



**Mayor Mitchell J. Landrieu  
2012 State of the City Address**

**Mahalia Jackson Theater for the Performing Arts  
New Orleans, Louisiana**

**May 22, 2012**

**\*\*\*Prepared Remarks\*\*\***

**EMBARGOED UNTIL DELIVERY**

Thank you all for coming.

Citizens, community, and neighborhood leaders, business leaders, city employees, welcome everyone.

I want to recognize all the elected officials that are here today- please stand to be recognized. Thank you all for your service to our City.

I especially want to recognize Council President Jackie Clarkson and the New Orleans City Council. Thank you for being here.

For the last two years we have worked together side by side and made great progress for our city. We achieve a lot when we seek and find common ground. In the next two years if we continue to work together we will accomplish great things for all of New Orleans.

Two years ago we stood together unbowed and unbroken and proclaimed that even after our trials and tribulation, we had come out on the other side--strong, united, and ready to rebuild New Orleans not as she was, but as we always dreamed she could be.

In the last 752 days, we've seen the good, the bad, the ugly... and the really ugly. This whole speech can be summarized as follows: we found a mess, we made great progress, and we have a long way to go.

When we met 2 years ago, this City was in a nosedive. Government was a barrier to progress rather than a catalyst to change. Hundreds of rebuilding projects were unfunded, stalled and in disarray. Our police department teetered on collapse. Our city was hurtling towards financial disaster. Worst blight problem in the country and no real strategy or resources to deal with it. A recreation department, once a national model had become a sad embarrassment. Economic development efforts were uncoordinated and failed to produce jobs; and City Hall had even been cut back to a four day work week. Private businesses, not for profits, and national philanthropies headed for the hills looking elsewhere for opportunity to invest.

But the people of this city have an unwavering spirit, and so against all odds, we kept moving forward one step at a time. Now, I stand before you to say that we have turned the corner and are blazing a new, but very difficult path forward.

To paraphrase my friends Ben Franklin and Sam Cooke- the only certain things in life are death, taxes and change. Yes change. My friends, change is gonna come. Our challenge when we change is to preserve the good, get rid of the bad and pray that God grants us the wisdom to know the difference.

Every day, we are working hard to change the bad into good. I call that reform.

Reform of the New Orleans Police Department is the first order of business. That is why before taking office, I invited the Department of Justice into our city to help us rebuild NOPD. They have been great partners.

We have moved aggressively to establish a consent decree, and we are 98 percent there, but we have not waited to finish the consent decree to start fixing the police department. Indeed, we have implemented a comprehensive 65-point plan to completely remake the police department. Today we are moving full speed ahead.

We have reformed City Hall, changing how our City spends money-- moving from fiscal irresponsibility to fiscal responsibility. For too long, this city wasted too much and delivered too little. But we're changing that. We cut the budget, reorganized AND invested in improved city services all at the same time.

We clawed our way out of a \$100 million budget hole, and put in place a balanced budget. Our fiscal house is in order. And we've got the scars to prove it.

We cut government spending by more than 8%. And while City Hall is spending \$43 million LESS than in the year before we took office, we are delivering MORE value. Much more.

The year before we got here the city only removed 154 blighted houses. In the last two years we've eradicated 4,400 blighted units and collected nearly \$2 million in revenue from blighted properties.

We reorganized the Health Department, giving our primary care clinics to private and non-profit providers who are delivering quality care to patients.

We've increased by 100% the number of catch basins we clean and cut in half the response time for towing abandoned vehicles. We cut our costs on sanitation contracts and added curb side recycling. And we've increased collections across the board.

We knew that to change City Hall we needed everyone involved. So we got about the business of creating an open and transparent government that invited the community to the table.

We asked for your input and you gave it at over 130 community meetings. We created accountability initiatives to track our work, including BlightStat and QualityofLife Stat. Plus, we are selecting members from across the city for the new Police Community Advisory Boards. This kind of openness and accountability is the key to delivering results.

Our city's recreation department was in shambles. Our kids had nowhere to play. So we reformed NORD and made it work again. With your vote we created the NORD Commission. We then doubled funding for recreation, committed over \$100 million dollars to new parks and playgrounds, open and renovated 10 parks and 12 pools, tripled the number of kids taking part in camps—going from 4 to 34 kiddie camps- 1600 kids to nearly 5000 kids served.

