



2005 State of the City

Presented by Mayor Ron Hansen on February 14, 2005

For the past few years, we have presented a State of the City address to let you know how Shoreline is doing, what we've accomplished this past year and what challenges we expect in the coming year. This year's address is even more important since we are marking a major milestone. As we celebrate our tenth year as a City, I am pleased to report that the state of the City of Shoreline is excellent.

One of the main reasons we are in excellent condition is the City Council's conservative approach to finances. Our financial picture is solid. This is especially significant when you consider that so many other government agencies in our region have had to lay-off staff and cut essential services.

Over the past ten years, the City of Shoreline has managed its finances in a very conservative manner. We have lived within our means while continuing to provide the services the residents of Shoreline said they wanted.

We do this by using stable revenue sources for ongoing operating expenses. These are revenue sources we know we can count on in the future. Less stable revenue sources that could fluctuate year to year are mainly used for one-time investments or are set aside for future capital projects.

We have maintained a lean operating budget and have not increased staff without careful thought and we use a judicious mix of City staff and private contracting to ensure

maximum efficiency. This is especially evident when you look at how we compare to other Puget Sound cities in our ratio of employees to residents.

Our conservative financial policies date back to the first days of being a City. It was one of the earliest decisions our original City Council made and these policies have served us well over the years.

But there were many other decisions that the community recommended and Council adopted early on that have influenced how our City has developed over these past ten years.

When Shoreline residents voted to incorporate, we had a vision for this community. One of the major goals was to have a local government more responsive to our local infrastructure needs. To have some of the long-standing problems solved – in the parks, on the roads and in our drainage system. Shoreline residents were well aware that maintenance and repairs to these important systems had been neglected by King County for decades and we were feeling the effects of that neglect in flooding, potholes, cracked sidewalks and unkempt parks.

When Shoreline became a City, one of the first orders of business was to repair or replace these systems to bring them up to acceptable levels of service. This is something we have focused on from the beginning. And we have made excellent progress. We're not done yet because I don't think a City is ever finished with this type of work. These systems continue to age year by year and need to be repaired or replaced. But when I walk and drive around Shoreline, I see major improvements to our parks and roads, and I see lots of evidence that our flooding problems have been significantly reduced.

To give you an idea of how much the City of Shoreline has accomplished in improving these areas, let me share just a few figures with you. Since incorporation, Shoreline has:

- Paved nearly 25 lane-miles of roadway;
- Added or repaired over 7,000 linear feet of sidewalk;
- Added over 170 new sidewalk wheelchair ramps;
- Added over 3,000 linear feet of curbs and gutters;
- Dredged 1,500 cubic yards of sediment from Hidden Lake;

- Had more than 15,000 people participate in waste reduction and recycling events;
- Approved nearly \$140,000 in neighborhood mini-grants;
- Logged over 150,000 hours of park maintenance time;
- Upgraded three existing park facilities – the Pool, the Richmond Highlands Recreation Center and Paramount School Park; and
- Built three new major park facilities – the Skateboard Park at Paramount, the Spartan Gym and the new fields at Shoreview Park.

One of my favorite memories over the past ten years was the Shoreview Park opening in 2002. It was great to see that dream become a reality after more than 15 years of planning and public process. It took the dedication of many people to make it happen. Now when I see the kids using those fields, it makes all those years of work worth it. I hope those of you who were involved feel the same way.

In the early years we focused on a multitude of smaller projects that needed immediate attention. Since we have completed many of those, we are now able to focus on some of the larger projects to make even more significant improvements in our City.

One of these is the Third Ave. NW Drainage Improvement Project, now underway. This project is designed to alleviate flooding to over 20 homes and surrounding streets by replacing and improving the storm drainage system and expanding the detention pond at Hidden Lake.

Another project that is underway is the Interurban Trail. Like the fields in Shoreview Park, this was a project that was discussed for many years before Shoreline incorporated. It is exciting to see it become a reality and to know that the City is making it happen. The groundbreaking for the Trail was another great memory from the past ten years.

But some of our best memories as a City are yet to come. The entire community has worked hard to plan these important improvements we have coming up in the next couple of years.

