevent untreated sewage from backing up into our waterways during heavy rainfalls. It is important for citizens to understand that this change to our Combined Sewer Overflow system—the CSO for short—will be expensive.
- Over twenty years, we are required to make an estimated \$500 million in improvements so we can cut our discharges by 95 percent and comply with the Clean Water Act. We will need to use excellent engineering and financing methods to try to cushion the impact this will have on taxes, bonds, and, and water bills.

### **7. Admin and Finance**



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- While there have been new costs added to the city's burden, we have also identified new savings. Under the leadership of Controller Mark Neal, our city's administration and finance department has kept up excellent work in keeping our budget balanced.
- While some American cities are mired in excessive debt, South Bend has maintained a very good bond rating from S&P, Moody's, and Fitch.
- And we are taking advantage of lower interest rates to re-finance the debt we do have, much as you would re-finance a mortgage. Doing this has allowed us to save taxpayers \$2.95 million, and we will continue to look for more savings.
- In IT, the new phone system installed over the course of the winter will save taxpayers millions by using voice-over-IP technology.
- The Controller and HR office are also carrying the ball forward on the wellness program initiated under the prior administration, allowing city employees to share in the health care cost savings they create by paying a reduced insurance premium in exchange for participation.
- The Human Rights Commission, also overseen by the Controller, addressed over 100 discrimination complaints, and is gearing up to incorporate the addition of discrimination on the basis sexual orientation to their scope. With this bill, our city joined over 160 American cities to say that no hard-working, high-performing employee should work in fear of losing their job simply because of sexual orientation. The Commission will enforce this law with fairness and integrity.



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### 8. Legal

- Our legal department, under the leadership of interim City Attorney Aladean Derosé Smithburn continues to staff and advise the administration and various boards, and while they often work behind the scenes, every citizen should be grateful for the hard work these employees have put in, even while short-staffed.

### 9. Vacant and abandoned properties

- In February, I announced the formation of a Mayor's Task Force on Vacant and Abandoned Properties, to identify problems and break down barriers when it comes to finding solutions.
- Co-chaired by national expert Professor Jim Kelly from Notre Dame Law School, the task force will make sure we are correctly assessing and addressing the problem of vacant and abandoned properties.
- The task force is composed mainly of the city and county officials best positioned to deal with the problem, along with other key stakeholders, and while there will not be a report until this summer, it is already clear that cooperation between the city and the county will be absolutely vital.
- We will also rely on community participation, and the task force is coming soon to a neighborhood near you in order to listen to problems and solutions envisioned by neighbors when it comes to abandoned properties.

*These are just a few of the activities that our hard-working city employees have been undertaking to make this the best possible place to live, work, and play. But as I said*



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*earlier, we are only 102 days into the life of this administration, and much of the work still to come. I'd like to share a little more on the vision of where we are headed, what could come, and what it may take to get there.*

### **D. The vision**

#### **10. JOBS**

- The central theme of the last election, and a major focus for everything we do, is the fact that South Bend must grow economically in order to have the future we all want for our hometown.
- I mentioned some specific economic development projects, but something much bigger is at stake. Now is our chance to redesign the way this community handles economic development. With the sunset of Project Future and the assumption of its duties by the St. Joseph County Chamber of Commerce, we have a new and potentially better organization of economic development taking shape in our community.
- The Chamber of Commerce will increasingly take the lead on managing site selection and real estate deals and opportunities, and will continue in partnership with the city to work with existing businesses. Attracting new businesses is an important goal, but we have lots of work to do to ensure the employers we already have can thrive, grow, and create more jobs, and that's at the heart of our partnership with the Chamber.
- Last year, a joint City-Chamber initiative on business growth, funded by the city and staffed by the tireless Phil D'Amico, conducted 461 business visits in South Bend and resolved 115 different business issues to help



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employers stay and create more jobs in our city. That's the kind of public-private partnership we can build on.