We introduced 7 teen camps for 1000 teenagers. And we partnered with the Red Cross to offer over 52,000 hours of swim lessons. There is no doubt NORD is moving in the right direction.

Our economic development efforts had broken down. So we reformed economic development, creating the NOLA Business Alliance to grow jobs in our community.

Now, we're rocking and rolling. 2 years and over 3400 jobs created. That's 3400 NEW jobs in our city and a new process that works.

Our biggest addition-- GE Capital -- is a game changer for our city. It will establish a new Technology Center downtown with 300 high paying, knowledge based jobs of the future.

Everyone said that retail was desperately needed, so we got on it, -since taking office over 50 new retail businesses have opened in the city- including DaFresh in Central City.

With a Fresh Food Retailer Initiative loan, DaFresh owner and New Orleans native Douglas Kariker is going to be able to open shop. Now the neighborhood finally will have a great new grocery store.

Our latest blockbuster deal- Costco will open a new store right here in New Orleans. \$40 million investment, 200 permanent jobs and nearly 150,000 square feet of world class retail.

And more major retailers are coming - a new Mid City Retail Market, a Wal-Mart in New Orleans East, and last Thursday we sealed the deal for a new Wal-Mart in Gentilly. And there's more to come.

And let's not forget that New Orleans' economy continues to grow and diversify; now earning the title of Hollywood South. In the last two years, our film industry has nearly doubled, doing over a half billion dollar book of business in 2011 alone, with 1,120 local workers in the film industry. At this moment, 6 major motion pictures are filming right here in your city.

Also, the Port continues to grow and prosper, serving as the great gateway to the American heart land. And thousands arrive in the city everyday streaming off cruise ships and into our shops and restaurants. Plus, our energy industry is coming back. I want to congratulate Tidewater Inc for a huge fourth quarter where they doubled their earnings from a year ago.

The numbers speak for themselves. A regional unemployment rate below the national average. Home sales up over 9 percent in the metro area.

*Forbes* said we're the number 1 city for brain gain and one of the best big cities for jobs. *Wall Street Journal's Market Watch* said we were most improved city for business in America. And, ladies and gentlemen, the Hornets are staying right where they belong, here in New Orleans forever. There is no doubt our economy is moving in the right direction and people are taking notice.

But everyone has to share in these opportunities, and New Orleanians must be the ones to rebuild our city. For years we operated under a dark cloud. Our procurement process was in disarray and too often local, minority, and woman owned businesses were shut out.

So we reformed the procurement process too. With the stroke of a pen, we leveled the playing field and stamped out corruption and cronyism and started moving city contracting in the right direction—awarding contracts based on what you know, not who you know. I have lost friendships over this fight, but it was the right thing to do.

Now, we have a fully staffed office of Supplier Diversity, doubling DBE city contracts and tripling the number of firms we certify as DBE each month.

To further build capacity for small businesses we also launched the Contractors College of New Orleans, and we partnered with Goldman Sachs and Delgado on the 10,000 Small Businesses Program, which so far has provided local businesses with access to capital-- over \$20 million. This initiative has allowed nearly 100 local, small, minority, and women owned businesses to learn, expand, and create jobs. One great example from this group is Angelica Rivera from Colmex Construction. Since being inducted into the 10,000 Small Businesses Program they've received outstanding support and have expanded from 6 to 15 employees with new construction projects springing up all over the city.

Boards and commissions were broken, so we reformed them too and we will continue to do so. Everybody knows about the Public Belt Railroad- it went off the tracks. In the year before we arrived- public money was being misspent. So we reformed it with a new, downsized board, common sense term lengths and limits and a new direction. After we fixed it, last year profits for this key public asset were up nearly \$2 million.

Many thanks to Mayor Barthelemy and the new Public Belt Board- Public Belt is back on track.

The Inspector General once called our airport a “monument to corruption.” So we reformed that public body too with new leadership and new tough policies. You can see the improvements with \$350 million in renovations, new direct flights, new vendors with New Orleans food, and more. The airport is taking off and will be ready as we host the world for the Super Bowl.

