



State of the City  
March 4, 2021

I'm Lacey Beaty, Beaverton's Mayor.

I'm excited to be giving my first State of the City address. While there are not a lot of upsides to life in the pandemic, figuring out new ways to connect our community with the city is a pretty cool one. Way more people can join us for this event than ever before.

This past year has been beyond difficult for each of us. As a mom, married to a full-time military officer - I get it. Sharing space in our house as we both work has not been easy. Adding in a toddler has complicated the situation. We've all been stretched to the limits of our comforts.

Parents became teachers...teachers came into our homes virtually...libraries moved outdoors...Doctors, nurses and our first responders were faced with bigger threats and uncertainties than ever before. We began to see essential workers as "truly essential..." grocery store workers and delivery drivers... people we often walked past before became suddenly more important in our lives. And our responsibilities never stopped - whether we were able to work from home, or we had to keep going into work to serve our community, we had to find a way because the work never felt done. For some, loved ones were lost and jobs were sacrificed...the distance between families and friends became more and more difficult with each passing day. This has been hard. We all had to step up, be creative, learn new skills, take on new jobs, engage with each other differently, and act in new ways. Whether it was teaching our parents or students how to use Zoom, or how to sign up to get a vaccine - we're constantly learning. Beaverton is coming together to move forward, but we are still in the middle of this.

And while I'm hopeful and optimistic about our future, we've got to talk about where we are right now. We still have businesses struggling, and students failing because they lack reliable internet access. With vaccines coming, there's a light at the end of the tunnel. And we need to keep complying with CDC recommendations like wearing masks and social distancing. I'm getting lots of questions about vaccinations and opening schools. I know those are on the top of my mind too. I don't get to make those decisions. But I see my role as a convener and collaborator, and that's why one of my top priorities right now is bringing together a COVID-19 task force to determine where people in our community can get access to these life-saving doses. We don't get to determine "who" gets vaccines or "when," - but we can create a space where people can get them when the time comes. On that note, I've invited our partner Kaiser to talk about what that could look like.

*[VIDEO: Annie Herbert from Kaiser Permanente]*

I hope that the worst is behind us and we will soon return to the routines and activities that we love. I want you to know that Beaverton is here to roll up our sleeves alongside you. We are here to help with the hard work that is happening within our community. The City Council and I are dedicated to showing up for you and helping through our awareness and empathy, but most importantly - through our actions. One way we've already done this is by changing the way we engage with our neighbors. In 2020, we improved our operations. And I want to give a huge shout of gratitude to all the city staff. They hustled and stretched and pivoted over the past year to maintain programs and services. And because of their good work, I can share that we did much more than just keep the lights on. We embraced virtual interactions and adapted our programs to maintain safe connections with our community. We also continued with important improvements to better ensure a more walkable, livable community. More than six miles of street paving occurred. We upgraded more than 200 curb ramps for ADA-compliance. We maintained nearly 39 thousand public trees, which safeguarded our status as a tree city. We planted 120 new trees along our city streets. Our community members have continued to experience Beaverton in new and different ways. I mentioned earlier that our libraries moved outdoors, and I've invited a community member to share their experience with the library.

*[VIDEO: Yelitza, Library Patron]*

I'm grateful to our library staff for the creative ways they've continued to serve our community so that neighbors like Yelitza have access to resources for themselves and their families. I fully expect that we will experience lasting benefit from these creative solutions. Curbside services, virtual events, online City Council and neighborhood meetings are now a part of the way we do things. We are already witnessing better access to services and more common-sense approaches to the way we do business. We also pushed the limits of our impact. Beaverton was one of the first cities in Oregon to launch early assistance for those who most needed it.

We listened to business owners and allowed the outdoor expansion of restaurants. Our small businesses said their greatest need was cash to pay rent. So, we helped distribute more than \$4.3 million in grants to struggling business owners. These emergency grants have gone to businesses directly impacted by the pandemic that serve customers in person--like restaurants, gyms, salons and childcare centers. Nearly 2/3 of the grants have supported businesses owned by people of color, and approximately half of those have gone to women-owned businesses. And if you don't already know, women -- and particularly women of color -- have been among those hit hardest by this pandemic. Very early, we passed a moratorium on residential evictions - keeping people housed during the global pandemic. Housing is one of our top priorities and I've asked the newly elected Councilor Nadia Hasan to share more about housing in Beaverton.

*[VIDEO: Councilor Hasan]*

[Remarks from Councilor Hasan: Hello, I'm Councilor Nadia Hasan. I have been fortunate to live in Beaverton for many years and raise my family in this community.

Like my fellow City Councilors, I understand the importance of "home," especially in times of great uncertainty. We know that people are struggling, especially our BIPOC community. Our goal is that every person who wants to live in Beaverton can, and that we all...including Black, Indigenous and Communities of Color...have access to the same opportunities.

Housing is a human right.

Pathways to homeownership and affordable housing options are for everyone. This is why Beaverton has continued to invest time and resources in ensuring our housing priorities are met. Having more home options and increasing the variety of housing within our neighborhoods has never been more important.

I'm excited to see new developments in our downtown areas taking shape, as well as long-awaited plans for future developments in South Cooper Mountain. The city has done some work, but we know it's not enough. Until everyone who wants to live in Beaverton *can*, we still have work to do.

The pandemic has showcased the inequities that already existed.

To build strong communities, we know that we need to work towards greater homeownership – because that creates generational wealth. But until then, we need to find better ways to support economically sustainable rent. Several new complexes with more than 300 new affordable housing units in total have recently opened their doors or will be opening soon.

And we need to do more.

