

Mayor Ralph Becker

State of the City Address

January 15, 2008

Good evening, Madam Chair, Council Members, City Employees, Salt Lake City Residents, and honored guests. Tonight, I am pleased to report on the State of our City.

I have much to report on since the inaugural – at least another six minutes’ worth– detailing *all* my accomplishments from my first week in office.

I have a unique opportunity in my first State of the City address to reflect on the condition of the City, to introduce two new innovative programs – for governance and accountability – and to lay out for you what I hope to accomplish in this first year of my administration.

When I addressed you last week, I remarked on all that Salt Lake City has to offer: a thriving economy, a magnificent natural setting, and hard-working, diverse, creative residents.

Salt Lake City today is the result of legacies left to all of us by my predecessors. Among their achievements: Mayor Anderson put issues of social justice and the urgency of addressing climate change at the top of our City’s agenda; Mayor Corradini championed many of the infrastructure projects that were completed in advance of the Olympics; Mayor DePaulis led the charge to save and restore this beautiful historic building, establish a homeless shelter and care for the disadvantaged; Mayor Wilson was instrumental in foothill protection; and all of these dedicated leaders helped make possible our light rail system that has proven to be such a benefit.

I certainly have big shoes to fill.

Yet, as I remarked last week, we have much to accomplish for *every* resident of Salt Lake City.

Domestic Partnership Registry

Last week, I started by introducing a City-wide Domestic-Partnership Registry that is intended to provide all Salt Lake City residents the same level of equality, dignity, and respect. This registry is for adult residents of the City who cohabit and rely on one another as dependents. The measure would help many of our elderly residents, people with adult dependent children, as well as same-sex couples. The City would create and maintain the registry and provide certificates to the registrants, thereby making it easier for employers, hospitals, and municipal facilities to recognize these relationships. I have appreciated the dialog in the community and the state, and look forward to your review and action on this proposal.

Leadership Policy

Last week I signed a Leadership Policy to endorse and promote the value and contributions of our dedicated City employees. That Policy created a Leadership Council that is tasked to enhance the value of City employees through leadership initiatives. Salt Lake City Corporation *is*

its employees. With personnel costs making up 60% of the City's general revenue fund budget, taxpayers make a significant investment. We, as elected officials, along with City senior managers, must continuously find ways to enhance the value of the City's employees.

Working closely with the City's Chief Administrative Officer Lyn Creswell, Sam Guevara, the City's Human Resources Director, and all department directors, we will seek to provide effective and consistent leadership and supervision of employees; ensure accountability of employees, supervisors, and managers; share the responsibility for training and career development with City employees; engage employees in policy development, process improvement, and performance/readiness measures; provide a fair, respectful, cooperative, and safe work environment; celebrate success and achievement with City employees; and support employee work/life balance. I will work with the City's labor unions and employee representatives to achieve these objectives. Next year, and each year of my administration, I look forward to reporting to you how City employees provide service to the citizens, businesses, and visitors in Salt Lake City.

NEW MEASURES

In addition to carrying out the Leadership Policy, I am announcing today the introduction of two specific measures that are on the leading edge of municipal governance and accountability:

Salt Lake Solutions

The first is an initiative called Salt Lake Solutions. Salt Lake Solutions will engage all segments of our community. It is collaborative government, one that includes those affected by decisions, considers ideas and options, and arrives at public solutions based on healthy dialog and consensus. We have reorganized our Mayor's office, and, under the leadership of Karen Hale, we will bring in the skills and abilities to facilitate consensus-building efforts and integrate a solutions approach in City government.

Salt Lake Solutions will be led by a Steering Committee and guided by a set of Community Objectives. The Steering Committee will rally resources for community projects that otherwise would not be achieved without the integration of public and private support.

We will be open to suggestions from the public for Salt Lake Solutions projects. Projects will undergo rigorous assessment by the Mayor's office to ensure they further Community Objectives based on the vision for Salt Lake City I outlined during the campaign.

