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FOURTH ANNUAL  
STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS



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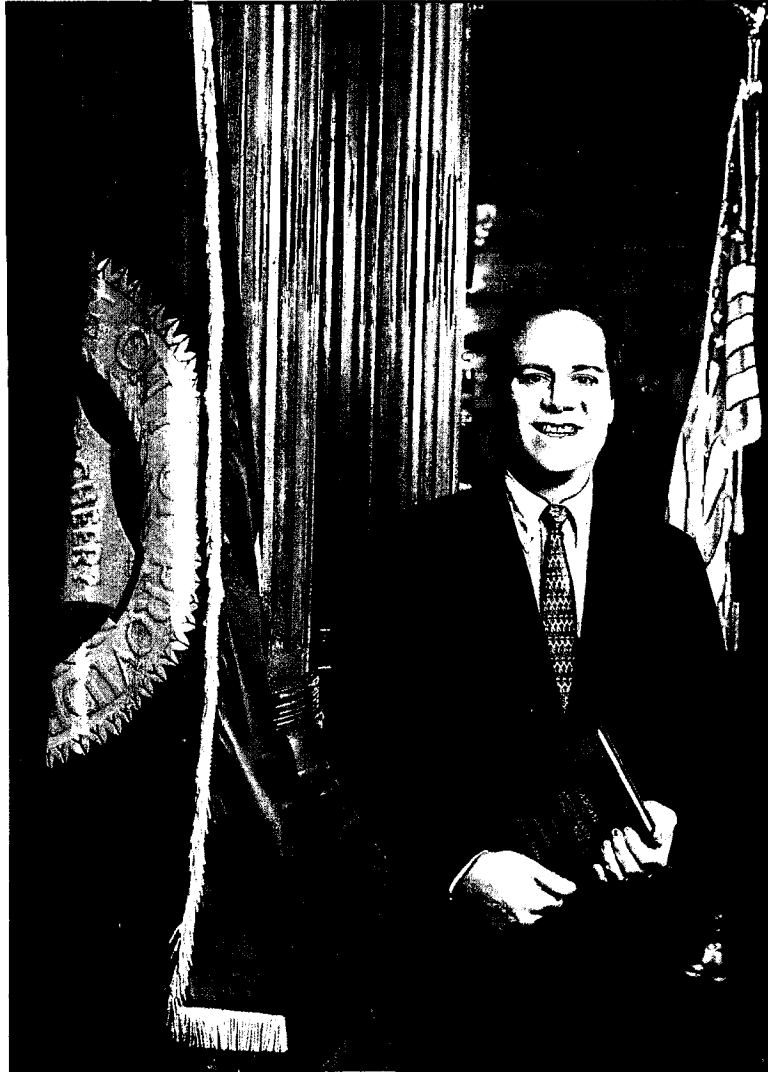
JOSEPH R. PAOLINO, JR.  
MAYOR OF PROVIDENCE

TO THE

PROVIDENCE CITY COUNCIL

JANUARY 1988

Joseph R. Paolino, Jr.  
Mayor 1988



MAYOR JOSEPH R. PAOLINO, JR.

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*Dedicated to*  
*The Honorable Matthew J. Smith,*  
*Speaker of the Rhode Island House of Representatives,*  
*who served the people of Providence*  
*with dignity, integrity, and honor*  
*and whose personal friendship, advice and counsel*  
*have been deeply appreciated.*

## ***Prudently Investing In Our Neighborhoods: Rebuilding the Infrastructure of a 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; tonight as I report on the State of the City for the fourth time, I remember the excitement and anticipation of the first, the enthusiasm and achievements of the second, and the continued progress and ambitious agenda of the third. With each year have come more and more successes in our neighborhoods, and greater and greater challenges.

So much has changed in just three years; it has changed for the better. We have been prudent in our deliberations, made the right choices, and forged strong partnerships. There has been no problem too big for the people of Providence to solve, no challenge too difficult, no obstacle too great. I would like to thank you, the members of the City Council, and everyone who works in City government for making this administration a success. Your enthusiastic support and guidance is deeply appreciated. It was Ralph Waldo Emerson who said, "nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm," and this administration and this Mayor certainly have had enthusiasm.

Together we have shared enthusiasm and optimism about the future because we have built a healthy, sound government that is modern, effective, efficient, fiscally responsible, and running well, and we have put that government to work in the neighborhoods. We are investing in our schools doing maintenance work that hasn't been done in over thirty-five years. We're investing in our parks and open spaces, and we're going to systematically fix roads and sidewalks; we're putting up road and

street signs, rebuilding the police department and making government at all levels work for the people.

This year we turn the attention of government to preserving the vital infrastructure of our City — our parks, roads, schools, and our water supply system.

I am pleased to report to you tonight that the State of the City is excellent; but because it is excellent — and because we have achieved so much — the persistent nagging problems that come with urban society are that much more difficult to accept.

In the last few weeks we have all been touched in one way or another by the tragic and senseless crimes in the news. And we are all seeing how drugs and drug related crimes can tear apart neighborhoods, families, and communities.

### ***Meeting the Challenges of Urban Society***

When I went to an Elmwood neighborhood meeting not long ago, the neighborhood association was most concerned with one thing — the open sale and use of drugs on the streets of their neighborhood — and for good reason. We heard stories of children delivering, buying, and using drugs, and we heard of robberies and break-ins to support the drug habits of so many who are threatening the stability of our community. When I heard these stories I was more concerned than ever for the future of our children.

