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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PRESS RELEASE

City's Innovation Team requests community input to determine area of focus in 2018

Syracuse residents can play a role in choosing the challenge the i-team will tackle

SYRACUSE, NY – The City of Syracuse's Office of Innovation, or "i-team," seeks community input to determine the office's focus area for 2018. Each year, the i-team focuses on one challenge facing the city and uses a data-driven approach to create and implement innovative solutions.

The i-team was formed in 2015 with a \$1.35 million grant from Bloomberg Philanthropies. The team works closely with residents and city staff to design solutions with clear goals and rigorously measure progress. In the past, the team has focused on infrastructure, opportunity and housing. Kicking off his new term, Mayor Walsh and the i-team are asking for public input to select the priority area.

"We are working to establish a culture of inclusiveness, where citizens truly feel like engaged participants in our local government," said Mayor Walsh. "This is among the first of what we anticipate to be many opportunities for the people of our city to be involved in decision-making processes that impact them and our community at large."

Individuals interested in submitting their ideas should visit www.innovatesyracuse.com/ideas. You may choose from one of the listed topic areas (including Customer Service, Economic Development, Education, Eviction, Government Efficiencies, Neighborhood Improvement, Public Engagement, Public Safety, Social Inclusion, Workforce Development, Youth Development and many others); submit a different topic; or provide more details about a specific idea or challenge.

The i-team is accepting input until Jan. 24. Then they will determine the most popular responses and release those to the public for a two-week voting period. The top topics that receive the most votes will go to the Mayor for final review. The community can expect a decision by the end of February.

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Determining the focus area is the first step in the team's yearlong process, which includes investigating the problem, generating ideas, developing solutions, and implementing and adjusting the initiatives.

Since its launch in 2015, the i-team helped make substantial progress on previous focus areas like improving the city's water and road infrastructure— filling over 15,000 potholes, more than doubling its speed in resolving requests for repairs from residents, saving over \$1.2 million on infrastructure costs, and winning over \$750,000 more in state infrastructure grants. Additionally, the team's most recent work with the Division of Code Enforcement has yielded an 18.2 percentage point increase in code compliance. Nearly 60% of violations, including health and safety violations such as heat and water shutoffs, infestations, and chipping lead paint, were successfully resolved by property owners on time.

Bloomberg Philanthropies Innovation Teams Program

Now working in more than 20 cities across four countries, the Innovation Teams Program helps cities solve problems in new ways to deliver better results for residents. Bloomberg Philanthropies awards cities multi-year grants to create in-house innovation teams, or "i-teams," which offer cities a different set of tools and techniques to innovate more effectively and tackle critical challenges—from reducing violent crime to revitalizing neighborhoods to strengthening the growth of small businesses

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