- Meanwhile, a new organization, the Corporate Partnership for Economic Growth, is pulling together players from around a six-county region to coordinate opportunities to make our whole area more competitive.
- Inside city government, we have been re-imagining the future of our own Community and Economic Development department. On Day One, I promised to personally assume responsibility for decisions in this department while we undertook a complete strategic and structural review.
- My office has led a top-to-bottom process to assess how we do business in this important department, and emerged with a vision to move community and economic development forward in the most efficient and effective way possible.
- We're going to provide the department with a new, less bureaucratic structure that ensures that people's skills are matched to where they can have the most impact.
- We're going to use more of the tools available to us—not only tax incentives and real estate support, but targeted investments and workforce development so that ours is truly a globally competitive economic region.
- And whenever we do spend economic development dollars in the future, it will be guided by a concrete set of guidelines and a clear strategy. This includes laying out expectations on measurable targets such as the ratio of public to private dollars, expectations for jobs, and accountability and protections for taxpayers to ensure both sides live up to their commitments.



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- In June, I will convene an economic summit to communicate these changes, get key players under the same roof, and ensure that everyone understands the role they can play in our community's new economic direction.
- The strategic goal of all this groundwork is to ensure that anyone prepared to create jobs in our community, whether a startup, an existing business, or an outside investor, knows exactly who to call. We need to make it easier to get action and answers.
- One unmistakable theme through all our economic development work is the fundamental importance of both K-12 and postsecondary education, which brings me to the second pillar of this administration's vision:

### **11. EDUCATION**

- Education is critical, and just because we're not in charge of it, doesn't diminish our obligation to help. Partnerships will be vital here.
- I am regularly meeting with school superintendent Dr. Carole Schmidt and members of the School Board as we work to ensure that the city and the school corporation are partners in educating our kids.
- I have had opportunities to get into various classrooms in our primary, elementary, and high school buildings, and am always moved by the questions of students and by their interest in civic issues. (photos)
- Examples of how we can work together range from joint purchasing opportunities that ensure more school dollars actually make it into the classroom, to job-training partnerships to help find high-school graduates a place in the economy.



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- Part of my job is also to celebrate successes in the school system. Whether it's Adams High sending its national champion mock trial team to nationals once again, or Riley representing our community at the statewide Science Olympiad, we have much to be proud of in our public schools.
- We also must do more with post-secondary education in order to keep our local economy competitive and prepared for the jobs of the future. Local community colleges and vocational education centers must be in dialogue with our employers so we can have more demand-driven education, and I am working to convene discussions on how to do just that.
- Ivy Tech chancellor Dr. Tom Coley is ready to work with local employers to identify any gaps and overlaps when it comes to demand-driven training, and I have committed to work to facilitate these key conversations.
- Meanwhile, we have a golden moment to ensure our five universities and colleges are all strong partners going forward in the life of the city.
- I have met with leaders of Holy Cross, IUSB, Notre Dame, and soon will engage St. Mary's and Bethel College on working together in new ways.
- IU South Bend continues to grow, with a newly renovated student center, a major expansion of the Education and Arts building, and a very meaningful partnership I inherited with faculty member Dr. Kevin James at the Civil Rights Heritage Center.



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- Meanwhile, I feel confident in saying that the relationship between the city and the University of Notre Dame is at an all-time high.
- We recently celebrated the anniversary of the Robinson Community Learning Center, joining university and community together in projects that range from a Shakespeare program for inner-city youth to a computer club where I met one 90-year-old participant who loves being in the digital age. (images)
- The area around Notre Dame is poised for growth, and I welcome this progress as it continues to focus on a deep neighborhood partnership. But much depends on the city so that we can ensure this zone between city and university develops not as a buffer, but as a bridge.
- At a brisk walk, you can get from the door of the Century Center to the Five Guys by the campus of Notre Dame in less than half an hour. From the same spot, you could bike to IUSB in less than fifteen minutes. It's time to close the psychological distance between our city center and our campuses, and finding new ways to do that will inform our planning policy going forward.

