



Mayor Martin J. Walsh
Address to the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce
September 24, 2015

As prepared for delivery

Thank you, **Bob [Gallery]**. And thank you for your service to the Chamber and your dedication to our city.

I want to congratulate **Jim Rooney** and **Nav Singh** on your new leadership roles at the Chamber. I look forward to working with you, as you bring your skill and passion to this vital institution.

I'd like to begin by introducing some rising new leaders at City Hall.

- **Erin Santhouse** is the new Manager of 1 in 3, our program for engaging the young adults who make up more than one third of Boston's population.
- **Katie Hammer** is our new Budget Director.
- **Tricia Lyons** is our new Director of Public Facilities.
- **Dion Irish** is new Elections Commissioner.
- **Janine Anzalota** is heading up our Office of Fair Housing and Equity.
- **Giselle Sterling** is a U.S. Marine Corps veteran and Boston's first female Commissioner of Veterans' Affairs.
- **Chris Osgood** is Chief of Streets—a cabinet post that brings together Public Works

and Transportation.

- **Jen Tracey** is the director of our new Office of Recovery Services.
- **Stefanie Seskin** is our first Active Transportation Director. Her work will support walking, biking, and healthy activity.
- **Dr. Atyia Martin** is Boston's first-ever Chief Resilience Officer, with a focus on the social fabric of our diverse city.
- **Sara Myerson** is the Executive Director of Imagine Boston 2030—Boston's first citywide plan in 50 years.
- And **Dr. Tommy Chang** is the Superintendent of the Boston Public Schools. He's joined by **Makeeba McCreary**, his chief of staff.

My cabinet is here too, and I'll ask everyone to stand.

These diverse leaders come from inside and outside City Hall; from Boston's neighborhoods and far beyond them. They reflect our commitment to unlocking the city's full potential—the wider range of perspectives and the deeper pool of talent that we need, in order to thrive.

You can see we've been busy in the 9 months since I last addressed the Chamber. Nearly 10 feet of snow was just the tip of the iceberg ... no pun intended. In the face of that challenge and others, we made real progress. And we laid the groundwork for more.

We've approached every obstacle as a chance to learn and grow, to ask new questions, and listen to more voices. Even—and especially—on our toughest challenges: we're setting ambitious goals and we're building smart, practical plans to meet them. We're finding out that Boston, as a city, can aim higher than we ever thought before.

I want us to seize this moment together. It's a time for drawing more deeply on our talent, for thinking bigger ideas, for making bolder plans. That's how we write the next chapter in Boston's great history.

Take the housing crunch that's putting so much pressure on our workforce. Last year, we launched our Plan to create 53,000 new units of housing by 2030. We got right on track by breaking the record for annual housing starts. This year, with \$2 billion of new housing

construction underway, we're on a pace to set new records for both starts and completions. We're adding more middle-class, low-income, and college housing than Boston has seen in this decade. And we've created a Housing Innovation Lab to keep pushing the envelope.

We took a similar approach to homelessness. Last year we had to close the Long Island Bridge. So we took a whole new look at how we help the most vulnerable. This spring, we opened a state-of-the-art shelter to replace every bed on Long Island. And we made it the front door of a groundbreaking new system that will end veteran homelessness and chronic homelessness in our city.

We're reinventing how people connect to city government. Last year we created a Civic Engagement cabinet, whose staff walked every last mile of city streets. This summer we launched 3-1-1. It's a phone number, a mobile app, and a social media channel that connect you to city government 24 hours a day. Download the Boston 3-1-1 app today, and you'll see how easy it is.

At City Hall last year, we added greeters and a coffee cart to make our lobby more welcoming. This summer we did what many thought was impossible. We made City Hall Plaza fun—so much fun that we got a full-page spread in the New York Times on our new lawn. We're going to keep it going, with free events all Fall.

Access, Engagement, Responsiveness. These are also the values that should govern permitting—for the businesses and residents who want to grow and improve our city. That's why we cut a full week off plan review and put more permits online than ever. And it's why we held a series of hackathons, where programmers came up with online solutions to 3 different sticking points in the process.

We've continued to review all the city's regulations, looking to eliminate unnecessary barriers. This week, I submitted to the City Council an ordinance that would remove permitting requirements for sandwich boards outside stores and restaurants, while protecting access and safety on our sidewalks. I look forward to working with the Council to pass it.

