

Mr. City Manager, Madame Deputy City Manager, Madame Vice Mayor, Honorable Councillors, Distinguished Guests, and My Fellow Cantabrigians.

We gather in this Chamber, as we have on so many occasions throughout this past year, to represent the will of the people, in service to the common good, and to take up that great task of improving the welfare of those residents who have placed their trust, and the future of this City, into our collective hands. Our success in this endeavor depends not upon the command of any individual intelligence, nor the conviction of any individual will, nor the depth of any individual compassion, but upon the belief that through our combined life-experiences and shared values, we may arrive at wisdom.

Council means an assembly of people called together for a purpose. As we prepare to enter a new year, let us rededicate ourselves to the purpose of community and justice, and join together in pursuit of those goals as partners for progress.

I want to begin by wishing all of you and your families, as well as everyone watching at home, a very happy and restful holiday season.

It is clear from my time meeting with residents, small business owners, non-profits, and neighborhood groups, that much is expected of this Council. I am sure my colleagues have experienced the same. We are asked to house the homeless, to be resilient in the face of a warming climate, to build an equitable and inclusive future for our children, to prevent the further displacement of the families and workers who are our city's foundation, to ensure our streets are safe for all, and to expand access to the global industries and opportunities that call Cambridge home. While efforts toward these goals is ongoing, we should not think of them as destinations to which we can arrive, our desire for justice and equity satisfied. Rather, they are

the cardinal directions that keep our progress moving forward, toward true north, and to the betterment of our City. How, then, should we measure our growth this year? What is the state of Cambridge at the end of 2018?

We just heard in the City Manager's comments, on the state of the institutions and programs that make up our city: the departments that are open to business for a city of more than 100,000 residents; of the services that allow those to embark upon their own pursuit of happiness, and to give them the tools and support of a progressive and technologically-advanced society to aid in their journey. The state of our infrastructure—our roadways, public parks, snow removal, and water supply—is secure and we, like many who are fortunate enough to live in such a wealthy nation, are free from the daily burdens of necessity to explore the boundaries of human potential.

But that freedom is not shared equally by all our residents. Far too many people still go hungry each night, or lack the basic comforts of a hot shower, or a home. In the shadows of biotech industry titans and two of the world's leading universities, the tale of another city unfolds. During my time in public service, and especially over the last year, I have been talking about this disparity.

It is hard to walk around Cambridge and not see the impact that opportunity gaps have in creating or widening disparities. Our city is home to some of our nation's most influential citizens, and yet 500 of our most vulnerable sleep on our streets each night. Cambridge provides tremendous opportunities for the most highly-educated who can expect an average annual wage of more than \$150,000, while the median *family* income, however, is far lower than that, creating a gap that drives displacement and fuels inequality.

We are all by now familiar with the *Globe's* Spotlight finding that African-American households in the Greater Boston region have a median net worth of just \$8. The business and corporations that lay around Kendall Square, meanwhile, are valued at a combined market estimate of \$170 billion. In the face of such staggering disparities in our community, I am reminded of the words of President John F. Kennedy, who cautioned that, Wealth is the means—people are the ends. All our material riches will avail us little if we do not use them to expand the opportunities of our people.

So, I ask again, how should we evaluate the state of our City, by what metrics can we measure progress? A difficult question as the State of our City depends on your perspective and how you feel the city is helping to meet your needs. Serving as Cambridge's Mayor has been my duty and privilege for the past year. I am eager to share the work that we have accomplished so far, and what I hope to accomplish with my fellow Councillors in 2019.