### **12. SAFETY**

- I've spoken of economic development and education, and neither of these can be separated from the most fundamental priority of any government: safety.
- The central theme of this administration's approach to public safety will be accountability. By better using data to set targets and hold ourselves accountable to them, we can make better decisions and get



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better outcomes. With public safety now accounting for 80% of the general budget, we have to do better with the resources we are already spending.

- Downtown will see a more visible police presence, including a police substation in a storefront to make people feel safe, and bike patrols in the central area, and in our neighborhoods the “walk-with-a-cop” initiative will encourage officers to get out of their cars and get to know the residents they protect.
- While incidents of nonviolent crime like burglary and theft are down, I am very concerned by the number of violent incidents already this year, particularly since that many of them involve our youth.
- It is clear that we must adopt a comprehensive, community-wide youth violence prevention strategy, based on the following three principles:
  - i. First, we should learn from what other communities are doing. There are multiple models from around the country that we can draw on, and we don’t have to reinvent the wheel.
  - ii. Secondly, whatever we do must be true to our own community, and be designed with a maximum of community buy-in. Policy-makers, educators, religious leaders, law enforcement, parents, youth, and others must have a voice in the formation of this strategy.
  - iii. Third, whatever we do must be based on proven methods and held accountable to targets based on data. This is crucial, because recent research has shown that some youth programs, such as the “Scared Straight” program that sends young people



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into prisons, can actually increase crime. In this, as with every other area of government we have talked about, I will continue to make the case for us to use facts and evidence when we make decisions.

- No one has a magic wand for dealing with crime, but I know that we can make progress if we all pull together and adopt a shared strategy.

### **13. CONNECTEDNESS**

- The fourth of the five pillars of our campaign and our administration is connectedness. I want to lay out the importance of two kinds of connectedness—internal and external.
- First, internal connectedness. By this I mean connections within and between neighborhoods, families, employers, and groups in our community.
- So many people in this community are ready to volunteer and partner to make it stronger. City government cannot and should not orchestrate all volunteer activity, but we do have to help.
- In time, we will build a city-supported clearinghouse to help link willing volunteers with worthy causes.
- As a preview, let me show you just one small example of something that we could do with help from the community: this is what that desk in the County-City building could look like. I think we can all agree that that lobby could be more welcoming. There is no taxpayer funding available to make it look like this, but we can clean up and staff a desk



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like this with a modest amount of sponsorship and volunteer time, and my office is working to make it happen.

- I also want to stress the importance of mentorship. I'll have more to about it later this year, but let me just point out that one of the biggest differences anyone can make for our community is by helping to mentor a child in our school system.
- As time goes on I will continue to champion other important ways for citizens to help move our city forward. We can all make a difference, and volunteers are going to be crucial to our future success.
- Then, there is external connectedness, thinking of ourselves as part of a broader, interconnected whole.
- I have been working with partners from around our area to make sure South Bend is better tied in to the region and world. We have strong relationships with county officials, Mishawaka Mayor Dave Wood, and other nearby communities. The simple reality is that communities our size cannot compete alone.
- We are part of a global economy now. Let me name a few Chinese cities: Changchun, Zibo, Taiyuan, Shijiazhuang, Ningbo. These cities have three things in common. First, I had never heard of them before I sat down to research this speech. Secondly, they each have more than three million people. Third, none of them is even in the top twenty of Chinese cities by population.
- Like it or not, you and I are in the same economy as the minor Chinese city of Shijiazhuang and its ten million people. My point is that to compete in this global economy, a community like South Bend or



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Mishawaka or Osceola doesn't have a chance unless it can join forces with those around it. That is the point of regionalism.

- Regionalism key to building our reputation across the broader Midwest, around the country, and around the world. And Michiana has a good story to tell, by stressing what is most distinctive in our economy—those things we do better than anyone else in the world, from certain kinds of nanotech research to centers of excellence in fabricated metal products manufacturing.

