

FRIDAY MEMO

December 30, 2005

“2005: It Was a Very Good Year”

This-the last Friday Memo of 2005-is different. Don't worry, I will return next week to a strictly informational format. The truth is that I didn't even plan to do one this week. My first thought as we approached the end of the year was to take a few days off and forget work. The past few months have been hard-difficult issues, controversy, and stress seemed-present in all we did. A few days to spend time with my family and away from work (including the Friday Memo) seemed to be a good antidote to those months.

I am still taking Thursday and Friday off. I can do that because I leave behind a talented, professional staff that is deeply dedicated to the City. They will, as they have in the past and will continue to do in the future, handle anything that comes along. But I cannot leave 2005 behind-yet. As I said, the past few months have been difficult. However, when I measure time by looking at the entire year rather than just a piece of it, I see that 2005 was a very good year for the City of Milwaukie.

Consider the following:

North Main Project: In 2005 we saw construction begin on the mixed-use residential/retail North Main Project. For a time it seemed as if it would never happen, as the project costs escalated due to many factors including Hurricane Katrina. Tom Kemper, the developer, never gave up. The City Council, staff, the community, and our partners-Metro and the State Department of Housing and Community Services-never gave up. This perseverance has resulted in an flurry of activity on the site that will lead to a completed project in 2006.

McLoughlin Boulevard Project: In 2005 we also saw construction begin on the McLoughlin Boulevard Project. Paid for with Federal, State, and City money, this project will change the character of the traffic moving through the City and its Downtown. We used to be a city that a lot of people just passed through. This project will help people notice that we are a small town with a beautiful riverfront and a revitalizing downtown. The McLoughlin Project is adding pedestrian and bicycle amenities that will make our Riverfront more accessible. Again, the City Council, staff, community, and our Federal and State partners moved with resolve to make it happen. As construction progresses we are beginning to see the outlines of what will be a wonderful change in the City's landscape.

Three Bridges Project: In 2005 construction also began on the Three Bridges Project, which will allow a connection of the Springwater Corridor to the pedestrian/bike system across McLoughlin. This project, which is jointly undertaken by the City of Milwaukie, Metro, TriMet, and the City of Portland

Parks and Recreation and the Portland Office of Transportation, will result in three new bridges crossing the railroad tracks, Johnson Creek, and McLoughlin Boulevard and represents a major improvement in the region's pedestrian/bike system. In the coming weeks the McLoughlin signature bridge will be erected and will mark an impressive entranceway for the northern point of Milwaukie.

Texaco/City Parking Lot Joint Agreement: In 2005 Metro completed a purchase of the Texaco site, and the City and Metro entered into an agreement to jointly market that site and the City parking lot across from City Hall as one entire block for development. The City Council, City staff, and Metro worked for months to make it happen, and the Texaco purchase and the joint agreement were successfully completed. The property will be marketed in 2006, with one goal of keeping the momentum we have gained with the North Main Project.

Transit Center Relocation Project: I understand that many will question why I am including this as a 2005 accomplishment, given the fact that the Kellogg Lake site, which had been the recommended site, was removed from consideration. The discovery of the 1991 agreement designating it as a park, which makes it inconsistent for use as a transit center, will provide further clarity as we again tackle relocation of the present transit center in 2006. When the region designated the I-205 corridor as the next light rail alignment, we fought for something concrete for the City of Milwaukie. We argued that it was not enough to promise a vote on the light rail issue some time in the future. The region made a commitment to move the on-street transit center during development of I-205 light rail. That was a major victory for the City, but we will have to come to a consensus on an appropriate location in 2006. I believe that we are moving closer to making that decision.

Farmers' Market Community Booth: In 2005, at the suggestion of a neighborhood chair, we set up a booth each Sunday at the Farmers' Market that had a wealth of information on the City and its direction. The booth was staffed by volunteers, including community members, City staff, and Council members. The purpose was to present information on the many projects, to answer questions, and to listen to folks who stopped by. The results exceeded our expectations. The interest that people have in Milwaukie is incredible, and it was exciting to hear the many comments about how they like the direction and activity.

As I write I see that I could continue adding to the list. The City was involved in many successful events, including, for example, the annual festival (including the fireworks display), the solstice event, and the summer concerts sponsored by the Historic Milwaukie and Ardenwald Neighborhoods. We moved development of the Riverfront forward with both the removal of the final two buildings (with assistance from Governor Kulongoski) and the

survey. With assistance from Congressman Earl Blumenauer and his staff we secured \$4 million in funding for a major project on Lake Road. Through the hard work of the Lewelling Neighborhood, residents were able to secure \$200,000 in state funding for the development of their park

Yes, we did encounter a few bumps in the road during 2005. But if we focus only on those bumps we lose sight of the bigger picture. We all accomplished a great deal, and we did it together. The transit center relocation and Riverfront development will present challenges during 2006. Both are projects that, when accomplished, should result in major celebrations. But that's 2006.

For now I want to reflect on where we have been and on what we have accomplished during 2005. When I do so, I see that all of us can celebrate the fact that in Milwaukie 2005 was a very good year.