



Mayor Kevin L. Faulconer

2016 State of the City Speech

Thank you.

It's so great to be here with you tonight.

It is an honor and privilege to serve as your mayor.

I'm excited to share what we're accomplishing together and what lies ahead.

This is a great time for San Diego.

We are a city on the rise and we are a city on the move.

San Diegans are getting back to work.

Small businesses are growing.

Local innovators are making new breakthroughs.

Families are enjoying improved parks and libraries.

And San Diego, we are paving our streets!

Together, we have come a long way in the last two years.

And it's because of the strength and resilience of the people who make our city great.

Yes, we are a city composed of beaches and bays.

Of tourism and technology.

Of roads and recreation centers and everything in-between.

But San Diego's foundation is not made of bricks and mortar.

The foundation of our city is our people.

The parents who are raising their families.

The immigrants who are moving here to begin a new life.

The teachers who educate our children.

The religious leaders in our churches, our temples, our mosques and our synagogues.

The heroes who serve our country, and keep us safe.

As I've had the honor to lead this city as your mayor, I've seen first-hand that we are a city of people from many different backgrounds who are joined together in the collective belief that San Diego is a place where opportunities are seized every day.

We are unified in our most essential pursuit:

Forging a better life for ourselves, our children, and our community.

The foundation of our city is strong.

And ladies and gentlemen, the state of our city is strong.

We are uniting as one city.

One community.

One San Diego.

By working together, we are building our better future.

And tonight, we draw our blueprint for what comes next.

To know where we're going, first let's look at how far we've come.

The achievements from this past year have been remarkable.

It's been my goal to set a tone of collaboration.

And a focus on results.

Because when we work together we can do great things.

We are creating a world-class city for all.

And it starts with our neighborhoods.

No matter which part of San Diego you call home, everyone deserves to live in a community that's safe.

It wasn't right that some Southeastern San Diego residents had to wait longer after they called 911.

So last year we changed the system.

We improved fire emergency response times by thirty percent in that neighborhood, and we're saving lives as a result.

We opened the first new fire station in seven years, with more on the way.

And the City Council confirmed my selection for our new fire chief, Brian Fennessy, whose exceptional thirty-eight-year career has been dedicated to protecting our community.

Last year, we also continued to rebuild and reform our police department to make it more inclusive.

I brought forward a compensation package that was essential to keeping San Diego competitive as we work to recruit and retain more officers.

Under Chief Shelley Zimmerman's command, and at my direction, the department is once again putting an emphasis on community policing.

Now more officers work hand-in-hand with residents to keep our neighborhoods safe.

And we're continuing our efforts to hire police officers from our community to ensure the force reflects the people it serves.

Thanks to the work of our officers, San Diego continues to be one of the safest big cities in the entire United States.

Our lifeguards, police officers, fire-fighters and maintenance crews are working around the clock during this El Niño storm season.

We're in store for a wet winter.

So please join me in thanking all of the first responders who will continue to keep us safe.

My commitment is to bring improvements to every community.

And over the last twelve months we've done just that.

We increased operating hours at rec centers citywide.

We improved parks across San Diego with better playgrounds and ballfields.

And we introduced new parks to urban communities that need green spaces the most – making sure families get quality services no matter which neighborhood they live in.

There are great things happening in San Diego, and in 2015 the country – and the world took –notice.

Last summer we were the only metro area in North America to be named a World Smart City by National Geographic, prompting an hour-long showcase on San Diego that was broadcast around the globe.

This summer the All-Star Game will be coming to Petco Park thanks to a bid San Diego won in partnership with the Padres.

And for more summers to come, Comic-Con will be staying right here in San Diego.

These are just a few examples of how we've shown the nation what our city can do when we work together.

And together, we've had a heck of a week in the world of sports.

There's been a lot of twists and turns.

I hope I'm reading the right version of this speech.

San Diego, in the last ten months, we've made more progress on a new stadium than in the last ten years.

