



STATE OF THE CITY

Presented by Mayor Julie Fitzgerald

April 17, 2023 at 7:00 P.M.

Finally, it is my pleasure to stand in front of you in person instead of on video or in a Zoom meeting for our state of the City, and to share a few thoughts about the state of our City. Spoiler alert, it's a great City. But, I want to start with some introductions and ask if, I know we have some other elected officials. Metro Councilor Rosenthal is here. Where is he? There he is. Thank you, Councilor Rosenthal, for joining us. And I also want to ask any members of our boards and commissions or volunteers with the City to please stand so we can thank you for everything that you're doing for our City. Thank you. And we are lucky to have some of our past elected officials, former Mayor and Councilor Charlotte Lehan, right here and former Mayor and Councilor Tim Knapp. Thank you.

And I would also like to thank our staff who are a big part of everything that we do in the City. Some of them are probably already standing but please wave because with your help, we're able to get the ideas and visions that we develop carried out. So thank you very much.

It's my honor now to introduce the members of our Council, starting with Council President Akervall. If you would please stand up and say hello. As you know, Council President Akervall was elected to her second four-year term in 2020. Councilor Joann Linville, over here, started out in a partial term by being appointed to fill an open position. And I believe she served for about 18 months in that position and then was elected to a four-year term in 2020. Councilor Caroline Berry, right here, and Councilor Katie Dunwell, right here, were both elected in November of last year, and as we know, they were sworn in January 2023. So thank you to all of our Councilors. It is an honor to work with you.

So this Council is representing a fantastic City of 27,000; residents 20,000 jobs; and a \$1.5 billion private sector payroll. We value and work for great parks, bike and pedestrian access, fresh air, safe neighborhoods, safe streets, excellent water supply and other services. So, we're busy in Wilsonville and for good reason.

So, having introduced our Councilors, I encourage you if you haven't done so already to get to know them, and meet them and find out some of the things they work on. And you can also read a little bit about them on the City website where they have their bios. These Councilors have really varied life experiences and professional experiences and it's really valuable to the work that we do as a Council. But, there are some things that all of us have in common. In addition to being advocates for Wilsonville, we are also parents, daughters, and elected leaders.

So, one comment that has come our way periodically since 2023 and some of us like it, and some of us don't like it. It's the comment that goes something like this, "Wow, this is an historic moment. How is it to serve on an all women Council?" And it kind of makes me wonder when we had our first City Council for Wilsonville in 1969, did anyone say, "Wow, that must be really cool serving with an all-male Council, how's that working out?" They probably didn't ask. But really, the better question is, is why has it taken so long for candidates to decide to run and to be elected, who can begin to represent more diversity than we may have seen 50 years ago. And I think we've already seen a lot of that. But, when you look at the makeup of our boards and commissions, and the people who sign up for the Civics Academy every year, I think we're starting to see a lot more diversity. And that's really great. And I think we'll just continue to see more diversity. But, I do have some thoughts on the subject of why it's taken 54 years to have a shift from the all-male Council in 1969, to the all-woman Council, that happens to be in place right now. Times change, and you know, it's actually I think one of the reasons for that, it's only been since 1912, that woman, could even vote in Oregon. And that could have something to do with the fact that it's taken 54 years to get to this all-woman Council. So, Oregon is really, as we see around the state electing a lot of different people with different backgrounds to City Councils all over our state and I think we'll continue to see that in Wilsonville.

The Council has been working this spring to set our goals for the next two years and we do this every two years, when we have new Councilors. So, we've set goals for the 2023 - 2025 period and our goals do reflect these values that you see on the screen. We really took those into account.

In speaking of people of Wilsonville being represented in our City, we have so many, a number of boards and commissions probably more than in other cities. And this has been going on for many years. Mayor Knapp and Mayor Lehan know that and they helped build up some of these committees. And so we're honored to have a lot of community involvement, on our boards and commissions. And I thought what I would do is just not go through this whole list but, highlight three of them that maybe don't get so much notice.

The first one is the Kitakata Sister City Committee. This was established by Mayor Knapp as one of his last initiatives before he left office. And as a lot of you may know, it started as a nonprofit, by people in Wilsonville and they had a very active exchange program with business people and students for about 30 years. And it started showing signs of not having enough volunteers and maybe not being able to continue as it had with a lot of strength. And so, thank you Mayor Knapp for taking steps to make that one of our official boards and commissions. Of course then right after that, we had COVID so there were no exchanges. But, this December, this last December 10 students came from Kitakata, Japan and stayed with people in Wilsonville. I think they had a great time and we look forward to a group going over to Kitakata. It's a City that's about how half a day's drive from Tokyo, and has about 50,000 residents. And one of the things they mentioned as one of, their, a couple of their claims to fame is they're very proud and for their reputation for delicious, producing delicious ramen, and beautiful lacquerware.

