

State of The City, Mayor's Address, 7pm, February 20, 2020

Welcome! It is so good to see everyone here tonight! Thank you all for being here! This is my fifth State of the City, and may I say that I'm always excited and energized as we get together, to think about where we are, where we've come, and, best, about where we are going. And enjoy great music and spoken word. Please join me in thanking John Layton and his jazz quintet from Bloomington High School North, the musicians from the Mariachi Perla Del Medio Oeste ensemble, and Juliana Crespo, teacher and writer extraordinaire of Bloomington High School South.

Juliana shared her story this evening about the way our City has inspired her. Each of you here -- each person pictured in the slide show we just saw -- every one of us in Bloomington -- has a story, unique, and also, often, familiar. Instructive. Inspiring. Activating. The vibrant community we call home--so palpable in the room tonight--is made up of all those individual stories. Every one of them matters in the big story of Bloomington, every one counts. Everyone Counts. That's our theme for the evening -- and what must be our focus going forward.

We're going to talk about the census, that every-ten-years event, getting everyone counted. And we're going to talk together about the decade in front of us, the 2020s. It's energizing to think about what we can make that decade mean -- you and I, us -- working together, to make sure that Everyone Counts in Bloomington's future. Think about a sustainable Bloomington and about climate change -- how our actions in the next 10 years are VITAL in limiting irreversible damage, and how everyone counts in getting that done. And also about the simultaneous need to ensure that everyone has a place in that future. That no one gets left behind or left out. Every single resident counts, deserves a future, and respect. A voice. A vote. A home. A job. A good life. In our Bloomington.

Before we dig into how we create that future, let's remember some achievements of the past 12 months -- milestones already moving us toward the future we are striving to create. Bloomington has been very busy, with a lot to celebrate:

Three months ago, we cut the ribbon on a new City treasure -- Switchyard Park -- transforming this longtime railroad switchyard into a 60-acre greenspace much needed on the southwest side, enticing young and old to come out and play, and with a Pavilion and a performance stage to welcome new local and regional happenings. The Mill completed its first full year, won an award as the state's best historic rehab, and expanded faster than any co-work space in Indiana history. We opened B-Line Heights -- affordable housing right in the heart of the Trades District, and just sold The Kiln to a local consortium ready to re-activate that old brick building into a hub for the New Economy (with SOMA coffee to boot!). We opened a new senior center at the mall. Young people by the hundreds got active with Youth Participatory Budgeting, strengthening our democracy and our community together -- watch for the cool new moss wall they voted for. Speaking of voting, Bloomington voters brought four new faces to our City Council in January. We welcomed new public art from internationally renowned artists, one reason Bloomington earned a 2019 National Award for Local Arts Leadership ...Medical manufacturer Catalent, after its one billion dollar initial investment in their Bloomington facility in 2017, last year announced a \$125 million expansion and 200 new good-paying jobs, a big thumbs up for Bloomington's life-sciences industry. And of course 24/7 we protect public safety -- with lower crime and the third year in a row with zero fire fatalities. We deliver clean water, operate buses and plows and sanitation pickups. We inspect apartments and repair potholes, run day camps and pools and movies and concerts, and help Bloomingtonians have better lives.

Looking to the year ahead, MANY of these things continue.....plus some exciting new steps. I'll mention just a few:

1. Join in the public engagement starting this spring for the redevelopment of the current IU Health Bloomington Hospital site --24 acres full of potential for affordable housing, green space, and a new neighborhood in the heart of our downtown
2. This year should see the design and financing details for the convention center expansion, to strengthen and boost our downtown economy
3. The STRIDE crisis diversion center, is slated to open this spring--a place for helping people in crisis who don't belong in jail or the hospital
4. Our Transportation Demand Management report arrives next month
5. And a new Digital Divide Survey and a Climate Vulnerability Assessment both are coming soon.