Therefore, in early December with Brown University and Commissioner of Public Safety, Charles Pisaturo, we convened a statewide symposium on Drugs and Society to address our concerns and to find ways for the legislative, enforcement, judicial, and correctional systems to ensure that justice is being served and criminals are taken off the streets. We started the dialogue. Now we need to develop constructive solutions to the issues we

raised. We need to support mandatory sentencing legislation and the excellent legislative package on drugs that Senator John Revens has introduced; we need to support legislation requiring judges to accept drug field tests rather than wait for toxicology reports, and we need to increase state funding for the toxicology lab. We need to strengthen the bail amendment to the Rhode Island Constitution that was passed last year; we need to look to the State's Public Building Authority for funding for new prisons. We need to develop new educational programs in our schools, and we need to increase support of drug treatment facilities across the State. We need to prioritize drug cases by amending existing laws to ensure that those in possession of large amounts of drugs can be charged as dealers, held without bail, and taken off the streets of neighborhoods like Elmwood.

The Symposium will issue its final report in the next two months, and I intend to support its recommendations and ask all of you to join with me in doing whatever we can to give us the weapons we need to successfully fight the war against drugs.

But something must be done at the national level to help us here in our cities. Tonight I call on Senator Claiborne Pell, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and our entire Congressional delegation to protect children in neighborhoods across this nation by working to stop drugs at our borders. We need to activate the resources of our defense and state departments to defend our children against the silent invasion of cocaine, crack, and heroin.

Recently we've been reading about countries like Bolivia, Columbia, and Mexico — countries that we call "friendly governments." But how friendly can they be when they're killing our children? Just a few weeks ago a judge in Columbia released from prison Jorge Luis Ochoa, considered a leading figure in the "Medellin-Cartel" — one of the largest drug cartels in the world. This man, along with Pablo Escobar, are the leaders of a drug

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ring responsible for 70% of all the cocaine smuggled into the United States. Fortune Magazine listed them among the twenty richest men in the world. Escobar is said to be worth \$3 billion and Ochoa worth \$2 billion. And they have private armies that are bigger and better equipped than most small Third-World nations. If that isn't cause to activate our defenses, then I don't know what is. We cannot allow drug armies to rule nations and to profit at the expense of our neighborhoods. We cannot allow drug dealers and their assassins to kill American drug enforcement officers like Enrique Salazar in Mexico in 1985. Therefore, I call on Senator Pell and the United States Congress to realize that the drug war is a foreign policy issue. My suggestion might be bold but I believe it makes sense — cut off economic aid to those countries that are harboring drug armies and cartels, and if we must use the power of our national defense — then so be it! I will be talking — during the next few months — with Mayors from around the country and with the United States Conference of Mayors to see if we can convene a national symposium on Drugs and Society that will address the need to activate our defenses to save our children and stop this invasion. When it comes to drugs — foreign policy *is* a neighborhood issue, and I intend to continue to work for our neighborhoods!

To help fight the war on drugs locally, I am announcing tonight that the City will hold a public auction of the many vehicles it has seized in the increased number of successful drug raids conducted by the Providence Police Department. The money raised from that auction will be used to fund new programs and buy essential equipment to enhance the police's ability to wage a successful war on drugs in Providence, and I'd like to thank Senator John Bevilacqua, Representative Jeffrey Teitz, and Representative Frank Fiorenzano for spearheading the legislation that allows us to direct those funds into the drug war. And to help coordinate drug prevention activities in the City we will soon be appointing a Substance Abuse Prevention Council under a State grant program.

## ***The Contrast of Individual Neighborhood Achievements***

But, in contrast to the persistent problems of a growing urban society, there are thousands of individual achievements, thousands of inspirational neighborhood stories that represent the changes for the better that we have seen in this City in just four short years. Each story is a shining city light that makes the future brighter.

There's the story of Katerina Singleton, a wonderful elderly Russian immigrant who, on her own, organized twenty neighborhood children to restore and clean Candace Street playground. She asked neighbors to donate paint and materials and she and the children went to work. "It's our park and we've got to get the kids involved," she said. Katerina Singleton knows what her park means to her neighborhood, but more than that she knows the true meaning of community pride.

Her story — in contrast to the stories I heard at the Elmwood meeting — is one city light, one shining light of individual achievement, self respect, and pride. As of tonight, let's all turn the lights up and let the City shine.

## ***Parks and Open Spaces — The Issue of The '90s***

The individual achievement of Katerina Singleton and the children of Candace Street reflects our renewed commitment to the preservation of parks and open spaces across the City. That commitment becomes increasingly important as economic prosperity brings more and more development to our State and to our City. This year we have a unique opportunity to take the lead in Providence; even though we're an urban community we can lead this State in the preservation of open spaces and the protection of our environment. I have continually said that we



must seek to strike the proper balance between development and preservation, and now is the time to act.

The bond issue that you so overwhelmingly approved in November will fund a planned total of \$30 million of improvements to every park in our City. With that kind of investment we can have first class ballfields, modern outdoor athletic facilities, safe and clean playgrounds, and clean open spaces where the beauty of nature makes us a more livable city. Henry David Thoreau said, "we can never have enough nature. In nature is the preservation of the world." We may not be able to match the wilderness that Thoreau had in mind, but we can take his advice and enhance the parks and open spaces we share in an urban environment, and rebuild the infrastructure of our neighborhoods.

