

2023

State of the City Address

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City of Dallas Oregon

Good afternoon and thank you for inviting me to share with you my first State of the City Address.

Today I will talk about some accomplishments throughout the last year and our goals with a bit of my visions for the year ahead. I would also like to highlight a few of the smaller accomplishments that sometimes go unseen, the accomplishments that are often not always recognized. It is these small accomplishments and achievements that bring us closer to our objective, closer to the big picture – closer to becoming a city that effectively enables growth through advanced planning and implementation of needed infrastructure improvements, delivers the services our citizens need, want and are willing to support, closer to a city where the Downtown Development Commission and Economic Development Commission respond to the changing needs of the economy and are active in development and redevelopment activities, closer to a city that provides safe and reliable drinking water, sewage disposal, storm drainage and transportation systems, and lastly to becoming a city that will ensure public safety by protecting people and property,

I would like to start off by saying thank you to all those who participate in the many different facets of our city. Thank you to the Dallas City Council. They are elected to represent the citizens, business community, and host the visitors to our great city, and they do a terrific job. Thank you to everyone who diligently serves on the many boards, commissions and committees the city of Dallas has. There are 62 volunteers who dedicate their time, effort and energies to serve on these boards, commissions and committees making our city a great place to be with high livability, and a strengthening economy. I wish to thank the many community partners and organizations who create community in the city of Dallas. I will not name them all individually, but would like to specifically name a few. First I wish to thank the Dallas Area Chamber of Commerce. They do an amazing job at supporting and strengthening the business community in Dallas and go above and beyond to support various community events. Thank you Dallas School District for your leadership to ensure our youth are prepared for their futures. Thank you to Polk County and our three commissioners. They are working with the cities in the county to improve the lives of the residents of the county. Finally, thank you to the Dallas city staff. Our city is very well served by those in our employ and the public can trust that you will accomplish the various work needed to retain a high standard of living in our community.

As I begin this address, I will call your attention to our 2030 vision. This vision honors our history and presents a promising future to which our strategic plan is directed. Our 2030 vision is this, ***“set in the picturesque mid-Willamette Valley alongside the foothills of the Coast Range, we are a prosperous community that has preserved its small-town character. Our 1898 county courthouse looks out over the town square and revitalized historic downtown. We have planned well for our growth and towards development, updating essential infrastructure, and strengthening our neighborhoods”***. That is our community’s 2030 vision. That is the vision we strive to make steps towards each day.

Over the last couple of years, we as a community have overcome the mountain of the global pandemic, have found ways to retain and recruit needed workers to our community and continue to encounter steep nationwide inflation. However, through these challenges, the Dallas community is taking steps towards achieving our vision. I am proud of what we have accomplished, what we are moving towards, and the resiliency and resurgence of our community.

The state of the city is great! We are welcoming new businesses, and supporting established ones. In 2022 the city welcomed Ascentec Engineering, Dreamies Creamery, Two Wolves Taphouse and Pacific North Wild to our business community. Ascentec Engineering is an Oregon based metals manufacturing company. They have hired 50 employees to their Dallas facility with plans to expand and hire more employees over the next few years.

As we proceed ahead into 2023, we are ecstatic to welcome Red Clover Public House to our downtown. They will be opening their doors in March. West Valley Hospital and Open Road have plans to expand this year as well. Open Road is an example of a wonderful Dallas based company. As just mentioned, they are expanding their headquarters locally. The city has actively worked with them to ensure they are able to make their expansion plans become a reality. We are happy for them and continue to support their successes as a local business.

The vast majority of businesses in Dallas are locally owned and many of the business owners are local residents. As a small city, we rely on those who surround us and our local businesses. The city of Dallas’ future relies on coming together, building a community, and supporting our neighbors.

