

MICHIGAN: STATE OF THE CITIES

2018

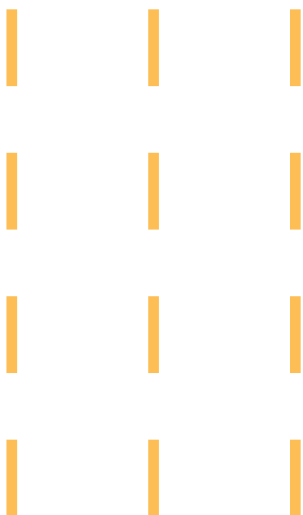


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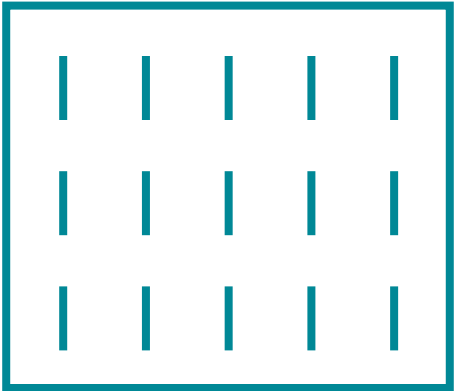
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About the Michigan Municipal League

The Michigan Municipal League is dedicated to making Michigan's communities better by thoughtfully innovating programs, energetically connecting ideas and people, actively serving members with resources and services, and passionately inspiring positive change for Michigan's greatest centers of potential: its communities.

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We love
where you live.



Introduction

Every day in Michigan, residents and businesses in the state's 544 cities and villages interact with their local municipality in various ways. Municipal governments are the front lines in our democracy. They are responsible for providing the services we rely on like waste and recycling, building safety, police and fire protection, recreation programs, infrastructure improvements, and many more. Residents are often more engaged in shaping local policy and governance decisions than at the state and federal level, and give back to their communities in significant ways.

Michigan's cities and villages range in size from just over 100 to more than 700,000 people. The work of governing these communities can be complex and highly variable, and local leaders must address an ever-increasing diversity of issues. Effectively communicating with and engaging community members is a vital part of ensuring a healthy and prosperous community.

Similar to presidential State of the Union or gubernatorial State of the State speeches, annual State of the City (village) addresses are an opportunity for local leaders to connect with their residents and businesses and reflect on the well-being and position of the community overall. While the style of these speeches varies, they generally highlight accomplishments and challenges, and share information on city/village priorities and plans. They are an effective and creative tool for improving transparency and community engagement.

In this second annual State of the City report, the Michigan Municipal League has looked at the key themes and priorities presented in 28 State of the City addresses given by Michigan mayors and other local leaders in early 2018. This report, modeled after the annual National League of Cities [State of the Cities](#) report, highlights findings in 11 top line categories such as

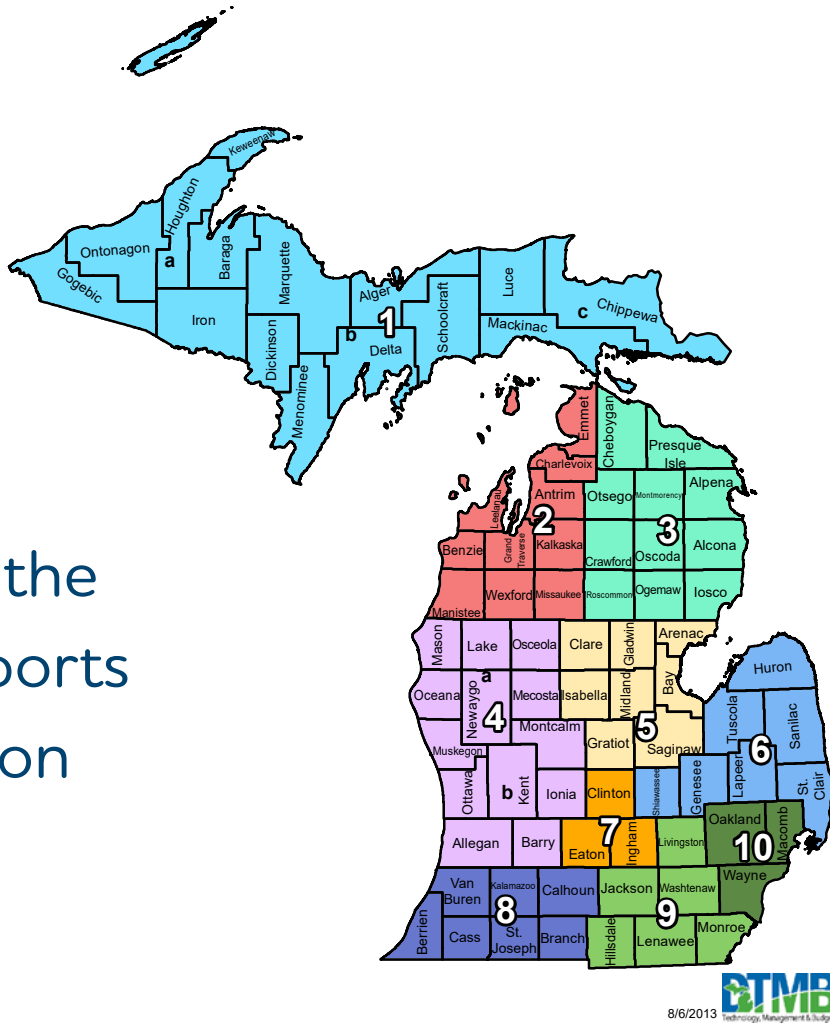
economic development and public safety. The report summarizes which topics mayors devoted significant time to in their speeches, and identifies 65 subtopics across these categories which were mentioned in the state of the city addresses.

Taken as a whole, this report provides an annual snapshot of the issues that municipal leaders think are important for their communities and the state. It allows the League to compare data over the years and track priority topics so that we can better provide members with the services and information they need. It also allows communities to benchmark issues with their peers and learn about how other local leaders are addressing their community's opportunities and challenges.

¹The general term "mayors" is used in this report to refer to all local leaders who delivered state of the city speeches.



State of the Cities Reports by Region



Region 1:
City of Menominee

Region 2:
City of Cadillac
City of Harbor Springs

Region 3:
City of Alpena
City of Gaylord

Region 4:
City of East Grand Rapids
City of Grand Rapids

Region 5:
City of Midland
City of Saginaw

Region 6:
City of Flint
City of Grand Blanc

Region 7:
City of Lansing

Region 8:
None

Region 9:
City of Jackson
City of Saline

Region 10:
City of Allen Park
City of Auburn Hills
City of Detroit
City of Ferndale
City of Hazel Park
City of Livonia
City of Madison Heights
City of Novi
City of Rochester Hills
City of Romulus
City of Southfield
City of Sterling Heights
City of Trenton
City of Warren

Key Findings

The League reviewed 28 State of the City speeches for this 2018 report, including transcripts of the speeches and video when available. Where transcripts were provided (for all but four of the cities), the League categorized the speeches by topic and calculated what percent of the total speech content was focused on each of the 11 top-line issues. A mayor was considered to have spent “significant time” on a topic if at least five percent of the total words in the speech were devoted to that issue.

In 2018, the League made a minor change to our analysis of top-line topics by separating out parks and recreation issues. Last year, portions of the mayors’ addresses that focused on parks and recreation were counted under infrastructure and economic development. This year we separated out the topic because so many mayors focused on it, and the discussion often went beyond park infrastructure to highlight recreational programming and partnerships.

Key findings from this year’s report (as highlighted in Exhibits 1 and 2) include:

- Economic development was the top issue in state of the city speeches again this year, with 100 percent of the mayors spending significant time on this topic.
- Infrastructure and budget/management rounded out the top three issues, and both had an increased number of mayors devoting significant time to the topics this year.

