

**State of the City**  
**Jan. 29, 2015**  
**Ed Hansen Conference Center**

It's an honor to be here to present the 2015 State of the City address – my 12<sup>th</sup> State of the City. Thanks for all that you do to support Everett and move us forward.

2015 is the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the adoption of Vision 2025. As way of background, a citizen committee developed a shared vision for what our community would look like and what steps we would take to get there.

- **Identified six critical areas:**
  - Education
  - Parks/art/culture
  - Harborfront/Riverfront
  - Urban design
  - Transportation
  - Economic development

At this halfway point, I'd like to take the opportunity to check in on our progress over the last decade, remind us of where we're going, and share my administration's next steps, including some immediate priorities for the coming year.

## **Education**

### **What have we accomplished?**

The City worked for years to establish Washington State University at the University Center, a consortium of public and private universities in north Everett.

- WSU's first class of mechanical engineers graduated in June 2014, and this past fall the University added three new degrees in electrical engineering, communications and hospitality.
- In the last 10 years, the baccalaureate program at the University Center has increased from 174 to 465 students, an increase of 167 percent.

And it's not just WSU. Closer to downtown, Trinity Lutheran College has established itself in the heart of our community, and we are currently working with the college on their plans for dedicated student housing.

Everett Community College continues to grow and expand, and opened its cutting-edge Advanced Manufacturing Training Center last summer.

### **Everett in 2025**

In 2025, Everett will be home to a thriving college district in north Everett, and the University Center will serve nearly 1,500 students a year.

WSU's presence will continue to grow, with a focus on STEM degrees and preparing graduates for a wide variety of careers, including in the medical field.

Our kids and grandkids will have an opportunity to get an affordable research university degree and a good family-wage job, and continue to make Everett their home.

### **What are our priorities for 2015?**

- The City will actively support WSU's legislative requests to further establish and expand four-year degree opportunities in Everett:
  - \$4.5 million to launch four new programs: aviation management and aviation maintenance management, data analytics, software engineering, and sustainable food systems
  - \$61.1 million to build an academic center in north Everett
- The City will strongly support WSU's efforts to establish a second state medical school in Spokane. WSU envisions a community-based medical education model, which would include opportunities for WSU Everett students to enroll in the medical school and train in a clinical site on the Everett campus.
- We will kick off work on the north Everett college district study area in the second half of this year, and will engage the community and key stakeholders to help guide future growth and address related issues, such as parking.
- The City will continue to support the Everett and Mukilteo school districts and their innovative and integrated STEM curriculums. The K-12 system is a critical piece of the education puzzle in Everett.

## **Parks/art/culture**

### **What have we accomplished?**

Everett has always been ahead of the curve when it comes to supporting art opportunities in the community. In the past decade we have expanded our free summer concert series, our annual July 4<sup>th</sup> parade and fireworks show, and our incredibly popular Sorticulture festival. We have added new festivals and interactive art exhibits, like Street Tunes and Word on the Street. Every year we break our own records for attendance at our free activities and events.

We also recognize the value of the arts as an economic driver. Since the Vision plan was adopted in 2005, we have built the Wetmore Theatre Plaza, surplussed property for the ArtSpace lofts, and worked with the Village Theatre to renovate and open Second Stage and the Youth Education Center.

We also support, through grants, sponsorships and other partnerships, several arts- and culture-oriented organizations, including the Schack Art Center, Historic Everett Theatre, Imagine Children's Museum and the Everett Music Initiative. All have become huge attractions, bringing in visitors from well beyond our region.

Since 2005, we've expanded our community green space by acquiring properties in south Everett for future parks. We teamed up with Forterra in 2012 to form the Green Everett Partnership to develop and implement a plan for sustainable, healthy forests in Everett. Each year we expand our creative and affordable recreation offerings designed to keep our community active and healthy.

Our comprehensive budget work last spring confirmed that the community is fiercely protective of our quality of life, and places a huge value on our accessible, affordable activities and resources.

### **Everett in 2025**

Everett in 2025 will be recognized as the best and most diverse parks and recreation community in the state. High-quality, free events and activities will provide cultural opportunities for Everett families and attract new visitors to the city.

The Silver Lake trail around the lake will soon be complete, and our south Everett park properties will be developed. Riverfront and Harborfront park and office space amenities will put Everett on the destination map.

