



CITY OF CHATTANOOGA

# STATE OF THE CITY

MAYOR ANDY BERKE

## 2019 PRIORITIES





# OUR MISSION & VISION

**Mission:** To break down the barriers that prevent people from living the lives they want in our community.

**Vision:** We will be a city that empowers Chattanoogaans to build an equitable, authentic, and inclusive community through prosperity and a high quality of life.

## OUR PRIORITIES

Mayor Andy Berke outlined four clear priorities in his 2019 State of the City address.

- **Planning for Regional Resiliency**
- **Ending Homelessness**
- **Smarter Students and Safer Schools**
- **A New Chattanooga Dream**

# PLANNING FOR REGIONAL RESILIENCY

Fifty years ago, Walter Cronkite declared on national television that air pollution in Chattanooga had reached crisis proportions. Since then, we've worked hard cleaning up our air and water, and today our community's natural beauty is among our most treasured assets. As the planet's climate continues to change and weather events intensify, we have to keep planning and building for the future.

## PROBLEM

Our region's climate is changing. Chattanooga has the **sixth fastest rising temperatures** in the country.

**More than 270,000 Tennesseans** live in areas at high risk for inland flooding, which mirrors what we've seen locally.

Chattanooga has seen **two floods in the last ten years that are considered "100-year floods,"** and last year was our wettest year on record.

**Thirty-seven percent of Tennesseans** now live in an area that has a higher risk for wildfires.

## GOALS & VALUES

**Enlist the bi-partisan, multi-state Regional Mayor's Council** to collaborate on crafting a new regional resiliency plan.

**Utilize our greatest asset -- EPB's Smart Grid** -- which rapidly identify and redirect power to trouble spots in neighborhoods experiencing unexpected service outages.

**Preserve the green spaces and clean water** that we've worked so hard to improve for all to enjoy.

**Ensure care and emergency response are available** to neighboring municipalities and counties.

## ACTIONS

**Plan for the future.** In order to be a resilient city and region, the Regional Mayor's Council will create a framework and response plan for disaster prevention, emergency responsiveness, and development in potential danger zones.

**Engage our community.** We've worked hard to preserve and improve our scenic spaces over the last 50 years. Educating the public on the importance of resiliency, climate change, mitigating extreme weather, and disaster responsiveness will ensure generations will be able to enjoy Chattanooga's beauty for decades to come.

# SMARTER STUDENTS AND SAFER SCHOOLS

Education looks a lot different than it did 50 years ago. Testing and benchmarks are starting at an earlier age, which means it's crucial children are at the starting line when they begin kindergarten, not behind.

In 1969, if you had asked what school safety looked like, someone would probably mention crossing guards. Today, many children and parents are concerned about how secure their school will be in the event of a school shooting.

## PROBLEM

**Nearly 60% of Chattanooga's children** are not prepared when they enter kindergarten.

Early-learning centers are often underfunded and have to choose between hiring educators or purchasing the best curriculum to prepare students.

Today, **57% of teens** say they are worried about the possibility of a shooting happening at their school, with one-in-four saying they are very worried. **63% of parents** today are worried about a shooting at their child's school.

## GOALS & VALUES

**Help children develop the skills they'll need when they enter kindergarten** by preparing early-learning providers with high-quality, research-based curricula.

**Foster positive relationships** between law enforcement and school communities that lead to more communication and safer outcomes.

**Provide a sense of security** for every student at every school.

## ACTIONS

**Invest in the future.** As the City's Office of Early Learning strides toward the goal of 1,000 high-quality seats by 2021 it is vital our educators have the tools they need to prepare our students. The City has pledged to purchase curriculum identified by early learning providers in Chattanooga when they reach 3 Star certification and commit to our Seats for Success program.

**Build trust through consistency.** Identifying a liaison from the Chattanooga Police Department for each public school and early learning center in the city limits will build trust with school administrators, teachers and students.

**Handle With Care:** When a child goes through an adverse experience at home, the result could be adverse behavior in the classroom. The Chattanooga Police Department and Hamilton County Schools will launch Handle With Care to communicate with administrators and teachers about these instances, because when they know more they can do more to help our kids.

# ENDING HOMELESSNESS

Fifty years ago, there wasn't a real definition for homelessness. Last year, 2,000 adults and 600 children in our community experienced homelessness. Chattanooga has been recognized as one of the few cities to effectively end homelessness among veterans, but there is more we need to do.

Last year, Mayor Andy Berke created the Chattanooga Interagency Council on Homelessness (CICH). Then in early December, CICH released their Homelessness Action Plan, which is a five-year strategy to end homelessness in our community for good.

## PROBLEM

Finding affordable housing can be an enormous task when you don't have the right resources.

Supporting those experiencing homelessness while they remain homeless is **more expensive for taxpayers and less successful** for those facing homelessness.

Current workloads for case managers are exceeding realistic amounts that they are able to handle, and as a result, there is no capacity to help people experiencing homelessness find housing.

## GOALS & VALUES

**Continue a "Housing First" approach** with our non-profit partners who provide services to those experiencing homelessness. The only way to end homelessness is to get someone housed.

**Provide** navigators to help individuals experiencing homelessness overcome barriers presented when finding and maintaining affordable housing.

**Move** 500 individuals off the streets and into home in Fiscal Year 2020 through increased investment in staff and flexible housing funds.

## ACTIONS

**Fund what works.** The City will invest \$400,000 annually into a flexible housing fund so that we can rapidly eliminate barriers to housing.

**Support people during transition.** Getting homeless individuals housed is not where relationships end. The City will hire five outreach workers to identify and connect people to housing. Over the next year, four navigators will work with people experiencing homelessness to find housing. Three new service coordinators will ensure they have support to remain housed.

**Create more room for everyone.** The City will work with landlords and the Chattanooga Housing Authority to increase the number of safe and affordable units available to those experiencing homelessness.

# A NEW CHATTANOOGA DREAM

In 1969, Chattanooga launched an unprecedented community-wide effort to clean up our air and water, setting into motion a 50-year transformation. Since then, despite considerable success in various sectors, economic mobility has declined drastically across our nation.

If we think about our economy as a ladder, with every passing decade, it feels like the rungs are getting farther out of our reach and harder for us to hold onto.

## PROBLEM

In 1970, nine out of ten 30-year-olds in America were outearning their parents. **By 2014, only half of that age cohort were earning at their parents' level.**

**Tennessee is one of only five states without a minimum wage** and the federal mandated minimum wage has stayed stagnant at \$7.25 per hour since 2009.

Too many barriers including segregated schools, access to pre-k, and availability of living wage jobs to name a few, exist that prohibit people from living the life of their choosing in our City.

## GOALS & VALUES

**Create a more comprehensive understanding of economic mobility** in our region, particularly among decision-makers in education, housing, and corporate sectors.

**Determine strategies for short and long-term impact** to enhance the likelihood that Chattanoogaans who are born into low-income families can enter and remain in the middle class.

**Provide a common language** and platform for advocates who want to revive the Chattanooga Dream in our region.

## ACTIONS

**Activate our stakeholders.** Identify key community groups such as business leaders, faith leaders, students, and neighborhood leaders to help educate their networks and build framework rooted in changing the systems that prohibit economic mobility

**Dream big -- and act bigger.** With the help and support of the public, we will build out a five-year economic mobility plan that will include multiple benchmarks, action strategies, and key findings. We want to create an actionable roadmap not only for City government but for other agencies, organizations, and sectors to utilize in the years beyond the Berke administration.