We joined together the City and County to craft a real financing plan that doesn't raise taxes.

We assembled experts from across the country to design it, and complete the highest-level of environmental review.

We secured a special certification from the Governor that will help us break ground on time.

And we united the community around this common-sense proposal.

Our San Diego family has stood with the Chargers in victory and defeat for more than fifty years.

That ought to count for something.

This franchise has prospered because of generations of loyal fans.

The passion, the heart, the energy that has powered the Bolts for fifty-five years –

You can't get that in L.A.

You can't get that in Inglewood.

You can only get that in San Diego!

It's not too late to get this done!

It's not too late for us to come back to the table!

It's not too late to do what's right for this team, our fans and our home!

San Diego gets things done.

And we got a lot done last year to help our city thrive for decades to come.

I unveiled a plan to power City buildings with solar and renewable energy.

The City resolved its oldest lawsuit, ending twenty years of litigation and saving taxpayers millions of dollars.

And with a bipartisan, unanimous vote, the Council adopted my climate action plan.

A landmark effort to boost green jobs, protect our environment and cut San Diego's greenhouse gas emissions in half, making San Diego the largest city in the United States to set a goal of one hundred percent clean energy.

People around the world have called this plan bold.

They've called it groundbreaking.

And we're proud of that.

But what is truly remarkable is how we did it.

Business groups. Environmentalists. Democrats. Republicans.

SDG&E – an industry leader on renewable energy.

We brought them all to the table.

And united around a common-sense plan for a greener and more prosperous future.

By doing so, we set the bar for the nation.

San Diego is world-famous for our beautiful environment.

It's only natural that we now show the world how to protect it.

San Diego is leading. San Diego is doing. San Diego, we are making history.

Last year, we changed the way we address homelessness.

Instead of investing in a bed, we're investing in people.

For years the City's answer to homelessness was just providing a bed for the night.

Warehousing people in an outdoor tent.

It wasn't enough. So we found a better way.

The Council and I backed a new approach that focuses on addressing the roots of homelessness.

Today, homeless individuals and veterans can find shelter and access services under one roof, and start their transition to a better life.

In fact, thanks to the support of Father Joe's Villages, the number of people we've transitioned off the streets compared to last year has more than doubled.

We're on the right path, but there's still much more to do.

A majority of our homeless funding comes from the federal government.

But as San Diego's homeless population has grown, our funding levels have not.

So I will continue to call on Washington to provide San Diego the resources we need and that we deserve.

My goal is for everyone to have the opportunity to share in our city's success.

Thousands of children have used the "Do Your Homework at the Library" program where they can use laptops donated by the One San Diego nonprofit and find a safe place to study after school.

Countless families, businesses and students are getting faster Internet speeds to help them succeed in today's world.

Last year, I announced with Cox and AT&T that speedier web access is coming to San Diego homes and businesses.

And my administration began to explore bringing Google Fiber here to San Diego, making us one of only a handful of metro areas Google chose for this opportunity.

Technology can link people to possibilities that would have otherwise been out of reach.

Just ask Cassandra Denneson, a San Diego mom who had dreams of becoming a veterinarian.

Cassandra had the motivation.

She had the ability.

But one thing was missing.

She didn't have her high school diploma.

Between a full-time job and family obligations at home, it seemed she might never find the time to complete the coursework.

That's why I launched the Career Online High School program.

To help people like Cassandra get their education online.

Cassandra qualified for a scholarship through the San Diego Public Library Foundation, and started taking classes over the Internet.

With the support of an academic coach, she was able to finish her high school education in just a few months.

And you know, one of the best days I've had on the job was when I got to hand Cassandra her diploma.

Her smile could have lit up this whole room.

Cassandra is one of dozens of San Diegans who are now on the path to a better future.

And tonight I'm setting the goal of helping one hundred more of our neighbors get their high school diploma this year.

I never forget that this is your city government.

And it's here to serve you.

City Hall must be responsive, results-driven and accountable to the public.