The city's taxi cabs weren't looking so good, so with City Council we passed a sweeping reform package to clean up the industry. By early next year customers can expect clean cabs equipped with a security camera, GPS and a credit card machine. And cab drivers can expect a bureau that's on the up and up, delivering better services. Our cab drivers are our front-line ambassadors, and I look forward to working with them in the future.

When we got here customer service at City Hall was not so friendly either, so we're reforming that too.

To start with, we're now open five days a week and you're now greeted by a courteous city employee at our welcome desk who has answers to your questions. Our web site has been revamped. And for the record, our web site is now nola-dot-gov. It's no longer the city-of-no-dot-com, which hopefully says a lot about our new attitude at City Hall.

We've also launched the first phase of NOLA 311. Now you can dial 3-1-1 from any phone to get info. Or you can register a complaint about a pot hole or a street light. You will get a tracking number and a timeline for repair.

As you can see, we've come a long way. And we will continue to move customer service in the right direction in the upcoming year, because we know we work for you.

When we arrived, major rebuilding efforts had basically stopped, so we had to reorganize that as well, and our steady progress is manifest by the workers in hard hats and the sound of jack hammers, in the tractors and trucks that are rolling from uptown to downtown to the East.

Yes, Virginia, there really are finally cranes in the sky.

But it's not just about construction jobs and bricks and mortar – it's about rebuilding our neighborhoods, which are the very heart and soul of our city.

From the East to Broadmoor, four new libraries are open with one more coming this summer to Algiers, and new police and fire stations are coming on line.

We prioritized and fully funded 295 capital projects. Half way through our term and our committed projects are nearly 50% complete.

Getting streetscapes and business corridors up and running like Freret Street, Oak Street, St. Claude Ave, OC Haley Blvd, and Harrison Ave makes a huge difference for the whole neighborhood.

Take a look at Read Boulevard in New Orleans East and the nearly \$25 million of investments in Joe W. Brown Memorial Park. But we don't stop there.

Overlooking Joe Brown is the new regional library, when it opened 1000 library cards were issued in the first week; a brand new state-of-the-art police station; a 24-hour urgent care facility that since July has treated 5700 patients; and by the end of 2013, a full-service hospital. The point is that strong communities need all the pieces to be in place- housing, businesses, retail, schools, jobs, health care, recreation, and transportation.

And we're creating this synergy in neighborhoods from Pontchartrain Park to Lakeview.

A Choice Neighborhoods grant from the federal government will allow the City and the Housing Authority to redevelop the historic Treme neighborhood and the Iberville, leveraging over \$1 billion in investments including the Joy Theatre, new grocers, and the Saenger Theater. Its' happening now, right before our eyes.

The Lafitte Greenway project will transform an old, abandoned rail car line into a beautiful, linear park linking Congo Square to City Park. Then there's the \$30 million park along the River that will finally open up riverfront access to residents this fall.

Thanks to the help of Senator Landrieu, President Obama, and our delegation, we have \$1.8 billion hitting the ground in school rebuilding for every part of the city. By the end of the year, 20 schools will have been built or be under construction. I want to thank the Recovery School District and the Orleans Parish School Board for their hard work in this area. By the end of 2016 every child will attend a school worthy of his or her great promise, and city-wide we will have some of the most improved educational facilities in the country.

We've completely re-imagined the Big 4 housing developments and brought back nearly 1200 families into new and better communities. Just a few weeks ago we were at the old BW Cooper to cut the ribbon for the new Marrero Commons- 250 brand new units proudly dedicated to Yvonne Marrero/a great leader for the neighborhood.

A new street car line on the Loyola Avenue Corridor is currently under construction. And will be completed before the end of the year.

And of course, the crown jewel- the \$2 billion University Medical Center and new VA Hospital, which will create 10,000 good-paying, new jobs in the health care sector. It is coming out of the ground as we speak.

These are all major, catalytic projects going on in your city right now as we build the city we dreamed she could be.

But while we think big, we are focused on getting the basics right. We are making progress towards fixing our streets.