Exhibit 1. Percent of Mayors Who Spent Significant Time on Top-Line Issues

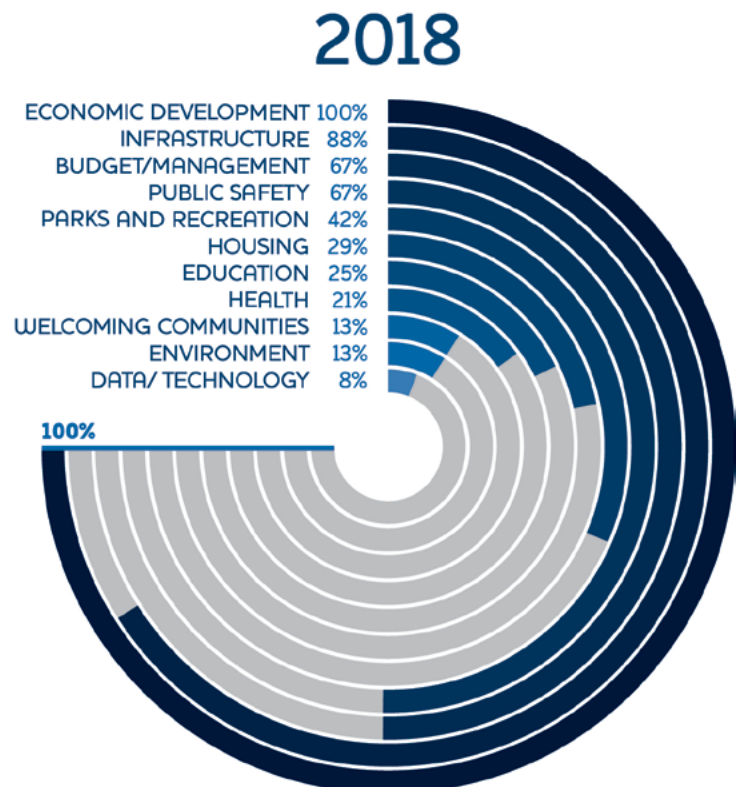
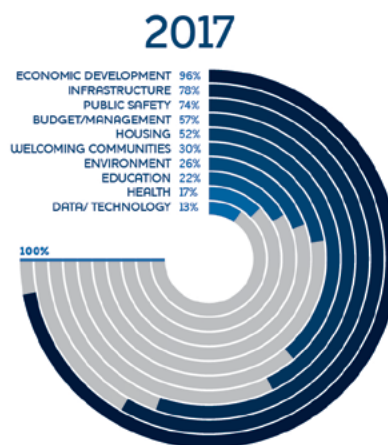
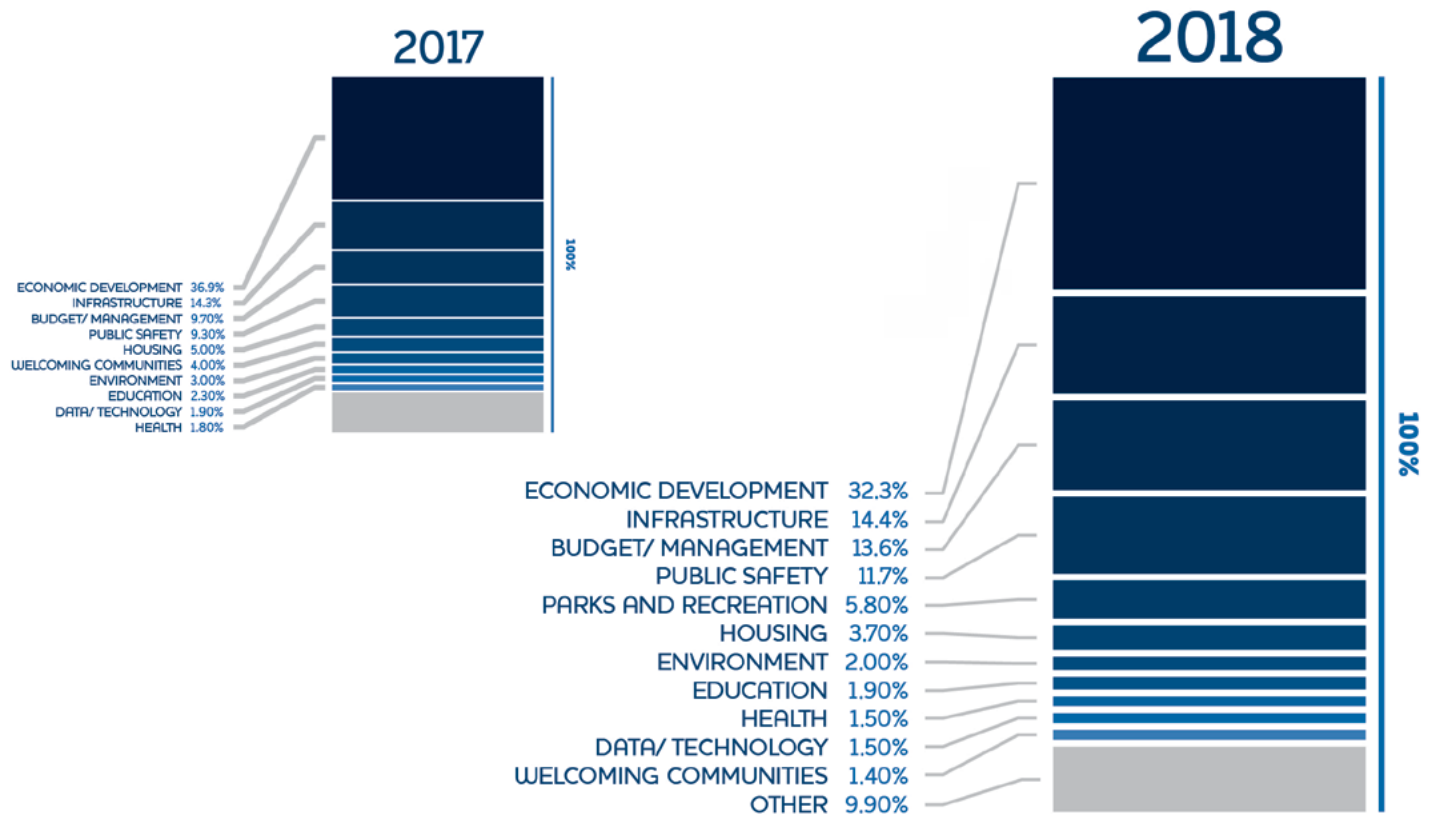


Exhibit 2. Average Percentage of SOC Speeches Devoted to Leading Topics



- Public safety and housing, both of which were in the top five issues in 2017 and 2018, got much less attention this year. The number of mayors who spent significant time on these topics declined by 7 and 23 percent respectively.
- The number of mayors who spent significant time discussing issues of welcoming communities/inclusion and environment also substantially declined in 2018.
- Almost half of the mayors spent significant time discussing accomplishments and plans related to parks and recreation in their communities. This is the first year the League has tracked this topic independently.

- The breakdown of aggregated 2018 state of the city speech content (percentage of total words) remained similar to 2017 (see Exhibit 2), with notable decreases in total time spent on economic development and welcoming communities, and an increase in content related to management and budgets.

In addition to comparing the 2018 results to the League's 2017 State of the City report findings, we also compared this year's findings to the NLC's State of the Cities report which covered cities from across the U.S. The top five topics discussed in Michigan's state of the city addresses—economic development, infrastructure, budgets and management, housing and public safety—mirrored the top issues identified by mayors across the country, as highlighted in the NLC's 2018 [State of the Cities report](#). It's interesting

to note that the number of mayors spending significant time on public safety issues declined in 2018 both nationally and in Michigan. However, in both cases, police/fire/EMS specifically were among the top-mentioned subtopics by mayors.

Fixing Michigan's broken municipal finance system has been a major programmatic and legislative thrust for the League and its members over the last several years, so it is not surprising that there was an increase in the amount of time and the number of local leaders focused on issues related to budgets and management in their state of the city speeches this year. This topic moved up in the ranking of top issues, and saw a 4 percent increase in the total percentage of speech content devoted to this issue, as demonstrated in Exhibit 2.



