

REPORT 2013

# State of the City



**Our River. Our City. Our Future.**

New online service center ~ Watch meetings ~ YouTube videos

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CITY OF  
**Vancouver**  
WASHINGTON

Serving our citizens since 1857



Mayor Timothy D. Leavitt

## Successfully navigating a river of change.

This is OUR RIVER - 20 miles of the Columbia River waterfront on Vancouver's doorstep! This mighty river brings us all together - for commerce, culture, nature and community life - as it has for

hundreds of years. The City of Vancouver grew up on the Columbia River and incorporated here 156 years ago - our river defines where Oregon ends and where Washington begins. We are Vancouver, Washington - City on the River.

The City of Vancouver has successfully navigated a river of change, while building on efforts of those who came before and working together toward a brighter future. We have made excellent progress - in 2012 and over the last several years, amidst challenging financial times - making course corrections to right the ship.

Just last year, the City and partner organizations began reopening downtown waterfront access and river views to our Columbia River for the first time in more than a century. We are building on our founders' dreams when they claimed this river, this soil, this Vancouver. These are exciting times. Join us!

As the birthplace of the Pacific Northwest, our community is forever connected to the Columbia River. It is our link to our past and, with today's hard work, the key to our future.

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**One River. One City. One Future.**

Timothy D. Leavitt, Mayor

## Vancouver City Council



Jeanne Harris  
1997 - present



Jeanne E. Stewart  
2001 - present



Larry Smith  
2004 - present



Jack Burkman  
2009 - present

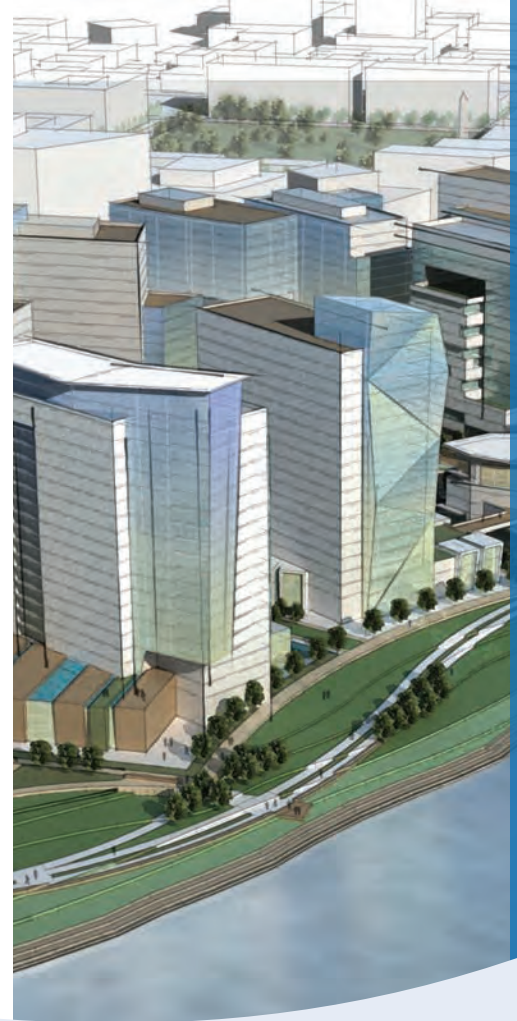


Bart Hansen  
2010 - present



Bill Turlay  
2011 - present





## Our River. Our City. Our Future.

### **We are Vancouver, Washington. City on the river.**

The Columbia River makes this a great place to work, live and play, connecting 20 miles of waterfront on our southern and western shores. Inland, streams form our Columbia River watershed, from Burnt Bridge Creek to Vancouver Lake. Our River nurtures wildlife, evergreen forests, our families, neighborhoods and businesses within a single, vibrant river community.

### **The City of Vancouver provides core services for a safe, thriving community.**

From public safety to economic development, to parks and community centers, our City delivers core services. The State of the City address, at our Water Resources Education Center, reminds us not only of the City's efficient delivery of water and wastewater services, but also the importance of our watershed to drinking water and our quality of life. Interaction at the Water Center helps us rediscover our connection to the river.

### **Waterfront redevelopment: reconnecting downtown to the Columbia River.**

Work is now underway to reopen access previously blocked for 104 years. Next year, Vancouver Waterfront Park breaks ground, and we'll extend our Columbia River Renaissance trail, now used by one million people per year.

