



CITY OF EVERETT  
State of Everett 2020

Jan. 16, 2020

Mayor Cassie Franklin

Thank you, Amber and Maddy, for that wonderful introduction, and for kicking off our program this morning.

I am pleased to have such smart and engaged young women leading the work of our new Youth Advisory Board!

Attending a Leadership Launch event last year gave me the inspiration to put the board together. Leadership Launch is a nonprofit dedicated to mentoring young people to help them succeed in school and become future leaders.

I was incredibly impressed with the young men and women I met there. They not only underscored for me the importance of involving youth in City decisions and forming a youth board; they also worked together with me to make it happen.

I'm proud to now have 17 very dynamic and remarkable young people volunteering their time to advise me on important initiatives in our city.

A big thank you to the representatives of Leadership Launch.

And again, thank you, Amber and Maddy, and all of our youth advisory board members, for your leadership!

I'd also like to thank Patrick and the Economic Alliance for putting on this event, as well as Bill McSherry and the Boeing Company for sponsoring, and again thank all of our elected officials for being here today.

I'd especially like to acknowledge all seven of our City councilmembers who joined us here today: Council President Judy Tuohy and Councilmembers: Scott Bader, Scott Murphy, Jeff Moore, Paul Roberts, Brenda Stonecipher and Liz Vogeli.

It is an honor to work with each of you. I appreciate your partnership, commitment, and willingness to roll up your sleeves and do the hard work. And I'm very grateful to lead this beautiful city together with you.

I'd also like to take a moment to recognize our City team. I often tell people that one of the things that has impressed most is the dedication of each individual who works for the City of Everett.

Our team members are true public servants. Day in and day out, they go above and beyond to ensure our residents are well cared for and our City is able to continue to provide essential services especially during inclement weather. Thank you!

Finally, heading into the holiday weekend, I think it is important to acknowledge the legacy that Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. bestowed upon our nation.

Dr. King was a true leader of all people who never chose fear, but always chose courage and determination when tackling difficult challenges. He maintained a vision for a diverse America where all people were truly equal. Now, it is as important as ever to hold his ideals in our hearts.

As I mentioned, today I want us all to have the future in mind, which is why we began by sharing the video of Everett's younger residents.

A big thank you, by the way, to Pipa Escalante from the City's communications team for producing that wonderful video, and thank you to the bright young people who participated in it!

Today is about engaging our youth and creating a brighter future for them.

It's hard to listen to the news these days and not get overwhelmed by the negative things going on in our world: devastating wildfires in Australia, unrest in the Middle East, and increasing divisions in our society.

But these kids give me hope. And hearing their passion and vision for the future, reminds me that the things we do, or don't do, will have consequences for them. I want to do my part to make their positive vision for our City a reality.

I may not be able to deliver on making Everett "nice and sunny" all the time, but I *am* committed to ensuring this city is welcoming, inclusive, safe, and "awesome," as Lianne in the video says. And that we are a city that cultivates opportunities for everyone - especially our youth - to rise, thrive and succeed.

So, my remarks today focus on what we are doing, and planning to do, to shape our city for them.

I will also talk about the challenges we continue to face, the tough choices we need to make, and how we, as a community, can and must work together to ensure Everett remains strong, grows sustainably, and maintains a high quality of life for all who live, work and learn here.



I will focus on the four following areas:

- A better future for all
- Collaboration and partnership
- Economic and cultural vitality
- And sustainable and effective government

## **A BETTER FUTURE FOR ALL**

---

Let's start by talking about what a better future for all looks like.

I believe that government's most important job is keeping our community safe. We are working hard to address crime, homelessness, and other safety challenges. And, we've made considerable progress.

In early 2018, I issued a directive to reduce gang and youth gun violence, and the City stood up its first stand-alone gang response unit.

The results so far are very encouraging:

- Gang-related cases are down by nearly half compared with 2018
- Crime rates along Casino Road have also dropped
- And, importantly, young gang members are discovering that they have other options

As an example, our Gang Response Unit told me they are currently working with four teens who reached out to them, asking for help in leaving their gang. With support from our officers, now all four of these youth have reduced their criminal justice contacts. And two are actively back in school, working hard to get back on track and graduate high school.

