

IRVINE

2018 STATE OF THE CITY

presented by

Mayor Donald P. Wagner



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**Mayor
Donald P. Wagner**



**Mayor Pro Tem
Christina L. Shea**



**Councilmember
Melissa Fox**



**Councilmember
Jeffrey Lalloway**



**Councilmember
Lynn Schott**

*The following is the City of Irvine State of the City Address,
originally delivered February 27, 2018, by Mayor Donald P. Wagner*

Hello, everyone. Thank you for joining me for my second State of the City address.

I want to begin with a couple of specific thank yous. First, to Rabbi Steinberg. The year just passed brought some challenges to our Jewish community – and thus to the entire Irvine community. It was great to see so many of us of all different faiths several months ago rally against hate in response to a bomb threat against a Jewish Community Center. I thank Rabbi Steinberg for being with us and sharing his thoughtful and inspiring words this evening.

Second, I really must thank my wife, Megan, the First Lady of Irvine. Thank you for your love and support in this and all of my political endeavors.

Third, I want to give a special thank you to our recently retired City Manager, Sean Joyce. Sean served as City Manager honorably and admirably for more than a decade and made my transition into the Mayor's role much easier than it otherwise could have been. I am grateful and wish Sean and his wife Veronica much success and joy in the coming years.

Finally, allow me to introduce a number of very special people who are responsible for the many strengths of this City, my City Council colleagues: Mayor Pro Tem Christina Shea, Councilmember Melissa Fox, Councilmember Jeff Lalloway and, Councilmember Lynn Schott.

We also have with us a number of staff members who work so hard on behalf of our residents, including City Manager Pro Tem Grace Leung and Assistant City Manager Sharon Landers ... and Police Chief Mike Hamel.

Joining us today from other local agencies which do such great work of their own for Irvine, we have with us a number of elected officials:

From the Irvine Unified School District: Board members Ira Glasky, Lauren Brooks, and Betty Carroll.

From the Tustin Unified School District: Board member Jonathan Abelow, who has been joined tonight by Superintendent Greg Franklin.



And, from the Irvine Ranch Water District: Board members Doug Reinhart and John Withers.

Let me begin with a review of the just finished year as a prelude to my thoughts on the coming year.

Once again, we enjoyed a number of successes, many of them new, and some the continuation of great work that has been going on here for years.

For example, Sunset magazine ranked Irvine as one of the "Best Places to Live 2017" in highlighting its "20 Western Dream Towns." Meanwhile, the non-profit organization "Truth in Accounting" ranked Irvine the number one city of the nation's 75 most populated cities in terms of fiscal health.

According to the Orange County Register, the Truth in Accounting report explains our number one status like this: "Unlike most cities, Irvine's elected officials have only promised the amount of benefits they can afford to pay."

What have we gotten for that money? Let me suggest a couple of answers.

First, of course, is public safety.

We remained America's safest big city, according to FBI statistics on violent crime. Chief Hamel and the men and women of the Irvine Police Department deserve much of the credit for that continuing success. But so do you in the community for your commit-

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ment to the safety of yourselves, your families, your friends, and your neighborhoods. Our public safety demonstrates a police and community partnership in which Irvine sets the standard for the entire nation.

Second, we get world class education.

Nearly 40,000 K-12 students are enrolled in the Irvine Unified and the Tustin Unified school districts. I understand that at least 72 different languages are spoken in Irvine homes. The challenge is enormous. Yet both districts continue to perform well above expectations. They are a big reason why people from across the globe move to Irvine. And the students they produce are among the most prepared in the nation, prepared to go on to any of the institutions of higher education in Irvine or anywhere in the nation.

This City Council enthusiastically supports our schools. Last November, we approved the ongoing Educational Partnership Fund and Challenge Match Grant programs through the 2019 and 2020 school years. Our direct funds go to support school nurses and health clerks, guidance counselors, our School Resource Officer program, and to provide lump sum allocations for each of the school district's unique needs.

In all, this City Council maintains our number one fiscal status yet still provides nearly \$10 million a year in direct and indirect support to our schools.

Third, we get an unmatched quality of life in Irvine.

Consider for a moment that we are finally seeing significant progress on the long promised Orange County Great Park. This marvelous asset, not just for



Irvine or even Orange County, but for all of Southern California, had been – to mix metaphors – a political football and cash cow for friends of former councilmembers for far too long. But now, working with our partner FivePoint, under this Council, there is good news to deliver on the Great Park's 688-acre development.

