



Andy Schor, Mayor

2021 State of the City Address Highlights

Mayor Andy Schor

City of Lansing Mayor Andy Schor's State of the City Address was held virtually in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, on Wednesday, February 3, 2021.

COVID-19

Mayor Schor spoke about the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on the community. He had a moment of silence in remembrance of those we have lost to the virus. He thanked City employees, City Council and Lansing residents for working together to move Lansing forward in spite of 2020's challenges.

- The Lansing Fire Department's Emergency Management team and Ingham County Health Officer Linda Vail have contributed their expert advice and counsel to guide the City of Lansing through the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Mayor Schor urged federal officials to pass a comprehensive plan to provide stimulus funds for cities as soon as possible in order to stave off cuts to services that residents expect.
- Mayor Schor thanked elected officials for their support including:
 - State Representatives Sarah Anthony, Kara Hope, and Angela Witwer along with State Senator Curtis Hertel, Jr. who have been advocates for additional funding for Lansing.
 - Congresswoman Elissa Slotkin and our US Senators, Debbie Stabenow and Gary Peters, who have pushed Congress to help cities that have taken the brunt of the economic damage.
 - Governor Gretchen Whitmer who has had to make tough decisions to keep Michiganders safe and healthy.
- The City is committed to assisting with mass vaccination to ensure all residents are safe.

RACIAL JUSTICE & EQUITY

Lansing is a proudly diverse city and remains focused on ensuring everyone has access to City resources, and that all people are treated with the same level of respect and dignity regardless of the color of their skin or how they identify.

- Mayor Andy Schor has worked with Lansing Police Chief Daryl Green to reform traffic stop policies for minor offenses and eliminate “no knock” searches.
- The City of Lansing was one of six communities chosen by the National League of Cities to participate in the Cities Addressing Fines and Fees Equitably Initiative.
 - Lansing’s Financial Empowerment team worked with 54-A District Court and those facing past-due debt from driving on a suspended license charges.
 - Significant fees owed to the court were waived if the person met with a financial counselor at Cristo Rey Community Center’s Financial Empowerment Center.
- Attorney Teresa Bingman, an expert on racial justice, is leading the City of Lansing’s racial justice and equity effort. She is working closely with Mayor Schor, Police Chief Daryl Green, Department of Human Relations and Community Services Director Kim Coleman and Human Resources Director Linda Sanchez-Gazella, and Lansing’s own Willard Walker in this endeavor.
- Mayor Schor created the Mayor’s Racial Justice and Equity Alliance (MRJEA) comprised of community leaders.
 - MRJEA is working to create the Lansing Racial Justice and Equity Plan.
 - Mayor Schor worked with MRJEA to issue an Executive Directive to ensure City staff receive important training to prevent implicit bias at the City, and to utilize the knowledge of national efforts like the Government Alliance on Race and Equity.
 - MRJEA will host a community update later in February 2021. Details to be announced.

CONNECTION AND PARTNERSHIPS

Mayor Andy Schor spoke on the importance of connection and the ways the City of Lansing acts as a connector of neighbors, services, organizations, and resources.

- The City of Lansing partnered with East Lansing to provide dollars for the unsheltered in addition to what the City already allocates for this purpose.
- Gier Community Center was re-opened as a homeless shelter for those in need.
- The City of Lansing partnered with the Lansing School District to turn the Foster Community Center into a safe “Learning Lab” for students whose parents had to return to in-person work.
- The Mayor’s Community Responses Cabinet was formed last summer and includes nonprofit organizations, businesses, education partners and community leaders that worked to combine resources and efforts to efficiently manage the COVID-19 crisis in the Greater Lansing Area.
- The Community Response Cabinet created the One Lansing Fund to help residents who were struggling with paying rent/mortgage, feeding themselves and their families and many other day-to-day needs.

- The Capital Area United Way, the Community Foundation, the Greater Lansing Food Bank, the Lansing School District, LEAP and others worked together on this effort.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND SMALL BUSINESSES SUPPORT

- Hundreds of new housing units were opened in the City of Lansing, including in downtown Lansing, along the Michigan Avenue Corridor and in South Lansing.
- The Capital City Market, at the corner of Michigan and Larch, officially opened.
- The new Courtyard by Marriot will open on the same block as the Capital City Market later in February 2021. This will be the first hotel to open in Lansing in the last 30+ years.
- Investment in small business:
 - Mayor Schor worked with the Lansing Chamber of Commerce, on a taskforce to develop and introduce the Relaunch Greater Lansing guidebook to help businesses overcome COVID-19.
 - Mayor Schor also worked with the Lansing Economic Area Partnership to source money for struggling Lansing businesses. LEAP provided more than \$6.5 million in grants and loans to businesses in the region, and more than \$2.5 million of that went to small businesses located here in the City of Lansing.
 - The City of Lansing and the Lansing Economic Development Corporation partnered to offer an additional \$600,000 in grants specifically for struggling businesses in Lansing.
- Lansing CARES program has launched:
 - The City will use nearly \$1.5 million through its federal Community Development Block Grant funds in the following ways:
 - The City will provide \$600,000 towards emergency financial assistance and disaster planning training to small businesses in danger of going out of business due to COVID-19. These forgivable loans of between \$5,000 and \$50,000 will be issued to small businesses by the LEDC with the help of LEAP as quickly as possible.
 - The City will also work with Michigan Women Forward to provide \$100,000 in emergency financial assistance and disaster planning training to City of Lansing microenterprises in danger of going out of business due to COVID-19.
 - The City will add \$780,000 to the current funding already allocated towards homelessness in our current budget. This will include rent and mortgage payments for up to three months to Lansing residents and will be done together with Lansing's own Capital Area Housing Partnership.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR RESIDENTS

- The City's Office of Financial Empowerment created a section on the City of Lansing's website called "Managing Your Finances During COVID-19." The information provided under this section includes financial tips, resources and information on basic needs such as food, shelter, transportation and utilities.
- Director of the Office of Financial Empowerment, Amber Paxton, hosted a live weekly web series on Facebook to discuss finances and answer questions.
- The Office of Financial Empowerment received an \$80,000 grant from the national Cities of Financial Empowerment Fund to add an additional financial counselor for a year in response to the pandemic.
- Through the What Works Cities: Economic Mobility Initiative, the City worked with several national organizations to advance economic mobility for Lansing residents.

MODERNIZING LOCAL GOVERNMENT

City Hall and local government will be made even more accessible remotely in 2021.

- The Department of Treasury will be accepting e-file for individual income tax returns. The City is working to have this service available on the website by Spring 2021.
- The City of Lansing is in the process of completely transforming its website to make it easier for residents, visitors, and businesses owners to navigate and find what they need. The website will launch later in 2021.
- The City of Lansing will launch a 3-1-1 answering center called "One Call to City Hall" in 2021.
 - "One Call to City Hall" will be a one-stop shop for questions regarding any non-emergency city service. Citizens will be able to call 3-1-1 rather than searching the website, etc. to have their question answered.
 - "One Call to City Hall" will be staffed by real people in Lansing who will be prepared to handle almost any problem, question, or complaint a resident may have.

To read the full speech, visit www.Lansingmi.gov/SOTC2021.