



**MAYOR GREGERSON'S REMARKS**  
**STATE OF THE CITY**  
**March 18, 2019**

Council President and Vice President, members of our City Council, City staff, honored guests, friends and fellow Mukilteans:

I would like to begin with a few words of thanks, first to Sheriff Trenary, for his warm introduction and dedicated service to our County. I also want to thank my family for all their support this past year, my mom and dad—Bill and Jill, and my sister Anne, brother-in-law Alex and my amazing nephew Westley and niece Willow! They are all either at home, work or daycare, but I still feel their support, as always.

Thank you also to the elected officials joining us today. Your commitment to service is valued and never thanked enough. I would



like to acknowledge Councilmembers Whelpley and Champion for their attendance today.

To begin, I'd like to share one of my favorite stories from Mukilteo's history. At our founding, we were a slightly different town, though, as we all remember from February, the gray skies of winter still cast the same light over the community. As one of Mukilteo's founders, Jacob Fowler, said in November 1860 as he was first establishing a trading post and hotel here, "It is lonesome up here and very quiet. Trade is very dull, but I live in hopes of it being better one of these days." Things did improve and grow over time, and in fact, our little community became the County seat, and home of county government.

Before January, 1861, we were part of Island County. That month, the territorial legislature created Snohomish County, with Mukilteo becoming its pro tem county seat, pending a July election. The first commissioners meeting took place in Mukilteo in March 1861. Pending



issues focused on building a connecting road from Snohomish to the Monroe area, and rejecting one of Mukilteo's founders, Jacob Fowler's request for a liquor license.

In July, an election was held, though largely without too much excitement. As Fowler said, "Our election is all over. It passed off very quiet, no fighting or drunkenness." The City of Snohomish beat Mukilteo and took the county seat, by a vote of 17 to 10. Emory Ferguson, a founder of Snohomish, boated down to Mukilteo and took the seven pages of County records with him back to Snohomish.

Though we weren't the County seat for long, Mukilteo was still a key transportation hub. In 1911 the Island Transportation Company began passenger-ferry service between points on Whidbey Island. Car ferries began in 1919 by the Black Ball Line, until 1951 when the company was purchased by Washington State Ferries.



As we know, businesses and ferry landings have long been good companions and the Mukilteo ferry landing was no exception. A tiny lunch room built by Howard Josh offered food, fishing tackle, and bait, which then evolved into the Ferry Lunch in the 1920's; the Taylor family purchased it in the late 1940s and continued to run it as the Ferry Lunch for 22 years. They finally changed the name in 1970 to what customers were already calling it, "Taylor's Landing." Today, Ivar's Mukilteo Landing continues that tradition.

As our waterfront changes, these businesses and water access will still be a key hub for our community and region.

Over the last five years as your mayor, I have worked hard to strengthen what makes our city special, but also tackle the big challenges that face our small town. Today, I want to share a few of the accomplishments we have achieved together, and share my vision for how we can keep our city strong.



Every year I have shared an action agenda of what I hope to see accomplished in the year to come. This is how I share my priorities and hold myself and our team accountable. I am proud of the help of our City staff in delivering so many important accomplishments. It's fun to look back, so here are a few gems from the last five years:

Last year, our Council approved a new garbage franchise agreement, city-wide, with Waste Management. Starting in September, all neighborhoods will benefit from one bin recycling and easier composting, as well as an opportunity for a dropsite for garbage in case service is canceled due to bad weather! This most basic service keeps our community clean and protects public health. We will also work to make composting easier and more available as well, to reduce our waste stream and recycle organic materials instead of sending it all to be buried in a landfill.



This year, we are continuing investments and improvements in our Facility Renewal program. Focusing on the environmental and economic benefits of our green buildings, we have built and expanded this program since 2016. This year, nearly all of the City's buildings will receive improvements, including replacing 25-year-old heating and cooling systems and dorm windows at Fire Station 25.

In 2015, we established the Rosehill Board. This board has helped 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. The local residents who serve on the board have provided support, feedback and valuable input in guiding the direction of this gem of our community.



We've done a lot over these five years, but one last one that was a tough battle but a huge benefit to our community was the opening of the waterfront trail to Edgewater Beach. I jumped on that issue when I was first elected in 2014, and we had it open to the public by May. It will be partially closed, as WSF finishes their work and begins the first construction of the permanent promenade long the waterfront, but we hope to have occasional openings as often as possible.

Looking forward to the future, and as I think about the important challenges that we face, I would like to share my Action Agenda for this year. I'll begin with Japanese Gulch.

## JAPANESE GULCH

Japanese Gulch gets its name from the workers who built a community and raised their families as Mukilteans. These residents worked in the Crown Lumber Mill on our waterfront, enjoyed Edgewater Beach, built



homes, a community center and a park. Mas Odoi, a resident of the Gulch in the 1920's, said, "There were deep pools along Japanese Gulch Creek's mile long course with hungry trout, eager for wriggling angle worms skewered by boys on hooks of their fishing lines." He added, just like today, "The surrounding forests were honeycombed with trails for exploration by adventurous souls and nature lovers." Our community has invested in preserving that forest and trails. Our next step is to ensure that the creek is as healthy as it once was, as described by Mr. Odoi.

