



**2007 STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS
PRIDE. PROGRESS. POSSIBILITIES
JANUARY 23, 2007**

Good morning. I am Royce Pollard Mayor of America's Vancouver! I am here to deliver the 2007 State of the City address and I thank you all for being here this morning.

Before I begin, I would like to take this opportunity to thank my colleagues on the Vancouver City Council. We had a number of tough issues put before us which made last year a particularly challenging one. Yet, I know you are unwavering in your resolve and remain committed to achieving great results for the citizens of America's Vancouver.

I'd also like to acknowledge the best City Manager in the country, Pat McDonnell.

And finally, I'd like to thank the entire city staff for their great efforts on behalf of our citizens. Please join me in thanking all of them for their hard work.

I would also like to take some time to acknowledge the men and women serving in our armed forces here and overseas.

The State of the City address is the most important speech I give each year. It gives me an opportunity to stand before you, our community's leaders and citizens, to try to paint a strategic vision for our future together.

This year is particularly special because this year, on this day, marks Vancouver's 150th birthday since incorporation. This is more than a State of the City address. This is a celebration of our community!

And so, in honor of this special celebration, I am going to speak with you for a full 150 minutes!

150 years ... it's an impressive milestone to have reached as a city. This year we will pay tribute to our roots. This year, we will respect the progress we've made as a community. This year, we will review all the possibilities the future holds for America's Vancouver.

For the next 12 months we will celebrate the spirit of America's Vancouver and see it come alive in many ways. Throughout our anniversary, we will echo the thoughts of earlier leaders like Esther Short or Mother Joseph who believed, as I do, that we have a bright future, not just for today, but for the next 150 years.

Building a compelling and lasting vision takes time, persistence and leadership. It means working together. And, if there is a theme in my talk today it is that our first 150 years have clearly shown that when America's Vancouver works together, we achieve great things.

Vancouver's bright future depends on you and all citizens stepping forward to create a legacy and a vision for our next generation.

This year, our 150th anniversary, I want all of us to think of our Pride, Progress and Possibilities – where we've been, how far we've come and where we're going.

You will hear and see the tag line for our 150th birthday celebration often this year – but what do each of those mean – what are we really talking about?

Pride can be a source of strength when it is about self-respect or self-esteem – and this, ladies and gentlemen, is the foundation of our pride in this place we call home – America's Vancouver.

Vancouver has a lot to be proud of and this special year of celebration gives us a good reason to relearn our history. And, if you really want to learn more about Vancouver's history, I encourage you to go see the special 150th exhibit called "Vancouver Uncovered" at the Clark County Historic Museum which will open on February 22.

I believe our pride starts with a reason why we have a special and unique relationship with our city – something that helps define who we are. It all begins with the river – our river – your river – the mighty river of the west – the Columbia River.

For centuries, we have reaped endless benefit from our river. It was a vital life-giving force for our Native American friends. Its sheltering shores welcomed Lewis and Clark and the first settlers at Fort Vancouver.

Our river served us in war with the Kaiser Shipyards and in peace and during Vancouver's heaviest industrial days during the Alcoa and Boise Cascade era. And, today, its serene waters serve as one of our main avenues of trade and commerce.

The river is and will serve us again. It is not only our past, it is our future.

But, not too long ago, we lost connection to our river –we turned our back and ignored our magnificent waterway. And in the process, we lost connection to our city, our history and to our heritage.

It would take rediscovering our waterfront, the longest shoreline of any city along the Columbia, to rediscover ourselves and once again feel proud of a place where we can live, work and raise our families.

Why is the river so important? Because the river...the water... is our lifeblood. It unites us and is our link to the rest of the world. When we started using the river to divide instead of to

connect, we lost our focus and direction. We are a better community when we are connected and our river has been and will be our key to success.

With the waterfront renaissance in 1990 we began to reconnect with our history and regain our sense of identity.

Obviously, I believe strongly that a big part of our pride, our progress and our possibilities lie in our river.

The latest research shows that waterfront redevelopments are perhaps the most successful investments a city can make toward revitalization and we here in America's Vancouver are ahead of the pack.

The redevelopment of the Boise-Cascade site along the Columbia River presents us with a unique opportunity to have a world-class waterfront development in our community. I can't tell you how huge the potential is.