Addressing the housing crisis is the most pressing matter before this Council. It is time that we act boldly to ensure that equal opportunity exists for people across the economic spectrum to bind their voice, and their spirit, to the story of our city. During my first address to you as Mayor, I expressed my belief that we were united in our desire for Cambridge to be a socially and economically just community for all who live here. That is still my belief today. Achieving those goals requires collaboration, which is why I appointed Councillor Simmons and Councillor Siddiqui to bring their leadership and vision to co-chairing the Housing Committee. They have charted an ambitious agenda to strengthen our Inclusionary Zoning program, which this year celebrated its 1,000th unit, to direct the city to allocate \$40 million into affordable housing, removing parking requirements from developments, and ensuring that our focus

remains on tackling our housing crisis. I thank Councillor Simmons and Siddiqui for their leadership.

We need to build more housing in this city, and work with our partners in neighboring cities to increase their stock of housing as well, but we must take targeted steps now to shore up the protections for our current residents teetering at the edge of displacement. That is why I will be forming a new blue-ribbon committee in January to address tenant protections and to generate anti-displacement recommendations for this Council to adopt. Councillor Siddiqui has generously agreed to lead this effort, and I pledge the partnership and support of my Office in making the Committee's mission a success.

If we are to respond to the pressures that a global job market and spiraling rent prices are having on our residents, we must update our nearly 60-year-old zoning code. A lot has changed since 1961, and our zoning needs to work for the people living in Cambridge today. The disparities in income and opportunity are not only saddled upon the people living here, it is imprinted upon the urban plan of the city. While we oppose walls and gated-communities elsewhere, our zoning code has created these communities here in Cambridge. Walls that concentrate inequality in some neighborhoods while sheltering wealth in others, walls that are built not by a mason's hand, but signed into ordinance by our own. Dismantling those walls, and the zoning plan on which they stand, is the work of restorative justice. Many of us read the *The Color of Law* by Richard Rothstein, earlier this year; we know the legacy that racist zoning has left on America's cities. When Envision Cambridge completes its process, I will call on us to take up the recommendations of the housing subcommittee for consideration, and to pass the 100 percent affordable housing overlay. If we are going to live the progressive values we say we

have, then every neighborhood, every resident, must be willing to stand up and be part—must be willing to put aside their own interests to ensure that Cambridge is truly accessible to all.

I would like to share the contents of a letter I received last week from a Cambridge resident named Michael, asking if I could help him find housing. Michael's letter was remarkable in the humanity of his plea, but sadly, all too common in its request. It read, Mr. Mayor, my name is Michael and I'm reaching out to you about me being on the Cambridge housing list for many years and I'm still homeless. I'm waiting on a one-bedroom apartment or a studio, it really don't matter at this time of year considering it's so cold out now. I'm a lifelong resident of Cambridge, born and raised. Mr. Mayor, I would love to meet with you in regard to this matter, and then he thanked me for my time. I have heard Michael's story or some version of it almost every day this year: sometimes it is a single-parent who is being priced out of an apartment; sometimes a public school teacher wanting to feel connected to the community they educate; and often, it is our young residents who, like Michael, were born and raised in Cambridge, the only home they have ever known, and are forced to move their future beyond our city lines.

So, as we move forward with debate over zoning with so much of our focus on setbacks, FAR, density and height, let us not forget that what we are really talking about is people. People like Michael who desperately want to remain in the city we all love, but who can't. What we decide to do regarding incentivizing affordable housing develop will directly impact who gets to live in our city and what kind of city we truly want to be. We MUST listen and respect their stories.

Housing is a human right. But for the hundreds of our residents—and they are our residents—who are currently experiencing homelessness, their needs for housing was not met

soon enough. To be clear, putting into practice our belief that housing is a human right is not easy, especially for the chronically homeless. But it is still our responsibility to ease their suffering when we can and uphold their dignity and humanity at all times. Starting last year and then launching just a few weeks into my term as Mayor, my office worked closely with the City to open Cambridge's first Warming Center for the Homeless. This center, located in the basement of the Senior Center just across the street, provided much needed shelter to the more than 400 individuals who went there last winter. According to one of the guests, The Cambridge Warming Center has made the winter months easier for us. It literally saved lives.