This is the key to keeping Beaverton a welcoming, diverse community. Beaverton is stronger when our neighborhoods reflect the needs of everybody who calls our city home. We need better housing now, for a better future.]

Like Councilor Hasan said, Housing is a human right. And making sure that housing is affordable and attainable in Beaverton is critical. One of our partners in this important work is a non-profit called REACH Community Development. I've asked Alma from REACH to talk a bit more about affordable housing in Beaverton.

*[VIDEO: Alma from REACH Community Development]*

We are excited about partnering with REACH and other agencies on new housing developments. At the same time, we know that some of our neighbors are just one unplanned expense away from losing housing. We are a city that wants to support the most vulnerable among us. People often ask me: what are we actually doing about homelessness? Two years ago, we started a Safe Parking program, which allowed people in our community a safe place to sleep, restoring dignity for people living in their vehicles. We wrap them with resources and services with the goal of helping them transition into permanent housing. We hit a milestone with the program last year. Twenty-four people have successfully moved into stable housing. And we have expanded the number of sites in the community. And because we know there's more work to do, we expanded our severe weather shelter to operate 24-hours, seven days each week in response to COVID-19 and increased need.

We are looking for opportunities to do more, including with our student populations, because we know that we have one of the highest rates of students experiencing homelessness in Oregon. We partner with organizations like HomePlate Youth Services, and I've asked their Executive Director, Bridget to share a few words.

*[VIDEO: Bridget from HomePlate Youth Services]*

I'm so grateful for our non-profit partners who have continued to serve and shine a light on needs in our community. They've also been teaching us about where we still need to stretch and grow. Beaverton is a strong city, but we can be so much more.

We are a city that is moving forward with a new charter and a new community vision for our future. We've gotten a lot of questions about what this means for you, the community. The new charter changed our form of government. We now have one additional city councilor, and the mayor serves as a voting member of the council. The mayor used to oversee internal operations, but now we have a city manager who does that.

With that off my plate, I'm able to focus more on what the community wants, hear from you, and advocate for our city. For all those that were hoping they could just call me with their requests, and I could snap my fingers and make it happen - that's not how it works. It's the whole City Council - mayor included -- coming together on your behalf. It means the decisions coming from City Council are going to be well thought-out, having many voices at the table, and that's what you wanted. That's why you elected all of us and approved the new charter. And now you get all our voices weighing in on issues, not just one voice. One of the issues we are weighing in on right now is Public Safety. I've invited newly elected Councilor Tivnon to share a bit about the council's perspective on this important issue.

*[VIDEO: Councilor Tivnon]*

[Remarks from Councilor Tivnon: Hi, I'm Councilor Allison Tivnon. 2020 served as a reckoning for many of the things we hold dear—public safety being chief among them.

The safety of our community is a top priority for City Council. And we recognize that feeling safe means many things to many people. The heartbreaking events of the last year brought to light the need for cities—across the country and here in Beaverton—to re-examine what public safety means, especially for communities of color.

The Council recognizes that to do this, we need more voices informing these discussions. Matters of policy may be decided by this small band of elected officials, but it is guided by your input and your lived experience. Over the past 6 months, the Beaverton Human Rights Advisory Committee has worked tirelessly to research and compile a report of recommendations for the Council to consider as we work with the Beaverton Police Department to respond to community input.

Over the next several weeks and months we will diligently work our way through this list of recommendations and make decisions.

The Black Lives Matter movement has been a wake-up call and it represents voices and experiences that are finally being heard and acknowledged. It's every elected official's role to be aware of and engaged with what's going on in our community. And it is every elected official's job to work tirelessly to adapt and evolve our policy decisions in ways that reflect our community as a whole.

The City Council is committed to making sure that our words and actions continue to align with the vision we collectively have for Beaverton: to be a safe and welcoming community that affords all residents an opportunity for social, economic and personal growth regardless of their age, origin or individual dream. The conversations and decisions before us may be difficult. But we are committed to working together, working with our police department, and working with our communities of color as we strive to make Beaverton a welcoming and safe place for all.]

I have heard our community calling for racial justice and accountability. And it's clear from those calls that we, as a city and as a community, need to begin taking the concrete steps toward realizing a better Beaverton for all. And I want to say clearly that I believe Black Lives Matter. As we think about the kind of city we want to live in, we know we have more work to do.

And when we talk about recovery, I think about how the American Dream is one of the things we need to recover. Our nation was founded on this idea of the American Dream - the idea of a place where everyone and anyone could succeed. If you were willing to put in the hard work and make sacrifices, you could achieve things here in America that you couldn't elsewhere. And I know business owners in Downtown Beaverton who immigrated here because they believed that in America -- they could build a better life for their children. But the pandemic has revealed how for many, the American Dream has never been within reach. What does it take for families and individuals to succeed in our community? It means addressing issues of structural racism,

affordable housing, affordable childcare, successful public schools. And there are inequities that we cannot ignore.

Not everyone starts with the same opportunities and privileges in life and unfortunately public institutions have historically widened that divide. We have work to do to make sure that we're refocusing through a lens of equity, which means doing what it takes to support communities with what they need to be successful. Equity is the core value upon which the City should continue to center our work and priorities. I want Beaverton to be a place where success is available to everyone. A place where if you're willing to put in the work, you can achieve whatever level of success you envision.

It is my responsibility as your Mayor to do the necessary and hard work, along with City Council and City Staff to move towards a more equitable and better Beaverton. Like I said, we've got some work to do. Thank you for electing me as your new mayor. I'm excited to get to work!

Now, to close out this year's State of the City, I'd like to invite you to watch a brief video made by our friends at Lara Media so we can hear more from the people and organizations in our community who overcame significant challenges in 2020.

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