### **What are our priorities for 2015?**

- We will move forward with our plans for a pedestrian bridge connecting Grand Avenue with the waterfront, enhancing public access and improving walkability.
- Phase 1 of the Henry M Jackson Park renovation will be completed this summer, updating the west four acres of the park with a new playground, restrooms, a new shelter, walking and jogging paths, community gardens, and a central gathering plaza.
- Staff continues work to transform the Bruskrud parcel into a neighborhood green space with trails and a picnic area. Work will be completed by summer 2016.
- We will continue to support new and established artists and musicians through grants and our annual arts awards.

## **Harborfront/Riverfront**

### **What have we accomplished?**

The past decade has been a story of perseverance for the City's Riverfront and the Port's Harborfront projects. Our planning commission, City Council and staff worked with the community to craft comprehensive plans for both sides of the city to ensure that the developments would reflect our community values and our vision for Everett's future. This past year we saw our hard work and dedication pay off as both projects made significant progress.

The unfortunate closure of the Kimberly-Clark mill in 2012 was an unexpected event that negatively affected employees and their families, and was a significant revenue hit for the City.

However, the City Council has approved a comprehensive plan revision that sets the stage for a future robust maritime use, creating hundreds of family-wage jobs.

### **Everett in 2025**

Everett's two waterfront communities will be the premier attractions for people relocating to our community, offering diverse inventory of homes for buyers at every price point. Opportunities to live and work in these walkable, exciting neighborhoods will be a draw for families, young professionals and retirees alike. A thriving and growing maritime industry of shipbuilding and repair, adding to the Port's robust shipping and marina operations, will be the centerpiece of our working waterfront, providing hundreds of family-wage jobs.

Naval Station Everett will continue to be a valued partner in our community and a strategic resource for the country.

### **What are our priorities for 2015?**

- Both developments were significantly slowed by the recession but are now moving forward. The first homes in the Riverfront development will go up for sale by the end of the year, and mixed-use development is scheduled to start in 2016.
- The City Council approved the Port's revamped Waterfront Place plans last week and we will continue to work with the Port as their project takes shape.
- I will continue to support and champion Naval Station Everett as a critical component of our national security plans. And I will work closely with the Economic Alliance on our ongoing efforts to bring a more robust Coast Guard presence to Everett.
- The City will continue to encourage efforts to reactivate the Kimberly-Clark property, while ensuring that the site is safe and clean for future uses.

## **Urban Design**

### **What have we accomplished?**

Our Vision 2025 work outlined the need for comprehensive design standards to ensure quality development and livability in the City's commercial districts and key corridors. In 2006 the City Council adopted an updated Downtown Comprehensive Plan, which included property tax exemptions for multi-family developments and other incentives. New design standards for the core residential area were developed in 2007, followed by the Broadway corridor mixed-use zoning standards in 2008. In 2012 we completed the Evergreen Way revitalization plan, which included changes to design standards and incentives for mixed-use development and housing around SWIFT bus-rapid-transit stations.

Since 2005, more than 420 new residential units have been built in the downtown core and another 404 units are currently under construction, including the Skotdal project on Rucker Avenue and new apartments above the future Farmer's Market. Together, these developments are creating a thriving, walkable downtown neighborhood.

Additionally, the Hampton Inn Extended Stay Hotel opened last summer and the Marriott Hotel is under construction.

### **Everett 2025**

By 2025 Everett's central business district will become a true mix of the best residential and business opportunities in the Puget Sound region, with incredible views and amenities, a lively arts-and-music scene, quality retail options, high-end restaurants, and a growing sports and concerts hub. Residents and visitors will flock to the walkable, bike-friendly urban core of Everett.

### **What are our priorities for 2015?**

- The year-round farmers market on Grand Avenue, a long-sought centerpiece to our downtown core, will open this spring. The market will feature micro-restaurants, a commercial kitchen, and space for local farmers to connect directly with restaurateurs and customers.
- The City will begin a study of parking capacity and usage in our downtown core this summer, and will develop a plan to ensure that visitors to our businesses, shops and restaurants are able to find convenient, affordable parking options.
- Our code enforcement team will continue to focus on nuisance complaints to protect our community's quality of life. In 2014 we handled 736 nuisance cases, a 10 percent increase over 2013.
- Our comprehensive plan update, which will be completed mid-year, includes new regulations to allow housing in the Everett Station area, and that will be an area of focus in coming years.

## **Transportation**

### **What have we accomplished?**

The City was a key advocate for a \$250 million I-5 expansion that was completed ahead of schedule and on budget in 2008. This massive infrastructure expansion has been a critical component in our region's continued economic development and job growth.

