

**State of the City – Mayor Larry Klein**  
**September 14, 2019, Downtown Sunnyvale**

This is my first State of the City address as your mayor and it's quite an honor to be here in that role today.

I can tell you that, having learned from the capable mayors before me when I was a planning commissioner, councilmember and vice mayor, I felt fairly prepared to be mayor.

But honestly, nothing could have prepared me for what happened in Sunnyvale on the evening of April 23 this year.

You may remember the tragic incident on El Camino Real when a driver struck and injured eight pedestrians who were simply walking and biking to their destinations.

Like so many of us, I initially thought this was a terrible accident.

Sadly, we learned that the investigation found evidence that this act was not only intentional, but intended to target members of the Muslim faith.

I happen to live just a block from where this occurred and I was at the scene until midnight talking to residents and our public safety officers.

In the days and weeks that followed, there was an incredible outpouring of support for the victims and our community from people near and far.

Hundreds of people attended a Unity Gathering we held a few weeks later to hear multi-faith leaders in our community speak about tolerance, understanding and diversity.

Many of those involved with planning and hosting that event are here today and I'd like to ask you to please stand and be recognized.

On behalf of our entire community, thank you for all you've done, and continue to do, to unite us and find ways to strengthen our ties.

Witnessing how Sunnyvale came together to condemn this type of bigotry and violence and instead embrace love and light was easily one of my proudest moments.

And fortunately, we have many other things to be proud of here in Sunnyvale as well.

Among them is our continued leadership with climate action.

We know addressing climate change is a race against time and we've heard from many in our community who want to get and stay ahead as soon as we can.

To that end, we adopted our first Climate Action Plan in 2014 which helped us not only meet but exceed the state's 2020 greenhouse gas reduction target four years earlier than required.

But we can't stop there, so we turned to you – our community – to help generate new ideas that would form our next plan of action.

After many months of community input, analysis and development, the City Council unanimously adopted our new Climate Playbook this August with ambitious emissions targets – among them to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050.

This Playbook contains our broad long-term strategies along with specific actions for the City and community to take in the next three years to move toward achieving our goals.

So we ask and encourage you to do what you can because it will take all of our collective efforts to make an impact.

In fact, our new FoodCycle program is a powerful example of what collective effort can achieve.

Not only have our residents significantly reduced the amount of garbage being sent to the landfill by recycling their food scraps, this has actually resulted in LOWERING residential garbage rates.

The City is also taking sustainability to heart with one of our most significant public works projects – modernizing the 26-acre Civic Center campus.

Just a few weeks ago, the City Council approved the design and construction procurement for Phase 1, which includes a new City Hall and Public Safety building addition.

Both buildings will be all electric and the new City Hall will be both Net Zero Energy and Certified LEED Platinum, which to our knowledge will be the first City Hall to achieve this in the country.

Not to be outshined, the largest capital improvement project in our City's history also has a role to play – that is rebuilding our wastewater treatment plant.

Our City staff operate this complex industrial facility around the clock to ensure we meet regulatory requirements and protect our Bay waters.

But this aging facility needs to be rebuilt.

By itself, this is an incredible feat because we are rebuilding while simultaneously keeping the Plant running.

But not only is this project expansive in its scope for the next 20 years, it is also bringing sustainable ideas to fruition.

Partnering with experts in this field, we're exploring new ways to meet our energy needs with byproducts generated at the Plant and the neighboring SMaRT Station.

And we're evaluating options to improve our recycled water quality and studying advanced water purification options to augment our water supply.

Just as important as our behind-the-scenes infrastructure like the Plant, is our transportation network that you see and use every day, whether you're walking, biking, driving or using transit.

And your City government is continually working to improve the quality, efficiency and safety of this network.

To help achieve that, we are now developing a comprehensive Active Transportation Plan which focuses on Bicycles, Pedestrian Safety and Circulation, and Safe Routes to School.

Through the Active Transportation Plan, we will identify current needs and gaps within the City's bicycle and pedestrian network, and propose improvements to make walking and biking more viable transportation choices.

And we're already putting specific improvements in place.

For example, we just became one of the first cities in the Bay Area to reduce the speed limit at all our public elementary and middle school zones from 25 to only 15 miles an hour when students are present.

Our goal with this citywide speed reduction is to encourage walking and biking to and from school by making it as safe as possible for our students.

Another important step we've taken is to join cities worldwide in adopting a Vision Zero Plan that aims to eliminate traffic fatalities and serious injuries.

The City Council adopted this Plan in late July so we now have – based on data and community input – a list of priority locations for us to improve, along with strategies to address them.

Our next step is to prepare and prioritize grant applications so that we can get the funding necessary to design and complete these transportation safety improvements.

