



## STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS

May 05, 2025 at 7:00 PM

Wilsonville City Hall & Remote Video Conferencing

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Welcome everyone. Happy Cinco de Mayo. Thank you for joining me tonight in the City we all love for my first state of the city address.

I've been Mayor for a mere four months, so I asked staff for a bit of guidance about this State of the City Addresses, and they told me I could make it "whatever I want." So, immediately I thought great this will be short.

However, I did a little digging and learned that the shortest state of the City ever in Wilsonville was about eleven minutes — tempting. Shockingly, the longest was well over an hour. Nobody needs that from me. So, I promise to land somewhere in the middle. Long enough to review where we are, but short enough to keep you from checking your phone too often.

It is an honor to have been elected Wilsonville's 10<sup>th</sup> Mayor. This City has been home to my family for more than 17 years. We've invested in our home and business here, we are raising our son here, and like many of you, we care deeply about protecting the things that make Wilsonville extraordinary. As we plan and move forward with intention and heart for our families and their futures here.

As we begin, I want to recognize some wonderful people in this room tonight. Let's start with my colleagues on the City Council:

- Council President Caroline Berry
- Councilor Katie Dunwell
- Councilor Adam Cunningham
- Councilor Anne Shevlin

This is truly a team of thoughtful and dedicated public servants. I may have the podium tonight, but I can tell you that most everything we do, we do together. Thank you, Councilors.

I also want to acknowledge the leadership that came before us. Present tonight are former Mayors:

- Tim Knapp
- Julie Fitzgerald
- And is former Council President Akervall here? No.
- And former Councilor Joanne Linville.

Your tenures plant the many seeds that we now enjoy as a City. Thank you, visionary leaders.

And to our elected officials here tonight in spirit Senator Aaron Woods, and Representative Courtney Neron, she many not be here this evening, but she said she might be here. So. I'll just give her that acknowledgement. Thank you for your collaboration and hard work on behalf of our City, region, and state.

To our City Manager Bryan Cosgrove; our City Attorney Amanda Guile-Hinman and our phenomenal, phenomenal City staff, to our law enforcement led by Police Chief Rob Wurpes and, to our first responders from Tualatin Valley Fire & Rescue led by Fire Chief Deric Weiss. Thank you for being the hearts, minds, and hardworking hands of our City.

Let's give them a round of applause.

To our many volunteer board and commission members, to the Wilsonville Area Chamber of Commerce.

Finally, to my wife Yumi, and our son Tenzin, who's at home watching on YouTube. You are my greatest joy and my fiercest supporters. I know this journey has been challenging, but your love and sacrifice have been the foundation for everything I do. I love you. Thank you.

Yumi and I came to Wilsonville in 2008. We were like so many of you, young(ish), ambitious, and just trying to make life work. She had a job up in Portland. I was commuting down to Salem. And Wilsonville? Perfectly inconvenient for both of us. A true marital compromise.

Those first few years, we were in a constant state of "go." It felt like we only really lived in Wilsonville on the weekends. But even in those brief windows, we saw something here something special that bested both Portland and Salem. A community that was peaceful, walkable, with a nice variety of local restaurants for the time some of our favorites, owned and operated by folks from historically marginalized cultures. We loved it. But we also knew it could be more. More inclusive, more diverse, more connected and over time, we've watched that vision begin to take root.

When our son Tenzin was born in 2011, everything changed for us. Suddenly, we weren't only considering commutes when thinking about livability. We were now also thinking about childcare, school quality, convenient parks, safe streets, and a sense of belonging for our family. We became vested in our City and Community's future.

I opened my law firm here in Wilsonville to be closer to home. I had encouragement from former City Attorney Michael Kohlhoff, who had opened his business, his firm years ago and I had a lot of help from other local small business owners. Especially other parents who knew the juggle of building a business while raising a family. We kept each other going. The Chamber of Commerce played a key role as well. Wilsonville's small businesses are not just an important economic driver for us all they are in many ways the soul of this City.

Supported by great organizations like the Wilsonville Rotary Club, they volunteer, sponsor our sports teams and student groups, they show up for our events, they reinvest in our future.

As Mayor, I want to make sure our local small businesses are supported and appreciated. And of course, the other essential economic driver for our community is our many innovative industries and large employers that operate in Wilsonville.

These, along with institutions like the Oregon Institute of Technology and Clackamas Community College, allow our community to continually punch above its weight, offering opportunity and prosperity for everyone.

In 2014, when my son was about to start public school, I discovered that his primary school was located next to an old petroleum pipeline owned by Kinder Morgan, an energy infrastructure conglomerate. At that time, middle school children next door were being evacuated on top of the pipeline during earthquake drills, and many local leaders were unaware of the pipeline's existence or the associated risks. Residents did not realize it was in their backyards.

Many had either never known or had forgotten the tragic 1999 Olympic pipeline rupture in Washington, where three children lost their lives. That pipeline in Washington was the same age as the Kinder Morgan pipeline we have in our community. At the time, Kinder Morgan and the federal government claimed there were no safety concerns. Out of concern for our children, I tried to educate our community and City leaders.