Last August, we opened a championship soccer stadium and six other natural grass soccer and lacrosse fields. The Council and I were pleased to celebrate this long anticipated event with the whole community.

Also, we opened 25 tennis courts, 5 sand volleyball courts, and a Children's Play Area.

With more to come this spring and summer, such as the 1-mile long trail connecting Irvine Boulevard and the Great Park; six additional soccer and lacrosse fields, which are on artificial turf; championship baseball and softball stadiums, with seven baseball fields and five softball fields; flexible athletic fields that will allow for more play; and, I hope very soon, an Olympic Water Polo facility.

Also in the near future, an 18-hole golf course opens at the Great Park ...

But wait, there's still more.

We heard you when you said you wanted live music back in Irvine. In partnership with LiveNation and FivePoint, we opened a temporary amphitheater at the Great Park. Irvine's own homegrown band, Young the Giant, headlined the very first concert. We plan to have a permanent amphitheater.

In a separate area of the Great Park being paid for, built, and to be maintained by an affiliate of the Anaheim Ducks, is the Community Ice Facility, to open this fall. It boasts four sheets of ice and, at 270,000-square-feet, will be the largest in California and one of the largest in the country. It will then fill a need for local and regional youth hockey teams, for figure skating, and for public ice time.

None of this, by the way, went unnoticed. The Orange County Business Council recently awarded the City of Irvine its Public-Private Partnership Award for our work with FivePoint and the Anaheim Ducks on their respective projects. Let me personally thank Emile Haddad of FivePoint and, from the Ducks, Henry and Susan Samuelli, and Michael Schulman.

Finally, on the subject of sports, I have good news for you. Whether you are a fan of the Angels or Dodgers, or somebody else, Irvine is a Major League town. Last year, we partnered with Major League Baseball for its nation-wide Mayors Play Ball program, designed to get young people out on the ballfield, in the fresh air, running around the bases. Irvine, despite not quite having a Major League team ... yet ... was one of the very few cities to receive special recognition at the National Mayors Conference in Washington, D.C., this past January for our participation in the program. Over 250 cities participated. Less than 30 of them actually have Major League baseball teams. And still, Irvine got one of the 20 special recognitions for our work in the Mayors Play Ball program.

We'll be back at it this year. Caps go on and the season begins on March 29. Look for an opportunity to join us out on the ballfield.

All of this is to say that Irvine, for good reason, is a place where people want to live, and raise their families.

Maybe for all of the reasons I've just mentioned, in 2017 Irvine was among a very select few cities around the nation to receive one of the United States Conference of Mayors' Livability Awards for cities of 100,000 people or more.

But Irvine also boasts of "workability," because we have one of the most vibrant business communities in the entire country. That's a big claim, but consider:

Our jobs-to-resident ratio is the best in America.



And many, many of those are high paying, intellectually stimulating, and personally rewarding jobs. We are home to Edwards Lifesciences, Allergan, Massimo, Blizzard Entertainment, and Western Digital, to name but a very few of the exciting companies that call Irvine home. No offense to all the others.

And ironically, for some of our traffic woes which I will talk about in a minute, we are also proud to have in Irvine a very diverse representation of the auto industry. Again, not to slight anyone, but:

Mazda, Ford Motor Co., and the Chrysler Group, have long had offices here. Now, the ultra-luxury electric car company, Karma, has moved here.

If you see a hydrogen car, the Toyota Mirai, driving around, it may be one of the vehicles that is partnered with UC Irvine's hydrogen car program.

And I know you will see Kia Motors America around town, along with Hyundai, which has offices in the high-rise at Park Place.

But we are not prepared to rest on our business laurels. That is why last year I formed the Irvine Mayor's Advisory Council on Business. And this year, a group of us went to the United Kingdom in search of life sciences companies looking to bring their human and financial capital to America.

As to my business council, the purpose is to bring together industry leaders, and to cross multiple industries, for us all to figure out what works, what doesn't work, what more needs to be done, and how the City may better support our businesses and entrepreneurs. Meetings have included more than two dozen Irvine

business and education leaders from throughout the city. We learn from each other with what are, I hope, free-wheeling and robust discussions.

There is plenty of room for more input. We meet tomorrow at 11:30 at Edwards Lifesciences. Please join us if you're interested.

As to the United Kingdom, the Greater Irvine Chamber of Commerce and I led a delegation to London and Cambridge almost two weeks ago where we met with dozens of companies and academics in the life sciences field.

