



# Office of the Mayor

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## STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS

Mayor Jim Paine

Nearly one year ago, I took an oath. I was nervous. Not to stand in front of a crowd, I'm actually okay with that. I knew that I was accepting a heavy responsibility. Throughout my campaign I told the people of Superior that in exchange for your vote, I would work tirelessly to build a city that works for everyone. And I had offered more than my hard work. I told you that I had ideas that would move our city forward and that I had the education, the relationships, and the experience to get it done. Elections are not simply popularity contests, especially in Superior. In that moment, I knew that I had earned the trust of the people not because of my personality, but because you believed I could deliver real results for our community.

So if you noticed my hand shaking a little, or a slight quavering of my voice, it's because I had a difficult job ahead of me. And I knew that I would be held accountable. But I also knew that I wouldn't be doing the job alone. I told you during that campaign that we were in this together. I told you that real progress takes faith and effort and ideas and optimism from all of us.

I showed up to work that day and I have been working every single day since. But you have shown up too. And that's why I get to stand here tonight and tell you the story of a city on the rise.

Mr. Banker: Thank you for your warm introduction. Your wisdom, support, and friendship have been unwavering since the moment I met you. You are one of the reasons I get to live this incredible honor. You are an example of the very best we can ever expect of a citizen. And your work in this community is part of the story of our success.

City Councilors, County Board Supervisors, City Staff, friends, neighbors, fellow citizens. Thank you for your attendance tonight and for your own work to improve our community. Delivering this speech was an important goal of mine. I consider it the duty of the Mayor to stand accountable to the people and report, in a timely fashion, the progress we have made on our mutual efforts. But this is also an opportunity. Leadership is not just about making decisions in the moment and hoping for the best. Leadership requires vision. It requires a

plan. And that plan should be bold. Because if we set low expectations, we can't achieve great results. So I am going to use this opportunity to set a bold course for the next year, the final of my term.

But I can't accomplish any of it alone. I told you that last year and I am going to say it again and again tonight. I need your help to move this city forward. Our greatest achievements are always won together. This speech will be a call for unity to a common purpose, a bold vision. That vision is simple, but daunting:

I believe that we can make life better for every single citizen of this City.

To do so will require the faith, support, and effort of every single one of us. But more than any other citizen, I will require leadership from our leaders. Last week many of you won election to public office. You asked for responsibility. You asked for power. You asked for authority. You got it. Now I intend to call on you to use it for the betterment of our neighbors that have placed their trust in all of us. Every single one of them.

For years, citizens have complained about stagnation and decline in our community. It seemed like nothing was working. But that isn't true. This city has always worked for some people. Some of us have always had access to jobs and opportunity, to our beautiful woods and waters, to safety and security. But that hasn't been true for everyone. We are going to change that. We are going to pursue an agenda that makes sure nobody gets left behind. That the well-being of every one of us is the responsibility of every one of us. That's what citizenship means. That's what community means.

I know this is possible. I know we can have a city that works for everyone. And I think you know it too, because for the last year we have been building it together. And we can be proud of the work we've done, especially because we've done it together.

I believe we deserve to celebrate some of the things we've accomplished in the last year.

The first responsibility of a city is to protect its citizens. Public safety and security are not just important to protect the lives and property of our people, but necessary for the economic health and well-being of our communities. It is easy to try and make public safety seem simple by investing solely in Police and Fire staffing and equipment. But protecting people and creating culture of safety, trust, and respect is more than just a line item in our budget. We need innovative and adaptive training and equipment to respond to the changing needs of our community. We also need to make sure that we are responding most where the need is greatest. I came into this office with a great deal of respect for our Police Chief, Nick Alexander, and his work to build a stronger relationship between our police force and our marginalized communities, especially our communities of color.

The Chief and I recognize that police interactions with the public are determined not just by the character of police officers but by their training. This is why our 2018 budget saw new investments for training in Crisis intervention and Implicit Bias.

Our police force is also leading the way by taking the rare step of demilitarizing its presence on our streets. Our military MRAP was unnecessary, expensive, and inefficient to

meet needs of a civilian police force. It also had the effect of causing undue fear in our neighborhoods and excessive damage to public and private property. So we are getting rid of it and replacing it with a civilian Emergency Operations Vehicle because we need a police vehicle to do police work.

We also recognize that representation matters when it comes to building trust and respect. So we were excited to welcome our first African-American police officer to our force and another highly qualified, educated, and experienced person of color to our Police and Fire Commission. Following my two appointments to the PFC, more than half of that body is now comprised of women and people of color.

