

## **STATE OF THE CITY 2024- A BETTER TOMORROW**

**Mayor Michael Dylan Brennan – April 11, 2024**

Fellow residents, elected officials, honored guests. Welcome to the 2024 State of the City Address.

For a lifetime I have fought for justice, for equity, for fairness, in the courtroom, in the board room, in the classroom.

Seven years ago, I ran on a platform of progress and cooperation, with ambitious goals, that together we would reach new heights.

Tonight, I look back on the great things we have done together, the goals that remain, and the course we are charting, for “A Better Tomorrow.” Yes, like the revised Superman motto, “Truth, Justice, and A Better Tomorrow.”

First, I’d like to talk about this past week.

Since Sunday, I have taken part in two transcendent experiences.

I joined 2,500 friends and neighbors at Walter Stinson Community Park to experience the total eclipse of the sun. I knew what a total eclipse would look like from photos and animations. But to actually see it with my own eyes, and while surrounded by loved ones. I understand now why some people chase eclipses.

I have never felt closer to G-d than through nature. Usually I have to go into the woods, or into the mountains, or out on the water, to feel that closeness. This week I felt that for the first time right here at The Walt. Which makes this more than an astronomical experience for me. University Heights will not see another total eclipse until the year 2444, exemplifying how awesome this was.

The people at The Walt, they felt something too, and they shared it with me. They appreciated the event, the protective eyewear delivered to every household in the City. And of course, it didn't happen without our team at City Hall who took to the streets to make that happen.

Now I said there were two transcendent experiences.

On Sunday I attended a Torah Parade – the Hachnasas Sefer Torah – for the Aleksander Shul.

I am not equipped to deliver a theological lecture about the event.

I can tell you how it made me feel.

In the parade I danced with one of our eldest residents, Wolf Safrin, who is 97 years old. With everyone, we danced, we shook hands, we spoke in terms of community, and how grateful we were to celebrate together, how appreciative we are of each other. And finally, walking along side the canopy under which the Torah was carried, I spoke with Rabbi Shnior Denciger. We shook hands, and held hands. He thanked me for being there. And I thanked him for inviting me, I told him, today, is a great day for the Aleksanders and for our City.

For you see, reconciliation can happen among people who have argued. Even sharply. People of good faith and good character and integrity can come together, to heal, to be at peace.

Finding the path forward to lead under trying circumstances is central to working towards A Better Tomorrow.

There are many keys to a better tomorrow. I start with this proposition:

It is the legitimate role of government to do for people that which they cannot do for themselves, or do as well for themselves as could be better done – together – through the government.

There is nowhere where this is more apparent than in local government, where our role is to deliver services that further the health, safety, and welfare of the community.

The responsibilities are broad, with police and fire and sanitation as obvious responsibilities, but there is more, and I start with...

Economic development, under the leadership of Director Susan Drucker.

It was a campaign promise I made in 2017 to start the city's first economic development department. It has paid off for the City, especially with the great news about University Square.

As we announced just three weeks ago, Target and Macy's, together with the current shopping center ownership, the proposed new ownership, and the City, came to terms for the sale of University Square so that the new owners may proceed with our 2019 plan for redevelopment. The bankruptcy court approved the sale last month, with closing to occur in 90 days.

Two nights ago, Cuyahoga County Council approved the \$500,000 in ARPA money the City is contributing towards the parking garage to make this redevelopment deal possible.

By securing and committing this \$500,000.00 in ARPA funds, and by agreeing to take title to the Garage through a CIC, University Heights accomplishes the following:

- The ageing, blighted Garage will be brought into and kept in a state of code compliance;
- A Reserve Fund of \$1.5 Million Dollars will be built up over ten years (including \$500,000 from the City and \$1 Million in aggregate from the Developer and Target);
- Contractual capital repair contribution obligations from Target and the Developer will be created;
- Increased common area maintenance responsibilities and contributions for common areas on the site, including the Garage, will result, which should prevent the degree of decay and lack of care we have all seen in recent years;

All of creates the space to allow the following to finally proceed:

- The vacant and blighted Retail Parcel will be re-developed into apartments and first floor retail space, creating an increase in City population and adding to the City's tax base;
- Vacant since 2006, the former Top's space will be occupied by a tax producing family entertainment business;
- The former Applebee's space will likely be occupied by a restaurant, to be announced, and restrictions Applebee's previously negotiated regarding other restaurants at the site are no longer in effect;
- The tax and assessment delinquencies on the Core Retail and Outparcel will be eliminated;
- The possibility of future development of the Outparcel will exist;
- An open area will be created in between the center's buildings to provide for a more walkable site;
- Future control for the City over development of the site based upon the City's ownership of the Garage will result.

