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STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS delivered by Mayor
Charles ROYER June 24, 1985

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Tim Hill, City Comptroller

By Theresa Dunbar

Deputy

ACTION OF THE COUNCIL

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Honorable President:

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would respectfully report that we have considered the

MAYOR CHARLES ROYER
STATE OF THE CITY SPEECH
JUNE 24, 1985

The City Charter requires the Mayor to report every June to the City Council as to the State of the City.

I have discharged this responsibility both in good times and bad, and I can tell you it feels better in good times.

But nothing makes me feel better than to see our friend, Sam Smith, back at his usual and accustomed place of business--in good condition.

And the City is in good condition. Seattle is working well. We're in good shape and headed in the right direction.

Simply stated, our City government is in its best financial condition in 20 years. Our reserves are at record levels. Our bond ratings solid double A. We are fixing up and cleaning up the city as never before. Our economy outpaces that of the state and most other American cities.

We face some tough new challenges. But we've never been in better shape to deal with them.

Think for a moment about what we have done--this year--despite diminished federal support.

We completed scores of neighborhood projects. We renovated the old Georgetown City Hall and the Wallingford Precinct Station as landmarks and homes for community clinics and the Wilmot Library. We built the Rowing and Sailing Center at Sayres Park and rebuilt North Pacific Street and the Fourth Avenue South Bridge. We built an entire neighborhood at Burke-Gilman Place, and weatherized more than 2,400 homes throughout the city.

We overcame the problems at Gas Works Park, and restored the water quality at Green Lake. We began the battle to clean the Duwamish and Elliott Bay.

This year we complete the Senior Housing Bond Issue. We built the 1,000 units we promised, and we have 200 extra

units under construction, with \$5 million left to meet special housing needs.

We've made new investments in energy--in conservation, the High Ross settlement, Lucky Peak and Boundary Dam, and we've cut in half our dependence on BPA.

Two weeks ago, you gave final approval to our plan for downtown. Paul Kraabel did yeoman work in that effort. The new plan already is beginning to strengthen Seattle's position as the commercial capital of the Northwest. It will build stronger downtown neighborhoods, add new housing, and bring new life to downtown on weekends and after work. In the Market, Pioneer Square, the International District, and the waterfront you can already see new life on the streets. And crews are finally at work under the streets moving utilities for the Westlake project.

Together, we passed the Seattle 1-2-3 Bonds last fall, and put new energy into cleaning up our city. By mid-summer, you'll begin to see this sign appear in neighborhoods from Meadowbrook to Fauntleroy as the Seattle 1-2-3 bonds put people to work--repairing streets, bridges, fire stations, libraries and parks throughout the city.

As a local newspaper editorial said recently, the wheels of civic progress are spinning in Seattle.

Our task now is to turn that energy toward new challenges. For even as the pace of Seattle's progress has accelerated, so has the pace of change. We are seeing dramatic changes in the economy, in the federal system, and most important, in the character of our population and the way we live. Those are major structural changes driving new challenges.

Nothing is more basic than family. And families are different today. A small minority of Seattle's households fit the old pattern: one wage-earner, one homemaker, and several children in public schools. Today, 30 percent of Seattle households are people living alone. One half of the children in Seattle's public schools have only one parent, and two-thirds of Seattle's mothers work outside the home. The family of Seattle has changed.

We are not without skill at adapting to such changes. Seattle has been a leader in responding to the greying of America. We pioneered the development of senior nutrition

programs, discounts on utility rates and public transportation. We've built more public housing for the elderly per capita than any other city in America. We helped in Olympia and Washington, D.C., as seniors used their political power to bring needed change.

The next time someone tells you that kind of political action doesn't work, share with them these facts:

In 1970, 25 percent of America's elderly lived in poverty. By 1982, thanks to the political power of the elderly and the response of government, that percentage had been cut to 14 percent, and here in Seattle to less than 10 percent.

Now, the fastest growing age group in America--and in Seattle--are those above 75 years of age.

Our new challenge is to keep those elderly active members of the family of Seattle; active in their neighborhoods, secure in their own homes, and out of nursing homes and hospitals.