Speaking of funding, I want to thank you all for supporting VTA's Measure B, the half-cent countywide sales tax to enhance transit, highways, expressways and active transportation.

Now that the Measure B litigation has been resolved, Sunnyvale will be receiving \$2.9 million annually from the fund toward safety education and street resurfacing programs.

And, another \$17 million from Measure B, combined with City and SB1 funds, are being put toward our number one transportation priority – reconstructing the Mathilda/101/237 interchange.

Those of you who travel in this area know very well what a complex and congested monster it is.

Fortunately, relief is on the way.

Construction work began this February and is progressing rapidly toward being complete next summer.

This \$42 million infrastructure project is designed to reduce congestion and improve traffic on Mathilda Avenue for all modes of travel including pedestrians, bicycles, and transit.

This includes modifying on- and off-ramps, improving traffic signals and adding new left-turn lanes.

It also will provide better access to local destinations and major employment centers in Sunnyvale by widening Mathilda Avenue to provide three lanes in each direction,

Adding dedicated bike lanes and continuous sidewalks along Mathilda Avenue and

Providing a new multi-purpose trail along Moffett Park Drive.

Of course, one of those local destinations is right here in Sunnyvale's downtown.

As you know, there are many wonderful events held here throughout the year for all ages, and we'll be complementing them with a new attraction coming soon.

Thanks to a partnership between the City, Google and STC, the developers of CityLine Sunnyvale, we'll have an outdoor ice skating rink opening Thanksgiving weekend and running, or should I say skating, through January next year.

We're all excited about this fun new addition and looking forward to seeing you out on the ice this winter enjoying our downtown in yet another way!

And when you're here for that, you'll have a front row seat to the incredible progress being made on the CityLine Sunnyvale project.

Looking around, it's hard not to appreciate just how far we've come in the last year.

At the end of the new Murphy Avenue extension, construction continues on the future Whole Foods Market grocery store, AMC movie theater and the public parking garage, which are all scheduled to open early next year.

We're also excited to share that CityLine has signed leases for some of their additional retail space with AT&T Wireless and two restaurants – Pacific Catch and Urban Plates.

In addition, the City is currently reviewing construction drawings for another 75 apartment units at Iowa and Taaffe, with 12.5% of them designated as below market rate units for low-income households.

This CityLine project is one of many bringing much needed housing to the community.

Affordable housing continues to be a significant challenge facing local governments and our communities today, and I'm very proud that Sunnyvale remains a leader in this area.

One of the biggest influences the City has is through our General Plan and zoning policies.

These ensure we enable a diverse mix of housing to be built, particularly near public transit and employment areas.

We're currently in the process of studying the potential for additional housing in several of our major planning districts, including along El Camino Real, Lawrence Station, Downtown, and possibly within Moffett Park.

And these studies will all include an evaluation of adequate infrastructure and services.

Back in 2017, we also revised regulations making it easier for people to build in-law or granny units on their properties – and the results are in.

Compared to the building permits issued in 2017, we almost tripled that number in 2018 and are on track to quadruple it this year.

Beyond studies and regulations, we're also actively partnering with others to build and preserve affordable housing.

In fact, in 2018, 12% of all building permits issued for new housing in Sunnyvale was reserved for moderate income households.

And we have several hundred new affordable rental and ownership units in the pipeline for construction over the next few years.

We also hit a record in the last fiscal year with nearly 50 affordable below market rate homes sold to income eligible households.

Better still, several of these households were able to take advantage of the City's Down Payment Assistance Program.

This past spring, the official grand opening was held for Edwina Benner Plaza on Persian Drive which is a new 100% affordable apartment development named for Sunnyvale's and California's first female mayor.

This MidPen Housing development was supported by \$8 million in local housing mitigation and federal grant funds, and all 66 units are now home to formerly homeless and lower-income households.

We continue to allocate our federal grant and local housing mitigation funds – which Sunnyvale has had in place for decades, by the way – to help create or rehabilitate affordable housing locations for low income households, seniors and special needs tenants.

For example, work is nearly complete on rehabilitating 24 affordable apartments at Eight Trees Apartments, and renovations are scheduled later this year for 100 affordable housing units for seniors at Plaza de las Flores.

Another exciting milestone for us is that our planning staff are currently reviewing the site layout and architectural designs for a 90-unit affordable housing development on City-owned property just across the way from here at Charles, Iowa and Mathilda.

Once approved and constructed, this development will create new housing for Sunnyvale's lower-income and developmentally disabled community members in a terrific location near downtown.

Aside from these individual projects, we're also in the process of reviewing our existing housing programs and opportunities for potential improvements.

