



## 2018 STATE OF THE CITY

Well, that was quite a year!

Beginning with the women's march in January—and followed by a sanctuary city ordinance, scholarships to the Dreamers program, and our first annual Indigenous People's Day—2017 was a year to define ourselves in light of—or in contrast to—a turbulent national climate. We also responded to an increase in hate speech and graffiti.

Let me be clear—what we do in Eugene matters. It matters that we stand for our values; it matters that we work toward improving the quality of life for everyone who lives here; it matters that we respond constructively and positively to climate change; and it matters that we model the work we want others to follow.

I want to do two things tonight: review and report on the commitments I made to you last year; and highlight the themes that will guide my second year in office.

First, the long term. Big choices of lasting impact were voted on and moved forward by City Council. We approved a 20-year Transportation System Plan and an Urban Growth Boundary, both of which respond to the dual challenges of climate change and population growth. Both are fundamental equity issues because they form the framework on which we build a livable community. A livable community must incorporate transportation options to serve everyone – people who live here today and those who are coming. It includes buses, biking and walking—options that reduce our carbon footprint, and strengthen our commitment to Vision Zero, a program to eliminate vehicle-related deaths. Thanks to voters, we have extended for another five years the road bond to maintain and improve both our roads and our biking and pedestrian infrastructure.

Council made a huge step in realizing the Envision Eugene goals by agreeing to expand our urban growth boundary to include more land for parks, schools, and industrial areas to encourage continued economic growth. Council also voted not to increase that boundary to accommodate more housing. With this big decision behind us, the city is positioned to gather data that identifies where future expansion for housing can and should take place.

These decisions sharpen the challenge of building enough housing in enough neighborhoods that people at all economic levels can afford.

I made two commitments related to housing last year. The first was to address the need for increased shelter options for people who are homeless. We continue to support and expand the Dusk to Dawn and Rest Stop programs, which answer the urgent needs for shelter and stability. But the pressure is unrelenting to do more, faster. We continue to struggle to find locations for more rest stops that are acceptable to neighbors.

I convened three meetings to gauge the interest and commitment for a permanent public shelter. There is consensus that a low barrier shelter for folks who are sleeping in our parks and doorways would be valuable. Providers of housing and health services are eager to engage in the development of this shelter. The Budget Committee and council took a significant step in directing the manager to reserve \$1 million of the Comcast settlement funds for this capital investment, and the County Human Services Commission has committed \$50,000 towards a feasibility study.

Let's be clear: a shelter is not a solution to homelessness. Yes, some people who stay there will access services and make their way toward more stable lives. But others will rotate in and out multiple times.

The shelter is an answer to a health crisis. It will increase the survival chances for folks who are living in the open; reduce the impact of people seeking emergency care on our hospitals and clinics; and reduce suffering. It is in everyone's best interest for these folks to be safely housed because people living without shelter and sanitation struggle with untreated infectious diseases. Untreated human waste in our city is a health hazard to us all.

My second commitment related to housing was to champion the "missing middle"—compact, more affordable options, including duplexes, four-plexes, cottage clusters and townhouses. We have missed decades of building housing in the price range, size, and location to meet the demand of boomers who want to downsize and millennials who need to get started. As with all housing proposals, there are challenges and opportunities. The conversations about what, how and where are beginning to coalesce. I'm grateful to the realtors, developers, architects, land use experts, affordable housing providers, City staff and community volunteers who are bringing their experience to bear in this conversation. The University of Oregon has stepped forward as a key partner and will host a missing middle forum with this new coalition, Better Housing Together, in February to identify a few key strategies that could promote more construction of this housing. Council will follow with a work session, and we will begin to transition from talking to doing. Please be a part of this!

All of this progress hinges on our economy. The city is responsible for creating a climate in which businesses can provide products, services and jobs to our community. Downtown in particular is our economic engine. This year the City invested in expanding the high speed fiber throughout downtown, a commitment that earned us two national awards as a Mozilla Gigabit city and a US Ignite city. Our city's tech sector continues to grow and thrive – attracting new businesses who invest, create jobs, and infuse our downtown with energy and opportunity.

We are poised to realize a long-held vision for riverfront development. This game-changer expands housing, commercial and park space and forms a dynamic triangle between our downtown, the riverfront, and the University's new Knight Campus. This work joins us more closely with Springfield, as they work westward to enhance Franklin Boulevard. Together we are compounding our investment in that essential transportation corridor.

Ahead of us is planning a new city hall, a permanent home for the farmers market, rejuvenated Park Blocks and Kesey Square, and a reconfigured plaza at the Hult Center. In 2017, we marked the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Hult Center, which was built on land within an Urban Renewal zone and constructed during an economic slump. It was controversial then, but no longer. Recognizing that anniversary should galvanize our commitment to investing in our public spaces.