Our Department of Human Resources is responding to this challenge by providing chore services and reaching out to the frail and isolated elderly. Pacific Medical Center and the community clinics are stepping up their services for seniors in spite of new limitations on Medicare.

Seattle and its elderly have a longstanding commitment to one another, a commitment we intend to keep.

The success of that commitment gives us confidence in our new endeavor--the campaign for Seattle's children. A year ago we began a concerted effort to make Seattle the very best city in the nation in which to raise a family. That initiative--KidsPlace--caught the city's imagination. We began to see our city through younger eyes. We renovated parks to make them safer, increased supervision at wading pools and playgrounds, and changed sick leave policies to benefit single, working and adoptive parents. We created a bonus for downtown child care, expanded day camp programs in our parks, and strengthened Head Start and children's health programs.

We designed a new family health center in the Rainier Valley to house the Rainier Vista Community Clinic and the Columbia Health Center, the busiest clinic for children in the Pacific Northwest. I'll submit that design to the Council by August 1. Best of all, Seattle's voters approved \$64 million

in school construction bonds, and put the school district in the business of building schools and fixing them up instead of boarding them up.

All of this was the easy part of KidsPlace. The hard part will be maintaining our unity of purpose in the face of the widening chasm between rich and poor that is so evident among children. The recent surge of births among parents who are older, well educated and well established has been important to our city. It has provided much of the energy for our children's initiative. But thousands of children in our city are born into very different circumstances, and KidsPlace must open new opportunity for those children, too.

While the poverty rate among America's elderly was cut in half during the past decade, the poverty rate among children rose by 50 percent. Today, one in four pre-school children in our country lives in poverty. Even in Seattle, one child in seven is poor. An ever larger share of America's children are undernourished, ill-housed, and poorly educated. Yet, the nation has a greater stake in the well-being of these children than any that have come before. For while they are relatively few in number, these children will later be called upon to sustain the economy at a level that will support social security and Medicare for the entire post-war, baby boom generation. It should be clear that the health and education of these children will determine our future as well as theirs.

Every child in Seattle should have the very best education a great city can provide. City Hall doesn't manage the public schools. But Seattle can't manage to be a great city for children unless we can help to overcome the crisis of confidence that has shaken our schools.

We have asked our schools for a lot during the past fifteen years: we asked them to be sensitive to neighborhood concerns as they were forced to close one-third of their facilities, to implement desegregation without a court order, to accommodate a huge influx of refugees and to teach children in 40 languages. We asked all this from them while they were facing severe cuts in budgets and faculty. But after fifteen years of dealing with those problems and many others, from the end of the baby boom to the cloning of Madonna, we have an amazing level of quality in our classrooms. Our students' achievement test scores continue to climb, 21 of our students are National Merit Scholars this

year, and Ingraham won nomination as one of the very best high schools in America.

Our schools have done a lot for Seattle. Now we must ask what we can do for the schools.

There is a lot we can do from City Hall. First, we can use our services to reinforce school programs. The City already provides dental screening, health education, public safety programs, Head Start, and even senior nutrition programs within the schools. In fact, the School District is now Seattle's third largest contractor for providing human services. We've just completed an agreement with the district to increase the sharing of parks and playfields. But we can do more to bring the City's programs into schools.

Second, we can be more active in district policy making. The City's strong presence in the Early Childhood Education Seminar helped start a new joint effort to build space for child care centers in school buildings. In 1986, the district will break ground for new schools--the first new schools in this city in a generation. That surge of new construction gives us a priceless opportunity to build a coherent system of community child care at the same time.

We can also help the district communicate. We have already agreed to help develop clearer information for parents, easier registration for kindergarten, greater program continuity, and active parent-teacher councils in each school.

But you who are listening on the radio, watching on television or reading the papers can do more for the schools than City Hall.

You can run for the School Board. Or find the best person running for re-election and help that person with your ideas and your energy. You can call your legislator and get a commitment that he or she will make good on the State's promise to fully fund basic education, even when it means raising taxes. We all share the responsibility for our schools.

