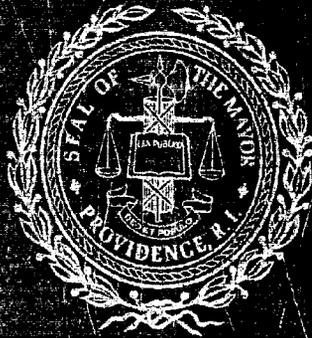


THIRD ANNUAL
STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS



OF

JOSEPH R. PAOLINO, JR.
MAYOR OF PROVIDENCE

TO THE

PROVIDENCE CITY COUNCIL

JANUARY 1987



MAYOR JOSEPH R. PAOLINO, JR.

Meeting the Changing Needs of a Prosperous City

Thank you Mr. President.

Honorable members of the City Council, Department Directors, Honorable members of the City Judiciary, members of Municipal Boards and Commissions, State and local officials, people of Providence: I am pleased to report to you tonight that the State of the City is very good. It is very good because we have found strength in stability and rediscovered our potential; and because we put a revitalized government to work for the neighborhoods. We listened to what people wanted and did our best to make it happen.

On this year's agenda is a continuation of the prosperity we have already seen. It is an agenda for progress through reorganization. As I said in my Inaugural Address: "Where old programs have failed, new programs will be implemented, where changes are needed, we will not hesitate to make them. Where Government has failed, we will make it succeed. Where government has succeeded, we will make it better and search for ways to get the most for every tax dollar."

In a new year we inevitably look back to what we have achieved. We have a long list of accomplishments this year — a list too long to mention but one that includes a River Relocation Project that will forever change the face of Providence, a Housing Court and a School Repair Bond Issue. But the most satisfying accomplishments are the ones that didn't make the headlines, the hundreds of individual requests and concerns that we heard and acted upon at our 40 neighborhood meetings around the City . . . the street signs we replaced, road repairs we made, safety concerns we addressed; the housing problems we solved, the neighborhood speeding we stopped, the vicious dogs we rounded up, the youth gangs we dispersed, and the drug dealers

we arrested. These are the accomplishments we may not read about in the paper, but they are the accomplishments that this administration holds as the true standard for success in municipal government.

When we look back on 1986, we are proud of our accomplishments. As we look ahead, we seek new ways to make government more responsive to the needs of our changing City.

Building a More Responsive Police Department

After working with the Public Safety Commissioner, the Chief of Police, the police union, and the City Council on the details of a workable plan, I am announcing tonight a plan of organization for the Providence Police Department. It is a plan designed to make the Department more responsive to the needs of our neighborhoods, and it will be carried out under the competent leadership of Colonel Anthony Mancuso who continues to have the confidence of this administration. To complement this plan, the Chief of Police has developed a program that will increase department morale and make this plan work.

Tonight I am ordering that 70 percent of all sworn officers be placed back in uniform. This means that 288 out of 412 police officers will be available for uniformed patrol, and 75 new officers will be on the streets of our neighborhoods.

I am also increasing by 11, from 62 to 73, the number of officers available to follow up leads and investigate crimes in the Investigative Division of the Department. This will also have the effect of increasing the number of Juvenile officers available to handle Juvenile crimes. In addition, we are combining the Intelligence Unit and Special Operations Group, into one Special Investigative Bureau to handle all narcotics problems and to rid our neighborhoods of drugs and drug-related crimes. I am also

directing that all 29 police car posts around the City be adequately maintained 24 hours a day, seven days a week, with any additional uniformed officers on call and assigned to the Neighborhood Tactical Bureau. To ensure maximum supervision of officers under this plan, I have requested that superior officers who have been assigned to special units be re-assigned to assume the supervisory roles for which they were trained, and that ongoing supervisory training programs be conducted for all superior officers.

With this plan, the Department is being simplified and returned to basic personnel management principles designed to severely limit call back and overtime within the Uniform Division. Overall I have ordered the Public Safety Commissioner and Police Chief to simplify the structure of the Department into four basic divisions from the several bureaus that have evolved over the last few years and which have reported directly to the Chief. This new structure will include only a Uniform Division, an Investigative Division, a Special Investigations Bureau, and an Administrative Staff. I have requested that this entire plan be completed and put into effect on March 1 when new police officers will be assigned from the police school bringing the Department to full complement once again.

