



## 2022 State of the City Address

Council President Moe, Springfield City Councilors, City Staff, and Springfield community members. Thank you for joining us. It is our time to come together to celebrate the progress that Springfield made in 2021 and look forward to 2022 and the years beyond.

As Springfield's Mayor, I remain immensely grateful for the faith that my community has placed in me. For my family, Elaine, Katie, and Livy.... Thank you for your love and support as I continue this adventure.

My twin daughters, Katie and Livy, turned 5 this year. I am looking forward to them starting with Springfield Public School in this fall.

My sense of service and love of history comes from several people in my life. One of those people was my grandmother, Mary Ann Lee. She was also my 8th grade teacher. Most of the grandkids called her Mrs. Lee because she taught most of us at some point in her life. Her real gift was to breathe life into the stories of human history and discuss both the high points and low points. She believed that Americans didn't always get things right to begin with, but we get things right in the end.

Eleven months ago, I stood in front of you asking you to hope and believe in Springfield, Oregon. I promised that we would still be together as a community, and that we would find better days as a community again. In 2021, we worked and showed Springfield was resilient and thriving. It wasn't easy. It wasn't perfect. However, we showed up for each other. That's what Springfield does. We show up.

Let's look at some of the achievements and progress that Springfield made in 2021 (*Year In Review Video*).

Over the last 24 months, We've faced so many challenges as a community and as a country. We have made significant progress, and we still have work to do. Springfield needs to harness the energy that we poured into 2021. The hard reality is that our future success isn't guaranteed. Our future is what we will choose to make it and our collective commitment to do the work to achieve it.

Springfield is a community of opportunity. A community of opportunity is open, it's welcoming, and a community of choice. I want people to choose to live here, have a good job here, and raise their family here.

A community of opportunity is both who we are and who we strive to be.

A community of opportunity begins with leadership, and Springfield is known for its bold innovative leadership from nonprofits to government to businesses. The Distinctively Springfield Leadership Award is a Mayor's Award that recognizes leadership that goes above and beyond to build a community of opportunity in Springfield. I am pleased to announce the 2021 Distinctively Springfield Leader of Year is Mariela German Hernandez.

She serves as Chair of Escudo Latino, which supports the LatinX community within Springfield and Lane County. Her leadership within Springfield has created a network of support and resources for Spanish-speaking community members. She helps translate and provide information via a growing social media presence. She's partnered with community organizations throughout the City to help reduce barriers to food access. Through her role with Escudo Latino, Mariela also helped establish the new LatinX mural in Downtown Springfield, honoring the beautiful and diverse cultures of LatinX communities. Escudo Latino is part of the new Casa de la Unidad, or House of Unity, which offers a safe and welcoming space for underrepresented community members. We are incredibly grateful for Mariela's leadership to ensuring Springfield is a community that is welcoming to all.

## **Economic Development**

Springfield has a well-deserved reputation for smart, pro-business policies. Strong economic development opportunities deliver benefits to our community through wages to workers, venues to visit, and a tax base to support community assets and infrastructure. Springfield finds pride in both the dignity of work, and the entrepreneurial spirit to challenge everything. We work harder and dream bigger because that is what fuels our Springfield spirit. It is how we build a community of economic opportunity.

In 2020, Springfield Buick Motors approached the Springfield Economic Development Agency, or SEDA, with a dream to redevelop their historic property in Downtown Springfield. A dream that would build off the heritage of their site to add housing, restaurants, and coworking office space.

I am excited to share for the first time the completed renderings of this project.

Under the leadership of the SEDA Board Chair Marilee Woodrow, we entered into a partnership with the Scherer family and Northwest Sustainable Properties. It will be a first of its kind, mixed use residential building in Downtown Springfield. This development will move us to the next level of market performance using limited land, sustainable construction, and innovative mass timber materials. Here is why it's important to you: First, it will provide needed housing. Second, it's an example of an all-market rate building that can be used as a comparable to develop other projects. Third, it will continue to revitalize and bring people into the downtown core. It's a great time to be in Springfield.