But we need more than just representation. We need the voices of people of color playing an active role in policy development. I was challenged in my campaign to answer how we will give voice to people that too often go unheard. My answer was that the only way to give people a voice is to give **them** a voice. That's why I created the Mayor's Commission on Communities of Color and appointed prominent leaders, activists, and advocates with proven experience in working towards social and racial justice. These advocates don't have an easy job. They have to research and recommend real policy changes that improve the lives of people of color in Superior. We owe them enough dignity and respect to support them when they tell us how we can help our fellow citizens, even if that support seems difficult or challenging.

The work we've done hasn't gone unnoticed. In addition to the personal recognition our Chief has received from communities of color, our Police Department was recognized as an organizational nominee for a Drum Major for Peace award at the Martin Luther King Jr. day rally. In a time where division, discord, fear, and violence mark the relationship between police and communities of color in our country, the Superior Police Department has been an example of responsible, proactive policing and direct engagement with citizens.

While Public Safety is usually the first priority of most public officials, it doesn't always get the most attention. I can't think of a Mayor in recent memory for whom economic development hasn't been a major talking point. That's because if safety is our top priority, security isn't far behind.

I came to this office with the belief that our economy works best when it works for everyone. That means that it isn't enough that many people have access to jobs, but that everyone has access to jobs. It means that it isn't enough to have access to a job, but that good wages and benefits matter to our economy too. It means that your work day should be safe, healthy, and prosperous. It means that you shouldn't have to be a millionaire to open a business. It means that shoppers have access to choices and business owners have access customers.

This has been a year of steady and impressive successes for our local economy. Unemployment is at the lowest it has ever been, with more than 97% of our workforce holding a job.

We've celebrated the opening of EarthRider, the first new manufacturing brewery in more than 50 years.

We have welcomed several new and returning restaurants including KD's, Twisted Pastries, Wasabi, Pak's Green Corner, and Billings Park Cafe.

We announced largest private investment in the history of Northern Wisconsin, the Nemadji Trail Energy Center, which will employ dozens of people through construction and operation, provide more than a million dollars of direct investment to our communities and generate an estimated \$1 billion impact on our local economy.

Perhaps most importantly, we stood up not only for investors and entrepreneurs, but for working people too. One of our first acts after taking office was to write and pass the Superior Responsible Bidder's Ordinance, which protects public projects and public funds from subpar contractors. This is the first pro-labor ordinance that the City of Superior has passed since the legislature took away our right as a municipality to choose the best company for the job. It is already working and making sure that our projects are receiving bids from good companies with good reputations for good work and fair treatment.

It isn't just contractors that owe the public responsibility. They have a right to expect it from their government as well.

When I asked our City Council to participate in a priorities based budgeting approach to our 2018 budget, they identified government efficiency and transparency as their highest priority. I took that seriously. When I asked citizens during my campaign, their highest priority was lowering our property tax rate. I took that seriously as well.

We began the general fund budget process in the early summer with a more than \$400,000 deficit. Department by department, line by line, we balanced the budget and built a surplus. This combined with an increase in property value city wide resulted in an actual decrease in property tax for citizens.

But what I'm most proud of is the document itself. After years of working on award winning budgets at the Douglas County Board, I insisted that we produce a document that Superior citizens could actually read. The result is a budget book that is accessible for the vast majority of citizens and actually shows you where we are spending your money.

Throughout the 2017 Mayor's race, every candidate addressed the need for more and better housing in the City of Superior. Our rental market was out of proportion and demand was forcing prices up. The age and quality of our housing stock was afflicting property values and the quality of our neighborhoods. But I believed that we had opportunity hidden in this adversity.

Shortly after taking office, I convened the Mayor's Housing Task Force and put housing professionals and advocates to work on solutions to our housing challenges. They recommended significant new policies, such as home rehab programs, which we have funded with a quarter million dollars annually for at least the next five years. They also recommended a dedicated, full time housing coordinator to work with home owners, developers, and city staff to restore our neighborhoods and build value. I am pleased to report that our City Council approved this position last week and we are now beginning the

hiring process. Our Housing Coordinator will be a full time advocate for safe affordable housing for homeowners and renters throughout the city.

But we haven't just been planning. We've also been building. The Empire Block has seen a total restoration and beautiful, historic housing in the heart of our downtown is finally a reality again. A few blocks away, we have watched the Onyx building rise. This brand new, 54 unit modern, efficient, market-rate building offers even more downtown living in a walkable neighborhood.