This year I intend to call on the Governor and the General Assembly to approve an additional \$18 million bond issue to match — dollar for dollar — every city and town's open space proposals without favoring one community over another.

We have already begun the process of selecting architects, engineers, and a professional construction management firm to oversee the ambitious three-year open space preservation project, and groundbreaking plans are completed for renovations of the first 32 of 85 neighborhood parks with anticipated completion in the late Fall of this year. This first phase will include two parks in each of the City's fifteen neighborhoods.

Overall we will be creating ten premier sports complexes at Gano Street, Hope High School field, Prete field, Davis Park, Bucklin Park, Mount Pleasant field, Central and Classical fields, Neutaconkanut Park, Richardson Park, and Merino Park. Renovations will include jogging trails, lighted ballfields, soccer fields, and basketball, volleyball and tennis courts. We will be upgrading tot lots. We will be protecting and restoring the unique treasures that are part of our city park system. The opportunity is at hand

to upgrade walkways and piers at India Point Park, and to preserve neighborhood gateway parks like Blackstone Boulevard, Wanskuck Park, and Pleasant Valley Parkway. And we will have a new five-year tree planting program to reforest our City.

Everybody's parks will be improved and the improvements will allow for easy and continued maintenance. What we repair, we intend to maintain!

Roger Williams Park — The Jewel of Providence — is our most renowned example of artistic and educational open space design and utilization. Its magnificent waterways and green space, its nationally acclaimed zoo, its newly renovated Museum of Natural History, and its restored Planetarium are a monument to progressive environmental planning in an urban setting. Now we have the opportunity to make Roger Williams Park even better. I have a vision of Roger Williams Park as the best park in America. With the bond issue you approved in November, Roger Williams Park will receive \$6 million for capital and infrastructure improvements.

There are opportunities that go beyond brick and mortar; they are opportunities that, if taken, will speak to generations to come about who we are and what was important to us in Providence in 1988.

But most importantly, next week this administration will unveil plans for the most dramatic and far-reaching upgrading of the Roger Williams Park Zoo ever undertaken. I'm not talking about new fences and a few new picnic benches. I'm talking about building a state-of-the-art zoo, designed by America's leading authorities, with a new African exhibit and dramatic open environments for the preservation of wildlife and the education of all of us. The Roger Williams Park Zoo has meant too much to many generations to leave it behind as we move into the twenty-first century. This plan will make our zoo one of the best zoos in America, and I for one can't wait to see it happen.

## ***The Business of Government = A***

In contrast to the visible achievements of a city enjoying four years of prosperity, there are the many day-to-day tasks of government that go unnoticed. This administration has taken pride in responsibly attending to the business of government. This year we now turn our management skills to upgrading the infrastructure of this City, dealing with the basic physical needs of city systems that have gone unattended in some cases for almost thirty-five years.

In my first State of the City address in January of 1985 I said, "the people of this City must be confident that the business of government is good business." And every time I have stood here since, I have been able to report that the men and women of this administration have conducted the day-to-day, nuts-and-bolts business of government with skill and professionalism and tonight is no exception. The results speak for themselves.

Last year we said that we were on our way back to being a nationally recognized, fiscally responsible municipal government. Last year Moody's Investment Service in New York raised our bond rating for the first time in years from an all-time low of Baa to a Baal. And in just twelve months, Moody's has once again upgraded our bond rating from Baal to A. We're half way back to where we should be and we've done it in just three and a half years. Providence should be an AA rated city again, and if the men and women of any administration can do it, we can.

I'd like to thank you, the members of the City Council for making the right choices. Since 1981 you have been the fiscal watchdogs of this government and a partner in bringing back our fiscal strength. I remember the long nights we spent on the Finance Committee back then — Councilman Nicholas Easton, Councilman David Dillon, Councilman Malcolm Farmer, and Chairperson Carolyn Brassil. We worked hard back then, and I

know how hard you have all worked since to help raise our bond rating and turn this City's finances around.

But if raising our bond rating to the highest its been in twelve years isn't enough, there's more. We've been able to reduce our deficit each and every year since we've been in office. That deficit was \$6.5 million three and a half years ago. It stands at just over \$1 million today. I said that we would wipe out that deficit under a five-year plan, but I can confidently say tonight that we can beat our deadline and eliminate the entire deficit by the end of this fiscal year.

Under this administration, the business of Providence government has been good business. With good managers who have shown fiscal responsibility and sound economic judgement, the machinery of government has performed quietly and smoothly. In contrast to the visible examples of growth that appear in the press, the real shining examples of our City's progress are the Department Directors who are sitting here tonight. They are the unsung heroes, the professional men and women who have made the difference. They are the ones who have individually changed the machinery of government. They are the ones who deserve our thanks and recognition.

Tonight, as has become a tradition, I would like to thank and recognize not just one member of this administration, but each and every Department Director for rising against the odds to accept the sometimes difficult challenges of making city government work — and for dealing with me. Each of you has shown that the business of government *can* be good business. Thank you all for a job well done.

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## ***Restoring Our Infrastructure — Investing In Our Neighborhoods***

Now we must put the business of government to work to restore antiquated city systems — our parks, our schools, our roads and sidewalks, and our water supply system.

We've already replaced most of the old informational filing systems throughout city offices with modern new computer facilities. That work has been done and quietly continues. But there is much more to be done.

