

STATE OF THE CITY OF EDMONDS ADDRESS 2011

Mayor Mike Cooper

Edmonds City Council Chambers

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“When I took the oath of office on July 23, 2010 I committed to move the city towards a position of financial sustainability for our future generations. I wanted a plan that protects our taxpayers assets as resources for our future. These assets include the city’s cash, property, workers, and infrastructure. I am pleased that decisions we have made helped to mitigate, as much as possible, against the difficult times all governments are now facing. But today is not tomorrow.

However proactive we have historically been, the City of Edmonds is now facing those same challenging economic times, but unlike others we have already made the difficult cuts and decisions over the past decade. We were ahead of the curve in planning for the times we are now amid. Since the year 2000 Edmonds has reduced employees by 20%, cut down non essential budget items such as travel and supplies; cutting them down to the bare minimum operational needs. We imposed furlough days and the

resulting loss of pay onto the remaining workforce and froze those same employees wages. Even Public Safety was hit as Edmonds eliminated our Crime Prevention Program and eliminated funding for a police officer.

But now, even with this history of proactive spending cuts and responsible forecasting by our finance department, we will not be able to sustain the one month reserve as directed by council policy for much longer. Without action, in 2012 we will fall below that council mandated one month of reserves, the funds we run the city with should any “non act of God” crisis hit. This shortfall will not be by any small amount; but by hundreds of thousands of dollars. It does not have to be that way, and I am dedicated to never seeing that day arrive here in Edmonds!

To protect the assets our community values it is crucial that we give the voters an opportunity to consider new revenue this year.

Within the next two weeks, I will be delivering a recommendation for a levy proposal for consideration on the August primary ballot. My recommendation will include the funds needed to restore our public safety crime prevention program; preserve Yost pool, ensure safe parks, trails, playgrounds, and provide funding to begin the process of restoring our street maintenance program. I am committed to working with the community and the city council to approach voters to ask for approval to protect these treasures we value.

In addition, if we are to be sustainable into the future, we must consider partnering with other local governments in order to control escalating costs as we deliver high quality services. That is why I am working with our neighbors to explore regional delivery of fire and emergency medical service.

As we move forward, an involved community is critical to the process. It is important to listen and hear the priorities of those who live and work in Edmonds as the base values of any budget. In the coming weeks I will be appointing a working group of up to 30 people, representing a diverse cross section of our community, to share priorities and provide their collective feedback as I develop the 2012 preliminary budget.

During the coming months we will be developing a citywide strategic plan that will include community, staff and city council input. This plan is essential as we continue to build on our success and commitment to economic development as a business friendly and thriving city. I am proud that due to the hard work of city staff and the Economic Development Commission we have attracted numerous new businesses, brought an international film festival to Edmonds and are welcoming a northwest icon like Dick's Drive In later this year. Our congratulations also go to the Boeing Company on winning the bid to build the US Air Force refueling tanker. The tanker will be built right here in Snohomish County by the best trained aerospace workers in the world. The 11,000 jobs created will be some of the highest paid jobs in the region and some those workers will live and spend money here in Edmonds. This is just the kind of economic boost we need.

Edmonds is also a leader in finding ways for both the city and our residents to save money on energy. Even with the awards we have received in Edmonds for energy conservation we still spend nearly a million dollars a year on natural gas and electricity in city buildings. President Obama challenged America to become 20% more energy efficient by the year 2020. I accept that challenge and encourage all of you to join me. During 2011, through my Climate Protection Committee, I will bring forward a proposal to the city council to invest city resources into the future by taking measures to reduce our energy use even more than we already have. This includes, more alternative fuel vehicles, as well as conservation upgrades to our buildings. Your city government will lead in helping the community meet the Presidential challenge.

The key to delivering cost effective, highly responsive services that in Edmonds is frequent, transparent and fundamentally positive communication. Using the latest technology available in order to involve the most residents and serve their needs expediently, is possible and with limited investment. The opportunity for convenience to the customer, efficient information sharing and accountability rests in Edmonds becoming current in its technology.

I am proud to serve you as Mayor and look forward to working with the council as well as the community to keep Edmonds, “The Gem of Puget Sound”, well into the future. Thank you.”