

2016 *State of the City Address*



PRESENTED BY
MAYOR STEVEN S. CHOI, PH.D.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2016
IRVINE CIVIC CENTER COUNCIL CHAMBER





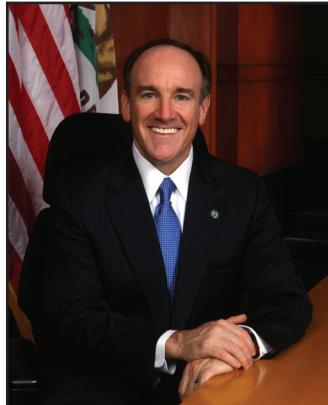
Mayor
Steven S. Choi, Ph.D.



Mayor Pro Tem
Lynn Schott



Councilmember
Beth Krom



Councilmember
Jeffrey Lalloway



Councilwoman
Christina Shea



City Manager
Sean Joyce

*The following is the City of Irvine State of the City Address,
originally delivered February 9, 2016, by Mayor Steven S. Choi, Ph.D.*

Good evening and welcome to my fourth State of the City Address to the community.

Let me tell you about “My City, My Home.”

The National League of Cities recently asked the nation’s mayors to define their home. This is how I answered: “I love Irvine because it is a city like no other. As a culturally diverse community, we focus special attention on ensuring that Irvine’s high quality of life is not only enjoyed by today’s residents, but is guaranteed for generations to come.”

The state of our City is unquestionably positive. No one ignores the challenges before us as we move into the future. But what this City Council is accomplishing on a daily basis is truly remarkable.

However, I am mindful we live in a world that feels, to many, as if peace is a memory and hate and terror are in fashion. We cry for the victims of Paris and San Bernardino and the millions who hope for nothing more than a better day.

It is a comfort to go to bed at night in Irvine. But it is important we do NOT forget ALL of humankind.

I would like to introduce and thank my City Council colleagues for their continuing work. Please stand as I call your names: Mayor Pro Tem Lynn Schott, Councilmember Beth Krom, Councilmember Jeff Lalloway and Councilwoman Christina Shea.

And, as I call your name, please rise: City Manager Sean Joyce ... Assistant City Manager/Great Park Eric Tolles ... and Police Chief Mike Hamel. Thank you, Sean, Eric and Mike.

Let me also introduce my family members who are here tonight: my wife, Janie; my son, Daniel; and my daughter and son-in-law, Michelle and Nick.

Our success belongs to many people, including community organizations ... the private sector ... our residents ... our commissioners and committee



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members ... and our City employees. Thank you, everyone.

I thank you for partnerships ... such as water conservation during the drought with Irvine Ranch Water District ... and drowning prevention outreach with the Orange County Fire Authority.

I thank you for a job well done, such as the Irvine Company’s recent lease agreement with Mazda North American Operations at the new, 20-story high-rise in Irvine Spectrum.

I salute Five Point Communities for its continued success in the Great Park Neighborhoods and the

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Beacon Park residential village.

And did everyone see how we began the new year in a big way? The Chamber of Commerce's Destination Irvine float was a highlight at the Rose Parade in Pasadena. I was there, too!

So once again, I say thank you to everyone for all you do.

What I share tonight represents Irvine's activities that have been underway in 2015 and are planned for 2016.

Top of the list is a technology council that I am forming – Irvine Tech Advisory Council, or iTAC.

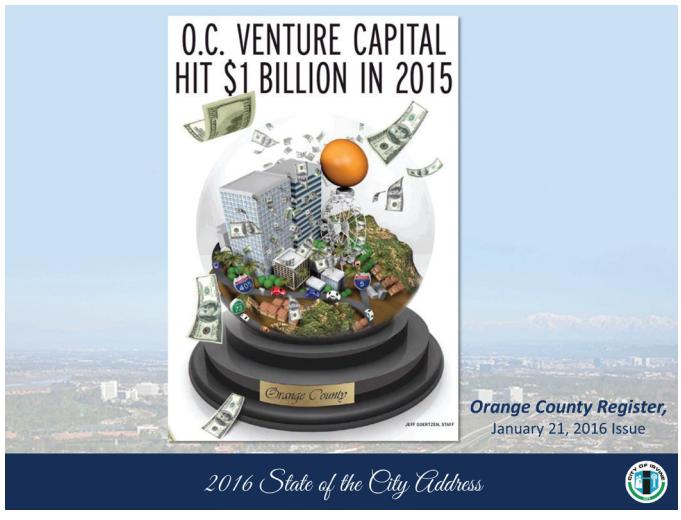
We have sent out invitations to technology stakeholders for our first meeting on February 18.

iTAC will seek advice on how Irvine can advance on a technology platform to improve the quality of our lives.

