

Mayor David Condon's Statement of Conditions and Affairs

Monday, October 6, 2014 at 6 pm
City Council Chambers

- Good evening Council President and members of the City Council
- Welcome members of the community who are here with us tonight at City Hall and watching at home and online
- Thank you for taking the time to engage with your city government and being a part of the future of our community
- The policy work the City Council does as legislators, the operational work we do as the executive branch and the work the City's 1,900 employees do every day is accomplished with the goal of providing the best service at a cost that's affordable to you and aligned to your priorities
- Partnerships, teamwork and a willingness to look at traditional challenges in new ways are making that happen
- Your interest, engagement and input contributes in a major way to what Spokane is, could be and ought to be as a community
- We talk a lot about innovation and new ideas at the City, and many of the things we do originate with people like you
- People whose perspectives and ideas add tremendous value and insight to the work we do every day to make Spokane safer, stronger and smarter
- Your engagement with the City is invaluable to our progress and critical to our success well into the future
- It sets a good example for what is possible when the discussion is respectful, the debate robust and professional, and we work together toward a common goal
- Over the past few years, we have seen exceptional partnerships between the legislative and executive branches



- That has been evident in the dialogue this summer and into the early fall about the 2015 budget
- The conversation has produced very close alignment across the board, especially in major citizen priority areas
- That collegial spirit has also paid dividends as the City Council and Mayor's Office have worked together to engage Spokane County in discussion about ways to partner on important regional issues
- We are committed to continuing that collaboration with you at home and in the audience, the City Council, Spokane County and other partners to answer important questions before us
- Questions like where we prioritize replenishing our reserves against taking on new obligations, how aggressive we should be in projecting future revenue growth and how to thoughtfully, affordably and efficiently extend services to manage growth
- We will talk tonight about our results – driven by citizen suggestions – as we have pursued new ways of delivering better outcomes
- Maintaining a dialogue keeps us accountable and on the road to progress
- Tonight is one of those times where we report back to you, the people we serve
- *According to the Spokane City Charter, Article IV, Section 24, I hereby fulfill my duty as your mayor to annually communicate a statement of the conditions and affairs of the city*
- To answer that duty, I say: Our progress gives us optimism and confidence
- We have accomplished a lot, and are excited about the work we still have left to do
- We've been moving rather quickly – or for some, maybe not quickly enough – to become a safer, stronger and smarter Spokane
- We have made strides by lowering crime, refining how we respond to non-emergency medical calls, thinking holistically about stormwater management and leveraging our dollars to achieve more and greater outcomes for citizen investments
- We are excited about what we have accomplished, and now is the time to make sure we keep our foot steadily on the gas pedal

- It's the only way to make and keep Spokane the City of Choice
- We start by endeavoring to BECOME THE SAFEST CITY OF OUR SIZE
- After years of increasing or flat crime rates, we have it trending in the right direction
- The work to get to double-digit reductions in crime overall and in the two major categories hasn't been easy
- The challenge before us now is to keep it going because I don't have to convince anyone that there is much more progress to be made
- That belief is universally shared by me, by police Chief Frank Straub, by my Cabinet, by the City Council and by those of you watching and listening tonight
- The good news is a lot of the pieces are in place to continue the momentum
 - The Spokane Police Division has achieved state law enforcement accreditation
 - Great progress has been made toward fulfilling SPD's commitment to implementing each and every one of the 26 Use of Force Commission recommendations
 - We are delivering an unprecedented level of police oversight
 - An independent citizen police ombudsman commission will hold its first meeting two weeks from tonight
 - Public engagement is ongoing during SPD's four-month body-worn camera pilot program to develop the policy for their ongoing use
 - Chief Straub and I have invited in the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Community Oriented Policing Services to help us identify and implement best practices regarding use of force
 - In fact, representatives of that program were here again two weeks ago talking to the division and community about the Spokane Police Division culture
 - Nearly 100 percent of commissioned officers are now crisis intervention trained

- We have expanded the geographic policing model to include a greater presence on the north side and downtown with plans to put more officers in South Hill neighborhoods
- More important than physical assets, the data-driven strategy upon which the distribution of resources is built is working
- Crime is dropping in each of the three geographic police service areas of the City
- All of that progress keeps us on the road of continuous improvement
- The Spokane Fire Department also makes Spokane safer, and we have been busy evolving our fire and emergency medical services model to better meet changing community needs
- The volume of medical-related calls continues to grow – it now represents more than 80 percent of our total volume
- So, we have extended the pilot program that dispatches smaller vehicles to non-emergency medical calls and leaves resources available to meet other critical needs
- Working together with the City Council, we are executing a plan to replace aging fire apparatus
- Based on feedback from the community, we have restored firefighting capability to fire Station 9
- And, we secured an agreement with a neighboring fire district to provide additional coverage to the southwest area of the City
- Each of those were Fire Task Force recommendations that have been implemented
- Additionally, we have re-emphasized hands-only CPR training in the community and introduced Pulse Point, a phone app that let's ordinary citizens put that training to work
- The success of that program was proudly – and thankfully – on display recently near downtown
- A Spokane master technician learned of a nearby one-month-old infant in need of CPR from the Pulse Point app on his phone
- Trained in CPR, the man kept the baby breathing long enough for fire responders to get the baby to the hospital and in the care of highly trained doctors

