

So What's New?

by Dave Earling

Yep, a New Year! Equally important for many of us is how did we wind-down the previous year. For me, after the budget passed the 2nd week of December and concluding a very busy year at the city, I knew and promised myself some time to refocus and prepare for 2016.

So, the day after passage of the budget, I headed for Hawaii for 10 days to recharge. Man, did it help! For me, going somewhere you know it's going to be "sunny and 82 degrees" is a great refresher. I must admit, warm weather is where I go for a needed break.

Upon my return, besides returning to city hall, the holidays are important to me to see friends and family. I had my daughter, Sarah, her husband and our 4 month old grandson from Arizona here for a week. In addition I spent time with the rest of the family.

Beyond the warm weather and family time, when I returned I met with my senior staff to let them know we were going to have an ambitious year. At a recent meeting, I asked the lead staff to each spend 5-7 minutes reviewing the sizable departmental projects and work load we will undertake in 2016. The coming year is simply going to be remarkable!

As we have before, over the coming few months I will ask each Director to write a more detailed column of the work their departments will undertake this year. We have found in providing more information regarding each department helps the community better understand the breadth of the commitment staff undertakes each year.

Below is a very brief overview of a couple of examples major work from each department:

Parks and Recreation- Completing the purchase and Master Planning of the Civic Field and rehabilitation of the Fishing Pier.

Development Services-Completing the Highway 99 subarea plan and dealing with the increasing number of plans and permits indicative of the continuing strong economy.

Public Works-Beginning work on the extensive project at 212th and 76th to better improve congestion and the installation of trackside warning system at rail crossings at Dayton and Main to lesson train noise.

Public Safety-re-instituting the Street Crimes Unit cut with budget reductions several years ago and bringing back a 2nd K-9 unit.

Finance-Establishing long term Financial Planning and investigating long term revenue sources to assure financial stability.

Economic Development and Community Services-Actively seek appropriately scaled development in key corridors such as Highway 99 and Westgate and the completion of the Downtown Restrooms project.

The previous list only begins the scratch the surface of new and important projects we will undertake this year, and to say nothing about the day to day normal operations to keep the city humming.

The economy is good, people are working hard and there is much to accomplish. And we are in the midst of a busy city with exciting energy and potential. I anticipate another good year and look forward to continuing the success.

In closing, let me say how much I look forward to working with the new city council. You have elected a new group of fellow citizens who I am convinced will be very engaged, active and will move the community forward.

Oh yes, and Happy New Year!