



**State of the City Address**  
**Mayor Paula Hicks-Hudson**  
Thursday, February 9, 2017

Thank you, Council President Steel for your gracious introduction. And thank you to members of Toledo City Council who are with us tonight. Thanks also to our partners who join us here. I'm especially grateful that so many engaged citizens chose to be here in person or are viewing this event remotely through Live Streaming. Thanks to 13ABC for offering to do this so that more people can participate. Thank you and welcome one and all.

Before I begin, I also want to thank Kathy's Confections and Black Kite Coffee for providing refreshments. As you know, this is my second state of the City address and I am happy to report that our city is improving steadily. Progress is being made in the hustle and bustle of downtown, commercial and industrial activities and participation of citizens through neighborhood groups. This is shared progress! Partners from all sections of our community, within and without our city borders are a part of this vibe that is Toledo. With the help of the business community, our brothers and sisters in labor, the faith-based and nonprofit communities, Toledo is moving forward to become a 21<sup>st</sup> Century City.

The accomplishments that I am going to highlight are the result of true partnership and collaboration. What is a 21<sup>st</sup> Century City? It is a city that is safe. People can live, raise their families and age in place in neighborhoods that are liveable and walkable. It is a city that engages its citizens and tax payers in meaningful communication, so we can be responsive in a timely fashion. And it is where decisions are made based upon data and information using technology to execute those decisions. We are not there yet, but we are working with this goal in mind.



## Mayor Hicks-Hudson Priority: Grow & Diversify our Economy

***“Toledo Among Top 100 Best-Performing Cities”***

- Milkin Institute

***“Growth of Toledo Economy Outpaces National Average”***

- Federal Reserve of Cleveland

***“Toledo in Top Ten Midsize Metros in Nation  
for Fastest Growing Gross Regional Product”***

- Headlight Data of Austin

***“Toledo 19th in Nation for  
Construction Employment Increases”***

- Associated General Contractors of America

These statements say a great deal about our city. This external recognition confirms that 2016 was a banner year for Toledo’s Economic & Business Development and the most significant amount of activity we’ve seen in decades.

Fiat Chrysler of America announced the investment of \$700 million to retool the North Plant of its Toledo Assembly Complex. It will produce the next generation Jeep Wrangler here, retaining 5100 employees and adding 700 new jobs. Dana announced it will return to manufacturing once more in Toledo by constructing a new \$70 million axle plant at the Overland Industrial site, creating 300 new jobs. An automotive supplier new to this market, Detroit Manufacturing Systems, is also building a new manufacturing facility at the Overland site and creating more than 250 new living wage jobs.

GM will invest \$667 million to build new transmissions in Toledo. This investment supports the retention of 739 jobs for years to come. Martin Technologies has opened a new Toledo office on Opportunity Drive and is expected to add 100 new jobs.

In addition to the great news in the automotive sector, we're seeing growth in other areas of our economy. Randy Oostra's leadership in moving ProMedica's headquarters to downtown Toledo has started a renaissance of our downtown riverfront and a new strategic development plan for both sides of the river. ProMedica's investment has spurred other companies to once again look at downtown as the place to be. We appreciate Lathrop's new investment in the heart of our downtown. I believe we are witnessing the long-awaited, critical mass of people who will need additional business supplies and services. Mercy Health's new emergency room and their community work with the Cherry Street Legacy Project is another example of economic growth and recovery that is specific to the vision and mission of our partners.

Smaller businesses are also thriving throughout the city, and we celebrated dozens of groundbreakings and ribbon-cuttings in 2016. InfoCision opened operations on Reynolds Road. Toledo Family Pharmacy opened a new location on Main Street in East Toledo. JupMode T-shirts opened its brick-and-mortar operation on Adams Street. A healthier twist on an American staple, Pizza Fire, opened on Secor Road. A young woman opened the Wildflower Hair Salon & Spa on West Sylvania Avenue. These are but a few examples to demonstrate that the entrepreneurial spirit is alive and well in Toledo. Revenue from inspection fees in 2016 were up 50% over 2015 indicating stellar economic growth.

Economic development is a team sport. We appreciate the partnerships with the business community, Jobs Ohio, the Toledo-Lucas County Port Authority, Lucas County, the Regional Growth Partnership, the Toledo Regional Chamber of Commerce and the University of Toledo.



## Mayor Hicks-Hudson Priority: Protect our Water

I am proud to report we have kept the drinking water safe for every man, woman and child living in Toledo and as well as those in communities which purchase water from us. I will continue to do everything in my power to not just keep the drinking water safe, but to promote our national reputation as a City with excellent and abundant water. A city where water is a resource and catalyst for economic development. A city positioned to grow and build on this incredible asset.