While the developers, Gramor Development, are still working out design details, I have every confidence that everything from the architecture to the public features like plazas and parks will be nothing short of first-class. We will once again beam with pride as we continue to reconnect with our river.

Something else we should always be proud of is our strong connection to our history. Our history is the source of the strong values and traditions we hold today. And let me tell you, it is a grand and glorious history.

From being the original state territorial capitol, to being the first area in the Northwest with telephone and street lights to being home to the first American skier to win an Olympic Gold Medal – we are a city of firsts. By the way, that America skier was Gretchen Fraser. And in her honor, we've named the park adjacent to the new east precinct Gretchen Fraser Park.

The way we connect to our past truly comes alive on the Historic Reserve. The creation and official Congressional designation of the Vancouver National Historic Reserve ten years ago is one of the most significant things this community has ever done. The Reserve is the most important historic site in the Pacific Northwest and is an asset we must honor and respect.

Not only will the Reserve be our "Williamsburg of the West", it will soon become the premier center for archaeological research and education in the nation.

Something else we should be proud of but often take for granted is our patriotism. It is exemplified in the way we celebrate the Fourth of July and in the way we honor our veterans. We turn out standing-room-only crowds to say thank you and Godspeed when our men and women are deployed to serve in the War on Terror and we Celebrate Freedom fiercely, proudly and with great emotion.

As I think of why I am proud to be a citizen of America's Vancouver, I think it can best be epitomized by one of my heroes, General George C. Marshall – both in why we continue to honor him in this community and in the life he lived. In one man we have a unique microcosm of the greatness of both America and America's Vancouver – devotion to duty, dedicated public service, knowledge and respect for history, compassion for others – especially those in need – love of family and commitment to excellence.

George Marshall loved Vancouver and said it was the best place he ever lived. That is our community and we must all take pride in America's Vancouver!

But, as good as we are and as we recognize our value as a great city – we know we can be better!

We are making progress but we're not there yet. WE CAN BE BETTER!!

Progress means different things to different people – baby steps to some may seem like sweeping changes to others. Today when I speak of “progress” I'm speaking about forward movement. In other words, progress is not about remaining stagnant or standing still.

Some would call the World War II era in Vancouver its heyday and a time of great progress for our community. When Henry Kaiser opened the Vancouver branch of Kaiser Shipyards in 1942, Vancouver grew almost overnight.

In 1941, before the shipyard opened, there were only about 18,000 people in Vancouver. By the end of 1944, there were 38,000 workers at the Vancouver facility - 10,000 of whom were women – who brought with them their families. The city blossomed to almost 100,000 people.

Economically, the city boomed and downtown Vancouver was at its peak. Socially, it was a time of progress as well. At Kaiser, people of different backgrounds and ethnicities worked together side by side. Also, the women who worked at Kaiser were offered good pay as riveters and welders and worked the same jobs as men and, more importantly, received the same pay as men – imagine that! As a matter of fact, to honor the women who worked at the shipyards, we will be dedicating the Wendy the Welder statue on the waterfront later this year.

Of even more significance, in a forward, progressive approach to the housing needs of our community, the Vancouver Housing Authority, led by Elwood Caples, had a strict policy about enforcing non-segregated housing. This policy helped shape the city we know today. And, when the war was over and these defense communities were demolished, the VHA, on its own, without any government mandate, elected to continue its fair housing policy and placed black families in each of the city's neighborhoods which is why Vancouver and Clark County today have no racially confined or segregated areas.

After the war ended in 1946, Vancouver slowly slipped into a typical postwar pattern: the deterioration of the downtown core with both the people and businesses spilling into the suburbs.

Over time, this area that was once described as “rolling in milk and honey” became a town of beer and aluminum. Our identity was characterized by heavy industry including Alcoa

Aluminum, a silicon carbide processing facility, Boise Cascade, Lucky Lager Brewery, Fort Vancouver Plywood and a Del Monte cannery. We were a working class, blue-collar town and proud of it.

By the 1970s and 80s, Vancouver's commercial core was almost completely deserted for suburban mall developments in Jantzen Beach and Vancouver Mall. Vancouver would soon begin its economic slump.

Alcoa, Fort Vancouver Plywood and Lucky Lager would close and Boise Cascade would convert from a robust paper production plant to a modest printing operation. In addition, our historic Officers Row would rot and sag.