One big project getting underway this year is work on a City Hall. For the past ten years, Shoreline has been paying rent for office space and it has been a Council goal for a long time that one day we would own our City Hall. As you know, you receive no return

paying rent, the money is just gone. And, just as buying your own home is part of a sound financial plan, putting our money into a City Hall is an investment that will pay off in the future. Although we are just at the beginning stages of this project, I am looking forward to seeing it take shape.

Two exciting projects where Shoreline residents will be seeing much more visible progress this year are North City and Aurora.

We're scheduled to begin construction on the improvements in North City this year, which will be the culmination of years and years of hard work by the residents and business owners of that neighborhood. When it is complete, the City's investment will support revitalization and growth of this key neighborhood commercial and residential center.

And our biggest project, the Aurora Corridor, is also set to begin construction this year. It is fitting that the most significant project in the City has also required the most significant public participation, discussion and planning. Since the vision for improving Aurora first began to take shape upon incorporation, countless people have been involved in refining the plan to make the most of this main street in our City. We have worked hard to balance the diverse needs of all the people who rely on this major transportation corridor. And though it hasn't always been easy, I believe that when it is complete it will be something the entire community can be proud of and that will serve us all well into the future.

Forming our City hasn't all been about repairing and replacing existing infrastructure. As a new City, we had to start from scratch on what services we would provide and how City departments would be organized to provide those services.

We also had to set up ways to communicate with the community and to learn more about what our residents valued and wanted for Shoreline's future. We now do this in a variety of ways such as public comments at Council meetings, our City newsletter, advisory groups such as the Planning Commission and Council of Neighborhoods, our Web site, the Recreation Guide, the Owner's Manual and special project newsletters.

We also had to develop major planning tools such as the Comprehensive Plan, the Development Code and the Capital Improvement Program. Community members devoted hundreds of hours to helping the City develop these plans and many of you continue to be

involved as these documents are updated each year. These documents reflect the community's vision and values and provide important guidance as we make decisions about how Shoreline grows, improves and develops into the future.

In thinking about how many people in the Shoreline community participated in developing these various documents, I would also like to thank the hundreds of community members who volunteer their time to the City of Shoreline either as advisory group members, at the Police Neighborhood Centers, in the parks, at special events and in various other ways. Without their dedication, the City would not be in the fine shape it is today.

Another dedicated group I'd like to mention is City staff. Many of them were attracted to working for the City of Shoreline by the challenge of setting up a new City and making sure it was done correctly from the beginning. There are quite a few who have been here from the first year. One thing you should know about the people we have working for the City is their generosity in giving to the community. Last year, as a group, City of Shoreline employees raised over \$20,000 for United Way and received the United Way Outstanding Employee Campaign Award for the third year in a row. Shoreline's campaign ranked in the top 300 out of 2,800 in King County. That puts us in league with companies such as Weyerhaeuser, Boeing and Microsoft. All of our City employees truly care about the community and take pride in providing excellent customer service.

Now that we have invested 10 years in building a stable foundation, what is next for Shoreline? What are our challenges for the next 10 years?

It is probably not a surprise, but one of our biggest challenges likely will be financial. While we have budgeted conservatively over the years and are in a much better financial position than many other jurisdictions, we have been affected by the same factors that have hurt them: the slow economy and voter initiatives that reduced local tax revenues. Due to these factors, the cost of maintaining current services is expected to outpace our revenues in the coming years.

The City continues to look for ways to do more with less. To find cost savings that don't significantly affect the quality and quantity of the services we provide to you and to continue improving efficiency in our delivery service. But there may come a point where that just isn't enough to keep the budget balanced as required by both State law

and fiscal prudence. As we consider ways to meet this challenge, we will be coming to you, the Shoreline community, to help us set priorities for services we provide and how we pay for them. And, I'm confident that, together, we will make sound decisions and maintain our financially stable position.

As I look around the City and see the changes and how much we've accomplished over the past 10 years, I can't help but be excited to see what we will accomplish in the next ten years. I hope you are as proud of our City as I am and will join us in celebrating our first 10 years. We've accomplished a lot together and have much to look forward to. And we have all earned a big celebration to mark how far we have come as a community.