And so many great events in coming months, like the Black History Month annual Gala in 9 days, like the 100th anniversary of women's suffrage, the 200th anniversary of IU, the 50th anniversary of Earth Day, our third annual street fair on Kirkwood, and more celebrations of arts, trails, jobs, and affordable housing.

So much goes on, in our always creative, dynamic, changing, improving city. For more details go to our website or come into my office or catch Dawn or me or any city staff around town. Speaking of which, if you work for the City, would you please stand or wave as you're able, and let us thank you and all 800 City employees for the work you do all year long to make our city run!

Now, I'll ask you all to take a deep breath, and join me in casting our gaze farther into the future we can build together. The poet Robert Browning said: our reach should exceed our grasp. We need always to be striving to reach things beyond our grasp. And tonight I want to focus on what we should reach for here in Bloomington.

Let me just briefly note that beyond our community -- at the state and national levels -- what's happening can be incredibly challenging and distressing. I hope like me you're tenaciously committed to change and better results this November and beyond. I know so many of you are so deeply engaged in that work, and that's terribly important -- for all the things we'll consider tonight. But during our time tonight, I'm not dealing much with national and state politics. Another time. (You can find Dawn and me around town anytime to talk about that too.) Let's make this evening a session of local focus, (local therapy?), to remember how much we can do for each other, how much we mean to each other, and the future we can shape together right here.

Because, because, I do believe that we, together, here in Bloomington, even in the face of frustrating state and national trends, can chart a course for our own community that is exciting, and positive, and transformative, to bring more opportunity and more justice, more peace and more joy right here.

First, for the coming decade, it's essential that we count who we are. The census. Required by the US Constitution every 10 years. It determines our voting power. It determines a lot of financial power. Money. For infrastructure projects and community nonprofits. We need to be sure that Everyone Counts -- meaning Everyone is Counted! It's also important as a message that says, everyone belongs here.

We need to know you're here, whether you sleep in a big fancy house or an apartment or a dorm or if you sleep outdoors or in an emergency shelter. Whether you've been here your whole life or just since last week. Whether you speak fluent English or none. Whether you are documented or not. Whatever your story, You count, and we want you counted. Everyone counts, all together making up our Bloomington story.

Census mailings begin in March, for households to respond online, by phone, or by mail. Census workers will follow up with home visits to anyone who hasn't filled out the information, starting in mid-May. Your responses will remain private, and cannot, by law, be shared with law enforcement or immigration, or affect the benefits you receive. So, we're counting on you! If just one out of every 300 people in Bloomington is missed, our community could lose a million dollars every year.

By the way, if you're interested, information about working as a census taker is available in the lobby this evening.

Once we're all counted, we're ready for the 2020s. Let's start with some facts:

Our planet is in trouble. In their 2018 report, the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (the IPCC) sounded an alarm: by 2030, global greenhouse emissions must be reduced by 45%, toward a goal of net zero by 2050. Why? Scientists agree that those reductions will likely limit global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Centigrade from pre-industrial levels. And although even that rise will have, already has had, dramatic and cascading effects on rainfall, heat events, sea level, habitat and biodiversity, if we can limit

that temperature rise to 1.5 and not higher, we can avoid the most devastating effects that could make much of this world largely uninhabitable.

Just last week, the Antarctic continent hit its hottest recorded temperature ever: 65 degrees (in Antarctica!). And last summer the Arctic region broke its all-time heat record, at 70 degrees. Closer to home, Indiana's average temperatures are expected to rise 5 to 6 degrees Fahrenheit in the next 30 years, giving southern Indiana up to 51 extremely hot days a year, and threatening our state's agricultural productivity and drinking water supplies.

Another aspect of our work ahead needs emphasizing. We know that our own country is also leaving so many people behind or sidelined:

- Over the last 40 years, worker productivity has increased 134 percent, but worker hourly compensation has barely budged
- 3 wealthy Americans today own more wealth than 160 million Americans put together
- 41 percent of America's children live in low-income families
- The median white American family owns 40 times more wealth than the median black family, nearly \$150,000 to less than \$4,000, and they own 20 times more wealth than the median Latinx family, with \$6,500.