We're seeing positive results in other areas, as well.

Between 2016-2018, violent crimes in Everett decreased by more than 20 percent. And property and burglary crimes are down as well.

Additionally, Everett Police received the number one clearance rate in Washington State when compared with the top 10 most populous cities. High clearance rates means crimes are being solved and arrests are being made.



I'm proud to note that Everett Police officers are also among the best trained in the nation and I want to be sure we keep it that way. I aim to provide Everett Police with the resources needed to continue delivering superior service.

Everett Police now has a fully-staffed bicycle unit and were able to add both a motorcycle officer and recruiting officer this past year. We also trained staff on implicit bias, procedural justice and trauma-informed care. And, just last month, we started piloting body-worn cameras.

This year we will also revive our community police academy, after a very long hiatus. The academy builds relationships between residents and Police with the goal of reducing neighborhood crime. The academy, along with the Chief's Community Advisory Board, provides feedback on police programs and policies to ensure best practices, and build trust and mutual respect in our community.

Working in collaboration with our police department is our prosecutor's office, which aims to ensure that justice prevails. Last year our prosecutors handled more than 3,000 cases. Our prosecutors work diligently to protect the community from domestic violence abusers, dangerous drivers and other criminals.

I'd like to thank Chief Templeman, the Everett Police, the prosecutor's office as well as our municipal court judges, for your dedication and service to keeping our community safe. Thank you.

No community is without its challenges, however, and Everett is not immune to some of the growing national problems affecting cities everywhere. Wealth inequality, the opioid epidemic and untreated or undiagnosed behavioral health issues are fueling the rise of homelessness across the country, including here in Everett.

That said, we remain ahead of many of our peer cities. We are deploying resources on multiple fronts to address this challenge and we're getting results.

One example is our Community Outreach & Enforcement Team, which pairs police officers and social workers to reach out to people in need and connect them to resources.

Since 2017, our embedded teams have connected nearly 800 people to mental health and chemical dependency services, and helped more than 360 find housing.

A member of our team shared a story, which I'd like to share with you:

A young veteran who was living in his vehicle and struggling with substance abuse was referred to our team. This young man had experienced trauma, suffered from anxiety, and didn't know how to get help. Our team connected him with veteran's services and mental health care, and helped place him in treatment for his addiction. When he was ready, our team helped him reunite with his family so he would be surrounded with more support. He is now home with loved ones, sober, and currently connected with veteran's support services.



It's stories like this that show how we can make a difference, one interaction at a time, and truly help turn a life around.

In addition to this program, we're working to create more housing solutions for those living without permanent shelter.

In 2019 we welcomed the opening of several supportive housing projects in Everett, including Cocoon House's HUB, HopeWorks Station and Clare's Place. Together these organizations have added 170 units of supportive housing to our city.

We also partnered with Snohomish County, United Church of Christ and the Salvation Army to open a winter shelter. In just a few months, the 60-bed shelter has already served more than 400 people.

Last year we launched a Cars to Housing pilot program in partnership with Interfaith Family Shelter and Cascade View Presbyterian Church. The program offers families living in their vehicles a safe place to park at night and connects them with services to help transition into housing. Since August, this program has served 16 families. The majority of them have now moved from the parking lot to a family shelter or permanent housing.

And just last week, the Carnegie Resource Center celebrated its one-year anniversary. Carnegie has been a remarkable community partner and last year made more than 16,000 direct connections, helping people in need get off the streets and onto a more stable path.

These are just some examples of incredible work going on in our city.

We have some outstanding partners in Snohomish County human services, as well as our nonprofit and faith-based partners, who are working diligently to bring stability and shelter to even more members of our community.

The web of support these local organizations provide is helping people turn their lives around, whether it's through shelter, job skills training, or behavioral health services. I am grateful for the dedication and compassion they bring to the community. I know many of these fabulous organizations are here today! Thank you all for your service!

I also want to acknowledge that in spite of these great efforts, we still have to do more. Our businesses, our neighborhoods, and our families across the city, can feel unsafe due to street level challenges. And there are still far too many people living without a roof over their heads or a place to call home. This only reinforces my determination to get ahead of this crisis.

