



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

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Scranton's 'Then and Now' Story Takes Center Stage at 2026 State of the City Address

Mayor Cagnetti Touts Financial Turnaround, Public Safety Investments, and 1K New Housing Units in 2026 State of the City Address

SCRANTON, PA. – Scranton Mayor Paige G. Cagnetti delivered her annual State of the City address Wednesday at the University of Scranton, outlining a six-year turnaround that has taken the city from the brink of financial distress to a position of stability and growth, while detailing continued investments in public safety, infrastructure, and overall quality of life and lower costs for residents.

Framing her remarks as a contrast between “then” and “now,” Cagnetti pointed to the city’s progress since taking office in 2020, when Scranton faced the possibility of insolvency, significant legal liabilities, and longstanding operational challenges. Today, she said, the city has strengthened its financial footing, improved core services, modernized government operations, and rebuilt public trust through a focus on fiscal discipline, transparent governance, neighborhood investment, and stronger, better-equipped police and fire departments.

“I want to talk about the incredible progress we have made together. But first I want to remind us of where we started,” Mayor Cagnetti told city and community leaders, local educators, and nonprofit and business partners in attendance. “The city was facing the possibility of insolvency. Nearly \$200 million in litigation liability loomed over us. Systems weren’t working or even in place. Trust that had been broken.

“What I believed then, and what I now know to be true, is that government should work as hard as the people it serves, and we’ve built that here. Today, Scranton is stable. It’s growing. It’s being recognized. And you can feel it.

“This didn’t happen by accident. It happened because our community can trust that city government works on behalf of Scranton, not for a few connected people. This is what a change in culture looks like and it’s a tribute to the professionals and the partners that I’ve gotten to work alongside these past six years. We have a playbook for success that we continue to update and can utilize going forward.”

Mayor Cagnetti’s remarks Wednesday outlined the often-remarkable strides made over the last six years, beginning perhaps most importantly with Scranton’s financial status. Since dropping its long-time identity as a financially distressed municipality in 2022, the City’s credit rating has been

upgraded three times to its current A- rating with a stable outlook. Representatives from the city's financial advisory firm PFM called it a "remarkable turnaround" earlier this year upon receiving the new rating. The improvements show that good governance is simple: municipalities should pay their bills, rely less on debt, and put financial policies in place that use taxpayer dollars responsibly and efficiently.

Cognetti unveiled a new number of housing units - 1067 - built in Scranton during her tenure, with 51 more coming online soon with more projects planned. Housing costs are far too high for residents, and building up housing capacity remains a critical issue for communities across the country. In addition to new housing being developed, the City has also strengthened its rental registration policies and legal strategy to hold irresponsible landlords to account.

Investments in public safety are ongoing, with leaders committed to the safety of our first responders as they keep us safe. The Scranton Police Department's (SPD) modernization includes a Real-Time Crime Center for which the city is seeking funding. The City has invested over \$5 million in training, recruitment, and technology to help our officers complete their jobs safely and efficiently. Scranton's training and education partnership with the Lackawanna College Police Academy provides exciting opportunities to connect cadets with our existing state-of-the-art technology, and it invests in our current officers through scholarships for continued education. Additionally, SPD's lateral officer transfer program welcomes talented and experienced officers to the newly state-accredited force.

Similarly, the Scranton Fire Department stands ready to respond thanks to investments in new equipment, modern station alerting systems, and new fire apparatus planned for the coming years. Our fire prevention programs reach families before emergencies strike, and our fire fighters have more of the tools they need to prevent tragedies and save lives.

Infrastructure improvements continue both above and below ground throughout the City. Since 2020, largely supported by projects made possible through American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds, Scranton has invested nearly \$23 million into stormwater and infrastructure projects designed to protect neighborhoods and prevent events like the September 2023 flash flooding in Keyser Valley and North Scranton. Infrastructure projects are underway to complete improvements in those hardest hit areas of Scranton, as well as Tripp Park, Minooka, and East Mountain.

Major street safety projects along Cedar Avenue, Main Avenue in West Scranton, and throughout downtown Scranton will improve how drivers and pedestrians travel through our neighborhoods and to our local businesses. The most significant system of changes is occurring downtown, where projects totaling \$15.3 million will produce new sidewalks and curbs, install accessible ramps, add period lighting, and move utility cables underground. Where it's safe to do so, the City will also convert some one-way roads to two-way streets and replace traffic signals with stop signs. Changes are designed to slow traffic and make all of downtown safer for pedestrians and drivers alike.

Projects totaling \$2.2 million continue along the 300-700 blocks of Cedar Avenue and near the 1100 block of North Main Avenue. On Cedar, a project that began in September 2025 has entered its second phase, adding new sidewalks curbs, trees, and more. Meanwhile, crews are helping to transform the gateway to West Scranton with safer sidewalks and other features. The streetscape projects are in addition to years of prior investments including \$9 million in street paving from 2021 to 2025, repainted crosswalks and school zone markers, and replacing thousands of damaged and missing street signs.

The City has achieved all these accomplishments while keeping costs low and reducing some fees for residents and businesses. Throughout this administration, Mayor Cagnetti has reduced fees for new building permits, building inspection fees, and more, all while modernizing the systems by which residents and business owners can apply for those permits.

In establishing a capital budget, the Cagnetti administration has an annually updated roadmap for future improvements and signature projects, several of which were completed in the last calendar year. The City completed nearly \$12.8 million in park improvements at Robinson Park, Nay Aug Park, John F. Kennedy Elementary School, Connell Park, Weston Field, and Weston Park, refurbishing public spaces with new pools, playground equipment, walking trails, dog parks, and more.

“If you really want to understand what’s happening in Scranton right now, just walk outside,” Mayor Cagnetti concluded. “Go downtown on a weekend. Walk through a neighborhood festival. Stand along a parade or marathon route. This is the energy and activity of a city on the move, growing with public and private investment, and with community investment in our quality of life.

“We are proud of where we’ve come and are working hard to continue our progress. Tomorrow we mark Scranton’s 160th anniversary. We’re celebrating America 250 together, culminating with the Wall That Heals at Nay Aug in October. This summer, the FIFA World Cup Fan Zone will bring thousands of people to the city.

“The projects needed for decades are not just ideas anymore. They’re happening. And the playbook we’ve written will help us continue to make strides for years to come.”

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ABOUT THE CITY OF SCRANTON: Incorporated in 1866, the City of Scranton has a population of approximately 76,000 residents and is the sixth-largest municipality in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Scranton City Hall is located at 340 N. Washington Ave., Scranton, PA 18503. Residents requiring services should visit www.scrantonpa.gov

ABOUT MAYOR PAIGE G. COGNETTI: Paige G. Cagnetti was sworn in as the 36th Mayor of Scranton in January 2020 and took her third Oath of Office in January 2026. Her administration is focused on public safety, driving economic growth, upgrading infrastructure, government transparency and efficiency, and improving residents’ overall quality of life.