With the departure of our key manufacturing industries and the start of suburban sprawl, local employment opportunities dwindled. These were not easy years for Vancouver.

Every community reaches a turning point and Vancouver was no exception. I believe the first wave of change and the first sign of progress after those painful years took place in the 1980's when the Vancouver City Council felt they needed to come together to decide, "What defines us as a community?" and "What is the city's part in helping to identify that role?"

In the process of trying to answer those questions, they rediscovered a love for and a passion to re-establish Vancouver to its former glory.

The Vancouver City Council, led by my predecessors, Mayors Jim Justin, Bryce Seidl and Bruce Hagensen, determined that a city's role is more than providing water, sewer and public safety. A city's role is to help create its unique character and to reverse the trend of becoming just another bedroom community of Portland. I was proud to be a member of the city Council at that time because we made critical decisions that helped shape the Vancouver we know and love today.

The leaders of that time began to realize that in America's Vancouver, we have resources other cities can only dream of:

- a central park and greenspace in the Historic Reserve that hugs the downtown area
- accessible historic resources and, of course,
- our roots – our river.

During the beginning of this revival, there were rays of optimism:

- Although the I-205 bridge moved people from Vancouver's core area, it opened up huge areas of development between Vancouver and Camas;
- Tektronix opened one of the first high tech plants in the Pacific Northwest on Mill Plain and 164th.
- The SeaFirst Building (now Bank of America), the First Independent Bank Building and Murdock Executive Plaza were constructed in downtown and,

- Officers Row was deeded to the City who rehabilitated and restored the decaying buildings.

Downtown Vancouver really began to roar to life in the late 1990's after the adoption of the Esther Short Redevelopment Plan which, as most of you now know, created over \$300 million of public-private investment around Esther Short Park, including this Hilton Hotel and convention center.

This downtown progress will continue with the Vancouver City Center Vision plan which will guide continued growth and development of the approximately 130-block City Center area.

I want to emphasize that downtown came alive again in the 1990s for one simple reason: we committed and we invested. The City invested almost \$27 million in streets, parking, underground utilities and Esther Short Park. The State committed almost \$28 million to this building complementing the City's and Identity Clark County's support. And, private developers and lenders invested almost five times more than the City and State combined.

The result of this is that:

- \$164 million in State and local tax revenues will be generated by 2025;
- The State share of this tax revenue will be about 69%, but Vancouver School District, the Port of Vancouver and the Fort Vancouver Regional Library District will receive almost \$24 million;
- The City will recoup its investment with a modest financial return, but will also realize:
 - Almost 1,500 new permanent jobs,
 - Over 400,000 square feet of new office space,
 - Over 85,000 square feet of new retail space and
 - Nearly 700 new downtown residences

During the 90's, our waterfront slowly began to see some changes as well:

- Ross Island Sand and Gravel and the US Coast Guard station became the Bridge Tender and Chart House Restaurants, now Joe's Crab Shack, and Who Song and Larry's
- The FMC Hydrogen Peroxide Plant became the Columbia Shores Condominiums and,
- Our magnificent waterfront trail started to take shape

During this time, an economic explosion changed the east Vancouver landscape from rustic to rampant, an explosion that we're still seeing with:

- Columbia Tech Center
- Mill Plain One
- SEH America
- Retail, retail and more retail
- Housing, housing and more housing
- And of course, Big Al's!

How did all of this progress occur? We often forget or take for granted the fact that we are where we are today because of partnerships and collaboration. We are fortunate that it is a regular part of the way we do business here. In other areas of our region and throughout our country, collaboration tends to be the exception rather than the rule.

I think in this area more than others, we know that we succeed or fail together. We are more than a city of historic firsts – we are a city of people who connect with each other and foster and promote partnerships to achieve a common vision.

These partnerships – especially those of the past 10 to 20 years – are part of the uniqueness of our community. None of our success or our progress would have become a reality without the strong support – including financial – enthusiasm, and hard work of WSU, the Port of Vancouver, Clark Public Utilities, the State, the County, Clark College, the Vancouver and Evergreen School Districts, the Housing Authority, the National Park Service, Southwest Washington Medical Center – one of the 100 best hospitals in America – now joined by Legacy Health, Identity Clark County, neighborhoods and businesses – just to name a few.