Look. Perseverance and teamwork got this deal done. It doesn't happen without that. As the old sayings go, "politics is the art of the possible," and "politics is about relationships". None of this happens without the relationships we have cultivated together: our team at City Hall, our partners in county government and the school district, and our city council.

Of course, I must thank Brad Kowit and Gregg Levy, the developers who will create the new University Square, and breathe new life into this development. I know how much they believe in the project.

This project was frustrated by the pandemic, and using ARPA funds to ameliorate the pandemic effects that stalled out this redevelopment project is exactly what President Joe Biden had in mind when creating ARPA and all the other infrastructure programs to move our country forward out of the COVID economy towards A Better Tomorrow.

Most of all I want to thank the residents for their patience, and for always believing in what we were doing. Of all the reasons why I ran for this office, it is the one that has been the most elusive, most difficult to achieve. And the one that may now be the sweetest.

What if we had not done this?

The alternative was to have the property languish, until the eventually condemnation of the garage as unsafe and the closure of Target and Macy's for want of the garage. The entire center would go dark and then have remained in a blighted condition for an undetermined and extended period of time.

Working together, we avoid that fate. University Square. Will. Be. Redeveloped! For a Better Tomorrow.

But that's not all.

Two mayors ago, in 2008, the KFC at 2115 South Taylor Road closed, and the building was left vacant and allowed to crumble.

When I took office, my administration put pressure on the ownership. Because the site was once a gas station, we got Exxon and the Ohio EPA involved. We got the site cleaned up and cleared for reuse. And through citations and threatened court action, we made the building owners bring the building up to code and make it suitable for a new business.

Just last week, after 16 years of vacancy, a restaurant has reopened in that space. Lefty's Cheesesteaks, with 19 locations in Michigan, 2 in Florida, and now their

first in Ohio, here in University Heights. Lefty's bought the building, and made it their flagship Ohio store, as they plan to expand across the Buckeye State.

This didn't happen without our constant pressure on the previous property owners to make this site attractive and ready for reuse.

We brought similar pressure and enforcement at 13485 Cedar Road, that 9 or 10 years ago was the Cedar Taylor Garage and Auto Body. It is now under reconstruction to be the new home of Pizza BOGO. Another welcome addition to University Heights – new businesses for the City where once there were vacant buildings.

I turn now to John Carroll University, our city's namesake and largest economic driver. Under the leadership of President Al Miciak, the University is preparing for the future.

The new Athletic Wellness and Event Center is under construction, and soon JCU's championship track and field team won't have to travel to the SPIRE in Geneva to practice, and will be able to host its own meets.

JCU has redeveloped its library, its residence halls, and is moving all students into university-owned housing all four years effective with the current freshman class. Eventually, the South Gateway project at the site of the former BP at Fairmount Circle should provide the mixed-use development that JCU's senior students will covet. Till then, the Fairmount Circle apartments in University Heights will have a year to year license for student housing. A bridge solution, yes, and we will continue to work with JCU to help it make the best decisions for town and gown.

And just announced, JCU has just made permanent Dr. Melissa Cole, who last year was named interim dean of the new College of Health. JCU is working hard to secure A Better Tomorrow.

The end of student rental housing on Warrensville Center Road segues us into the next City project, the municipal zoning code update. We are just weeks away from the first drafts of a new zoning code. We have already had a public presentation envisioning the new Warrensville Center Road rezoned as high density residential with high density mixed use on the corners, from Fairmount Circle all the way to Silsby Road. We have an opportunity to make a walkable district that integrates in scale with the existing neighborhoods. We have an opportunity to create missing middle housing, townhomes and condos and apartments, with the small shops that we all yearn for. As we program the redo of Warrensville Center Road with traffic calming elements to encourage biking and walking and not just motor traffic, we're taking a page from the Strong Towns movement. It's an opportunity for the downtown our City never had. It all makes for A Better Tomorrow.

The Housing and Community Development Department, like Economic Development, was also created under my administration. We separated functions from the Building Department, and then enhanced both departments.

Under the leadership of Director Geoff Englebrecht, the Department continued the pursuit of regional collaboration between University Heights, Cleveland Heights, and South Euclid. We were awarded over \$395,000.00 for the Taylor Road Project- Phase 1, funded through a TLCI Grant through NOACA (our regional Metropolitan Planning Organization).