One of the biggest obstacles a person experiencing homelessness faces in gaining access to assistance programs, is a lack of proper identification. Not having a home makes it difficult to store and keep track of the documents needed to prove our identity. Even when a homeless resident does compile all the necessary paperwork, they sometimes can't pay the modest filing fee required by the RMV, and so they continue to carry their personal papers around with them on the street, where they are subject to loss or theft, starting the cycle all over again. To address this problem, my Office has partnered with the Human Services Department and a student group at the Harvard Law School to pilot a new program that I am announcing tonight to support people experiencing homelessness with the funding necessary for them to acquire their state and other IDs, knocking down a barrier to improve their access to support.

As we know, Cambridge is not immune to issues of race and class. We have heard countless stories from residents who have experienced discrimination, racism, classism, and the types of hatred we protest elsewhere, right here in our community. Just two weeks ago light's triumph over darkness was dimmed momentarily when a menorah on the Cambridge Common was toppled by a lone, and troubled young man. I would like to recognize, John and Lillian of

Somerville, here with us tonight, who were among those who came forward to lift the menorah back in place. If there is a lesson in the response to that act, it is that while the actions of one person may knock something down, it is often the task of many to rebuild. This should be an example for all of us to expand our communities and to welcome each other's warmth and strength, for indeed each kindness is needed.

Through partnerships with the City, the City Council, the Schools, the School Department and School Committee, non-profits and our residents, we have taken steps to address both the long and short-term dismantling of inequity. Over the summer, we once again celebrated Loving Day, marking the anniversary of the Supreme Court decision to overturn laws banning interracial marriage, a reminder that the rights we exercise now were not always present for our parents. We partnered with the North American Indian Center of Boston and Cultural Survival to publicly celebrate Indigenous Peoples' Day by sponsoring events throughout the city. In Massachusetts' decided support for our transgender and gender nonconforming residents, no City was louder than Cambridge, which passed Ballot Issue 3 by 90 percent, one of the highest in the Commonwealth. I want to thank my colleagues on the Council and School Committee for unanimously passing resolutions in support of Question 3, and for joining me in signing a letter to the *Chronicle* stating our unequivocal support for transgender rights.

To combat the Trump administration's xenophobic attacks on our immigrant communities, and to maintain our identity as a Sanctuary City, one of the first actions I took as Mayor was to partner with the Cambridge Community Foundation to launch the Cambridge Legal Defense Fund for Immigrants, which in October distributed a quarter of a million dollars in grants to four local legal defense organizations that work with low-income immigrants being threatened by removal, including young people protected under the DACA program. I would like

to recognize Geeta Pradhan, the Executive Director of the Community Foundation, because without her and her staff, this effort would never have been so successful.

The seeds of racism and inequity are deep rooted, and that we must engage in meaningful conversations to address not only issues in our community, but issues within ourselves. That is why Councillor Siddiqui and I launched the Cambridge Digs DEEP initiative to engage the community in conversations about equity, privilege, diversity, inclusion, and race in a series of forums and workshops led by Dr. Darnisa Amante from the Disruptive Education Equity Program. More than 150 attendees joined our first conversation in November, and there are four more dialogues planned for the first half of 2019. We must continue these commitments to dialogue and public process, and to show up for our neighbors, because this is how we build trust and resiliency.

One of the concerns we have heard over the years is that many residents, whether they are small business owners who can't take time off work, residents who don't feel comfortable attending meetings, or residents who don't have the freedom to be activists, is that their voices are not heard. To address this concern we launched the Mayor's Outreach Team, to bring the Mayor's Office and City Hall to the people. This team was made up of college-aged interns who you may have seen engaging with businesses and community members in The Port, in Riverside, at Rindge Towers, and in our squares. These incredible young people were out spreading awareness of Find It Cambridge, educating residents on how to use Commonwealth Connect, and asking local business owners how the city could better support their establishments.

