

Mayor Ivy R. Taylor

San Antonio: A City at Work

March 22, 2016

(Introduction by Noe Castro and Nadia Balderas)

Thank you, Noe and Nadia. If anyone in this room is an inspiration, it's you. Your perseverance and your eloquence inspire and challenge each of us to dream big and work hard. You remind us that ultimately it's the people of San Antonio who make our city unlike any other in the nation.

Our people—those of you in this room, all the Noe's and Nadia's out there waiting to step up—our people will continue to lead us through the 21st century as one of the most economically and culturally vital cities in the United States.

Today, as the mayor of this wonderful city, I say with the greatest sense of certainty that **THE STATE OF OUR CITY IS STRONG!**

Thank Yous

I'd like to start by thanking the chambers of commerce for coming together to organize this annual event and for your work on behalf of a stronger, more prosperous San Antonio.

Renee Flores and Becky Cedillo, it's great to have such strong women at the helm.

I have to acknowledge Bexar County Judge Nelson Wolff. I feel fortunate to call you a partner.

Please also join me in thanking your San Antonio City Council. As mayor I have the privilege to serve alongside these talented and dedicated leaders.

I want to thank my hardworking staff and all our outstanding City of San Antonio employees. Led by the invaluable Sheryl Sculley, there are more than 12,000 people working on behalf of our taxpayers.

Last, but certainly not least, I want to thank my beautiful daughter Morgan and my personal stylist, who also happens to be my wonderful husband Rodney, for your incredible support.

Accomplishments

All of us working together have accomplished so much. According to Census data San Antonio is one of the 10 fastest growing cities in the nation, attracting more millennials than other parts of the country.

Last year, in partnership with the Economic Development Foundation and other community partners, we announced nearly 4,000 new jobs. We recruited global companies like Cytocentrics and Indo-MIM to bring hundreds of high-wage jobs in key targeted industries like advanced manufacturing and biosciences. We helped outstanding local companies expand, companies like Security Service Federal Credit Union, SWBC and Holt CAT.

Downtown development continues to prosper with more than 4,000 new housing options added or planned since 2012, and the opening of a brand new HEB in the heart of our city.

We've created a strong partnership with the State and the private sector to restore our treasured Alamo.

We opened Yanaguana Gardens, and announced public-private developments for Hemisfair--investments now totaling more than \$275 million dollars.

In total, investments in the downtown core have topped \$1.4 billion since 2011.

Our first high-rise since the 80s is underway, a mixed use project delivered through a public-private partnership with Weston Urban and complemented by the San Pedro Creek redevelopment.

We secured \$135 million dollars to build a new federal courthouse after years of consistent efforts. Senator Cornyn and Representative Cuellar and our federal delegation, we appreciate your leadership. *(PAUSE)*

Our very own USAA donated \$2.1 million to ensure that here in Military City USA no veteran sleeps on the streets and that all former servicemen and women have access to permanent housing and supports. Once, veterans like Ronald Smith, who served honorably and was discharged but then developed PTSD, had little hope. But today, due to the efforts of partners like American GI Forum and the South Alamo Regional Alliance for the Homeless, Ronald has his own apartment and is working to improve his income, and secure benefits.

In fact, through the Mayor's Challenge to End Veteran Homelessness, we have successfully housed more than 1000 residents, and we are on pace to end veteran's homelessness in San Antonio this month! Thank you to HUD and the VA for their role in this effort.

Google selected San Antonio as its next fiber community, and AT&T announced an expansion of its gigapower services. We developed an innovative consumer-choice framework to welcome Uber and Lyft back to San Antonio.

We completed the largest capital project in our history, the expansion of our Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center and we are one step closer to securing a major league soccer team in partnership with Spurs Sports and Entertainment and Bexar County.

We are also laying the groundwork for the development of a brand new Triple A ball park in downtown San Antonio—with a team to play in it!

These accomplishments did not occur by accident. Progress is not inevitable—it is a reflection of the vision, investment and dedication of individuals who have come together as a community.

And we cannot for one moment slow down.

One of my staff recently shared the story of her late grandfather, a laborer and immigrant named Jose Aleman who worked hard to create opportunities for his children. His mantra to his family was simple and powerful. “Hay que trabajar,” there’s work to do, he would say. Rain or shine, cold or heat, near or far, “hay que trabajar” became the family cry.

This statement truly embodies the spirit of San Antonio.

Yes, the State of the City is strong, but “**Hay que trabajar,**” San Antonio. **There’s still work to be done!**

Vision

A globally competitive city where each of us has the opportunity to prosper—that’s my vision for San Antonio.

This vision is anchored by three priorities:

First, we will enhance our local and international economic competitiveness;

Second, we will be fiscally responsible in delivering infrastructure that supports industry and improves our quality of life;

And third, we will continue to work as One San Antonio, where all have the opportunity to prosper.

