

State of the City 2025



Carmella R. Mantello

Mayor, City of Troy

Good evening to my family, members of the City Council, esteemed guests, and my fellow Trojans.

It is an honor to stand before you tonight to deliver my second State of the City Address. I want to begin by expressing my deepest gratitude to those who made this evening possible— my family and the great people of Troy. Thank you for your trust, your resilience, your patience and your commitment to our great city.

A city is only as strong as the foundation it stands on, and for too long, Troy has suffered under a system of band-aid solutions—quick fixes that failed to address the underlying issues holding us back. That era is over. This administration is committed to foundational fixes, not band-aid solutions. We are not here to just patch potholes; we are here to rebuild roads. We are not here to temporarily reduce crime; we are here to make Troy permanently safer. We are not here to defer problems like our archaic 1980's accounting system to the next administration; we are here to solve them once and for all.

But before we go any further, I want to express my deepest gratitude to Mike Cocca, Mike Fusco and the team for hosting this year's state of the city in the beautiful Franklin Plaza here tonight. Thank you for having us here tonight. Mike, Franklin Plaza has served the people of Troy for a very long time, and I can't tell you how

much of an important role you and your team have played in the revitalization of our city. You took a big leap of faith purchasing this historic bank years ago, and I want you to know how appreciative we are for your investments and support from the people who call Troy home. Just like you had the vision decades ago, our administration too has a big vision for the future of our city.

I would also like to give a special thank you to our Deputy Mayor, Seamus Donnelly. Seam, from the moment we took office together, you have been my right hand. You have been a steady voice of reason and knowledge during times of adversity. The goals we set just one year ago and have since conquered would not be possible without you by my side. Thank you, Seam.

I want to welcome my family, my husband Paul and my son James who are watching at home, my mom, my siblings and my other son Paulie who is in Kansas City... Thankfully he is not a Chiefs fan – you guys are my rock. I must say, being mayor of this city is a pretty sweet gig – but the greatest thing I will ever do in my life is being a wife, a daughter, and a mom to two amazing boys. Thank you all and I love you very much.

Most importantly, I want to extend my appreciation and love for the people of Troy – thank you for the trust you have placed in me to lead our great city. I consider being your mayor a significant responsibility and I am wholeheartedly dedicated to doing everything that I can to make Troy the best place to work, live, and raise a family. This

past year has been a testament to the strength, resilience, and the spirit of Troy – a city with proud history, and an incredibly bright future.

From our historic downtown to our vibrant neighborhoods, from our small businesses to our dedicated public servants, Troy is a city on the rise – and I am happy to report the state of our city is strong. But fighting for a Safer-Cleaner future does not come without obstacles. Tonight, I will outline where we stand, the progress we have made, and the bold vision that will guide us forward in the years ahead.

From day one, our administration hit the ground running, focusing on the core priorities that matter most to you – public safety, economic growth, infrastructure, protecting our city's assets and improving the Quality-of-Life for you and future generations. We've taken decisive and meaningful actions to invest in our roads, parks, and support the hardworking men and women who make Troy the most special city in New York State.

Our administration has been working day in and day out these last 13 months. But the successes we have shared in such a short amount of time are truly just the beginning. We do have ambitious goals ahead, and achieving them will require collaboration, determination, and a shared commitment to making Troy the best it can possibly be. I am confident that together, we will continue building a Safer-Cleaner and more prosperous future for all.

I am proud to recognize the incredible work of our Troy Police Department. Public safety is the bedrock of any thriving city, it is a key factor in improving your Quality-of-Life, and we have refused to settle for half-measures. That is why we implemented a new fleet camera program, enhancing transparency and accountability for law enforcement. These are not just cameras; they are a foundation for trust between officers and residents that will last for generations.