I am pleased to announce to you tonight some of the Steering Committee members for Salt Lake Solutions—a group that represents some of our finest community leaders:

- Scott Anderson, President of Zions Bank
- Community Advocate Pamela Atkinson
- Michael Bassis, President of Westminster College
- Salt Lake Chamber of Commerce President and CEO Lane Beattie
- Chuck Chappell, Chair of the Wasatch Front Regional Council
- Salt Lake County Mayor Peter Corroon
- Bill Crim, Executive Director of United Way of Utah

- Director of the State Department of Community and Culture and former Salt Lake City Mayor Palmer Depaulis
- Kristie Fink, Executive Director of the Coalition for Civic, Character and Service Learning
- Dave Livermore, Executive Director of the Nature Conservancy
- Bruce Reese, President and CEO of Bonneville International Corporation
- University of Utah President Michael Young

One of the first Salt Lake Solutions community projects will emerge in the Euclid neighborhood of our city. In that neighborhood, there is a beautiful historic Victorian home—the Fisher Mansion—built on the bank of the Jordan River. The city acquired the property through a purchase to complete a segment of the Jordan River Trail.

The Fisher Mansion project potentially meets multiple community objectives: advancing historic preservation, tying together our waterways and urban trails network, expanding cultural offerings, showcasing environmental stewardship, and offering public access via bus from TRAX and a bike path. Ultimately, this facility offers a great opportunity for our city, neighborhood residents, visitors and local businesses.

Our initial assessment has determined that the project does indeed meet community objectives. Public and private partners for the Fisher Mansion Project will soon be identified. This group may include The Poplar Grove Community Council, historic preservationists, patrons of the Jordan River, the Utah Department of Transportation, and the Arts Council.

Council Member Van Turner and I will convene the partnership group. This group will meet together and come to an agreement on process and their objectives, standards of conduct, and principles they will apply to the project. The group will consider alternatives and then agree on recommendations for the use of the property.

These Salt Lake Solutions Partners are the people who make it all happen. They reach a Partnership Agreement outlining their individual commitments and a project timeline, and dreams become reality.

In addition to individual projects, Salt Lake Solutions will integrate collaborative, consensus-based problem-solving in city government. City department heads are already being introduced to Salt Lake Solutions. Our efforts will include training for alternative dispute resolution and consensus-building processes.

CityWorks

The second initiative internal to City government is CityWorks, an information-driven budget and management program that ensures our city government is responsible, accountable, and cost-effective. About a dozen other U.S. cities have employed programs like CityWorks to establish measurable standards for City programs and services.

Implementation of CityWorks will be a two- to three-year effort. We plan to roll it out initially focusing on one department, the Police Department, and one interdepartmental effort, carbon footprints planning and improvements for each City Department.

IMPLEMENTING THE 180-DAY ACTION PLAN

Other initiatives will rise to the top of my agenda this year, many of which are outlined in my 180-Day Action Plan:

Education

In education, we will do everything we can to give every child the opportunity to succeed through a first-class public education.

As John Adams said at the founding of our nation: "The greatest minds agree that laws for the liberal education of youth, especially for the lower classes of people, are so extremely wise and useful, that to a humane and generous mind, no expense for this purpose would be thought extravagant."

A selection committee of members inside and outside City government has been helping us hire an Education Partnership Coordinator, and the School District has offered to help fund this position.

I will move forward with the Mayor's School Summit and the "Salt Lake City is College-Bound" scholarship program.

Environment and Energy

We are blessed with majestic mountains, ribbons of rivers and streams, and a progressive approach to the use of energy in our buildings and transportation system. To optimize our assets for our quality of life and economic opportunities, I want to see Salt Lake City rapidly take giant steps forward.

I will accelerate the planning and funding for Salt Lake Bikeways. Among the new bikeways, Salt Lake City will have a dedicated bikeway for City Creek to the Jordan River and west to the airport.