In the coming weeks, we will take another step forward, with the launch of our new permitting website. It will make permitting quicker and easier; and even provide tools for entrepreneurs to help unlock new business ideas. At long last, Boston has a modern, online permitting experience. It's one that supports new ideas rather than pushing them away. And it will only get better over time.

In development: transparency and fairness have been our guiding values. For the past 20

months, we have been driving deep change at the Boston Redevelopment Authority. We used a series of audits to get at the root of the challenges. We've placed the people and communities of Boston at the heart of the BRA's mission.

We put more functions online, including the entire zoning code. We brought record-keeping into the 21st century. Better compliance has made possible a new, transparent community benefits system. Next up, we are modernizing real estate management.

We are building a new planning office—with a nationwide search underway for a Chief Planner as well as several new staff experts. In the meantime, we've moved ahead with community planning for middle-class Growth Zones along the Red Line and Orange Line.

When I spoke with you in December, I challenged developers to reach for more inspiring architecture. Since then, we've begun to see a response. Tishman-Speyer's plan for Pier 4 is a good example. Designed by a team including local architects at Elkus Manfredi and CBT, it promises to be a new waterfront landmark. We're going to build on this momentum by triggering design review sooner in the process, saving time and money that can support more imaginative plans.

Finally, we have appointed directors to the BRA board who bring necessary new perspectives and skills. They include architect **Ted Landsmark**; and, more recently, **Priscilla Rojas**, an experienced auditor; and **Carol Downs**, a civic leader and small business owner in Jamaica Plain.

In sum, we are building, from the inside out, the world-class, community-focused development and planning agency that Boston has always deserved.

We remain committed to growing good jobs in Boston by supporting existing businesses and inviting new ones to join them. Last year, we increased funding for the Main Streets program. Next month, we are launching the city's first-ever Small Business Plan, to support enterprise all across the city. And we'll be naming the city's first Neighborhood Innovation District, connecting the power of the new economy to the talent in our community.

Meanwhile, our recruiting efforts have continued to pay off. This year we welcomed AutoDesk, Acquia, and Insight Squared; Primark, and Converse. I could go on!

But today I want to make a new announcement. LEGO Education North America will be moving its headquarters from Kansas all the way to Boston, bringing 75 good jobs and a stellar international brand that's a perfect fit for our city. CEO **Colin Gillespie** is here this

morning with his wife **Ginger**. Please join me in welcoming them to Boston.

We are also working to elevate one of the city's greatest resources: the Boston Public Library. The BPL is the oldest public circulating library in the world, and it remains a global leader. Last year we won a Knight Foundation grant to turn city data into a public resource at the Library. This year we've launched a nationwide search for the BPL's next president, under the guidance of leading digital media expert **John Palfrey**. And we have just welcomed **Lisa Bevilaqua** from the Gardner Museum as the new Director of the Boston Public Library Foundation.

So yes, we've been busy. And through it all, we've made sure to strengthen the city's financial outlook. Our 2016 budget invests in students and their schools; funds homes for our seniors; and supports innovations from smart parking meters to the redesign of our website.

We've invested more resources than ever before in the award-winning park system that means so much to our quality of life.

In contract negotiations, we are building on the relationships that have put our labor investments on a stable course.

And about that historic winter? Despite close to \$40 million in snow removal costs, we ended the winter with a budget surplus—and our Triple-A bond ratings—still intact.

As far as I'm concerned, city employees—from Public Works to Budgeting, to Police, Fire, and Parks—all shared the gold medal in our own Winter Games.

Which brings me to the Olympics. Make no mistake: we put Boston's stamp on that global institution—by holding fast to our values. Just as important, we got a chance to look at our beautiful city through the world's eyes—in all its greatness and in all its un-tapped potential. We're going to take advantage of the planning momentum the bid created. More fundamentally, I learned from the process that we can think bigger and we can think more boldly about Boston's future.

We can dream bigger dreams for our city—and if we work together, we can make them come true. Imagine Boston 2030 is going to allow us to do exactly that. As well as being the first citywide plan in 50 years, it will be a plan that goes beyond land use: to encompass how people live, work, and learn; move, create, and play in our city. Our goal is to empower everyone to weave their needs and dreams together into a shared vision of a thriving, healthy, and innovative Boston.