Last year we implemented the Troy PD's Sentinel Operation and it is a major step in ensuring a safer, stronger community. This specialized team, composed of highly trained officers with expertise in crime suppression, is designed to tackle strategic issues impacting our neighborhoods—everything from drug sales to lewd behavior and quality-of-life concerns. By maintaining police presence on our streets while being activated for targeted enforcement, the Sentinel Unit has already seen tremendous success—recovering stolen vehicles, seizing narcotics, and taking illegal firearms off our streets. This is not a temporary crackdown—it's a permanent shift in how we combat violent crime. One proof of this effort is the remarkable strides our officers have made in taking dangerous weapons off our streets. This past year alone, we recovered over 70 firearms used in violent crimes. Each one of these recoveries represents a life potentially saved and a step toward a safer Troy. Shootings are down 33%

We also made history in 2024 by promoting Mary Magnetto as Troy's first female command officer. Mary's leadership, professionalism, and commitment to our city make her a trailblazer. Her promotion is not just a milestone for our department – it's a powerful example for future generations of officers.

Since 2024, we have welcomed 17 new police officers to the Troy Police Department, strengthening our commitment to public safety and ensuring that our officers have the support they need to protect and serve our community. These new hires bring fresh energy, dedication, and a deep commitment to keeping Troy safe. As we continue to invest in our police force, we are not only enhancing crime prevention and community policing but also reinforcing the trust between law enforcement and our residents. I am incredibly proud of these new officers and look forward to seeing the positive impact they will have on our city.

The new PBA contract and a four-year agreement with the Command Officers Association of Troy reflect our commitment to recruitment and retention in our officers, recognizing their dedication, and ensuring they have the resources needed to serve Troy effectively. We value the sacrifices they make, and this contract is a testament to our appreciation for their service and our ongoing commitment to public safety. When I took office, the starting pay for a Troy police officer was \$40,000 (miserably lower than surrounding communities) – I am proud to say through these successful negotiations – the starting pay is now over \$50,000.

Because of this, this past year we had the highest number of applicants for our police department in years. This is a tremendous achievement for our officers and their families.

Public safety will always be the top priority of my administration. In 2025, under the leadership of Chief Dan DeWolf, Deputy Chief Chris Kehn, Assistant Chief Steve Barker and the rest of our Troy Police Force. We will double down on our commitment to ensuring that every resident of Troy feels safe in their homes, their neighborhoods and throughout the city. Last year, I promised the public access to scanners - I am proud to announce that there will soon be access to those scanners, in the meantime, there will be an online version made available.

In 2025, we will launch a Domestic Violence Intervention Program—not a reactive measure, but a proactive initiative that aligns with statewide efforts to prevent violence before it begins. Likewise, our expanded citywide camera system isn't just about catching crime after the fact—it's about stopping it in its tracks.

These initiatives represent our unwavering dedication to public safety and our determination to build a stronger, safer Troy for all. To our police officers and first responders—thank you for your service and your commitment to protecting our city. Together, we will make 2025 a year of progress, innovation, and continued success.

The dedication and hard work of our Troy Fire Department continues to be a cornerstone of our city's safety and well-being. Over the past year, we've made tremendous strides in improving the department's capabilities, ensuring they have the resources needed to respond to emergencies effectively. In 2024, our firefighters answered over 13,000 calls providing quick and professional service to our community.

We are proud to continue funding our PEAK Ambulance Service through 2025 and we are committed in the future to continue this necessary funding. We are so committed that we have funded 24-hour service compared to the 12-hour service in the past. This investment provides high-quality emergency medical services when needed. This continued commitment strengthens and reaffirms our ability to provide reliable, life-saving care for the community. Within the coming weeks the firefighter staffing and ambulance study will be made public. It is no surprise we have to address our broken and outdated staffing model.

Our partnership with Hudson Valley Community College continues to grow, which has allowed us to have 15 graduates from the highly respected HVCC paramedic program, further enhancing the quality of care our department provides.