### **14. CITY SERVICES**

- The fifth and final focus of the vision for our city, a theme I discussed over and over again in the campaign, is that we have to have highly efficient, transparent, cost-effective government services in order to stay competitive and provide a good quality of life.
- Setting the tone for this is why the very first thing I did in office was to introduce an ethics code for city employees. Some employees found this code a little strict, but we have all learned to work within these important guidelines to prevent even the appearance of conflicts of interest.
- We also need to increase transparency and accessibility. That's one reason we established a monthly meeting where our city department heads and I are available for Mayor's Night In and Mayor's Night Out. Any citizen can see me, one-on-one, with any issue on their minds, and we work together to find a solution.



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- I'm also using press opportunities, from regular appearances on local television and before editorial boards to the monthly "Ask Pete" column in the Tribune, to proactively connect with citizens on important matters.
- And new media such as Twitter and Facebook are providing a better way to stay abreast of citizen concerns and communicate our activities.
- Transparency is one of many issues where the Common Council has a crucial role to play. Council members are the officials closest to the concerns of citizens, and the city relies on a strong council in order to make progress.
- In order to ensure good communication, I have invested a great deal of time meeting council members, not just in formal settings but also one and two at a time. We have had our first shared session on the budget process and look forward to many more. My door is always open to Council members with any question, concern, or idea.
- Later this year, we aim to roll out a new 311 line for information and city services. The end goal is a one-stop-shop where citizens can get answers and have problems solved in real time.
- Not only does this make customer service more efficient, it also provides us with data we can use to make better management decisions. Emulating the "CitiStat" program used effectively in cities across the country, we will use real-time data as the basis for performance reviews—the same as any large business—to create more accountability and transparency and run the city more smoothly.



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- By the time this effort is complete, we'll have capabilities we never had before: detailed data on what issues citizens call most often about, how long it takes to address them, and how good a job we do. Without that data, we cannot be a great customer service organization. With it, we can and will make better management decisions and provide outstanding services to all our citizens and organizations.
- We are revamping the city's website, and later this year will deliver a new and improved look with a more user-friendly functionality and easy-to-find information.
- The overarching vision is for technology to make it easier for citizens to solve problems and easier for government to make good decisions.

### **E. Reflection on diversity and unity**

- Before closing, I'd like to take a moment to reflect on the questions of leadership, diversity and unity in our community.
- Not long ago, I faced an unpleasant choice, and the need, among unattractive alternatives, to discern the least bad option. I made the choice I felt was best for the city. I knew it would be difficult, that it would potentially be unpopular, and likely misunderstood. And because there were—and still are—serious confidentiality issues limiting what I could say about the matter, I knew that I would have to bite my tongue while opening the door to the potential for confusion and rumor.
- But it was clear, given the circumstances, what was the right thing to do.
- This situation illustrates what is perhaps the most important difference between being a candidate for office and being a bearer of executive responsibility. In my



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- role as mayor, I cannot please everyone. Ultimately, this administration, its leaders, and I, must be judged on whether the city was well-served by our choices. On whether South Bend becomes, on our watch, a better place in which to live, work, and raise a family. My commitment to you is that I will always make decisions with a view to this goal, whatever the consequences or appearances.
- Meanwhile, we have all had occasion to think about what it means to have an inclusive city government that reflects the richness and diversity of our community as a whole.
  - Our city has made great gains in inclusiveness in recent years, and I am committed to keeping this up. I am proud to have assembled a mayor's office staff that includes diversity of ethnicity, race, orientation, gender, and background.
  - Not just on my office team but in appointments to senior positions, boards and commissions, we value and seek diversity in age, background, perspective, religion, ethnicity, and gender.
  - Policy-wise, I stood up for diversity in what I considered to be an important way at the Council meeting a few weeks ago, and it was inspiring to see one citizen after another, young, old, black, white, gay, straight, clergy, teacher, veteran, come to the microphone and call for equal protection under the law by expanding our non-discrimination ordinance to ensure that no person will be fired simply over sexual orientation.
  - We are making strides with our Diversity Utilization Board, taking concrete steps to make it easier for women- and minority-owned businesses to play a major role in future economic growth and government contracting, as they did in the construction of this Kroc Center.



