

2020 Budget Address

MAYOR JACOB FREY

City Hall – Council Chambers

August 15, 2019

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11 a.m.



[Call to Order and introduction by City Council Vice-President Andrea Jenkins]

Introductions & Acknowledgments

Thank you, Council Vice-President Jenkins. Your friendship, collaboration, and commitment to progress has meant a great deal to this city and to me. Thank you to our City Council Members for your input. Having met with each of you individually, your feedback was informative and constructive, and has helped shape this budget.

It’s good to be joined by leaders from across our city and region, including a City Hall alum, Congresswoman Ilhan Omar.

I want to thank leaders from across our departments, our finance team, and my staff for the long nights and major sweat equity they invested in making this budget happen. Your patience and persistence have been invaluable in building an exceptional budget for 2020 and developing important groundwork for years ahead.

We also received important input from community members earlier this year. Your voices were heard, and they are reflected.

And now it is my great honor to present to you the City of Minneapolis 2020 Recommended Budget.

And as a matter of housekeeping, here’s the same brief disclaimer I offered last year: There is a lot to unpack, and several exciting items didn’t make it into these remarks given time constraints. I will be more than happy to further discuss any item in the 2020 budget with you. My door is always open.



Structural Changes

Last year, we promised you a strong foundation for a stronger future in Minneapolis. We’ve made good on that commitment, but we must now put our city on the right course for the future – a course that accounts for a cyclical economy, political instability, a warming climate, and our shared values that drive each and every decision.

Cities throughout the world succumb to external pressures – and residents and neighborhoods rise and fall with the tide. Minneapolis can and should be different. We set a vision, we make tough decisions, and we don’t bend to pressures we can predict. We plan for them.

In this budget, we plan. We’ve made decisions resulting in a higher levy today that will help shield us from volatility tomorrow. As I’ve said before, cities are the laboratories of democracy – experimenting with

innovation and groundbreaking policy. When run properly, they're also reliable. We're the government that doesn't shut down. And we should plan so that we keep running, no matter what.

There are several deliberate decisions we've made in this vein. The projections we've made for revenue from construction permits are intentionally conservative. Last year we saw development in the city surpass \$1.8 billion. We have already hit a billion dollars this year, which staff tells me is the earliest we have reached that milestone. In other words, it looks like 2020 is shaping up to be another banner year.

But the cyclical nature of our economy says that those trends won't hold forever. An overly ambitious outlook could mean that beneficial programs get cut just when people need them most. Rather than take a political win now with a lower levy, we've been more conservative with our projections, more strategic with our allocations, and, therefore, can be more confident in our city's future.

Second, and you may not know this, our city has a contingency fund that serves as a backup plan in the most difficult and unexpected moments – an insurance against hard times. A city committed to enduring prosperity knows how to weather a storm – and understands that you don't wait for the rain to fall before you fix the roof. You plan ahead. For years, our contingency fund has been replenished on a one-time basis, which meant it was always competing against other, sexier items. Mayor Hodges began, and we've expedited and finished, the process of moving it into ongoing funding, and we're starting with an accelerated investment of \$1.6 million in 2020.

Third, the state-created consolidated Tax Increment Finance district – which has funded Neighborhood Associations and NCR for years – is expiring. This leaves a hole in the City's budget, a big one, of over \$7 million in 2021. It would have been easy to kick the can down the road. But I felt strongly that we could not leave our neighborhoods and an entire City department in limbo. Instead, we have laid out a plan to provide funding for this work and an opportunity for Council Members to make the best decisions for the future, freed from the looming question of whether any funding is available.

Finally, the fund that supports our housing inspectors – previously filled by fees from vacant and boarded properties – has dwindled. That's because the number of vacant and boarded properties has dwindled. The upside is we have fewer vacant and boarded properties. The downside is we can no longer pay our employees from that fund. Regulatory Services directors have been raising the alarm about this issue for years, and last year I took steps to bridge our gap while staff sought a permanent solution.

Our budget lays out a two-year plan to ensure that core city functions—like making sure people's housing is safe—are maintained even when times are lean. Big, structural changes help set us up for long-term success. Council Member Linea Palmisano has consistently put this philosophy into action, most recently in advocating for a two-year budget cycle. But a prosperous future *also* depends on inclusive policymaking and program development now. We've begun setting the stage.

