



CITY OF
MUKILTEO

Office of the Mayor

MAYOR'S REMARKS

STATE OF THE CITY

JANUARY 23, 2016

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

A few weeks ago, I reached the halfway point of my term as Mayor. I really can't believe how fast the time has gone by! It has been a good reminder to appreciate every day, because time does move quickly. As I reflect on the last two years and the lessons I have learned, it gives me a chance to take inventory of things and plan for the next two years.

I look forward to sharing some of those observations with you today and hopefully getting your feedback and advice as well.

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 Champion and Councilmembers Cook, Emery, Lord, and Wheeler. I had the great pleasure of serving on the City Council for six years with Richard Emery, and I am so pleased to have him back on the dais where he is already making great contributions!

I would also like to acknowledge all the City staff who are here this afternoon. If you are a City employee, please raise your hand. Please join me in a round of applause for these dedicated public servants.

Of course, I would be remiss if I didn't take a moment to introduce my family! Normally I would begin with my husband, but this year I cannot wait to introduce my new nephew —Westley Wilder Costumbrado! Westley joined our family last spring and he is such a wonderful ball of energy and love. Having him around reminds me of the need to leave our next generation with a world that is better off than the one we found. Westley is joined by his parents, my sister Anne and brother-in-law Alex. And of course, most of you know my husband, Jeff, and I am proud to have my parents Bill and Jill here today too.

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!

TWO YEARS OF ACTION

When I was first sworn in, I shared with you my vision for Mukilteo: A sustainable, well-run city with safe strong neighborhoods. I committed myself to realizing this vision by outlining an Action Agenda each year and taking concrete steps to make progress on those goals.

I am proud to report that after two years, we have accomplished twelve Action Agenda items that have made real and measurable changes in our community.

I'd like to first briefly celebrate some of these accomplishments and remember the progress we have made together.

Business License Reform

As a small business owner, I know how important our smallest entrepreneurs are to our economy. That's why I directed our staff to examine ways to streamline our business licenses to make life easier for our smallest companies. The way our current system is structured, if you hire even one employee, the City charges you more. I don't think this sends the right message to our businesses; we want to encourage them to create jobs. I am pleased to report that our local chamber of commerce supports our proposal and the Council will hopefully enact it next month.

Community Voice for Rosehill

Last year, I worked with our City Council to create a new Rosehill Community Board to help add residents' voices into the operations of our Community Center. The Board is already providing valuable insights to our city staff and I know the Council values and looks forward to their input.

Investing in Transportation

Rosehill wasn't the only issue we needed community feedback on, we also face challenges paying for street maintenance and building a connected transportation system that is accessible to all of our residents. I joined with the City Council to create the Wise Investments in Transportation Taskforce last summer. They've just delivered their interim report that identified the need to invest more in our infrastructure. Now they'll spend the next few months helping identify potential solutions.

Public Safety and Prevention

An old saying reminds us that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. When it comes to protecting public safety, we can save money and provide better service by preventing injuries, fires and crimes before they happen. I am pleased that the City Council adopted my recommendation to hire a new Assistant Fire Chief to oversee fire prevention and community outreach. We can prevent injuries, reduce the risk of fires, and ensure our community is safer and healthier by working together.

Twelve Action Agenda items in two years, ranging from domestic violence prevention to transportation to housing affordability, I am really so proud of the work we have done together. And this is all on top of the important work that our city staff does every day to deliver great service to our residents, and defining what it means to be a part of the great City of Mukilteo.

I am proud to report that the state of our city is strong and vibrant. With a healthy economy, safe neighborhoods, and low taxes—we can be proud to live in Mukilteo.

As I shared two years ago, I am committed to creating a culture of continuous improvement at City Hall. We shouldn't rest on our laurels, and we should be leaders in addressing the challenges our region faces.

After writing two difficult budgets that have tried to balance our low taxes with our high expectations of service, I also want to be clear that we cannot achieve our vision alone—we must partner with others and find creative new solutions to the challenges our community faces.

2016 ACTION AGENDA

This year, my Action Agenda will be focused on partnerships, within our community, with other governments, with the private sector—it is so important that we work together.

Reducing Energy Use

In addition to partnerships, we need to build on our previous successes. One of the first things we accomplished in 2014 was creating a Green Team of city employees. This year, we will utilize the expertise of our team to comprehensively survey energy use at all our City facilities to help us measure our baseline. Using this baseline information, we can take action to reduce energy use and save money in our city operations. We can set a better example for other building owners and save some money in our bottom line.

Fire Prevention and Community Engagement

Our most important partners are the residents we serve: I believe when we work together, our City and our community, we can accomplish a lot more. After we have our new Assistant Fire Chief on board, we will be relying on residents to participate in the work of community engagement and fire prevention. By taking common sense steps to make our homes and community safer, we can avoid the costs and heartache that come with accidents and disasters.

Public safety is at the core of everything we do in city government. I think about this solemn obligation every time I swear in a new police officer or firefighter. At the same time, these services come at great cost, so we really must focus on prevention or be ready to pay more as costs escalate every year.

Youth Health and Safety

In addition to preventing fires and preparing for disasters, we also have to face a sad reality that substance abuse and mental health pose great risks to our young residents and our families. My 2016 Budget proposed continuing funding for outreach efforts by our Crime Prevention Officer Colt Davis to address youth substance abuse and mental health, and I am grateful the City Council supported this request. We have lost too many young people in our community to suicide and addiction. We can and must do more to prevent these tragedies.