Last year we began the long overdue process of restoring our schools with a \$25 million bond issue. When I first took office, some school buildings had no heat because boilers hadn't been properly maintained in years and just stopped working. We began emergency measures to keep those schools open. We contracted with an energy management firm and began the process necessary to permanently restore the integrity of our schools. I asked you to help "Save our Schools" with a \$25 million bond issue that you overwhelmingly approved, and the work began last year.

But we knew we had a more extensive problem. We knew that many schools, 62% of which are over fifty years old, haven't been even minimally maintained in decades. We didn't want to spend \$25 million but we had to. We had to fix the "bad work" and "band-aid" measures that have led to the problem. We've learned from mistakes of the past. It was Councilperson Joan DiRuzzo who kept telling us that something had to be done in our schools. She was right. We hired a reputable management consultant firm to investigate the extent of the problem and oversee our investment. This administration is and will continue to be a fiscally prudent administration that will invest taxpayers dollars where and when it is absolutely necessary and only when the investment can bring a substantial return. Our schools need

such an investment. I know, I've visited close to twenty schools this year and I've seen the terrible lighting, dirty hallways, leaky ceilings, broken windows, graffiti, and bathrooms and locker rooms that are in deplorable condition. You wouldn't believe the lack of maintenance in these buildings. We have to do something about it and \$25 million just isn't enough.

Education is everybody's business, and tonight I am asking you, the members of the City Council and the people of Providence to support this administration's "Neighborhood Schools — Renaissance Plan 2000". This is a comprehensive, professional, construction, maintenance, and repair plan that addresses all educational sectors — the needs of teachers as well as students, administrators as well as workers, and most importantly, the desperate needs of every school building in this City — from plumbing and electricity to ventilation and heating, from classrooms and locker rooms to corridors and stairs. The work must begin now for the year 2000. I intend to make "School Renaissance Plan 2000" a priority of this administration.

The report we will release in final form in the next few weeks dramatically underscores the extent of the problem. In completing that report, survey teams crawled through every space in every building to identify and prioritize projects in each school. The results are incredible and the challenge is great. But now the people of Providence and the administration of city government are a different breed. We're not going to take the easy way. We're equipped and willing to do what must be done to get the job done and get it done right.

First, we will need to pass the largest bond in the City's history. Details will be announced soon, and I will be looking to each member of the City Council for support and to the people for passage of the bond issue in November. Then the work will begin. Work will be standardized and prioritized and will be project specific rather than building specific. It will include nec-

essary maintenance management programs to safeguard our schools for all future generations — even if that means implementing new or reorganized maintenance and supervisory personnel systems to oversee modern maintenance procedures. Tonight I am calling on teachers, administrators, students, parents, and labor leaders to join us in working to make this effort a success.

The investment we make today will have returns into the next century and for generations to come. Tonight I ask of you to join me in supporting our “Neighborhood Schools — Renaissance Plan 2000” because education *is* everybody’s business. This investment in our infrastructure is an investment in our future.

Schools are one element of our City’s infrastructure. Roads and sidewalks are another. In the past we had a huge deficit and a low bond rating, and the machinery of government was running slowly. Now the deficit is down, the bond rating is up, and the machinery of government is fixed. Now we can invest in our roads and sidewalks. This year close to \$3 million will be invested in a comprehensive and fair road and sidewalk repair program. It will begin in late Spring and continue through late Fall.

We’ve all seen many city road and sidewalk repair programs, most of which were implemented once every four years only in certain areas. Consequently, some areas of the City have been left unattended, and many roads and sidewalks have begun to show their age. But government can work more efficiently and responsibly. When one road in a city this size is impassable because of broken pavement, pot holes, and general neglect — when one sidewalk is a rocky obstacle rather than a safe path — then the image of our entire city suffers.

Road and sidewalk repairs can be systematically and fairly prioritized and completed with an ongoing written plan funded

by a Road Improvement Trust Fund financed with \$1.6 million annually from payment in lieu of taxes for tax-exempt institutions.

As long as the State continues to assist us by providing adequate funding, the Road Improvement Trust Fund will continue to benefit every neighborhood. With the continued help of the Governor and the support of the Providence delegation and all the members of the General Assembly who have worked so hard to make payment in lieu of taxes a reality for all the communities of Rhode Island, we can fairly and systematically rebuild our roads and sidewalks.

These basic services and the maintenance of this City's neighborhoods is the primary responsibility of a department that has undergone many changes — even since I've been Mayor. But, with each change we have taken one step closer to our goal of a more efficient and respected Department of Public Works. The new Director of Public Works has my complete confidence. He has already shown his skill and determination in successfully handling snowstorms with speed and ease.

Like our parks, our roads and sidewalks, and our schools, the very department responsible for maintenance has itself been neglected in the past. Some of that fault is mine. Capital improvements are still needed in the Department of Public Works.

I have asked the new Director to submit a list of essential equipment and he has. We expect bids to be finalized soon and delivery within the next two months. We'll be purchasing everything he needs, from compressors to dump trucks, backhoes to plows. It is a difficult task for one department of 175 men to keep every system in this City in top working order.

We know that workmen's compensation is a serious problem for business, for taxpayers, and for the City of Providence. Everytime it has been reviewed and rules are amended, more problems



arise. We need to work with the leaders of the business community, the General Assembly, labor leaders, and with Governor DiPrete in changing the system to stop abuses while continuing to help those truly in need.

One very important system in the broad range of city services is the Water Supply Board. It is responsible for the preservation, purity, and delivery of two-thirds of this state's water supply. The integrity of that system is a profound responsibility for any administration. As we hear more and more about toxic contamination of well water around our Nation, when we see the results of an oil spill in Pittsburgh, we can be thankful that competent professional city engineers are working constantly to ensure that our State's water supply, provided by the Providence Water Supply Board, continues to be among the best in America.