The other board I wanted to shine a light on is our Library Board. And you can see with these statistics here how active our Library is. So, this board worked with our Library Director to reflect, just work with the Library, and continue to make it strong and active. And it's pretty amazing to see that we, I just asked for the current statistics from the Library Director, that we have 13,000 visitors every month, 177 new patrons every month, and thousands and thousands of books, and other items are checked out every month. And they do partner with a number of groups in the City. So, if you haven't been to the Library lately, this is a great time to go.

The third board that I wanted to mention is our Wilsonville Tourism Promotion Committee. That committee is charged with overseeing how the hotel and motel tax that is collected in Wilsonville is spent. And they've done, they've really made a lot of great progress lately. And the purpose of that is to identify more reasons for people to come to Wilsonville, patronize our restaurants, our various activities people can participate in, and our lodging establishments. They have really beefed up their website lately. It's really easy to find ExploreWilsonville.com. So, those are just three of some of our boards and commissions.

This year has been a big one for, let's talk about the inner workings of the City, especially our new Public Works complex. If you've driven by, down Boeberg Road, you've seen this going up there. I think they're on schedule, as far as I know. This is going to move us from our current position of having our Public Works vehicles dispersed in four different locations. Pretty inefficient for a City our size in order to respond to things ahead. So, we're really pleased with this Public Works facility moving along. When the Public Works Department moves out of their current location, which is across the street in what we call the Public Works block where the Police Department, is they are in the upper floor, the Police Department is in the lower floor. That will give us the opportunity to design a better Police facility. It may be an interim Police facility to begin with but we know we need a better situation for public safety.

Speaking of public safety couple of words about this, Chief Wurpes as you may have heard at an earlier Council meeting has hired a Behavioral Health Specialist. Her name is Brenda Evans and she has a number of roles including serving as first response to people experiencing mental health emergencies, coordinating follow up care, support, and connection to resources. So, she also trains on topics related to mental health. She provides a critical, compassionate care to community members who are experiencing a mental health crisis and also by virtue of that frees up our Police force for their traditional roles. Even though I'm sure they will still interact with her and call her in where needed.

Parks and Recreation has been really active. If you've been to Memorial Park lately, which I hope you have, you might have noticed the new restaurant, restrooms, and the skate ramps, no restaurants down there. The Parks and Recreation Department has also restarted the lunches at the Community Center, those are for people who are seniors or would like to join for that lunch. In addition, they've restarted the meal delivery program for people who are unable, who need that, but are unable to come to the Community Center.

Another nice walk if you're looking for that I think we're going to have some sun here pretty soon is that Villebois we're just about to be completed with those regional parks along Tooze Road and Coffee Lake Drive. Great places to walk. And that's going to be completed pretty soon. And then another park is under, in the early stages of development at Frog Pond West. The three-acre piece of land has been

acquired, and the concept plan has been developed. They did a lot of community input and took feedback. (I think I'm on the wrong, didn't advance. There, that's where I'm meant to be.) And another thing to celebrate about our parks, Memorial Park is, again, if you go down to the park, kind of near the tennis area and head to the southwest corner by the Willamette River, you'll see this new young child Nature Play Area. It was designed, built, and installed by our Parks Department, and they got a great award from the Oregon Regional Parks Association. It was ingenious design, really well done, and also very affordable. So I think they really wowed them with this park.

Well, streets are a big part of any City, especially Wilsonville. We've had some big projects going on. It's always a lot of bit of trouble to navigate around street projects, but it's for a good reason. We in fact, talked about one of them today. The Boeckman Road corridor improvement, which is going to be a big project has been underway for a long time, but it's required to give us the safety and access needed for all the residents in the school in that area. And if any, we have a lot more described on all of these things on our website.

Economic Development is very important to the City of Wilsonville. We've spent a lot of time this year with the legislature and the state advocating for funding for the investments that we need to make in our Basalt Creek and Coffee Creek industrial areas. So, that we can compete with other cities and attract the kind of high quality businesses that we have in Wilsonville. We want; we have room for more of those. And cities all across Oregon have the same problem in order to attract these industries the cities have to come up with a significant amount of money to put the sewer, water, and sidewalks in. And so we are I hope making some good progress in that regard. We've certainly been working on it. I thank our Government Relations staff, and Planning for their work and Economic Development.