As a community, we *have* to do more. I look forward to working together to find innovative and effective solutions.



Now I'd also like to give a special shout out to another group of dedicated public servants: our own Everett Fire Department. In Everett we are fortunate to have the best of the best.

Whether they are helping someone who's seriously hurt or extinguishing a blazing fire, our first responders work hard to keep our community safe, and to be there for us when we need them most.

In fact, "we're here for you" is the new mission of Everett Fire, which emerged through an inclusive mission, vision, values development process last year. The mission represents the remarkable variety of work our Everett Fire teams perform every day to keep us safe.

In 2019, our fire crews answered nearly 23,000 calls for emergency service. They also are active in our community, offering safety and preparedness training. We now have 360 community volunteers trained and ready to help respond in the event of a disaster or emergency situation.

I'd like to thank Chief DeMarco and his brave and dedicated team for delivering on their mission, and "being here for us."

## **COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIP**

---

Moving on, I'd like to talk about collaboration.

One of our key partners is Snohomish County, and I am grateful for the strong relationship we have with Executive Somers, the County Council and the entire Snohomish County team. Because our local communities often face very similar challenges, we work together to efficiently address our common issues.

Another important partnership our city has is with the Boeing Company. Once again I'd like to thank Boeing for generously hosting this morning's event!

I think we can all appreciate that Boeing has had a really rough year. The plane crashes and terrible loss of life were a tragedy for all of us.

But Everett is a Boeing town, and we have weathered tough times before. Despite the setbacks of the 737 MAX, Boeing has stayed strong and not laid off any workers to date. Boeing remains a strong pillar of our economy, and our aerospace industry is solid. With the manufacturing of the 777X, and it's first flight coming up in just a week or so, Boeing has retained our foothold as the center of the composite universe! I am very optimistic about the future of our aerospace sector and the continued growth and innovation it will bring to our region.



But what really impresses me, are the machinists, engineers, and others who go to work in the biggest building of the world and build these amazing planes! Thank you for the work that you do.

Another very important partner is Naval Station Everett. I will continue to advocate fiercely to the Navy and Coast Guard leadership in Washington, D.C. about why adding more assets to Naval Station Everett is in our military's best interest. Everett's deep water port and quick access to the Pacific offers strategic advantages that can't be found elsewhere along the West Coast.

Plus, Everett is known as "the Sailor's Choice" for good reason. Not only are we one of the most beautiful places in the northwest, but we are proud to have the Navy and Coast Guard here, and we welcome their families as valued members of our community.

At this time, will all of our Navy, Coast Guard and other members of the military please stand, as well as our veterans? Thank you all for your service.

I'm also grateful for our partnership with the Port of Everett and the considerable investments they are putting into our community. Through their Mills to Maritime initiative, they are transforming our waterfront, cleaning up old mill sites and transitioning them into job-producing uses. I'm also grateful for the Port's environmental stewardship. One of their current projects, the Blue Heron Slough, is creating 353 acres of wetland to support salmon habitat and also doubles as a mitigation bank. I'd like to thank Port CEO Lisa Lefeber and our Port Commissioners for bringing these projects to life.

We are also continuing our collaborations within the education community. We have excellent public schools here and top-notch higher education institutions.

That includes WSU Everett, which continues to boost enrolment and attract even more students. Their engineering and medical programs are growing, offering important STEM opportunities and building the future workforce our local employers need to remain world leaders in aerospace, healthcare and other STEM-related industries. I'd like to recognize and thank Dr. Paul Pitre, Chancellor, for continuing to expand such quality higher education options in Everett!

We are also proud to have an outstanding community college as well as some of the best K-12 schools in the state. Last year we welcomed new leadership to those institutions, including:

- Dr. Alison Brynson as superintendent of Mukilteo Public Schools
- Dr. Ian Saltzman as the new superintendent of Everett Public Schools
- And Dr. Daria Willis as new president of Everett Community College

I've enjoyed meeting with them and other leaders in education to discuss how we can ensure our schools are accessible, inclusive and providing young people with the knowledge and skills they need to achieve and succeed.