Economic Development

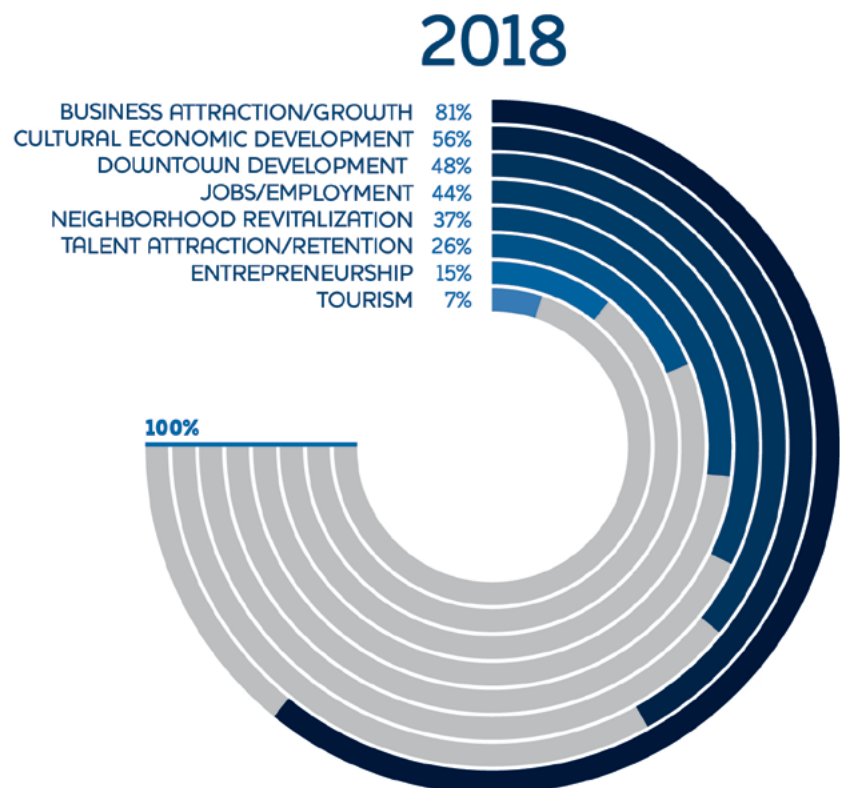
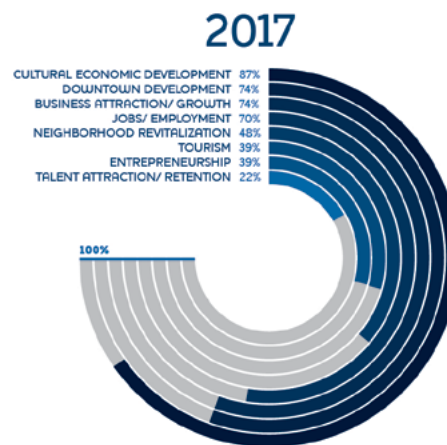
As with other cities across the U.S., economic development was the most frequently mentioned topic for Michigan mayors. One hundred percent of the mayors spent significant time discussing economic development issues broadly in their state of the city addresses. These speeches tend to be an opportunity for mayors to celebrate successes of new businesses that have located in the community, or to highlight new entrepreneurs and/or job growth.

Exhibit 3 shows the percent of mayors who mentioned each of the economic development subtopics in their state of the city addresses. Business attraction and growth took the top spot this year, with over 80 percent of mayors mentioning something about the topic in their speeches. For example, cities such as Midland, Hazel Park, and Novi all mentioned new advanced manufacturing or health care facilities that had opened in their community last year.

Regional economic partnerships around business attraction were also a common theme in the state of the city speeches. Saline, Trenton and Madison Heights mayors all mentioned partnerships their city has undertaken with the state and other regional organizations to help recruit and attract new businesses to their community.

As in 2017, cultural economic development, downtown development, and jobs/employment were the other highly mentioned sub-topics. Cultural economic development included highlights from festivals, new art installations and venues, and farmers markets. Grand Blanc Mayor Jan Parisi was one of the 15 mayors who mentioned cultural economic development efforts in her

Exhibit 3. Top Economic Development Issues





speech, highlighting their Festival of Lights, summer Concerts in the Park series, farmers market days, and food truck rallies.

Forty-eight percent of city leaders mentioned downtown development in their 2018 speeches. Examples included redeveloping existing downtown properties to diversify business opportunities and investing in downtown amenities such as public plazas and gathering spaces. Cadillac's City Manager Marcus Peccia, for example, spent significant time in his speech talking about the community's investment in a new downtown plaza that includes a splash pad (summer), ice rink (winter), fireplace, and public seating area.

About a dozen of the mayors also mentioned employers who expanded their operations and hired people—creating new jobs for residents. Livonia Mayor Dennis Wright noted in his speech that Amazon's new 1-million square foot fulfillment center opened in the city in 2017, adding 1,200 employees. Midland Mayor Maureen Donker shared that McLaren Health Bay Region and Mid-Michigan Health are both expanding and bringing over 70 new jobs combined to the city.

“For the seventh time, Madison Heights was recognized for its entrepreneurial growth and economic development in the annual University of Michigan Dearborn eCities study. The entrepreneurs we assist through our monthly E-Lounge are bearing fruit. One of our success stories is Clark's Fabrication. This husband and wife team from Madison Heights worked with our Economic Development team to find the perfect space for their custom furniture company—a 4,000 square foot industrial building. The Clarks' custom work is sought after by the hippest businesses in Michigan. As they say, 'We love our community and can't wait to grow with the artistic momentum coming to Madison Heights.'”

- Mayor Brian Hartwell,
City of Madison Heights



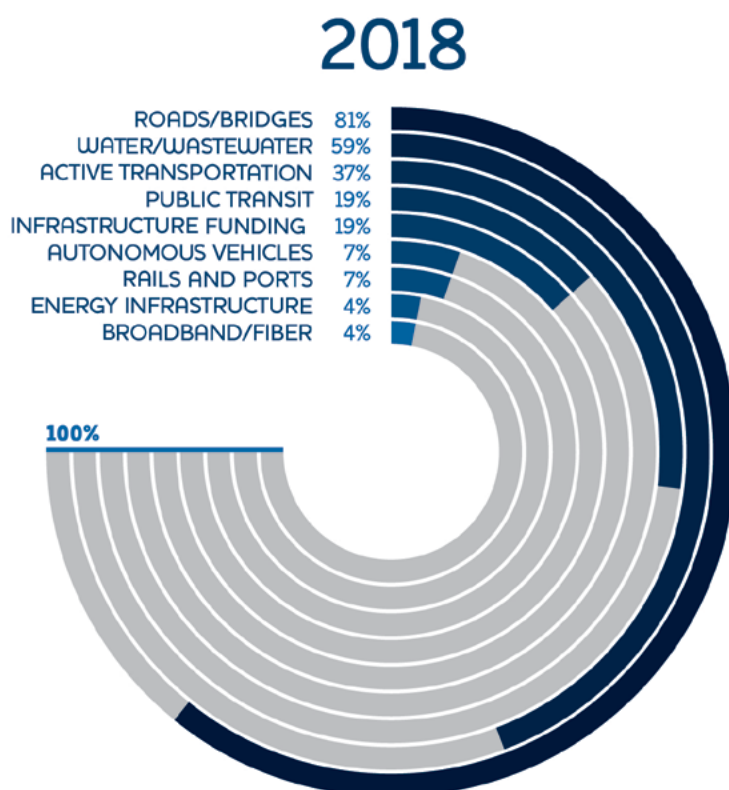
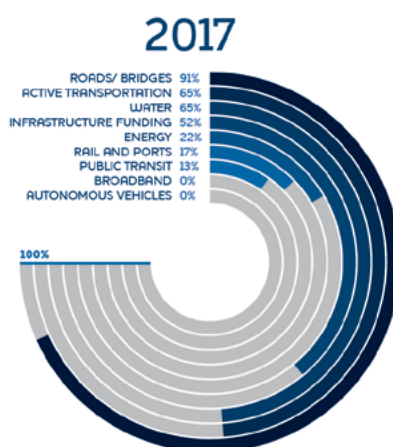
Infrastructure

The quality of Michigan's transportation, water and wastewater, energy, and communications infrastructure has been a significant focus of policy discussions in Michigan the last several years, and continued to be a top priority issue in 2018. Eighty-eight percent of the state of the city speeches included significant time on infrastructure issues in 2018. This compares with 56 percent of mayors in other U.S. cities.

For anyone who has spent time driving or biking on Michigan's roads, it was no surprise that roads and bridges were the most highly mentioned infrastructure sub-topic in 2018. Eighty-one percent of mayors mentioned the topic in their speeches. Many leaders talked about the significant deterioration and quality of our roads and bridges, and highlighted road resurfacing and reconstruction projects happening in their communities. Novi Mayor Bob Gatt, for example, stated that "nearly \$8 million was spent on road improvements by the City of Novi, with another nearly \$9 million from the Michigan Department of Transportation (DOT) and the Oakland County DOT" in 2017. A few of the mayors also mentioned bridge safety and the critical need for bridge repairs throughout the state.

Water and wastewater infrastructure was the second most-mentioned sub-topic in the speeches. Flint Mayor Karen Weaver devoted significant time in her speech again this year to discussing the water crisis in that city. She highlighted ongoing upgrades to the city's water delivery system, committed to making sure residents get access to safe water, and reiterated that the city will continue to work with the state to ensure this problem is fixed permanently. Leaders from other cities

Exhibit 4. Top Infrastructure Issues



“

In 2018, you are going to see a very busy engineering department and a lot of orange barrels."

- Mayor Derek Dobies, Jackson

like Menominee, Saline, and East Grand Rapids also highlighted the need for, and progress on upgrading aging water infrastructure in their communities.