We are building all of these projects with fair, responsible labor, and they will provide housing to our oversaturated rental market, which will drive down rental prices and attract working people and their families.

If we are going to improve the lives of every single citizen, we have to be focused on more than our jobs and our houses. I was raised in Superior, but when I left to serve in the Marine Corps, much of my family moved shortly after. When my military service was over, I had to choose where to live. I chose Superior. And during my campaign, it became clear to me that many of you chose it as well, whether you ever left or not. We have chosen to build our lives here and we continue to choose it year after year. For many of us its family, for some it's an economic opportunity. But for the vast majority of the people I have spoken to, it has been the place itself. Superior is a paradise of woods and waters. Of long and vibrant summer days and sparkling, magical winter nights. It's a haunting, crisp autumn and the surging joy and freshening of spring. It's The Lake.

Cities all over this country have jobs. They all have houses and historic neighborhoods. They all have streets and sidewalks and public transportation. But only a small, handful have Lake Superior. And none have our unique, unparalleled access to wilderness and wet of the Great Northwoods. Three navigable rivers flow within our city limits, one through the 3rd largest municipal forest in the country. We hold more than 22 miles of St. Louis River shoreline and access Lake Superior through one of the world's largest natural sand bars. These resources define who we are. It's why I chose to come home to Superior. It's our greatest opportunity to attract visitors and new citizens and it's how we will keep our young people here to raise their own families.

Protecting these resources, restoring these spaces, and improving access and experiences for our citizens, has been one of my very highest priorities. One of my very first actions upon taking office was to rejoin and attend the Great Lakes Initiative, where municipal leaders from Great Lakes Cites in the U.S. and Canada work to fight for the health of this unique ecosystem. Back home, we got to work on our Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, which will finish this spring and put your ideas to work making sure every single citizen has free and fair access to fun and healthy things to do in Superior. We purchased a new primitive landing, now called Howard's Bay Landing to increase water access for paddle sports and we partnered with our local Ironworkers Union to install permanent canoe and kayak racks at three landings so you can spend more time on the water. We have increased our investments in city parks for years to come so that every citizen has a free place to play in their own neighborhood. The City has become an official sponsor of Grandma's Marathon and announced that we will be bringing half-marathon shuttle busses to Superior, increasing access for citizens and visitors to the Twin Ports single largest event

and promoting healthy lifestyles and affordable outdoor recreation. And we stepped up our involvement in the planning of the citywide Independence Day celebration, culminating in one of the largest turnouts in decades to watch the return of fireworks over the water at Barker's Island.

The 4th of July was so successful that we stepped our involvement in all of our festivals. We created a festival committee to help support citizen run events. We saw increased growth and improvement in the Lake Superior Ice Festival. We welcomed the Twin Ports Chess Open, one of Superior's largest events, back to Superior. And the Lake Superior Dragon Boat Festival, Superior's single largest event of the year, survived one of its wettest years with almost no decrease in participation.

So far I have detailed how we have improved where we live, work, and play. These are all economic systems that leadership and government can influence or inhibit. But ultimately, they are not the responsibility of local government. The responsibility of government is to create and protect safe spaces where economies and people can flourish. Infrastructure and transportation brings customers to business, employees to work, children to schools and parks, and it brings communities together. The cost and efficiency of our transportation systems affects our economy, our health and safety, and the functionality of our public spaces.

I have spent the year trying first to advocate for pedestrians because every single citizen is a pedestrian at some point and every single citizen deserves to be able to move safely through their community. That's why we have increased funding for sidewalk construction, repair, replacement and improvement to half a million dollars per year for at least the next five years. That work starts right now so in some of our most ignored neighborhoods.

I have advocated for bicycle transportation because it is cheaper, safer, faster, more efficient, healthier, and better for the environment than auto transportation, especially in Superior, a city with much higher bike ridership than our neighboring cities. I also recognize that the fastest growing and most successful cities in the country are also those that have made significant investments in bicycle infrastructure. That's why we completed a dedicated bike lane on Belknap and invested public and private funds into the Twin Ports first bike share program.

I have supported public passenger rail in the form of the Northern Lights Express. When I asked our City Council to join me in supporting the NLX I was pleased when they agreed to fund our membership in this alliance that advocates for common sense, 21st century infrastructure that supports communities throughout Northern Minnesota and Wisconsin.

But I have also recognized the need to maintain clear, safe roadways that safely move people within and between the cities of the Twin Ports. We have are not only investing more than \$17 million in road projects in Superior, we are also investing in new equipment for the streets department that will get our streets clear and safe faster in winter.