Unless you have a particular fondness of floppy disks and dial up, you probably find the City's website out of date and hard to navigate.

San Diego's online profile is stuck in the last century, so I kicked off a complete redesign to modernize it and make it easier to use.

It will be San Diego's new digital front door.

It's designed by local companies and built on the feedback of nearly five-thousand local residents and visitors.

And when it launches this spring, you'll finally be able to report a pothole, look up library hours, find a nearby park or complete hundreds of other tasks from the palm of your hand.

We've established clear performance standards at City Hall so you know how your money is being spent and we know which parts of the bureaucracy are in the most need of reform.

Reforms like streamlining the permitting process at City Hall so you can open up a business, remodel your home, or get a permit without unnecessary delay.

Last year the City started accepting some permit applications electronically, helping San Diego businesses and homeowners get things done faster and easier.

And when I asked City employees for their efficiency ideas, they submitted more than one hundred proposals that will save us more than one million dollars a year.

Creating an effective government is a team effort.

So I'd like to take this moment to thank all the hard-working board and commission members, volunteers, and – of course – City employees who work every single day to help make our city great.

Thank you.

I also want to recognize four leaders who are entering their final year in office at City Hall.

Each of them has worked tirelessly to move our city forward.

And I'd like to thank them for their commitment to our community.

City Attorney Jan Goldsmith, Council President Sherri Lightner, Council President Pro Tem Marti Emerald, and Councilmember Todd Gloria.

Thank you.

Often times it's the people of our city who bring the biggest changes to our government.

My pledge is that the reforms you voted for take root at City Hall.

San Diegans went to the polls four years ago to overwhelmingly approve pension reform, switching the City to a fair system that taxpayers could afford.

But last month a legal challenge threatened to undo the changes that voters approved.

Reversing course would cost taxpayers tens of millions of dollars – and set a dangerous precedent by silencing the voice of the people.

We cannot go back.

So I applaud the City Council, who unanimously voted Tuesday to defend pension reform in court.

I will always stand up for your right to reform your government!

It was only a few years ago that we saw how volatile pension costs led to slashed library hours, reductions in community services, and the near-closure of fire stations.

Times are better now.

But we know it's not always going to be this way.

Now is the time to save for our future.

I have presented a plan to protect neighborhood services when pension costs unexpectedly balloon.

This rainy day reserve will help us continue to make investments in our neighborhoods and protect San Diego's credit ratings.

There's a big pension bill coming this spring that will cost taxpayers millions more than last year – and threatens our progress on restoring previously cut services.

We need to act.

My pension stabilization plan will come before the City Council this month.

For the sake of our City's hard-fought financial health, I urge the Council to approve it – without delay.

And there's one more vote the City Council can cast this month to ensure we continue to invest in neighborhood repairs for years to come.

I've pledged to dedicate half of the City's new revenue each year to infrastructure.

I did it last year. I did it this year. And I'm going to do it every year.

But there's no guarantee that this practice of dedicating funds to neighborhood infrastructure will continue under future mayors.

That's why I'm asking the City Council to place a measure authored by the City's Infrastructure Chairman on the ballot so voters can guarantee funds for neighborhood infrastructure decades into the future.

I want to thank Councilmember Mark Kersey for authoring this plan – to ensure the spirit of my commitment continues.

So more of our tax dollars are used for community improvements.

I'm focused on long-term results, not just short-term success.

That's how we build our better future.

And in 2015 we continued to build a fiscally healthy and stable city.

The independent City Auditor recently confirmed that our financial standing now is among the best in the country.

Our credit ratings continued to improve and our budget was balanced responsibly.

You couldn't have said that about San Diego a decade ago.

And I'm proud that my budget last year was the first to receive unanimous Council approval in more than a decade.

Councilmembers, I think we ought to do that again this year.

These are the results we can achieve when we work together and put people above politics.

We have laid the groundwork for building our better future.

Now, in 2016, we begin the next phase of One San Diego.