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- Yet despite all this effort, one thing that has become painfully clear to me is that many in this community still do not feel that they have an equal place at the table when it comes to enjoying the life of our city and steering the direction of our community.
- And let's face it, this isn't just people's feelings, it's in the data. Graduation rates, poverty rates, incarceration rates in our community, and personnel measures in our most important institutions, including government, show us that we do not live in a post-racial society.
- So how else can we move in the right direction? What will it take for us as a community to move closer to a reality we all believe in, one in which the opportunity and freedom to be a full participant in our society is not at all constrained by being in any minority?
- There is no easy answer, but it seems to me that the question of diversity is inseparable from the idea of unity. I believe we need to have a richer concept of what it means to be a united community. At my inauguration I implored the community to come together, because it is the only way we can survive. I'll repeat now what I said then: we know what we are up against, and it is not each other.
- Our diversity must become our strength, just as diversity has been the strength of our country. That we are a nation of many stripes has challenged us in many ways. But it also makes us who we are, and out of those challenges we have developed new ideas and a vibrancy that has made us the most innovative and creative country in the world.
- The same is true for South Bend, an extraordinarily diverse place. Our diversity is linked to many challenges, but it is a treasure and we have to see it that way.



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- Unity through diversity comes by way of a two-way street. We need diverse perspectives in government and in leadership. And we need to ensure that we reach out to different corners of our community.
- We do this not just to check boxes or to make ourselves feel better about ourselves, but because we have so much to learn from each other, so much to teach each other.
- It would be naïve to think that our community or any community can wipe away the differences between us or to think that by better understanding each other, disagreements will all melt away.
- But unity is not about everyone agreeing on every issue or every decision. No two people will ever agree on absolutely everything. Democracy itself rests on the wisdom of knowing that total sameness of thought is not possible, nor is it desirable.
- Unity through diversity, in my view, is about understanding our differences, learning from them, and remembering what is worth more to us than our individual agendas. It's about understanding where others in our community are coming from, and being willing to set aside personal and factional priorities in the service of a bigger vision of what we all could become, if and only if we all work together on getting there.
- For citizens, that can mean allowing one priority to wait while we all pull together on another one with wider impact.
- For elected leaders like me, it means placing the city's interest ahead of our own, ahead of pet projects, and ahead of the desire to be popular. It means seeing something bigger than one organization, one constituency, one district, one interest group.



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- And for all of us, we must recognize that as a community, we are in constant negotiation with each other. In any good negotiation, none of us walks out the door completely satisfied, but all of us walk out the door better off.
- For this to work, we need both trust and understanding. We must continue to trust each other, reach out to each other, to listen to each other, and to ensure that difficult trade-offs are made in good faith, with a greater good in mind. We must expect, and seek out, the best in one another, no matter the differences in background, situation, or opinion that come between us.
- Let us ask of ourselves and demand of each other—especially our leaders—that every action and statement be tested against this standard: will it help us make our diversity into a source of strength, or will it serve to divide us against one another?
- If we persist in seeking unity through diversity—in understanding that civic harmony comes not through the erasure of difference but through the unification of different interests into a greater purpose—then South Bend will truly be a model city for all.

### **F. Restatement and conclusion**

- Let me conclude by reiterating that the state of our city is hopeful. People believe in South Bend like I've never seen before, and everyone I talk to is prepared to do their part.
- The vision I've shared this evening—
  - i. a new economic direction driven by clear criteria for action and expectations for partnership



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- ii. new forms of support for our independent school system by marshaling city resources and convening power
  - iii. making public safety a priority and using data-driven accountability to make better decisions
  - iv. building our internal and external connectedness to survive in a global economy
  - v. and holding city government to a higher standard of transparency, efficiency, and cost-effectiveness
- --this isn't just one leader's vision. It's a shared vision, that can be delivered only with shared commitment.
  - This is a building year, with much groundwork and heavy lifting still to come. But we are off to a great start—a fresh start—and I believe 2012 will be remembered as a time of swift progress on the road to our great hometown's comeback.
  - Thank you and good night.