



**Mike McGinn, Mayor**  
City of Seattle

**State of the City Address (as written)**  
**February 21, 2012**

Thank you, Council President Clark and Councilmembers, for your welcome. And thank you all for being here.

The City Charter mandates that I report to the Council and to the people on the state of the city.

When I think about the state of the city, I think about where we have been, and what we have faced. Seattle was knocked down pretty hard during the recession. We lost 35,000 jobs. Unemployment peaked at 8.2%. Some of our city's leading companies went under, along with many small businesses, promising startups, and beloved neighborhood shops. We watched our family, friends and neighbors struggle, while our home values and retirement savings dropped. It was, and remains, the worst hard time since the Great Depression.

In moments like that, you can learn something about yourself and the people you share a community with. We learned we are resilient, we are determined, we are innovative, and we are passionate about the place we live.

The hard times aren't over. But we have been making progress. Since the bottom of the recession, we have created approximately 18,000 jobs in Seattle. Our unemployment rate is 6.6%, while the national unemployment rate is 8.3%. Construction activity is picking up. When I took office there weren't any cranes on the skyline. On my way to City Hall this morning I counted at least a dozen. It's good to see hardhats.

But recovery isn't happening as fast as we would like. We still haven't put everyone back to work. We haven't solved the persistent inequalities in our economy. We know that unemployment is higher among young people, especially in communities of color. We know that not everybody has the same opportunities.

We face other challenges. There are children in this city who aren't graduating school -- or if they are, they aren't prepared for college or a career. Too many people don't feel safe in their own neighborhoods. Our transit system has to be better. Global warming still looms over us all.

Today I want to talk about how we are addressing these challenges. Doing so will require us to be determined, focused, and innovative.

We are facing our budget challenges here at City Hall. On January 1, 2010, the day I took office, the 2009 General Fund Budget closed \$2.4 million in the red. The



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previously adopted budgets spent down our rainy day savings fund by \$20 million. Faced with revenue shortfalls in 2010 and 2011, we had to do something different. Working with the council and our employees, we did. We ended both 2010 and 2011 in the black. We adopted a new Rainy Day Fund policy (thank you for your work on this Councilmember Godden) which means we are slowly building back our Rainy Day fund. We have increased the value of the Rainy Day Fund from \$10.5 million to \$13.2 million.

We made cuts too. But we were able to balance our budget without a general tax increase. We protected core services through cost savings, efficiencies, and regional collaboration. We are not building a new jail. Our city employees renegotiated their pay. We combined departments. We reduced the size of our fleet. We reduced overtime, and found numerous other ways to save money so that we could deliver the best services to the people of Seattle.

Our efficiencies helped us continue to provide important services. We filled more than 25,000 potholes in 2011, more than in the last two years combined. Last year federal budget cuts threatened funding to homeless shelters and services. We were able to find \$713,000 million to backfill those cuts and keep those services going.

But we can't always do that. Today we are working with much less money than we had during the boom years. We face more state and federal cuts. We have to fund a new seawall -- a very high priority in the coming year -- for safety reasons, and if we want to lay a foundation for our waterfront. And we face another budget shortfall of \$40 million in 2013. We will tackle this challenge the same way as we have before -- we will get your input and focus on making government more efficient. We will work hard to balance our budget in a way that reflects Seattle's values.

We know that one of the best ways to help improve our budget is to help grow our economy and bring new investment to Seattle.

Nine months ago we were approached by Chris Hansen to explore options to build an arena in Seattle. I am going to talk about that later in the speech. But I want you to know that when anyone approaches us asking for our help to invest in our city, we take it seriously. You don't have to be looking to bring a basketball team home.

One year ago Amazon approached my office. They had been part of ongoing conversations about developing a new electrical substation and redundant electrical system in South Lake Union for some time. Amazon was at a point where they needed to know if we were serious. Because the pioneering work of researchers, health care providers, and companies like Amazon all need reliable electricity. You don't want to lose power in the middle of your cancer research. Or during the Christmas rush.