To ensure that the Department is maintained at full complement and the effect of this plan is maximized, I am ordering a new police school to be formed July 1 and a third school formed thereafter; the graduates of which will be assigned immediately to fill any vacancies which arise. Thanks to the efforts of Commissioner Charles Pisaturo, these new schools will be filled under the successful new minority recruitment program which in the first school resulted in 40 percent of the new recruits being women and minorities. In addition, I am asking that a new Police Recruit Reserve Program be created. These police recruit reserves will be those young men and women who have graduated from the police school and are awaiting assignments in the de-

partment. With the authority and responsibility of regular police officers, they will be assigned around the City, assigned to the Housing Authority, or Downtown, or along Westminster Mall, or to special neighborhood projects. As we maintain our Police Department at full complement and continue new police schools, we will be able to maintain the new Police Recruit Reserve Program at maximum strength.

As I have said, where changes are needed we will not hesitate to make them. Where we have succeeded we will do even better.

Addressing Human Services

We will do better in human services. We need a department of City government to oversee the development of long and short range human service policies and programs. Tonight I am introducing an ordinance creating a Department of Human Services. We will begin this new Department with the assignment of a professional advocate to serve as the new Director. I am asking Frank Sullivan, who served as the Director of the Officer of Day Care and Special Projects for Maryland, to be the new Director of Human Services for the City of Providence. I am asking him to form a Human Services Coordinating Council to assist in focusing human services in this time of scarce resources. I am asking the new Department Director to begin by performing a needs assessment, to establish an advocacy function, to review all existing human service policies and programs and determine which are most important, to identify the role of the City in the delivery of services and the establishment of policies, to develop a program for coordination and review of all existing programs, to monitor and evaluate those programs, and finally, to establish a resource development function within the new department.

There is a human services issue in our city which must be addressed. We have a preliminary report on what has happened in the past. We have functions that are being funded. Now we

want to give the issue, the agencies, and the funding a proper governmental structure, as well as provide the necessary reporting and review mechanism. Before making any final determinations on the organization of this new Department I will await the recommendations of our new Human Services Director. However, I am committing tonight to the establishment of a Division of Elderly Services within the new Department and to programs to promote day care and a stronger network of community services. Where changes are needed, we will not hesitate to make them. Where we have failed, we will succeed. Where we have succeeded, we will do better.

Continued Progress in Public Works

We will do better in Public Works with the appointment of a new Director, Rocco DeLuca. He brings with him years of administrative experience at the State level where, over the past one and a half years, he reduced workers' compensation costs by 20 percent and reduced sick-time costs from 35 percent to less than five percent. The new Director enjoys the respect and confidence of this administration. We have made tremendous progress in Public Works. We have restored confidence in the delivery of services and in the administrative procedure within the Department. Now we are ready to take the next step.

We have come from corruption and no work, to no corruption and day-to-day work. We have come from no shows and no programs to regular schedules and new programs; programs like street sweeping, abandoned car removal, and improved neighborhood cleanup services. But the City is still not clean enough. Our priority will be to purchase new equipment where necessary and increase our response to neighborhood problems. I have instructed the new Director to re-organize personnel and procedures to achieve maximum efficiency. I have asked him to address the problems of workers' compensation, supervisory

overtime, and sick leave abuse. I have asked him to evaluate all employees, to develop a maintenance and management schedule for everything from street paving to vehicle maintenance, to start training programs for personnel, to review the street sweeping program to see if some streets should be swept more often, and to re-evaluate the snow removal plan. The new Director faces a difficult challenge, but he heads a changed Department, a Department whose workers have made our vacant lot and abandoned car programs successful.

In other Departments where changes are needed, we will not hesitate to make them. We will, over the next few months, be looking at the re-assignment of personnel at the Water Supply Board and at the Department of Planning and Development, and we will be completing a study of fire services with special emphasis on rescue services in Providence to ensure that we are doing all we can to maintain the high quality of existing rescue and fire services. Additionally, we will be re-evaluating personnel in Building Inspection and in Code Enforcement to bring those areas in line with additional responsibilities generated by the new Providence Housing Court. There is always room for improvement.