In addition to investing in training and personnel, we've made significant investments in equipment. We recently took delivery of a new Sutphen Ladder Truck at a cost of \$1.2 million, as well as a new PL Custom ambulance and a new Sutphen

Pumper, all vital tools that will ensure our department is equipped to handle any situation.

Looking ahead, a project that was dead when my administration took office - we are already moving forward with the plan and design to build a state-of-the-art station 1 firehouse in the Burgh', that will better serve our community and our firefighters. The current dilapidated Lansingburgh Firehouse has looked more temporary than permanent - this new critical investment in public safety and prioritizes the needs of our firefighters so that they can enhance their ability to serve our residents in times of emergency. In this administration, we preserve our assets instead of letting them fall apart, or we will work to create new ones. This new firehouse will not only be efficient and safer, but it will be the economic catalyst to the bounce back of the corridor and neighborhood.

Just as we're investing in new equipment and a firehouse, we're also investing in our firefighters through our negotiations with the Unified Firefighters Association of Troy (UFA) on a new contract. Our discussions with the new UFA President have been productive, and I'm confident we'll reach an agreement that honors our firefighters' dedication and ensures they have the resources needed to serve Troy effectively.

Thank you to Chief Rich Cellucci, Deputy Chief Jared Barringer, Assistant Chief Mike Kelleher, and our entire Fire Department for your outstanding service.

Access to clean, safe drinking water is not a luxury, it's a necessity. Our administration has made safe drinking water a top priority, replacing over 400 lead service lines across Troy, over 300 were done in 2024. We've also conducted over 700 inventory excavations to identify remaining lead pipes, distributed nearly 1000 Brita pitchers to residents, and engaged in door-to-door outreach to educate our community. (I was out there myself on the street along with department heads) This effort is about more than just infrastructure; it's about peace of mind. Every family deserves to know that the water they drink, cook with, and bathe in is safe.

Beyond our city limits, Troy serves as a regional water provider serving 135,000 people across nine municipalities; we've also upgraded the Eddy's Lane pumping station. In my first two weeks, I had to issue an emergency declaration on Eddy's Pumping Station. My administration, with the help of our amazing DPU crew, installed new valves and controls, preventing potential service disruptions and flooding risks. We're moving from band-aid solutions to comprehensive infrastructure improvements because our residents deserve nothing less.

Clean water isn't just an investment in infrastructure, it's an investment in our health, our neighborhoods, and our future. We will continue this momentum, replacing outdated lead pipes and ensuring every resident can trust the water that flows into their homes. An RFP will be out in the coming weeks requesting multiple contractors to go gangbusters. I want to thank our dedicated city teams and

community partners for their commitment to this effort. Together, we are building a safer, healthier Troy for generations to come. I want to thank Senator Chuck Schumer for the 13 million dollars in federal funding so that we can complete our mission to replace all lead pipes throughout the city. This funding would not be possible without the hard work and effort put into the application from our staff at the water plant which is part of our Public Utilities Department. Whether it's repairing water main breaks in the freezing cold at 2am, grant applications... I see you; I see your dedication firsthand – I am committed to fixing our decades old staffing model... I am committed to making our salaries competitive for CDL Drivers and paying for you to get your license. Our city is nothing without a strong workforce, and I can't thank you all enough for the time you put into keeping our city firing on all cylinders.

For too long, our kids and residents have lacked an accessible ice rink right here in Troy. But as of a few weeks ago, that has changed! The Knick Ice Rink is once again a place where young athletes can hone their skills, where families can create lifelong memories, and where our entire community can come together to enjoy the thrill of skating, hockey, and recreational entertainment – for the first time in nearly a decade.

