

2020 State of the County

January 6, 2020

1. Welcome

- a. Welcome and thank you for joining us this morning.
- b. Please give a round of applause to the Oregon Youth Men's Ensemble led by instructor Chris Dobson. This incredible group includes students from the Eugene School District, Creswell, Springfield and several home-schooled students. We will get to hear one more song from them shortly.
- c. Now, I would like you to join me in welcoming University of Oregon Army ROTC students as they present the colors.

2. Presentation of Colors

3. Introductions

- a. Fellow commissioners
- b. *Others as identified on the morning of the event*

4. Oregon Youth Men's Ensemble Performance

5. Strategic Plan

- a. Last year, the Board of Commissioners adopted an updated Strategic Plan that outlines the focus of our work through 2021. During the last 12 months, our departments have accomplished an impressive amount of work in each of our key areas: Vibrant Communities, Robust Infrastructure, Our People & Partnerships, and Safe, Healthy County.

6. Vibrant Communities

- a. Part of our commitment to supporting vibrant communities is enhancing economic opportunity for all of our residents.
- b. Access to high speed Internet is critical for businesses to operate efficiently, but is not available for most of the more than 100,000 rural residents.
- c. To help bring access – and with it opportunities – to rural Lane County, we partnered with the Technology Association of Oregon, M-Lab, US Ignite, and the City of Eugene to develop Speed Up America, a unique tool that can provide accurate information about the availability of Internet Service Providers and real speeds received.
- d. The data gathered through Speed Up America will help inform policy makers and community leaders on where the true “data deserts” exist and how to prioritize support.
- e. Our work to support and enhance our local economy is not limited to rural Lane County.
- f. We also worked to recruit a global company with 600 new jobs to Springfield earlier this year. Wayfair opened its first West Coast office to support the company's customer service department.

- g. In addition to the 600 new jobs, Wayfair will also be implementing a number of workplace programs that promote upward mobility, diversity, equity and inclusion – values we can get behind here at Lane County.
- h. In Eugene, Lane County partnered with the City of Eugene, Lane Transit District, and Lane Council of Governments to pilot EmGo.
- i. EmGo is a free, on-demand transportation system designed to alleviate parking demand and support commerce in downtown Eugene by making it easier for people to access local businesses and services downtown.

7. Robust Infrastructure

- a. Robust Infrastructure – our second Strategic Plan priority – is quite often literally the foundation upon which our community is built and moves.
- b. In 2019, we completed 10 road and bridge construction projects totaling \$13 million, including a rebuild of the historic Bridge Street Bridge near Deerhorn and Americans with Disabilities Act upgrades to 138 pedestrian ramps.
- c. We also officially took on jurisdiction of the 42-mile stretch of Territorial Highway that spans Lane County. While we will take on the maintenance of Territorial over the next few years, we are excited to begin digging in – literally – and start making critical safety improvements to the highway this coming summer. In turn, we handed Delta Highway over to the State.
- d. The funding to support this increase in road improvements comes in large part from the Keep Oregon Moving transportation package passed by the Legislature in 2017.
- e. Infrastructure across the county was hard hit in early 2019 when a record-breaking snow storm swept through our region. The debris clean-up along Lane County roads is ongoing and so far more than 2,200 tons of debris in the roadways has been removed.
- f. Our Road and Bridge Maintenance Division did such an incredible job reopening roads, supporting emergency access, and helping trapped residents that the whole division and every employee was recognized by the Oregon Chapter of the American Public Works Association as Everyday Heroes for 2019.
- g. Our infrastructure is not limited to physical assets. Our ability to conduct fair and proper elections is critical to the wellbeing of our community. Lane County Elections processed 56,517 voter registration transactions through November 2019 and installed a second high-speed ballot sorter to increase efficiency and provide redundancy in preparation for the 2020 election cycle.
- h. The Lane County Clerk’s Office is also the keeper of important records for our community, including real property deeds and marriage licensing. In 2019, we had processed more than 54,000 documents through November. Another way to look at that is that our small Clerk’s office processed more than one document every two minutes during work hours.

- i. We have been steadily working to digitize our historical records and this year we digitized nearly 2 million document images – 6 Terabytes of data from August of 1973 to the present.
- j. Our financial infrastructure has also continued to stabilize.
- k. The Financial Services Division received a clean opinion from independent accounting auditors for the most recent fiscal year’s financial data.
- l. Lane County also received a clean opinion from the independent accountant on the financial data for the voter-supported Jail and Youth Services public safety levy.
- m. We are also taking proactive steps to protect our financial, operational and informational infrastructure by completing a cyber security review and continuously making responsible improvements to safeguard our critical information.