We've been making quite a few visits the Council and the staff to businesses in Wilsonville to hear what is working for them, hear what is not working, what more things they think we could do to help them be more successful. If any of you would like us to visit with you let us, know.

Our Economic Development Department has had success in marketing Wilsonville as a top tier business and development friendly City. And in fact, earlier this year, a regional economic development agency organization called Greater Portland Inc. (GPI) selected Wilsonville as one of the stops on their Best Practices Tour. And our head of our Community Development Department Chris Neamtzu, and Economic Development Manager Matt Lorenzen gave a really good presentation. And really, it was about how did a City like this get a \$1.5 billion private sector payroll. I'm looking at Charlotte Lehan and Tim Knapp because it took a long time and we're still going.

And one of the things that's that we know is important is the lack of childcare in Wilsonville, the Economic Development Manager did a survey of businesses. Everybody knows this is an issue but it's one of the impediments that our employers have to expanding their businesses. If prospective employees cannot afford or find childcare, they're not really going to be able to fill those jobs.

Housing Affordability is another big part of that, and we'll talk about that a little bit later. In fact, right now. Equitable housing or we this, the Council passed the Equitable Housing Strategic Plan in 2019. And it's got a lot packed into it. We've been peeling off the recommendations and working our way through that. And presently, we have some things that I think have made some really good progress. One is what

we call the Transit-Oriented Development (TOD), and it's called that because it is located near transit. We hope it can qualify for some specific funding that matches up with that. We are moving ahead with building a 100 unit affordable housing development near the West Center, West Station that is on City land, which is one of the big components of making affordable housing is if you already have the land. And there was a spot that was just perfect for that, on the ground floor, it would have some services and some act, some Wilsonville Community Sharing might be able to be located there, perhaps a restaurant or something of that nature that would attract everyone residents to come and gather and enjoy that spot. So that is that is moving along, it's not ready to break ground or anything like that. But it's moving ahead.

Frog Pond East and South I'll talk about that a little bit later on the next slide. But these three other aspects that came out of our Equitable Strategic Plan Housing Plan, are helping us get closer to having more housing for people at different wage, and different capabilities for paying for housing. One is middle housing, you probably all remember, our Planning Commission spent a lot of time on this and our staff, figuring out how to integrate middle housing into Frog Pond East and West. And we have passed a Vertical Housing, Vertical Development Housing Zone. I think I said that right. No Vertical Housing Development Zone (VHDZ) which means that in in two zones, the center of Villebois and also some areas in Town Center, builders are going to be encouraged to build some three or four story buildings, for residential, with work, live, retail space on the ground floor. And those are, those incentives are needed, because it doesn't always pencil out for the builder. So, that's how we were getting started on that one. And I think that I've covered most of the things on that slide.

Speaking, going to Frog Pond East and South thanks again to our Planning Commission, and many residents who participated in surveys and open houses, the master plan for this 293 acre future housing area has been completed and it will be able to accommodate more than 1,500 homes not right away, it'll take years to develop that. And it also will have some opportunities to facilitate housing within that land that will serve households earning less than 80% of the area median income. In order to do that we will need to purchase partner with the land trust, these are not easy things to do, we have to figure out how to get that done. But that's a priority. And so those the key and the unique feature of Frog Pond East and South that has a lot of similarities to some things that you see in Villebois, which is to say that the area is integrated all different types of housing, sizes and shapes can be found throughout the area. Also, parks, and interest areas, and walking paths, and some retail as well.

So, now let's move to our Council goals. I just want to briefly go through these. And of the first one was around emergency preparedness and public safety. I think the biggest feature the new feature of this that is on our list is to whether using technology will take some input from the public. We want to have a great system for neighbors to connect with neighbors, businesses to connect with businesses. When needed, the City can do so much we can do certain things. We don't have enough staff and police to run to everybody's house and knock on the door. And so this is rather a big charge. But we really want to see Wilsonville a connected community so that when that big Cascadia earthquake or the next ice storm or some other thing that we don't even want to imagine happens, our City is prepared to evacuate help each other do what's needed to come out of it in good shape. Also in this priority, we are, or this set of goals we want to complete a Police Department staffing study. And also, as I mentioned, when Public Works moves out of the location where they are now to the new building, we want to develop a plan to improve those Police facilities.

The second goal is to actively preserve, protect, and protect our environment. This is not a new idea. This has been a hallmark of Wilsonville for a long time. What we want to do with this goal is to dig deep a little bit really we want to develop a climate inventory and gap analysis of City practices and operations to see where we need to do more. This could be something that is connected to the DEI Committee, the Planning Commission; it could show up in many different ways. We also want to do a community education campaign to encourage climate friendly practices. And along with the, you know, the phrase that with many hands make light work. Doing well in this area is not something to be to leave to government or leave to the City Council; we will do as much as we can and we always want to keep doing better. But to really succeed in this, residents, businesses Planning Commission, DEI (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion) Committee, Community Enhancement Committee , schools, service clubs, all have an opportunity to help us succeed in that area.