We are the City of Innovation, and my Irvine Tech Valley initiative – which I call InnoVine – is in place to support tech companies from startup onward.

In the two short years since the beginning of my Tech Valley initiative, I have seen huge improvements both in financial investments in Irvine as well as business buy-in.

Here is the best example of the initiative so far:



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Irvine-based startups raised nearly \$636 million in 2015 in attracting venture capital investments. That is 63 percent of all investment dollars in Orange County, according to the Register.

I want to thank Jeffrey Ingham, senior managing director at Jones Lang LaSalle, which has offices in Irvine. In the article, he said about our city:

"It's a business address, it's a technology address and it's an international address now."

And, the Irvine Company has embraced my vision of a technology center. The company opened The Vine in March 2015 for startups to work on their new ideas ... rent-free.

I would ask Mike LeBlanc, Senior Vice President, Entitlement for Irvine Company, to please stand and be recognized.

I also applaud UC Irvine in its efforts to provide a harbor for new business startups. The result is The Cove – home of the UCI Applied Innovation ecosystem. This provides a rent-free space for startup ideas for those connected to the campus.

I ask Kate Klimow, Assistant Vice Chancellor, Community and Government Relations for UCI, to please stand and be recognized.

With iTAC, I will rely upon the smart people with bright ideas.

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With investments in Irvine in the hundreds of millions of dollars, I can count on venture capitalists to be knocking on our door.

Part of my job is to continue to promote who we are: Irvine IS a tech center and a business giant.

For example...

We receive many wonderful accolades. In 2015, these included:

- the U.S. Conference of Mayors City Livability Achievement Award as one of the “Most Livable” Cities in America.
- the No. 3 Small American City of the Future for economic potential by Foreign Direct Investment Intelligence.
- the No. 1 Best City in the Nation for Veterans by WalletHub.com based on ... job opportunities, veteran-owned businesses, veteran wage growth, and ...quality of life.

And, as you know, we remain one of the Safest Cities in America. This helps us in every aspect of community life.

People are reading, reacting, and acting:

A recent headline in the Orange County Business Journal reads: “Irvine’s Reputation Draws German Valve Maker.”

JenaValve Inc. has moved its corporate headquarters from Germany to Irvine. Why?

This is what CEO Victoria Carr-Brendel said:

“The industry center of the universe is in Irvine.” And, “If we’re going to come to the states, the place to come is Irvine.”

I would ask Dr. Carr-Brendel to please stand.

Irvine is such a great City! Let me touch on that theme.

First, our Safe Community

Sustaining a safe and secure environment is one of the City’s most important goals. The result is:

Visionary planning ... enlightened City leadership ... public and private partnerships ... and an engaged community.

These are the foundations of our success.

Through the City Council’s leadership, Irvine will continue to focus resources on sustaining a safe environment for residents, businesses and visitors.

We also benefit with a strong health care community that includes Hoag Hospital Irvine and Kaiser Permanente. Public health goes hand-in-hand with public safety.

Second, our Prosperity

Financial prosperity in any community starts with the City itself. The city ended this last fiscal year with a \$10.9 million operating surplus.

This allowed the City Council to reach its goal of 20 percent in reserves.

Irvine’s fiscal strength is a powerful magnet: With companies of all sizes ... Irvine is a hub for employment.

People who live here ... are working here.



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With unemployment at 3.1 percent, WalletHub.com has ranked Irvine as the 7th best city in America for finding jobs.

For example, our two major business centers – the Irvine Spectrum and Irvine Business Complex – account for more than 150,000 jobs.

Third, our Excellence in Education

I am pleased to announce that the City Council continues to provide direct grants to support Irvine schools. We have done this as a City Council since 2006.

And two weeks ago, the City Council approved a streamlined program providing \$4 million annually over the next two years.

This includes \$2.5 million for programs that provide classroom and learning activities, along with school nurses and guidance counselors.

Plus, \$1.5 million in Challenge Match Grant funds for class size reduction measures.

And that's not all! Add together the in-kind support and the total is more than \$8.6 million ... these include crossing guards, school resource officers, and DARE programs – that is, Drug Abuse Resistance Education provided to all sixth-graders in Irvine public schools. Also, DARE curriculum is available for private schools.



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And, IUSD students' state standardized test scores rank highest in math and second-highest in English language arts/literacy!

The City Council is proud of its continued investment in our local school districts and the excellent work that they do for our students.

At this time, I would ask Lauren Brooks and Ira Glasky, Irvine Unified School District Board members, to please stand.