Phase 1 will reconfigure Taylor Road from Euclid Heights Blvd. to the north on through Cedarbrook Rd. to the south, and will have a visual impact on the



Cedar/Taylor intersection. The intersection will see curb bump outs at all four corners allowing for shorter crossing times for pedestrians along with the addition of bicycle lanes throughout.

The project continues the City's leadership in sustainability efforts within the region and our collaboration with Cleveland Heights and South Euclid, with the Heights Regional Neighborhood Greenway Phase 1, already underway, which has had two meetings already to develop the Heights Regional Active Transportation Plan, formerly known as the "Bike Boulevards," to create the wayfinding for bicyclists to better travel around our cities.

Coming up, we will be programming the NOACA supported plan for the Washington Boulevard multipurpose trail to connect Walter Stinson Community Park with Cain Park in Cleveland Heights. All these community development and infrastructure improvements are preparing our City for A Better Tomorrow.

This department is also the home of the City's growing Juneteenth Celebration.

The City's 2nd Annual Juneteenth Celebration was the largest event held at Walter Stinson Community Park, hosting over 4,000 people from within University Heights and throughout the region. It was a wildly successful, family friendly event for all freedom loving residents – and we're looking to top it this year.

Dollar Bank is already committed as the Exclusive sponsor at the Presenting Sponsor Level, and has contributed \$10,000 towards this year's celebration.

Among residents surveyed, Juneteenth and Fall Fest, the two community festivals started under my administration, rank higher with residents surveyed than even our much beloved Memorial Day Parade.

Now, for the housing programs. The Exterior Maintenance Program Grant is available to homeowners seeking assistance in addressing exterior violations at their home.

The Heritage Home Program by Cleveland Restoration Society provides no cost technical assistance to homeowners whose homes are over 50 years old, as well as low interest loan products for projects.

If there are any questions in regards to these programs or the Point of Sale, Rental, or Exterior Maintenance Inspections programs, please do not hesitate to call or walk-in and speak with Director Englebrecht or any member of his team.

You see, we have stepped up code enforcement. Not just at the commercial properties, including commercial apartment buildings now, but also 1 and 2 family residential properties. This is not always popular. We all love living on well kept streets with well kept houses. None of us likes getting a violation notice.

In 2023, 78 of the 100 new housing cases brought in Shaker Heights Municipal Court were brought by University Heights. 58 of those cases were resolved, because in the end, we want to work with our property owners.

This is personal to me. As a kid growing up on the south side of Youngstown, I watched neighborhoods fall down around me, through poverty, neglect of property owners, and inaction of government. I refuse to let that happen here.

As we redo our zoning code, we must address Missing Middle housing, as well as single level living so residents may better age in place.

We must take on locally the public policy challenge facing this country that housing in the United States has gotten too expensive. It is less pronounced in Ohio than it is on the coasts, but we are seeing it here now. We are seeing it in large corporate landlords buying up single family homes and outbidding people who would have bought those homes to live in themselves. We are seeing it in skyrocketing housing prices. We all want our houses to appreciate as investments, yes. But we are reaching a point in University Heights where housing prices are growing out of reach.

As we update our zoning, we need to leverage our density while diversifying our housing options. We need to consider Accessory Dwelling Units – so-called “granny-pods” or tiny homes or housing over our garages.

We need to consider mandating a set aside of affordable homes and units with our new developments – while allowing that same housing to appreciate so the purchasers can have the same opportunities to generate wealth as we and our parents did.

This is how we grow when we are landlocked, and provide housing options for the same residents we have long pursued and obtained: first time home buyers, young families, educators and professionals, and empty nesters and retirees.

I turn now to the service department, under the leadership of Director Allen Pennington. While Allen would like me to tell you how we improved leaf collection

last year (we did), and saved a lot of money on our leaf composting (we did), the real news is the modernization underway of our city recycling program.

About three weeks ago I signed the ordinance that will modernize our recycling program as I have advocated for since 2020. The vote was 7-0. Thank you, City Council.

This year we will end the use of blue plastic bags for recyclables. We will issue a wheeled cart to every household that requests one. We are obtaining an automated truck for curbside recycling collection.

We will assist qualifying residents who seek assistance getting their cart to the curb. We will develop an education program for the new way to recycle in University Heights. We will increase our recycling volume and reduce our use of landfills. When Cleveland Heights implemented curbside recycling in 2022, it increased its recycling by 70 percent.