As I mentioned earlier, I will frame my remarks today around the City’s 2030 vision. Every step and accomplishment toward our 2030 vision, no matter how big or small, makes an impact on our future and livability. The rewards of the work we do today may not be realized for years to come. However, as we continue to put in the effort and work today, we know that our vision is

being fulfilled. The future begins today. Our vision becomes clearer with each small step we take, and it will be realized. Over the past 40 years of public service to Dallas, I have had an opportunity to be a part of and witness great change in our community. Some of the accomplishments during my time on the Dallas City Council include the construction of public facilities such as the Senior Center, Aquatic Center, Rickreall Creek Trail System, Library, Ambulance facility, improvements to the city parks including tennis courts, pickle ball courts, skate park, and ball fields at Roger Jordan Park. Several street and bridge projects, including the LaCreole Bridge over Rickreall Creek, redesign of North Dallas intersection, new Levens Street Bridge, and the new Rickreall interchange.

This past year our community hosted a barbecue to recognize and celebrate Juneteenth and hosted a number of speakers to share the history of Juneteenth as well as give public addresses on the topics of racism, and black history in America. This annual event will become a wonderful tradition for many years to come, including our support and compassion for every resident and visitor to our community.

Also this past year, the City of Dallas was awarded a \$34,160 Moda Assist grant, to help the city buy and install an ***“all abilities play equipment”*** for our community. A giant check was presented at halftime at the Blazers/New Orleans basketball game on March 30th last year.

Thank you for the willingness and hard work of the Dallas Area Chamber of Commerce, Dallas brought back the Krazy Dayz/Summerfest parade this year. The parade was a huge success this last summer. We had a large number of floats and a great crowd. We plan to do even better this year by making the route longer and incorporating more of our downtown!

A few more community events that were also a hit include the Christmas town and tree lighting event that took place in December in the Polk County courtyard as well as the trick or treat event that was held by a partnership between the Chamber, local sponsors and Morrison school students. This event was a hit and was a great way to get the community involved and allow businesses to partner up and provide fun and safe Halloween activities for everyone in the community.

Our city faces many challenges, and we are ready to take them head on. The City Council identified its priority goals for fiscal year 2022-23. These goals have been identified as priorities as they shape the work for city staff and have budgetary impacts in the immediate future. These goals, in no particular order, are (1) prepare the former mill site for redevelopment, (2) serve the LaCreole Node with city utilities, (3) increase raw water storage capacity, (4) address the General Fund budget need, (5) design, build and operate our public safety services from facilities

which meets our current and 30-year operational needs, and (6) implement a robust street maintenance plan to repair and improve the city's streets.

All of these goals fall under the focus area or themes in the city's strategic plan. For example, preparing the former mill site for redevelopment fits in the theme *of improving our economy and jobs*. All of these goals are outlined in the Dallas Strategic Plan and are designed to improve what has been identified as "challenges" or areas for improvement. These goals, once completed, will lead us to realizing our 2030 vision. You can view the Dallas Strategic Plan on the city's website. Although the plan is designed as a continual 5-year work plan for the city, I believe we will see great efforts and tremendous progress towards our vision in the next year!

Now let me take some time to talk about the exciting stuff. What is the City doing to help us realize our 2030 vision?

The first opportunity is to improve our local economy and jobs. What is the City doing to improve the local economy? Well, one primary goal that the city council has focused on is to prepare the former mill site for development. This will allow the Downtown Development Commission and Economic Development Commission to respond to the changing needs of the economy and are active in development and redevelopment activities. We are currently working with a grant funded consultant to create a redevelopment plan for the entire site, including the extension of Monmouth Cutoff through the site to Jefferson and Main streets and rezoning the South Dallas Urban Renewal District. This district enables the city to invest current and future tax funds into public and private projects to expedite economic growth in the area.