Stable Homes Stable Schools

Based on budget recommendations last year, Stable Homes Stable Schools is already helping Minneapolis Public School students and families secure stable housing. Heading into the second year of the program's three-year pilot, I believe that Stable Homes, Stable Schools will be held up as a national blueprint for effectively breaking the cycle of generational poverty.

Since officially kicking off the program in April, we've provided housing stability to over 237 children; that includes securing housing for 22 families, and preventing homelessness for an additional 56 families. And 159 more children and their families are already enrolled in the program. That's a total of 125 families and 396

children in just a few short months, with numbers poised to grow substantially as students return to school in the next few weeks.

Those are a lot of great numbers – but this program isn't about numbers, it's about kids and their families. Before the social worker at Pillsbury Community referred Desiree and her family to Stable Homes Stable Schools, they had been homeless for 6 months, moving constantly from hotel to hotel. At one point, Desiree and her husband were forced to make the heart wrenching decision to split up their family – their 2 girls with Desiree and their 2 boys with Jorge – to find temporary places to stay. Now through Stable Homes Stable Schools, they are starting the school year in a stable home together.

We expected success. But we could not have anticipated this level of progress this quickly. We are housing families. And based on the clear data, this program is working, and it is working well. Thank you, Councilman Phillippe Cunningham, our in-house youth development expert, for backing Stable Homes every step of the way. The program is growing by leaps and bounds, and will hit full stride later this year. Thank you to Minneapolis Public Schools, the Minneapolis Public Housing Authority, Hennepin County, the Pohlada Family Foundation, the YMCA, the Minnesota Multi-Housing Association, our entire city council, and every one of our partners who are collaborating in a profound way to make Stable Homes Stable Schools a success.

Please give them a hand for their extraordinary work.

Our commitment to expanding access to affordable housing is unwavering.

Economic Inclusion

So too is our commitment to economic inclusion.

Economic inclusion is the implementation of specific solutions that undo the legacy of institutionalized exclusion of Black, Indigenous, People of Color, and immigrants and furthers the economic and social independence of these communities. In principle and in practice, this means that these communities are prioritized as the primary beneficiaries of, and key partners in our economic decisions. I want you to say it with me. Seriously. Please reach under your seats. No, you're not getting a car; it's even better. A piece of paper with a definition on it. Say it with me:

“Economic inclusion is the implementation of specific solutions that undo the legacy of institutionalized exclusion of Black, Indigenous, People of Color, and immigrants and furthers the economic and social independence of these communities.”

In principle and in practice, this means that these communities are prioritized as the primary beneficiaries of, and key partners in our economic decisions. Now that we've defined the term, let's define our work.

Cultural Districts

Cultural Districts represent an intentional strategy whereby people of color who have made – and continue to make – our city remarkable, can reap the benefits of development, investment, and improvements in their communities while staying in place. Chinatown in New York City; Hyde Park in Chicago; Miami's Little Haiti; Black Wall Street in Tulsa; and soon, due to Council Member Abdi Warsame's hard work, African Village will be right here in Minneapolis.

These are readily recognizable destinations, landmarks central to how we tell the story of our nation. In Minneapolis, we have an opportunity to lead. Through our Cultural Districts initiative, we will. Now, we're moving from promise to plan, and plans require specificity. Let me be specific.

When I talk about a remarkable community, here's what I believe it rests on: it rests on people with the economic security to forge their own path; entrepreneurs with the fiscal stability to take a great idea and scale it; a system that helps ensure people who have already made these communities great will benefit from their work. When I talk about a remarkable community, I'm talking about a phenomenon; a tangible feeling; a sense of place. The literal experience of knowing you're a part of something bigger than you.

I remember visiting my grandparents in Queens, New York City. They'd take me to Bagel Oasis to purchase – you guessed it – everything bagels. It wasn't just a transaction. It was an experience. An experience made rich by cultural heritage. Not just my Ashkenazi Jew heritage. In the same area you found culture – from Puerto Rican to Italian, Jamican to Ethiopian to Chinese – bursting from the sidewalk. But this wasn't just about having a new experience. The place was made special because a plethora of different communities had, for generations, created an ecosystem that both gave to the neighborhood and was duly supported by it.

Cultural Districts are intentionally designed to bolster the vision of Black, Indigenous, and Immigrant communities. Here's how we are going to do it.