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**Vancouver is a city of firsts:  
First city on the Columbia  
River. First city in what is now  
Washington State.**

- Vancouver's Columbia River Waterfront Public Access and Recreation Master Plan, 1989





## 2012 Progress Report

### City Council adopted a balanced 2013-14 budget

- Preserved a balance of core City services without cuts
- Investments in efficient, effective and sustainable core services

### 2012 community survey showed residents think we are on the right path

- Increased satisfaction with City decisions
- Wanted no major cuts, no new taxes
- Despite service cuts and recession, Quality of Life and Livability increased

### Despite the Great Recession, our City is in better financial condition today than 2009-2012

- Mayor and City Council and City Manager made swift, difficult decisions to live within limited means
- Underlying deficit remains and is being addressed
- Council adopted progressive new financial policies to help navigate the future

### Vancouver Police continues as top community service priority

- Violent crime down 8%, total crime down 3%
- To improve neighborhood safety, VPD has deployed:
  - ~100+ active citizen volunteers in Neighbors On Watch (NOW) program
  - ~Four Neighborhood Police Officers
  - ~Two Neighborhood Response teams
- Service assessment currently underway
- Recruitment of new Chief this year

### Vancouver Fire Department charts ways to sustain services

- Responded to 23,000 emergency calls, 62.5 calls per day
- Maintained response times despite economic challenges
- Lengthy community-based assessment explored new alternatives
- Strategic redesign of EMS and ambulance transports underway
- Grant funding for emergency response boat and critical equipment
- Planning new SUV response to reduce fire engine use
- Developing a new sustainable department redesign for Council consideration

### Achieved significant savings through smart, conservative financial planning

- Continuing trend of clean audits
- Increased credit rating, 2012 debt refinancing will save public \$2.8 million
- First full year in City Hall - higher than expected savings of \$1.1 million by downsizing from five buildings. Savings are ongoing.

### Provided high quality water, sewer and stormwater services

- Vancouver's rates among the lowest in the region
- Delivered 9.2 billion gallons of clean drinking water
- Treated 8 billion gallons of wastewater
- Recycled 800 million gallons of irrigation water for reuse

### Parks and Recreation remains key to Vancouver's quality of life

- 369,000 visits to recreation centers by pass holders and 75,000 drop-in guests
- 3 million people used bike and walking paths
- 15 acres of new public space added in partnership with other agencies
- Experts studied new opportunities, such as revisiting the city/county partnership

### We bring the City to you. Visit us online not in line at [www.cityofvancouver.us](http://www.cityofvancouver.us)

- Online use doubled to 3.1 million users and 6 million page views
- City's new customer service website launches this month, providing a multitude of interactive services at your fingertips
- Watch us on YouTube and City Council meetings air online
- Like us on Facebook, join our email list

### Special events contribute to a sense of place

- City's *Riverview Six to Sunset Concert Series* drew 38,000 to Esther Short Park
- Farmer's Market, cultural festivals, car shows, beer festivals and more

### Volunteers and neighborhoods reinforce our sense of community

- 50,000 volunteer hours
- Two new neighborhood associations; 66 groups partner with City staff

### Enhanced street system

- Invested \$12.58 million in major street and infrastructure projects
- Obtained \$5.7 million in grants for funded traffic safety improvements

### Started new programs to help business grow and thrive

- Business Assistance Program, Business Pre-lease Program, VancouverBusinessResource.org
- On-line permit center launches in 2013, reducing costs, timelines and paper
- Fast permitting, low fees, exceptional service



## 24/7, the City provides core community services

The City touches your life in many ways - police and fire, water, sewer, streets, recycling, parks and recreation, neighborhood planning, building safety, building community, building jobs and a brighter future for all of us.



## 2013 CITY COUNCIL GOALS

Address the future of Fire and EMS services and emergency preparedness facilities.



Address the future of Parks and Recreation services in Vancouver.



Establish a strategic plan for the future of policing in the City.



Address the City's long term street funding needs.