The number of mayors mentioning programs or policies to address active transportation in their state of the cities speeches declined substantially this year—from 65 to 37 percent. However, more local leaders included discussion of public transit needs and upgrades in their speeches than in 2017. Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan highlighted a unique partnership between the city, school district, and local philanthropies to create a public transit network that would broaden families' abilities to choose schools for their children.

Other infrastructure projects were also a point of interest for mayors this year. Allen Park Mayor Matakas, for example, spent significant time talking about the new City Hall and police station building in that community. He noted that the 29,000-square foot building was finishing up by May 1, and would be a "great" facility. Saginaw Mayor Dennis Browning mentioned that the development of autonomous and electric vehicles is improving and advancing rapidly, and that the city must improve its infrastructure and be prepared with the technology to accommodate these vehicles.

The other notable change in infrastructure discussions in the 2018 state of the city speeches was the decline in the number of mayors talking about energy infrastructure. Only one mayor, Jackson Mayor Derek Dobies, mentioned the topic in his speech this year compared to five mayors in 2017.





Municipal Finance/ Budgets

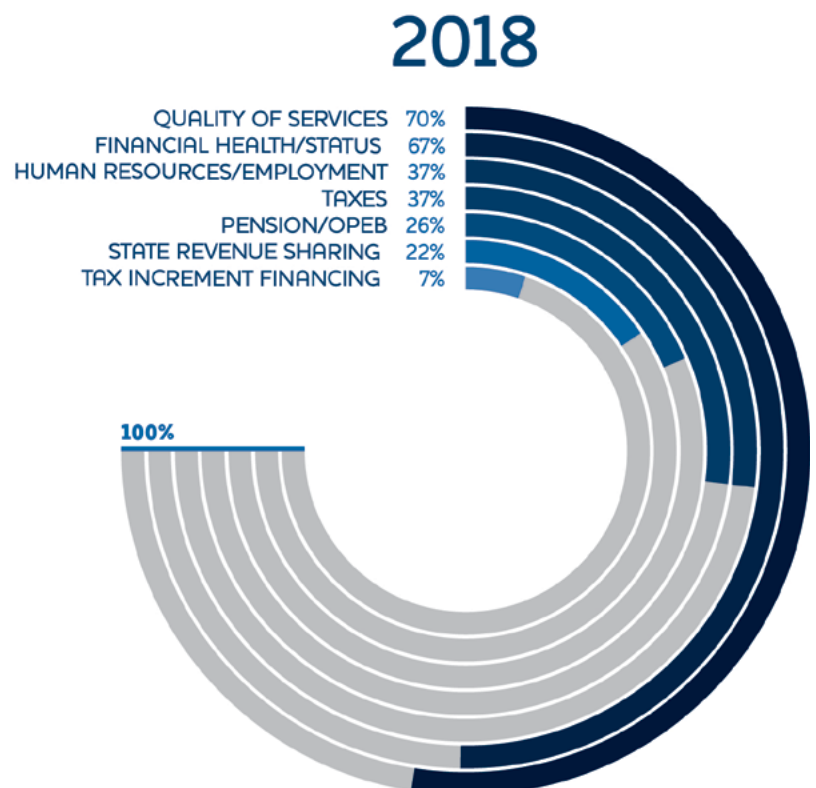
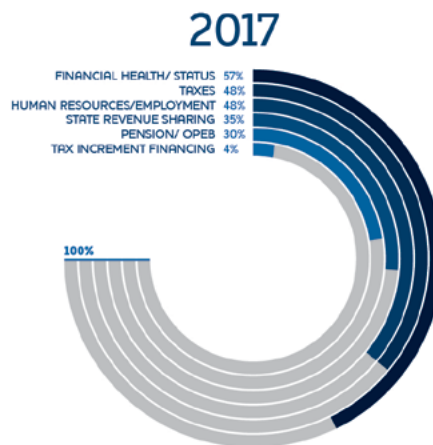
Municipal finance has been a big issue for the League and its members the last few years. Our SaveMICity campaign to advocate for changes to the state's broken municipal finance system has engaged hundreds of city and state leaders and other stakeholders.

More than 2/3 of the cities' mayors devoted some significant time in their state of the city speeches to management and budget issues, up from 57 percent in 2017. Generally, the cities which focused a higher percentage of their speech on these issues tended to be smaller and mid-sized communities like Allen Park, Gaylord, Menominee, and Alpena.

In 2018, the League added a new budget/management sub-category to track "quality of services" and it was the most commonly mentioned sub-topic in the speeches. Seventy percent of mayors' speeches mentioned something about the quality of services in their community. Alpena City Manager Greg Sundin, for example, noted that "with the retirements [in city staff] that have already occurred and those that will be yet this year, it is important that we continue to anticipate and prepare for changes in the administrative ranks. This will be critical to the continued effective, efficient and safe operation of all our City departments to the benefit of residents, businesses, property owners."

Overall financial status, taxes, and employment/human resources were the other highly mentioned sub-topics this year. Several communities talked about the improvement in property tax values and modest increases in local revenue associated with that. They highlighted strong audit reports, investments in fund balances, and their efforts to pursue

Exhibit 5. Top Budget/Management Issues



new and creative funding options (such as infrastructure grants). Cadillac City Manager Marcus Peccia, for example, noted that his city has been successful in getting over \$750,000 in grants and donations to support city projects over the last eight years.

Mayors also continued to highlight the ways they are addressing budget gaps through cost-cutting measures, including continued staff reductions, regional service sharing, and cutting back on some services. For example, Saline Mayor Brian Marl told his audience that “the community can rest assured Council and city will continue to scrutinize and evaluate all programs and services in the hopes of improving efficiencies and identifying additional opportunities for cost savings.”

Cuts in state revenue sharing and the burden of legacy pension and retiree health care (OPEB) costs continued to be popular topics (22 percent and 26 percent of speeches, respectively), although slightly fewer mayors mentioned these sub-topics in 2018 compared to 2017. Leaders of cities big and small—including Midland, Saline, Cadillac, Lansing, Flint, Gaylord, and Allen Park—mentioned something in their speeches about their legacy pension and OPEB costs or the impact of declining state revenue sharing on their communities.



“Funding is still restricted at the state level. Some funding has returned, but last year the City received a reduction of \$131,459 in revenue sharing funds. When we look at the totals since 2002; the State has reduced funding to the City in the amount of \$1,279,223. During this same time frame, State of Michigan revenues increased by 29%, yet revenue from the State to local governments declined by 56%. If we can ever see a more equitable sharing of revenue, or even a return to past statutory formulas, our City would be in much better financial shape.”

- Mayor John Jenkins, City of Gaylord



Public Safety

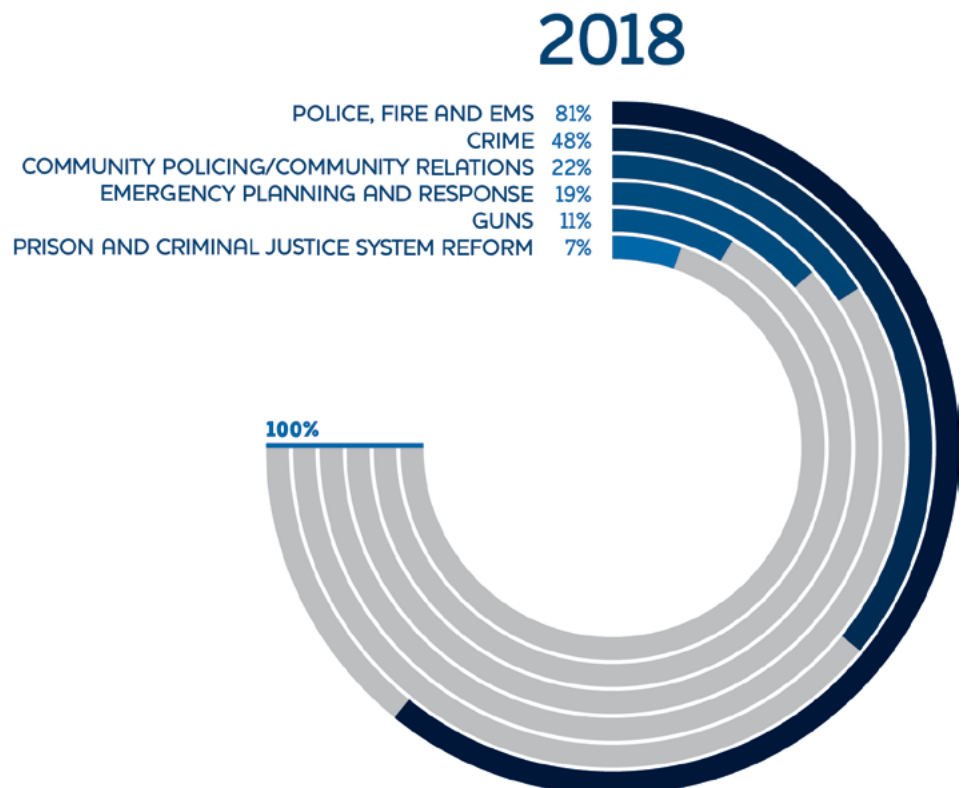
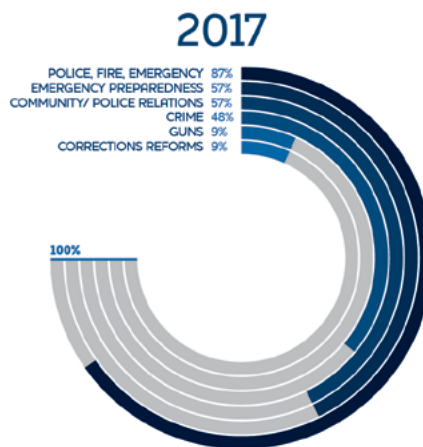
Sixty-seven percent of Michigan's local leaders spent significant time in their state of the city speeches addressing public safety issues, and all but five made mention of police, fire, and emergency services specifically.