We need all of them, and we need all of you, to move forward...to prosper...to progress.

We may all have different missions but ultimately, we share the same goal – to keep our home, our Vancouver, a place we can be proud of.

I look at facilities like the Firstenburg Community Center, or even this Hilton Hotel and know that neither of them would be here if we had to rely on just the city to get it done. We needed the entire team of the city, Ed and Mary Firstenburg, the State of Washington, Identity Clark County and neighborhood and community members banding together to work toward a common goal.

And, in another terrific example of business and government working together I am pleased to announce today that our friends at Nautilus have once again stepped up to the plate for our community.

Concerned about the level of inactivity and obesity in our community, Nautilus wanted to supplement the efforts of our terrific commercial fitness clubs with a \$200,000 donation of cardio and strength equipment to the Marshall Center, which is currently being renovated and will re-open this fall. This donation is in addition to their quarter-million donation of equipment to the Firstenburg Community Center and their support of our Police Activities League program.

Please join me in thanking our friends at Nautilus!

It is one thing for politicians or elected leaders to have a vision and even impose that vision on a community. But there is no way to ultimately achieve those visions until you get the community to buy in – with their checkbooks and their hearts. That is what we have done in Vancouver – that is part of what distinguishes us from the rest and that is how we have progressed as a community. Let us never forget that.

As Henry Ford said, “Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success.”

“**Possibilities**” is a great word because it means our dreams, goals and wishes are all within our reach and ability and I believe that they are for America’s Vancouver.

Our community is full of possibilities and we know of a lot of them in the short-term – the Maya Lin Land Bridge, which is opening this fall, the Evergreen Landing project on the eastside, the Grand Central project near Pearson, the Riverwest project in downtown, our new libraries on the east and west side, the new Firstenburg tower at Southwest Washington Medical Center and the re-opening of the historic Marshall Community Center in September.

I want to talk with you a few minutes about our long-term possibilities. It is always a challenge to try to predict the future but I want to focus my views for Vancouver’s possibilities on three areas. I hope you will have others:

- Sustainability
- Jobs and Growth
- Transportation

Sustainability is the big buzz word we’re hearing all over the place. Green initiatives, green cities, green energy, green buildings – it’s hard not to take notice of this issue.

What do I mean when I say sustainability? I mean meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. In other words, when I speak of a sustainable Vancouver, I’m talking about leaving a place for our kids and grandkids that is in better shape than we got it. Not like now – it’s got to be better! It can be better!

My fifth grandchild, Stanley Arthur was born last year. I look at Stanley and all my grandchildren and see an embodiment of hope for the future. These little ones serve as reminders that you and I are accountable today for the generations yet to come.

By the time Stanley is ready to run for Mayor of America’s Vancouver, what will our community look like? I want to make sure he gets to enjoy the beauty of our trees in the Northwest and that he understands that salmon comes from the river and not just from the seafood aisle at Freddie’s.

Some of you may know that I was one of 358 mayors from 49 states, representing a total population of over 55 million citizens, who signed the U.S. Mayor’s Climate Protection Agreement in 2005. This agreement was part of the United Nations’ Kyoto Protocol.

Mayors who sign on to the Agreement are making a commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in their cities and communities.

In addition to signing the agreement, last year I went to a Mayor's summit on climate change in Alaska – ground zero for the effects of global warming.

I admit I was skeptical of what people were saying about global warming but I saw for myself the results of warmer temperatures on the glaciers and salmon runs and the acres of forests dying from beetle infestations.

I even touched one of the glaciers and shared a moment with it - it spoke to me. It said, "Mayor of America's Vancouver, help me. I'm melting."

Now, most of you would probably not characterize me as a tree hugger. But, after seeing what I saw in Alaska, I'd willingly embrace an elm or squeeze a spruce if it would help slow global warming!

Some may question what the city's role is in this larger global issue. I believe we can lead through example. In fact, we must. I know there are already companies out there, like Burgerville, who are keenly aware of the impact each business and each individual has on this issue. Among other initiatives, Burgerville has purchased enough wind power from local utilities to power all of its facilities and instituted a program to transform cooking oil into clean-burning biodiesel. Burgerville is truly a national leader with their sustainability efforts.