8. Our People & Partnerships

- a. Our People & Partnerships is a Strategic Plan priority added during the most recent update. It reflects how important our employees and community partners are to being able to serve our community.
- b. We have committed to increasing employee engagement because we know that our employees are our most valuable asset and engaged employees are productive and invested in their roles.
- c. We integrated our three core behaviors – Focused on Solutions; Driven to Connect; and Passion to Serve – into our job postings, hiring process and performance evaluations so that every employee can be successful.
- d. We have been closely tracking our employee turnover for several years and are pleased to report that it is in a healthy range – some turnover is a good thing because it brings in new employees, new ideas and provides room for growth in our organization. We saw a total of 11 percent turnover in 2019 with more than half of those due to retirement or taking new positions within the County.
- e. This year, we negotiated four collective bargaining agreements with employee groups, including our Lane County Peace Officers Association, Admin Pro, AFSCME Physicians and 626. The negotiations with 626 were conducted using interest-based bargaining, which focuses on developing shared values and strengthening relationships between union leadership and County leadership. We hope that our other bargaining units join us in interest-based bargaining moving forward.
- f. Our efforts have not gone unnoticed. In 2019, we were awarded the third healthiest large employer in Oregon for the third year in a row. Nationally, we placed within the top 100 healthiest workplaces in America this fall.
- g. Lane County received these awards, in part, for our successful shift to a self-funded health insurance plan in 2015; investing in wellness and preventative care for employees; as well as other wellness-related efforts.
- h. Our focus on wellness has a two-fold effect: it reduces cost, allowing Lane County to invest more resources into direct services, and it increases

employee productivity and engagement.

9. Safe, Healthy County

- a. Creating Lane County as a safe, healthy county for all residents is the fourth priority area in our Strategic Plan.
- b. In 2019, we accomplished a number of goals that help increase the safety and health of our residents.
- c. The District Attorney's Office reviewed more than 5700 criminal cases through November from Lane County law enforcement agencies.
- d. The Department of Transportation-funded DUII investigator performed 105 warrant attempts – helping to keep our roads safer and ensure there are consequences for those who choose to drive while under the influence.
- e. The Victim Services Division supported more than 2,300 Lane County residents, helping them with tasks such as filing for orders of protection or navigating the legal process.
- f. The Family Law Division collected approximately \$21 million for children in Lane County and handled more than 4,000 child support cases.
- g. Our specialty treatment courts graduated 63 individuals who successfully completed more than a year of treatment for addiction or mental health issues and who have demonstrated their commitment to being positive members of our community. The treatment courts include Drug Court, Veterans Court and Mental Health Court.
- h. In April, the Board of Commissioners appointed Cliff Harrold to serve as Lane County Sheriff after a public application process. Sheriff Harrold's long service, which began in 1990 when he joined the Sheriff's Office Explorer Post for youth, demonstrates well his commitment to our community. Sheriff Harrold succeeded Byron Trapp, who retired this spring after 31 years of service.
- i. In addition to welcoming the new sheriff in town, the Lane County Sheriff's Office has, for the first time since 2011, been able to fully staff the Dispatch Center. As we all know, dispatchers are highly trained and provide a critical link between callers and emergency responders.
- j. The Sheriff's Police Services Division trained 5 new patrol deputies during 2019. This is a nearly yearlong training process that includes 16 weeks at the Oregon Department of Public Safety Standards and Training Police Academy and about 18 weeks of hands-on field training before they are ready for solo patrol.
- k. We have also made significant investments in mental health services at the Lane County Jail. We all know that jail is not the ideal place to provide mental health services, but the reality is that up to 60 percent of inmates need treatment and the jail is the only option available for many of them.
- l. Last year, the Sheriff's Office increased the number of mental health staff members to six full-time positions and continued to prioritize Inmate Wellness Services.
- m. Those services are provided by a mix of mental health staff, jail staff and outside providers. Providing options to help inmates manage their

wellness needs has led to a decrease in depression, anxiety, obsessive compulsive behavior, insomnia and psychosis among inmates. It has also increased the number of inmates who are able to access needed medications.

- n. Our role in providing support does not end when a person is released from jail. For those on post-prison supervision, Lane County Parole & Probation provides an important path to successful re-entry into the community.
- o. With growing numbers of women assigned to supervision, and a large proportion of those women having children, Parole & Probation opened the Justice-Involved Women's Reporting Center to provide female parolees with a safe space to perform their required check-ins with their children. The center is equipped with victim services and childcare because we know that the vast majority of incarcerated women and women on supervision are victims themselves and need a different kind of support to be successful as compared to men on supervision.
- p. Currently, our Parole & Probation division is scattered in 15 different locations. In December, the Board of Commissioners voted to purchase a property on Four Corners in Eugene to serve as a new home for Parole & Probation – increasing their efficiency and reducing the number of leased spaces.
- q. The challenges created by such widespread offices haven't stopped Parole & Probation from continuously working to improve how they serve our community. In fact, the training program developed by our local Parole & Probation office has become the preferred parole officer training model in the state and early data suggests a 36 percent reduction in new crimes committed by those on supervision.
- r. I plan to share more on how Lane County is working toward a healthy county a bit later, but for now I'll take pride in sharing that our Health & Human Services Department has established partnerships with both Trillium and PacificSource to implement coordinated care for approximately 90,000 Oregon Health Plan members, including managing the behavioral health system and providing critical primary care and behavioral health clinical services.
- s. We have also partnered with Florence and the West Lane County community to provide mobile mental health crisis response to help resolve conflicts stemming from behavioral crises before they become a law enforcement issue. A model that Cohoos created and that has served the metro area for several years.