Mayor Joseph Gainer had the vision and foresight to start the Water Supply Board and we must have the vision and foresight to restore it. The system is run down. The last major investment in the infrastructure of the system was made more than twenty years ago. It is time to rebuild.

The necessary investment in modern water supply equipment, treatment, and delivery technologies to properly maintain and preserve the most valuable of city services is a priority of this administration. We have fought in the General Assembly for the necessary funds to purchase additional watershed land to expand the controlled area around the Scituate Reservoir, and therefore, to keep the groundwaters that flow into our system as pure as possible.

Whatever investment is required for the City to maintain our water supply system is a prudent investment in the future. We anticipate using the Public Building Authority to finance repairs to the water supply system. I don't believe there is anyone in this room who could responsibly and in good conscience think such an investment is not a sound investment in the future.

These repairs will include upgrading the power system, replacing the obsolete control board with a modern monitoring and telemetering system, replacing thousands of old valves, inspecting dams, upgrading the laboratory to better comply with the Safe Drinking Water Act, and securing our watershed lands. We must put the water supply system on a progressive maintenance schedule, and regularly upgrade the system.

But not only are we going to rebuild our water system; this year we will aggressively buy additional watershed land around the Scituate Reservoir to preserve the clean, fresh water we all enjoy.

### ***Rivers and Neighborhoods — A Downtown Strategy***

This year as we turn the business of government to rebuilding, let's assess the prosperity and progress of our downtown and what it means to the neighborhoods — what we must do to balance development and preservation for the good of all.

As I have said before, "the development of our downtown is the development of our City as a whole." It is the key to economic prosperity, to jobs, and to expanding our tax base to ease the property tax burden from the backs of our neighborhoods. Tonight I restate that those whose interests lie in downtown development must understand the depth of our commitment to our neighborhoods. We welcome all responsible development that benefits the community and capitalizes on its strength as an historic, diverse small cosmopolitan urban center. This administration will continue to offer tax inducements to any developer who meets our standards and whose projects have citywide implications.

Providence Place is just one example. Plans call for an up-scale shopping mall with major retail and parking for 4500 cars

to be located right in the heart of downtown in the capital center. With Providence Place will come jobs and more opportunities for continued growth.

The face of downtown is changing. It's not a dream. It's happening now. Can you believe it? We have a shopping mall war in downtown Providence. That means progress and prosperity. We've turned the corner, and I think it's great!

The retailing axis of the City is turning toward Providence Place and the new Foundry Complex that will house retail shops and a new hotel. As that axis begins to turn, we must work even more diligently to revitalize the heart of downtown and the Westminster Mall area.

I am announcing tonight that this year we will redesign Westminster Mall and allow automobile traffic before 11 a.m. and after 2 p.m. But, bringing traffic back to Westminster Street is not enough. With new zoning laws, the establishment of the Providence Company, increased parking facilities, better lighting, and new opportunities for residential living, we can change the face of the area. The opportunities are real and the pieces are in place.

We first mentioned the possibility of downtown apartment living three years ago. It is now becoming a reality.

We have sought to commit \$4 million in federal funds for the newly formed Providence Company, a non-profit corporation whose sole purpose is to expedite the development of downtown residential units. Under the auspices of the Providence Foundation, the Providence Company will provide loans at 75% of the prime rate to downtown developers with plans for mixed use and residential development in the heart of downtown in the Westminster Mall area.

Attracting new residential users to a revitalized downtown neighborhood will not only offset the turning of the retail axis

toward the Capital Center area, it will not only restore an older part of our downtown, but it will relieve some of the gentrification pressures on neighborhoods in the immediate area, like Federal Hall, the East Side, Elmwood, and the West End. Recent surveys have shown a need for 2000 additional residential units in the downtown area and we will now begin to see that happen.

In conjunction with the establishment of the Providence Company, I am asking that some consideration be given to attracting artists to the Westminster Mall area, and that zoning changes be discussed that allow for the creation of studio and loft space under any plans considered by the Providence Company. We are an artists' city, and those Providence artists who now have space in the CIC and Foundry Complex will need some place to move. Where better than to the heart of downtown?

The revitalization of downtown has many facets, and the interrelationship of the arts and the educational institutions is one of those facets. We are fortunate to have two of America's finest educational institutions located right here on the East Side of Providence. Brown University and the Rhode Island School of Design along with the other fine colleges in Providence make us a unique educational center. But, on the East Side there have been divisions in the neighborhoods because of proposed expansion at Brown and RISD. Both need more dormitory space but are located in an area that has reached its limit. Tonight I am proposing that both Brown University and the Rhode Island School of Design look to the center of downtown for dormitory space, for an additional bookstore, for classroom space, or for any future development. It is this kind of unique interaction that can resolve both neighborhood concerns and university expansion needs, and bring the retail success we've seen on Thayer Street to the heart of downtown.

Tonight I formally call on the Providence Company to coordinate this effort and bring city and university officials together to explore this idea and develop a plan.

With the addition of the Foundry and Providence Place, potential commercial development in the Capital Center, the revitalization of the Westminster Street area for residential development, the restoration of the Outlet Building, and the completion of the River Relocation Project we have a dynamic plan underway for the commercial and residential redistribution and reuse of our entire downtown. The downtown is literally shifting toward the Capital Center and the Waterfront.