We also have a responsibility to the kids who've dropped out of school. The film "Streetwise" riveted attention on the street kids along Pike Street and Second Avenue. The film

was made in Seattle, but the problem is nationwide--a legacy of broken homes and a juvenile justice system that is itself an orphan of state and federal budgets.

A lot of good people at the Orion Center and other youth agencies are working to help, and the City must stand by them now that Federal funding has ended. We have provided funds for outreach and shelter this year and worked in Olympia to win funding for street kids. But we must do more to keep young people from falling into street life in the first place.

The Council is considering regulations for teenage dance halls, and I'll support appropriate regulation. But we've got to do more than crack down on bad behavior. We've got to open new opportunities. The Youth Plan we are drafting with community agencies will address that task.

For most of our young people, the priority is a job. We are one of six cities in the nation to win a Ford Foundation grant to provide jobs and tutoring to at-risk youths, and we've put that program into action.

With Councilman Smith's help, we've established the nucleus of a Seattle Conservation Corps in our Summer Youth Employment Program. 250 young people will be at work this summer repairing watersheds, creeks and trails in our parks, clearing brush and debris for the elderly, and cleaning up neighborhoods.

No challenge is as troubling to the people of Seattle as the sight of homeless people on our streets.

But we can be proud of Seattle's response. There are no people in America more committed and capable than the people who operate Seattle's network of survival services. There is no better community forum for developing solutions than the task force on the homeless we have assembled here, and no more comprehensive plan for solving the problems than the work program they have written.

Next month we'll reopen the Broadview Shelter for women and children, and I will submit a proposal to provide the City's share of funds to expand the St. Martin de Porres Shelter.

The Survival Services Coalition won \$5 million in State funds to match our support to the food banks, shelters and clinics,

and John Gilles and the Seattle Firefighters Union played a big part in helping win that victory.

At the same time we are providing more help to those who are hurting, we've taken action against those who are hurting others. Chief Fitzsimons has increased walking beats and plain clothes operations downtown. Councilman Kraabel has worked hard to amend ordinances to protect the public from aggressive street behavior. Those amendments now have broad community support, and we should adopt them.

We must never accept the premise that emergency shelters are a permanent fixture in our city, or that a mat on the floor is the new standard for public housing. We should work to make homelessness and hunger forgotten words in Seattle--a distant memory like the billboards of 1970 that told those leaving Seattle to turn out the lights.

Our staff is working very hard on a strategy to build more housing like the Morrison Hotel, where SHA has rehabilitated 200 units of housing for the very poor--and more important--created a new sense of community. We are also looking at the larger issue of low income family housing in light of the Federal government's total abdication and the obvious need. In the next few weeks, I will present that strategy to the Council.

If we are to ask the voters to fund more housing for low income families, then we must offer them a proposal that is carefully crafted and broadly supported.

The Office of Management and Budget is working closely with neighborhood groups on a strategy for community participation in planning and budgeting for a new housing program. That strategy will help to build the base of support for family housing and identify other physical projects that should be funded to build stronger family neighborhoods.

Clearly, our greatest challenge is making certain we continue to have economic growth and financial health so that we can put our good ideas into action. The federal-local partnership is dissolving on the Washington, D.C., end, and while we should not abandon the fight to make federal priorities reflect our own, we need not wait to take action on our own. We are a strong, healthy city, which has become a magnet for new growth. We're helping to lead economic

recovery for the rest of the state. We can build on that strength.

We have a strong downtown business community and a Downtown Land Use and Transit Plan that will make it even stronger. We are already the eleventh largest commercial center in the United States, and our plan for a transit tunnel will help to attract 55,000 new jobs downtown by the year 2000.

The Port of Seattle is one of the world's great ports with new and energetic leadership. Just a week ago, Seattle became the main port of entry for cargo bound to and from the People's Republic of China. New passenger ships now call on Seattle and those lines seek to expand their operations. The City can build on the good relationship we have established with the port and look for new opportunities for joint ventures in international trade, tourism and industrial development.

Seattle is the home of one of the nation's great research universities. The approval of the Master Plan for university development sets the stage for more active cooperation among the City, the university, and the neighborhoods. Working together, we can create a new incubator center for the high-tech companies that spin-off from university research, and locate those firms where they are most compatible with our neighborhoods.