Our choices about investment of public dollars can be controversial. Reasonable people disagree. The timing and quality of information that is shared between decision-makers and with the public drives the discourse and influences the outcome. I pledged last year to work hard to report in a timely and clear way to the public. I have done so. The promised Monthly Report has been updated regularly and posted on the city's website. I have written weekly blogs all year and published nine guest viewpoints in the *Register-Guard*.

I also instituted an independent study group to review and share information about the kinds of auditor roles incorporated in other city and county governments. My goal is to ensure that we have a robust, factual discussion of the choice before us on the May ballot.

A performance auditor can be valuable. An objective review of specific City functions with an eye towards delivering the best service possible will help inform and reassure the public that tax dollars are being well spent. The citizen initiative proposal—which adds a third branch of government with dedicated funds—should stand the test of public scrutiny before it becomes law. We are aiming for responsiveness – that the City’s work meets the needs and hopes of all who live here. The public discussion is important. As my study group concluded: there is no right or wrong way to do this. It is a question of what structure is the best fit for our community.

City staff raised the bar with their innovative public engagement efforts this year. Parks and Rec staged a little red bus in the parks to invite ideas and feedback on the master plan. The City’s “listen, recruit, hire” outreach to solicit views on the hiring of a new police chief has astounded the national recruiting firm for its extensiveness and effectiveness. What we learn from each of these efforts will inform how we approach the changes and challenges ahead.

And change is the name of the game. As I look forward to the coming year, two themes emerge. The first is that the global is local, and the local is global. We are an increasingly diverse community, emerging in a national climate of distrust, racism and sexism. We have been caught in our own complacency about how people of color, varying gender identities or national origins experience life in our community. We can do better. We can listen; we can pay attention; we can question our assumptions. Whether we are talking about access to jobs, to a quality education, to affordable housing, or to the opportunities to simply enjoy life and our community, we need to bring all of the voices to the table.

Eugene will be on the global stage in 2021 for the World Track and Field Championship, the biggest international sporting event in the world that year. I travelled to London last August to see the championship and gain insight into how London -- a city of 7 million -- accommodated 40,000 guests. My take away from that trip is that we will host in a uniquely Eugene and Oregon style, and it will be extraordinary. We have already begun -- witness the spectacular murals across our city as part of the “20x21” project. We anticipate opening a bike share program in March that not only will enable more of us to make quick bike trips between the university, downtown and Whitaker, it will move us toward our climate recovery goals and serve our future international guests.

We are all challenged to answer the question: what’s your 20 by 21 goal? Mine is that, as a community, we will honor 20 different cultures in monthly themes -- restaurants offering food; venues offering music, dance or theater; museums sharing history and art; schools engaging students in learning about other cultures and languages. Many of those 20 cultures are already represented in our friends, colleagues and neighbors -- they offer us a personal and direct passport to other parts of the world. Let’s make the most of this moment!

The second theme that emerges for me is resiliency. I mean this in the broadest sense. The city works on many levels to prepare us for disaster, whether in the form of climate change or a major earthquake. Neighborhood associations are conducting CERT training to expand the number of people who can guide and assist in times of crisis. Our transportation funds help us strengthen bridges; EWEB works to ensure access to water and power. New schools are built to withstand earthquake tremors.

Last year the Mayor’s Ad Hoc Committee on the Climate Recovery Ordinance worked closely with City staff to update the Climate and Energy Action Plan. This plan will provide us with a roadmap as we adapt to and mitigate the impacts of climate change. The big structural and infrastructural changes require action by big entities -- major energy consumers and major employers.

But resiliency is also a personal responsibility.

Last year's ice storm and forest fires have made it clear that we will not escape the reverberations of climate change. The way we approach those challenges will determine our success. We are in this together, and if we look at this as an opportunity to live better together, with more care for one another, we will build a more cohesive and effective community.

Imagine our neighborhood schools as centers for us all, each with its own power grid and water source; a place not only for shelter but for stability. Whether or not the big one hits in our lifetime, these scattered, strong neighborhood centers will bind us together. Suddenly school funding is something that matters to everyone, whether or not you have kids in school. Neighborhoods become safer because residents can count on the neighborhood center to help them weather a crisis. The elderly and disabled know there is a place to go and neighbors to help them.

During the course of my first year in office, a number of people – mostly young – began their testimony before the City Council by saying, "I want to acknowledge that we are meeting here in buildings built on Kalapuya land." Most of them were testifying about climate change or homelessness – reminding us of our context and that history should guide our thinking about current and future challenges.

I am part of one wave of migration that is now surging into a new, larger wave. We came because we believed that our lives would be better here than in the place we left behind.

And it is. We all make it that way -- with our talents, passion, love of nature, the arts, and the quirkiness that makes Eugene unique. Keep that thought close as we tackle these larger than life challenges and acknowledge with gratitude the people who came before. Our emerging diversity is part of our resilience. We're in this together. I'm excited for the year to come. Let's get to work.