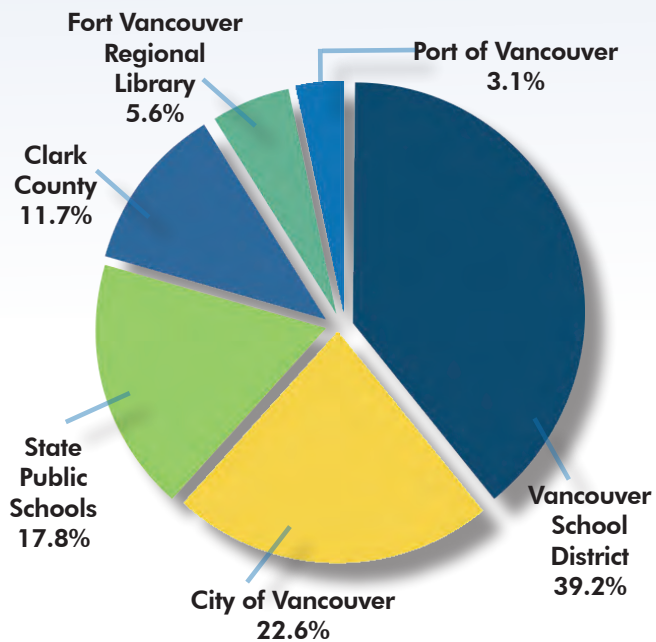


Establish a system for next generation performance management.



Did you know? In the last ten years, your City property taxes have increased less than a dollar a month. Today, you're paying \$45 a month – ten years ago you paid \$44.30. During that time, prices have risen due to inflation by 22%.

### 2012 Property Tax Distribution for a Typical Vancouver Household



A typical Vancouver household (home value of \$185,000) pays \$535.80 per year in property taxes for City services. From every City tax dollar, here is how your money is spent:







## Making Vancouver a better place – now and for the future

Vancouver supports new businesses, job creation, community health and vibrancy. Through hard work and partnerships, we bring new vitality to Vancouver and enhance quality of life.

- ~ Pictured above: Downtown, our Waterfront Access project will reconnect people to the Columbia River this year and is attracting \$1.3 billion in private investment for a mixed-use development, including a new Waterfront Community Park and extension of our popular riverfront trail.
- ~ On Vancouver's modern east side, the 192nd Avenue and Highway 14 corridor is one of the premier employment and housing clusters in the region. The City will continue to support this area by building partnerships and funding for needed public infrastructure.

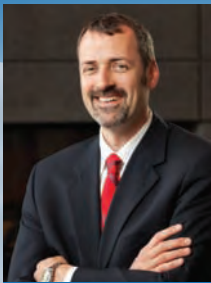
**Working together for a brighter future: more than 1,000 students, from kindergarten through high school, collect water quality and habitat data during the school year working with the City of Vancouver's Water Resources Education Center.**

- ~ In east Vancouver, Columbia Tech Center continues to evolve as an economic hub. The new 52,000-square-foot Nautilus building and remodeled Kuni headquarters offer workforce housing and amenities to attract new tenants.
- ~ 2012 major commercial projects: Great Western Malting (\$4.1 million); Cinetopia (\$10.5 million); The Quarry Senior Living (\$6.5 million).
- ~ We partner to promote a digitally savvy workforce, a strategy of the Regional Economic Development Plan.





# Vancouver - City on the River



**City Manager  
Eric Holmes**

**Help us help Vancouver**  
Incorporated in 1857, the City of Vancouver is a municipal agency in the Council/City Manager form of government. Residents elect a Mayor and a six-member City Council that sets policy. Council appointed Eric Holmes as City Manager in 2010 to oversee City operations and staff much like the CEO of a large business.

#### **City Council Regular Session**

First and third Monday of each month, 7 p.m. Public testimony accepted.

#### **Consent Meeting & Citizen Forum**

Second and fourth Monday of each month, 6:30 p.m.

#### **Council Workshops**

Every Monday 4–6 p.m.

**Visit the City online – not inline:** [www.cityofvancouver.us](http://www.cityofvancouver.us)

**E-MAIL** the City Manager: [vanCMO@cityofvancouver.us](mailto:vanCMO@cityofvancouver.us)

**CALL** the City Council/City Manager's office: **360-487-8000**

**WATCH** the public meetings on [www.CVTV.org](http://www.CVTV.org) and **CVTV channel 23**



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