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We submitted, and council approved in December 2011, funding to begin the preliminary engineering work for this highly reliable network service, including a new substation. We'll return to Council this month to release additional engineering funds and to initiate the environmental review process. I'm looking forward to working with Councilmember O'Brien to get this done.

Last week we learned that Amazon was planning a major expansion - right here in Seattle. They are looking at three blocks in the Denny Triangle along Westlake with a reported intent to build a one-million square foot building on each block. That would more than double Amazon's already substantial footprint in Seattle. In the words of one observer, "in terms of jobs for Seattle, this is off the charts." We have put together a team from the city that is already working directly with Amazon to support their project.

We want them to build here.

Amazon isn't the only company that wants to be here.

Our software companies and our businesses told me that they need better internet connections. Last year in the State of the City address I pledged to address this. Last May we launched a project to bring [broadband](#) to Pioneer Square by laying conduit underneath 1st Avenue that internet service providers could use to serve nearby businesses. We have good news to report. Comcast took us up on our offer and there are now 50 companies ready to sign up for this fiber optic broadband.

And that's not all. We're still working to make our dark fiber -- unused city owned fiber optic cable -- available to the public. We're partnering with the University of Washington on [Gig U](#), a national initiative to expand high-capacity fiber optic broadband in campus communities. We invited service providers to use our dark fiber to connect an entire neighborhood. Imagine researchers, businesses, students, professors, families all connected to dramatically faster fiber. This could be transformative. Look at how desktop computers, wifi, even cell phones have changed our lives in ways we could not have imagined. Fiber optic broadband has that potential.

Nationwide, GigU has received proposals from over 50 companies. We are working with the UW to identify respondents that could be a good fit for a partnership right here in Seattle.

Pioneer Square and the U-district are two examples, but we have fiber optic cable available across the city. I will ask the Council to act to modernize our rules and ordinances so that we can connect our residents and businesses and light up our dark fiber. I look forward to continuing to work with Councilmember Harrell on this important issue.



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We are going to keep pushing the edge of the envelope, because Seattle has the kind of people who will do amazing things if we give them the tools.

We're listening to our research companies too. They recently told me that the city collects a business and occupation tax on research grants from the National Institutes of Health. That didn't make sense. An NIH grant is not revenue, it is specified research funding that fuels the innovation that will create new products and new jobs. And nowhere in the grant award from the federal government is there a line item for paying taxes. So, we're proposing to fix it. We're working with Councilmembers Conlin and Clark to develop legislation to eliminate this tax. We want our research companies doing research.

I want to be clear - we are working to build a culture of responsiveness in City government to support economic activity. Argosy Cruises contacted us with a concern that paid parking on the waterfront is only 2 hours long, while their cruises are 2 and a half hours long. We've fixed that. Parking near Argosy is now four hours. We're also helping businesses that cater to a thriving nightlife by extending nighttime parking limits to 3 hours, so you can pay at 5 and stay all night. In fact, if you've had too good a time and don't want to drive, you can even [prepay](#) for the next morning.

Now I know parking rates are controversial. I promise you we'll continue to adjust rates and parking times as circumstances require, based on a data driven approach. Thank you Council member Burgess for your leadership in helping develop our parking rate policy and approach that we're now implementing.

In the last two years, I've done more than 60 town halls and walking tours, and sometimes, I get an earful. Last year, I stood in front of builders who told me it was taking them 9 weeks to get an intake appointment to start a building project. They were right, that's way too long. Those are jobs waiting to happen. Diane Sugimura of DPD now sends me a weekly email with waiting times for all appointments. Despite deep cuts to DPD due to reduced permit fees, they have appointments available within three weeks, and we're pushing to get it lower.

This matters. People want to build in Seattle. I have spoken to mayors of cities where people don't want to build, and it ain't pretty there. We are going to keep working to get those projects out the door. We're adding resources to DPD to build on the momentum.