- That chain of events saved the baby’s life and landed Spokane in the national spotlight for its emergency medical services innovation
- Spokane cannot be safer without ALSO BECOMING STRONGER
- That work starts with how we allocate resources
- We thank the City Council for once again reaffirming budgeting principles we can all live by
- Those principles include:
 - Don’t spend more than you take in
 - Don’t pay for ongoing expenses with one-time money
 - Maintain prudent budget reserves
 - Maintain strict controls on hiring and spending
 - Fund the highest priority City services first
- We followed these guidelines carefully as we developed next year’s budget
- That’s why we have proposed beginning to replenish the reserves that were drawn down to meet our needs during the recession
- Citizens have told us that starting to rebuild reserves is a priority before taking on new obligations
- The philosophy in those principles also guided our approach to forecasting sales tax revenue
- Growth in sales tax revenue is encouraging, though we are careful in our evaluation of its sustainability
- Those figures give us reason for optimism, and we have bumped our sales tax revenue forecast by 1 percent
- At the same time, we have been cautious because the Council correctly reminds us to not spend more than we take in
- At the very core, we work every day to provide services that are consistent with citizen priorities, deliver them at the level they expect and at a cost they can afford
- Following that mandate, we have limited utility rate increases to inflation and eliminated the structural gap

- I want to take just a second to emphasize the magnitude of that achievement and brag about the people that work at the City
- Our employees have been able to make revenues and expenses line up for the first time *and* hold one of our most important revenue sources at a rate affordable to citizens
- In partnership with our labor unions, we have also reformed the Spokane Employees Retirement System to be more sustainable for current and future employees
- Spokane is fortunate to have forward-thinking employees who are willing to compromise for the benefit of stronger City finances
- There are numerous examples of cities around the country that have found themselves speeding down a much different road
- Outside of City Hall, we are working hard to make a difference
- We saw record new construction of \$538 million in the City – an investment trend we are seeing continue this year
- We doubled the investment in street maintenance and are bringing voters a levy proposal to keep the tax rate the same and drive as much as \$25 million annually in street improvements
- A second, separate bond proposal on the November ballot proposes to invest \$60 million in improvements to Riverfront Park for the first time in 40 years
- How we maintain and improve our streets and utilize park space is now also a part of our conversation about getting to a cleaner river faster
- Our integrated plan considers stormwater, wastewater, street and parks needs
- That way of thinking is saving us \$150 million even as we exceed regulatory requirements ahead of schedule
- The Department of Ecology recently summarized that work this way:
 - *“Spokane might be the first in the nation that’s doing this as a smart government approach to planning – rather than by court order. I think it could evolve into the normal way of doing business.”*

- For the City of Spokane, that way of thinking has already become the norm
- OUR GOAL IS TO BE SMARTER about the way we do business
- That's why we have integrated strategies for infrastructure work
- We have realigned social service and housing investments to better deliver the resources where they are needed most
- Partnerships between local nonprofits, service providers and the City have helped us become smarter about the way we direct people to critical resources
- Our goal is to ensure that federal, state and local grant funds to serve Spokane's extremely-low-to-moderate income citizens are spent buying services
- One of the success stories is Community Court, which conveniently assembles important life-changing programs every Monday at the Spokane Public Library for people who need them most – whether or not they find themselves in the court system
- City government also shares in the responsibility of driving economic growth
- We do that by fostering and nurturing an environment that makes the City attractive for business relocation and expansion
- That includes establishing and maintaining predictability in processes, and am proud to report that we have driven full-route permitting times under 30 days for the first time
- We are also engaging our regional partners in conversations that establish parameters for smarter growth and better service delivery – also important factors for companies making decisions about where they do business
- Finally, we are working to be smarter about the way we engage citizens in the decision-making process
- Traditional town-hall-style meetings used to be where our outreach stopped and started
- Today, we are making better use of technology to meet people where and when it's convenient to them
- Over the past few months, we have used social media to reach out to more than 15,000 people – and engage more than 500 in conversation about our streets and park system

- We have improved our web presence to become a place for robust engagement and dialogue
- Currently, conversations are ongoing on spokanecity.org about defining Spokane's neighborhoods for the next 20 years, how the policy for use of body-worn cameras should be refined and what our priorities should be over the next several years
- Future conversations might include discussion about appropriate strategies to drive economic and budgetary growth or the management of labor contracts
- Those discussions are also happening @spokanecity on Facebook and Twitter
- I encourage those of you watching tonight to give us your feedback on all of those topics
- Your input has helped get us to this point as a City, and will carry us successfully into the future
- In recent weeks, you have told us you appreciate the effort we put into publishing performance measures and showing how we stack up against them – whether the results are positive or show that more work needs to be done
- You have encouraged us to renew our efforts to collaborate as we continue the work we have started
- You have reaffirmed our belief that we must stay focused on your priorities even as we make progress delivering the services and outcomes you expect and deserve
- And, you confirmed our steadfast conviction that periodically checking in with those who invest in our community, rely on City services and choose to make Spokane their home is not only the right thing to do, it's the only way we move forward
- Thank you again, to all of you watching at home and here with us, for your time
- And, to the City Council, thank you for the opportunity to update the community on what has been accomplished and what lies ahead for Spokane
- We take to heart the community's direction to look for every opportunity to collaborate, and look forward to working together to continue delivering results Spokane can be proud of