A city where every neighborhood has the chance to succeed and every person has the opportunity to prosper.

I am a firm believer that libraries change lives.

They are communal areas where neighbors gather.

Places to celebrate our city's vibrant arts and culture.

And sanctuaries for lifelong learning.

Yet for seven years the City hadn't moved a single branch library project off the drawing board.

That is changing.

By 2020, you'll be able to visit a new library in every corner of the city.

I am happy to announce that we are building four branch libraries in North, South, East and Central San Diego during the next four years.

Our beaches, parks and open spaces are also places where San Diegans come together – and why people come to San Diego by the millions year after year.

For me, protecting our parks is the reason I became involved in public service.

Some of my best memories growing up are the summers my family and I spent at the local rec center, or hanging out at the beach.

And when I became a father myself, Katherine and I wanted our children to have the same experience.

Our parks have special meaning to me.

I know countless San Diegans feel the same way.

It's why, as a councilmember, I fought to protect Mission Bay Park for future generations.

Now, as mayor, I want every neighborhood, every family, and every child to have a park where they can make memories of their own.

Tonight, I am proud to announce that, this year, we are embarking on the largest park investment effort San Diego has seen in modern history.

These parks will be places for all of San Diego's diverse communities and cultures.

Algunos de mis mejores recuerdos de mi juventud son los veranos con mi familia que pasá-bamos en el parque comunitario.

Y luego, cuando empecé mi familia, yo quería que mis hijos tuvieran la misma experiencia.

Ahora como alcalde, quiero lo mismo para todas las familias de San Diego.

Quiero que todos los niños de todas las comunidades tengan un parque en el que puedan crear sus propios recuerdos.

Esta noche, estoy orgu-yoso de anunciar que vamos a instalar cincuenta parques en los próximos cinco años.

I'd like to share with you the three pillars that will support San Diego's new generation of parks.

First, we are starting an effort to design the next phase of Mission Bay Park.

In 2016, we will begin charting a bold new vision for its last unplanned area – the 76-acre mobile home park next to De Anza Cove.

More recreation areas on and around the water.

Hiking. Camping. Trails for biking and walking. Restoring our wetlands.

These are some of the exciting possibilities to transform this place into a waterfront experience.

A place residents, visitors and families can enjoy for generations to come.

Together, we will create San Diego's next great public space.

Second, we're going to give San Diego's park system a dramatic makeover.

We're planning to open brand new parks in Mid-City, Mission Valley, Mira Mesa and Serra Mesa.

And we will complete park upgrades in Oak Park, San Ysidro, Linda Vista, Mountain View, City Heights, Tierrasanta, Rancho Penasquitos and University City.

You know, just to name a few.

And this is just the beginning.

This year we will begin an effort to create a new master plan for San Diego's park system – the first comprehensive vision for San Diego's parks in more than sixty years.

It will give us a blueprint for building parks in every community.

And finally, we are going to strengthen the bond between our schools and our neighborhoods.

Quality schools make quality neighborhoods, and quality neighborhoods have quality parks.

Today, there are fields and green spaces across San Diego that our communities could use on evenings and weekends.

But because they're on school property, they get locked up whenever class isn't in session.

Our communities and our school system are fundamentally linked.

We shouldn't let government bureaucracy stand in the way of making our neighborhoods great.

That's why I'm teaming up with the San Diego Unified School District.

Our "Play All Day" initiative will open up new community parks on school property.

We're going to build or upgrade dozens of parks next to our schools – and do it in the communities that need it the most.

All told, these three pillars – Mission Bay Park, city parks and school parks – are supporting the most significant park improvements San Diego has seen in years.

Over the next five years, families across San Diego will see groundbreakings on fifty new or upgraded parks.

From our libraries to our parks to day-to-day neighborhood repairs, the scope of the infrastructure improvements happening in our communities is extraordinary.

Ten years ago, when it came to getting shovels in the ground to fix our sidewalks, sewer lines and community assets, the City was barely scratching the surface – doing just a handful of capital projects each year.