Our waterfront is in the midst of dramatic change, and our City is well positioned with a comprehensive Waterfront Master Plan, ready for implementation. A key element of that plan is daylighting Japanese Gulch Creek. Currently tunneled under the old tank farm, Japanese Gulch Creek is still home to a resourceful salmon population. We have constructed a number of fish passage improvements over the last ten





years in the Gulch to help that salmon population. Returning the Creek to its historical flow is a key step in improving the environment at the water's edge. I have begun work and will continue to work through this legislative session to convince the State to fund the project through this year's capital budget. Receiving funding now puts us on track to complete the project, which includes public access and boardwalks through a new estuary, in the next few years.

#### PUBLIC SAFETY

When it comes to delivering services efficiently and well, there is nothing more important than the public safety services we provide. We are fortunate to have career professionals in our Fire and Police Departments who keep us safe.

I am proud that we are able to partner with the School District to have a School Resource Officer, the excellent Officer Dodds, to be present in our schools, particularly at Kamiak. She is able to build relationships



with our kids, serve as a role model, and provide crime prevention support. We hear often from our community about the need for an additional officer, to focus on our kids in middle school. Reaching students at that key age would expand prevention efforts, increase a sense of safety in our schools and build those relationships that increase the likelihood that kids will ask for help when they need it.

There are additional ways that we can improve safety in our community. Traffic safety- in school zones and in our neighborhoods- is a frequent concern. From Endeavor Elementary School, to Pointe Elliot neighborhoods, to Old Town- residents frequently reach out with concerns about speeding. One way to increase safety is to commit to increased enforcement. Adding a permanently funded motorcycle officer would help us do that.



Neighboring communities have seen powerful results from the use of an embedded social worker in their police departments. A skilled professional with a background that can partner with law enforcement to provide the type of diversion and support that many need, more than a trip to the jail, is a huge benefit to those individuals impacted and to those communities.

I believe we should be funding improved school safety, better response times to 911 calls, modernizing our fire stations, crime prevention, but also support for crime victims, as well as responding to the opioid crisis. This year, our staff will be discussing options for this with the City Council.

#### ROSEHILL PRICING POLICY

Moving on: Rosehill Community Center deserves a high-level policy focus that can help provide the big picture direction for our staff to



implement. Right now, our center is run well, and efficiently. We have dozens of free community activities, hundreds of recreation programs for all ages, and rentals that help cover costs of other opportunities to enjoy the Center. In many other cities, the City Council establishes a pricing and cost recovery policy that provides direction on how much to subsidize these important recreational offerings. Our staff will work this year to talk with the public, learn about what matters to you, and allow the Council to set this new clear direction that we need.

## SENIOR NEEDS ASSESSMENT

One of the regular users of our Center, the Mukilteo Seniors are a growing and vibrant organization. They have become more than just a fellowship-growing monthly luncheon, and I have heard they are interested in growing further. I think the smart way to make sure we are serving our senior population in Mukilteo, is to take a step back and really understand what today and tomorrow's seniors are seeking from



their community. I am hoping that the Council will join me in asking our Recreation Department to conduct a senior needs assessment or gap analysis. We can answer questions about is provided today, where the gaps are, what are trends in senior programming, what a dedicated senior center might be able to provide, as well as the needed operational costs and staffing.

There are just a few topics that could be addressed in a robust community wide analysis of senior needs. At the end of the day, our plans moving forward should be shaped by evaluating what senior services are available and what is needed.

Sometimes my action agenda efforts are about raising awareness of a need. This next issue is one of those.

FARMERS MARKET



Our Mukilteo spirit of volunteerism is a hallmark of what makes this a wonderful city. Just like the Mukilteo Seniors volunteers, our residents come together to make the Lighthouse Festival a success, to support the Kiwanis and Rotary organizations, to preserve and open the Lighthouse every summer, and more. The Farmers Market is one more volunteer-sponsored event that enlivens our waterfront every summer. It has been organized by community volunteers for over a decade, founded by Eden Trenor, and over the years, with the help of Cherri Paul, Anna Tink, and the Landsberg family, and market manager Bear Summers, among others. This year, the volunteer board is taking a hiatus. I am certain we will all miss the easy access to fresh food, purchased directly from the farmers who grow it, and the festive atmosphere of a visit to the waterfront. The Market board is seeking a market manager and more volunteers to help ensure their success. I encourage you to contact them, to step up, and help our community bring the Farmers Market back in 2020.



As I begin this sixth year as your Mayor, I can say with confidence that the state of our city is strong. We are faced with great challenges, but even bigger opportunities. From our beautiful waterfront redevelopment, to the new Harbour Reach Corridor Project, we are literally building a new future for our community.

I hope that all of you here will join me in the work that we have to come, but I also hope that you will keep sharing your thoughts, advice, and constructive criticisms too. You've got my email, my phone number and you know where to find me.

As the early settlers of Mukilteo noted a century ago, "Mother Nature is lavish" in the gifts she has given our community. We are so lucky to live in a place as special and as beautiful. I have been lucky to call it home



for my entire life. As I start a new term, I am filled with optimism for what we can achieve together and I am full of thanks for this opportunity to serve.

Thank you.