Economic Competitiveness

We are well-positioned to advance our economic competitiveness, regionally and here in San Antonio.

Now I asked fellow mayors from our region to join me here today because our fates are so strongly interwoven.

San Antonio and Austin are two great cities and our region is one of the fastest growing in the nation. Mayor Steve

Adler and I are working on more than figuring out which city has the better breakfast taco. We are developing a working group to address regional issues like transportation and we'll meet for the first time in early April.

In the coming months, we will name a new CEO for our Economic Development Foundation—a pivotal decision. EDF can and should lead us as we move in innovative directions with workforce development, marketing and outreach, and promoting entrepreneurship.

We all recognize that the number one site selection or expansion factor for businesses, large and small, is access to people with skills.

Workforce development is economic development.

Last year Judge Wolff and I joined forces to develop the most robust and effective workforce development system in the nation. Led by Peter John Holt and Kate Rogers with the generous support of Charles Butt and powered by dozens of agencies like the Chamber of Commerce and Alamo Colleges, this effort has coalesced as SA Works.

Let me tell you about a gentleman I met at my “Meet The Mayor” event at a public library last month, a man who went from a life of drugs, guns and struggling for survival to winning awards for his nursing skills. A man who threatened others' lives, but is now saving them.

Jesus Garcia—who his friends call Chuy—is joining us today as living proof that the education and training we offer in this community can enable men and women to turn their lives around. Chuy once faced up to 25 years in prison, but he told me that completing the LVN to RN program at St. Phillip's College gave him the opportunity to proudly support his family and make a better future for his wife and children.

More San Antonians like Chuy can succeed and contribute to our economy if we better align our partners' programs. So today I am pleased to announce that SA Works will move under the Economic Development Foundation, **effectively integrating economic and workforce development in San Antonio.**

We will expand our investment in skills training like the Open Cloud Academy and in incubators that empower entrepreneurs, who are the primary source of net new job creation in communities. Our goal is to help innovative companies grow and develop in our emerging downtown tech hub-- and to effectively market our wonderful city of San Antonio to the world.

We have made an excellent start by restructuring our Convention and Visitors Bureau to support a renewed focus on San Antonio's heritage and culture. The travel industry is increasingly geared toward giving travelers experiences they can't have anywhere else and once again, San Antonio is perfectly positioned to take advantage of

this trend. With the only UNESCO World Heritage Site in Texas, and as we prepare to celebrate our 300th anniversary in 2018, we have the chance to invest in our historic sites, connect our people and our visitors to our fascinating past, and cement our reputation as one of America's unique cities.

Our Tricentennial commemoration also offers us the ideal platform to continue developing our strong international economic development strategy, expanding from countries like Spain and Mexico toward South America, Asia and Europe.

Close to 70,000 jobs in our community are tied to international business, and that number will grow as commerce continues to globalize. We have identified countries like Germany and Japan, with strong exports and foreign direct investment in San Antonio, as targets for expansion, and are taking concrete steps to build those relationships.

As just one example, in a few weeks the Mayor of Darmstadt, Germany, will sign a Friendship City agreement here in San Antonio. Darmstadt is Germany's cybersecurity hub and the aerospace capital of Europe, and last year I travelled there to initiate this cooperative relationship.

Infrastructure and Fiscal Stewardship

My first priority is directly tied to my second. Our long-term economic competitiveness depends upon our ability to maintain a smart, fiscally responsible government that develops infrastructure to support our industries and improve the quality of life for our residents.

SA2020 brought us together in an unprecedented way to envision our future. Now it's our responsibility execute that vision through the SA Tomorrow comprehensive planning process and the largest bond program in our history.

We anticipate nearly a million new residents in our region over the next 25 years, and we must plan and build for that now by focusing growth in a dozen or so neighborhood centers and creating stable, mixed-income housing opportunities.

With regard to growth, we have used annexation as a tool in the past, and it has accomplished what we expected—it has expanded our boundaries, increased our population, and added to our tax base.

But we need to be fiscally prudent and above all we need to be responsible to our taxpayers—current and future. When we annex a neighborhood, those San Antonians have the same rights and expectations that the rest of us do about City services and facilities.

And with the state legislature and leadership proposing restrictions to municipal budgets, particularly to revenues from property taxes, I feel more strongly than ever that blanket annexation is a risky strategy when compared to focusing our efforts on building value in our existing community. And we need to ensure that any annexation advances the vision of SA2020 and the goals SA Tomorrow.

The first opportunity we will have to bring SA Tomorrow to life will be next year. Our 2017 bond package will be historic both in its size and its emphasis on high-quality design that implements our collective vision.