In 2009 we partnered with Community Transit to establish SWIFT bus-rapid-transit service on Evergreen Way between the Everett Station and King County. The route has become Community Transit's most productive non-commuter route.

Even during the economic downturn, the City provided annual maintenance and street overlay resources to maintain a high-quality streets system.

### **Everett in 2025**

In 2025, Everett businesses and customers will reap the benefits of strategic capacity improvements that allow them to move products more efficiently in and out of the city.

Commuters will enjoy more reliable travel times due to increased transportation options and key infrastructure improvements.

### **What are our priorities for 2015?**

- In the last four years, the number of vehicles on I-5 in the Puget Sound region has increased by 89 percent. The lack of recent transportation infrastructure funding at the federal and state levels has hurt mobility in and around Everett, and we will continue to put pressure on our elected officials to fund transportation improvements in Snohomish County.
  - While we identified \$3 billion in needed county-wide investments, we have taken a disciplined approach by requesting \$1 billion in improvements for the next ten years.
- We worked closely with Sound Transit to ensure that the future light-rail alignment serves our aerospace center at Paine Field, as well as Everett Station and the hospital and college district to the north.
  - In the 2015 legislative session we will advocate for a 2016 ballot measure to fund light rail to Everett, which would be completed by 2033.
- Last year the City Council secured a new funding source for local transportation improvements by establishing the transportation benefit district. In 2015 we will begin to allocate that funding to much-needed projects, such as street overlays.
- Within days, the demolition and replacement of the aging Broadway Bridge – a largely grant-supported project – will get underway.
- This year we also hope to begin construction on the first phase of improvements to 41<sup>st</sup> Street and Rucker Avenue to enhance freight mobility between the Port and I-5. We have asked the legislature for funds to complete this critical project.

## **Economic Development**

### **What have we accomplished?**

In 2005, 85,000 people worked in Everett, with aerospace, military and health care being the major employers. Through careful financial stewardship, we survived the worst recession of our lifetimes, which began in 2008. Today, 95,000 people work in Everett. The aerospace and health care fields have grown significantly, with the success of the 787, military refueling tanker and recent 777X decision, as well as the expansion of Providence Regional Medical Center and ongoing growth of Everett Clinic. In 2011, I helped create Economic Alliance Snohomish County and I continue to serve on the Executive Committee and Trustee Board.

Our downtown core is rebounding from the recession and Everett's economy continues to diversify. In 2012 we launched our Experience Everett tourism initiative to promote major attractions and events, bringing more visitors and overnight stays into the city.

**Everett in 2025**

Over the next ten years, Everett will continue to grow as a significant job center with the addition of as many as 30,000 new jobs in aerospace, health care, military, maritime, international trade and supporting industries. We will maintain our place at the forefront of aerospace and technology, with a strong position in the global marketplace. Our downtown core will be a regional attraction, boosting the economy of the entire city.

**What are our priorities for 2015?**

- I will continue to push for progress on commercial air. Lack of this essential service puts us at a competitive disadvantage as we work to attract new investors and companies to Snohomish County. I know you've all heard me make this case for the last ten years, but the time has come. We need to act.
- We will work closely with our major employers in the medical and aerospace fields to ensure that we are developing the talented workforce needed for their future success.
- As part of our ongoing Streets Initiative effort, we will collaborate with our partners in the region to implement innovative approaches to treating mental illness and homelessness that will enable our citizens to fully participate in the workforce and contribute to the community.
- My team is working hard to attract and secure new businesses of all sizes. While I'm not at liberty to share some of the good news that's coming our way, know that a lot of activity is happening behind the scenes and there is significant national and international interest in our community, particularly in the Riverfront and Waterfront developments. I am excited about our prospects for 2015 and look forward to welcoming new investors to Everett.

**Conclusion**

- It can be easy to take for granted all that we as a community have accomplished in the last decade. Everyone in this room has played a role in those successes, and they are important to celebrate. At the same time, we can't become complacent. Our past achievements should be the fuel that pushes us forward on critical priorities in the coming years. As a native son of Everett, I am continually amazed by our citizens' resiliency, generosity and pride for our community.
- In our 122-year history, Everett has seen many transitions and ups and downs, yet we always look to the future with optimism and hope. Our Everett of 2025 will be an exciting and fun place to live, work and raise a family. Our roadmap for the future is based on our strengths, and knowing our opportunities, who we are and who we can become. I look forward to working with my fellow citizens to make Everett one of the best cities in America.