10. Video

- a. There are a number of other areas where we've made exciting progress this year. I would like to take a few minutes and share a video with you to highlight those areas.

11. Homelessness

- a. As we saw in the video, creating solutions to homelessness is a major focus of our work here at Lane County.
- b. In 2019, the Board of Commissioners declared homelessness to be an emergency in our community. The declaration served to reinforce how committed commissioners, County staff and partner agencies are to ensuring homelessness in our community is rare, brief and non-recurring.
- c. The declaration also reflects our awareness that most, if not all, of our community-based services are operating at capacity.
- d. The new units of permanent supportive housing that I mentioned in the video will provide much-needed housing for the most vulnerable and difficult to serve people in our community – not just in Eugene, but in rural communities, as well.
- e. Square One Villages received financial support this year to make its Cottage Village in Cottage Grove a reality. That project is bringing low-income tiny homes to southern Lane County.
- f. We have been making steady progress, along with our partners at the City of Eugene, in implementing key recommendations from the Technical Assistance Collaborative (TAC) report that address immediate needs and build a more sustainable system in the long-term.
- g. As we are working to find a suitable site for the low barrier shelter, Lane County and the City of Eugene have also recently agreed to come together to further increase the capacity of Dusk to Dawn by an additional 64 spaces as soon as possible.
- h. We are also partnering with the City of Eugene to launch a mobile street outreach team this year to help meet people where they are and connect them to housing and critical services.
- i. Part of our work includes identifying opportunities for communities across the county. We are meeting with our partners at Homes for Good and the City of Eugene to explore a process to incentivize and encourage landlords to make their properties available to people who are homeless. We hope to use that to open up housing opportunities from Florence to Oakridge, and from Junction City to Cottage Grove.
- j. As we continue to make progress on this work, we know that it will take relentless dedication, and to help keep us all moving we are in the process of hiring an individual who can coordinate these efforts and more on behalf of Lane County and the City. We are excited to introduce this person to our community once we have found the best possible candidate – and we are excited to get them working toward building more supportive housing and opening the shelter.

12. Looking Forward

- a. It is easy to be inspired by the work accomplished in 2019. We should take a few minutes to appreciate the efforts of our staff, community partners and residents for their work to continually make Lane County a better place to live. A better place to work. And a better place to play.

- b. However, we must also acknowledge that there is more work to do and that we need to maintain and increase our momentum as 2020 gets underway.
- c. We have exciting work before us and you should expect to see more about several initiatives including equity, our parks, our climate, our economy and justice during the next 12 months.
- d. You will hear more about our Equity 2.0 work in 2020. Equity 2.0 is our plan to re-focus our efforts to increase equity among all of our employees, and to create equity in our community and in the services we provide. Short-term priorities include increasing the diversity of our employees so that we better reflect our community, as well as carefully reviewing practices and policies regarding how we work with private businesses to break down barriers for minority-owned businesses to compete for government contracts.
- e. In just a few weeks, we will kick off our Parks Funding Task Force to explore how we can provide a stable foundation for Lane County Parks to implement that Master Plan that was adopted just over a year ago.
- f. The community-member led task force will be responsible for bringing creative and sustainable recommendations forward for commissioners to consider.
- g. We are also embarking upon the County's first-ever Climate Action Plan. As Commissioner Buch mentioned in the video, we know that reducing greenhouse gas emissions will have positive effects on the health of our community.
- h. We are also embarking upon a fresh look at our proposal to replace the under-sized, inefficient and unsafe Courthouse with a Justice Center that can serve our community well now and far into the future.
- i. The need hasn't gone away and it's important that we present a solution that reflects our community's priorities and that people can support.
- j. That's why we are checking in with the community to establish priorities and consider trade-offs while a design team is testing all the assumptions made in the previous proposal. We'll use this information to develop several options for the community to consider and weigh in on.
- k. We invite our residents and community partners to become involved in that process by starting with a visit to lanejusticecenter.org where we have a survey and calendar of events, as well as sign-up for email updates.
- l. The Board of Commissioners is also continuing to explore a fascinating new perspective brought forward by Commissioner Berney last winter – a community benefit framework for County projects that would require the Board act on priorities such as hiring local residents, making sure they get quality training for real jobs and careers with living wages, workforce diversity.
- m. It also includes the use of renewable energy, lowering our carbon footprint, and keeping county spending and purchasing local, injecting funds into local businesses in our community.

- n. It has been my pleasure to serve as Chair of the Lane County Board of Commissioners for the past year. While we will be choosing a new chair and vice chair tomorrow, I am no less invested in and excited about the work before us in 2020.