We can help South Lake Union continue to grow and maintain the momentum through a planned rezone this year. The City will be bringing a proposal back to the community in the next few months, realizing the original vision laid out in the 2004 plan and the need



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to support Seattle's continued growth. Based on feedback from a variety of stakeholders, I will then submit a proposal to the City Council.

And there is more we can do. In July of last year we announced a package of regulatory [changes](#) that will help our businesses grow. We went through our code looking for laws that no longer serve a useful purpose, in fact stand in the way of environmentally sustainable economic development.

It was kind of like rummaging through my fridge checking items for the freshness date. And let me tell you, we've got some moldy laws. They deserve to be thrown out. I'm looking forward to working with Councilmember Conlin to move that legislation in the weeks and months to come. Our roundtable of stakeholders is also looking at a broader set of possible reforms.

Last week I met with the CEO of Brooks Sports and the head of Skanska. They have submitted plans to construct a [new green building](#) in Fremont that will house Brooks' headquarters and bring 300 new jobs to Seattle. Like Amazon they want to be in Seattle, creating new jobs next to the Burke Gilman Trail. Their CEO is very excited about this - he said "if you looked all over the world there isn't a better place to be than the corner of Stone Way and 34th in Fremont."

He was looking to construct a building greener than anything we've seen before. To accomplish this, they requested an additional ten feet in height. He's run into a glitch - some neighbors are appealing this change. But we're going to keep pushing, because we don't want to lose those 300 jobs and a corporate headquarters. And Fremont deserves to have one of the greenest buildings ever built in this city.

That we're working on a living building here is a testament to our city's leadership on green buildings. Last year President Obama launched a [Better Buildings Challenge](#) - to reduce energy use by 20% in the building sector by 2020.

Our city has accepted that challenge - in fact, our design, architecture, development and business community says we can do better than that. They launched the [2030 District](#) to make even deeper reductions in energy and water use in commercial buildings in this city. We've been supporting that effort with our [Community Power Works](#) program, our conservation programs at Seattle City Light, and innovative policies to encourage deep green buildings. In June, as a result of that civic resolve by the 2030 district, we were selected by the Obama Administration to be one of the first three cities as partners in the Better Building Challenge.

And I know that it feels sometimes like climate change has disappeared from the news. But we are continuing our commitment to solving it. I will soon be announcing a new



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Green Ribbon Commission to look at where we've been and where we need to go. The environmental imperative is clear. The health and quality of life benefits of reducing pollution are obvious.

But there's another benefit too. All around the globe cities and nations are trying to figure out how to get off fossil fuels. There's a simple reason for that: oil and gas are just going to keep going up in price. The city that figures out how to reduce fossil fuel use isn't just going cleaner and healthier, it's going to be more prosperous. Other cities will want to know how we did it. Then we can export that knowledge, how to build prosperous green cities - the same way we export software and airplanes.

I want to say something else about why Amazon is staying here and expanding here, why Brooks Sports want to be here, why [Pioneer Square](#) has several new ventures, why Zymogenetics chose to stay, why the Gates Foundation, global health companies, and biotech want to be here. Because we're a city, with everything that means. For the last fifty years, we've seen companies locate headquarters far on the edge of town. Where there are greenfields to dig up, and room for acres of parking lots. We don't have that here. But we have a lot of stuff that matters - things that only cities have -- and that's why they want to be here. And we need to build on that.

We have great colleges and universities. A world-class research institution in the University of Washington. Seattle University. Seattle Pacific. Cornish College of the Arts - the premier Northwest arts college. Our community colleges - a hidden gem.

And we're getting more. We worked with City University on their relocation from Bellevue to Sixth and Wall. We're working with Northeastern University to open a branch here.

We have extraordinary arts and culture, from big institutions to neighborhood groups, we have thousands of people engaged in creating art and enhancing our quality of life. That drives economic development too.

Last year we were approached by the owners of five historic theaters, and now we have created an [Historic Theater District](#) here in the City of Seattle. We've protected our funding for the arts and culture, and will work to promote it.