When I describe my job to children, or anyone really, I point out that the Mayor of Superior actually has three jobs: The most challenging is acting as the Chief Executive Officer of the City, where I have to manage the administration of every department and over 300

employees and ensure that the business of government happens every day of the week, 365 days a year. The most rewarding is acting as a policy advocate and working to achieve the successes I have just described. But by far the most fun job I have is representing the people of Superior. In that capacity I have had the privilege of attending scores of events throughout this year. I've attended ribbon cuttings for new business to show our support for entrepreneurs, I made the first move at the Twin Ports Chess open, I told corny jokes at Billings Park Days and got dunked in dirty water at South End Days. I rallied with for Martin Luther King Jr Day and joined hundreds of fellow citizens at the Women's March. I didn't just attend or paddle at our Dragon Boat festival but I stood in the back of boats and steered all day. And for the first time in at least 14 years, Superior citizens saw their Mayor walk in our Pride parade.

But I didn't limit myself to Superior, I've crossed the bridge dozens of times to advocate for Superior and build relationships with policy leaders in our neighboring cities. I've traveled to Montreal to fight for Lake Superior, to Thunder Bay in solidarity with our Veterans, to Eau Claire to support women and mothers in government, to Madison again and again to argue that just because we are the furthest from our Capital shouldn't mean we are forgotten or exploited.

I've spoken at our schools and our churches, at clubs and events, at breakfasts, lunches, and dinners. I've spoken to small groups and to large conferences. I've brought the Mayor's Office to our community and it has made this the most thrilling year of my life because I discovered what I always believed what was true. The people of this City are passionate about our future and believe that this city is on the brink of something great.

We are on the verge of something great. This City is at a turning point. But it won't turn on its own. We have to turn it. I want to challenge you, especially those of you that join me in the honor of holding elected office, to subscribe to an ambitious agenda.

We will make our community safer by bringing more law enforcement into our neighborhoods with a take home squad program. We can deter crime, save money by extending the life of police vehicles, and incentives our police officers to live in the communities that they protect.

We will complete construction on a new Fire Department Headquarters. Despite the fact that this major public project comes after the irresponsible banning of project labor agreements and prevailing wage, thanks to our responsible bidders ordinance, we will build your Fire Hall using only responsible contractors that operate safe work sites, pay fair wages, and effectively train their workers.

We will ask you to support our Fire Fighters and each other by ensuring that every rig is fully staffed when you call 911. This Fall I will ask the Council and then the public to approve a referendum on public safety which will replace the funding formerly supplied by the SAFER grant and bring our Fire Department back up to full staffing.

We are going to keep our economy moving by bringing at least one more manufacturing or industrial company with good paying jobs to Superior.

With the completion of Tower Avenue and now Belknap Street, we are going to continue to develop effective spaces for retail growth using modern, proven development strategies. We will now turn our attention fully to our working waterfront in the far north end and the 28th street corridor, which connects Superior shore to shore.

We will continue to improve our stewardship of the people's funds. As our revenue from the Enbridge Terminal tax continues to increase and our capital improvement plan is fully funded, I will ask the City Council to return that money to where it belongs. To you! Excess Terminal Tax Revenue should be transferred back to the general fund to reduce property taxes.

For years the City of Superior has been creating and increasing fees in addition to the regular property tax. None have ever been decreased. That changes this year. I will be proposing that the City of Superior reduce the Landfill fee this year.

We are going to keep adding to our housing stock by working with P&R Plumbing to provide more good construction jobs and more market rate housing by building yet another, even bigger apartment complex this year.

We are going to stop tackling our housing and neighborhood problems one at a time. Next week I will assemble several City staff to begin work on a total neighborhood restoration of the Center City neighborhood from Belknap to 21st, Hammond to Tower. Working with staff and neighbors, we will start investing in neighborhoods with the same vision, energy, time, and money that we have previously only poured into business districts.

We will support housing rehabilitation throughout the whole city by fully implementing our housing task force's Superior Homes housing rehab program so that homeowners at every income level can invest in their properties and improve their neighborhoods.

We are going to get you outside.

We will complete the Barker's Island Beach Restoration and Wisconsin Point Dune Restoration projects to improve your experience at the water.

We are going to get you to the water in better ways with improved landings and, for the first time, pedestrians will have safe access to Wisconsin Point via our new Wisconsin Point Wilderness trail, which connect the Osaugie Trail to the Point.