This is an opt-in program. Residents will not get a cart automatically. You must request one. There is no charge for this cart. You may request your cart on the city website. Anyone completing their request before May 31 will be among the first to get their carts.

From our studies, we know that while three quarters of our residents agree that recycling is important, only a third of our residents actually participate in the present outdated program. This new program is one that our residents can rely on to actually recycle our recyclables, increase the number of eligible items, and control costs associated with landfilling.

Maybe the best news is once you have your cart, you will never have to buy or use a blue plastic bag again. The eco-violent practice of picking up recyclables using a single use plastic bag that gets thrown away will soon be over in University Heights.

It is a victory for the planet, for sustainability, for common sense, and for the residents of University Heights.

As of this morning at 10:30 a.m., we had a total of 828 households opt in to the recycling program.

671 – Requested the recommended 95 gallon cart, or 81%

157 – Requested a compact 48-gallon cart, or 19%

The larger cart is recommended because cardboard will fit better. Also, if you have a big party at your house, or a lot of deliveries for the holidays, the larger cart will accommodate your biggest recycling loads, while smaller carts might not.

Nearly 20% of our households have already signed up for a cart, based upon news reports, the city e-news, and word of mouth. We anticipate a lot more as our communications plan shifts into high gear, once the postcards and fliers go out, once the cart story runs in Mosaic Magazine, and as people see the sample carts at City events.

In the long view, we should work towards curbside pick up of organics. What we are doing with Rust Belt Riders and drop-off composting is the beginning of what is possible. In this country there is a transformative big lift possible, where we can stop wasting organics and nutrients in landfills, compost it all, and use it to keep the soil rich to grow more nutritious food.

I turn now to our safety forces, Fire and Police, under the leadership of Chief Robert Perko III and Chief Dustin Rogers, respectively.

In 2023 the fire department hired 2 new members, following 2 retirements, obtained \$90k in grant funding for technical rescue training, and obtained \$200k in grant funding for firefighter wellness programming.

When I took over as mayor, our fire department was deprived of training as a misguided austerity measure. Last year, the department conducted a total of 10,000 hours in training consisting of hands-on, regional, and virtual in Firefighting, EMS, Fire Safety, Development, and Incident Management.

Meanwhile, in the Police Department, we have implemented a Lateral Entry Hiring Process to help staff up. Hiring enough police officers is a problem everywhere. UHPD was carrying over multiple vacancies in the uniform bureau, and we are now nearly fully staffed. Like Fire, Police has implemented wellness programming, as the mental and physical health of our safety forces is absolutely imperative. And we obtained a Body Worn Camera Award to replace worn out and outdated body cameras. For your protection, all of our police officers wear body cameras on the job in University Heights.

I mention both departments together tonight, because we have a major new initiative together. University Heights is poised to join the Heights-Hillcrest cities of Shaker Heights, Cleveland Heights, South Euclid and Richmond Heights, in the expanded pilot for mental health response. With grant funding and County Executive Ronayne's support, we will soon be able to dispatch a mental health worker in select situations. This is a major advancement in public safety and public health for our city. We have already budgeted for this program in 2024, and the

law departments of the several cities are working on the documents to bring to our respective city councils to formalize the arrangement.

Executive Assistant to the Mayor on Special Projects Deanna Bremer Fisher has covered a lot of ground this year. New phone system at City offices. New front desk receptionist answering the phones and greeting visitors. New managed IT services to keep the tech running smoothly.

The return of Senior Services is underway – at the last state of the city, I said we would seek the restoration of the Senior Services Coordinator position, and this year we got it. The position will be posted this month, and once filled, we will resume senior programming for the first time since the pandemic.

As we restore senior services, we will convene our City’s first Committee on Aging.

On special projects Deanna leads our sustainability initiatives, and with that, the Citizens Advisory Committee on Sustainability. In working with Power a Clean Future Ohio to analyze our carbon footprint, we observed together that the biggest change we can make is in the aggregate, as homeowners, when we make improvements to our homes that reduce our carbon footprint as a household.

Towards that end: the City will hold its first Sustainable Home Fair, to be held later this month, April 21, from 1 to 4 pm at the former Wiley Middle School.

It is also through this committee that we are exploring reforms and improvements to our tree program (this, even as University Heights has just received Tree City USA recognition for the 46<sup>th</sup> consecutive year), as well as discouraging the use of gasoline powered yard equipment, a source of both air and noise pollution.