As demonstrated in Exhibit 5, the other key subtopics mentioned by mayors in the speeches included crime, community/police relations, and emergency preparedness. The number of mayors who mentioned crime or crime rates in their speeches was the same in 2018 as it was in 2017. However, far fewer leaders talked about community policing or community-police relations this year (only 6 of the speeches versus 15 last year).

In their comments about public safety, city leaders spoke about police, fire, and emergency medical (EMS) staffing levels and the need for attracting public safety talent. While several took the opportunity to celebrate new staff and management, more than a few of the mayors said in their speeches that the community was still struggling to restore full staffing levels for their public safety personnel.

Another key topic in the 2018 speeches was investments in training and equipment for public safety officers. Several mayors, for example, noted that they have purchased body cameras for their police force to help improve transparency and protect both citizens and officers.

Exhibit 6. Top Public Safety Issues





Again this year, mayors highlighted the importance of planning and training as cities face evolving types of emergencies. Midland Mayor Maureen Donker, for example, noted that last year's flooding was not the usual water rising from the Tittabawasee River, but overland flooding from rain that could not be drained quickly enough by existing infrastructure. In her speech she praised the police and fire departments who were actively "blocking off streets, evacuating people from the area, performing water rescues and responding to other calls for service. Over 150 rescues and evacuations were performed."

“ A good police department and fire department gives citizens the peace of mind they need to enjoy the community in which they live and work. Perhaps there is nothing more important than feeling safe and secure.”

- Mayor Kevin McDaniel,
City of Auburn Hills





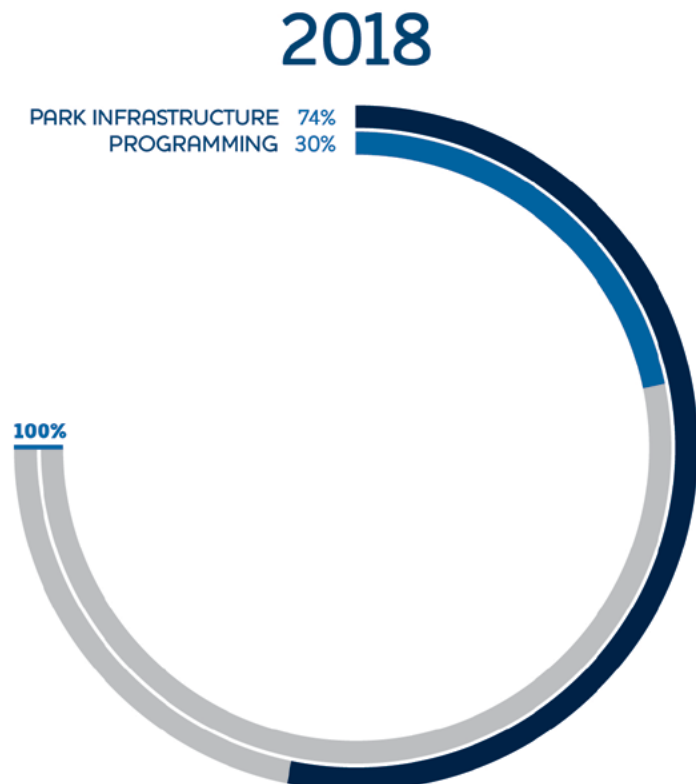
Parks and Recreation

New in 2018, the League began tracking parks and recreation discussions in state of the city speeches separately (they were previously tracked as subtopics of economic development and infrastructure) because of their frequent inclusion in the speeches. With 42 percent of mayors devoting significant time to the topic, parks and recreation rounded out the top five issues in state of the city speeches this year. For some of the local leaders, parks and recreation was a key highlight of their state of the city speech. Menominee Mayor Jean Stegeman and City Manager Greg Sundin in Alpena spent almost a quarter of their speeches on park and recreation-related topics.

Most of the discussion by local leaders in their speeches focused on parks and recreation infrastructure. Mayors such as Livonia Mayor Dennis Wright mentioned new dog parks, pool and aquatic center improvements, trail expansions, new parks, and downtown plazas. Other park infrastructure topics included equipment upgrades and improvements, preservation of natural areas, and improving waterfront areas.

While slightly less time was devoted to issues of parks and recreation programming (compared to park infrastructure) in the state of the city speeches, eight of the mayors did discuss programs such as youth sports leagues, summer camps and after-school programs, and community enrichment programs (e.g., yoga, art, reading programs). Several of them specifically mentioned their partnerships with other community organizations, foundations, and school districts in providing recreation programming.

Exhibit 7. Top Parks and Recreation Issues



“ Our youth, along with their families, deserve to play sports and have fun just like other children and we are committed to providing them with that opportunity. This past summer we took advantage of an exciting opportunity to partner with U.S. Conference of Mayors, Major League Baseball and the Detroit Tigers to host a ‘PLAY BALL’ event to promote the creation of a new Reviving Baseball in Inner Cities (RBI) program in Flint. Jackson Park RBI will serve as a low-cost baseball and softball league for young people throughout the City of Flint.”

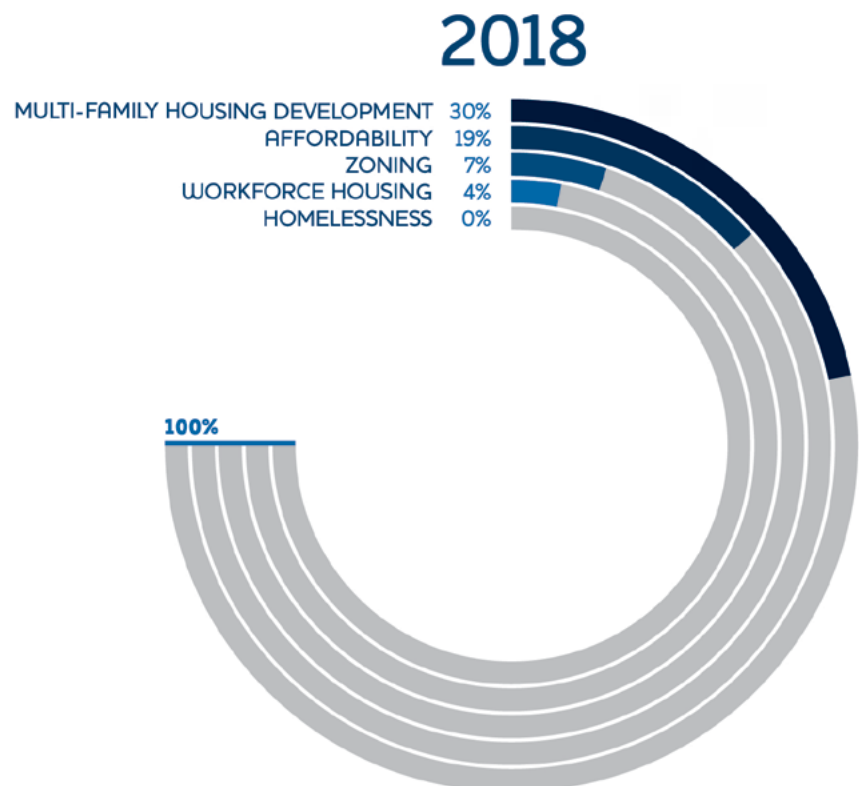
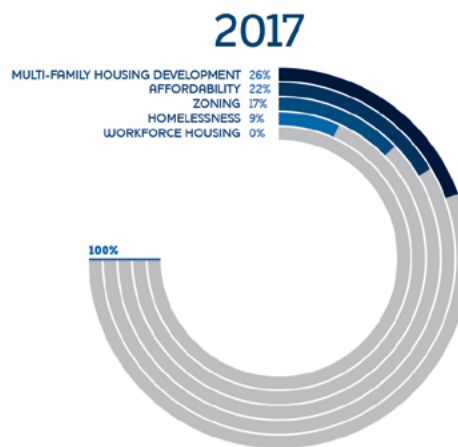
- Mayor Karen Weaver, City of Flint



Housing



Exhibit 8. Top Housing Issues



Housing issues continued to be a topic of interest for many mayors in their annual state of the city addresses. Almost 1/3 (29 percent) of mayors discussed housing-related topics in their speeches, including new projects underway, improved housing values, the need for more housing in their communities, affordability, and planning or zoning changes that had been made during the prior year. This was slightly less than national trends, where 39 percent of U.S. mayors discussed housing issues in their state of the city speeches.