The second area of improvement is our rapid growth and development as a city. Growth and development is great, but not being able to keep up with the rapid growths and development is when issues arise and we want to stay on top of this and prevent these issues. The goal is to serve the LaCreole Node with city utilities. By doing so, the city will be able to effectively grow through advanced planning and implementation of needed infrastructure improvements. The City of Dallas has completed a sewer capacity analysis to determine where we could tie in future sewer servicing the LaCreole Node to our current system. The city is currently working on the design of the sewer lines and the design is planned to be completed by June of this year.

The third improvement will also allow the city to effectively grow and develop through advanced planning and implementation of needed infrastructure improvements, and that is to increase our raw water storage capacity. The city council has completed the site selection process and the new reservoir will be built just downstream of the current Mercer Reservoir. This new reservoir will hold a little more than three times our current reservoir or roughly 1.4 billion gallons of

water. The city has applied with the state of Oregon Water Resources for increased impoundment rights. The city has necessarily increased water rates to support the construction of this project. With these rate increases, the city is able to effectively continue to grow and develop.

The fourth improvement focuses on growth and development as well and that is to address the General Fund Budget Need. This will allow the city to deliver the services our citizens need, want, and are willing to support. The city is pursuing the creation of a parks and recreation district, which would be a new tax that solely supports parks and recreation opportunities in the community. We are working to increase the commercial and industrial tax base by supporting economic development initiatives.

The last area of improvement the city council has outlined is our health and safety. This goal the council has focused on is to design, build, and operate our public safety services from facilities which meet our current and 30-year operational needs. Our public safety facilities need improvement. The city is currently looking at and seeking options for our police department as well as looking at property options for development of a second fire station north of Rickreall Creek, with housing for 24-hour career staff.

The last goal focuses on our health and safety as well and that is to implement a robust Street Maintenance Plan to repair and improve the city's streets. If you have taken a trip around town, you will have noticed the repairs made to city streets in Phase 1 and part of Phase 2 of our street maintenance program. These street repairs are on various neighborhood streets in the older sections of the City.

We acknowledge that there are many areas for improvement as there always are, both across the nation and here in Dallas, there is always something to improve. The City of Dallas has more than just this planned. Such as homelessness continues to be of the highest concern around the country, the city has plans and an outline in place to demonstrate compassion and care for our homeless population by creating policies to provide assistance, and to build partnerships with Polk County and other non-profit organizations to assist. We will continue our participation with the Mid-Willamette Valley Homeless Alliance and engage with Polk County and other partners in the Homeless Prevention Workgroup of Polk County.

Our historic downtown is also something that we are putting plenty of attention towards. Our historic downtown is something that this community, and myself included, cherish and want to preserve. We have hired an Economic Development Specialist who, among other tasks, provides support to the Dallas Downtown Association. The city is also now accepting applications for the

2023 American Rescue Plan Action (ARPA) grants to assist owners of downtown Dallas buildings with key improvement projects. More information is available on our city website. This brings me to the Dallas Business Inventory (DBI). The city's Economic and Community Development Team is excited to launch the DBI. It is a free service provided to the Dallas business community to receive updates from the City of Dallas about new grant opportunities, city-wide programs and events, as well as educational opportunities for business owners and their employees.

Change happens slowly, little steps at a time. It is these little steps – these small improvements that add up and get us closer to our vision. But change only happens when we come together as a community. I want to make this an annual time where we can reflect back on what we have accomplished, reflect on those little steps we took this past year, and celebrate our community. I hope that with this reflection you will leave here inspired to strengthen our community and continue to contribute to those crucial incremental steps that will ultimately get us to where we want to be!

We have a vision, and the steps needed to get to that vision, but in order to get there we need your help. The Dallas business community and the Dallas community as a whole need to work together alongside the city. Working together is what moves us as a city closer to becoming a city that reflects our vision of being a prosperous community that has preserved its small-town character and has a revitalized historic downtown. A city that has planned well for our growth and development updating essential infrastructure and strengthening our neighborhoods. Together, we are beginning to bring back the parts of Dallas that we all love.

Being a fifth-generation Woods in Dallas, I am proud to call Dallas my home! Thank You!

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