This was truly a remarkable group of people representing the City of Irvine, and I was honored to be with them. Some are here tonight and I'd like them to stand and be thanked for their service.

From the Chamber is its President and CEO, Bryan Starr. But the real star for the Chamber was Executive Vice President Linda DiMario, who organized everything, was indefatigable, and kept us all going with good humor, and even managed a 6 a.m. breakfast and coffee service when needed one day!

Also with us from UC Irvine were Kate Klimow, Chief Administrative Officer and Director of External Relations, UCI Applied Innovation, and Dr. Steven Small, Professor of Neurology, Neurobiology and Behavior, and Cognitive Sciences, and Chief Scientific Officer of the Medical Innovation Institute.

From Cal State Fullerton – which has a vibrant Irvine campus – came Lynn Stewart, Director of Business Development – Extended Education – International Programs and Global Engagement.

Edwards Lifesciences gave us Leigh Volkland, its Senior Director for Government Affairs.

The financial guru with us came from the startup incubator OCTANe, its President and CEO Bill Carpou.

To help with real estate issues any new business to our shores would have, we brought with us Jason Lantgen, Vice President and Market Lead for the Technology and Life Sciences practice group at Jones Lang LaSalle Orange County.

From ThinkBox Technology Group, we had Carlos Oregon, its Vice President of Operations and Principal Consultant, offering his breadth of experience in



global program and project management initiatives in the pharmaceutical and life science sectors, among many others.

Finally, to show that Irvine is hospitable to our friends from the United Kingdom we had with us Andy Downer from Horizon Consumer Science and a board member of the British American Business Association.

It was truly a world-class group to show off Irvine and entice businesses in the life sciences industry looking to establish a home in America. The next slides give you just a taste of the companies we met with.

It was actually quite a bit of work, in and around other meetings with government leaders like the Deputy Mayor of London for trade and the Mayor of Cambridge. But work that will pay dividends as we grow the life sciences “ecosystem” right here in Irvine.

But, of course, growth comes with challenges for 2018.

This Council is determined to meet those challenges. That is why we have not approved a single housing project that puts more cars on the road. In fact, the only new housing project the Council has approved takes cars off the road. It's at UCI, adds to the City's store of affordable housing, and means that more students are now able to live on campus, and no longer need to drive to and from their classes every day on our roads.

That is also why we are in litigation with the County of Orange over its proposed mega-development on a 100-acre parcel of land it owns. We must insist that



any development be reasonable, proportional to the surrounding infrastructure, and not contribute to the traffic woes misguided prior Council decisions created.

So, what are we doing about transportation? To begin, I promised to focus on fixing Irvine traffic by bringing back our Transportation Commission to dig deep into the issues and by hiring a full-time transportation professional to advise me and the commission on best practices in the industry to reduce traffic congestion. That has been done and they are hard at work.

Here are some of the specific actions being undertaken this year to address traffic.

First, as I mentioned, the Council is determined not to repeat the mistakes of the past with rampant development inconsistent with the Master Plan.

But we are also doing much more. Transportation and traffic improvements include:

- Synchronized lights at our freeway onramps and off-ramps with agreement with Caltrans;
- Widen University Drive from four to six lanes between MacArthur Boulevard and Campus Drive. This will begin shortly and help those going to UC Irvine as well as residents and commuters;
- Improve the Culver Drive/University Drive intersection, adding two new northbound right-turn lanes and a new northbound through-lane on Culver Drive to ease traffic congestion from high school and university students as well as commuters.

These projects will be completed by the end of June 2019, with more to come. As an example: Reconfig-

ure and widen the Jamboree Drive intersection at Barranca, perhaps the busiest in the city.

But please realize, a problem that has been years in the making can only be solved over time with dedicated and consistent effort. I am quite proud of this Council and their commitment to that effort.

And then there are our alternative transportation options. We have expanded routes of the iShuttle from the two train stations that serve Irvine, and the City of Irvine has 362.8 miles of bikeways – 61.8 miles of off-street and 301 miles of on-street bike lanes. The total infrastructure value is about \$230 million. (By the way, that's a lot of miles. The City of Irvine has two and a half times as many bikeway miles, including 15 more miles of off-street bike lanes, than bike-crazy Seattle.) In fact, in 2017, the City of Irvine earned a Silver Level Bicycle Friendly Community designation from the League of American Bicyclists. To make biking even more attractive as an alternative to cars, the City coordinates with the Metrolink train system that runs through Irvine Station for special bike cars.