That is why we speak about the need for responsible development, development which fits into the overall plan for the future of Providence. Each piece of that plan, each development is dependent on another and many pieces are already in place. New zoning regulations and ordinances will be reported in the next several months, more parking is being planned by the Parking Authority to enhance the success of each of the new downtown developments, the mall is being reopened, and creative financing is being utilized to ensure that selected projects become a reality.

For example, as the picture of the downtown shifts and moves, we must always plan for a shift in parking needs to support new development. Each is dependent on the other. Imagine the changing parking needs of this City as we see a new Convention Center, Providence Place, a reopened Westminster Street, waterfront development, and a completely new area around the relocated rivers. We have put in place an off-street Parking Authority to constantly monitor and plan for the changing needs of Providence. That Authority has already completed a Downtown Parking Garage Marketing Study which identifies eleven potential parking garage locations adapted to the shift in the focal points of city activity. But, to also address the parking needs of the future, we will need additional zoning ordinance changes to allow for stronger enforcement of parking requirements in new development areas. All of these elements must work together if we are to succeed. This administration is strategically ap-

proaching downtown development related issues, and the example of the Parking Authority exemplifies the continuity of our efforts.

Another example of the complex interrelationships of successful revitalization is the fact that current housing codes and zoning ordinances do not always conform to the conversion of offices and commercial space to residences — as in the case of the Outlet. These problems must be addressed in the development of dynamic new zoning and housing codes that are rigid enough to ensure safety but flexible enough to allow for creative change. Under the able chairmanship of Councilman Thomas Glavin the study of the Zoning Commission will soon be released and will have a dramatic impact on Providence for decades to come. I'd like to thank Tom Glavin for his hard work and leadership.

I have spoken about cornerstone projects that are shifting the focal points of our City. Providence Place and the Foundry are just two examples. In the next few years we will see those focal points shift again to other areas like the Convention Center, the Outlet, India Point, and the Waterfront. With each shift a new piece of Providence's future is put in place. But there is, indeed, a method to the madness.

A Convention Center needs hotels, hotels need a Convention Center that needs visitors, and visitors need things to do and places to go — like major new shopping facilities, cultural centers, and recreational areas, new restaurants and pleasant intimate cosmopolitan settings that thrive on our historic past. At the same time, to achieve all that, the downtown will need to become a neighborhood that is alive with artists, students, and young professionals. It is a grand plan, but it is beginning to take shape. I believe it can and it will happen.

For example, under the powerful, dynamic leadership of one of America's foremost businessmen, Richard Oster, the Conven-

tion Center Authority is moving more quickly than the Governor or I anticipated. The Convention Center Authority has already moved to finalize a site next to the Bonanza Bus Station and the Civic Center and has begun preliminary work in the construction process. This includes the condemnation of land and the accommodation of continued bus service to the center of downtown. I would like to thank Governor DiPrete and the members of the Convention Center Authority for quickly bringing our idea for a Convention Center in downtown Providence off the drawing board. Their foresight, perseverance, and leadership have put one more essential development piece in place.

Another piece in another section of the City is the Waterfront development. The success of Corliss Landing and the Old Harbor District, and the tax incremental financing plan that helped make it a reality is now being expanded to include India Point and the entire waterfront area. If we can open our waterfront once again — if we can, at the same time, restore the great open space of India Point Park and provide additional tax incremental financing to bring responsible development to the waterfront, we will rediscover our greatest natural resource, Narragansett Bay, and make it a part of our shifting city landscape.

As I look back on my first State of the City Address, I take great comfort in knowing that the vision we set then is beginning to come true now. With the River Relocation Project nearing completion, the Convention Center, Providence Place, The Foundry, The Outlet, Corliss Landing, India Point, Westminster Street and the Providence Company, we are realizing our dream. The new and exciting adventure we began then will continue and we *will* see a new city landscape in our lifetime.

## ***The Value of Providence — The Price of Prosperity***

There is a price for prosperity. As Providence becomes a more attractive city — as businesses and young professionals leave the congestion of larger more complex cities like Boston for the livable simplicity of smaller cosmopolitan communities like Providence — the value of our property increases. On the one hand we should be flattered that we are in such demand, and that our property is becoming more valuable. On the other hand, as taxpayers, we'd just-as-soon leave well enough alone. Many fear that revaluation will make the price of prosperity too high. Make no mistake; the homeowners of Providence will be able, under the leadership of this administration, to afford the price of prosperity. This administration will do all it can to support homeowners.

I once spoke with Mayor Carlton Viveiros of Fall River about revaluation. He said it isn't an issue in Massachusetts. Why? Because only 25% of his budget comes from property taxes. Here over 55% of the budget comes from property tax. It is important that, with diminishing federal support for local government, the State play an increased role in funding communities. We have had a good working relationship with Governor DiPrete and with Majority Leader John Revers, Former Speaker Matthew Smith, and the new Speaker of the House, Joseph DeAngelis, and I know that relationship will continue. I know that we will have their full support in whatever legislation we propose to ensure a fair and equitable tax system for the City of Providence.

We have undertaken the most honest, comprehensive, and professional revaluation this City has ever had. We will take whatever steps are necessary to ensure that the full burden for any shift in values will not fall solely on the backs of homeowners in our neighborhoods. If it takes a tax classification program to maintain a fair distribution of the tax burden, then we must show the leadership to implement it.