Last year, the economic development agency released for the first time a formal request for qualified developers in Glenwood. SEDA owns 7.5 acres of prime riverfront land that is slated for catalytic development for the Glenwood area. After a decade of community input and substantial investment in infrastructure, we are ready to move to the next phase that will revitalize Glenwood. SEDA has selected a development team from Edhlen and Company and deChase Miksis as our partner in this development. They have the experience and qualifications to complete a development that is as complex and important as the Riverfront.

The work to redevelop Glenwood is not limited to the riverfront property, and the community must tackle the next set of big questions for Glenwood development. We must begin to plan for the McVay Highway improvements and the next phase of upgrading Franklin Boulevard. Glenwood remains a special place, and there is a lot of work to do to achieve our vision. It's going to take time, and it will be worth it.

Springfield is, and will remain, open for business. I commend local business owners and their staff who work tirelessly in our community. They believe in our community, and the opportunity that entrepreneurship brings them. They generously support everything from non-profits to foundations to little league teams. Thank you for being an integral part of Springfield.

With the support of the Springfield Chamber, local business starts continue to increase. In downtown, we celebrated more than a dozen new storefronts. We opened new businesses in every corner of Springfield including Gateway, Mohawk, Thurston, and mid-Springfield. I am excited to see this new generation of entrepreneurs begin their business.

With supply chain issues, worker shortages, and technology that allows you to get anything within 48 hours, it is tough to be a local business owner. Springfield needs to make a regular habit of supporting local businesses. I ask everyone in Springfield to make a conscious effort to support small businesses every day in 2022.

## **Public Safety**

Public safety is one of the most important services that cities provide. In the last two years, we've learned hard lessons about the importance of creating a complete network that meets the diverse needs of our community.

For the Springfield Police, the last year has been a time of reflection and growth. The department has faced numerous changes and challenges. Thank you to the individuals of the Springfield police department. We ask a lot of you, and your dedication to community service is noticed and valued.

Over the last year, the City Council received the Thurston Use of Force Report, the OIR report from the Stacey Kenny settlement, and the Annual Use of Force Report. Those three reports paired with 21st Century policing practices are framing a road map on where we need to go as a police department.

SPD deployed industry leading software to track both use of force incidents and complaints. Prior to the new software, if you filed a complaint, the police followed a manual, cumbersome process, and you didn't get a case number. Now, we can track, trend, and coach based on feedback from the community. We can use that information to be a better police force.

The City Council approved the use of grant funding for more training for officers. The police department added 6 new sworn officers last year. And the police department started an Employee Assistance Program supporting officer and employee wellness. The trauma that officers see daily has a cumulative effect on them physically and physiologically. SPD and the City understand we must take care of our officers and employees so they can take care of the Springfield community.

Success is a journey that we will take together. Our community still has hard work and important conversations about policing to come. We will not ignore the lessons to be drawn from the death of Stacey Kenny, the Thurston protests, and recent national events. In 2022, the Springfield Police Department will continue to build trust through community engagement with youth and underrepresented communities. The police department will continue to send liaison officers to community events and host Coffee with a Cop. We will also add a data scientist position to allow the command leadership to be more responsive to trends in arrests and work to reduce force. The Council will meet with the Springfield Police Advisory Committee in a joint meeting for the first time since 2015. And, the Council will have quarterly updates with the police department to review progress on key initiatives. I am proud of the Springfield Police Department's dedication to answer the community's calls for change and their commitment to the Springfield community.

In the last year, the City Manager Nancy Newton selected interim police Chief Andrew Shearer to lead the department. Thank you, Chief Shearer for your consistent engagement with the community, and commitment to listen to their concerns.

In 2022, the Fire Department will begin its first major review of the combined governance structure in more than a decade and begin recruiting for a permanent chief of the department. The reality is that the administrative structure of the department is too cumbersome for our current needs, and we need a governance structure that allows Springfield more of a say in fire policy. We look forward to discussions on how to continue providing exemplary fire and life safety services for our communities in the most effective and efficient way possible.

