

## STATE OF THE CITY SPEECH – 2024

### Intro

Thank you all so much for taking the time to reflect on 2023 as well as look into what we have planned for 2024 here at the City. I always look forward to these speeches and especially the Q&A portion which we will get to after the speech. I want to thank everyone in attendance, and all of the staff who made this possible.

**\*Mention new projector at Rosehill Speech\***

I also want to thank our City Council who work so hard and diligently to better the lives of everyone here in Mukilteo. I am so appreciative to have a good working relationship between the executive and legislative branches here in Mukilteo. (Recognize any in attendance)

### City Snapshot

For the first slide here I wanted to give a quick City Snapshot. I have been proud to call Mukilteo home for the past 28 years. Our estimated population currently sits at 21,096, which ranks 13th in Snohomish County. Our population has seen relatively minor growth over the last number of years, especially in comparison to some other cities in our region. The small-town feel of Mukilteo is what attracted me and so many others to this wonderful community, and I think it is important that we retain that.

The City of Mukilteo employs 139 full-time staff, including Fire and Police. And I have to mention that when I first took office again in 2022, we were dealing with significant staffing challenges, so I can't tell you how excited I am to be mostly fully staffed again. Our staff do a

tremendous job day in and day out and I truly can't thank them enough.

## **2024 Budget**

I want to thank the City Council for passing the 2024 budget largely as presented. Many of the City's funding sources are restricted funds. So, for example, the EMS fund must be spent on emergency medical services. We can not use those funds for a full-time employee in our Finance Department or for the construction of a new park. Where the City does have discretion on where to allocate funds is through the general fund. Up on the screen, we have a chart showing what makes up our general fund. As you can see, the bulk of the general fund comes from taxes. There's a good balance of tax revenue sources. Property taxes are the leading source, but it is important to note that cities only receive around 10% of your total property tax bill. The majority of property tax revenue goes toward schools.

On the next slide, you can see where the City spends those general fund dollars. Similar to other cities, the largest expenditure from the general fund goes towards our Police Department. It is important that the City is responsible stewards of the taxpayers' dollars, which is why I am proud to say that we have had clean financial audits through 2021, and so far, 2022 which they are currently auditing. A big thank you to our Finance Department for all of their hard work!

The City is going to be considering switching from an annual budget to a biannual budget. Making this switch would result in numerous improvements, including improved efficiency and reduced administrative burden, enhanced long-term financial planning, and enhanced stability, among other things. My hope is to have this budget cycle implemented in time for the 2025-26 budget.

Staying on the topic of Finance, the City will be reestablishing the Long-Range Financial Committee in the very near future. The City Council and I understand the importance of planning for the future and ensuring the City is in strong financial condition for years to come. Keep an eye out for opportunities to apply to this committee on the City's website and social media outlets in the coming months.

## **Public Safety (Police)**

As your Mayor, public safety has and will continue to be, my top priority. Our Police Department had a busy 2023 filled with quite a bit of change. Police Chief Andy Illyn has done a tremendous job since taking over the position after former Chief Kang's departure. He has already made some changes to the department, including the addition of SERVICE as a new core value of the Police Department. The department also has a new assistant chief, sergeants, and new members.

As shown on the chart on the screen, crime is trending downward in Mukilteo from 2022 to 2023. Despite a decrease in overall crime, 25% more individuals were booked in jail compared to 2022. You can also see the increase in traffic stops. This has been a continued priority of mine and a concern I have heard from the community time and time again. In fact, traffic is the number one call for service that our Police Department receives. In 2023, the department conducted over 4,000 traffic stops and 1380 traffic emphasis patrols.

I discussed my desire to find solutions to the growing traffic safety issues in town at last year's State of the City and I am proud to announce that in 2024, we will be implementing speed cameras at three locations to increase safety and reduce reckless driving in our community. The cameras will be located at SR 525 next to Rosehill Community Center, Olympic View Middle School/Mukilteo Elementary

School, and 92nd Street Park. The speed cameras will also free up staff time for police, allowing them to spend more time out in the community in other areas and on other calls. I want to thank our Police Department for their hard work, professionalism, and friendly attitudes.

I am happy to share some good news about the timing of the ferry light at the speedway. The timing of that ferry light has had an extraordinarily long green light to unload ferry traffic, which has resulted in traffic issues on 525. After many discussions with Washington State Ferries, they have agreed to reduce the green signal time at the speedway from 75 to 50 seconds, until the summer months, when it will be reevaluated. We are hopeful that this change will reduce some of the congestion on 525 when the ferry lets out.

As you likely have heard, the City has moved to a fully digital parking program. And yes, this includes the resident waterfront passes that are used to park for free down by Lighthouse Park. We have heard a lot of feedback on the difficulty of navigating the online portal, and we are continuously working with the vendor to make the process as seamless as possible. The annual renewal process should be much easier than the initial setup you likely did this year (if you haven't yet, this is your reminder to do so!). Our park rangers will be honoring a grace period until April to ensure residents have ample time to get set up on the online portal. Our staff at City Hall are always happy to assist in person if you have difficulty navigating the new portal. Since January 2024, over 1,690 digital parking permits for residents have been transferred to the new portal.