Parks — Building a Cultural Cornerstone

Last year, during our 350th Anniversary Celebration, we all rediscovered our Parks and what they mean to our quality of life. Last year was a year of achievements for the Parks Department. We saw dramatic renovations of the Museum and Planetarium. . .and one of the most significant but unnoticed achievements of this administration was Roger Williams Park Zoo becoming an accredited institution once again. This is only the beginning for our Park System. Tonight I am calling for a five-year Master Plan for Roger Williams Park Zoo. I am asking that

the plan include recommendations for the building of an African exhibit that will attract more people and give greater visibility to our City Park. We all remember Alice the elephant. It's time to bring her back again. And it's time to bring a children's area back to the Park, with rides, a children's zoo and maybe a new carousel. I would like the plan to include recommendations on upgrading current exhibits including the renovation of the Bird-house for innovative new uses.

Last year our 350th Anniversary Celebration reached out to all our citizens in every neighborhood of our City. It taught us about our past, about our heroes, and about ourselves. It taught us about our neighborhoods, and how they have grown and changed and how we have changed as a City. As chairman of Providence/350, I was proud to be involved in a truly unique program which gave us so much. As Mayor, I want to continue the spirit that the 350th began. Therefore, tonight I am creating a Special Events Office within the Parks Department which will coordinate a City Celebration each year presented through generosity of business and individual sponsorships from around our City and State.

Tonight I want to recognize the one person who has been most responsible for the success of so many programs that have restored our enthusiasm for our City. I would like to thank Nancy Derrig, our Park Superintendent, for a job well done.

Together where we have succeeded, we will do even better.

Economic Development — Striking A Proper Balance

We have succeeded in rediscovering ourselves as a city and letting others know what a great city it is with our creative new advertising and marketing program that we unveiled in Boston earlier this week. But we must strike the proper balance between

development and neighborhood preservation. There are new opportunities that can revitalize the Downtown, open our waterfront, expand our tax base, and benefit all the neighborhoods of Providence.

In my Inaugural Address I called on the Capital Center Commission to lift the prohibition on major retail in the Capital Center. That prohibition was designed to protect major Downtown retail. But now major Downtown retail is what we need most. With new tax laws that discourage speculative construction of office buildings, the time is right to look to retail development in the Capital Center. I have spoken with developers who have expressed interest in bringing a major retail facility to Providence, a facility similar to Copley Place. Some may say that there are too many ambitious ideas and plans for just a 60-acre project. Therefore, tonight I am proposing that the University of Rhode Island Extension Building land be annexed as part of the Capital Center, and I am calling on the Governor to work with me to study the possibility of moving the URI facility across town to the Jewelry District as one alternative site. This would encourage the development of that area as the Soho of Providence geared toward education and the arts, and free up valuable land for further development in the Capital Center.

There's an excitement in Providence. There are new development opportunities everywhere but we must be diligent in our deliberations so that we make the best choices, the choices that expand not only our tax base but our vitality as a community. I see the River Relocation Project as our legacy to the future. To complement that project there is a choice we can make. We can open our entire waterfront once again. This won't happen overnight, but the excitement we feel about Providence gives us the potential to realize our dreams. I want to see the implementation of the entire Waterfront Development Plan which recommends the increased utilization and enjoyment of our greatest natural resource, Narragansett Bay. I want to begin the process

of opening the Bay for the recreational and economic benefit of the entire City. Tonight I am calling on the Department of Planning and Development to update the Waterfront Plan and make recommendations on the mixed-use development of the 800-acre parcel that extends from the Port to Allens Avenue, from the Shipyard to Fox Point.

One of our greatest obstacles to development in the Downtown is the lack of adequate parking. Tonight I am asking the new Providence Off-Street Public Parking Corporation to develop a comprehensive plan to turn the \$80 million in funding authority that we have from the Federal Government into brick and mortar. Thirty million dollars of that funding is earmarked for a parking garage next to the planned convention center. The remaining \$50 million will be used for new parking facilities as developed by the Off-Street Parking Corporation. This administration wants to see a plan of action by the spring of this year.

I hope that by that time the Governor and I will have passed the necessary legislation to create the Convention Center Authority bringing the idea of a Convention Center in Providence closer to reality. There has been a Task Force working on the City's behalf to develop a feasibility study to determine the size and operating cost requirements of a new Convention facility. The Task Force is also investigating how best to combine physically and administratively the Civic Center, Convention Center and other developments on the site. With the 1,400 seat expansion of the Civic Center planned for this year, the finalization of plans for a new Convention Center are very important to our overall economic development plans for the Downtown.

Where government has succeeded, we will make it better and search for ways to get the most for every tax dollar.

Keeping Housing Affordable

This year government has succeeded in establishing the first Providence Housing Court to protect our neighborhoods from absentee landlords and poor housing conditions. Tonight I am requesting the City Solicitor to have the proper ordinance creating the new Court ready for City Council approval as soon as possible. I would like the details of the establishment of this new Court of Record in place prior to the new budget in July.

