

## **2020 STATE OF THE CITY SPEECH**

**Good afternoon and thank you all for coming today.**

**For the last eight years I have had the distinct privilege to deliver the State of the City, and today will be my final address as Mayor of this great city.**

**And a great city it is!**

**We accomplished plenty in 2019, and there is still much work to be done in my final year.**

**None of it would be possible without the contributions of each one of you.**

**I'd like to thank Steve for the generous introduction, as well as the Pleasanton Chamber of Commerce and today's sponsors for all the work that goes into organizing this annual event.**

**I would like to introduce my our City Councilmembers and other special guests who work tirelessly to enhance our quality of life in Pleasanton:**

**Vice Mayor Kathy Narum**

**Councilmember Karla Brown**

**Councilmember Jerry Pentin**

**Councilmember Julie Testa**

**I'd also like to acknowledge our City commission, committee and task force members who dedicate their time and expertise to making this city its very best.**

**Speaking of making this city the very best, I can't say enough positive things about the City's partnership with our school district.**

**From our cooperation on the Amador Valley High School solar parking lot project to PG&E's Public Safety Power**

**Shutoff, we are fortunate to have a great relationship with Pleasanton Unified School District.**

**None of it would be possible without the great leadership of Superintendent Dr. David Haglund and members of his team, guided by school board trustees: Board President Steve Maher, Vice President Jamie Yee, and Trustees Joan Laursen and Mark Miller.**

**Thank you for your partnership and leadership as we work collaboratively to ensure the health of our district, teachers and students.**

**These efforts show, as our Pleasanton schools rank among the best in the county and state.**

**In Alameda County, Pleasanton Unified School District ranked first in rankings from Niche, AND number one in Alameda County among elementary, middle, and high schools.**

**In 2019, Foothill High School was recognized as a California Distinguished School. And most recently this year, Mohr Elementary was recognized as a 2020 California Distinguished School.**

**And finally, I would like to thank our own City staff led by the person that keeps us firing on all cylinders, our City Manager Nelson Fialho, and the entire executive team.**

**Let's give all these folks a hand for the commitment they give to this community day-in and day-out.**

**Pleasanton has been home to me for 45 years.**

**We often hear: "There is no place like home."**

**I am here to remind you there is no place like Pleasanton.**

**What makes Pleasanton so special? Well, I'll tell you.**

**Pleasanton was ranked by Safewise as the 10<sup>th</sup> safest city in California and among the top 30 safest cities in the nation.**

**This would not be possible without our dedicated police and fire departments.**

**Our police department is top-notch but what sets our public safety officers apart is our community policing approach, where our officers are out every day serving with compassion and fostering community relationships through events like Coffee with Cop, Cone with a Cop and National Night Out; through long-standing programs such as D.A.R.E.; and by engaging one-on-one with residents and businesses.**

**Simply put, they live their motto: “better together”.**

**We know that despite the strong economy, homelessness is at an all-time high of across the state.**

**While we experience this on a small scale compared to some of our Bay Area neighbors, it is still our shared reality here in Pleasanton and the Tri-Valley.**

**To help these individuals – who for various reasons have encountered hardship – the City is partnering with our Tri-Valley neighbors and local non-profit organizations to help our fellow residents get back on their feet.**

**Our police department has also created a Homeless Outreach Team dedicated to working alongside with other City departments to help connect our homeless residents with needed services and shelters.**

**As another demonstration of the City’s commitment to providing service, I’m pleased to report that this past year we opened a new Police Services Center in north Pleasanton across from Stoneridge Shopping Center.**

**On the ground floor of the BART parking lot the new Police Services Center is operated jointly by Pleasanton and BART police to better serve riders and residents in and around the area.**

**Equally outstanding public safety services are provided by the Livermore-Pleasanton Fire Department.**

**These fine men and women work tirelessly as first responders as well as on preventative measures that build our capacity to be fully prepared to respond during a disaster.**

**You might have noticed the entire fleet of fire engines and trucks have now been replaced to ensure we can best respond when called upon.**

**The newest arrival is the City's new ladder-tiller truck, a first of its kind for the City, which is stationed at Fire Station #3 on Santa Rita Road.**