The committee is helping advise on our Arbor Day celebration on April 25 at Gesu, and our Bike with a Mayor event on June 9<sup>th</sup> which will include a tour of some of our residential solar installations.

Finally, it is through our Sustainability Committee that we will originate the City's first Climate Action Plan – like a master plan or strategic plan, except focused on climate, sustainability and resiliency, setting forth priorities that should carry forward through and beyond my administration.

This important work is being done working with this citizens advisory committee, because this is where we have found residents who are reliable partners and collaborators to help us do the work towards a sustainable future for this city and community. And in doing so, we are building the next generation of leaders for this city. The people who will lead in A Better Tomorrow.

Working with Deanna to hype these special projects is our Communications and Civic Engagement Director, Director Mike Cook.

Mike and Deanna are working together on Fall Fest. This year's event will be earlier in the season, so I'm optimistic we'll have great weather – eclipse level great weather. Our fifth annual Fall Fest will take place on Sunday, September 29 from noon to 5 p.m.

On the bill for entertainment is a country and honky tonk band from Akron, The Shootouts, and local legends Yiddishe Cup. Additional entertainment will be announced soon. As is now our tradition, we'll have food trucks, family entertainment, plus over 100 artists and vendors.



Speaking of tradition, for the last several years we've used the State of the City address to announce the Summer Concert Series schedule. So, I'm going to take a breath for 90 seconds while you enjoy this year's announcement video. Let's roll!

[video plays]

[ad lib something re the video]

Also, this past year, Communications and Civic Engagement working together with Special Projects, brought us the new online help desk, the website redo, and as of now, the soft rollout of the app for the Yodel Community Calendar. For real, you can download Yodel as an app now, making it even easier to keep track of community events in and around University Heights.

Now, we can have all the best ideas, but none of them matter if we don't have the people and the means to implement them. I turn now to our Finance Department, under Director Dennis Kennedy.

After replacing the entire finance department shortly after taking office, we have had clean audits every year since 2019. In the last two years, 2021 and 2022, we received the Ohio Auditor of State's Award for Excellence in Financial Reporting. The 2023 audit is now underway.

In 2019 we established a formal reserve policy:

"The City shall conduct all annual business in a manner and method that will allow for a minimum carryover balance in the General Fund equal to fifteen percent (15%) of the previous year operating revenue recorded in the General Fund."

By this policy in 2023, we kept a reserve of just under \$2.6 million. At year end 2023, we carried over well in excess of that, just over \$6 million in the general fund and \$10.6 million across all funds. This, in a city with a total budget of \$24 million.

Under my administration, the City has managed its day-to-day operations, created new initiatives and programming, improved our fire and police departments, established economic development and housing and community development departments, established a director of communications and civic engagement, increased the level of service to our residents, even rebranded and rolled out new city signs last year, and we have done all of this without a property tax increase, without an income tax increase, and without any reduction to the City's income tax credit. We are living within our means and delivering more than ever before.

But it is not enough.

You demand more.

We can do more.

We know, especially since the pandemic, that Walter Stinson Community Park has become the unofficial community center for the city. For want of an actual building, we meet there year-round, as long as weather permits. Which is every day – we gotta walk the dog, after all.

In an effort to quantify, last month we deployed a recreation survey.

Tonight, some results.

Regarding the possibility of having a Farmers' Market at The Walt on Tuesdays from 4:30-7:30pm, 58% of respondents said they were likely or very likely to attend.

Guided by this data, we have begun preparing a plan to present to city council to bring a farmers market to The Walt.

When it comes to indoor recreation, a whopping 89% of respondents think that UH has a need for indoor recreation, fitness, and community facilities.

Benefits for the community regarding indoor recreation facilities include increased recreational opportunities, a guaranteed place to exercise year-round, and a gathering place for seniors and indeed, for all residents.

The highest rated activity suggestions for indoor recreation include:

indoor walking/running track,

cardio/fitness equipment,

an indoor swimming pool,

and a yoga/dance studio.

Non fitness related indoor recreational activities that were highly rated include

senior activities and meeting spaces,

community meeting space/special events,

and an arts/makerspace area.

All of these recreation additions have this in common. There is nobody better than the City to fill this demand. But to do that, we need a site, and there is no site more obvious than the former Frank J. Wiley Middle School.