The Department of Community Development is already working to help the University build non-academic facilities in neighborhoods that need new jobs--like the new University laundry in the Rainier Valley.

We have three excellent community colleges and outstanding private colleges. We should work with them to create custom-made training programs for new jobs in small businesses.

We are in the midst of developing new land use policies for industrial areas. That work will give us a chance to explore ways to stabilize manufacturing industries--the shipyards, mills and factories that always have been the muscle of Seattle's economy, and have paid a family wage. These industries are not likely to create many new jobs--but we can help to prevent good jobs from being lost.

More than ever before, small business is fueling our economic growth. Seventy-five percent of the new jobs in our

city are created by small business. That's partly because the City has been an active partner in helping them get started and expand. The City of Seattle is now the number one broker of federal small business loans in the United States. We've won eleven Urban Development Action Grants. And this year we won the single largest loan guarantee ever made in this state by the Small Business Administration. We've even started our own small business improvement program for target neighborhoods.

When I talk about small business, I'm not just talking about established shops with 20 or 50 employees. I'm talking about the mother of three who fought her way off welfare by learning new skills at Seattle Central Community College, and then almost wound up back on welfare because no one would loan her \$5,000 to set up her shop. But we made that loan, and put her in business.

To keep opening those opportunities, we need to listen to the advice of our new economic development commission and streamline our procedures for dealing with small business. That effort is under way.

We also need some new development tools. The City is limited by the State Constitution in what we can do to create jobs.

Now we have a governor who understands how much more could be done if local and state government had the tools, and we should make the most of this opportunity. A constitutional amendment allowing the City to use Community Redevelopment financing will be on the ballot this fall, and we must make certain the value of that tool in job creation is adequately explained to our citizens.

The final and most important element in our strategy for creating jobs is the most basic: maintaining the quality of our neighborhoods and our environment. Employers know that their employees, like everyone else, want to be able to live in a city with beautiful residential neighborhoods and a vibrant downtown, to enjoy a wonderful park system, and take their kids to a place like the Seattle Center or a world class zoo. They know they'll be able to find and keep the best employees in a quality city.

Working together, we've created a strategy to protect that quality, to keep Seattle Seattle in the midst of change. It's a strategy built on partnership, as exemplified by the

unprecedented intergovernmental agreement to complete our zoo through a county-wide bond issue.

The battle to save Puget Sound is another critical part of that strategy.

A host of actors must all play their parts to save Puget Sound, but Seattle has a special role. We are the largest city on its shores. The Sound is our front yard, and we must be leaders in the fight to save it--and to keep it clean.

We were among the first to press for a comprehensive study of the Sound's problems in April of 1984. Now that study is underway, and we must do everything in our power to help. In the next few days, I will ask the Council for funds to pay for a share of the Elliott Bay Toxics Action Plan.

We will soon join our colleagues on the Metro Council in deciding how to convert to secondary treatment. We worked very hard to prepare for this decision--to make certain that every possible configuration was explored openly and and thoroughly. That work is paying off. Among the alternatives we will consider are options that would reduce the load on the existing treatment plants in Seattle parks and solve many of our combined sewer overflow problems along the Duwamish. These alternatives involve higher immediate costs than those that would simply expand the existing treatment plants, but they will ultimately prove to be the best investments for Seattle and for Puget Sound. We should work together to see that the Metro Council chooses that course of action.

The list of challenges I have presented is long; the tasks difficult. To keep Seattle's longstanding commitments to the elderly--and fulfill our new promises to our children. To provide more aid for the homeless, and leadership to restore the environment. I've suggested that we plan a new initiative to build housing for families; work together to form new partnerships to create jobs; and make a special city-wide effort to help the schools. Our community's financial resources are not unlimited. But our energy is. These jobs are not impossible for us. Just difficult. Like building the West Seattle Bridge or reaching agreement on the Downtown Plan. Like saving Pacific Medical Center or winning a settlement at High Ross Dam.

Like those other achievements we have shared, these new challenges will bring out the best in our great city. For Seattle, the greater the challenge, the greater the victory, and the better the celebration that will follow.