In 2 years, with help from federal and state partners we've doubled down on our investments in New Orleans streets and all told hundreds of millions has gone into road construction in every part of the city- Earhart, Holiday, Claiborne, Elysian Fields, Downman, Magazine, Robert E Lee, Orleans, MacArthur Blvd, St. Charles Avenue and many more- 60 miles of street repair since taking office, and we've increased bikeways and walking paths tenfold since Katrina.

And more projects from Gentilly to the French Quarter are about to get off the ground.

But while most folks would agree that our major corridors have improved, our neighborhood, interior streets are still in awful shape and will remain a long-term problem we have to solve together.

Everyone thinks that their neighborhood has it the worst. Let me assure you, the competition is fierce for this honor. Some potholes in Lakeview are the size of Christmas trees, and going along some streets in Gentilly is like riding the Zephyr. When you get to the West Bank, watch out.

So we got to work. We've filled 67,734 potholes and have worked really hard with FEMA to secure additional funding specifically for smaller streets.

After Katrina, FEMA obligated just \$40 million for road repairs in neighborhoods, barely a drop in the bucket. When I came into office, we went back to the drawing board, meeting with FEMA 327 times. Our efforts have paid off and FEMA in total has given us \$450 million in new money, with \$200 million of that \$450 million for streets in over a dozen neighborhoods. On top of all that, another \$247 million in new Hazard Mitigation money for major citywide projects, and there's more on the way.

That's hard work. That's progress.

One of the basics is street lights, and we have a plan to turn on every street light this year. I realize that if your street light doesn't work what I am about to say doesn't matter.

But just for the record.

There are 54,400 street lights in New Orleans. When we took office over 16,000 were dark. That's about 30%. Since taking office, we've made over 16,000 repairs. But, it is an old, Katrina damaged system, and as fast as we repair them, they go out again. Thousands still need major repairs, which take weeks and thousands of dollars each.

Our solution is to dedicate an additional \$8 million in one-time hurricane recovery money to fund a surge in repair work so the lights can come on in every neighborhood by the end of the year. We're going from 3 repair crews to 6 crews, 5 day work week to a 6 day work week, 8 hours per day to 13 hours per day. We'll get it done.

Another critical, basic part of rebuilding neighborhoods is eliminating blight. There was no strategy when we got here. None. We established a comprehensive strategy to remove 10,000 blighted properties by 2014.

In the year before we got here the city didn't get much done, removing just 154 blighted properties. We have eradicated 4,400 blighted housing units since taking office and are well on our way to our goal of 10,000. But property owners – you're on notice. We will continue aggressive enforcement. If you own blighted property, do your part, it's not fair, clean it up or there will be consequences. We will fight to preserve quality of life in our neighborhoods, like we did in Hollygrove at Big Time Tips Bar, which had become a big time problem for the community. Well, we shut it down.

Another basic is homeownership. So we launched the revamped \$52 million soft-seconds program, which will put hundreds of New Orleans families into new homes by the end of 2013. Since March, we have given 63 families \$3.4 million in soft seconds, putting them on the path to becoming first time homeowners and realizing the American dream. People like a young mother and her son who were living in a small apartment until they qualified for \$40,500 in soft second assistance and now own a beautiful home in Gentilly closer to work and school. This program is making a huge difference.

The energy in our city is contagious. Just ask the nearly 9 million visitors we welcomed last year, or just ask your neighbor who went to the Jazz Fest, French Quarter Fest, and Bayou Boogaloo this past weekend. And the first 5 months of this year have been off the charts.

Your city has hosted an unmatched string of major events – from Bayou Classic, the New Orleans Bowl, New Years Eve, Sugar Bowl, the BCS Championship, Men’s Final Four, Navy Week, Jazz Fest, French Quarter Fest and more. Now we are preparing for the world’s biggest show, the 2013 Super Bowl. It will be our 10<sup>th</sup> time hosting this world event, the most of any city besides Miami, which has also hosted ten times.

And we have the 2014 NBA All Star Game as lagniappe.

Visitors are blown away by this great city and people from around the country are taking notice. The San Francisco Chronicle wrote last month that “Six years after Katrina, New Orleans looks like a renewed city, fresh with life, teeming with music and back in business. And Jazz Fest... is back to being the best damn time on the face of the earth.” That’s good stuff.