On that note, the City is also helping create pipelines for young people to gain the knowledge and skills they need to enter the workforce. This is all part of our efforts to build a brighter future for our youth.

One such pathway is our Everett Career Link internship program, which we launched last summer in partnership with Everett Public Schools. This program connects local businesses with high school students for 90-hour summer internships, for which the students receive school credit.

Fifty students participated, working at 29 different work sites. We hosted a number of them throughout the City, including an outstanding young intern in my office, Jaime Smith. She did so well that we kept her on as an intern and she continues to be a valued team member in my office today. Thank you, Jaime! Thank you to Shannon Affholter, Dr. Dana Riley Black and the entire team of Everett Schools for their fantastic work putting this program together!

And thanks to all of the businesses who hosted an intern. This year, I'm pleased to announce that we will be expanding the program to Everett students in the Mukilteo School District, so that even more young people have an opportunity to gain this real-world work experience.

The Workforce Development Center offers another truly amazing program I want to highlight. This nonprofit organization provides hands-on training for at-risk and disadvantaged high school juniors and seniors. Students learn practical skills that prepare them for jobs in the aerospace sector. I was able to tour their facility and meet with young people who are training to help create future generations of airplanes.

One of their current students is with us today, Keelan Clearbrook. When I recently met with Keelan, I was impressed by his intelligence and passion for aerospace work. Keelan is 17, lives in Everett, and attends Edmonds-Woodway High School.

Keelan is also deaf. He was inspired to start at the Workforce Development Center because his dad works at Boeing, and he hopes to one day follow in his father's footsteps. He told me he was grateful for this opportunity because deaf people can often have a hard time finding work. At the Center, he's gaining knowledge and building skills in a supportive and welcoming environment that is ensuring he is career-ready and very hireable.

Carmela Morelli, director of student services also shared with me that last year, every one of the 40 seniors in the program graduated high school, and all went on to either employment or post-secondary education. Impressively, 28 were hired in Snohomish County aerospace companies, including Boeing.

These are truly compelling results and show how a program like this can help a young person overcome their challenges and achieve their goals. Thank you, Carmela and the team at Workforce and thank you, Keelan for joining us today and sharing your story.





When it comes to workforce development, we cannot overlook the important role of labor and trades in our community. Everett was built on labor and I will continue to support pathways into the trades and opportunities for people to earn good family wage jobs in a variety of sectors.

Another important pillar of our community is our incredible Everett Public Library! Our library teams work hard to keep residents informed, and to create a safe place to gather and share ideas, and to read!

A key milestone of last year was the grand re-opening of the Evergreen Branch. It is amazing and has all new state-of-the-art features, including new meeting space, new computers and laptop stations, and a fabulous children's room!

I'm very proud of the quality programs our libraries offer to the community. And because youth is a key theme today, I wanted to highlight our Great Stories Club, a book club for teens.

Our youth services librarian who leads this program told me about a student I'll call "Max", and how this program made a difference in their life:

Max had never read any books with characters that reflected how they identified as themselves in the world. Nobody that resembled them or could serve as a role model. So, the librarian brought in a stack of books that changed all that, written by, or about, people that Max could relate to. Max was "thrilled and overwhelmed" by the idea that there were so many stories out there that reflected aspects of their own experience.

Programs like this are just one way we can cultivate inclusion, acceptance, and be a welcoming community.

Our neighborhoods are another conduit we have to our residents and I'm grateful to our neighborhood leaders for the passion they bring to our community. In the coming year, we'll continue to work with these dedicated community leaders to ensure all residents know how to effectively and efficiently access City services and engage with the City team.

## **ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL VITALITY**

---

Next, I'd like to talk about economic and cultural vitality.

Establishing Everett as the destination of choice for businesses, residents and tourists alike is part of my vision for a more vibrant city and better future for all. This means capitalizing on, and managing, the growth Everett is experiencing. And boy have we been growing!

We are attracting new businesses, new visitors, new residents every day. It's also exciting to see our established businesses continue to grow. I'd like to share a few highlights:



Obviously, a very big deal was the start of commercial air service at the beautiful Paine Field passenger terminal, which opened last spring.