Design excellence is not just about public art and architecture—although these are critical components. It’s about creating places that people want to visit, places where people choose to live. Places like the Broadway corridor, which includes cultural institutions such as the Witte Museum, DoSeum, McNay Museum of Art, San Antonio Botanical Gardens, Brackenridge Park, San Antonio Zoo and San Antonio Museum of Art.

The renaissance of this corridor stems from a \$500 million makeover from private and public investments, including a corridor planning effort, new facilities and an entirely new urban neighborhood-- The Pearl, with more restaurants, more housing units, and a more walkable way of life that is in high demand. As San Antonio welcomes another 1 million people by 2040, we need more places like the Pearl and we can’t let quality suffer at the hands of quantity.

We have the opportunity to raise the profile of San Antonio to new heights –and being San Antonio, we will do it on time and on budget and with an eye toward seizing the future.

I am looking forward to working with our Citizens Bond Oversight Committee and our community-based process to develop projects that embody what I call the “Three Ts:”

- Transportation
- Technology and
- Transformation

We have to continue to invest in the basics—but build them better.

Better designed streets with sidewalks and streetlights, better systems and technology to serve taxpayers, and better transportation options to connect San Antonians to opportunity.

When I met with area ISD superintendents earlier this month, they were unanimous in their message to me: better sidewalks and lighting will help their students get to class!

To do this I have asked the City Manager to develop a Smart Cities program within our Office of Innovation to explore new uses of technology that will make municipal government more effective, sustainable and responsive to citizens.

We will explore collaborations with Bexar County, SAWS and the River Authority to convert more miles of concrete channel to green infrastructure, improving our drainage and storm water systems and providing an amenity for residents...just like the redeveloped San Pedro Creek.

We will explore partnerships with VIA and our development community to offer more rapid, flexible service to neighborhoods making it easier to get around.

Our 2017 bond projects will reflect the vision of SA2020, the strategies of SA Tomorrow and the aspirations of our community—as well as the reality that we have to get to work building a city that can compete in the 21st century.

Enhancing our competitiveness—while remaining fiscally responsible—is a key reason I support the Vista Ridge water supply project. Vista Ridge is in fact less risky now than it has ever been: interest rates are low and successful test wells have been drilled. The project may cost less than originally anticipated, and we are within the timeframe envisioned in the agreement.

So today I am pleased to announce that Garney, the current construction partner, is finalizing negotiations with Abengoa that would allow Garney to take controlling ownership of the Vista Ridge Project.

This is not a material change--but we will proceed as we did during contract negotiations by publically reviewing this proposal to ensure that it continues to protect customers, City of San Antonio taxpayers and SAWS's rights under the project contract--which was unanimously approved by City Council in 2014.

As a member of the SAWS board, of course I am receiving information regularly--and I will ensure that City Council will remain involved and advised as we make progress.

As always, the biggest risk remains failure to secure our water future, and we will continue to work diligently to conserve and expand supplies.

We **are** a city that works, and no group of San Antonians is called on to work harder or make greater sacrifices than our police and firefighters. Our officers deliver on the most important promise elected officials can make to

citizens: the promise of public safety. But we can't expect our police and firefighters to work indefinitely without a union contract, and we can't expect taxpayers to write a blank check to meet union demands.

Nor can we expect our residents to continue to accept existing contract stipulations that prevent transparency in disciplinary actions and reporting. I'm working hard to ensure that San Antonio does not become another city where the Police and the community are polarized; where officers are no longer seen as guardians but as the enemy. We have to continue to build the trust necessary for effective community-based policing. We need to make changes, and now is the time.

And so I have one message for the union leadership: Hay que trabajar. Let's get back to work! The unions have to be willing to put the City's final and best offer to a vote of their membership. So, union leaders, Mike Helle and Chris Steele, our community needs you to get back to work immediately on resolving this issue. Their refusal to even negotiate is **not acceptable**. The residents of this community and union members deserve better.

Our responsibility for fiscal stewardship extends throughout our budget and even to our form of government.

Our charter, for example, ought to reflect our aspirations for San Antonio. Last year's successful election demonstrated that we have raised our expectations of City Council members. Before our next charter amendment election we will have a community discussion about other changes that have been suggested, such as consolidating functions with Bexar County, joining the party primary system and thus moving our municipal election dates, or making changes to our Council-Manager form of government.

These are big ideas—very big ideas and possibly controversial--which is why we will continue to follow a citizen-lead and community-based process to prepare for a possible charter election in November of 2017.

We will make whatever changes are necessary to serve our citizens better because it is our people who make up this city—our people who make this city great.

One San Antonio—Opportunity to Prosper

A few weeks ago, I made a quick stop at Nadler's famous bakery. As I was gathering a substantial pile of pot pies, kolaches and cookies, I spent a few minutes with Ms. Nadler herself. She shared her family story--they've been in business for 58 years. With her daughter behind the counter and her husband in the kitchen, Minerva Nadler told the story of her husband Hans, a former GI and a Swiss immigrant whom she met while he was stationed at Ft. Sam.