This is more than just a reopening—it's an investment in our children's future. It is another example of how we are reviving our city's long-neglected assets and

bringing them back to life. By providing a positive alternative for our youth, we are fostering a stronger, healthier, and more engaged community - this will improve the Quality-of-Life. Whether it's a child lacing up their skates for the first time or a team taking the ice under the bright arena lights, the Knick is a place of joy, teamwork, and tradition for generations to come. One of the most important components of reopening the Knick was to ensure that everyone in our community can access the ice. That is why we have implemented free skating rentals for all Troy and Rensselaer County and free open skate times for all Veterans, Active-Duty Military, Seniors, and children aged 6 and under who are also residents

I want to thank our County Executive Steve McLaughlin and Rensselaer County Legislature and the City Council members who voted to reopen the Knick. This HISTORIC partnership on this project with an investment of \$2 million dollars from the county to turn this into reality. Steve, thank you. Thank you to everyone who played a role in making this reopening a reality—our city staff, community leaders, and all the passionate individuals who never gave up on bringing the Knick back to life. This is a win for Troy, and I can't wait to see this rink filled with energy, excitement, and smiles.

Creating Safer – Cleaner neighborhoods is a top priority. The Quality-of-Life Task Force plays a vital role in keeping Troy safe, vibrant, and growing. Through their hard work and dedication, we've made significant progress in holding property owners

accountable, keeping our streets and alleyways clean, ensuring safe buildings, and fostering responsible development across our city.

In September we launched Operation Sweep, building on this administration's Safer-Cleaner initiative to bring together multiple city departments – including our code enforcement, litter patrol, sanitation to tackle our Quality-of-Life issues head on. But it is more than just enforcement – it is about engagement. Our teams aren't just issuing citations; they're speaking directly with the homeowners and tenants, educating them on city regulations, and, in many cases, addressing issues on the spot. During each sweep, we visit key areas where neighborhood organizations and residents have raised concerns about safety and property conditions. By working collaboratively, we're able to not only identify violations but also provide immediate solutions and resources. This hands-on approach fosters stronger connections between the city and our residents, empowering everyone to take pride in their communities. Operation Sweep is about action, accountability, and partnership. Together, we're making Troy a safer, cleaner place to live. I am proud and excited to continue these efforts to ensure that every neighborhood benefits from this initiative. In 2025, we will be implementing various traffic calming and enforcement measures in neighborhoods across the city to ensure safety for all travelers. This project is just another example of this administration prioritizing smart, common-sense improvements to our streets

In 2024 alone, our department issued over 1000 building permits, generating \$1.1 million in total payments—a testament to the growing investment in our city. These permits reflect new construction, renovations, and improvements that strengthen our neighborhoods and enhance the quality of life for all residents.

Code enforcement is a key part of our Quality-of-Life Task Force and it is about more than just regulations – it's about protecting our community, preserving our historic charm, and ensuring that every resident has a safe and well-maintained place to call home. I want to thank our Code Enforcement team for their tireless efforts, and I look forward to continuing this momentum as we build a stronger, safer Troy together. I would also like to highlight our partnership with Rensselaer County for our Landlord registry program which allows our code enforcement department to inspect properties for lead throughout the city.

One of the most impactful ways we have done this is by transforming foreclosed Red X properties into homes once again. These buildings, once symbols of neglect and blight, now represent opportunity—opportunity for first-time homebuyers to achieve their dream of homeownership, for investors to breathe new life into our neighborhoods, and for all of us to build a stronger, safer, and more vibrant Troy.

By doing so, we're not just fixing structures, we're improving quality of life, increasing property values, and making our streets safer and more welcoming. I want to highlight our partnership with the newly revived Troy Community Land Bank

which is an important tool in revitalizing our neighborhoods and community.

Another one of our great partnerships with TRIP utilizing \$1 million dollars in home improvement grants.

To our first-time homebuyers and investors: Now is the time to take advantage of

this opportunity! Troy is a city on the rise, and we want you to be part of its growth.

Our administration is committed to providing the tools and support needed to make homeownership and property investment more accessible, helping you turn these once-forgotten spaces into places of pride and community.

Together, we are turning blight into progress, vacancies into homes, and challenges into success stories. Let's keep Troy moving forward!