The Wilsonville Spokesman reporting over the years was critical in helping with this process. As an aside, the Wilsonville Spokesman is a vital institution that safeguards the first amendment at the local level. It reports on the issues that matter most to our community and ensures that public institutions are held accountable. We should all have a subscription.

Back to the pipeline beginning in 2019, with the encouragement of our community, City staff, Mayor Knapp, and Mayor Fitzgerald, along with Representative Neron, collectively put pressure on Kinder Morgan and the federal government to take action.

Fast forward to today. Thanks to the relentless efforts of our community and its leaders, Kinder Morgan has been ordered by the federal government to make repairs and enhance the overall safety of this sixty-four-year-old pipeline.

You can now see this vital work taking place in our community today. We must remain vigilant and, as a community, continue to advocate for Kinder Morgan to improve and maintain the safety of the pipeline and keeping us informed.

And yes, our School District has assured me that our children are no longer evacuated on top of the pipeline during earthquake drills.

And while I wouldn't recommend pipeline safety advocacy as a relaxing hobby it did teach me a lot about our community resolve. It is the unwavering support and strong community relationships we've built over the years that I carry with me today.

This support is crucial now more than ever as we advocate for the federal government and the state of Oregon to expedite full funding for the replacement of the Boone Bridge, which divides our City.

We must ensure that this bridge is seismically sound to withstand a Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake and provides additional lanes to alleviate traffic congestion. We, all of us, can achieve this together.

Representative Courtney Neron, Congresswoman Andrea Salinas, Senator Jeff Merkley, and many of our regional leaders are actively supporting this effort. As a community, we must continue to communicate directly with them about this critical need.

Of course, much has changed since my family moved here in 2008. And for the better by most measures. Our inviting parks and trails, our varied and livable neighborhoods have been designed with community in mind. As I visit neighborhoods, I see diverse residents who all seem to appreciate what our City offers a stronger sense of belonging. That's no accident. That is the result of years of advocacy, empathy, and intentional leadership both by our elected, and our community.

Wilsonville is a City of belonging for all for our seniors, for people of color, or those historically marginalized, for our LGBTQ+ community member, for our neighbors with disabilities, our veterans, diversity, equity, inclusion is not just a tagline. It's our north star.

And if you need examples simply consider the diverse occasions our City has hosted or celebrated this past year, such as the grand opening of our new disability-inclusive playground at Boones Ferry Park.

Here's a brief tour of the park if you haven't had a chance to visit in person.

*A video about the Boones Ferry Park was played for the audience.*

*The Mayor announced Representative Neron had arrived.*

The only regret I have about that park opened when my now kid is too old to go enjoy it. We got the old one.

Wilsonville also renewed its sister City exchange with Kitakata, Japan.

We observed this past year the Korean War Interpretive Center opening attended by many veterans and dignitaries including Governor Kotek.

We also honored those who served at Veteran's Day and Memorial Day ceremonies.

We had fun with the always popular community Easter Egg Hunt.

We embraced our LGBTQ+ friends and neighbors with a Pride Celebration and Mural.

We celebrated Juneteenth with music and guest speakers.

We brought families together for National Night Out and Party in the Park.

We congratulated our high school scholastic and athletic champions!

We hosted Wilsonville's annual Christmas tree lighting, photos with Santa, community caroling, and Christmas stocking donations for home-bound seniors.

We enjoyed a las Posadas Celebration.

We observed Wilsonville's first-ever Menorah lighting.

We enjoyed a Ramadan community potluck, and during this time members of the Muslim community center collected hygiene products throughout the month to support Wilsonville Community Sharing.

We celebrated Lunar New Year with traditional Chinese performances and crafts for kids.

And most recently, we hosted a standing-room-only multicultural dance presentation at McMenamin's Old Church featuring Japanese, Indian, and Indigenous dance groups.

Here are a few highlights from that lovely day.

*A video of the multicultural dance presentation was played for the audience.*

These cultural events are hugely popular with community members, and there's something for everyone even a bingo night fundraiser benefiting our Senior Community Center.

Just this past week Wilsonville unveiled an amazing City-wide Hearts of Wilsonville installation by a dozen local artists.

*A video about the HeART of the City artwork was played for the audience.*

And last Saturday, we experienced a remarkable event titled '*turning darkness into light*,' commemorating the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Dammasch hospital closure. This Mental Health Fair featured outstanding speakers, captivating entertainment, delicious food, and a wide array of mental health support resources.

These aren't just social activities. They are chapters in the collective Wilsonville story that show respect and support for our diverse communities.

We all should be proud of our City.

Now let's talk about a few infrastructure accomplishments.

Since last year, we've accomplished a lot. We completed a state-of-the-art public works complex to improve efficiency, responsiveness, and emergency preparedness for key departments, essential to the safe and smooth operation of our City.

We are almost finished building a 3-million-gallon westside water reservoir because hydration is lifeline infrastructure. This will provide a critical resource in the event of an emergency making our community resilient and ready for the future.

