

MAYOR'S REMARKS

STATE OF THE CITY

JANUARY 24, 2015

**Members of the City Council, to our Department Directors and City Staff,
Elected Officials, Honored Guests, Friends and Family, Ladies and
Gentlemen:**

It is hard to believe that my first year as Mayor is already completed! It seems like just yesterday that we were gathering here for my swearing in ceremony, full of excitement and optimism. And what a year it has been! I am delighted to spend some time this morning reviewing our progress and outlining my agenda for 2015.

Before I begin, I would like to acknowledge some people that have joined us today. I am grateful for our City Councilmembers that are here, Council President Bob Champion and Councilmembers Cook, Grafer, Lord, Schmalz, Wheeler, and Vanderwielen. Transitioning from being a member of the Council to being mayor has been an exciting journey, and I am appreciative of the Council's partnership with me to keep our City moving in the right direction.

I would also like to acknowledge all the City staff who are here this morning. If you are a City employee, please raise your hand. Please join me in a round of applause for these dedicated public servants. I would also like to single out Christopher Phillips, the City's new Management Services Director and my second in command. Chris has been an amazing addition to our team, and I count on his wise counsel and great sense of humor.

I would be remiss if I didn't take a moment to introduce my family, my husband, Jeff, parents Bill and Jill, and my sister and brother-in-law, Anne and Alex. And next year, I look forward to introducing my new nephew, who will be joining our family in just a few weeks!

I also want to thank all of you for joining me this Saturday morning, it's an honor and a delight to see so many familiar faces! In this new year, full of new beginnings, I reflect on the tremendous changes the past few years have brought for me and for our city. For me, 2014 was an eventful year—my first year as your Mayor, shaping a new leadership team, and, maybe even more exciting, I got married last July!

HISTORY

To begin, it's important to think about history, and Mukilteo has a rich history, and like many smaller communities, we have always been home to proud residents who love our unique corner of the world. A newspaper clipping from 1910 described Mukilteo as a place where, "Mother Nature was lavish in her favors. In all the Sound country, there is no more beautiful view.... A panorama of sandy beach and glistening water, wooded islands, the Olympic range of mountains, standing sentinel over the gateway of the Pacific." The image of those beautiful views and pristine land is reflected in the photos in our historic display here in our Council Chambers.

These photos remind our city leaders of our past, and the important features that have shaped our community and made us who we are. These photos are all here due to the efforts of Mayor Joe Marine. This was a vision that Joe had, and he personally supervised the implementation in the last few months of his term.

That is why I am proud to announce that the City is formally designating this display as the Mayor Joe Marine Historic Photo Collection. We have also developed a booklet to accompany the photos and tell the stories behind the images. Preserving our history takes care and dedication, but it also depends on today's leaders to remind our current residents of where we came from and who shaped our history. On behalf of our community, I want to thank Mayor Marine for ensuring that our community's story will be told for years to come.

2014 ACTION AGENDA RECAP

When we gathered here last January, I shared my commitment to taking action on the pressing challenges that face our community. In that spirit, I announced my first Action Agenda, to help guide and focus my administration. I am proud to share that we were able to make significant progress on all seven issues, and we completed work by September!

I would like to briefly review these seven issues and update you on our progress.

Green Team

Last March, we formed the City's Green Team, with staff from every department, to help identify new and innovative strategies for making our city government a better steward of the environment. Their work resulted in new ideas like reducing harmful chemicals in cleaning products, saving energy by turning off equipment at night, and chipping and reusing plants, brush and even your donated holiday trees for use in our landscaping.

Chip Seal Moratorium

I heard loud and clear from residents that our chip seal program wasn't working, so in my first month in office, I suspended the program and asked our staff to find better alternatives. Through a lot of discussion and work, we've identified a new technology that should deliver a better result while still controlling costs. With our 2015 budget, we will implement a trial of the new technique this summer.

Fire Regionalization

I strongly believe in finding more opportunities for regional cooperation to deliver services. By joining together with our neighbors, we can get the same or better service at a lower cost. Last January, I pledged to finalize a contract for fire regionalization, and in July, I presented the City Council with a proposal. While I believe that this contract would have been the best way to deliver fire service, the City Council chose to keep our own Mukilteo Fire Department. I respect the Council's decision. Maintaining our own department will require more resources moving forward, or else we will face some tough choices about the quality of service we provide. I hope we can examine other avenues for regional cooperation, perhaps by building off of our current fruitful partnership with the City of Lynnwood.

