

2024

State of the City Address

Kenneth L. Woods, Jr., Mayor

City of Dallas Oregon

Good evening and welcome. Today, I will talk about some accomplishments throughout the last year and our goals for the year ahead.

I would like to start by saying thank you to all those who participate in the many different facets of our city. Thank you to the Dallas City Council and to everyone who diligently serves on the many boards, commissions, and committees the city of Dallas has. I wish to thank the many community partners and organizations who help contribute to the community in Dallas. 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 to Polk County and our three commissioners. They are leading and partnering with the cities in the county to improve the lives of the residents of the county. I wish to thank those who protect our community and keep us safe, Dallas Police Department, and Dallas Fire & EMS. Finally, Thank you to the Dallas city staff. Our city is very well served by city employees allowing the public to trust that you will accomplish the various work needed to retain the high standard of living in our community.

I am proud of what we have accomplished and what we are moving towards. The state of the city is good! We are welcoming new businesses, and supporting established ones. We were happy to see continued investments in our downtown businesses as well as throughout Dallas such as Dreamies Creamery, Open Road Transportation, West Valley Hospital, and many more!

As a small city, we rely on those surrounding us and our local businesses. The City of Dallas's future relies on coming together, building a community, and supporting our neighbors.

As I reflect on my first year as Mayor in 2023, it brings me great joy to highlight the significant achievements we've made in strengthening our community. Drive around, and you'll notice the newly paved residential streets and updated sidewalks, enhancing the safety and convenience for all.

The acquisition of 791 Main St., marks a milestone in eliminating vacant spaces, showcasing our commitment to revitalizing the downtown. The Dallas Public Library, also a part of our

downtown area, was remodeled in November and is once again a hub for community events catering to all age groups.

In August of 2023, we engaged stakeholders in an open house meeting, outlining the project to expand the Mercer Reservoir, proposed solutions, and next steps. The Mercer Reservoir project will build a new dam to current standards, and bring improvements to water quality and quantity available in Rickreall Creek.

Looking forward to 2024, we aim to build on this momentum. Plans for a new police station are underway, providing a long-overdue, appropriately sized space for the police department. The Fire Department anticipates the delivery of a new fire engine to enhance emergency response capabilities.

Our commitment to economic revitalization continues with plans by the Urban Renewal Agency to build a mixed-use building at 791 Main St, and for the City by installing underground utilities to serve the La Creole Node, improving our city's infrastructure. These two projects are focused on providing opportunities for business growth and development.

And finally, I want to acknowledge the City of Dallas' 150th birthday last month. We had a great team of community volunteers and city staff who partnered together to put on a great community event to help celebrate all of the amazing accomplishments throughout our 150 years!

The City Council identified its priority goals for fiscal year 2024 during a Council Retreat in February of this year. Those goals are to (1) Be a Healthy and Fun Community with things to do for everyone such as movie theaters, parades, trails, athletic events, parks, and restaurants. (2) Be a Safe and Resilient Community with a larger water supply and with police, fire, and EMS response and capacity to meet the needs of the Dallas community now and in the future. (3) Be a Growing and Robust Community with more industry, development, and commercial uses. (4) and lastly to Encourage Managed Residential Growth in Our Community

We have made great strides towards all of these goals the City Council has outlined in just the past year. Please allow me to update you on the progress we have made.

The owners of the Dallas Mill Site, a 60+acre industrial site in south Dallas, have received a \$100,000 Industrial Lands Technical Assistance Grant from the Business Oregon Strategic Reserve Fund. By focusing on industry, development, and commercial land use, the Dallas City Council has for the past several years made redevelopment of the Dallas Mill Site a top priority goal. Working with the property owner, staff supported and will continue to support efforts such as this to bring in resources to facilitate redevelopment activities. This grant will be used to assist in the completion of design and engineering related to the North Fork of Ash Creek, which

bisects the site and is a potential barrier to redevelopment. A large and diverse Project Advisory Committee, representing a broad base of community stakeholders, will begin meeting in 2024 and help the consultant, ODOT and the City shape the project.

The project of serving the La Creole node with city utilities is in progress, the City has received funding from the Oregon State Legislature for this project. With this funding and completion of the project, the city will be able to effectively grow through advanced planning and implementation of needed infrastructure improvements. 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 with construction to immediately follow.

The City Council addressed the general fund needs earlier this year after careful research and community input by implementing a public safety fee. This fee will be reviewed annually by the City Council. The general fund supports Dallas Police, Fire and Emergency Medical Services, Parks and Recreation, Aquatic Center, Library, Economic and Community Development, Facilities, and Administrative and Financial Services.

The City has made the necessary steps toward increasing our raw water storage capacity by completing the site selection process. The new reservoir will be built just downstream of the current Aaron Mercer Reservoir. This new reservoir will hold a little more than 3 times our current reservoir or roughly 1.4B 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 can effectively continue to grow and develop.

The city has purchased the Itemizer-Observer building at 147 SE Court Street. The property will be used to build a police department in the future. This much-needed police department will serve our current and 30-year operational needs once built.

As I mentioned previously, we have made great strides toward implementing a robust Street Maintenance Plan to repair and improve the city's streets with the newly paved residential streets and updated sidewalks. We have repaired and overlaid approximately 10 miles of city streets which represents about 15% of the city street system and will continue to do so over the next year.

Another general improvement the city has made steps towards is the La Creole Node Conceptual Plan. The Council's goal is to create more commercial, residential, and mixed-use development opportunities. This project is funded through a combination of Federal and state dollars and has been approved by the City Council to move forward.

I would also like to take this time to remind you all to mark your calendars for May 4, 2024. This is the date the Dallas Farmers Market returns to downtown. This much-anticipated revival aims

to provide a key connection between area consumers and our residents, bring additional activity downtown, and improve our tourism impact. This project is in partnership with the Dallas Area Chamber of Commerce and the Dallas Downtown Association.

Our community's continued support is invaluable as we work together to make Dallas a place we're all proud to call home. Here's to another year of progress, collaboration, and a thriving community. Thank you!