These challenges are really two sides of the same coin: we must do our part to save our planet, and we must leave no one behind. Everyone Counts. Two vital questions face us: first, by the time we get to 2030, will we have charted the course for a future where our planet -- and our community -- will physically be habitable and sustainable? And second, will we have a place for everyone at the new table?

I believe in my bones we can get this right. It is true, we cannot magically control Green House Gas emissions of countries around the world. But together, we can address our carbon footprint here in Bloomington, and do our part along with hundreds of the world's progressive cities. And true, we cannot assure opportunity and respect for all those now being left behind in our state, country and world, but together, we can build a community, right here in southern Indiana over the next decade that shows everyone belongs here, and can thrive here. We can make the 2020s a turning point, a decade of action, steering us toward that bright future.

If we listen, we hear that our community has been calling for this already. In our biannual city survey, where our residents express their values and goals, an overwhelming 90% of respondents consistently want the City to help residents experiencing homelessness, with housing, and also with job training and substance use disorder services. We are compassionate, and we want action. Similar numbers rate affordable and workforce housing as in dramatically short supply, and needing more city support. We want action. We also unequivocally want a diverse and welcoming community. And one hears strong support for biking, walking and transit services and infrastructure. This is the city our residents -- you -- tell us in City government, that you want.

Last fall hundreds of climate activists --mostly young people -- demonstrated inside City Hall on two occasions, demanding that the City take significant action to address climate change. And they are right. They remind us of our moral obligation to future generations, to do our part to address our climate emergency. We have no Planet B. Are we ready to answer today's 10 year olds, when they turn 20 and ask "what did you do during the 2020s to turn things around?" Does any one of us want to leave our next generations with a planet in tatters? With flooded coasts, extreme weather, disrupted agriculture and commerce, all creating global turmoil? We have to act. Our community has been calling for serious action on climate change, and for serious action on inclusion and opportunity for all.

We are positioned to meet the challenge of doing our part to protect our physical world and community, our planet. We are POSITIONED. But I'd say we are not yet PROVISIONED. We are ready, but we need strong steps, and the plan and the resources to accomplish it. Everyone Counts in this; we all need to do our part, during the make or break decade of the 2020s.

A great deal of good work is already underway in Bloomington that we should celebrate. As part of the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy, Bloomington has joined 10,000 cities around the world that pledge to report our emissions to the global disclosure system and work to curb them. Here's something to be proud of: just this week, that international project announced that Bloomington is one of 105 of those cities -- representing 170 million people around the globe -- who made the group's "A" List for leadership and transparency on climate action.

Some more recognitions: on the national level, Bloomington received the ICLEI Milestone Achievement Award for GHG Emissions Management, and we were named an EPA Green Power Partner. At the state level, IDEM gave us the Governor's Greening the Government Award; and Environment America Research & Policy Center recognized us among 250 cities in the country making solar energy a key element of our communities' energy plans.

Our efforts locally are making a difference: our water utility launched a new four million dollar green storm-water infrastructure program and is installing 15,000 new, smart water meters. Bloomington Transit just bought its second all Electric Bus, joining a hybrid fleet. Last year's Urban Forest Report found that we have increased the City's public tree population over 50% in the last twelve years. Solar investments have soared, with PV systems at 32 City properties, and 5 MW of new solar capacity for municipal operations and private homeowners. Ten million dollars in Bicentennial Bonds are adding more public trails, trees, and other amenities to improve health and quality of life for all. We're shaping more sustainable land use with projects like the redevelopment of the current hospital site and with robust tools like our newly passed zoning code. Our new Local Food coordinator connects local farmers with new markets and institutional buyers. And our Waste to Energy task force has finished phase one and recommends exploring a viable system to collect and convert our organic waste into clean, green compressed natural gas to power vehicles and/or water treatment. Phase 2 will begin immediately.

