



Updates from the City Manager

Martin D. Casey
January 2020

General Government

- City employees in every department were involved in bringing December's festive holiday events to Sunnyside residents. Highlights included the Festival of Trees, Downtown Christmas Market, Museum Christmas Open House, Firefighter's Chili Feed, and the spectacular Lighted Farm Implement Parade.
- Council approved the 2020 budget on December 9. We have balanced the budget, set aside a \$750,000 ending fund balance reserve, and avoided general tax increases in the General Fund.
- Municipal Court Clerks Elvira Anciso and Irma Jasso both retired in December after a combined 60+ years of dedicated service to Sunnyside residents. We congratulate them on their retirements and are now working to build a new team to serve the Court's needs for some time to come.

Public Safety

- In December the U.S. District Court in Spokane dismissed the state Attorney General's (AG) Crime Free Rental Housing (CFRH) lawsuit against the city. The Court ruled the AG did not show that it had proper standing to bring the lawsuit. The City was very gratified by the Court's ruling, but dismayed that the AG's actions may have undermined public trust in the City and our employees. However, the AG's office has announced that they plan to file an amended complaint in January to try to overcome the Court's concerns. We will continue to defend the city's CFRH program and employees.
- The Governor's Supplemental Budget proposal includes \$1.4 million more funding for gun violence reduction grants. The Governor's proposal would give priority to agencies in Yakima County and south King County. We will monitor the proposal closely as it is considered by the 2020 Legislature.

Public Works

- Public Works experiences about 8-10 water main breaks each year; piping in parts of the city is very old cast iron. We must report on water system efficiency to the state Department of Health. By their standards, a good system will show less than 10% loss - meaning that you are using 90% or more of the water you pump from the aquifer. In 2018, we had less than 5% loss, an indicator that despite its age our system is still tight and that staff are accounting for all water pumped and used effectively
- The state Transportation Improvement Board (TIB) recently announced its next cycle of grant awards. We were pleased that our Midvale Road resurfacing project was approved for 2022-2023. This project is vital to sustaining economic development in that corridor. The total project cost is estimated at \$2.5 million. If the City decides to accept the grant, the City must identify and obligate matching funds of about \$235,000 by October 2020. Staff will factor this into our budget reviews for Council consideration in mid-2020.

Best Wishes for the New Year!