**While Pleasanton means home to us, others have also acknowledged this special place we've built.**

**In 2019, Pleasanton was ranked by Money Inc. as among the 20 best places to live in Northern California AND by Wallethub as the second-best small city in California.**

**I couldn't be more Pleasanton Proud.**

**These rankings certainly take into account safety, but they also consider our economic health and our excellent quality of life.**

**Let me assure you that Pleasanton's economy is strong.**

**Our general fund operating revenues are projected to total \$127 million this year compared to expenditures projected at \$121 million, leaving a bit of room for unanticipated expenses.**

**That's good governance.**

**I am pleased to announce the City has been recognized for excellence in financial reporting for the 22<sup>nd</sup> consecutive year AND has received the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award from the Government Finance Officers Association for this fiscal's year budget document.**

**Thanks to the hard work of our finance department which leads this annual effort.**

**Not only is our budget balanced, we have also sharpened our pencils to meet our financial obligations and set aside money in our rainy day fund.**

**This past year we increased our general fund reserve from 20 to 25 percent, reinforcing our City's commitment to short- and long-term fiscal sustainability.**

**We have done all of this while preparing a 10-year Infrastructure and Facilities Replacement Plan to maintain our great roads, parks, and facilities.**

**As I shared with you previously, we continue to address our pension obligations and are in an enviable position compared to many other cities.**

**In 2018, the City allocated \$28 million to a pension trust fund. With a contribution of \$15.3 million this fiscal year, along with more required contributions in the coming years, the**

**City is focused on the future to ensure our commitments are fulfilled and community service levels are sustained over the next 30 years.**

**Adding to Pleasanton's strong fiscal position is our robust economic vitality.**

**Our office vacancy rate is a healthy 8 percent, meaning most commercial space is occupied while leaving some room for companies to expand and move into the city.**

**We also measure the strength of our market by the commitment companies make to a Pleasanton location.**

**To see this, you need to look no further than the investment that Workday has made along Stoneridge Mall Road, as we cut the ribbon on the company's new headquarters campus last spring.**

**The new LEED platinum building is visible from I-680 and houses 2,200 of its 4,600 employees, affording many of them the ability to work and live in Pleasanton or to use BART.**

**I can't talk about economic development without highlighting our growing life sciences industry, and the Council's commitment to expanding this sector.**

**Last year we helped to host the second annual Tri-Valley Life Sciences Summit to continue to support the game-changing biotech and medical device industry we're building right here in Pleasanton.**

**Just one example of the success of this sector is Pleasanton's homegrown 10x Genomics.**

**Since its \$390 million initial public offering this past September – which vaulted the company to more than \$1 billion in valuation – its stock has increased already by 125 percent.**

**Now that's a data point that speaks of success!**

**Now, let's turn our attention to our treasured downtown.**

**We have completed an update to the Downtown Specific Plan thanks to the hard work of our task force, Planning Commission and staff – with substantial community input along the way.**

**The updated plan will serve as a long-range framework to guide future development and preserve the City’s downtown historic district, while also encouraging continued commercial advancement.**

**Along with our downtown, Pleasanton takes pride in offering bountiful recreational amenities including more than 24 miles of walking, hiking and biking trails, over 600 acres of open space, and 44 neighborhood and community parks.**

**We also work hard to increase developmental and educational offerings through our Library and Recreation Department’s extensive programming and services.**

**If you haven’t been to the Firehouse Arts Center lately, you’re missing out on some outstanding performances.**

**In fact, our very own Creatures of Impulse teen improv group recently received a Best Of award at San Francisco's Improv Festival.**

**As we maintain and update the city's parks, we are continually looking to increase and improve accessibility for residents of all ages and abilities.**

**Some recent improvements include the first multi-generational swings at Hansen Park and renovation of the side-by-side slides at Mission Hills Park with wheelchair access and an adjacent rock-climbing incline.**

**And later this year, the Council will consider a location for an inclusive all-abilities playground.**

**To increase access to our programs, last fall Library staff started "Pop-Up" programming where library programs are taken beyond the walls of the library to locations throughout the city such as the police department and fire stations,**