We, at the City, have been doing our share for awhile. This year, City Manager McDonnell has elevated the importance of sustainability and made it one of the citywide performance goals for 2007.

Some of the green actions we are already taking at the city include:

- Switching to LED lights in traffic signals and to T-8 fluorescent bulbs in City facilities;
- We have green vehicles including six hybrid vehicles currently in our fleet;
- Our Operations Center is phasing in more earth-friendly materials in its cleaners, chemicals and fertilizers and,
- We adopted a policy ensuring new City buildings will meet green building standards via the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, or LEED certification system. This can be seen in the sustainable design of the Firstenberg Community Center and the Marshall Center remodel. And, recently our Hilton hotel...this Hilton hotel...became the first Hilton in the world to be LEED certified by the Green Building Council.

We are going to continue these initiatives and do more to make America's Vancouver a leader in sustainability.

The City Council and I will:

- Look at all our operating areas and apply the triple bottom-line: Planet, People, Profit test against them: Are they economically sustainable? Do they cause no harm to the environment? And, are they fair in their treatment of all citizens?

- We will train our staff in the principles and practices of sustainability.
- We will continue to consider hybrids when replacing vehicles in our fleet;
- We will reach our target tree canopy goal of 28% in the next ten years by preserving our existing trees and replanting new ones and;
- We will bring all city buildings up to LEED standards and increase green energy purchase to become more sustainable in our use of power.

It is not unreasonable to expect that within the next few years, LEED will become the norm - the standard for all buildings. The Council and I will ask City Manager McDonnell to bring forth an ordinance to encourage that kind of development, joining a handful of cities that now promote LEED development projects.

Those are just a few of the things we plan on doing here at the City. What are you going to do?

I'm here to tell you that it isn't hard to make an impact and that no matter what Kermit the Frog may say, it is easy being green!

Replacing a single incandescent bulb with a Compact Fluorescent Light, or, as I call them, the squiggly bulb, will keep a half-ton of CO2 out of the atmosphere over the life of the bulb.

If every American home replaced just one light bulb with a squiggly bulb, we would save enough energy to light more than 2.5 million homes for a year and prevent greenhouse gases equivalent to the emissions of nearly 800,000 cars.

If you don't want to replace your bulbs, then plant a tree. Two mature trees provide enough oxygen for a family of four. One acre of forest absorbs six tons of carbon dioxide and puts out four tons of oxygen - enough to meet the annual needs of 18 people.

When you leave today, we will have waiting for you 150 squiggly bulbs, courtesy of our friends at Clark Public Utilities who are already at the forefront of sustainability. We will also have 150 seedlings, courtesy of our Urban Forestry program. You can start to do your part by taking a bulb or a seedling and either screw it in a socket or plant it in the ground! Make a difference starting today.

Sustainability is not just about protecting our environment. It's about providing environmental value balanced with economic prosperity. Clearly, a sustainable city must be friendly to the environment but we should also give future generations a city that is sustainable in all senses of the word. True sustainability should ensure that economic opportunity flows to all sectors of our community now and for a long time to come.

It is about being stewards of our community so it can continue to progress and prosper for the next 150 years.

Important to the history of America's Vancouver is our legacy of growth. Future growth isn't just a possibility. Like it or not, it will happen.

From a settlement of a few thousand, we have grown to become the fourth largest city in the state. It isn't just about growth and getting bigger with no purpose. It's about getting the attention we need because in the eyes of the ones holding the money, bigger is better.

When we were a town of 69,000, decision-makers in Olympia and Washington, DC, barely knew where we were on the map. Now when we call or visit our state or nation's capitols, people know where we are and who we are – they take our calls – they listen and they respond.

Given current population trends, and not counting any annexations, 25 years from now, we can expect Vancouver's population to be between 275,000 to 300,000 people - almost twice our population right now.

Jobs are and will continue to be a top priority for us. Our ultimate wish is to not have our residents' jobs based in Oregon. We want 60,000 people crossing the bridge to come here to work, not the other way around.

I am confident that we are heading in the right direction. Last year, job growth maintained a steady pace in Clark County as our employers added jobs at twice the rate of employers in the Portland metro area overall. This statistic gives us a shot of confidence because while other areas are struggling, we are seeing rays of hope. We must be doing something right.