The most commonly-mentioned subtopic in Michigan was multi-family housing development (30 percent of local leaders mentioned it). Mayors touted new projects underway in their community, including downtown multi-family projects that add diversity and density to their housing markets. Jackson Mayor Derek Dobies, for example, highlighted almost a dozen planned or completed multi-family housing redevelopment projects in the city. He noted “there is no vision of Jackson that does not include space for a variety of incomes, experiences, and ages.”

Another frequently mentioned housing topic was affordability (19 percent of mayors mentioned it in their speeches). These mayors talked about the importance of providing diverse options for all ages and household types, and ensuring access to affordable homeownership and rentals. Ferndale Mayor Dave Coulter, for example, said “the city recently adopted an inclusive housing policy that requires developers of all future projects building 25 or more units to reserve at least 25% of those units for affordable housing. We’re putting our money where our mouth is and making sure that Ferndale remains an affordable and viable option for ALL—young professionals, families, seniors, and everyone else who wants to call our city home.”



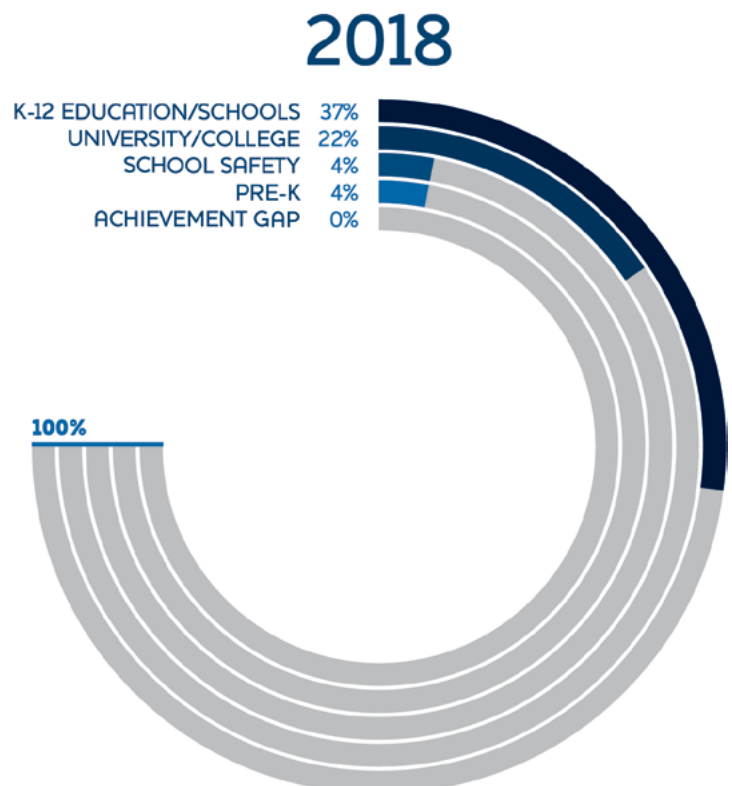
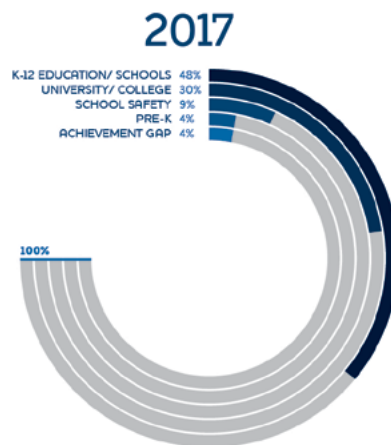
Education

Education was another topic addressed in the state of the city speeches. Only 25 percent of mayors spent significant time on the topic, although this was comparable to the 28 percent of speeches in other U.S. cities as described in the NLC's annual report. As with the findings in the National League of Cities report, the most widely mentioned sub-topics were K-12 education and higher education (universities and colleges of all types).

Rochester Hills Mayor Bryan Barnett noted in his speech that a "great city needs great schools. They don't exist without them. And our residents fully understand the connection as both districts saw voter approved bonds infuse their buildings and grounds with much needed improvements." Other mayors also mentioned partnerships for services with their local school districts, discussed improvements to school facilities, and touted the academic and athletic successes of K-12 schools in their cities.

Leaders of several cities, including Hazel Park, Midland, Detroit, Grand Rapids, Rochester Hills, and Auburn Hills also highlighted the value and benefit of higher education institutions in their communities, and the work they are doing to create stronger pathways for their residents to attend college. Detroit's Mayor Mike Duggan, for example, talked about the success of the Detroit Promise program and noted that 1,182 Detroit Promise students are enrolled in college today. Auburn Hills Mayor Kevin McDaniel highlighted the substantial investment that Oakland University is making in their campus to meet the growing needs of college students.

Exhibit 9. Top Education Issues





“ A strong and thriving city is one that builds on the talents and strengths of all its residents. In addition to programs such as OurCity Academy, another way we do this is by increasing our talent pool for innovation and growth. The City of Grand Rapids – working with Grand Rapids Public Schools, higher education partners and K-Connect – is setting in motion a plan that creates pathways for all students, particularly students of color, to get to and through college. The To-College-Through-College Studio, or T2C, has been the front door to college for more than 1,000 students in its first year.”

- Mayor Rosalyn Bliss, City of Grand Rapids



Health and Social Services

Just over 20 percent of mayors spent significant time in their state of the city speeches on health and social service topics. The primary sub-topics discussed included substance abuse (11percent of mayors), healthy lifestyles (11percent of mayors), and youth social services (7percent of mayors).