We have our first-ever Sustainability Plan in place, with specific, measurable goals through 2023. We have completed our first reliable Greenhouse Gas Inventory. We are currently undertaking a Climate Vulnerability Assessment, and seeking the community's input to fill in the picture. The soon-to-be-released Transportation Demand Management study will help promote better transportation options and fewer car trips.

These are all good and important actions. But there's sobering news too: Because we live in an area so dominated by coal and natural gas energy production, Bloomington's per capita carbon footprint is higher than the national average. Right now. Despite all our good work. Bloomington's footprint is substantially better than Indiana's as a whole (Indiana being one of 10 worst in the country). But we're still above the national average. One relevant fact is that our electricity provider generates less than 1% of its Indiana electricity from renewable sources. (This is where we could spend a lot of time about the importance of state and national advocacy, but that's another day.)

What we do in the 2020s will determine whether we can achieve sustainability and net zero by 2050. Our Green House Gas inventory tells us quite clearly where change will need to come; you can see the slices of the GHG pie:

- We have to change how we all get around, with more public transit, walking, biking, ride sharing, carpooling and the like, and fewer solo car trips (lowering the carbon impact of our mobility)
- We must significantly improve the energy efficiency of the buildings in which we live, work, learn, and play
- We have to diversify and clean up our energy sources, expanding local production like solar
- We have to evolve where we live, our housing patterns, so we drive less
- And we must improve how we deal with our waste, our water, and our food growing and consuming patterns.

All of these things will help do our share for the planet, and they'll make Bloomington a better place to live -- with a higher quality of life. But make no mistake they are big challenges. Everyone Counts in addressing this existential emergency. Bloomington is well positioned, now we need to be provisioned to implement the plans we need for the 2020s. More in a minute on the need for more resources, through a Sustainability Investment Fund.

But before that we need to consider the second of our dual imperatives. Because doing our part locally to join in saving a planet from climate catastrophe, is not enough if we don't also have a community that offers successful, quality lives to all of us humans living here. Lowering our carbon footprint is half the battle. The other half is making sure that our community has a PLACE for everyone. That everyone counts. That AS WE move to a sustainable economy and address climate change, we also remedy injustices and failures that destine so many of our people to lives of pinched opportunity or worse.

More specifically, building a more inclusive community with opportunity for all, during our decade of action, means:

- accelerating our momentum to deal with affordable housing -- so people of all walks of life can live in Bloomington, raising the quality of life of so many;
- it means assuring we have jobs for all who can work, that pay living wages and support lives of dignity, including particularly green jobs that won't be outsourced or automated away;
- it means lowering the costs of living, including with lower energy and transportation costs, so effective wages and wealth can go up;
- it means investing in local food, so our essential food supply gives us much needed resilience, and also supports more of those local, green jobs; and
- it means ensuring supportive services are there for those who need them -- to deal with an illness or substance use disorder, or disability, or lack of job readiness or skills, or young kids needing child care during working hours -- so no one is left behind or on the wayside as we transform into a sustainable Bloomington.

Let me say as well, that as we address these basics of housing, jobs, transportation, food, the safety net, and more, to assure that everyone counts, everyone belongs -- we also must address the legacies of racism and injustice that persist today, right here. We explicitly need to imagine and work toward a 2030 where belonging is actual and universal. Where in Bloomington, the color of one's skin, or the zip code or country of one's birth, or the language one first learned, or whom one loves, or the gender one identifies with, that none of that determines opportunities or possibilities. We know Bloomington today carries legacies of racism and of class divisions. We see bias incidents every year. We know opportunities are not fully equal today. We know very well that racism and bigotry are present still, and demand our collective efforts to overcome them. As we work toward a Bloomington where everyone truly belongs, we must address all these legacies directly.