We have a thriving nightlife and music scene. We've made substantial progress in our [nightlife initiative](#), and continue to work to make nightlife safe and inviting parts of our communities.

We're promoting our music too. The 30 million people who go through [Sea-Tac Airport](#) will now hear Seattle music and Seattle musicians. Maybe we'll get a few of those



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visitors to come down and listen to that music. Thank you to the music commission for that work.

We heard from our hospitality industry that they were concerned with promoting Seattle as a tourist destination since the state had eliminated its own promotion programs. The industry came to us with a proposal to fill in the void. We worked with the Council to pass a \$2 surcharge on occupied hotel rooms in the Center City to fund a [Seattle Tourism Improvement Area](#). We're once again telling people around the country, and the world, why Seattle is a great place to visit.

We also have a diverse population, people that have grown up here, and people who come from all over the world. We need to support and celebrate the diversity in our neighborhoods -- because they help make Seattle great.

We've heard from neighborhood businesses, and our ethnic businesses, that they could use help. Neighborhood business districts serve as incubators for small business start-ups, as well as for local youth to get their first jobs and experience.

Here's one example: Last spring the MLK Business Association used city grant funds to host the first-ever Plate of Nations restaurant event. A dozen independently owned ethnic restaurants serving great food from around the world. You can drive up and down MLK and see a few chains, but mainly you'll see locally owned restaurants run by some of the hardest working people in this city. Businesses were happy with the increased revenue and they're planning to make this a yearly event. This year we will invest \$1.2 million in 19 neighborhoods that have worked together to seek our support.

We're also supporting entrepreneurs with training and business development to those in our community for whom traditional business development services are out of reach. To date, 50 East African- and Vietnamese-American entrepreneurs have completed the training program. One of these entrepreneurs is Zahara Solom, who owns Solom Grocery and Deli. It's a small corner store and Ethiopian restaurant located at the southern end of Columbia City. She has worked hard to carry healthier products in her store at the request of her customers. With the help of our Healthy Foods Here initiative, Zahara was able to purchase a small freezer for frozen vegetables and a refrigerator for produce, dairy, and healthy snacks, including sandwiches and salads.

Here's another low cost entrepreneurial activity we're supporting. Across America food trucks have been growing in popularity. We heard from entrepreneurs and food lovers that our rules in Seattle were limiting their ability to grow and operate. So we worked with Council President Clark to pass [legislation](#) that makes it easier to set up a mobile food cart. Food trucks have been one way for immigrants and people of color to get into



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the middle class. They're also a sign of a vibrant neighborhood and busy streets. As the weather warms I expect we'll see a lot more food trucks around our business districts.

Companies large and small want to be in our city because of these neighborhoods. They want to be here because we have food trucks. Nightlife. Arts and culture. Educational institutions.

And walkable neighborhoods.

One of the things that makes our neighborhoods special is that we have a lot of ways to get around. One of the common themes in our neighborhood plans is that people want the sense of community that comes from being able to walk around and get to know your neighbors.

Residents have begun organizing to design and build neighborhood greenways for bicycles, and with Councilmember Bagshaw we're doing our part to help. A group of residents on Linden Avenue in the North End, many of them seniors, organized to ask the city to build sidewalks, bike paths, and other improvements to help them get around safely. That project is out to bid and should begin construction this spring.

Soon we will announce our Transportation Action Agenda for the next three years, describing the work we're doing across this city for every mode of travel.

We know there have been concerns about how we share the roads, especially in the wake of tragedies that took place on our streets and sidewalks last year. That's why we called together a [Road Safety Summit](#). Working with Councilmembers Bagshaw and Rasmussen, we brought the public together to listen to what they had to say. We heard a lot of ideas and comments about ways we can improve safety on our roads. But the main thing we heard was that people in Seattle agree -- everyone should feel safe out there.

As a result of that summit, later this spring we will launch a sustained campaign to address safety on our roads. It will emphasize education, enforcement, and the way we design our roads for safety. It will also focus on creating a culture of empathy on our roads.