My administration will be making historic investments in Frear Park. Frear Park is not just a magnificent golf course – it is a place where families gather, friends connect, and lifelong memories are made. That's why we're going to be making major investments to enhance this incredible space, ensuring it remains a premier destination for recreation and community enjoyment. Frear Park is a gem of our city, and these investments will ensure it remains a vibrant, thriving part of Troy's future. I can't wait to see the transformation and to share in the exciting next chapter for this beloved park. I want to thank our City Council who unanimously voted in favor of allocating almost \$4 million dollars to the park.

One of the most exciting transformations ahead is the revitalization of the former Park Pub restaurant. For years, this beloved eatery served as a gathering place for our community - a spot where families celebrated, golfers relaxed after a round, and friends came together. But unfortunately, this is another asset that was left neglected. Our plan has been to bring new life to this space, creating a welcoming environment that can be enjoyed by all - where new memories will be made for generations to come. As you walked in this evening, you saw two preliminary designs for a new one-of-a-kind facility and a brand-new playground accessible for all, including those with intellectual, physical, and developmental disabilities – a place where children, like my son James, can create lifelong memories and families can enjoy the outdoors in a safe and welcoming environment.

Prospect Park is one of Troy's greatest treasures, a place where families gather, children play, and our community comes together. That's why we are making major investments to enhance and revitalize this beloved space. With almost \$1 million dollars in funding, you will see a new playground, new tennis courts, new pickleball courts, and new paved roads. The master plan for Prospect Park won't be dictated by City Hall—it will be shaped by your voices, your ideas, and your vision for what this park should be. We will be doing numerous community engagement sessions on this plan to ensure that. This will be a park for the people, built by the people, and

I am proud that we are working together to make it a true destination for recreation and community gatherings.

As we move forward, we will continue to invest in our public spaces because parks like Prospect Park are the heart of our neighborhoods. Why? Because this administration is committed to preserving and protecting our assets – not letting them fall to pieces. I truly cannot wait to see this transformation, and I thank everyone who has contributed to making this vision a reality.

One of the projects I'm very proud of is the 112th Street Park in Burgh. After long delays due to material shortages, we got this project back on track—and today, it's thriving! From pickleball courts to a vibrant playground, it's wonderful to see families and kids from the Burgh Boys and Girls Club enjoying this space every day.

In South Troy, we've created a much-needed pocket park at Canal Avenue. Small but impactful, this playground is already a favorite for families, offering another safe and welcoming space for children to play.

We're also bringing history back to life with the Little Italy Historic Market Project. This space was once a vital gathering place, and soon, it will be again—with improved bocce courts, sprinklers, a dog run, shaded seating, and much more. This is the final piece in revitalizing the corridor, building on the success of beloved businesses like DeFazio's, Jo's, Prism, Sabor, and Can Stop, as well as dedicated

organizations like TEAM HERO. With improvements to roads and retaining walls, plus the addition of our new mobility hub, we are truly strengthening this neighborhood for generations to come. This progress is not possible without the help and partnership of our Little Italy Quality-of-Life Committee, thank you all for your incredible work and dedication to this mission.

And, of course, I can't talk about revitalization without mentioning Knick Pool. We continue to bring this incredible space back to life, turning it into a true destination for our community. When combined with the ice rink, playground, and pavilion, this will be a premier recreational complex, offering year-round activities for residents of all ages and abilities. We hope the Knick Board continues to work with the city and do what's right for our residents and families in the Burgh' and Troy. I am proud to announce that I am going to be putting a proposal in front of the council in the near future for funding to add long-awaited amenities to Kinloch Park. Many of you are aware of the drainage issues at the park, this is something our administration has been working on to improve. We look forward to holding community engagement meetings to discuss the future of the park with you all.

These projects aren't just about buildings and parks, they're about investing in the people of Troy. They're about ensuring our families have great places to gather, play, and build lasting memories. I'm proud of what we've accomplished so far, and I know that together, we will continue to move our city forward.