The City of Toledo is investing a total of \$500 million in Ohio EPA-approved improvements at the Collins Park Water Treatment Plant. The investment includes an ozone treatment process, which is the gold-standard for countering toxins from algal blooms.

And Toledo is doing its part to improve the quality of water in Lake Erie. We're in the final stretch of the \$521 million Toledo Waterways Initiative. We are constructing storage basins to hold storm and sewer water: one at the International Park on the East side of downtown, and a 36-million-gallon storage basin at Joe E. Brown Park. (Does anyone remember the Joe E. Brown mountain from last year?) When this project is finished later this year, new ball diamonds, tennis courts, playground equipment, a roller hockey rink, new park shelter and even LED lighting will be installed to upgrade the entire area. The city worked with residents keeping communication lines open so that the headaches associated with this project were kept to a minimum and resolved quickly.

Toledo co-funded the Nutrient Source Inventory to help citizens better understand the direct relationship between what occurs in the watershed and the quality of water in Lake Erie. This online resource shows where some of the harmful excess nutrients originate. Our partners include Lucas County, TMACOG, Lake Erie Waterkeepers, American Rivers, Partners for Clean Streams, Clear Water 2, the National Wildlife Foundation and the Toledo-Lucas County Public Library.

As part of reducing nutrients in the Maumee River, we are part of pilot project in partnership with the Port Authority and the United States Army Corps of Engineering to prepare for the elimination of open lake dumping by 2020. This project is reclaiming sediment from the dredging of the river for possible reuse.

But Toledo cannot fix the nutrient problem alone. We have greatly decreased our nutrient discharges into the river. But the time has come to create real solutions for the problems we face today. The Clean Water Act needs to be strengthened to allow for the direct regulation of nonpoint sources of nutrient pollution. These are the major contributors of nutrients into Lake Erie.

I have called on President Trump to issue an executive order for coordinated federal oversight of Lake Erie and I renew that call today. President Trump can make Toledo, Northwest Ohio and Southeast Michigan great again by improving water quality in Lake Erie. If the President wants to eliminate two old regulations before creating a new one, he can start by reducing regulations on cities that have complied with the Clean Water Act and enacting new regulations on non-point sources of nutrients.

Finally, in 2017 there will be more discussion about regional water. As I participate on panels regarding our water, I discuss with other mayors one of our greatest economic assets: fresh water. We must forget about past actions and past histories and focus on the future of Toledo and this region holistically. Only then can we truly think long range and futuristically, for the betterment of this region.

Toledo has repeatedly used its water to help create jobs in Northwest Ohio and come to the aid of our neighbors by providing water in emergencies. We literally helped grow the entire region. We will continue to work with TMACOG. But, let me be clear, the City of Toledo will continue to own our water system. I am committed to ensuring that future Toledoans benefit from the assets that were paid for and built by Toledoans. Any new arrangement concerning regional water must acknowledge Toledo's past and present contribution to creating this incredible asset.



## Mayor Hicks-Hudson Priority: Maintain Safe, Livable Neighborhoods

We maintain safe, livable neighborhoods by providing the best public services possible with available resources and recognizing the many neighborhood associations and groups who help us. No matter what part of Toledo, we must be responsive to the needs and communicate with neighbors. As you will see, we did that in 2016 and will work to be further engaged in 2017.

We hired police and fire classes in 2016. These new recruits kept our numbers stable for our highly-trained police and fire & rescue personnel; new police and fire classes are also budgeted in 2017.

One example of this administration's effort to create greater interdepartmental cooperation is our Fire and Police Arson Unit. The team pairs Toledo Police detectives with Toledo Fire investigators, which increased arson arrests in 2016 by 400% over 2015. Their work is essential to protecting the lives of our citizens and our first responders.

Before I talk about the work of our Police, I must thank and commend Toledo Neighborhood Block Watch leaders and members who actively work with our police officers to keep neighborhoods safer. Many thanks to Co-Chairs Janet Beam and Lucinda McKinnon for their tireless work in keeping this organization running. The work of Block Watches is more than being the eyes and ears of law enforcement. They also provide invaluable information to neighbors about all types of services available in our community. If you are interested in learning more about Block Watch please check out their Facebook page.

However, Toledo Police responded to 213,987 calls for assistance and made 14,465 arrests last year. Protecting our children, Toledo Police assisted with the arrest of 78 individuals in cooperation with the Northern Ohio Violent Crimes

Against Children Task Force.