For this initiative, we've been holding workshops and meetings since January to hear from the community and stakeholders on a variety of topics, including mobile homes and age-friendly housing.

Ultimately, City staff will develop a comprehensive Housing Strategy that the City Council will consider early next year to provide direction on future housing-related programs and policies.

In the meantime, however, we're continuing to explore changes designed to increase the affordable housing supply in Sunnyvale.

Just next week, in fact, the Council will be considering a new Rental Inclusionary Housing Program that could set aside 15% of new apartments for low and very low income renters in Sunnyvale.

As we adapt and respond to the changing needs of our community, one thing we always remain focused on is safety.

And for the fourth year in a row, Sunnyvale has been ranked the safest city in America.

While we're very proud of this accolade, I know the Chief would tell you that it wouldn't be possible without the positive relationship our public safety officers have with the community.

They work hard every day to be visible and engaged.

Last fall, they did that collaboratively with five other cities and the County by hosting the first ever North County Gun Buyback event.

By offering the community a safe and anonymous way to dispose of unwanted firearms, we collected almost 600 of them in just a few hours.

We also continued with two very successful programs – the Citizens Academy and the Public Safety Youth Academy.

The second 8-week Citizens Academy just started with 24 participants (including the City Manager and myself) who will get a behind-the-scenes introduction to public safety and learn how our unique integrated Public Safety model serves the community.

And the third Public Safety Youth Leadership Academy just concluded with another 27 Sunnyvale youth graduating with skills ranging from leadership and team-building to fitness, nutrition and digital safety.

It is truly amazing to see these remarkable young leaders challenge themselves to push out of their comfort zone and gain the confidence necessary to go after their goals.

We all know that confidence goes a long way, but it often helps to have the latest technology too.

You might remember that early last year, we went live with the Text to 911 service.

This technology has already helped people quickly and quietly get in touch with public safety by texting when calling was not possible.

This year, we've continued to improve 911 service with RapidSOS technology that helps locate wireless calls within 50 feet of their location.

Since 80% of our 911 calls come from wireless devices, this dramatically improved location accuracy has been incredibly beneficial to our response.

Finally, our public safety department just became the first in the County to have an FAA-certified drone program.

Since deploying the drones this June, they've already used this amazing technology to look for a missing person, monitor a barricaded person at the scene, and take investigation images for a major injury accident.

For many of us, having ready access to technology is not a concern.

But the reality is there is a digital divide in our community that prevents families from accessing and using the internet.

Because so much of what our schools do is now online – from assignments to messages about grades and homework – this divide is a very real concern for our students and schools.

Now, thanks to a major grant from the California Public Utilities Commission and Google, the City is partnering with the Sunnyvale School District to address this issue in five of our elementary schools.

Starting this month, 650 parents will receive eight hours of computer training being offered in Spanish and English.

Once they've completed that training, the families will receive a free Chromebook, low-cost internet access, and one year of additional tech support and training as needed.

This is an incredible partnership that should go a long way toward helping to close that technology gap and give our students the best shot at success in school.

*Of course, we really need to balance all of that schoolwork with play too, right?*

Which is why we're all looking forward to the results of our major renovations at Fair Oaks Park and the Washington Community Swim Center.

Last year we told you that one of the highlights of the Fair Oaks Park renovations is a Magical Bridge Playground to serve everyone in our community, but especially those with disabilities.

And the design of the new Swim Center calls for completely replacing and enhancing the complex, including the pool, deck and buildings.

This will significantly improve recreational swim and therapeutic opportunities with features like a zero depth entry, water play equipment, slides and wading areas.

These projects are both now in the design and construction bid phase so we'll be underway with site work soon.

But perhaps the best park news of all are two private projects currently in the development process that have been approved to add 8.5 acres to our public park system.

The first is a 2-acre public park that is part of a housing development on the former Corn Palace property west of Lawrence Expressway.

The second is a 6.5-acre public park also part of a housing development on the former property of chip maker AMD off of Duane Avenue.

These new additions will be wonderful complements to the 7 acres of parkland we've added in the past few years at Swegles, Seven Seas, and Wiser Parks.

In closing, we are so fortunate to have had a year with many significant accomplishments and milestones.

Our professional and talented City staff always set a high bar for service and give their all to supporting our community and the City Council as we take bold steps toward our future.

We have set ambitious goals and risen to meet them.

We have faced complex challenges and collaborated on creative solutions.

And we have confronted hate and darkness with love and light and shown how unity and diversity can leave our community stronger than it was before.

I think we can all be very proud.

So I hope you'll join me today in celebrating these accomplishments and looking forward to another successful year ahead for Sunnyvale.

Thank you for being here on this wonderful day.