

**State of the City Address  
Mayor Lily Mei  
City of Fremont  
March 22, 2019**

Good afternoon.

I'm pleased to be here at the invitation of the Fremont Chamber of Commerce, the host for today's luncheon.

Thank you to the Marriott for their excellent service.

What a year!

Fremont made history by converting our elections from at large voting to a district-based system last November.

Residents residing in Districts 1 through 4 voted on new Council representatives.

I would like to recognize my fellow colleagues on the Fremont City Council:

Vice Mayor Raj Salwan

Councilmember Vinnie Bacon

Councilmember Teresa Keng in District 1

Councilmember Rick Jones in District 2

Councilmember Jenny Kassan in District 3

Councilmember Yang Shao in District 4

Districts 5 and 6 will be electing their representatives in 2020.

We have a long legacy of great leadership.

We recognize the loss of retired Fire Chief Dan Lydon earlier this week.

Dan has left his imprint on making Fremont a better community.  
Mayor Mei, City of Fremont

Now I'd like to welcome our new City Manager, Mark Danaj, who was hired last September.

Mark's passion for city management revolves around modernizing local government, making it more accessible to residents, and fostering authentic civic engagement.

With a new Council and City Manager onboard, we held a retreat in January, and agreed upon a shared vision of three key focus areas which I'll touch upon throughout my speech today:

Housing  
Traffic congestion  
and neighborhood commercial districts and businesses.

These priorities will translate to actions, including a review of housing and growth management, the creation of new development guidelines, the exploration of innovative transportation solutions, and increased support for our businesses.

And these priorities are in line with results from our community survey conducted last June.

While City services overall continue to have a positive impact, we heard you, and are increasing resources for all areas of concern.

As Fremont and the rest of Silicon Valley have added jobs, the demand for housing has skyrocketed.

There needs to be an appropriate mix of housing at varying levels of income.

For example, in the Warm Springs Innovation District, the City partnered with developers to create a transit-oriented mixed-use community.

This will include 4,000 new homes, ranging from high-end townhomes to rental apartments serving very-low-income families, as well as a brand new elementary school.

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Fremont has always had a good balance between housing and jobs. As job growth has risen in the past few years, Fremont has approved new construction, particularly around the Warm Springs BART Station, to try to maintain that balance.

Although Fremont has maintained a healthy balance between jobs and housing, many communities in the Bay Area and throughout California have not.

As a result, the State has passed legislation intended to make housing development easier at the expense of local control over planning decisions.

Many additional housing bills that would impact cities have been proposed this year.

I'm actively working with the legislature to share Fremont's story, to show we are meeting our state-imposed housing goals, while still ensuring that new development contributes to the balanced infrastructure, with parks, roads, schools, and affordable housing that make our communities great places to live.

Fremont has done the right thing.

We shouldn't be subjected to one-size-fits-all mandates from Sacramento.

Fremont requires new residential development projects to support affordable housing by providing either on-site units or paying fees.

Commercial and industrial projects are also now required to pay a "linkage fee" to help produce more affordable housing.

It's been a record breaking year for us, building more affordable housing units than ever before.

Let me share a few of the highlights with you.

Stevenson Terrace was completed earlier this year with MidPen Housing.

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Also, the City and Habitat for Humanity are giving low and moderate income families the opportunity to own a home, at Central Commons.

Additional funding was also approved for construction of City Center Apartments.

Providing supportive housing for low-income households, with a number of units set aside for veterans and people with mental disabilities.

And last November,

the Council approved entitlements and funding for the conversion of the Islander Motel on Mowry to rental apartments for low income households.

In the interim, we will use the current motel to house some of our homeless population.

Homelessness is a growing societal issue for Fremont and our entire nation.

We just wrapped up our second Alameda County biennial homeless count. I'm proud that Fremont is a city where everyone counts.

Additionally, this year Fremont moved from providing a Warming Center to an expanded winter relief shelter.

It relocated from our Senior Center, to the Teen Center, in January.

Joining forces with Newark and several community partners We also launched a newly named Mobile Hygiene unit, called 'Fresh Start.'

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It will provide much-needed shower and laundry services to those unsheltered and homeless.

We're appreciative of all our community partners that have made these services possible.

Community collaborations also help us better serve our senior population.  
And make Fremont an Age-Friendly,  
livable city for all.

Seniors can rejoice that construction of the  
Pauline Weaver Senior Apartments is complete.

The project was built in partnership with Eden Housing,  
and you're all invited to the grand opening celebration on May 17.