We have strong partners in this effort in the Columbia River Economic Development Council who have been successful in recruiting and retaining key jobs in our area, and in our friends at the Port of Vancouver, who currently support almost 16,000 local jobs. Their Columbia-Gateway project is expected to generate even thousands more jobs.

We also have tremendous opportunities with our pride and our progress – our river. The redevelopment of the Boise Cascade site holds the potential for almost 2,000 new jobs.

However, are these efforts enough? Neither City Hall nor the private sector alone can address the challenges we face. We must understand that each entity brings unique resources and tools to the table.

We know that a big part of our focus will have to be a continued partnership among schools, businesses and government. To remain competitive, we have to have access to the best and brightest in the world. Education is our key.

Our community is fortunate to have two of the best school districts in America in the Vancouver and Evergreen School Districts. We know they are a big reason why people move here. To keep them being the best, we need to continue throwing our full support behind them.

Last year Gov. Gregoire spoke about making Clark County one of the state's "innovation zones". These zones would receive funding to develop research labs and to advance cooperation between universities and businesses.

An innovation zone would involve WSU Vancouver and would fit with the proposed Center for Semiconductor Research and Innovation at WSU Vancouver. If this Center gets funded this legislative session, by 2009, high-tech companies will have a world-class facility to conduct experiments and develop new products.

The possibilities for this Center are exciting, especially when you consider that our community has developed its cluster of semiconductor and electronics manufacturing industries without the benefit of collaboration with a major research university.

We have to always remember that the competition out there is fierce. We've all heard or read that the world is flat. We're not only competing with other cities across the U.S. – we're competing on a worldwide playing field with every community pegging their hopes on the same thing: attracting industries of the high-tech sector and the creative economy. Because we're competing on a global scale, we need world-class facilities and world-class benefits to compete realistically for private investment. Our scope is big and our ambitions are even bigger.

The only communities that will "win" in the race to attract companies are the ones bold enough to commit and invest today in an infrastructure that meets the needs of tomorrow's economy. The communities that succeed also know the power of working together as a region and we have many examples of how our regional partnerships have paid off for our community. We know that before we go global, we must first act local, and we are.

Are we sincere about bringing jobs here? Then we need to be a competitive place to launch a business. We know we have to be our own salespeople - no one else is going to sell ourselves to the rest of the world except us. We must do what it takes to make this community attractive to employers. You know that saying, "If you keep doing what you're doing, you'll keep getting what you got."? Well, we're going to get more aggressive, be more creative and work even more closely together to get more than we've been getting.

Last year SEH America announced that it was going to invest at least \$350 million in its Vancouver facility and add hundreds of jobs to produce silicon wafers for the computer chip industry. I firmly believe that our one and only recruiting trip overseas gave Vancouver the leg-up over other communities SEH had to choose from. It was a powerful combination of listening to our customers' needs, building trusting relationships and following through on our word that allowed SEH America to feel secure enough to continue investing in Vancouver. And now, not only are they helping the economy, SEH America is helping our community by being a strong supporter of several local organizations.

As I said, we're going to get more aggressive. We will actively search out companies around the world wanting to expand and grow. We have worked well with our friends in the United Arab Emirates with the Vancouvercenter project and will continue to build on that relationship. We

have a representative from Vancouver going to the Philippines on a trade mission in February. We also have a few irons in the fire for possible trade missions to China and Korea as well.

Folks, no matter what people say, America's Vancouver is still "Open for Business".

We may have been criticized last year for not having a business-friendly attitude with some of the initiatives we brought forward but I believe it is time we all realize that a world class community believes in itself and, more importantly, invests in itself. Raising dollars to reinvest in our community to bring jobs here is one way we stay Open for Business! Each and every one of us can, and must assume responsibility for the state of our City.

To paraphrase President Kennedy, it isn't about how much the City can do for you; it's about how much you are willing to do for your city. If we begin to take greater pride in our block, our neighborhood, and ultimately our City, we will quickly realize our collective potential and create a quality of living that will attract and retain quality businesses, families and professionals.

When you talk about jobs and growth, you have to talk about **transportation**. In the future, will we have well-planned urban and commercial corridors? What will our public transit options look like? Will our roads be choked with traffic or will they become a model of innovation and improvement other cities will want to follow?

