

2019 State of the City Address

Mayor Sandy Martin

2018 has been an amazing and extraordinarily successful year for the City of Shoreview. The year was highlighted by the Community Center Expansion Project and the recent opening of Bamboo Bay, the first major addition to the Tropics Indoor Water Park since the Community Center opened nearly 30 years ago. Bamboo Bay is a shallow water pool that has a large tropical themed aquatic play structure with more than 40 interactive water play features that are attractive to our younger visitors. The expansion also addressed the need for additional family changing rooms. Included in the expansion project was a significant addition to the Tropical Adventure Indoor Playground, including an exclusive toddler area, additional parent seating, and a private birthday party area. For our fitness members, we added four new state-of-the art fitness studios on the lower level. The addition of 4 new multi-purpose activity rooms upstairs has created space to expand senior programming and some specialized areas for music, drama, science and even cooking classes. New and more comfortable space will also be noticed in the Wave Cafe, the Fireside Room and all of the hallways.

Throughout this challenging year, the entire City Council has demonstrated their vision, dedication, leadership and commitment to our City and they all deserve our appreciation for their efforts to make Shoreview an even better place to live, to work and to play. So thank you to my colleagues: Terry Quigley, Emy Johnson, Cory Springhorn and Sue Denkinger. They are a pleasure to work with and they contribute so much toward our success as a City.

Our recently completed community survey indicated that Shoreview residents resoundingly believe that Shoreview is a great place to live. Ninety-seven percent of our residents rated the quality of life in Shoreview as either excellent or good and this rating placed Shoreview among the top cities in the metropolitan area. In addition, 93% of Shoreview residents believe that the City is headed in the right direction, which is very gratifying and encouraging to the staff, volunteers and elected officials. These survey results are reviewed and analyzed by the City Council and City staff and they are used to guide us as we continue Shoreview's commitment to first class amenities and programs that help us create a community with exceptional livability.

Now, I would like to highlight some of the key accomplishments of 2018, and also look ahead to some key projects that are planned in 2019.

One of the keys to Shoreview success in every single area has been our long range planning and our ability to adjust to change. After more than a year's worth of work and extensive community involvement and significant input from all of our citizen committees and commissions, the City completed an update to the Comprehensive Plan this year. "Destination Shoreview 2040" is a 20 year planning document that covers everything from land use, housing and economic development to city utilities, parks and open space, and transportation. The Plan serves as a blueprint for future development and redevelopment in the City and also identifies the City's guiding principles and goals for nearly all of our community facilities and services.

Economic Development

During 2018, the City has seen a significant amount of economic development activity, particularly in the multi-family housing area. The McMillan, a 134-unit market rate apartment building located at the Rice Street/Grass Lake Place intersection, opened in the spring of 2018. This mixed-use development, which also includes some

ground floor retail space and 14 townhome units, replaced a mostly vacant and deteriorated retail shopping center. The new development is valued in excess of \$40 million.

The first phase of The Loden, a large two-phase 410-unit market rate apartment project located at 1005 Gramsie Road, opened this fall. This major redevelopment project is being undertaken by the development team of Eagle Ridge Partners and Greco at a former office/manufacturing site in the Shoreview Corporate Center across the street from the Green Mill restaurant. Once the second phase is complete, the entire project value will exceed \$80 million. Both the McMillan and the Loden apartment projects include many high-end amenities and provide some new housing choices in the community.

The City Council has also approved a project submitted by JPL Development for a mixed-use development for an 18-acre vacant property in the Rice Creek Corporate Center located at I-35W and County Road J. The project, called the Edison, includes 300 market rate apartment units, 68 rental townhomes, and an outlot that is reserved for future retail development. The first phase of this development will include 150 apartment units and about 40 townhomes and construction will begin this spring. The project will add significantly to the City's tax base and, when finished, will complete nearly all of the development in the Rice Creek Corporate Park.

The City's Business Retention and Expansion Program (BRE) continues to thrive and numerous visits to our key and emerging businesses were conducted by the City Council, Economic Development Commission and City staff. These visits are always informative and help us to understand the challenges and needs of our business community. Several more visits are scheduled for 2019.