Domestic Violence Prevention

Last year, in this room, I shared a sobering statistic-- Our crime reports show that on average, more than one person a week is arrested in domestic violence incidents. That is more than twice as many arrests as we see for DUI, with little attention from the media or public. We must continue to remember the victims and stories behind that statistic,

the most vulnerable members of our community. I'm proud to share that this year, a domestic violence prevention coordinator will be working alongside our police officers, to provide the attention and support that these cases need, ensuring no victims fall through the cracks, and doing the follow up that is so important.

Human Resources Professional

One of my other pledges was to improve the support for our employees by establishing a Human Resources Department. I'm so pleased to have our Human Resources Manager, Julie Good, on board and helping our employees, since July. I was able to find funds for the position through savings elsewhere in my administration, ensuring that we deliver on my promise without costing taxpayers more.

Interim Access to the Waterfront

Last summer, I was thrilled when we partnered with Sound Transit and the Port of Everett to open safe, legal pedestrian and bicycle access to Edgewater Beach for the first time in decades. Permanent access—utilizing a new road with bike and pedestrian lanes—will be open by June of this year.

Japanese Gulch

In April, Mukilteo officially became the owner of the last remaining undeveloped land in Japanese Gulch! I am pleased to see the great work that volunteers, commissioners and Councilmembers are doing to define a future for Japanese Gulch, our newest 140 acre park. Mukilteans should be proud stewards of this land, an expansive wood our families can hike, bike and play in for generations to come.

When I announced these agenda items last year, I remember how nervous I was, some of these were big items that would involve big changes. But I am so grateful to our department heads and city staff, who all came together to make sure that we finished all seven items, with months to spare!

As I begin my second year as our Mayor, I can tell you with confidence: the state of our city is strong. Building on a long and proud history, with a

dedicated team of professionals here to guide the way, I know that the future is bright for Mukilteo.

VISION

As we chart our course forward, I believe that it's vitally important to have a vision for the kind of city we are and want to be. As Mayor, I have crafted a vision statement for my team, so that our staff know what I expect from them.

My vision for Mukilteo is a sustainable, well-run city with safe, strong neighborhoods.

In order to achieve this vision, there are a number of components that are critical to our success, from public involvement to budgeting efficiently and effectively to planning for the future. There are copies of my vision statement here for you to take and review, I encourage you to share your thoughts as well.

2015 ACTION AGENDA

Realizing my vision, of a city that is sustainable, well-run, and made up of safe strong neighborhoods, takes action. I believe in committing to a clear agenda for the coming year. I'm proud that I kept my promises in 2014, and I commit to you that I will do the same this year. I would like to outline a few of the steps I intend to take to keep our city moving forward towards this vision.

Business License Reform

A strong Mukilteo depends on a healthy economy, for our businesses, for every Mukilteo resident, and for our children's future. We will plan strategically to support that economy. Our aerospace sector is an important component, and we should ensure all of Mukilteo's children are ready to join that workforce. This year, we will pursue a reform of our business licenses, to encourage job creation and reduce the administrative burden on small businesses. The way our current system is structured, if you hire even one employee, the City charges you more. I do not think this sends the right message to our businesses; we want to encourage them to create jobs. I look forward to partnering with our business community, the City Council, and staff on this project.

Community Voice for Rosehill

When we built the new Rosehill Community Center, it was meant to be a gem for our community. I believe that we can ensure that Rosehill serves our community needs better by giving our residents more of a voice in the operations and mission of the Community Center. I also believe in encouraging citizen participation in city government wherever we can. Next month, I will propose to the City Council that we form a Rosehill Community Board to engage local residents in guiding the direction of this vital community institution.

Public Safety and Prevention

The most important duty our City has is ensuring we live in a safe community. I think about this solemn responsibility every time I swear in a new police officer or firefighter. We are so blessed to have these brave women and men working to keep us safe and healthy.