But let's be honest; none of this will ever be enough, or done soon enough, for some. I cannot end this evening without touching on two very important matters that will likely be the subject of much discussion in Irvine in 2018:

The Irvine Master Plan and the Southern California State Veterans Cemetery.

First, the City's Master Plan. There are folks in our community with a very different vision of Irvine's future than that envisioned so long ago and written into the Master Plan. It is a vision inconsistent with the Master Plan. It is a vision that, when represented on this Council in past years, ignored the Master Plan, for example creating the traffic and development disaster that is in the IBC today.

It is a vision today that, I believe, frankly, wants no more development in Irvine under the false flag of "responsible" development. It is unfortunate, really, when so many people are drawn to a Master Planned community because of that Master Plan, that we must work to preserve the Master Plan vision from people who want to abandon it and to abandon growth and continued vitality. Don't they realize, no City has ever

stagnated its way to greatness?

Please do not underestimate Irvine. This City is poised for a greatness that is baked into our Master Plan ... if we have the courage to embrace it. As I mentioned before, it is this Council, not the NIM-BYs, who are dedicated to real responsible growth.

Such responsible growth will see us – mindful always of traffic – create affordable housing so that our children and grandchildren can return to live in Irvine, and so that we can continue to attract the best and brightest from our colleges and universities to fuel the next great discovery in the life sciences or create the next great American company. Real responsible development – which is threatened by the anti-growth crowd – will allow us to finish the Great Park and create our world class Cultural Terrace with museums, gardens, open space, live entertainment with the permanent amphitheater, meeting space, water features, and a water park, among so much else.

We are finally on the cusp of realizing the long ago and much delayed Great Park promise. Now is not the time to give up on that promise and shut down development at the Cultural Terrace. Now is not the time to give up on the Master Plan. Irvine has long been a vibrant and open city; now is not the time to pull in the welcome mat, shut our doors, and call it “responsible” growth.

The recent Irvine bid for Amazon’s HQ2 illustrates the folly of the no growth efforts that are so inconsistent with Irvine’s venerable Master Plan. Admittedly always a long shot to actually land Amazon, putting together that proposal allowed us to take a thorough inventory of the City, its strengths and weaknesses, and what it could offer to a company like Amazon in exchange for 50,000 new, high tech, well paid jobs. The results of that inventory were impressive.

The 60-page bid sent to Amazon shows that Irvine has the educated and available workforce; we have the office and warehouse capacity; we have the infrastructure; we have a stable business climate for growth and innovation, along with a strong local culture and diversity, top performing public schools, and unparalleled safety.

City staff worked with Irvine Company on the bid, and I want to thank Donald Bren and his staff for that

partnership. I also want to thank the business community, specifically the Greater Irvine Chamber of Commerce and the Orange County Business Council, for their support in this process. We are grateful.

What we were reminded of as we went through the process of defining Irvine for the Amazon bid is that we are forward-thinking, vibrant, and remain a critical driver of economic prosperity for the entire Southern California region.

Now is not the time to give that up!

And then there is the Veterans Cemetery. I have been personally committed to a state veterans cemetery in Irvine since 2014. Then, as a member of the California Assembly, I co-authored legislation with Assemblywoman Sharon Quirk Silva, signed by the governor, supporting development of this cemetery.

Unfortunately, though, it has gotten complicated. Two proposed sites were identified, neither actually in the Great Park, despite what you might read in a few unscrupulous publications, and both on the MCAS El Toro base, again despite what some geographically challenged folks would have you believe.

The governor visited last year, expressed a preference for one of the two sites, called the Strawberry Fields site, and working with me, Ms. Quirk Silva, and representatives of state and local veterans’ organizations, legislation was signed to make it happen. In January of this year, during a trip to Washington, D.C., for the National Mayors Conference, I met with officials of the Veterans Administration – which also supports the Strawberry Fields site, by the way – to hopefully accelerate the construction of the cemetery.

However, the City Council’s action last year to accelerate and reduce the cost of developing the state veterans cemetery has been halted by a group of activists preferring the original, more expensive and polluted site. Some of my Council colleagues agree with that preference and, while I personally do not, I of course take as a given their good faith in the dispute – and in June, it will be up to you, the voters of Irvine, to decide the fate of the Southern California State Veterans Cemetery.

On that note, I thank you for being here tonight and for your kind attention. We are adjourned.