I think it is important to explain the benefit that moving digital provides to the community. The move to online permitting will allow our Police

Department to scan license plates instead of exiting their vehicles to check for physical passes. This will provide more consistent enforcement in a more efficient way that frees them up for other tasks.

## **EMS**

Next, I wanted to touch on our Emergency Medical Services and explain why the City felt the need to ask the voters for an EMS levy lid lift last year. In 2010 Mukilteo voters authorized a permanent property tax levy for emergency medical care and services of up to \$0.50 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation starting in 2011. Due to increasing assessed valuation and law limiting the rate, the annual levy rate decreased, with the 2023 levy rate reduced to approximately \$0.27. As it stands now, the City is having to transfer general fund dollars to close the gap of the EMS fund. This is a financially unsustainable practice.

This may be coming to the ballot in August should the City Council take action on it. If that is the case, the proposal would likely be to go back up to the original amount of 0.50 cents per 1,000 dollars of assessed value.

I want to thank our firefighters and paramedics for their continued dedication, courage, and professionalism.

**\*Discuss regionalization\***

## **Waterfront Redevelopment**

We have made significant strides on the waterfront redevelopment project in 2023. Representatives from the City: Myself, Council President Harris, Vice President Jordal, & City Administrator Powers have been meeting regularly with officials from the Port of Everett to negotiate a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Once executed,

this document will serve as the legal formation of our partnership and a major step in the overall project. The MOU will hopefully be presented to the City Council and Port Commission in 2024.

We are also going to be initiating a parking garage study in addition to a boat launch relocation study.

We have some artist renderings of what future development on the waterfront could look like pictured on the screen. While exciting, it is important to note that these renderings are a result of the community feedback received on this project over the past few years. It is difficult to predict the feasibility of many of these features this early on in the project.

## EXPLAIN RENDERING

### **Annexation**

The current proposed area we are trying to annex from the county is shown in the image on the screen. The annexation currently includes the east side of the Speedway from the Mukilteo Speedway Café to Beverly Park Road in addition to both sides of 121st Street SW.

Residents are often surprised to learn that when they are eating at the Mukilteo Speedway Café, for example, they are not in Mukilteo. Our residents are generally the ones who frequent these businesses, and our emergency services are the ones who most often take calls in this area.

Over the past year or so, we have been working with Snohomish County on annexing this area as it is currently in their jurisdiction. An interlocal agreement is being drafted and I am hopeful it will be finalized soon to take the next step in this process. That interlocal

agreement will then need to be approved by the City Council, among other steps.

An added benefit of the annexation will be an additional revenue stream for the City to utilize. In year one of the annexation, the City will likely have some one-time costs associated with an annexation like this. Moving forward, however, the annexation will generate anywhere from an estimated \$420,000 to \$510,000 in revenue for the City. Around \$250,000 of that will be dedicated to the general fund, while the Transportation Benefit District, Emergency Medical Services, and Surface Water Enterprise fund will also receive dedicated funds. This will play a role in helping strengthen the City's financial stability for years to come.

I want to give a special shout out to our Planning and Community Development Department who has been instrumental in getting this project moved along!

## **Housing**

Housing density continues to be a hot topic in our state legislature. The 2023 legislative session resulted in the state requiring Mukilteo to allow for two units per residential lot. They also passed legislation requiring the City to allow two Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) per lot in all urban growth areas, in addition to the existing home. The code also prohibits Homeowner Associations from adopting new covenants, conditions, or restrictions to prohibit ADUs. Both of these requirements include restrictions on how much on-site parking can be required.

Think of how this increased density and street parking in your existing neighborhood could impact the character and feel of the community you first moved to. It is my firm belief that these critical decisions that shape our cities should be left to local governments. In the end, cities

are better suited to establish zoning requirements that fit the needs of each unique community.

Unfortunately, the Legislature is not finished with the density requirements just yet. House Bill 2160, a bill focused on transit-oriented development, is being considered this session. The bill would require upzoning around rail-based transit stations and bus rapid transit stops. For Mukilteo, we would be included in this legislation due to the Sound Transit Station near the Ferry Terminal. This would significantly affect the look and feel of Old Town, superseding the City's height and density restrictions. Further, the bill limits the City's ability to require adequate parking for the increased density.

Another proposal being discussed in this legislative session is lot-splitting. A bill that passed out of the State House of Representatives would require the City to allow the splitting of any single residential lot as long as the resulting lots are at least 2,000 square feet and other conditions are met. This would double the density in our single-family neighborhoods. These policies may work for places like Seattle or Bellevue, but they do not work for Mukilteo.

The residents of Mukilteo were clear with their thoughts on housing density when 83% of Mukilteans voted against it in 2021. I am committed to doing everything I can to push back against this legislation, but I need your help. If you feel so inclined, reach out to your state representatives and voice your opinion on these issues.