And ground breaking for the  
new senior center in Warm Springs  
is anticipated this summer.

This center, expected to open by 2021,  
will offer a much needed space for older adults.

Moving on now,  
let's turn our focus to traffic and mobility challenges  
across the Bay Area  
and throughout our city.

Both continue to be top concerns that we're taking bold actions to address.

Locally, we just adopted the Fremont Mobility Action Plan which includes strategies to improve our local and regional transportation systems.

Regionally, on ACTC I serve as vice chair for  
Alameda County Goods Movement Committee  
and chair the 680 Sunol Express Lane Joint Powers Authority Committee.

There, I'm advocating to deliver mobility improvements for our community.  
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I'm also fighting to bring Federal funding to Fremont as a member of the Transportation and Infrastructure Services Policy Committee for the National League of Cities and serving as Co-Chair for their Transportation Technology subcommittee.

Looking at the root causes of traffic congestion that overwhelms our city, I want underscore the unbalanced development of jobs and housing.

In the Bay Area since 2010, 700,000 new jobs have been added, but only about one hundred thousand new housing units.

Fremont is at the junction of major commute corridors that connect where people live and where they work.

Dumbarton Bridge and Niles Canyon 880 and worst of them all, ranking fourth most congested corridor in the Bay Area, 680, over the Sunol grade.

Fremont has been leading the way, in responsible planning.

Unfortunately, this is not the case in many Bay Area communities.

In Santa Clara County the recent ratio of new jobs to housing has been 8 to 1, while in San Mateo County the ratio is 17 to 1.

As a result, we're working to influence regional policy to prompt other communities to develop in a more balanced way.

Key strategies we support are having more housing built in cities that are approving an excess amount of jobs and having new jobs locate to where the people are.

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Simultaneously, progress is being made to improve regional transportation systems, like BART extending south to Milpitas and San Jose. In November 2020, there will be an additional eastbound lane on 680 and over the Sunol grade.

More projects are in the planning pipeline as Fremont's working hard to compete for funding from regional, state, and federal governments, as well as the private sector.

Supporting our goods movement is a leading priority and unclogging the bottleneck along 262 and Mission by upgrading this connection between 880 and 680.

In North Fremont, a high priority is to build the Dumbarton Rail connector, facilitating multiple railways across the Bay.

We appreciate twice elected MTC Chair Scott Haggerty and ACTC Chair Richard Valle, for their partnership with the City of Fremont in helping us deliver transportation infrastructure projects.

And kudos to Senator Bob Wieckowski for securing State funding for a Southern Alameda County Rail Integration Study.

Thumbs up to Facebook for taking the lead on planning and financing the Dumbarton Rail project.

Speaking of funding, big thanks to the voters for their commitment to transportation investment.

Last year they rejected Prop 6 which would have taken away Mayor Mei, City of Fremont

Millions of SB1 gas tax dollars that Fremont is using to maintain our streets and improve traffic safety,  
as well as billions of dollars committed to regional transportation.

Voters also approved Regional Measure 3,  
increasing bridge tolls in the Bay Area earmarked to improve a variety of projects like BART and 262.

Thanks to a community task force and extensive public input,  
our Mobility Action Plan is complete.

In addition to regional policy and projects,  
the Plan addresses many local priorities including  
working with Fremont Unified to expand  
our Safe Routes to Schools program  
helping more students safely walk and bike to school.

Over the next 2 years,  
we'll be working with AC Transit to get more frequent buses along major corridors.

I'm proud to see Mobility task force member  
Diane Shaw,  
elected last year to serve on the AC Transit District Board.

In addition, our Fremont traffic signals are overdue for an upgrade.

Fremont has 220 traffic signals and most of them are operating on technology that predates the iPhone.

Plans to modernize our signals with new hardware and software will allow more efficient traffic flow,  
faster response times for emergency vehicles,  
better detection for bicyclists,  
and a battery backup system to ensure uninterrupted power.

We've budgeted to modernize 40% of our traffic signals by 2022.  
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And we'll be looking for funding sources  
to complete  
the City's network.

2018 saw Fremont's lowest number of major traffic crashes involving a severe injury or fatality.

In the coming year,  
more traffic safety devices will be installed  
like flashing beacons and enhanced crosswalks to help pedestrians cross busy streets.

As we work to implement creative solutions to traffic and housing,  
we'll also be focusing on neighborhoods of character  
and look forward to working with our  
historic commercial districts, small businesses, and community partners.