This administration is very sensitive to the fears and concerns of all taxpayers, especially elderly residents on fixed incomes who can ill-afford any additional tax burden. This administration will make sure that elderly exemptions increase to maintain parity with property values. Right now, my administration and staff are exploring all policy options to minimize the impact of revaluation for those who have raised their families and built their lives in Providence.

To the business community — I say that this administration will not seek to unfairly shift the tax burden to business. We have never been anti-business and we won't start now. We have formed strong partnerships with the business community, and every partnership has paid dividends. I see revaluation as an opportunity to finely tune the tax distribution we already have.

But make no mistake! I intend to ensure that the price of prosperity will not fall solely on the thousands of families who have called Providence home.

### ***Keeping Housing Affordable***

With real estate values increasing across America, affordable housing is rapidly becoming a national issue. In Providence the Public Housing Authority has been successfully reorganized and efficiency has increased. This year the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development has once again gained confidence in our Public Housing Authority. With that confidence has come \$17 million for renovations to Hartford Park, \$1.5 million for Manton Heights, and \$15 million for the development of 184 units of new, scattered-site public housing. And, at Chad-Brown and Admiral Terrace, \$17 million of renovations are nearing completion.

This administration has invested in housing. Under the Rental Rehabilitation Program we have rehabilitated 429 units at a cost of \$1.5 million, and an additional \$2.7 million of private funds have been leveraged. We have spent \$500,000 toward the

development of 26 low income units at Fox Point Housing. We have secured two major HoDAG Grants — 87 housing units at Renaissance Apartments, and 36 units at Indian Village Housing Project for a total of \$8.4 million. And we have committed more than half-a-million dollars to assist 511 elderly homeowners through the Elderly Handicapped Paint Program.

With the sale of the Fleet Garage UDAG, the City will have \$5.8 million available for overall housing development programs for low and moderate income families. Up to \$4 million has already been committed to support the Providence Company. Under federal guidelines 20% of the units will be low income units, and I have already said I would like the Providence Company to investigate the possibility of bringing some of Providence's artists now renting space at the Foundry complex into the center of downtown under this program. We are also looking at the possibility of 50 new low income units at Oxford Gardens, and 150 units at Barbara Jordan II. And tonight I call on The Rhode Island Housing and Mortgage Finance Corporation to direct income from the sale of the Fleet UDAG to fund existing public Housing Authority maintenance projects and new homeless programs to be developed. If these programs are going to fall onto the City, we have to find a way to pay for them at no additional cost to the taxpayers.

Not everyone can afford to own a home, and some can barely afford to rent. I believe that RIHMFC has a responsibility to the renters and the homeless of this State. To increase the affordability of decent housing I am asking tonight that RIHMFC establish a Rental Subsidy Program that would complement the Federal Section 8 Voucher Program. This Program could be administered by local Housing Authorities to avoid duplication of administrative costs, and would make decent housing more affordable in every Rhode Island community.

Additionally I am calling tonight on the Providence Redevelopment Agency to create an overall redevelopment plan that

provides for the condemnation of land for affordable housing. I would like that plan completed by the Spring. Our neighborhoods are crying out for decent affordable housing, and we have heard those cries.

Some say that prosperity will drive rents higher and higher, and that decent affordable housing in our neighborhoods will become less and less available. Because this administration was concerned that tenants would have no recourse against landlords who neglected their property, we fought for and got a Providence Housing Court. When that court began in October, there was a backlog of almost 700 cases, some dating back to 1979. That backlog should be completely eliminated by April 1.

Our neighborhoods need decent affordable housing and we cannot let them down.

### ***Human Services — Understanding the Homeless***

In just one year the new Director of Human Services has begun the difficult task of reorganizing all human service programs and delivery systems throughout the City while, at the same time, continuing to provide ongoing day care and youth programs, health care, senior services, and community center programs. As I have said before, the property tax base cannot bear additional burdens, but neither can the need for services be ignored.

But we see some, especially in the downtown, who are truly homeless, and many more who have been released from state institutions into group homes. Unfortunately, in relieving itself of the financial burden of daily care the State has relied on an uncooperative federal government which has — in many cases — neglected the responsibility for adequate follow-up drug therapy and maintenance for those who the state has de-

institutionalized. The state closed many high cost facilities with the assumption that adequate federal financing would continue. That funding has been reduced.

I believe we are facing two distinct problems. One is the need for sheltering truly homeless people who want but do not have and cannot afford a place to live. The other is the adequate medical and psychological care for those who have been de-institutionalized.

In the case of the truly homeless and for those who need immediate shelter, I am committing tonight \$600,000 to an emergency shelter for those in need. At a minimum, these funds will double the capacity of Interim House. The site for this shelter is being studied now and will be announced soon.

In the case of those who suffer from medical or psychological problems, I am calling on the General Assembly and the Governor to increase funding for the Providence Center and to initiate a comprehensive program to send a trained medical and social service team around this City to determine the real needs of those who are living on our streets. If reinstitutionalization is deemed necessary, then the state should, for the sake of those in need, reopen its doors.

### ***Public Safety — Keeping the Police Strong . . .***

The care and safety of all our citizens has been the job of our excellent public safety personnel. Last year we reorganized the Police Department to make it more responsive to our neighborhoods. That reorganization has worked. To maintain the effectiveness of the Police Department and to ensure that it has a full complement of highly qualified officers, I am requesting tonight that a police school be held each and every year.

Our accomplishments in Public Safety have been second to none. We've raised the Table of Organization of the Police De-

partment to 440, the highest it has been in thirty years and we've provided new cars and equipment to increase efficiency.