Here's another reason people want to live here - we have transit. Not all the transit we want, but enough to make a difference.

Seattle supports rail. Done right, it can provide a more affordable way to get around than driving - and if you haven't noticed lately, gas prices are going back up. Our [Transit Master Plan](#) shows that rail is one of the most effective ways to connect our



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neighborhoods. Our Transit Master Plan concluded rail was the only form of high capacity transit that would drive significant ridership gains between Ballard and Downtown - as many as 25,000 riders a day.

We are about to begin construction on the [First Hill Streetcar](#), connecting Pioneer Square, First Hill and Capitol Hill. We're working on finding funding for the Broadway north extension.

We have been working with our partners to begin planning rail to connect more of our neighborhoods. Sound Transit has agreed to advance its timeline to [plan rail](#) on the West corridor, from Ballard to downtown. Their board has authorized spending \$2 million this year and in the coming years to work with us at the City of Seattle to get planning under way.

Along with a \$900,000 federal grant and City matching funds, this will allow the City and Sound Transit to conduct a detailed analysis of alignments and technologies that will enable us to meet the longer-term demand for transit between some of our the fastest growing neighborhoods and downtown.

I want to thank Councilmember Conlin and Sound Transit CEO Joni Earl for their hard work in helping us reach this agreement. Now it's up to the Council to help us take the next step. I urge you to lift the proviso and let us get this planning process under way here in 2012.

There's another great part about the streetcar expansion. We make stuff here. President Obama came to see us build airplanes. We also make boats. We make steel. And for this streetcar line, we're going to make the streetcars here at [Pacifica](#). We're not the only city looking at streetcars. 20 cities are looking at expanding their operations. Pacifica is one of two companies in the US that can assemble streetcars. We're going to start exporting streetcars the way we export planes and boats. We're going to continue being the place that builds and exports things other people want.

I mentioned the [arena](#) at the top of this. If successful, this project means hundreds of millions of dollars of private investment – an investment that means even more during our city's fragile recovery.

I want to reiterate a few of the key points regarding this proposal:

1. No new taxes will be required. The arena will be self-financed.
2. Only taxes generated from construction and operation will be used for the project. In other words, it is funded by revenue that only exists because of the arena.



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3. The public will be protected by contractual guarantees from the investment group, backed up by securities placed in escrow.

4. The teams will enter into a binding non-relocation agreement until the arena financing is fully repaid.

If no teams come, no arena will be built.

We are putting that proposal in front of a citizen panel, and the Council will have their chance to review the proposal too. I look forward to the day we can stand up together and say to the NBA: this is a good deal for Seattle and we are ready for the Sonics to return.

We've been talking about new jobs. But we want to make sure those jobs go to the people who live here, as well as to those who have come here fleeing hardship. I've already spoken about mobile food trucks, and supporting local businesses like our restaurants in the Rainier Valley. And we want them to be good jobs, with good benefits. That's why I was proud to support [paid sick leave](#) in the City of Seattle. Thank you Councilmember Licata for leading that effort.

We need to go even deeper to prepare our young people for college and a career. I want Seattleites to fill those good jobs we are creating. But we have a big gap to close. In 2010, only 57% of African American students and 65% of Latino students met the state's 3rd grade reading standard. Native Americans and Asian and Pacific Islander groups face similar challenges. Meanwhile, 90.7% of our white students did the standard.

We cannot accept this. That's not who we are in Seattle. We have a moral and economic responsibility to do better.

We're taking two approaches to addressing this: investing in our schools through the [Families and Education Levy](#) and working with our partners at the community colleges to get more workers the skills they need.

Last year we renewed and enhanced the Families and Education Levy - \$241 million over the next seven years. Thank you, Councilmember Burgess, for your work on the Levy. And thank you, voters of Seattle, for continuing Seattle's commitment to our children.

Our most at risk students across the city will be benefiting from the Levy at the beginning of the next school year. These investments will focus on broadening and



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deepening proven academic programs that support student learning. Investments include Early-Learning programs for our youngest learners to prepare them for kindergarten, stronger academic and student support services at elementary schools including extra learning time and out of school activities, academic and college readiness programs for middle and high school students, and investments in health for pre-schoolers and elementary school students.