In collaboration with Council Members Alondra Cano, Andrea Jenkins, Jeremiah Ellison, Abdi Warsame, and Kevin Reich, more than thirty community groups, dozens of subject matter experts, and city staff, we have identified several cultural districts. From West Broadway to Central, from Cedar Riverside to East Lake, to our oldest cultural districts along Franklin and 38th Street, these communities have long been catalysts for economic development and innovation. But that development has been systemically hamstrung and that innovation vanishes without fertile soil.

In our urban core, that fertile soil is the lighting, the streets, the buildings, and yes – our sense of safety. With our incredible Public Works Department, we're going to ensure that the soil in these districts is set with investments of \$550,000 for prioritized street sweeps, trash pickup, and improved lighting. Our \$350,000 investment in Meet Minneapolis, focusing on Cultural Districts, helps to shine a light on the cultural assets of the districts and drive customers to support the commercial vitality of each. On top of that, we're designating an additional \$200,000 for the Great Streets Facade Improvement Program. The focus will be on expanding the program to include interior improvements and address deferred maintenance in Cultural Districts.

It's hard to talk about culture without talking about art. Our \$200,000 Cultural Districts arts investments will support both emerging artists and the destinations. Finally, in cultivating our Cultural Districts, we will work to ensure that those with deep roots stay firmly planted in community.

Commercial Property Development Fund

It used to be the case that if you wanted to own a hardware store, you bought a hardware store. You owned the real estate. You owned the building. You owned the hammers, the nails, and all the other things you find in a hardware store. Stores were passed from generation to generation because the family owned them. That's how generational wealth is created.

We know that Black, Indigenous, and Immigrant People of Color were locked out of that exact opportunity. And still today, developers and businesses – especially those of color – continue to face extraordinary barriers in the financial system. Those barriers often leave even the hardest working entrepreneurs with a small but formidable gap between a great idea and turning the key to the building they own. That's why I'm working with Council Member Jeremiah Ellison to create the Minneapolis Commercial Property Development Fund.

Seeded with \$2.5 million, this revolving fund establishes a no interest loan that does not get repaid until the property is sold, and helps move more People of Color closer to truly owning their own buildings – and by extension, realizing their dreams.

Bail Reform

We're certainly not afraid to try new things in Minneapolis.

Our City Attorney pushed the state legislature to eliminate cash bail. Though the legislature didn't get it done this session, that's not where our efforts stop. Thanks to our new Hennepin County Sheriff, she had a partner to act locally. We are investing \$75,000 in an alternative to cash bail, an archaic and fundamentally unjust practice. Cash bail up-ends families and ruins livelihoods by cutting off an individual's ability to continue going to work, to pay rent, to be there for their families, even before they've had their day in court.

This is just a first step. But it's one that will be important in creating a more equitable Minneapolis.

Opioid Intervention

And just as the cycle of poverty ravages communities, so does the cycle of addiction. The opioid epidemic has left no corner of our city untouched. Our first responders, from firefighters to police to EMS, are increasingly strained as the first line of defense. And the impact has been felt acutely by our native community.

In the MPD's third precinct, home to Little Earth, there were 80 overdoses in 2015. Fast-forward to 2018 and that number has skyrocketed to 359 – a 348% increase in just three years.

Our communities deserve a strong response, and they deserve a local government committed to breaking the cycle of addiction. That is precisely what our multi-jurisdictional task force recommended earlier this year. And it is precisely why we are investing an additional \$400,000 in our City's response to the opioid crisis, including a new hospital-based intervention initiative. Through this new initiative, people suffering from addiction are supported; they are met by a social service provider at their most vulnerable place and time, at their hospital bed following an overdose. They are connected to resources, support systems, and addiction treatment. They are not treated as outcasts to society but as loved members of our community that deserve help.

We can't arrest our way out of this crisis. We need public health based and culturally-specific solutions.

Beyond Policing

Public health and public safety measures in this budget aren't limited to tackling the opioid crisis.

We are allocating additional funding for our Group Violence Intervention Initiative, our mental health co-responder program, the City Attorney's trauma-informed domestic violence and alternative to cash bail initiatives, our homeless and vulnerable populations outreach efforts, additional staff and gear for our fire department, investigative staff for both domestic and sexual assault crimes, and, yes, major funding for affordable housing and economic inclusion.

For those of you who say, we need public safety measures beyond policing, we agree – wholeheartedly - and we are putting our money where our mouth is. Our Public Safety Chair, Council Member Alondra Cano, knows how important it is that we develop a holistic safety agenda for our city. And she has been instrumental in helping us develop one. However, we can't afford to ignore the critical role our police officers must – and do – play towards ensuring our safety.