Even if these proposals don't pass this year, this is the direction they are headed, so it is important to share your thoughts with your elected officials.

## **Upcoming Projects**



We have some exciting projects on the way for 2024!

Our gateway and park signs throughout town are deteriorating and are in need of replacement! This project was identified as a City Council priority in 2023. An initial survey went out to the public at the end of that year, and more outreach is expected this year. Ultimately, the goal is for the new signs to reflect the character and feel of Mukilteo.

Another project I am particularly excited about is the Dirt Jump Park located near the Mukilteo Community Garden. A ribbon cutting is anticipated for the spring of 2024! I want to give a big thank you to our Recreation Department and the volunteers who are helping this project come together. If any of you have been down by the community garden, you have seen how poor the condition of the parking lot is. That parking lot will be receiving some much-needed treatment and repaving this year.

Next, we have the South Mukilteo Park Project! The goal here is to improve this existing neighborhood park to include new activities for a variety of ages and abilities for the adjacent community. This project was originally identified in the 2017 Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Arts Plan under the name Harbour Pointe Park. The addition of a playground, fitness area, and seating will help to activate the existing park and fill the need for more park space at the south end of Mukilteo. Design for the South Mukilteo Park was funded by the Mukilteo City Council through the American Rescue Plan Act dollars, and some construction funding was allocated in the 2024 City budget. In addition our local south Everett/mukilteo rotary club is donating \$20,000 towards ADA accessible equipment.

I also wanted to discuss the SR 525 bridge replacement. We are working really closely with WSDOT on this project and while it's still

early in the process, we want to ensure the planning of it aligns with certain aspects of the Waterfront Redevelopment. To give a rough overview of how long this project will take, it will be in just the design phase for the next 2 to 3 years.

Moving on, we have the Harbour Pointe Pathway Repairs project. This stretch of pavement is a safety hazard and is in need of repair. Thanks to multiple partners, we have received funding for this project and will be working on construction this year.

We have received several complaints about parking and pedestrian safety issues on 47th Pl W in Mukilteo. This is the street in front of our Fire and Police Departments, YMCA & Boys and Girls Club. The street is scheduled to be repaved and restriped, and the City plans to address some of the complaints at the same time. If you are facing North on 47th, the west side will now be marked as no parking due to a bike lane or existing no parking. Additionally, a new pedestrian crosswalk will be put in between the Boys and Girls Club and YMCA. These changes will lead to increased safety for this area of town that is frequently walked by families and children.

The City's website will be receiving a complete overhaul this year. The goal is for the website to be more intuitive for both staff and the public. On top of the new website, the City will be getting a mobile app where residents can submit fix-it tickets, view upcoming events, find contact information, and more!

In addition to these projects, the City will be continuing tasks like park maintenance, sidewalk repairs, ADA improvements, Pond Cleaning & maintenance, Catch Basin Repairs, and more.

I just want to give a shout out to the great job our Public Works crews are doing keeping Mukilteo looking beautiful.

## **Leg Priorities**

Each year, the City meets with our legislative delegation to discuss our priorities. In 2024, we identified three key projects to request funding assistance on:

- Installation of two pickleball courts (390k)
- Mukilteo Waterfront Parking Structure Feasibility and Demand Study (150k)
- South Mukilteo Park Construction (250k)

Often times the City is unable to fund projects solely using our City funds, so we always are looking for grant funding opportunities through the county, state, and federal levels.

## **City Events**

Up on the screen are a few City events I wanted to highlight for this year. The curbside cleanup in coordination with Waste Management is scheduled for Saturday, May 18th! This will be the weekend following the Mukilteo Garage Sale, which is scheduled for May 11<sup>th</sup>. Be sure to have your items out by 6 AM that morning to get picked up.

Last year, we held the Earth Day Community Cleanup at Lighthouse Park. The event was a huge success! We had around 150 people and 7 different non profits attend. This year, the event will be held on Saturday, April 20th, with a similar layout as last year. This is a great opportunity to come together with your fellow community members and make a positive impact on Earth Day.

Seniors - Every Wednesday, Mukilteo Recreation is hosting a 9:00 am – 11:30 am Coffee, Pastries, and Social Time for Mukilteo Seniors! Be sure to stop by for a great time!

I also wanted to plug our Council Chats that the City Council is putting on. These engaging discussions will take place at the Rosehill Community Center in the Rosehill Room on even months and at the Mukilteo Library in the Meeting Room on odd months. Whether you're a longtime resident or new to the area, you're invited to join for an hour of open dialogue about any City topics, on the last day of each month. Exact dates and times can be found on the City's website.

And of course, we are excited for this year's annual Spooktacular and Merry Mukilteo events. A special thanks to our Recreation Department for all of their outstanding work!

## **Q&A**

Next, we will move to my favorite portion of the speech, Q&A! Please raise your hand if you have any questions you would like answered by me or one of our directors.

## **Close**