Under the current Levy, we have learned much about building successful models for improving academic outcomes for students. Next year, this successful approach will be expanded to elementary schools and additional high schools where too many students face challenges to academic achievement.

We're not stopping there. In 2010 we held the [Youth and Families Initiative](#), where more than 3,000 people gathered in 131 community meetings to tell us how the City could help improve education and quality of life for our children. One of the things they told us was that the City could improve the way we coordinate our numerous services to benefit our children.

Last year the City Budget Office conducted an inventory of youth & family programs in the City – we found that the City invests \$85 million across 130 programs in 9 agencies.

We know how much we spend and we know how many people we service. What we do not know is how effective these investments are in achieving their intended outcomes for our youth and families.

Here's a good example. We know that if a student is not literate by the third grade, they are more likely to drop out of school.

The City of Seattle spends a lot of money in this area. But we have no way to tell whether they're actually working, because we have no way to measure success.

That's why we are implementing a plan to start systematically measuring the results of City investments in education. We are starting with a pilot project at Northgate Elementary to measure the success of City investments in achieving third-grade reading objectives.

The City Budget office, the Human Services Department's Family Services Center, the Office for Education, and the Department of Neighborhoods are already working with Northgate Elementary Principal Stan Jaskot and his committed group of teachers and staff on this project. We are focusing existing City programs and services in the North End of the City most effectively to get all kids at Northgate Elementary read at grade level by 3rd grade. Currently, only 30% of the students at Northgate meet that goal.



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This approach begins with the third graders at Northgate and will broaden to include those in second, first, and kindergarten. We can track each cohort using data that measures how well we are succeeding – and can adjust each program to be responsive to their needs.

This pilot program will form the foundation of a broader outcome-based budgeting approach that the City can incorporate into other program areas in the future.

Seattle is a town that cares whether or not our kids succeed. How do we do that? Make sure every one is in school.

Our citywide Be Here Get There attendance campaign has been delivering results. Preliminary data shows that the rate of students attending school is at its highest level in five years. I want to thank all of our community partners, especially the students, parents, teachers and administrators who are making this effort possible.

We're also working to give every child a shot at college. The price of tuition is rising, and it shouldn't price out children who work hard. The state's College Bound Success program offers a full scholarship to students who meet financial eligibility requirements, maintain a certain grade point average and stay out of trouble. But they have to sign up by the eighth grade to be eligible. Last year our community partners signed up 42% more students than last year, and we reached almost every eligible kid. We'll be out there again this year.

We're also working to get job training for our young people. The City is partnering with the Seattle Community Colleges to launch the Pathways to Careers Partnership to double the student completion rates in high demand occupations.

Leveraging more than \$5 million in funds from our partners, the Pathways to Careers Partnership will help more of our workers get the skills they need to compete and succeed. In turn, that provides our local businesses with the skilled workers they need right here in Seattle, without having to look to other states.

Pathways to Careers focuses on training for high growth occupations business and information technology, manufacturing and industrial skills, international trade transportation and logistics, and healthcare. Our goal is to increase the student completion rates from approximately 40% to 80% in these four sectors.

Seattle is the kind of place where we step up and help our children to do well in school and in life. Seattle is also the kind of place where we build communities that are safe.



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We have the lowest crime rates in 55 years across our city, but we have seen some increases in certain kinds of crime. People are concerned about public safety. I heard concerns from residents in Columbia City the weekend before last. I heard concerns in Belltown on Friday night. I've heard it in other neighborhoods too.

I share the public's concerns. These problems are real. Last fall we saw an increase in the number of home break-ins in the Southeast Precinct. SPD swung into action and after making several arrests, the number of home break-ins fell back to normal levels.

So far in 2012 we have had seven homicides on our streets. Several of them stemmed from the drug trade. A few others took place around nightclubs. All involved guns.