You can’t have this kind of success without a world class sports and entertainment industry. You can’t have it without a New Orleans Police Department that is one of the best in the nation at crowd control. And you can’t do it without a city government that is clicking on all cylinders- from parks and parkways to sanitation, from EMS to Traffic Control Officers. And you can’t do it without the City working in lock step with small businesses and citizens as well– you make our city proud.

Notwithstanding all the good that I just spoke about, I’d be remiss not to talk about our challenges.

Pension responsibilities, major infrastructure needs, streets, sewerage and water repairs, and education reform are things we can’t kick the can down the road. We must face these issues head on, and in the coming months, we will continue to engage with you and our elected officials on forging a responsible path forward on these long-term needs.

We found a mess, made great progress and are doing a lot to move in the right direction.

But, and this is a very big but, as every parent knows, you can only be as happy as your saddest child, and unfortunately we have too many of those.

Reducing violent crime and murder and making New Orleans safe will continue to be the most important issue facing this city and its future. We must find a way to stop the killing, there is no greater gift that we could leave to future generations, and no challenge is larger, or more imminent.

Today, I will lay out a comprehensive plan to end murder and violent crime in our city.

But first let me tell you, while it is true we are not all at fault, we are all responsible. Like Robert Kennedy and others have reminded us through the ages, "If not us, then who? If not now, then when?"

We all must do our part. The battlefield of this great struggle is both on the street and of the heart. We must change our culture of death, the ugly side of our city. We have no other choice. With each death, we lose what is most valuable- life. Each life is precious and with each murder, our future grows dimmer. The pain is too great for the mothers of New Orleans to bear.

In 1864, President Lincoln wrote a mother whose five sons were lost to the killing fields of the Civil War. In the famous Bixby Letter, Lincoln consoles the mother and lionizes her five sons for having died on the field of battle.

Now, almost 150 years later, while the circumstances are so very different, a similar scene has played out on the streets of New Orleans- four sons taken by violence, one mother's heart, broken to pieces. But here, in our time, there is no slight consolation for the bereaved, just bewilderment about the senselessness and relentlessness of the violence.

All that's left are four empty chairs around Ms. Althea Phillip's dining room table and a hurt that runs furious and deep as the Mississippi River.

The same hurt felt by Ricky Summer's family, teachers and classmates as they mourned his death early this year.

16 years old, he was no stranger to violence in his Central City neighborhood. But Ricky was determined to get out, determined to be different.

He was one of the original 'KIPPsters' enrolled in the first class at KIPP Central City. He was a good kid who like many young people in our city was struggling to become a man without the guiding hand of a father.

His 8<sup>th</sup> grade English class had been studying Langston Hughes and just finished reviewing the poem *A Dream Deferred*, it reads:

What happens to a dream deferred?  
Does it dry up  
like a raisin in the sun?  
Or fester like a sore--  
And then run?  
Does it stink like rotten meat?  
Or crust and sugar over--  
like a syrupy sweet?  
Maybe it just sags  
like a heavy load.  
Or does it explode?

Ricky's dream was not just deferred, it was a dream violently denied. His rich potential snuffed out like too many before him.

Like baby Keira Holmes who was caught in the crossfire as she played outside her home, just before Christmas and her second birthday. Or like Jeremy Galmon struck by a bullet meant for another. He was just two years old as well. Or like Brandon Baker, a football player about to graduate from Cohen. Or the recent horrible killings that brought even more pain to the KIPP community. Or the five John McDonogh High School students killed last year before they had a chance to make their mark on the world. It is a sad, horrifying truth that in 2011, a John McDonogh High School student was more likely to be killed on the streets of America in the City of New Orleans than a soldier fighting for our freedom in Afghanistan. Indeed, last month, we had 6 murder victims who were baby-faced teenagers. Dreams deferred. Dreams denied.

So, let's take a look at the hard facts.

In 2010, nearly 13,000 people were murdered on the streets of our country. The weapon of choice, a hand gun; the victims and perpetrators, disproportionately young, African American men.

If a foreign enemy killed 13,000 American citizens, there would be hell to pay. If the Ku Klux Klan murdered thousands of young black men, this nation would be in an uproar.