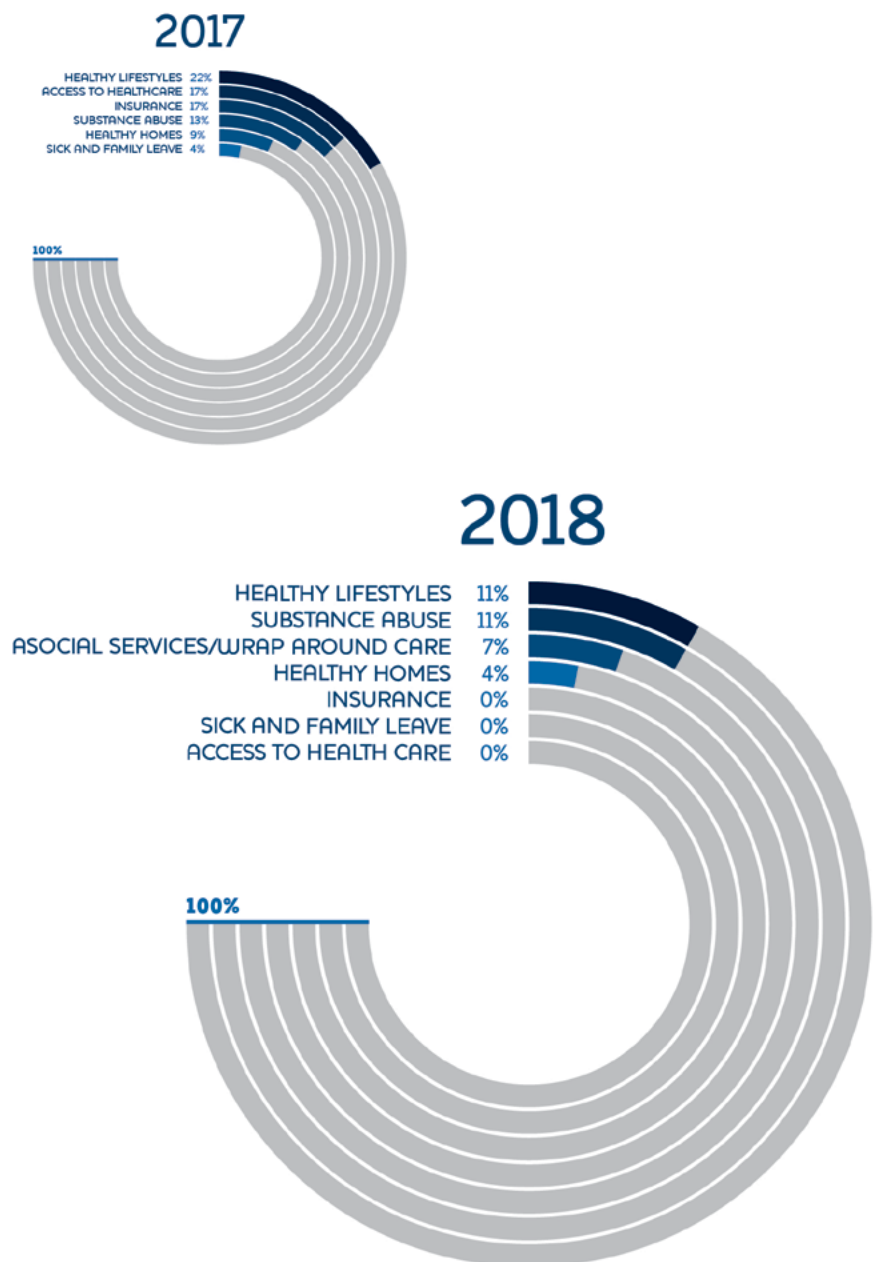
Not surprisingly (given the research and media coverage dedicated to the topic), opioid addiction was mentioned by several of the mayors. Lansing Mayor Andy Schor talked about how police officers and paramedics in his city are responding every day to emergencies because of opioid use and overdoses. He noted that “the use of Narcan, the only FDA-approved treatment for an opioid overdose, has nearly doubled by our first responders since 2015.”

Efforts to improve the health and well-being of residents—to enable healthy lifestyles—was also highlighted by several mayors in their speeches. They shared updates on projects such as new bike infrastructure, walking trails, farmer’s markets, or fitness centers, and touted partnerships with other community organizations to provide access to fitness, healthy food, and health services.

“The efforts of the Healthy Trenton initiative, launched in 2015 with Trenton Public Schools and Beaumont Health, has sponsored the installation of bike racks and worked with local restaurants to offer healthy meal choices.”

- Mayor Kyle Stack, City of Trenton

Exhibit 10. Top Health and Social Services Issues



Welcoming and Inclusive Communities

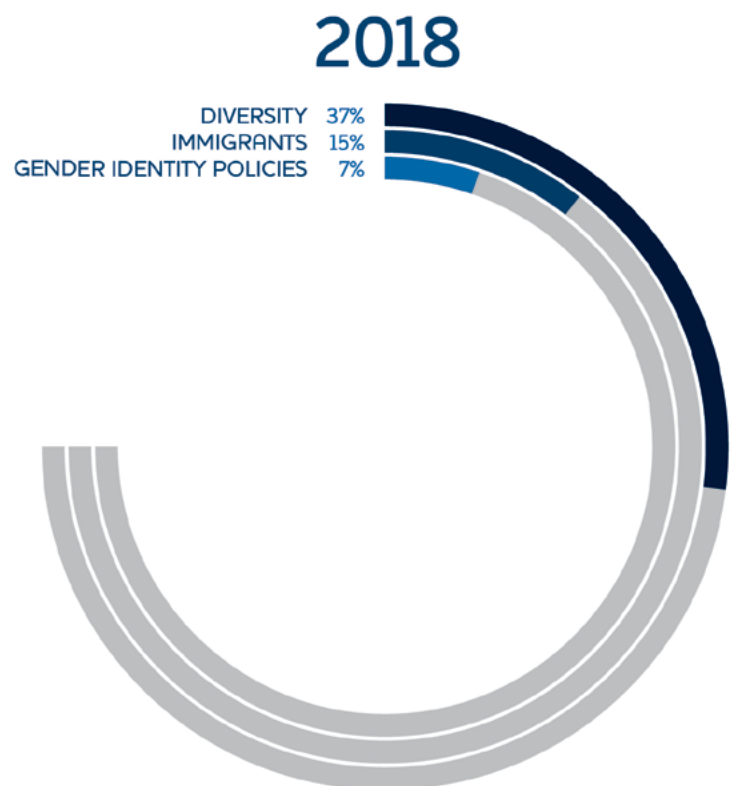
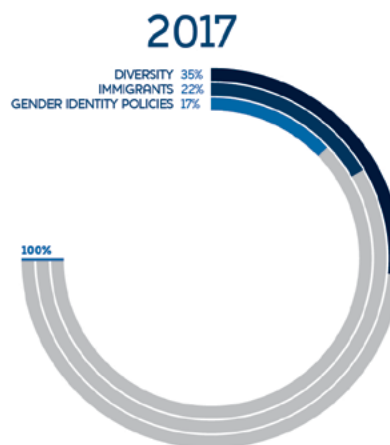


The League has emphasized the importance of being a welcoming community as part of its decade-long placemaking efforts, and highlighted the connections between welcoming policies and community social and economic prosperity.

Diversity and immigration continued to be the highest priority sub-topics in this category. Mayors highlighted their communities' work in updating non-discrimination ordinances, implementing diversity training, protecting the rights of all people living and working in their communities, and finding opportunities to celebrate the diversity of their communities. For example, Grand Rapids Mayor Rosalyn Bliss told her audience that the Grand Rapids Racial Equity Initiative she announced last year now "brings together more than 35 community leaders and stakeholders to create action steps that increase equitable employment and reduce racial disparities in our city. As a group, we also are identifying ways to work together for communitywide impact."

Although more than a dozen mayors mentioned these topics in their speeches, the number of mayors devoting significant time on these issues declined by more than half this year. Among U.S. mayors included in the NLC's State of the Cities report, there was a similar decline in the number addressing issues of diversity (from 20 percent in 2017 to 11 percent in 2018). This result is somewhat surprising given the level of national attention being paid to racial tension, inclusion, and immigration policies.

Exhibit 11. Top Diversity and Inclusion Issues





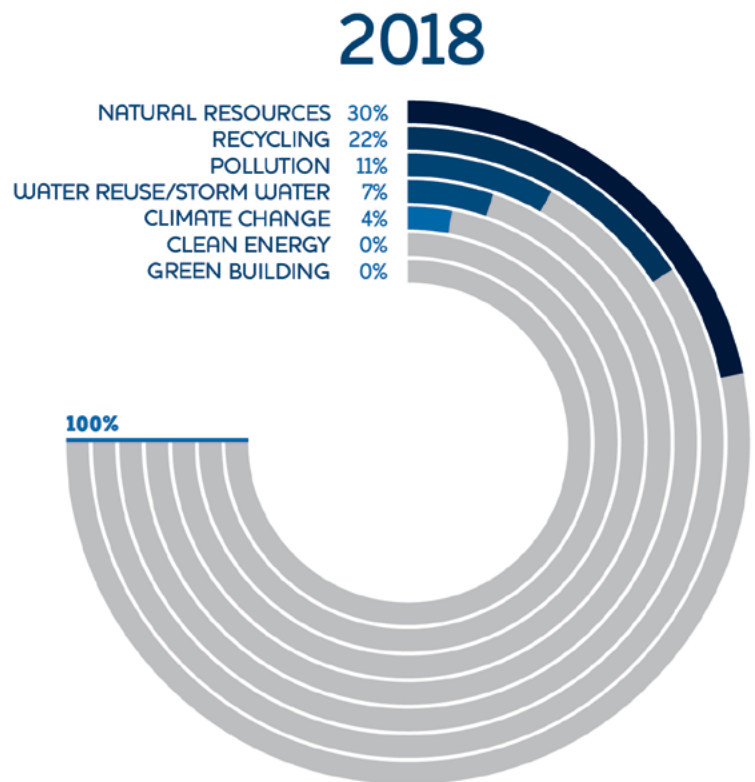
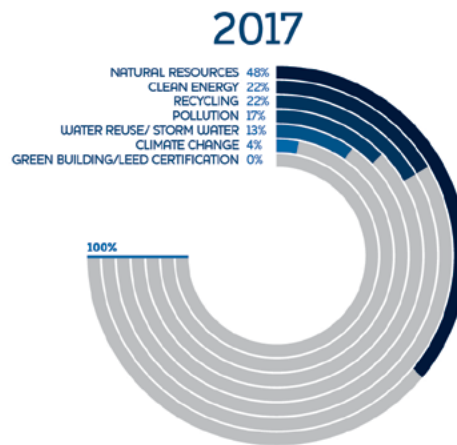
Environment

Thirteen percent of mayors spent time discussing their communities' environmental initiatives, successes, and challenges in their state of the cities speeches in 2018. This was a significant decline from 2017 where 26 percent of mayors devoted significant time to the topic. This was also much fewer than the percent of other U.S. mayors (25 percent) who included significant discussions of environmental and sustainability issues in their speeches.