This administration has been "pro-cop." It added more officers when they were needed, and provided new equipment when it was necessary. We started 1987 in an atmosphere of cooperation with the police union. In the last several months that relationship became strained but we were able to reach a mutually beneficial agreement that marks a new era of cooperation. Unfortunately, the bickering that occurred has overshadowed the good that has been done.

### ***. . . And Adding New Rescue Units***

In the Fire Department, a department that has always enjoyed the confidence and respect of all our citizens and has maintained the highest standards of excellence, we can report tonight that there will be two new additional rescue units in our neighborhoods this year. This will be the first time we've added rescue units to the force since 1957.

Starting May 1, the City will have five rescue units on the streets of our neighborhoods. The addition of new rescue units is one of our greatest accomplishments — one that has unfortunately gone unnoticed.

Additionally, this administration is very close to finalizing a site and plans for a modern new Public Safety Headquarters that will be centrally located and easily accessible to all areas of the City. I hope an announcement will be forthcoming soon.

### ***Continuing the Tradition of Neighborhood Meetings***

Neighborhood meetings have been the hallmark and the greatest success of this administration. The tradition will con-

tinue. The opportunity to bring city government to the people has been personally rewarding and deeply satisfying.

This year we will continue to listen to what the people want; we will return to every neighborhood and continue to put government to work for the people.

### ***More Accomplishments and Plans***

The accomplishments of government last year are matched only by the plans to accomplish even more this year. We've developed and will implement a new citywide Affirmative Action Program, and we've made minority recruitment a standard part of all police and fire recruitment efforts. We've been awarded a \$35,000 Action Grant by the Federal government to develop a drug education program and drug awareness curriculum in our schools. And we've continued to remove abandoned cars from our neighborhoods, and clean vacant lots. This year we plan to expand the vacant lot program to include tax reverted houses to help revitalize areas of our City.

We're working to bring every part of our City back to life. The Port has been repaved and we're working with the State on a Joint Marketing program that signals a trend for future statewide Port activities. And we've fought for and will continue to fight for more state funding for the Providence Public Library. And if you haven't noticed we're continuing to put up new street signs everywhere.

And tonight I am announcing two new commissions that are important to the effectiveness of government and the quality of life in our City. I am establishing a Commission on Residency to investigate and report on the impact of the City Charter's residency requirement on the workforce. I am also creating The Mayor's Special Commission on Arts and Cultural Affairs. This will be a working, blue ribbon commission that will report to the Mayor and serve as the City's lead agency on the growing

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number of cultural and artistic opportunities that come with prosperity and a respect for the rich heritage of an artists' city.

City government has responded honestly, professionally, and fairly to the people. If that is what success is in government then I believe this administration has succeeded. I've found that Emerson was right when he said, "nothing astonishes men so much as common sense and plain dealing." This administration has succeeded because it has been a common sense, plain dealing administration.

### ***The City's Lights That Make The Future Brighter***

I have spoken tonight about persistent problems in an urban environment — like drugs and the people who deal and use them whose crimes have torn families apart. I've spoken about others like Katerina Singleton and the children of Candace Street whose dedication brought families together to solve a neighborhood's problems. These are the striking contrasts of a prosperous twentieth-century American City with dreams of greatness — some dreams broken by the pains of poverty and neglect — some dramatically realized by the simple acts of faith that keep the human spirit alive. The realization of those dreams brilliantly shines against the darkness and makes the future brighter.

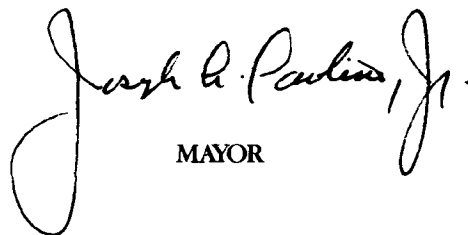
Tonight as we turn our attentions to prudently investing in the infrastructure of our City, let us symbolically turn up the City's lights. Let's recognize and remember the thousands of individual achievements in every neighborhood. It is those achievements, the combination of those singular efforts, that make our City great, that make it exciting to be Mayor, exciting to live in and be part of a great, modern urban adventure. Those are the bright lights that make us believe that we *are* a city that has once again found its pride, and that this adventure will bring great rewards.

Putting together this fourth State of the City Message has been a reflective time for me. I've thought about what we said before, and how far we've come. When I first stood here in 1985, I told you I had a vision of pride and progress for Providence. That vision has become a reality. We are once again a proud city that enjoys not only the profits of renewed prosperity but a sense of common purpose that ties us together.

I said then that we were a city in transition, a city on the threshold of a new era of economic prosperity in which diversity is strength and the proud traditions and rich heritage of our neighborhoods hold the key to success. I said that if we had a clear vision of the future, if we developed a realistic agenda, and if we work together, we could make that vision a reality. Tonight, just three years later, we can look back with satisfaction because we had the vision, we set the goals, we waged the war and we are winning. We have had many victories, and many grand successes but we can never stop fighting for Providence.

Tonight let the adventure continue. Let the policies we have set in motion take us one step further toward a bright and prosperous future. Let us look right here — right in front of us — to the fifth graders of Oliver Hazard Perry who impressed me when I visited their class. They are the City's shining lights that will keep the spirit of Providence alive. Let us together accept the challenge of the future as we continue this great adventure to make Providence America's Best City.

Thank you and good night.

  
MAYOR