



4646 Dakota St. SE
Prior Lake, MN 55372

Mayor Jack Haugen's

State of the City

Presented Tuesday, February 20, 2007

Introduction

We are part of a historic day in Prior Lake, the likes of which have not been seen for 50 or 60 years in our community, and likely will not be seen again for the next 50 or 60 years. A facility needs study was done in 1993 which showed that we need a number of facilities in our city. In the late 1990s the Maintenance Center, Library and Fire Station were built, leaving the void of the Police Station and City Hall. Well, today we celebrate the grand opening of those facilities. Through that process we moved from the past into the future. These facilities were built for the future.

Location of City Hall

This is an environment which is tied tremendously to our downtown, our revitalized and energized downtown. It connects Prior Lake (the lake), Lakefront Park and Downtown together. It really becomes a focal point, a gathering place, for those three entities to meet. I want to thank the Klingberg family who are here tonight and four members of the family who served as greeters of residents who entered City Hall and the Police Station today. It was their idea that led to the City Hall/Police Station split facility. And we are sitting today nearly in the living room of the house that stood for many many years. Thanks also to the other two willing sellers of houses to the west of where we are sitting.

Two Major Facilities

These two major facilities are designed to serve our community, to serve our citizens, to enhance our quality of life; facilities that will create opportunities for government participation; facilities that will create a community gathering place, a welcoming place for all. And without question a source of community pride today, and well into the future.

Together a New Vision

Five years ago, in January 2002, I was sworn in as your Mayor. The presentation I made that night, which became the first of now six State of the City addresses, was entitled "Together a New Vision." There were key themes in that speech. Some of them were:

- Teamwork, acknowledging that everyone is part of the team.
- To create an environment of open communication, trust, respect and cooperation within our government.
- To create an environment where our citizens and guests become raving fans for our community.

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- To invite citizens to participate in creating a long-range (20 year) plan for our community.
 - Downtown redevelopment.
 - Recognizing our lakes, parks, fields, and schools as critical assets.
 - Maximizing the value of our citizen's tax dollar and create value in everything we did.
 - Focusing on partnerships and the recognition that partnerships make everything else work.
- Well, I'm pleased with the progress we have made these last five years, and much of the progress can be specifically traced to the 2030 Vision and Strategic Plan.

Value of the Vision

The 2030 Vision and Strategic Plan is the roadmap to our city's future. The city must be able to imagine and decide what they want the future to be. The city must then decide how they are going to make the desired future become a reality.

It is the process that brings people together to think about the future, create a vision and invent ways to make the desired future become a reality. The strategic plan will effectively challenge and stretch the community's imagination by defining what is possible and to test the community's will to commit to a great and exciting future, rather than a "good enough" future. The strategic plan will forge and maintain the critical partnerships and relationships that will translate the strategic plan into reality.

It is not my plan. It is not the staff's plan. It's our plan. We can't do it without you. The strategic plan is about teamwork and the strategic plan cannot become reality without the participation and commitment of each member of the team.

Growth

Growth is a fact. Growth has happened for a long, long time. Growth is not an optional thing. And it will continue happening.

Many of you have heard me say that when Mary and I moved here in 1973, Prior Lake was one square mile and it had less than 4,000 people. Today, it is 19 square miles and approaching 23,000 people. The projection for 2030 is that it will be approximately 24 square miles and 40,000 to 45,000 people.

In Scott County, today there are 115,000 people. The projection for 2030 is that it will be 230,000 people. And the project for the turn of the century is that Scott County will be approximately 750,000. And the Twin City metro area will encompass an additional 1 million people by 2030.

What you may not have heard, is that the projection for the turn of the century, 93 years from now, is that the metropolitan area will be the size of Chicago.

Growth is happening. We must manage our growth. It's the key to the City council. It's the key to the staff. It's the key to everyone in this room. The question is: Do we want growth for the sake of growth, or do we want quality growth? Quality growth that includes quality developments that include something special. Quality developments that include preservation of natural areas for the long term. Quality growth that doesn't become problem areas in 10, 15 or 20 year's time. And quality developments that stand the test of time and quality growth that follows the concepts defined in our 2030 Comprehensive Plan.

Transportation

Transportation is a quality-of-life issue; it's not just a transportation issue. We must find ways to effectively move people within Prior Lake and Scott County. The County Rd. 82 project, the County Rd. 21 extension to come in the next couple of years, and the County Rd. 12 are important projects. But we also need to focus on alternatives to traffic demand on Hwy. 13. We need to find some answers. We need to continue to look at transit alternatives.

I'm privileged to serve on the SCALE Transportation Task Force which is looking at transportation needs and alternatives out 30 years. We need to focus ahead a long period of time. We need to partner with other cities and organizations to make enhancements our transportation systems. We need to improve quality of life by keeping our people closer to home.