TPD is among the best trained police forces in the nation. They include deceleration training, cultural awareness and other training activities which embody the goal to protect and serve. They work with DART and the Heroin Overdose Death Task Force to address the heroin epidemic.

Chief Kral is to be commended for his ongoing police-community relations initiatives, such as Town Halls and Coffee with the Cops. Members of this department continue to find ways to engage with our citizens with programs such as Brains and Bodies and Police in the Park. These and many other events throughout the year allow our children and citizens to meet and know their police officers and provide input to the department. Also, it should be noted that the Police Review Board was reinstated in 2016 as another way to have citizen involvement in our policing efforts.

The City and many partners initiated a Gun Safety program to promote community education and free gun locks to help prevent needless deaths resulting from unlocked, unattended guns. Toledo Police Officers removed 1054 guns from Toledo streets in 2016. Although we have experienced too many tragedies in our city, preliminary numbers for 2016 show a 9% decrease in crime statistics from 2015. The joint efforts of TPD and the Toledo Command and Patrol unions help us in our efforts for safe neighborhoods.

For many citizens, the Toledo Fire & Rescue Department serves as a medical lifeline. Toledo Fire & Rescue made 60,000 fire and emergency medical service (EMS) runs in 2016. In addition to being skilled firefighters, 100% of Toledo Fire & Rescue personnel are fully-trained emergency medical technicians and 232 are paramedics.

There are 33,000 fire departments in the nation. There are only 45 departments of the 33,000 that are both internationally-accredited and possess the prestigious Insurance Services Office Class 1 Rating. Under Chief Luis Santiago's leadership

and in cooperation with Local 92, I continue to be amazed at the work Toledo Fire & Rescue does for our citizens. Tonight I am especially proud to announce, in addition to being internationally-accredited, our Toledo Fire & Rescue Department has received the distinction of ISO Class 1 Rating. We are the only city fire department in the State of Ohio that is both internationally-accredited and has achieved ISO Class 1 Rating. This achievement confirms what we have always known: that we have a first-rate fire and rescue department by any measure. I'd like to ask all Toledo Fire & Rescue personnel to stand and accept public appreciation and congratulations for this extraordinary recognition of the work you do every day.

While it is a never ending battle, we continue to maintain and keep our city clean. Members of the Streets, Bridges & Harbor Division work tirelessly with a limited budget. Last year we were able to have a limited Mill & Fill program, which used 7,600 tons of asphalt to improve the ride-ability of 74 residential streets.

We offered four "Free Dump Days" for Toledo citizens and each council district had two "Recycling Drop-Off Days." Additionally in 2016, curbside bulk pickup service tripled from once a quarter to once a month, with 41,053 bulk pick-ups made in 2016. Unsightly and unhealthy "set outs" are collected each week keeping our neighborhoods much cleaner and more attractive. Four hundred sixty-five blighted, abandoned structures were demolished in conjunction with the Lucas County Land Bank in 2016.

Reducing the incidence of lead poisoning is a major initiative for the well being our children. Thanks to members of council for working with the administration on this important issue. Implementing the Lead Safe program will begin to prevent our children from being irreparably harmed from being needlessly exposed to lead hazards.

Rejuvenating the Toledo Youth Commission is an important step for our community. We hear so much about "brain drain." We are helping to address this through the work of our Youth commission. Last year we increased the age to 24



for young people to meet employers at the summer job fairs. This year we are again extending this opportunity. The Youth Commission has created quality programs with the Toledo Museum of Art, the Toledo Zoo, Imagination Station as well as our educational partners. Providing positive choices and different activities for our youth will help them experience all the possibilities for them here in their hometown.

One new initiative that I am especially proud of is the Toledo Youth Commission's online resource map. This map lets kids and parents know what's going on and where—activities, bikeways, parks, sports, arts/cultural partners, community centers, medical and mental health care locations and real time TARTA transportation data help get people where they want to go. Neighborhoods are more livable when resources throughout our city are communicated and used.

For 2017, I have directed our neighborhood and economic departments to also focus on rebuilding, through rehabilitation, our housing stock. We just announced funding for eligible homeowners to have their roofs repaired. We are looking at additional ways to use the tools so that our neighborhoods are strengthened. With the help of LISC, local lending institutions, and the Land Bank, we can and must improve the housing stock in our community.



## Mayor Hicks-Hudson Priority: Increase Government Efficiency

I hope you are hearing throughout this address that we are focusing on working smarter and using technology and data to improve our delivery of services to our citizens. Before becoming Mayor, I was as frustrated as citizens who called for

essential services, and it was difficult to see results. Today I am proud that we are using technology to eliminate what I used to call the 936-2020 “black hole.”