Expanding Recreational Opportunities

In addition to the work of the community-based Mukilteo Youth Coalition and our Crime Prevention Officer, there are many other tools we can use to encourage our younger residents to stay healthy and safe. One proven solution is expanding recreational opportunities, to encourage physical activity and give our younger residents healthy outlets. We are blessed to have some amazing school facilities in our City, and this year, I am directing our staff to engage with the Mukilteo School District and search for more opportunities to partner together to create expanded recreational opportunities for our kids. Whether it's the pool, the gym or the theater, we should be finding ways to partner to support our youth. The City's 2016 Budget set aside some funding for facility rental, and we will be looking at opportunities to trade services and space at our City facilities as well.

I am so grateful for the partnership with our Mukilteo schools and for the leadership of Superintendent Marci Larsen. I look forward to growing this relationship even more this year so we can work together to support our community's future—our kids.

Aerospace Workforce

While we're on the topic of the next generation, I wanted to share a sobering statistic from Boeing's President: about 50 percent of Boeing's top engineers and mechanics will be eligible to retire over the next five years. This turnover is both a challenge and an opportunity. Our community depends on the aerospace sector, and we have many bright

young minds who would make excellent engineers and mechanics right here in Mukilteo.

However, at the same time, these career pathways aren't being fully explored by all of our young residents. In 2009, just 24% of scientists and engineers in this country were women, not because women aren't smart enough or motivated enough to study these subjects—studies have found that our girls aren't being encouraged to consider these careers and explore all of their opportunities.

Encouraging women to pursue careers in aerospace isn't just about preparing the future of the workforce, the fact is that jobs in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math—also called “STEM”—pay 33% more on average than non-STEM jobs. Closing the pay gap between men and women means encouraging girls to explore all the same opportunities as boys. That is why I will be hosting a Cool Girls in Aerospace seminar this year, to encourage some of our bright young women in Mukilteo to really consider careers in aerospace and other STEM fields. I want them to get some hands-on experiences, meet some brilliant women and be inspired to dream big dreams.

For me, I grew up here and fell in love with this community and was able to come back after college. I want that same dream to become reality for today's young women—and I want them to know there's a place for them at our great aerospace companies who need their smarts and their energy now more than ever.

Japanese Gulch Stewardship

Four months into my term, Mukilteo became the proud owners of the remaining undeveloped land in Japanese Gulch! This was the culmination of many years of effort—and the leadership of people like Councilmember Emery and so many others—to preserve this hundred acre woods for future generations.

This tremendous asset will now take careful stewardship. And I am here to report that our city budget cannot afford to pay for this stewardship by itself—we must engage our

community to help care for the Gulch. Building on successful stewardship programs in other cities, in our state and national parks, I proposed funding for a Gulch Stewardship Program in our 2016 Budget. The funds will provide supplies and training, but the work will be done by volunteers and dedicated community members. We all worked so hard to save the Gulch, now it's time for us to work together to take care of it.

Partnering to Serve Seniors and Kids

In my 2016 budget proposal, I asked the City Council to fund the construction of a new Senior Center as part of the Boys and Girls Club's new Shin Center in Harbour Pointe. By partnering with the Club, we can provide enhanced service to both seniors and kids, at a much lower cost than building a stand-alone facility.

This partnership would also foster and develop a multi-generational community space for our youth to learn from our older residents and maybe teach them a thing or two as well.

The City Council decided it wasn't the right time to fund this request as part of that budget. I respect and understand their reasons. This is a big, new idea and we have a lot on our plates. But this unique partnership opportunity will not be here forever, and so I will respectfully ask my colleagues to join me- and take a deeper look at the issue, consider the benefits, hear from the public, and give it more consideration.

Our community is aging, and we need to ensure that our seniors have the space and the opportunity to remain active, engaged residents. It's good for their health and it's good for our whole community. Plus, I plan to grow old here in Mukilteo, and as Babs Williams, the Seniors Association president, has reminded me: that day comes faster than you expect!

HISTORY OF PARTNERSHIP

Our community has a long and rich history of community partnerships. One hundred years ago, Mukilteo was mostly a "company town" for the Crown Lumber Company, at

one point the largest lumber mill on Puget Sound. There was no city government then, but that didn't stop community members from building a baseball field near today's Lighthouse Park, using donated lumber from the company.

And the same building used by our Boys and Girls Club today was built in 1925 by community volunteers using more donated lumber.

In the 1930s, residents formed the Mukilteo Improvement Club to undertake many of the tasks the City performs today: street repairs, cleaning up Pioneer Cemetery and other activities to improve the welfare of the community. The Club convened a special meeting the day after Pearl Harbor to organize an Air Raid Precaution Zone, since there was an airbase at Paine Field. Otto Zahler, the President of Club, wrote to members: "Don't think that this matter can wait until tomorrow or next week. This community needs to be organized immediately in order to protect ourselves."

While the challenges we face today are not as dire as they felt then, Otto's words about coming together and partnering as a community ring true today, this isn't a matter that can wait until tomorrow or next week. We need to begin partnering today, so that we leave the next generation with a safer, stronger, more sustainable community.

CONCLUSION

In closing, the last two years have been the most rewarding personal and professional challenge of my life. I have enjoyed the opportunity to lead our fantastic city staff, work with our City Council, and find new and better ways to connect with all of our residents.

Today, I recommit myself to this task with energy, devotion and enthusiasm. We have a lot left to do, but I know that if we work together—we can achieve great things for our community.

I hope that you will take time to share your thoughts with me too. Whether today, or by email, phone, or even at the grocery store—I love hearing from our community about what we are doing right and where we can do better.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve the City I love and thank you for joining me today.