**Stoneridge Shopping Center, and even Valley Humane Society.**

**These “Pop-Up” events have been so popular that the library is continuing the programming into this year.**

**Additionally, in following library policy trends nationally, and to further grow our connection with the community, the City has eliminated daily overdue library fines to remove barriers to information access and eliminate penalizing patrons for overdue materials.**

**Speaking of access to all residents, it is important to mention the engagement of Pleasanton’s youth.**

**I don’t know how many of you know that Pleasanton is one of few cities that not only has a Youth Commission, but also encourages youth members to serve on commissions such as Parks and Recreation, Library, Civic Arts, and Human Services.**

**Until last year, those youth members participated as non-voting members.**

**At the end of last year, the Council voted to allow youth members to vote on items presented before their respective commissions.**

**With the participation of our City's youth, we benefit by better decision making when it comes to policies impacting youth, and we are helping shape our future leaders.**

**There really is no place like Pleasanton, and many of us are fortunate to call this place home.**

**But we know that housing in Pleasanton and in our surrounding Tri-Valley cities is not getting any less expensive.**

**Pleasanton understands its role in providing affordable housing, and I am pleased to report on two housing projects.**

**One is the completion of phase two of Kottinger Gardens, with 54 affordable senior housing units, which was fully leased last summer.**

**The second is the groundbreaking of Sunflower Hill at Irby Ranch, a 31-unit affordable housing development specifically for individuals with special needs.**

**We're eagerly awaiting that project's completion this year.**

**As many of you know, the Governor and State Legislature have made affordable housing production a priority, and Pleasanton certainly is committed to being part of the solution.**

**Last year numerous pieces of legislation relating to housing and local zoning were proposed and passed.**

**Again this year, housing legislation will continue to be of primary importance in Sacramento.**

**And the City is doing its part to develop a local solution.**

**In 2019, the Tri-Valley Cities of Danville, Dublin, Livermore, Pleasanton and San Ramon worked together to develop the Tri-Valley Housing and Policy Framework to advocate, engage and influence the legislative process on behalf of our shared positions on key topics such as infrastructure, transportation, local decision making, economic development and housing.**

**At the same time, the City Council has taken positions on various bills to preserve our quality of life here in Pleasanton.**

**One bill which many of you maybe familiar with is Senate Bill 50.**

**This bill would have required cities like Pleasanton to zone for buildings up to four or five stories on parcels within a quarter to a half mile of major transit lines and job centers AND eliminate single-family zoning by allowing fourplexes to be constructed in your neighborhoods.**

**Specifically, in Pleasanton:**

**It would limit our local control by allowing higher density housing within a quarter- to half-mile around Pleasanton's downtown ACE train station.**

**Imagine what this would do to our historic downtown, in which our ACE station is located.**

**It would also allow up to four units on any vacant residential lot or conversion of existing structures to include up to four units.**

**Imagine how this could change the quality of our existing, well-established neighborhoods: places like Birdland, Fairlands, Mohr-Martin, Muirwood, and Ruby Hill.**

**Through our Tri-Valley alliance, we actively engaged our local legislators and the bill's author in meaningful dialogue to express our concerns.**

**Influenced by our active engagement, I am pleased to report that in late January SB 50 was defeated.**

**By far the debate is not over, but at least we will continue to be at the table engaging in substantive dialogue on housing solutions appropriate and balanced for our region.**

**We are being heard.**

**On a related note, I understand that while many do live and work in Pleasanton we have residents and employees who commute.**

**And before my term as Mayor is over, I will have done my part to make the widening of Highway 84 from south of Ruby Hill to I-680 a reality.**

**According to the Alameda County Transportation Commission, the final design of the project is anticipated for completion by this month or next, and the right-of-way contracts are scheduled to be signed by April of this year,**

**with construction still anticipated to be on track to start in spring 2021.**

**I am holding on to plans for a fall groundbreaking.**

**Speaking of moving people more efficiently while moving cars off the road, I want to provide an update on Valley Link.**

**We may have faced some funding setbacks last year, but we are not going to lose momentum.**

**Two proposed sales taxes are being considered to fill the shortfall:**

**A measure called “Faster Bay Area” would fund various modes of transportation including rail, highways, and bicycles.**