Obviously, transportation is one of the biggest issues we face - how are we going to move people and goods efficiently across and through our community?

One look at the cost of building the roads, bridges, rail road underpasses and traffic controls to handle the projected demand of cars in motion and the parking to store them should convince anyone that we need to think outside of the box.

We know that more mixed-use communities such as ours can reduce auto trips by 20% or more. That translates into more people than presently ride C-TRAN. But we can and must think even beyond using our land more wisely.

What about trolleys or private jitneys or pedicabs or even rickshaws? These may be cost-effective alternatives to more roads and parking structures. I am willing to get creative to find alternatives to sinking more money into roads and parking that only seems to foster more demand for roads and parking in a time of fewer financial resources.

No matter what alternatives we choose, a functioning transportation system is clearly fundamental for a successful community. Last year we adopted a "head tax" of \$50 per employee to finance road construction that would help us keep our community and economy moving. It's no secret that the \$2.4 million being raised from the head tax is but a drop in the bucket for our total transportation needs. We have to get down to brass tacks and do what has to get done for the transportation and economic development needs of our community.

We are supporting our local legislators in their efforts to back a proposal allowing cities and counties to levy \$20 annual fees on vehicles. With this legislation, the City Council could impose

the vehicle fee and raise \$4 million a year for transportation improvements. If this does not go through the legislature, we will hold the business community to their commitment to help us seek other solutions to our transportation challenges.

It should come as no surprise to any of you to hear me repeat that we need to provide ways for people to get across the river other than driving and I believe one of the best ways to do that is with light rail.

In 1960, 30,000 vehicles crossed the I-5 bridge each day. In 2006, over 130,000 vehicles crossed daily, resulting in demand that exceeds capacity during morning and evening peak periods. This number will rise to around 200,000 a day by 2020. Now, you tell me, does something need to change?

I've said it before, but it bears repeating – Vancouver and Clark County residents have the cheapest buy-in to one of the most successful light-rail systems in the world, the MAX system. There is over \$5 billion invested in light rail across the river. We can tap into that system at a very minimal cost. We'd be foolish not to.

The bi-state Columbia River Crossing initiative is making plans for the future of our community for 50 years and beyond. This project should not happen without integrating light rail that comes into downtown Vancouver. If the final alternative doesn't have a light rail component, I will not support it.

In 1995 Clark County voters rejected a sales tax that would have extended Portland's light rail system into Clark County. I accepted that but, I believe we are a different and more progressive community than we were back then and I am optimistic that we are ready to explore other commuting options for the future health of our community. Let me say it again, light rail will come to Vancouver!

The bottom line is that the citizens of Vancouver, and not others, should decide our public transit future. Therefore, I believe it may be time for us as a city to take control and consider our own options for providing appropriate transit solutions for the citizens of our community.

So, how are we going to pay for this Columbia River Crossing? Does anyone here remember something I said in 1999 about tolls and trolls? I stand before you today, firm in my resolve, that there will be tolls on the Crossing. After all, it is how we paid for the I-5 bridge in the first place.

Just to refresh everyone's memory, the first bridge was opened in 1917 for \$1.75 million. 5-cent tolls helped paid for that bridge.

In 1958 an upgrade created a southbound span and doubled the capacity of the bridge. At the time the new bridge was opened, the old one closed. When both bridges were opened in 1960, tolls were reinstated.

Tolls will be a part of the Columbia River Crossing. Really, what are our alternatives?

As I mentioned earlier, projects that create or sustain jobs are critical in our region. To get those jobs, the quality of life has to be at a high standard especially when it comes to transportation. Transportation is not just about moving people from “a” to “b”. It’s about connecting them from one place to another. Again, when we connect with each other we grow, we progress and we are at our best.

Let’s stop living in the past and start thinking about what is best for the future of our community.

There are so many more possibilities that lie ahead for our community but the bottom line is that none of the possibilities I just mentioned are going to happen until we get real and stop thinking like a small town and start thinking big. The days of labeling America’s Vancouver a “small town” are long gone. Some want things to be the way they were five or ten years ago but I’m sorry - we need to be planning for five, ten, 50, and even 150 years into our future.