In April, we were successful in another important mission - not just for the City of Troy, but for the women and families who rely on the Burdett Birthing Center for necessary healthcare. When we heard the center was at risk, we knew we had to fight. Because this is more than a facility, this is about ensuring every mother has access to safe, quality care right here in our community.

Women's health must be a priority and keeping Burdett open means keeping that promise. It means ensuring that expecting mothers have a place to deliver with dignity, with expert care, and with the support they deserve.

This wouldn't have been possible without the relentless advocacy and partnership of the people of our city, Senator Jake Ashby, Assemblyman John McDonald, and County Executive Steve McLaughlin. We crossed the political aisle and joined forces to protect essential healthcare services and that has made all the difference. To everyone who raised their voices, signed petitions, and stood up for this critical healthcare resource—thank you. This is what happens when a community comes together. This is what happens when we fight for what's right. And today, we celebrate a future where mothers and babies in Troy continue to have the care they need.

The Hudson River has always been a part of my life—during my time as Executive Director of the Hudson River Valley Greenway and Director of the New York State

Canal System, I saw firsthand the power our waterways have to connect communities, drive tourism, and boost local economies.

Now, as Mayor, I am proud to bring that vision to Troy by welcoming American Cruise Lines and the visitors they bring to our historic and vibrant city.

This partnership will enhance local tourism, support our small businesses, and help grow our economy. When visitors step off these cruise ships, they will experience our incredible restaurants, shops, and cultural attractions, bringing new energy and opportunity to our city.

In May of 2024, we reached a significant milestone for the future of Troy's waterfront.

After decades of our riverfront being dominated by a massive salt pile, Troy is reclaiming its waterfront destiny. Our landmark agreement with American Rock Salt in May 2024 will finally relocate this industrial barrier, unlocking prime riverfront land for recreation, business, and community spaces. This isn't just about removing salt – it's about restoring public access to our magnificent Hudson River shoreline and catalyzing the waterfront transformation our residents have long envisioned.

Through persistence and partnership, we're turning a longtime obstacle into Troy's next great opportunity. Our waterfront is one of Troy's greatest assets, and this is just the beginning. By embracing our riverfront, investing in our infrastructure, and strengthening partnerships like this one, we are ensuring a stronger, more prosperous future for our city.

Our Planning Department has been hard at work, making strategic investments and driving projects that strengthen our economy, enhance our public spaces, and support our local businesses. Through the Small Business 50/50 Matching Grant Program, funded by ARPA, we assisted local businesses with capital improvement projects investing over \$800,000 in grant funds, matched dollar-for-dollar by our business owners. These projects are making a real impact, helping small businesses grow and thrive right here in Troy.

Recently, Troy was awarded \$1 million dollars in Pro-Community Housing Program funds which will give a significant boost to our Marina North Riverwalk Project. This investment will help expand housing opportunities while enhancing our waterfront, which is second to none – while ensuring our residents can enjoy and benefit from our city's continued growth and revitalization. Thank you to our amazing staff in the planning department for their hard work to secure this crucial funding.

One of the most significant projects underway is the Route 2 Congress-Ferry Corridor Improvement Project. The preliminary design has been completed, and we've held two public meetings to ensure community input. This project will be truly transformational, improving connectivity and revitalizing a key corridor in our city. Part of these improvements will be to fix the Ferry Street Tunnel and connect River Street.

And of course, I could not forget the huge, transformational project on Campbell's Avenue - again, this is not a band aid solution - this was a complete reconstruction of the road, drainage, accessible sidewalks that cover the full length, along with lead pipe replacement.