In 2016, we're going to be investing nearly ten million dollars in our communities every week.

In fact, the number of construction projects is at the highest level of the decade.

And neighborhood construction spending is on track to nearly double.

This year alone, we are investing nearly half a billion dollars to rebuild our neighborhoods.

When we talk about repairing our infrastructure, this is what we mean.

Better streets. Better parks. Better libraries. Better sidewalks. A better San Diego.

These are your hard-earned tax dollars at work.

This is your city in action.

And this isn't all happening by chance.

Last year, I launched sweeping reforms to ramp up community improvements.

With the support of the City Council, my administration has – and continues to – enact measures to cut red tape, increase efficiency and improve financial oversight.

The result is streamlined neighborhood repairs.

And we are using tax dollars – your tax dollars – more effectively.

In fact, a recent reform helped us identify more than seventy-five million dollars that was gathering dust in city coffers.

Now, that seventy-five million can be invested back in our communities.

So what does all this mean?

Simply put, it's evidence that infrastructure repairs are at historic levels.

This magnitude of investment, it's practically unprecedented.

Now, there will always be parts of our neighborhoods that need fixing.

But I know that San Diegans want City Hall to fix their streets first.

So I've made road repair my top infrastructure priority.

Last year, I set a goal of repairing one thousand miles of streets.

And we're putting more people on the job to get maintenance work done faster.

People like Mario Escalera and Ronnie Gomez.

They may be two of the most popular guys you've never heard of.

That's because they fill our potholes.

Mario, Ronnie and the entire City pothole crew are up before dawn every morning to make our roads smoother.

Thanks to their extraordinary work, we will fill twenty-seven thousand potholes this year alone.

And that's not easy.

Filling potholes is a tough job, trust me, because I went out with them to try it.

And let me tell you: Mario and Ronnie had no problem putting the mayor in his place.

They ran circles around me.

You want these professionals filling your potholes, not me.

Our road paving crews are busier than ever before because the City's budget is healthy.

And our economy is strong.

But it could be even stronger.

We have a convention center expansion plan that would attract more large conventions and bring millions more dollars to our neighborhoods.

The California Coastal Commission has already approved an expansion on the waterfront, and Comic-Con and other conventions say they prefer the contiguous plan.

But a lawsuit is holding up this momentum.

This delay is costing San Diego thousands of jobs and our economy tens of millions of dollars.

That's money that could put laptops in our libraries.

Put playgrounds in parks.

And repair even more of our roads.

I will continue to stand up for San Diego's jobs and neighborhoods by fighting for this in court.

And we will put a legally defensible plan on the ballot to finance this project.

It's time to settle this once and for all – and get the convention center expanded.

One of my most important jobs is to keep our economy moving.

This year we will broaden our efforts to cement San Diego's position as a world class innovation hub.

And help local businesses expand their national – and global – reach.

San Diego and Tijuana are partnering to keep, grow and attract well-paying technology and advanced manufacturing jobs to our binational megaregion.

And I'd like to thank Tijuana Mayor Jorge Astiazaran and our entire Baja California delegation here tonight.

A mis amigos de Baja California, gracias por estar aquí esta noche.

Como ah-li-ados brindamos buena fortuna a nuestros ciudadanos de nuestra región.

San Diego is home to some of the world's most talented people, prestigious educational institutions and dynamic startups.

This year we're launching a new incubator to attract out-of-town venture capital to help more San Diego startups grow and hire.

And we're positioning San Diego as the nation's top medical research hub in the race to beat the third leading cause of death in the region – Alzheimer's disease.

Cooperation among local scientists, philanthropists and research institutes has already yielded promising breakthroughs that could end the scourge of Alzheimer's.

I'm proud to be a part of this regional effort – and harness the collaboration that is a part of San Diego's DNA.

San Diego will find a cure for Alzheimer's!