We are going to continue to improve our Independence Day Celebrations and add a community event on Memorial Day. This year, in addition to keeping festivities on Barker's Island, I am going to advocate for the return of the 4th of July Parade to one of our business districts so that our small business owners can benefit from the ever increasing crowds this event is creating.

We are going to protect our water, which surrounds and defines our city, as well as our property by conducting a full audit of our codes and eliminate regulations that inhibit green infrastructure so that we can beautify our city while protecting our environment.



We are going to promote renewable energy by bringing Superior its first solar garden.

We are going to make our community more accessible by making tough changes to our snow removal ordinance, increasing ADA compliance on our sidewalks, clearing snow on city owned streets and sidewalks faster, and making more deliberate enforcement choices that protect children, senior citizens, and citizens with mobility impairments.

We are going to write our first active transportation plan. Infrastructure that enables and supports safe, healthy, efficient, affordable, modes of transportation shouldn't just be a good idea. It should be policy.

Our infrastructure should support all modes of transportation and should take up as little space as possible to increase value and minimize liabilities. This year we will complete plans for our first road diet and complete street. Both of these are infrastructure advances that are improving communities across the United States. Its time to bring them to Superior.

Let me speak directly to the City Council now. The elections are over. We are the leaders of this community. But these seats and these offices do not belong to us. They are the sovereign property of the people. And our people expect results. I want this speech to serve as a challenge to you. Work with me to accomplish these goals for the people of Superior while bringing your own. If you come to this job with humility, hard work, and new ideas, then I promise to be your ally and work diligently by your side for the good of our city. But to do nothing and stand in the way of progress is not acceptable. The status quo failed us for far too long. I have laid out my agenda. I am asking for your help and support. I challenge you to lay out your own and we will work together to accomplish all of our goals. But we are going to accomplish something. We have to. Our citizens expect nothing less.

I promised that I would not govern this city around our challenges but around our opportunities. For years, I listened to local politicians tell us that we couldn't make progress because too much was stacked against us. They blamed the economy, Madison, the weather. But I don't believe that the people of Superior are intimidated by challenges. I believe that every generation of this community has been defined by their ability to overcome adversity. But we aren't individualists either. We face adversity best when we face it together. And opportunity, real prosperity, is too great to be harnessed by only the privileged few.

The greatest opportunity that community offers us is that we can do more, build bigger, fear less, and live better when we rely on each other. The responsibility of community is that we cannot turn away from one another's problems. A challenge for one person is a challenge for all of us. That is the duty of a good citizen, to use your power and your privilege not just to serve yourself but to serve others. When I announced that I wanted to use tonight to recognize one of our neighbors as our Citizen of the Year, I received dozens of nominations. Many of you nominated some hardworking and accomplished people that have made very real contributions to Superior. It speaks well of Superior that so many of you qualify as a Citizen of the Year. But one stood out as exemplifying the very meaning of citizenship.

I draw much of my sense of service from my faith. Mathew 25:35-36

For I was hungry and you gave Me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave Me something to drink, I was a stranger and you took Me in, **36I was naked and you clothed Me, I was sick and you looked after Me, I was in prison and you visited Me.'**

At its most basic, this is all citizenship means, when someone needs help. We help. Our Citizen of the Year exemplifies this best. For nearly two decades, Reverend Barb Certa-Werner has been putting her faith into action and taking responsibility for the most vulnerable citizens in our community. Finding a lack of homeless services in Superior, she didn't just demand action from community leaders, she founded Harbor House herself and rallied her community around mothers and children and victims and survivors. More than just providing safety and stability, she provided opportunity by employing many of Harbor House's former residents not only to provide them employment but to ensure that every person served by Harbor House finds not only housing and support, but compassion and understanding. She isn't afraid to take on the great policy challenges of our time either. She speaks truth to power and never lets those in charge forget their responsibilities to their citizens. Reverend Barb has the humility to help someone across the street and the courage to demand a safer street.

She is an advocate. She is a Minister. She is faithful and a loving friend. And she is our Citizen of the year.

The City of Superior is not streets and sidewalks. It isn't houses or businesses. It isn't rivers or a great lake. It is the people that have made their lives here. As a government, as a community, we exist to serve one another. We have a chance now to improve the lives of every single citizen. Reverend Certa-Werner proves that hard work, compassion, and dedication can make miracles happen.

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for coming tonight. It has been the honor of my life to serve as your Mayor. I have one more year with this responsibility before you will decide again who will lead this city. I intend to make the most of that time. I hope you will join me.