Our officers respond to 9-1-1 calls when we need them most. They are tasked with handling situations ranging from opioid overdoses to homicides. They run in when others run out. And they are charged with doing so compassionately, efficiently, and responsibly. And this past decade, they have been responsible for doing more with less. Our city has grown from 382,000 people in 2010 to about 430,000 today, while our number of sworn officers has remained stagnant. Again, population up, sworn officers stagnant. That's not a sustainable metric. There is no time to waste on false choices and binary options in addressing the causes of crime and violence in our city. We need safety beyond policing, but we still need police.

Community Policing

Some of the challenges we confront today are new. Some are well-tread throughout history.

The fall of 1992 is etched into the memory of many Minneapolis residents to this day. An MPD officer had just been shot and killed. And the city was still reeling from an officer-involved shooting just two years prior in North Minneapolis that resulted in the death of a black teenager. At the time, our city turned to a 25-year-old rookie with a memorable name to serve as a bridge, as a purveyor of hope between community and the department they count on in moments of need – in crisis. People turned to this young man with a badge and a uniform because they'd come to trust him.

That young man was officer Medaria Arradondo.

When Chief Arradondo made the request to add neighborhood outreach officers, he told me about his own experience. About how he began his career with the MPD, walking Golden Valley Road on the Northside. And how he's come to understand community policing. He considered it an abject failure if a squad car responded to his beat. Why? Because that was his community. It was his responsibility to prevent the need for squads to come out by bringing community in.

Today, flashing lights are the only police response much of our city knows. Because of diminished numbers, it's the only one we presently allow for. Instead of building those relationships or investing their time in community, our officers are pulled from 9-1-1 call to 9-1-1 call. And, as the data shows, even there we are too often falling short due to lack of personnel. If we aren't going to step up and make transformational change now – with this chief – then when? With what Chief?

I stand with Chief Arradondo, and I'll offer him more than comforting words in supporting his vision for strengthening police-community relations. He has made clear that enhancement of police-community relations cannot happen without giving officers the time to walk a beat and engage with community. My 2020 budget includes a recommendation for eight neighborhood outreach officers, so more of our new cops come to understand community-policing as Chief Arradondo does.

We've added traffic enforcement, a good idea championed by Council Member Andrew Johnson, in keeping with our Vision Zero initiative. Finally, we're adding investigators to the sex crimes and domestic violence units so that our department can be more responsive to the needs of survivors.

Affordable Housing Agenda

Matthew Desmond, in his landmark work *Evicted*, rightfully identifies safe, secure housing at the heart of keeping that public peace. Last year we invested a record \$40 million in city funding alone. And the support has seeded good work.

In the 2019 funding round, we received an all-time high in strong applications to the Affordable Housing Trust Fund for new affordable housing development. And thanks to last year's record amount of funding, this Fall we will be meeting a record amount of that demand with new units. Supported strongly by Council President Lisa Bender, we invested heavily in the acquisition of naturally occurring affordable housing last year and recently that investment paid off. Aeon, an affordable housing non-profit, secured 209 units in Whittier, Lyndale, and Logan Park. Those units will now remain affordable long-term, helping to prevent resident displacement.

We also invested in Minneapolis Homes, leveraging City owned lots, especially on the Northside, as key resources in our push to create more affordable home ownership. The large investment in the Minneapolis Homes program has meant that the total number of units produced and financed are on track to double in 2019, with 90 units approved compared to 40 in previous years. And Minneapolis Homes' rate of service to households of color is over 70 percent. This year, we are also injecting another \$31 million of city money into our affordable housing budget. And we are maintaining our commitment to capture and dedicate as many State and Federal resources for affordable housing as possible. And we've been successful.

Taking into account our allocation of affordable housing resources beyond our general fund, we are on track for an annual investment of over \$130 million in affordable housing in Minneapolis. Dollar-for-dollar, no administration in any Minnesota municipality has demonstrated a deeper commitment to affordable housing. We've heard loud and clear the need for a sustainable source of funding for affordable housing. While we'll continue to call for support from other jurisdictions, I'm proud to announce Minneapolis will be taking the lead in starting that sustainable source.