In the Mission San Jose Business District,  
we've initiated a commercial strategy study that encompasses  
the area near Washington and Mission boulevards.  
We asked for public input,

and look forward to the study's results in May.

To strengthen the historic heart of Irvington  
and allow it to grow in a healthy and vibrant way,  
we held a workshop to provide an overview  
of the City's General Plan  
as it applies to the Irvington Community Plan Area.

Over in Centerville,  
we're moving forward with our commitment to the State of California  
to facilitate a new elementary school at Centerville Community Park  
and to build two new City parks by June 2023.  
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Adding to this revitalization,  
the District is attracting significant private investment,  
including a variety of new retail amenities.

We continue working with community partners to highlight Niles,  
our unique historic gem,  
with its small businesses and colorful events delighting all.

Working with the Small Business Development Center,  
we continue to provide free workshops and seminars on topics  
of interest to our small businesses.

Later this year, look for this resource to become more robust and accessible in Fremont,  
as the  
Alameda County Small Business Center Headquarters  
relocates from Oakland  
to Ohlone College.

Working with the Fremont Chamber of Commerce and historic business districts,  
we're supporting an environment to help our small businesses thrive.

We're thrilled Fremont's economy continues to show strength in a variety of sectors.

Building Fremont's robust Advanced Industry profile remains a top priority for our City  
and is critical to maintaining a diverse economic base,  
creating jobs,  
and generating revenues.

Fremont's long-standing leadership in Advanced Manufacturing is at the foundation of  
this strength.

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Look no further than the Tesla Factory, with the Model 3 now being delivered to thousands of customers.

As the City's largest employer, their presence extends far beyond the thousands of direct jobs they've created, and into a vast ecosystem that other anchor tenants are attracted to.

As new industries continuously emerge in Silicon Valley, there are a few that are concentrating in Fremont.

These include industrial automation, robotics, and autonomous vehicles.

This impressive collection of logos represents new tenants in Fremont, as they establish their operations and pave the way for innovation.

Fremont's largest growth sector continues to be Biotechnology. Most of Fremont's biomedical companies manufacture here,

which is of particular importance given the ripple effects in the larger economy due to a growing supply chain network.

Last year I shared about Boehringer Ingelheim's \$217 million expansion, bringing 300 jobs at one of the city's largest biotech tenants.

Innovation is in our DNA, I'm excited that U.K.-based Orchard Therapeutics has located to Warm Springs to build out a gene therapy manufacturing operation.

We also welcomed dozens of new biomedical startups, including PrinterPrezz, who is revolutionizing medifufacturing, through advanced 3D printing.

Expanding workforce development is key.  
Advancing to its second year,  
Mayor Mei, City of Fremont

I'm thrilled that FUSE Fellow  
Parker Thomas,  
is now working with the Alameda County Library team  
to support the next generation,  
as they prepare to join the workforce.

Just like the Aviation Institute of Maintenance,  
relocating to a new facility in Fremont,  
to grow student population and improve training amenities.

In addition to reaching 1,000 students by the end of this month,  
our famous coding school,  
42 Silicon Valley is bringing international attention to Fremont.

Through activities like participation in IBM's 'Call for Code' challenge,  
where the City's emergency response process was the subject of an international  
competition with over 180 teams,  
culminating in \$200,000 dollars in VC funding.

For several years  
Mission Valley ROP students and teachers  
have participated in Manufacturing Day tours to local companies.

Students see and learn first-hand  
the importance of advanced manufacturing and its direct connection with Career  
Technical Education.

Our Smart City initiative is continuing to advance.

We're harnessing innovative technologies to improve our own operation and service  
delivery models.

Modernizing traffic signals,  
and being selected into  
City Innovate's Startup In Residence program,  
we're working with players in the tech industry,  
to ease traffic congestion throughout our streets.

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And forming alliances with Fremont-based companies like Gridscape Solutions, who completed the Fremont Fire Station Microgrids project, now a model for dozens of other California cities.

Fremont has also been concentrating efforts to focus on one of our most strategic employment locations in the Silicon Valley, the Ardenwood Technology Park.

Its proximity to the Peninsula and superior access for a technology workforce, is turning heads.

Industry growth has been significant and swift.

In addition to 42 Silicon Valley and Boehringer Ingelheim, new operations have established in the district, including Novo Nordisc, a world leader in diabetes care.

And did you hear?

Facebook has leased over 1 million square feet of space to develop its eastern Silicon Valley campus, creating a shorter commute for many of its employees, who live right here in Fremont.