Additionally, in the area of Housing, I am directing the Department of Planning and Development to investigate whether monies from the bond issue for the conversion of the 30-acre Roger Williams Housing Project into an industrial park can be re-directed to bring badly needed low income housing facilities back to the area. We need an industrial site in Lower South Providence, but I am not convinced that this is the best site. However, if a single high-tech industrial development were proposed, this site could be suitable. In the meantime, I am asking the Rhode Island Housing and Mortgage Corporation to work with the City and all elected officials and neighborhood groups in developing a low interest mortgage program that can revitalize the Roger Williams Project and return affordable one, two, and three family units to that area of the City.

We want to stabilize this entire area and make it stronger with hundreds of affordable new housing units. We want to expand to the entire city our model program with Omni Development to create new affordable housing opportunities for our neighborhoods. Already we are working with Omni Development to bring five new single family homes to upper South Providence. We acquired vacant lot land and sold it to Omni for one dollar to build these five single family homes. These homes are being marketed to neighborhood families for \$60,000. We have worked with the Rhode Island Housing and Mortgage Finance Corporation for low interest construction and permanent mortgages

that will utilize the Providence Housing Fund. This is the kind of program that can begin to rebuild our neighborhoods.

I was pleased to hear that the Governor, in his State of the State Address, committed his administration to affordable housing. Tonight I call on him to make that commitment a reality and work with us on developing options for this area. No other city needs affordable housing more than Providence.

It is still my belief that a downtown residential neighborhood is important to our city. The Outlet was to be the cornerstone of that development but tax law changes made that impossible. However, it is my desire to save the Outlet Building for development by Blue Cross to keep one of our best partners in our Downtown. It is still the intent of this administration to bring affordable residential development to the Downtown — like we have seen at the ITT Grinnell site — and we will continue to explore all options.

A Fair and Honest Revaluation

Housing issues have become a major concern in our changing city. We see speculators buying property and driving up property values. We see a constantly changing real estate market and we are concerned about the value of our homes. This year we must address those concerns. We must investigate all options, and I am proposing anti-speculation tax legislation to prevent out-of-state developers from driving the cost of housing beyond the limits of our citizens. And we must address the concerns we all have about revaluation. From ignorance comes fear and we must first understand what revaluation is and how it affects us.

Tonight I am announcing the implementation of an educational program on the entire revaluation process. I have directed the City Assessor to work with Sabre Systems, the City's revaluation firm, to administer a new public awareness program de-

signed to answer everyone's questions about how revaluation will affect you and your property. We will go into every neighborhood and answer every question. We will mail brochures to every taxpayer explaining the revaluation process, what to expect, and what it means. I have already briefed you, the members of the City Council, on this program and I ask you to help me bring this program to your neighborhoods. Make no mistake, this will be an honest and fair revaluation process.

Education — The Future of Our City

We have succeeded in repairing our schools after years of neglect. Now that we have established a program to replace boilers and passed a \$25 million bond issue to physically repair every school building in the city, I am asking the new acting Superintendent to work with the Committee on School Maintenance to develop a comprehensive maintenance program to prevent this city from facing the massive repair program that was needed to make our schools safe and warm. I want clean classrooms and clean facilities. And this year I will be visiting every school and talking to every principal who is the person ultimately responsible for the maintenance of their buildings.

Now we can turn our attention to education. Tonight I am asking the new acting Superintendent to present this administration with options and proposals for reducing our dropout rate and attacking the problem of illiteracy in our City. I am asking him also to develop educational programs to meet the needs of the new Hispanic and Southeast Asian immigrants as well as other minority immigrants who are coming to our City as our fathers came years ago. And I am requesting that he establish procedures to continually review the school curriculum and administrative staffing of the school department as well as teacher staffing to ensure that all subjects being taught are in line with modern trends.

I am proud to report on the success of our Adopt-A-School Program and pledge this administration to the continuation of that partnership with the members of the City Council and the Chamber of Commerce. And this year we will be inviting all school children to tour City Hall, to talk with the Mayor, and learn about their City government.

We concentrated on necessary maintenance. Now let's concentrate on education.