While the overall amount of time dedicated to environmental topics declined this year, a dozen of the mayors still made mention of environment and sustainability-related topics in their speeches. Once again, the most commonly mentioned environmental sub-topic (30 percent of mayors) was natural resources. This is not surprising given Michigan's rich offerings of lakes, rivers, forests, beaches, minerals, and wildlife.



Exhibit 12. Top Environment Issues



Urban forestry was a topic of particular interest in state of the city speeches this year. City leaders from Harbor Springs, Madison Heights, Cadillac, Ferndale, and Trenton all mentioned their work on preserving and expanding the tree canopy in their communities, citing the air and water quality benefits as well as the role of urban trees in improving neighborhood character.

Recycling was another popular environmental sub-topic in 2018. Twenty-two percent of the mayors mentioned recycling in their speeches. Hazel Park Mayor Jan Parisi shared with her constituents that “every city resident received high-capacity recycling containers over the summer, which led to a 61 percent increase in recycling, the largest increase of all communities that year that are serviced by the Southeastern Oakland County Resource Recovery Authority (SOCRRRA).” And Rochester Hills Mayor Bryan Barnett celebrated his city’s innovative approach to recycling through their partnership with Recyclebank.

Other topics mentioned by mayors in their state of the city speeches included efforts to reduce pollution, plan for and mitigate climate change, expand the use of renewable energy, and protect local water resources.



“ In February I joined the Climate Mayors initiative. We’re a group of 402 mayors representing more than 69 million Americans, and we’re standing together and speaking out against the continual reduction in environmental standards we’re seeing at the national level. Denying and ignoring the effects of climate change can have devastating impacts on communities like Ferndale—increased air pollution, worsening climate change, and stronger and more destructive extreme weather events. By joining the Climate Mayors, we can help create a healthier and more sustainable future not just here, but across the country.”

- Mayor Dave Coulter, City of Ferndale



Data and Technology

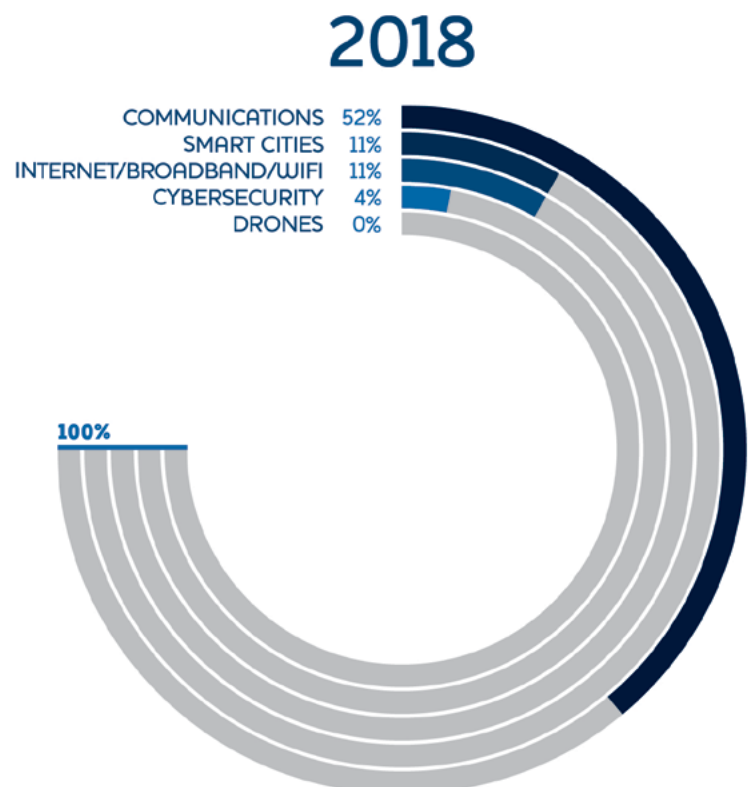
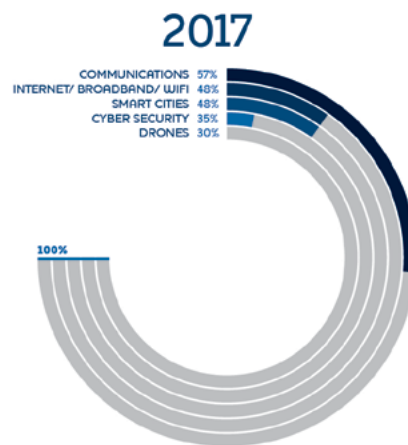
Cities use data and technology to improve communications and transparency with their constituents, evaluate the effectiveness of programs, and improve the efficiency of their work. Resident and business access to technology such as broadband and high-speed internet is also a critical asset of thriving cities.

In 2018, less than 10 percent of mayors spent significant time in their state of the city speeches discussing issues related to data and technology. This is a decline from last year, and overall there were fewer mentions of data and technology subtopics compared to last year as well. This continues to be one of the lowest ranking topics among other U.S. mayors as well, according to the NLC State of the Cities report.

Communications, smart cities, Internet and broadband access were the most mentioned sub-topics in the speeches. About half of the mayors mentioned something about communications, including use of emergency alert systems, website updates, electronic newsletters, and use of social media. Allen Park Mayor Bill Matakas, for example, highlighted his community's use of the See, Click, Fix app, and encouraged his residents to use it for reporting issues such as road maintenance needs, ordinance violations, or property damage.

For the second year in a row, the League tracked whether mayors made any mention of cyber security or drones, two sub-topics that have been the subject of much media attention the last few years. Once again, only one mayor mentioned cyber security and none mentioned drones. The League will continue to track these issues, as well as other emerging data and technology sub-topics in the coming years.

Exhibit 13. Top Technology Issues



Appendix: Methodology

This 2018 State of the Cities report marks the League's second effort to review and evaluate themes from annual mayoral state of the city addresses. It is modeled (in methodology and approach) after the National League of Cities' annual State of the Cities report (the most recent report was released May, 2018), which allows the League to make some comparisons between the findings in Michigan's speeches to State of the City addresses throughout the U.S.

The 2018 Michigan State of the City report includes speeches delivered by 28 mayors (or equivalent position such as Board Chair or City Manager) across Michigan. The cities varied in population size and geographic region, allowing for some representation of diverse community types and locations (although findings cannot be generalized to all cities in the state).

For all speeches, staff watched video of the speech (where provided) and reviewed written transcripts obtained online or via email from the cities directly. Written speeches were coded for major topics, including economic development, infrastructure, public safety, budgets and municipal management, environment, education, housing, data and technology, health care/public health, and welcoming communities, and later coded by subtopic. For example, the major topic of economic development contained multiple subtopics, including downtown development, neighborhood revitalization, jobs and employment, business attrition and growth, talent attrition and retention, entrepreneurship, cultural economic development, and tourism.

A speech was considered to place significant weight on a topic if at least five percent of its total "significant words" were dedicated to that topic. Total significant words were counted by removing things like introductions, statements of thanks, or other non-content words. A speech was considered to have coverage of a subtopic if that subtopic was specifically mentioned. Any review of past accomplishments within a topic or subtopic counted in the content analysis if the aforementioned guidelines were met.

Four of the speeches did not have online or emailed transcripts available and were not included in the calculation of total significant words. However, videos (and/or slideshows) of the speeches were reviewed and included in the tabulation of sub-topics mentioned.

The table below identifies the population characteristics of the cities who provided state of the city speeches for this report.

City/Village Size	# of Cities/Villages
< 5,000 people	2
5,001 to 10,000 people	3
10,001 to 20,000 people	5
20,001 to 50,000 people	7
> 50,000 people	10
Average city size	76,481
Median city size	28,706

There are clearly more medium to large cities delivering state of the city addresses than smaller communities. The map on page 3 of this report also shows that most State of the City speeches were delivered by local leaders in southeast Michigan.

The League has provided training and resources to our members on how to deliver effective state of the city speeches and will continue to do so in the coming years. We hope this will increase the number of communities participating in this engaging outreach approach.