This is attracting new investment in Ardenwood and proposed new development.

Similarly, investment is robust in the City's other strategic locations for employment growth and new amenities, including Downtown and Warm Springs.

Embracing our vision of creating an active and vibrant downtown, we're finalizing plans for the new Downtown Event Center and Plaza to serve as Fremont's primary destination for cultural, social and civic events.

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Supporting our local business community,  
there will be new space for networking, events, and conferences.

Keeping with Fremont's goal of being green,  
it's the first city building to be primarily supplied with solar energy.

With zero dependence on natural gas,  
the facility's operations will be emissions free.

This aligns with the City's goals of moving away from  
fossil fuel infrastructure  
towards clean and renewable electricity.

Walking a few steps further,  
a new mixed-use development will be coming to  
the corner of Walnut Avenue and Liberty Street.

The much anticipated Locale @ State Street project on Capitol Avenue is nearing  
completion.

A wide variety of businesses,  
from coffee shops to restaurants  
are in active talks with the developer.

Building on this momentum in Downtown,  
this district has been designated as a federal Opportunity Zone.

As one of only a few Bay Area cities  
to receive such a designation,  
the associated tax benefits will make investment in Downtown even more compelling.

And the landscape in Warm Springs/South Fremont continues to change  
with the strategic build-out of our 21st Century Innovation District.

This brings new jobs, housing options, and walkable communities.

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Also increasing access to affordable housing in Warm Springs with the construction of over 500 new affordable rental units.

And providing nearly 11 acres of accessible public space, knit together by a network of neighborhood parks, plazas, and trails being constructed as part of large-scale mixed-use and commercial master plan developments.

Serving as the cornerstone for education and open space in the Fremont Innovation District, the new Lila Bringhurst Elementary School will be ready for the new school year this fall.

The new joint-use Community Park is scheduled for completion this summer.

The joint-use park is a collaboration between The School District, Lennar Homes, and the City.

Looking forward to opening day for the new West Access Bridge and Plaza Project.

Thanks to Measure BB, it's currently under construction and we appreciate the help from our partners.

Around the corner near the Warm Springs BART station, we have two affordable housing projects underway.

Innovia is being built in partnership with St. Anton Communities.

And Warm Spring's Metro Crossing is a collaborative effort with Eden Housing.

Another collaboration was our recent Commercial Real Estate Bus Tour, with The Registry publication.  
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Touring nearly 200 investors and potential partners,  
we showcased projects in  
Warm Springs,  
Downtown,  
ArtistWalk in Centerville,  
and the industrial development known as Pacific Commons South.

This breadth of projects demonstrates the balanced growth that Fremont is  
experiencing,  
addressing both jobs and housing.

Our Economic Development team has also grown the selection of retail and restaurant  
offerings in Fremont.

Also, 2 new auto dealerships are in the works,  
as we've entitled  
undeveloped land in South Fremont.  
And 4 new hotels are in the pipeline.

Business get a head start with our Business Ally program  
and a single point of contact.

New Chapter Director,  
Gaytri Khandelwal onboard,  
2019 programming for Startup Grind is in full swing.

With meetups focused on topics like blockchain,  
marketing, and crowdfunding.

Thank you to local entrepreneurs,  
and to Peerbuds Innovation Labs for hosting these important events.

Welcome to our new Community Development Director,  
Dan Schoenholz,  
who has led updates to the City's General Plan,  
while most recently,  
overseeing the creation of several hundred units of affordable housing.  
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Creating better access for businesses and residents,  
we launched our new online permitting tool.

You'll save time, money  
and reduce paper consumption.

In other sustainability efforts,  
we're updating our Climate Action Plan,  
with a goal of reducing community-wide greenhouse gas emissions.

Recent technological advancements,  
paired with favorable codes, ordinances, and incentive programs have helped to keep  
Fremont on track.

For those businesses seeking assistance with  
rebate and incentive programs,  
help is available through these several agencies.

Another key initiative for Fremont  
is welcoming a new electricity provider through a  
local Community Choice Energy program.

East Bay Community Energy launched affordable green options for  
Fremont residents and businesses, who are now getting cleaner electricity  
at an affordable rate.

Further punctuating Fremont's continued bold climate leadership,  
I'm proud of the unanimous Council approval to adopt a new carbon neutral goal and  
post-carbon community framework.  
Fremont is one of the first cities in the region to align local policies  
with California's most ambitious target  
of carbon neutrality by 2045.