I am here today to tell you that we are standing firm with the people of Seattle against violent behavior, armed robberies, open-air drug dealing and any other form of criminal behavior in Seattle.

Everyone who lives here, who works here, who shops here, and who comes here to enjoy what Seattle has to offer deserves to feel safe and secure. That goes for every neighborhood in our city.

The Seattle Police Department is launching "violence prevention emphasis patrols" in each of the city's five precincts. That means more officers will be deployed to address street disorder, assaults, and shootings, focusing on the specific problems in each neighborhood.

By providing a dedicated group of officers from each precinct to address these problems in our communities, we hope to improve our ability to prevent gun violence and other crimes as well as respond to calls for service within each precinct. These patrols have already started getting illegal guns off the street.

These patrols will work collaboratively with neighborhood businesses to ensure that residents and visitors can be in these areas safely and without fear.

Redeploying our police is just one part of the solution. Officers cannot solve this alone. We have to create a safe environment as well. Last year we cleaned up the Jungle in Beacon Hill. We partnered with residents of Columbia City to help clean up open-air drug markets.

The vast majority of our bars and clubs are safe, law-abiding, and help make Seattle a great place. We are taking action against those very few that aren't following the rules. Petty Officer 3rd Class Gregory Wayne Anderson, Junior was visiting Seattle from the USS Nimitz earlier this month when he was shot and killed during a fight near Club



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Republiq. That club had been facing bankruptcy, so we sent an SPD sergeant to testify to a judge about the problems there. The judge pulled the plug and shut the club down last week.

We heard concerns about Studio 7, and we went to the Liquor Control Board to ask that their liquor license be revoked. Because of our efforts, a notice of intent to revoke was issued last week. When problems arose at the Copper Cart in Belltown, city officials and the Liquor Control Board worked with the new owners and staff to improve safety and implement better practices. We are optimistic these changes will make a difference. And we stand ready to act in the event they do not.

We also know that some problems result from unmet social needs. While critical, police officers alone won't solve those problems, although they do help.

HSD Director Dannette Smith has convened several meetings with community service providers with the intention of working together to preserve the quality of life in Belltown and Pioneer Square while continuing to serve people who need assistance the most.

This year we are expanding our work to 3rd Avenue and to the International District. We're bringing our departments together to focus on sensible solutions to street disorder and crime. I want to thank Councilmembers Bagshaw and Rasmussen for their work on this project.

It is time we were honest about the problems we face with the drug trade. Drugs are a source of criminal profit, and that has led to shootings and even murders. Just like we learned in the 1920s with the prohibition of alcohol, prohibition of marijuana is fueling violent activity. We also know today that the drug war fuels a biased incarceration policy. The drug war's victims are predominantly young men of color.

Seattle is the kind of place that isn't afraid to try a different approach. We support safe access to medical marijuana and made enforcement of possession of marijuana for personal purposes our lowest enforcement priority. But we've learned in the past year that with the federal war on drugs still intact, and with our kids still getting gunned down on the streets, we need to do more.

I know every one of the city council members sitting to my left and right believe as I do: it's time for this state to legalize marijuana, and stop the violence, stop the incarceration, stop the erosion of civil liberties, and urge the federal government to stop the failed war on drugs.

And maybe if we can get sensible about marijuana, we can get sensible about gun laws next.



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We've been talking about gun violence. We ask our officers to put themselves in harm's way for us. We ask them to make tough decisions in the heat of the moment. We want them to do that so they can keep us safe.

For our officers to fight crime, they must have the public's trust. We want them to be trained to make the right decisions that fight both crime and build trust.

Now we know that trust was badly damaged by several high profile incidents. And, of course, we cannot talk about public safety without talking about the recent DOJ report. You know that I have ordered the police department to implement the reforms contained in that report and they are doing so.

The community is deeply interested in whether we will succeed. They should be. Issues of excessive force and bias in policing have been longstanding concerns.

We have to start by acknowledging that in our society, despite our best intentions, race matters. Not just in policing, but across our society.