The Development and Public Works Operations Division responds to everything from road repairs to flooding to reports of trees down. They play a critical role in managing the City's infrastructure to allow people to move around Springfield safely.

Councilor Woodrow and I recently participated in a neighborhood safety meeting in mid-Springfield. It was dark. It was cold. It was raining. It was also critical that we met that night to discuss a transportation issue important to the community. Operations set up tents, lights, and safety signs to ensure that everyone had the space to speak. They had staff onsite to answer

questions and provide advice. The dedication of Operations staff allowed us to listen to and help this neighborhood.

Our City Manager often describes the Operations Division as the quietest first responder and stand outs in an organization of standout employees. As a team, they provide exceptional and needed public service. They work in all hours, and in all conditions to ensure that Springfield stays safe. It is my pleasure to recognize the City of Springfield Operations Division with our Distinctively Springfield Employees of the Year Award.

Springfield is the home to two of the region's two premier hospitals - PeaceHealth Sacred Heart at Riverbend and McKenzie-Willamette Medical Center. The healthcare sector is one of the largest growing sectors of our economy. As the delta variant surged in late summer, it stressed our hospital system and their employees. At the height of the surge, Riverbend expanded its ICU into the post-operative recovery area to add capacity, which had never happened. Over the last year, in addition to caring for the influx of COVID-19 patients, our hospitals performed over 22,000 surgeries and were responsible for over 3,000 births.

It is truly an honor to recognize the nurses of PeachHealth Sacred Heart at Riverbend and McKenzie-Willamette Medical Center with the Distinctively Springfield Healthcare Workers of the Year Award. Thank you for long hours away from your families to take care of our loved ones. We owe you a debt of gratitude.

## **Housing**

Housing remains a large, long-term focus for Springfield as the available housing stock doesn't meet the demand or the diversity of needs in our community. In 2021, we had a record building year adding 209 new homes. While progress is being made, we will remain in a housing crisis for at least the next decade, and we need to find creative measures to ensure that people can build homes here.

The City permitted 17 new accessory dwelling units in 2021 which brings our total to 37 since 2018. The completion of the more than 750 housing units in Marcola Meadows will occur by 2023.

As development continues to boom, Springfield is laying the groundwork for the next phase of housing improvements. We approved funds to add an additional mile of sewer line to serve growth in the Jasper Natron development. City Hall has added online development center services, and we will add a parcel-specific zoning map. If you own a piece of land, we want to make it as easy as possible to understand what you can build, and support and encourage you to develop it as soon as possible.

Working with state partners and State Representative John Lively, Springfield secured an additional \$4 million to develop affordable housing and support manufactured home parks.

The Springfield Economic Development Agency will consider housing priorities when evaluating how to move forward in Glenwood. At the Council direction, Springfield staff will continue to participate in rulemaking at the state level for housing policy that meets the needs of the Springfield community.

Springfield is a state leader in housing policy, and it is important that our voice for practicality, affordability, and choice continues to be heard at the state and federal level.

## **Infrastructure**

Springfield deserves to have a modern, resilient infrastructure system. Modern infrastructure is not simply about highways. It includes sewer systems, utilities, bike and pedestrian facilities, levees and more. Our infrastructure is a public asset that requires good fiscal management to maintain it.

One community asset that is also part of our infrastructure is urban trees. One of my long-term goals is to increase our urban canopy. 25 new trees were planted last year by Operations staff and 40 new trees are planned for 2022. Additionally, developers are required to plant trees in new developments or redevelopments. Bio-swales and rain gardens are planned to include new tree plantings. Homeowners can work with Friends of Trees organization to plant trees on street frontage to help us increase our urban canopy. City-managed trees are a community asset and we received 1,500 requests for tree service last year.

When Springfield gets the infrastructure right, we drive both economic growth and strong neighborhoods. We compete for businesses and attract homeowners. It creates an environment that fosters a more robust and vibrant future.

We are set to spend more on infrastructure in the next decade than at any other point in time since I've been serving this community. In the next five years, Springfield will be a part of critical transportation work both regionally and locally. We will work on everything from the Main Street Facility Plan to finish the West D bike path to completing the 2018 voter-approved street bond package.

