



CITY OF MILWAUKIE

"Dogwood City of the West"

STATE of the CITY ADDRESS

2024 – Delivered by Mayor Lisa Batey

Delivered at (new) Milwaukie City Hall on June 7, 2024

[Editorial note: Not all of these remarks were made during the address. I promised to get people out in a half-hour and ended up having to truncate the last half of the planned remarks.]

Welcome: my first SOTC, 17 months in as the Mayor of Milwaukie – will get you out by 5pm to enjoy First Friday – if we finish before that, I'll take some questions from the floor, otherwise will stay around to answer questions

[Introductions of electeds; thanks to Emma and Scott]

The last 6-7 years has been an exciting time of growth for Milwaukie after a long period of little growth. We're now in a time of transition, with Ann's departure and Luke's retirement – but Ann assembled a great team that is keeping things moving along and got us through our just-adopted budget.

Overview: Milwaukie as a work in progress – lots of good stuff happening, but still lots of room for improvement. I'll highlight some recent projects and developments, some projects on the horizon, and then touch on some of the challenges we face as a City and a community.

Things to celebrate: [Wichita]

- New City Hall – consolidating staff from most departments, more community space
- New Seasons brings new life to Milwaukie Marketplace – also Planet Fitness, Ace Hardware, Luna's Ice Cream
- New apartments downtown and new businesses, including Spoke & Word Books, That One Vintage Shop, and soon to come, O'Malley's Gym

- Completion of sidewalk and street projects on Home Avenue, 43rd Ave, Linwood Ave
- Holding steady on utility rates in these inflationary times
- Ledding Library as our first after-hours cooling center (until 10pm)
- Real progress on Council's goals of climate, equity, and parks:
 - Climate: The electricity we use is 100% from renewable sources, installing EV chargers and transitioning increasingly to EVs, solar installation coming to JCB
 - Equity: Developed a multi-year equity work plan and are launching a community event fund overseen by ESC
 - Parks: I'm gonna talk about parks more later, but it's a good segue to . . .

What's ahead in the coming year or so?

- Three new parks opening in October!
- Continued efforts to institutionalize the city's commitments to climate and equity, which was a concerted focus of this biennium's budget'
- After several years of planning and preparation, phase I of Hillside Park will break ground this fall
- Monroe Greenway gets underway in 2025
- Washington Street improvements to wrap up and Ardenwald North to kick off
- Hwy 224 repaving (including reconstruction of Monroe intersection) in 2025
- New Headstart preschool coming to site of former YMCA childcare center
- Campbell Elementary to be home to charter school after being shuttered for a decade
- A downtown church looking to provide a winter overnight warming shelter on the coldest nights

- Improved stormwater absorption capacity and treatment for Central Milwaukie and Ardenwald with Meek St./Balfour detention pond
- Downtown could see a lot of transformation – not just Pfriem/Historic City Hall, but also some other new eateries appear to be in the works, Libbie’s and Chase are for sale, etc.
- First expenditures of our urban renewal district – some infrastructure improvements and assistance for small businesses
- Three Herons partnership with the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde
- This summer – 6.6 miles of slurry sealing and 3 miles of new paving of neighborhood streets

[give shout out to CD report]

A few years out – bye bye Kellogg dam?!?!

- Coho Point plus new underpass a game changer for South Downtown
- how ironic it is that the dam may be gone before MBP gets built
- call on County to build MBP

Housing: The growth in businesses is tied with the growth in housing and number of residents. In the decade between 2017 and 2026, we are on track to see 2,000 new housing units – mostly apartments, but also a few hundred new single-family homes and middle housing units. This is an increase of almost 23% over the 8,800 housing units in Milwaukie in 2016.

How much of that housing is affordable? 400 new units at Hillside, 28 units at NHA, and 23 units to come in the Coho Point development. But hopefully we will see some townhome and cottage cluster developments that will create home ownership opportunities at price points below the current \$500K median price for single-family homes (Zillow), so that the younger generation of Milwaukians can afford to stay here.

But more housing bring smore demand for services, more traffic and parking conflicts.

Challenges

- We're going into a very tight two-year budget, with net decreases for most departments ("hold the line"). A looming fiscal cliff, and we've got some tough conversations ahead about increasing revenue or else cutting services and staffing.
- Need to invest in our water system – to create enough capacity for growth, but also upgrading treatment for PFAS chemicals and federal mandates to eliminate lead pipes
- Parks – staying or going [MBP; also encourage people to take systems plan survey]
- Parking – downtown and in some neighborhoods

Closing:

Before closing, I wanted to say a few words about public engagement in Milwaukie.

In the Oregonian, a Mike's Drive-In manager commented on the clamor for reopening: "People are quite invested in Milwaukie" Yes, we are. Whether you're a relatively new arrival to Milwaukie or a longtime resident, everyone is invested in the success of our little town.

[longtime residents as backbone of institutions like Milw Historical Society, Community Emergency Response Team, Rotary and others. But also new residents eager to engage -- B&C interview example – and shoutout for Leadership Academy]

I sometimes see comments on social media that "they'll do what they want to do anyway." Distressful. Yes, sometimes state mandates tie our hands. But Milwaukie history of listening – 29th Ave Greenway example.

So stay tuned in to news you get through the Pilot, your NDA, social media for some of these tough conversations, as well as news about things happening in your neighborhood.

Meanwhile, summer is the best time in Milwaukie – but as we approach July 4th, please remember that fireworks are prohibited anywhere in Milwaukie. So find a good public display – Oaks Park, Waterfront Blues, LO does laser light. And new lawnsigns -- if you want a lawnsign, sign the sheet on the table outside the door.

I look forward to seeing everyone out and about for our summer events -- out to First Friday, Juneteenth, Pride, summer concerts in August, return of the duck race over Kellogg dam on July 13, and more. Thanks for coming today!