Race matters in education. I've already quoted disturbing statistics about racial disparities in education. That's why our Families and Education is focused on that issue.

Race still matters in employment. Nationwide, the unemployment rate for African Americans is 15.8%, and 11% for Latinos. That's higher than it is for whites. Those disparities persist in Seattle too. That's why our Community Power Works program requires hiring disadvantaged young men and women from Seattle. When we solicited bids for the \$16 million [Rainier Beach Community Center project](#), all the bids came in with no women and minority inclusion. We rejected those bids, and required bids to meet the stricter standards of our new Inclusion Plan. The low bid this time came in with over 30% women and minority inclusion.

Race still matters in housing. Our Office for Civil Rights (OCR) recently did an undercover [survey](#) of local housing. They sent a white person and black person with identical financial history and background to try and rent homes. 69% of housing providers tested showed patterns of racial discrimination. OCR filed Director's charges against six of the properties that exhibited unambiguous evidence of discrimination. OCR worked with those properties to educate them about fair housing and resolve the charges.

Race matters in policing too. We have been and will continue to make changes to hiring, training, mentoring, supervision, discipline, and community outreach. Now, I



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can't stand here and guarantee that we will solve this problem immediately, anymore that I can promise you I am going to immediately solve racial discrimination in education, housing, contracting, and employment. But I can promise you this - in city government we will tackle this issue with resolve, determination and passion - no matter where racial and social inequities exist- in education, in housing, in employment, in contracting, and in policing. We will work to be the city that Seattle wants to be, a city where people can achieve, and be treated with dignity, no matter what their race or background.

That's the city we want to be. That's the city we want to fight for. And as long as I'm your Mayor, I am going to fight for that city.

And you know what, we have a lot of good people, and lot worth fighting for.

We've got great neighborhoods. On my walking tours I've seen neighbors in Columbia City come together to fight drug dealers. I've seen parents and volunteers come together to keep a summer reading program alive. I've seen Lake City residents come together to keep their local food bank open and stocked with donations during the holiday season.

We've got great employees here at the City. I had opportunity to work with many of them during the recent snowstorm. They weren't just focused on keeping our streets clear. They worked hard to make sure emergency responders could get to people in need, that dialysis patients had cars and drivers to get to their treatment, to communicate with immigrant and refugee populations. We aren't perfect, but it was great to be side by side with our city employees dedicated to I see that dedication to service every day in my job.

We have good kids, and we need to do more to support them. Last week I was out visiting Youth Green Corps. It's a group of young men age 18 to 25 that didn't finish high school, but they're out there in the rain planting trees and getting their GED. We just want to give them the tools they need to succeed.

We're creative. Our arts and culture never stand still. We're always creating something new, something interesting, and something different. That creativity spills over into everything we do

We've got visionaries here. We can't keep doing things the way we have been. Seattle is a place that supports visionaries. And it's not just those working for big companies. I still believe that the next big thing is going to be invented in somebody's garage or spare bedroom. The next big retailer is scouting out some hole in the wall retail space, or



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putting up a website. A craftsperson is coming up with our next Theo Chocolates or Redhook beer.

And we're not afraid to get our hands dirty. whether it's converting a vacant lot to a new P-patch with our neighbors, or building boats, planes and streetcars, we'll roll up our sleeves. Our fishing boats brave harsh Alaskan conditions, and we're collecting scrap metal to turn into steel right on our waterfront.

We have great people, and we live in a great place. It's why we stay here, whether we grew up in Seattle or moved here as soon as we got the good sense to do so.

All of those things that make Seattle great also make us resilient. They make us competitive. They make us strong.

And we're going to have to strong, and resilient and innovative - because the challenges we face - from inequality, to education, to economic competitiveness, to environmental sustainability - are real, and they're big.

But I can't think of any other city better prepared to face the challenges we face. If there is any place in the world that can show the way to deal with those challenges - it's Seattle, and I look forward to working with you to face those challenges.

Thank you.



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