This kind of vision is not just about what our city looks like. It's about how we will live and how we will relate to each other. Planning can't unlock a vision unless it mobilizes the community that can build it together.

Everyone who lives and works in Boston should be asking: what can we do right now, to put our city in a position to thrive? How does our global city prepare to cross new frontiers, while nurturing our core strengths: the talent in our classrooms and workplaces, and the resilience of our tightly knit community?

For one thing, we have to make sure everyone gets the opportunity to thrive. It's not just about fairness. It's about competitiveness, and reaching our true potential. That's why, in addition to improving our own hiring practices at City Hall, we are working to empower women across Boston's workforce.

Next week, we are launching free workshops in salary negotiation, thanks to funding from the American Association of University Women. In addition, we have just launched a new program called Women Entrepreneurs Boston, or We-Bos. It will help women start businesses—especially in the high-growth spaces where the data confirms they are underrepresented.

I support pending state legislation that would take steps to close the wage gap. But as Mayor, I'm more focused on how we can change workplace culture in our city. Everyone in this room has the power, and the responsibility, to help do that.

With us this morning are the co-chairs of the Boston Women's Workforce Council: former Lieutenant Governor **Evelyn Murphy**; and **Cathy Minehan**, Dean of the School of Management at Simmons College. They are joined by Council member **Alison Quirk**, Chief of Human Resources at State Street. They'll be happy to talk to you, today, about what you can do to help close the wage gap and advance women into positions of leadership.

I'll start the conversation with a personal appeal for you to join the 60 employers who make up our Boston Talent Compact. It's a voluntary commitment to start closing the wage gap. And it's a set of tools for boosting your organization's human capital to a new level. It's 2015. It's time we do more than talk about this issue. It's time to take human capital in our city to a new level.

For many years, the Mayor has addressed the Chamber of Commerce in December. For a number of reasons, we agreed to move the date up this year. I'm tempted to say it's because we didn't want to take a chance on getting snowed out.

As everyone is saying in Boston these days, winter is coming. And with the MBTA in the news every week, we are all thinking about transportation. You're thinking about how your employees get to work; how your goods, and your customers, get to market; how your family gets around town. We've been thinking about it too. And working on it.

We started with GoBoston 2030, a comprehensive mobility plan. We studied the data. We asked over 5,000 people their ideas and their needs. We even sent staff out to join people on their daily commutes.

3 priorities rose to the top: People need a system that is more reliable; that is safer; and that makes the entire city more accessible. We'll have an action plan ready in the spring. But there's plenty we can do right now, using technology and common sense.

To start, we'll fight traffic congestion. We're going to use data from our partners at the traffic app Waze, to target enforcement of "Don't Block the Box." And with the help of a new class of Parking Enforcement Officers, we're going to crack down on double-parking downtown.

Longer-term, we're looking at the impact of meter parking on traffic. At \$1.25 an hour, our meters are 3 to 5 times cheaper than other cities'. In busy areas, they increase congestion by creating an incentive to circle the block. So we're going to study a plan that could give select parking meters flexible rates, based on demand. It's a model proven in San Francisco to reduce search time by 43%. The price shifts would be reasonable, and our new smart parking meters will make paying easy. We'll look at how to re-invest the revenue in the areas where it is collected.

The bottom line is: \$1.25 an hour isn't working in our busiest areas. I like offering a good deal, but not at the price of stress and gridlock on our streets. It's not helping anyone. And we should be looking at any plan that can help us change that.

Safety is another major concern. This year, we launched Vision Zero, a campaign to move us toward eliminating fatal accidents. We're putting together a toolkit for neighborhood streets, to slow speeding and reduce the danger to pedestrians. We're making changes in the Back Bay, to improve safety along one of the busiest bike routes in our city.

We can also do more in street design to ease congestion, stress, and danger. I can announce today that I will sign an executive order making Complete Streets our design policy moving forward. Complete Streets is a nationally recognized approach for balancing public space among cars, transit, walkers, and cyclists. It's that balance we need, to make our streets flow better and function better as we grow.

The urgency behind these measures was made tragically clear in August, when a cyclist lost her life. We've made progress, but we have to do more. And we have to do it without delay.

The way we move around our city matters. It affects our productivity. It affects our quality of life and our environment. It affects our safety and our sense of community.