I don't know how you say "Hay que trabajar" when you're from Switzerland, but I'm sure Hans and Minerva Nadler and their family said it frequently.

They seized the opportunity to succeed in San Antonio...an opportunity that we must continue to provide. And their story brings me to my third priority: ensuring that all San Antonians are connected to the opportunity for prosperity.

Now, we should be proud of the training and skills development being offered through Promise Zone to Work, Open Cloud Academy, and through our digital inclusion initiatives. We are thrilled with the success of Geekdom and other incubators and supports for entrepreneurs.

San Antonio has seen great strides in our education system over the last few years. High school graduation rates are up, investments in career and technical education as well as college access services are increasing.

However, nearly 1 out of every 5 residents in our community lacks a high school diploma or GED—which is a direct correlation to the nearly 1 in 5 of our residents living below the poverty level. We are still not seeing improvements in college readiness rates in our most distressed neighborhoods.

That's unacceptable, and unsustainable—both economically and morally. And it translates to other gaps: San Antonio continues to experience lower levels of college completion and higher levels of illiteracy than our peer cities, and some industries can't find the specific skills they need in our workforce.

We have to confront some unpleasant facts: in San Antonio, minority males are about half as likely to obtain post-secondary education as their white counterparts. Across the United States, a typical white individual earns \$2 million during a lifetime, while a typical black earns \$1.5 million and a Hispanic-- \$1 million. These are not good odds.

We need to reshuffle the cards. Those who have had the deck stacked against them must be dealt a new hand—both for their benefit, **and** for ours.

That's why earlier this month I launched My Brother's Keeper San Antonio, a comprehensive action plan to improve the life outcomes of young men and boys of color. Our goals are to increase levels of education and training, reduce crime and recidivism, and sustain our positive impacts for the long term.

San Antonio will succeed when **all** young men like Noe are seen as a resource, and not a problem. Our people – ALL of our people--will support our economy, the expansion of local businesses and perhaps the creation of entirely new industries.

In addition to our workforce development efforts, to prepare our residents to take advantage of job training opportunities, we will also focus on basic literacy skills—whether that’s helping families to make a budget, read a book, or use a computer. Through the ConnectHome program, we are partnering with the San Antonio Housing Authority to bring high-speed internet access and new computers to thousands of families, supported by outreach and education to close the digital divide.

Companies like USAA and PricewaterhouseCoopers are committing volunteers and expertise to ensure that San Antonians have access to financial readiness training. Regardless of stage of life or occupation, we all need to have basic skills in budgeting, saving, and managing our credit and debt. Once we build the basics for our families, they can grow our economy.

Closing

I wonder how many people in this room are familiar with the story of Artemesia Bowden? And yet I’m sure you know the proud history of St. Philip’s College—well, we wouldn’t have St. Philip’s, and its nursing and culinary programs and SAISD Early College High School—if it weren’t for Artemesia Bowden.

In 1898 the Episcopal church opened a school offering vocational instruction for black girls in San Antonio. Starting in 1902 and for the next fifty years, a woman named Artemesia Bowden, daughter of an emancipated slave, served as president of the school. During the Depression, when the Church discontinued its support, Miss Bowden used her own money to pay teachers and keep her school operating.

She grew St. Phillip’s College from six girls in a sewing circle in 1902 to almost 10,000 students and 70 different academic and technical disciplines today--the only college in the country that is both an HBCU and a Hispanic Serving Institution. Artemesia knew that a proper education would open doors for young men and women of color and she worked hard to make that opportunity a reality.

Although she never met her, Artemesia Bowden believed in Nadia Balderas. She believed in Noe Castro. She believed in Chuy Garcia. She dedicated her life to providing San Antonians with the skills to compete and thrive.

Last year during this speech, I spoke about my hopes for my daughter Morgan, and remarked that I often try to see the future of our city through her eyes. I think Artemesia Bowden must have done that too. She must have looked at those six girls in 1902 and seen what they could become, what San Antonio could become, if we all had the opportunity to work hard and be rewarded for our efforts.

In 1900, around the time Artemesia Bowden arrived at St. Phillips, San Antonio had 50,000 people; there were 70 cities in the US bigger than San Antonio.

We are no longer that small town. We are a big city with big opportunities. We are one of America's leading cities, and we represent the future of our great country.

And ultimately it's the people of San Antonio who make our city unlike any other in the nation.

I thank everyone in here for everything you have done, and you will do, to build One San Antonio, a city where each of us has the opportunity to prosper.

So Hay Que Trabajar, San Antonio—Let's get to work!