However, there are a few transportation projects that generate a majority of the questions we receive from community members.

First, 42nd Street. In 2017, we received \$12 million to repair and improve 42nd Street. A major levee runs along the McKenzie River next to 42nd Street which protects most of North Springfield homes. The levee is nearing the end of its useful life. The 42nd Street levee was the top priority for the City this year when we lobbied Congress, with support from Senator Wyden, Senator Merkley, and Congressman DeFazio. We also partnered with State Representative John

Lively to find the funds to study the levee's replacement. We need to finalize the work to prepare a coordinated plan for the levee and 42nd Street before we fix the street.

Second, Mill Street. Mill Street between S. "A" Street to Centennial Boulevard will be getting repaired. The City has identified funding and will soon start the design work with the project construction planned for 2024.

Springfield must continue to update its infrastructure and be a voice at the state level for practical solutions that allow for locally centered infrastructure. In the 2022 Legislative Session, Springfield will lobby to expand the Oregon Transportation Commission from 5 members to 7 members to allow for all parts of the state to be represented. We will continue to advocate to modernize the approach the state takes to allocate transportation dollars to focus on our region's safety problems. And, we will be advocates for the State Government to be more responsive to local communities.

### **Team Springfield**

The City relies on the support of our Team Springfield partners. Thank you to Willamalane Park and Recreation District, Springfield Utility Board, and Springfield Public School District. This year, I have included a list of accomplishments on our website that will allow the community to see and celebrate the work that is done across the Springfield community.

Childcare and return to school activities were major issues for Springfield families. I want to acknowledge the work of the school district and Willamalane to develop solutions that helped families. Between all the jurisdictions, there has been an enormous amount of time and resources to work on families' needs.

Thank you to Springfield Public School District and your staff for all the work that it takes to keep schools open. Having kids back in school doesn't erase that damage that the pandemic did to education. To the teachers and staff in our schools, thank you. Todd Hamilton, School Superintendent, describes one particular teacher as a shining example of dedication to Springfield students, and a teacher that is focused on improving the entire educational system to allow for student success. Pauline Pham is a teacher at Springfield High School for English and Special Education. I want to recognize Pauline Pham as 2021 Distinctively Springfield Teacher of the Year.

As I think about the next 50 years, we must maintain the tradition of Team Springfield, and the culture of how the public bodies work together for public good. For the volunteer, elected leadership in Springfield, your commitment to what your organizations do, achieving your core missions, and your leadership is more important than ever. The world and our community are changing, and we need to adapt with it. We are truly better together.

## **Conclusion**

Our Springfield family can be impacted by things beyond the horizon, and the randomness of that can be scary.

We can't always control events around us, but we can decide how we respond to them. We choose to love our neighbors even when we don't agree with them. We choose to be confident in our future. We choose to be welcoming to everyone. We choose to show up for each other to do the work even when it's uncomfortable. It's those choices that are at the core of who we are. It's what makes a community of opportunity.

A community of opportunity is not just who we are, but it is how we work together. We made critical investments in our infrastructure and capitalized on additional state and federal funding. We developed homes for people. We re-opened our businesses and supported new businesses. We made progress on building additional trust in the public safety system. We added art and cultural exhibits. And, we promoted a more transparent and welcoming city. This is about our future, and our calling is to walk that road together.

Marcus Aurelius was a Roman Emperor and philosopher. He is best known for writing a book called Meditations which is part autobiography, part philosophy, and part journal. To quote one passage where he offers encouragement to himself, "[Don't] assume it is impossible because you find it hard. But recognize that if it is humanly possible, you can do it." Frankly, that sounds like something someone in Springfield would write.

I believe in Springfield. I believe in our families. I believe in our businesses. I believe in you. Our best days are still in front of us. As I close this Address, I asked the City Council to share their hopes for the future, and thoughts on what a community of opportunity means to them. Here is what they shared. Hang Tough, Springfield.