Every time I'm in the terminal, I'm amazed by how easy the experience is and I'm dazzled by the special touches. Alaska and United Airlines currently offer daily flights to eleven destinations and are just one stop away from global getaways.

We're truly fortunate to have a luxury airport right here in our own backyard! No wonder that it's already been named "World's Best Regional Airport" by Monocle Magazine. Thank you to CEO of Propeller Air, Brett Smith, for having this vision and making commercial air travel a reality here in Everett!

Another newcomer to the city is TerraPower, which is bringing cutting-edge nuclear science to Everett. In their new lab, researchers will tackle some of society's most challenging problems, such as generating carbon-free electricity and treating cancer.

In a different kind of "lab," I'm pleased to see the Northwest Innovation Resource Center called "The Lab" continuing to grow and do remarkable work. Through a new partnership with Providence Regional Medical Center, Everett Community College and WSU Everett, they will bring together students, healthcare workers and entrepreneurs to explore innovative solutions to community health issues.

And yet another company supporting entrepreneurship is Executive Beauty Suites. I had the opportunity to attend their grand opening in South Everett and was very impressed. This is a small business that supports other small businesses. Their model is built around helping aspiring entrepreneurs get off the ground and launch their own independent beauty business!

Josh and Laycee Gwyther are here today. Thank you for making the dreams of other beauty professionals come true!

I was also pleased to attend the grand opening of Judd & Black's new home on Everett Mall Way, which is nearly twice as big as the flagship store they lost to a tragic fire two years ago. The entire community rallied around them to celebrate this new beginning. There's a reason they are so loved! I am grateful for their resilience and community involvement, and keeping our households stocked with great, quality appliances.

One of my favorite new additions to our community has been the Los Tamaahles food truck. Los Tamaahles rotate around the city and can often be spotted at Boeing and our local microbreweries. Owners Hugo and Viviana are so friendly and welcoming, and the food is outstanding. As a vegetarian, my favorite is their jackfruit tamale, coupled with tasty Mexican corn! Thank you, Hugo and Viviana, for making Everett your home.



Yet another addition is Soundbite Cider, which joins a growing number of microbreweries setting up shop in South Everett, making it a haven for craft beverage fans.

And we were pleased to welcome Golden Fleece Billiards, who opened their doors on Colby and provides billiards, beverages and bites. A fun fact: one of its business partners, Kim Jones, was the first African-American woman to compete in billiards for a world title, and has won five grand master events. I've been told she gives lessons!

These are just a few examples of how Everett is establishing itself as a place that attracts new business, and a place where existing businesses can grow and thrive.

In addition to new businesses, Everett is also attracting more and more residents! Our population has been growing by an average of 1,000 residents a year since 2010, and today we have about 112,000.

As we grow, it's important to ensure Everett offers a wide range of housing at all price points. We have some good news on that front. Projects to develop more than 1,200 new units are either under construction or in the City's permitting pipeline.

Down on the waterfront, construction is underway to build 266 units of market rate apartments. The first building is expected to open in 2021.

You may have also noticed the big red crane in the middle of downtown. That's where Skotdal Real Estate is building the MARQUEE apartment community, which will add 77 units of beautiful market rate housing.

And on the riverfront, 35 years after the tire fire there and decades of environmental restoration, further development has begun. We expect the first phase of the Riverfront project to open in 2022, bringing close to 300 residential units, as well as a theater, grocery store, restaurants and more!

There are also new apartments and townhomes in the works in Twin Creeks, Beverly Lake, Silver Lake, Delta and Westmont neighborhoods.

Yet in spite of all this development, our region still faces a housing crisis.

In 2019, the median price to purchase a house in Everett was \$389,000. The median household income in Everett is only \$55,000. Local incomes are simply not keeping pace with housing costs, which means owning a home here is out of reach for many of our residents. Our local City and County teams are working to address this.

One example is our participation on Executive Somers' Housing Affordability Regional Taskforce. Over the past eight months, Snohomish County cities and towns have worked to develop a five-year housing action plan outlining how we can move forward, protect housing affordability, and grow responsibly.