Accordingly, I support the City seeking the acquisition of the former Wiley Middle School – To be clear, not the school board offices, bus garage and bus depot, but the rest of the Wiley property, as a public asset for public purposes and community use.

Because of this, the acquisition should come with a covenant that the use will continue to be for the public. The school district and the city have a common constituency: the residents of this community. To that end, we all have already paid for Wiley. It is a public asset. So, changing who holds title and manages its use for the benefit of the public ought to be done for nominal consideration.

And what should the uses be? We know there is overwhelming demand for a community center, and Wiley has the space to meet the demand and fulfill it. With two gymnasiums, an auditorium, and a cafeteria, we could offer much of the desired recreation and more. We could offer indoor pickle ball and basketball, offer year round programming, a true home for the University Heights Symphonic Band, restore the home of Heights Youth Theater, work with Gesu on its requests for practice and play space, have our own rain location for the city summer concert series, and be able to provide the site for services and programming for seniors, youths, and all ages in between.

There are possibilities in enhancing outdoor fitness beyond our current tennis courts, in building a dog park, in expanding our offerings for aquatics beyond the

current pool (especially with Purvis Park adjacent to Wiley), These are all made possible for consideration by the City's acquisition of the Wiley property.

Wiley is technically a brownfield, so there are funding opportunities that may assist in the conversion. We should agree as a City that to serve our constituents, to meet their needs, that we do this.

There is another pressing reason as well.

I go back to my first few weeks as mayor. When I got here, I was shocked by the conditions our city employees work in. We have a 700-page report finalized in June 2022 that illustrates this in great detail, together with a proposed plan for action. It is time to proceed.

We came to terms and are getting ready to close on the former YABI property south of the police station. YABI was essential to this process so that we can proceed. And just as importantly, so is Wiley.

As we execute our plan to construct new municipal facilities, Wiley is the obvious swing space as we build new municipal facilities for service, police, fire, and administration. The principal's office can be the mayor's office, just temporarily, and so on.

Back in 2021 we studied the feasibility of using the area at Wiley due south of Purvis Park as a site of the city's service department. Per our consultant's recommendations, we will need to move the service yard to create the space to stage and build the new police and fire departments. The urgency of new facilities is not whenever. This must happen now. The acquisition of Wiley is the next key.

In addition, our new facilities should be (not merely accessible but) inclusive by design of all physical abilities, they should be green, and be constructed by union labor. We must ensure that we are building facilities that meet not only the current needs for the community, but the needs we may anticipate for A Better Tomorrow.

Being your mayor has been a dream. Yet, it was not my lifelong dream. I had long felt the desire to serve the public. I volunteered and served on nonprofit boards for the years leading up to and throughout my time as mayor, and my public service would come to take this form, that of your mayor. At my first State of the City address, I observed that “when you are Mayor, you have no idea how long you will get to do that. I would never want to look back at this time and think I did not do everything I could to improve our City.”

At the time I said that, I had hanging in my office another quote, from Don Draper, the ad man from Mad Men, who said that he was “living like there’s no tomorrow, because there isn’t one.” And for the first two years I was in office, up to the pandemic, I lived by that. The city was here before I got here, and will be here after I’m gone. So, I was working in the immediate, in the here and now, I was living in the present tense.

Earlier this year I had the occasion to meet Michael Steele, former Lt. Governor of Maryland. He told me that no one is guaranteed the future. One is only guaranteed Right Now.

I am not today thinking about where I will be in two years or six, but I am thinking about where the City will be, then and beyond. And I am thinking about the work we will complete to do that. University Square redeveloped, zoning code updated, modern recycling implemented, Wiley Middle School acquired, recreation expanded year-round, new bicycling infrastructure,, new service yard, new police department, new fire department, new city hall.. All together, these things will make for A Better Tomorrow.

To that end, I close:

It is a view that I borrow from the Talmud, that creation in all of its perfection is incomplete, that our role in our limited time is to help finish it. Alas the work is never done. But.

The things I came here to do, I have done.

The things that remain, will be done.

With the team I have assembled, together with our greatest asset, all of the employees of this city

– and, so long as I have the mutual accord of the community, myself, and my family—

I will continue to do the people’s work for you, Right Now. And for A Better Tomorrow.

Thank you.

May G-d bless you. My G-d bless the United States, the great state of Ohio, and the City of University Heights.

[OUTRO music: “Right Now” by Van Halen, “Superman” by Taylor Swift, “Tomorrow” by Postmodern Jukebox, “Superman” by REM]