PAR Task Force

We need to follow through on the recommendations that came from the Park Athletics and Recreation (PAR) Task Force. They are very clear and very defined. Those recommendations were made up with tremendous citizen involvement that took hundreds and hundreds of hours of study.

The first recommendation was to maximize utilization of current athletic facilities. The second was the support the Prior Lake Shakopee Hockey Association's hockey arena project in coordination with the school district.

We need to continue and focus on preservation of natural areas and purchase of additional land for parks – both passive and active.

And finally, one of the recommendations is to explore options to create a senior citizens' center. It's part of our 2030 Vision. It says that it's within walking distance from here, maybe a baseball throw from here. But we need to explore options in the interim, creating opportunities for our seniors both in terms of facilities and in terms of programs.

Economic Development / Downtown Redevelopment

Economic development is a vital thing for a city to be involved in. We need to continue that focus. In fact, we need to ratchet it up. Block 2 and Block 4 in our downtown environment are wonderful opportunities for redevelopment in the future.

Economic development creates jobs and keeps people working closer to their home. And when they are working close to home, they are becoming more a part of their community. And when they're more a part of their community, they have an increased sense of ownership in their community. And when they have an increased sense of ownership in their community, they have an increased sense of pride in their community, which leads to more volunteerism and a very significant cycle.

Economic development plays many different roles. Certainly a broadening of the tax base is important, but I also like to focus on the quality of life issue that economic development provides.

Fiscal Responsibility

The City's bond rating of double A3 is outstanding. The average tax increase is equal to inflation over the last five years, even though we've invested significantly in our community. The commitment to maximizing the value of a tax dollar is something that this council and the prior council were tremendously concerned about and committed to.

We need to do two things. And I believe there are only two ways you create success in life if you're a business or if you're city: you need to control expenses and we need to look at ways to make certain that we're utilizing tax dollars in an effective way. Every year we need to look at that to be effective. Are there things we're doing because of habit? If so, we ought to not do them. Are there things that we can do in a better manner? If so, we ought to find them. Are there energy alternatives that we might be able to find? If so, let's find them.

Expense control is one thing you need to do. The second thing in building a community or building a business is to find non-tax revenue. If you only focus on expense control you choke the city, you choke the business. You need to do both. And we need to continue through our partnering efforts to find revenues in a non-tax environment, especially through our partnerships and our relationships with entities around Prior Lake.

Communication

A recent survey said 96% of our residents feel that the quality of life in Prior Lake is either good or excellent. There's an increase of 50% of the number of people who feel the city is going in the right direction. Two thirds of the people in Prior Lake feel they have an awareness of the 2030 Vision, and by a 3-to-1 ratio they support it. That's good. We're pleased. But let's deal with the percent that doesn't support it.

We need to engage those people to create understanding. It's a challenge this council has talked about for many hours in the last 45 days. How do we engage the public? How do we create effective communication in a community where 90 percent of our public leaves every day, and in a community where we don't all have cable television and we don't have a daily newspaper? How do we create effective communication?

And I would ask anyone sitting here today, and I would ask anyone sitting at home watching television and in the coming weeks: If you have any magical ideas that would help us, we're all ears because we want to engage the public and create effective communication.

We issued Mike Peterson, our communications coordinator, a challenge the other day. Let's add 1,000 households to our email bank in the next 180 days. It will give us 1,000 more households which are capable of receiving his effective communication where people know what's going on in their community, rather than relying on a rumor mill which is often inaccurate. That's a major challenge, and why communications was added as a Vision element two years ago. We're very serious about enhancing the communication process in our community.

Partnerships

I'm proud of partnerships we have developed in the last five years – partnerships with residents, with neighborhoods, with businesses, with the chamber of commerce, with the school district, the surrounding townships, Scott County, with the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community (SMSC). And I'm proud we have been an active member and an active leader in the SCALE organization.

We need to continue to strengthen our relationships. We can never take them for granted. We need to strengthen our relationships everyday with our residents. We have much to gain by having strong partnerships with other entities within Scott County. We have much to gain by having a healthy, strong, viable relationship with the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community. I'm proud of our relationship with SMSC and proud of our relationship with the county.

And I am accepting a personal challenge on behalf of our City to bring the county, the tribal community, Shakopee and Prior Lake together to create a common foundation and an aura of respect so we can move forward and develop a sound relationship which will enhance all of the governments in Scott County. No one can stand alone. We are all changing. Our needs are dependant on each other. We need to lay the foundation for effective communication in our county.

Conclusion

Five years have passed. You have heard some of our successes. You know some of our challenges. You were part of a dedication of your new police station and city hall. I hope you are as excited about what's going on in Prior Lake as we are, and I hope you continue to join us in saying "Prior Lake is a Wonderful Place to Call Home."

May God bless each and every one of you. Thank You.

Mayor Jack Haugen