In addition to infrastructure improvements, Troy is seeing unprecedented investment in housing and development, including:

- Taylor I – A \$67 million project bringing 141 new housing units.
- City Station North – An \$80 million investment adding 87 units.
- Kings II Landing – A \$17 million project with 62 units.
- The Rise/Collar City – A \$3 million investment creating 43 units.
- Catholic Central – A \$10 million redevelopment delivering 69 units.
- Flanagan Building – An \$11 million project adding 72 units.
- A future investment on the old Leonard Hospital site

These projects represent more than just numbers; they represent progress, new opportunities, and a stronger, more vibrant Troy. With smart planning and strategic investment, we are ensuring our city continues to grow while preserving its unique character and charm. I'm proud of the work we've done, and I look forward to seeing these projects come to life!

We are also making exciting progress on the District Geothermal Project, working closely with the LDC team, National Grid, NYSERDA, and our contractors to move this innovative clean energy initiative forward. I want to thank our LDC executive director deputy mayor Seamus Donnelly, our planning commissioner Randy Coburn and the staff. The momentum is building, and we will have much more to report in the coming months as we advance through key design and environmental review stages.

Our commitment to arts, culture, and history remains strong as well. We proudly contributed \$20,000 toward the Contemporary Circus and Immersive Arts Center's Circus in the Park, supported the Charles Nalle Walking Memorial, a \$29,750 initiative by the Hart Cluett Museum and RPI students, celebrated the Troy Art Block, which won "Best New Festival" in USA Today's 10Best Readers' Choice Awards, bringing national recognition to our vibrant arts scene. I also want to highlight the partnership with proctor's in revitalizing the American Theater which the city has contributed \$1 million in ARPA Funds for. Speaking of national recognition - Having HBO's hit show – The Gilded Age film in Troy is an incredible opportunity to showcase our city's history and stunning architecture. Troy's unique charm and well-preserved 19th century buildings made it the perfect backdrop, highlighting our community's deep connection to the Gilded Age and boosting our economic

activity. If you haven't watched the Gilded Age... you should, you just may recognize a few buildings in some scenes.

These projects reflect the forward-thinking vision we have for Troy—one that supports small businesses, promotes clean energy, preserves our history, and fosters the arts. I want to thank our Planning Department for their dedication, and I look forward to continuing this momentum in the months ahead.

As we honor Black History Month this February, we celebrate the countless contributions of African Americans to our nation and to the vibrant community of Troy. This is a time to reflect on our shared history, recognize the progress we've made, and recommit to building a future that is inclusive, diverse, and full of opportunity for all.

In that spirit, I am incredibly proud of the work being done through Troy's first Office of Diversity, Opportunity, and Outreach, led by Kevin Pryor. His leadership is helping to create pathways for our youth, providing them with positive alternatives and empowering them to succeed.

Kevin's work is crucial in keeping our young people away from the streets and offering them the tools they need to thrive. Whether through mentorship, community engagement, or creating opportunities for education and growth, their efforts are helping to build a brighter future for Troy's next generation.

This month, as we honor the past, we also celebrate the work being done right here in Troy to ensure that all our residents, especially our youth, have the support and opportunities they deserve. Thank you to Kevin and everyone who is committed to making Troy a place where opportunity knows no bounds. Together, we will continue to move Troy forward, with pride in our diversity and a shared vision for a better tomorrow.

Beyond cybersecurity, we are also working to upgrade our city's accounting system to a modern solution. If you have watched the news, you know it has been a long road to finding a comptroller, but as of this past week's confirmation, we are excited to take a significant step forward with the hiring of our new City Comptroller, Jack Krokos.

We've found an exceptional leader in Jack as our new comptroller. His accounting experience comes at a crucial time – our accounting systems are nearly 40 years old and on the precipice of extinction. Under his leadership, we'll modernize our city's financial operations with updated technology that enhances efficiency and transparency. I would like to thank our treasurer, Gabrielle Mahoney, for her hard work and dedication, which are totally unmatched. These improvements, coupled with strengthened cybersecurity, aren't just upgrades – they're investments in protecting our city and ensuring we're prepared for the future.