**The second would be a sales tax placed before the San Joaquin County voters on the 2022 ballot.**

**I know our local legislators are looking into additional solutions to fund this much-needed project that will move thousands of cars off our already over capacity highways.**

**Just last month, I attended my final U.S. Conference of Mayors in Washington D.C. with my fellow Tri-Valley mayors.**

**We leveraged our time in our nation's Capitol and met with the offices of members of Congress, our two U.S. senators, and the Department of Transportation to advocate for federal funding.**

**I remain optimistic from our meetings that we will be able to identify the funding shortfall for Valley Link, whether it be through the New Starts Program or the fiscal year 2021 transportation budget.**

**However, despite our transportation hurdles, our community collectively still finds solutions one mile at a time.**

**Hacienda has once again been named as one of the Best Workplaces for Commuters in 2020 for meeting National Standard of Excellence criteria.**

**This national designation is bestowed on employers who provide access to progressive commuter programs like discounted transit passes, bicycle-friendly amenities, and rideshare solutions.**

**Congratulations and thanks to James Paxson and the folks leading Hacienda into the future.**

**As we embark on this new year, I want to touch upon what to expect in Pleasanton as laid out in the City Council's Work Plan:**

**Earlier this month, the Council unanimously re-approved the Johnson Drive Economic Development Zone, which means projects like the hotels, Costco, and area transportation improvements can now move forward.**

**We'll see comprehensive plans for redevelopment of the Stoneridge Shopping Center with new retail, restaurants, housing and potentially a movie theater and hotel that will keep the mall successful in the years to come.**

**Look for an update of the City's Climate Action Plan as we ensure that we are good stewards of this city for the next generations.**

**And finally, as we continue to look for affordable housing solutions, and respond to state housing mandates, we are taking a closer look at East Pleasanton, and when and how we restart the planning process.**

**During last Tuesday's Council meeting, we heard presentations from staff, and heard from many residents both in support and opposition.**

**At the next Council meeting on March 3, the Council will be continuing the public hearing, deliberate, and we will come to**

**a decision once and for all on what the next step for East Pleasanton will be.**

**I have served the City of Pleasanton for 25 years, from Parks and Recreation commissioner to City Councilmember, and now Mayor.**

**It has truly been an honor to serve a community with such tremendous character – one imbued with 125 years of rich history, and one comprised of residents and business people like all of you who are committed to making Pleasanton the very best city in which to live and work.**

**Pleasanton has come a long way in the 125 years since its incorporation, and I know there is still much more to come in the next 125 years.**

**This may be my final State of the City address, and these my final months as Mayor, but there will always be work to do to retain the special character of Pleasanton.**

**So, I ask each of you to find some way that you can participate.**

**That might be in a school-parent group or as a volunteer for one of our many community-based organizations.**

**A City commission or committee might be just the right fit for you, or you may decide that you want to run for elected office one day and perhaps even serve on the City Council.**

**Like many of you, I was a parent with a daughter in competitive swimming, and got involved with one thing or another – fundraising, bake sales, swim meets...until one day, I was president of the Pleasanton Seahawks.**

**One thing led to another and I ended up leveraging my background from my private sector career to lead a grassroots effort to get a 50-meter Olympic-sized pool at the Dolores Bengston Aquatic Center.**

**All of that work led to an appointment on the City's Parks and Recreation commission for 10 years until one day I decided to run for Council, and then Mayor.**

**While some days seemed long, I assure you that 25 years passed quickly.**

**Now I stand before you in my last year as Mayor, and ask each of you to find your passion, find your cause, find whatever motivates you to get engaged in our community.**

**My hope is to be sitting where you are today, eager to hear your journey and how you are making a difference in Pleasanton...a place like no other.**

**Every contribution is valuable as we all collaborate to build a Pleasanton community that openly reflects the breadth of our residents and businesses.**

**In all the places I have lived, or have traveled to, or the places I still want to go, I know there is truly no place like Pleasanton.**

**Thank you all for coming here today to recognize our recent achievements and to look to our future.**

**God bless Pleasanton, our State, and our great Nation. Thank you.**