One of the greatest and most meaningful roles as Mayor is to Chair the Cambridge School Committee, working to shape the policies and practices aimed to serve our diverse student population is no small challenge; but one that I take on with care and optimism. Our

district objectives of equity and access, engaging learning, partnerships, improvement and a whole child perspective provide the direction for our work. As a committee we've passed motions to ensure our backing of immigrant students, to expand academic supports for struggling student-athletes, to create clear systems of reporting issues of racism and discrimination, to take steps to ensure that we as policy makers understand and reflect upon our own biases. We've brought together administrators, educators, and students at roundtables on key issues such as social emotional learning; such as on elementary staffing which included important representation from the Cambridge Education Association; and on racism and incidents of bias with the essential voices of students from CRLS Black Student Union. We remain committed to our district objectives, and to holding each other accountable for the wellbeing and education of each and every one of our students.

I would like to highlight some of the programs that bring wider economic and social justice to our schools. Thanks to the leadership of Superintendent Salim, Deputy Superintendent Turk, CRLS Principal Damon Smith as well as our many dedicated administrators and educators, we are implementing programs such as the Level Up initiative, which provides Honors level education in English Language Arts and History to all students, affirming our knowledge that all our students are capable of rigorous learning. This year, we also initiated a CRLS school-wide 1:1 technology program, providing Chromebooks to every student to address the digital divide and to ensure our students are equipped for success. We are also moving forward with The Nellie Mae Building Equity Bridges Grant, a partnership between CPS and Cambridge Education Association, to authentically engage community in analyzing systemic and school-level barriers that perpetuate gaps. I would like to thank my colleagues on the School Committee: Vice-Chair

Kathleen Kelly, members, Manikka Bowman, Emily Dexter, Fred Fantini, Laurence Kimbrough, and Patty Nolan for their commitment to the children of our school district.

The hardest part of my job is to look a parent in the eye and tell them that we have a 3-year plan to implement a program that their child needs now. Together, we must move forward with urgency for the students who are in our classrooms today.

Every Cambridge resident deserves to feel that they belong in our city, that their interests and they themselves are fully reflected by those who hold office. Last month, we saw a record number of women elected to positions at every level of our government, and across our nation. Closer to home, that included historic firsts like the election Ayanna Pressley and the rising leadership of Representative Katherine Clark. At the State level, with the advocacy of State Representative Decker and State Senator Jehlen we see that women leadership is essential for progress. The positive impact of women in politics is exemplified by the expertise, perspective, and accomplishments of our own elected officials right here in Cambridge. Councillor Simmons has long been a driving force behind progressive issues in our City, ranging from empowering young girls through the GOLD program to championing a history where they can see themselves represented; Vice Mayor Deveraux works tirelessly to protect our shared environment and create a robust small business ecosystem; Councillor Siddiqui and Councillor Mallon's work addressing hunger among children and reforming our housing system is actively improving the lives of residents, and you can hear all about it in their podcast "Women are Here." And to School Committee Vice Chair Kelly, and School Committee Members Nolan, Bowman and Dexter – thank you, and I am proud to live in a city under your collective stewardship.

Being connected to residents informs our understanding and enables us to more fully serve. Multiple and dramatically differing realities exist in Cambridge at the same time. In the

span of a day, a group of constituents may attend a meeting expressing their concerns regarding potholes in their neighborhood, while at the same time—within our 3-mile city span—a child is not allowed outside to play for fear of gun violence. Every resident deserves to be heard, and every resident deserves to feel secure and safe. If we are to live our liberal values, it is our responsibility to continue to educate each other on the hierarchy of needs felt by all our residents.

The vision of community policing under Police Commissioner Bard has brought great gains, setting the Cambridge Police Department as a model for departments across the nation. Earlier this week, the Council passed a surveillance technology ordinance, becoming one of the first on the east coast to enact such legislation protecting our civil rights. This milestone would not have been possible without the active and continued support of Commissioner Bard.