I look forward to working with Jack as we continue to strengthen Troy's financial future and create a city that is not only more efficient but also more transparent and responsive to the needs of our residents. Jack, thank you for choosing Troy.

Today, I'm proud to announce a defining moment in Troy's revitalization - the transformation of One Monument Square. Thanks to \$19 million in funding from New York State, we are finally turning what has been a HOLE IN THE GROUND into the centerpiece our downtown deserves. This isn't another temporary fix or partial solution - this is a complete transformation that will anchor our downtown and waterfront for generations to come.

This project exemplifies our commitment to real, lasting solutions. Where others saw a vacant lot, we envisioned a vibrant hub of economic activity and community life. One Monument Square will be more than a development project – it will be the beating heart of our downtown, a gathering place that celebrates Troy's character while driving our economic future forward.

The success of this project reflects the power of persistence and partnership. I want to particularly recognize Assemblyman John McDonald, whose tireless advocacy helped secure this transformative funding. This is what happens when we think big and refuse to settle for band-aid solutions.

When complete, One Monument Square will be more than just a building—it will be a symbol of Troy's renaissance, a place where commerce thrives, community gathers, and our waterfront comes alive. This is the kind of foundational investment that will shape Troy's future for decades to come, and I can't wait to see it rise from the ground and take its place as the crown jewel of our downtown.

I want to take a moment to recognize the three pillars of higher education that make Troy such a dynamic and vibrant community: Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Hudson Valley Community College, and Russell Sage College.

These institutions are not only academic powerhouses, but they are also tremendous partners in our shared mission to support and empower the youth of Troy. From providing invaluable opportunities for internships and hands-on learning to collaborating on initiatives that prepare our young people for successful careers, the contributions of our colleges are immeasurable.

Through their dedication, we have seen students grow, learn, and thrive—preparing for bright futures while also giving back to our city. The partnership between our colleges and the city is truly fruitful and productive, and I look forward to all that we will continue to accomplish together.

Thank you to all the faculty, staff, and students for your ongoing commitment to our youth and to making Troy a better place for all of us. Together, we are shaping the leaders of tomorrow and building a stronger, brighter future for Troy.

Folks, it is now time to land this plane and get you home to your families. But before I do, I want to share with you all a very exciting announcement. I am thrilled to announce that Troy will soon have a new home for our City Hall, a move that embodies our commitment to foundational fixes, not band-aid solutions. For too long, our government has operated in temporary and inefficient spaces - this ends now.

A permanent City Hall is not just about a new building; it is about investing in the long-term strength and stability of our city. This new location will offer greater accessibility and efficiency, ensuring that government services are delivered effectively to every resident. It will serve as a hub for community engagement and civic participation, where ideas become actions and challenges become opportunities.

By investing in a permanent City Hall, we are reinforcing our commitment to open, transparent, and effective governance that puts the needs of our citizens first. This is more than a building project, it's a transformational step that ensures we are building the foundation for a stronger, more resilient Troy that will serve our city for generations to come.

As we enter the spring season, I look forward to announcing this historic project that will finally give our city government the permanent home it deserves—and our citizens the accessible, efficient services they deserve."

But this is just the beginning. 2025 and beyond will bring even greater opportunities to strengthen our neighborhoods, support our local businesses, and improve the quality of life for every resident. We will continue to invest in public safety, modernize our city's dilapidated infrastructure, and create new opportunities for economic growth—ensuring that Troy remains a city where families, businesses, and future generations can thrive.

Ladies and Gentlemen - THIS IS OUR MOMENT - The future of Troy is bright, and I have no doubt that by working together, we will continue to build a safer - cleaner and more prosperous city for all. We will continue to improve the Quality-of-Life of our residents and deliver the best services. Thank you for your support, your dedication, and your belief in our great city.

To everyone here tonight, our City Council, Department Heads, Elected Officials across Troy and Rensselaer County, and my fellow Trojans – Thank you all for being here tonight, here is to a prosperous 2025 and let's keep Troy moving forward!