But for some reason we are hardened to these facts and remain eerily silent. We refuse to hear it or see it. But it is ripping us apart.

We should consider what is happening here on the streets of our fair City.

According to the FBI, we rank 79<sup>th</sup> for violent crime rate out of 274 cities. But New Orleans has the 8<sup>th</sup> most murders of any American city and we are number one for murders per person.

Sadly, this is not a new phenomenon. Going back at least 33 years to 1979, on average New Orleans has had seven to eight times the national murder rate.

It has always been this way – way back to when gas was 89 cents per gallon; when the 'Aints were still wearing bags on their heads; through five Mayors, six Presidents and a dizzying series of world events from the fall of the Berlin Wall, the invention of the personal computer, the Iran Hostage crisis, and the liberation of Nelson Mandela. Through peaks and valleys, highs and lows, our murder rate has been higher than the rest of the country. With an average of 241 murders a year for as far back as our records count.

This is unnatural. We must say that this is unacceptable. That this has to stop. Make no mistake, it can be fixed. There is an answer to this problem.

Various theories have been put forth for why New Orleans of all places has this deep-seated problem. People wonder why here, in this place that knows how to live and love so well, can the death be so routine and so relentless.

Some say it's Katrina. But this problem precedes Katrina and goes back generations.

Some say that poverty, unemployment, and bad schools drive New Orleans' murder rate. These are very important factors, but don't give the whole picture. Just look at Atlanta, Memphis and Montgomery, all southern cities with very similar stories to tell, yet none of their murder rates come anywhere close to ours. Clearly, poverty and unemployment does not necessarily mean high murder.

Finally, some say this is just a 'New Orleans problem', like there is something in the water down here. But the truth is that every American city has neighborhoods where young men are killing and being killed at alarming rates. This problem is not unique to our city, but we have more of it.

What do we know about murders in New Orleans? Let's take a closer look. In 2011 on the streets of our city, 199 people lost their lives as victims of murder. According to the Department of Justice:

Murders are highly concentrated in three or four neighborhoods; most perpetrators and victims are unemployed African-American men between 16-25 with little education and long criminal records; And in 78% of the cases, the perpetrators and victims know each other.

We know that petty arguments – stepping on someone's shoe, taking someone's parking spot and any sign of disrespect – can cause blood to be spilled and lives lost.

So we've taken these facts and with the help of a grant from Bloomberg Philanthropies, we have developed a comprehensive plan to attack this problem and end murder and violent crime. It's called NOLA FOR LIFE because we will end the cycle of violence, and change the culture of death to a culture of life. We must change the bad to good. This is not an impossible task. Indeed, at one time many had given up on cities like Los Angeles, New York, and Boston, but they dramatically reduced crime and murder, so can we.

And I don't know about you, but I'm not going anywhere. We all made a decision after Katrina to stay here and fight for the people we love.

I need you to be with me...NOLA FOR LIFE.

The pillars of NOLA FOR LIFE are really simple:

- Stop the Shooting;
- Invest in Prevention;
- Promote Jobs and Opportunity;
- Improve the Police Department;

- And get the community involved to rebuild neighborhoods.

It begins with a laser focus on a small number of young men who are killing and being killed. Our message to them: stop shooting.

Jobs, Prevention, Rebuilding Neighborhoods – all are important parts of the plan. But first, you have to stop the shooting. Imagine a patient lying on the operating table, dying of a heart attack. In that moment, for that person, when the heart has flat lined, the answer is not a healthy diet and exercise. The answer is an emergency procedure - a defibrillator sending shock waves through the heart to make it beat.

I'm asking every mother. Every father. Every brother. Every sister. Every pastor. Every judge. Every neighbor. Every auntie. Every teacher. Every outreach worker. Every friend. Governor Jindal. President Obama. Stand with me today to send this message through word and deed – Stop the shooting.

Front line officers, probation and parole agents, and our federal partners are already working together. We took the Department of Justice's advice and brought together criminal justice leaders, social service providers, school officials and others to create the Mayor's Strategic Command to Reduce Murders. This initiative focuses our efforts on the right people and the right places to stop the shooting.

