



Statement from Mayor Anthony Foxx  
Friday, April 5, 2013

As we get older, we remember things shared by our elders when our own proving time comes. My grandfather often paraphrased the book of Ecclesiastes when he said, "There is a season for everything under the sun." I remember his words as I announce today my decision not to run for re-election.

In my living room in 2005, a small group of friends help me put together an upstart campaign for city council at-large in a crowded field that included six candidates with previous city council experience. I pledged to focus on "solutions, opportunity and accountability." This city carried me to an improbable victory that year and, working together, we reduced our crime rate to historic levels, put forth the largest road bonds in the city's history on the ballot, established an economic development initiative to improve our decaying inner ring communities. We put the pieces in place to keep the property tax rate level during the unforeseen recession.

In 2009, I made another leap and ran for mayor. For most of that campaign, prognosticators considered me an underdog. We went door-to-door, neighborhood-to-neighborhood and built a campaign from the ground up. On election night, I was filled with great joy and deep recognition that I would be leading Charlotte during a transitional time – we needed to regain our economic footing, deepen our commitment to making every neighborhood strong and strengthen our relationship with Washington and Raleigh to move Charlotte forward.

Nearly four years later, we are moving forward. We have grown 13,068 net jobs since December 2009. To put that in perspective, we lost 27,000 jobs over the previous two years and a large headquarters. We have made a significant dent in reversing the downturn and putting Charlotte on the mend. We've made Charlotte more hospitable to small businesses and entrepreneurs. We're building a new generation of citizens and business leaders through the Mayors Youth Employment Program, which, thanks to the Charlotte business community, has grown from 48 kids in 2006 to 3200 this past year. We took bold steps to mark our place among global cities by hosting the 2012 Democratic National Convention, an event that also generated a \$163 million economic impact. I led a first-of-its-kind Mayoral Trade Mission to China. While we still have work to do, we are far better off today than we were four years ago.

On quality-of-life measures, we're forging ahead, even as we debate important questions about how quickly we transition from a defensive to an offensive posture. Four years ago, effective educators in our school system were being laid off. I pushed the city council to help keep effective educators working by releasing \$5 million owed to the Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools. Three years ago, two thirds of Charlotte-Mecklenburg libraries were on the chopping block due to the economic slowdown. I will never forget Mayor Pro Tem Susan Burgess's courageous entrance into our meeting to cast the deciding vote to keep the library system alive for another year, enabling the community time to create a successful sustainability plan. Our city council nipped and tucked our budget to avoid a property tax increase, while reinventing the delivery of basic services. The public safety pay plan used to compensate police and firefighters was scheduled to become insolvent this year. Thanks to members

of the Mayors Efficient and Effective Government Task Force, this issue was brought to light, a new plan was developed and pay plan is now solvent. We also reduced the number of recycling pick ups but put out larger receptacles. As a result, Charlotteans are recycling 30% more and we're saving \$40 million over 10 years. After years of stale debates about whether Charlotte should support afterschool programs at all, we have put in place competition for those dollars, opening up opportunities to community organizations to demonstrate effectiveness in helping our children succeed. For most of these years, our crime rate has dropped to historic lows. The combination of increased staffing and putting that force on the streets delivered those results. Along the way, we have preserved our AAA bond rating and even reduced the city's tax rate to a revenue neutral level.

Our relationships in Washington and, until recently, in Raleigh improved and enabled Charlotte to advance. Against long odds, Charlotte scored a major victory when we obtained a \$500 million federal full funding grant agreement and similar commitment from the state to extend the light rail line to UNC Charlotte. We earned a \$25 million federal grant to bring streetcars back to Charlotte. We've opened a third parallel runway and broken ground on an intermodal facility at the airport. Governor Beverly Perdue and her Transportation Secretary Gene Conti developed an innovative design-build plan to get the completion of I-485 accelerated along with the widening of the southern leg. We also joined forces with other cities and counties in our region to push for critical improvements to the Yadkin River Bridge.

Beyond government-based solutions, I am equally proud of the unique privately-funded effort to eliminate the achievement gap put forth by Project LIFT. This courageous effort, led by Anna Nelson Spangler and Richard "Stick" Williams, is an example of Charlotte at its best – confronting a thorny issue with uncommon resolve. I am grateful to be a part of it.

While heading to an end, I very much enjoy my role as mayor and, as a community, we still have a lot on our plate. Over the next 60 to 90 days, we face critical decisions that, for good or ill, will mark our future for many years to come.

- On May 1, an airport governance study is expected to be complete. This study attempts to help the legislative sponsors and the unnamed "senior business leaders" reverse course and identify the problem to be solved first – and then determine whether the proposed solution makes sense. I hope this study gets everyone on the same page and points us all in a sensible direction.
- The Carolina Panthers franchise has become part of the fabric of Charlotte. Within 60 days, I expect we'll know what tools the City of Charlotte will be allowed to use to keep the team here for another generation. Jerry Richardson is a good man who fought hard to get the team to Charlotte. He knows that a future owner could move the team and that the team is worth more with that flexibility. He working against his own financial interests to preserve its presence here. That's why I am proud of the Charlotte City Council for working so hard to craft a partnership.
- With families keeping their belts tight, and uncertainty still the order of the day, it is no surprise that the Charlotte City Council has struggled to put together a capital plan. Since last year, we've held more budget retreats and spent more committee hours studying every piece of the budget. Within 90 days, this council will finalize a new budget.
- The Metropolitan Transit Commission Finance Working Group, which is studying how we should go about advancing our 2030 Transit Plan, will report its results later this month. We have no capacity to complete the plan beyond the light rail extension to UNC-Charlotte – no commuter rail to the north, no streetcars to the East and West or to the airport. The plan is critical to how we manage growth and build a stronger tax base. That's why I have fought to

make progress on all parts of the system, including the streetcar, and why I will continue working with leaders throughout our region to build a workable funding model for the entire plan. We should build a national model for accelerating our transit system and using creative tools to get there.

With all of this work done, and much still to do, I owe a great deal of thanks to my family, friends and the larger Charlotte community for your tremendous help. Over these nearly eight years, I have made many sacrifices but my family, especially Samara and my two children, have made even more. Samara has been graceful, patient and immensely supportive throughout, and I could not do this work without her. My children, who were both born during my service, are getting older – and they still like hanging around me. I do not want to be a father who looks back and wishes I had spent more time with them.

There is indeed a season for everything. I entered my years as mayor believing that the role is and should be "a season," not a lifetime. There should be frequent transitions, new voices in the discussion and constant, vigorous effort to position Charlotte for success. I am grateful for the privilege of serving, knowing that this season will soon come to an end. That said, my work is not done. For the rest of my time as mayor, I will work, as I always have, for the long-term interests of our community. I am deeply grateful to the citizens of Charlotte for investing your confidence in me.