Bloomington has been and is doing a lot in many ways to improve our community so everyone belongs.

We've added hundreds of units of long-term affordable housing to Bloomington, with partners like Centerstone, Life Designs, Habitat for Humanity, Shalom, the Housing Authority, SCIHO, or our newest, CDFI-Friendly Bloomington. Every year we invest hundreds of thousands of local dollars directly in our social safety net, through the Jack Hopkins Fund, now boosted with an extra \$100 thousand per year dedicated to Child care support. SIREN has helped numerous low-income home owners install their own solar systems to lower costs and carbon impact. We believe the new STRIDE Crisis Diversion Center will help transform individual lives dramatically. Our state-leading transit system is exploring new routes and new micro-mobility options to enhance ways to move around town. Our new local food coordinator is working with local farmers and buyers to make local agriculture stronger and more resilient. Our Bloomington Police Department was the first in the state to hire a dedicated social worker, who along with two new neighborhood resource specialists and a new after-hours ambassador are forging stronger community connections to promote inclusion, belonging and safety. And last but definitely not least, our new Bridge Initiative, grown out of the Farmers Market challenges last year, is a community-led effort to focus on deep and persistent racial legacies and challenges, to recommend action steps as a community.

These are good and important things going on now to create a more inclusive and welcoming Bloomington. But we know we have a great deal of work still ahead, with many Bloomingtonians still not able to live the lives they want to live.

These two imperatives -- doing our part to save the planet, and assuring we have a place at the table for everyone -- these pose very big challenges in the decade ahead. But these are huge opportunities too. They are huge opportunities to create the culture and society that we hope for fervently, but that can seem beyond our grasp.

Notice similarities between the two big lists of challenges. Doing the right thing for our sustainable planet ALSO lets us do the right thing for each other -- to do the things, AT THE SAME TIME, that will help us have the kind of community we want -- more just, more livable, more equitable, more full of opportunity and high quality of life, with better food, and jobs, and health, and lifestyles. This is a big deal. As our community is doing our part to save a planet, we're also building a society that looks so much more like what we reach for.

Let me offer a reality check: We cannot expect to meet great challenges and achieve great things in this coming decade without new efforts and new resources. We cannot transform our community to be what we want by just continuing to do what we've been doing, with the resources we've been investing. It requires mobilizing new energy and resources.

State law defines how we can raise local revenues, so I have proposed what I see as our best option: a 0.5% increase to our local income tax, which we can dedicate to sustainable economic development. This substantial new income should be focused on addressing these dual challenges --- pursuing these dual opportunities -- over the next decade, for a much more sustainable Bloomington.

Over the next decade this new income would let the City invest an additional approximately \$80 million toward our better Bloomington (and provide the county with an additional \$80 million). This would support major progress toward the changes our community wants to see, in areas we know are so important to us all. This chart shows just one example of the scale of financial impact this can have....you can see the green bars, reflecting a potential 40% increase in the annual transit operating budget, a doubling of affordable housing investments and clean energy supports, and a quintupling of local food support. This is just one example to show the potential scale of impact.

And a note about our financial capacity. We are in very good shape, with strong fiscal reserves, to protect against any economic downturns. And it's important to know that, among Indiana's 20 largest cities, we in Bloomington are also a very low-tax city. Specifically, we are in the lowest quartile of those cities both for property tax rates and local income tax rates.

Today we have the lowest local income tax rate of all seven contiguous counties, and after passing a 0.5% income tax increase we would still have the third lowest rate. The tax would cost \$50 annually for every \$10,000 of taxed income. That makes one part of our challenge very clear: to be sure to invest in changes that will produce much more than that in benefits to our lower-income residents: better transportation options, and housing options, and energy options, and food options. Quality of Life.