I also need to take time to thank our first responders, our police officers and firefighters for always being at the ready for your city. Earlier this year, I was invited by the fire fighters union to tour some of Cambridge's firehouses—I even got to gear up and participate in a firefighter training exercise with our Mayor's Summer Youth Employment Program—and it was clear from those experiences that work needed to be done to give our firefighters a professional and dignified place to work and to rest. After communicating these concerns to the City Manager, and with the help of the Council, in particular Councillor Mallon who has been a leader on this issue, we were able to appropriate \$2 million in June toward making essential improvements to the City's firehouses, and more funding is on the way, including at Monday's meeting, an additional \$3 million.

One of the deadliest threats that faces our community comes from the ongoing opioid epidemic. In all, 115 people have died here in Cambridge from opioid-related overdoses from 2013 to 2017.

To combat the rising epidemic and expand needed services, I convened an Opioid Working Group to lay the foundation for a coordinated citywide response, to educate the community, to support people with substance use disorders, and develop strategies to address their specific needs within our city. Carrying on the work of that committee, the City Manager has formed an administrative Opioid Working Group. Their final report should be before the Council within the coming months.

We have also seen tragedy visit our streets too often this year in the fatalities of pedestrians and bicyclists, which included CRLS teacher Sam Bixler. Our streets can serve the needs of residents and commerce, while still being a place where people of every age and ability can travel to work for recreation, and where they can practice healthier lifestyles and environmentally sustainable commuting habits. The City has already implemented Vision Zero and reduced the speed limit in our dense streets and commercial neighborhoods. In the New Year, I will be asking this Council to go further.

Of course, one of the biggest challenges we face is being resilient to the effects of climate change, and to prevent the runaway warming of our world. We have already begun to see the impact here in Cambridge as the number of days over 90 degrees is continuing to increase, as precipitation events become more extreme, and as infectious diseases spill beyond their traditional range. Councillor Kelley has written to the Council multiple times about the urgency of improving our resiliency efforts, building better infrastructure, and strengthening community connections. Councillor Zondervan, has spent a career protecting Cambridge's natural environment, and has offered several innovative policies to help the City adapt for the future. Thank you both for never letting us forget our duty to prepare for and address climate change in this Council.

We know that the goal of a progressive government is not just to provide for the basic needs of its residents, but to be a force for the betterment of the larger society. I believe that government can make positive improvements in the lives of its people, and I believe this starts with our children, and with their education. But education cannot be the great equalizer when students come into the classroom carrying the weight of inequality at home. One of the most basic ways we can ensure that all students are ready to learn is to remove the distraction of an empty stomach. In 2017, I partnered with Councillor Mallon and School Committee Member Kathleen Kelley to produce the Free and Reduced Lunch Program Report, an analysis of food insecurity and Federal Income Standards, which laid the groundwork for universal free breakfast and expanded free lunch programming that we are implementing today. As Mayor, I worked with the City Manager and School Administration to implement these changes, and I thank the Council for voting to allocate funds for this program. This morning, all students, including those who couldn't get breakfast at home received one at school, and the financial burden of paying for lunch was lessened for many of our families. We must continue to identify inequities and bridge the divide between those who have and those who do not.

And we know that learning and development doesn't just happen when our children enter school. Half of our public-school students qualify for free or reduced lunches, a safety net that our federal government sets for families of four who make less than \$25,000 a year. That, by the way, is about the yearly cost of sending one child to daycare in the City. Many families are faced with impossible choices, to provide for basic needs or to pay for early childhood education. Gaps begin even before a child enters public school, which makes early education critical to success throughout life. As Co-Chair of the Early Childhood Taskforce in 2015, with now State Representative Marjorie Decker, we worked to put forward recommendations that address

fundamental concerns of access, quality, affordability to early childhood educations. Today, under the leadership of Ellen Semonoff, the Birth -3rd grade partnership continues to explore and expand these efforts.