But safety shouldn't depend only on responding to emergencies, we can do more to prevent those emergencies from happening in the first place. Particularly for our most vulnerable residents, those that are young and those that are aging, we can do more to prevent injuries and harm. And when we prevent an injury, we save taxpayer dollars that fund our emergency services. This year, I'll be working with our emergency medical service providers to identify ways to keep all our residents healthy and safe. One area that we will study in depth is protecting our seniors from falling at home. Over half of the injuries that our firefighters and paramedics are responding to are due to falls- 52%! And, what's even more troubling, is that most older adults who experience a fall don't talk to their doctor about it—and falls are the leading cause of fatal and nonfatal injuries. Preventing these falls means that an aging resident can stay in their own home longer, improve their quality of life, and ensure that they have extra time with their loved ones.

For our younger residents, I'm so proud to be working with our schools, nonprofits, the faith community and other organizations on a new focus to prevent youth substance abuse. This year, we'll be able to leverage our city's dollars with a new initiative

spearheaded by Kamiak's PTO President, Rick Simon and Principal, Mike Gallagher, to ensure we have healthy and successful students and families in Mukilteo. I believe we need to bring these efforts into the daylight, remove the stigma of recovery, and support our children and families seeking help. Pairing our Youth Substance Abuse Prevention program with the efforts of the Together We Can Initiative means we will go further together.

Investing in Transportation

Destinations throughout Mukilteo should be accessible to all our residents. Whether you use a car, a bike, or your own two feet, our city should invest in a transportation system that works for everyone. Our valuable infrastructure should be well-maintained and preserved for the future. We should plan strategically and stay ahead of the curve. But we know that the City does not have adequate resources to invest in maintenance and improve our system at the same time. So later this year, I will convene a special citizen committee to study our infrastructure needs and make recommendations on funding options we should consider to pay for our streets, sidewalks, trails and bike paths.

When our City was trying to decide how to deliver emergency medical services, the Mayor and City Council asked residents to make recommendations and that is why we have our City EMS levy. Our transportation system needs this same level of study and review, and we need our entire community at the table for this discussion. Together, we will identify the best way to maintain the infrastructure in which our city has invested, and ensure we make it easier and safer to access all destinations in Mukilteo.

Housing Affordability

As most of you know, I'm a home-grown Mukilteo Mayor, I grew up here, graduated from Kamiak, and I'm so pleased that I've been able to return home to Mukilteo, run a successful business, and now help shape the future of our city as your Mayor.

However, I remember how it felt when I first moved back home to Mukilteo and looked at the housing options in our community. After years away at college in a big city, I valued the community spirit even more, and wanted to begin my career and life here. It

can be tough to afford to live in this town, for our kids returning from college, or starting out in life; as well as for our seniors looking at the big family home that may no longer fit their needs.

I want to make sure we have a lot of choices for our community, to make sure the people that love Mukilteo and want to be a part of it are able to do so. We will encourage more affordable housing choices by reexamining our policies around the creation of mother-in-law units. The Council first passed these regulations in 2009. Since then, only two people have taken advantage of the option. It's time to take a second look, understand why more property owners aren't using this option, and ensure that Mukilteo provides better housing choices for residents of all ages.

CONCLUSION

As Mukilteans noted over a century ago, "Mother Nature is lavish" with her gifts to our town. It's up to us to ensure that those beautiful views, our lush forests and clean waters stay healthy for future generations. I am committed to ensuring our sustainable, well-run City of Mukilteo will do just that.

I will lead our city government to support our safe, strong neighborhoods and our healthy economy. We will continue to listen to and involve our residents in the City, because we are better together. Mukilteo is an amazing place to live, and I will work to ensure that our residents find opportunity and can make their homes here throughout all stages in their lives.

Again, thank you for your presence today, I'm honored and thrilled to share this exciting day with you. Stick around, enjoy the Mayor Joe Marine Historic Photo Collection, and share your thoughts about what makes Mukilteo special for you.

I hope that you'll keep bringing me with your ideas and concerns. I can always be reached at City Hall, in the grocery store, or even out for a walk on the boulevard. Email or call, and keep me on track!

I pledge to keep listening, and continue to reach out to you—I don't just expect you to come to this building to get involved in city government!

I am hopeful and excited as I look forward to the year ahead. Thank you for sharing your time and energy with me and our City. You make this a fabulous place to live and I am so proud to be your Mayor.

Thank you very much.