The third goal is about economic development, we want to continue with the good successes Wilsonville has had in attracting high quality industry and supporting economic opportunity. One of those strategies is around the childcare goal that I mentioned earlier. And we also are going to be implementing some urban renewal strategies because some of the things that we need to do require more than the annual budget, including Town Center, we have not forgotten about Town Center.

The fourth goal is to increase housing opportunity and eliminate homelessness. And you've heard housing come up several times already tonight. I don't mean to be repeating myself, but it does show up in many different ways. Of course, we want to continue to work on our equitable housing opportunities, which, includes the problem of homelessness. The more housing we have at the different levels, the fewer people we hope will be entering homelessness, so that is very important. We recently met with Clackamas County and they told us that in fact, already, they are seeing more people exiting homelessness than entering it. So that was really good news and we want to be a part of continuing to work on that. (I think I went too far. Okay.)

So, just another few words on the homelessness and housing opportunities. You may have heard us at our in our Work Sessions lately talking about this program called Built for Zero of which, Clackamas County is a member. And it was developed in in New York and it's basically around seeing people who are homeless and taking deliberate regular well organized steps to connect people to services. And in Clackamas County, we actually have some funds to do that. The taxpayers have approved a housing bond that Clackamas County is making use of to build various levels of housing, types of housing. And there's another tax that the voters approved in 2020, which is generating, it's for the three counties in the metro area. As you may have read in the papers that is generating a new \$40 million every year for the next eight years to be used for wraparound services. So, that is why we think if we are diligent and organized and working with partners in Clackamas County and agencies, and helpful people here in Wilsonville, we can really make a difference in getting people who are experiencing homelessness into housing. It's not going to be overnight and it's not going to happen tomorrow. But we're going to, we're determined and we actually have a meeting coming up a second meeting with Clackamas County, next week on this.

We have a goal around parks, you heard me say we've done a lot with parks already this year. But looking at the next two years we want to go back and pick up the plan that the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee and the Parks Department developed with a lot of input, and the City Council with a lot of input from residents of Wilsonville, back in about 2019 - 2020. And it was put on pause because of COVID. And it had some great programs and great ideas way more than you could ever do. But they all, they prioritize them based on what's possible and what people are most interested in. It included things like how can we get access to the Willamette River for non-motorized boats, how we can how can we make that recreation more easily accessible, more sports fields, what can we do to improve our community services block once the Police move out. So, we are going to pick that plan up and get right get back into it, and determine where we can get started and how we can get the funding.

The sixth goal is to enhance our communications and engagement. All of the things I've talked about require being in touch with people all across our City and even beyond with our neighbors or our neighboring cities. So, we really didn't need to increase staff capacity to do that. We also want to increase our bilingual outreach. We've done some in that area, but we want to do much better. We also want to increase an increase engagement in our neighborhoods for public safety, as mentioned earlier, and that will require more staff support.

And our seventh goal is to continue diligently protecting livability by advancing some high priority legislative priorities. And these will include things that we have worked on before, but they need more attention and different attention every year. You can see the list there everything from making sure that we are at the table and listened to and fully aware of any plans for master planning at the Aurora State Airport nearby, or rural reserves, certainly freeway funding, tolling and the Boone Bridge, and some of the other areas that we've already talked about. One that I didn't mention this very important, of course, is our transit our SMART transit operations in Wilsonville are some of the best in the state. And as the City grows into those industrial areas, we want to make sure that those areas and Frog Pond, they can continue to get the best kind of transit.

Challenges ahead, you heard me talking about some of these challenges already. So, I don't need to repeat myself. But, I want you to know that I think our Council is up for the challenge. And if you'd like to talk within any of us about ideas or come to our meetings and ask questions, please do.

In closing, I just found a couple of examples of some of the many things that are going on that were advertised in our Parks and Recreation catalog and you see some of these in the Boones Ferry Messenger. So, you don't really have to be on a board or commission, you certainly we always want more applicants for those, but as you go to programs like Juneteenth that's coming up. Which I really recommend going to this it's just been a great program. Go to something you maybe haven't ever gone to before and meet those people. So, get to know more of the people in your community, your neighbors, and people in different interest groups so that together we can all keep making Wilsonville a place that we're proud to call home. Thank you.