The Effects of Revenue Sharing

Tonight, I've said the state of the City is good, and it is. We've improved finances and had surpluses each year; we've increased our bond rating and been able to insure our bonds to AAA; we've improved our financial management systems and made Providence a sound investment. But we still have a \$3 million cumulative deficit that I inherited and every dollar of surplus by law must go toward paying that debt. Until we pay that debt, we can't take advantage of our success; we can't use that money to fix one pothole or repair one street.

The state of the City *is* good, but I am concerned when I see the federal government take \$4.6 million in revenue sharing for Providence out of our City budget. I am concerned when the State wants to take five percent of our school aid and regulate its use without giving the City additional money. I am concerned when the Federal and State governments want to balance their budgets on the backs of Providence taxpayers, when they cut community development grants from \$9.5 million to \$5.5 million. We need more aid from the State to ensure the continuation of efficient and effective municipal services, we need to find new sources of revenue and tonight I am calling on the General Assembly to help in that effort.

For example, in 1986 the Recorder of Deeds took in \$1,178,000 for Revenue Stamps for the State of which the City gets only 10 percent or \$117,000 . . . and we do all the work. All the State gives us is an antiquated stamp machine. Give us our fair share, and we will provide a new machine. I call on the State to give us back our revenue tools. When the City issues a speeding ticket or cites someone for drunk driving, no matter what the fine is, whether it is \$50, \$100, or \$1,000, the City gets only \$5.00 from the State. Last year we got just \$31,000. The State got \$5 million statewide . . . and we do all the work. Think about it. We supply the police, the car, the gas, the time for the officer to go to court, at time and a half pay, and we get only \$5.00. That's highway robbery. If the State and Federal government do not help us find new revenue sources and continue to erode our revenue base, then the burden will fall to Providence taxpayers . . . and that's not fair.

Volunteerism For a Better Providence

I have established volunteerism as a priority in my administration. Like most municipalities across the United States, we have a host of citizens serving on boards and commissions concerned with the different aspects of the well-being of the City and its residents. Just as importantly, various individuals and groups work across the City in many capacities. Volunteerism can be a tradition in our City. As Mayor, I will provide administrative and fiscal support, and personal leadership to the development and application of citizen volunteerism. I will encourage and support well-managed volunteer programs that bring good results. I am not interested in empty catchwords. Quite simply, I want every citizen in Providence to be presented with the opportunity to pitch into the work effort — to care about the quality of life in our city — to achieve success in citizen participation — to enjoy being a part of a great City.

Neighborhood Meetings — The Hallmark of This Administration

We will continue to hold neighborhood meetings across the City. These meetings have become the hallmark of this administration, and they have brought us our greatest accomplishments and our deepest satisfaction.

This year we will go back to every neighborhood. We will listen to what people want, and we will continue to put government to work for the people.

An Ambitious Agenda for Progress

I view you, the City Council, as partners in all of our efforts. We may from time to time disagree on some policies, but we will have one voice in promoting Providence and serving the people. You are our ambassadors to the neighborhoods. Together we can succeed.

This is a year of action with a full and ambitious agenda. We will be negotiating all City labor contracts and we anticipate the continuation of the new era in labor relations we began last year. We will in good faith negotiate fair and equitable agreements based on cooperation and compromise, agreements that preserve the economic integrity of the City and maintain and improve management options.

We will finally be computerizing all City management and record-keeping systems making record retrieval and maintenance much easier for employees and for citizens. We will seek to increase our bond rating as we did last year. We will once again go to New York and show investment firms that Providence is truly a City that works. We will be introducing legislation to the General Assembly to seek new sources of revenue. And, I will be working closely with the Providence delegation who have

been our good friends and have shown this young Mayor how the legislative process works. But most of all we will listen to what people need and we will act.

Our agenda reflects what the people of Providence want, what they really value as a community, opportunity for themselves and their families, fair play and honest hard work, an independent spirit and common sense, a vision for the future and a dream of greatness, their individual worth and the freedom to pursue their goals, the strength of their families and their legacy to their children. Ours is an ambitious agenda, not just for a year but for the lifetime of a City.

The choices we will face may be difficult but the resources at our command are limitless. We can be the best because we have the best. The people of Providence have the courage, talent, and determination to prosper. I know we will keep the flame burning because together we have seen what we can be and the future looks brighter than it has before.

Let us leave here tonight knowing that together we really can make Providence America's Best City because we have the best neighborhoods and the best people, and because we've made it work. When that happens, I sincerely hope Providence will look back and say that we did it because we had America's Best Mayor.

Thank you and good night.