We also launched Ceasefire New Orleans in Central City and our Ceasefire outreach workers are saving lives, combining science and street smarts to track where beefs are heating up and then interrupt the violence

We've partnered with criminologist Professor David Kennedy who has worked with other cities like Boston and Los Angeles to drastically reduce murder and shootings. Kennedy's approach starts with respected elders and other community members delivering a simple message: stop shooting. Those who heed that message will be offered support and services so they can start a new life and leave behind violence. And those who don't change their ways will be held accountable with strict, predictable and certain consequences.

We have strengthened the partnership between NOPD and the State's Office of Probation and Parole. It is really important that parolees stay on the straight and narrow, but with about 150 cases each, local probation and parole officers are stretched to the limit.

That's why I have requested that Governor Jindal put more resources into the understaffed New Orleans office. With additional probation officers and more electronic monitoring, probation and parole can help NOPD target hotspots and put those parolees who are most at risk of reoffending under a microscope.

Furthermore, to take guns off the streets, we are building on the success of Project Safe Neighborhoods. With the support of Attorney General Eric Holder, in the last several months the ATF, DEA, and US Marshall have more than doubled their manpower in

New Orleans. They are working closely with the NOPD to seize illegal weapons from violent offenders. But we're asking President Obama and the federal government for additional support in a concept I call "Operation Full Circle."

Our plan would create a more permanent "strike/surge" team of federal law enforcement and prosecutors who would come to New Orleans on detail from their agencies to build, indict and prosecute violent gangs and drug lords in identified "hot spots." With this kind of surge support we can focus like a laser on violent offenders and stop the shooting.

We must stop the shooting first.

But, we all know that we cannot just arrest our way out of this problem.

That's why NOLA for Life puts a heavy focus on prevention.

Through the initiative we began, Saving Our Sons, we have identified and trained new mentors for our young people.

We are expanding recreational opportunities so our kids can enjoy worthwhile, positive activities and we teamed up with world-class organizations like Nike at Joe Brown to the Hornets with Midnight Basketball.

We're also trying to protect mental health services and are fighting to restore cuts in Baton Rouge as we speak. This is another way Governor Jindal can make our city safer, because if the state does not honor their obligation, we will have to do less with less and our streets will not be as safe.

And lastly, the youth of New Orleans are too often confronted with the realities of murder and violence. We must respond quickly and support those affected, so the NOPD and our Health Department work together to facilitate immediate mental health support on site at school. We're working with schools, LSU, and the Children's Bureau to support students most in need of help.

The third part of NOLA for Life is promoting jobs and opportunity.

A job is the best way out.

Since taking office, we've doubled the number of summer jobs for kids and rapidly expanded the number of job sites, yet, we need more.

The Lot Maintenance Program in the 9<sup>th</sup> Ward is a great model, where local residents and ex-offenders deliver a great service, cut overgrown lots, and the City's new reentry coordinator will take it to the next level.

The fourth pillar is completely remaking the New Orleans Police Department.

This is one of the toughest jobs in America and for too long a few corrupt cops have caused our community and this department much pain and agony. We have strong

allies in the hundreds of honest cops who dreamed of being police officers so that they could protect and serve.

In the old NOPD, there was little accountability and limited oversight. In the new NOPD, we insist on total, complete transparency and have redesigned and opened COMSTAT meetings to the public and added FBI agents to the NOPD's internal investigations team.

In the old NOPD, officers reported for duty and were dispatched to different neighborhoods on different days. In the new NOPD, we deploy smarter, putting the same officers in the same neighborhoods day after day. It's about building trust and getting back to the basics of community policing.

Plus, we have a new class of 29 recruits that will hit the streets in July. We need better training, so we've raised the bar for our newest officers. In the new NOPD Academy, the program is more extensive, more rigorous, and based on instilling community policing practices.

Residents are starting to notice the new NOPD. Crime Stoppers report an 11 percent increase in tips and people are more willing to call in police to solve neighborhood problems and share information. This is a sign of great progress, but everyone knows that we have a very long way to go.

In the old NOPD, the Homicide Unit was woefully understaffed and there was little follow up. The new NOPD has beefed up and reformed the Homicide Unit going from 16 to 32 detectives. Now, immediately following a murder, the area is flooded with both homicide and narcotics officers. And according to the Metropolitan Crime Commission, we are seeing results and arresting the bad guys quicker to create real consequences for crime.