I will ramp up action on the Jordan River: parkway completion, a trail the length of the river in Salt Lake City, and restoration of the river corridor. The valley-wide effort needs our full participation, and we need to think long-term about making the Jordan River watershed a model for ecological restoration and a pleasing amenity for our residents and visitors. Since I've been talking about the Jordan River during the campaign and through the transition to my new position, volunteers have flooded my office, and I'm excited to leverage our City resources with actions by other communities along the Jordan River, our residents, the State of Utah and the federal government. An action plan will be forthcoming to detail our steps to success.

During the transition I spent more time looking at our community development function than any other part of City government. Planning has been an area of particular focus for me, because that part of City government hasn't functioned well for the community. Changes that I have made, coupled with a new direction resulting from a city council audit, our transition reports, and work done by many interested parties, are under way. Within the next six months, we can expect to have a well-functioning department within the City that will adhere closely to the land-use policies of the City.

Among other actions, I will hire a director of a combined Community and Economic Development Department and move forward with my "Fix by Six" effort to update existing community general plans within six years. I will work to establish a strong Sustainability Ordinance that removes barriers and provides incentives to make Salt Lake City a model of self-sufficiency.

To address air quality and climate change we will move aggressively forward with rail and transit programs, enhancing our neighborhood service centers and creating a bikeway system that enables commuters, families, and recreationists to move through our City safely and comfortably. In addition, I will be proposing to you a revision of Salt Lake City's building codes to strongly encourage use of LEED – which stands for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design -- or LEED-equivalent building standards.

Equality

We live in a wonderfully diverse community that reflects the future of not only Salt Lake City but our region. Every resident should feel welcome and included in Salt Lake City.

I'll be bringing more proposals forward that I've identified in my 180-day plan including an expansion of our nondiscrimination ordinance and retirement benefits.

Public Safety

I will work to strengthen police presence and responsiveness throughout all neighborhoods of our City, through the deployment of additional police officers, visible and available to our residents.

I will work to strengthen our mobile and neighborhood-watch citizen efforts and initiate a plan to address crimes that detract from our city, such as graffiti, panhandling, and drug trafficking in parks.

Downtown

I will prioritize action steps to implement the Downtown Rising plan and the Downtown Transportation Plan, which needs to move quickly through an adoption process. Between implementation of these two planning documents and the enormous investment in City Creek Center, we are on the brink of a vibrant, exciting downtown. I look forward to working with you and our business community to implement many of the elements of those plans.

The elements of the plans that need our attention include the creation of a downtown cultural district, preservation of the Utah Theater and development of a Broadway-style Performing Arts Center; creation of a year-round Public Market; working with the state of Utah for a Global Exchange Place; the creation of a Downtown Parking Authority; initiation of a downtown transit circulator system; capitalizing on the completion of commuter rail from the north and our Intermodal Hub Central Station providing bike lockers, bike rental facilities and a safe bikeway system downtown; and developing, in conjunction with the University of Utah, an extension of the campus to our downtown and along the transit lines of University Boulevard (400 South) with research, classroom and housing facilities in a manner that is compatible with existing neighborhoods.

There are many other very pressing and very real issues facing our City every day – homelessness, the need for quality, convenient and affordable housing, and transportation options that must be open and affordable to all Salt Lake City residents.

The Mayor's office is also actively involved in up-to-the-minute discussions on City issues such as the Airport TRAX line, Public Safety facilities that are woefully inadequate, and the challenge of maximizing the utility and opportunities the Leonardo offers to our community.

I am pleased to be able to count my friends and former peers in the Legislature as colleagues. I know we share many of the same objectives for our Capital City and our State, and I trust that they will respect our local needs and desire for a Capital City that will be recognized as among the best in our nation.

I am energized by the challenges and opportunities ahead for Salt Lake City. I am excited to work with the 3,000 City employees who *really* make this City run. Our potential is as vast and impressive as our mountains.

We all want progress, prosperity, and a good quality of life. We all have the same basic desires for good health, safety, a home for our families, and a good education for our children. I hope you will join me in accomplishing the goals of the agenda I've outlined tonight, because "Together We Will Succeed."

Thank you.