We're moving forward with a new eight-year framework with a \$52 million baseline and increasing the level of ongoing funding. This plan not only ensures the continued production of the affordable housing we so desperately need – especially at deeply affordable levels – it provides certainty for our development and non-profit partners and sends a clear message: we are in this for the long haul. I don't want this point to be lost. That eight-year framework and increase in ongoing funding are only the floor. We can and we will go well beyond this initial plan as we continue prioritizing additional one-time resources.

Public Service Center

Speaking of floors, we're investing in 10 of them – along with the future of our enterprise – through the new Public Service Center.

The City of Minneapolis is home to approximately 4,000 exceptional city employees. In many cases, they could make more money working in the private sector. But they enter work every day with a hop in their step because they care deeply about Minneapolis, and they want to make it a better place. They won't stick around if their working conditions are poor, and if we can't retain them, the whole city will suffer.

Thanks to years of hard work and careful planning guided by Council Member Lisa Goodman – who has built a legacy of significant projects – we have invested in our new Public Service Center. By extension, we're investing in our City's human capital. Kitty corner to City Hall, this building will help consolidate employees that were previously spread throughout downtown and enhance inter-departmental collaboration. And importantly, the new Public Service Center will be customer oriented, making it easier to navigate our systems and services with a one-stop-shop front desk. Not to mention, the long-term cost is cheaper than continuously renting the buildings we presently occupy.

As Chamber of Commerce President Jonathan Weinhagen told me, businesses make long-term investments to retain and recruit exceptional employees all the time. The City of Minneapolis shouldn't be any different.

The Public Service Center will be opening next year.

Minneapolis Black Business Week, Workforce

While we continue working to prioritize the efficacy and efficiency of city government, we're maintaining a focus on business ownership and our private sector partners.

Look no further than our first annual Minneapolis Black Business Week.

Thanks to the incredible partnership of West Broadway Business and Area Coalition, the Northside Job Creation Team, and many others, we engaged with and highlighted the work of over 800 Black-owned businesses, including nearly 300 Black women makers and innovators, and connected over 200 entrepreneurs to city contracting opportunities.

Our Civil Rights Department is tasked with monitoring 407 projects with a combined value of \$1.2 billion. By adding a new full-time Contract Compliance Officer, we're proactively implementing our inclusive goals. Thanks to the leadership of Council Vice President Andrea Jenkins, those goals have been set in city policy. She worked alongside our City Coordinator's office and Division of Race Equity to pass our very first Racial Equity Action plan, which includes a 30 percent goal for inclusive contracting.

MSP TechHire

From development to hiring, the companies that call Minneapolis home are critical to our success. And one industry in the private sector that we're targeting in a big way is technology. Since 2015, the City of Minneapolis has invested more than \$2 million in scholarships to support low-income Minneapolis residents who want to enter tech careers through MSP TechHire. Our partners and employers from across Minneapolis are increasing the talent pool for our businesses.

More than 1,300 people who participated in accelerated TechHire training are now working with over 500 tech employers. On average, they've seen a wage increase of \$16,000, annually. In a tech industry that is woefully unrepresentative of our communities nationally, TechHire graduates are 30 percent people of color and 40 percent women. In 2020, we are investing an additional \$250,000 in MSP TechHire to build on this progress.

Sustainability

And if we're concerned about our economic future, we'd better be concerned with the future of our planet.

Local governments across the country are wrestling with the unfolding impacts of climate change and moving with a renewed sense of urgency to step up and address the climate crisis, a defining social justice issue of our time. Some are content with being on the cutting edge of the fight to curb climate change. In Minneapolis, we are working to set the curve.

We are continuing to invest in our climate work with another \$260,000 in ongoing funding added this year, bringing our ongoing investments in sustainability to over \$3 million. The new investment will be put toward expanding our 4d affordable housing preservation program – which includes resources for sustainability upgrades – further cementing our conviction that affordable housing and climate policy are linked.

We'll also be doubling down on enforcing our nationally-recognized benchmarking ordinances aimed at maximizing energy efficiency in buildings across our city. And those laws have gained that national attention thanks to the excellent work of Council Members Jeremy Schroeder and Cam Gordon.

Beyond our buildings, we know the fight to curb climate change is very much playing out on our streets. So, we're taking steps to both reduce greenhouse gas emissions and congestion with funding for mobility hubs. In mobility hubs, new ways to get around, like electric vehicles and bike-sharing, literally meet the traditional forms of mass transit like buses and trains.

By making these alternatives more readily available throughout Minneapolis, we'll do right by the environment while making it more convenient for our residents to get around.