As mayor, my job is to create an environment where opportunities are plentiful and people can realize their dreams.

People like Paul Martini, a UCSD grad, and his brother Peter, who launched their own startup here.

From the ground up, they built iboss – one of the fastest growing cyber-security companies in North America.

Unsurprisingly, Texas came calling with financial incentives to lure iboss away.

But the brothers said no.

The talent they wanted to hire was right here in San Diego.

And the help they needed to grow was just a phone call away.

My economic development team guided Paul and Peter through the permitting process to expand their business.

Today the company directly employs two-hundred seventy workers in its new Sorrento Mesa headquarters.

That's a fifty-nine million dollar regional economic impact.

That's just one company.

That's just one success story.

That's just one more opportunity that's been seized.

I believe all San Diegans deserve a chance to thrive, just as Paul and Peter have done.

Unfortunately, the pathway to careers that have traditionally assured a lifetime of stable employment and good wages isn't as clear as it used to be.

The middle class of today isn't the same as the middle class of fifty years ago. Or even five years ago.

It's not as simple anymore as graduating high school and then finding a job on the factory floor.

Today's middle class jobs are found in hospitals, inside labs, and in front of computer screens.

These positions require special skills and training, but don't always require a college degree.

Healthcare. Advanced manufacturing. Information technology. Biotech and blue tech.

These are San Diego's new middle class careers.

Right now, at this very moment, there are thousands of local, well-paying jobs available in these industries.

But there aren't enough local applicants who have the skills to fill them.

The impact of this skills gap is particularly harsh on low income communities – especially for our young adults.

What we're talking about here are the roots of poverty and economic inequality.

Our city will not reach its fullest potential until all San Diegans can reach theirs.

So when it seems more likely that a San Diego kid will end up with a job in fast food – rather than a future in biotechnology – something has to change.

We are failing the next generation if the best opportunity we can offer hard-working people without a college degree is a lifetime of low-wage employment.

Especially when careers that offer a better life are ready for the taking.

I believe bringing equality to economic opportunity is our generation's calling.

It's why I've assembled our region's experts in education, business, economics and workforce development to inspire, teach and train San Diegans for the jobs of today – and the opportunities of tomorrow.

I want to share with you just a few of the things we're doing this year to put these plans into action.

And lay the foundation for a twenty-first century middle class.

First, we're going to introduce children to local career opportunities at a younger age.

Qualcomm's Thinkabit Lab offers students a hands-on experience with robotics to see first-hand that science is cool.

For teens from Southeastern San Diego, this field trip may be their first time entering a real laboratory.

The goal is to make sure it's not their last.

In just one year, Thinkabit has served three thousand local middle school students.

Just imagine if we had more labs focused on marine sciences, defense technology, aerospace and other industries that are hiring.

We could help tens of thousands of students learn about the bright futures in their own backyard.

So I've begun working with San Diego's top companies to create these types of opportunities across the city to teach children about San Diego's innovation economy.

I'm proud to announce that, in partnership with the San Diego Unified School District, Northrup Grumman, Hubbs-SeaWorld Research Institute and Raytheon have all committed to launching labs for our youth in 2016.

My goal is to have five labs up and running this year.

Next, working with the San Diego Workforce Partnership and San Diego Economic Development Corporation, we're going to get local employers involved in hiring San Diego's young adults.

Tonight, we are launching the One San Diego One Hundred – a campaign to unite one hundred local businesses to offer jobs to San Diego high school and college students.

With a focus on our low income neighborhoods.

Please join me in welcoming the first members of the One San Diego One Hundred: Cox, NASSCO, SDG&E and Sharp Healthcare.

Together, we will employ one thousand San Diegans this year – and invest in the youth that will build our better future.

I'll be partnering with more companies throughout the year, as well as announcing additional opportunities to strengthen our workforce.

Starting from grade school and continuing to adulthood, this is how we will help aspiring and hard-working San Diegans climb the ladder of success to rewarding careers.