Parks and Trails

During the past several months, the City has finalized the Master Plan for the Shoreview Commons area, which serves as the "central park" for the City. The City is working with design professionals to develop schematic design and construction plans for the first phase of the Commons Park improvements that will include a new decorative pond and formal garden area, a plaza-style skatepark, additional trails, sidewalks and a new pedestrian connection to the Ramsey County Regional Library, and a new neighborhood playground area near Mound Avenue. The second phase of the improvements, which are expected to be completed in 2021, include a destination playground and new park building. These exciting improvements in the Shoreview Commons area will complement the recently completed Community Center Expansion, further enhancing this area as the social, recreational, and cultural gathering place for Shoreview residents.

The City Council is also very excited to be working with the Shoreview Historical Society on the designation of Heritage Park during the next year. This new 2.5-acre park will include the historic City-owned Lepak/Larson house, and it is also the home to the historic Guerin Gas Station, the first gas station in the City of Shoreview. The Historical Society is using a small portion of the home for its office and storage of historic documents. The City and Historical Society plan to work together to furnish the main floor of this vintage Chaska brick farmhouse; and, once it is furnished, tours will be offered to the public at various times during the year.

We have learned through our community survey that trails are a very important asset to residents throughout the City. During 2019, there are two major trail projects that are scheduled for construction. The first project will complete the trail along County Road E from Victoria Avenue to Lexington Avenue. This trail will provide improved pedestrian connections to the Lexington Avenue retail corridor for many residents in southern Shoreview. The City is also working with Ramsey County staff to repair and replace sections of the trail through

the Snail Lake Open Space area that have been damaged or unusable because of high water levels in the area. As part of this project, staff also plans to construct an at-grade trail crossing of Gramsie Road that will connect the Snail Lake Open Space to the Grass Lake Open Space. The current pedestrian tunnel has been flooded for the past few years, making it difficult for pedestrians and cyclists to easily connect these two open space areas. The City will also be constructing a new sidewalk on Kent Street between Harriet Avenue and North Owasso Boulevard. These significant trail and sidewalk improvements will continue to improve Shoreview's trail system, which is our most used recreational resource.

Road Projects

At long last, Ramsey County will begin the reconstruction of the Rice Street Bridge over I-694. This project will improve traffic flow through an area that is often congested. The intersection is very complex and involves freeway ramps, private access, railroad tracks and the necessity for safe pedestrian travel. The new design includes a series of three roundabouts. Although the roundabouts will take some education and practice, I believe that once our residents become familiar with how to navigate through this new design, it will ease congestion and provide improved access to neighborhood streets and local businesses.

During 2019, the City is also planning to begin some preliminary work on the reconstruction of North Owasso Boulevard between Rice Street and Victoria Street. Although most of the reconstruction work will take place in 2020, there may be some preliminary utility work beginning in late 2019. This same roadwork will facilitate the completion of the County's renovation of Lake Owasso Beach Park.

The City will also be completing the final portion of the 2018-2019 street rehabilitation projects this year. About two miles of streets in central Shoreview were resurfaced in 2018 and three miles of local streets, primarily in the northern part of the City will be repaired and resurfaced in 2019.

Financial Condition

The City continues to maintain its AAA bond rating from Standard and Poor's, which is a key indicator of the overall financial strength of the City. Our City's continued focus on long-term financial planning, maintaining healthy reserves, and a strong local and regional economy are all important elements of this extremely strong bond rating. The City Council is also extremely proud that the City portion of the tax levy is fourth-lowest of 28 other similarly sized cities in the metropolitan area. Shoreview's share of the property tax on a median valued home is \$937, nearly 25% below the average of \$1,246.

Conclusion

As I begin my 12th term as Mayor of Shoreview, I am convinced that the local level of government is where we can make a positive difference in the lives of people in the community. It is this firmly held belief that continues to keep me motivated and focused on creating a better City for current and future generations. By continuing to work collaboratively with our citizens, neighboring communities and other levels of government, and maintaining our emphasis on long range planning, Shoreview will continue to be viewed as one of the premier communities in the nation.

On behalf of our City Council, I would like to thank all of the members of our City Committees and Commissions who provide outstanding counsel and advice. I would also like to thank our many community organizations such

as the Shoreview Historical Society, Gallery 96, Northern Lights Variety Band, Shoreview-Einhausen Sister City Association, Shoreview Community Foundation, and the Slice of Shoreview Committee, who help build civic pride and make our community stronger. I also want to thank our outstanding City staff that provides customer focused services and programs to our residents, businesses, and visitors to the community.

It continues to be a great honor and privilege to serve as the Mayor of our great community and I look forward to working together for continued progress and success. Thank you.