We'll keep planning and innovating and working with state partners. But in the meantime, we're going to act. We're going to be ready for winter. And we're going to make moving through Boston a bit smoother, a bit greener, and a bit safer for everyone.

I want to close by focusing our attention on the young people of Boston. We have sustained our commitment to opportunity as the key to thriving youth and healthy neighborhoods.

In June, we were proud to receive the U.S. Conference of Mayors' Livable Cities Award for our work empowering young people to vote on budget priorities. In July we opened a Connection Center in Roxbury, to reach the nearly 5,000 young people who are out of school and out of work.

And we worked all year to grow Boston's groundbreaking summer jobs program. I'm pleased to report that together we hired 10,360 young people—173 more than last year. I want to thank every single employer who hired a teen, especially the 40 new employers we added to the rolls. And I ask for your help in recruiting more for next year. These investments will pay huge dividends in the long run—for those young people, for our communities, and for our workforce.

That brings me to my final, and most important, subject. I want to ask you, today, to go “all in” with me to support a new era of public education in Boston. For 20 months, we have been laying the groundwork.

- We expanded pre-kindergarten by 380 seats in the last 2 years.
- We extended the school day by 40 minutes.
- We launched a facilities plan and a high school redesign.
- And we tripled the size of our college completion program.

Next, we're going to pilot free college savings accounts. **Dr. Chang** has hit the ground running, driving ahead with his 100-day plan. I can announce another step we are taking this fall.

As some of you know, the Mayor's Office of New Urban Mechanics is our nationally recognized civic innovation agency. Located right next to my office, they are the team

behind everything from smart parking meters to the 3-1-1 app. They've also created engagement tools for parents, like the Discover BPS website.

I want to put this model of dedicated innovation to work for the Boston Public Schools. So starting this fall, the New Urban Mechanics will help create the BPS Experience Lab at School Department headquarters in Roxbury. We'll bring a new spirit of creative problem-solving to the challenges of urban education, from sharing information with parents to using technology in the classroom.

We're moving forward. But we need, our kids need, more than smart policies. They need a whole community behind them. Not just their school, and not just their neighborhood—all of us.

Every day, business leaders ask me: what can I do to help Boston's schools? Today, I want to offer you a concrete way that you can not only help, but make a big difference.

Three years ago, Natixis Global Asset Management created a special relationship with the Winthrop Elementary School in Dorchester. To this day, they are helping the Winthrop with technology, mentoring, the arts, and more. We think it's time for other successful businesses in our city to follow suit.

It's about more than resources. It's about a commitment to your community. And it's about doing the smart thing, for the future of our economy. Our schools of today contain your workforce of tomorrow. Help us make sure they are ready to take flight. Help us scale up the Adopt-a-School program to transformative heights, and create another Boston model for the nation to follow.

I could say more—I could go on all morning about this topic. But you've probably heard enough from me today.

I'd rather you hear from a more compelling source. I'd like to introduce you to some very important Bostonians: Joining us today are **Leah Blake-McKetty**, Principal of the Winthrop School; and students **Jaleel Cardoso** and **Marie Augustin**. They are going to talk about what Natixis commitment has meant to them.

[Children speak]

Thank you, **Jaleel** and **Marie**.

If you'd like to have this kind of impact, I invite you to join me for a lunch meeting at the

Parkman House in the coming weeks. We'll be joined by Dr. **Chang**, Education Chief **Rahn Dorsey**, Chief of Economic Development **John Barros**, and the Chamber's own **Jim Rooney**.

We'll talk about the Boston Public Schools and the wonderful children they serve. We'll talk about how to create a relationship with a school. And we'll talk about how to lift up the hopes and dreams of young people like **Jaleel** and **Marie**.

When I speak to young people, I tell them: think about the dream you have at this moment. Now imagine taking it one, or two, or three steps further. Dream bigger dreams, because you are capable of more than you know.

That was my experience in life. Boston was the city that nurtured my dreams and made them come true.

Right now is a time for Boston to dream bigger dreams. Through Imagine Boston 2030—and, just as important, in offices, classrooms, and around every dinner table—that's what we're going to do: share our dreams, combine our talents, and write the next chapter together in Boston's great history.

Thank you, and God Bless the City of Boston.

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