Also, through the City's Rethink Housing and Rethink Zoning initiatives, we aim to ensure present and future residents of Everett have sufficient housing opportunities that are safe, accessible, attractive and affordable.

Please join the conversation! We're planning a Rethink Housing forum this spring, which will broaden our community's understanding of the housing crisis and explore what community partners can do together to create more options at all price points.

City teams have also begun incorporating principles of "placemaking" into our work, which is about making Everett the vibrant place we all know it can be.

On that note, last summer we were thrilled to welcome the Everett Farmers Market to its new home on Wetmore. This is bringing thousands of people and new vitality downtown every Sunday of the market season. I look forward to continuing this partnership for years to come.

Our City has also begun working toward certification as a Creative District, which is a program that helps communities turn cultural activities into economic growth. Everett is already a creative center with the Schack, Imagine Children's Museum, Everett Performing Art Center and Black Lab Gallery. This designation allows us to highlight what we already have.

We have amazing new sculptures at our arboretum and newly remodeled Evergreen Branch library, and exciting plans for new murals downtown, funded through public/private partnerships with Skotdal Real Estate and Funko. Funko is even going to hold an in-house competition amongst its 300 graphic designers and artists to design one of the murals, which will go on the Everett Performing Arts Center, all at no cost to the city.

This summer the Schack Art Center's Graffiti Show will bring artists, demonstrations, new artwork and more murals to downtown. And, Broadway will soon feature new sculptures that also function as bike racks!

Certainly, something that makes Everett a cool place to be, is having great things to do.

The Angel of the Winds Arena continues to bring a great variety of music and activities to our city, including sports like our beloved Silvertips and the Seattle Storm. In just a few weeks we'll be hosting the Fed Cup, the premier international competition in women's tennis. And it was just announced yesterday that tennis icon Serena Williams will be playing! I'm kind of a fan – who isn't – so I can't wait!

We also are proud to host our Everett Aquasox at the recently re-branded Funko Field! If you haven't been to a game – you really need to go! It's one of the best places for a family to enjoy a sunny summer day. Thank you to our fabulous local athletes, Angel of the Winds Arena and Funko Field for making Everett a great place to be!



Being able to get where you need to go in a reasonable amount of time is also part of economic vitality, which means having great transportation infrastructure: roads, bridges, intersections and traffic management systems.

Our public works and transit teams do a great job of keeping the city moving. That's especially apparent this week! Teams have been working around the clock to keep our roads safe and buses running. Without them, many of us may not have been able to make it here today. I'm truly grateful for their dedication.

Last year our public works team completed a significant milestone. Our team successfully lifted and installed the million-pound Grand Avenue Park Bridge - a feat of incredible technical precision. This utility project not only upgrades City storm and sewer systems, but also creates a beautiful pedestrian connection to the waterfront that will open this spring.

This year our Public Works team will continue to ensure our roads are among the best maintained in the region, finish the Rucker Renewal project, and complete segments of our bicycle master plan.

Maintaining this level of service is getting tougher, however, with dwindling resources. The passage of I-976 deals a significant blow to our public works and transportation budgets, and this year we will need to take a hard look at how we provide these essential services.

One way we're working to bring revenue to the City is by showcasing Everett as a premiere tourist destination. Last year we debuted a new tourism brand called "Visit Everett." So far Visit Everett has reached an estimated 7.5 million people, highlighting Everett's beautiful waterfront, our historic and walkable downtown, and of course our many unique restaurants and businesses.

Some of you may recall in my State of the City last year, I challenged everyone who lives, works and learns in Everett to be our own best ambassadors and to share our love of Everett loudly, and proudly. And you have risen to the challenge! All around me, including in the voices of our young people, I hear pride and a sense of belonging when we talk about Everett being our home.

Vibrant welcoming communities always have great parks, so I'm especially proud of Everett's robust park system. We have more than one thousand acres spanning 54 park properties, all offering our residents and visitors an opportunity to get some fresh air and exercise, volunteer with Green Everett, and take in the natural beauty of the Pacific Northwest. Our parks department also offers excellent classes for all ages and interests, such as swimming, gardening, guided tours, and more!