Other noteworthy Council actions include  
taking steps to preserve solar access for everyone  
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through our recently passed Solar Preservation Ordinance for all planning applications.

The Council also adopted a local minimum wage ordinance that increases the rate to \$15 per hour, two years earlier than under State law.

And, the Rent Review Ordinance was passed in January 2018.

And the Council is preparing to align with StopWaste.org's efforts to regionally reduce the consumption of single-use plastics over the next year.

Fremont continues to act on climate change, signing 10 prominent national and international letters of support in the last 4 years.

Speaking of notable news, last July Fremont welcomed our new police chief, Kimberly Petersen.

Her impressive 22-year career makes us proud that she's our city's 7th police chief, and first female chief.

Under new leadership, the Police Department continues to maintain our public safety, even being recognized today with the Chairman's Award from the Chamber of Commerce.

Remaining steady over the past 2 years, our City maintains its focus on reducing residential burglaries.

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An expanded focus is now on auto burglaries,  
something that remains a significant problem  
not only in Fremont  
but in most Bay Area cities.

We've allocated significant resources  
to disrupt this trend,

and have seen an 11% decrease in thefts from vehicles this year compared to last  
year.

We recognize the severity of resolving these situations and just last month arrested 11  
suspects in an 8-day period.

We're implementing 21<sup>st</sup> century policing,  
including deployment of body-worn cameras  
and in-car cameras.

Fremont is a Compassionate City,  
not just for people,  
but our furry friends too!

Wrapping up a \$1.5 million dollar renovation to enhance the Tri City Animal Shelter,  
we're making it more customer friendly,  
including recently launching a new website.

And our Patrol Division is  
strengthening relationships with our community,  
and enhancing safety, security, and quality of life issues.

We're also employing innovative strategies to hire Police personnel  
to recruit our next generation of officers and dispatchers.

I'm pleased to report that 20 new officers were hired in our Police Department for the  
current fiscal year.

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Over in the Fire Department, they're focused on recruitment strategies to hire under-represented groups and those economically disadvantaged, making the rounds to various career expos.

Eager to spark young women's interest in fire service, the Department opened its training center doors to NorCal Women in the Fire Service for its inaugural NorCal First Alarm Girls Fire Camp last fall.

Being prepared for a disaster is crucial. We're excited by the increase in attendance for our CERT and PEP classes, where residents practice for various scenarios like earthquakes.

Last October was the 150th anniversary of the "Great Quake" on the Hayward Fault and 29th anniversary of Loma Prieta.

We co-sponsored community activities in Central Park with local nonprofit Math Science Nucleus and US-GS,

and debuted a series of Earthquake Walk signs installed throughout the park.

With the recent floods and wildfires across California on our minds, preparation and communications are key.

I urge the community to please sign up for AC Alert, Fremont's mass notification system to receive emergency and non-emergency notifications.

Mayor Mei, City of Fremont

Now let's move on to the growth in the national and regional economies, which has slowed over the last two quarters, yet still remains robust with a continuing strong labor market and relatively high consumer confidence.

Looking at our local economy,

the City's sales tax revenue has benefitted from a spike in new auto sales and online retail activity which have led to a healthy projected General Fund ending fund balance.

However, we recognize that as time passes, the current economic expansion may slow.

With this in mind, the City is planning to increase its reserves over the next few years.

As we plan, we encourage our community to get involved.

Mark your calendar for the upcoming budget hearings.

The City's proposed operating and capital improvement budget for the next fiscal year will be presented to the Council on May 21st.

Kicking off next month is the U.S. Census, the main way Fremont receives its fair share of government funding for critical needs like highways, schools, health facilities, and many more community programs.

Get engaged now.

Census forms will be hitting mailboxes in April.

Make sure your voice is heard and you're counted.

Throughout this year and beyond, the City of Fremont has made a concentrated effort to listen to our residents, Mayor Mei, City of Fremont

businesses,  
and employees  
to make the most of the resources entrusted to us.

We recognize the importance and impact that each of the  
people and organizations we serve has on our great city.

We acknowledge that everyone counts and belongs in our community.  
Today's presentation was made possible through the support of our employees who  
serve the community each and every day.  
A round of applause, please.

Just as koi fish  
persevere  
and symbolize ambition  
and good fortune,

I believe they also characterize the spirit of Fremont  
as we push forward into 2019  
to further invigorate our economy and pursue balanced, healthy growth.

Thank you.

Mayor Mei, City of Fremont