



This Week from the Mayor



JUNE 12, 2019

VOL. IV, NO. 18

State budget contains “wins” for Renton



The city asked for and received \$610,000 from the state to make improvements to the play equipment and drainage system at Gene Coulon Memorial Beach Park.

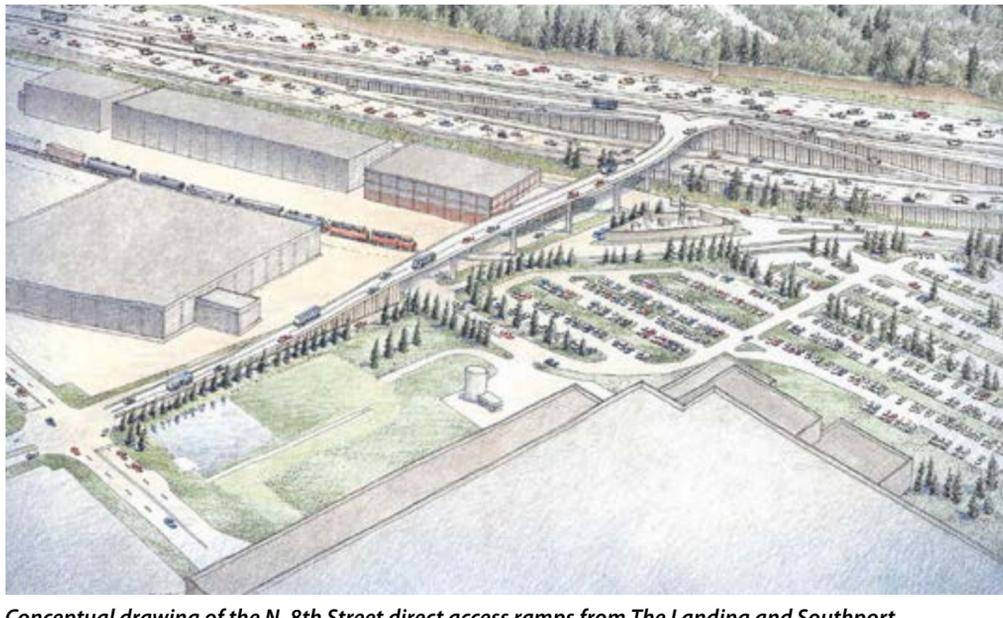
EACH YEAR WE APPROACH the new legislative session with a list of key priorities designed to improve the quality of life for Renton residents. I'm happy to report that in the recently concluded legislative session we were able to secure funding for several of our major projects.

It's no secret we have some of the best parks and trails in the northwest. To keep them maintained we asked for and received \$610,000 for new play equipment and drainage improvements at Gene Coulon Memorial Beach Park. We also received \$500,000 to start work on extending Burnett Linear Park northward. This is a component of our "Renton Connector" plan, which will establish pedestrian/bike/trail connections to and from the Cedar River and stimulate economic activity within the city core.

Affordable housing, homeless and mental health services was also on our priorities list. We received \$175 million in funding for the Housing Trust Fund (HTF) and over \$500 million in tax credits over the next 20 years. June Leonard Place, which provides housing for low-income local residents in downtown, was built, in part, using funds from HTF.

The Renton Housing Authority helped secure \$1 million to aid the conversion of the former Renton Highlands Library into the Sunset Multi-Use Center. The center will provide social and community services to Sunset Area residents and the broader Highlands community.

At the top of our transportation priorities list was authorization of and funding for the I-405 express toll lanes. The legislature not only authorized the project, but also included \$210 million in bonds for the Renton-to-Bellevue segment. They allocated another \$20 million to construct an I-405 access ramp at N. 8th Street. This ramp will give commuters direct access to and from Southport and The Landing. The city also received \$210,000 from the legislature to enhance landscaping, greenery, signage, and other features at the I-405/NE 44th Avenue interchange. The plan is to make the area a more "formal" entry to the city.



Conceptual drawing of the N. 8th Street direct access ramps from The Landing and Southport.

State funding for public safety, while not targeting specific Renton projects, aligned with our priorities and will fund critical needs. The state allocated \$10.3 million to establish a lab that will eliminate within two years the backlog of sexual assault and rape cases. The funding also mandates a 45-day processing time frame for new cases.

For years we have advocated for an increase in the number of classes at the Basic Law Enforcement Academy. The state listened and will now fund 75 percent of nine new classes, almost doubling the previous total. Legislation also includes a \$4.4 million grant to allow law enforcement and mental health professionals to work together in response teams and \$2.2 million for diversion and therapy training in jails. SCORE jail, of which Renton is one of seven owner cities, will receive increased funding as the legislature directed the Department of Corrections to increase the per-bed subsidy paid to SCORE for housing inmates.

You can see it was a very good session for Renton. These positive outcomes were achieved through hard work by several people. Our administrative team was diligent to first establish and then fine tune our list of priorities. Several city councilmembers joined me in Olympia multiple times to lobby.

Then there is the work of our legislators. I've often said Renton is very fortunate to have such a dedicated, hard-working group representing our interests in Olympia. Once again our senators and representatives worked behind closed doors to keep Renton's priorities part of the budget. My thanks and appreciation to all of you.

Talbot Hill Elementary students visit



MICROSOCIETY STUDENTS from Talbot Hill Elementary School visited city hall last week to learn first-hand about the inner workings of a city. I spent time with them in my office explaining the mayor's role in city government, and answering several well thought-out questions.

The MicroSociety program teaches students how to establish a city government with branches for taxation and licensing, run businesses and banks. As a result, they are charged with making decisions that affect daily life. In addition to visiting my office and peppering me with questions, they also toured Center of Hope day shelter, met with police and fire chiefs to learn about police and fire operations, and examined a fire engine and patrol car.

Police win First Responders Bowl

THE OLD SAYING, "to the victors go the spoils," is evident on the face of Renton Police Chief Ed VanValey (right) as he holds the First Responders Bowl trophy for 2019. The police beat the firefighters, 12-8, in the second annual game and now have bragging rights until next year.

The two teams played four quarters of aggressive football last Saturday at Renton Stadium. Renton police dominated the game and led 12-0 before a late touchdown and two-point conversion by the firefighters. The police held on to take home the trophy and avenge a stinging loss from last year.

These guys were very competitive, but what's great to know is their dedicated commitment to work closely together every day serving and protecting our residents!

All proceeds from the game went to [I Am Lionhardt](#), which provides awareness and financial support to all first responders battling critical illness.



Feedback

Comments, questions or suggestions, or just want to share all the great things that are happening in the city, please [email](#) me. Thanks for reading. [Translate](#) | [Archive](#)