Late last year we also celebrated the grand opening of the new YMCA! Through our partnership with the Y, City of Everett residents can use the swim center for a small fee, without becoming a member. Now residents have two exceptional pools to choose from! This partnership also includes creating a new city park, adjacent to the Y, which will open this year. Thank you to our local Y for your partnership and all you do for your members and our residents alike!



## SUSTAINABLE AND EFFECTIVE GOVERNMENT

---

Now I'd like to touch on what it means to be a sustainable and effective government. That means being responsive and responsible, transparent and accountable.

A new way we've added transparency to City operations is through our open data portal. This interactive online portal gives community members access to a range of datasets, including topics like public safety, education, health and transportation.

Another example is council districting. Everett voters decided to have our city council seats represent geographic areas. That kicked off a districting process and the formation of a districting commission. Over the next few months, the Commission will work with the community and the districting master to create five equitable districts in our city.

Effective governance also means being nimble and responsive to the needs of our community. Right now, more than half of Everett's population is under the age of 40. That means we need to cultivate more opportunities for our young people and families to stay and thrive in Everett. We also need to ensure that Everett is a welcoming city and a great place to live and work.

To help in that endeavor, I'll be working with our Youth Advisory Board and our other boards and commissions to explore ways we can better engage younger generations in City business and decisions, and grow Everett into a city of which they will be proud.

Although my focus today is on our youth, we remain committed to ensuring a great quality of life for all of us over 40, as well!

That stresses the importance not only of creating jobs for youth and future generations, but also taking care of our seniors and ensuring Everett remains affordable, offers quality programs and services, and is overall a great place to retire.

Through our Parks Department and our Carl Gipson Senior Center, the City continues to provide high quality classes that engage the body and mind, and create a sense of community. And, thanks to a grant from Snohomish County, last year we installed new fitness equipment at the senior center, which will help keep our seniors active and physically fit.

Being a sustainable, responsive and responsible government means we must also address climate change and take action to reduce our carbon footprint.

Our region is already experiencing the effects of climate change, from hotter than usual summers to wetter than usual rainy seasons and winter storms, to smokier than ever summer skies due to wildfires. All of these affect our health, safety and quality of life. As I think about this, I have to think about my daughter. I want a better future for her and all of our residents.



Toward that end, the City has been taking action.

In City operations, transportation accounts for most of our greenhouse gas emissions. Accordingly, our efforts to date have focused on tackling emissions from City vehicles. We're replacing fleet vehicles with more fuel-efficient models, and even all-electric ones when feasible. Everett Transit, for example, is leading the charge toward electrification and has added nine all-electric buses, with more on the way this year.

We're also promoting alternatives to driving by improving the walkability and bike-ability of Everett.

One of my New Year's resolutions is to bike more, so I'm thrilled that a new major link of the bicycle master plan opened last year. It connects Pacific Avenue to the Interurban Trail, providing a safe, convenient route to bike between North and South Everett and our other neighboring communities.

We also continue work to increase and protect our green spaces and natural areas. Through our tree program, we've worked with residential and commercial property owners to plant close to 5,000 trees in city neighborhoods.

These are meaningful steps, but I know we must do more.

In the coming weeks, we'll be presenting a Climate Action Plan to City Council. The plan sets targets to reduce the climate pollution from both City operations, as well as throughout our community, and seeks to position Everett as a leader on climate action. I look forward to working with City Council to advance this work.

Good government also means focusing on, and anticipating, the future. This has been a priority of mine since taking office, where we faced a \$13.2 million-dollar structural deficit. I've been working with our City Council and the City team to put us on a fiscally sustainable path.

This process has not been easy and has meant trimming programs, reorganizing departments and reducing staff. In the past 2 years, we've made nearly \$8 million in permanent reductions, and reduced staffing from an already-lean workforce by an additional 18 FTEs.

Despite these actions, more work is necessary to permanently address our structural deficit. The City cannot accomplish this goal on its own. It will take the commitment of everyone in our community, our residents, and our businesses alike.

