



# State of the City

March 18, 2009

Our region and city are experiencing one of the most difficult periods of our lifetimes, but even in these trying times, the state of our city is strong. With the exceptional vision and leadership of the City Council and the efforts of each and every city employee, we have accomplished a great deal in the face of adversity.

We continue to look at every possible way to maintain high quality service to our citizens while making decisions that will ensure our ability to provide critical services.

And though these times will test us, it gives us the opportunity to transform ourselves — an opportunity to keep our city on a path that will lead to enhanced fiscal accountability, greater efficiencies, and a culture of innovation.

The downturn in the U.S. and Puget Sound economies will be felt in Renton.

Renton employment is expected to decline about 3 percent this year. Housing permits dropped from more than 1,300 units in 2007 to 448 in 2008, and further declines are anticipated.

However, this past year Renton was one of only three cities in the Puget Sound region to see a positive growth in retail sales.

In October we passed the city's 2009 budget of \$252 million. Of this, the city's general government operations expenses equal \$101 million, which pays for things such as police, fire and other key services. Due to the decline in the economy we are projecting future deficits of possibly as much as 8 percent.

We are working hard to explore options to determine how best to bridge the gap with the least impact to the community we serve. As the city moves forward we will

maintain a long-term view toward prosperity, while strengthening confidence in city government and making a difference in people's lives.

Despite the economic challenges, Renton has been experiencing some positive gains lately. Businesses continue to open at The Landing and throughout the city, and most stores are exceeding their performance expectations.

Tough times reveal true character, and following these challenging times we will come through this a stronger city. We will make difficult choices today, but attain greater prosperity tomorrow.

— **Mayor Denis Law**

*For a complete copy of the Mayor's state of the city speech, go to [rentonwa.gov](http://rentonwa.gov)*

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### Unprecedented Growth

The City of Renton population has doubled from about 40,000 in 1990 to over 80,000 in 2008, in part due to the annexation of the Benson Hill area and other neighborhoods adjoining Renton.

### Enhanced Public Safety

- Increased police patrols in downtown and transit center
- Relocated Police Special Operations Division to transit center
- Launched photo enforcement program
- Launched anti-graffiti initiative and passed ordinance to punish offenders
- Emphasized code enforcement; demolished the Don-a-Lisa Motel

### Preparing for Major Disasters

- Successfully responded to several major storms this past winter
- Completed Emergency Management Plans and established "disaster assignments" for all city employees



**"We've enjoyed several ribbon-cuttings last year — from the Federal Reserve to the Seahawks Virginia Mason Athletic Center, to several restaurants, stores and the cinemas at The Landing."**

— **Mayor Denis Law**

### Promoting Economic Development

- Numerous businesses opened in 2008 at The Landing and throughout the city
- Renton drew several large employers to the city, including Providence Health and Services, the Seattle Cancer Treatment and Wellness Center, and Downtown Harley Davidson

### Transportation Projects

- Duvall Avenue construction to be completed this summer, on time and on budget
- Completed improvements to SR169/I-405 Interchange
- Finished construction of bike path along Logan Avenue



**"Our snow plows and sanding trucks plowed 13,000 miles this winter — the equivalent of plowing half way around the earth's equator."**

— **Mayor Denis Law**

# PRIORITIES

## Evaluate Annexations Without Impacting City Services

Welcome annexation areas that desire to be a part of Renton while ensuring adequate funding for Renton.

## Ascertain Community's Future Needs for Library Service

As significant investments are needed to meet future library needs, the city is working on a plan to give our community the option to determine whether or not to annex to King County Library System.

## Reduce Crime and Enhance Safety in our Neighborhoods

- Increase video surveillance at transit center and other identified areas
- Expand anti-graffiti initiatives, including placing several surveillance cameras at key locations, prosecuting offenders and seeking restitution



**"It is our responsibility to ensure that we do everything possible to make our neighborhoods and community feel safe."**

— Mayor Denis Law



**"Our events and festivals, such as the Fourth of July and Renton River Days, serve to bring our community together to celebrate Renton."**

— Mayor Denis Law

- Expand "Renton's Most Wanted," an effort to provide the community with information on wanted criminals
- Cooperate with 18 other agencies in King and Pierce County to reduce auto theft

## Continue to Prepare City and Community for Emergencies

- Prepare Emergency Preparedness Plan for potential impact from the Howard Hanson Dam
- Develop automatic notification system and establish Community Emergency Response Teams for businesses
- Increase public access to AEDs (Automated External Defibrillators)

## Empower Citizens to Envision the Future of Renton

- Launch Community Planning Initiative to empower citizens to create a visionary, yet strategic and sustainable future for Renton



- Implement the Highlands Task Force recommendations for the revitalization of the Highlands neighborhood

## Emphasize Strong Economic Development to Create Jobs

- Begin construction of Hawks' Landing, a new hotel at Pan Abode site
- Celebrate the Seahawks' first full year at their new training camp
- Work closely with Boeing to ensure continued prosperity and partnership

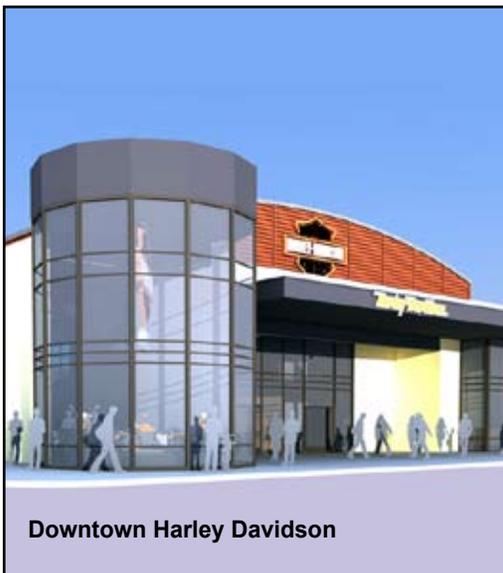


**"By empowering our citizens we will create a visionary, yet strategic future for Renton."**

— Mayor Denis Law

## Invest in Significant Road Project Infrastructure and Improvements

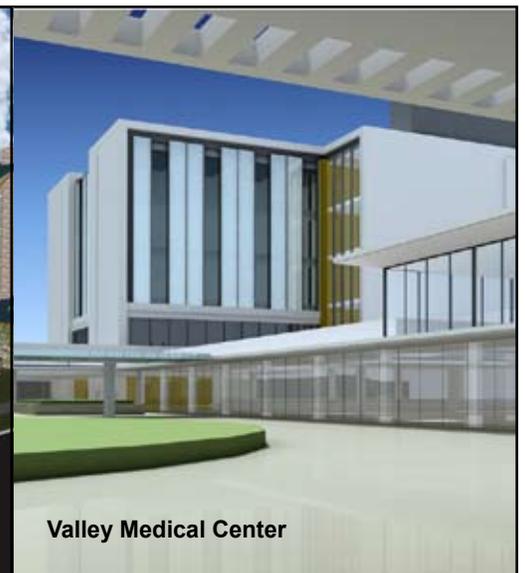
- Improvements to Rainier Avenue
- Install school zone flashers at all schools
- Improve sidewalk safety
- Work with Sound Transit, WSDOT and our regional partners to ensure high capacity transit investments in our community



Downtown Harley Davidson



Hawks' Landing



Valley Medical Center