Together, we will build a better future for our children.

We will build the stronger middle class San Diegans deserve.

We will make San Diego known as a city where opportunity is back within reach!

There is one career that is among the noblest, and I'm proud that San Diego is known for it around the world.

Whether they serve at Naval Base San Diego, Point Loma, North Island, Miramar, Camp Pendleton, or just went through training at M.C.R.D., our service men and women make us proud.

I, and every San Diego resident, say thank you.

We're home to more than two-hundred thirty-thousand veterans – the third-largest veteran population in the country.

In fact, more than one in ten San Diego County businesses are owned or jointly owned by a veteran.

A successful veteran community helps drive a successful city.

But a relatively small group of veterans has a difficult time transitioning to civilian life.

Today's unfortunate reality is that almost seventeen hundred veterans are without stable housing or call our sidewalks and alleys home.

The vast majority – about a thousand of them – have gone through care programs, but remain homeless because they can't find an apartment to rent.

These are not faceless strangers.

They are family members and friends who have served our country.

They are people like Faith.

Faith is a veteran who served as an Army nurse for 11 years and was looking for work.

But she ran into trouble at home.

Like many women who end up homeless, domestic violence forced her and her son to leave their apartment – and step into a new and frightening world.

With no money saved, Faith and her son lived in hotels, motels and their car.

Eventually, with no shelters for families available, their only choice was to separate or live on the street.

I don't think many of us could imagine telling our child they had to live alone in a homeless shelter.

But after months of desperation, that seemed to be the only choice Faith had.

Until she got a helping hand.

Faith and her son were connected to an apartment unit through the San Diego Housing Commission.

Here, they were able to begin the process of securing employment, finding a permanent home, and rebuilding their lives.

Faith was able to find a job as a nurse and today she has completed her Master's Degree.

We have an opportunity – and an obligation – to make sure other homeless veterans who need help can get the same support Faith did.

So tonight we build on San Diego's new approach of providing housing with supportive services.

I'm proud to announce the Housing Our Heroes initiative – a call to action to help one thousand homeless veterans get the housing they deserve!

First, for veterans who are already on the streets, I am working with San Diego landlords to open their doors.

And second, for veterans like Faith that suddenly find themselves homeless, we are ramping up our rapid-rehousing program.

When veterans find themselves on the verge of homelessness or without housing, we will help them find a place to live – so the word “homeless” never enters their vocabulary.

We have already begun a partnership with San Diego Chamber CEO Jerry Sanders and local apartment associations to identify hundreds of housing units for veterans.

And I'm working with the San Diego Housing Commission, which has already identified the funds we need to ensure veterans have enough money for a security deposit, first, and last month's rent.

And we'll be working closely with the County Board of Supervisors to help these heroes receive the care they need.

Sometimes the key to a better life is as simple as a key to a home you can call your own.

This is a priority.

I'm going to propose to the Council an action to dedicate four million dollars of this twelve million initiative toward the men and women who have dedicated their lives to protecting us.

We will work to stop homelessness among veterans before it starts.

The challenges are complicated.

But our goal is simple.

This year we will help one thousand homeless veterans get off the streets!

Whether it's our communities, our economy, or our futures, together we are building our better San Diego.

It's what we San Diegans do.

People have always traveled to these shores in search of a better life.

Now, we are the people upon which San Diego will reach new heights.

People like Cassandra who are pursuing new careers.

People like Mario and Ronnie who are fixing our streets.

People like Paul and Peter who are inventing the jobs of tomorrow.

People like Faith who are building a better life for themselves and for their children.

We are different people, yet we are joined together in a shared bond that forms the bedrock of our city.

To move forward, our community must strengthen that bond.

We must come together.

To construct the next generation of parks.

To repair our broken roads.

To forge a stronger economy.

To inspire our children to learn more.

To create a community that earns more.

To support our veterans.

And to strengthen our neighborhoods.

San Diego, this is how we build our better future.

Let's keep moving.

Thank you.