

Inaugural Address
Mayor Ralph Becker
January 2012

I am honored to have been entrusted to serve as mayor of Salt Lake City for another four years. Thank you for your trust.

Today I share my vision for our city, building on the last four years and the generations of city leaders before me. This day offers an opportunity to look at our city with a slightly *new perspective*.

On this occasion of my second inaugural, I hold up a mirror – a mirror for all of us to see Salt Lake City in its reflection. When I hold up the mirror and look at our city, I see a city that wins best in class. I see a city defined by *accessibility* – the kind of accessibility that enables residents and visitors to get around easily and access world-class art and culture as readily as they can access some of our nation’s most admired wilderness and recreation. I see a city defined by *sustainability* – the kind of sustainability that promises to preserve both our natural environment and our economic viability. I see a city defined by its *sophistication* – the kind of sophistication that showcases as much its respect for tradition and the city’s origins as it does imagination and edginess.

Salt Lake City is a city ***distinct*** on its own, yet part of a greater region and state. Our City's promise is reflected in its majestic peaks, symbolic of a City that is ***ascending*** – it is growing; it is vibrant; it is moving forward; reaching to be something even greater than it is right now.

When I hold the mirror before all of you, I see active, engaged, adventurous, dynamic and creative people. I see people who have adopted the pioneering spirit that is so much a part of Utah's fabric and channeled it into the arts, sciences, technology, business, medicine and education. I see people who, like the city itself, are ***ascendant*** and ***accessible*** and ***sustainable*** and ***sophisticated***. I see people who are diverse and welcoming, whose definition of an ***urban area*** is perhaps a little bit different than the norm.

When most people use the term "***urban area***" they are referring to a city with a large population. That's one measure, but it's quickly becoming outdated. ***Urban***, in my mind, describes both ***a place*** and ***an experience***. In fact, my view of "urban" is evolving right here in Salt Lake City, as we shape this city around the way we live, with thought for those who will follow us. My view of ***urban*** fits within our historical and natural context. We combine a city life rich in tradition and culture with an outdoor aesthetic that bears equally rich offerings. No place – no urban

place – has the opportunity to maintain a mountain, desert and an intensely dynamic and creative human experience quite like Salt Lake City. We have here **a balance** in a city that is surely among the most enviable of urban areas.

And because of this, Salt Lake City is ascendant. It is the next iteration of what cities will – and want to be. It is Ascendant Urbanism. As we watch our downtown blossom and flourish and change, we are mindful that Salt Lake City is **emerging as a model** for other urban areas around the country striving to combine place and experience with the kind of **growing diversity, welcoming spirit** and **bold ingenuity** that Salt Lake City has.

We live in a moment of transformation locally, nationally and globally – a time that calls for our community to **evaluate our extraordinary assets** and focus on how we can use them wisely to sustain ourselves with health and prosperity for our children and future generations. Our changing times can create hesitation and uncertainty. But when I reflect on where we are and what we can be, I see in our mirror a city that becomes a model for a desired future. And luckily for us, we are fed by an energy and motion provided by everyone who lives in and cares for this city.

So here's what I would like to ask of all of you today: look in our mirror and keep that mirror trained on Salt Lake City. Do you remember when Salt

Lake City won the Winter Olympics bid? We all looked at our community, region and state and saw that we needed to make a few improvements and adjustments before we welcomed the world. Look at our city with that same discerning eye. Look at our city as it is today – not as it was when you were a kid growing up here, or when you first moved here. Look at this city we have here and now, the place and the experience. **Imagine** what our city can become. Ask yourselves how you can **contribute**, how you can **become engaged** and how you might **invest in our City's future**.

We are all the keepers of the mirror. Four years ago as I stood before you, I asked that we all **come together** to seek the Great American City. We have come together. And we will **continue to move forward** together.

As Mayor, I have a special role as steward of what we see and what we can be. I am committed to that role, and to serving you and this city we live in and work in – and love.

I ask you to join me as we shape the future and progression of Salt Lake City.

Thank you.