All this data tells us two basic things:

- First, these are very significant investments relative to our current level of investments in these key areas -- they can help transform our community over the next decade, to be where we want to be by 2030: a much more sustainable community, headed toward net zero energy, and a much more truly inclusive society, where everyone belongs and has a place; and
- second, we have the financial capacity, responsibly to make these investments, given our current healthy fiscal position and our relative position in Indiana

And let's be clear: these are investments. Not expenses. Investments in a better future. The future we want. The future our residents tell us they want. To change Bloomington. They will let us look today's 10-year-olds in the eye, ten years from now in 2030, and say we did our level best.

Now, before we get ahead of ourselves, lots of details are yet to be determined, before any votes on this proposed tax and before any votes on next year's budget. This conversation started just about 7 weeks ago. It's good so many of us are talking about our options. The process to decide all this must be and will be wide open and inclusive. I've been laying out some ideas and options. Collaboration and engagement will be key, among the city council, and county colleagues, advocates, and of course the public at large, to help consider how revenues can and should be used, starting in 2021, and for 10 years through the decade. You can weigh

in right now at the city's website, and look for many more events and opportunities to explore the ideas and options in coming months. Including a convening hosted by city council on Thursday, March 5th at The Mill at 7pm.

So here's a summary from tonight: Bloomington is in a strong position, with great momentum on many fronts, and in a strong financial condition. We're facing, and we're positioned to meet, some very big challenges -- and opportunities -- ahead. It's time to accelerate our momentum and our investments. So I am calling for the Local Income Tax Council to act on this 0.5% increase by summer, for the City to create a transformative Sustainability Investment Fund. The decade of the 2020s has begun, and we need enthusiastically to grasp the opportunities in front of us. I'm also activating our Waste to Energy effort version 2.0, seriously to evaluate whether we can convert waste in our community into energy, in viable ways. And I will be forming the Green Ribbon Panel outlined last month, to meet by the end of next month. This group of public, private, and nonprofit representatives, multigenerational, regional, will help advise and build momentum on our green goals.

Serving as your mayor these past four years, I've been to hundreds of meetings and heard thousands of you talk about your hopes and dreams for Bloomington. I've heard the stories you want told, and lived, in Bloomington. I'm very proud of what we've all done together, to help so many write so many new and good stories. Today, I hear the call for more. I hear young people challenge us to do our part -- this next decade -- to become the city and the community we want to be. I hear people ask, how are we going to really welcome new residents, with affordable housing, with good jobs, with high quality of life, so diverse people from all walks of life can truly belong? I hear people ask, do we have a better way to help those struggling with substance use disorder? I hear people ask, can we keep building more trails and connections, encouraging more bikers and walkers? I hear parents wonder if their kids will have the options they did 25 years ago. I hear kids wonder if they will have a planet to live on. And a place to fit in.

Tonight we've looked out to 2030. We've talked about our reach, what we should be reaching toward. I want to ask you for a moment here as we wrap up: Where is your sanctuary, your place of safety, haven, special time -- where do you go to center yourself, and decide what's important? To gain strength for hard things? Where or with whom do you check yourself and your values, to see if you're living your values? If we're living our values as a community? Whether a religious place, or place of nature, or an activity or gathering of special people -- I'm asking you to go there, you can imagine it right now, but go there too, and think about what is Bloomington's proper role in the 2020s? And what is your role?

All this isn't easy. In fact, it's hard. But this community has always done hard things. We've pulled limestone from the earth. We've built a world class university in the middle of southern Indiana forests. We've dealt with industrial pollution and Superfund sites. We've invented lifesaving stents, and built the first color televisions. We've saved an iconic court house. We've leaned into our progressive values amid a conservative state.... We're a blueberry in a bowl of tomato soup. Bloomington can do this stuff.

My friends, the state of Bloomington is strong. We're a community full of energy and potential, where Everyone Counts. And it's our turn -- let's make the 20s a decade to remember. Thank you and good night.