## 2020 INITIATIVES

---



Our vision for Everett is one of strength, security and equity, and if we work together as a community, we will realize that vision. As we are working towards this goal, I have four exciting initiatives that I intend to pursue, and hope I will have your full support in bringing them to fruition.

First, we must ensure we continue to have a robust, well-trained police force to keep our communities safe. I'm proud of our outstanding Police Department and everything they have accomplished to reduce crime across the city. But we know that more needs to be done so that our residents feel safe everywhere, all the time.

With a growing population, it's important that our Police Force grows in tandem. Therefore, I intend to add 24 officers by 2022. This will add patrol officers where we need them most, reduce response times and ensure our residents are not only safe, but also *feel* safe.

This is our number one goal and priority. With the community's help, I know we can accomplish this goal.

Second, we must eliminate student homelessness in the city of Everett.

Last school year, roughly 1200 Everett school children were living without safe, stable housing.

Kids cannot succeed without a roof over their head. If you're hungry, if you haven't slept, if you don't know where you're going to end up the next day, how can you possibly stay focused, or even pass a test at school?

I believe this is a problem we can solve. I am calling on experts in the field to form a task force to develop recommendations so that together we can execute a plan to solve student homelessness in our city.

I'm proud to announce Joe Alonzo, CEO of Cocoon House and Dr. Joyce Stewart, former deputy superintendent of Everett Public Schools, will co-lead this effort. I can't think of two better people to champion this cause, and know they will bring unmatched expertise, perspective and determination to solving this challenge.

The task force will also include representatives from nonprofits, faith-based organizations, both Everett and Mukilteo school districts, and other community leaders, as well as students experiencing homelessness and their families.

From my experience on the Community Streets Initiative, I know that working together, we can tackle big problems. There is no community more collaborative, or innovative, than Everett.

Third, we live in an incredibly beautiful city, but not all of our neighborhoods enjoy the same beautiful outdoor amenities.





Historically much of the City's investments have been in North Everett, which tends to have better walking and biking routes, as well as access to water and riverfronts. South Everett, in the meantime, has one of the most beautiful, but underutilized lakes in the region: Silver Lake.

Decades ago, City teams envisioned creating a cohesive and connected recreational trail around the lake. Those plans were revisited and tabled over and over again for years due to the high price tag of the project.

A few months ago I was fortunate to be one of seven mayors selected to participate in the Mayor's Institute of Urban Design, where I received guidance from experts around the country on how to move forward with this project. I learned that we *can* make this happen, affordably, for our residents in South Everett, for our visitors and our region as a whole.

Therefore, I have directed staff to revisit previous City plans to improve recreational opportunities and pathways around the lake, so people of all abilities can safely enjoy it. I look forward to reporting on our progress on this in the months to come.

Finally, to address our future sustainability, I am calling together a stakeholder committee to explore our fiscal options and to advise City leadership on ways we can address the City's revenue challenges this year, and far into the future.

Balancing a budget year over year, while facing a growing deficit, is not only unsustainable, it's bad business. Our City and residents deserve the investments I've talked about today, and much more.

We cannot achieve a high quality of life if we continue to whittle away at services and programs to balance our bottom line. We need lasting changes that put us on a more sustainable financial path.

We will launch this work immediately and it will be of utmost importance in ensuring we can accomplish our combined vision and the vision that the young people shared this morning.



## CONCLUSION

---

You've just heard me talk about the wonderful things happening in the city, and the ways we're making a difference. You've also heard me talk about some of the challenges we face, how we might solve those challenges, and our vision for a bright future.

I'll end my remarks today where I began, which is with the future in mind; a future that is awesome, filled with FUNKO, world-class companies, flight, fun things to do, a City that is welcoming with housing at all price points, and sunny days, the hopes and dreams of our young residents.

You are leaders from big business, small business, faith-based organizations, nonprofits, government, law enforcement, financial institutions and education.

Together we have everything we need to make Everett the city our youth hope it will be.

I am grateful for your investment in this community and look forward to continuing our partnership to ensure Everett remains a safe, welcoming, prosperous and "awesome" community. Thank you!