Irvine remains an educational mecca, and that includes our higher-education choices – UCI, Irvine Valley College, and the local campuses representing Concordia University ... Chapman University's Harry and Diane Rinker Health Science Campus ... Cal State Fullerton ... Brandman University ... USC ... and Pepperdine University.

The payback is immeasurable.

Fourth, our Diversity

By focusing attention on our growing cultural diversity, Irvine is recognized as one of the most ethnically diverse cities in the country.

By the way, did you know how many different languages are spoken in Irvine homes? Seventy-three, by a survey of the school district!

To increase Irvine's cultural awareness, the City supports active international programs that foster

goodwill and understanding between residents and other nations.

Irvine has Sister City relationships with: Tsukuba, Japan; Hermosillo, Mexico; Taoyuan, Taiwan; and Seocho-gu, Korea. Our Friendship City program includes a relationship with Nowon-gu, Korea.

Cultural diversity is celebrated annually with our signature community event – the Irvine Global Village Festival.

And throughout the year, you will experience Chinese, Korean, Persian, Indian and Jewish festivals.

We were also the Host Town for Korean athletes during last year's Special Olympics World Games. The athletes stayed at UC Irvine, played at the Great Park, had a picnic at Bommer Canyon, and enjoyed a parade at Irvine Spectrum Center. They ... had ... fun!

And now, for the first time, the City's Winter Wonderland celebration attracted thousands more community members to the Civic Center.

So much to do in Irvine ... and so little time.

I invite you to our next big event – the Irvine Police Open House – which is being planned in the next few months here at the Civic Center.

This second annual event is intended to be a celebration of our community partnership. Take this opportunity to meet the men and women of the Irvine Police Department, enjoy station tours and children's activities, experience vehicle displays, K-9 visits ... and food and music.

Also, let me address traffic.

You may have run into traffic getting here tonight, and I am very aware of that.

We are finalizing a comprehensive citywide traffic management study to identify strategies for improving traffic flow.

The study, to be presented in the next few months, will analyze traffic congestion issues, traffic operation and management practices ... and our strategies in transit, walking and biking.

We will determine what can be done to further improve the City's traffic flow during peak commute hours.

But the City Council has not waited. We are accelerating \$60 million in infrastructure improvements that will ease traffic:

- the widening of Jamboree Road by one lane in each direction between Main and Barranca;
- pedestrian connectivity at Jamboree and Michelson;
- the Jeffrey/Walnut intersection widening;
- the Culver/University intersection widening; and...
- the widening of University Drive between MacArthur and Campus near UCI.

Another important topic is Affordable Housing.

Last September, we celebrated the grand opening of the Alegre Affordable Housing project: Every one of the 104 homes will be permanently affordable.

It is the first project built by the City's nonprofit: the Irvine Community Land Trust.

Alegre adds to our growing inventory of affordable housing serving our diverse community.

The Orange County Great Park continues to move forward

The Great Park is on target this fall to open the first phase of the 175-acre Sports Park. The Sports Park includes 12 baseball/softball fields, 25 tennis courts and other amenities that are part of the 688-acre public-private partnership between the City and Five Point Communities.

The new and existing soccer/lacrosse fields will equal a grand total of 25 of those playing fields.

I would ask Emile Haddad, President and Chief Executive for FivePoint Communities, to please stand and be recognized.

The Great Park's 688 acres include the Upper Bee, the Bosque, golf course and wildlife corridor.

In addition, we are looking forward to an ice rink at the Great Park!

A nonprofit representing the Anaheim Ducks plans to build one of the most complete public facilities of its kind in the nation. The four skating rinks will serve many local needs for ice hockey, public ice skating, and individual training.

The City Council also has begun its work on the future 250-acre Cultural Terrace, with four key elements:

- Museums
- Library
- Amphitheater
- And a lake

I am so happy that the City Council has embraced an Irvine City Metropolitan Library as a main anchor.

In conclusion ...

There are many other subjects that are so important to our community.

Our third senior center, Trabuco Center, opens on February 20.

Adventure Playground, newly renovated and reopened, has drawn thousands of enthusiastic families.

The Quail Hill Community Center will be added.

The City's iShuttle public transportation is transitioning to the Orange County Transportation Authority for expansion of the commuter system.

And, Google Fiber has chosen Irvine to explore its services. The company is working with City staff for much-needed fiber optics at speeds we can only imagine.

All of those are big plans and successes.

We must continue to aim high.

Just think how far we've already come. This year, we celebrate our 45th Anniversary as the City of Irvine.

So, we are young ... yet accomplished.

I believe the best legacy a Mayor can give a city is the inspiration, the resources and the foundation to meet the challenges of the future.

Thank you for giving me that opportunity. Good night and God Bless America.



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