In the old NOPD, the department inefficiently deployed resources. In the new NOPD, we are using cutting edge technology to target crime hot spots- areas often no larger than four to five square blocks.

In the old NOPD, the crime lab was barely functioning. So we have dedicated ourselves to standing up a new NOPD Crime Lab and at the end of last year eliminated a multi-year backlog of firearms testing. We cannot tolerate evidence that could solve crimes sitting on a shelf collecting dust. And with the help of the National Institute of Justice, State Police, and Marshall University, the NOPD also eliminated a multi-year backlog of over 800 sexual assault kits. Victims of this most heinous crime are now getting answers and we have gotten 70 new leads on rape cases.

This is the new NOPD; however, make no mistake, there is hard work ahead, but we are ready for more change, much more change

The detail system is being overhauled and will be run by an independent office outside the NOPD, reporting to the Chief Administrative Officer.

All cop cars will be outfitted with cameras so there will be no more 'he said she said.'

And there will be a new mandated focus on the constitutional application of justice.

We will not waver or shrink from this challenge. Our reforms are taking root and the consent decree will solidify these changes for good. This is the new NOPD.

That brings us to final pillar of NOLA for Life. Community Involvement and rebuilding our neighborhoods. And what you can do.

We will make our neighborhoods safe by turning on every streetlight and eradicating blight. We will create vibrant communities and are spending hundreds of millions of dollars for new community centers, health clinics, playgrounds and roads.

Again, we are all in this together. We are all responsible. So here's what you can do to get involved.

Take the fight to the streets on NOLA for Life Volunteers Days where citizens, city agencies and the NOPD will clean up crime hot spots. We'll take back the neighborhoods. Our first NOLA for Life volunteer day will be in July and I'm asking you to join us. Get involved with or start a neighborhood watch. Volunteer to become mentor at your neighborhood school. Or provide job opportunities for our young people and ex-offenders. Sign up on the city's website.

Let me be clear. We are asking everyone to put skin in the game.

We're asking the State to increase probation and parole resources, fund mental health, fund its obligations from the DA to the public defender, and give us more state troopers to patrol the interstate and state assets so NOPD can focus on neighborhoods

We're asking President Obama and Congress to invest in Operation Full Circle- more boots on the ground, help with intelligence gathering, interdiction of guns, and training our local law enforcement.

I have had constituents, Councilmembers, and legislators say they will do whatever it takes to make our kids safe, and I look forward to working with them on this issue.

The cost of doing nothing is much more severe. The alternative is unacceptable.

To conclude, there is nothing broken here that we cannot fix. No problem here that cannot be solved. No offense between us that cannot be forgiven. No breach or divide that cannot be repaired. Some are cynical and believe that we cannot change, but I believe we can. I have great hope because of young people like Ryan Dalton....

Ryan is the 6th of 11 children.

He was raised by his mom and times were tough in their 8th Ward home. Katrina hit when he was just 15 years old. His family went to Houston and Ryan didn't return to school until they moved back to New Orleans.

It was good to be home, but with a new child to care for, Ryan needed money and turned to life on the streets. And it was there that he was nearly lost, shot three times, but he survived. It was his sister who first told Ryan about a program called Cafe' Reconcile, a non-profit on OC Haley Blvd that helps connect young people to skills and jobs. Ryan excelled in the program and now is a Cafe' Reconcile Floor Trainer in his own right, and is pursuing a degree in business. Ryan's life is a testament that hope-though she may be concealed, is always there, waiting for us to seek her out.

That out of tragedy came come triumph. Out of despair, there can be hope. Out of destruction can come something beautiful.

And so today, I have great hope for all our young men. Because their potential is inspiring. And I have hope for the City of New Orleans. Because of people like Ryan and because of you - the people of New Orleans who never stop moving forward, even during our darkest hours.

I hope you'll join us in changing the culture of death into a culture of life, NOLA for Life.

We have made great progress. And we have a long way to go together.

One team.  
One fight.  
One voice.  
One city.

Let's get to work, New Orleans.