Many of you are benefiting from the vision and sacrifice of those who came before you. Please do not squander this progress over a few dollars or even a few quarters. Think beyond your lifetimes, beyond your bottom lines and beyond your circumstances. Keep the momentum we’ve built together moving forward. Be a steward and caretaker of your community for the generations to come.

We could have a few small minds and large egos keep our community from moving ahead. Do you like the progress you’ve seen? Do you want to see more of the possibilities ahead? Then don’t make us lose our economic advantage by thinking only of yourselves.

If you want a small town with a small town mentality, they’re out there...be my guest. Living in the Vancouver of tomorrow will be very uncomfortable for you. Big things and big changes are coming.

Cooperating and connecting with each other is key to our future. We cannot move our community forward unless we all acknowledge the responsibility that we share. As Mayor, I will gladly lead when appropriate, but I cannot move this city forward unless all of you are prepared to stand with me and the Council in this effort.

This community has gotten as far as we have because people have taken risks, people have sacrificed, people have worked hard and because people have had faith in our community. Where would we be without the George and Carolyn Propstras, the Ed and Mary Firstenburgs, the Ray Hickeys, the David and Patricia Nierenbergs, the Ed and Dolly Lynches or the Al Angelo families of our community? Where would we be without Identity Clark County, Nautilus or all the volunteers who help form the foundation of this community? These people believe in our community and believe in our destiny to be greater than what is expected of us. We have to have a long-term vision and stop focusing on short-term gains.

Moving ahead is going to take sacrifice on all of our parts. And to expect that you can live in a community that is clean, safe and offers lots of recreational opportunities without paying some kind of price is unrealistic.

After all, what does it take to live here? On average, a typical Vancouver resident, earning a median income of \$53,000 in a home valued at about \$236,000 pays about \$15 a month for Police service, \$11 a month for transportation, \$9 month for fire service and \$6 a month for parks, recreation and cultural services. That's \$41 a month for essential programs and services. Some of you spend more than that a month on your tall, half-caf, soy, extra hot, no whip, hazelnut and vanilla lattes. Think about it...

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This morning I've told you the story of our pride, our progress and our possibilities. What links our past, present and future is a story about how we connect – with our river, with our history and with each other.

150 years of community is really 150 years of people and their contributions. We have been blessed with extremely talented, caring individuals who are committed to making our city the best in the region. There are people, leaders, workers, thinkers, and doers behind every achievement I have mentioned and without them, none of this would be possible.

Do we have a lot to be proud of? Yup. Have we made a lot of progress? Yes! Do we have endless possibilities for our future? Absolutely! I wouldn't be here otherwise. If this community felt that this is as good as we're going to get, I probably wouldn't have any motivation to stick around. Our spirit is strong and our will is even stronger.

To achieve greatness tomorrow, we have to act today. The time is now for each of us to assume responsibility for the community our children and grandchildren will inherit. Or, will we be satisfied just passing along stories of how wonderful America's Vancouver used to be?

Vancouver is a wonderful city. But too many of us lack pride and confidence in our community – we lack pride in our past and present and lack confidence in our future.

On our 150th birthday, the time is now to push, promote and publicize our pride. The time is now to cast aside indifference and cynicism. As neighbors, residents, parents, and friends, the time is now to dream big and pursue our shared vision with resolve.

We must take pride in our history. We must take pride in our environment and cultural stewardship of our land, our waterways and our treasured buildings.

We must take pride in our multi-culturalism and we must take pride in our patriotism – our unabashed love for our country and the people who serve to protect and honor this great land of ours.

So, what is the state of our city? Pretty damned strong, and together, we can make it even stronger. Our city is, and always will be, what we...not me...what we make of it and together, we can help move our community toward greatness and prosperity.

It is our job to create possibilities and to keep hope and optimism alive for the ones who will take over our community.

We are part of something bigger than ourselves at this moment in time. We inherited the vision of those who came before us, and we must respect our values and our traditions as we work together to shape the future of our community.

So, today promise me that you will share in the responsibility to keep building pride in our community. Promise me you will join me and the City Council in renewing our commitment to our community through active engagement and strong partnerships. Promise me you will join us to pursue the endless possibilities that await America's Vancouver.

Thank you for your time. God bless you. God bless America. God bless America's Vancouver.
Happy Birthday Vancouver!!!