To further address access for our young people, with the support of the City Manager, we are going to build the first fully accessible playground in Cambridge. More than a fifth of our students report some form of disability, so creating a Universal Design playground advances our City's goals for open space, accessibility, and inclusion. The Council passed an appropriation of \$500,000 to begin the design phase of this project to create a fully accessible playground at Danehy Park.

My Office has also been working to expand opportunities for our students who are graduating from CRLS. We initiated a networking event for first generation students—those whose parents did not complete college—to connect them with business and community mentors who were themselves first generation students. By partnering with local businesses and trade unions, we continue to identify new avenues for current and recent students to begin a career working right here in our city. We also brought new union trainings to the Rindge School of Technical Arts and to career night at CRLS, so that young people can be introduced to the lucrative trades as an alternative to taking on massive amounts of student loans, and to expand access and highlight multiple pathways to success.

Research shows that if high school graduates have as little as \$500 saved for college, they are three times more likely to access post-secondary education. With this in mind, I am excited to announce that I am leading a collaboration with Councillors Siddiqui and Mallon, the School Department, and the City Manager to work toward establishing a children's savings account

program for all incoming kindergartners to encourage on-going deposits by their families for college tuition.

This past year, we have also heard loud and clear from the arts community that Cambridge needs to do more to maintain its cultural leadership position in the region. I would like to thank Councillor Mallon for chairing the Mayor's Arts Task Force, pulling together artists, city officials, and experts to discuss and recommend ways Cambridge can do more to support the arts and artists in our community. And, just this week, the Council voted to eliminate the permit fee for street performers as not only a financial incentive, but as an open welcome to buskers to return to Cambridge and enliven our streets once again. One of our key partners in this effort has been Michael Monestime and the Central Square Business Association, who are actively engaged in unlocking the vibrancy and diversity of Central Square. Nothing exemplifies this work better than the collaboration with our Cambridge Arts Council to create the Mural Arts Project, and the effort to establish Central Square as a Business Improvement District.

I would like to mention our efforts to support and utilize the businesses and nonprofits who are our partners in making Cambridge such a great place to live and work. Two of the biggest issues that they identified as areas for improvement were the City's permitting process and the ability to compete for city contracts. As a result, we have begun discussions with the City Manager's Office to make the process more accessible for those who wish to do business with and for our city. In this, we are indebted to Councillor Toomey's work to make sure that our small business owners have a voice in the Council Chamber. I also want to thank the co-chairs of the Ordinance Committee, Councillors Carlone and Kelley for their leadership in taking several proposals through the process towards ordination, especially on zoning for recreational cannabis

establishments. Cambridge overwhelmingly supported the legalization of cannabis, and it is high time we respond to their mandate and pass this zoning proposal after the New Year.

I want to thank the residents of our community for caring so deeply about our City. As in any community or family, we are not always going to agree on every issue but I think we can all agree that Cambridge is doing some wonderful things, and there is more to do if we are going to truly be the socially and economically just community we strive to be.

I also want to thank the City Manager, the City Council Office, my team in the Mayor's Office, and everyone who works for the City of Cambridge. The Council can pass innovative policies, but without the people who work in our departments and those on the ground offering direct service, our policies are just words on paper. It is our city employees who put those words into action and I am grateful for what you do every day.

I want to thank my family, especially my wife, Mary Anne, who has supported me every step of the way and without whose love I would not be standing here tonight.

I want to thank everyone for coming tonight, and for considering the work that my colleagues and I have done to ensure that Cambridge continues to be a welcoming, supportive, and progressive city to raise a family, to work, and to pursue happiness. But progress is not just a badge that we can wear, it is not just a noun, it is also a verb. The root of progress means to go forth, and that is what we must do on the issues that matter to Cambridge residents. I want to leave you with a quote that I often use, again from President Kennedy, which also hangs on the wall of my office. One person can make a difference, and every person should try. Let us remember these words as we leave here tonight, to rejoin our families during this holiday season, and as we embark upon a new year.

Thank You, and Good night.