We're looking out for pedestrians, too. Navigating the sidewalks during snowy months in Minneapolis can be difficult, especially for those with disabilities and our seniors. Intersections often form the point of most significant hardship. And so, with support from Council Member Steve Fletcher, we are accelerating corner clearance, and providing greater mobility year-round for everyone.

VFC

Throughout the first two years of this administration, we've built important partnerships across our city and across sectors. Last year we invested half a million dollars in Village Financial Cooperative, the only Black-owned credit union and community development financial institution in the State of Minnesota. Since then, the Village Team has been kicking butt and taking names. Seriously, they're taking a lot of names. They've signed up over 1,900 names for deposit and established themselves as a budding, community-oriented financial option with over \$5 million pledged. Let's keep that momentum going. I'm honored to announce that we will be investing half a million dollars in the continued development of a transformational entity.

And we hope that others match and exceed our investment.

This model can and should be replicated. Just ask Council Member Kevin Reich, our foremost leader in cooperatives. He's called for the implementation of cooperative ideals, and we are delivering through our new Cultural Districts Co-op and Employee Owner Opportunity Fund. Want to start and grow a cooperative but don't know how? No problem. We will now guide you through the process, and in Cultural Districts, we'll provide matching funds to see the cooperative to fruition.

Elections

Minneapolis is known for many things. We're known for our park system, Prince and First Avenue, and all things purple. We're also known for voting in droves. But exercising your right to vote isn't limited to showing up at a polling place on Election Day.

Early voting is helping drive our status as the top vote-delivering city in big ways. With a new, \$4 million investment and the leadership of our City Clerk, we can provide even more people in Minneapolis an opportunity to cast their ballot. We're setting out to establish three, seven-day early voting centers in North and South and at the University of Minnesota, along with the staff needed to support those locations. Next year's vote will be a historic one, and again, we are working to maximize turnout in our city.

Parks

Some institutions tell our city's story better than any individual can. Our world-class park system is one such institution. The independent nature of our Park Board has paid dividends, and the investments we've made have stood the test of time. In fact, my favorite park bench in the city, located in Chute Square, is a really old one. It bears the insignia WPA for the Works Progress Administration from the Roosevelt era. Today that bench is where Sarah and I eat lunch on the weekend. This is our simple pleasure – a simple pleasure this particular bench has afforded to Minneapolis residents since 1942.

But parks elicit more than just simple pleasures. They've supported the health, equity, and vitality of our city; they support youth development; and they are certainly deserving of our ongoing support. And yes, we made that commitment as part of the 20-year Parks and Streets funding plan. By committing an additional \$11 million on an annual basis, we've helped ensure our parks can fund necessary upkeep and capital needs. Keeping our crown jewel also requires that we go even further, and we are.

On top of last year's \$950,000 increase, this year we are increasing the Park Budget even more, to the tune of \$1.23 million. Strong commitments in our city's earliest days and throughout the 20th century have helped make Minneapolis what it is today. By keeping that tradition alive, more couples and families will enjoy clean, safe parks – and park benches – for decades to come.

Levy

After months of running and re-running numbers, meeting with department leadership, Council Members, stakeholders and community members; after building out innovative funding plans for fueling inclusive economic growth, expanding access to affordable housing, and improving police-community relations; it seems a shame to boil it all down to a single number. But the levy has real impacts on the people of Minneapolis. And we have an obligation to residents – a fiduciary duty – to spend their tax dollars wisely and efficiently.

We started the year with a projected base levy increase of 7.0%; that was just to honor ongoing commitments and maintain current service levels. Through hard work and harder decisions, we are now at a 6.95% levy. As I mentioned in the opening, this is a levy that sets the stage for what's next and doesn't shy away from doing the right thing now, even when it is tough.

Conclusion

In Minneapolis, we must be united. We are bound by a shared duty to our city, to one another, to advancing progress here, no matter what the world may throw our way.

Robert Kennedy, who decades ago boldly confronted many of the challenges we still face today, eloquently summed up an attitude built right into how Minneapolis does business—

“Let no one be discouraged by the belief there is nothing one person can do against the enormous array of the world's misery, ignorance, and violence. Few will have the greatness to bend history, but each of us can work to change a small portion of events. And in the total of all those acts will be written the history of a generation.”

Let the totality of our acts, of the events we change, be the making of a truly inclusive Minneapolis. Let that be the history of our generation.

Thank you.