We're also investing in our future with a new sewer interceptor to support new neighborhoods east of Stafford Road in Frog Pond.

These projects may not be high visibility, but they are impressive accomplishments that will give our community a huge advantage and reward all community members for this investment.

And Boeckman Road? It's almost back! No more hazardous Boeckman dip. Drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians alike will soon enjoy safer access with a seismically sound bridge and leveled street grade, a new roundabout to keep traffic flowing, wider sidewalks and dedicated bike lanes, concealed utilities, and even a restored creek habitat for our wildlife. Safe, efficient, and accessible for all that's how Wilsonville rolls.

The Vuela residential development is also nearing completion. A 121-unit complex adjacent to the Wilsonville transit center, with rents starting at around \$539 a month. This much anticipated and sorely needed affordable housing provides economic stability and opportunity for our community. And, because these homes are conveniently located next to our transit center, Vuela residents can connect to jobs while building a future as part of our community. It's the progress cities can, should and must deliver.

I just wanted to add Wilsonville is getting it done!

We're also moving forward on the Town Center Plan. A long-term vision to replace outdated and vacant big box retail buildings with sustainable retail, affordable modern homes, plus community amenities our community members have made abundantly clear they expect Wilsonville leaders to deliver. So, our Town Center can be active, attractive, and vibrant. This kind of transformation obviously takes time and financial investment. But we are planning now on how best to proceed.

Let's talk about the challenging road ahead. Like every municipality these days, we are closely monitoring external economic and political turbulence, and its impact on funding for critical infrastructure. Such as the replacement of the Boone Bridge. Likely cost increases due to tariffs on technology and supplies that will impact City budgets and services. And disruption of supply chains may impact timelines on project completion and City services for our residents.

Additionally, we must prepare for a transition of City administration leadership as long-time employees retire. Community Director Chris Neamtzu retired last month, Government and Public Affairs Director Mark Ottenad will retire this month, and City Manager Bryan Cosgrove will retire at the end of the year.

Much of what we enjoy today was implemented by these dedicated individuals with guidance from our civic leaders and community.

As Mayor, I am honored that during my first state of the City address and their last I can acknowledge their service to our community. They have left their successors a clear map, and I anticipate a smooth transition. Thanks to their expertise and professionalism.

Let's give them a round of applause.

Given all this the City Council has organized progress in four broad areas:

1. First, under the umbrella of public health, safety, and welfare, the Council identified the following goals:
  - Streamlining response to code enforcement difficulties reported by community members.
  - Evaluating and updating our public nuisance code.
  - Exploring a rental inspection program, including funding for such a program.
  - Expanding on-the-ground mental health resources to support our community.
2. Second, the Council focus will be on the current and future fiscal health of the City's operating funds, including these financial goals:
  - Exploring efficiencies, cost savings and alternative revenue options.
  - Future-proofing revenues and avoiding further large rate spikes in the sewer, water, and stormwater funds by indexing these utilities to a CIP index.
3. Third, Council will focus on ways the City can continue to build trust through communication and community engagement with the following goals:

- Engaging the community on urban renewal and infrastructure funding sources.
  - Creating a Town Center communication and engagement strategy to help inform Council decisions.
  - Evaluating and improving online engagement to expand community interactions.
4. Fourth, to ensure that the current quality of parks maintenance is provided for the long term as our parks portfolio grows, with an additional thirty acres of maintenance responsibility coming online in the next couple years.

The goal is to retain existing levels of service after expansion by identifying potential cost savings and new revenue opportunities.

I look forward to working with my colleagues on Council to achieve those goals.

Thirty-seven years ago, when I first arrived in Oregon, I was introduced to something folks called back then “the Oregon way.” It was more than just a phrase it was a way of life. One grounded in collaboration, respect, and finding common ground over partisanship.

It was a time when neighbors said good morning not out of habit, but out of genuine respect. A time when people could disagree without being disagreeable. When communication means not just speaking but listening, truly listening.

Much has changed since then. The digital age has sped things up, and sometimes, drowned things out. But I believe the spirit of the Oregon way matters now more than ever. Because it’s not about who’s right or wrong — it’s about mutual respect, shared ideas, and working together to move our community forward. That, to me, should be the Wilsonville way. Let’s carry that spirit forward not just for ourselves, but for the next generation.

We’ve accomplished so much together but the future will ask even more of us. And I believe we’re ready. By building on our progress, facing challenges with resolve, and creating opportunity for all, we can ensure Wilsonville continues to thrive.

I’m genuinely excited for what lies ahead. This City is a living example of what’s possible when we lead with innovation, inclusivity, and heart.

I look forward to working alongside our City Council, our incredible staff, our passionate volunteers, and each and every one of you as we move forward, together, with purpose and optimism. Together, we’ll ensure Wilsonville remains a vibrant, welcoming City that future generations will be proud to call home.

Thank you for being here tonight and watching me sweat. Thank you for believing in this City. And thank you for being a part of Wilsonville’s future. Thank you!