With more than 280,000 citizens to serve, we now have a system that’s working well to collect, manage and track requests. This is great news, because in 2016, we managed 33,588 requests for service from citizens and generated 46,770 work orders. Our citizens have noticed, and so has the Public Technology Institute, which recently recognized Toledo as a Citizen-Engaged Community, one of only 8 cities nationwide. City divisions use a GIS system that's integrated with the Engage Toledo program to help them be more effective managing labor, materials and work flow.

Traffic signals at 400 intersections in the city have been improved by the upgrading of our traffic signal and control center, which allows the signals to communicate with each other.

We've prepared a handout with some of the timesaving resources that are available to our citizens 24 hours a day online. For example: Citizens and businesses have online access to permitting and inspection service requests. Citizens can complete online crime reports on damages of less than \$1000 when a police crew is not needed. We will continue to work with our partners on improving these resources and the implementation of additional ones.

The City remains committed to reducing expenditures and is engaged in the outcome-based budgeting process that was funded in part thanks to the Toledo Regional Chamber of Commerce. This tool will help us identify additional ways to improve resource allocation, tighten our budget and allow for greater citizen input related to specific program priorities.

Cost-cutting at City Hall provided \$3.52 million in savings that I’ve proposed be used for residential street improvements in 2017. These cost reductions were possible because of disciplined management of the City operations and finances.

The City received commendations for Toledo's excellence in financial reporting for two years in a row from State Auditor David Yost. We were the first city in Ohio to put our checkbook online for public view.

We increased efficiency not only through cost reductions, but by increasing our resources for applicable projects with state and federal grant funding. In 2016 we received \$25.6 million in grants. We have already provided the incoming administration in Washington with information on major projects to be considered under potential new infrastructure funding in the federal budget.

By using technology we reach thousands more citizens through Town Hall meetings on FaceBook Live and by sending emails directly to citizens who sign up for Text Alerts on our website.

We remain financially challenged as a city. We're grateful to our voters for passing the ¾% temporary income tax, which is so important, but as you know was not an increase. So, just as you must do in your home or business, we will manage and monitor our activities carefully using only the resources available to us. We will continue to be vigilant about cost-controls. The budget I've proposed is virtually flat at just 0.6% more than last year. Our budgets reflect our four priorities. Public Safety remains our highest general fund expenditure.

For 2017, we have placed \$4 million in the proposed budget for residential street improvements which will provide about 14.6 lane miles. One hundred fifty thousand dollars has been budgeted for residential road crack sealing. And we've included \$500,000 to fund a similar Mill & Fill street repair program as last year. This plan is a start for fixing residential streets in 2017. It is not yet where we should be. But it is a responsible use of our limited public resources to begin to address a pressing need.

In 2017 we will pave 45.6 lane miles in our major streets using a total of \$24.65 million, leveraging \$18.1 million in state and federal funds. Combining residential lane miles with major street lane miles totals more than 60 lane miles of paving for 2017.

I have talked about some of the progress being made and priorities of this administration. City services are provided on a daily basis by committed employees who believe in public service. Tonight I want to recognize seven City of Toledo employees who have distinguished themselves as 21<sup>st</sup> Century Employees and who will be formally recognized at the February 21<sup>st</sup> Toledo City Council meeting at which time they will be presented with proclamations: Jim Lewis, Melanie Campbell, Private Dennis Kookoothe, Junethia Fischer, Officer Joe Okos, Mario Moreno and William Ortyl. Please join me in congratulating these employees who exemplify outstanding public service.

As we move into 2017, we will keep steady at the helm, because Toledo is definitely moving in the right direction. We'll capitalize on our momentum-- foster more partnerships to drive economic growth, and continue to focus on reducing costs and improving City operations. There is still work to be done to reduce our response times, increase communication and achieve high standards of service for our citizens.

The challenges we face in Toledo are not unique. History tells us that we have been here before. We know what we must do. We must continue to foster progress through partnership. We must manage our most pressing social challenges as well as fiscal challenges: infant mortality, childhood obesity, an aging population, future workforce needs, aging infrastructure, community development and job creation. However, I am convinced that we will meet these challenges and create a progressive future that will be different from and superior to any previous time in our history. I have just told you about the beginning sparks of this future.

We will remain focused on our four priorities—We will protect our water, maintain clean, safe neighborhoods, identify additional government efficiencies and continue to grow and diversify our economy. Please partner with us as we move toward this goal of creating a 21<sup>st</sup> Century City. Thank you and may God bless you and the City of Toledo.